

The Metaphysical Tasks of the Psychodramatist

by Clare Elizabeth

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Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? What is the purpose of my life? Such questions have arisen within the hearts and minds of men and women throughout history. As psychodramatists we are called upon to recognise that these questions are fundamental to human experience.

To respond to them we need to have grappled, or be grappling with, these areas of inquiry ourselves, albeit not having found satisfactory answers. Such endeavours are likely to result in a greater ability to effectively engage with our clients in their attempts to address such questions.

A challenge exists for many of us to take greater initiative in this area than we have done previously. Responding to this challenge will assist us to remain connected to the essence of Moreno's philosophy and theology as well as address our clients' needs for a relevant spirituality.

The Metaphysical Model of Humanity

What is Metaphysics?

The word 'metaphysics' literally means 'beyond the physical'. Human beings are natural metaphysicians in that we tend to ask certain fundamental questions. We know we are physical beings with a brain, heart, lungs and so on, but we also know we are more than this. When we ask 'Who am I?' we are not asking merely about our physical nature or even the nature of our personality. Rather, we are inquiring about a deeper reality which is experienced by us as being more fundamental than any other aspect of ourselves. It is that deeper reality which we sense when we say 'I'. And it is that to which we are referring when, with the death of a loved one, we say, 'I can still feel her spirit around me'. In metaphysics we search behind the outer towards an inner reality in an attempt to understand the nature and meaning of our own being and the universe.

The Metaphysical Model

The metaphysical model (Schoenmaker, 1992) holds that we are a triune being, consisting of body, soul (mind) and spirit (God). The body is that which is associated with life and death in accordance with the laws of the physical world. The soul or psyche is that which experiences life in all its many facets. It is, therefore, the part of us that evolves and changes and can usefully be equated to consciousness. The three aspects of soul or consciousness are thinking, feeling and willing. The spirit is the eternal aspect of us, sometimes referred to as the I AM or our Spiritual 'I'. Spirit is not tied to the body and belongs to another realm of existence, hence the need for the soul to act as an interface between it and the body.

Spiritual Evolution

Within the metaphysical model the purpose or goal of spiritual evolution is the unifying or integration of soul with spirit. Integration is achieved through the development and expansion of consciousness, involving the three soul aspects of thinking, feeling and willing, and the overcoming of our egocentric tendencies. It is further assumed that each person has responsibility for his or her own spiritual development.

As the soul aspect continues to grow and develop, there is a greater ability to connect with and express our 'Spiritual "I"', as opposed to our 'egocentric "I"'. Within several of the major mystical traditions, the integration of the soul with spirit is sometimes referred to as the 'mystical marriage', in which the soul (the Bride) is united with God (the Bridegroom).

The Spiritual 'I' of the metaphysical model is comparable to concepts from different religious traditions, contemporary psychotherapeutic approaches and various New Age philosophies. The I AM of the Christian tradition, the Atman of the Hindu tradition, the Spiritual Self of Assagioli's Psychosynthesis, the Higher Power of Alcoholics Anonymous, and the Higher Self of New Age thinkers, all allude to that aspect of our functioning which is the Spiritual 'I'.

The importance of consciousness and the relinquishing of our egocentricity in the process of spiritual evolution or development are ideas that are clearly not limited to the metaphysical model. Jung (1959) used the term 'individuation' to refer to the process that transforms human beings from unconscious to conscious and (thus) whole people. Individuation is essentially the idea that everything that is alive seeks to fulfil itself. An oak tree is an acorn that has individuated. Given the right conditions of climate, soil and moisture, the acorn will become the oak tree. Within human beings, however, the individuation process must be consciously experienced and expressed through an ego that has self-awareness and certain powers of choice. It is for this reason that Jung viewed the human individuation process as a spiritual and psychological, as well as, a natural process.

According to Sanford (1987), Fritz Kunkel emphasises the notion that if the ego is to perform its task in the process of development it must overcome its egocentricity. As long as a person is egocentric the ego will block rather than fulfil the urge toward growth. Only the person with true ego strength can afford to give up his/her egocentricity in order to become a willing servant of life. It is as a result of the transformation of our egocentric human self that we draw closer to and are able to express our divine self. A similar idea is put forward by Frankl (1984) when he says that '...self-actualisation is possible only as a side-effect of self-transcendence' (p133). Moreno (1946) also gives recognition to the need for us to be able to give up our own self-interest when he places role reversal as the final stage of personality development.

Within spiritual evolution it is sometimes helpful to equate the development of consciousness with the expansion of consciousness. Skolimowski (1994) argues that we need to develop 'new sensitivities' that increase our capacity to enter into, apprehend and express ourselves within new realities. Such realities include the realm of Assagioli's (1991) 'transpersonal

consciousness' which refers to those states of consciousness which 'are the result of coming or being brought involuntarily into contact with a plane or sphere of Reality which is "above" or "beyond" those which are normally regarded as "real", a reality that 'is perceived as something more real, lasting and substantial than the everyday world in which we live, as the true source and essence of being...' (p19).

While not explicitly addressed within Morenian thinking, the concept of expanding consciousness is consistent with one of the goals within psychodrama of increasing role repertoire.

