

Working with Maori and Pacific Island Clients in Aotearoa / New Zealand

Considerations for the Pakeha Psychodramatist

by John Faisandier

At the time of writing this paper John was working in the Office of the Race Relations Conciliator in Christchurch. He now works at Queen Mary Hospital, Hanmer Springs, and is the first to be employed exclusively as a Psychodramatist in Australia and New Zealand. It is now twenty years since the first psychodrama training event was conducted in New Zealand.

This paper is Part Two of the thesis written by John as partial fulfilment of the requirements towards certification as a Psychodramatist. This thesis was passed this year. Part One provides a context for his ideas; Part Two outlines specific cultural elements with considerations for the Pakeha Psychodramatist. He suggests these principles could be useful for Psychodramatists working cross-culturally in other countries.

Abstract

This paper considers the question of how a Pakeha psychodrama director can best work with Maori and Pacific Island clients.

The psychodramatic method does have universal applications and when used as Moreno intended can benefit any cultural group or individual. When cultural differences are acknowledged and incorporated into the practise of psychodrama the experience can be so much richer for groups or individuals of other cultures.

Specific examples are presented

as illustrations of various cultural practices and values that have an impact on the way a psychodrama session might be run with Maori and Pacific Island clients.



Introduction

Ever since I spent a year in Tonga as a young volunteer teacher, 25 years ago, I have been aware that working cross culturally involves huge translations not just of words but also of systems and values. I am always

aware of the ever present reality of "talking past each other" (Metge & Kinlock:1978) when working with people of other cultures.

When I began writing this paper I was employed in the Office of the Race Relations Conciliator in Christchurch. I was involved with investigation of complaints of racial discrimination and education of people about their rights under the Race Relations Act. I then took up a position as a Life Skills tutor with predominantly Pacific Island groups. My abiding interest in this educative work and beyond, was to assist people to value their own culture so that everyone's life is enhanced. I did this especially by increasing spontaneity using the psychodramatic method.

Now I am employed as the full-time psychodramatist at the Queen Mary Centre, Hanmer Springs. We run residential programmes for people recovering from severe drug and alcohol addictions. Psychodrama was introduced to Queen Mary in the late 1970s when Robert Crawford was Superintendent, and has always been a part of the treatment programme. My appointment in July 1994 signals a new commitment to making psychodrama a vital element in the Queen Mary programme. I conduct three psychodrama sessions each week with Pakeha clients and for two weeks out of four run these sessions with Maori and Pakeha clients together. This work is exciting and I find myself further developing ideas set out in this paper each day.

Confidentiality: Where possible I have gained client permission to tell their stories in this paper. I have not used names of clients and at times have changed some details so that confidentiality can be maintained.

Language: In New Zealand the use of Maori language, and to a lesser

extent Pacific Island languages, is increasingly becoming a part of everyday speech. In this paper I have generally used these words without drawing any special attention to them with speech marks or an English alternative. I have not added the English plural suffix 's' for plural words. The context would indicate if the word is plural. There is a glossary of words at the end of the article.

Many Pakeha New Zealanders have difficulty perceiving the existence of their culture and remain unaware of the significance of Maori culture for Maori people. That Maori and Pakeha cultures differ is a premise on which this paper is written.

I have adapted this article from Part Two of my thesis which I submitted for certification as a psychodramatist. In Part One I briefly covered the theoretical background to psychodrama, Moreno's ideas on culture and how psychodrama, as a universal method, has been used in different cross cultural situations. I also presented basic anthropological concepts of culture and information on the New Zealand situation vis a vis race relations.

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premise on which this paper is written.

While psychodrama is a universal method the best person to direct a drama is someone of the protagonist's own culture because there are so many nuances and subtle meanings conveyed in the words and actions of all the players; i.e. the director, the protagonist, the characters in the drama, and the audience. When the director is of another culture the more he or she can know of the protagonist's culture the richer the drama can be.

Specific cultural elements will be examined in the context of psychodramatic enactment. Experiences and reflections of work with Maori and Pacific Island clients will be presented to illustrate various points. From these experiences, principles and suggestions can be drawn concerning what the Pakeha practitioner needs to consider when working with people from these groups. Some of these principles should also be useful for psychodramatists working cross culturally in other countries.

In my work with Maori and Pacific Island people I have had many rewarding experiences. In reporting some of these experiences I hope to encourage other Pakeha psychodrama practitioners to become involved with Maori and Pacific Island people in the expectation that they too will find it equally rewarding.

Application to Psychodrama

In this section illustrations of how the psychodramatic method can be used with Maori and Pacific Island clients will be presented. These examples will be arranged around the concepts provided by two models for

understanding psychodrama.

Model 1: Moreno's model of the five key elements of psychodrama are: the stage, the protagonist, the director, the audience and the auxiliaries.

Model 2: Moreno's model of the process of psychodrama which presents the dynamic aspect of psychodrama moving from warm-up, through action to resolution and sharing.



