AANZPA JOURNAL #31 2022

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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.

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Editorial

Tēnā koutou katoa
Welcome to you all

Ko tāu rourou, ko tāku rourou, ka ora ai te iwi.
With your contribution, and my contribution, the people will survive and grow.

He māramatanga tō tēnei whetū,
he māramatanga anō tō tērā whetū.
Each star has its own luminescence or presence in the sky,
Each individual has their own personality.

Increasingly, in the world we now live in, we are challenged to warm up again and again to AANZPA's vision. We seek to be spontaneous and joyful in spite of living in troubled times where war, pestilence and uncertainty are ever present. We continue to sustain ourselves through relationship and valuing our psychodrama connections, old and new, known and unknown.

Some of us read novels, play music or create art. Others walk, sing, dance and dream. We nurture our land, be with other creatures, be in nature. We play, we work, we sleep. We let significant others know about us.

In this *Journal* you can read contributions from different perspectives as the writers show us their take on work, life and being. I hope that these articles move you, like a starry night. That each of you will find something stimulating and life giving. And most of all, we will strengthen our understanding and valuing of each other's experience.

The first article, by Hamish Brown, invites us to consider the forces of social cohesion, collaboration and decision-making in working effectively with organisations. Glenis Levack tenderly demonstrates how to engage teenagers in a new warm up to learning. Then Jane Maher engages us in her take on Beauty and the Covid Beast. Neil Simmons follows with an engaging account of how he brings psychodrama into his medical practice.

By this time, I hope you are involved with the stories and maybe ready to tell one of your own. To get you going, Diana Jones shares her wisdom as the author of two published psychodrama books. If you are motivated to be a change agent in your community, Cissy Rock's demonstration of how to do it will inspire you. Craig Whisker reflects on his experiences leading a residential psychodrama group.

This Journal concludes with reviews of two books: *Leadership Levers* and *Social Work, Sociometry and Psychodrama*. Ali Begg has taken a stunning

photograph of three of her mugs to grace the cover of our *Journal* this year, a word about her process follows the book reviews.

An invitation to the Brisbane Conference in 2024 is on the back page.

Mā te wā
Farewell until sometime in the future
Sara Crane
Editor

Collaborative Decision Making in Facilitated Groups and Other Organisations

HAMISH BROWN

Key words

collaboration, decision making, dependency, development, facilitation, leadership, Moreno, organisation, relationship, role, role theory, social system, sociometry, subgroups

Introduction

Developing collaborative approaches in organisational settings is very challenging. If collaboration were simple most organisations would adopt such practices with ease. However, this is rarely the case. I have spent nearly three decades working to find effective ways to bring about collaboration in organisational settings. This paper presents the approach that I and my colleagues from Phoenix Facilitation developed to make collaborative decision making in groups and complex organisational settings possible. It is based primarily on the Psychodramatic theories of sociometry and role theory. In this paper I will introduce you to three dimensions of organisational life that are central to organisational functioning and discuss how these dimensions relate to one another. I will present a diagnostic and descriptive model that arises from this approach, which assists in seeing and understanding the relational dynamics people in the organisation are experiencing. This model also directly assists in planning organisational change.

Defining social cohesion

In this paper I use the term *social cohesion* quite a lot. Social cohesion is a measure that can be used to determine the level of group members' ability to choose each other positively under conditions of stress. Different levels of social cohesion are required depending on the purpose and function of a group. When social cohesion cannot be sustained fragmentation of the social network will be observed.

Social cohesion is an emergent property of the sociometry of the group in that it develops or changes in response to individuals' experience of relationships as they are enacted over time. Sociometry was developed by

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Moreno for the purpose of making visible the specific criteria that make up the social relationships of a social system affecting the process of choosing and rejecting that emerges out of these criteria. Moreno was also interested in the development of social cohesion across a whole social system.

> *The social health of a nation is dependent on its cohesion… Social interventions (such as sociometry, group psychotherapy and psychodrama) promise to transform areas of low cohesion into areas of high cohesion without sacrificing the spontaneity and the freedom of small groups... The cohesion of the group is measured by the degree of cooperativeness and collaborative interaction forth coming from as many subgroups and members as possible on behalf of the **purpose** for which the group is formed.* (Moreno 1951)

A group with strong social cohesion is able to withstand considerable stress from various sources, such as organisational restructures, while maintaining genuine positive relationships and getting the work of the organisation done. A group with weak social cohesion is rarely able to withstand organisational stresses and changes, which may also be deemed necessary because of the weak social cohesion. Such a group will tend to lose work focus or get caught up in organisational politics, sub-group infighting and unnecessary competition.

I am highlighting here that while sociometry is a micro measure to do with making the specific criteria that make up social relationships visible social cohesion is a macro measure to do with making the strength of social connections across a whole social network visible.

Developing and maintaining social cohesion
This section introduces triangular relationships as the smallest unit related to the development of social cohesion.

A group of researchers from Cornell University developed a mathematical model (Easley, Kleinberg, 2010) that shows how groups split into factions, which Bill Steel wrote an article about (Steel, 2011).
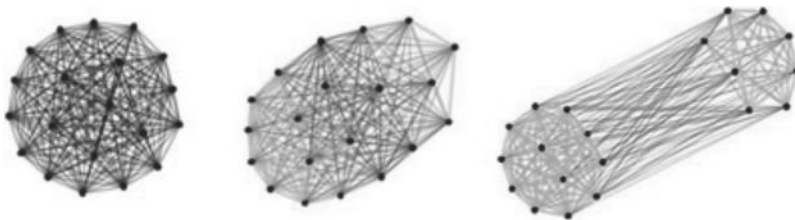
AS CHANGES IN INDIVIDUAL RELATIONSHIPS SPREAD THROUGH A GROUP, EVENTUALLY A SPLIT EVOLVES.

They demonstrate that…these triangles can be either balanced or unbalanced, depending on the particular mix of positive and negative relationships they contain. Once a certain percentage of negative relationships are present the group maintains social cohesion by splitting into subgroups; each sub-group being internally positive but negative towards the other group. This is a deterministic model that shows what happens but stops short of explaining how it happens. The mathematical equation shows that if the *"mean friendliness" — the average strength of connections across the entire network — is positive, the system evolves to a single, all-positive pattern.* "The model shows how to influence the result, but it doesn't tell you how to get there," Kleinberg cautioned.
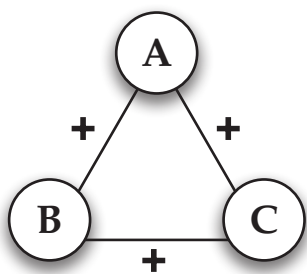
(A) A, B AND C ARE MUTUAL FRIENDS: BALANCED.
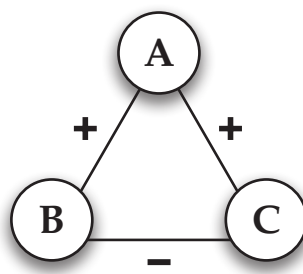
(B) A IS FRIENDS WITH B AND C, BUT THEY DON'T GET ALONG WITH EACH OTHER: NOT BALANCED.
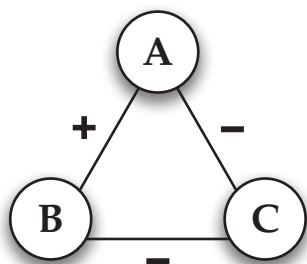
(C) A AND B ARE FRIENDS WITH C AS A MUTUAL ENEMY: BALANCED.
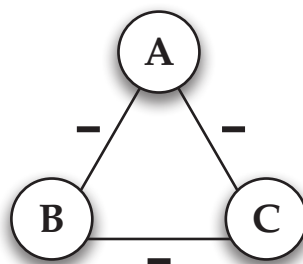
(D) A, B, AND C ARE MUTUAL ENEMIES: NOT BALANCED.

FROM "NETWORKS" BY JON KLEINBERG AND DAVID EASLEY

Social groups can be broken down into "relationship triangles" with four possibilities as illustrated in the diagram above. Each triangle of relationships must have either one or three positive edges to be considered balanced. Unbalanced triangles set off changes that spread though the group.

Take a moment to see if you can visualise the group as sets of triangles

and picture this dynamic process of change with each relationship pair being affected by each relationship change they are connected to.
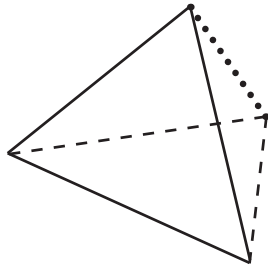
Depicted is a group consisting of four people this means there are six relationships. Each change in a relationship affects each of the other two people. The dotted line shows a rejecting relationship. At the point in time an event occurs that triggers this relationship changing from accepting to rejecting, the other two people will also be affected. Their relationships with each person in the system will be impacted
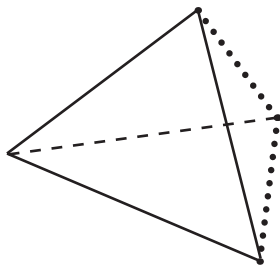
Here a second relationship becomes rejecting in response to the initial change. Whether further changes to the relationship matrix occur depends on the degree of openness and cohesion in the system and the capacity to learn from and respond to the experiences unfolding.
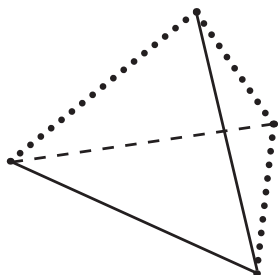
Now it is evident that the fourth person has rejected the other member of the initial rejecting pair. This is an unstable relationship matrix which the group will resolve by producing more positive relationships or by fragmenting into two subgroups. Each rejection is a separate event

however the series of events is connected through time as change occurs in the relationship matrix.

Wondering why triangles and why not some other shape? Triangles are the shape formed if you draw all the people in a group and connect each person to every other with a line to portray the relationship. Similarly, the larger the group gets the closer to a sphere the whole group will be when diagramed this way. The underlying maths arises out of the triangles (formed by three people) and the choosing or rejecting in each relationship (between two people). It is worth considering whether a dyad is a group or whether the smallest group comprises three people based on the geometry. When a pair reject each other and move away there can be no sub-grouping process.

Sociometry and its relationship to social cohesion

Dr Jacob Moreno developed sociometry in the 1930's. His theories have been further developed and tested by many practitioners of the Psychodrama method since then. Sociometry provides a developmental and sociological understanding of the development of social cohesion that matches the basic principles of Easley and Kleinberg's (Easley, Kleinberg, 2010) mathematical model.

Sociometry provides:
1. *A method of measuring the relationships that make up the organisation of a social system.*
2. *A diagnostic method, aiming to classify the positions of individuals in groups and the position of groups in the community.*
3. *Therapeutic and political methods, aiming to aid individuals and groups to better adjustment.*

In the complete sociometric procedure, all these methods are synthetically united into a single operation, one method depending on the other.

Moreno noticed that people choose or reject each other based upon specific criteria. He noticed that these criteria are responses formed in relation to the specific way of being each person is enacting in response to the other. He termed these ways of being 'roles' and noticed that when a person enacts a role a response is generated in the other.

Role theory enables us to understand how members of a group develop the capacity to continue to choose each other under conditions of stress and sociometry the diagnostic methods to identify where in the group or social system this development is needed.

The diagram following is a sociometric diagram in which each person's positive, negative, ambivalent or neutral response to the other is shown. Here a relationship triangle is represented. It may be useful to name the role or way of being each person is enacting at the point in time that the diagram

is constructed, this enables us to appreciate that the positive, negative, neutral and ambivalent responses are specific to functioning a person is currently portraying or is a response that has become fixed based upon the functioning the person has previously portrayed.
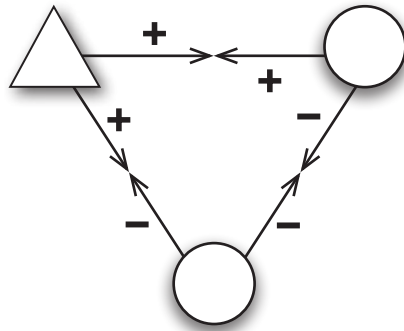
Here a man is positive to a woman who is also positive to him. This is a mutually positive dyad. A woman is negative to a woman who is also negative towards her. This is a mutually negative dyad. A man is positive towards a woman who is negative in response to him. This is a conflicted relationship. Note that using Moreno's method we see each relationship comprising two parts.

Remember that social cohesion is a measure that can be used to determine the level of group members' ability to choose each other positively under conditions of stress. Moreno's role theory and sociometry, unlike the deterministic model of Easley and Kleinberg (Easley, Kleinberg, 2010) provides an explicatory understanding of social cohesion in groups and larger social systems. However, the two models provide coherent parallel descriptions of social cohesion and each supports the other.
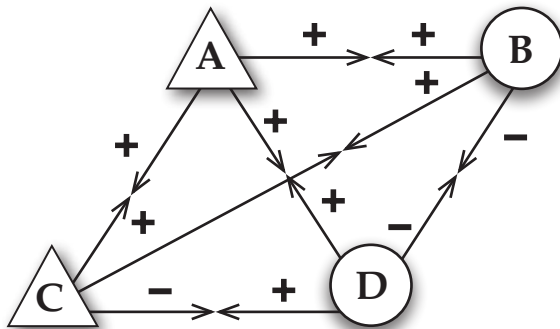
Here the representation of a second man C creates three more triangles (this doubles the number of relationships from three to six). It is evident that A is the only person whom everyone has a positive relationship with (Sociometric

Star), and that everyone except A is rejecting of D (Sociometric Isolate). As the number number of people diagramed expands it becomes clearer how Sociometry provides a diagnostic map that highlights where interventions can be made to increase social cohesion.
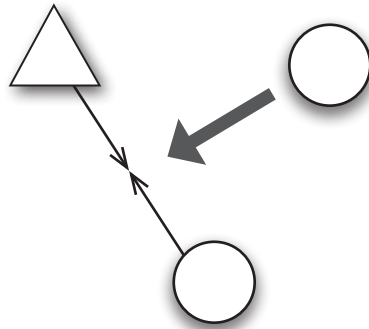
In this diagram a man and a woman are interacting in a group and a second woman is affected as she experiences each of the people and the relationship. Role development can occur for each member of the pair, for the relationship and also for the third person who experiences the self-presentation of the pair. This assists us to observe role development as a function of the triangles comprising a group at each point in time.
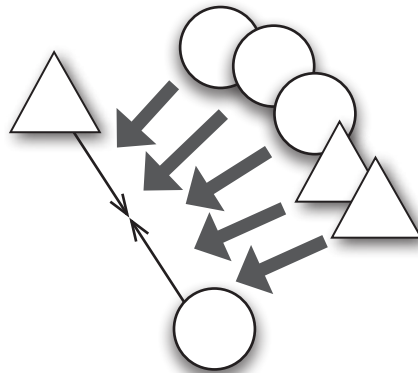
See how every person in a larger group is affected by the interaction. At this moment in time in the group process each person is in a triangular relationship with this pair, each is affected by the experience that occurs in the pair. Change in even very large groups is affected through the triangulation processes that go on in relation to the interaction of each pair. Leadership development in organisational systems can be affected through group work because of this triangulation of learning as a result of encounter. As people experience the development of relationship through the exercise of relational leadership capacities they are both provoked into a process of

development and observe the developing culture present in the system, these forces enable them to better adjust to the system and provide leadership within it.

This is a whole of system view that puts relationship development at the centre. It emerges through the pioneering work of Moreno, however, Murray Bowen provides a coherent parallel definition of differentiation as it relates to triangular relationships.

Bowen's triangling and its close relationship to Moreno's sociometry

Bowen's focus is on patterns that develop in families in order to defuse anxiety. A key generator of anxiety in families is the perception of either too much closeness or too great a distance in a relationship. The degree of anxiety in any one family will be determined by the current levels of external stress and the sensitivities to particular themes that have been transmitted down the generations. If family members do not have the capacity to think through their responses to relationship dilemmas, but rather react anxiously to perceived emotional demands, a state of chronic anxiety or reactivity may be set in place. The main goal of Bowenian therapy is to reduce chronic anxiety by:

- facilitating awareness of how the emotional system functions; and
- increasing levels of differentiation, where the focus is on making changes for the self rather than on trying to change others.

Bowen also describes triangles as the smallest stable relationship unit. The process of triangling is central to his theory. Triangling is said to occur when the inevitable anxiety in a dyad is relieved by involving a vulnerable third party who either takes sides or provides a detour for the anxiety. Triangles are linked closely with Bowen's concept of differentiation, in that the greater the degree of fusion in a relationship, the more heightened is the pull to preserve emotional stability by forming a triangle. Bowen did not suggest that the process of triangling was necessarily dysfunctional, but the concept is a useful way of grasping the notion that the original tension gets acted out elsewhere.

Interventions in the whole group for the development of social cohesion

Opposite is a model I developed that describes the relationship between two dimensions of openness and social cohesion.

When cohesion is low (left hand side of the diagram) the range and type
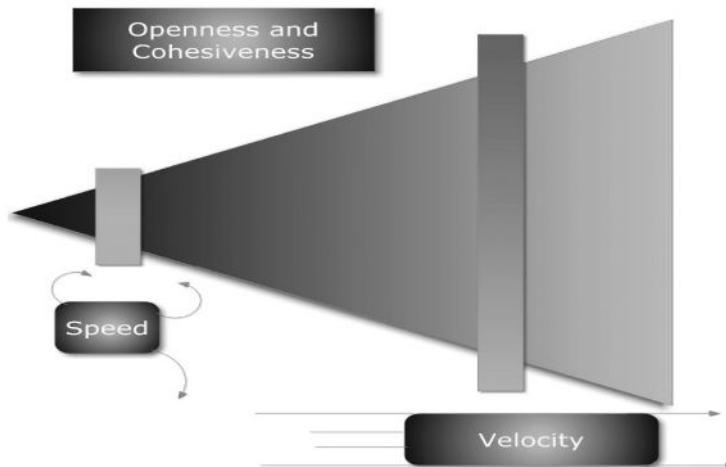
of interventions a group will tolerate without becoming fragmented is low. If an intervention produces too much openness/exposure it will cause people to experience distress beyond what can be talked about or processed in the group. It will cause a decrease in social cohesion as people move away from each other, split into subgroups, or work to protect themselves or hide their true experience. As group cohesion increases the group members will be able to tolerate and even enjoy greater degrees of openness and this will produce greater cohesion.