Broadly speaking, then, spiritual evolution or the integration of the soul and the spiritual 'I' or self requires an increase and/or expansion of consciousness. An important part of this process is becoming more aware of one's calling or life purpose.

James Hillman (1996) directs his exploration of the nature of humanity to the question 'What is the purpose of my life?' He gives fresh impetus to the old idea of the calling as a prime fact of human existence. He proposes that before we are born each of us is given a unique daimon which has selected an image or pattern that we live on earth. This daimon guides us here and remains at an unconscious level within us as the carrier of our destiny. 'A calling may be postponed, avoided, intermittently missed. It may also possess you completely. Whatever, eventually it will out. It makes its claim. The daimon does not go away' (p8).

The metaphysical model is consistent with a number of perspectives on the nature of humanity – those psychotherapeutic theories that incorporate a spiritual dimension, e.g. Jung's Analytical Psychology, Assagioli's Psychosynthesis, Frankl's Logotherapy, the philosophy and theories of Moreno, as well as various New Age philosophies. Furthermore, this conceptualisation is in implicit agreement with the writings of the mystics across major religious traditions. All of these share a general emphasis on the importance of integration both within the soul and

between the soul and the spiritual or higher self. A further emphasis exists in the important role given to developing consciousness in achieving this task, including becoming conscious of one's calling or purpose in life.

The metaphysical model is a dynamic model that incorporates both our 'being' and our 'becoming'. It brings together two perspectives that are currently emphasised in scientific, philosophical and religious thought. These are the evolutionary (developmental) and the systemic (holistic) dimensions – evolutionary in that development occurs through the augmentation of consciousness and the overcoming of our egocentricity, and systemic, in that such development (and by implication, interventions), can occur across multiple levels. The model's emphasis on the key role of self-responsibility in spiritual development concurs with Moreno's view of humanity as being co-responsible Co-Creators along with God.

The model explicitly incorporates both a systems and an evolutionary perspective, and, consequently, I have found it useful when applied in conjunction with Moreno's role model of personality functioning.

J. L. Moreno's Philosophy, Theology, and Cosmology

Throughout his writings, Moreno (1955) continually emphasises the significance of his philosophical and religious roots in the development of his thinking and methods. 'All my inspirations for my methods and techniques have come directly or indirectly from my idea of the Godhead and from the principle of His genesis' (p31).

During the early part of the twentieth century, when there was a strong division between science and religion, Moreno attempted to create a marriage between the two. He wrote: 'It may be said that I tried to do through sociometry what "religion without science" has failed to accomplish in the past and what "science without religion" has failed to accomplish in Soviet Russia' (1955, p7). Many of his earlier writings illustrate Moreno's attempts to broaden the concept

of psychiatry beyond its medical and sociological limitations and to broaden the concept of religion beyond its historical and theological limitations.

Moreno's Philosophy – Creativity, Spontaneity and Metapraxie

Moreno's philosophy is based on a belief in the central importance of the process of creativity as a fundamental and universal aspect of existence. He sees this process of creativity as intimately linked with, although not identical to, the process of spontaneity. Moreno (1934), in *Who Shall Survive*, views creativity as belonging to the 'categories of substance' and spontaneity to the 'categories of catalyser' (Student edition, 1993, p12). While these two phenomena provide the cornerstones of Moreno's sociometric conceptualisations, at a deeper level creativity and spontaneity involve metaphysical categories – they are concerned with the nature and properties of ultimate reality.

In attempting to develop a philosophical foundation for his theories of creativity and spontaneity, Moreno (1947) describes a metaphysical concept he called 'metapraxie'. Metapraxie is the innate potential within the world which exists within, and yet transcends, specific creative acts. In incorporating the word 'praxis' Moreno is trying to emphasise the idea of practice rather than theory, of the cosmos consisting more of an act, or a becoming, than a state of being, and of creative processes innate within the emergence of every event in the world.

Blatner and Blatner (1988b) expand upon some of Moreno's ideas to illustrate similarities between his concept of metapraxie and Bohm's theory of the wholeness and the implicate order of existence, Jung's theory of archetypes and the writings of the medieval Jewish mystics, the Kabbalists.

Moreno's Theology – The Godhead

Essentially, Moreno's theology is a creation theology. God is the underlying principle of spontaneity and creativity within the cosmos. Only in God has all spontaneity become

creativity. 'He is one case in which spontaneity and creativity are identical' (Moreno, 1934, quoted from Student edition, 1993, p11).

The Godhead is the name given by Moreno to represent a changing concept for a permanent universal principle (Kraus, 1984). Each person, as well as each culture and era, has their own version of the Godhead. 'At every crucial point in history the meaning of the universe has challenged man's mind. God – or what stood for the meaning-giving, central idea of the universe – had to achieve a form which was able to interpret man's place in the scheme of things' (Moreno, 1941, quoted from 1971 edition, pxii).

The Godhead, therefore, incorporates an evolutionary perspective and describes a progression from a distant God to a close God. We have moved from a 'He' God of the Mosaic tradition, through a 'Thou' God of the Christian, to a new dimension of the Godhead, an 'I' God, in the twentieth century.

