Reflections on Psychodrama and Buddhist Practice

BY TIMOTHY 'SUGATO' MAPEL

Timothy 'Sugato' Mapel trained as a Theravadin Buddhist monk for 12 years in England and New Zealand. Since writing this article he has left monastic life and is living in Wellington working as a counsellor. He is an advanced trainee at the Wellington Psychodrama Training Institute.

I first got interested in psychodrama as I attempted to integrate an interest in psychotherapeutic disciplines with my long-standing commitment to my life as a monk and to Buddhist meditation practice. I was looking for guidance and training that would enable me to do some personal therapy work in areas of myself I considered unexplored. I was also hoping to learn skills to be able to share with my monastic community to enhance my roles as group leader, teacher, trainer and counsellor.

Psychodrama was described to me by a friend as 'meditation externalised' or as an 'externalised meditation on the inner and outer worlds'. That description intrigued me and motivated me to join the local training group in Wellington. What I have found over the past three years is a great deal of concurrence between the psychodrama method and the practice of meditation – and a strong complementarity between the two seemingly diverse cultures.

From the outside, the two methods couldn't appear more different. Psychodrama is an action method, meditation is a movement towards stillness. Psychodrama is expressive and verbal, meditation is silent and internalised. Psychodrama involves groups and group interaction, while meditation, although it can be done in groups, has an individual focus and appears to be exclusively about internal processes and inner things.

But to judge either discipline by its external form is to miss the deeper purpose and aims involved in both practices. And it is in these deeper underlying attitudes and values that there is a great deal of similarity between psychodrama and Buddhist meditation.

Openness to Life

The first thing that struck and excited me about psychodrama was the permission and willingness to allow everything to be a part of a drama. No matter how difficult, painful or conventionally inappropriate or unacceptable the issues were, they could be explored in a session. There was room for it all and consequently room for everyone and everything. There was the demand for and

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the love of honesty. There was permission to be oneself in a full and uncensored way no matter how scary, challenging or conflicted that might be. And with skilful directing and supportive auxiliaries, it was possible for a protagonist to have a new and clearer understanding of themselves, their inner dynamics and the world in which they live. This atmosphere of openness and acceptance is an important part of healing and self-understanding and is one of the central attitudes cultivated in meditation practice.

Developing Consciousness

In both psychodrama and meditation there is a trust in awareness itself and a recognition of the healing and transformative powers of making things more conscious in our lives. It is in the unconscious and conflicted areas of our lives that we suffer. But if we have the opportunity to explore the issues and behaviours that surround suffering then enhanced awareness of our lives brings greater understanding and new ways of approaching similar situations in the future.

In psychodrama we make things conscious through techniques like concretisation, soliloquy and maximisation to make the invisible visible. In meditation we become conscious by a patient, gentle relaxation and acceptance that allows things to come up into our feeling awareness and be seen. This exploration must take place in a safe and supportive environment in order to allow us to move into the difficult places in our lives. Whether that be the safety and support of a psychodrama group or the safety and support of silence in a meditative space, what is crucial is the attitude of acceptance of whatever comes up and the trust that simply being conscious of that is the first step towards understanding and increased freedom.

Focus on Health

Underlying this trust in the value of becoming more conscious is another strong parallel between psychodrama and Buddhism. Moreno made it clear that psychodrama operates from a 'model of health'. He insisted that psychodrama was not to focus on pathology but to recognise, enhance and celebrate the healthy functioning

of an individual. While acknowledging that everyone has areas in their lives in which either relatively progressive, coping or fragmenting roles are operating to one degree or another, the emphasis is placed on the health of the system as a whole rather than the sickness or problems of one area. By focusing on health rather than pathology, our strengths become supports for working on and improving areas that are less adequately developed in our lives.

In Buddhism too there is a fundamental recognition of the health or 'okayness' of each individual reflecting the teaching about original mind as 'pure, bright, and radiant'. This original mind is obscured by our lack of clear seeing and selfish preoccupations like the sun obscured by clouds passing through the sky. Valuing of the health and underlying inherent purity of our lives gives us hope and a feeling of workability with the struggles that we do have. It is not some cursed state of unredeemable sin but our own lack of understanding and unconsciousness which causes us pain.

And this can be remedied by a patient and thorough conscious exploration of the areas of our lives where we feel limited, stuck or in conflict. Trusting that there is health in our lives at a fundamental level gives us the courage and support to explore those less-developed areas with an appreciation that seeing heals and understanding frees. We begin to realise that more important than looking good or appearing 'together' is our capacity to be open to and accept the truth of our lives with all of our flaws and strengths.

In Buddhism there is a great deal of emphasis on 'seeing things as they are', not with the purpose of changing or fixing ourselves but with the patient and humble acceptance of exactly who and how we are now. Change will happen and healing will occur naturally if we can see clearly the truth of how it is for us and open to and acknowledge that fully. For Buddhists, this is our refuge in Buddha (clear seeing), our refuge in Dhamma (the Truth of the way things are), and our refuge in Sangha (the practice of opening to the truth of our experience in the moment).

Psychodrama has many different tools to deepen our ability to 'see things as they are' including doubling to increase self-acceptance, mirroring to promote self-understanding by seeing ourselves from another's perspective and role reversal to broaden our ability to inhabit many and various different roles.

Development of Spontaneity

Psychodrama places a lot of emphasis on spontaneity. Spontaneity is an expression of health; it enables new responses to old situations and adequate responses to new situations. Increased spontaneity is in many ways the goal of psychodrama. Moreno described spontaneity as 'the arch catalyser of creativity'.

Psychodrama is designed to increase spontaneity rather than problem solve. It recognises that with an increase in spontaneity, problems will be solved and new ways of seeing things will indirectly emerge through increased warm-up. One expression of spontaneity is ease of access to different roles that are appropriate in any given situation. The greater the spontaneity, the more choice and flexibility we have in life. The more choice and flexibility we have in life, the greater freedom we have to move through the world allied to our purpose in a conscious way, rather than reenacting old scripts in a habitual or compulsive way.

Spontaneity is the key to healthy role functioning and the cornerstone of a meaningful and fulfilled life. The more role options we have in a given situation, the healthier we are. The more spontaneous we are, the more easily we can role reverse and thus have a greater appreciation and understanding of our diverse world.

Non-Attachment

Buddhism also places a lot of emphasis on the ability to respond to life with flexibility and freedom of choice. In Buddhist language we talk about the practice and development of a life based on non-attachment. Non-attachment is not some split-off state of profound indifference and disinterest in life. It is not about pushing life away and keeping everyone and everything at a safe distance where there is no feeling and no pain.

Non-attachment arises through being fully present and receptive to life in a willing and wholehearted way and allowing life to touch us as deeply as we can. When we open to our experience without resistance or demand then life passes through us unhindered since we're not holding on to it. There is mindfulness and reflection and the opportunity to make choices since we are witnessing our experience rather than being identified as it.

This practice of non-identification with the contents of our experience (of not taking all of life so personally as 'me' and 'mine') enables us to empathise with, open to and accept the whole range of possible human experience, sensation, thoughts and emotions.

To me, this is the essence of role reversal and the connection between spontaneity and freedom. If we are not limited by our identification with a particular role or roles, then we are free to experience any and every role available. The possibilities are limitless since we are not placing any limits on ourselves.

For Buddhists, this is the essence of non-attachment and the central meaning of the experience of Anatta or 'not-self'. Freedom and happiness lie not in the ability to gratify our wants and desires but in the capacity to live life free from the limitations of attachment and identification. In meditation we are exploring this directly and experientially all the time. 'Where am I attached? What am I identified as? Where do I feel limited, without choice and options?'

And we are learning how to see, feel, accept, open to and release out of these self-imposed definitions and restrictions as they happen to us in the moment. We begin to really feel the pain of our limitations and the unsatisfactoriness of being exclusively identified as a particular role, a particular kind of person or anything at all for that matter. Seeing this happening clearly and consciously gives us the opportunity not to do it and to do something different instead.

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Focus on Experience

Both psychodrama and meditation are experiential in nature. It doesn't matter how many books you've read or how much you understand the theories, you've got to practise it. An experiential method requires us to be as fully present in the moment as we can possibly be. To the extent that we can we are increasing our awareness of ourselves, our thoughts, sensations, moods, feelings, conditioning, environment, relationships – all of it.

With increased awareness, whether it be of internal or external things, there is an enhanced relationship with ourselves and our world around us. In both psychodrama and meditation there is only this present moment. It is all happening now. Whether we are dramatising a childhood incident, fantasising about a future outcome or feeling a pain in our knee, what is important is that which is happening to us now.

Psychodrama and meditation help us increase our sensitivity and enable us to develop greater understanding and nuance in our lives. Moreno said that psychodrama was concerned with two questions: 'Who am I? And where do I fit in?' Basically it is about Life and how to live it. Thankfully, there are many supports along the way to assist us, and meditation and psychodrama are but two of them.

Differences

Having outlined some of the major points of congruence between Buddhism and psychodrama, it might be good to point out some of their differences. One of the main shortcomings I have experienced in my own monastic culture which has a strong emphasis on meditation is the prevalent attitude of 'working things out in silence'. There is the belief and the hope that all conflicts, difficulties and suffering are resolvable in one's own mind through individual effort and insight. While perhaps this is true in an ultimate sense, this meditative attitude tends to fixate, looking exclusively to the transcendent and transpersonal dimensions for answers to life's challenges. This is often done by dismissing and devaluing the importance of the interpersonal

and immanent dimensions of one's life. There can be too much emphasis placed on awareness itself and not enough on action and participation in life. Meditation, when practised like this, becomes a way of 'spiritually bypassing' the relationships, responsibilities and more 'mundane' aspects of life in favour of a detached and non-relational stance towards life. From this view 'life is suffering' and the best thing to do is weave myself a spiritual cocoon where I don't have to feel or deal with life because I am above and beyond it. This is a danger in the meditative culture and one that psychodrama seems to nicely compensate for.

For while Buddhist meditation practice emphasises the transcendent perspective towards life, psychodrama begins with the nitty gritty personal and interpersonal areas of life. Psychodrama works with ordinary scenes from life and distils universal meanings from them, revealing the transpersonal dimensions of experience.

Where psychodrama can fall short is in an over-fascination with the details or content of a drama while failing to bring out the universal features of the protagonist's situation. Often it is in the sharing section immediately following a drama where the audience offers reflections, connections and feelings of what touched them in the drama they've just witnessed that the larger dimensions of what might have been a very ordinary situation are revealed.

Psychodrama's emphasis on group learning and group process is also very different from the personal practice and individual spiritual development of a meditator. When there is an emphasis on group process and group participation it very quickly becomes apparent if someone is avoiding dealing with issues in their lives by taking a detached and 'spiritually' superior stance. The directness of psychodrama can be a very refreshing and effective challenge for the detached meditator who denies there is any work to do in their interpersonal life.

Psychodrama promotes greater awareness of thinking and feeling through an action method. Buddhist meditation practice places a lot of

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emphasis on developing calm and tranquility. The way to 'see things as they are' is by sustained attention and a stillness or one-pointedness of mind. When our minds are still and calm then we see life clearly and our innate wisdom faculty can operate with fewer distortions. I have not been aware of psychodrama placing much emphasis on stillness or concentration of mind. Having said that, if one's warm-up is strong then concentration will be present. And increase in spontaneity is connected with a greater degree of awareness. But perhaps more comment could be made on the exact qualities of mind that promote integration, resolution and understanding in a psychodramatic enactment, and how those qualities could be enhanced and developed.

Meditation's emphasis on the mind and on developing wholesome mental states means that meditators get a lot of training and practice in this area and are presented with a highly articulated structural framework to work with. There are clear maps that point to the areas of our lives that need our attention and allow for self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses – what is developed and what needs to be developed. Role theory is an alternative

mapping system and seems nicely complementary to the more spiritual focus of the Buddhist teachings. Many meditators need to keep being encouraged to take these qualities of mind out into life and to develop them in other contexts beside the silence of their meditation practice.

Complementarity

Buddhist meditation practice is just one part of a very broad culture of training and purification of body, speech and mind. If non-attachment, freedom and abiding as awareness itself are the goal then there are innumerable tools and practices to aid us in making our hearts strong and our minds clear. These include generosity, discipline, patience, loving kindness, virtue, renunciation and the qualities of serenity and equanimity which allow us to be open to all of life and cowered by none. This is seen as a lifetime's (or many lifetimes') work and involves learning that will bring great benefit to our lives and the lives of others. For me, stillness and action go together. Group work and individual work are inseparable. The inner and the outer are one. And psychodrama and meditation are compatible and mutually supportive systems to bring out the best in all of us.

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A Psychodramatist in the Classroom

BY GRACE KENNEDY

Grace meets with sixty high school students every day, in three separate classes, which focus on the study of literature and the development of literacy skills. At the local government school in which she works in Canberra, Grace supervises teachers of literature and the arts, and is a member of the school executive. Grace has submitted her psychodrama thesis to the ANZPA Board. She is involved in the management of the Psychodrama Institute of the ACT, and in 2001 commences work as a visiting teacher.

My Experience as a Psychodrama Trainee

It was in the process of training to become a psychodramatist that I first experienced education that took account of me as an individual, with a unique identity. I had lived for many years in a kind of emotional darkness. In my own family I had never experienced the warm and positive presence of a loving adult who accepted my world and was interested in it. I had only ever experienced the conditional love of 'if you want to enter my world, you must do things my way'. As a child, I did want to belong, so I tried to enter into things on the other's terms, but as a result I lost contact with my own world, my own ideas.

As I entered into close relationships with my psychodrama teachers, I began to experience my own world. I got to know myself. I could now begin to experience the presence of a trustworthy other person, who was interested in my world. I started to realise that my world didn't have to disappear if someone good was in it with me.

When I remember my childhood now, it is with a great deal of pleasure and awareness, because my own experience and values as a child are now alive and available to me. I can remember how good it felt to take a big bite out of an apple, run out to the clothesline on the hill behind the house, and stand in the wind as the bright drunken clothes wove around me, in and out of the broad blue lake of the sky. I climbed the big fir tree and read my book in its sheltering pungent branches, listening to the soughing of the wind.

My experiences as a psychodrama trainee have inspired me as a teacher to introduce certain principles and practices into the classroom. My approach reflects a developmental view of education which allows me to make the identity of my students central to work in the classroom. Before expanding on this approach further I will contrast it with two outmoded models of education still practised in Australia.

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Contrasting Approaches to Education

TRANSMISSION

In the teaching of adolescents today, there is an old reliance on conditional methods of domination. The teacher in effect says to the students, 'You must master this material, so that you can eventually get a job. The better you master this material, the better will be your chances of getting a job. You may not get a job if you do not do this thing that I want you to do.' The teacher is saying, 'You must enter the world, on my terms, if you are going to be successful in life.' I have always felt that this method exiles the students, excluding the values and experiences of the adolescent. In the teaching of reading and writing, which is my day-to-day business, I have found the conditional approach unworkable.

The approach belongs to a traditional view of education – as a process of transmitting knowledge from the teacher to the student. The student is an empty vessel to be filled. Certain kinds of learning can be taught using this model. Driver education – where driving is seen as a series of competencies to be mastered – is a fine example of the proper application of this 'transmission' model. Theorists linked with this method of learning include Pavlov and B.F. Skinner. The 'transmission of knowledge' model does little to assist us to teach young people how to value themselves, or how to be reflective and then active in the world.

TRANSACTION

Reform in education led away from the 'transmission' idea to the 'transaction' idea. Education is seen here more as an interactive process between the students and the curriculum, in which the teacher attempts to link the material to the developmental abilities of the child. Educators who worked from this perspective are Bloom, Dewey and later, Bruner. Most curriculum reform and innovation in the last thirty years has sprung from ideas about transaction. However, this broader idea about education attended only to the cognitive development of the child.

TRANSFORMATION

The third step from 'transmission' and 'transaction' is 'transformation'. In this view of education the student is seen as central, positive, purposive, active and involved in organising her life experiences. The roots of this idea about education are found in the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Leo Tolstoy, A.S. Neill, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow and John Holt. Here are the main ideas of 'transformation' theory:

- *The experience of the learner is primary.*
- *Choice, creativity, values and self-realisation are central.*
- *People are intrinsically valuable and interesting.*
- *Interpersonal relationships between learners are important.*
- *There is an orientation towards social change and reflection upon one's actions.*

The kind of education based on these principles is the kind I encountered in psychodrama training, and can be termed 'developmental'. I will now introduce you to three educators from the twentieth century, who enacted this kind of orientation in their teaching and whose values and practices have influenced my own classroom practice. I link the work of these educators both to my experiences as a psychodrama trainee and to elements of my classroom practice.

Three Inspirational Educators

LEILA BERG

Leila Berg made a major contribution to the education of primary school children in Britain in the 1960s and 70s. She introduced a reading scheme which was based on the lives, experiences and language of ordinary children from working-class homes from all over England. She rejected the bloodless and lifeless old readers, with artificial stories and sanitised expressions, in favour of stories from real children she knew, about Dad being out of a job, about the problem of a leaking roof and the joys of fish and chips for supper.

Leila observed relationships between teachers and learners in primary schools, and noticed

that a mutually satisfying relationship between learner and teacher, conducted in an atmosphere of pleasure, is the best basis for language development. The relationship is central, not the curriculum. As I experienced this principle in psychodrama training, I began to practise it in my own classroom, taking account of the feelings and attitudes of the child, and of what they brought to me. In this atmosphere of pleasure and acceptance, many small writing projects were born and came to fruition, with the students' experiences and language forming the basis of the projects.

Leila observed that children have a desire to be competent in the world. This simple belief is very contrary to a pervasive doubt in most teachers' minds about the essential nature of children. Children do have a desire to grow up well. Leila believed that this motivating force is stronger that the dark and difficult things, which can hold children back from making progress. In the early years of my psychodrama training, I was constantly challenged to focus on my purpose and on my goals. I became aware of this life-oriented impulse within me, instead of only focusing on my fears and on obstacles. In the classroom, I began to focus on the often small yet tremendous signs of a child's urge to progress, rather than on their refusals. This has become the single most important idea that I carry with me into every lesson: children want to succeed and become competent.

SYLVIA ASHTON-WARNER

Sylvia Ashton-Warner taught Maori children in New Zealand during the 1940s and 50s. She made extraordinary contact with the alienated Maori communities in which she worked, and predating Leila Berg, created a series of readers for Maori children which was based on their experiences and their language.

Sylvia recalls how one of her pupils, Rangi, was not making any progress on the old English readers – with words like 'Look, Tom. See the cat.' Finally, Sylvia asked Rangi what was frightening him. Rangi told her that one day the police were coming to take him to jail, to cut him up with a butcher's knife and hang

what was left of him. It transpired that Rangi's father ran an illegal gambling den, and the whole family did live in fear of the police. Sylvia taught Rangi these words: 'police; butcher; knife; kill; gaol' and from this intensely personal beginning with words Rangi became a reader.

Sylvia's capacity for intimacy with Rangi was typical of her work, and mirrored the intimacy I was developing with my teachers and peers in psychodrama training. I took this new capacity for intimacy back into my own classroom, and using simple conversations, I embarked on a project of coming to know my students intimately, so that their learning to read and write could be based on the reality of their own lives and experiences.