Model 1: MORENO'S FIVE ELEMENTS OF PSYCHODRAMA

In considering the general principles that need to be understood when working as a Pakeha director with Maori or Pacific Island clients we can look at these five elements and the process of the psychodrama session and consider some of the ways they might be affected by the particular needs and concerns of the client group.

It does need to be stressed that not all of these examples apply all of the time to all of the people. They are simply presented as examples of what has happened in particular situations with particular people and are intended to alert the reader to some of the possibilities that may arise with Maori and Pacific Island clients. As with all psychodramatic enactment it is the protagonist who writes the script. The director needs to be attuned to the protagonist to hear the cues which in a cross-cultural situation may be different from those the director is readily familiar with.

The Stage

Moreno considered the stage as an important element in psychodrama. It is the area in which the enactment takes place. Once the protagonist is on the stage they can enter into the world of surplus reality and act "as if" they are in another time and place.

At a particular workshop in the South Island a young Maori man of Kai Tahu descent enacted a drama about his deceased father. His father encouraged him to continue developing his leadership role in the tribe. It was a poignant drama in which the protagonist also confronted his aunts and grandparents about putting too much pressure on him to succeed.

In talking with the protagonist the next day he said he could not have done this drama in the North Island, away from his tribal land. He needed the security of doing this rather delicate social atom repair where he has mana, on his own land.

It may be that the director needs to pay particular attention to scene setting and warming the protagonist up to being in the place where they do have mana. It is not clear if this protagonist could have done this drama in the North Island given adequate warm up to the surplus reality the stage provides. What is clear is that both land and the connections to the people of the land are very important to Maori and Pacific Island people.

For Maori the word whenua means both land and placenta. The placenta is buried in the land and a tree is planted to bind the newborn to the land. Land has a spiritual significance that also links the people to one another, since it is communally owned. Tongan and Samoan people also have the same word for placenta and land.

For Samoans identity and status are linked with the village and the family. When working with Samoan students of English I often begin the first session with a sociometric map displaying which village the students come from. In practical terms the Church takes a similar identifying role together with the family in New Zealand.

A further insight into the question of land is illustrated in the above drama. The Pakeha director's great grandfather settled in the area where the workshop was taking place. The director was very proud of his forebears and had a plot of land himself which he was cultivating. This had been acknowledged in the workshop on several occasions. He told me after the drama that he had great pride in the place and found directing easy because he knew his own identity there.

What wasn't spoken by either protagonist or director was the fact that much of the South Island land was taken by Pakeha settlers by dubious and at times dishonest means and at great cost to the integrity and well-being of the Kai Tahu people. Often it is only the Pakeha side of history that is told and acknowledged. As Laidlaw said, Maori had to compromise and give ground every day in order to survive in a world "almost exclusively tuned to the Pakeha wavelength". (1993:46)

This is not to suggest that in this instance there was any overt arrogance on the part of the director. Rather, the lack of acknowledgment of the history and the centrality of the land for the Maori itself causes a tension. Neither am I suggesting that the Pakeha director should lose his own sense of dignity and connection with the land. That would serve no purpose. Rather, this example illustrates the tensions that already

exist in our history, whether stated or not. The task of the Pakeha director is to work with these realities creatively when directing Maori and Pacific Island clients.

Summary

1. The surplus reality of the stage is sufficient to create whatever locus of action is required.
2. The director knowing the importance of the land for the Maori, and village for the Pacific Island clients, could increase the possible production options for a drama.
3. If the director knows and acknowledges the history of the land acquisitions in New Zealand that could further give the protagonist recognition and affirmation of his or her cultural experience.



The Protagonist

The protagonist is the term used for the person who is the subject to the psychodramatic enactment. When a person portrays his or her own life then he or she is the protagonist. In most Pakeha psychodrama groups the protagonist is seen as an individual who is seeking to develop their own autonomy and individuality.

Maori and Pacific Island people have a different perception of the self than do Pakeha people. For Maori and Pacific Islanders the self is integrally linked with the primary group. In Samoa this is the aiga and the village. For Maori it is the iwi, hapu and whanau.

A situation occurred in one training group where a Maori protagonist was enacting a drama

around the theme of her identity as an individual. I was not present at this drama, but the person reporting it was aware of the different perceptions of the self. She told me that the director was striving, encouraging, cajoling and eventually celebrating the protagonist's attempts to develop roles of Independent Free Agent and to break away from her

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family. The observer was of the opinion that the director was not acting with the awareness of the different sense that the Maori would have of the self. The result would possibly be that the Maori protagonist, while feeling accepted by the psychodrama group would be more alienated from their own family.

This, of course, is what happens in many psychodrama sessions when people develop new roles which do not have an easy place in their current social atom, be they Maori or Pakeha. However, it is important for the director to know how this concept of self might be operating when the client is a Maori or Pacific Islander.

One group of Maori recovering addicts and alcoholics I meet with weekly, support the protagonist in each drama by reminding them of their links with their whanau or extended family. While group members are not all related by blood they are all members or associates of a gang and now see their belonging to a whanau of recovery as important to their continued well being and identity.

