Interventions with Kerry, a Twelve-Year-Old Student

by Frances Porter

Frances was Deputy Principal at an Intermediate School near Wellington when this paper was written. She has worked as a teacher and manager for more than 25 years. This article draws from material in a social and cultural atom paper completed as part of her training as a Psychodramatist. She has passed her psychodrama practical assessment and is close to completing her thesis. Currently Frances is Senior Team Leader in the Primary division of the Correspondence School.

INTRODUCTION

As the deputy principal of an intermediate school, catering for 500 11–13-year-old students, I function as both a disciplinarian and a guidance counsellor (among many other things). Kerry[1] first came to my attention because of extremely disruptive and uncooperative behaviour. In the course of my work with him I came to know his family, his friendship network, his relationships with the other thirty students in his class, his teacher, and his relationships with staff in the school, through his eyes. This extensive contact assisted me to perceive Kerry's social and cultural atom.

THE INITIAL MEETING

I met Kerry incidentally many times during his first year at Maidstone school. It was late in the first term of his second year that his teacher sent for me. Kerry had refused to leave the room (*Desperate Avoider, Reckless Gambler, General Custer*), having already refused to settle to work (*Aversive Student*), and was angry and mouthy (*Angry Rebel, Fearless Showman*) as he moved around the classroom. It was not unusual for him to misbehave, but he had carried it to a new level.

I walked in (*Sheriff, Respected Authority*), caught his eye, beckoned to him to follow, and walked out again. This was a very dramatic moment in the life of the class, and every individual was aware and focused on what might happen. Within a split second the *Relieved Capitulator* appeared in Kerry; he left the room and followed me. I think the fact that I did not stand there and watch him allowed him to choose to leave, thus retaining some dignity.

As we walked back to my office Kerry hung back (*Ashamed Victim, Apprehensive Anticipator*). I asked him to keep up with me, which he did (*Cooperative Captive*).

I chatted with him in a low-key conversation designed to establish rapport and show him I was not intending to be punitive. I used the short walk, which probably took about a minute, to be a *Warm Companion*.

Once in my office Kerry took a seat, and so did I. He looked around *(Interested Observer of Surroundings, Accepting Cruiser)*, and kept returning his gaze to the screen saver on my computer rather than to me *(Shy Self-Protector)*. I asked him questions about himself, and his family, and he answered willingly *(Animated Storyteller).* As Kerry relaxed and warmed up he became an *Engaging Entertainer.* By now I had begun to make an initial role analysis, and the roles I observed emerging during this meeting are illustrated in the following diagram.

Beginning with the *Paralysed Learner* and moving clockwise, the first part of this diagram shows the negativity of Kerry's relationship with himself. He was in this

main role during much of his time at school, certainly in his public interactions. He was only able to move out of it when taken out of the classroom by me. A positive set of roles was then revealed in the security of my room. A negative identity is more acceptable to many of Kerry's peers, and Kerry himself, than a positive one, which is stigmatised with such epithets as 'nerd' and 'goody good'.

KERRY'S SOCIAL ATOM

Kerry lives with Dad and his 13-year-old sister, Sharon. She recently returned to live with them, and Kerry thinks Dad conciliates Sharon to keep her there. Dad sounds like a larger version of Kerry (later confirmed by Grandmother), though Kerry goes out of his way to have me think well of Dad *(Loving, Loyal Son)*. Dad's girlfriend Rosie and her two-year-old son Hayden live in the same town. Kerry speaks very warmly of Hayden *(Affectionate Stepbrother).* His mother, who
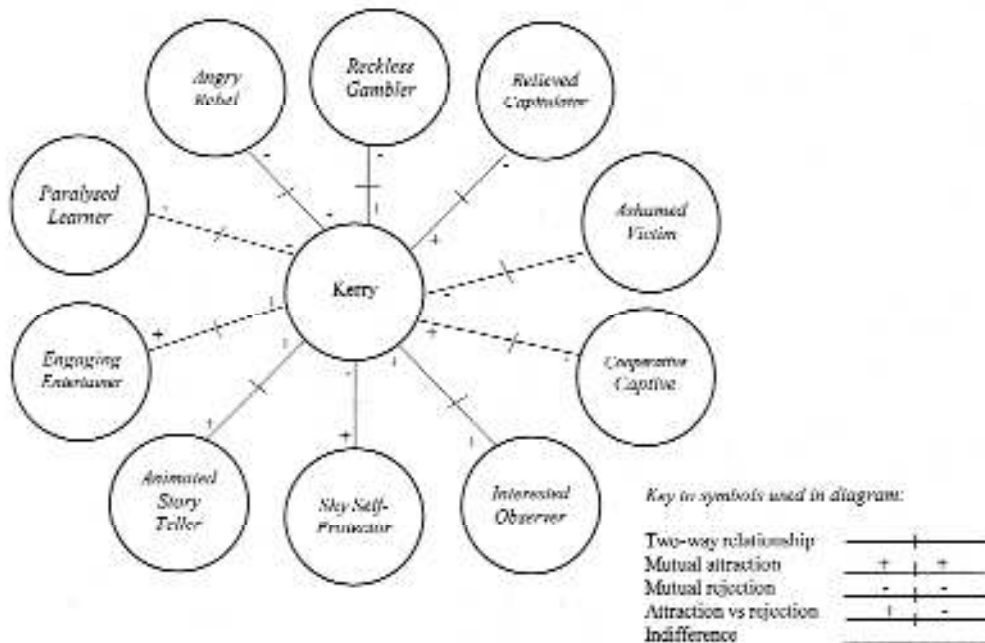

Figure 1: Kerry's cultural atom

does not get on at all with his father now, lives about 20 km away and he doesn't have her phone number. He wants to live with her *(Pleading Beggar)*, but can't even speak to her when he wants to *(Sad, Hopeless Waif)*. He has recently spent a week with her, misbehaved dreadfully *(Boundary Pusher, Angry Rebel)* and ended up running back home *(Hit and Run Artist)*. These relationships are depicted below, and the role systems are analysed later in Table 1.

In response to questions about himself and his functioning in his classroom, Kerry informed me that he was dumb *(Self-Condemner)*. Absent was any evidence of a self-valuing role. I spent time as a *Warm Companion* as I explored what it was like to

be in a class where most kids were operating at a more competent level. Wanting him to wake up to himself, I mirrored back to him his intelligent response to the questions I'd asked. This elicited an *Astonished Disbeliever*. I added that I'd been a teacher for years, talked to lots of kids, and knew an intelligent kid when I heard one. By the time the interview ended Kerry was using his considerable ability to positively engage me *(Charming Engager)*.

The dramatic changes in role were brought about firstly by his perception of me as *Respected Authority*, which enabled him to surrender his out-of-control behaviour, and then by my respectful, warm valuing of Kerry, as I showed interest in *him* rather than
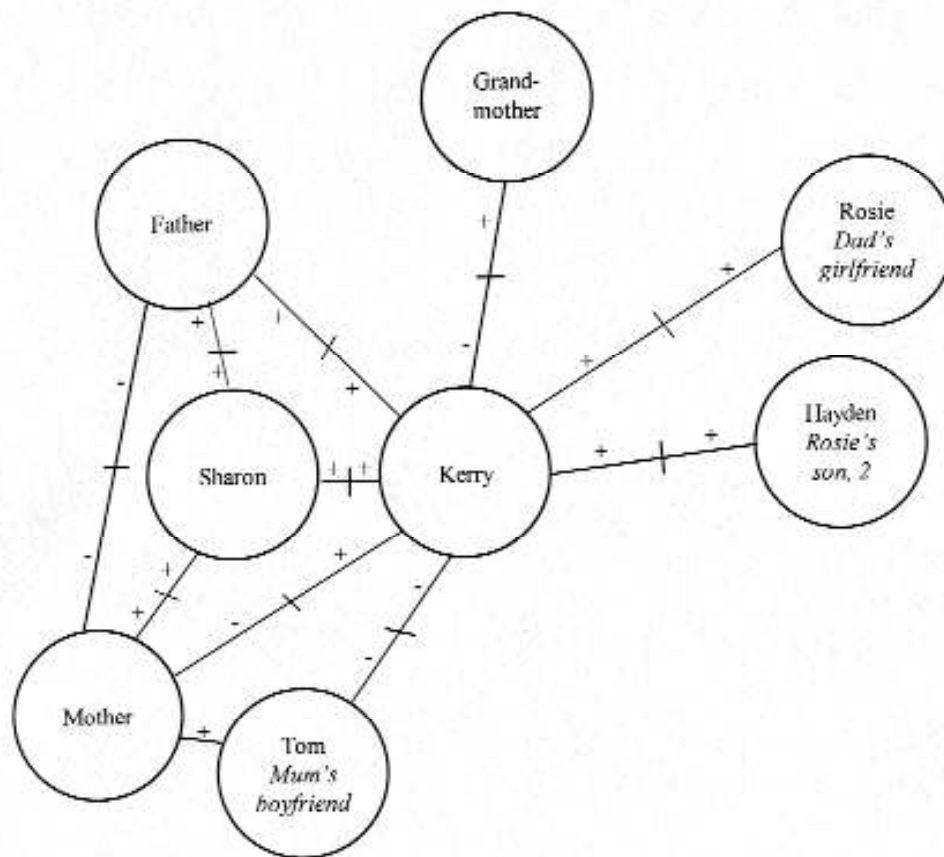

Figure 2: Kerry's family social atom

disapproval of his behaviour. This began the process of social atom repair.

At the end of the initial meeting, and from other observations, I was able to make a more comprehensive chart of Kerry's roles, illustrated below by Table 1. In looking at this chart you can see that there are many roles in the coping and fragmenting systems, and few roles in the progressive system. This reflects Kerry's spirited response to the stressful challenges of both home and school, as well as the limited opportunity he has experienced thus far to build more progressive roles.

The central role in the fragmenting system is the *Despairing Paralysed Learner*. Kerry is acutely aware of his inability to do the basic tasks he sees others managing easily, and has condemned himself as 'dumb'. His impatience with himself and demand that he not be singled out have led him to reject proffered help. He has to be coaxed and bribed to work with the teacher aide appointed for him. As such tasks are the substance of every day, Kerry is compelled to spend most of his time in a school system that is, by now, toxic to him. With six years experience (it is not known whether he was previously offered extra help) at other schools before he began at Maidstone, this role is absolutely fixed. He has used the coping role of *Agent Provocateur* to create alternatives for himself in the classroom. The trouble that constantly results from this is clearly less distressing than facing the pain of his learning gaps. On several occasions

Progressive Roles		Coping Roles			Fragmenting Roles	
Well Developed	Developing	Moving Toward	Moving Away	Moving Against	Diminishing	Over-developed & Unchanging
Affectionate Step-brother	Interested Observer	Pleading Beggar *(to mother)*	Hit and Run Artist *(Home/School)*	Agent Provocateur	Jealous Brother *(of Sharon)*	Despairing Paralysed Learner
Loving Loyal Son	Opening Rose	Loyal Sidekcik *(of Dad's)*	Astonished Disbeliever	Angry Rebel	Sad Hopeless Waif *(Mum)*	Rock of Gibralter
	Sparkling Entertainer/ Storyteller	Shy Self-Protector	Desperate Avoider	Boundary Pusher	Angry Outcast	Distrusting Victim *(at school)*
	Charming Engager	Cooperative Captive	Apprehensive Anticipator	Fearless Showman	General Custer	Ashamed Victim
		Accetping Cruiser	Self Condemner		Reckless Gambler	

Table 1: First Role Analysis[2]

at school, during unsupervised breaks with fellow students, he has become a *Heartless Bully*. When confronted he has assumed the role of *Rock of Gibraltar*, refusing to consider the significance of what he has done.

When Kerry can be lifted out of the formal class work situation (as on this occasion) other more progressive roles emerge. When – working on social atom repair – I mirrored his intelligent conversation back to him, he had seven years of experiences to the contrary to set against what I was saying. He had no concept of himself as capable of formal learning such as doing school work. The role of the *Competent Learner* is absent.

FIRST GROUP SESSION – A SPONTANEOUS EVENT

As can be the way in a school, I thought little more of Kerry until a week later when another emergency call came out. The scene in the classroom was similar. The difference was that this time I had a teaching commitment, with a group of sixteen of the brightest students in the school who belonged to the Future Problem Solving group[3]. Kerry came willingly, and I simply took him with me. He sat cross-legged on a desk, the only furniture there, to the side of the group *(Interested Observer)*.

I began my discussion with the group who were working on the theme of violence. I was conscious of Kerry's presence, and of the fact the group were also conscious of him, and somewhat curious. Almost immediately it occurred to me *(Spontaneous Actor)* to say to them that they might get some first-hand information from Kerry on the subject. As we all turned towards him I added that he might not be willing to answer their questions. He replied without hesitation, his eyes dancing, 'Oh, yes I would!' *(Eager Beaver)*.

I think the roles of psychodrama director sometimes intersect with the roles of teacher. In previous discussions I had already tended to use roles such as *Creator of Group and Role Warm-up* to enliven the discussion, and to awaken in the students a greater consciousness of the impact various issues we discussed have on themselves and on people in general.

The first question directed to Kerry was, 'Why are you violent?'

He paused, then said: 'Because I've been brought up in violence.' *(Sincere Self-Revealer)*.

This question and answer had a huge emotional impact on us all, and blew the discussion and all the participants wide open. The students proceeded to interview Kerry for about 40 minutes, during which time he was an *Expansive Self-Examiner* who relished all the attention and validation he was getting. There was also an embryonic *Self-Valuer.* The group ended up getting a first-hand insight into life in a family where the relationship between the parents has been violent, and warmed up to being *Empathic Enquirers*. Kerry changed his warm-up to a group of people he would formerly have regarded as unrelieved nerds (embryonic *Respectful Acknowledger*). This showed some repair of his social atom. I worked to keep the communication open and two-way by clarifying, coaching, modelling, mirroring and doubling, for group members as well as Kerry. The atmosphere was intense, and we all remained passionately involved throughout. Figure 3, overleaf, charts the roles evident in this session.

The value of this session was immense. Kerry became a positive star whose opinions were sought and valued as he experienced the
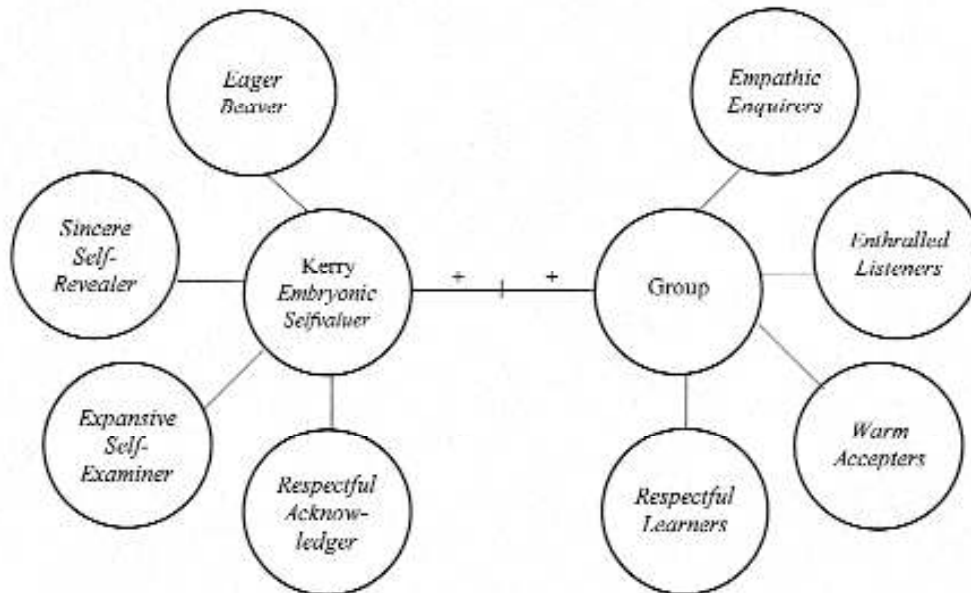
Figure 3: Diagram of group session

warmth of the group in an atmosphere of mutual acceptance. This contributed to the emergence of the embryonic *Self-Valuer*, a vital new role in his cultural atom.

SECOND GROUP SESSION – A PLANNED EVENT

I understood from Miss Gray that the real issue remained Kerry's total unwillingness to work, for his disruptive behaviours were all produced in lieu of engaging with school work. I suggested the possibility of my conducting a session (called a class meeting) with him and the class. Miss Gray was agreeable to the idea. Class meetings are becoming part of the culture at Maidstone, and are a place for any member of a class to raise issues of concern to them. They operate through an agenda to which every member of the class has access. I have introduced them and make myself available to model respectful ways of working with children – including using my psychodrama abilities. The idea for this meeting came from the

success of the first session with the FPS group. Offering it broke new ground for me, and gave me further insight into integrating psychodrama into my work in the school. Also central to my decision to offer this was Miss Gray's openness and willingness to learn a new process from me.

I sent for Kerry, and told him he would be going on a learning/behaviour contract. Behaviour contracts were beginning to be a recognised part of the discipline system at Maidstone. They are negotiated between the student and a teacher, and contain provisions a student must meet, with regular checking times during the day. These regular checks turn into positive strokes, and surprisingly some of the toughest students like the way they assist with personal control. When I, as Deputy Principal, become involved, they are taken even more seriously by the student. I asked Kerry to tell me what contract provisions he thought would be helpful to keep him on track in class. He identified appropriate guidelines and they were written

in. One, for example, said without hesitation, was 'I will be courteous to the teacher' *(Truthful Self-Analyst)*. We walked back to class with the contract.

When Kerry and I arrived the class were already gathered on the mat with Miss Gray, and we joined them. I said to the class that they all knew Kerry had been working with me, and I thought it would be good if he heard from them. I asked him if he thought he would be able to listen even if they told him the things he did that upset them. (In hindsight I regret that I did not emphasise equally the importance of their mirroring to him positive aspects they liked in him. This omission makes his response clearer.)

'Oh no,' he replied, 'I'd get too angry!' *(Apprehensive Victim)*

'What if people speak in a way that doesn't put you down and is thoughtful and caring?'

After assurance that he would be looked after during this process Kerry agreed somewhat apprehensively *(Courageous Investigator, Apprehensive Adventurer)*.

I explained the terms of his contract even though the necessity for it was apparent to everyone. In giving this explanation I established myself as the leader, as well as creating a clear focus for the work of the meeting.

Over the next 20 minutes class members let Kerry know what upset them in what he did, including his aggravating behaviours to them and Miss Gray. They specially mentioned Bill, the class isolate, who would do anything Kerry required. Again, I coached, mirrored, modelled and doubled very actively and quickly for any participant, whenever the established boundaries were breached. Though I had overlooked asking for positive comments, in this process I mirrored and coached students who were in anyway negative in what they said, to be good auxiliaries for Kerry in this effort to create a positive identity and healthy social atom.

Individual students told Kerry what they were willing to do to assist him to fulfil the conditions of the contract. The class members adopted the role of *Caring Supporters,* and it was clear that their sustained interest validated Kerry *(Self-Valuer)*. The positive tele in the room was palpable. This positive response from the group was facilitated by their seeing the warm, positive relationship between Kerry and me, and by my work as a director with them in their role as auxiliaries. The intensity of their involvement showed me that the experience was very real for them, underlining their deep interest in themselves, each other and class relationships.