PAULO FREIRE

Paulo Freire was born into a middle-class family in north-east Brazil, in a repressive and totalitarian state. He was very poor in the 1930s and was often hungry at school, listless and unable to learn. At eleven, he vowed to dedicate his life to fight hunger. When he later became a teacher, he taught illiterate adults living in Brazil's slums. His radical new methods of teaching resulted in the creation of a huge program to make five million Brazilians literate. After a military coup in 1962, he was imprisoned as a subversive. He lived in exile for fifteen years, but in 1989 he was appointed Secretary for Education in Sao Paulo.

Freire's principle for working with the 'oppressed' was to work with the themes and concerns of the group, not on imposing the teacher's agenda. My own teaching job has required me to work with the 'oppressed' in school – children who are being failed by the system. A constant theme of this group is the pain, suffering and humiliation these students have experienced at school, and elsewhere in their lives.

In psychodrama training, I was able to display the painful truth of my own life experiences, and to have others involved with me in dealing with the pain. Back in the classroom, I became better able to permit expressions of pain and rage from angry students. I continued to experiment in my work with these students,

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creating class meetings, where students' concerns could become the focus of our interactions and my interventions.

I also began to develop an advocacy role to champion the cause of these particular students, by giving lectures and conducting demonstrations elsewhere in the education system, at both local and national professional development days.

Summary

I have attempted to illuminate a method of working in the classroom which allows me to use principles of learning from my psychodrama training to promote the development of each student's identity. In applying these principles, I acknowledge the influence and confluence of the lives and practices of a number of eminent educators: Leila Berg, Sylvia Ashton-Warner and Paulo Freire.

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Ryan and the Yellow Bike: Using Psychodrama in Work with Autistic Children

BY LYNLEY McNAB

Lynley McNab is a speech therapist, trained teacher and an advanced psychodrama trainee. She presently works for the Autism Association of New South Wales teaching 10-year-old students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in one of the Autism Association Schools.

The Teachable Moment

I am completely fascinated with the idea of living fully in each moment, and how this can be explored and played out within a classroom setting with children with special needs, specifically, children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

My colleague, Julie Quinn, and I have been working with our students with a new, cutting edge Special Education programming technique specifically designed for people with ASD. This approach, called 'Social Stories', was pioneered by Carol Gray in Michigan, USA (Gray, 1995). This involves using a strength of most children with ASD: their outstanding visual ability.

Children with ASD bring their own set of distinct difficulties. In my working model of ASD I picture this as a triad of disorders overlaid by sensory difficulties. See Figure 1.
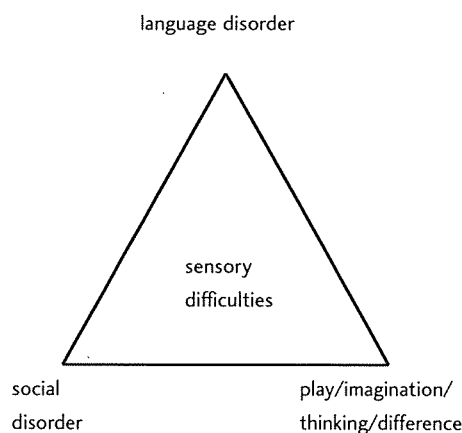
language disorder

sensory difficulties

social disorder

play/imagination/ thinking/difference

FIGURE 1: WORKING MODEL OF ASD

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Children with ASD typically have a qualitative impairment in all three areas. Their social difficulties don't occur as a consequence of their language difficulties. These children are very unusual in that they have a social disorder as well as a language disorder. For example, for a child with ASD it is not that you can't make friends because you are not very good at talking; it is that you don't understand friendship or the meaning of anything social *and* that you are not very good at talking. These children have extreme difficulty in understanding what people, faces, interactions and relationships are all about. They also then have difficulty predicting what other people are going to say or do next. So, for example, when a child with ASD looks at a person's face, they may not understand the total meaning of what that face is expressing and what the face means socially (Social Comprehension). They may instead, when they see a face, notice the shine on a glasses rim. Children who have this much trouble understanding anything social and expressing themselves, understandably, can get very confused and frustrated. They may find themselves using an extreme form of communication such as screaming, hitting, biting or crying or maybe talking repetitively.

It has been proposed that people with ASD also think in a very different manner than we 'neurotypical' people. According to 'Central Coherence Theory' (Happé: 1994), people with ASD focus on specific detail (like the glasses frame) while 'neurotypical' people focus on the 'gist of things' or the meaning. Thus, understanding meaningful social interaction becomes even more elusive.

Julie and I have been working on developing social stories strategies using a method described by Carol Gray called 'Comic Strip Conversations'. By literally drawing what people say and do and think, things social can be slowed down and described in explicit detail. Children then get a chance to understand and explore the strange reasons why people do what they do and say what they say. The children can then understand and learn about themselves, other people and the world around them by the

presentation and integration of information in the form that is their natural learning strength, the visual format.

We present information to our students using a visual format, rather than just by talking with them. We use this method to assist with learning and understanding more about the complex and confusing world of social interaction and relationships. In Carol Gray's terms, we are developing their 'Social Comprehension' of situations. The meaning of the situation is integrally connected to the meaning of the thoughts and words.

We are also using this method to support our students towards a more full expression of themselves and their ideas. The interaction is slowed down enough for us to examine and explore visually the display of what other people think, say and do. This in turn allows time to also examine options for responding.

I wrestle with the compromises that need to be made between expected curriculum activities and making the most of exciting chances for incidental dramas and opportunities for accidental learning which arise. These offer the 'teachable moments'. Also there is a clash between the traditional behaviour modification methods and methods of managing behaviour and encouraging more adequate means of expression through the development of 'Social Comprehension'.

I am particularly alert to the difference between these approaches when 'the moment' is in any way social, relationship or communication-based. I will grab my pen and paper and head on over to where the action is occurring. Let me tell you the story of one such event.

The Yellow Bike

There were big projects going in our school that we had been working on for most of the year. Firstly, it was the year for our school inspection by the NSW Board of Studies. Secondly, Julie and I had been extending Carol Gray's Social Stories idea by bringing it into the moment using 'illustrated interactions'. Thirdly, and most important to Ryan, our school had the good

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fortune to have retired engineers especially build and modify bikes that would meet the needs of our students, and so 'the yellow bike' was born.
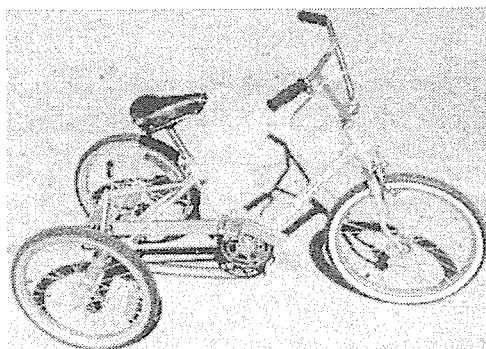
The yellow bike wasn't a speedster, but it was relatively fast and extremely stable. With the right rider at the helm, it could get you around our bike track at a fairly good clip. Ryan adored the yellow bike. He rode it at every opportunity. He raced around the school track with some skill and much enthusiasm. Ryan had found freedom at last, an 'exhilarated speedster'.

Unfortunately, the yellow bike proved a teeny bit too fragile for 11-year-old Ryan's very generous and sturdy body. After a long series of bent and broken parts, our engineers sadly shook their heads and informed us that, really, they had to suggest 'no more yellow bike for Ryan'. It just couldn't cope with the use, and they had run out of bike strengthening ideas. The staff had to create a rule that would make sense to all the children, not single out Ryan, nor humiliate him because of his size. We decided that the rule would be that 'only kids under 10 years' could ride the yellow bike. Ryan was devastated. Work was done to support Ryan through this. He courageously accepted the decision over time, becoming a 'resigned, sometimes petulant griever'.

Hello, Mr President

Meanwhile, after months of frenzied preparation, our day of reckoning, the school inspection, has arrived. There is an air of anxiety and anticipation in the school. The children pick up on the mood of the day, and some are slightly more stressed and anxious than usual. The

group of men in their 'flash' suits walk around our school, view our programs and meet the kids. When the men enter our class en masse, one of our boys goes over, shakes one of their hands, and says, 'Hello Mr President'. It certainly is our big day!

During my break, I gradually become conscious of a familiar scream issuing forth from the playground. I sneak a look outside and feel immediate tension in my belly. The 'suits' are all lined up at our classroom window watching as Ryan screams and runs around the playground, highly distressed. The yellow bike is in the centre of the action guarded by the teacher on duty, the 'determined gatekeeper'.

The school principal approaches me and suggests that now might be a good time to show off this new cutting edge method that I have been working on all year with Ryan. I can feel the observing phalanx of suits through the staffroom wall and am aware that their report may include how we manage such a situation at our school. I pick up my now familiar wad of paper and thick-tipped felt pen and head out into the playground.

Creating the Stage

To view this within the psychodramatic framework, Ryan is already very warmed up to himself and his issues. He is in an overdeveloped role of the 'cathartic expresser'. The relationships that he is most warmed up to are firstly with himself and secondly with the yellow bike. He is not directing his expression to, nor in close relationship with, another person at present.

What I will offer to him is the container and the process of the psychodramatic stage, in the form of pen and paper. This will be a place for the concretisation and expression of his present concerns and a place for an exploration of these concerns if he wishes. He will be in relationship with his director, myself, and his possible auxiliaries: the yellow bike and the teacher.

As I walk out towards him, I am warming up to my role as a director of a drama, rather than the traditional role of the 'problem solver'. I feel my

sense of time begin to expand and lengthen. I believe implicitly that Ryan has something to say and that he knows what it is. I am warming up to my role of 'producer' co-creating this drama with Ryan. I feel no anxiety about outcomes or 'what might happen', but a deep calm and curiosity about what Ryan might show me about himself and his world. I believe in Ryan's creative genius and am ready to value his display, whatever that may be.

9 Years Old

As I walk out into the playground, Ryan sees me approach and comes running over, still yelling. I tell him to sit down. He does so. I sit alongside him on the small hillock in our playground and immediately offer him both the pen and the paper. Ryan grabs the pen and now in total silence draws quickly and furiously, the 'passionate expresser'.
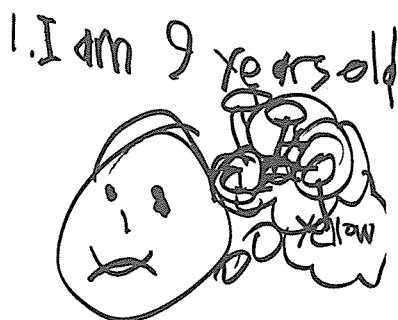
Ryan draws a happy smile, and then changes it to 'sad' with a tear in his eye. He tells me that he is only nine years old (and therefore within the yellow bike-riding age bracket) and that he is thinking about the yellow bike. As he draws, he settles and becomes calm and focuses on the page.

Ryan is warmed up to himself and to his concerns. He shows immediate trust in the now familiar method and in me. I am taking Ryan seriously and he warms up to his power to act rather than simply reacting. He has open-heartedly and passionately entered into this drama.

Ryan begins to concretise and express himself while in relationship to his director. I delight in

the emergence of a thinking component to his expression. The 'self-righteous rule-bender' is present. Ryan hands the paper and pen to me. As we sit side-by-side, I am aware that our joint attention is focused on the page, that we have oriented to our stage.

I find responding to Ryan very easy. I like the clarity that he has brought to his expression. Ryan leans over and watches with great interest as I write.

Freed Up From Outcomes

I find this an extremely freeing and exciting method. Naming what is there. Living purely in the moment with Ryan being so present with me. I am freed up from having to create outcomes. I trust that the next moment will emerge if I can live fully in this moment.

This is in direct contrast to a traditional special education behaviour modification approach. My overall priorities are to build trust, relationships and learning (including social comprehension and role development) with my students. Right now, I am in an active listening role, co-creating a drama with Ryan.

This is a very different role than that which a teacher would assume within a more traditional task- or outcome-oriented approach. Such an approach would focus more on the behaviour and how to manage it where the teacher might be in some form of the role of 'authoritarian controller'. Outcomes that may be targeted in such programs could include: Ryan must stop running around or yelling, and keep his hands down.

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The behaviour management plan would also include communication goals. For example:

- *Ryan learning how to request the yellow bike with appropriate language, rather than demanding the bike by yelling or screaming; and*
- *Ryan learning how to express his disappointment in a socially appropriate manner, rather than smashing or hitting.*

It is reasonable to consider that if everyone expressed his or her distress and disappointment in our society by running around, screaming, yelling and hitting, we would not have an easily workable system. However, I find that supporting the work to be done in this psychodramatic fashion, the children do change their means of expression over time as they are heard, mirrored and extend their role development and role systems. The outcomes flow from an integration of the work, rather than imposition from adult decision-making.

All To Himself Forever

I have mirrored Ryan in words and invited him to take up the stage. Ryan responds with this:
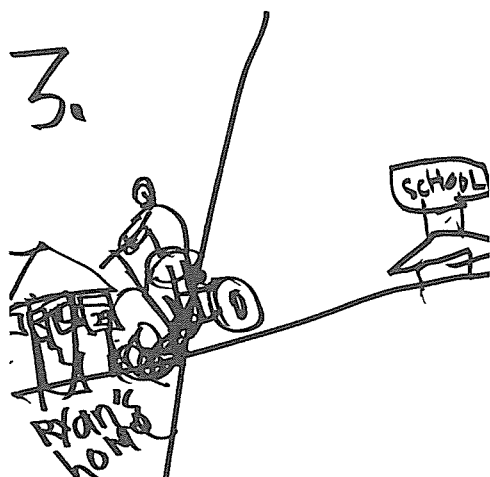
Don't I get it yet? Ryan loves this bike. Ryan longs for this bike constantly. Ryan must have this bike. Riding this bike feels great. It is a wonderful feeling that Ryan wants to experience as often as possible. He is out of here and home to his world with his rules. 'The daring escapee'.

I respond:
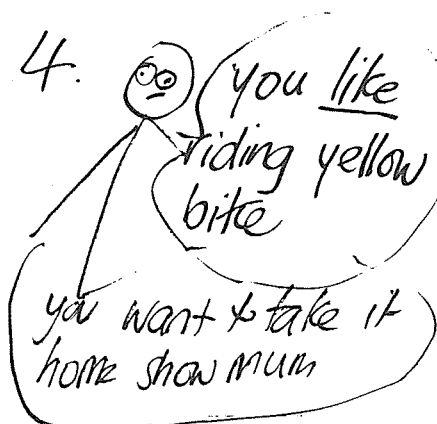
I look at this now and think that I could have used this opportunity to mirror back just how big Ryan's wanting and yearning is for this bike more fully, particularly as Ryan's warm-up has now deepened. Ryan doesn't want to just take it home to show mum; he wants to have it all to himself forever. He wants to immerse himself fully in the experience of totally having this bike. (However, remember the suits? I am working intermittently to maintain my spontaneity and warm-up and not worry about how it is all looking).

Ryan gives me yet another chance to get what he is trying to tell me; the 'persistent communicator' is present. Ryan wasn't fully mirrored in intensity, so he has to do it again.

As we continue with this, other children have gradually approached the stage. The sociometry of the group has shifted. We now have an obvious audience. I become aware that a child is leaning on my back looking at the paper. Another is over my outstretched leg.

A Sense of Group

I have experienced this phenomenon over and over again. The children move in. They do not look at each other, but intensely focus on the page in close proximity to each other. What is the attraction? Is it the concretisation of someone's inner world? A world that is presented in discrete, non overwhelming chunks. It is in the visual format which they find the easiest to interpret. It allows them to begin to build a picture of what might be going on here (Social Comprehension again).

Does Ryan's concretisation somehow mirror something that is in them, that they recognize but would struggle to express themselves? Or is it the side-by-side relationship and dynamic between Ryan and myself that also attracts them? Is it that someone is valuing Ryan as they may wish to be seen and valued? Whatever is the case, the children all jointly focus on the unfolding drama.

The process has a powerful influence on the sociometry of the group. I notice that over time these children do display a higher awareness of each other and a wish to connect with each other in some way, and a development that feels to me like a sense of 'group' emerges. The children are aware that they are members of that group. A boy in my present class, who showed no obvious interest in his peers, now won't leave the classroom until everybody comes, and another boy wants to have 'runners like James'.
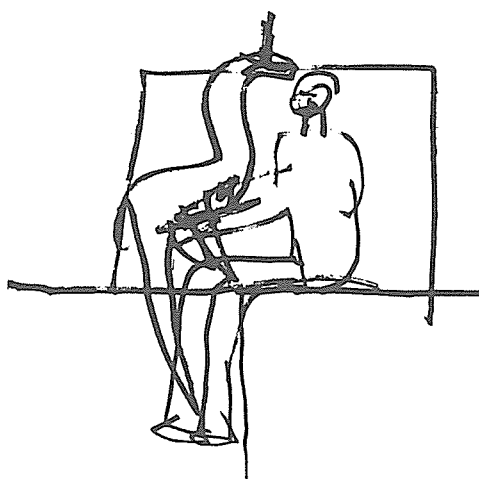
Meeting the Gentle Friend

I make a guess based on past experience with Ryan's 'insatiable demander':

6. *oh yes Ryan, you want mummy to buy you a yellow bike*
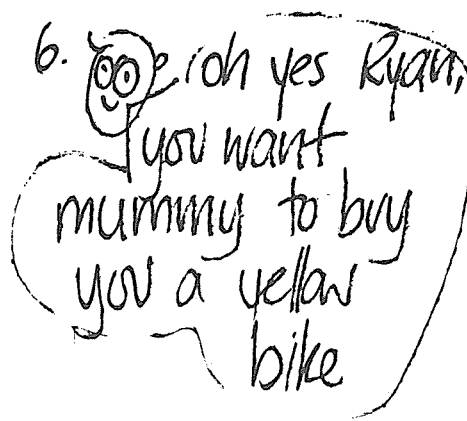
Ryan responds:

7.

This is a critical moment in the drama. I sense the role shift for Ryan. He moves from the belief that he can only be satisfied by possessing the bike or by being the 'self-involved speedster forever', to being satisfied by being in relationship with a friend. I know that he is starting to think and talk about friends because he recently drew this in the classroom:
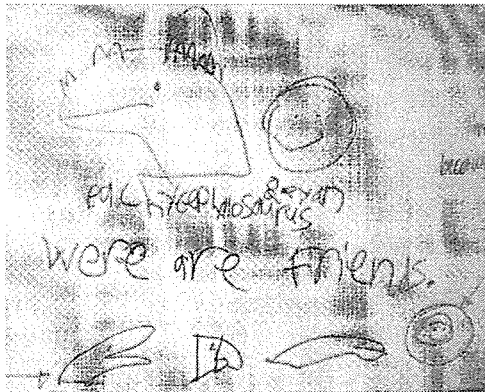
Ryan says, 'Here are some of pachycephalosaurus' friends.'

When I asked Ryan why he had a circle around him, he said, 'Because I'm not a dinosaur.'

Ryan has displayed a role shift from 'insatiable demander' and 'insatiable yearner' to 'needing a friend', 'gentle friend' or maybe 'welcoming companion'.