This model assists us to consider what interventions will be helpful for a group at any particular point in time. To increase social cohesion, it is necessary to intervene in a manner that requires/produces more openness than is currently present but not so much more that the experience people have cannot be talked about in the group. As the group develops greater cohesion it becomes easier and easier for the group members to maintain positive open relationships with each other under conditions of stress.

A work group has a purpose or objective. Notice that the purpose and function of the group provides a context for the work of the group. The more challenging the purpose the greater the cohesion required to work effectively to achieve it. If the purpose presents little challenge and therefore little stress not much social cohesion is required for the group to become effective enough for the purpose to be achieved.

I consider social cohesion the single most important factor in group effectiveness. In fact, social cohesion is probably the most important factor in creating a healthy productive society because as cohesion develops so too openness develops. As cohesion develops people are more likely to be able to speak about their experience when challenging things happen to them and people are more likely to be able to listen and respond helpfully when people express themselves. People learn and develop greater resilience and

effectiveness in environments where they are able to talk and reflect openly on their experience and these capacities equate directly with the development of social cohesion.

Modes of decision-making and the scope for collaboration

This section deals with how decisions are authorised and the scope for collaboration within this. There are three modes of decision-making; these are autocratic, democratic and consensual. These modes are essentially structural (organisational) forms that assign the power to authorise decision-making and are evident across all kinds of social organisation from the national political to the small group. Autocratic decision making effectively means one person is authorised to decide on behalf of others. Democratic decision-making means the majority decide while consensus decision-making means everyone decides together.

It is not uncommon to see different decision-making modes in place in different parts of an organisation. For example, large stratified organisations are essentially autocratic from the Chief Executive down with complex policies detailing what decisions can be made at which level and what must be escalated upwards, while the governance structures may work democratically or in the case of large corporations by vote per share rather than vote per person.

When organisations work together on a project decision-making is one area in which a working agreement must be reached. This is commonly called a multi-stakeholder situation. Sometimes multi-stakeholder processes are formed because of the need to reach an agreement across many organisations that all will commit to. This appears at first glance to be a consensus situation however very often legislation requires that specific bodies enact certain responsibilities and for this reason different organisations have differing authority in the decision-making process. The central first step in engaging in a facilitated process that includes decision-making is uncovering what mode of decision-making applies to which elements of the decision. Directly related to this is recognising who has what decision-making authority in the process.

Collaboration is best defined as involvement in decision-making. Each decision-making mode can be undertaken on a spectrum from non-collaborative to collaborative however the greater the involvement the greater the collaboration. In this context consensus involves the greatest collaboration by definition, however, a decision which is autocratically authorised can be made collaboratively through the open engagement of all people affected by the decision. Similarly, democratically authorised decisions can be made with a simple vote. Participative democracy is the movement toward using facilitated process to actively involve people affected by a decision in working together to produce a common solution. So, while some decisions are

authorised autocratically or democratically it is possible that the decision that is made has the broad agreement of all present. I call this collaborative decision-making and the associated facilitation processes, collaboration.

The essential key in collaborative decision-making is that the mode of decision-making is known by all involved. The greatest damage to the social cohesion required to work collaboratively occurs when people believe they will decide something when in fact a person, organisation or vote will decide. This amounts to being truthful and open about the nature of the involvement people are being invited into.

Most often social difficulties arise around misunderstandings about who will decide or differences about who gets to decide how the decision will be made. Public consultation is one area in which being clear and overt about who will make which decisions, and how each will be made, is important.

Organisational change is another area where social cohesion is assisted by being clear and overt about who will decide what. Processes which appear to invite the broader staff group into involvement in decision-making while actually retaining decision-making authority cause significant damage to social cohesion, often called damage to trust in this instance. Often the perceived difficulty for the decision-makers is in some vital information being too sensitive to share broadly meaning that broader involvement cannot be meaningful unless a clear overt approach is worked out.

The illusion of 'buy in'

Many dysfunctional organisational dynamics relate to a confusion of these three decision-making modes. For example, the common managerial phrase "get buy in to a decision" generally indicates the person has an acceptance that social cohesion is important coupled with a belief that if people feel like they decided, they will own the decision someone else has made. Unfortunately, 'getting buy in' is often done by obscuring the decision-making mode and for this reason can lead to an unintended consequence of damage to trust as people feel manipulated. In many organisations this approach is so ingrained that people no longer expect their opinions to have any real meaning to those in positions of power. The solution is not to shift to consensus which is often structurally impossible and brings many other challenges but to get clear about how genuine collaboration can be facilitated. Collaboration is not 'buy in', it is getting clear about exactly what genuine involvement in the decision people can have and then designing a process to assist them in having this involvement.

The decision-making modes are not value based positions. One useful thing about this framework is that it assists us to separate the different forces that act on people as they exist in their organisation. For example, autocratic does not necessarily mean dictatorial, dictatorial includes one person deciding and little or no collaboration and no consideration (or only

utilitarian consideration) of social cohesion. The form that these three factors of, cohesion, collaboration and decision-making take, has a significant effect on the functioning of the organisation and the experience of its people.

Organisational archetypes arising from the notions of social cohesion, collaboration and decision-making

Purposeful
High Cohesion
Low Collaboration

Innovative
High Cohesion
High Collaboration

Dysfunctional
Low Cohesion
Low Collaboration

Inefficient
Low Cohesion
High Collaboration

Social Cohesion
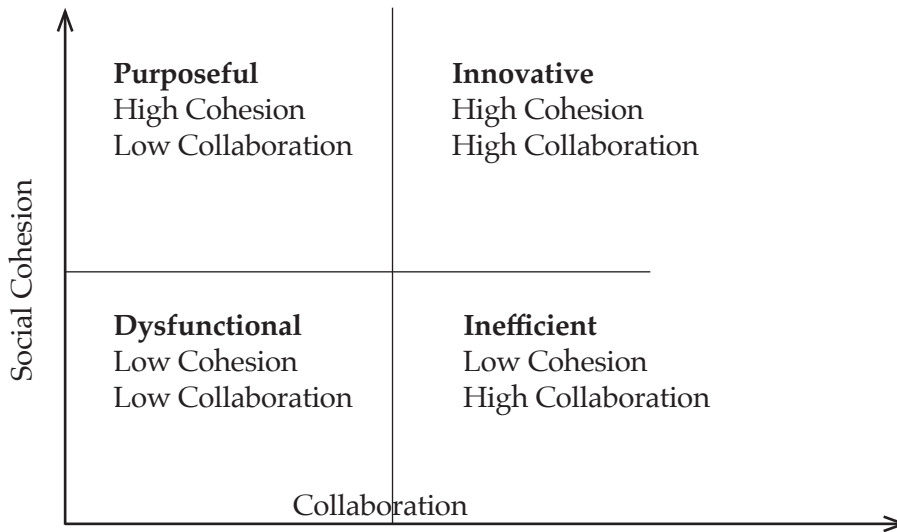
Collaboration

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL COHESION, COLLABORATION AND DECISION-MAKING

The value of these categories is that they enable us to recognise some classic or archetypal organisational forms.

As we think about how social cohesion, collaboration and decision-making interact in organisational contexts it is evident that they can be placed in a grid. Any specific organisation can then assess where they are on the grid and this can be used to open up a conversation about development. Generalisations can be made about the organisation as a whole as has been done below. However, any specific issue an organisation faces can be plotted and each issue and/or division in an organisation may track differently. Being able to say 'we have discovered we are dysfunctional in this specific regard' can be the beginning of an empowering process of change. Similarly, being able to identify that division X is highly innovative we can begin to appreciate how they are operating differently to the rest of the organisation and thus their success can be more easily replicated.

The Archetypes
Jung compared the archetype (the preformed tendency to create images) to a dry river bed. *The rain gives form and direction to the flow. We name the river,*

but it is never a thing located any place; it is a form but it is never the same; it is always changing. But it is a river, and we know that rivers ultimately flow into oceans which are symbolic of the unconscious. (Jung, 1936 as cited in Wilmer, 1987)

Purposeful

The purposeful category contains at least three organisational forms; Miltaristic, Charismatic, Cause Based. These can be differentiated through the way high cohesion is generated.

Militaristic organisations

Organisations that are high cohesion low collaboration may have developed cohesion through a collective perception of an external threat. This is easiest to see in military organisations where the perceived threat is very real. It is also evident in many corporations in which perceptions of threats to a company's market position by a competitor can cause people to pull together and accept a common leader that makes decisions quickly on behalf of the whole. Issues of authority and dependency are managed through a clear chain of command and stratified decision making. Militaristic organisations also include organisations that orient positively to competition and an internal motivation to compete pulls people together and forms a basis for performance. A rugby team is a good example of this kind of organisation. However, you will notice that a rugby team is competing against an opposing team and the dynamic that generates cohesion is the same.

It is worth highlighting that since the development of the militaristic organisation and its associated organisational forms of stratification and chain of command it has been adopted in most organisations around the world and forms the basis of most management thinking. For this reason, most people have primarily experienced being part of organisations of this type, and individuals and societies have become habituated into thinking of militaristic organisation as if it is ubiquitous.

Once set in motion stratified organisations have what I think of as a sociometric quirk. People are sophisticated enough to work out how to fit in and thrive in any given social context, in a stratified system sustaining a positive relationship with senior people is effective. So people tend to privilege the criteria upon which they value their leaders, often discounting criteria that would place them at odds with the leaders. This may be partially a result of coercion but that is not necessarily so. It is also helpful to see that people are participating in a manner that makes sense to them. If they want more influence or to feel less coerced that may be less a systemic issue and more an issue of role development. If you look at it this way then it is evident how the stratified system creates and sustains cohesion over time.

Charismatic organisations

Organisations that are high cohesion low collaboration may have developed cohesion through charismatic leadership. This is in evidence in the evangelical churches where the congregation is highly cohesive in response to a loved leader's representation of God. Issues of authority and dependency may be maximised with child-like followers and a god-like leader as in a cult. It is also possible that the tendency to depend on the charismatic leader provokes a developmental process in the membership that is facilitated within the organisation so that gradually these issues are resolved and the organisation becomes collaborative.

Cause based organisations

Some organisations generate high cohesion via commitment to a cause. Often these organisations also have charismatic leadership and sometimes they are collaborative. Issues of authority and dependency may be projected outwards onto a world that is perceived as needing changing or bad authorities that are perceived as needing to be pulled down.

Innovative organisations

An organisation that is run in a highly collaborative manner where most decisions are made with the involvement of those affected will tend to maximise the members sense of responsibility for their involvement. When there is also high cohesion the membership will subsequently act with greater degrees of autonomy and self-direction. Issues of authority and dependency are less likely to be the focus in this kind of organisation as openness will be high. Because people are involved in thinking about how the whole functions and contributing with others who have different thoughts to them, they will maximise their ability to have unique notions. The capacity to learn and benefit as a result of difference is developed in an organisation of this kind.

Dysfunctional

Organisations that are dysfunctional will have high staff turnover; cultural surveys will indicate a lack of engagement. Issues of dependency and authority will be expressed as passive resistance to decision-making and change or overt and covert hostility. Bullying may predominate as frustrated and ineffective manages attempt to lift poor performance. The membership may have a profound inability to think for themselves or act in proactive ways. Sometimes social cohesion develops as a revolution against the leadership. The dynamics of revolution have been evident in some countries run as dictatorships, in organisations it is common to see restructure or the breaking away of a subgroup to form a new company.

Inefficient

There is a common misperception that involvement in decision-making is necessary for social cohesion, or that collaboration necessarily produces high social cohesion. Organisations are sometimes structured to make decisions by consensus for this reason. When social cohesion is low working to make decisions by consensus is very slow because genuine consensus involves the power of veto and people who do not have enough trust to be open with each other will tend to exercise this right because they are frightened that their point of view will not be taken into account by others (this can result in a kind of reversion to autocratic functioning). Also, when social cohesion is low people have more difficulty valuing difference and this includes recognising when content experts need to have a greater input in the outcome of a decision. Issues of authority and dependency tend to be responded to with endless circular conversation in the absence of strong respectful leadership.

Personal authority and organisational leadership

Give responsibility
Participative / Shared
Leadership

	Purposeful	**Innovative**
High Cohesion	High Cohesion
Low Collaboration	High Collaboration

	Dysfunctional	**Inefficient**
Low Cohesion	Low Cohesion
Low Collaboration	High Collaboration

Cohesion

Take a lead

Collaboration
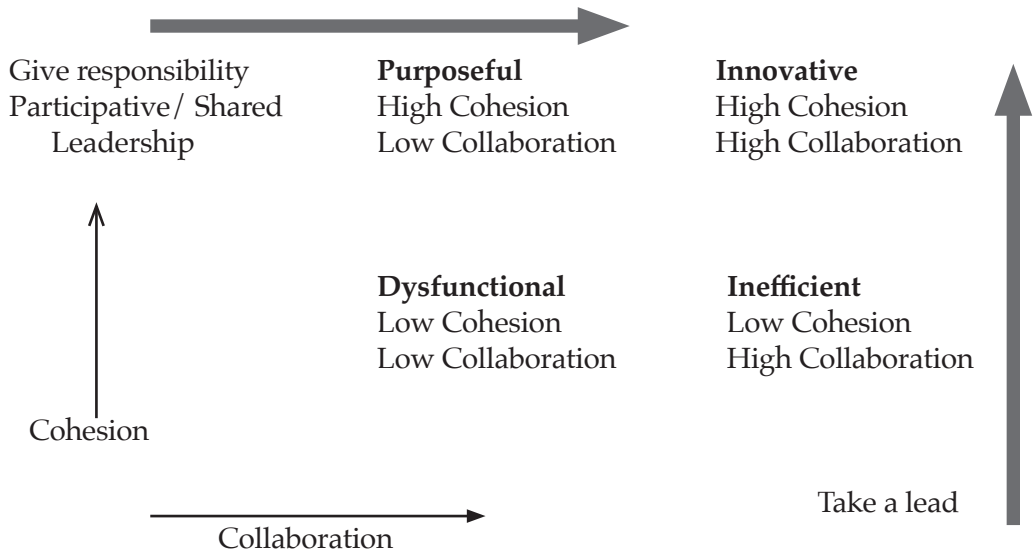
Perhaps counter-intuitively, at the largest level of meaning-making when social cohesion is low the social system benefits most from strong respectful leadership, including centralised decision-making what Sandra Turner termed 'Good Authority' (personal communication). On the other hand, when social cohesion is high, innovation will best be served through shared leadership. However strong leadership and centralised decision-making tend to make evident authority and dependency dynamics in the group in the areas where there is limited differentiation in the membership. Rather than perceiving the leadership style as problematic these archetypes assist us to perceive a relationship between leadership and the development of

differentiation (as defined by Bowen and Moreno) which produces greater capacity across the membership to sustain positive relationships under conditions of stress.

Once we can think about social cohesion, collaboration and decision-making modes as separate forces that interact, issues to do with the effects of the exercising of power can be more easily understood. This paper has been highlighting that there is a strong relationship between decision-making, the exercising of power, social cohesion and personal issues to do with reactions to authority, including perceptions of power. The tendency to depend on those that exercise power and the need to trust those that exercise power on our behalf is central to these issues and the effectiveness of organisations. It has been presented that addressing the issues of differentiation and the development of effective role functioning is central in producing organisational effectiveness.

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Creating a New Warm Up to Learning

GLENIS LEVACK

Teenagers who are pregnant or who have a young child face many challenges in returning to school, especially when they have had a number of earlier learning experiences that have been discouraging. In this article, factors resulting in students feeling that they lack the capacity to learn are acknowledged and interventions that assist them to have a new experience of learning are described.

Theories relating to the concept of role, role training principles, warm-up, learning styles and spontaneity are outlined. Situations showing the integration of these theoretical concepts within the constraints of teaching mathematics in a school for teenaged parents are presented, particularly as they pertain to the work of creating a new warm-up to learning.

The context of the work is a school for teenage parents that bring specific complexities and constraints that demand creative approaches.

Aotearoa New Zealand has one of the highest rates of teen pregnancies in the developed world. A concern then becomes how to care for these teenagers and their need to continue their education while they have very young children, when many of them are no longer attending any educational facility. Many of the students have not attended school regularly, many have no positive experience of school and most have little experience of being successful learners. Drawing on my extensive work with a wide range of students in different settings and my close observation of these students, it became clear that a strong focus was needed on the students' warm-up to learning so they could develop a new response to what they perceived as an old situation and have a new and different engagement with learning.

Four key roles that are necessary for a good warm-up to learning and for sustained learning to occur are: the compassionate self-valuer, the creative organiser, the steady perseverer and the adventurous naive explorer. Over many years teaching I have noticed consistently that students' warm-up to learning is heightened when they have developed an adequate warm-up to these four roles.

The role of the compassionate self-valuer

For a student to sustain a good warm-up to learning, a sturdy ability to keep valuing oneself is required. A student requires courage to be involved in something new and to explore ideas without too much anxiety. They need to be willing to make mistakes and to be accepting when mistakes are made, to be willing to not understand and to ask questions. These are quite a challenge to anyone, let alone a student returning to school after absences or earlier unsatisfactory learning experiences. Many of the teen parent students I have worked with struggle with being able to continue valuing themselves in the face of the possibility of getting something wrong.

In every class, I encounter students dominated by self-criticism, full of self-doubt, with limited capacity to value themselves or to recognise their achievements and abilities – all of which are major obstacles to learning.

Getting to school is an achievement in itself

Mary walks to school pushing her baby in the buggy through her neighbourhood, head down, avoiding eye contact as she tries to ignore the stares, critical looks and comments from people in the street. This is how she arrives at school, fuming as she comes up the path.

Me: It's been hard work just getting here today.

Mary looks up at me silently, at first showing all her fury, then her eyes soften. She straightens herself and moves away towards the school room her body a little less stooped, her shoulders a little higher.