This does not mean that individuals are not aware that their own recovery and growth depends to a large extent on their own efforts. However, working in the context of whanau is of vital importance.

This also has implications for a lone Maori in a predominantly Pakeha group. The important element of belonging to a whanau could be missing. While a Pakeha group could not make up for the Whanau totally, acknowledging this can be a significant step.

If the director is also aware of the individual needing to belong to the group for his or her identity rather than needing to be a separate individual, then this director could assist with the production of the whanau in the action space and be more attuned to the protagonist's possible place within the whanau or aiga in the actual world.

The Maori or Pacific Island protagonist may also have negative reactions to the Pakeha group leader or Pakeha group members based on their understanding of colonial history or their own past experiences of racism and prejudice. During the sharing following a drama which involved a scene of sexual abuse, one Maori group member said for the first time that he understood why he hated Pakeha so much. Up until this time the reason he had always given was that "Pakeha had taken Maori

land and mistreated our old people". He said he now realised that he hated Pakeha most because as a child he had been sexually abused by two different Pakeha men and he carried this hatred with him.

This sharing assisted the whole group to acknowledge negative feelings they had towards Pakeha for various incidents that had occurred in their lives and the history they knew about. For myself as a Pakeha director, I listened to the sharing of group members, making sure I did not take their statements as a personal attack. If unacknowledged these negative feelings (sometimes referred to as transference) between Maori and Pakeha could limit the effectiveness of the group.

An important concept which may affect an individual Maori protagonist is whakama. This word describes the reaction of Maori to humiliation or public embarrassment. It incorporates the idea of shame and goes beyond that. Whakama involves a physical and psychological response in the person such that they are no longer able to talk directly in the group or with a person in authority. In Samoan a similar reaction is called musumusu.

An instance occurred in a psychodrama session I was conducting once. The Maori protagonist was setting out in action a picture he had of his addiction. Two members of the group laughed as they took up a particular shape. The protagonist got very angry and stormed out of the room.

The two group members went to get him and to apologise. He eventually came back into the room and sat in the corner with bowed head and downcast eyes. After a long silence I asked him if he would care to address the group. He gave no response. I then realised that he was whakama. So I took the initiative and

praised him for his courage in returning to the room and commented on how his drama had been up until he left. Others in the group apologised and affirmed his strength. After some considerable time the protagonist was able to speak. He said that the laughter was not only embarrassing for him in the drama but it took him back to his primary school days when his grandmother embarrassed him in front of the whole school – who laughed at him often. It was not until I realised this protagonist was whakama and so needed a more roundabout approach, that he could move on.

Summary

1. The protagonist is the individual who portrays his or her own life in the drama and develop for himself or herself new ways of acting, thinking and feeling.
2. Maori and Pacific Island cultures perceive the individual existing only within the group and defined by membership to a group.
3. Where possible the psychodrama group itself should, for Maori and Pacific Island clients, be as a family group.
4. When a Maori protagonist works in a predominantly Pakeha group a culturally aware director could produce an appropriate primary group for the Maori protagonist to re-enter and integrate the changes made in the drama.
5. Personal and historical memories of unfair treatment of Maori by Pakeha will be present in Maori protagonists and group members. The director who is aware of this can deal with it effectively when it arises.
6. Individuals may experience culturally specific reactions such as whakama or musumusu which

require different approaches by the director and the group.



The Director

The director is the person who guides the protagonist in the use of the psychodramatic method in order to help the protagonist explore a particular problem.

The things a psychodrama director needs in a cross cultural setting are specific well developed roles at the personal level, an awareness of cross cultural communication issues, and a spirit of humility.

The roles of the Naive Inquirer, the Wise Person, the Producer and the Coach stand out as particularly important. In my early days of training I directed a drama for a Pakeha protagonist I knew quite well. Because I thought I knew the story line I assumed the drama would go in a particular direction. I remember struggling with the protagonist when she came up with quite different responses to the situation. I am sure there is not a trainee on earth who has not experienced this difficulty.

When working with a Tongan person setting out their social atom this Naive Inquirer role becomes even more important. Even if the director knows nothing of the specific family arrangements, when the protagonist sets out an aunt (mehikitanga) or any other relation, questions about that person's place in the family would reveal they are not the same kind of aunt that the Pakeha director may have.

In the role of the Wise Person the director is aware of his or her own culture and also how cultures are different. The director then realises

that this cultural perspective may not explain enough of the other person's reality to be of use. Knowing this may be the case will lead the director to look beyond what is simply spoken by the protagonist and to view it as part of a larger cultural system.

The concept of co-production may assist in understanding how the director can relate to a protagonist. The director works with the protagonist to write the script of the drama. Following the lead of the protagonist is of vital importance. However, one of the roles of the producer is Magician. The producer needs to work authoritatively to bring in surprises and to increase the spontaneity of the protagonist and move the drama along.