God as Involved Creator – The 'I-God'

In *Preludes to My Autobiography*, Moreno (1955) describes how, in developing his idea of the Godhead, he drew a picture in his mind of what God might have looked like on the first day of creation. He saw clearly that 'Hovering over the chaos on the first day, he was there to create, not to take apart and to analyse' (p8), that 'God was first a creator, an actor, a psychodramatist' (p9). In other words, God was not Love, but rather, a Lover. He concluded that the 'creative definition of "Godplaying" is the *maximum of involvement*, the putting of everything unborn from the chaos into the first moment of being' (p9, emphasis added).

Moreno (1955) believed that the role of the objective scientist had been modelled after the idea of the impartial Godhead. 'He is objective, neutral, uninvolved, he is the impartial recorder of events as they emerge' (p32). However, while this model was adequate for the physical scientist, it was not sufficient for the social scientist who was interested in studying and building human communities based on love and mutual sharing.

In works such as 'Words of the Father',

originally published in English in 1941, Moreno added a new dimension to the Godhead, that of subjectivity – the 'I-God' who 'comes forth alone and in full earnestness, creating and experiencing, with all the subjectivity of a real being' (Moreno, 1971 edition, px). Furthermore, by imagining God as existing in loving relationship with his creations, Moreno places both himself and God within a systems approach to humanity and the universe.

God in the 'first' person 'does not deprive the Godhead of the objectivity, neutrality and impartiality of the old model but it makes the path free for the exercise of cosmic empathy, love and intimate participation, in other words, for the psychodrama of God' (1955, p33). Such a God communicates, not through his prophets, nor through Jesus, but directly through each of us.

Humanity Evolving – Spontaneous Co-Creative Beings

As Moreno's speculations about the Godhead and His character evolved and deepened, he '...began to see God, not only as the One who assigned some of His spontaneity and creativity to every particle of the universe, but as One, who by so doing, created for Himself innumerable oppositions, the counter spontaneities of innumerable beings'. In so doing God made Himself dependent upon every being, and also '...made us and all beings far more dependent upon Him than we would have been had we not a share in some of His initiative and responsibility. The distribution of His spontaneity and creativity made Him a partner and equal. He was to serve, not to rule. He was to coexist, cocreate and coproduce' (Jonathon Moreno, 1989, p52).

Herein lies Moreno's view of humanity. When Moreno asked himself 'Who am I?' he looked not to the least but to the most he could be. He concluded that not only are we the biodynamic being of Darwin, the sociodynamic being of Marx and the psychodynamic being of Freud, but we are also a cosmodynamic being.

God is now fully and completely placed into the existence of every person, the 'I-God'.

If God is conceptualised as the spontaneity/creativity in the universe and we each have been assigned a portion of this, then to know God is to be in touch with that part of ourselves, our own spontaneity/creativity. Hence, 'in order to exist meaningfully we must find the path of creativity and let it lead us into direct communication and identity with the Creator' (Moreno, 1941, quoted from 1971 edition, pxiv–xv).

Kraus (1984) considers that psychodrama was Moreno's way of reuniting mortals momentarily with God or the eternal world of all-spontaneity. 'It is a method for people who have fallen from their dreams. Each fall affirms their separation from God, and their mortality from their immortality' (p48). Through the psychodrama method, each 'fallen angel' is picked up and pointed towards the realisation of their hopes and desires.

Humanity is viewed as evolving and dynamic, comprising a system of biological, social, psychological and cosmic forces. Through and within the interaction of these different aspects we enact our fundamental impetus towards creative expression. While his ideas are part of a more general movement in philosophical and scientific thought towards the systems and evolutionary perspectives, Moreno's unique contribution lies in the way he places God at the centre of his philosophy.

Moreno's Personality Theory – Spontaneity and Creativity within a System of Roles

Moreno's concept of spontaneity provides a bridge between his philosophy and his theory of personality functioning. Spontaneity is the catalyst which enables our creativity to



emerge. It first awakens at birth and gives rise to initial acts which later develop into larger units of behaviour called roles.

For Moreno, personality is organised into a system of roles. Different roles develop at different stages of personality development. The last group to emerge are psychodramatic roles which provide us with a sense of our individual self.

Spontaneity promotes the development of new roles, which results in an expanded role repertoire and a greater personality integration, enabling us to live a more creative and therefore satisfying life.

While Moreno did not explicitly utilise the concept of purpose in relation to personality functioning, this notion is implicit within his personality theory which views the human being as a developing system of roles. In *Words of the Father* when Moreno says, 'The essence of our existence is a craving to create...' he seems to be alluding to our purposes (Moreno, 1971 edition, pxiii). Purpose, therefore, is evident each and every time the individual strives to express his/her creativity.

The Metaphysical Tasks of the Psychodramatist

In my work as a psychotherapist, psychodramatist and trainer, I increasingly come into contact with people who are either consciously seeking to explore the spiritual dimension of their lives, or who might benefit from such an exploration.