Miss Gray, who was very warmed up and positive to Kerry, then went on to develop a completely individualised program in contract form for him to work on, representing hours of her own effort.

Kerry had experienced much success in his first year at Maidstone in the role of *Agent Provocateur* in his class. He was with a teacher who eventually was only saved from a complete breakdown (a situation to which he contributed significantly) by being persuaded to take sick leave, and his class was supportive of him in that role. His second year class was better managed. Miss Gray was learning to recognise when he took up that role and send him off for 'time out'. Now the class supported her rather than him, and cooperated with her in bringing about a norm in the group that promoted a

Progressive Roles		Coping Roles			Fragmenting Roles	
Well Developed	Developing	Moving Toward	Moving Away	Moving Against	Diminishing	Over-developed & Unchanging
Sincere Self-Revealer	Courageous Investigator /Risk-taker	Eager Beaver	Accepter of Time-out	Agent Provocateur	Despairing Paralysed Learner	Rock of Gibralter
Truthful Self-Analyst	Sparkling Entertainer/ Storyteller	Apprehensive Adventurer			Heartless Bully	
Interested Observer	Self-valuer *(embryonic)*				Puppet Master *(with Bill)*	
					Distrusting Victim	

Table 2: Role analysis from both group sessions

positive approach to learning. This increased the likelihood of the development of a positive identity.

The table above shows the success of the interventions, with a big reduction in the number of roles in the coping and fragmenting systems, and an increase in the progressive system. Most significantly, the *Despairing Paralysed Learner* has moved slightly.

Encouraged by the contract, and armed with a totally individual learning program he could manage, Kerry had several productive weeks (*Emerging Learner* and embryonic *Willing Worker*). During this time several other students he mixed with outside school went seriously off track. They were neighbours and gang companions, with whom he had been in trouble with the police. He met me before school one morning (perhaps on purpose, maybe by chance) and told with great relish the story of how two

of them had met him on the way to the bus stop. They let him know they were going to wag, and invited him to join them. He refused, and when they called him names, turned and walked away to catch the bus. Pointing out that he had never been able to resist such temptation before, he was bursting with pride in his new found strength (*Hercules*). Kerry went on to tell and retell the story to his teacher, teacher-aide, the special needs teacher and the principal. It began to assume something of the feeling of an epic.

The *Vengeful Saboteur* subsequently emerged on several occasions when he ostentatiously ripped up work Miss Gray had prepared for him, and completed work of his own. In his rage he was prepared to sacrifice his own work to hurt her. Roles in the fragmenting and coping systems were still to the fore and roles in the progressive system still undeveloped.

CONCLUSION

It was clear that the role development/social atom repair process was still very much in progress. Kerry struggled through to the end of the year with a number of crisis times. He went on to a second contract specifically to avert the imminent prospect of suspension, brought about by an unprovoked physical attack on another student. It is a measure of the success of the work that he was not suspended, and was able to stay out of further trouble.

Achieved was the *embryonic* development of several crucial roles:

Believer in Self

Self-Valuer

Emerging Learner

This change was brought about through the conscious application of role theory in individual and group sessions with Kerry. This focused on relationship systems both externally and within Kerry himself, and built on the relationship I established with him. The role of the *Despairing Paralysed Learner* that I previously assessed to be over-developed and unchanging, began to diminish. This is a significant change from a clinical perspective – the evidence of real social atom repair. It enabled Kerry to begin developing the progressive roles outlined above.

The nature of the work with Kerry differs in several respects from a classic therapeutic relationship – one that usually results from the client actively seeking contact with the therapist, and taking responsibility for maintaining it.

First, I chose to actively establish a strong connection with him, knowing it had to be based on roles other than those associated with negativity in order for any new solutions to emerge. In this, he readily engaged with me. I also suggested to him that he could see me of his own accord. Kerry did not formally take this up, though he did talk informally to me when I was out and about. He was unable even to take up the offer of choosing his own time out, always requiring an intervention from Miss Gray. Nonetheless, even through some very challenging times later in the year when suspension seemed inevitable, Kerry continued to accept me as a person interested in his welfare. If I sent for him he was generally pleased to come, because I persistently mirrored a very attractive self back to him. My focus was on finding ways to keep him functioning in the school.

Second, I was not able to maintain a regular contact with him – I would have liked to be able to do more, but my role did not permit. This had an effect on what was achieved, as did the fact there was no support system anywhere else in Kerry's life to build on the work done at school. It was an anticlimax to the work of previous months where in many moments Kerry showed the development of new roles and the beginnings of new relationships. This situation illustrates that in order for new roles to be sustained, a significant number of strong positive connections may be needed.

SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT

The year Kerry began secondary school, he lasted only a week before being suspended, and was suspended again around mid-year. It is clear that the supports he had at Maidstone, in the form of his teacher, teacher aide, the other children and me, were not present. In addition, the secondary school system moves students from teacher to

teacher many times each day. In order for new roles to develop to an adequate level, a student like Kerry needs a social atom that includes at least one strong positive relationship, where there is understanding and encouragement. This may often be achieved with a teacher. The existence of one such strong positive relationship can make it possible for a student such as Kerry to simply *survive* day by day, and possibly begin to feel himself of value.

POSTSCRIPT

Kerry called into school later in his first year at secondary school and told me his school had sent him on an anger management course. He looked and sounded happy and said he is managing day to day life more successfully now. He is feeling happier with himself and with what he is doing.

Endnotes

1   I have changed Kerry's name for this paper, as I have with all individuals mentioned. I have not changed the name of the school.

2   The role category descriptions 'progressive, coping, fragmenting' are taken from Max Clayton 1995, The preparation and writing of a social and cultural atom paper, *Australian and New Zealand Psychodrama Association Inc. Journal*, no. 4, 43–50.

3   Future Problem Solving (FPS) is a program that trains students to develop specific thinking strategies to work on potential problems of the future. It runs as a competition, works on a set of themes and requires prior research, and the competition has a strict time limit within which teams must work.

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Building a Relationship with Alice, an Autistic Child

by Ioanna Gagani

Ioanna Gagani was born in Athens and studied acting in Athens and theatre studies in Paris. In 1997 she moved to Melbourne where she studied psychology and Spanish and began her psychodrama training. She started her work with autistic children in 1999 and currently works as a departmental coordinator in a school for children with autism and intellectual disabilities. Her goal is to help children with autism to find pleasure in their relationships with others and through that develop their communication and social skills.

Ever since I was an adolescent, I have had a big interest in autism. The complete isolation of the children whom I saw in films and documentaries always left me speechless with amazement. Although I could grasp the concept of other disorders, autism was a huge question mark for me. How was it possible for someone to be so completely detached from the world?

I was very exited with my decision, years later, to work with autistic children. When a job came up, however, I was terrified. I had never met an autistic person before, much less worked with a three-year-old, non-verbal girl with autism. What was I thinking? How could I possibly do this?

I was hired as one of three therapists who would be working with Alice following the Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) treatment approach. We all had a two-day training session in ABA and then started working individually with Alice. Although I was doing ABA, I was always thinking in psychodramatic terms. I knew that, no matter what intervention I used, it wouldn't work unless I first made a connection with Alice and established a strong relationship with her.

In this article, I present a few significant moments in my work with Alice that helped us make a connection and start building what is now a very strong positive relationship.

THE FIRST CONNECTION

Alice plays with her picture cards. They are small square cards with pictures of animals and objects on them. She sits on the floor repetitively gathering her cards, holding them up as high as her hand can reach, watching them drop and gathering them again. As she does this (during most of our session) she looks happy and completely detached from her surroundings, including me. Often she talks while doing it, speaking words that

are incomprehensible. She has complete control of what she does (gathering and dropping the cards) and provides herself with the stimulation she enjoys (watching things fall). This self-stimulatory behaviour is a characteristic of autism.

My desire is to enter Alice's game and participate in it. I think that, if I succeed, the above roles that keep her safe but isolated will diminish and thus more progressive roles will emerge. I have tried on previous occasions to enter into her game, but Alice has ignored me and turned her back to me. It feels like she has the key and I am searching for the right keyhole. I once again plunge into the search, so that the door to her game will open and Alice will welcome me in.

At last I do something that gets Alice's attention and triggers her curiosity. I get on my knees, sit on my heels and lay my upper body on my thighs. I wait, immobile, and as the cards fall on the floor I start laughing as if I am being tickled. Alice is interested.

Alice's roles shown in Figure 1 are part of what I perceive as a very big isolating role cluster. Her desire to control her environment leads her to shut off from the world and engage in self-stimulatory play which is a safe, controllable and risk-free activity. I come in as *The Mass* and relate to the *Happy Mesmerised Self-Stimulator*, as I don't want Alice to give up any control. I am just trying to get her to receive some stimulation from me, rather than herself. She does get interested. She picks up her cards and drops them again, this time looking at me and enjoying my reaction.

As Alice becomes curious about what I am and what I am doing as *The Mass*, her isolating roles give way to a progressive one, the *Surprised Curious Delighted Player*. She becomes involved in what I am doing, instead of being detached and isolated. As I observe this shift, a symmetrical role emerges in me; I also am delighted and surprised, since, after so many unsuccessful attempts to play with her, I have finally found a way to do it. The two symmetrical roles that emerge in both of us are very important, as without the delight of both players no game can continue.

And the game goes on. The third time Alice picks up her cards, instead of letting them
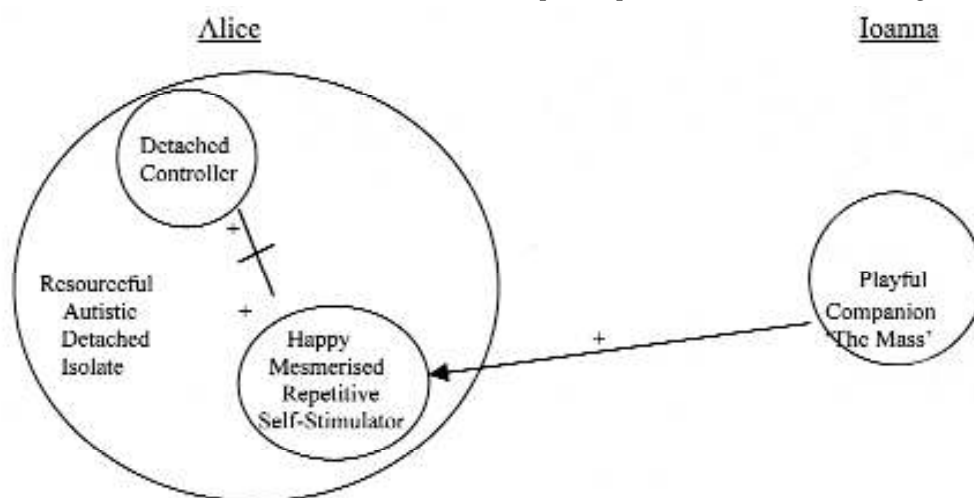

Figure 1: Alice's roles during the picture card game

drop on the floor, she drops them on me. I laugh and subtly move my upper body as if the cards are tickling me. As the game continues, I slowly make my responses bigger and louder. I try variations of my initial response, always careful to stay lower than her, because the moment I move out of her visual field, Alice doesn't follow me with her eyes. She is very amused and surprised with all my responses and although she mostly looks at my moving body, when she drops her picture cards on me, she looks into my eyes with a look that says 'what will you do now?!'.

Figures 2a and 2b show the shifts in Alice's roles after my intervention. Alice's coping roles diminish and three new progressive roles emerge.

Although some aspects of her coping roles are still present (Alice is still doing the same repetitive motion and has control of the cards), the progressive roles that emerge allow her to connect with me rather than to isolate herself.

As a *Playful Resourceful Companion*, I try different ways of playing with Alice, the majority of which had no effect on her. I send a message of acceptance, that it is all right for her to be however she wants to be. I never push her to do anything she doesn't want to. I never persist when Alice shows no interest. Rather, I move away and try something different later in our session. This has two positive outcomes: firstly, it gives Alice permission to be who she wants to be and do what she wants. Secondly, it keeps Alice's warm-up to me at the same almost non-existent level. If I persist in my attempts to play the picture card game with her, I feel it will affect her warm-up in a negative way, pushing her further away from me and strengthening her desire for isolation. So the

message I give is ' I will try and play with you for a while and if you don't like it, I will stop. I won't be angry with you, I will just try again later.'

After a few attempts, I become aware that I am trying to connect with Alice as a person, as myself. This might be too confronting for her. I try something different; I stop being a person and became a mass, physically smaller than her, which moves as the cards fall. That mass apparently isn't too confronting for Alice and her curiosity is triggered. So I provide Alice with a situation where her motivating force (I want to find out more about this mass before me) is stronger than her reactive fear (I'm losing control, I don't know what will happen). In fact, Alice still has some control over me, because she is controlling the cards and if the cards don't drop, the mass won't move. I do control how the mass moves, so I am very careful not to become either too confronting, or too boring.

This is my first connection with Alice. I watch as she slowly moves away from her coping roles and into new, more progressive ones. She connects, not so much with me, but with *The Mass*, not fully aware it is me. She makes that connection some sessions later. For the time, she enjoys the game and for a few minutes connects with me as *The Mass*. That connection ends the moment the game finishes. As soon as I stop being a *Spontaneous Responsive Companion*, Alice goes back to her isolation. She has provided me with great insights about how to approach her in the future. We continue playing the picture card game in following sessions, but that doesn't change Alice's warm-up to me outside the game.
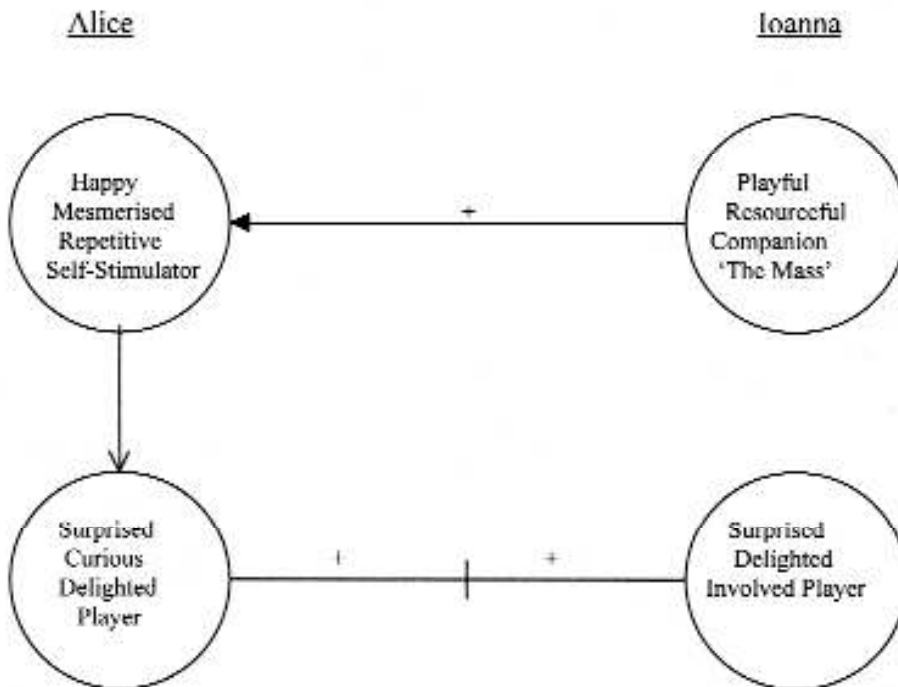
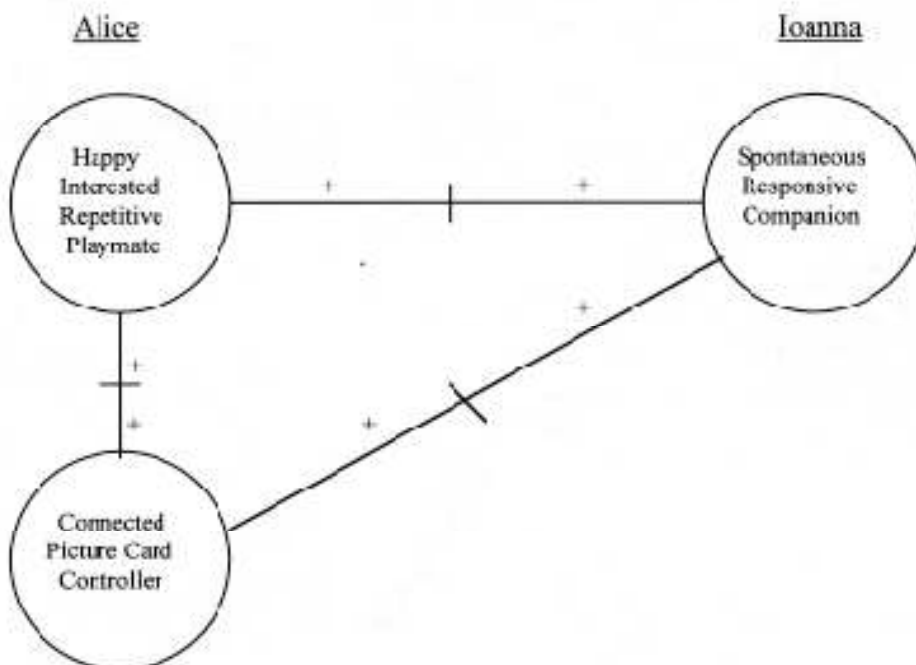Figure 2a: Alice's role progression in the picture card game

Figure 2b: Alice's transformed roles in the picture card game

THE BEGINNING OF THE RELATIONSHIP

I will now describe a number of interventions that I made in one session with Alice, which changed our relationship completely and in particular Alice's warm-up to me. These interventions were so significant that from these moments onwards, a very strong mutually positive relationship began to develop between us.

I would arrive at Alice's home in the afternoon. If she had been awake from her nap for a while, her reaction when she saw me was to cry. If she were still feeling quite sleepy, she would ignore me as she did everyone and everything else around her.