Ryan may be doing fantastically, however, my grip on my warm-up is slipping. I can feel myself panicking and getting conscious of the audience of suits. As I move from 'open-hearted valuer of the display' and 'calm mirrorer' to 'nervous questioner' and 'solution finder'. I say:
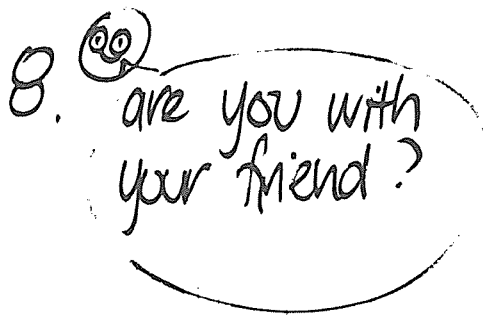
On reflection, I could have brought the drama to an end here by mirroring back to Ryan the wonderfully intimate feeling of sitting quietly with a friend. For example, 'sitting beside a friend feels good', rather than asking a nervous and self-evident question.

Ryan responds with this:
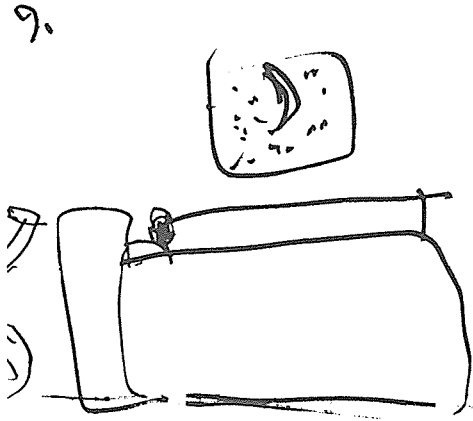
He is now at home, in bed, it is night time and the yellow bike is parked at his head. 'Thank you very much, we'll just pause there and clear the stage.'

Some children have wandered off, some are still here. Ryan is calm and at peace with himself. He has made a small but courageous step from 'having' to 'sitting beside a friend'. I chat with him quietly about what he might like to go and do now. He stands up and wanders off by himself. I sit with the other children for a while.

As a director, I feel mixed emotions. I am elated that something so dear to my heart turned out so beautifully in the face of such intense scrutiny. The sense of 'there is always enough time' is marred by the feeling that I rushed at the crucial moment. However, Ryan was able to move forward from the intoxication of 'I want' to have to an emergent intimacy with a friend. There is no need for me to bother with giving my 'harsh critic' an airing at this moment.

So, we've arrived at our outcome! Ryan came to his own decisions about resolution and outcomes. Ryan is not yelling. Ryan is not running around. And Ryan's hands are down. This has happened by using a highly visual method allowing Ryan to take the stage and explore the situation in strong relationship with his teacher. Ryan has maintained his warm-up to his power to act. He came to his own

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conclusions through his own role shifts. He explored his own and my sense of the social situation.

I find myself back in the staff room, ravenous, eating my cold pasta out of an old takeaway container. I hear that the suits are in the Principal's office discussing their inspection. I hope that they saw the profound shifts that Ryan made as they watched through the looking glass of the classroom window.

I value the pure producer and believer in the childrens' creative genius and their willingness to enter into such an adventure with me. The 'righteous and cathartic demanders' give way to 'clear communicators' and 'dream claimers'. It is a great privilege and experience for me to walk some of this journey with these extraordinary children.

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Acknowledgments

I feel no anxiety about outcomes or 'what might happen', but a deep calm and curiosity about what Ryan might show me about himself and his world. I believe in Ryan's creative genius and am ready to value his display, whatever that may be.

The Use of Role Theory in Developing Mental Health Support Workers

BY CARIL COWAN

Caril Cowan is the Program Coordinator of Mental Health Support Work at the Auckland University of Technology's Department of Psychotherapy and Applied Psychology. She has a special interest in the life stories and journeys of people who live with severe and persistent mental illness and their experience of using the health services. She is an advanced trainee in psychodrama at the Auckland Centre for Training in Psychodrama.

Introduction

In New Zealand the role of mental health support worker emerged following the closure of the psychiatric hospitals along with a move to community care for people with severe and persistent mental illness. With these changes came a call for community support for people with mental illness from 'non-professionals'.

Prior to 1992 a scattering of non-governmental organisations were providing a few supported homes within the community. These were run largely on a voluntary or low-paid basis and commonly referred to as halfway houses.

Changes in the health policy and funding over 1992–6 saw increased government funding and an expansion of supported housing and community support services. As the use of an 'untrained' workforce was seen as the most affordable option, the position of mental health support worker was established.

Initially there was no educational preparation for people taking up this work. But it quickly became clear that to do this job adequately would take more than a good heart. (Falloon, 1992:3). To train this new group in the mental health workforce the National Certificate in Mental Health (Mental Health Support Work) was developed by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, and offered for the first time in 1998. The national certificate is a pre-degree qualification which aims to develop basic skills, knowledge and attitudes for mental health work.

I was employed at the Auckland University of Technology to establish this program. In response to requests from students and health

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sector workers I have since also been involved in developing a Diploma in Mental Health – a one-year undergraduate program. It is anticipated that this Diploma will be incorporated into a full undergraduate degree.

I have found in this work that the application of role theory assists me to maintain positive tele with the students and a strong warm-up to my work. This in turn has assisted in the role development of students. This paper discusses my understanding of how I apply role theory in the educational preparation of mental health support workers.

The Role of Mental Health Support Worker

People working as mental health support workers support people living in the community with severe and persistent mental illness. This includes people living independently and those living in supported housing and residential rehabilitation services.

Some literature refers to these workers as 'carers', aligning them with the roles played by family/whanau/friends. However, their role is different from that of a family member. Family members have little choice in their involvement with their mentally ill relative and yet they have their own career/life to create and maintain. In comparison, the support worker chooses to work and receives pay for the support they give. They have their own family and life and are likely to move on from this position and the people they are supporting to other roles. They may even choose to change careers.

There are conflicting expectations about the role of mental health support workers. Clinical staff expect support workers to enforce compliance with medical orders, making people take their medication, monitoring their signs of illness and calling the acute services when required. Members of the public have an unrealistic fear of violence from people with mental illness and want mental health support workers to ensure public safety. Both groups expect mental health support workers to take a custodial role.

The people who receive the support services have a high level of social disability related to their mental illness. Recently the mental health services have been challenged largely by consumers to focus on recovery (Mental Health Commission, 1998). 'Recovery' refers to the individual journey people make to recreate their lives following mental health crises. This view is endorsed by the Health Funding Authority which pays for rehabilitation services.

The role of support workers is to assist people with severe and persistent illness through their daily life, maximising their independent functioning. The role is not therapy but support. It requires the ability to be present with others in all their states of existence in life. It calls for excellent communication skills and a strong sense of self. It also requires an understanding of how society functions and the ability to guide people to understand where and how they can find their place in society.

Support workers require enough knowledge of mental illness to guide people to understand their life experience and to learn/accept what they need to do to re-create their lives. In re-creating their lives people need to make their own sense of the lived experience of the symptoms attributed to the mental illness (such as hearing or seeing things that others don't hear, feeling invincible or not sleeping). This role required of the mental health support worker is that of therapeutic guide.

There is an obvious and unresolved tension between these two expectations. One is a custodial role, ensuring compliance and safety. The other role is that of therapeutic guide to the person living through each day with the effects of a mental illness.

My Warm-Up

Several factors have led to my passion for working in mental health and more latterly in workforce development. I had an aunt who spent all her adult life within the old custodial mental health system. As a child I was part of family visits to her in Oakley Hospital, the psychiatric asylum for Auckland. Prior to and

after these visits my mother would agonise about the necessity for her sister-in-law to live in such conditions. The impact on me contributed to a passion to create enabling environments and support for people with severe and persistent mental illness. I take this passion into my work with students who are entering the mental health workforce.

I am always striving to find better and more effective methods to assist the students in their journey working in mental health. The application of role theory in this educational setting has expanded my satisfaction and effectiveness in the classroom. I am now delighted to share with you some of my insights. I hope that you will be stimulated and expanded in your thinking and understanding of the application of role theory.

My awareness of the roles displayed by students and the process of fostering role development have developed over time and with active use of supervision. Time and again I have taken to supervision my frustrations at the resistance to learning I have experienced from students. I would set a learning exercise and see the students freeze. I would patiently explain, demonstrate, use the moment, do all I could in action, maximising the learning opportunities. But the assignments showed that students had not learnt. I have felt helpless, hopeless, frustrated and angry. Patiently and insistently my supervisor has coached me into the application of role theory; and to see even the most challenging of students have the potential to grow. This has helped me to see the growing edge of students, to rejoice in their movement and growth and to be progressive in my functioning with them.

The Students and Their Psychodramatic Roles

This program for adults who wish to work in mental health aims to augment their life experience with sufficient knowledge and skills, and to foster the attitudes required, for working as support workers. The students come to study in this program with a variety of warm-ups.

Some students are eager to do good work, improving the mental health services and/or improving the lives of people using the services. They may have experienced mental ill-health themselves or have a family member who has a mental illness.

Others have worked in mental health for some time. They have gained experiential knowledge and believe that they do not require any more knowledge to work expertly in their role. They are required by their employer to do this program.

Some students are using this program as part of their path to recovery, following a sometimes long journey through the mental health services.

Most, if not all students, have experienced formal education as unpleasant. They have not succeeded in formal education and have been shamed for being unintelligent.

Maori and Pacifika students, living with institutional racism, have learnt to hide their true selves. Their knowledge and the knowledge of their culture has been denigrated over many generations, in education, health, business and the media. These institutions are organised according to, and perpetuate, the dominant culture. It is the expectation of Maori and Pacifika students that this experience will continue in the program. It is, of course, offered in a Pakeha/Palangi (Anglo-Celtic) university with Pakeha/Palangi lecturers.

These various warm-ups in the classroom can be summarised in psychodramatic terms as in the table below:

World Saviour
Mental Health Expert
Psych Patient
Dunce in the Corner
Cultural Survivor

TABLE 1

To understand in more depth the experiences brought into the classroom by students, each of these psychodramatic roles is expanded below and organised into three groups – fragmenting, coping and progressive roles. Fragmenting roles

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are the falling-apart behaviour that we all have as an individualised expression within us. The coping roles are the behaviours we develop to suppress or cover up the fragmenting experience. Coping roles are frequently overdeveloped. To begin to realise our creative, spontaneous selves we develop varying degrees of progressive functioning. Each of the role categories can be further classified as absent, embryonic, adequate or overdeveloped. (Clayton, 1992, Hucker, 1999).

WORLD SAVIOUR

Progressive Roles	Coping Roles	Fragmenting Roles
Active Knowledge Seeker	Righteous Anger	Horrified Hades Dweller
Self Believer	Conscientious Battler	Bedlam Inmate
Active Skill Developer	Eager Learner	
Systems Analyst	Critical Learner	

COLONISED SURVIVOR

Progressive Roles (embryonic)	Coping Roles (overdeveloped)	Fragmenting Roles
Self Accepter/Lover	Self Denier	Annihilation Anticipater
Creative Link Maker/Artist	Defensive Self Protector	
Brave Open Contributor	Right Answer Seeker	

MENTAL HEALTH EXPERT

Progressive Roles (embryonic)	Coping Roles (overdeveloped)	Fragmenting Roles
Self Lover	Knowledge Imposer	Shamed Non-Knower
Creative Artist	Disruptive Know-All	
Knowledge Seeker	Smart Analyser	
	Associate Lecturer	

PSYCH PATIENT

Progressive Roles (embryonic)	Coping Roles	Fragmenting Roles
Self Believer	Illness Denier	Embodied Madness
Self Lover	*Or: Overdeveloped*	
Self Knowledge Valuer	Discloser of Illness	
Creative Artist	Expert Over-User of Mental Health Services	
Active Learner		
	Disruptive Know-All	

DUNCE IN THE CORNER

Progressive Roles	Coping Roles	Fragmenting Roles
Knowledge Seeker	Conscientious Scholar	Embodied Stupidity
Skill Developer	Obedient Student	
Critical Thinker	Right Answer Seeker	
Self Believer	Teacher's Pet	

TABLE 2

Role Development through the Educational Process

In all early contact with prospective students the Department and the University aim to foster the development of a positive warm-up to study and to working in the mental health workforce. Staff are asked to consider whether their contact will foster a prospective student's desire to work in mental health by studying on the program. Advertising, brochures, letters and telephone answering systems have been established to foster a positive warm-up. The director/lecturer actively fosters positive tele with the students.

There is a serious shortage of Maori and Pacifika peoples in the mental health workforce. Contact with the University is designed to indicate our intention to make the educational setting a place Maori and Pacifika people can feel welcome and safe enough to learn. There is a Powhiri (greeting ceremony) on the first day. All study days open and close with a karakia (blessing) and waiata (song). The director/lecturer uses the roles of resource accesser, open accepter, cultural difference acknowledger and valuer, and bi-cultural/multicultural fosterer. The Department has a Maori Liaison officer whose role it is to support Maori to adjust to the demands of study and the Pakeha educational system. She acts as a resource for the Pakeha lecturers.

The warm-up fostered in class is to the journey that students are sharing on this program; to learning together; to making links with the developing community of mental health support workers and the larger mental health workforce. Students are encouraged in class to see themselves as people who know and who have valuable knowledge to share and to expand.

The major difference between formal and non-formal learning is the assessment process. Students' fear of being judged and their fear of failure/shame/ridicule is overdeveloped to a disabling extent when assessments are to be presented. In class, this is re-framed. Assignments are learning tools to extend and clarify our thinking. The importance of

congruence with colleagues' thinking and refereeing of journal articles is discussed. Marking sheets are feedback sheets. Feedback on assignments is a tool for the students to learn that their thinking and expression is clear, that they are using the knowledge available and expected of them in working in mental health. The director/lecturer is in the role of coach and wise guide.

Application in the Classroom

Classroom sessions are places of active learning. To foster the progressive role development of students, a myriad of active learning techniques are used. I will describe one session which I found demanded a high level of spontaneity. I enjoyed this opportunity to foster learning and role development. The session addressed the fragmenting role of fear of failure/shame/ridicule/persecution and fostered the progressive role of active knowledge seeker.

Students frequently stumble over the need to use literature. Their learning from reading is underdeveloped. The expectation to use at least three references in each assignment frightens many students. Students frequently think that their statements should be sufficient without qualification, or that they do not need to acknowledge the people who have developed concepts or reported research. In the session described below I used concretisation to demonstrate the value of referring to literature.

One student was chosen to represent the generic mental health support worker. A chair represented a challenging situation where the mental health support worker was out of their depth. They needed more knowledge, insight and skill. They turned around and asked for help. Several students were chosen to represent authors. The books written by these authors were placed in their hands. One person represented a Kaumatua (male Maori elder) as a speaker at a hui (conference). The director went to each person representing an author and valued the specific insights, knowledge and skill they had contributed to working in mental health. The generic mental health support worker was invited to use these books and the

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report from the hui.

A student in the audience asked with some astonishment why the worker would not speak directly to each person who had written the books. Without the application of role theory, I would likely have been astonished at this lack of appreciation of the value of the literature. I could have enhanced the fragmenting experience of education these students bring to the classroom. In the role of knowing scholar I could have invoked the fragmenting roles of the useless failure, persecuted victim or crazy non-knower (see Table 2).

In the classroom setting, I have often struggled to assist all the students to maintain a positive warm-up to both studying and working in the mental health services. It has been easy for me to take a superior role of knowledgeable lecturer, and foster the reactive role of inferiority in the student. In the example above I could have dictated the program requirements, or perhaps have been disparaging of students' inability or reluctance to use references.

Instead, I responded to the knowledge gap made so obvious in action. I helped to make the use of learning from reading and conferences live for the students. Each author was placed geographically (most do not live in Auckland), in time (some are very old or have died) and personal considerations given (one has lived with schizophrenia for several decades). This created new insight about the availability to students of established knowledge available to them. It fostered the progressive roles of active learner, knowledge seeker and acknowledger of expertise.

Valuer of Each Student
Identifier of the Growing Edge in People
Creative Actor/Director
Coach
Wise Guide

TABLE 3: ROLES USED BY THE LECTURER

Support workers require enough knowledge of mental illness to guide people to understand their life experience and to learn/accept what they need to do to re-create their lives.

Conclusion

By using role theory I have been able to appreciate some of the deeper issues for the students. By thinking about the psychodramatic roles they have brought with them to the classroom, I have increased my understanding of their functioning as students and mental health support workers. This has increased my progressive functioning as lecturer/director and has in turn fostered greater role development in the students.

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Role Training with Men Who Sexually Offend

BY VINCENT FLEMING

Vincent has worked as a therapist and group facilitator for four years with the SAFE treatment program for sexual offenders in Auckland. He has worked for two years on the adolescent program and for the last two years has worked full time on the adult program. Vincent is an advanced trainee at the Auckland Centre for Training in Psychodrama.

The SAFE program is for both adolescent and adult men and women who sexually offend. Adult clients are mostly directed to treatment by the Courts or from family pressure. In our work we have become aware of the benefit to clients of perceiving and developing the roles they need to stop sexual offending behaviour. We have come to recognise the benefits of role training clients to perform adequately in future high-risk situations. The role training is done primarily in groups to spread the benefits and to strengthen role development through peer support and recognition.

Developing Trust

In using role training in educational settings Williams (1975) emphasised that exploring situations of great importance to the individual is possible only if there is a bond of trust between the students and between the teacher and the students. She also noted the need for an atmosphere where students feel they will not be judged or condemned (Williams, 1975). This trust is very relevant in work with men who

sexually offend. Blanchard (1995) observes that in restoring sex offenders to safe and healthy relationships within society, the quality of the therapist–patient relationship is equally important, if not more so, than any other technique or instrument used.

Fear and potential for shame is high with men who enter treatment for sexually offending against children. They are at different levels of being exposed as child molesters. The level of difficulty for sex offenders to trust is great as they often come from emotionally deprived and physically abusive backgrounds. They frequently lack the social skills necessary to develop and maintain long-term adult relationships. Arriving to and participating in treatment can be a very threatening experience for sex offenders.

Men who sexually offend often have core beliefs such as: I am worthless, I am no good, I am hopeless and I am different from everyone else. These core beliefs are compounded by their exposure as child molesters. They may

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also have core beliefs about others: people are untrustworthy, people will hurt me, the world is a bad place and people are unworthy. As Beck (1995) suggests, these core beliefs can be reinforced by community pressure to punish men who sexually offend. Such core beliefs may operate when a person is depressed or they may operate for much of the time (Beck, 1995).

Added to this are men's normal fears around talking about such matters as masturbation and sexual fantasies.

How quick, then, for them to use coping roles of conforming, placating or attacking when in group therapy?

According to Whitaker and Lieberman (1989), failure to benefit from therapy occurs:

- *When a person succeeds consistently in maintaining a habitual maladaptive solution in the group, remaining comfortable but affectively untouched.*
- *When a person resorts to physical or psychological flight thus insulating himself from affective forces in the group.*
- *When a person reacts with breakdown of previously established solutions and substitution of disorganised, inadequate behaviour.*

One method of minimising the anxieties that the men feel is by itemising the very areas that require role repertoire development.

