

AANZPA

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The AANZPA Journal has been established to assist in the fulfilment of the purposes of AANZPA through the dissemination of high quality written articles focused on psychodrama theory and methods, and their applications by practitioners in Australia and New Zealand.

The opinions and views expressed in AANZPA Journal articles and reviews are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions and recommendations of the editor or of AANZPA.

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AANZPA is an organisation of people trained in Dr. J. L. Moreno's psychodrama theory and methods, and their application and development in Australia and New Zealand.

An ordinary member is certificated as a Psychodramatist, Sociodramatist, Sociometrist, and/or Role Trainer. A TEP is a Trainer, Educator and Practitioner.

The purposes of AANZPA include the establishment and promotion of the psychodramatic method, the setting and maintenance of standards, and the professional association of its members. Members associate within geographical regions, through the AANZPA Journal and electronic publication Socio, and at annual conferences.



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Editorial

Each article in this edition has resulted from a cooperative effort. Many people have been involved in assisting the contributors in the many different ways that are required to produce a satisfactory and effective piece of writing. I thank you. I have worked hard to facilitate the relationships and to model thoughtfulness and direct expression. I am very pleased to see that a journal is being created that reflects the work and thinking of AANZPA; a distinctive group of psychodrama practitioners, trainers and trainees.

Wilhelmina Boettcher integrates clinical and aesthetic sensibilities in a poem taken from her social and cultural atom paper.

Valerie Hunton highlights aesthetic aspects of the psychodramatic method, illustrating the value of setting the scene and being a living example of readiness for life. The cover has paintings by Valerie of the blue lizards from the North Pacific, the *limen imen seri*, protector of the infant and new life.

A tribute follows to Evan Sherrard, a TEP from Auckland – colleague, friend, pioneer, educator and trainer. There are expressions of our love to him and his love to us.

Rosemary Nourse presents group work with the elderly; reflecting on the advantages of careful attention to the physical and being alert to the rich life experiences in such groups. The description of the work is crafted with astutely observed details informed by heart.

Patricia O'Rourke and Heather Warne discuss their work with infants and their families; Patricia as supervisor, Heather as a worker. Heather says, "Supervision has helped me to bring realness into the therapy room as well as spontaneity, the ability to really be with my clients, and to trust in the process of relationship." These things are illustrated in an immediate and intimate way in an essay of Heather's work with a client.

I am delighted to discover that writing was so nourishing and generative for Heather. Patricia says, "The writing process is a sort of doubling process in your self. It's like a production. Instead of actually producing the action on the stage you've produced it on the paper." Heather replies, "I find writing very enlivening. Through the writing I get immersed in the 'drama' and the felt sense of the session and at the end I feel more settled and have a new perspective. It's like an un-jumbling process that feels satisfying."

Katherine Howard takes us on a journey, a vision quest, that provides background for a consideration of the connections between the psychodramatic and shamanic worlds. The question of lineage is raised. Psychodrama as a formulation of J. L. Moreno's is modern. However, if one orientates to the core elements of *spontaneity*, *encounter* and *the stage*, then

ancient origins can be traced. Such an orientation has advantages. J L Moreno becomes one of many visionaries. Reification of the hero may be avoided. The onus goes on current practitioners to refresh psychodramatic theory and practice.

Walter Logeman is one such practitioner. He discovered that the heart of Moreno's philosophy includes a research paradigm that incorporates spontaneity and unpredictability. A set of principles are identified and formed into a working description that Walter hopes will be taken up.

Neil Hucker, Peggy Cook, Annette Fisher and Kate Cooke are a group of clinicians who have been working to describe and translate their practice so it can be understood by both psychodramatists and medical professionals. They report on the 19th International Association of Group Psychotherapy Congress to which they presented their work. The Congress theme of *Desire and Despair in Times of Crisis* is highly relevant to many group workers around the world.

Peter Parkinson is a psychodramatist and MD who has embodied a working knowledge of medicine with appreciation of the psychodramatic method. Caril Cowan reviews his book – *Smash Asthma: The wisdom of wheezing*.

Thank you to all contributors. From the association and from other readers; thank you.

For the next edition, the 25th, there is a call for contributions that reflect on papers written during the previous 25 editions. This might be from an author reflecting on what has developed out of their writing. It might be from a reader on the impact of a paper, or papers, on their own understanding and practice.

I hope you enjoy the journal and find it uplifts your spirits and informs your practice.