The session that I describe here starts with Alice lying on the couch, still sleepy. She has her arms between her legs and is softly rocking herself. Her eyes look empty and she is completely shut off from the outside world. She is a *Detached, Self-Sufficient Rocking Nurturer*. This is a coping role in which she has control of what happens to her and provides herself with the stimulation she needs at that moment: to be rocked like a baby and to be nurtured. My initial response is to leave her alone; she doesn't want to be disturbed. I feel helpless. I perceive her as being so far away that there is nothing I can do to bring her back. I have two choices: I can just pick her up saying 'come sit' which signals the beginning of the ABA, or I can take some time to warm her up to it.
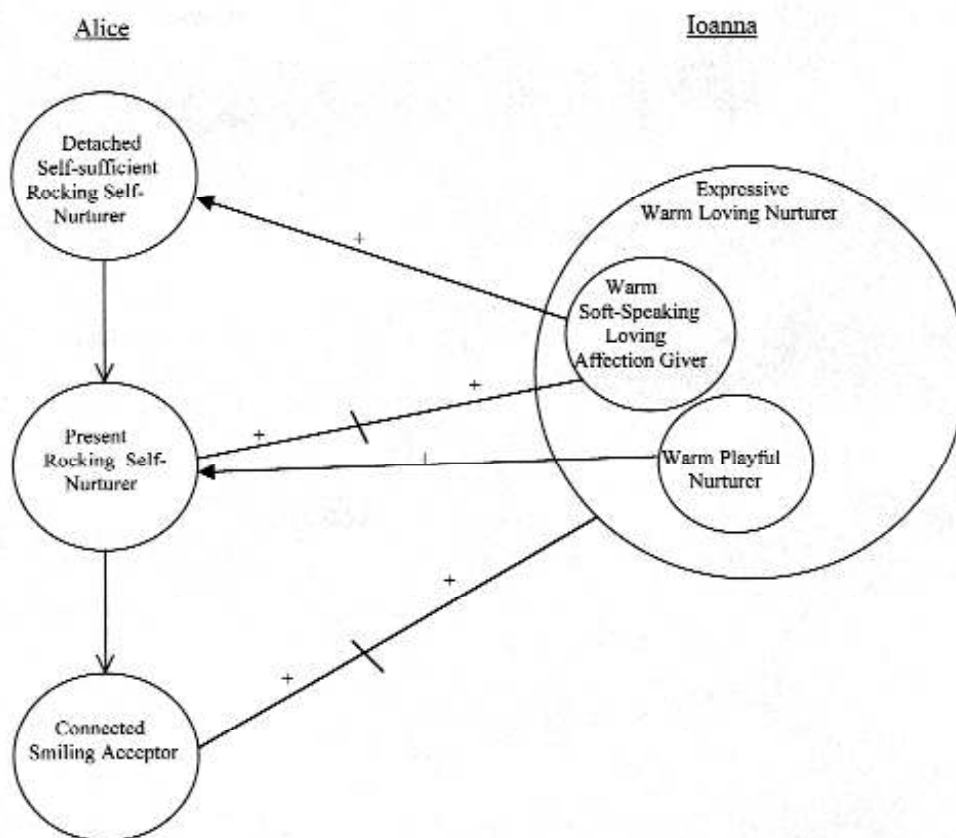

Figure 3: Alice's role progression as I warm her up to me

The first choice seems very cruel, abrupt and not respectful of where Alice is at. I know that it will upset her very much, and rightly so. When I decide to go for the second choice, my own warm-up immediately changes from helplessness to spontaneity and resourcefulness. I know that I am in unknown territory and that I have to be very crisp in my observations of Alice's shifts, and shift myself accordingly.

I sit on the floor next to the armchair where Alice is lying. I speak to her in a soft voice and stroke her legs and her hands (*Warm Soft-Speaking Loving Affection Giver*). Alice turns her head towards me, looks at me and then turns away. I continue stroking her and talking to her, the way I would speak to a baby. Alice once again looks at me. This time, however, she smiles and doesn't turn away. She keeps rocking herself (*Present Rocking Self-Nurturer*). Very smoothly, I shift from stroking her to gently playing and tickling her (*Warm Playful Nurturer*). This process goes on for about 15 minutes, with me in the role of *Expressive Warm Loving Nurturer*. Alice is enjoying my gentle way of connecting with her. She is smiling and accepts everything I do. Although she is not always looking at me, she doesn't turn away from me any more. She also stops rocking herself and accepts the nurturing that I give her (*Connected Smiling Acceptor*).

When I arrive for my session, Alice appears to be in a soft and gentle mood. I sit next to her and mirror that mood by also being soft and gentle. I take on, however, a complementary role to hers, by becoming a *Warm Soft-Speaking Loving Affection Giver*. I observe a change in Alice's role: she is still a self-nurturer rocking herself, but she is no longer detached. This is a major shift from her previous role. She has come back from wherever she was to the here and now. This

is a sign that I am on the right track and that Alice is aware of the affection I am giving her. Being very patient and giving her all the time she needs, I interact with her as an *Expressive Warm Loving Nurturer*. The one-way relationship between my *Warm Playful Nurturer* and her *Present Rocking Self-Nurturer* gives rise to a new role in Alice, the *Connected Smiling Acceptor*. It is the first time in our relationship that Alice takes on a complementary role to mine – I provide nurturing and she accepts it. This is a very significant moment. Alice is beginning to trust me! She gives up her self-nurturing and accepts my affection instead.

The fact that I have taken the time to warm her up to her relationship with me means that Alice doesn't cry when we start the two-hour ABA session. During the first hour she is present and happy, connecting with me very often, and at other times playing by herself. We play a number of games involving her picture cards. On the break, Alice wants to watch a video, so I put on Cinderella, one of her favourites. While she is watching TV, I watch her. I observe her laughing and smiling and going very close to the TV when there are animals on the screen. She moves back and does not react whenever Cinderella or another person appears. Just as she has connected with me as a mass in the picture card game, Alice is now connecting with the animals rather than the people on the TV. She moves around and smiles with all the songs in 'animal language' and disconnects from all the people songs in English.

When the break is over, we go back in the therapy room and Alice sits on the floor looking through her Cinderella book. I sit next to her and point at different animals in the book. I make the appropriate animal sound and interact with her as an animal. I become a mouse, a cat, a horse, a dog, and a
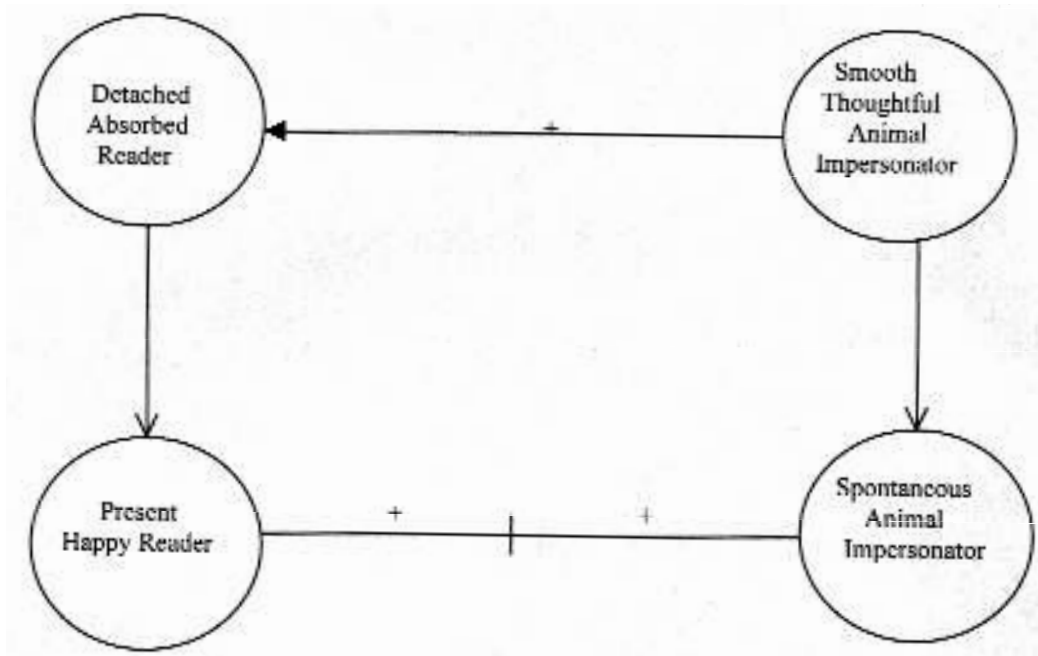
Figure 4a: Alice's role progression and role relationship with me during the animal game

chicken. I start very smoothly, ready to stop if Alice doesn't like it. But she does. For a while, we are connecting through the book, me pointing and acting as the animal I point at and Alice enjoying it and smiling.

Observing Alice as she watches Cinderella gives me a great insight into her sociometry. I already know that she loves Cinderella, both the book and the video. But by watching her, it becomes clear to me that she is mostly connecting with the animals. So when, after the break, Alice starts looking at the

Cinderella book, it is an opportunity for me to try and get on board with her by taking up the roles of the animals in the book. I make a smooth start in order to see if Alice will take notice. Immediately a new role emerges in her, the *Present Happy Reader*, which allows her to connect with me and enjoy what I am doing. I immediately expand my role. I am a horse pushing Alice around with my head, a mouse tickling her all over with my hands, a dog barking, licking, biting and sniffing her. We gradually get so involved in this game that we forget about the book and
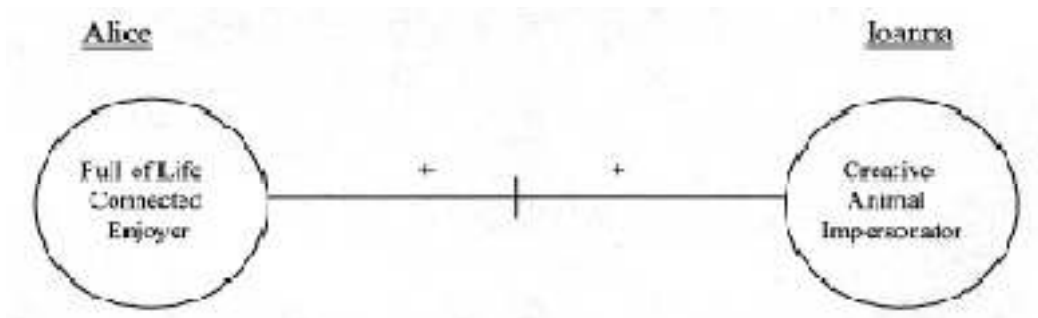

Figure 4b: Alice's role progression and role relationship with me as the animal game continues

end up rolling around on the floor with me becoming every animal I can think of.

As I keep expanding my role, Alice changes as well and a completely new progressive role emerges, the *Full of Life Connected Enjoyer*. At this point of the game we are in complementary roles – if someone were watching us they would see an adult playing with a child. Alice's functioning is progressive and no aspect of her isolating role cluster is in the foreground. Actually, I have never seen Alice having so much fun before. She is really accepting of what I am doing and enjoying the closeness of our bodies. She is laughing as loud as she can. She looks radiant. We end up lying side by side on the floor; her cheeks, and I am sure mine too, are bright red, and her eyes shining. It is at this moment that she looks at me and really sees me. Alice looks straight into my eyes. Her eyes are full of love and tell me that she realises all those animals she has just played with are me.

Having been in complementary roles, the end of the game finds us in symmetrical ones. Alice is in another new progressive role, the *Radiant Satisfied Player*. I doubt that she has ever enjoyed so fully playing with another person. And a further role emerges – the *Conscious Loving Seer* . This one forever changes our relationship. It was very clear just at the end of the game that Alice had made the connection between the animals and myself. She didn't make that connection in the picture card game where *The Mass* was something separate from Ioanna, but now she can see that the animals are Ioanna. And by making that connection she realises that Ioanna can be and do all sorts of different things. That realisation changes everything.

From that day on, Alice stopped crying every time I arrived. She has warmed up to me and as a consequence has been warming up more to ABA. She has been a lot more open to playing with me, rather than with herself. And it is not as difficult for her to move out
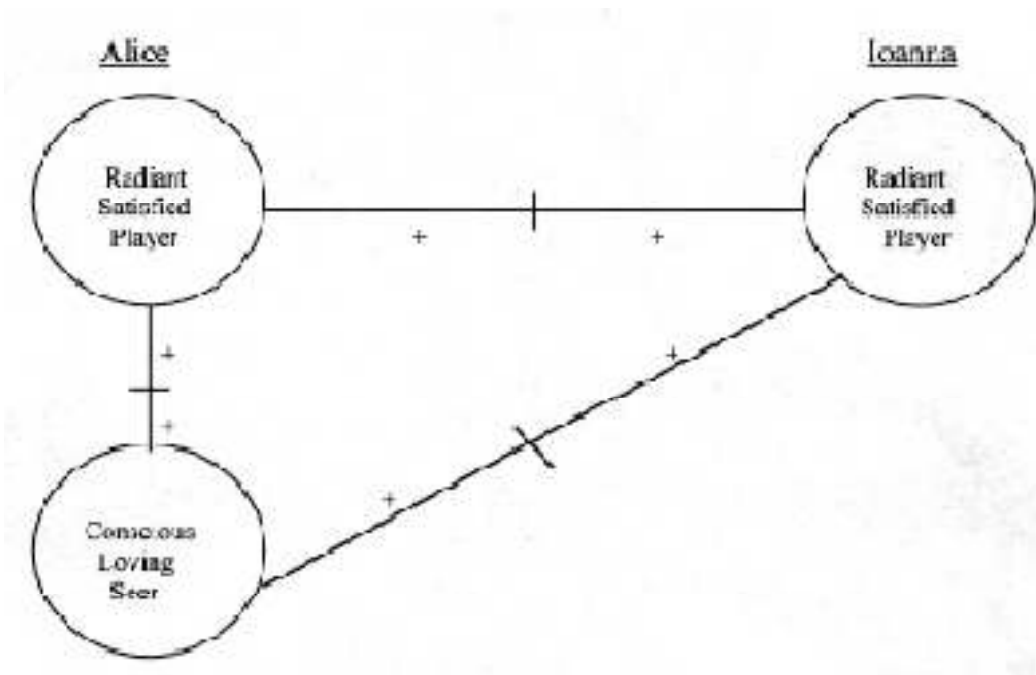

Figure 4c: Alice's roles at the end of the animal game

of her isolation, or for me to move her out of it. She is now very interested in me, knowing that I'll come up with something out of the ordinary. Very often she wants me included in things that she used to enjoy doing alone. She gets very upset, for example, when I am not next to her at the computer enhancing all the games that she likes, bringing the characters to life right in front of her. And she is aware that I am there with her in the room. She will always turn and look at where I am and what I am doing when she is watching television.

So many things have happened in one year. So many changes, laughs and tears, all of which have shifted Alice's social atom in amazing ways. She is now almost four years old and talking! A lot of her speech is echolalia (compulsive and apparently senseless repetition of a word or phrase just spoken by another person), but she also asks for things and says what she wants.

Alice also has mutually positive relationships with others on the ABA team. At the team meetings she comes and hugs each one of us. She loves the attention and loves being the star of the meetings. Although she still doesn't always accept and like the ABA, she has developed a relationship with us, in which she sees more in us than just our role as ABA therapists.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

What a gift to see Alice's huge progress within one year and know that I have played a part in it. The same child who used to cry at my sight, who used to bite me, kick me and hit me at times when she wasn't ignoring me, is now hugging me and singing songs with me. And not only that, but she is also calling me by my name! 'Ioanna', she says in a tone of voice that is very hard to

describe in words but that will stay engraved in my mind and heart forever, 'Yes!' I reply, trying hard not to jump off my chair with joy because she is saying my name in a functional way and not just repeating it echolalically. 'I want help' she says to me. And I either help her or coach her to do it alone, if I know that she can.

Although Alice's progressive roles have generalised in other situations and with other people, it is a slow process, often depending on the response of others. For example, she doesn't call everyone by name, even though she knows their name. I believe it has to do with how the person reacts when Alice calls them. Some of us are thrilled every time she calls us and we show it. Alice can pick up the slightest emotion in people and when she does something that makes us excited she shares our joy, and is more likely to do it again than if we had acted as if it was nothing special.

A role that has generalised very quickly and with everyone is the *Participator in Laughter*. During our individual sessions I would start laughing on purpose and Alice would laugh with me. At the team meetings, whenever we laugh, Alice joins us. She even stops watching her favourite videos when she hears us laugh and walks into the living room laughing. This makes us laugh more, then she laughs more, and we end up not being able to stop.

A lot of her isolating roles have diminished, she is now very rarely a *Detached Controller* or a *Detached Rocking Self-Nurturer*. She stopped playing the picture card game a long time ago. Generally, her self-stimulatory behaviours have decreased, as more progressive roles have started developing. Most of the time Alice now prefers to be with others, rather than on her own.

GUIDELINES

There is no recipe to follow when working with autistic children, or with anyone for that matter. Every child is different and must be approached in unique ways. However, I have found the following general guidelines useful in my work:

Accept, respect and allow the child to be however they want.

Don't pull the child into your world. Find a way to step into their world and walk together along the bridge that connects the two.

Observe and work with the child's sociometry. Get on board with them by getting on board with whatever it is that they are most connected with, be it a person, a toy or a piece of string.

Doubling and mirroring are two very useful techniques in order to get a sense of the child's world and also to be a companion to them.

Never assume that the child doesn't understand just because they lack communication skills. Talk to them. They do understand, if not the all words you speak, definitely the emotions you are expressing both verbally and non-verbally.

Be spontaneous. Find ways to make them curious about you.

If you are feeling any hesitation within you about doing something, don't do it, it won't work. Be comfortable and confident. The child can pick up on any hesitation or uncertainty that you are feeling.

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Supervision of Psychodrama Trainees

by Robert Brodie

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There is a magic to spending an hour or so with a practitioner and assisting them to transform an experienced frustration or stuckness into a wealth of insight and free action. Those moments which bring the greatest challenge may also offer the greatest opportunity for new expression of the creative genius.

What is it about supervision that excites and draws me in? I have certainly learned its value from my own experiences of being supervised. Supervision offers an opportunity for talents and abilities to be mirrored and integrated. Prejudices get exploded and melted. The supervisee becomes more conscious and efficacious. The capacity to act develops as inhibitors are diminished and the burgeoning practitioner connects more deeply with their vision and aspirations. For both a supervisor and a trainee engaging in supervision, the engendering of spontaneity can be a surprising and promising experience. Close attention to the warm-up to action brings increasing depth, subtlety and complexity to the

practitioner's abilities. Above all as a supervisor I am doing what I value most, namely, furthering life and creativity.

In this article I describe the purpose and focus of supervision, discuss its relationship to training and make some observations about the significance of boundaries in supervision. A case illustration of an individual supervision session is then presented. This is followed by a list of some principles of supervision.

THE PURPOSE OF SUPERVISION

Supervision is the overseeing of the relevant development of a trainee by an adequately trained supervisor with whom they make a voluntary contract. The broad purpose of supervision is the development of the identity and abilities of the practitioner. More specifically, the purposes are: to develop the trainee as a director, so that emerging roles are integrated into practice; to develop the trainee's ability to reflect fruitfully on their own work; and to provide adequate service delivery for the client group and embedding system.

SUPERVISION AND TRAINING

Supervision is an essential component of psychodrama training. Many common principles underlie them both. In psychodrama training, we create a space within which the trainee can play with the elements of psychodrama. Thereby, learning to direct is integrated with their entire functioning. Supervision has these characteristics also, whether it is immediate during a training group or in an individual supervisory session, based on a particular moment of concern to the trainee.

Regular supervision assists in conveying the fruits of the profound playground of training into the realities of the workaday world. Supervision is strongly recommended for any application of training in work situations. At times it is required to ensure ethical practice.

A supervisory contract is made in explicit detail at the beginning of the supervisory relationship. Every interaction and action of the supervisor relates to the purpose of supervision, more or less explicitly. The trainee's responsibility is to present their functioning as fully as they are able and to undertake the work of developing further adequacy as a practitioner.

ESTABLISHING A FOCUS FOR A SUPERVISION SESSION

In undertaking extensive supervision, both the supervisor and the supervisee bring their observations and experience of the trainee's practice to supervision at various times, so that the goals of supervision can be achieved. When both do so, they generate a new perspective with greater depth and discrimination.