Conceptual Foundations

My work in role development is informed by a number of sources. Moreno (1977) defines a role as 'the functioning form the individual assumes in the specific moment he reacts to a situation in which other persons or objects are involved'. He distinguishes *role perception* which is cognitive and anticipates forthcoming responses and *role enactment* which is a skill of performance. Moreno notes that a high degree of role perception can be accompanied by a low skill for role enactment and vice versa.

According to Moreno, role-playing is a function of both role perception and role enactment.

Role training, in contrast, is an effort, through the rehearsal of roles, to perform adequately in future situations.

Williams (1975) observes that we learn roles in everyday life mainly from the family and school. Often we develop destructive roles or roles which are inadequate for the situation we find ourselves in. Role training can be helpful to actually see the roles we play and change and develop them where they are in conflict with our intentions.

In my psychodrama training at Auckland Centre for Training in Psychodrama (ACTP) two functions have been identified which if integrated by the client will make role reversal more effective. The first is that a client is able to be doubled. The client is assisted by having others stand behind him saying what he is feeling or thinking. This allows the client to develop his own identity, his own feelings and his own will.

The second function is mirroring. This is achieved by having a client stand outside of his enactment to watch himself in relation to the other people and objects in the scene. This is important in having the client appreciate and recognise himself. While he is in the scene he is stuck. When he is standing outside of the scene he gains extra ability to act, and gains a better ability to strategise. As Bergman (1997) observes, 'the excitement/proto-reality of experience in drama therapy reveals the performer as he really is. The experience mostly occurs too quickly for the "performer" to use his defence. He responds with the strategies that he uses everywhere, rather than the careful defences of treatment.'

The Need for Role Development

'People vary in how emotionally aroused they become during crises, and thus in how much their behaviour is disrupted. Studies of people faced with crises such as fires or sudden floods (Hillards, 1996) find that 15% of people show organised effective behaviour. Most people (70%) show various degrees of disorganisation, but still function with some effectiveness. The remaining 15% are so disorganised that they are

unable to function at all. They may panic or exhibit aimless and completely inappropriate behaviour, suggesting they are far from their optimal level of emotional arousal.

Sexual offenders are known for their offending through times of stress and crises. 'Sexual abusive behaviour, like many other behaviours, is compensatory in nature. That is, the offender may use this behaviour to reduce negative emotional states, such as inadequacy, helplessness, powerlessness, boredom and anger, among others' (Juvenile and Family Court Journal, 1993).

It is also recognised in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy that people can have relatively positive core beliefs until they experience a crisis, when negative core beliefs surface (Beck, 1995). Given that many offenders already have negative core beliefs and an inability to handle stress, and/or lack social skills, it is important that they have coping roles practised and accessible for future crises.

For sexual offenders, to begin imagining possible future crises and developing abilities to manage these crises is crucial to stopping sexual offensive behaviours. Group discussions to find out what constitutes possible future crises are followed by the men role playing how to exit these situations. Their strategies include approaching their support persons for help, phoning emergency services such as Lifeline and leaving the area.

Gauging Role Ability

It is not enough to have clients recognise useful ways of exiting a situation. They have to be capable of doing it. I have observed clients not being able to exit the situation. It is as though they become stuck. I therefore believe that it is dangerous to assume that they know how to exit in real-life situations. Role training will develop the client's ability to act on their will and intent.

One way of gauging a client's ability to cope in situations is to have him acting scenarios that he may face in the future. For example, when working with a client he suspects may not know

how to exit, a facilitator may set up a situation where he can act as a child, get on his knees (to be at a child's height) and approach the man and ask for help with some minor chore.

Another example of gauging a client's ability to cope in a difficult situation is as follows. A client was asked to role-play exiting from a high-risk situation where a child entered a public toilet while he was there. When enacting this situation the client become aggressive in the extreme towards the child and told the child to 'fuck off' in a loud voice. This was how the offender best knew how to exit this situation! With his restricted ability to handle a high-risk situation, he was acting abusively towards the child. The client then watched as his peers modelled other ways of handling this situation. He was then invited to re-enact the approach he found most useful. This time he acted in such a way that he exited the situation without any abuse hurled at the child.

Another offender had learnt to 'thought-stop'. He reported that he could stop his inappropriate sexual thoughts about young girls, but he continued to engage in high risk situations of standing and staring at girls. He knew that this was inappropriate, but it appeared that he could not access the behaviour that would have him walk away from this high-risk scene. Group members suggested a number of ways of moving away from the girls, then invited him back to re-enact and then modelled to him. After some practice he was able to act physically to exit from this situation. He had been given verbal instructions by his peer group in previous group sessions, but it became clear that he needed to practise his exit in action, as he continued to report becoming physically stuck when in this high-risk situation. After enacting this scene he presently reports leaving such situations.

'Drama therapy is part of the process realistically providing a base for raising clients' self-confidence by successfully negotiating if only in a "test tube" setting, high-risk situations. These successes contribute towards raising the clients successful picture of self in recovery' (Bergman, 1997).

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Cognitive Distortions

Re-enactment of high-risk situations can also be useful for clients in gaining insight into their cognitive distortions around offending. The following example describes work with a client who had perpetrated many sexual offences in public toilets. The scene was set and a peer role-played a young boy urinating in a public toilet. The offender was requested to stand next to the boy and pretend urinating. He was then interviewed in this role about what thoughts were going through his head as he stood next to the boy. His thoughts were that the boy was showing him his penis on purpose, that the boy wanted sex and that there was possibility of an ongoing relationship with the boy. The offender was then asked to reverse roles with the boy and interviewed in the role of the boy.

He gained further insight from the boy's perspective. He was then asked to stand back and watch as a peer group member re-enacted the scene. This allowed the offender to stand outside of himself and observe how distorted his thinking was.

Insight is one important step in sex offender treatment. However, insight alone will not give an offender the abilities to cope in a high-risk situation.

Models and Exits

Having peer group members take turns at modelling appropriate behaviours keeps all the group members engaged, thinking about and enacting how they would handle the same situations. This provides added insights for the facilitators.

An example of modelling is as follows: A client talks of a high-risk incident such as having a child enter his bedroom. If he does not describe handling this situation adequately – such as having the child exit the room immediately – he is requested to stand and to enact this scene. Each peer group member is then invited to sit in the client's high-risk situation and model other ways of handling this situation. It's important, for spontaneity's sake, that the peer group are

told that there is no right or wrong way to model, but rather it's more important that they are being generous enough to model an alternative for the offender. If there is no appropriate model the facilitators can model an appropriate exit.

After the peer group models the exits from these high-risk situations, the client is asked to choose the most useful model for himself. This is important because each client is at a different stage on the therapeutic journey. What could be an easily accessible model or exit for one client could be impossible for another client when in a high-risk situation. He then enacts his chosen model, with coaching from the facilitator if necessary.

Sometimes the offender is unable to put voice to the model he chose. A peer group member can be requested to stand behind the offender and voice the words necessary for this role. Then they reverse roles so that the offender says those same words. This reversal of roles can continue until the original offender feels confident in saying those words.

The peer group members can then discuss what they could relate to in the enactment, which opens group discussion on such incidents other clients have had. It also compounds the learning of how handy this exit could be for them in the future.

Modelling can cover a wide range of situations. Other examples include men dealing with aggressive or passive communication from others in the group when they share their everyday difficulties at check-in time; exiting from situations where their friends or workmates are making inappropriate sexual comments about young people; being assertive in making a complaint about inadequate services; saying no to friends offering drugs or alcohol; and approaching potential partners.

Positive Reinforcement to Role Development

When a client acts a scene – of saying no to peer pressure to use alcohol for example – it is

then important to reinforce this role training by bringing into the next scene the people who will benefit from his saying 'no'. For example, his wife and children can be role-played by the peer group. The client can be interviewed in those roles by the facilitator. The offender is able to name the benefits of his control over alcohol abuse while in the role of his wife and children, and this reinforces his decision to change. It also allows for the offender to develop the ability to see the world through the eyes of others. 'It is by taking the roles of all the people in the situation that the individual gains insight' (Williams, 1975).

Displaying Options

A useful technique when offenders have an important choice to make is to display the different sides of the choice in action. The offender can reverse roles into each different side of the choice and be interviewed there by the facilitator. When reversing roles back to himself the offender is asked to take some time to choose, and to bring back to the group the following week the choice he has made. I have learned it is important not to force an immediate choice which often puts the offender in a 'please or fight the facilitator' position – not the best place to make a life-changing decision (Reekie).

Mirroring

Mirroring is a behavioural presentation by an auxiliary of the protagonist's behaviour while the protagonist observes (Auckland Centre for Training in Psychodrama). It assists a person to see themselves clearly in a context, to recognise themselves.

In one group situation, the offender is withdrawing from others. Peer group members are invited to mirror the offender's behaviour in pulling away to his Hiding Place. This mirroring needs to be managed to minimise the chances of peers ridiculing through the mirroring process, or of the offender interpreting it as ridicule. This may be done through peer group feedback on the client's behaviour, or mirrored in action. This mirroring can give the offender a

chance to see what he looks like to other people, with the view of his gaining insight into what may cause others to be distant in relationship to him.

Reversing Roles to Experience Modelling

'Role reversal is the process of changing roles with an auxiliary role (e.g. mother and daughter)' (Auckland Centre for Training in Psychodrama).

In developing an offender's ability to empathise, role reversal with others, such as the person offering drugs, or the person making the inappropriate comments, can be helpful. This allows the client to experience more deeply the new roles coming forward from the modelling.

For example, a client role-played a scene where he was lying on a beach and a young woman came and lay next to him. He was to role-play exiting from this situation as he was still early in developing new thoughts to balance his distorted thinking about women and children being friendly to him. He reversed roles to play the woman lying next to him on the beach. This allowed him to experience her as human rather than as an object to be sexualised and it helped him correct distortions, for example that she only wanted sex with him. He then reversed roles back to be himself and role-played exiting from the situation. By doing this he gained insight into other people's world views. 'We learn new roles in fragments so it is important to keep practising these new roles' (Herron).

Empathy through Loss and Grief

Clients leave treatment for a number of reasons and their leaving needs to be processed by the remaining peer group, if the group is to remain at its most productive. Processing may generate the theme of loss – focusing on losses they have each experienced throughout their own lives, and disclosures about traumatic events. This sharing can lead to a realisation that they are not alone in their experiences. It can also be useful to see which offenders are not able to identify their feelings and which offenders cannot empathise.

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In one group situation a client shared how he held his brother in his arms as he died after a serious car accident. One peer group member responded by saying 'Them's the breaks', another responded by saying there was 'obviously alcohol involved'. Other peer group members were able to respond with varying levels of empathy and say that they felt sad in hearing his story. These responses can be further processed in-group.

After the group members name personal experience with loss, they are asked to have a ten-minute break. They are asked to think of what their victims have lost and to feed this back after break to the group. Because of the previous group discussions the group members are now warmed up to loss and at a more real place to role reverse with their victims.

Some clients may get stuck in their own grieving at losses, such as access to their children, and facilitators will need to empathise for some time until the client is capable of moving more fully to thinking of the impact of his offending on his family system.

A quick method of gauging ability to empathise and respond appropriately is by having a client role play a person crying, and then each group member has a turn at empathising and supporting the person crying. This exercise can bring out some very distorted beliefs about being supportive.

Public Ridicule

A high-risk future experience for many offenders will be public ridicule and isolation. Group discussion about what sort of comments could be aimed at them usually brings forward such names such as Kiddie Fucker, Sicko, Loser and Freak. These names are similar to their core beliefs: unless addressed they can undermine their self-esteem and cause a high level of stress in their everyday interactions with people. Stress and low self-esteem are two factors leading men to sexually offend, and therefore must put the client at a higher risk of reoffending. A number of clients believe they deserve abuse from their communities because of the heinous nature of their crime/crimes, and

they conclude that they do not have the right of reply. This can again compound their core beliefs. Other clients do not know how to put themselves in a more secure position when confronted aggressively, leaving them open to receiving violence from members of their communities. Through the use of role training the clients can learn to handle rejection and have an ability to exit from violent situations.

Confrontation

'Group therapists may elect to employ confrontive group techniques in any type of group therapy. These techniques include the use of a "hot seat" to increase feedback to an individual sexual offender; deliberately baiting or challenging; and the use of psychodramatic techniques such as mirroring, doubling, and role playing (as in a confrontation between an offender and his victim)' (Maletzky, 1991).

This type of confrontation can cause clients to disassociate and become overwhelmed with feelings of shame and shock.

My observation is that this hot seat process works best when a client feels trusting of the group and of the therapy process. This trust can take time to build. It is also helpful to men's disclosures if the offenders chosen to take the hot seat first are the clients who are most motivated to move through treatment. Their levels of honesty will more likely be higher and therefore they will set the group norm of disclosing openly.

When a client does use aggressive or placating behaviour to a facilitator who is challenging, the co-worker can intervene and interview the offender to help him to gain insight into his Hiding Place. 'Since the offender is so adept at suppressing most affective states, and since rage is extremely threatening to him, the offender rarely understands that his assaults are expressions of profound anger. This resistance contributes to maintaining a backlog of old hurts, insults and injuries that remain part of private "food for malignant thought"' (Bergman, 1997). This intervention from the co-therapist can allow the client to start gaining insight into his Hiding Place. Going to this Hiding Place is

usually fuelled by negative automatic thoughts that spring from the backlog of negative experiences.

An anchoring technique we have found useful in having offenders disclose openly without minimising their offences is to pair their individual treatment goals with the treatment program's expected outcomes for the men. These goals and treatment outcome expectations can be constantly referred to. This puts in perspective for the offender why he is in the hot seat, and minimises the chances of his pulling away from the therapeutic process.

Having offenders share their difficulties about disclosing offending behaviours can also create a more supportive environment for the vulnerable clients to disclose. Having clients share their fears with peer group members and realising that others have the same or similar fears helps them to be more confident (Williams, 1975).

There is I believe a real difficulty in working with men who sexually offend. As workers in this field we carry with us society's views toward sex offenders, and when a client is minimising or denying it is very easy to enter into a blaming or a critical role. This stimulates counter roles in the clients who may respond with angrier defiance or with placating behaviour. 'These behaviours may in turn stimulate further punishing and rejecting behaviour in the teacher' (McKimmie, 1985).

'Certain counselling tenets have stood the test of experience. The solid principles of the humanist philosophy apply to clients – sex offenders included. Of those cherished tenets and principles, the use of self in the therapeutic relationship offers the greatest promise of restoring the lives of sex offenders. If we truly desire to protect our citizenry, we must choose strategies of treatment that have been shown to work. A reactionary treatment response marked by vengeance and punishment may make its

It is helpful to men's disclosures if the offenders chosen to take the hot seat first are the clients who are most motivated to move through treatment. Their levels of honesty will more likely be higher and therefore they will set the group norm of disclosing openly.

proponents feel good in the moment, but it leaves many in continued danger when the sex offender is back on the street' (Blanchard, 1995).

Summary

The SAFE facilitators are presently given live supervision by both a senior therapist and a psychodramatist. We also have peer supervision, which allows for ongoing discussion and sharing of ideas. This supervision enables our work to be ethical and productive.

Ultimately we would like to have the clients accessing their own 'creative genius' so as to enable ongoing creation of ideas for exiting high-risk situations. However, being able to create ideas for exiting high-risk situations is not enough. The men must be able to action these exits. The confidence in being able to action these exits can be achieved through role training.

Another important treatment outcome for men who sexually offend is to be able to empathise with their victims. Doubling, mirroring and role reversal are all-important ingredients in developing empathy in men who sexually offend. Ongoing use of these psychodramatic tools can only enhance long term an offender's ability to empathise. These tools can be fun to use and it can also support the therapist's ability to remain optimistic as he/she sees in action the client's developing ability to exit and empathise.

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The Narcissistic Role System: A New Concept of Systemic Role Theory

BY YUJIRO ISODA

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Foreword

For many years I have been interested in the origin of narcissism and J.L. Moreno's reference to the concept of 'megalomania normalis' (Moreno, 1959). The issue of narcissism has arisen in my therapeutic treatment of patients using psychodrama. Many of the patients I work with have displayed psychopathological symptoms, low-grade self-esteem and, at the same time, the abnormally enlarged grandiose feelings, which we call pathological narcissism.

From my point of view, the issue of narcissism is very important and has been given little theoretical attention by psychodramatists. It has been addressed by a number of psychoanalysts, especially those in Kohut's school – including Kohut and Ornstein.

In this paper I will discuss this issue from the psychodramatic point of view, using systemic role theory, which I have learnt about in my psychodrama training with ANZPA. If we want to treat narcissism in patients therapeutically, there is a need to make our theory more clear and crisp.

I am relating to the structure of personality as a system composed of subsystems. These include the 'pathological subsystems', which Lynette Clayton formerly described as the pathological Gestalt; the 'coping subsystems', which she described as the coping Gestalt; and the 'Individuated subsystem' (Clayton, 1975).

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In this article, I would like to add a further role subsystem. This differs in origin, form and characteristics from other role subsystems and develops a different future course. I would like to name this the narcissistic role system.

In the psychoanalytic field, Kohut describes the Narcissistic personality developing along a different path than the usual object-relations development (Kohut, 1983). I also contend in this article that the Narcissistic role has its own developmental path and has its own character, different from the normal development described by Lynette Clayton.

This Narcissistic role system comprises different elements to normally developed role systems. These are what I call an 'Infantile role system', a 'Coping Role System' and an 'Individuated Role System'.

The origin of the Narcissistic Role system is based on D. Rosenfeld's theory of Pathological Personality Organization. In his article 'On the Psychopathology of Narcissism' (Rosenfeld, 1964), he describes that the child's envy makes it impossible to introject the good object, and therefore he makes up the idealized breast from his infantile omnipotence. This is called Narcissistic Pathological Organization. I suppose this is nothing but the Narcissistic Role System itself, which I would like to describe later using some clinical examples. My thinking is also based on Steiner, who argued in his article

(Steiner, 1987) that the Narcissistic Pathological Organization originates and develops as shown in Figure 1.
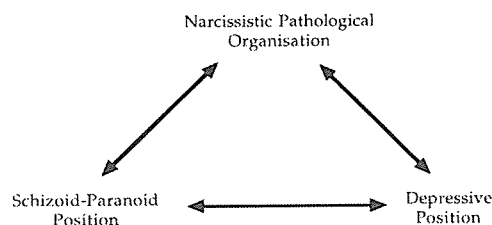
FIGURE 1: PSYCHODYNAMICS OF NARCISSISTIC PATHOLOGICAL ORGANIZATION (BY J. STEINER)

In this graphic Steiner explains that in addition to normal psychodynamic relationships of the Schizoid-Paranoid Position and the Depressive Position there exists a Narcissistic Pathological Organisation which has developed through a combination of the narcissistic grandiose self and destructive impulses.