If we accept the model outlined above with its emphasis on both being (the systems perspective) and becoming (the evolutionary perspective), then we can broadly conclude that the metaphysical task of the psychodramatist is to assist in the reconciliation and/or integration of body, soul and spirit. This requires us to act as a bridge-builder within and between the physical and spiritual

worlds. As we assist people to overcome their egocentricity and to express their spiritual self through the development and expansion of consciousness, greater spontaneity and creativity will emerge in them.

In a situation involving reconciliation, an effort is made to come together again after an estrangement or when a relationship has broken down. Within psychotherapy and psychodrama, attention is focused on assisting people to become more conscious of their separation from certain aspects of themselves.

This estrangement is of two varieties. In the first instance it occurs when we have split off from the painful or undesirable aspects of our functioning with regard to both ourselves and others. In the second instance it occurs when we have lost contact with that deeper, creative and life-giving spiritual dimension in our lives. In Moreno's view, unless we reconnect with the ground of our being, in which resides 'metapraxis', that innate creative potential within the world, we cannot become creative and spontaneous beings, co-responsible with God in the act of creating ourselves and the universe.

For the psychodramatist, the overall metaphysical task of reconciliation can be broken down into a number of smaller ones. This enables us to operationalise the task to the point where it becomes practical. The following list is not considered to be exhaustive, but rather represents my current thinking in the evolution of this model.

Task 1

To acknowledge our need for connection and reconciliation/integration with spirit, or that reality that lies beyond the realm of the physical.

Task 2

To assist people to find a relevant framework, including a language, that will accommodate or reflect their experience of the spiritual or that which is 'beyond', so that it strengthens their connection with spirit.

Task 3

To assist people to raise their consciousness and to develop and integrate all aspects of their functioning.

Task 4

To assist people to take responsibility for creating themselves and their own lives, and, by extension, the community(ies) in which they live.

Task 5

To assist people to develop and act on an expanded evolutionary perspective, including identifying a greater life purpose for self and others.

Task 6

To assist people to identify their own spiritual direction and to develop and maintain its expression.

Task 7

To assist people who are locked into rigid personality role systems to go forward by activating metaphysical roles.

Case Study with a Summary Role Analysis

The following case study is accompanied by an analysis of the metaphysical tasks and roles of the Director. It focuses on key moments of interaction selected from a more comprehensive analysis outlined in my thesis.

In the work described below, I enact three metaphysical role clusters: THE BRIDGE, THE MENTOR and THE VISIONARY.

Background

Teresa is a young woman in her late thirties. She is primary caregiver for two teenage children. She is doing full-time postgraduate university study. At different times over the past seven years Teresa has completed a significant amount of personal development. Much of the work has involved doing social atom repair and addressing issues of

dependence/independence, power and control. She is less conflicted and has developed many new and satisfying roles.

When she comes to see me, Teresa is exhausted, experiencing difficulty in completing her university written work and having frequent conflict with one of her children. She feels guilty and ashamed that she is not coping. She has been realising the degree to which she has used her academic achievements to bolster herself up. This has driven her to push herself harder and harder in order to achieve success. She knows she cannot continue living in this manner, yet she is also frightened by the impending completion of her degree. What will she do then? She experiences an emptiness within herself which she feels hopeless about being able to fill.

Initially, Teresa's work with me involves revisiting her perfectionism, her feelings of shame, and, especially, her need to be in control. I then put forward the idea that she has devoted enough time to these issues. I suggest that now might be a time for her to forget about permanently resolving such conflicts, as this is an impossible task. I propose that we abandon such a focus on her difficulties, and instead converse in an ordinary human way about a wide range of topics.

A little further on Teresa arrives at a session saying in a somewhat mystified way that she has been thinking about prayer. She is unsure what to make of this. After some discussion, I read to her the first stanza of St John of the Cross's poem, 'The Spiritual Canticle', which speaks in lyric verse about the loving exchange which takes place between the soul and Christ, its Bridegroom.

*Where have You hidden,
Beloved, and left me moaning?
You fled like the stag
After wounding me;
I went out calling You, and You were gone.*

Teresa is profoundly moved and tears stream down her face. She becomes aware of a deep yearning for a connection with God. She thinks that if she could surrender and trust in Him then maybe she would not have to be so

much in control. We talk about how her relationship with God might be developed and strengthened. She responds positively to my suggestion that she set aside an area of her bedroom to pray and meditate in. She is very cautious because she wants to develop an authentic spirituality, one which is her own and not one which she takes on from other people.

The role cluster of THE BRIDGE is fundamental. It is from this role that the Director functions to create, re-establish or strengthen the links between body, soul and spirit of the protagonist. This may involve assisting the person to develop and integrate different aspects of their role functioning, to reconnect or reconcile with their physical body or to strengthen their connection with the indwelling spirit – the Spiritual 'I'. Depending on the role system of the protagonist(s), a wide range of roles may be required of the Director in order to acknowledge the need for, and to assist a person to make, connections between all aspects of themselves.