Comment

In this brief interaction I have warmed up as a double. I begin to enter Mary's world of feeling hurt by the jibes and rejection and her need to put on a brave face. I express myself in a way that is warm, accepting and companionable, applying the principle of doubling where I begin to enter the world of Mary as she is at this moment. By recognising and acknowledging the situation she has found herself in that morning, I validate her experience and demonstrate that her achievement in just getting to school is valued. I am modelling compassion, acceptance and valuing, which assists in developing the role of the compassionate self-valuer.

I express empathy and acceptance, which are essential components but only aspects of doubling. Empathy is a one-way feeling towards and into the experience of another. Doubling is a more intimate two-way feeling process where both parties are affected by each other. Doubling includes empathy and is also more complex. It involves tuning in physically, mentally and emotionally, as well as understanding, open enquiry, acceptance, imagination and genuineness.

A simple interaction such as this can help dissipate distress, counter

defensiveness and ward off a sense of failure. The small changes in Mary's demeanour indicate a shift in her warm-up where she is a little more relaxed and is valuing herself. It is a small moment in which I catch a hint of the role of compassionate self-valuer and in that moment a change in her warm-up as she moves towards the school room.

The role of the creative organiser

This role involves thinking ahead and being methodical. An inner stillness and discipline are required. Although it is not always apparent, it is important to note that many of the teen parents at the Teenage Parent Unit have the roles of the creative organiser well developed in some aspects of their everyday lives. A teenage parent getting ready for a school day is creative in the way they organise themselves and their child. Supplies of nappies, changes of clothes and maybe special baby foods need to be gathered up. This all requires thought, planning and an orientation to time.

Mathematics diaries

I discovered that maintaining a mathematics diary is a valuable way to help students begin to warm up to organising themselves and their work more effectively. Such a diary helps create a structure for the students' learning. Initially it is important for the students to learn to keep track of where they are up to in their work and to create a focus for the next lesson.

Time is set aside at the end of each lesson for the students to reflect on what they have accomplished and what they might do next. The students come to see that picking up their diaries and looking over what they have written at the end of the last lesson helps them warm up more quickly to the work they need to do. It is important to note that the students are all working from different material in individualised programmes, so a level of individual responsibility is required.

After a while I begin to write in their diaries, very often reflecting on something that is assisting them, building on any sign of newly emerging roles relating to strategic effort and organisation. Again, this is an application of mirroring and as a result the students gain a new awareness of their ability to learn and what is required in their warm-up to organising themselves in order to learn. Most students take a lively interest in what I write and many write several lines back in response, so that over a week or so a conversation emerges.

Me: I notice that you stopped to review your work before rushing on to the next exercise. I see that you were pleased with what you had accomplished. You are developing very good skills in solving even quite complicated equations.

Student:	Thanks for believing in me. It helps a lot.
Me:	I notice that you picked up your diary, read over what you had written last time and quickly settled to work. You looked confident and quite willing to try out something you have never done before.
Student:	I used to be good at mathematics and now I am getting good at it again.

Once the diary writing is established, I take it another step further. Towards the end of some lessons, I ask the students to reflect on their experience, particularly relating to how they organised themselves. As a coach, I ask explicitly: "Did you come with all the right books and calculator? Did you have a focus for the topic you were on? Did you have an idea of what you might achieve?"

The role of the steady perseverer

I am aware that for some students just turning up at school, despite the challenges of the morning, is evidence of persevering. This role involves commitment, patience, steadiness, hope, resilience, self-control and a vision for life. Understanding and accepting that failure is part of learning requires plenty of experiences of both succeeding and failing. Failing is inevitable but it is not the end of the road, as learning can occur as a result of not getting things right. As students come to understand this, they are less likely to immediately doubt their competence. Strengthening the role of the steady perseverer is important because very often perseverance, rather than a focus on ability, is a winning strategy.

The role of the steady perseverer is essential to making progress in many areas of life; for example, in sport or fitness training, saving money, or completing tasks that have a number of steps. It requires commitment from within the person, a steadiness, as well as effort and discipline. This is also true of learning; it is so easy to give up when the going gets tough or the situation is distressing.

This role is underdeveloped in most of the students in the Teenage Parent Unit. Many of them have no experience of the benefit of staying with something that is considered hard or grappling with something and ultimately finding a solution. When students do not immediately succeed, they tend to lose hope. If the work becomes challenging or if something else looks easier or more attractive to do, the student typically loses interest in the work in front of them. They will often then openly reject any idea of continuing, or they seamlessly divert themselves. They have a great repertoire of distracting and avoiding behaviours and the challenge is to warm them up to staying on the task a bit longer.

Doing maths is dumb

Rose is a new student to the school and has had a series of difficult school and life experiences prior to coming to this Teenage Parent Unit. She has zero confidence in being able to learn and minimal capacity to stay with a task. We have not yet established a working relationship and I have carefully chosen work I think she can manage.

It is the start of the lesson, and everyone settles with their work books in front of them. Rose suddenly becomes angry and bursts out with "I am NOT doing this, this is dumb! I am going to go and do something else!"

Me: You don't want to do this; you want to go and do something else. Doing mathematics is very frustrating and maddening.

Rose stops sweeping up all her books, pens and calculator. She takes a breath.

Me: Mathematics can be very challenging because you know immediately if you cannot do the next line, you can't hide behind a whole lot of words. It would be so easy to walk away when this happens.

Rose stops. She does not walk away; she stays to have another go.

Me: Let's have a look at what you have done that did work out.

Rose settles back to the table and opens her book once more.

Rose is clearly surprised at my recognition of her frustration and the fact that I ignore her defiant challenge and accept her and the difficulties she is having. This acceptance, a key component of doubling, enables her to stay in relationship with me and I am able to build on this. Although Rose moves quickly into doubting herself, she can feel me alongside her and does not feel on her own in this time of stress as she faces the difficulty of the mathematics problem.

She feels accepted even when she hits a road block, gets angry and wants to give up. She experiences that it is one thing to have these feelings but that this is not the end of the road. She shows signs of an emerging willingness to stay with the task at hand, signs of a new warm-up. The role of steady perseverer that has been quite underdeveloped, both in this moment and in general, is in a process of developing.

If a student believes they are going to have the same outcome no matter what they try, or that they are just not smart enough, they will be reluctant to persevere. The focus needs to shift away from perceived lack of ability to what it is to persevere through sustained effort. I work with Rose so that she can realise that abilities are learned over time and that practice is required. As students persevere and experience the positive effects of doing this, hopelessness drops into the background and a new warm-up emerges.

The role of the adventurous naive explorer

The role of an adventurous naïve explorer involves having a curious, questioning mind, a willingness to move into the unknown and an interest in trying out new ideas.

Many teen parents are challenged by the need to experiment, to take thoughtful risks and to come out of isolation and ask for help. Most students are fearful of admitting that they don't know something. They are also fearful about making mistakes. This makes it difficult for them to take a first step in a learning task. The role of the adventurous naive explorer is underdeveloped and it takes significant effort to work with them to warm up to more openness in their learning.

I frequently encounter dependent and counter-dependent learning styles with these students. Their warm-up tends towards safety rather than to experimenting with different approaches to a problem. Linked in with the underdeveloped role of self-valuer, the students are often so uncertain about what will happen if they don't know, or if they are seen not to know something, that just trying something or asking for help is very challenging. A student needs to feel they will not be judged, rejected or humiliated if they ask a question or make a mistake. They need to warm up to the idea that it might be uncomfortable not to know something and that this is part of a learning process.

Understanding dependent learning styles has been invaluable in assisting me to work creatively with students where the expression of dependency can vary considerably from one student to the next.

Waiting, waiting...

Tyler is an unsettled and often disruptive student who is not familiar with learning success. At this point she has some proficiency but is still very lacking in confidence. It is common for her to act as if she doesn't know anything and she presents as helpless. After many months of working with her I decided to tackle this overdeveloped role.

Tyler arrives with her work, flicks her books open randomly, folds her arms, sits up, gives me full eye contact ... and waits. After some time, she bursts out, "I can't do this stuff!"

Me: It is not so comfortable when you think you can't do something. Not knowing is just part of learning but you are acting as if you don't know anything about this topic. What's more you haven't thought about looking back at any of the work you did yesterday.

Tyler looks surprised. She is quite still as she listens to me. She stays engaged with me.

| Me: | How about you look back at what you did yesterday and in a couple of minutes get back to me with any questions you might have. |

Tyler turns to the correct page and looks down at her work with interest.

| Tyler: | I need to go over changing fractions to decimals again. |

I remind her of the steps involved. Tyler then moves easily between fractions, decimals and percentages.

Tyler seems to have no idea about how to get started by herself or how to warm herself up to the next thing. She appears to be lost, as well as stubbornly dependent on me to begin. From what I know of Tyler, her defiance and her challenging attitude are a cover for her feelings of helplessness and it does not occur to her to ask me for help. She is clearly waiting for me to initiate something to assist her.

Applying aspects of doubling and mirroring together with some coaching helps Tyler get hold of something in herself and to begin to warm up to what she does know, which in this case is not insignificant. We are then able to build on this. Repeat experiences of being encouraged to review her work and to focus on what she does know helps Tyler build her courage to explore ideas on her own and also to accept me as a resource that she can feel free to call on rather than wait to be rescued.

It is an important part of a teacher's work to assist students with the transition from the outside everyday world into the learning environment. This involves working in a way that creates a fresh warm-up. Teachers who are willing to attend to the students' warm-up to learning before presenting content are likely to improve their relationship with their students and achieve better learning outcomes. This is particularly necessary when working with young people who have had earlier negative experiences at school and who face significant challenges in their warm-up to learning.

For anyone involved in teaching and learning, it is important to include a focus on the warm-up that is emerging moment to moment in the student, at the same time as attending to the content of the lesson. With appropriate interventions, it is possible to shift a person's warm-up so they are more open and focused on learning. An assessment of this warm-up forms the basis of interactions whether they occur between a teacher and student, a trainer and trainee, or a supervisor and supervisee.

A person willing to act as a stable auxiliary with a regular on-going and accepting relationship in a young person's life will be more effective if they learn to double them. This will help students overcome feelings of anxiety, shame and hopelessness as they approach learning. For teachers, it is important to train themselves to notice and mirror a student's functioning

as this makes it possible for them to build on what is adequate in what they are doing even when their warm-up is embryonic. A wider implication is that learning to be an auxiliary and to use doubling and mirroring would be beneficial to include as part of teacher training.

Moreno's role theory, the concept of warm-up and the principles of role training (Clayton, 1992, 1993, 1994; Clayton & Carter, 2004; Fink, 1962; Hollander & Hollander, 1978a, 1978b; Moreno, 1977; O'Rourke, 2005; Williams, 1985) have been integrated together with other learning theories to identify four key roles that are essential for learning, namely: the compassionate self-valuer, the steady perseverer, the creative organiser and the adventurous naive explorer. Specific moments working in situ with students where these roles have been identified as being largely underdeveloped, confirm that with thoughtful interventions it is possible to assist a student to develop these roles, creating a new and positive warm-up to learning.

Maintaining a strong focus on the warm-up of a student as they approach learning has a significant impact on whether they will be successful and be able to take advantage of a second chance at education. They begin to develop new responses to learning and move away from old patterns of behaviour that have not been helpful. The cumulative impact of interventions made with Teenage Parent Unit students to address previously negative learning experiences and create a more adequate warm-up to learning has shown that students can achieve considerable academic success.

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Beauty and the Covid Beast

Jane Maher

> *… were they … invulnerable to, untouched by, vulgarity and ugliness, glancing for a moment into … a hidden reality: the presence at all times, in all places, of a beautiful world?* (Rooney, 2021 p.250)

In this moment from 'Beautiful World Where Are You', Sally Rooney's characters experience reunification, they embrace, after separation, conflict, breakdown and heart break. Beauty blossoms in their embrace. Embracing has been something that the Covid 19 Pandemic required us to curtail. Hugging, kissing, touching, proximity, gathering, all required more awareness, more planning; often constraint. At times the number of minutes we spent out of home were closely clocked, the distance from home and what we could go out for were prescribed. Likewise who we could be with. Mandated lockdowns, curfews, border closures, quarantining, masks, covid safety plans; all new ways of living imposed to mitigate a health crisis that might otherwise push through the pre-existing cracks and bring on total social collapse. In this context our priorities were naturally reviewed. Where do we find beauty amongst the unwelcome messes, fears, sorrows, losses; the burdens that discriminate unfairly. There have also been new possibilities. Telehealth has expanded treatment options, mitigated geographic isolation; decentralisation and relocation have become easier; detail previously overlooked in our interactions and our locales was revealed. The comparative experiences of relating in person and online accentuated the value of what we actually experience by being physically together; what we don't have when we can't be. It is no great claim to say that the Covid-19 Pandemic reconfirmed the primacy of relationships and the importance of being in the moment. If we can make this more than a passing novelty Covid has shifted our consciousness for the better.

Within the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association (AANZPA Inc), we place primacy on relationships and being in the moment. We have a group methodology that privileges relationships

as a critical means to not only enable healing and growth — we know that relating deeply matters to us. Relationships undergirded by trust, respect, honour create the conditions for the co-creative development of our roles and role relationships, for our sleeping genii to awaken. We endeavour to free our uniqueness while remaining connected, to be more responsive in the moment, more vital, flexible, creative, original; to be good enough. This is what it means to function as a "spontaneous actor", a role we give the highest value to. The spontaneous actor is recognisable in the congruence between our thinking, feeling and acting; not impulsivity, nor necessarily vivaciousness; being responsive, not reactive. Those of us who have participated in the psychodrama method have experienced its transformative power. We know the dramas of profound healing, the taming of pre and post-verbal traumas, the rewriting of old narratives, the creation of new neural pathways, the diversification and strengthening of our role repertoires. We have borne our ugly and our beautiful truths with each other. We know heart blossoming sweetness for ourselves and others. We know how to embody beauty. The joy to be found in each other's company has been accentuated by the privations of Covid and this creates opportunities for our relationships to be more exulting, more beautiful. We have to hold onto this.

To go

But what is beauty — apparently a very contentious philosophical issue. Over 8 billion references arise from a general internet search. References to the beauty industry focus on visual pleasure and choke off those that offer something more intrinsic, the exulting type of beauty. Beauty has been commodified. We live in a materialist, rationalist, post-industrial, electronic age. Perhaps the commodification of beauty is what Elvis Costello (1996) is lamenting when he sings,

> *What shall we do,*
> *What shall we do with all this useless beauty?*
> *All this useless beauty…*

The question about what is beauty and what is its value is referenced in archetypal stories. Beauty, in the fairy tale (Villeneuve, 1740), transforms her perception of the visual ugliness of the Beast to reveal his underlying inner beauty. Captain von Trapp (played by Christopher Plummer) in the Sound of Music (Wise, 1965) is engaged to the glamorous Baroness (played by Eleanor Parker) who is the sumptuous confluence of Aryan beauty and wealth. She offers a perfectly confected femininity — exquisite looks, couture, hair, deportment, grace, charm — something most of us fail at before we start:

I learned the truth at seventeen that love was meant for beauty queens (Ian, 1975)

But the Captain falls for the homely governess, who has inspired the love of his children, who brings singing back into their lives; they joyfully unite as a family singing troupe.

   This discussion of beauty is not an appeal to asceticism or utilitarianism. Beauty may be commodified and often only skin deep but WOW Eleanor Parker makes a luscious Baroness! The number of music videos that sample Christopher Plummer's good looks and desirous gazes is also remarkable. Both offer very pleasant immersions in sensuality and create space for the exploration of desire, for our unknown selves. The excitation of the senses is not a facile indulgence; I recall the look of sheer joy on the face of a farm dog arrested by the grooming of a concert of cows with their wide long tongues. The elegant curves of art-nouveau fretwork, the emphasis on pink in this year's European summer fashions, the sleek lines of a Maserati, the exquisite arrangements of colour, perfume, texture and form in a manicured garden, in a meal, in an object, in a cinematic scene — all worthy sensual experiences that honour desire. It can take hours of love and dedication to create pleasure for the senses. New truths can emerge out of creative endeavours, beauty can help to transcend turmoil. Sensory beauty can be deeply inspiring and not necessarily vacuous even if ornamental. Sensory enjoyment can make profound moments of internal coherence accessible and bring the role of our lovers of life to the fore.

   It seems impossible to write about beauty decoupled from joy, love, truth, desire, beingness, virtue, integrity, unity, wholeness, peace, meaningfulness and power. Beauty seems to be available in all these experiences as well as being better understood by experiences of ugliness and vulgarity. Joy feels beautiful, love creates beautiful moments in relationships; we long for meaningfulness, moments of being, things that stave off the threats of emptiness; we strive for beauty, we co-operate to co-create it. Love risks grief, sorrow can be exquisitely poignant and softening, sweetness can assuage ugly impulses to hurt, criticise, violate. Conflict and loss enable insights into the value of peacefulness and beingness. Beautiful actions speak a thousand words, beautiful words, beautifully timed can be an exquisite thing:

Baby, can I hold you tonight?
Maybe if I told you the right words
Ooh, at the right time you'd be mine
You'd be mine
You'd be mine (Chapman, 1988)

Being at peace with our unadulterated truths can enable an exulting personal power and stand us in good stead in conflicts; the unity of body, soul and spirit can be glimpsed. We feel whole, big, full of potency, effortless flow is experienced. Irrevocable integrity, irrefutable authority, statuesque dignity can be conveyed. Standing in my own truth without taking anything away from anyone else, even when standing for something that is against the wishes of another, offers a feeling of unity and wholeness that can flow forth into creativity and leadership. Yet beauty is not essentially high-minded and vulgarity also can be unifying. Recently I heard the exquisite giggles of zoologists witnessing Tasmanian devils fleeing in a flatulent panic. Laughter together, shared humour is an exquisite lift for the spirit. I have experienced shared humour that is not at anyone else's expense, more likely at mine, as unifying experiences between companions. We are elevated by moments of earthly mirth. We also all know how superficial charm can wear thin.

Is the growing importance of relationships just coinciding with the advent of Covid? Are we maturing, evolving and weary of beauty being commodified anyway, tired of competitive anxieties, traumatising insensitivities and divisive conflicts? Are we developing a more effective capacity for peacefulness, joy, power in being authoritative, connected and well differentiated? Or is this just a random over generalised subjective experience of my developmental stage and the sum total of a lifetime of healing and privilege? Has greed, materialism, rationalism, the desecration of the earth finally been maximised enough to tip over into a prioritisation of beauty that reaches into something deeper in us, something light years from consumerism? Is relating beautifully the best frontier left by the ugly, vulgar world that Rooney laments. Is there a kind of retrospective tragedy about the protracted preoccupation with the feminine form?