In this view, Narcissistic Organization differs from normal object-relations development because of its connection to pathological factors, such as the infant envy and omnipotence mentioned by Rosenfeld. From my point of view, if we apply systemic role theory this figure is transformed into the next figure shown below in Figure 2.
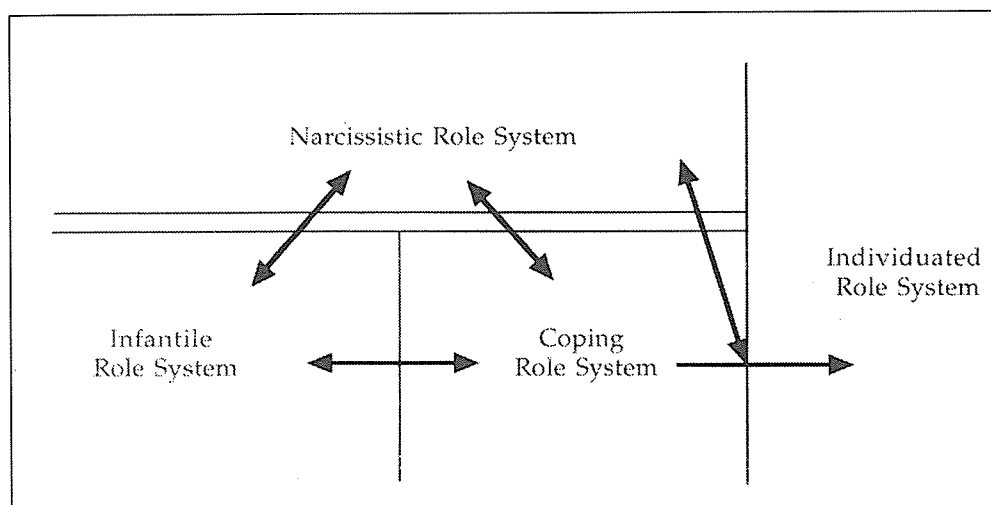
FIGURE 2: NARCISSISTIC ROLE SYSTEM

In this figure I draw your attention to the transcendent arrow on the right side between the border of the Individuated System and Narcissistic System. This shows the healthy aspect of narcissism called megalomania normalis. The arrow is bipolar, indicating how the role can easily transform itself. But self-development into the individuated system moves in one direction only. In this figure, coping roles in the coping system can easily turn into infantile oriented roles. And while these infantile roles originate in the infantile role system they develop into coping roles through interaction with the counter roles of others.

Also the Narcissistic role system is dynamically related to both the infantile system and the coping system. However, it is distinguished and divided from the normal development path of role systems through the splitting mechanism of the self.

The border between the Narcissistic System and both Infantile and Coping Systems differs from the border between the Coping system and Infantile System. (The later is only a fine line easily crossed since it is from the same origin with no special characteristics.) However, the border of the Narcissistic System reflects its different origin from factors such as envy and infantile omnipotence. Arising from this the Narcissistic Role System never needs the object, so there is a lack of the counter-role – an indispensable aspect in development of role systems for anyone.

The Clinical Instance

I continue my discussion showing a clinical case involving my psychodrama group for University psychiatric clinic outpatients.

This group first began as a trial group to establish the therapeutic effect of psychodrama in outpatient clinic settings. Three of the patients in the group were already doing individual therapy with clinic staff and two others were referred by a psychiatrist who thought that it would help their patients improve.

I will describe a session in the fourth series of the group. Each series involves eleven sessions, after which the group re-forms to include old members and newcomers. At this point the group comprises five members and three staff (one director and two auxiliaries).

The group comprises the following women – Sayoko and Mitsue both with chronic schizophrenic disorder (Mitsue is the protagonist of the session cited here); Yoshiko, a university student with a narcissistic personality disorder; Megumi who has a borderline personality disorder; and Setsuko who has an eating disorder.

The protagonist, Mitsue, is selected because her spontaneity level is high – measured mainly by her interest in being a protagonist during this session. She is 49 years old and for many years has suffered, and been in recovery from, a schizophrenic disorder. She was first admitted to a psychiatric hospital in her middle 20s. At that time she had the symptoms of auditory hallucination and delusion and loss of contact with people in the outside world. She had withdrawn from all interpersonal relations and enclosed herself in her small room.

At the time of this group she had recovered from most of her delusional symptoms and hallucinations, except in some instances, such as when making close contact with people she was most conflicted about, such as her sisters. At these times she sometimes suffered hypersensitive complaints that her sisters had evil intentions to make her obey their instructions regarding financial deposits. While she sometimes misunderstood them, sometimes it was true that her sisters had evil intentions to use her as their servant.

At this point, she had stayed in her community for over 15 years, was a good neighbour and had no troubles with the surrounding people. But she suffered from low self-esteem and loss of self-confidence and could not go out into society to work in an organisation.

Firstly she said that while she had an idea of her independence from her sisters, she was very

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confused and wished to become clearer about her relationship with one sister.

She told us using a metaphor that the silent, polite daffodil (like herself) has no means to transform herself into the beautiful, gorgeous tulip (like her sister). Here the director decides to set a scene making clear the relationship between daffodil and tulip. I call this symbolic concretisation, and have written about it elsewhere. It allows an easy connection to the protagonist's inner world, especially the protagonist with a heavy psychopathology.

Thus we begin the drama.

Mitsue firstly tells us that the tulip wants to talk with the daffodil, but the daffodil wasn't interested.

She selects Megumi to be the tulip (she had a quarrel with Megumi five or six days ago) and selects Yoshiko as the daffodil.

Tulip (Megumi): Let's talk about many things. I suppose that—

Daffodil (Mitsue): Oh, I am so tired to hear you.

(Mitsue reverses with Yoshiko, and takes the mirror position. Yoshiko and Megumi continue the scene)

Mitsue: She wants to guess and take care of others. She fears what will happen when she expresses herself freely.

(The director asks her to select someone to be a caring daffodil)

Caring daffodil (Sayoko): I am so fatigued, because I can not tell you about the differences between us. I am just taking care of you.

Self-confident daffodil (Yoshiko): I think everyone might accept what I say is common sense.

(director asks Mitsue to show how the tulip behaves)

Tulip (Mitsue): I am very selfish and get everyone to obey my orders.

Director: What do you do here?

Tulip (Mitsue): I order daffodil to go there and

fetch me some water.

Director: Reverse roles with Daffodil.

Tulip (Megumi): Go to fetch me some water.

Daffodil (Mitsue): You should do it yourself.

(reverse roles)

Daffodil (Megumi): You should do it yourself.

Tulip (Mitsue): All right. I will do it

Director: Hey, Tulip! What makes you change your behaviour?

Tulip (Mitsue): Because, she is so tough-minded and she will never change her attitude. As a matter of fact, she has only a few friends. I have a lot, but they were all so weak and have no power. She is alone but so strong and believes in herself. I need a lot of help from others, but she does not.

(reverse roles)

Tulip: (same soliloquy)

Daffodil (Mitsue): Why is she so honest in accepting her own weakness?

(reverse role to Tulip)

Tulip (Mitsue): Because the daffodil seems so bright.

Discussion

Apparently, at this moment of the drama we have discovered a big change – a transformation of tulip's role system. We might be astonished by the nature of the change in the roles revealed here. At first tulip was thought to be selfish, powerful and expressive, yet after only one role reversal, she becomes the weak, unself-confident one. This emerges from a quick role reversal from tulip ordering daffodil to fetch some water, daffodil refusing to obey, and then tulip suddenly changing her role to become kind, acceptable and cooperative.

No conflicts or struggles are revealed here. There has been no battle and no role has been treated. It is not clear what caused the change in the role! And we discover that there are no roles there, using the strict definition, 'as the

functioning form an individual assumes in the specific moment he reacts to a specific situation in which other persons are involved'. Of course, all the roles are imaginative ones, since they mainly belong to the internal psyche of the protagonist. But the role of kind tulip, where did it come from? It lacked interaction with other people and the counter-roles they bring.

This was coming directly from the imaginative world of protagonist's internal psyche, or from the desire of the protagonist. Desire produces the internal unconscious fantasy, so it produces the new changed 'role'.

I named this a narcissistic role (Yokoyama, Isoda and Isoda, 1999).

In this article I conceptualise it and make a clear definition of it. The narcissistic role has the following four characteristics:

- *It lacks interaction to bring about any change in the role system of the protagonist.*
- *The change occurs only in the counter-role and never from the protagonist's position in the drama.*
- *It lacks the counter-role of others. So it is enclosed and solitary without any vivid interaction with others.*
- *Also there is no indication of the spontaneity and creativity of protagonist.*

  From the psychodramatic point of view, especially from the point of view of systemic role theory, it seems clear that in the internal psychic world of the protagonist, which is enacted and concretised on the stage, the conflict and struggle evokes the change of role systems through such techniques as repeated role reversal, mirroring for objectivity and doubling for support. This we call the dramatisation. And it takes a long time for any protagonist to find out the distortion of his/her own role systems and to change the role system using spontaneity and creativity.

However, in this case it has not occurred. Instead, the omnipotence of the protagonist herself is in control, and all the changed roles are coming from internal change without any conflicts. So there is no spontaneity there.

In the case of Mitsue described here, the counter-role of daffodil played by Megumi was firstly an aggressive and expressive one, but it changed when Mitsue took up the role, to be polite and respectful to the role of Mitsue, and then later to be afraid of Mitsue.

We can easily conclude the next facts from this occurrence:

- *These changes occurred in her own internal psychic world without any interaction with other people in her external world.*
- *The change is not only sudden, but has no basis in real role relationship.*

  The roles displayed here – among them 'weak tulip' and 'terrified respecter tulip' are projections of her inner object. So they can easily change.

They are all narcissistic roles, with only slight differences in gradation as the drama progesses. Together they construct a narcissistic role system. This is composed of unchanged conserved roles arising from projection of the self. So the self-object counter-role of others has a tendancy to easily and conveniently change. As you can see, they are all self-objects, not true objects independent from the self. So the true counter-roles are not present in the last phase of the drama.

From this we can conclude that the change portrayed in the drama is not related to true progress of the self. When the narcissistic role system is employed, the internal pain of impotence and desperation is totally denied through the omnipotent fantasy of the narcissistic world, where we, as a baby, have all the power and are almighty, since we think ourselves as God.

If this is true, then the next problem occurs, since Moreno described in his book Psychodrama Vol. 3 (Moreno and Moreno, 1969) that all of us are God. This is the basis of psychodrama. But in psychodrama, we don't employ a narcissistic role system, but a true exchanging role system. Here we should distinguish both the narcissistic role system (pathological one) and normal megalomaniac
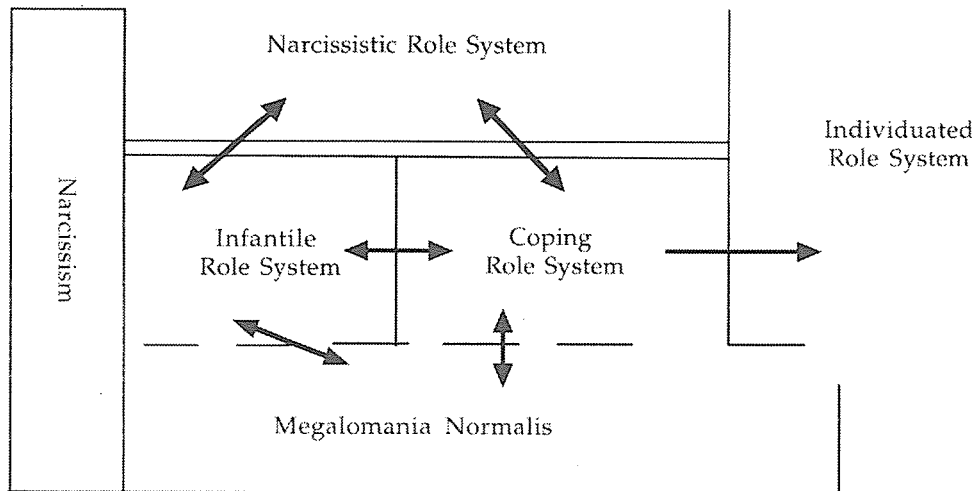
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FIGURE 3: ROLE SYSTEM MODIFIED WITH DEVELOPMENT OF NARCISSISM

world. We can have a hypothesis that both have the same origin but that the later has mostly different features.

So we must modify our model as shown in Figure 3.

Here I have used the idea of Kohut's narcissistic personality development path. But I modified it to incorporate Moreno's notion of megalomania normalis and his concept of We-Gods (Moreno and Moreno, 1969). From my experience, normal megalomania involves needing appreciation from others. This is the major difference to the narcissistic role system. The easy accessibility and co-interaction with counter-roles is reflected in the dotted-line border of megalomania normalis. Both the narcissistic role system and megalomania normalis have their origin in the narcissism of the infantile identification arising from a primitive fused state in the mother's body.

I can easily give you one example which shows the difference between the two. It happened when I returned back to Japan from Jerusalem. I was on the train when a young American girl rushed along the aisle. Her mother sat far away as her daughter rushed here and there throughout the train. One old Japanese lady began to look after her and whenever she asked something or cried out, and the lady could not understand what she said, she replied to her in nonsense words. Both of them could not understand any words but they interacted with

each other. In this instance, this little girl's megalomania normalis was accepted and encouraged. Her words could not be understood and her play was narcissistic, but when the lady answered her crying in nonsense words, her narcissistic world opened to others and her boundary opened (it becomes a dotted line rather than a barrier interfering in the meaningful interaction for both). I suppose that this is the most beautiful psychodrama that I have ever seen. And also this is the answer to how the narcissistic role system changed into megalomania normalis.

Conclusion

I introduce here a new concept of systemic role theory – the Narcissistic Role System. The characteristics of that system are: its origin is omnipotence to avoid the psychic pain of object-loss; it lacks interaction with outer roles; it changes easily and suddenly without any treatment of role systems; and it does not engage spontaneity and creativity.

I hypothesise the narcissistic role system develops independently to the normal self-development path. While narcissism originates from the intra-uterine memory, afterwards it differentiates into two paths – one being megalomania normalis and the other a narcissistic role system.

Also I insist that treatment of the narcissistic role system is of utmost importance for severely ill people.

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Phenomenology and Role-Dynamics

BY SANDY PARKER

Sandy's working life has mostly been with teenagers in schools and with youth groups in the UK. With a long-time interest in the use of action methods in education and group work, he came to Victoria in 1993. Sandy is a member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and his recent work has been with a Quaker spiritual development program in Australia and with pastoral care students at Whitely College, Melbourne. This article further develops ideas from his psychodrama thesis (1998) and from his Masters of Theology thesis (1999).

To look at any thing.

If you would know that thing.

You must look at it long:

To look at this green and say

I have seen spring in these

Woods, will not do – you must

Be the thing you see:

You must be the dark snakes of

Stems and ferny plumes of leaves.

You must enter in

To the small silences between the leaves.

You must take your time

And touch the very peace

They issue from.

(John Moffitt, 1985)

Introduction

When I create a description of the psychodramatic roles of those involved in an interaction, in a relationship, I seek to look, to listen, to enter into the experience. I seek to create a vivid, living, rich description. I do not seek to understand, interpret, or explain.

I endeavour to create what the cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz calls *thick description* (Geertz, 1983). I desire to avoid the thin description of the external observer. Thin descriptions are the so-called 'objective' ones that omit the understanding and experience of the participants in the actions. They involve 'observations' by those outside and uninvolved in the life of the community. 'Meanings' are imposed from some external framework. Thick descriptions are built from the interpretations and understandings of those involved. They grow from the shared meanings

and practices of the community. For Clifford Geertz (1983, p20) thick description 'takes us into the heart of that which is the interpretation'.

Phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty offers a similar vision. Writing about the artist Paul Cézanne, he describes his purpose (Merleau-Ponty, 1993, p62):

> the object is no longer covered by reflections and lost in its relationship to the atmosphere and other objects. It seems subtly illuminated from within, light emanates from it, and the result is an impression of solidarity and substance.

This is contrasted with the work of the impressionist painters. The impressionists sought to capture the ways in which we experience the objects through their eyes and their senses. This led to an impression:

> which no longer corresponded point-by-point to nature [and] afforded a generally true impression through the action of the separate parts upon one another. But at the same time, depicting the atmosphere and breaking up the tones submerged the object and caused it to lose its proper weight.

The Impressionist's focus is on the artist's experience. In contrast, Cézanne's intention was to focus on both the object and its relationships, neither at the expense of the other. What we perceive, what we experience, is neither geometric, nor photographic, nor solely impressionistic... 'the lived object is not rediscovered or constructed...rather, it presents itself to us from the start' (Merleau-Ponty, 1993, p65).

It is a demanding task for the artist, writer, psychodramatist or researcher and, as for Cézanne, requires that we sometimes ponder long before painting the next stroke or making the next move. It is a task that requires discipline and care as well as a willingness to abandon much that we have learned (necessarily) about methodology! (Merleau-Ponty, 1993, p67).

Role Dynamic Analysis

Psychodramatic role theory and analysis is different in intent from sociological role theory based on the work of George Herbert Mead. Sociologist Peter L. Berger defines a role as 'a typified response to a typified expectation. Society has pre-defined the typology' (Berger, 1979, p112):

> Society provides the scripts... The individual actors need but slip into the roles already assigned to them before the curtain goes up.

Andris Hicks (1983) points out that such an external and objective description is an institutional and 'system serving' view of roles. There is little room for the spontaneity of individual response, little belief in our essential creativity.

For others a 'symbolic interactionist' interpretation seeks to make explicit 'the meaning that the acts and symbols of the actors in the process of interaction have for each other' (Conway, 1988, p67). Such role descriptions are primarily concerned with sociological analysis of our roles in organisations.

In Jacob Moreno's terms this can be seen as deeper analysis of the social roles expected of us in organisations, and of ways in which individuals express or interpret these through role taking, role playing or role creating (Moreno, 1978, p75). To focus on the psychodramatic roles is a richer and fuller way of achieving a similar purpose, by creating a living picture of our functioning in interaction with others. There is the assumption that through the expression of our own inherent creative genius we come to be more spontaneous and effective in our relationships. The main focus of a psychodramatic role-analysis is on the direct relationships of those protagonists, without denying the reality, significance and power of our social systems. This both honours and challenges these systems more fully than any sociological role-analysis can.

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Our understanding of role theory and role-analysis based on Jacob Moreno's work is still evolving, and our language and descriptions continue to be refined.

Antony Williams (1988, p58) reminds us that a role is always interactional, and analysis and description must take account of both the context and consequences of the action. He also emphasises that the thinking aspect, or beliefs underlying the role, are a complex 'network of presuppositions', often 'largely out of awareness' (1988, p66). Max Clayton (1993) has powerfully demonstrated how our role-descriptions and analysis can be extended and enhanced. Sue Daniel (1998) suggests we need to recognise that 'seeing and listening are each an action in themselves'.

Adam Blatner (1998) believes it is more helpful to talk of 'role dynamics' rather than role theory or analysis, to distinguish it from sociological role theory. He emphasises the constantly changing and interactional nature of the relationships and recognises the effect of the observer on the relationship:

> the meta-role of the observer who...not only modifies the ways the roles are played...but can also continue to reflect on the potential to modify roles.

Role description becomes especially rich and effective when undertaken as a cooperative exercise by all involved (including observers) in an interaction, for example in a training group, or in a role-training enactment.

In remainder of this paper I present two anecdotes by way of illustration, identify some of the strengths of role dynamic analysis and offer some further reflections.

The Court Recorder

I was one of the facilitators for a spiritual development retreat. We met daily in small listening groups. Each participant took turns at being:

- *pilgrim or explorer, speaking about issues arising for them in their lives;*

- *listener or companion-guide;*
- *witness to or observer of the listening process.*

Tania took her turn to be the pilgrim, choosing Chris as her listener. The four of us arranged our chairs. Tania looked warmed up to exploring some questions arising for her. Chris picked up his imposing black notebook, opened it on his knee, pen poised in his hand.