When working with a mixed group of Pakeha and Maori the director will need to be aware that many Pakeha in the group do not perceive the subtle differences that may be manifested in the roles a Maori protagonist displays. The drama could be enhanced for the protagonist if the director as Coach, especially through frequent role reversal, helps the auxiliaries in their roles when they change some of the nuances which are important to the protagonist.

It is also important for the Pakeha director to be aware of the differences in communication across cultures. These differences can cover verbal and non-verbal language. The phrase, "talking past each other" aptly sums up the result when communication differences are not taken into account. For example, a very common stumbling block is in asking questions. The question "You didn't bring your book, did you?" in English is answered "No [I didn't]". A Pacific Island person would answer "Yes [I agree with your statement, I didn't bring my book.]" It is very easy

for an over-anxious director to trip up on the use of language. It is also important to learn the correct pronunciation of Maori and Polynesian words. Because the vowels are constant it is relatively easy to learn how to say words correctly.

For Maori, healing takes place within the context of the community. This is often seen when a Maori person goes into hospital. Large numbers of family come to visit the sick person, much to the amazement of other Pakeha patients and staff.

Any knowledge of Maori things that a director may have needs to be used in a quiet, unpretentious way. Maori themselves are cautious about parading their own good points and abilities, and have ways of bringing someone into line who does get too inflated with their own self importance. If a Pakeha presented themselves this way the group members may not say anything, and may indeed appear to go along with what is being asked of them, but they will hold back and in the end not trust the person concerned.

As one Maori informant said, "As a Pakeha director you need to acknowledge that you know about Maori things in a humble way. Don't proclaim your knowledge. There was a Pakeha director who got up once and said she knew all about Maori ways. But she didn't know the people

in front of her.” The best way to show a knowledge of Maori culture is to do some of the small but significant things as a matter of course even if there are only one or two Maori people present. Such things would be correct pronunciation of the name and not sitting on tables or pillows.

In an informal setting with a group of trainees a Maori person was explaining why it was offensive for a person to sit on a pillow. All the people in the group appeared interested. However, all through the discussion and for the rest of the afternoon one of the group members continued to sit on his pillow. The Maori person reported feeling uneasy that while this person might claim to have learned something of Maori culture he was not prepared to change his behaviour to show that he did indeed know about Maori culture. The adage “actions speak louder than words” is nowhere more true than here.

Summary

1. Any director who works fully from the roles set out in the Training and Standards Manual could produce an adequate drama for a person of any culture.
2. When working cross culturally the roles of Naive Inquirer, Wise Person and Coach are particularly useful.
3. A Pakeha director who knows his or her own cultural bias and communication patterns can be aware of these and make allowances so that communication and understanding are enhanced.
4. The director who knows something of Maori or Pacific Island culture needs to carry this knowledge in the group with humility and be prepared to act differently.



The Audience

The audience is the other people present during the psychodrama. Unlike a conventional audience, the audience in psychodrama often takes an active role in participating in the protagonist's enactment.

I was talking about psychodrama with a young Maori psychology graduate a couple of years ago. She quickly saw that psychodrama would work well with groups of her peers in the Maori community. As we walked along the country road we enthusiastically planned a weekend workshop which I might direct in her home town. However as we walked back towards the marae the complexities of our proposal dawned on us.

We realised consultation with the community, (the bigger audience) especially the kaumatua, their approval and involvement was needed. It would also be desirable to have a Maori co-facilitate. Often the relationship between Maori and Pakeha that exists in the community (particularly of Pakeha having decision making power over Maori) is reproduced in such groups. This issue needed to be addressed and a relationship with the elders established.

We both realised as we walked that the “audience” for Maori is a much bigger group than for Pakeha. For Pakeha the individual easily operates on his or her own and psychodrama is just another “associational” group common in an “urban type” culture. For Maori, the group takes on many aspects of whanau. For example, the group already mentioned who act as a whanau are accountable to each

other in many other areas of living, not just in the psychodrama group.

This special nature of the group is seen in the Taha Maori programme at Queen Mary Hospital in Hanmer. The group that goes through the eight weeks programme is called a whanau. There was extensive consultation with the Maori community prior to the establishment of this unit to ensure it would address Maori cultural needs in an explicit way. The work is continually monitored by the elders and "the audience" is very much the wider Maori community.

For Maori, healing takes place within the context of the community. This is often seen when a Maori person goes into hospital. Large numbers of family come to visit the sick person, much to the amazement of other Pakeha patients and staff.

This is not to say that a psychodrama session does not have its own boundaries and might be limited to its members. In a recovering alcoholics group I ran in a Maori context the group members were most concerned that no one could see into the room or hear what was going on. After each session other members of that community provided food for the participants to share and yet the confidentiality of what occurred in the drama was well guarded.

Summary

1. An audience, whether for Pakeha or Maori, gets involved in the drama of the protagonist. Its active presence can be a significant factor in increasing the spontaneity of the protagonist, enhancing creativity and bringing about healing.
2. For Maori, the audience/group often has an added component which they call whanau.