> *Is there a time for kohl and lipstick*
> *A time for curling hair*
> *Is there a time for high street shopping*
> *To find the right dress to wear*
> *Here she comes*
> *Heads turn around*
> *Here she comes*
> *…*
> *Beauty plays the clown*
> *Here she comes*
> *Surreal in her crown….* (Passengers, 1995)

The primacy of relationship, of savouring the moment has not arisen because of Covid; wars have long concentrated the collective mind. Isolated communities, societies under duress, companions, families, have all long

known the importance of connectedness. Have the limitations of the urban experience of anonymity been delineated, the scale of Metropoli found to be demoralising? Has Covid exacerbated the pre-existing cracks in our lives?

This pathway of words now turns to portraying more personal moments that inform my evolving understanding of beauty. Experiences include travels into exhilarating alpine heights and the elevation of a rustic artless scene into a beautiful form. The materialisation of a metaphor is offered; there is an attempt to articulate but not constrain bliss. The poignance of vulnerability in the venerable is savoured. More questions are asked. Are there nascent signs of teens revising the coordinates of interpersonal aesthetics / ethics? For the sake of seeing the light that there is to be found in facing ugliness and our capacity for cruelty, an explication of the genesis of a type of beastliness is risked. The latter story reminds me of how beastliness can reveal beauty, if we care to keep the hand of love, acceptance, understanding extended.

To fall, to step out

…multiplying thrills, the steady climb, a burst into oceanic wholeness…

A long time ago, in a foreign land, as a young adult, alone, I experienced an alpine heaven — eye to eye with peaks of nuggety dark chocolate massifs; snow-dusted, blue skies, green grass, fresh air. Stupendous, exhilarating, searing. A place more elevated than the opening scene of 'The Sound of Music' where Julie Andrews in her sackcloth and pinafore comes wheeling over a verdant crest, alight with joy, in love with the music she hears in nature. Who wouldn't be uplifted by being in the audience of the majestic elemental beauty of alpine country? So much relief from ego in being wonderfully small and liberated from my own small orbit.

By night warm and safe under layers of dense duck down I experienced a soundscape created by the cows barned under the chalet floor. Each with individually forged bells, each a unique sound-tag that their cow herd, with his pointed hat and pointy beard, knew like a name. Though not musical it was an unforgettable score. There was so much to be charmed by but within a day I was cross-eyed with confusion about why I was so unhappy. I later understood that I had rationalised that beauty into fixing all my problems, feeding me everything that I was so starving for — the wholeness that emerges for the Von Trapp Family Singers. I was idealising. Being alone in the company of another that I didn't share a history, a language or a cultural heritage with, the tide of loneliness rose. Idealisation crumbled; replaced by regression back into the primitive fragmented inchoate horrifying experiences of infantile abandonment. Unable to find internal peace to relate from, or to even know that that was what was so missing, this remarkable

beauty became empty. For years after I remembered the lesson — you can be in the most beautiful places in the world and still be miserable.

Since then I've made sense of and processed that torment. I know that without sufficient doubling to bring order to the inchoate experiences of the newborn, to move beyond the stage of the Matrix of all Identity, overwhelm can become the unknown normal. Additional anxieties at times could feel life-threatening. As Moreno says anxiety fills the space left by the absence of spontaneity. Chronic overwhelm is destabilising and makes responsivity, spontaneity less accessible.

Internal peace, however, is not always a prerequisite for being able to be responsive to beauty. Sometimes it is beauty that overcomes anxiety. Recently I heard a countrywoman who described herself as a "broomstick singer" for the first time in public, release an aria into the heavenly vault of a decommissioned church with brilliant acoustics. Some ugly old angst that had been skulking around, hardening my heart was liquidated. Likewise, a front row seat at the Bangarra Dance Company performance of Unaipon in 2004 allowed some ossified grief to be mourned. These kinds of tears are a magical transformative capacity; what a beautiful thing to be furnished with; perhaps a glimpse of the divine.

One meaningless stir crazy weekend in lockdown I discovered, through creating a collage for a friend, a place of timelessness. In search of images to mirror her, I trawled through my art gallery magazines and found a new wonder for art and artists. I became enthralled inside the images, textures, colours, painterly strokes, the choices of detail, the palette, the relationships between the protagonists, the times those images evoked. My imagination was on fire, alive and at peace. Any sense of deprivation or desire to be anywhere else, doing anything else, with anyone else, was extinguished.

The experience of my first trip to the National Gallery of Victoria, my first visit to any art gallery, as a girl from a dirty, dusty sheep farm where domestic drudgery characterised my mother's life, found me stalled on a balcony overlooking a deep internal courtyard. Transfixed by the sculpture there, recognition lead me into vivid validation. In the sculpture, I recognised something that referenced home. Intermittent jets of water spurting out of the spigot on the floor of the courtyard, water arcs jumping like the sheep who leap in excitement / fear, as they are released to rejoin their mob; maybe shaking off the agitation of their single file passage through the drafting race. The sculpture, the sculptor, gave my life a place in this cathedral of beauty. The shadow of an idea — unknown possibilities exist — was excited.

Subjectively, something about sculptures gives them their own way of offering powerful experiences. Their materiality, their substance, their three-dimensionality fleshes out an identification; maybe like being kindred masses in space, their artistic power animates them. Living and working in London six months after my ankle-twisting descent from the incredible

grandeur of the Swiss Alps I was drawn to a sculpture exhibition advertised by the image of an orderly stack of crushed cars melted together. A different massif — something soothing in its up-ended rectangular lines — yet disturbing in its critique of consumerism. Iconic cars reduced into giant stacks-on Jenga. There seemed to be a commentary about society and what is meaningful, implying something contrary to the stories told in omniscient advertising. The otherness appealed — again possibilities were suggested. Could there be other people who see the world as I do; could a thought barely known to myself also be thought by unknown others, and more, could this also be rendered artistic? Maybe the deep self within wasn't an alien, wasn't a freak; was one with many. The pièce de résistance — inside the gallery, around a corner, a room of pendulous roof-hung grey steel, riveted and polished into clumpy cumulus clouds. An arresting experience to be underneath. Gasping, I clicked — heavy weather. A metaphor transformed into a visceral experience. Unity between poetry and beingness.

More recently during the gestation of this paper, I noticed how moved I was when a very venerable colleague, honouring the truth of the younger other, gaze turned inward, took humility in hand and acknowledged that they were being inducted into new self-restraint. An exquisite moment of seeing vulnerability rearrange their demeanour, rearrange their role repertoire; the acceptance of again growing. Internal chaos, subtly evident in their mildly fibrillating chin muscles, evolves before my eyes into softness, a greater unconfected sweetness. Unmasked, nobility beamed out of this giant of wisdom. The respect I felt for this humility, after this moment of exertion, inspired.

I was recently with the father of a disabled, traumatised child when he relinquished his resistance to the changes wrought on him by this experience. He called it splendour. He related this through acquiescence, tears wrought of laying down resistances, giving in to utter acceptance. Dignity found, status anxiety discarded. The privilege of travelling with someone while they not only heal but transform themselves is a profound reward for the work it takes to be that companionable guide.

I have realised with my own body that out of the horrifying fires of infantile neglect, the conditions were created for an obsessive quest to plug up the gaping emptiness left by the absence of my mother. Consumerism preys on these emptinesses. What newborn doesn't think they are beholding the greatest beauty when engaged by their mother's engrossed gaze? For a long time, I searched to satiate that hunger. This is the story of Frankenstein's monster in pursuit of his maker, roaming the North Pole, starving for love. Compulsively, understandably, unreasonably I used others in inevitably doomed attempts to approximate my mother. In retrospect, I understand my preoccupation with beauty, the idealisation of it, my frustrated demands on hapless others. I was rejected, I am sorry. I developed impatience, counter-

rejected, was cruel, lonely, tormented, fragmented. What an incredible thing to belong in an organisation where these driven roles can be discovered, exposed, understood, honoured, processed, transformed between us. To know if it is possible for me means it is possible for others too — hope is a beautiful thing. What a relief to see others through eyes without expectations, entitlement, demands. To approach as the naive enquirer, to be in the moment.

Bitter roles borne of traumas are not easily transformed. They live on, often creating ugly interactions, isolation beyond distance, perverting history. Fear begotten beliefs can ossify into truisms that carve out ruts in our role systems only to re-create themselves, then claim proof of their circular validity. Rigidity touts itself as security. The fragile possibility that there may be an alternative, that some valuable evolution may germinate if only we can soften and stay open to possibilities, can seem too dangerous. So often hope is scotched for fear of further heartbreak, breakdown. This can set up that life that is lived in the valley of greyness, quiet despair, where the inner beast remains trapped unaware of the possibilities of a loving hand of self-acceptance, of a parent-like friend.

The incredibly beautiful moments I have experienced between friends, family, colleagues, trainers, mentors, teachers — despite pathogenic infantile chaos and all the subsequent mess-making — are a testament to the power, the love, the capacity for co-creation that our methodology makes possible. The hand that helps us navigate overwhelm, the acknowledgment of each other's everyday humanity and heroisms, the mirroring of each other's best motivating forces, achievements; the co-creation of progressive roles out of coping or fragmenting roles — these are exquisite moments of beauty. AANZPA provides a dynamic, healing, uplifting nursery to become in, to give from, that keeps giving. What we have in our community is incredibly precious. I see transformation despite ad nauseam repetitions, spontaneity-rich role systems, the hilarious fun enacted at our dinner dances. We are onto something really beautiful. Still, some ossified roles evade transformation, we clash and war and offend and stumble with hurt. It is an ongoing road, other methodologies are also our auxiliaries, others come after us.

I remember admiring a colleague when challenging 14-year-olds to consider the tattoo they would have chosen for themselves as a 3-year-old, 7-year-old, an 11-year-old. A simple exercise to encourage a deeper engagement with themselves beyond transitory engrossments.

Amongst teens, I wonder if I have glimpsed a struggle to step towards a future ethics of aesthetics that is beyond the e-world where all fantasies can be experienced. A future where desire, the beauty of looks, perfection or "normality" has dubious currency. I see meaningful connections enacted where disability, sexuality, gender, heritage, personal hygiene, cognitive

intelligence, neurotypicality, wit are all irrelevant. I wonder how much they perceive doom in their future or is that just a projection of an ageing facilitator grappling with my own mortality. The internet offers gluttonous escapism; an infinity of stimulation, imagery, soundscapes, information; fantastical desires and ideals can be uber-maximised. Maybe cravings for escapism are being sated. I have wondered, is a revised interpersonal ethics arising in this context? Everything else seems immaterial, gutted, consumed, destroyed, inaccessible. Is the imperative to be kind, respectful, peaceful the path to the only refuge left? What isn't unstraight, unabled, unwhite, unconventional, unbinary seems passé — we know idealised refuges lose their charm. I have wondered if this makes sense of the extraordinary anguish when the rock of friendship is shaken. What is to be made of those moments when they are with each other, when they seem silenced by the risks of not being able to edit what they say before expressing it? They don't seem to know how to disagree / differentiate so they don't. They seem to put the highest value on being peaceful with each other.

To close, and remain open

Whilst the physical world is being desecrated by greed-driven predation on our hungers, does it behove us to become more beautiful within ourselves and with each other. Do we have as much time as we had to squander on petty conflicts and half-hearted moments? Are we on notice to take greater responsibility for our feelings and not turn them into ugly decoctions of blame and criticism, judgement, reactivity, aggression, distance and coldness? Does it take courage and strength to be beautiful? The deeply rich satisfying place that being together offers has become more precious since the arrival of the Covid 19 pandemic. Our relationships with the arts, the elements, breathtaking and everyday moments, with movement, congregation, play, work, travel, these have known fallow times. Social distancing has set the scene for getting better acquainted with the beauty to be created when we deeply value what we can be when together, when with ourselves.

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Moreno (Back) in the Doctors' Surgery

Neil Simmons

Key words

concretisation, creativity, doctor, doubling, health, mirroring, Moreno, patient, psychodramatic methods, relationship, role, social system, spontaneity, tele, warm up

I am a creative being. As a child I was artistic. I was always making things; baskets, weaving, jewellery, drawings, paintings and furniture. Since deciding not to be a professional artist and to continue being a doctor, I have been on a quest to bring creative life to my medical work. In more recent years, psychodrama has been a companion in this quest.

Medicine provides a great deal to me; a meaningful occupation, a work place where I belong, income and intellectual stimulation. Medicine provides the social role of a general practitioner, in which I can express one of my main psychodramatic roles as a healer.

Each day when I arrive at work, I anticipate interactions that will be full of life. I want my patients to warm up to themselves when they are with me and to leave feeling more alive in themselves, however that may be. For myself, I want to feel the life force in me that comes from being present, open and vulnerable with others. In short, I want Morenian encounters in the consulting room.

It has taken me decades to embrace my identity as a medical doctor; psychodrama has assisted me in this journey. Now the medical doctor and the psychodramatist can stand side by side. No longer is it either medicine or creativity; the two walk easily together. With its philosophical underpinnings of spontaneity and creativity and its focus on relationship, psychodrama sits easily in my consulting room. It serves the dual purpose of improving rapport between my patient and myself at the same time as bringing life to both of us.

In small ways, I continually use psychodramatic methods with the patients I see. I take opportunities to double, mirror and reverse roles with them. I concretise and maximise, and sometimes I progress to using more involved psychodramatic processes. As medicine and psychodrama weave themselves together, I find that I may elicit a patient's history with doubling as well as a checklist of questions and the formulation of a management

plan is relational as well as being instructive. In fact, training in psychodrama has changed every facet of the way I relate *to my patient.*

We are in an era of medicine where patients expect their doctor to be more than an expert and a technician; they also want them to be a friend and a confidante. People come to the medical practice where I work because they have heard that not only are we competent clinicians, but we also provide an understanding and accepting atmosphere. They may seek me out because they have heard I am a good listener, or that I care. In this day and age, when you can get any technical answer from Google, such simple human services are highly valued.

A relationship-centred approach to medicine places a high value on empathy and engagement and sees them as an essential part of the therapeutic process. This was reflected in my medical training. When I was a medical student in the 1980s, we did role-playing in palliative care training, where we played doctors interviewing people with terminal illnesses and then we changed roles to play the patient. Later, in my general practice training, we were invited to be part of a Balint group; these groups provide a discussion forum for trainee GPs to focus on the doctor-patient relationships. I enjoyed and learnt a lot from those experiences and they laid the foundation for my later interest in psychodrama. With its focus on the relationship, I have found psychodrama to be a valuable companion in my profession at this time.

The duration of the warm-up of the patient to a medical consultation varies greatly. Sometimes a visit to the doctor is the culmination of years of wondering, analysing and procrastinating by a patient and, on the other hand, sometimes it is an emergency. The patient usually comes with a complaint; a symptom, which they present in order to find out the diagnosis and management. They have an expectation about the usual course of the consultation, which involves a history and possibly an examination and investigations, followed by a management plan and this affects their warm-up. The patient will also warm up to the doctor and their relationship with the doctor in a variety of ways. However, patients are not expecting concretisations and role play.

When a medical clinician prepares to see a patient, they usually go through their past medical history and investigations. They may get ready to perform a history, examination, various investigations and develop a management plan. Also, the clinician is increasingly expected to consider their relationship with the patient and the greater system around the patient, such as their family or their work. This leads to a familiar warm-up for the general practitioner.

Planning to use psychodrama in the consulting room takes the warm-up in a different direction than that produced by these pre-planned usual activities. There are several critical moments in a consultation as the action

moves away from medicine and towards psychodrama. At these times the psychodramatist practitioner needs to tune in with the patient and engage in psychodramatic actions that keep both of them warming up. The doctor benefits from being flexible and easy, and choosing carefully the patient whom they decide to do this with. Not all patients respond well to doubling and mirroring, and many will reject concretisation, enactments and other psychodramatic approaches. The use of a particular psychodramatic method is preferably determined by the presentation of the patient. For example, people who have received inadequate mirroring and doubling for an aspect of their functioning may benefit from these methods, and people involved in a complex social system may gain value from concretisation of that system.

Here is an example of how awareness of tele may guide a consultation. Moreno (1972, p. 84) wrote "tele is the simplest unit of feeling transmitted from one individual to another." Tele is something that happens between people without their conscious control and results in different degrees of attraction or repulsion, acceptance or rejection, closeness or distance, positive or negative feelings. Moreno considered that tele operates almost instantaneously between group members at their first meeting (Moreno 1972, p. XX). This shows how my experience of tele between my patient and myself led me to change my warm-up.

I usually look at the patient's name in the appointment book before they arrive and notice what I am feeling towards them and imagine what they are feeling towards me. I notice my warm-up and consider what theirs might be. Even before Terry arrived, I was becoming hurried, worried and irritated with him. He had a number of complicated chronic medical conditions that required careful monitoring and he could easily become unwell without diligent medical attention. Although he is not a personal friend he usually wants to chat. In contrast, I want to spend the precious minutes in the consulting room making sure that his medical conditions are adequately checked.

As I read Terry's notes before he came in and scanned through his numerous medical problems, I had an overall picture of his health. I was also worried about missing things. There was not much time and hence I wanted him to answer my medical questions quickly and clearly. Instead, Terry was chatty and wanted to talk about his life and hear about mine. He also had a couple of jobs for me on his shopping list, taking blood and giving him a prescription. Despite Terry's chattiness I proceeded with completing my tasks in a curt manner. This involved interrupting his attempts at engaging me in conversation about non-medical things. I got through my checklist of monitoring his conditions and completing chores. By the end of the interview, we had run out of time. Terry had dropped his chattiness and had little to say; his voice had become quiet and flat. I was feeling more impatient and irritated with him and I felt that I had failed to care about him as I should. I could feel a

hardness in my face and hear a monotone in my voice. I was glad to see him go.