Sandy: (gently) I'd like you to put your journal down, Chris.

Chris: (surprised) I want to be able to remember accurately what Tania says.

Sandy: Ask Tania what she thinks about it.

Chris: Tania, I'd like to be able to make notes – it helps me to pay attention and remember your words.

Tania: I'd rather you put it away – It's you... I want you listen to me, not your book!

Chris looked chastened and doubtful, and put his book under his chair. He appeared uncomfortable and uncertain as he began to listen to Tania's story.

In this interaction Chris seemed to know of only one way to show that he was listening – by demonstrating that he would record accurately all that Tania said. As she took up the opportunity to be the 'pilgrim' she was a tentative reflective explorer. Chris responded as an efficient court recorder, focusing on the accurate recording of Tania's words as his primary task. Each was positive towards the other, yet somehow missed one another. Their roles at that moment may be represented:
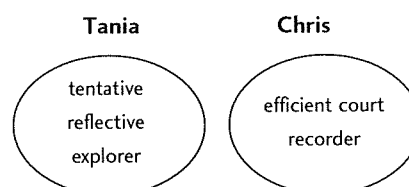
Tania	Chris
tentative reflective explorer	efficient court recorder

FIGURE 1

There is no actual relationship between their roles. Both Chris and Tania are responding to

their understandings of their tasks (towards which they are each positive) rather than to each other. I had a fuller and richer vision, and drew Chris out about the way he saw his role, coaching him to try it differently. I sensed some conflict in Chris – between his anxious but familiar court recorder, and his determination to be an effective companion for Tania. He accepted my coaching, first as a reluctant learner, then a willing learner. His initial response was negative, but changed as he recognised the gentle caring offered:
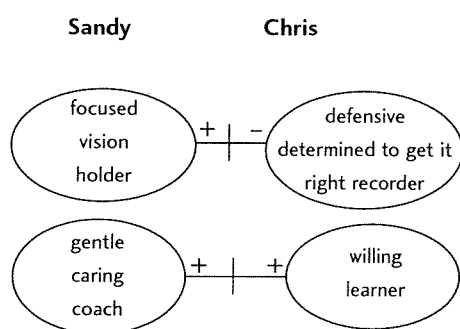

FIGURE 2

Tania observed this conversation with interest, and expressed her need clearly. Chris remained unsure but chose to give it a go:
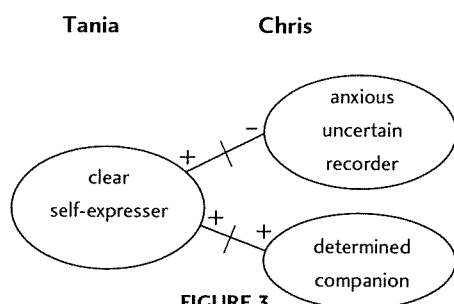

FIGURE 3

Despite Chris's uncertainty, Tania warmed to her task, and new roles emerged in each as they became more confident in their relating:
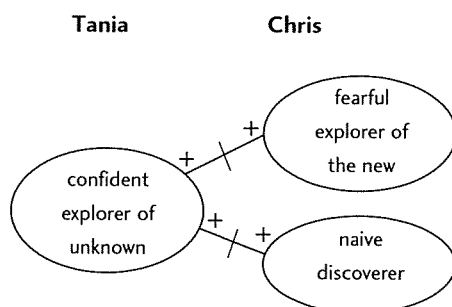

FIGURE 4

After Tania had finished, each member of the group reflected on their experience. Tania and Chris described theirs:

Tania: I liked the way you listened to me – I felt you were really present with me once you put your journal down – you didn't have to say or do anything, just be there.

Chris: I felt I'd lost something when I put it down. I didn't know what to do. I just had to listen, to be with Tania, even though I didn't know what to do. I was scared I'd forget things, but it didn't matter. I realised Tania trusted me. I just had to let go and be me. It was scary, and I seemed to hear Tania in quite a different way, not just her words. I…was surprised.

My own focus was in the moment, believing that this was sufficient, that all could stem from this. In addition to my differing roles in relationship to Tania and to Chris, a key role for me, in relating to the group, was the grounded holder of every moment… Other roles I was displaying included the big-picture holder and the systems-aware role analyst. My awareness of the variety of role relationships was a key factor in my ability to deepen and enrich the experience for all the members of the group. Later the same day Tania wrote in her journal about her experience of this listening group:

> Small group, an amazing process. The telling is amazingly open and courageous. It is received with listening and care by three others.

The Shy Foal and the Rock

Later in the same retreat week Tania was one of four members of a different 'listening group', and the only woman in the group. She told the group that she had nothing urgent to explore, and could forego her turn as pilgrim to allow the other three more time.

I knew that she had had a fairly stormy week, with a phone call the day before from her home in another state telling her that her dog was seriously ill. Each of the three men took their turns as 'pilgrims'. Tania was a competent, fully present and effective listener for one of them. I had kept an eye on the time and told Tania that

time still was available for her as 'pilgrim' if she wished – reminding her that she could choose any of the four others (including myself) as her listener. Listening to Tania's silence, I continued to hold a space for her.

As Tania told her story, she spoke of her deep sense of integration with the natural world, of times of meditation practice when she had experienced unexpected flows of energy in her body. She told of her fear of telling anyone about this, lest they doubt her sanity. I let her know that this was not an unusual experience, and invited other members of the group to respond briefly. Afterwards Tania wrote in her journal:

> ...in the first small group, I surprised myself by speaking of the rushes of happenings that at times caused me anxiety... As I spoke I was aware of feeling very vulnerable even to be speaking obliquely about stuff which is so significant to me... Only in the last small group of the week when Sandy...offered to be my listener did I speak my experience openly and reasonably fully. I know if he hadn't been listener I wouldn't have spoken... And having spoken and received brief but sound reassurance from Sandy and mention of his own experience... I'm relieved and more relaxed.

On this occasion Tania was initially both self effacing listener and clear self expresser. Towards the whole group I was again big picture holder and intuitive systems analyst: for Tania I was a generous and creative provider of possibilities. At first responding tentatively, she sensed my compassion and respect, and gradually revealed more of herself, becoming quietly reflective about what she discovered (see figure 5).

Awareness of the overall role dynamic picture assisted me in moving forwards with Tania. This enabled her to become more independent and aware of her own power, gaining a sense of her own forward movement. Later she was to write in her journal:

> When I was listener, Sandy made a particular comment to me 'When you were listening I
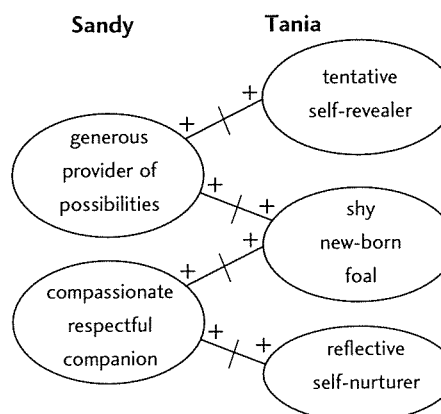
Sandy   Tania

FIGURE 5

had a vision of you as a solid rock in a very rapid river. It was quite beautiful.' This was a valuable gift to me of acknowledgment, and I felt acknowledged and grateful. I said thank you, but I felt very thank you.

In presenting these two anecdotes, I have sought to build a vivid picture of these brief interactions with Chris and with Tania describing the major roles I observed in each of us. There is no judgement of the effectiveness of Chris' way of being with Tania, or my responses to Chris and Tania. My intention is to build a rich, clear and vivid picture true to the experiences of each of us.

Role Evaluation and Assessment

Such role-analysis and description focuses on the functioning psychodramatic roles rather than on the enacted social roles. Even so, it would be possible for it to become just another 'thin' exercise in labelling people (with adjective and verb!) rather than productive of 'thick' description of people's living experiences.

Ideally the identification of the roles will be a collaborative enterprise. It demands at the very least a willingness to seek to enter into the experience of others, to look at it through their lenses. Our role descriptions will always be tentative and open to modification in the light of our further conversation and reflection. It is my experience – as I believe the vignettes in this article demonstrate – that this approach is enlivening and enriching for all concerned.

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This section reflects further on these vignettes. Various ways of assessing roles are suggested to evaluate which roles build and enhance the spirit of the protagonists, carry them forward in their lives, enrich their relationships and build community.

The role descriptions are not judgmental, even when assessments are being made about the effectiveness of a particular role for that situation. To say a role is progressive (building effective relationship) or fragmenting (i.e. retrogressive, distancing or destructive of relationship) is not to make a value judgement about the role: rather it describes from observation whether this particular role builds and carries the relationship forward, or whether it undermines and fragments the relationship. A role may also reveal a coping strategy, when someone is relying on an old and familiar role, rather than finding a new and creative response in an unfamiliar situation.

For example, in the first vignette neither Chris's court recorder (in relationship to Tania), nor his defensive recorder (in response to me) deepened the relationship. In contrast, my roles of focused vision holder and caring coach enabled Chris to begin to develop new ways of relating to Tania. The court recorder was an over-utilised, potentially valuable role, inappropriate to the situation. His underdeveloped role of open interested listener begins to emerge and strengthen as a new response in an unfamiliar situation.

Chris and Tania each displayed role conflicts at different times. In the first vignette, Chris experienced anxiety in the conflict between his familiar court recorder and the learner of new ways of being. In the second, Tania had expressed a willingness to forego her time as pilgrim, though it later became clear that she had urgent questions to explore. From being a self-effacing listener, she becomes both tentative self-revealer and reflective self-nurturer.

Such role conflicts arise in a conflicted 'warm-up' resulting from holding a number of conflicting or contradictory beliefs or values

about the situation. We have noted above that the thinking, or belief element of a role may consist of a complex network of assumptions and presuppositions, some conscious, some unconscious, some strongly at odds with others. The warm-up and the outwardly displayed role can be the result of internal conflict – an argument between our various inner voices or 'intra-psychic roles'. Of course our outward display may change dramatically from moment to moment.

In the two anecdotes presented a number of clusters of roles can be identified:

- *roles involving listening, holding, witnessing;*
- *roles involving open companioning and sharing;*
- *roles involving inquiring, exploring, drawing out;*
- *roles involving modelling and coaching;*
- *roles involving being systems-aware, and being a vision-holder.*

However, more important than any taxonomy of roles, our descriptions seek to communicate a rich and meaningful picture that is true to the experience of all the protagonists.

Reflections

This analysis of role-dynamics seeks to be true to the experience of those who have participated, as well as to the web of relationships and beliefs in which all are involved. It seeks to present vivid and thick descriptions of those experiences, in such a way that they are illuminated from within, rather than through external frameworks. It is an approach that gives full attention to the world-view and values, to the emotions and feelings, and to the actions of those involved.

There are many ways in which role dynamics and analysis can enlarge and enrich our approach to, and experience of, our relationships.

1. Any account leaves much to the imagination, to guesswork. Theoretical analysis is in danger of losing the reality, just as words can never adequately describe a painting. Role assessment and analysis demands that we read between the lines creating a rich and living picture to enrich our experience. We come to appreciate and

assess our own functioning more fully. The more fully I listen and see, the less I need to 'interpret'.

2. Such role-analysis does not require detailed history or long conversation. Analysis and assessment can be made of brief interactions, and of their moment-to-moment changes.

3. Role pictures allow us to appreciate the uniqueness of an individual and their functioning, rather than seeking to fit some pre-determined analytical framework. The descriptions encourage a reflective analytical assessment of the relationships involved, leading to an awareness of our own, and the other's, movement and development.

4. Identifying which roles are life-enhancing carries us forward in our relationships. This enables purposeful and systematic planning:

- in responding to another's particular situation and needs;
- in assisting us to develop our own functioning in actual situations;
- in developing training programs for those involved in caring roles.

5. Role dynamics is systems oriented:

- the individual is not seen in isolation, but in the context of their multiplicity of relationships;
- there is recognition that in healthy relationships, roles adapt and change in response to developing circumstance;
- in giving full attention to values and emotions as well as actions, the social, cultural and spiritual dimensions are all taken into account;
- we include ourselves as significant figures in the picture.

This encourages an awareness of the 'bigger picture', of the vision of what is possible, adding to, rather than detracting from, our awareness of the moment-to-moment changes in role relationships.

6. Role-analysis enhances our awareness of our values and our assumptions. It encourages us to be explicit about our values, for example:

- do we have a problem-solving or solution focus?

- do we believe in the 'creative genius', 'that of God', 'the spirit of the Cosmos' in each individual?

7. Role dynamics encourages us to see each interaction as a mutual and collaborative learning experience, involving care-giver and care-receiver:

- there is an openness to analysis and hunches being checked out and corrected through feedback from one to the other.
- naming and describing roles is not a complex process: most people can quickly learn to use and understand it.

A Cautionary Tale

This article has focused largely on words, yet the spaces between the words may express as much as the words themselves. And when I, or another, finds the truly expressive word – it is surrounded by words that I have chosen not to use – ones maybe tried and found wanting.

In short we must consider the word before it is spoken, the background of silence which does not cease to surround it and without which it would say nothing... We must uncover the threads of silence with which speech is intertwined (Merleau-Ponty, 1993, p83–4).

And the artist finishing her painting, the writer his writing, have each produced a work which invites the viewer or the reader:

to take up the gesture which created it and, skipping the intermediaries, to rejoin, without any guide...the silent world of the painter (or of the writer), henceforth uttered and accessible (Merleau-Ponty, 1993, p88).

The finished project is incomplete and without full purpose, without you as reader. You and I are necessarily partners in the overall venture. A phenomenological perspective is inherently participative. 'Perception always involves, at its most intimate level, the experience of active interplay, or coupling, between the perceiving body and that which it perceives' (David Abram, 1996, p57). It is an approach that values openness and creativity. Maurice Merleau-Ponty differentiates between language that is truly

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expressive and speech that relies solely on remembered meanings and repeating established formulae (David Abram, 1996, p81).

John Woolman, a North American Quaker, wrote of travelling amongst native Americans in Pennsylvania in 1763 (John Woolman, 1989, p133). Visiting one Indian township, he and his travelling companion joined their evening worship. Towards the end he expressed his willingness to dispense with the (inexpert) interpreters as he prayed aloud. Afterwards, he inquired of the interpreters what one of the Indians, Papunehang, was saying to them about the prayers in an unknown language. Papunehang had said: 'I love to hear where words come from'.

This entering into the experience without a necessary need for common language demonstrates, for me, the essence of a phenomenological perspective and is at the heart of the analysis of role dynamics. We do indeed have to discern not only the words, but 'where words come from'.

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Roles for Constructive Communication and Conflict Resolution

BY KATERINA SELIGMANN

Katerina is a psychodramatist with twenty years experience working with the psychodrama method. She has recently been certified as a Trainer Educator and Practitioner with ANZPA. Katerina is a trainer with the Wellington Psychodrama Training Institute (Nelson Area). She works as a psychotherapist in private practice and conducts residential psychodrama workshops and training workshops at her home on a small farm on the South Island of New Zealand.

Introduction

Conflict is an inevitable part of life. No matter how good a relationship, sooner or later conflict arises. The way conflict is dealt with determines whether it escalates or is resolved. Escalation can produce further alienation, hurt and misunderstanding, while resolution can bring about increased understanding and respect in the relationship.

Close observation of people who are good communicators reveals that they have a number of specific abilities which facilitate their communications. These abilities can best be described using the role theory of Jacob Moreno. I have identified a system of eight roles which I have found useful in conflict resolution. They are 'Courageous Adventurer',

'Self-Accepting Encourager', 'Trust-Building Visionary', 'Creative Organiser', 'Committed Truth-Speaker', 'Reflective Meta-Communicator', 'Active Listener' and 'Naive Receptive Enquirer'. These roles are illustrated in the following case study and then described in more detail later.

Case Study

In this session, the psychodramatist works to bring out the roles necessary for a constructive encounter. Mary has come to a psychodrama workshop which has a particular focus on conflict resolution. She and her co-worker Jane have been in conflict for many months, and now Mary is seeking assistance. She thinks that she will have to leave her job if the difficulty continues for much longer.

Constructive Communication and Conflict Resolution

SCENE ONE

Scene one focuses on Mary's relationship with herself. I direct Mary to set up a psychodramatic meeting with Jane to address the difficulty. She immediately becomes tearful and expresses a sense of hopelessness. I ask her to choose a person in the group to represent herself feeling tearful and hopeless. She does this and I direct her to express herself to the auxiliary acting Mary feeling hopeless and tearful. She turns her head away.

Mary: Oh, she's pathetic!

Director: You really dislike her when she's like this!

Mary: Well yes, she falls apart, but I know how hard she's tried.

Director: So you're not just negative, you're positive as well. You know she's made a real effort to improve this relationship with Jane. Which feeling is stronger in you at the moment? Are you more positive or more negative to Mary right now, as you see her there tearful and despairing?

Mary: I feel impatient with her.

Director: So right now you're more in touch with your negative feelings. Well choose someone to represent you feeling positive towards yourself. We know this aspect of you exists as well.

Mary chooses an auxiliary who stands beside her.

Director: How about you give yourself permission to give vent to the negativity you feel towards yourself over there right now.

Mary: You're a weak pathetic wimp. I can't stand you snivelling like that.

Director: Reverse roles.

Auxiliary to Mary: You're a weak pathetic wimp. I can't stand you snivelling like that.

Mary: Well I can't help it. I've tried and tried to get on better with that woman. Nothing works. (Becomes more tearful.)

Director: Okay, now let's mirror this relationship to you for a moment.

Group members mirror Mary acting the roles of 'tearful despairer' and 'harsh rejecting judge'. Mary stands beside the director and looks on.

Director: What comes up in you when you see this relationship?

Mary: It's not helpful to her to be so harsh. It's just how my mother used to be when I was upset.

Director: Express yourself to Mary over there

Mary (addressing herself to the auxiliary playing the role of 'tearful despairer'): I'm sorry. I shouldn't have been so hard on you; you've tried really hard to get something better going with Jane.

Director (conscious that Mary has expressed the thinking and feeling components of the role, but the action component is underdeveloped): Be aware of the impulse you have to act towards her right now.

Mary (moving closer to the auxiliary and putting a hand on her shoulder): Don't give up. You've tried really hard. I promise I'll support you from now on.

Here we see the development of the role of the 'self-accepting encourager', which is essential for any conflict to be resolved.

SCENE TWO

Director: Let's see what happens when you get together with Jane now. Where are you next likely to meet her?

Mary (looking scared): Oh, this will be hard!

Director: Well, one thing I do know about you is that you're a courageous person. You wouldn't have come to this workshop, or have presented yourself to do this work if you didn't have guts. (Here the director brings to the fore the role of the 'courageous adventurer'.)

Mary: Okay, I'll see her in the office. She's always in a rush.

Director: Okay, let's see if you can set up a time and place to get together with her. But first you're going to have to warm her up to this meeting. Let's put all the difficulties aside for the moment. Imagine that we have waved a magic wand, and that you've got an ideal

relationship with her now. How would that be? (Here the director works to bring forth the role of 'visionary'.)