The trainee reports on a session they have conducted and raises their own concerns about their work. The supervisor makes an assessment of their functioning based on this report; on the parallel process in the session; and on their experience of the trainee's skews in supervision (each person has a tendency to notice some aspects of their world around them and be unaware of or deny some other important actions and interactions). As the supervisor gets to know the trainee they can identify these tendencies and relate to the trainee's reports with these skews in mind. The authority relation with the supervisor also introduces possibilities for another skew and for productive work.

From time to time, the supervisor needs to observe first-hand a number of sessions conducted at work by the trainee. In observing sessions, the supervisor is able to make an independent assessment of the functioning of the director and group members. They can verify their own perceptions of the trainee's skew of perception in reporting.

I find the focus for a trainee's development comes from three different sources:

1 A Critical Moment

The trainee or supervisor identifies a moment when the trainee director does not rise to a spontaneity test, having lost the warm-up to their work identity. The pair can then aim to develop and sustain the trainee's spontaneity at that moment.

This focus may arise from the trainee's written or verbal account of such a moment they have identified; from the supervisor's observation of the immediate process of the trainee in supervision; or from the supervisor

noticing such a moment in the report. Stuckness in the development of the trainee may be noticed as a repetitive pattern during the supervision sessions.

Work on the trainee's original social atom may follow so they can develop spontaneity in this situation. This may be addressed in the supervision session or may require more extensive work in an ongoing personal development or training group or individual psychotherapy sessions.

It may be necessary to develop and strengthen the trainee's emerging functional roles in another context than the critical moment. These can then be enacted at a similar critical moment some later time in the training.

2 Building the Positive Identity of the Director

To strengthen self-esteem, create an accurate self-image and an evolving sense of self as a director, it is also important for the supervisor to balance critical comment, by mirroring and celebrating existing adequate director roles and other emerging functional roles.

3 Covering the Range of Director Roles

A supervisor seeks to actively develop a joint warm-up with the trainee to identify and focus on underdeveloped roles, thereby working to bring in a balance of director's roles. The supervisor overviews the trainee's development in relation to their own knowledge of what roles are necessary. They may make a contract detailing specific areas of work for a time. The primary trainer keeps an overview of the trainee's abilities as a director to ensure the range of necessary roles is developed. This knowledge arises

from their own experience and the body of wisdom conserved as the ANZPA Training Standards.

HONOURING BOUNDARIES

Supervision involves actively differentiating significant and influential boundaries within the trainee's work system; between the supervisor, the trainee, the administration and the client; within the ANZPA training system; and between the work and personal systems of both trainee and supervisor.

The supervisor needs to be aware of, have respect for and establish boundaries in their relationship with the trainee. Hence they model important director roles. We are multiple role players. The ability to discriminate and work to develop a progressive work-oriented warm-up in all concerned evolves over time, through repeated thoughtful analysis and the strengthening of the solid self.

Ultimately the task is for the trainee to become a peer practitioner of the supervisor so that their developing roles will reflect this increasing independence.

I have found a note of caution to be necessary here. A supervisor coaching a practitioner in front of clients can undermine their authority in a work situation and introduce a schizophrenogenic dynamic into the group. The trainee is probably ill-equipped to deal with it and their relationship with group participants is likely to become unproductive. Even if some trainees can handle the confusion likely to result, some can't, and never will, but can still become adequate directors.

CASE EXAMPLE: WARM-UP TO LEARNING

The following account of an individual supervision session with an advanced trainee exemplifies many principles of supervision.

I hope I can convey a sense of the flow of the session and its overall shape. I view the session as a drama. A dramatic conflict is presented, played through in various ways and finally resolved. The resolution is partial at first. Then the trainee strengthens his warm-up to directing, his identity as a director and a positive approach to life, which he is likely to maintain in his subsequent work with his client group.

Presenting the Critical Moment

After some small talk approving the fan on this hot day, John says he is expecting me to 'destroy' him for not having completed the assignment he said he would write about the group the previous week.

We shake hands through the medium of this initial small talk, a metacommunication about the nature of our relationship and the purpose of the session. We effectively agree that, despite his fears to the contrary, we are together here as human beings with a common task, not to vent our hostility or to be enslaved.

I believe explicit framing is redundant as we have had about twenty supervision sessions over the last two years. John knows he will present his concerns, bearing in mind our prior arrangement for him to present a written report, and I will work mine in through his process or bring them up directly as the session proceeds. (Initially people, particularly those who are very task-oriented, find this way of working difficult, and require greater structure at the initiative of the supervisor.)

Through this interaction, we set in place the session's theme, which recurs in a variety of ways as we examine John's relationships with students and as he relates to me. This theme is working to develop the roles of an open learner. Overall, there is an unhurried spaciousness and coherence as we work with it from different angles and moment by moment.

Dealing with the Trainee's Defensiveness

John gives an account of assessing a student's work and the pain he feels in trying to get them to the point of succeeding, in the face of their own self-destructive tendencies. When I mirror his commitment to students' progress and his related frustration, I notice a defensive stiffening in his body.

I remember that in previous sessions and training groups, I have noticed that John displays an extreme wariness with me and a sense of bombastic competition when I mirror some of his less-functional actions. I think that it is time to put this disabling habit to rest.

This time I catch these reactions quickly and mirror his response. He replies that he thought I wanted to spit on him for his failure to teach adequately.

I am sufficiently confident of my own focus, inner experience and the strength of our relationship, that the required social atom repair with authoritative teachers can occur in our interaction, rather than having to directly address John's earlier difficulties with teachers. This encourages his engagement with the task rather than his tendency to narcissistic self-absorption. The latter would be strengthened if I were to focus directly on his reaction at this stage of the session.

I tell him that: 'No, I am noticing your courage and willingness to bring forward your own process, in the face of your caution and pain, so that we can work with it'. He relaxes. I then focus on the task.

To engage him beyond the verbal realm, I go to get a piece of paper to draw the roles I saw during his account. Then I change my mind. I suggest to him to draw himself in this conflict being both nurturing teacher and strict assessor with students. He does so. Initially when he looks at his drawing he looks pleased, then contemptuous and miserable.

I think that we both seem bogged down in a field of heavy emotional fusion. I imagine having him draw the opposite pole, but I am wary of providing solutions as a nurturing teacher in this 'fix-it' system.

I continue to look and feel and to see John's curled lip. Then he remarks that at times he is playful, enjoying and free in his work. I suggest he draws this too. He becomes absorbed in drawing himself as a *Swiss Guide* and entitles the picture 'Alpine Crossing'. We discuss possible role names. He puts forward *Explorer*. I suggest *Pied Piper* and tell the story, emphasising the Piper's innate sense of fairness and ability to evoke positive visions in others. (I do this with the aim of assisting him to expand his sense of himself and to link this freedom to himself as he teaches.)

Light-Hearted, Wise, Free Limit-Setter is the role I am attempting to strengthen in John at this stage. It emerges in a variety of ways during the session as I weave through the various themes and levels of conscious focus.

I recommend John deal with the difficulties presented by his students with lightness. Now I also model this repeatedly in my own interaction with him as the session progresses.

John's warm-up to the issue is evidently deepening. He talks in a puzzled manner about a student who left a form requesting more time to complete an assignment on his desk late one Friday. She left no contact phone number. It is now late in the term and he reports that he advised her to start the project early in the term. He is reluctant to reward disorganisation. The woman has repeatedly complained of difficulties organising her study and child-rearing commitments, finally dumping this mess on his desk. I groan mightily about the impossibility of students' unrealistic attitudes and we laugh together at his image of an elephant in a mine-field. He is relaxed and confident as he imagines this.

Then he tightens his face and body and whines as he identifies a difficulty he has with pain-filled women. I start to describe his reaction and he withdraws.

I think that he has experienced me as critical and has withdrawn to defend himself when he moves from *Light, Playful Realist* to *Heavy Complaining Martyr*.

I invite him to focus on this moment. He enters in again with relaxed willingness. On examining this moment he identifies that when he starts to comment on his own functioning, he constricts. I am pleasantly surprised at his self-awareness and ability to reflect without constricting at this moment. He has risen to a spontaneity test.

I congratulate him on his success in this real-life situation with me as a teacher. John starts to talk of his family, especially how seriously he takes them.

He is not anticipating attack from me by this time.

John has learned to use supervision by expressing his internal flow. His ego-strength is sufficient to allow him to display his functioning for further development. He has developed a role of enthusiastic reflective adventurer. There is a quality of excitedly moving into unknown territory with a confidence in his ability to make constructive use of what arises – like a canoeist shooting increasingly difficult rapids with confidence in their ability to handle each new challenge.

I wish to continue to cooperatively engage John as an *Adventurous Enquirer* and thus strengthen this role rather than evoke a *Self-Justifying Rebel*, as I well know is his predisposition.

I offer to share my observation of a dynamic evident in his functioning and he accepts this with enthusiasm. He is in a position to accept or reject my offer as an equal through this metacommunication.

At another time, I may well impose my observation so as seek to evoke then mirror the predisposition to rebel. John may thus gain conscious mastery of it, and be better able to work with and learn from a wide range of people. At this moment however, I am focusing on another, related area in another way. Throughout, I am relating to an ongoing goal in his work, namely developing a solid self with emotional independence.

I elaborate my observation of his shift in warm-up from: *Painfilled Blackmailer* → *Independent Rejecter of Blackmail* →*Expressive Guilt-Ridden Catastrophiser* →*Cowed Complaining Slave*. I suggest that the *Guilt-ridden Catastrophiser* is based in part on his beliefs about family loyalty and duty. John recognises this description with some relief and humour. He is engaged in an open objective manner with an authority figure on

a topic previously too 'precious' to expose. He has warmed up to a progressive gestalt rather than the old fragmenting one.

John goes on to tell of his fantasy of being able to perceive a person's problem with learning and, through some perfect, healing intervention, enable them to function adequately as a learner. I mirror verbally and acknowledge the value of this *Miraculous Healer* as a psychodramatic role. In its idealistic vision it draws him forward to learn to build healthy development in an individual's personality, and so overcoming blocks to his own positive warm-up.

Here we conclude the session with a positive, optimistic warm-up to the trainee's further work with his students.

This was a sticky session. Reviewing it later, I see that in line with the goal to engage with the task rather than narcissistic self-absorption, another more nearly perfect and dramatic conclusion may have been a role test in the situation with the woman he identified earlier.

CONCLUSION

The above material has covered some aspects of supervision in depth. Others are barely mentioned. I have concentrated on work with the personality of the trainee, its significance in overall director training and the nature of the learning relationship. Some other important matters have been merely sketched: such as framing sessions; the specifics of the supervisory contract; its place in and responsibilities to the embedding systems.

LIST OF PRINCIPLES

Introduction

I view a principle as an essential, pure idea. It is an ideal, a vision used to inspire, inform and guide and, in the service of individuation, to enliven action. The following principles are stated categorically as ideals. In our everyday 'real world', life is never that simple. In actual life, the trainer naturally tempers each principle with others, and with compassion for themselves and the trainee. What follows are all guidelines, not rigid rules.

A well-formed progressive principle will usually imply its own eventual demise in its application as a more expansive consciousness results.

Frequently the supervisor is not consciously or deliberately applying these principles in interaction in a particular moment, but on reflection notices the adequacy of a spontaneous action in its exemplifying one or more of these principles.

The ability to apply them develops over years. This development itself requires supervision and suitable extensive training.

Definition and Purposes of Supervision

Supervision is the overseeing of the relevant development of a trainee by a supervisor with whom they make a voluntary contract for the purpose of becoming more adequate in their work.

The main purposes of supervision are to:

• Develop a trainee as a director so that emerging roles are integrated into practice;

• Develop the trainee's ability to reflect

fruitfully on their own work;

• Provide adequate service delivery for the client group and embedding system.

The Supervisory Contract

• The supervisory contract is made in explicit detail at the beginning of the supervisory relationship.

• All interaction and every action of the supervisor is actively related to the purpose of supervision more or less explicitly.

• Supervision is recommended for any application of training in work situations.

• The supervisor should observe enough groups run by the trainee in situ, in order to assess the trainee's functioning and to relate the self-reports to the actual events in the group and the abilities of the trainee-director.

Ideals for the Supervisory Relationship

• We are human beings actively engaging together in living life with vigour, courage, compassion and the willingness to face whatever arises.

• The supervisor is an experienced mentor who oversees an apprentice's work.

• The supervisor's thinking and action reflect the fact that the relationship evolves as the trainee progresses.

• Metacommunication, often contractual, contributes to equality between supervisor and supervisee.

• The trainee is an active learner and an adult who is responsible for maintaining their end of the relationship.

Using Supervision, An Early Focus

• To maximise learning, trainees learn to use supervision early in their experience of it.

• A trainee learns to use the supervisory process and so internalises it and generalises it outside the supervision setting.

• The supervisor relates the degree of structure to the experience and personality of the trainee.

Applying the Method in Supervision

• The supervisor applies the principles of the psychodrama method in conducting the supervisory session with the aim of enabling the supervisee to integrate the method as a practitioner.

Recognising Boundaries

• The supervisor's awareness of, respect for and establishment of boundaries models important director roles and assists the building of a solid self.

• A supervisor should take account of the possibility of undermining the authority of a practitioner in a work situation to avoid introducing a schizophrenogenic dynamic into the group which is probably ill-suited to deal with it.

• Morenian role theory is of unique assistance in establishing and sustaining clarity in this area.

Goals of a Supervisor as They Seek to Bracket Their Own Process

• The supervisor is conscious of their own inner process (thoughts, feelings, imagery, impulses) and is independent in their response to it, so that parallel process

with the trainee is used as one basis for assessment of trainee functioning.

• The supervisor's inner process including feelings and prejudices are noticed, valued and integrated constructively with the task of training.

• The supervisor brackets their own valance and needs, so that the trainee's development is not biased by the supervisor's predispositions, and the purpose of the relationship can be carried out.

Using Parallel Process

• There is a parallel process between the roles enacted with the supervisor and the trainee's experience of group members.

• The supervisor models developing roles in interaction with the trainee in the normal conduct of the session.

• The supervisor maintains their independence from the trainee's process.

• The supervisor models a solution to the issue as they work with the trainee in developing their own solution. This is one way the parallel process is harnessed in the service of the purpose of supervision.

Balance Between Maintaining an Overview and Working in the Moment

• There is a balance maintained between basing initiatives on the supervisor's wisdom arising from experience as generalisations, for instance about the development of director roles in the course of training, and on the unique here and now functioning of the trainee. This latter has primacy in the short term and must be related to in some way by the supervisor. In this way the

psychodrama principle of working with a person's warm-up is applied.

Social and Cultural Atom Repair

• Act hungers arising in the earlier social atom of a trainee will from time to time require direct attention, preferably through use of the psychodrama method in the supervision session or a training group or if extensive work is required, in a self-development group

• As far as possible social and cultural atom repair necessary for the trainee to direct and learn adequately is undertaken in the here and now interaction, rather than having to focus directly on difficulties.

Timing and Sensitivity of Intervention

•The supervisor does not do work that the supervisee is able to do for themselves. This is because:

    a. people learn by doing;

    b. the roles of the self-directed learner are thereby developed;

    c. greater equality and independence are fostered both in the context of a supervisory relationship and as a learner.

These last two are essential aspects of the work identity being developed by the trainee.

• Timing of intervention is based on sensitivity to the trainee's rhythms.

• Ruling the country is like cooking a small fish (*Tao te ching*, chapter 60)

• The trainee's goals are recognised and acknowledged. The supervisor relates to their own independent assessment of the supervisee's developmental needs.

• Creative Genius has its own time scale and rhythms. Its manifestation and evolution can no more be hastened than can the opening of a rosebud.

Relating to the Trainee's Personality

• The clinical understanding of the supervisor is used in the service of learning, including the maintenance of the supervisory relationship.

• The supervisor takes account of the personality of the supervisee in all interactions so as to proceed effectively with the uppermost issue.

• The supervisor knows the personality processes of the supervisee and both works to integrate these into the trainee's functioning as a director and uses them in the service of learning.

Building the Positive Identity of a Director

• The supervisor seeks to create and build links within the trainee's personality so that developed functional roles displace the warm-up to overdeveloped destructive roles.

• The supervisor relates to functional, progressive roles in the trainee's personality.

• The supervisor presents the trainee with a variety of spontaneity tests in their immediate interaction, thereby enabling the trainee to develop an increasingly strong solid self.

• The supervisor helps the trainee build an accurate self-image by balancing critical comment and challenge to spontaneity with mirroring and celebrating existing adequate director roles and emerging functional roles.

• Plans are made to carry forward and build on achievements.

Relating to a Broader Vision

• The trainee is assessed in relation to a framework of their individual growth and development which is increasingly deeply known to the supervisor.

• The supervisor has an overview of the trainee's abilities as a director to ensure the range of necessary roles is developed.

• The supervisor relates their thinking and consequent interventions to ongoing themes in the supervisee's development.

• The supervisor relates their thinking and consequent interventions to ongoing themes in the supervisee's development.

• The supervisor checks their own assumptions about the trainee's inner functioning through open investigation.

• Adequacy is not perfection.

• Creative Genius is active at all times.

Maintaining Coherence

• Each session is framed by the supervisor with a statement of purpose and procedure.

• A supervision session is like a mandala, moving out from the focus of developing as a director and looping back to this centrally organising purpose.

• All events are associatively linked to the current theme of the trainee's work.

• The supervisor is a weaver whose threads are multi-stranded themes, integrated on the loom of supervisory process into the whole fabric of each session, and over the long-term course of a trainee's development as a director.

• The pair work to a hierarchical plan where some items are given higher priority than others at a particular moment. Ideally, and necessarily over time, this is conscious, and an element in the warm-up of both the supervisor and supervisee.

• The supervisor creates for each session its own aesthetic shape which is dramatic.

Being and Working in the Moment

• The supervisor maintains contact moment by moment with the trainee's functioning and makes continual assessment of it.

• A trainee's immediate process is to be worked with so that what they learn is integrated. Discussion and input based on the trainee's immediate functioning and concerns have a powerful impact.

• Identify the moment when the trainee director loses their warm-up to their work identity, whatever the role, and work to maintain spontaneity at that moment.

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Using Role Theory
in Clinical Supervision

by Mike Consedine

Mike Consedine is a psychiatric nurse, psychotherapist, Psychodramatist and TEP-in-training. He developed and taught clinical supervision based on psychodramatic thinking and practice during his work as in-service training supervisor in a large psychiatric hospital. During the last 10 years in private practice he has taught this structure and thinking to many health professionals in Australia and New Zealand. Mike teaches at the Christchurch Institute for Training in Psychodrama, is a former chairperson of the Christchurch branch and the immediate past president of ANZPA.

Clinical supervision has long been a part of health delivery systems. It is used substantially in the training of psychotherapists and is a frequent requirement for ongoing certification. In various guises it has been a part of the training of psychiatrists, social workers and psychologists for many years. Nurses are increasingly accepting clinical supervision as they begin to experience its value in preparing practitioners to deliver the best available standard of care to the client.