Even before Terry arrived the tele that was operating from me to him was not helpful. As I prepared to see him, I warmed up to our previous meetings when I had been hurried and irritated. I also warmed up to a coping role from my original social and cultural atom; that of being a self-critic who compares himself to more caring people. I could feel my energy drop as this old role was enacted and I had a restricted ability to warm up to him anew in our consultation. At the end of the consultation, the hardness in my face and monotone in my voice indicated to me that my spontaneity had remained low.

This type of interaction demonstrates to me that there is very little chance of using psychodramatic methods with a patient when the tele is rejecting. Indeed, my training, experience and study in psychodrama leads me to conclude that strongly positive tele between the doctor and the patient is the most important factor in creating the opportunity for psychodramatic methods to be used. When the tele is mutually negative it is unlikely that the patient or the doctor will adequately warm up; there is too much fear and the spontaneity of both remains low.

At such times, I may consider several options that might permit a shifting of the warm-up; for example, with Terry it might be necessary to schedule longer appointments. Another approach that I sometimes use is to do a self-directed psychodrama in my consulting room in the few minutes before seeing a patient. In this psychodrama I enact the roles of the practitioner, the patient, the psychodrama director and the greater system around the patient. If I recognise worry or irritation in myself during this process, I can become more present, be gentle on myself, enter the world of the patient and shift my own warm-up. I then have more capacity to develop new responses and establish the foundation for positive tele.

At other times, when mutually positive tele leads to acceptance and ease, the warm-up increases. The doctor and patient are then more likely to enact roles that are required for the director and the protagonist, for example, to function as creative co-explorers in a psychodrama. It is the job of the psychodramatist doctor to develop positive tele towards their patient and from their patient towards them, so that such a shift may happen.

This is an example of a time when I assessed and acted upon my own initial warm-up to exhaustion during a consultation.

My energy usually dropped in my meetings with Paul. Things never seemed straightforward. The consultations usually ended up running overtime and I felt tired afterwards.

On this occasion Paul was distressed about a family crisis. Several things had happened and he was having a "meltdown"; he was feeling tearful, could not

concentrate properly and his sleep was disturbed. He was unable to perform his work and wanted a medical certificate.

He began to tell me about his family situation. As he did this, he started his usual pattern of looking away so that for most of the time he did not look at me. It took about half an hour to elicit the history as Paul explained various aspects of the situation. I got more and more tired taking in his story and I could feel my forehead creasing and my mouth tightening as the interview progressed. This was not the first time that Paul had presented to me with a crisis that required a medical certificate. Usually by this point in the interview I would feel so worn down that I would acquiesce without much resistance. However, on this occasion I had a different

response and rather than acquiescing I questioned Paul's response to these crises. I stated that making himself unwell with worry and anger so that he could not go to work would be one way of managing the situation and that he had other options. As I presented my response, I noticed that I sat up straighter in my chair, my voice became louder and my energy increased.

As I responded, he became quieter and started to listen more. Encouraged by this response, I reassured him that I believed in his commitment to work and I affirmed that his health was my main concern. I told him I would provide a certificate if needed.

By the time he left Paul was not talking so much. He had decreased the amount of looking away and was looking at me for most of the time. Also, he was sitting more still and upright in his chair.

As a result of previous meetings with Paul, I approached him as a 'heart-sink' patient. The term 'heart-sink' patient is a term commonly used by doctors, particularly GPs, to describe the feeling of a sinking heart that they experience in response to that patient. I had felt exhaustion and exasperation in our previous meetings and I related to these past experiences as I prepared to see him. As a result, I warmed up to being a sunken-hearted practitioner with him. In the interview, after listening to him for a while I shifted from feeling interested to feeling exhausted and hence repeated the role response to him that I had had in our previous meetings.

On this occasion, I changed my response and decided to regain my energy. The reason that I warmed up to a new response was because I noticed my increased tiredness, the creasing of my forehead and the tightening of my mouth and I interpreted this as a drop in my spontaneity. An awareness of spontaneity or its lack is something that psychodrama training has given me. The training has focused my attention on building spontaneity in others and myself and has also given me an experience of what high and low spontaneity feels like. As I get to know people, I start to notice the characteristics of their warm-up and I utilise this to assess the level of their spontaneity. I also tune into these features in myself.

With Paul I used an assessment of my low spontaneity as a provocation

to warm myself up to a different response. I warmed up to presenting my honest feelings about his situation, despite this being challenging for him. I could feel the life in me increase as I proceeded to do this; I sat up straighter and spoke more directly and clearly. Functioning in this way with my patients was a developing progressive role for me. The terms 'developing' and 'progressive' refer to a system of role analysis which was first developed by Lynette Clayton (1982) and later refined by Max Clayton (1993). In response to my different warm-up, Paul's posture and demeanour suggested that his warm-up had shifted and his spontaneity had increased. This experience has shown me that it is sometimes useful to reveal my responses to my patients and that doing so may bring more life to the consultation. Since my interaction with Paul, I have continued to develop my ability to reveal myself in a way that builds the warm-up and spontaneity.

When I am confronted with a patient who is struggling with their sexual preference or gender identity, I consider the likelihood that they have had inadequate doubling and mirroring of this aspect of their functioning. Here is an example of mirroring and doubling of such a patient.

Georgina was a 21-year-old male to female transgender and this was her first consultation with me. She had only come out as transgender a month ago and had been referred to see me for a discussion about starting hormones.

At the start of the interview, she continually shifted around in her seat and maintained little eye contact with me. I invited her to tell her coming out story. She told me that, despite being biologically male, she had felt she was a girl right from when she was very young. She described the difficulties and emotional trauma of going through puberty and eventually coming out to her family as transgender a few weeks previously. Her family was accepting and supportive, which was a great relief to her. As she described her coming out process she spoke clearly, the tone of her voice was even, she held eye contact intermittently and was a bit stiller in her chair. I listened and nodded and made encouraging noises ("uum", "aha") whilst she did so.

I proceeded to say, "You are anxious sitting here with me, it's a big deal coming to talk to me about all this, it's all so new and things are moving fast." Georgina nodded and smiled a little in response. I said, "Despite all this, you are quite easy with me and I feel easy here with you." Georgina smiled again, breathed out and sank a bit more in her chair.

I continued to mirror and double Georgina and by the end of our consultations she was smiling, talking more and held eye contact for longer than at the beginning. She thanked me for seeing her and said that she planned to see me again.

At the start of the interview Georgina's lack of eye contact and restlessness indicated that she was anxious and perhaps worried about being misunderstood or judged. When I, initially, used active listening to encourage

her to tell her story, her voice became clear and she was stiller in her chair, which indicated an increase in her spontaneity. Then, after being doubled and mirrored for several minutes she sank, relaxing into her chair, smiled more and held eye contact for longer. This indicated that the mirroring and doubling had been accepted and that her warm-up had further increased. Also, I self-disclosed my response to her by letting her know that I felt easy with her and this further built her spontaneity. Her functioning shifted from anxious self-revelation, to relaxed collaboration with me.

Initially I listened to her story and invited her to keep going by using active listening techniques, such as nodding and making encouraging noises. Then, knowing that she had probably received little accurate doubling and mirroring as transgender, I considered that if I could do this well, I might be able to assist her with her development and confidence. This led me to move from active listening to mirroring and doubling. I did this for several minutes by making statements and changing my posture. As my mirroring and doubling was accepted and her warm-up increased, my own increased stillness in the chair and softness in my eyes indicated to me that my spontaneity had also increased. As a result of the mirroring and doubling I shifted my role from being an engaged active listener to being an easy and open confidante.

Concretisation is a fundamental psychodrama technique. "Concretisation gives size and form to concepts, feelings and situations. Internal experiences are given symbolic form by choosing an object to represent a feeling, relationship or situation and placing it on the stage, or drawing it on paper" (Phiskie, 2008)

I may invite the patient to use toys, stones and other objects to concretise a system from their life such as their workplace or family. I keep all these objects on a set of shelves in the corner of my office. If I have not asked the patient to concretise a system previously, I will usually introduce the process by creating something with the toys myself. I use the examination couch as the stage and place objects upon it. I might then go on to ask them to add to my creation or correct it. With patients that have used concretisation previously, I invite them to create something on a blank examination couch. Here is an example of this.

Harriet was a 20-year-old woman who had moved from Germany with her family several years ago and was having difficulty settling in Australia. She told me that she continued to live at home but was constantly angry and fighting with her parents and brother. I asked her to describe some of these events. She proceeded to sketchily describe one example of getting angry and then was quiet. I asked her what might have been the reason for her anger and she said she didn't know; she looked at the floor and then said nothing.

I invited her to choose toys and objects to represent herself, family members and

other significant people. I suggested that she place them on the examination couch at a distance from each other, which represented the closeness between each person. She proceeded to slowly and carefully place each object and adjust their positions. She placed figures to represent herself and her family in a small huddle in the centre of the couch. Then we stepped back and together took in what she had created; we both did this for about a minute standing beside each other in silence. I then commented on the closeness of the small huddle in the centre of the couch and the lack of other significant relationships in the concretisation. I asked her about her connections with people from Germany who were outside this core group. She picked an object to represent her closest friend whom she had not seen for several years. As she did this, her head dropped slightly and her eyes moistened. I said, "you feel sadness as you think about your friend" and she nodded in agreement and took two deep breaths. I suggested that we pause at that point.

At the beginning of our clinical interview, I enquired about her anger and fighting at home with her brother; Harriet's answers were short and revealed little about her situation. She was unable or perhaps unwilling to reveal the reason for her anger and there were long silences in the conversation. She was possibly confused and embarrassed about her behaviour at home. However, when she was invited to concretise her social system, her functioning changed; she became thoughtful and careful in its creation. Her demeanour indicated an increase in her spontaneity and creativity. She placed a small group in the centre of the examination couch to represent her father, mother and brother. When she chose an object to represent her closest friend, she enacted a new role involving the open expression of deep feelings, like those of a tender friend or lover. This was a progressive role that I had not seen her enact previously. If there had been more time we may have proceeded to a psychodrama with her friend. It is something I might suggest in the future, as I believe there could be more social atom repair needed in this area. Moreno, as described by Nolte (2014, p. 160), hypothesised that the social atom is a constantly changing social structure. The goal is to achieve a homeostasis where there is a balance of giving and receiving of emotions. This balance is disrupted when somebody dies or moves away or the roles change. There is then a reparative process as others take the place of the one who has left and roles are created, altered and expanded.

The tele with Harriet was strong, since I had experienced an easy rapport with her in previous counselling sessions: this laid the foundation for action methods to be used. I chose to use concretisation as I thought that asking questions had led to her being conflicted and reluctant to disclose. I suspect that she was used to being questioned by her parents, who were both professionals with enquiring minds and I imagine that she often felt interrogated by them. When we started working in action, I think that she saw me less as an interrogator and more as a co-explorer. My functioning

changed from seated enquiry to moving around and helping her create the concretisation on the couch. The concretisation helped me enter Harriet's world and warm up to her social system. When she enacted the role of tender lover, I doubled her by saying "you feel sadness as you think about your friend." She nodded and took some deep breaths and I took this to indicate that my doubling had been accepted and that the progressive role had been fully enacted. This indicated to me that it was a good time to pause the action.

I consider the use of concretisation when there is a complicated system with many personal, interpersonal and societal forces at play. In such a situation, it is often simple and clear to ask a person to concretise the elements of the system. This creates an observational view of the system and the person's functioning in it. Also, concretisation requires the patient to shift role to be more creative and often more playful. It feels quite easy to do this with a patient because there is no role play involved and people have sometimes heard of sand-play or similar therapies that involve concretisation.

As a medical practitioner, I have been able to incorporate the identity of a psychodramatist into my professional identity as a doctor. The integration of these identities affected my medical practice and the experience of my patients. It increased my ability to warm up to my patients and to my work as a doctor. My patients were, consequently, more able to warm up to themselves and their experiences in life.

Moreno, as quoted by J.D. Moreno, is famously reported to have said to Freud "Well, Dr Freud, I start where you leave off. You meet people in the artificial setting of your office. I meet them on the street and in their home, in their natural surroundings" (Moreno, 2014, p. 50). In taking psychodramatic methods back into the consulting room, I have had experiences of increased warm up, spontaneity and creativity. Also, I have had encounters with patients where I have entered into their world and they have entered into mine and we have both been changed as a result.

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The Art of Writing is Born by Considering Elephants

Diana Jones

Have you ever sat down to write and waited or even prayed for a flash of brilliance that never came? Writing an assignment, a thesis, or a book might well seem impossible. You might have got started but floundered? After experiencing this many times myself, I discovered a secret. Well, more I attended to a cliché — on how to eat an elephant…one bite at a time.

One bite at a time, that's how you eat an elephant, not that many people are inclined to devour such magnificent creatures! This advice is perfect for writing a book; 50,000 words, 10 chapters, 5,000 words a chapter. Add the five concepts you want to convey in each chapter and a premise for each chapter. Structure each chapter to include the premise, a story, some examples, research, add personal observations and insights.

This means writing 250 words a day for 200 days, that takes six months, or 500 words a day for three months, which is the approach I took as I wrote my first book, Leadership Material. Eminently doable.

For an AANZPA thesis of 7,000 words, this is 250 words a day for 28 days. You get the picture.

Other suggestions for writers:

- Create and follow a structure.
- Stick to timelines – (not my natural tendency).
- Keep writing and editing as two distinct and disparate functions.
- Write 250 – 900 words each day.
- Keep meticulous bibliographic notes
- Accept that creating diagrams, gaining permissions for case stories and researching are your everyday conversations.

Why I wrote the book

My first book, Leadership Material, (Jones, 2017), focused on how encompassing personal experience underpins professional development. I knew that coming to terms with our life experience is the life blood of our

professional competence rather than skills and knowledge. Given that business schools had consistently avoided this knowledge, I wanted to write so that many more people would find this knowledge accessible.

I wrote my second book, Leadership Levers (Jones, 2022), because I had noticed leaders invariably floundered with group dynamics. I wanted to help them find joy in leading groups.

Three dominant coping mechanisms were apparent with the leaders I worked with. They would:

- prepare for meetings by being familiar with oceans of content, or
- talk without giving attention to the response they were getting, or
- withdraw and remain silent.

These three responses were guided by their fear that they would be rejected and that no-one would want to listen, believe, or accept what they were saying.

I wanted to change this. I wanted to help leaders succeed, whether with something as small as a meeting, or as large as implementing enterprise-wide change. I wanted to present a new model of leadership where relationships, not content or expertise were central to leaders' success.

A seed was sown

After being with Max Clayton in hundreds of workshops, each one riveting, I analysed Max's approach. How did Max warm us up to being present despite our fears, become vulnerable and work to explore and repair our relationships?

In essence, I observed Max ignored the 'agenda' and focused on building the relationships among those there. That insight steered much of my application of sociometry in my work roles as leadership coach and advisor. I realised the agenda was actually developing our relationships so we could have the conversations we wanted to have with the people we wanted to have them with.

I wanted to help leaders understand how groups work, to release their untapped talents to help them make better decisions and to create a sense of belonging for the people in their organisations.

I wanted leaders to understand that to lead a meeting their content and the agenda were secondary. Primarily, the leaders' role is to create group environments where people want to participate, they want to contribute and find the satisfaction and joy in that.

In essence, I wanted to write about my work as a practicing sociometrist in organisations and of the leaders' role in releasing the power of relationships.

Was the second book harder than the first?

I was asked if the second book was harder that the first or just different. Yes,

the second book was harder to write than the first and it was also different. With the first book I knew what I wanted to write about and had a format for each chapter of; main dilemma, story, facts and insights. I had the delightful experience of conveying my knowledge and experience and the flashes of brilliance you might dream of – words and concepts flowed.

With the second book, I had to fight to keep my ideas from merging. I had an overwhelming feeling that I was repeating concepts I had written about earlier. I discovered that a chapter heading and a subtitle had been repeated but that wasn't the problem. As I began differentiating the processes behind ideas, I was repeating myself. In dawned on me that processes of becoming influential as presenters, conversation inviters and group leaders do have similarities. That was the repetition. I was able to relax.

Writers create new concepts as they write

The biggest mistake writers make is thinking that they know everything they are going to write about before they begin. Writing is like producing a drama, directors don't know precisely what is going to happen when they begin. They trust the method, their protagonist, their experience and their intuition. Writing is similar. I discovered I was creating new concepts as I was writing. This was exciting and challenging.

As I was writing on intimacy, I realised that in my work in organisations, intimacy and authenticity in groups was both valued and rare. I would frequently say: 'You decide the level that you want to share. I provide a framework but it is you who decides what and how you will share.' I have been privileged to be present in profound moments in many work groups. Group participants long for their leaders to be personable and human.

I wanted to show leaders that intimacy is accessible. I wanted to show that intimacy is a leadership quality that many leaders find challenging to reveal relevantly. Many leaders' resort to being self-absorbed and lack empathy. This is the wrong warm up.

Over several supervision sessions, my supervisor and I teased out three levels to differentiate intimacy. Finding examples was easy, yet the table sat awkwardly as did the terminology. She proposed I outline a purpose for each. This united what I had been grappling to express eloquently. The terminology identifying the three levels of intimacy in work groups became 'simple, deeper, unguarded'.

Yes, there were setbacks

A month into the second book, David had a heart attack. We raced to the hospital and I faced the reality of losing the man dearest to my heart. I was unable to function other than to take care of him as he recovered. My life priorities changed radically. Rather than three months to write this book, I wanted to take six. My editor agreed.

The second set back was more insidious. Working with the line editor was a delightful experience on one hand, *Dear Ms Jones*, but damaging on the other in that typos were inserted and homophones overlooked, for example *elicit* meaning 'to get something' was changed to *illicit*, describing something illegal. The line editor had English as a second language and while endearing in our communications, this was not helpful in their linguistic accuracy as line editor.

Just before publication I had sent the edited manuscript to a colleague, within hours I received an email with the subject 'Typo'. My heart sank. Eight further emails in the same day and I accepted the book was not ready for publication. I contacted another colleague and together with my partner David, they scanned the book. By the end of the next day my eagle-eyed companions had identified 72 errors. Knowing they were close alongside me practically helping, lifted my spirits enormously.

One of the more difficult emails I have ever written was to my publisher asking for the corrections to be actioned. He was not happy. The corrections were completed within a week delaying publication by two weeks.

What makes good writing?