3. For Maori the audience is not always limited to the people who attend the group. The elders of the wider community also have a say in what a group of Maori people do.
4. For many Maori and Pacific Island people, healing best takes place in the community. A psychodrama group can be a particularly good setting for Maori and Pacific Island people to experience their healing within the community.



The Auxiliaries

The final key element in Moreno's model of psychodrama is the auxiliaries. This is the term for anyone beside the protagonist and the director who takes part in a psychodrama. Auxiliaries are usually members of the audience the protagonist chooses to take on roles in the drama.

The following drama was reported to me by a Maori woman who was an auxiliary in a psychodrama. The Maori protagonist enacted a powerful social atom drama in a mixed group of Pakeha and Maori people. The drama involved his relationship with his marae and his family, including the ancestors. He was attempting to find his place in the family and at the same time to free himself from his addiction to alcohol.

He portrayed the profound strength of aroha in belonging to his tribe with the marae as the place where the ancestors were present and so real, calling him to wholeness. At the same time he showed the violence and dysfunction of a family and community that has suffered generations of social disintegration, the effects of prolonged alcohol and

drug abuse, chronic ill health, educational failure, prejudice and poverty.

After the drama many of the Pakeha group members said to my informant that they were "blown away" by what the protagonist had presented of his social atom. They said they did not realise before what it was like being Maori.

This is an important aspect of working cross culturally in New Zealand. Most Pakeha do not have a real idea that Maori culture is so different from Pakeha culture.

Psychodrama is a wonderful opportunity for them to role reverse with Maori and experience on the stage some of the joys and the tensions of being Maori.

This would also mean the director needs to be aware of how much coaching the Pakeha auxiliaries will need. There are some moments that will need to be played sensitively so that the particular meaning the Maori or Pacific Island protagonist puts in a role is enacted by the auxiliary.

Summary

1. Auxiliaries do not need to be Maori or Pacific Islanders themselves to be of use to Maori or Pacific Island protagonists.
2. It is helpful for a Maori or Pacific Island protagonist if the director is aware of some of the significance of moments in the drama so that coaching can be given to auxiliaries if necessary.
3. Psychodrama with Maori or Pacific Island protagonists can be a powerful learning experience for Pakeha auxiliaries when they role reverse across cultures.



Model 2:

THE PROCESS OF A PSYCHODRAMA SESSION

The three stages of a psychodrama session described by Moreno (1946) and written up as a monograph by Hollander (1978) as Warm-up, Enactment and Sharing offer a framework in which the Pakeha practitioner can understand issues related to work with Maori and Pacific Island clients.¹ Moreno has identified the warm-up phase especially as being the time to consider cultural factors of individuals and groups. "Warming up to psychodrama may proceed differently from culture to culture and appropriate changes in the application of the method have to be made." (1969:237)

Warm Up

The warm-up phase of a psychodrama has the effect of bringing the group together and creating a working atmosphere by focusing the group on its central concern.

This is achieved in a variety of ways including the written brochure, the room setting, the welcome given to participants by the director and the activities the director might invite the group to do that will encourage their spontaneity to increase.

Enriching the drama for Maori or Pacific Island clients begins with the warm-up.

1. Much of the material in this section has come from conversations with Monica Stockdale, who was until 1993 Manager of the Taha Maori Programme, Queen Mary Hospital, Hanmer Springs.

Once when running a workshop with Tongan people (not in psychodrama) I began with a very brief introduction and proceeded with the content of the workshop. After I had spoken for a while I invited a response from members of the group. Instead of answering my question directly, several of the group members made speeches of welcome and introduction. I had failed to accommodate the more ritualised and formal greeting patterns of Tongans. Until such things are done a group may not feel comfortable and ready to work.

In Maori this is called the mihi and, if it is extended to include the coming together of two groups, the powhiri. In an all-Maori group I once directed, I met with the group members a week before the sessions were to begin. They started this meeting with a formal speech acknowledging where the speaker came from, honouring the house and the grounds we were meeting in and paying respect to the dead. This mihi was concluded with waiata, and following my speech and song, we greeted each other with a hongi and hand shake.

On another occasion I was conducting a warm-up session with a mixed group of Pacific Islanders. They did not know one another so I invited them to get with one other person and share some small detail from their home country or village. This exercise works well with Pakeha groups and seemed to be a good way to start. I was next going to invite them to meet someone else they didn't know and have another short exchange. However, before I got to that point the whole group began shaking hands with each other in what I immediately recognised as a typically Polynesian way. This warm-up was much more appropriate and

satisfying for them.

One aspect of beginnings for Maori and often with Pacific Island people is a karakia or lotu. This prayer is an expression of wairua and differs markedly from Pakeha spiritual beliefs in that it infuses all they do and is often made explicit in an unselfconscious way. Maori often say at the heart of what they do is wairua. So when Maori groups begin they normally have karakia and they often end with it as well.