When I read Teresa the verses from St John of the Cross' poem, I enact the role cluster of THE BRIDGE in the roles of Systems Analyst and Metaphor Spinner. I am also a Wise Person, one of the roles that contributes to the role cluster of THE VISIONARY (see below). Teresa experiences her deep need for connection with God and an ability to surrender her need for control as she enacts the roles of The Yearning Soul and Willing Yelder. Given Teresa's religious background and therefore the relevance of Christian terminology to her, I have named this progressive role cluster THE BRIDE OF CHRIST.

In assisting Teresa to develop the Steadfast Pilgrim, an action-oriented contributing role of THE BRIDE OF CHRIST, I am attending to strengthening the relationship between soul and spirit. In terms of the metaphysical tasks, this intervention assists Teresa to take more responsibility for herself by initiating an action that will enable her to develop her spiritual life.

In response to my intervention, Teresa finds herself thinking and writing about the idea of 'surrender'. Her reservation about surrender is that she equates it with giving in and being defeated. There is no way she is going to be defeated! However, she also knows that she needs to give up driving herself and trying to be in control of everything. She is aware that she is going to have to take responsibility for herself in a new way but is not sure what this is and whether she is capable of it. At this stage, she has no sense of being loved by God. She has no clear idea or sense of who God is and therefore praying feels 'somewhat odd' to her. A further dilemma centres around how to surrender when she does not know who she is surrendering to.

Weekend Seminar/Workshop on 'Living as a Spiritual Being'

This workshop evolved out of a number of thoughts and observations in my life and work. Firstly, in both spheres of my life I had encountered many people who had discarded the traditional beliefs and practices they were raised with, but continued to be interested in the spiritual dimension of life. Secondly, excluding private study, I was aware of few contexts within which a person can both receive some teaching and also have an opportunity to explore their own spirituality. Thirdly, I was in the process of exploring the idea that activating a spiritual life by developing metaphysical roles might assist people to more easily leave behind dysfunctional patterns of behaviour.

My purpose in conducting this weekend was two-fold: to assist people to become more conscious of the presence and workings of spirit in their lives; and to assist people to develop a lifestyle which is based on spiritual principles that are harmonious with their souls' purposes.

Teresa is one of a group of twelve participants attending the weekend seminar/workshop. She enacts her psychodrama during the second session.

WARM-UP

I speak about the inevitability of human growth and development and the need to become more conscious of this process within ourselves. I identify the paradigm of The Journey as providing a helpful model for organising and giving meaning to the experiences of life. In this view, life is seen as a journey in which we must confront certain tasks and learn necessary lessons. I suggest that the journey motif can be valuable as a metaphor for the journey of the soul towards oneness with spirit. I refer to the eastern view of the soul's journey over many lifetimes. I present Clift and Clift's (1988) variation of Joseph Campbell's model of the heroic journey and describe its stages: the Call to Adventure, the Initiation or the Road of Trials, and the Return Home. Following this, I instruct participants to take the opportunity to be on their own and become aware of the stage of the journey most relevant to them at this time.

THE VISIONARY is a fundamental metaphysical role cluster of the psychodramatist in that it draws on a vision of embracing purpose and direction for both the individual and for creation as a whole. THE VISIONARY is able to see beyond the concrete and the immediate, to an immanent reality. Some of the roles that contribute to the role cluster of THE VISIONARY during the warm-up phase include 'The Evolutionary', the Seeker of Meaning and the Wise Person. These are enacted when I speak about the phenomenon of spiritual development and life purpose, and the need to become more conscious of this process within ourselves. I have coined the term 'The Evolutionary' because it suggests not only one who thinks in terms of developmental or evolutionary processes but one who also has a significant action component to the role. The 'Evolutionary', therefore, is a midwife to the process of evolution. In response to these roles, Teresa and other group members warm up to the roles of Thoughtful Traveller, Seeker of Meaning and 'The Evolutionary'.

After about ten minutes, participants come together and share what they have been thinking and writing about. Teresa acknowledges a response in herself to the call to be one with God. Like many of the heroes of myth and legend she is aware that, although she has slain some dragons in the course of her journey, there is one last dragon to be confronted on her way home. She can see the peace that awaits her but is also afraid. She knows that slaying the dragon will change her forever.

Teresa comes forward in response to my invitation to the group to explore the journey through a psychodramatic enactment.

INTERVIEW

Teresa quickly establishes a purpose for the drama. She wishes to let go of wanting to control everything, and to be able to surrender, trusting that she will not disintegrate in the process. I acknowledge this as an excellent purpose. I say, 'This drama will be different from those you have done in the past. It would be good if you could forget about how you have gone about dramas previously, and let go of any expectations about how this one might turn out.' Teresa laughs and says 'Okay'.

Here I am taking on another role which is crucial to attending to the metaphysical tasks. This is the role cluster of THE MENTOR. The mentor is an experienced and trusted adviser. As 'one who has gone before', s/he possesses a loving authority within the roles of companion and teacher. THE MENTOR contains many roles, only a few of which may be enacted in any particular situation. During the Interview I enact roles of the Naive Inquirer, the Wise Person, the Loving Companion, the Benign Witness and the Believer in the Creative Genius. In response to these roles, Teresa takes up the roles of Trusting Companion, Enjoyer of Life and Naive Adventurer, trusting in what lies ahead and able to act and go forward with enjoyment.