Several elements comprise good writing:

1. One is powerful openings. Here, short sentences reign supreme. Let subjects lead. Avoid explanations. This takes practice.

2. Metaphors matter. Metaphors enable you to place your reader into two worlds at the same time, the content of your writing and the allied metaphor. The readers' imagination is engaged. Learning processes are stimulated.

3. Brevity and focus are essential. Angela Merkel's recent biography (Marton, 2021) the author noted, '*Angela spoke to the press with scientific precision and in easy-to-understand sentences. She hardly used adjectives and said things as they were, without flourishes. She presented twice as much information as her colleagues.*' Avoiding unnecessary adjectives means a great deal of information can be given simply.

4. Psychodramatists have exceptional opportunities to bring life to their writing. Role language enables us to describe behaviour vividly. A performance manager becomes a wise insightful talent spotter. A meeting manager becomes the inclusive guardian of group development. Adjectives enable writers to be compelling and captivating. Shifting our language from social descriptions to psychodramatic observations is at the heart of communicating our clinical capacities.

5. Compelling headings give your reader signposts to where they are being taken.

More hints and tips for writers

Asking myself a question whenever I hit a roadblock became second nature. At the end of a chapter, I'd write 'how do you want to make a compelling link to the next chapter?' The next day, I would know.

Other favourite questions were: 'How might you say this simply?' and 'What metaphor enhances this concept?'

Writing and editing are two separate and disparate functions. I learned if I got up early in the morning to write, I would have a few hours before my editor woke up and was active, usually relentlessly critical. Writing and editing at the same time doesn't work. What works is to write for several days and then edit. Write and then have supervision. I find if my editor is active and alongside my writer, my creative genius shrivels and disappears.

Colleagues matter

Writing itself is a solitary process. Maintaining your warm up to writing is a companionable process.

Writers have their formal connections with their publisher and line editor. After publication, the publisher's operations and distribution managers become your allies. My aim is to gain a trusted relationship with each of these people. To a person, they want you as a writer to succeed as that impacts on their success. I found the production and distribution managers personable and helpful.

Given that my publisher was in the USA during covid, simple email communication was most effective. I had contracted a graphic designer who lives in South Africa. She had created graphics for an Australian colleague's book, had speedy turn-around times and was easy to work with.

Being in a network of international colleagues with over 100 business writers helped. Several of these people had five or six books published. They inspired me. These authors give writing and publishing tips freely. I had developed my book proposal within a group of nine other writers from Sweden, Canada, England, US, Israel and Australia. We had an email group and communicated with one another as we achieved specific milestones. This process was motivating and companionable.

My original publisher rejected the *Leadership Levers* manuscript. Disappointed, I let one of my close US colleagues know. She immediately recommended my book to her publisher. He accepted.

The biggest mistake writers make

Going backwards and remembering your writing at school or university is a mistake. Warming up to writing for psychodrama is a chance to reflect on and share what you are learning, your observations and insights as you work with individuals and groups.

Are you like the leaders in my book who refuse to believe or accept they

are competent? I recall working with one leader who was over the 92nd percentile in each leadership category being rated, yet he wanted to work on his development. I thought there were only two areas of development for him —one was that he was blind to his abilities and two, he overthought everything. This is a recipe for immobilisation.

As writers we have a chance to mirror the exquisite experience of human development and to add to the body of knowledge of human healing in the world by expressing ourselves. Writing is another opportunity to concretise our learning and wisdom.

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Embodying a Creative Revolution:
A Sociodramatist at Work

Cissy Rock

Key words
as if, creativity, community development, encounter, God, health, mirroring, Moreno, playback theatre, relationship, role, sociodrama, sociometry, spontaneity, systems theory, warm up

This article explores Moreno's notion of sociatry and the required creative revolution that involves everyone in the healing of society (Moreno, 1947). It will appeal to anyone wanting to work sociodramatically or wanting to get to know about Moreno's concepts of sociatry and creative revolution. It is also relevant for anyone working with principles of social justice, equity, dignity, diversity and inclusion.

I work in the community with groups of people, most of whom want to change the world, people who have a desire for social justice whether openly expressed or not. I want that sense of freedom or relief of being able to face life head on and be ready for everything for everyone. I see myself in the people on the margins: those that haven't got the look, or the qualification, where the system has squashed their sense of self, those on benefits or single mums feeling 'othered' by not fitting in with the social norms.

Right now, the world literally needs to be healed as COVID-19 has shaken global systems. The global pandemic highlights the relevance of Moreno's question: "who shall survive?" (Moreno, 1953) and his challenge / call for others to embrace his philosophy to bring about healing in society. My interpretation of Moreno's works is that he writes of a revolution that results from everyone coming together and experiencing what is possible when each and every person takes each other in and warms up as spontaneous creative beings.

My reading of Moreno's concept of a creative revolution refers to a society centred on creativity and spontaneity and the idea of creating health, rather than focusing on disease. Often a revolution is one segment of society revolting against another. Moreno understood that all players in the system need to be part of a group process to expand what is possible. To achieve this requires the creative genius1 in each and every one of us to be appreciated.

As a sociodramatist I have found Moreno's concept of a creative revolution very stimulating and have considered what this might look like in practice. I see groups of people being accepting of each other and being ready for what comes at them; people being prepared to be in relationship and address human needs, such as belonging and inclusion. I see a culture where there is value placed on everyone's unique contribution in society; where there isn't perpetuation of divisions created on the well or unwell, or the deserving and undeserving; and where there is an understanding that it is a function of the systems themselves rather than individuals that create such binaries. A creative revolution works with entirety and encapsulates encounter, role reversal and appreciation of each person as a creative genius.

A creative revolution in a small rural community
In the 1970s a small rural town in the north of NZ was thriving as a stronghold for the timber industry, housed the district hospital, had a shopping centre and provided a regular bus and ferry service to surrounding locations.

Today, in that same town, issues of poverty, under employment, inadequate housing and mental health all intersect. The town is on the road to nowhere; there is no more industrial activity, no hospital, no public transport, no café or community meeting spot and no library. The footpaths are broken and uneven and the public toilets are vandalised and no longer in working order. However, there is a school, a young kids' playground and a shop where you might get milk or bread but not much else. Many of the houses are run down, with car shells and inorganic rubbish in piles.

The local Council felt that residents needed to take more responsibility for the area and had established a community group to respond to the lack of community facilities. I was contracted by the Council to work with this community group to help them take their ideas and turn them into action.

My analysis, based on an initial consultation with the Council, was that it would take more than an economic revolution to revitalise this community. This was a town where residents had lost hope and they had become reliant on the Council, who held the resources. Council made the rules and approved the solutions. There was also a long history of negativity between Council and community members as promises made by Council hadn't seen the light of day. A lot of advocacy had been undertaken by a community group established 20 years ago, yet on my arrival the group seemed to be written off by both townsfolk and Council. This particular community group was unwilling to work with other people and flatly refused to meet with Council as they were sick of Council not delivering on their promises. Committee members felt hopeless and unable to find the energy to make anything happen and people in the community felt left out and unable to contribute. The Council also had given up on this existing committee and just under a year ago they had established a new committee (that I was

charged to work with) to respond to the lack of community facilities. My view was that the Council's solution of setting up a new committee to tackle an old issue and disregarding the existing committee added competition into the mix.

I attribute the collapse of this thriving township and it becoming a drive-through-don't-stop town as a systemic failure. The very things that made the town flourish also caused its decline. The success of industry and services necessitated their relocation to larger and more central venues, taking wealth, resources and employment prospects away from the town. Currently there are 400 people living in the town, a good number of whom rely on benefits as their source of income; either as super annuitants, supported living beneficiaries or unemployed job seeker beneficiaries. Most of the people who are in paid work leave each morning to travel to larger towns as there is little chance for employment locally.

The pātaka kai (community pantry) is well used. Facebook pages announce when food parcels are up for grabs from the Salvation Army and they quickly run out.

The population is a mix of Pākehā settler families, Māori and others who have come for cheap housing. Many people are related; the majority have been at school with each other and know each other's families well. Their struggles include not having enough petrol to go to the closest town for supplies and some suffer from anxiety and/or depression. To quote one resident: *"People wake to leave for work or wake with no work and try to fill in time."*

And yet here in such an impoverished town I see evidence that there is a real sense of community e.g., there are high numbers of volunteers and people sharing their resources; the community hall committee puts on shared meals; someone picks up a person who lives alone in temporary accommodation and takes them to the supermarket; and someone else lets them use their house for showering and washing clothes.

I reach the conclusion that something new is required — a creative revolution that involves the whole town and includes everyone's aspirations. A creative revolution requires hope, relationships and connections with opportunities for shared experiences and an appreciation of each other. Fundamental to this is the idea that everyone belongs and is accepted for who they are. This requires everyone to be willing to experience feeling a bit uncomfortable, including myself, and to take time to get to know each other. Working this way in communities you can't helicopter in and out and expect to build relationships, it takes time.

I had a sense that if people could recapture some of the feeling of a time when they experienced energy and hope in the town, they could warm up again and re-ignite their enthusiasm for new possibilities. Thinking systemically, I decided that it would be possible to work with a small group

of 12 people and that this could have quite an impact in a town of 400. I was working with the notion that *"spontaneity begets spontaneity"* (Clayton & Carter, 2004, p.69) and that everyone is connected. I knew that a well-placed intervention would have an impact throughout the community.

I spent months of work building my relationships with a wide range of people in the community and thinking sociometrically. I met up with individuals and groups in the town and joined them up with each other, in particular I linked up the two different community groups. I distributed paper maps and stickers for people to identify where they wanted activities or focus.

Though there were many ideas coming through this process, it was when I was listening to various people that I heard many stories and I saw that when people told stories about the old days, their faces lit up, their eyes glimmered and their voices softened. There were stories about catching the ferry to Helensville and about how the town had the best pie shop ever.

I was aware there needed to be an intervention that added life, one that created feelings of warmth. It seemed it was easy for people to warm up to what was wrong in the town or with individuals e.g. The loss of the ferry service that stopped many years ago or that there was now no place that sells food, etc., rather than what felt good. As I heard the stories, I noticed these experiences were being re-told largely in isolation; the town wasn't joined up. I read the following quote from Clayton's eulogy in the AANZPA publication Socio that reminded me to notice what is present and progressive, to value it and encourage it to grow (AANZPA Socio, 2013). I wanted to take that small spark of hope from the stories and help it grow.

> *"There is always a bit of light. Stay with the light, just with that little bit. Don't look for a bigger one. Stay with what you've got — it'll grow. Stay with the small light. Very important, stay with it. Don't stay with what you haven't got. Light is light."* (AANZPA Socio, 2013)

I decided that Playback Theatre would be a suitable form for an intervention as it involves story, is novel, active and could involve a range of members in the community. I decided that it would also be a way of staying with that glimmer of light I saw in people's eyes.

I arranged for an experienced Playback Theatre conductor to lead a weekend event where on the first day some townsfolk were trained, if somewhat basically, as Playback actors. On the second day the community was invited to a Playback performance where members of the community told stories from their lives and the briefly trained townsfolk played back these stories for the audience.

This form allowed townsfolk to be part of the intervention; it provided a space for each other's stories to be experienced in a group and therefore

become shared stories in which people could locate themselves and their connections. I envisaged that the forces at play in the system of this town would be displayed for all to experience and also that this process would warm the townsfolk up to spontaneity and creativity and inspire and revitalise them with a flow on effect for the town.

On the day of the performance the hall was full of people: the Playcentre, parents of the actors, people from the Mārae, people from both community groups, elders from the town. The stories flowed. One man in his 90s relating to young people causing trouble told how when he was 15, he shot at an outside toilet while a girl was in it. As he said this, out of the audience we heard, "I am that girl!!" and a 90-year-old woman came forward to tell her story. And so it went on, each story stimulating the next — riding horses, the time the tornado tore through the town, sisters catching the ferry and being left behind, a young girl tripping up and feeling embarrassed in her school play. There were more stories than there was time to hear them.

Afterwards, almost everyone stayed for the afternoon tea and further telling of stories following from the performance. Connections, belonging, cohesion and hope were demonstrated. The room was full of people hugging and making plans for catch ups: *"Why did I wait so long before seeing you?"*, *"We must do something about the state of the hall."* The room was full of real experiences and spontaneity. It was as if this group of people had had an injection of vitamin B12. The town was enlivened as a community. They were more connected and, as a result, more able to draw upon their relationships to sustain them.

After the theatre performance a number of things were set up: a Facebook group grapevine; a church-based pop-in morning; the community plan was written up; a food truck was invited to town. Together, these seemingly small things began to make improvements to the community and community spirit.

I have been working with these people for over a year now, modeling ways of being, mirroring back to them their strengths, not being the expert or the saviour on a white horse but working with them to warm them up to their spontaneity.

The results of this process are not perfect. Several months after the Playback event, a ruction between two community groups presented itself, with public yelling and accusations being hurled. Part of knowing a creative revolution is in process is that while such disturbance can happen, people are not writing others off, but are willing to find ways to stay connected and to continue to involve all.

In my ongoing work with this community, I see how the people in the community are now maintaining relationships and having conversations that are difficult. My involvement with this particular community continues to occupy many hours of largely voluntary work.

The idea that a creative revolution would engage every human being has implications for people working in communities and for people who want to work with systems and social issues. People who work in communities, social workers, politicians, activists, teachers can all be part of the liberation of humankind. By embodying Moreno's notion of a creative revolution practitioners can spark change in the status quo.

A creative revolution is a long-term investment. Taking time to develop relationships, getting participants engaged and setting up work so the impact is sustained, requires going for more than temporary measures. If someone is interested in being involved in a creative revolution, they need to be prepared for months, even years of working with people and their warm up, modelling ways of being, mirroring strengths, not being the expert or being a saviour, but joining a group in the process as a committed participant.

A creative revolution requires hope, relationships and connections where there is an opportunity for shared experiences and appreciation of each other. Fundamental to this is the idea that everyone belongs and is accepted for who they are. A group leader needs to be in relationship with themselves and to be willing to disclose information about themselves as a group member. This requires personal development work alongside a lot of reflective practice, as well as an ability to reverse roles, double people and assess when it is appropriate to make interventions.

Sociatry necessitates working actively to balance participation in groups, communities and societies. It is important to address social norms and power dynamics that typically play out in groups that have an impact on 'social wealth'; that is the value of the resources a person has to meet their social and emotional needs. Social connection is the currency of social wealth. A well-placed intervention will have a significant impact throughout a group, so it is useful to consider choices about what interventions are likely to address the healing of society and bring about a creative revolution. Working in this way a group leader bases their choices on the principles that spontaneity begets spontaneity and that everyone is connected.

Moreno created methods to support his vision (Moreno, 1947, 1951,1964, 1983). It is important to know the meaning of Moreno's concepts and his call to action. The method itself isn't piecemeal. Without understanding how it all fits together, a practitioner could reduce the psychodramatic method to a set of techniques. Keeping Moreno's bigger vision in mind at all times demands that practitioners relate the meaning of the concepts to their use of the psychodramatic method.

As a sociodramatist I see people as spontaneous, creative beings. This approach can lead practitioners to look for the health in the system and not to lower expectations or write people off because of their inadequacies or differences. It also implies that practitioners look for opportunities to build

self-acceptance, to include everyone, to accept that all people are involved in the process of a creative revolution together and to work from a belief that there is good in everyone. In practice, this challenges practitioners to get curious about why people are the way they are, to work with generosity and say in ways that can be taken in, "Yes I see the good in you."

Articulating my beliefs and values has reinforced my commitment to Moreno's challenge to be intentional about linking interventions, no matter how small, to a greater vision of creating a dynamic world where each person is valued in terms of their expression of the I-Self-God (Moreno, 1947). This spontaneous-creative expression is contagious. Valuing and including everyone can collectively result in what Moreno described as a creative revolution.

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Tauhara Encounter:
Reflections on a Residential
Psychodrama Group Session

CRAIG WHISKER

KEY WORDS

audience, auxiliary, creativity, director, doubling, encounter, mirroring, Moreno, production, protagonist, psychodrama, psychotherapy, reflections, relationship, role, role reversal, sharing, spontaneity, tele, warm up

Since 2013 I have co-led with either Marian Hammond or Selina Reid, and have twice led by myself, an annual winter residential psychodrama retreat at the Tauhara Retreat Centre located above Acacia Bay on Taupō-nui-a-Tia, Lake Taupō near the centre of Te Ika-o-Māui, the North Island of Aotearoa, New Zealand. On each occasion I write copious notes describing workshop sessions and my initial analyses and reflections on them and I jot down insights from between-session or end-of-day discussions with my co-leader. The process of writing while memories and impressions are still fresh captures what in days, even hours, may be unrecoverable. When I warm up to re-entering the stream of consciousness I had during the session I often perceive more than I did when in the group. These are unpolished perceptions. They include wonderings or conflicts that I form into questions or pose as contrasting points of view and they sometimes cause fragments of associative thought to surface from deep within my psyche, or a new perspective to suddenly appear like the bright green tip of a spring bud.

This piece of writing assumes there is much to be gained from having a close look at moments of psychodramatic group work recorded in notes such as those described above. This may expand the awareness of readers about how psychodrama theory and practice is being expressed by the writer and encourage reflection and discussion on how and why directorial choices—including those occurring to a reader—might be refined to benefit the work of a group.

In this paper I first describe and later reflect upon a series of enactments occurring in one 2-hour psychodrama group session that features encounters of mutual rejection and mutual acceptance among group members. The descriptions begin with the following introduction to the session.

Introduction to the psychodrama session

It is the third evening of a 4-day residential psychodrama retreat and the August skies over Lake Taupō are a palette of luminous blues brushed pink by the sinking sun. Inside the large group room, a black-steel woodburner muffles the agonies or ecstasies of once-living limbs being carbonised to heat the space. In front of the burner thirteen group members and two group leaders sit in a semicircle of cushioned chairs. The session is twenty minutes old and brief reporting back from the afternoon sessions—when the group divided in two, each with one of the group leaders—is complete. For ten seconds or more no-one speaks. Some group members fix their gaze on the floor or on some other feature in the room. Others look around the group making visual connection with other group members or glance away.