Mary: Well, I can't imagine I'm ever going to like her very much. It would be great if we could just work alongside each other without so much tension.

Director: Feel easier in each other's presence?

Mary: Yes, and she'd let me get on with my job without looking over my shoulder all the time.

Director: Okay, so you want to be easier with each other, and you want her to stop interfering.

Mary: Yes.

Director: Okay, well we'll have an enactment now where you practise setting up a meeting with her with those goals in mind.

Mary sets up the office, and chooses an auxiliary to be Jane. The auxiliary who previously played the role of 'self-accepting encourager' stands beside her, and supports her throughout the enactment.

Mary to Jane: Hello Jane. Look, I'd really like to get together with you and talk for a bit.

Director: Reverse roles. (The directive 'reverse roles' is given after each expression. These have been omitted from the following text for the sake of simplicity.)

Jane: Oh? Well I don't have a lot of time. What is it you want to talk about?

Mary: I can see you're pretty pushed for time right now. (Mary enacts the role of 'active listener'.) But this is important to me. I've been feeling pretty tense about things here at work lately ('committed truth speaker'), and I'd like to get together with you to try and get something more relaxed happening here for both of us ('trust building visionary').

Jane (looking alarmed): Oh. Well I haven't got a lot of time. What's the problem?

Mary (noticing her alarm): You look worried ('active listener'). It's okay, I just want to have a talk. It's just so that we can work alongside each other in a better way, be more relaxed with each

other ('trust-building visionary').

Jane (relaxes a little): Okay, Well, what's on your mind?

Mary: I'd rather not talk right now. You're in a rush and I've got things to attend to too. How about we meet over lunch? ('creative organiser').

Jane: I have a lunchtime meeting. And the rest of the week's looking pretty full too.

Mary looks crestfallen. In a role reversal with the auxiliary acting the 'self-accepting encourager' she urges herself not to give up.

Mary: Well, when could you manage half an hour for us to get together? ('determined creative organiser').

Jane (cautious but intrigued): Okay, I'll meet you after work tonight.

Mary: Good. How about we go over to the park, that way we won't be interrupted? ('creative organiser').

SCENE THREE

Jane and Mary are in the park.

Jane: Well, what's this all about?

Mary: Well, I've been pretty tense at work for some time. I'm sure you must have noticed. And I'd really like to get something different happening between us so we can be more relaxed around each other ('trust-building visionary').

Jane (defensively): Yes, well, I don't like the way things are either. You're so unpleasant whenever I try to point anything out to you. I try to be sensitive but it seems I can't say anything without you reacting.

Mary begins to withdraw and the director coaches to express herself as an 'active listener'.

Mary: So it's been hard for you too. You don't like the way I react ('active listener').

Jane: No, I don't.

Mary: Well I really want to find a way of us working together so we can both relax a bit more ('trust-building visionary'). I get so touchy because it's really hard for me having you

looking over my shoulder all the time. It makes me nervous and I feel you don't trust me ('committed truth-speaker').

Jane (annoyed): Well, what am I supposed to do? I rely on your work, and you have made some horrible mistakes! It just makes more work for me.

Mary (staying in close contact with the auxiliary acting the 'self-loving encourager'): My mistakes have really affected you ('active listener').

The director coaches Mary to enquire about the mistakes.

Mary: What mistakes in particular have made extra work for you? ('naive receptive enquirer').

Jane: Well, when you first arrived I spent a week fixing up that mess you made over the health contract, and there have been other mistakes since then.

Mary: I know that incident at the beginning caused you a lot of problems ('active listener'). But that was right at the beginning, and I was very new to the job. I'd really like to be able to put that behind us ('passionate truthspeaker'). What other problems have I caused for you? ('naive receptive enquirer').

Jane: There's just been a series of little things. I'd really like this project to go well, I think we should set up a meeting with Geoff soon to talk about the boys' outdoor activities.

Mary begins to enter into a discussion about the meeting with Geoff. The director brings to her attention that she has allowed herself to become side-tracked, and coaches her to bring the interaction back to the subject of their relationship.

Mary (with encouragement from the auxiliary acting the role of 'self-accepting encourager'): I'm really happy to talk to you about that at some other time. But we're getting off the subject ('reflective meta-communicator'). Right now I'd like to focus on getting something better going between us ('determined, trust-building visionary'). It's really not helpful for you to be checking on me all the time. It makes me nervous and I'm more likely to make mistakes

when I'm nervous! I hate it! It really upsets me. Sometimes I feel like quitting ('committed truth-speaker').

Jane: (defensively with raised voice). Well I'm sorry, but I don't know what to do. This project is very important, and I have to check your work.

Mary (defensively with raised voice): Well it's important to me too!

Mary (with coaching from the director): Look we're both beginning to raise our voices ('reflective meta-communicator'). I understand that you don't know what to do and that this project is very important to you ('active listener').

Jane (looking softer): Yes it's very important.

Mary: It's important to me too! I am doing my best, and I'm usually pretty thorough when it comes to reports. But it makes me very nervous you checking on me all the time. I'd really like you to back off a bit ('committed truth-speaker'). I'd really like us to be able to work on this together and have a bit more fun with it ('trust-building visionary').

Jane (warily): Yes, I'd like that too. Well we'll just have to see how it goes.

The enactment ends here with Mary still in close contact with the auxiliary acting the role of 'self-accepting encourager'.

Mary reported a week later that she had a short but successful interaction with Jane. They were feeling more relaxed with each other and Jane had invited her out to lunch.

Eight Roles for Constructive Communication

During this drama, Mary enacted eight roles which facilitated her communication with Jane. While not all of these roles are required in every interaction, it is helpful to have all eight available to have consistent success in difficult communications. It is not possible to decide ahead of time the order in which the roles should be expressed. Which role is expressed at

any moment depends on what is coming from the other person However, the first two roles of 'courageous adventurer' and 'self-accepting encourager' need to be maintained throughout.

THE COURAGEOUS ADVENTURER

Resolving conflict requires engaging in difficult interactions and may mean learning new ways of relating. Whenever we leave behind old and familiar ways of being and enter into the unknown, fear arises. This fear often stops us from moving forward. To be successful in the resolution of conflicts, we need to be able to act in the face of fear. This does not mean to deny or push aside the fear. It means feeling our own heart pounding, and nevertheless moving forward with courage and acting in a new way.

THE SELF-ACCEPTING ENCOURAGER

The ability to accept and encourage oneself is basic to all healthy human functioning. Many people have an overdeveloped role of 'harsh critic'. There is a need for this to soften into self-acceptance and for us to lovingly encourage ourselves to move forward.

THE TRUST-BUILDING VISIONARY

When we feel angry, hurt or mistrustful of another person, there is a need to develop a vision of a harmonious and cooperative relationship.We also need to build the other person's trust that despite all the difficulties together, our intention is to create more ease and harmony in the relationship. We need to build trust before entering into the subject matter which is causing the conflict. And trust may need to be addressed several times throughout any difficult interaction.

THE CREATIVE ORGANISER

To resolve a conflict, there is a need for the people involved to get together and attempt to overcome their particular difficulties. Having built trust that the intention is to create a better relationship, the initiator needs to organise a time and place which eliminates distractions and offers the best chance of success.

THE COMMITTED TRUTH-SPEAKER

Having built a degree of trust in the other person that your intention is to develop a more

harmonious relationship with them, there is a need to let the other person know how you feel, and what is causing stress for you in the relationship. Often this is done in an incomplete way. For example a person might express their anger. However beneath the anger there may be other feelings such as hurt, fear, regret, and love and it is helpful for all of these to be expressed.

THE ACTIVE LISTENER OR DOUBLE

As well as bringing out our own thoughts and feelings, we must draw out the inner truth of the other person. Active listening or doubling is one way of doing this. We must do our best to put ourselves in the other person's shoes, getting a sense of their experience, and then letting them know what it is we understand about their experience. If our reflections are accurate the person feels heard and accepted. Even if we are somewhat inaccurate in our understanding, our attempt to enter the other person's world encourages them to express more.

THE NAIVE RECEPTIVE ENQUIRER

To act as a naive and receptive enquirer is important if conflict is to be resolved. This means asking naive, non-judgmental questions, with a real willingness to understand. 'How come you...?' is a more effective question than 'Why...?' because it engages the person more at a feeling level whereas 'why?' tends to engage only the intellect. Naive, non-judgmental questions draw out more of the inner truth of the other person.

THE REFLECTIVE META-COMMUNICATOR

To meta-communicate means to comment on the communication itself, bringing into focus the nature of the interaction at any particular moment. For example, if a communication starts to get heated and unproductive, a meta-communication can bring this to consciousness. 'We've both started to raise our voices and we've stopped listening', or 'We've gone off onto a different subject now' are examples of useful meta-communications. Meta-communication slows interactions down and assists people to become more aware of the process of communication, and whether it is effective or not.

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Application

When conflict exists between two people, it takes only one person to commit themselves to becoming a good communicator for the situation to improve. When a group of people are in conflict, a good first strategy is to improve the communication between two key people. The harmony created between the two then impacts on the system as a whole.

Good communication is a complex process. The roles listed above can assist to ease the flow of communication and bring about resolution. This article illustrates how an awareness of these roles can serve as a guide in our work as directors and in our personal relationships.

The way conflict is dealt with determines whether it escalates or is resolved. Escalation can produce further alienation, hurt and misunderstanding, while resolution can bring about increased understanding and respect in the relationship.

Role Reversal: Personal and Political Implications

BY DINAH HAWKEN

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Like many people, I find meaning in my life by believing that what I do can make a small difference in contributing to a better world. For many years I have been aware that a central ingredient of a better world would be the ability of individuals, groups and countries to put themselves more easily into another's position.

In our day-to-day lives we call this quality understanding, in psychotherapy we call it empathy, in the religious traditions love or compassion. Whatever language we use, the emphasis is on good relationship and the behaviour falls into the area of the personality that Jung called 'the feminine': a set of roles primarily concerned with connection and relationship.

I have a conviction that when women, with their different experience and values, are more visible and more respected in the world, then we will in fact naturally have a better world. As a consequence I have a strong commitment to feminism. And yet I have learnt, and am still learning, that being a feminist while respecting 'the feminine' is not a simple task.

Kath's Dream

This paper has stemmed from a moment of psychodramatic action which took place in a personal development group I directed for women students in the University counselling service where I work. The moment is the concretisation of a scene in a dream where Kath, the protagonist (a small 31-year-old social work student) has grown to be 6 feet tall while her powerful father has shrunk to under half his size and now just reaches up to her knees. She is standing over him, silently wagging her finger and shaking her head. Inside, she is saying 'No – I'm not going to take this any more.'

This moment, simply enacted on 'the stage' with Kath standing on a small table, made a powerful impact on her, on the group and on

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me. I could sense its archetypal nature and its meaning on several levels: intra-personal, interpersonal, social and political. It was as if, in taking the role that her father had always had in relation to her, the world had suddenly turned upside down. I was filled with wonder at the surprising way a simple image from the unconscious can influence personal development. I was amazed too at the impact that a simple act of concretisation can make. The situation also posed important questions about role reversal since Kath was very clear, as a highly warmed-up protagonist, that she did not want to reverse roles with her father in this scene.

I have chosen this particular vignette and particular moment as the focus of my paper because it contains an abundance of meaning on a number of different levels. It serves as a concrete departure point for discussion of the theoretical issues in the paper, and a situation where the theory can be brought back to and applied. It is one of those defining moments in a relationship – where there is a change in the balance of power – and much depends on how it is negotiated. It is also at the centre of the work that I choose to do with women.

In the dream it is as if Kath has changed places with her father in the colloquial sense of the term 'reversal of roles'. There has been a reversal of power in the relationship. Instead of her father controlling her, she is now controlling him. Suddenly we have a new configuration, a new regime. What does this mean and where will it end up?

Father and Daughter

The vignette took place in the fifth of eight weekly sessions of the personal development group I was facilitating for women students. That day the group-centred warm-up had focused on the theme of the relationships between the women in the group and their fathers. There was a particularly strong group warm-up and everyone was participating. I remember thinking with satisfaction, as the women shared their experiences with a great

deal of warmth, intuition and depth, that it was a particularly female experience we were having.

Kath had recently returned from several years of living and working overseas, and she was having difficulty getting on with her father, particularly in standing up to him. He was very keen to be involved in her life and to help her financially, but he was also very controlling. She always felt that if she accepted anything from him that there were conditions. They also had very different political and social values. Kath's father is a conservative, first-generation New Zealand businessman and Kath is a liberal, socially active social worker.

One day she came home to find an angry message from him on her answer phone. When she rang back and he began 'ranting and raving' she said firmly 'Dad, if you're going to talk to me like that I'll hang up.' She came off the phone trembling at her audacity. She was surprised and shaken: a new role had emerged. A few days later she felt very pleased with herself for behaving so authoritatively, and very relieved. It was after that that she had the dream. In the group warm-up, she suddenly said with a high level of energy, 'I want to set out a moment of the dream.'

The Vignette

We agreed to make use of the limited amount of time left in the session to do this. Kath reversed roles in the initial moments of the drama to demonstrate to the auxiliary where and how her father was standing and what his non-verbal 'attitude' was. The image of her father seemed to be very clear from the dream and she entered into his role very quickly, taking up his stance and his emotional demeanour easily. The concretisation of the difference in level between her father and her further increased her warm-up. Then in her own role, looking down, she said out loud to him what she had been saying in her head in the dream: 'No, I'm not going to take this any more.' At my direction she said this several times, each time strengthening her tone of voice. When I directed her to reverse roles she said clearly and simply that she did not

want to. Then she said to her father : 'I feel that you're in a position that I've been in, and I'm in a position that you've been in. I like it here and I'm going to stay here for a while. When I'm ready I'll come down and stand beside you.' This was the end of the enactment.

In the final integrative stage of the psychodrama session one group member felt very uncomfortable about Kath's father's situation, and expressed a need to protect him from the indignity of being put down. I commented that from my experience women often needed time to consolidate greater levels of confidence before they could fully resolve their relationships with others but that I also believed that it was no permanent solution to replace one relationship of disrespect with another. Kath nodded in agreement but remained clear that she did not want to 'rescue' her father or change anything for the time being. She was in a spontaneous state throughout the session.

About six months after the group had finished Kath and I made arrangements to meet. She recalled her father in the drama: 'His eyes were full of self-pity. He looked so out of place and uncomfortable. Forlorn and lost and little and sorry.' She explained that just as it was hard to look her father in the eye when she was intimidated by him, it had been hard to see his vulnerability and still to retain her strength and her sense of purpose. She said, 'I need to maintain my power. I don't want it to be over him. I don't want to be like Dad. I wanted him to know what it felt like.' I asked Kath if she had ever actually seen her father look small and lost as he was in the dream. She thought hard and said, 'No never'. Then she recalled that quite recently he'd mentioned his own father, in saying 'You should have seen *my* father. He was a hard man.'

Discussion

Even though the role reversal that Kath carried out in the vignette was very brief, it provided information for the auxiliary – and the director and audience. It also increased Kath's level of warm-up and spontaneity to a noticeable

degree. My purpose in asking Kath to role reverse again in response to her domination of her father in the dream was at least partially so that she could experience his position and his role more fully. I expected that she would gain greater understanding and empathy for him and the relationship between them might develop more positively.

However, looking back now, I see that just as the dream had spontaneously maximised Kath's new role towards her father it had also spontaneously role reversed their old pattern of relating. Kath knew only too well how it felt to be intimidated and controlled, and did not wish to experience it as she was developing confidence in herself. As she indicated in her discussion with me later, she had great difficulty in seeing her father so vulnerable. She was in fact able to empathise with him very easily. What she was wanting to experience most was the consolidation of her new role towards him. I think that the mirroring effect of the brief role reversal was helpful for that purpose. Because of the difference in height between them, produced by the concretisation, Kath could clearly see her 'growth' in confidence and authority.

In the enactment of the dream, and in her decision not to reverse roles, Kath was taking her own authority with her father and with me. She was setting limits with him and strengthening the new role that had emerged spontaneously on the phone. At first her role was of an authoritarian (high-handed?) limit setter. Then her tone of voice strengthened, she stopped wagging her finger at him and the role became less conflicted: she was a clear, firm limit setter. After that she explained to him confidently both what her position and what her intention was.

There appear to be two main purposes for Kath in embodying this new role: to strengthen her own sense of authority and self-esteem, and to experience being more fully understood. The dream had spontaneously maximised their change of places. I was struck by the aptness of the dream image with her father literally

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under-standing/standing under her. Through reversing roles with her she expected he would have a greater understanding of her position.

The Director's Response

The relationship between Kath as the protagonist and me as the director was basically one of trust. She was in a spontaneous state and I trusted her self-direction. However, when she stated so clearly that she did not want to reverse roles with her father I experienced a chain of internal responses. First I was surprised, then I had a momentary need to control, then I experienced conflict, followed by greater clarity and a continuing acceptance of her self-direction. The conflict was between my strong belief in the value of role reversal as a way of producing understanding between people, and the clear evidence I saw, looking up at Kath's face as she made her decision not to role reverse, that she knew clearly what was best for her. I remembered my own experience in similar situations, and I respected her role as autonomous decision-maker.

Values Expressed

In a psychodrama, as in this one, the value system or world-views of the protagonist and the director are often factors in what roles are enacted and the way they are enacted. In making the comments that I did during the integrative phase of the session I was deliberately expressing both sides of the conflict I had experienced in directing Kath. However it had lost its either/or nature and I could state both values together more comfortably.

I was aware that my thinking had been formed and strengthened partly by the reading I had done in feminist areas, and that, indeed, my ability to see and live with paradox had also been strengthened by that reading. I was also aware of Kath's values which she had expressed earlier in the group sessions. She had an inclusive, respectful approach to people. She also believed that she had to have the courage to stand up and confront others to achieve her own independence and to support causes and people who are oppressed. There can be a

conflict or contradiction between these two approaches to life which the concerned group member expressed and I had been grappling with. However, it is the ability to live with the contradiction and to negotiate a sophisticated solution that this paper is about. I believed that Kath was in the process of working towards a solution though it was not evident to all group members at the time.

Ideas Informing My Values

As I have mentioned, my values, and therefore my work, have been influenced by certain theoretical ideas. These ideas are, I believe, part of a paradigm shift occurring in many disciplines, and have been present for centuries in many religious traditions and in the minds of thoughtful people. In my case, it is in the areas of my own interests, feminist and literary theory, that I have met them most strongly. In the following sections I describe the essence of the ideas that are most relevant to the analysis of the relationship between Kath and her father, and to other relationships where a shift in power is occurring. In the final section I make connections between stages in the feminist struggle and Moreno's stages of personality development.

One of the ideas that has changed my way of thinking is a deeper realisation that knowledge, and the way we think and learn, is not based on neutral values. It is based on the values of those who have *constructed* that knowledge and the process by which they have attained it. In the western world, as we know, those people have mostly been European males. The objective knowledge that we believed science was producing – that too has been influenced by the experimenter, thinker or observer. Language, and the way we use language, is also strongly affected by the culture and the dominant values of the culture.