Over the years different approaches to supervision have evolved. Initially the emphasis was on ensuring that staff adequately fulfilled their job descriptions to meet administrative expectations and requirements. In more recent times a different emphasis in supervision has emerged. I have been actively engaged myself in developing new forms of supervision.

The purpose of this article is to expand the vision of practitioners and senior trainees of the psychodramatic method about the use of role theory in supervision. Toward this end a description of the supervisory emphasis is given and a number of conclusions are drawn. In particular the paper discusses the use of role theory as a means of deepening the experience of the supervisee with respect to the systemic nature of life and relationships. It is suggested that this experience provides a basis for an integrated assessment and planning process and that the subsequent new role development that occurs becomes the focus of further ongoing supervision.

AN INTRODUCTION TO CLINICAL SUPERVISION

Clinical supervision has been widely discussed both in writing and in peer interaction. Many see it as an educational process. Others see it more as a healing

and integrative process. Some see it as a directive process where the senior actively teaches a more junior colleague how to go about things. Others see it as a journey of self-discovery and self-growth.

Dr Bertram Lewin, a highly regarded psychoanalyst, in his forward to *The Teaching and Learning of Psychotherapy*, points out that supervision originated naturally in the older psychoanalytic institutes of Europe with the simple need of young practitioners to learn practically from older colleagues. Subsequently, the understanding of the process of supervision and the subtleties of human communication have developed considerably.

In this paper clinical supervision is viewed as a journey of personal/professional discovery and growth. Fergus (1989, pers. comm.) puts it this way: 'The function of supervision is to provide and create an environment that permits and provokes the emergence of the supervisee's spontaneity and creativity, that will support them past their impasse, so that they can re-enter the client system to do what they have to do with confidence.'

MORENEAN ROLE THEORY

Many theories are used in an attempt to make sense of relationships. Earlier examinations of the concept of role tended to focus on sociological aspects and uses. The more personal definition of the concept of role as developed by Moreno came about through his reflections on the enactment of roles in the theatre. Moreno (1953) saw himself leading a European trend which was marked by the publication of his book *Das Stegreiftheater* (1923), republished in English as *The Theater of Spontaneity* (1947). His concept of role and role relationships is developed and explained in *Who Shall*

Survive? (1934) and is set out again in *Psychodrama Vol. 1* (1946). Role theory has also been discussed by other authors, notably Clayton (1992, 1993) and Williams (1990). The concept of role playing as a form of psychotherapy is extensively discussed by Kipper (1986).

In this article it is assumed that the reader has a working knowledge of role theory. Those who do not are referred to the above literature.

AN APPROACH TO CLINICAL SUPERVISION

The development of the use of clinical supervision amongst health professionals has brought about increased interest in how it is delivered and in its functions. This section focuses on the basic structure of a session and on clinical material which demonstrates the approach taken.

Grief and Distress – Familiar Experiences

Joanne sits in the chair and sobs quietly. She is recalling the death of her father and the circumstances in which she found him. She is a mental health nurse who has recently been asked to identify the body of her patient who had committed suicide by drowning. The memory of his distorted features has haunted her. Often she has woken in the night distressed in a way she cannot quite identify. 'Somehow, I cannot find a place to file this experience,' she says. During the first 45 minutes of a clinical supervision session she has talked about the recent death of her patient and many other deaths. Finally and almost casually she mentions finding her father who had died of a stroke some 18 months previously. The recognition of this loss and its connection with her most recent loss finally triggers a release of this

expression of her distress. She recalls many other upsetting events and releases the distress associated with these as well.

Joanne's experience is not uncommon amongst health professionals. She comes to a supervision session fortnightly. Usually she talks about her relationships with her clients but sometimes about difficulties with other staff. More recently she has begun to focus on events and experiences in her work which have caused her considerable distress. Many of these experiences are talked through again and again. The effect of having someone regularly listening and assisting her to make sense of her experience is marked. As her confidence in this process increases, so her view of herself and her relationship with her clients deepens and develops. New experiences and perceptions are generated and fresh effective functioning is apparent. The supervision session, which is now a regular, familiar and necessary part of her professional life, is a potent factor in the development of an enlarged professional identity and flexible relevant actions.

Basic Approach to Supervision

A well-organised supervision session has a clear structure. It begins with a warm-up of supervisor and supervisee separately. When the two come together a joint warm-up to each other and to the work of the session occurs. The supervisee raises the matters on which they intend to focus. This is thought of as a broad area of concern. In the process of working towards a focus on specific experiences and reflecting on the dynamics involved, meanings attached to experiences can emerge as the supervisee becomes more conscious. When specific interactions have been identified as important, a role analysis may be carried out. The supervisee's responses to this will indicate directions to

be taken in the remainder of the session. The role analysis is central in assisting the supervisee to look more objectively at relationships and to become more conscious. In the section which follows, examples from clinical practice will be used to illustrate the use of role theory in clinical supervision.

CLINICAL SUPERVISION WITH A NEW SOCIAL WORKER

Description of Supervision

Megan is a 23-year-old social worker. She has recently graduated and her work experience in a psychiatric setting is limited. This fact and a lack of adequate orientation have contributed to Megan experiencing uncertainty in her relationships with other staff. In previous supervision sessions she has demonstrated herself to be very quick on the uptake, enthusiastic and keen to get down to work. This is her third session with me.

The work begins with Megan focusing on an interaction between herself and a patient, Jo, who has come to her crying and clearly very angry. Jo says she has just been told by one of the nursing staff that she is manipulative and a liar. Megan responds by asking Jo for more information about this incident. Jo continues to express her anger and distress, now generalising it to all the staff. She says she does not understand what they mean when they call her manipulative and a liar. She wants to know what manipulative means. Megan, responds by saying that she does not see Jo as manipulative. She goes on to let Jo know that it is all right to feel distressed and angry. While she makes a partial summary of the situation as she sees it she wonders how loyal she should be to her colleagues.

Megan realises that the purpose of the supervision is for her to develop a better understanding of what happened in the interaction with Jo. It is also to become more conscious of her own responses and motivations, and to resolve some of her conflict in the situation with Jo. In the session we make a role analysis of the incident, in particular examining Jo's functioning and Megan's responses both to her and to the other staff. As her supervisor I then display for her in action some possible responses to Jo and we discuss these. As a result

Megan develops greater consciousness of the incident and begins to develop a plan that will enable her to respond to Jo's manipulative behaviour in a more progressive way.

Analysis of the Roles in the Supervision Session

After Megan had given her account and expressed her concern we focused on the roles that had emerged during the interaction:
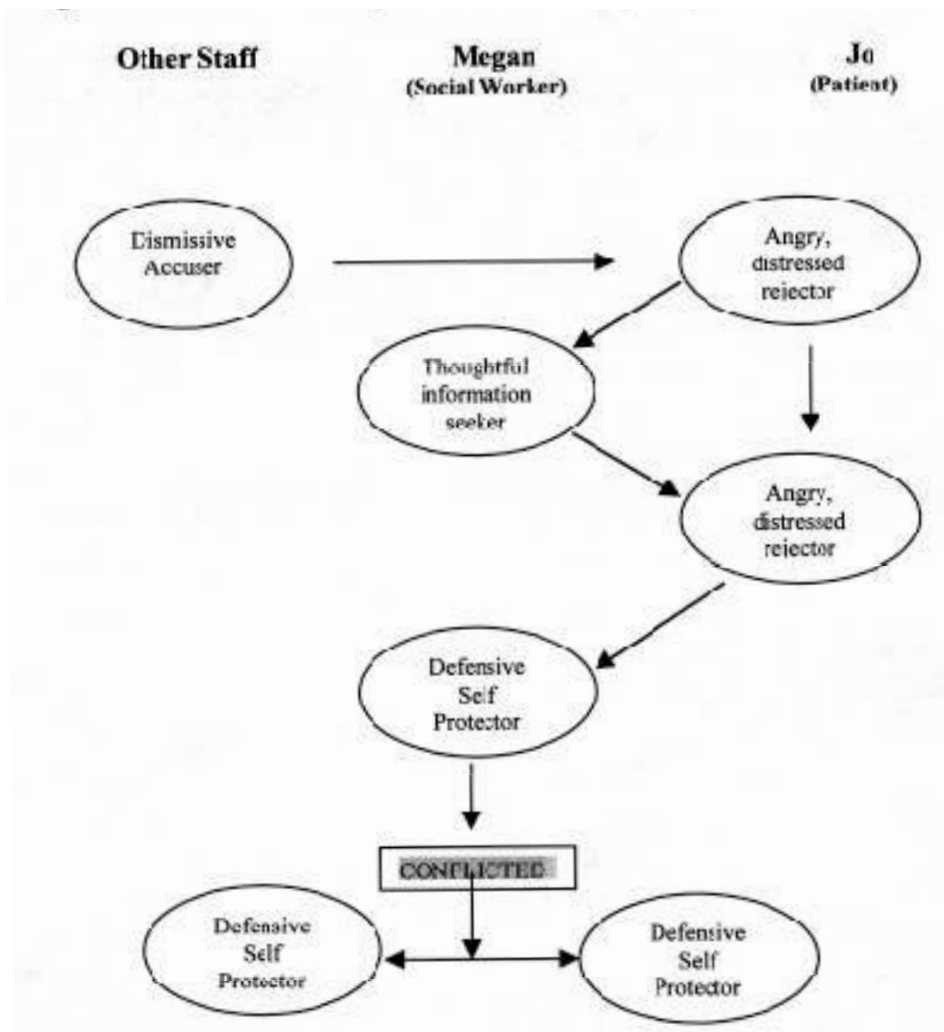
Figure 1: Role relations during the interaction

Initially Megan acts in the role of a thoughtful reflector. She realises that her first response to Jo in seeking information has been adequate. She has given herself the time to develop some clarity about the incident causing Jo's distress. Megan realises that quite probably Jo is again behaving in a manipulative way in taking her anger and distress to her in this rather attention-seeking manner. Jo has attempted once again to split the staff by targeting Megan, a relatively new staff member, rather than take her difficulty to the source. Megan informs her supervisor that she now sees that Jo has once again set up a dysfunctional relationship by triangling with her. She further tells the supervisor that she now sees Jo as a *Manipulative Game Player* who gets major satisfaction from the disruption she causes. In response to this understanding Megan is considerably enlivened as she reflects on her own responses. She now becomes an *Interested Learner* as she begins to identify her conflict as a possible counter-transference response. She begins to appreciate how Jo continually sets up fragmenting relationships.

Megan's attention now turns to the conflict. She realises that it is very important for her to be loyal to the other staff with whom she works. She is new on the job and wants to be accepted by them as a competent professional. She also has a compassionate heart and feels for Jo, whose distress is very obvious. As she reflects on Jo's fragmenting roles she feels very torn. She is reluctant to reject a distressed patient, yet she feels strongly that to undermine her colleagues would simply reinforce the dysfunctional world of the patient. She is stuck.

At this time we set up a small scenario. I have Megan take up the role of Jo and tell her that I will enact two or three possible responses.

Enactment 1: 'Well I don't think he should have done that at all. He has upset you a lot and I feel annoyed that he has done this.'

Enactment 2: 'Well this is not so good. I'll have a talk with the staff about it and see if I can sort it out. I'm sure there's been a mistake.'

Enactment 3: 'It's clearly very distressing to you when you are accused of something. It's obviously something that the person accusing you doesn't like, and you have no idea what it is they are talking about. It's no wonder you're upset.'

Megan responds immediately.

Megan: 'That's it, the third one. That feels much better and I can see why. In the third one you are relating to my experience. In the first two you're relating much more to your own experience. I can see that if I focus on her experience there is no opportunity to be disloyal to my colleagues.'

We then go on to a role enactment where Megan tries out the new role several times until she begins to feel more comfortable with it. Megan is delighted with all of this. She rapidly generates her own response and begins building up the role. She also realises that other staff have undermined her by their dismissive attitudes towards this patient. This has contributed to her conflict. By the end of the session she enacts the role well, staying fully responsive to Jo's experience. Her role system in response to Jo now includes a developing progressive role of *Empathic Validator* which stimulates a very undeveloped but nonetheless recognisable *Distressed Self-Explorer* response in Jo.

Enlivening Effect of Reflection on Roles

The identification of her role relationship with Jo was very enlivening for Megan. She recognised her defensive response as a coping role in which she really did not know what to do. She was very excited and challenged about discovering her tendency to be defensive when she was conflicted. She was immediately able to identify other situations where this had happened.

Megan was also interested in the fragmenting roles of both Jo and herself. She began to see how her defensive roles fragmented relationships. She could also see how Jo's manipulative roles fragmented many relationships in her life, as well as fragmenting her relationships with the staff. Separating out the roles involved in the conflict had a very beneficial effect. She focused at length on her relationships with her colleagues and realised that often she simply did not like the way they responded to and discussed the patients. She did not yet feel able to challenge some of the behaviour or the 'loose talk', but she could see that developing this ability would be a task for the future. She was also able to fully acknowledge her own compassion and her desire to make a difference in the quality of life of the patients. She felt that she was beginning to understand what empathy meant. Her full exploration of the two roles involved in the conflict went a long way toward assisting her in taking the next step.

Effect of Following the Supervisee's Warm-Up

Teasing out the roles in this way and allowing the supervisee freedom to focus where her own spontaneity took her provided the optimum opportunity for integration of new knowledge and the development of new roles. When the supervisor follows the warm-up of the supervisee, noticing their response to the different roles identified, the possibilities for really developing certain aspects of roles is maximised. Thus when Megan articulated her desire to be a loyal colleague and a part of the team it was wise to mirror her emergent understanding and developing roles.

Psychodramatic Techniques Aid Role Development

The appropriate use of psychodramatic techniques enhances integration and aids in progressive role development. In this case, modelling at an appropriate time stimulated Megan's own responses and presented her with possible options. She was readily able to identify a progressive response and then with coaching and enactment make the response her own and begin to develop and further integrate the role. Once the conflict had been explored and greater consciousness developed, modelling provided a stimulus for progressive role development.

Using the Role Language of the Supervisee

In the session described above the supervisor accepted the supervisee's role description without criticism. The rationale for this is that supervision is aimed at providing an opportunity to reflect on the dynamics of the patient relationship in a supportive and non-critical environment. Supervision can correct the supervisee's role descriptions on the grounds that they are demeaning of others, including patients. Supervision may correct the use of the word 'manipulative' to ensure the supervisee differentiates between someone whose functioning is consciously manipulative and someone who is unaware

that their functioning is causing confusion for others. Such teaching by the supervisor, designed to refine the clinical acumen of a supervisee, may very well be helpful in some supervision sessions. This was not done in the session described as the focus of the work was in a different area.

SUPERVISION WITH AN ANXIOUS SUPERVISEE

The Beginning of Supervision

Jane initially functions as an anxious person and maintains this. She talks very fast. She includes much that is off the point and unnecessary for completion of the work at hand. She maintains that she does not, and never has, felt anxious. Jane manages her designated job reasonably well although several colleagues have expressed doubts about this. She is frequently off work sick with somatic disorders such as a painful back and itchy skin. Her speed of delivery; her reactive, almost anticipatory, responses; and the lack of any pauses between sentences; are disturbing for me. In our first two sessions Jane and I begin to develop a method of working with one another. In the third session we start to focus on some of her interactions.

Fourth Supervisory Session

The purpose Jane presents for this session is to examine an interaction with her client, Margaret. She is attempting to persuade Margaret that she is having an upward mood swing, and that unless she takes some action the swing will continue to the point where she will once again require admission to hospital. Jane starts to tell me about this in a non-stop way. She is sidetracking herself and does not stay focused on the interaction with

her client. In the early part of the session I attempt to stop her and she says: 'Oh yes, I'm doing it again, aren't I? I'm going on and on, not really pausing very much and bringing in far too much material.' I privately conclude that Jane's approach will result in Margaret's mood becoming more elevated; that Jane's anxiety is producing more anxiety in Margaret.

At this point I decide it will be useful to slow down the session and investigate the nature of the role relationships. I want to provide Jane with an opportunity to reflect on her relationship with Margaret. I suggest to her that she sets up my office as Margaret's living room, making it as it is when she is discussing things with Margaret. I then assist her to enact a scene with Margaret in which she portrays her own role and also plays the role of Margaret. After each element of this interaction I have her pause and I re-enact what I have observed, taking both roles. We then work together to name the roles and map the interaction in role terms. The dominant roles or part roles are identified in Figure 2.

The separate behaviours depicted in Figure 2 each represent slightly different manifestations of a single role, the *Anxious Persuader*. The common purpose of each display was to persuade Margaret to a particular viewpoint. Margaret's role in response was *Frightened Rabbit*. She was determined not to acknowledge that anything was wrong for fear of the consequences. Later on we used this diagram to identify what a role actually is. In this session, however, by teasing out the elements of the interaction step by step, and naming each slightly differently, the aspect of the role that revealed fear was enacted and recognised.
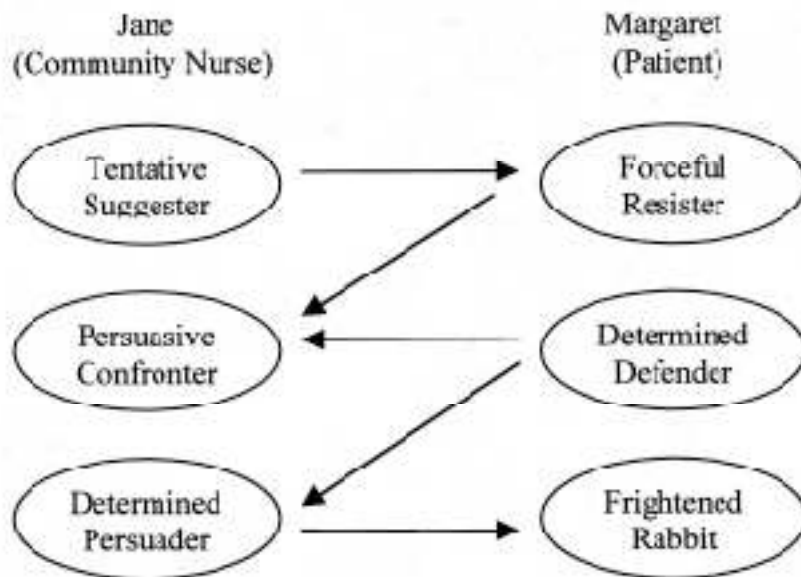
Figure 2: Role enactment of Jane and Margaret

Discussion on Role Enactment and Development of a New Role

The real breakthrough came for Jane when we identified the role of *Frightened Rabbit* in her client. She really had no idea that Margaret was frightened. She had been thinking that the determined resistance of her client was simply symptomatic of the lack of insight often associated with mood-elevated illnesses. On reflection, however, she could see that Margaret was frightened – frightened that if she acknowledged any changes in her behaviour or any increased activity or mood elevation, she would be acknowledging that she was getting ill again, and in her mind this was associated with a return to hospital. This was what she feared above all else. Once Jane was able to identify the role of the *Frightened Rabbit* she could see quite clearly that in Margaret's mind any acknowledgment that things were not quite right was automatically coupled with the fear associated with being readmitted to hospital. Therefore she could not own that anything was even slightly wrong.