Susie and Dean [all participant names are anonymised in this paper] are group members sitting beside one another near the middle of the semicircle. Susie's express purpose for attending the workshop is to speak from a place of connection with her being and to sustain a feeling of interconnected involvement in the group. Dean is committed to expressing his truth about the social anxiety he experiences in groups both to himself and to the group "rather than putting on a false face." Two or three times during the first two days of the workshop he unobtrusively leaves the room for several minutes to settle himself before returning. This morning he communicates to the group leaders and to those group members who are present at breakfast that he will "take the morning off because I need it for self-care."

Later I write the following description of the group session.

Director's description of the group session

Susie is sitting upright in her chair with an air of readiness for action about her. She turns her upper body towards Dean and says she is annoyed with him for not coming to the morning sessions today. She adds that her annoyance probably says more about her than about him and she hopes he won't take it personally. Dean listens while tilting his head towards Susie and confirms that he isn't taking her annoyance personally, in fact, it may be useful to him because one of his purposes for being in the group is to reflect on the effect he is having on other group members. Dean goes on to say that although he experiences social anxiety, he is also a *strong and resilient survivor* of rejections and bullying both at home and at school over many years. I am struggling to hear the softly spoken dialogue between Susie and Dean so I crouch down and move quietly towards them and by now I am sitting on the stage three or four metres away from them.

Susie appears to be thoughtful in response to what Dean has said and a few seconds later she purposely turns towards me to declare: "I don't know

how to say what I want to say. I feel caught between not wanting to hurt him [Dean] and not wanting to remain silent."

During these exchanges two aspects of Susie stand out prominently to me, namely, she is well motivated to communicate with Dean as seen in her body tone and her use of reflective-relational language, and her turning to me rather than continuing to impress her annoyance upon Dean may be a creative expression of self-care. I relate to her as the most spontaneous member of the group at that time.

I also value Dean's open-minded responses to Susie and his ongoing promotion of the freedom to experiment. Susie's and Dean's efforts to tune in with one another draw them to form mutually positive tele relations (Moreno, 1946), albeit tentatively at this stage in their encounter. The group is also giving Susie and Dean their cooperative attention, which is an expression of the group's culture being positively influenced by the presence of mutuality between the pair, and in response to the totality of the situation I recognise and instantly warm up to producing what my colleague, Philip Carter (2009), describes as "the drama [that] is right in front of you".

The interview phase of Susie's drama

With a few words I invite Susie to join me on the stage to explore the conflicting roles she is experiencing and she accepts. As we stand together, I address the whole group in an attempt to warm everyone up to perceiving Susie as an *open learner* who wants to communicate more effectively with Dean in the presence of the group. In my imagination I see Susie warming up to a wider range of abilities with which to resume her encounter with Dean. I feel cautiously confident about my intervention; confident I am well motivated to work with creativity and spontaneity, and cautious to enable rather than restrict an interpersonal encounter that might otherwise be unfolding.

The interview continues with Susie and I both standing on the stage. She describes the internal conflict drawing her away from Dean, and I seek to produce this in action with a view to the whole group gaining clarity about her current functioning, which may in turn assist the development of an inceptive plan for the action phase of her drama. The metaphor I utilise for doing so is the Focal-Conflict Model developed by French (1952) and later "modified and extended for application to group processes" by Whitaker and Lieberman (1964, p. 39), where "events in a group-therapy session are conceptualised in terms of a slowly emerging, shared covert conflict consisting of two elements—a disturbing motive (a wish) and a reactive motive (a fear)" (p. 19). Once set out and enacted, Susie has an auxiliary on the right-hand side of the stage enacting her disturbing motive and saying: "I want to be honest, express the truth, and live life honestly", and two auxiliaries on the left-hand side of the stage enacting her reactive

motive, one of whom is concerned about whether confronting Dean is a kind thing to do and the other about whether it is even necessary. As the conflict between these opposing motives intensifies, tension grows and I wonder what solution Susie, her auxiliaries, and the audience will come to. Will it be restricted to "alleviating fears [...] at the expense of satisfying or expressing the disturbing motive" (p. 23), or will it enable both alleviation and some satisfaction or expression of the disturbing motive? With the outcome seemingly hanging in the balance, Susie suddenly turns to me and says: "I'm aware of the words clamouring in my mind wanting to be said and the caution is holding them back."

The action phase of Susie's drama

Susie's words are a clear articulation of both a dramatic purpose and a dramatic plan. There are words clamouring in her mind *to be said* and caution *is holding them back*. I call for the stage to be cleared and direct Susie to concretise the clamouring words using objects or people. She briskly picks up two cushions and places them in the middle of the stage naming them "bravery" and "spinelessness" respectively. I direct Susie to walk around the peripheral warm up space circling the concretised words and soliloquising her thoughts aloud. I choose multiple auxiliaries to be her doubles and direct them to walk in a single file close behind her amplifying her physical actions, words, and emotions as she expresses them, like a Greek chorus. With the assistance of their doubling and choric mirroring Suzie's self-acceptance and self-awareness increases and she gives voice to the familiarity and frustration she feels for the concretised words. When I direct her and her doubles to maximise both what they are saying and doing, Suzie leads them in striding more forcefully, quickening their pace, and yelling out to the universe cathartically. As her spontaneity peaks Suzie suddenly becomes conscious of a past trauma and its effects on her that have never been adequately abreacted—literally an 'ab' [meaning 'away from' in German] reaction, Breuer & Freud's (1893) term for a person's cathartic reaction to trauma, expressed in action and or speech, which may discharge the effects of trauma in whole or part—and this causes her to stop walking and confess like a *repentant imposter*: "I'm the one who is spineless. That cushion is about me!" She continues to speak of self-rejection and self-disgust as stemming from an incident many years ago when she witnessed a 12-year-old school friend being bullied by other girls at their boarding school and did not speak up in her defense.

My first impulse is to produce the boarding school scene in keeping with Moreno's (1953) imperative that a catharsis of abreaction must be followed by a catharsis of integration. Unlike Freud's psychotherapy where "language serves as a substitute for action: by its help an effect can be abreacted almost as effectively" (Breuer & Freud, 1893/2009, p. 8), in

Moreno's psychodrama the production of action provides the protagonist "with a new and more extensive *experience* of reality, a 'surplus reality'" (Moreno, 1953, p. 85; emphasis added) where anything conscious or unconscious not expressed outwardly in the original situation is now expressed (Clayton, 1990).

Again, I call for the stage to be cleared, thank the departing auxiliaries, and direct Susie to set out the scene at her boarding school. As she collects props from the edge of the stage, I interview her for role as her school-girl self by asking: "How old are you? … Where is this boarding school located? … How often do you get to go home?" In response Susie warms up to being back in the girls' dormitory and she provides a commentary while recreating the dormitory scene on the stage: "Our beds are in a line over here … and there are partitions … this is the partition that's between each of our beds, and …"

Suddenly Dean stands up from his seat in the audience, takes three or four steps towards Susie and me, and protests: "This is not fair! I can't be expected to be a passive observer and to be called spineless and not have a chance to defend myself. I am not spineless. I'm a strong person, and you [Susie] have no idea about the social anxiety I live with and what I need to do to live with it." After a pause he adds: "I'd rather you [Susie] just said what you have to say to me, and then I can respond."

From protagonist-centred psychodrama to in-person encounter
Dean makes a dual challenge. Firstly, he challenges me as the director for presuming he will be a passive observer in the audience and not defend himself, and next he challenges Susie for calling him spineless, before inviting her to "just say what you have to say to me and then I can respond." His functioning as a *deft situational assessor* who addresses relevant issues sequentially and as an *open communicator* inviting a person-to-person encounter is admirable to me. As part of his assessment, he is likely to have experienced the telic relationship between Susie and I as mutually positive, and from me to him as neutral at best, perhaps weak negative. Indeed Susie and I are building mutually positive tele during the production of her drama while my expression of positive tele towards Dean is minimal—it is more felt than expressed—initially because Dean's early assurance that he is not taking Susie's criticism personally frees me psychologically to focus on Susie's emergent conflictedness, and later during Susie's drama I tune in to the audience as a whole rather than to Dean specifically, resulting—I now realise—in me being only vaguely aware of him. My perception of these telic relationships in the moment when Dean interrupts Susie's drama is depicted diagrammatically below.
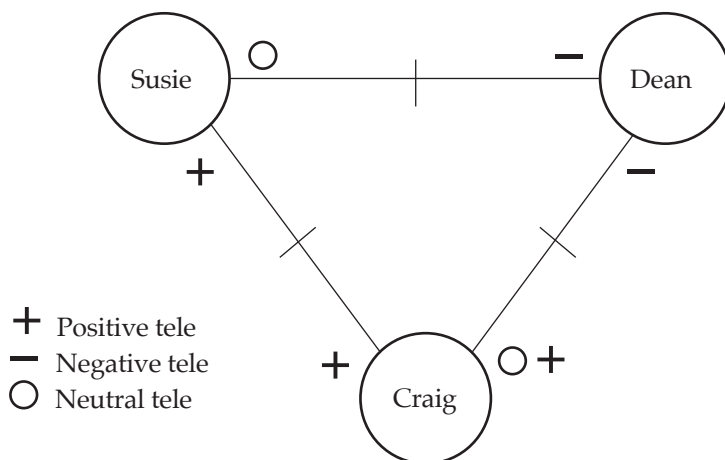
FIGURE A: TELIC RELATIONSHIPS AT THE MOMENT DEAN INTERRUPTS SUSIE'S DRAMA

Following this moment of realisation, I walk over to Dean while also asking my co-leader to stand beside Susie as her double, which she does and they exchange smiles of acknowledgement with one another. Dean is now sitting in his chair again and I sit in the empty chair beside him previously occupied by Susie.

There are a variety of contemporaneous expressions from audience members though there is no audio-visual recording that captures them all. Tina picks up her chair and carries it around the back of the audience placing it close behind and to the right of Dean in the double position. Simon moves to squat beside Tina joining her in tuning in with Dean. Several voices rise one over the other in discontent about Dean derailing Susie's drama. Evelyn strides into the centre of the stage gesticulating with her arms like a clapperboard to signal the resumption of the drama. Somewhere amongst all of this I make a statement to the whole group about every person in the room having their own construction of reality about what has happened and is still happening, and in addition, while the presence of mutuality in the group is an indicator of greater commitment to cooperative work and of greater satisfaction for group members (Clayton, 1993), such mutuality might be either mutual acceptance *or* mutual rejection. This latter point gives a few group members something to think about and mutual relations in the group lift a fraction.

I have come over to sit beside Dean to support him to continue to pursue his purpose for being in the group. I figure that the whole group needs him to keep going. Anything less would restrict group members' sense of the meaning and purpose of the group. To get through such an existential crisis the group requires effective leadership.

I gently enquire of Dean about the permission he gave Susie to express herself, knowing as he did that what Susie had to say said more about her than him. He agrees that he did support her to express herself, but he didn't know abuse would be directed towards him. Her calling him spineless echoes his high school bullies and having confronted them in a guided restorative justice process as recently as five years ago he has no intention of letting Suzie get away with that. He continues to relay his realities quite fully to the whole group by making several statements that are supplemented by his doubles or interjected on by opposing views among the audience, and each time there is a pause for a few seconds — this happens three or four times — I look directly at Susie standing on the other side of the stage being doubled by my co-leader and ask her: "What are you warming up to now?" Susie is evidently maintaining the strong warm up to spontaneous living that emerged during her truncated drama and instead of being conflicted, as she was when addressing Dean at the beginning of the group session, she is now softer, more empathic, and is making small but perceptible overtures of acceptance towards him. He sometimes spontaneously accepts her mirroring of his self-acceptance. Their movement from symmetrical rejection to tentative complimentary acceptance is depicted in Figure B below.
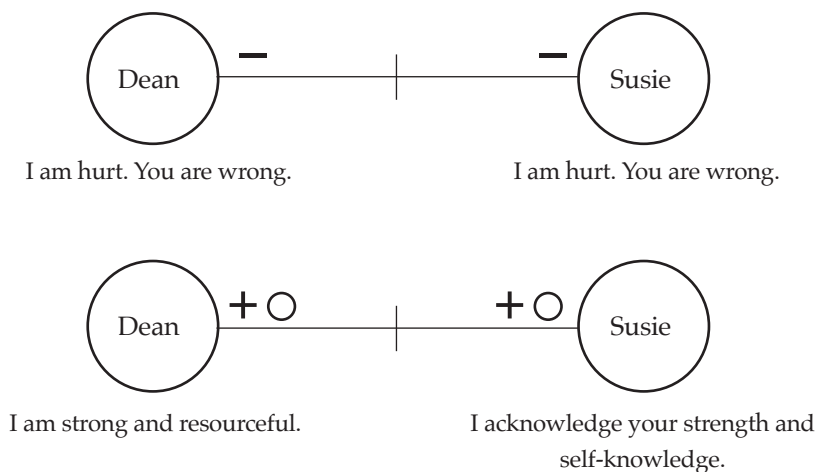

FIGURE B: MOVEMENT BETWEEN SUSIE AND DEAN FROM SYMMETRICAL REJECTION TO TENTATIVE COMPLEMENTARY ACCEPTANCE

As Dean continues to talk about his life, Susie's ability to reverse roles with him increases and gradually Dean takes on a more reconciliatory stance towards her. This tentative complementary acceptance of one another is new and only partial at this point. Perhaps Susie is being a *respectful foreign visitor* to Dean's life and Dean is slightly relaxing into the

experience of being an *appreciated tourist guide*. Like any 'touring party' the rest of the group have a variety of responses to what is on display; however, most acknowledge a change in the tone of relations between Susie and Dean with nods of approval or by moderating their protests. My assessment is that Dean's and Susie's relationship is fragile and that the doubling each protagonist is receiving is assisting their acceptance of humble mirroring from one another, but that to role test their ability to reverse roles with one another through the production of a classic role reversal by the director would be premature. On that basis I advise the group that the action phase of this work has finished and I direct the group to enter the sharing phase.

The sharing phase for both protagonists

I set out 4 chairs in front of the audience for Dean, myself, Susie, and my co-leader in that order. The remaining group members resume their seats. The following sharing ensues.

Tony: Expresses his anger at Dean for interrupting Susie's drama. I ask Tony to locate the source of his anger in his own life, which he does by describing the bullying he experienced at home and school as a youngster. This leads him to empathise with Dean and to reflect on his own journey of self-destruction and self-rejection. He also feels the injustice of Susie not getting to complete her drama, which leaves him caught somewhere between the two protagonists.

Kate: Has been practicing being straight with people regardless of their response or the effect on their relationship with her. She feels frustrated about how long the whole process took and that Susie's drama was getting somewhere when Dean stopped it.

Linda: Feels happy with the work and expresses her heart for psychodrama.

Sophie & Tina: Both feel grateful to the facilitators for holding the process for the group.

Wayne: Feels speechless. Nearly needed to leave the session when feeling his own dilemma regarding conflict. Heard the call from his mother to join her in fighting against his sister and father.

Olivia: Experiences the protagonist's feelings of self-hatred and self-annihilation. Was waiting for a role reversal.

Simon: Expresses several seemingly abstract concepts.

Wai: Having negative self-thoughts, but perhaps not as many as usual. Feelings came up during the drama and they passed. Still buoyed by last night's drama when she was the protagonist.

Evelyn: Rejects the facilitators for not "letting it [the encounter] happen." Follows Tony in expressing injustice that Susie didn't get to complete her drama.

Craig (director): A different director would produce different dramatic work and what I produce reflects what I have developed as a director to date. I recall the anguish I have felt in the past when rejected by others and the value I place on finding new ways to express myself under those conditions.

With the completion of the sharing the evening session ends.

Reflections after writing up this group session

In 'The Living Spirit of the Psychodramatic Method' Max Clayton states:

> *The area of direct expression. […] That is the encounter or the living encounter between two human beings. It involves role reversal. […] it's an encounter which takes account of the background, the warm-up and the abilities of the [other person]. [… A living encounter produces benefits for both people and for the whole group.] It's a breath of fresh air in the room.*
> (Clayton & Carter, 2004, p. 206)

From the outset when Susie says to me: "I don't know how to say what I want to say. … I feel caught between not wanting to hurt him [Dean] and not wanting to remain silent" I am aware that any response I give *will* affect the interaction she is initiating with Dean. So, what will that effect be? To answer that question, I make a clinical assessment; can Susie and Dean currently engage in a psychodramatic encounter that—as Clayton describes—takes account of the background, the warm up, and the abilities of both people? Reflecting on Dean's ability to monitor his level of anxiety and take time out from the group when needed, and Susie's aim to speak up in the group from a place of connection with her being, I decide to support Susie to resolve the conflictedness currently interfering with her speaking from such a place. I hope that Dean will practice self-care while the social and cultural atom repair for Susie takes place. If we successfully resolve Susie's conflictedness perhaps a subsequent encounter with Dean will provide a real-life role test. I know that to direct dramatic work with a protagonist I must be fully committed to the success of that endeavour and so I invite Susie on to the stage committed

to working with her in the first instance and the rest is history. In that first moment what else could I have done?

Several alternatives come to mind. I could discuss my assessment with Susie and Dean with a view to coming to some agreement with them both about how to proceed. This comes under the functions of the psychodramatic interview. Those functions include the development of a strong two-way working relationship between the director and the protagonist (or protagonists), the identification of a purpose for the drama, and the making of a plan for dramatic production that is workable for the protagonists, the director, and the group (Clayton, 1991, pp. 5-12). Such an interview with Susie and Dean could investigate whether they might take turns being a protagonist in two consecutive dramas, one where Susie explores her conflictedness, as she was in the boarding school drama, and another where Dean explores the overdevelopment of his *inner critic* or the underdevelopment of his functioning as a *tender self-empathiser*. Possible difficulties that either of them might experience when witnessing the other's drama could be discussed and provision made for them to receive effective emotional support. The group could be encouraged to organise itself to be of service to both protagonists. In other words, overt contracting could involve everyone in the group.

Another option is to work in the here and now with Susie to encourage her further direct expression to Dean as she sits in the group beside him. This might include doubling, mirroring, interviewing for role, concretisation, maximisation, aside, soliloquy, coaching, and or modelling that involves Susie and or Dean. Other group members could be invited to play auxiliary roles. The sociometry of the group pertaining to some criteria arising from Susie and Dean's encounter might be explored. Action might be produced in the semi-circle of chairs where the group members are sitting, or on the stage and warm up space, or both. An atmosphere might be created where the dramatic work becomes a group drama that not only benefits the protagonists, but profoundly benefits the whole group. This would undoubtedly challenge and perhaps change the group's culture.