ACTION PHASE

Teresa has a picture and I instruct her to set it out. Using auxiliaries, cushions and other props, she creates a rocky pass. It is very narrow with high walls and has big boulders strewn along it. A huge, green, slimy dragon guards the pass. He has a massive tail which is used to sweep boulders around so that no one can sneak up on him. As the dragon, Teresa is very animated, roaring and belching orange and blue fire, boasting, 'No one can get past me!'

On the other side of the pass Teresa sets out heaven, using a table decorated with lengths of blue and purple silk material, white candles and white flowers. She concretises God using a large crucifix which is raised higher than the table.

I direct Teresa in several role reversals with the dragon. She clearly enjoys being the dragon, becoming more grandiose and powerful with each role reversal. 'This is my pass, and no one gets past me!'

In the role of herself, Teresa is initially dismissive and contemptuous – 'You're all flame, no brain!' – but later turns away, defeated by the might and power of the dragon – 'What's the point? I've been here so many times before, and I never get through it.'

I instruct Teresa to choose someone to mirror her in her role of confronting the dragon. In response to the auxiliary's mirroring of herself, Teresa becomes angry and forceful. 'Just get going! You know you have to do this so just get on and do it! Just get up there and get going though the pass!'

In the role reversal Teresa becomes passive and sullen, complaining that it is too difficult. In a further role reversal, Teresa is contemptuous and coldly berating, calling her other self 'useless'. She turns away in disgust. In the role of her other self, Teresa responds by lowering her head and looking at the floor. 'It's so true, I am useless. I can't get beyond this.'

At this point, as well as being in the role of Producer, I am enacting the Consciousness-Builder, one of the roles that contribute to the role cluster of THE BRIDGE. From the role of Systems Analyst I observe the re-emergence of an historic and dysfunctional system. I enact the role of Consciousness Builder as I intervene to assist Teresa to once again become conscious of her longing for reconnection with, and surrender to, God.

I reverse Teresa back into her contemptuous and rejecting self, and say to her, 'I'm going to read you something'. Again I recite the first stanza from St John of the Cross' poem, 'A Spiritual Canticle'. Teresa begins to cry as I complete the first line. I go over to her and, taking her by the hand, lead her to her other self. Teresa, in addressing this other self, says that she knows it is hard for her. She is then silent and hesitant for a time. I take Teresa's hand and place it over the heart of her other self. Teresa cries and tells this self that she will be with her in this difficult task and that she does not have to do it alone.

At this point I am attending to the metaphysical tasks of reconciliation and integration from within the role cluster of The Bridge by assisting Teresa to link with her Spiritual 'I'. It is my view that Teresa was enabled to continue to move out of the roles of Drill Sergeant, Contemptuous Berator and Sullen Defeatist because my interventions activated a developing metaphysical role - The Bride of Christ.

On my instruction, Teresa chooses an auxiliary to be God. Turning to God, Teresa tells Him that she wants to be with Him but is frightened. In the role of God, Teresa says to herself that He aches for her and that He wants her as much as she wants Him. Reversed into the role of herself, Teresa cries freely and vigorously. She walks up to the pass and begins to enter it. I reverse Teresa into the role of the dragon. He stops slashing his tail

and belching fire, but stands in front of Teresa, barring her way. In the role of herself, Teresa tentatively tells the dragon that she is going through the pass. In a further role reversal, Teresa, in the role of the dragon, makes the claim that she cannot enter the pass because she needs him.

I instruct Teresa (as the dragon) to say more about this to herself. The dragon tells Teresa that she needs him to guard and protect her, that he has been doing his job for years, and that he refuses to be made redundant! In a role reversal Teresa replies in a soft and faltering voice that she really does not need him any more. Teresa, in the role of the dragon, stands firm in his belief in the need for his historical task of protection. In the role of herself, Teresa gives up.

I remind Teresa that she does not have to do it alone, that perhaps God could be of some assistance. Teresa calls out to God that she needs to know that He is actually there. Teresa, in the role of God, is moved. He stretches out His arms, saying in a tender voice that He has created this garden for her. He invites her to come into His garden where He is waiting for her. In the role of herself, Teresa cries and becomes very agitated. She says to God that she really wants to go into His garden but that the dragon is too strong for her. She appeals to God for help.

Teresa, in the role of God, begins to move towards herself and the dragon in the rocky pass. At this point I intervene with God, saying that I am not sure that such an initiative is wise, that perhaps He is doing the work that must be Teresa's. Teresa (in the role of God) considers this and then speaks clearly and lovingly to herself. 'I will wait for you in my garden. Find a way of coming to me.'

Within a role cluster such as THE BRIDE OF CHRIST there exists a tension between active pursuit and active surrender. The Soul (Bride) desires contact and union (integration) with The Lover (Christ, the Bridegroom). In order for this connection to occur Teresa must actively pursue the

relationship. Union with the Beloved also requires surrender of the self, especially those negative aspects of self. It is for this reason that, in the role of The Clinician, I intervene with God as He initiates action which will effectively prevent Teresa from taking this necessary step. Until Teresa is able to relinquish several fragmenting roles, such as the Sullen Defeatist, the Contemptuous Berator and the Powerful Controller, the connection with God that she is wanting is unlikely to occur.