After some further discussion and reflection Jane entered into some role training in which she began the development of the role of *Empathic Listener*. She was able to acknowledge Margaret's fear, which had the effect of addressing the real thing, instead of tilting at the windmills of lack of insight and defensiveness. Initially Jane found it difficult to remain empathic. However, when she took up the role of Margaret she was able to experience the effect of the role she was developing. She then took up the role of empathic listener again and gradually made it more her own, selecting her own responses and developing more confidence in her ability to do so.

The Power of Role Analysis in the Supervision Session

The breakthrough in the session came as a thoughtful role analysis enabled Jane to recognise Margaret's fear and the dynamic involved. As the session progressed she became more deeply involved and more thoughtful. By the end of the session she was

calm, reflective and even a little amazed. She was no longer over-inclusive and racy, but was beginning to appreciate the real value of the session for her. The use of role theory and role analysis in examining the interaction had been crucial. The slow, thoughtful identification of the roles had enabled her to identify and appreciate what had previously eluded her.

Entering the World of the Client through Role Reversal

It was interesting to discover in working with Jane in this session that during role reversal she slowed down. In subsequent sessions, interviewed in the role of her client, there was little evidence of the over-inclusive, racy expression that had characterised the early sessions. In the role of her clients Jane took on a different persona. She sat still, she was more relaxed and she was thoughtful and insightful. This, in fact, became a preferred way of conducting supervision sessions. I warmed her up to the role of the client – What was she wearing? Where was she? What had she been doing lately? What was her life like? I would enact the client role myself, responding to her in the client role. Following some enactment, together we would identify roles and role systems. Insights into her client's views about life and her own, and how these were displayed in action were rewarding outcomes. Once the nature of the role relationship was clear Jane was able to practise different interventions until she was satisfied with what had been developed. This assisted in the development of her practice and in the reduction of her pressured behaviour.

A Positive Outlook in the Face of Not Knowing What to Do

The development of the supervisee's capacity to tolerate the experience of not knowing

what to do is an important aspect of effective supervision. In the session outlined Jane developed the capacity to maintain a positive outlook until something clinically relevant had been brought to birth. She had no idea that Margaret was afraid. She had assumed that the rejection of her interventions and the denial of the difficulty were symptomatic – a part of Margaret's fragmenting role system. As a result she continued to pressure Margaret who increased her determination to resist.

Bion (1967) gave weight to the aim of developing such a capacity to tolerate feelings born of not knowing what to do. This session exemplifies that approach. Jane had no idea what to do. She continued to pressure Margaret in ways that tended to increase Margaret's determination to resist. By using enactment and role analysis Jane was enabled to further tolerate feelings born of not knowing what to do until something more clinically relevant did emerge – namely an appreciation of Margaret's fear.

Her further investigation revealed that Margaret was afraid that any acknowledgment of difficulty would mean a return to hospital. In the roles of *Thoughtful Investigator* and *Sympathetic Listener* she was able to develop a greater clarity about the real nature of the difficulty and a more functional intervention.

SUPERVISION IN A GROUP SETTING

Description

This is the third session of a supervision group, in a planned series of eight. Kirsten, who works as a psychotherapist, brings to the group a difficulty she is experiencing in her work. In her most recent session with a 28-year-old client – a client who has been severely obsessive compulsive – she

has felt distinctly uneasy. She is working with the client to assist her to relinquish the last remaining compulsive behaviours. This client is phobic about germs and has repetitive cleaning compulsions. Kirsten says that she feels in this moment that she just does not know how to unhook her from this remaining compulsive behaviour. She does know that somehow what she is doing is affecting her client quite markedly, but she doesn't really know how. She feels inadequate and ashamed.

The scene with her client is set out and enacted. The group warms up further as Kirsten enquires about the behaviour, is thoughtful and reflects back her client's responses and confronts her with her stubbornness in refusing to give up her compulsive washing. The client remains unmoved. She maintains that if she does not continue to carry out the compulsive behaviours she feels dirty. When Kirsten enquires further about this she says that she feels as if she is covered in germs. They are on her face. They crawl all over her face, nose, eyes and mouth. With Kirsten in the role of the client the germs are concretised and the enactment of their crawling on her face maximised. At this point Kirsten as the client suddenly realises that the drama is all about her guilt and shame around her rape which occurred when she was just 16 years old. She feels dirty, covered in germs.

In the moment Kirsten enacts this, she realises that the feelings relate to her own massive shame and guilt around being caught making love with her first boyfriend by her father. She clearly remembers her father saying, 'My life is ruined because of what you are doing now.' She sensed his enormous disappointment, despair, disapproval and shame.

Kirsten sobs strongly expressing her guilt and her shame. She goes on to angrily reject her father's interference in her life at a time when she most needed his love and support. Kirsten returns to her client in the role of *Empathic Appreciator* and enables her client to further explore and express herself about her rape and her feelings about it. The session ends with relevant sharing in the group.

Sustaining the Warm-Up of the Supervisee and the Group

The warm-up of the group to enactment was strong. In this session role analysis was enacted through the drama. Once Kirsten was warmed up through the enactment with her client, an understanding of the role system came quickly and her warm-up was toward further enactment. It was clear that pausing to make a role analysis would have significantly cut across the warm-up of the whole group. It might also have used up the available time. In retrospect, taking time out to tease out the roles and thus expose the role system more fully would have slowed down the group and probably fragmented it.

Focus on the Most Warmed-Up Person in the Group

Kirsten's connection to the group and to the supervisor was strong. Early in the session several group members tentatively raised issues as part of the group warm-up. Once Kirsten spoke there was never any doubt who would be the first protagonist. She spoke in a strong voice expressing clearly her unease and her desire to investigate this further. The roles of *Assertive Self-Presenter* and *Clear Thinker* were attractive and ensured that group members would warm up quickly to their protagonist.

The Development of an Effective Role System

In the early part of the enactment of her relationship with her client, Kirsten functioned as a *Frustrated Mrs Fix-it*. She was attempting to persuade her client to a particular viewpoint rather than create the conditions where the client would warm up to her own inner world and begin to express it more fully. Following the enactment and increased warm-up, Kirsten gave up this fragmenting role in favour of the progressive roles of *Empathetic Appreciator* and *Insightful Creator of Connections*.

Conducting a Role Analysis

While the value of role analysis has been highlighted, there are many situations in both individual and group supervision where it is not indicated. The situation described above where Kirsten developed a new role system is one.

In deciding to conduct a role analysis it is necessary to assess whether or not such an intervention is likely to serve the supervisee's process. When a role analysis is developed by a group of supervisees there is a purpose. On one level the purpose may be to elucidate the roles enacted. Beyond that, however, our purpose is to provide opportunities for the supervisee or protagonist to reflect on the dynamics in which they are involved, in order to become more conscious and thus to develop a more adequate warm-up. In the session described above Kirsten became much more conscious during the enactment.

This occurs often in supervision sessions, when long before the role analysis is complete the supervisee develops a greater consciousness. When this occurs the supervisor can decide to pursue the role analysis to further educate the group or to

abandon it in order to continue to follow the warm-up of the supervisee.

The Importance of a Clear Supervisory Contract

Supervision groups working in action often raise the question: 'What is the difference between therapy and supervision?' or 'Where does supervision end and therapy begin?' One answer lies in a clear supervisory contract.

The primary purpose of supervision is to assist the supervisee return to the client system with more spontaneity. In this session the supervisory purpose of Kirsten dealing effectively with her client was achieved. This came about as a result of her resolving a conflict. In work with other supervisees in the group resolution of a conflict occurred as a result of working with their family of origin with subsequent focus on their professional work with clients.

This is consistent with the ideas of Ekstein and Wallerstein (1958). They conclude that the major difference between supervision and therapy lies in the purpose. The main task of therapy, they maintain, is the resolution of inner conflict. The main task of supervision is the development in the supervisee of greater skill in their work with patients (Ekstein and Wallerstein 1971, p. 254). The group in which Kirsten was a participant was advertised as a supervision group. The people in it were expecting to be involved in supervision. The supervisory purpose of resolving Kirsten's conflict and developing an effective role system for work with the client was achieved and therefore to enact the scene with Kirsten's original family would have gone outside the contract. It was neither necessary nor desirable.

CONCLUSION

Role analysis in clinical supervision enlivens supervisees and gives them a new perspective by highlighting the dynamics of their relationships and increasing awareness of their experience. The accurate naming of the roles is in the service of understanding the dynamic psychological forces and raising personal consciousness. These processes aid in the development of personal abilities so that the supervisee is able to return to the client with greater spontaneity.

Concretisation, role reversal, role analysis, mirroring and modelling are interventions that clarify and make more conscious the development of professional identity during clinical supervision. They provide a way of working in which the clinical supervisor does not simply give the supervisee a set of ideas but makes interventions which stimulate their own creativity, producing more spontaneous responses to the client. The interventions are integrative – they have emerged and developed from within the supervisee. They are building on or developing previously integrated aspects of the supervisee's personality and functioning. They are not just ideas which have to be thought, but spontaneous responses which emerge without concentrated thought. The supervisee develops on all levels of functioning without necessarily consciously realising that the development has taken place, even though an increase in consciousness may be a part of the developmental process.

The supervisor as a spontaneous and creative individual is constantly assessing the supervisee to prompt or challenge them to respond with greater spontaneity – to become more alive. Supervision is a clinical seminar in which the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee itself, the very processes of this relationship, may become the vehicle for the development of the supervisee.

Clinical supervision is a developing activity throughout the health services. As the abilities of supervisors develop and their relationships with supervisees become stronger, greater appreciation of the benefits to the practitioner and the client will become apparent. More people are seeking supervision and the abilities of practitioners in relating to their clients are developing. In this environment where all encounters with the client can be brought under scrutiny, the likelihood of distortion in the relationship is reduced, and the possibility of truly therapeutic encounters and the healing that accompanies these is enhanced.

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Generating a Somatic Perspective in the Psychodramatic Enactment

by Hilde Knottenbelt

Hilde is a Psychodramatist, voice teacher and shiatsu practitioner in Melbourne. Her work in private practice includes running groups assisting people to develop their creativity and spontaneity through vocal improvisation. She is on the teaching staff of the Australian College of Psychodrama and the Australian Shiatsu College.

> 'The body is the physical aspect of the personality and movement is the personality made visible.' (Mary Starks Whitehouse, 1999, p. 52)

As human beings we inhabit our bodies in habitual ways. We have our particular way of doing and being in our bodies. The way we use and inhabit our bodies is related to our personal history, our personality, our thinking and feeling life, the recurrent work situations we find ourselves in and the idiosyncratic and cultural ways in which we interpret and engage with the world. Also, we are bipeds living within the earth's gravitational pull. Our bodies are at the interface between the external environment, our spiritual life and our psyche.

In a psychodramatic enactment we have an opportunity to witness and observe the body in action. Generating a somatic perspective implies the application of a body-focused approach within the wider theoretical framework of the psychodramatic method. How can we generate a perspective that enables us to produce a psychodrama in such a way that the (often unconscious) body knowing is brought out through the dramatic enactment? This article is intended as a contribution to developing this body of knowledge. In it I draw on my experience as a psychodramatist, voice teacher and shiatsu practitioner and teacher, and make reference to other theoretical frameworks including the Alexander Technique and Somatic Psychology.

As psychodramatists we work more or less consciously with the manifestations of the physical body. We train ourselves to observe changes in the physical body and to notice an emerging role via subtle changes in breath and body tone. We understand the notion of physical starters

in the ability to warm up to a role. We are attuned to bodies acting in physical space and time, and make meaning of the physical distances between objects. We use surplus reality to weave these things into the fabric of the drama. We have varying degrees of awareness of our own bodies as we run and participate in groups.

The psychodramatic method is a sytemic one. A systemic approach focuses on relationships and interdependence and does not reduce elements within the system to smaller parts (Capra, 1983, p. 286). As we develop awareness of the body in the psychodramatic enactment, we can usefully regard the body as an energetic system in itself with particular structures and functions. At the same time we can also perceive the body as located in a psychic, socio-cultural matrix.

The body carries an imprint of what the conscious mind no longer registers. This is sometimes called body memory or knowing. Body knowing necessarily includes life experiences for which there may be no words (preverbal) or a failure/inadequacy of words (when something is unspeakable). It can be expressed within the body through over-development of certain muscle groups and underdevelopment of others. It may be expressed through particular breathing patterns. In a psychodramatic enactment, the body is located in a time, space and context. These stimulate the memory and bring to the surface feelings/thoughts/roles that might not be available were the body static. How then, do we work with what the body is expressing, even if we don't understand it and even if it doesn't yet have a voice, as such? Furthermore, what are the assumptions underlying the way we perceive the body?

CONCEPTUALISING THE BODY

Spontaneity and the Body

Spontaneity is one of the cornerstones of the psychodramatic method. It includes, amongst other things, the notion of an adequate response, a readiness for action and the ability to meet the demands of the moment in a fresh way. If we think about this in terms of the body we might conceive of it as the ability to free ourselves from the domination of fixed habits, i.e. conserved ways of moving and using our bodies. It is my belief that if we don't 'get this' on the level of the body, we are missing an important element in enlivening/ invigorating the conserved parts of ourselves, and developing awareness of the unconscious patternings that influence our way of being in the world.

Significant changes in the body do occur in a psychodramatic enactment. A person stands taller and firmer as they become more unified in themselves. Their breathing is easier and their body tone significantly improved. The collapsed chest opens and the abdominal muscles lengthen and widen. The lower and upper body look all of a piece. However, we are also likely at a later time to revert in our postural patterns to old, familiar habits that are wedded with our personality (and role repertoire). It is useful to have a map, a way of charting and being able to perceive these habits.

The Alexander Technique offers such a framework. It was developed by F.-M. Alexander, an actor who suffered from vocal strain. In the process of seeking a cure he became interested in how he used his body as he spoke. De Alcanatara (1997, p.13) quotes Alexander: '*Talk about a man's individuality and character: it's the way he uses himself'*.

The Alexander Technique enables a person to become familiar with their repertoire of posture and habit and of the associated emotional patterns. It involves the experience of gradually freeing oneself from the domination of fixed habits (Gelb, 1983, p. 1). Gelb (p. 31) quotes Aldous Huxley on Alexander's work: *'If you teach an individual first to be aware of his physical organism and then to use it as it was meant to be used, you can often change his entire attitude to life and cure his neurotic tendencies.'*

While it is not within the scope of this article to describe this technique in any depth, the framework does give us some pointers to perceiving the body in action which are useful for the psychodramatist. I have woven them into the following considerations.

Given that we move and use our bodies in habituated ways, can we look at a person/protagonist/director and perceive at least some of these habits? Might we be able to direct people towards more neutral use of the body and out of that encourage new ways of moving and breathing? From a place of readiness for action in the body, a readiness to respond adequately, with the appropriate amount of physical activity for the task: there is the possibility for spontaneous action, for a new physical response to an old situation, for the embodiment of a new role. Can we, by drawing attention to the spine *and* the relationship between the head, neck and back, direct a protagonist to new ways of moving/experiencing/sensing?

Practice Perceiving:

• Notice the relationship between the head/neck/back. Is there a sense of unity of movement of the whole? Does the head sit on top of the spine? Is it pushed forward off the top of the spine? Is the lower back pulled in? Is the chest collapsed? Pulled down? Are the hips free? Is the breath easy? held? Is there a sense of length in the spine? Is there a tightening at the base of the skull?

Preverbal Experience, Somatic Roles and the Emerging Stage of the Double

A person at a residential voice workshop is setting out on the stage her warm-up to three days of vocal improvisation and story singing. She lies down on her back, and makes gurgling, baby sounds. She chooses someone to be her in the bassinette. The group member lies down beside her and takes up the role of her double. The protagonist is enjoying her body and its sensations and is absorbed in the discovery of the sounds she is making. They lie there together gurgling, making farting sounds with their lips, until the spell is broken by another group member laughing and commenting.

Moreno conceived of the psychosomatic role as a preverbal configuration in which the infant's bodily sensations and immediate physical needs are expressed. These roles may be accompanied by/associated with sounds, including sucking sounds, and cries rather than words. In very early development, these roles emerge out of the 'universal matrix of identity' in which it is hypothesised that the infant does not yet recognise 'the other' as separate, the world is simply an extension of itself. It is in this state that Moreno (1953, p. 245) says the

double is activated for the first time. The double in a psychodrama is a person who perceptually, intellectually, emotionally and physically assumes the same identity as the protagonist (Hollander, 1979). Moreno hypothesises the necessity for unity and integration, associated with the phase of the double, before the process of differentiation is initiated.

Let us consider the implications this has for a somatic perspective. As an auxiliary double, you inhabit the same gestural field as the protagonist. Your body is an immediate and direct expression of their life/your life. It directly informs you about the experience of the protagonist. Your capacity to double is affected by the spontaneity level in your own body, and the degree to which you can free yourself of your own postural and gestural habits.

The Body and the Stage of the Mirror

The stage of the mirror commences as the individual starts to become aware of itself as a separate entity with a body and impulses of its own. Any behaviour by others to enhance that person's awareness of their physical body, impulses, emotions and feelings will further autonomous development (Clayton, 1991, p. 16).

A person attending a voice workshop expresses her desire to sing soulfully. As she sings, her voice reaches out into the space around her, and just as soon it begins to retreat. Her mouth narrows, her shoulders hunch forward and the tone retreats, thins and loses its colour and ease, even as she continues singing. Subsequently, with mirroring of her physical body, she recognises the desire to be heard and the concurrent fear of being heard.

In the same way that Moreno hypothesises that the person emerges out of the role/universal matrix, Romanyshyn (1998) suggests the existence of archetypal gestural fields out of which the individual emerges and grows. The gesture, says Romanyshyn, is the portal through which each of us enters into the mystery of the other. He (1998, p. 46) describes English Actor Anthony Hopkins in the moment he understands the character of Picasso. *'It was in the movement of walking in a certain way, of going down a staircase, and in the gestures of the arms and trunk and legs which accompany such a movement, that Picasso was born in him. By waiting for the gestures, by making oneself a vehicle to be impregnated by the other, the character was/is born.'*

As we mirror another person in a drama, we are mirroring not only the physical, verbal expression, but a whole world of meaning, which can be captured in the tilt of a head or the holding out of a hand. Within the psychodrama, mirroring can occur both through the mirroring technique and through role reversal.

Role Playing and Role Reversal.

Roles emerge in relationship in response to other people, objects, memories and in a context. Our thinking and feeling life is intimately connected to the way we use our bodies and the role we are playing in a given moment. As directors, when we interview for role in a drama, we are amongst other things warming the protagonist up to the gestural field of the other. We might do this by having the protagonist tune in to the clothes they are wearing, their walk, and their senses.

When we role reverse we are acting a role we may or may not have acted in our own lives. We have a physical/bodily experience of the other.

The protagonist or auxiliary who role reverses, and maintains the same physical tone throughout, is unlikely to experience the other in great depth. On the other hand, as the protagonist/auxiliary reverses roles she may look different and act in a physically unhabituated manner. This can be associated with spontaneous, surprising ways of thinking. In the case of the auxiliary, it assists them to be less focused on remembering and repeating content, and more able to resource their knowing from their body.