In particular, the theorists emphasised that we have a way of thinking in binary or hierarchical oppositions, i.e. when we compare one thing to another thing we tend not just to say that this thing (say thinking) is different from another thing (say feeling) but we tend to make a

judgement and say one of these is better than the other. At base, this is competitive thinking. It is exclusive rather than inclusive. It is also very familiar thinking. We know it all too well – as we consider choices, for example: this solution or that solution, a right way or a wrong way, for or against.

A great deal of feminist and deconstructive work has aimed to show that these terms are not 'true' oppositions, but depend on each other to have meaning. Many of us are now learning to 'deconstruct' this way of thinking amongst ourselves as we become more aware of it. It is more and more common to hear people say for example, 'It's not an either/or situation, it's more complex' or 'both things are important' or 'there are a range of possible answers.' Our thinking is slowly becoming more systemic and less dual, more inclusive and less oppositional.

I have tried to sum up these ideas in this small poem:

Having broken the argument down and down

we come to the place in the text – a clearing

where a man and a woman have unexpectedly met.

We have been led to believe, remember, that one

will take advantage of the other, as we have been led

to believe that there is only one God.

   And later in this one:

Having broken the argument down and down

we come to a place in the text – a clearing

where a man and a woman have unexpectedly met.

We have come to believe, remember, that one

is simply different from the other, as we have come

to believe there is one and a host of gods.

   In general I think you can say that the post-structuralist and feminist literary theories that I have been most attracted to – many of which have influenced, and been influenced by,

psychotherapeutic theories – are putting an emphasis on the unstable, contradictory and complex nature of human identity, language and culture. In terms of individual identity this includes sexual identity. The notion of a solid, essential 'self' is questioned. These theorists are calling for us to become, as Hélenè Cixous, one of the French feminists writes, 'uncertain, poetic, complex, mobile, open beings' (Cixous in Moi, 1985). I think Moreno would have liked that description, with its strong suggestion of spontaneity and 'a wide repertoire of roles'. In fact the idea of personality, and a sense of self, developing from psychosomatic, and clusters of learned psychodramatic and social roles which are 'in a dynamic equilibrium' fits very well with Cixous' description. And perhaps these kind of 'beings' are the ones who will be most adaptable and most capable of survival in an increasingly fast-changing, complex and plural world?

The Feminist Struggle for Equality

Feminist writers though are naturally concerned with the central question of feminism: how can women achieve a position of true equality in society? Many have gone on to ask: how can this be done in a thorough, lasting way without, consciously or unconsciously, adopting the oppressive values of the dominant culture? How can women's difference be reflected in this new order of equality? I have found it very helpful to look at these questions through the writing of Julia Kristeva, another of the French feminists. She argues that the feminist struggle must be seen historically and politically as a three-tiered one. These can be summarised as:

* *Women demand equal access to the symbolic order. (The established order of language and culture.) Liberal feminism. Equality.*
* *Women reject the male symbolic order in the name of difference. Radical feminism. Femininity extolled.*
* *Women reject the dichotomy between masculine and feminine as metaphysical.*

(Moi, 1985, p12)

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When tier 3 is summarised as one where the dichotomy between masculine and feminine is rejected because it is 'metaphysical' it means I think that the oppositional distinction is an abstract, over-theoretical one, not necessarily real or accurate. Kristeva herself opts for the third position. She writes:

In the third attitude, which I strongly advocate – the very dichotomy man/woman as an opposition between two rival entities may be understood as belonging to metaphysics. What can 'identity', even 'sexual identity', mean in a new theoretical and scientific space where the very notion of identity is challenged?' (Kristeva in Moi, 1985, pp12–13).

Other feminists who have commented on the position that Kristeva takes have been concerned about the implied rejection of the second stage arguing that 'it still remains politically essential for feminists to defend women as women in order to counteract the patriarchal oppression that precisely despises women as women.' But they add that 'an "undeconstructed" form of "stage two" feminism, unaware of the metaphysical nature of gender identities, runs the risk of becoming an inverted form of sexism' (Moi, 1985 p13).

By an 'undeconstructed' form of stage two they mean a form which has not been seen and understood as containing the oppositional and hierarchical thinking of the dominant culture i.e. men and women are not seen as two different, equally respected, genders, but women are seen as superior to men.

This is the point that has made the greatest impact on me: that in fact we are not changing anything in the long run if we carry on with the same old (dominant culture) oppositional thinking. As Linda Aitken neatly puts it, in bringing psychodrama and literary theory together, 'we tend to hold on to the solutions provided by spontaneous acts, to the detriment of our ability to respond adequately to new situations and..."cultural conserves" are produced when original solutions become as entrenched as the problem they attempted to overcome' (Aitken, 1994). This seems to me to be a very important point.

There is a question of timing here: do people, radical groups, nations *hold on* to stage two for too long? Instead of passing through, do they get stuck there? We all know of radical feminists or radical minority groups who seem to cling on to old arguments or actions that seem personally and politically unproductive and demoralising. We see Catholics and Protestants caught in the same oppositional thinking for centuries. We see people who were colonised turn the tables and victimise in their turn. They are not making the leap to stage three.

Similarly, it seems to me that many women are not making the transition from stage one to stage two. They have been accepted into the established order, but has anything changed? Has there been a change of culture in the New Zealand parliament, for instance, now that there are more women politicians and leaders? It is too easy once in power to let go of the commitment and endurance necessary to effect real cultural change. Yet I think all three stages are natural and essential, that they don't necessarily exclude each other, and they are all occurring in the society in different places often at the same time. In New Zealand this is strongly evident in Maori/Pakeha relationships, as it is in the gender area. At each stage new roles are developed. Sometimes the solutions they produce become conserved and inadequate in the face of new developments. It seems that the challenge for us is to remain 'open, mobile' – that is, spontaneous – 'beings'.

Parallels with Moreno's Thinking

I will now discuss parallels between Kristeva's three stages and Moreno's stages of personality development.

Moreno saw the infant developing from the stage of the matrix of all-identity through the stage of the double, the stage of the mirror and the stage of role reversal to achieve a state of differentiated identity where other individuals become distinct from the self. The stage of the double is the stage where the infant develops a sense of self-acceptance by receiving adequate response and love from those caring for him or her. The stage of the mirror is where the child begins to develop self-awareness and a sense of

separate identity, through seeing him or her self reflected back in the mirroring of others. The stage of role reversal is when the ability to imaginatively put oneself into another's place becomes possible and empathy begins to develop.

Kristeva's three stages have parallels, I think, with Moreno's stages of the double, mirror and role reversal. Her first tier is the stage of equality i.e. acceptance. Her second tier is the stage of difference where the oppressed group accentuates its differences and prizes them above the other, the dominant group. In the process members of the group consolidate their own sense of identity and self-esteem. In the third stage oppositional difference is 'deconstructed' and acceptance of difference, and an ability to cooperate and understand each other emerges.

This last stage has a parallel also with what Lynette Clayton, in her model for recording personality change, calls the third or individuated gestalt. She says that the progressive roles of the individuated gestalt 'provide solutions to the paradoxical polarities (such as good and bad, power and weakness, action and reflection, ugliness and beauty) which are experienced and conceptualised uniquely by each individual. The resolution of paradoxes allows polarities to co-exist without internal conflict within the personality' (Clayton, 1982, p13).

What I am wanting to suggest is that both an individual and a group developing towards independence need to experience acceptance and a sense of identity before they are able to empathise with others. They need to be sufficiently understood before they can understand. As a proposition this tends to fit with my experience of individuals and groups, and my own experience as an individual and a feminist, trying to create change. I think that there is a readiness factor involved when people or peoples are faced with the opportunity to take the step from one stage to another in that the earlier stage may need to have been sufficiently accomplished before the next one can take place. We are aware of this kind of

thinking in most theories of personal development, for example, Erikson's stages, and we are aware of the idea of developmental arrest, but we are less likely to apply these ideas to political change or social development.

There is also readiness, in the sense that Moreno described and used – the concept of warm-up. In other words, spontaneity is necessary before the movement into a new order can be launched. After that the new solutions strengthen and stabilise, new roles become well developed over time, and then further movement occurs destabilising the system again as we take the next step. It is literally like walking, taking one step after another.

The Vignette Revisited

I would like now to return to Kath's development and to explore it further on the interpersonal, social and political levels.

The interpersonal level of the relationship between Kath and her father is the level from which Kath herself was seeing the relevance of the image from the dream. Her purpose at the beginning of the series of group sessions, and indeed in the fifth session, was to develop better ways of relating to her father, since she often found herself in conflict with him.

In particular she wanted to be able to stand up to him without getting into an argument. At thirty-one she wanted to be independent of his control, to be respected as a separate individual and to behave as an adult in response to him. These are appropriate goals for a young adult woman in our cultural context. In her family arguing and debating were the means used to discuss issues – a process, Kath considered, that was encouraged by her cultural background. Kath often felt that in these debates her opinions were not taken seriously – in fact that her father would often laugh at her in a belittling way.

At our meeting after the group had finished Kath told me about an incident at a family barbecue where her father and uncle were arguing about politics. Her father turned to her

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and said 'Kath what do you think?' She replied, in a much lighter way than she had been able to do in the past, 'Dad, I'm not going to argue about politics or religion with you any more because I don't think we ever get anywhere.' Both men laughed and changed the subject.

Kath was pleased with herself. She had set limits again, and expressed her own view, clearly and lightly. She said to me 'I'm much clearer now about my position and my standing and I'm not wanting to get caught up in arguing... Now that I'm more knowledgeable I don't need to argue, or change or influence them.' Kath's statement reminds me of three lines from a poem by Adrienne Rich, an American feminist poet:

Vision begins to happen in such a life

as if a woman quietly walked away

from the argument and jargon in a room...

(Adrienne Rich, 1978)

For most of us the dilemma of how to express our difference and to be independent of our parents without the loss of relationship is a poignant and difficult one. For a feminist, a woman who wants to have the autonomy to live her own life and make her own choices, separating from 'the father' has an added, crucial level of meaning. The 'symbolic order' that the French feminists talk about is also called 'the law of the Father'. Both young men and young women have to re-think 'the law of the Father', the (often unconsciously) accepted traditional values, to attain a strong sense of individuality. In most societies women are still in a different position to men. They have fewer opportunities, less power and have often been socialised to be more compliant. They do not have an automatic entry to the dominant culture.

So the emergence of the role of clear limit setter with her father – 'No, I won't take this any more' – is central to Kath's development as an autonomous woman. You might say that it is the very *embodiment* of her role as a feminist, along with her pride in herself and her value of her own thinking. She is in stage two of Kristeva's model, rejecting the male symbolic

order and strengthening her sense of identity and self-esteem.

However, she is also aware of stage three. She loves her father and wants to retain a relationship with him but one in which she is respected and understood. She doesn't want to argue with him or dominate him: she wants the relationship to be of another order. Whether this can be accomplished depends on what roles emerge in him as counter roles to her new stance, and her spontaneity in being able – when the time is right for her – to reverse roles with him. She is warming up to the stage of role reversal but hasn't yet embodied it.

From Personal to Political

It is likely that in some other contexts in her work or social life, when faced with controlling behaviour from others, that Kath would have been responding in an intimidated, withdrawn or perhaps an argumentative way. Having begun to develop a new way of responding to her father it is likely that she will express herself more clearly and authoritatively in other situations as well. She said when we met after the group sessions: 'I've had a hell of a lot of conflict lately – in my job, in my relationship and in my family... I've stayed so grounded. I've resolved things. I have a lot more inner strength. I'm really clear about where I want to go.' Kath works now as a community worker for a local authority where helping resolve conflict between various community interests is part of her work. She is bringing, as we all do, her learning from a family situation into her work and relationships in the wider social community. The functioning form this learning takes is her new role or roles.

A role is created by past experiences and the cultural patterns of the society in which a person lives and, as Moreno says, 'is a fusion of private and collective elements'. The social role of feminist is more possible for Kath in a society that is beginning to place value on the participation of women in the public areas of life than in, say, an Islamic country. Standing up to her father in that context may not have been a possible role perception, let alone a practice.

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As well, and sometimes more importantly, a woman's relationships with other significant people in her present or past social atom have a crucial influence on the roles she will develop. We have a tendency to focus on the interpersonal, dyadic relationship at the cost of seeing a more accurate systemic picture of a person's complex range of social contacts. Moreno's theories worked to shift this tendency and to offer a more comprehensive view. He saw social atoms as part of larger psychological networks which in their turn are part of what he called the psychological geography of a community. From this sociometric perspective Kath's relationship with her father and how she develops within it, truly matters. Her spontaneity will create a shift in the system. From a feminist point of view her ability to take and model self-esteem and authority in her community is of true value socially and politically.

As I said earlier, there were two main reasons why Kath was not ready to reverse roles with her father in the drama. She wanted first to strengthen her sense of authority and she wanted to experience being understood. The need to have her father under-stand her, literally stand in her shoes, seemed to be a factor in her readiness to negotiate the transition from stage 2 to stage 3: that is a shift from oppositional thinking to an agreement to live together in a way that could take account of their differences. This kind of negotiation towards an acceptance of difference has significant similarities on the personal and the political levels. Roger Fisher and William Ury in their widely read book on negotiation in political situations, *Getting to Yes*, say the following:

> The ability to see the situation as the other side sees it, as difficult as it may be, is one of the most important skills a negotiator can possess. It is not enough to know that they see things differently. You also need to understand empathetically the power of their point of view and to feel the emotional force with which they believe in it. It is not enough to study them like beetles under a microscope; you need to know what it feels like to be a beetle. To accomplish this task

> you should be prepared to withhold judgement for a while as you 'try on' their views.

(Fisher and Ury, 1987, p24)

Trying on the position and views of the other *is* just what role reversal is. Sometimes it is difficult. It is difficult if our personal experience of the other is very limited. It is particularly difficult if we have been hurt in the past by the other person or group, or if people we love have been hurt by them. It is difficult if they presently hold a position of power over us. It is confusing if we care for them *and* disagree with them. It is hard to let go of a hate or anger that has protected us from them or which has given us a sense of justice or identity or strength. We often think of understanding as agreeing or forgiving or backing down. Pride, therefore, can be a prime factor in our resistance.

Kath and her father are in a good position 'to negotiate' in that they both care for each other enough to want to continue their relationship. In a personal relationship, love or duty can provide the motivation. In a political or corporate negotiation both parties have to think they will have something to gain. In both cases the aim is for the relationship to turn from one of opposition to one of cooperation. It is not just a matter of the survival of the fittest – it is a balancing of both our competitive and cooperative instincts.

Summary/Conclusion

In this paper I have explored a moment of psychodramatic action, a moment of a dream, in the context of the living, ongoing relationship between a young woman and her father. I have applied psychodramatic theory and other theoretical viewpoints to the interaction, highlighting both the value of role reversal and the need to understand the developmental nature of the ability to role reverse – in other words timing and readiness. I have postulated that this applies on both the personal and political level.

My overall belief is that the ability to understand and accept others, to truly accept

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difference, will be one of the deciding factors in
whether we can survive, as a diverse species,
into the future. That ability, if we can shift our
ground to get there, will free us, I believe, to
truly care for the world in which we live and the
life within it.

We come to the place in the text – a clearing –

where a man and a woman have intentionally met.

They have come together (remember) under a totara
   tree: will they

take this tree to be the tree of life, to have and to hold

from this day forward, in fall and in flower

and in seed and in root and in stem and in branch
   and in leaf?

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Book Review

BY CHRIS HOSKING

Psychodrama, Surplus Reality and the Art of Healing

BY ZERKA MORENO, LEIF DAG BLOMKKVIST AND THOMAS RUTZEL

The topics chosen for this book and the chapters selected are at once interesting and suggestive. The variety of formats and brief presentations have created a light, direct, personal and stimulating book.

Many practitioners and trainees will be pleased, indeed excited, to see the complex topic of surplus reality as one of the central subjects that is presented and discussed. The portrayal of psychodrama as a 'theatre of healing', but in its greater meaning and context, is timely and welcome.

It is pleasing to read a book that is not overly ambitious but addresses a few selected themes. It is clear that the authors have a deep interest and passion for these particular aspects of the larger work of psychodrama. This book makes a very worthwhile contribution to the growing body of knowledge built up by the community of people who are keen to extend their experience and application of psychodrama and its orgins. It alerts us to people who are dedicated to make these ideas truly relevant to others, and to individuals who have achieved a significant level of integration of these notions within their own lives.

An outstanding feature of this book is a record of a series of interviews between Dag and Zerka. 'As for me, having experienced

psychodrama for almost sixty years now, I have come to think of it as the "Theatre of Mercy",' she says. The interview with Zerka allows us to meet Zerka today and to touch something of her journey with psychodrama over sixty years.

The decision by the authors to present a good proportion of their material in the format of an interview, addresses an important question that some of us have, a question that is not always expressed. This is a question about the true value and strength of our work, that part of our life in which we invest tremendous energies. It is reassuring and inspiring to hear something of the evolution and continuing unfolding of the conclusions and learning's of Zerka. Dag's respect for Zerka as his teacher and friend is obvious and one can feel the meeting of two very dedicated and passionate individuals.

It is refreshing to once again consider the purposes of sharing, of role reversal, of the use of magic, and to be reminded of the protagonist and their particular contribution. The chapters enable the reader to enter into these areas easily, lightly and enthusiastically. The chapter on sociometry is instructive and very effective in making the field of sociometry come alive and to highlight some of the reasons why Moreno regarded sociometry as the foundation for our work in psychodrama.

As the interview progresses through the book, the reader is also provoked to warm up to another question – what is the question I have; out of all my musings and reflections on this method and its history, what would I ask Zerka? For the reader, to imagine being there with Dag and Zerka, imagining participating in the encounter is an inviting and stimulating approach.

The interview allows us to encounter Zerka with a certain intensity, to feel something of her personal life view, such as her love of spirituality. The encounter with Dag is less intense and revealing. Some of his questions are overly conserved and cannot be real questions for him because we know of his lengthy history and extensive experience with psychodrama. We encounter Dag much more truly in the introduction sections that precede each chapter; here the depth of his interest, knowledge and individuality is apparent. The conserve that appears in some questions is distracting and tends to belie the intended purpose of the interview as 'an encounter'.

In making a parallel here to our aims in psychodrama for congruency and intensity in encounter, then the aim for encounter between Dag and Zerka is partially successful. There is no discussion on the limitations of the interview methodology, and it is interesting to consider whether a discussion of this nature

this may have strengthened the experience of the encounter for the reader. Here we have a meeting between a person with sixty years experience and another with approximately thirty years experience, (also remarkable) – the teacher–trainee relationship may have been overemphasised or somewhat forced in the approach to this book.

At the close of the book Zerka says '…therefore, when people come to psychodrama in no matter what role, professional, patient or student, they want a revolution in their lives…' The notion of personal and social revolution is quietly and lovingly embraced by those who are attracted to psychodrama. As Zerka speaks to her audience here, we too are prompted to speak to one another of the vital importance of our need for revolution within ourselves and the greater culture in which we live.

The closing paragraph of this book is anticlimactic. Many would view the fact that psychodrama hasn't been accepted by the establishment as a blessing, as an inspiration and a success. As trainees and practitioners independently interpret this methodology in their own fields a new appreciation of spontaneity is often discovered. This is one of the very sources of vitality that enables the radical nature of this work to flourish.

what is the question I have; out of all my musings and reflections on this method and its history, what would I ask Zerka?