In the role of herself again, Teresa is apprehensive and takes a step back. She then moves forward and begins a dialogue with the dragon. In a firm voice she tells him that she does not need anyone to stand guard for her any more. Furthermore, she no longer needs to control everything, she will be safe, and God will be there for her in His garden. Teresa, in the role of the dragon, is sceptical and reluctant to give up his protective function. I intervene, suggesting to the dragon that he cares a lot for Teresa and that this is why he has always fought so hard to protect her. The dragon visibly softens, and his eyes glint with tears. He tells Teresa that he loves her and that it is hard for him to stop protecting her.

In the role of herself, Teresa takes a step toward the dragon, and then stops. I instruct her to do what she has been wanting to do for a long time. She embraces the dragon, telling him that she loves and admires him, and thanking him for being her protector. 'I am going to find you a nice dry cave in Bavaria which has lots of nice boulders that you can sweep with your tail.' Teresa, as the dragon, expresses relief at his impending retirement, but nevertheless reassures Teresa that he is always available if needed! As herself, Teresa then builds the dragon a cave and leads him into it. In a series of role reversals, Teresa and the dragon share much warmth and laughter before waving goodbye to each other.

I instruct Teresa that she has five minutes in which to complete the drama. Teresa walks slowly and purposefully through the pass,



gazing continuously into the face of God. She reaches God, embraces Him, and cries. She rearranges her arms so that God's arms are clasped around hers. In the role of God, Teresa says to herself with utmost tenderness, 'I have waited a long time for you to come'. As herself again, Teresa cries and laughs and says she has too! Teresa, in the role of God, continues to speak about how much He has wanted her to enter His garden. I instruct Teresa to reverse back into her own role and to allow herself to take in what God is saying, and to fully experience being with God. She sighs and smiles gently. Her whole body relaxes.

After a time, Teresa sits down on a cushion on the floor and instructs the auxiliary (in the role of God) to sit behind her. She leans back luxuriously into God's arms, and makes a joke about her learning to lean on God! After a few minutes of silence, I say, 'Thank you very much, Teresa, this drama is now finished. Let's have some sharing'.

As Teresa's drama progresses she is able to leave behind her fragmenting roles and to warm up to a greater level of spontaneity expressed within the role cluster of THE BRIDE OF CHRIST. She becomes a Liberated Captive, a Willing Yelder and a Delighted Lover. One of the reasons that Teresa is able to warm up to, and further develop, the progressive role of THE BRIDE OF CHRIST has to do with the mirroring function I perform for her. Her acceptance of my role of THE MENTOR would not have been possible without having certain metaphysical roles developed in me. Teresa perceives the presence of the role of THE BRIDE OF CHRIST in me even though this role is not overtly or fully expressed at this time.

Conclusions and Implications

1 The philosophical foundation of our lives underpins the way we live and informs everything we plan and strive for. So, as practitioners we are called to ask ourselves if we have an adequate worldview, one that enlivens both ourselves and those we work

with, that takes us and them forward in our development. This invites us to take on a philosophy and a model of humanity that both adequately embraces the various levels of existence and functioning as is currently known, and is large enough to point to and accommodate other and as yet unknown levels of existence. Such models of humanity are likely to include the deeper or spiritual dimension of life. Skolimowski (1994) writes: 'Genuine philosophy for our times must help us to understand ourselves and the universe in a *new* way and help us live in it. It must address itself to the *total person*, his/her quest for understanding, for meaning, for consolation' (pxv, emphasis added).

2 If we accept the evolutionary imperative, then we need to remain cognisant of the fact that, as our mind and knowledge of ourselves and the universe evolve, so also will the theories and the models we develop to accommodate these. To remain within the spirit of Moreno's thinking, including his spontaneity/creativity principle of life and learning, we are challenged to continue to evolve our thinking, ever willing to discard old and outworn models of humanity. Such activity will ensure that we will keep generating new models in the light of fresh insights and knowledge. This applies to both practitioners and trainers of the method.

3 My experience within the psychodrama culture of New Zealand and Australia indicates that Moreno's philosophical and religious ideas, which are the foundation of his method of psychodrama, have been neglected by teachers, students and practitioners of the method alike. If trainees, from the outset, are to develop not only a love for the method itself but also an understanding of and appreciation for its metaphysical origins, then trainers especially need to hold such knowledge in the forefront of their thinking.

4 The metaphysical model provides psychodrama practitioners with a model of humanity that explicitly describes and attends to the nature of the relationship between the human and the divine aspects of self. Among other things, as human beings

we are linked by our shared divinity. It is within our relationships with others that we both learn to role reverse and to apprehend such shared divinity. Moreno's earliest vision encompassed a community based on faith in each other's intentions and a 'mutual love and sharing as a powerful, indispensable working principle in group life...' (Moreno, 1955, p7). The power and efficacy of the group in generating an awareness and expression of both our human and divine natures continues to be of ongoing relevance to group workers and practitioners of the method.