Practice Perceiving:

• Is the auxiliary/protagonist embodying the role? entering the gestural/physical field of the other or do they still look like themselves? What coaching might be necessary?

PRODUCING THE BODY

Concretisation of the Physical

A director asks a protagonist to set out her vision of herself in five years time.
She chooses an auxiliary to be herself and puts her in the middle of the stage. The protagonist then bites her lip. The director instructs her to choose someone to be her biting her lip, and to put that on the stage in relation to her vision of herself in five years time.

At the moment that the protagonist bites her lip, something extra is emerging in her. It is not at all clear what that is, and the protagonist is unaware that she has been biting her lip. In concretising the lip-biter, the protagonist becomes conscious of her self-doubt. The director then asks the protagonist to set out all the things that would stop her realising her vision.

From this intervention, the reactive forces are concretised. The vision is thereby anchored in a greater appreciation of what is required to bring it about. It is taken out of the realm of idealisation. The director is not concerned with trying to understand the meaning of the lip-biting, but is working as a producer, and in doing so, the story tells/reveals itself.

As psychodrama directors, we can generate hypotheses based on the gestural expression of the protagonist, which can be tested and either built on or dropped altogether if they prove irrelevant. At times we may not generate a hypothesis so much, as recognise every expression of the body as significant communication. We can train ourselves to notice this, and develop the ability to produce it in a number of ways.

Practice Perceiving:

• When the protagonist is conflicted, how is this manifesting in their physical body? This might look like a gesture that lacks flow or unity of movement. It may be that the gesture is dissonant with the verbal expression, and may seem truncated or discontinuous, as if the protagonist were moving in one direction, and at the same time held back. This mix of motivating and reactive forces creates a certain tension in the body. Where do you imagine the tension is located?

Bodily Sensations in the Psychodramatic Enactment

Somatic psychotherapist Barbara Holifield (1998, p. 69) describes her work with a client who suffered trauma in her early life through physical, sexual and emotional abuse. She outlines some physical manifestations which have emerged in Dolores as part of a

pattern of dissociation from her body. These include withdrawal of muscular tone and feeling from the periphery of her body, by chronic tightening inside or by loss of tone in intrinsic muscles (collapse), or by tightening outer musculature in order to numb against the overwhelming energy of terror and rage. Further she notes that, whatever the physical manifestation, attuning to bodily-felt experience can facilitate bringing cohesion to shattered states of self.

In the course of a psychodrama, a protagonist might say: 'I feel heavy; my head hurts; I feel sick; there's pressure in my chest; my arms are tingling; I feel weak at the knees; my heart is pounding; or I feel numb. These are somatic responses to the emerging drama. Naturally, any intervention would be influenced by the stage of the drama. But let's consider what techniques of surplus reality might be appropriate in order to bring out the latent content? Perhaps the following suggestions are a good place to start:

I feel heavy:

Act that, sculpt that, show us how heavy you feel.

There's pressure in my chest:

Choose someone from the group to be the pressure in your chest.

My arms are tingling:

Notice your legs, your torso etc. Are you aware of other sensations?

I feel numb:

Tune in to your bodily experience. Are you numb all over? Or are particular parts of you numb? Choose someone to be you who is feeling numb.

Maximisation

When we use maximisation, we are assisting the protagonist to tune in to their body in a particular moment, to warm up further, and perhaps to become more aware of their warm-up. In the process of extending the gesture/non verbal expression, there is the possibility that its meaning will be revealed through the body and that its meaning can be vocalised, if not verbalised. ('Put words/a sound to what you're doing.' / 'Be aware of your experience as you do this.' / 'Be aware of your body as you do this, your whole body.' / 'Notice what you're thinking and feeling.' / 'Notice where you're tight and where you are loose.') A detailed registering of the felt (thinking, feeling, experiencing, sensing) body is in some instances a necessary precursor to bridge the gap between something that is unconscious to something that is conscious.

Touch

Being a teacher and practitioner of shiatsu, I am particularly interested in what is communicated, what is received, what one can learn about the other through touch. Touch is an essential part of our experience of being human and inhabiting our physical bodies. The way we are touched and held as infants is an important factor in our development and our experience of our bodies and our sense of self.

A group member in a shiatsu weekend, when asked to bring out a significant experience of touch in her life, described how at primary school, she got excited when ever the mothers came to check the children's head for lice. She longed to have them touch her head as they scanned her scalp for lice. The memory was both painful, because of the absence of touch it implied in her family of

origin, and also somehow exquisite, for the secret stolen-ness of a need met.

Touch in the psychodramatic enactment can be initiated by the protagonist, as she writes and enacts her script. It may also come about as a strategic or therapeutic intervention during the drama. For instance, a director says to the protagonist: show us how you feel in relation to your sister. How close are you in this moment? The protagonist stands alongside her sister, their shoulders touching companionably.

In another situation, a director asks a protagonist to set out his vision of applying the psychodramatic method in his work. This is Larry's first experience with psychodrama. He is looking for a modality that will enliven his current practice with clients in a one-to-one setting. He sets out his consulting room where he is interviewing a client. The 'new modality' is concretised with the use of an auxiliary. It stands behind Larry, with its hands on his shoulders. During a role reversal the protagonist, acting as the New Modality, is having difficulty warming up and doesn't put his hands on Larry's shoulders. The director vigorously coaches him to 'Make Contact!' This is subsequently enacted. While in itself a small intervention, the making of physical contact immediately strengthens the warm-up of the New Modality to its own purpose, as well as strengthening the relationship between the protagonist and the New Modality. Larry is able to warm up to working with the client in a unified way.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This is essentially an investigative paper intended to stimulate further thought in this area. I have explored the notion of spontaneity applied to the body; the recognition of a world of meaning contained within a gesture; the way we use our bodies; the body as the physical aspect of the personality; and the significance of touch. These are all aspects of generating a somatic perspective in the psychodramatic enactment.

Knowing that the body is a vital resource and a way of getting in touch with one's experiencing, feeling and thinking, we might sense more deeply just what we are bringing about on the level of the body during a psychodramatic enactment. We may also be able to work more actively using psychodramatic techniques, to give the body a stronger, clearer voice within the enactment.

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Should We Tell the Truth?

by Gwen Reekie

Gwen is an Auckland-based Psychodramatist and Sociologist who works with mothers committed to 'being the mother you want to be'. She aims to keep herself and others awake to the reality-testing sociological scrutiny can bring to the world of psychotherapy. In this article she examines the social pressures on individuals to normalise and confess and explores implications for us as group leaders.

> 'The truthful rendering into speech of who one is, to one's parents, one's teachers, one's doctor, one's lover, and oneself, is installed at the heart of contemporary procedures of individualisation' (Rose 1993).

CONFESSING

According to Foucault (1979, 1988), we western human beings have become confessing animals – obsessed with 'telling the truth'. He sees this characteristic as an important element in individualistic societies where members aren't bound together by overt, dominating power, but by forms of government that are opaque and homogenising. He considers we have learned to 'tell the truth' about more and more areas of our lives. More and more of that truth (some about matters not so long ago outside the public domain and its scrutiny) is available for examination and placement on a continuum of the normal to the abnormal. He also considers that an expanding army of experts assists us to notice when we err towards the abnormal and then move back to the normal.

I am interested in the psychotherapeutic expert's relationship to that examination and placement.

Dr Dick Solomon, a highly intelligent alien visitor to Earth, in the television program 'Third Rock from the Sun', immediately grasped what was expected of a him when he and his partner Dr Mary Albright went along to a couple enrichment weekend. Like everyone else he donned a white suit, sat in a circle on the floor, looked joyful or sad or compassionate or understanding, declared deepest thoughts and feelings, and more than anyone else proclaimed his profound fears and anguish about rejection. The facilitator and other group members clapped him. And clapped him more and more. He became the sociometric star. Usually Mary (an ordinary earthling professor) had been pretty tolerant of

Dick – considering his egocentricity. In this group, though, she wasn't quick enough in her analysis of the system. She didn't always talk about what was going on for her. But she could not ignore her recognition of Dick's pretensions. She openly challenged Dick's delusional self-presentation and was castigated by the group for seeing things differently. She became the negative star.

The system of the couple enrichment weekend rapidly clarified and identified the expected range of input from participants: inadmissible input was emphasised by withholding approval or rejection. A continuum of the positive to the negative was immediately displayed, a field of comparison, differentiation, hierarchisation, reward and punishment and homogenisation. The totally unacceptable or rejected – what Foucault (1979) terms 'the external frontier of the abnormal' – was made especially clear. It was a process which examined and judged everyone's input in relation to the input of everyone else and where the abnormal was identified.

Foucault also describes a similar process in the 18th century Ecole Militaire's honorary classification system in which pupils wore coloured epaulettes. It was clear if pupils were 'very good' because their epaulettes were silver; 'good' pupils' wore red silk and silver, 'mediocre' pupils' wore red wool, and 'bad' pupils' wore brown wool. This created an obvious continuum of the positive to the negative for self-examination of where one stood in relation to other people.

HISTORICAL ORIGINS

Foucault claims that this process of self-examination and judgement developed because the enormous social changes that took pace in western societies from the middle ages required new norms, governance and new collaboration. People were moving from rural areas to urban areas, from settled communities with a known and accepted culture into the beginnings of industrialised populations with new ways of living, working, worshipping, travelling, organising time and cooperating with one another. Given that people were setting limits on external power and becoming increasingly individualistic, an art of government evolved which focused on maximum effectiveness with minimum political and economic cost.

This demanded populations of individuals freely, if not consciously, critiquing their own identities, with each individual regulating self and society in accord with a societal standard. They would freely choose and regulate identities and so foster the happiness of the population as a whole. This happiness or social security would come about if people who were formally free became a self-organised collective making their own decisions, recognising that this privilege applied to all the others too. Happiness, and fostering behaviours conducive to cooperation, became essential to governance. An ever-wider net was thrown out to catch more and more aspects of people's lives to be included in a form of consensus.

This cooperation was crucially influenced by the way individuals went about organising their conduct. They were no longer reacting to the introjected voices of the gods who constantly observed and judged and punished their actions. Individuals were now actively cooperating in the formation of themselves as selves with free choice and with an appreciation of the requirements of the collective of society as a whole. Aspects of people's lives were now caught up in the non-private and could be

examined opaquely rather than coercively, helped by the development of a particular type of confession – what Foucault calls 'verbalisation' – in Western societies.

VERBALISATION

Verbalisation expanded from medieval Christian confession, which aimed at self-improvement by sacrificing the self to a higher authority; concentrating on what the individual was thinking at a particular moment (the area of prime movement either toward or away from God), and confessing these thoughts before a superior. It was about looking for bad intentions, renouncing one's will and one's self and creating a new self. Verbalisation called for a preceding self-examination, for individuals to be subjectified to themselves as they self-examined, in the presence of a real or imagined other.

According to Foucault (1988), since the 18th century these techniques have been secularised and verbalised, with the expert (including the psychotherapeutic expert) of today having replaced the priestly hearer of confession in a pursuit of the truth. If and when individuals fail in some way, they can call in an expert to help out. For example, if individuals see themselves failing to express themselves adequately in specific situations they can call upon a psychotherapeutic expert, and maybe set out on a program of recovery so that they can express themselves adequately.

He argues that an essential bonding element for individualistic peoples is this verbalisation which assists their comfort with and collaboration in a particular political or social arrangement, with a growing army of experts ready to assist them to make decisions about the self they freely choose to develop.

RESPONSE TO FOUCAULT FROM THE PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC FIELD

In the late 1980s and early 1990s I was ploughing through Foucault's writing. Some was being popularised, with the phrases 'construction of identity' and 'deconstruction of identity' especially popular and used at what seemed every opportunity by social scientists. These phrases were problematic for people working in the psychotherapeutic area. In the face of their implied or perceived challenge, people from various therapeutic modalities protested that their particular modality most certainly did not collude with constructing identity focused on fitting a particular political or social arrangement. Psychotherapists co-opted the phrases. They asserted that their practitioners, by raising awareness of transference and counter-transference issues, and by helping people to take responsibility to develop their identity themselves, actively worked to deconstruct imposed identities, and challenged rather than colluded with external construction.

By the mid-1990s I was doing both postgraduate study focusing on social influences on the formation of the self, and advanced psychodrama training. I was jolted by completing a simple exercise at university involving identification of who managed the process in psychotherapeutic settings. I already knew that the director/therapist/counsellor/group therapist was a significant element in clients' explorations of their own experiences and motivations, and the understanding they came to about them. Now I found it difficult to refute the contention that the therapist is unavoidably a considerable influence in the interstices – the gaps between areas of understanding – in constraining exploration, navigation and preference from among the understandings or knowledges available.

Is Foucault anywhere near accurate about the existence of normalisation processes by which we fit ourselves to a particular social or political arrangement? Is there any merit in Argyris's idea that from whatever data we observe we make a selection, add meanings to it, from which we make assumptions, leading to conclusions, from which we adopt beliefs considered by us to be the truth and obvious?

As we more completely fit a particular social or political arrangement, we are often less able to accept Moreno's understanding that the universe has been created to include every one of us (1953). We are more likely to suppress difference, doubtful of the merit in alternate arrangements and the truths of others which do not fit familiarly with ours.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PSYCHODRAMATISTS

Psychodramatists are aware of Moreno's teaching that health comes from a balance of conserve with spontaneity. This could be understood as a balance between public and personal influence or societal and individual pressures and preferences. So, from this cursory presentation of Foucault's ideas and literature, what are the implications for you and me as psychodramatists?

For a start, I have to promote a culture that provides an acceptance of personal control, recognising the ease with which silken threads of dependency proliferate. I am using examples from my work with mothers who are concerned about the effect of their stress and anger on their children. These women want to be mothers who are 'good enough', who want to change inter-generational patterns of neglectful or abusive parenting.

I hold myself to the consciousness that personal control and self-determination is my commitment. I keep myself mindful that in being there as a leader and the mothers being there as group members, we have already made our meeting an agent of the societal pressure to be the mother they believe they should be. To be that mother each of them will be looking to each other and particularly to me for guiding clues and approval for their efforts and achievements. The group's title *Being the Mother You Want to Be* cuts into this homogenising influence. As I commence, I lightly debunk the role models of women's magazines, accepted mythic figures and myself as a supposed expert. I promote the idea that they are the best guide and coach for themselves, that individually and collectively they can select from what is available in the course of learning and review they are engaged in. I am deliberately playful and light in presentation, while firm in my own rejection of all action that permits abuse or neglect of children.

I have to ensure that people are not snared into 'telling their truth' rather than being aware of their experience when we work with doubling and during group warm-up and sharing. I am super-vigilant to any woman in the group beginning to confess, or 'tell the truth', or to 'open up'. When this happens other group members already know to soften their bodies, increase the impression of receptivity in their facial sculpting and open their eyes and hearts. Their confessor is about to be the *Representative of Collective Shame* and *Reliever of Silence and Hiddenness*. Obviously this is worthy of silver epaulettes. However, the confessing itself binds the woman to societal rule-following and will be self-programming to greater submission to societal demands for ever-heavier expectations. So I break in and lead the

group towards widespread identification with small revelations of inner experience. I challenge the would-be confessor to not say one thing that they are not absolutely ready to share and want to reveal. I question the need to reveal anything other than those things that they see as leading towards their goal or that they believe will be of loving assistance to another member. Even then I suggest choice be made carefully.

I have to be alert when some normalities/truths are approved of and awarded the same silver epaulette as Dick Solomon's whilst others the brown like Mary Albright's. Some years ago a supervisor encouraged me to challenge a group member's use of a particular substance, which I decided not to do. To challenge the use of a substance which probably reduced motivation and responsibility in her child-caring was probably sensible. She was a teenage mother with agonising life experience and deprivation, stepping into the unknown by coming along to the group and by making friends with another young woman who lived nearby. They met in a park for a chat and a smoke whilst their children played on the swings. My analysis was that she was moving from the stage of all-identity to the stage of the double, she was learning to listen and talk with the other members of the group and with me, she was beginning to have some dreams about what she might do with her life. I was surprised when she said at the end of the group that she had decided to make contact with her mother. Her meetings in the park, smoking under the trees, had combined with her coming along to the group to provide a stage of all-identity robust enough to significantly influence her ability to create a new social network.

Before reading Foucault I had had some curiosity about the abnormal. Since then I've become even more curious – and cautious – about the 'normal' and what I contribute to it.

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Two Stories of Training in Vietnam

by Matt Desmond and Chris Hosking

Matt is a training consultant based in Vietnam for the past six years, where much of his work was with a group of non-government-organisations, to build a pool of rural development trainers. In December 2001, his Vietnamese colleagues took over the consultancy and sent him back to New Zealand to de-worm and explore leisure opportunities.

Chris is a Psychodramatist working in private practice. Much of her professional life is associated with ANZPA training programs for those keen to learn to integrate the method of psychodrama within their work. Chris first led training in Vietnam in 1996, and has returned to the country each year since then. Currently living in Wellington, she is a staff member of the Wellington Psychodrama Training Institute.
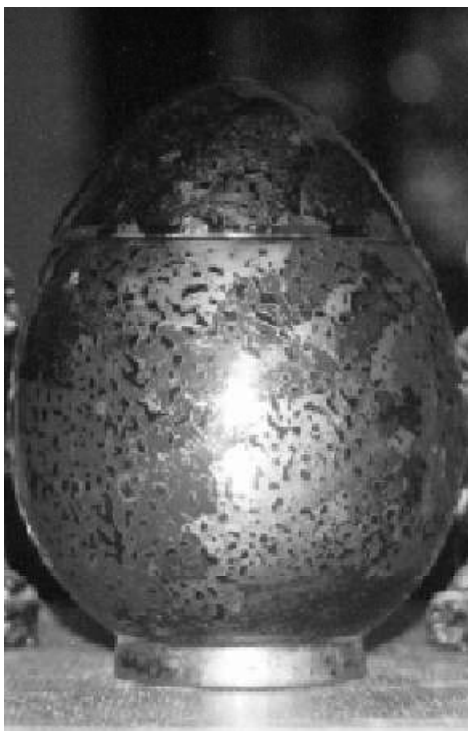

Figure 1: A Vietnamese lacquered egg

A LACQUERED EGG

by Matt

After more than six years of leading training workshops in the north of Vietnam it was somehow fitting that my swansong was a role-training workshop. Back in 1996, I had persuaded Chris Hosking and Bev Hosking to come and work with a group of the rural development workers I was training. I recall the questioning e-mails from New Zealand asking how exactly active group work and dramatic methods might be of relevance to people here. I recall the difficulties of sounding convincing based only on an intuition that there was a huge pool of spontaneity just waiting to be tapped. Five years and five workshops later, a group of rural development trainers came together in Phu Tho in November 2001 to work for a week with Chris and me.

In the last session of this last workshop we placed a low table on the stage. On its cover of white silk was a lacquered egg for each participant, and one for Chris and me. We introduced the eggs as 'Trainers' Treasure-boxes'. Each participant was invited to imagine one quality which was present in this group and would have real value for a trainer in village Vietnam 'when the chips were down' (which roughly translates as 'being at the bottom of the worst'). The participants then chose an image or symbol or colour for that quality. One by one they spoke of the quality they had imagined and placed its symbol in each egg. Here, I try to do justice in English to the qualities selected, and some of the people behind them.