A warm-up which involves elements of their culture works well for many Maori. For example, Maori identify themselves as belonging to a particular river or body of water and a particular mountain. This identity gives them strength because it tells them who they are. A Maori director reported she used legends and ancestors from the past to begin many of her sessions and noted the warm-up was quicker than using non-Maori things. She said it was "warming the wairua up to working".

While using Maori legends as a warm-up may be beyond most Pakeha directors who are not so familiar with the details or the nuances involved, there are a number of possible options to be aware of that give group members the choice to identify with a specifically Maori aspect of their being for that session. Occasionally I have invited group members to be a tree and place themselves somewhere in the land. Some have chosen to be native trees with their distinctively Maori meanings e.g., totara or kauri, while others have chosen introduced trees such as willow or oak trees. Using specific cultural elements is not essential but it can enhance the drama for Maori or Pacific Island people.

In the warm-up the group warms up to the group leader as much as to

themselves as individuals and to one another. If the director can display in simple, sincere ways he or she has a sense of what Maori value, what is tapu and what is respected, the level of trust will most likely increase. For instance, not sitting on or having someone stand on a table, and not sitting on a pillow. Maori group members may not want to actually do

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very much that is different but they will at least recognise that the director has a feeling for things Maori.

Maori warm up to each other by establishing their whakapapa. Whakapapa tells a person who he or she is, where they are from, which iwi they belong to and some sense of their history. For Maori the past is in

front of them and people have mana when their past is respected.

There are, of course, some Maori who do not know their whakapapa or where they are from. This can be embarrassing and painful for them at times. It is perhaps more appropriate for another Maori to assist them in their discovery of that. It is, however, worth the Pakeha director realising this when inviting Maori to present their whakapapa.

Waldegrave (1990:35) in his report on Family Therapy with Maori clients also makes this point of establishing a person's family connections before working on the immediate concern of the client. Acknowledging a person's tribe and place of origin can be a way of showing that the director is at least partly in tune with the Maori person.

Summary

1. Using more familiar "pakeha" warm-up activities will work with any group, so long as they achieve the purpose of focusing the group on its task. In the final analysis it is the person who is responsible for their own warm-up and so they may do something different from what the director intends.
2. The director who uses culturally appropriate warm-up activities can deepen the warm-up more quickly for members of that culture. That director is using symbols and elements which are immediately recognised as being part of the group member's life.
3. The director who directs a culturally appropriate warm-up signals to the Maori or Pacific Island group members that he or she is in tune with elements of their culture and that they, as director, are more likely to be culturally safe in their practise.
4. Culturally appropriate warm-up

for Maori and Pacific Island groups will include attention to the mihi, acknowledgment of whakapapa or family connections, spirituality and use of other cultural symbols.



Enactment

The enactment phase of a psychodrama follows the warm-up. It usually involves the protagonist setting out a scene or scenes in which he or she relates to the various elements. The protagonist writes the script of the drama as it goes along.

The director's task is to produce the drama for the protagonist, ensuring that both protagonist and group maintain their spontaneity and work towards the stated purpose of the drama. In a typical drama there is usually a catharsis in which the protagonist acts or sees things in a new way and experiences a degree of healing.

It is possible for any director following the method of psychodrama to produce an adequate setting for Maori or Pacific Island people to enact a drama in. The concern in this paper is to produce an enriching drama that is a good cultural experience for the protagonist and the group.

In the review of psychodrama in Israel, Hare (1988) said there was no difference in the way psychodrama was done in Israel from other parts of the world. A similar statement could be made about psychodrama with Maori. It is not the structure of the enactment that is different but what goes around it. That is the karakia, waiata and the different ways of respecting the mana of the group members.

The experience of the Taha Maori Unit at Hanmer is that psychodrama works very well for Maori. It helps them find confidence in themselves and they find it particularly useful to concretise things. The idea of psychodrama as play is also important to Maori. Many Maori have missed out on play as children. As children they have a lot of responsibilities for younger siblings and so do not know how to be childlike. A lot of time is spent in the Taha Maori programme on developing the roles of the playful child.

There are some particular things that are special to Maori and Pacific Island people that a culturally attuned director would work with. The first to consider is the authority of the elders and particularly their role as guardians of the ancestors.

A Maori director was demonstrating the use of psychodrama to a group of visiting kaumatua at the Taha Maori Unit in Hanmer Springs. She was not wanting the content of the drama to become too emotional as this was simply an opportunity to illustrate the use of psychodrama in the programme. The protagonist was warmed up to doing some early social atom repair at a deep level. The director was apprehensive because the drama would involve sacred things for Maori. She moved cautiously, explaining what she was doing as she went along. The visiting elders were very moved by the drama and cried a lot as the drama progressed. The director realised that "If you do the right things it can be accepted by the elders".

In this case "doing the right thing" meant being careful, going about the task slowly and respectfully, particularly honouring the spirit of the ancestors.

This honour for elders and parents is a strong feature of Maori and Pacific Island life. A consequence of this is that Maori and Pacific Island protagonists are resistant to beating up their parents, verbally or physically as sometimes happens in a psychodrama. If they do have a high level of anger with parents or grandparents they could be offered various other ways to express their anger. For example, if they had an alcoholic parent then they might beat up the bottle or get angry at the addicted part of the father, but they would want the father they love very firmly in place before they did that.