5 The presence of purpose is a defining characteristic of all living systems. Whether implicitly or explicitly stated, the idea of purpose is central in both psychodrama and in the metaphysical model. It is important, however, to consider purpose at many levels. Moreno considered that the essence of our existence was a 'craving to create' and thereby become co-creators along with God. However, the meaning we ascribe to our creative endeavours at any point in time is related to our own perception of purpose(s). The same activity can serve a variety of purposes ranging from the micro to the macro level. A parent assisting her disabled child may be meeting a school requirement, preparing him for later life, or fulfilling her own destiny to care for someone who has been 'given' to her. The work of psychodrama practitioners is enhanced by recognising and remaining conscious of the multi-levelled nature of our life purposes.

6 The metaphysical model can be seen to include the 'how' of evolution. It can be viewed as a way of life which focuses on the need to take responsibility for our thinking, feeling, and willing (acting), as we create ourselves and the communities and world in which we live. Blatner and Blatner (1988b), while acknowledging that Moreno's metapraxis contains '...a moral, existential injunction to participate as co-creators of this world' (p161), also suggest (1988a) that a retreat from responsibility is the predominant problem in the second half of the twentieth century. Moreno's approach focuses on developing spontaneity which strengthens a

person's flexibility of mind and thus assists him/her to take responsibility for self and community.

7 Within the metaphysical model, there is a focus on the development and expansion of consciousness and the overcoming of our egocentric tendencies through the development of the three soul aspects of thinking, feeling and willing. While taking responsibility for our lives and fulfilling our life purpose does involve our thinking and feeling, it especially involves the activation of the will. The birth of creativity requires action. Willing can be viewed as the power to act. Where there is no will, there is no action, and without action, the creative spirit remains unborn. Similarly, within the theory and practice of psychodrama there is a focus on developing our ability to act in order to fully develop and express roles that enable us to take creative responsibility for our lives. This has important implications for those of us who teach about the application of role theory. We can, at times, become myopic and fail to see how roles need to be actualised through action.

8 The evidence of twenty years of my clinical practice suggests that there is a tendency for people to naturally move on to spiritual concerns once their biography is complete. If we accept the existence of the spiritual dimension in life, perhaps there is no need for us to wait for our clients to raise spiritual issues with us. Perhaps psychotherapists and psychodramatists might take the initiative in assisting those we work with to warm up to and attend to their spiritual development. This might involve directing them to attend to the inner promptings of their Spiritual 'I', or to become conscious of their calling or life purpose. It may involve developing a variety of frameworks, language and metaphors to assist people to become aware of and make sense of the spiritual dimension in their lives. Or it might involve the exploration of an evolving concept of God that is life-enhancing and promotes self-responsibility and the expansion of roles.

9 The view of human beings as consisting of a system of interactive roles encompassing

physical, social, psychological and spiritual realities means that interventions within any one of these dimensions can effect change and development. We need not to be too narrow in our approach or too hasty in relegating our clients' feelings of discontent and restlessness to the exclusive domain of the psychological. Directors of psychodrama groups, and psychotherapists working within an individual setting, may find that assisting the development of metaphysical roles within people can assist them to move out of fragmenting role systems.

10 This paper has made little comment about our functioning within the physical dimension – the 'body' in the metaphysical model. This is not surprising, given that consultation about and treatment of physical symptoms generally falls within the domain of medical practitioners and related professions. Within both psychotherapy and psychodrama, treatment of the body per se is not the goal. Rather, any focus on the body is viewed more as an entry point into the treatment of the psychological system. Nonetheless, it is wise for us to remain conscious of the physical dimension. Clients who consult with us concerning the psyche but who also exhibit symptoms of the body may be better served by having the latter treated first. Again, we need to be open to the possibility that interventions within one dimension, in this case, the physical, will be more effective in terms of the development of the whole person.

11 If we are to assist in the spiritual development of others, as practitioners we must first give witness to our own. We need

to develop metaphysical roles that incorporate the hidden dimension of our lives, that attend to the fundamental questions of our existence and that address our need to be an individual who is both separate from, yet intimately connected with, that deeper reality which is shared by all of Creation.

While a number of metaphysical roles have been delineated in the case study, I suggest that other significant metaphysical roles might be required and offer the following:

- ❖ The Beloved of God
- ❖ The Venerator (one who reveres all of Life)
- ❖ The Delighter in Magic and Mystery
- ❖ The Mystical Scientist or 'neo theologica' (one who recognises the Oneness and Interconnectedness of Life)
- ❖ The Shape-Seer (one who apprehends universal patterns)
- ❖ The Willing Co-Creator
- ❖ Humble God (one who remembers both our divine and human status)

In conclusion, I would like to remind readers that one of the literal translations of the word 'spirit' is 'breath'. As breath gives life, so may we, as Servants of Life, also give life. It is through the full and rich expression of our own selves that we best assist one another to breathe deeply and draw upon the divine ground of our being – our creativity. Through the development of spontaneity we become more able to express this creativity, and thereby enact the role of Responsible Co-Creator along with God in the Universe. This is both our challenge and our Grail.

*'as breath gives life,
so may we, as Servants
of Life, also give life'*

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