Duong

Duong gave Resilience. She said that whatever happens during the training day we must be able to enjoy our dinner so we are recovered for what the next day might bring.

Earlier in the workshop, Ly (aged 25) had identified Duong (35) as possessing a quality of maturity and independence that she was seeking for herself. In the role of the *Elder Wise Consultant*, Duong had told Ly that when she was 22 her mother had given her a small rice-pot and a bicycle and told her that after being cared for for 22 years it was time for her to look after herself. She had found a teaching job in a remote village school for which there was initially no salary. For three months she had taught herself to be a teacher by day and found wild weeds for food in the forest by night. This experience, she explained to Ly, had given her the quality of independence.

Thao

Thao gave the quality of Creativity. She talked about the quality in a trainer that can create growth in situations where there seem to be very

few resources.

Thao had been protagonist in a long and difficult role-training session which contained scenes of her relationship with her father and her sons. She had searched for friendship in these relationships amongst the ancient backdrop of Confucian roles and norms. The 11-year-old Thao introduced us to the father who was already a leading funeral and 'people's opera' musician, but who could not permit his daughter to attend embroidery classes because study and housework should fill her life. Later in the session, she introduced us to her sons and explained why their longed-for 'games with mother on the mat' could only happen on the evenings when all homework had been completed. In giving Creativity, perhaps she was remembering her first role-training workshop when, exploring 'missed opportunities' with her recently deceased mother, the shame of small and silent tears had almost immobilised her in the drama. Almost.

Duong

The younger Duong gave the gift of trust in others. She said that the critical quality in all our training was to have trust in ourselves, to really believe that we are able to make relationships that can lead to growth and learning.

Over the past four years, Duong has wrestled with her age (now 26) and her 148 centimetres. Often being required to gain the trust of much older and far more experienced (and bigger) officials, she has led the group in a journey through the Vietnamese language and its maze of personal pronouns. Whether these young women should introduce themselves as 'em' with its connotations of youth and innocence and respect, or as 'chi' or 'co' with their messages

of teacherliness and ability to bring aspects of wisdom, or as 'toi' with it's implication of 'I am what you see, I am me'.

Tuyen

Tuyen followed immediately. 'My gift for the Treasure-box follows from Duong's. It is the quality of having trust in others. As a development trainer I need the genuine trust in others, in the people. I need to trust that all people can build their lives and livelihoods.'

Tuyen began her working life as a doctor, then became a dentist. Now, at 34, she is a mother of two, a team leader and a full-time trainer. I have seen Tuyen at work with her groups of young HIV-positive people. She is an excellent and truly respectful facilitator. And in our training groups we have also come to know the deep doubts she has about her work, especially now as the first of these young people are starting to die.

Tu

Tu had written a yellow card for each of the participants' Treasure-boxes. It read 'To respect and admire all the roles we have'. She said that the excellent trainer did not dismiss or cut off the roles they were uncomfortable or unhappy with. She said that for her these roles were 'part of Tu' and that she was learning more each year about valuing them.

Tu is an original member of the group. I say very publicly that, in all this country of 80 million, she is the most able, the most flexible, group-leader. She is pioneering an area of training which we might call 'self-knowing leadership' which focuses on our practice/praxis as the essence of who we really are. In this week's workshop she has displayed her relationship with her 80 year-old mother – coming home from work to

place her head in her mother's lap and to take an hour just feeling her mother's hands knead her hair. During this time her mother sings, first the sad songs of war separations and unrequited love, and later the songs of revolutionary heroes and their achievements.

Phong

Phong paced around the table of eggs and stuffed a wad of toilet paper in each calling out 'Crazy… Craziness…Trainers need to be crazy'.

Over the past two years Phong has been describing his learning edge as 'stepping out of the shadow'. We have gone with him inside this shadow and seen a type of tranquillity, and anonymity, and little responsibility. We have also often seen Phong and the shadow throwing each other off the group stage with true force and determination. And we have seen the shadow of his father, a much-decorated military doctor, who simply cannot comprehend that Phong is choosing rural work rather than the career in the Medical School which he has been offered.

Huong

Huong offers the quality of belief that change can really occur.

The whole group watches in silence as Huong places her card in each of their Treasure-boxes. We all reflect on her struggles over these past three years to create a place for herself, separate from her twin sister, separate from her co-trainers, separate from the poverty of her childhood. I reflect on the evening during this workshop when she had packed her bag and was ready to leave after what she felt as the shame of her few silent tears.

Ha

Ha stood, strode to the stage, and eyeballed each of us. 'The trainer is an adventurer', she said. 'Don't hang back. Get out there!'

Ha had expressed her workshop purpose as wanting to develop the role of rebel. In one evening session, she was invited to take as long as she needed to dress herself as a rebel and then to enter some enacted scenes from her daily work. The group had laughed themselves sick as she slowly and thoughtfully rolled up one trouser-leg, draped herself in orange and green silks, cocked her hips with a thumb in each pocket, ordered sex on a mobile phone, used some choice English from her Australian teacher's vocabulary, and swaggered around the stage with a cigarette. Later in the session she leapt onto the 'boardroom table' and berated her older 'managers' to get a life.

Hoa

Hoa had made a blue-green heart for each Treasure-box. The colour of young rice, she explained. Inside she had drawn the symbol for Sensitivity which she said the group had shown towards her in a new way. She said that this was the quality she aspired to, to have real empathy for the village mothers in her training groups.

Hoa was attending her first such workshop, having demonstrated a very high ability for group facilitation in her Training of Trainers' courses. She was the baby of the group at 24 and had, on the last morning of the workshop, announced her purpose of 'slowing down'. Her session earlier in the day had delighted all of us as she raced between roles (far ahead of the director's guidance – or perception?), and spoke psychodrama jargon like an old hand. 'Now I will say what I'm not saying'. 'Now I need

to reverse roles with that me over there'. 'Now I have already reversed roles with a me who isn't in the drama yet'. The session had ended with the group celebrating her acuity and liveliness. Even the 30 year-olds, with wistful admiration, had urged her not to slow down, but to learn to value and trust her natural, immediate responses to people and life.

Luong

Luong placed two smiling faces in each Treasure-box. She said that as trainers we need to be content within ourselves and to bring warmth and humour to the poverty of the villages.

That same morning Luong had shown us a 12-year old girl leaving the jungle after 10 years in hiding from the French military as the daughter of a revolutionary leader. The girl had shown her sadness at leaving the streams and trees, her young friends and the animals and noises of the jungle. The girl had sworn she would write about these things so that everyone could know what a wonderful time and place this had been. Then Luong showed us the 57-year-old woman who has taught, travelled, inspired and led, and is very much a respected aunty to this group. She is now nearing retirement and that morning she talked with her 12-year-old self and remembered with excitement and determination her promise to write of the time in the jungle.

Paul

Paul placed a frangipani flower in each egg. He said that as he had collected the flowers, he had imagined many qualities of a transformational trainer. But these were…just frangipani flowers.

Paul is an Alaskan salmon fisherman who spends up to nine months a year in Vietnam

teaching interactive communication to people in the camps – drug-users and sex workers who have been rounded up from the cities. During the week of the workshop he had been working to shrink the circles he tended to make around the present moment. The group of young Vietnamese trainers were great auxiliaries for Paul as they learned to challenge his loquacity, and demand that he summarise his thinking and join them…Now!

Ly

And Ly had written the simple word 'Wish' on violet card for each of the Treasure-boxes. She could find no words in the moment. Silently and delicately she placed her cards in the eggs.

For me, Ly is the spirit of this work and these people. At times outrageous, at others feeling a crippling shyness. So clever and quick, and often bewailing what she cannot yet do or understand. So determined to be a 'new Vietnamese woman', and so caught up in the needs and memories of her elders. During the week, Ly had presented a role-training session which involved her ageing parents, her young husband and the baby of her wishes. Finally from a tabletop high above the family she screamed at her father that she was his daughter not his wife and that the woman sitting next to him was his wife. She castigated his vigour, ordered him to leave behind the bitterness of war, and demanded that he re-romance the woman he had fallen in love with in the perilous swamps of Thai Binh.

Figure 2: Participants, 2001

NEW ROLE CREATION

by Chris

The workshop took place in the richly historic and symbolic area of Phu Tho. This is the home of the Hung kings, the first of whom was the eldest son of Lac Long Quan (the Dragon King). Quan's lover, Au Co (the Fairy Queen) delivered one hundred eggs which hatched into the one hundred Vietnamese forefathers. The Vietnamese people still call themselves 'the Children of the Dragon and the Fairy'. Phu Tho is also the home of the finest sumac trees in Vietnam, from whose sap the premium lacquer is made.

On arrival in Hanoi, the first words of beaming greeting are yet again 'you've got fat!' – a compliment, Matt reminds me. Then the nightmare bus ride into the countryside. And, in utter contrast to the traffic mayhem on the road, the bus is full of the hilarity and anticipation of the group members, some of whom have not met up since the last workshop a year ago. Lychee trees heavy with fruit line the roadside. I'm back!

We arrive at the Bai Bang Camp, our venue for the week. This is a compound with a touch of Ikea, built by the Swedes as a home for their workers at the adjacent paper mill. The Bai Bang mill was the first Western aid project to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and was begun while the American War was still raging. In fact it was begun because the American war was still raging. Construction of the mill was bitterly debated in Stockholm, and its opponents implanted the term 'Bai Bang' into the Swedish vocabulary as a derogatory term for a communist sympathiser. While Swedish experts were trying to survey the neighbouring forests, American B52s were flying overhead, discharging their devastating cargo.

But for our group members, Bai Bang is a paper mill, and a symbol of international friendship. For most of them, their growing-up was dominated by the American War, and the Cambodian War, and the Chinese one. Luong, the eldest, has also lived through two French wars and a Japanese one. But, she proudly notes, without mentioning 11 September, that Vietnam is now ranked the safest country in Asia and one of the safest in the world.

We walk into the musty dark of our group room. A red and yellow Party banner covers the length of one wall. A prominent bust of Ho Chi Minh (Uncle Ho) overlooks the room. A rather forbidding lectern stands at one end, offset by many garish plastic flowers. Like the streets and houses outside, a film of dust covers everything. Then memories of earlier workshops flood back and everything else becomes incidental.

Over the past five years, the trainers in these workshops have ranged in age from 23 to 57. Many speak Russian as their second language, some German, Bulgarian or Czech, a few French and English. For many of the first-timers it has been a unique experience. 'It is the first time to stay in a place like this, so much luxury. I learn living with strange people from different backgrounds and experiences and living styles.'

I recall Matt telling me: 'These trainers work with participants who, just like them, have no history of participating in their own learning. The first time they come on our training, they are unbelieving that they bring critical expertise to the problem at hand. And after the training they invariably go back to groups which expect them to lecture,

pontificate and provide expert solutions to every imaginable problem.'

Matt and his growing team of Vietnamese colleagues have been concentrating on building up a core group of trainers. There is a massive amount of 'training' going on in the country, but very little has developed yet in the way of a base of learning concepts or training practice. Everywhere are the legacies of Confucius; a long and vicious history of colonisation and invasion; and the central planning system required by the wars and the Party. And at the same time, the people are absolutely stunning – enormously intelligent, keen to learn, very committed to the future of their country, and possessing a deep gentleness that is full of laughter, song, and tears.

How terribly the rice suffers under the pestle!
But it emerges polished, as white as cotton.

The same process tempers the human spirit:
Hard trials shape us into polished diamonds.

from A Prison Diary, Ho Chi Minh 1890–1969

Back in '96, the first of the first moments. We look around and everyone has a pad and pen poised. It is mesmerising. Where is the warm-up? To stand out as an individual here is obviously not quite the norm – and I feel somewhat unusual. Very tall, as if my bones have suddenly expanded to an unusual size, decidedly plump, clumsy and horribly white. Matt certainly looks unusual and even Bev looks huge! The trust given when directing one of these folk though, no matter how new they were to this situation, was an astounding 130 per cent.

At the end of her second workshop, Yen wrote: 'Last training we practised a lot but for me it was a rain that has penetrated in me. With this training I learned much more by doing and feeling… I learned to say 'yes' to myself and that I will not be tiny in other peoples eyes…' What is impressive here is not just that Yen appreciated this new learning experience, but that she could recognise and value how the learning had affected her.[1] So although the training we did was effective, already inherent within these people was an outstanding responsiveness and sense of responsibility about learning: 'I want to become more confident in a big group. I don't want to wake up just my sleeping part – I want to wake up my sleeping volcano!'

One year Matt observed: 'The French invested virtually nothing in the education system here. They were interested in a passive, illiterate workforce and a small local educated 'mandarinate' whose loyalty to the French would be guaranteed by their small numbers and their privilege. Uncle Ho (Ho Chi Minh) and his comrades started with nothing except a highly committed and intelligent people, and achieved a unique 'educational revolution'. In the space of 25 years or so, the Viets achieved near universal literacy. This was (and is) unheard of and was achieved by probably the only way possible: a centrally driven and planned curriculum and teaching system, and revolutionary vigour. We have forgotten that to learn to read is revolutionary.'

Our group members often train groups of more than 50 participants, and initially their goal was to have '100 per cent participation'. Once they had been taught 'participatory methods', only complete participation was satisfactory in their eyes. Complete participation was the measure of success of the trainer, anything less was failure.

The interest in the benefits of role training was gripping, as were the daunting lists of objectives drawn up by the group members. 'This week, I want to find all my missing roles' became a little intimidating… I recall Mr Hai, head of an agriculture college with 3000 students. The first time he was a protagonist, he expected himself to not only be the protagonist, but to produce the drama, to organise the mirroring, coach the auxiliaries and lead the sharing! The subject of his drama was how to get his sister to stop crying after she had failed an exam. In his final re-enactment he gave her a microphone and coached her to weep to the whole world.

Halfway through the third workshop, that was for the first time daringly called 'Role-Training', a hot debate was going on amongst the participants, but in Vietnamese of course. Some time later a summary of this debate was reported to us. 'New Role Creation is a much more relevant name for this than Role Training', they asserted. Something of the spirit of Moreno had been realised – 'We are role creators', he asserted. From then on, the exuberant atmosphere of the workshop was congruent with its title, New Role Creation.

And Hong… Her letter to herself reflects many of the areas we worked together on, the rigidities and the tremendous flexibility. It reflects the work of the total Training Project: the philosophy, inspired and actualised by Matt, with the inherent values of self as a creator, of learning with mutuality and equality. The letter, written by Hong to herself in the future, was posted on to her six months after a workshop.

Dear Hong,

It is very nice that you join course. In the past you could not clearly recognise the importance of being yourself as a trainer that you should be

responsible for what you are and will be training, that you should care for people more, pay more attention to them, inflating the influence to the people participating the training you might lead.

Now, you can name your actions, you can name your behaviours, you can name your feelings, you can be confident with 'yourself' which you practised in the drama, you can identify or predict problems relating to training and that you can have strategy or solutions to solve one by one, you can and you have to be sure that what you want to bring to them is right and needed so that you don't waste time, energy and money to unwanted training.

You learnt to listen to people, to try to read their minds, their feelings, to have sympathy, empathy for them, to touch them, to learn their concerns and to create common concerns or interest in the group that you are working with. (It's a hard task for you, I know). Now on, please open your hearts, your eyes, your ears and practise what you think is right and needed for your target groups. Look around and you will find many supports from resources yourself. Your training target groups, your boss, your co-trainers, your colleagues, even your mother, brothers and your friends. Maybe they are waiting to help you, share and lead you in doing useful things for training or whatever you want to do.

Remember to pay attention to pick the wild weeds around the small tree to become a bigger tree, as big as you want.

Challenge yourself.

Strong too is the Vietnamese sense of responsibility to one another. Conducting any sharing at the close of a drama was at first impossible. No-one was allowed to speak for more than a few seconds before it had to be made clear to them that 'the solution of the drama would not work

in every situation'. Thank goodness for Japanese Psychodramatists – we knew that it was sometimes an advantage to have three chairs on the stage! One for the protagonist, one for the director, and one for the person sharing, no interrupting allowed! Easy. They knew, all too well perhaps, how to obey a rule.

A day and a half into one of our earlier workshops some group members demanded to hold an evaluation of the workshop. Several anxious hours later this was presented to Bev and me. 'Not enough singing!' Many of the projects these people work for are funded by various Aid agencies (Red Cross, Care, Oxfam etc.) and there is a very strong emphasis on these trainers evaluating the effectiveness of their work. The results of these evaluations usually determine whether their projects, and their years of commitment to date, can continue.

As well as the ability to learn, the ability to play is an astonishing aspect in working with these folk – one which we were quickly alerted to. Evening concerts, learning the Cha Cha and sharing one can of Coke and one apple for a group supper. Re-enacting the dramas of the day (especially the roles of the group leaders) brought the greatest mirth. In the first workshops, we had to have a song (usually Russian) to begin each session.

Mid-September 1998, the darkest night of the year and the brightest moon. Hundreds of children out in the lanes and alleys, calling to the 'Lady of the Moon' to come down and play with them. She came, laden with mooncakes, candy, toys…all the mothers and fathers disguised as the 'Lady of the Moon' came to play.

Combined with the playfulness is an imaginativeness. I recall Mrs Minh, when presenting a difficulty as a trainer, saying that she is 'so busy in her mind that her heart turns upside down and her blood changes from red to purple!' Or Mrs Thuy somehow feigning a leg amputation during a war scene. Or Huyen refusing to accept the burden of wisdom ascribed her by the group and instead, as a fortune-teller, reading wisdom from the palms of group members' hands.

Matt says: 'we talk about act hunger…well these people have got feedback hunger. It staggered me to realise how little feedback happens in this society. When they got the idea, either through genuine verbal feedback or mirroring by group members, we soared…' Dung writes 'If I am feeling brave I will want the group to reflect back what they see in my inner world, my relationships and my psychology'.

And of all the valued (treasured) memories from these workshops, these folk's receptiveness to, and use of, mirroring has been remarkable. It has opened up so many new possibilities. On the final morning of this last workshop (prior to the lacquered eggs!), Tu presented a moment in the sharing phase of a session where she was disturbed by the warm-up of one older man who was dealing out very strong advice to the younger protagonist. Tu had the idea to intervene using mirroring during the sharing, something I thought was definitely not recommended. She was unequivocal that this would work. She set out the scene and acted each role of the director, protagonist and group members, expanding on the unexpressed aspects. At the crucial moment, with some prompting, she organised mirroring and with the extended use of metacommunication, she

Figure 3: A sociodramatic moment for Matt and Chris (photo with Uncle Ho)

left us with no doubt that this man would accept the mirroring and that he would develop another warm-up. The freedom that Tu has experienced in being mirrored herself, created another new summit of confidence and sensitivity in the group's development over the past five years.

Endnote

1   The stories of group members' names has been a rich theme of all our workshops in Vietnam, (and a guaranteed starting place for the group leader who is very uncertain where the group's warm-up is). In the parts of North Vietnam that were bombed by the Americans between 1968–73, series of individual bomb-shelters were built by upturning concrete waterpipes into holes in the ground. Yen is named after these shelters, because her mother gave birth to her in one during a bombing-raid.