Language for any ethnic group is an important source of identity and expression of core values. With Maori this is no exception. Maori are also acutely aware that their language is under threat, even though it is an official language of the country. In groups I run with Maori even people who do not speak the language conversationally will use key Maori words within English sentences. Asking for a translation of these words both slows up the drama and indicates a lack of awareness on the part of the director. Even when I do not know the meaning of the word used I trust my intuition and allow the meaning to emerge through the context. This is an instance where the director needs to trust the process.

One director, who did not speak Maori herself, reported encouraging the protagonist to use Te Reo which he did. He was by a stream and even the fish were speaking Maori. She was getting lost and a little unsure of where the drama was going. She asked him if there was a tree there. He said there was, but then she thought this would be no good if it were a totara because that would speak Maori too. However, it was a pine tree so she got to hear what was

going on in English!

Body language is also an important way a protagonist has of communicating during the enactment. Even if a director does not remember all the details of cultural difference at least being aware that some behaviours differ because of culture is an important principle to carry.

One director, in her enthusiasm to produce an interesting drama invited the Samoan protagonist to stand on a chair and tell his father how he felt about him. The protagonist resisted this. The director wondered if this resistance was personal or cultural. She asked the protagonist who told her that in his culture he could not put his head above the head of his father. She then encouraged him to find the appropriate place to talk with his father. The director does not need to know everything about other cultures, but rather needs to be tuned in to the idea that there may be other cultural values at work in the enactment.



Summary

1. The basic form of psychodramatic enactment with Maori and Pacific Island clients is no different from psychodrama enactment with any other ethnic group.
2. Psychodrama offers Maori an opportunity to learn to play and to concretise their reality.
3. Some typical psychodrama activities which might otherwise offend Maori can be done with Maori groups if care is taken to warm the group up to this and an explanation of the purpose is given.
4. Maori hold their elders in high

regard. When a drama reaches a point when these people are to be criticised or attacked it is often better to isolate the one aspect of that person to attack and have the positive role of elder well established elsewhere on the stage.

5. Body language is an important way of communicating cultural values. A director needs to be aware that some actions a protagonist makes may have particular significance. If in doubt, ask.

Sharing

The sharing phase of the psychodrama follows the enactment. It is the time for individual group members to share their own experiences and responses to the drama. This has the effect of bringing the protagonist back into the group as well as revealing the emerging themes in the group following the drama. This time is also an opportunity for auxiliaries to de-role, especially if they have been affected by the roles they have taken in the drama.

In psychodrama with Maori and Pacific Island people the format of the sharing phase is usually similar to that in any other psychodrama group. There are some particular Maori practices that could extend and enhance this phase of a psychodrama session.

As was mentioned in the warm-up phase wairua is very important in Maori life. Karakia is frequently used to finish meetings where people have been together in a significant way. In a Maori group which I meet with weekly, at the end of the sharing we stand in a circle and one of the group members leads this karakia, in Maori.

In drama where particularly tapu topics have been addressed there is

an even greater reason to have a full sharing. The most obvious instance of this is where death is involved. If not dealt with in an appropriate way the mana of a deceased person could be “trampled on”. If this is a concern then the ending rituals may need to be extended and could involve karakia, waiata and more talk about that person. This is not something for the Pakeha director to impose on the group but rather to be aware of and to allow enough time for such things to be addressed, especially in a predominantly Maori group. This may take a lot more time than would otherwise happen in a Pakeha group.

Time is an important factor with Maori and Pacific Island people. For Pakeha time is a reality measured by the clock and it is usually allocated in advance to certain tasks. With Maori and Pacific Island people time is people-centred and event-centred. When people are ready the activity begins. If an event, like a powhiri, takes a long time then so be it. The people and the event are more important than the clock.

This is not to say that clock time has no meaning for Maori and Pacific Island people but when the activity is important enough clock time can be set aside in favour of the people or the event.

Summary

1. In psychodrama with Maori and Pacific Island people sharing follows a similar format to that with other groups.
2. Karakia can be an important way to finish sharing.
3. When a drama has dealt with particularly tapu topics, such as death, special attention may need to be given to the sharing phase. This is best determined by the Maori people themselves.
4. Maori and Pacific Island people

measure time in terms of completing a task. A director needs to allow for extra time so the process of sharing is completed.

Much can be achieved by a Pakeha director who works with a knowledge and understanding of his or her own culture and strives to understand the culture of Maori and Pacific Island groups.

Conclusion

This paper set out to look at the cross-cultural implications of Pakeha psychodramatists working with Maori and Pacific Island clients. It is hoped that this beginning will stimulate more appreciation and awareness of cultural issues, generally, amongst psychodrama practitioners.

The examples I have discussed such as the negative attitude of a Maori group member to Pakeha generally and the significance of the land to a Kai Tahu protagonist highlight the importance of knowing our colonial history.