Another way of looking at this group session is to consider what might have been done differently at critical moments during the dramatic action that was produced. Perhaps the two moments that stand out most in my reflections are the decision to stop the action phase of Susie's drama and the decision not to produce a psychodramatic role reversal between Susie and Dean.

Stopping the action phase of Susie's drama when Dean walks on to the stage to protest her belittlement of him is my way of acknowledging—albeit belatedly—Dean's role in the encounter that the dramatic work is part of. It is not just Susie's individual drama. The drama is a product of

the initial encounter that took place in the group-centred warm up. That warm up belongs to the group and therefore the drama belongs to the group. As we see after I stop the action phase, the group is not of one mind about whose drama it is. Some, such as Evelyn, Tony, and Kate, identify with the drama being Susie's. Others, namely, Tina, Simon, Sophie, and perhaps Linda, have maintained emotional contact with Dean since the group-centred warm up and readily accept his intervention in the action phase of Susie's enactment as an opportunity for further learning and growth. Perhaps Wayne is captured by the drama as if it is his own, and Wai may still be in her drama from the night before. Notwithstanding this variety of perception, I am unequivocal. The drama is a group drama and Dean is strongly implicated in the first scene. In hindsight it is not surprising that he might protest the slight made against him. He is the real person being depicted and is not just an auxiliary. The moment Dean walks on to the stage the boarding school enactment is suspended and an encounter is underway.

As for the decision not to produce a role reversal so Susie and Dean could deepen their mutual relationship by taking up each other's roles, I understand Max to be saying that the kind of role reversal necessary to create an encounter is not the production of a classic psychodramatic role reversal, but is the role reversal that occurs when both people take "account of the background, the warm up and the abilities of [the other]" (Clayton & Carter, 2004, p. 206). Such encounters might occur, say, between a group leader and a group member, or between two group members who develop a real meeting with one another during a break between group sessions and upon returning to the next group session continue to talk intimately with one another, thus creating an atmosphere of hopefulness in the group that lifts the vitality of other group members (Clayton, 1994). As a result, everyone benefits from their encounter. We see this happening when Susie and Dean take greater account of one another and develop a more complementary relationship, albeit tentatively. The group feels hope that Susie and Dean are making some progress in their relationship. When I bring the encounter process to an end the ensuing sharing phase gives Susie and Dean principally, and other group members also, the opportunity to integrate back into the group following the group drama.

Concluding comments

In this paper I celebrate the opportunity to have a close look at moments of psychodramatic group work recorded in the notes I make before, during, and immediately after a residential psychodrama group session. In this particular session a group-centred warm up is followed by various directorial choices that have a huge effect on the course of the psychodramatic work that follows. I discuss my rationales for those

choices, explore their effects, and propose alternative ways of responding to this particular group-centred warm up. The effects of doing so on me are both liberating and generative: liberating because such exploration is undertaken in a spirit of acceptance rather than judgement, and generative because the accent is on the creativity inherent in the psychodramatic method and in each of us.

For your part, I trust readers will place themselves in my shoes as a psychodrama director to reflect on what they might have done differently or would hope to do in the future. Perhaps further discussion will be fostered by your reflections either in-person or in print.

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Book reviews
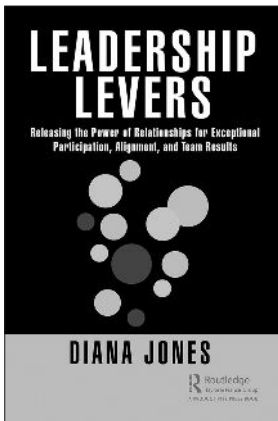
Leadership Levers: Releasing the Power of Relationships for Exceptional Participation, Alignment, and Team Results
By Diana Jones
Routledge, London and New York
2021

Reviewed by Helen Phelan

Having been in leadership development programs in organisations for many years, I was warmed up to the focus of the book and recognised the aspects the book addresses as highly relevant for these times; aspects that may not be new, but have needed addressing in a fresh way to enable new leadership outcomes of inclusive and collegial workplaces.

When scanning the Contents page – I am thinking yes! — these topics are the ones that come up time and again in professional development, supervision and reflecting on my work in organisational development, they are the hard, crunchy aspects of true leadership that are so often not recognised or taken up by seasoned or new leaders. Hard because to take up these principles, the leader has to challenge the established, 'endorsed' forms of leadership from the set expectations of higher leaders, political imperatives or influential peers. Crunchy because these leaders will continually get tested as they develop in this area.

Diana clearly states that unlike traditional views, leadership is not mastery of content, knowledge or set agendas; real leadership requires knowing themselves, being prepared to open up to the people on the team, developing the essential capacity to read people and learning how to inspire and invite their participation. This may be quite a work, as many leaders take on the positional authority to get people to meet the tasks, and often operate as if their knowledge is more important than the value the team members bring.

In my experience as a sociometrist in a fairly closed and traditionally-managed organisation, there was little recognition of 'tele' connections – those natural, vital and mostly invisible connections between people that make up the informal networks and systems where much of the informal messaging occurs, and often are the pathways for forming the workplace

culture. Diana illustrates the difficulties exposed when attempts to lead or encourage cooperation do not consider these natural connections and she crafts a process for leaders to explore these aspects and take them into account in establishing teams and the expectations of cooperation. Diana's strategies encourage leaders to look for the gold in the informal connections between people, including the related criteria of their connections – on what basis are they chosen and how can this assist in establishing more collegial working groups?

I enjoyed the expression of the areas of "seismic shifts" required. As an experienced trainer in organisations and a developing trainer in psychodrama, one of the areas I have been working with is the idea of "unlearning". What are the areas that trainees need to suspend a little to be open to taking in the concepts and new ways of viewing their world and relating to others? I recognise that for many leaders, these are huge shifts, especially for those who have a set identity as a competent group worker based on a rather concrete set of criteria like agenda manager. For some leaders, these shifts are 'seismic', and each person's capacity to hold themselves through to the other side is very challenging.

Another aspect of interest to me was the section on developing strategies for responding progressively to leaders' experience of rejection; usually such an unmentionable topic in the corporate environment. This is a valuable piece of work, as I experienced many managers and leaders who would be very sensitive to others' ideas or opinions and would react strongly as if they were personally being rejected. I could feel myself recalling situations in my own work-life as Diana presented some examples, and then relief when she provided very clear choice points for leaders to respond rather than react. Curiosity, discovery, appreciation – three enlivening responses Diana gives that bring new energy to the leader and in my experience, to the group / team.

Other topics of interest include:
- challenging old paradigms
- considering who gets included, who excluded and what impacts these decisions have on getting the teams to work together
- checking if the best use of the available talents is achieved
- the required level of trust and focus on purpose
- enlivening meetings and planning sessions
- stepping past old habits and practices

Diana's book offers fresh ways that are based on her experiences working with Senior Executives and CEOs and her knowledge in applying sociometric principles. Her focus on these senior levels and team leaders is where changes of this dimension need to occur. Too often individuals and teams are given a change program, already planned without their

contribution. Having the focus on leaders tackling their own changes first, and then engaging and valuing team members, there is the possibility of real cooperative and inclusive workplaces.

It was an easy read for a book that covers such a complex range, and her expressions produced imagery that gave a clear picture of the 'before' and 'after' that increased my warmup to the strategies and approaches recommended. As a sociometrist, it is a joy to see so many aspects of sociometry translated into everyday leadership language and in ways to engage and embrace. This is especially appreciated for anyone in a fallow paddock with their writing, and I am sure this well-crafted contribution to the field of sociometry, group and team leadership, will continue to warm me and others up to expressing our own pictures and ideas.

Given the distortions in power leadership we are currently experiencing in the world, this approach using the power of beneficial and mutual relationships in leadership is both timely and critically relevant for us, each in our own areas of influence.

Helen Phelan is a Sociometrist and TEPit in Perth, WA. She now identifies with the title of Creative Retiree and had many years of experience in organisational, personal, and professional development in many contexts. A focus of her work was applying sociometry and psychodrama in the social justice and human rights area, particularly addressing systemic discrimination issues. She holds a MA in Human Rights and Grad Cert in Counselling.
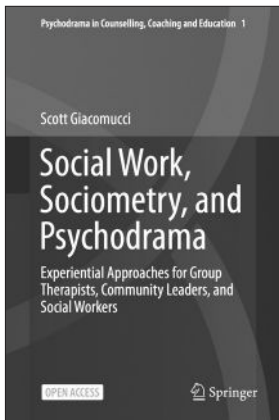
Social Work, Sociometry, and Psychodrama: Experiential Approaches for Group Therapists, Community Leaders, and Social Workers (Psychodrama in Counselling, Coaching and Education Book 1)
By Scott Giacomucci
Springer Nature Singapore
2021

Reviewed by Simon Gurnsey

Dr Scott Giacomucci has written a thoughtful work on the use of psychodrama, sociometry and group work in the field of social work and social work training. Giacomucci has generously made the book available as an open access book through a Creative Commons License. I read the Amazon Kindle version. Giacomucci's generosity in making available a 'free' eTextbook version of a psychodrama text isn't common, for example, Kindle versions of John Nolte's two very good books on psychodrama cost around USD $45. The Kindle version of Psychodrama and Social Work I read had a number of content errors, I found these irritating. Sending content error messages to Amazon is possible, but I understand this causes problems for authors so I don't use their reporting system anymore.

Giacomucci is an academic with a Doctorate in Clinical Social Work and the director and founder of the Phoenix Center for Experiential Trauma Therapy. His primary interest is in using experiential therapy, sociometry, and psychodrama with trauma and addiction using a social work framework. In this book, he makes a compelling case for the clinical use of psychodrama and sociometry within the field of social work. He has previously written extensively about the use of psychodrama in clinical social work and you may have read some of the articles he has published in the Journal of Psychodrama, Sociometry, and Group Psychotherapy of which he is Co-Editor-in-Chief.

Giacomucci wants psychodramatic training for social workers to enable them to work therapeutically with groups and individuals. He strongly advocates for this training and offers many lectures and demonstrations of the use of different Morenian techniques, including on YouTube. In my experience some of the work displayed in these videos is a little pedestrian but nevertheless is a great introduction to a naive audience. People following his step by step guides, who are able to be satisfied with the limited warm up created, won't find themselves in any difficulty. In my view, psychodrama training has to be done in person

through experiential workshops and supervision so learning psychodrama from Youtube, Zoom and textbooks is, ultimately, extremely limited.

In his foreword to Giacomucci's book, Dale Richard Buchanan lets us know about his experience of the author '...[Giacomucci]... has developed his gifts of intellect, courage, curiosity, and charisma into talents that he has faithfully and consistently used on behalf of the isolated, forgotten, marginalised, and oppressed. He has boundless affection, love, and fealty to the family of humans and not just for the family of his birth.' Giacomucci's love for humanity shines throughout the book and his good-hearted, earnest approach carried me through some of the repetitive bits, to the gems.

The individual sections and chapters stand alone and can be read separately, however, the book builds into a comprehensive whole. Giacomucci himself cautions us against a piecemeal approach that might further perpetuate the separation of the Morenian method from its underlying theory and philosophy. There are chapters on, amongst other things; What Are Sociometry and Psychodrama?, Social Work with Groups, Moreno's Methods and Group Work's Increased Demand in Practice. He examines applications that have arisen directly from psychodrama like sociodrama, as well as gives brief descriptions of approaches that are related to psychodrama and have varying degrees of overlap like drama therapy, Playback Theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed and Gestalt. Another section focuses on one-on-one work using sociometric and psychodramatic techniques. Having these approaches contextually described gives a satisfyingly complete view of Moreno›s work and its impact.

The reach of Morenian into the modern day social workers' repertoire is highlighted. Giacomucci claims social workers '... regularly employ the sociogram, social atom, and role atom tests as non-pathologising assessment tools that emphasise our person-in-environment perspective.' There are strong crossovers between these Social Work applications and how I see psychodrama trained people in Australasia applying the method.

There is a section on Strengths Based social work and its parallel to psychodrama's mutual aid, group-as-a-whole philosophy and the notion of each person being their own creative genius, having an "autonomous healing centre" — the innate capacity to heal one's self (Moreno, 2012). That Psychodrama is inherently a strengths-based approach is, I suppose, obvious but hadn't occurred to me before and I liked having this parallel well-argued by someone so knowledgeable in both fields. Giacomucci's very complete references are a monument to an astounding breadth of background reading and research and are a great resource for students and researchers of the method.

I find myself recommending the book to trainees and others looking for a starter book on psychodrama that is complete and also has a free version.

However, I have some reservations. Giacomucci's thorough, 'leave no stone unturned' and academic style isn't for everyone. A colleague was putting off reading the book as they considered the possible resulting indigestion. More inspiring books on psychodrama are available. I wish The Passionate Technique by Antony Williams was still in print! Considering the academic background of the author and its potential audience (social work students) this style is entirely forgivable.

A more serious reservation is the section on role theory. It lacks any mention of the developments in role theory beyond the USA since Moreno's death. Moreno himself told us that role is 'the functioning form the individual assumes in the specific moment [...the person…] reacts to a specific situation in which other persons or objects are involved' (Moreno, 1964, p. iv). So how does the word ‹specific› get overlooked by Giacomucci when a role analysis is constructed and we get generalised, un-contextual role descriptions like Appropriate Authority? Not including Max Clayton›s developments in role theory (Clayton, 1993, 1994), undermines the theoretical basis for this section on roles. Clayton built on the work of Karen Horney (Horney, 1972) and Lynette Clayton (Clayton, 1982), and together they introduced us to ideas about roles being overdeveloped, underdeveloped, adequate, embryonic and conflicted and the descriptive role gestalts of progressive, coping and fragmenting. This theory has been built further by many articles in this Journal (Consedine, 2001; Crane, 2003; Turner, 2008; Reekie, 2009; Broom 2010; Thomson 2014) and referenced by Sociometrist Ann E. Hale in her article in Group (Hale, 2009), thereby creating a body of literature around role theory that supports a sophisticated and nuanced understanding and method of application that is widely used.

Impossible to miss, you might have thought, but this well-developed body of knowledge appears to be either unknown to the author or he has ignored it. Giacomucci, commenting on an early draft of this review, let me know that this apparent gap in his conceptualisation of role is because his understanding of role theory is based on the Therapeutic Spiral Model (TSM™) model. He considers that Max Clayton is unknown in the USA.

I can easily understand how the TSM™ 'clinical maps' and 'intrapsychic role atoms' (Therapeutic Spiral International, n.d) might appeal to Giacomucci as a Social Work Clinician. TSM™ also uses terms such as 'prescribed roles' that appear to subvert the nature of roles being ‹specific› (Moreno, 1964, p. iv), contextual and relational (Williams, 1989). If the systemic nature of a role, as defined by Moreno and Williams, is conditional on a specific context and a response in a specific moment, then how can there be roles that are common to a group of people (prescribed) as TSM™ would have it, with Giacomucci's implicit agreement? Giacomucci compounds this gap in understanding of Morenian role theory by representing a Cultural Atom as a system of, what Moreno termed, Social

Roles (eg, teacher-student, parent-child), rather than the more evocative and situational Psychodramatic Roles that bring you right into the moment, for example *powerful raging dinosaur — distraught protector* (Crane, 2003). I suggest practitioners and students of psychodrama read these sections on roles as a way of contrasting and comparing the practice of psychodrama in Australasia with its USA counterpart.

Giacomucci's loving final words about Moreno see him as the embodiment of a social worker. 'He worked with oppressed and marginalised communities, groups, and individuals while creating larger societal changes which have had a lasting impact on society, education, group therapy, and social work. For this, we recognise him as a pioneer of the social work field and honour him on the 100th anniversary of his death.' (Giacomucci, 2021:687). And, yes, I almost got caught thinking there was a further content error before being reminded by Giacomucci via email that the final chapter is a psychodramatic letter from a social work leader in the future (2074) reflecting back on Moreno's contributions to the field on the 100th anniversary of his death.

This book is available in hardcover, paperback, PDF and eBook (EPUB) versions from the publisher. Springer https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-33-6342-7 and as a PDF from OPAEN https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/47303

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Simon Gurnsey, having spent most of his life in Christchurch, now lives on hillside near Parua Bay, Northland with his wife Sara in the house they built together. They are companioned by their many chickens, llamas, dogs and cats. He accredited as a Sociometrist in 2015 after being involved in psychodrama in Aotearoa and Australia since 1988 and is now the AANZPA Inc. Treasurer and a TEP in Training working mainly in Christchurch.

Three Cups

Ali Begg

Ali Begg has contributed the photograph of her glorious ceramic mugs for the cover of this *Journal*. Ali is a Psychodramaist who lives overlooking Lyttelton Harbour near Otautahi Christchurch, Aotearoa. Psychodrama has both awakened her creativity and given her permission to pursue it.

I've been affected by psychodramatists' valuing of beauty and aesthetics that comes out strongly when people deck themselves out for the conference dinner dance. Getting to know myself more through attending workshops and conferences has enabled me to recognise what gives me joy and the courage to pursue this. I look forward to getting together with my pottery friends every Monday morning at the studio. It is very enjoyable and sustaining playing with clay and creating useful and artistic objects. It is no coincidence that our group of five contains four psychodramatists!

AANZPA Conference 2024

The 2024 Conference of the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association (AANZPA) will be held at Women's College, University of Queensland, Brisbane from 17 to 21 January 2024.

The conference will begin with an opening at 5.00 PM on Wednesday 17 January, followed by dinner and a session focused on building our sociometry and warming up to the conference. A diverse and interesting array of workshops will be on offer from Thursday to Sunday with evening sessions, music and social events. The AANZPA AGM will take place on Saturday 20 January, and our onsite dinner dance will follow. The conference will end at 3.00 PM on Sunday 21 January.

Pre and post conference workshops will be held on 16-17 January and 22-23 January respectively.

Detailed information about the 2024 AANZPA Conference, including registration, the conference venue, accommodation, programme and workshop descriptions, will be publicised during 2023.