Specific cultural factors that a psychodrama director can become aware of when working with Maori and Pacific Island clients were discussed. These have been arranged around two of Moreno's models of psychodrama: The Five Elements of Psychodrama and The Three Step Process of Psychodrama.

A Pakeha director can never manage fully to achieve a drama that

is completely in tune with a Maori protagonist. I have referred to this in several places throughout the paper. Some of the examples I have quoted – for instance, telling Maori legends in the warm-up and dealing fully with tapu topics such as death – are the preserve of Maori. They have strong emotional and spiritual significance which need to be respected and left to the appropriate people to deal with. This is good reason for wanting to encourage Maori to train in psychodrama.

However, much can be achieved by a Pakeha director who works with a knowledge and understanding of his or her own culture and strives to understand the culture of Maori and Pacific Island groups.

As I have demonstrated, aspects of his or her own culture and functioning that a director needs to be aware of included perception of the self as an individual and an appreciation of how English speech patterns – such as double negatives – can be confusing. The director needs to show a willingness to actually change some of his or her behaviour. Correctly pronouncing Maori words, avoiding actions that are offensive to Maori or Pacific Island people, such as sitting on tables or pillows or staring into a person's eyes are important examples to take note of.

In communicating with another, Maori and Pacific people place considerable importance on formal greetings and the beginnings and endings of events – as is often shown by the use of waiata and karakia. In everyday speech there are distinctive speech patterns, words and body language that can be easily misunderstood by Pakeha.

I have also shown that Pakeha directors can increase their knowledge of Maori and Pacific Island cultures and thus enhance the

drama for protagonists and group members from these cultural groups. In my experience the important areas to be aware of include an appreciation of the significance of whenua, the role of whanau in a person's life, the place an individual has in the wider community of the iwi and the identity that they get from their whakapapa. In particular, Maori and Pacific Island people have a high level of respect for their parents, elders and their ancestors.

In summary I make the following points:

1. When directing in a cross cultural situation the psychodrama director needs to know his or her own culture first.
2. Anything the director can learn of the protagonist's culture will assist with the production of the drama.
3. Any knowledge the director has of Maori or Pacific Island culture needs to be revealed in a humble and tentative way.
4. Some things which are particularly sacred in Maori culture are best left to Maori to attend to.
5. It is possible for a Pakeha psychodrama director to direct a drama for Maori and Pacific Island clients.

Much of what has been referred to above would best occur in groups of all Maori or all Pacific Island clients. In mixed groups the dynamic is obviously different. Maori are used to being bicultural and fitting in with what Pakeha do. I believe the Pakeha now need to find ways of making changes in their behaviour that would fit with values and beliefs that Maori have and begin to understand what it really means to live biculturally.

Creativity is needed to work out ways that Maori and Pacific Island group members in mixed cultural

groups can have a full expression of their culture so that they and other group members are enriched. Each situation calls for a fresh response. This paper has offered some initial guidelines, suggestions and possibilities of what might occur in psychodrama groups in New Zealand in the future. Such work will be rewarding and the prospects for psychodrama as a whole are exciting.



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Glossary

Aotearoa

New Zealand; literally: long white cloud (Maori)

aroa

love, affectionate regard, show approval

aiga

family (Samoan)

awhi

embrace, foster, cherish, encourage

fa'etangata

uncle; literally: male mother (Tongan)

hapu

subdivision of tribe, sub-tribe, descent group; literally: to have conceived

hongi

to greet one another by pressing noses

iwi

tribe, social unit bound together by descent from a common ancestor or ancestors; literally: bone

Kai Tahu

the major iwi of the South Island, New Zealand

karakia

incantation, charm, spell, ancient rites; Christian prayers or chants

kaumatua

old man or woman, elders

kauri
native tree which grows very tall

lotu
prayer, to pray, to worship,
religion, especially Christianity
(Tongan)

mana
authority, power, psychic force,
prestige

Maori
indigenous people of Aotearoa/
New Zealand

marae
open space or courtyard where
people gather, generally in front
of main building or meeting
house, forum of social life

mehikitanga
aunt, specifically father's sister
(Tongan)

mihī
greeting

musumusu
response to public humiliation
(Samoan)

Pakeha
non-Maori, usually of British
ethnic origin or background

powhiri
ritual of greeting when two
groups meet

taba Maori
the Maori way, the Maori side

tangi
funeral rites, ceremony of
mourning

taonga
property, anything highly prized

tapu
sacred, under ceremonial
restriction, beyond one's power,
forbidden

te reo
Maori language

totara
native tree, the wood of which is
used for carving

waiata
chant, song, to chant, to sing

wairua
spirit, spirituality

whakama
response to public humiliation,
culturally specific term
incorporating embarrassment and
shame

whakapapa
genealogical table, to recite in
proper order; literally: to place in
layers

whanau
offspring, family group, a familiar
term of address to a number of
people; literally: to be born

whenua
land, country, ground, placenta,
afterbirth