Philip D. Carter



Therapy for Fallen Gods

Wilhelmina M. Boettcher

Conflict everywhere...
Cosy peace and horror war
The smallest being and here we are.
The conflict of mother, daughter
Many tears and not much laughter.
Just two in the social atom
No room to move, and they are at'm.
The atom grows, the roles expand
Who knows where?... the universe, a distant land.
(Boettcher 2015, p. 2)

Boettcher, W. M. (2015). *Therapy for Fallen Gods*. Unpublished Social and Cultural Atom Paper. Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association.



Willi Boettcher

Setting the Scene: An Image Maker 80 Years On

Valerie Hunton

...and when I take a break, I come over to my table, and that is what I saw (the photo below secretly taken by Rex Hunton). And in that moment, I began to laugh, tingle, and it seemed like everything in me resonated with: That is me now. I Am It! That's It!



Then the very next day, I did something I've never done in my life – I went to look for a canvas, 'coz I've never really worked on a set canvas. I went into the ship chandlery shop, and there is this man that I really like – he's a ship chandler like my father – and he has brewing stuff and ship chandlery and paint and ropes and he's an old Olympic Games rower. He says what do you want of me today?

And my gosh, there in front of me, was a museum canvas – that means it's good quality canvas and already stretched – and I knew in my mind's eye the proportions were exact, *exactly* right. So I came home and I started to draw me.

Now what surprised me is it took me right back to when I was at art school. It took me to the reading, writing, and arithmetic of being an art student. In those days, it was perspective, being able to really draw and to paint well. Somehow I knew that all those things in my kit of life experience were going to be required to do this. So I started work and it was just, tick, tick, tick.

I have a light-filled room, so there was light. I worked with the colour and I left open, like an empty stage, the rip in the shirt. So it took quite a long time to set the scene for Minnie and Mickey to appear. I worked extensively with the shirt. Whereas once it would have been working on the flat. No. This had to have more dimensions than that. A lot of skill to produce it. Then the next step would be my own body shape, and that was very important to me, very, very important to me; that somehow my body be seen as I perceive it to be now.

Then came the next quandary; I've got the shirt, how will I put the paint on, you know?

Valerie, what a dumb question; put it on with your palette knife the way you did your smock 50, 60, 65 years ago.

And then of course, I got into the space of the empty canvas and this piece here [the square piece of paper coming out of the circle canvas] is the expansion of whatever might be and I don't even know what is going to happen here. So it was just fantastic.

Then it began to dawn on me how much it was really beginning to represent me. My smock that I've worn ever since I've been in the Pacific – an old shirt of Rex's – reminded me of my very beginnings as an art student when we wore smocks for five years and never washed them; end of your five years, with paint and oil scrapped all over, they would stand up all by themselves. There was my smock!

Another thing, there was my stool, and always – because I am short – a stool has always been an extension of my body. So there was my stool. And on the floor there where two tops of some canvases that actually I had been working on right then because they were my neighbours playing tennis at

night, black and white; my very neighbourhood, the very outside of my door. My community. Everything was there.

The other thing was, I was holding a pencil. A pencil is sometimes in preparation. Often I would never use a pencil but I had on this occasion – a pencil. Now the next thing was my hair. I now have curls and I've loved curls for the last five years because they make me sprout from the middle. And here at this time I was due to have my eight monthly curls; we were waiting. I virtually had everything in place. Mickey and Minnie had emerged on the stage with the curtains drawn. Rex had been away and he comes back and there they are in front of him on the stage. There! It was a great moment. We celebrated – there they were!

Then in the week of waiting – don't touch, wait, wait – and the hairdressers are all warmed up. We take another photo of the unfinished canvas and the hairdresser sees what's going to happen, and all the hairdressers were there and the whole salon was abuzz because of the hair that was going to emerge and be in the painting. I had about a four hour session where they all sprung to life.



I came home and with my brush I grew the hair, curl by curl, onto my painting. So at this point, I'd like to recapture some of that joy. In fact, I'm tingling as I know that it's in the other room and I'm going to bring it out and it's going to be me, in the painting; and that's what's going to happen..



Every time I see it, I love it anew because the things I see deepen every time. I see how firmly I have secured the emerging painting to the wall. I see the easiness of my wall to attach things to. Nothing gets destroyed by it. It's the right surface in my art studio. I see my own skill at being able to portray the light in the whole image; that is both representative of what is outside and absolutely representative of what is inside me – the levels of light. I see with love, real love, my smock, and probably with even more love, I see the fine line between the panels in the wall. And I notice that I have exaggerated the nails that actually hold it together. In this wall they are small but as the studio extends and goes along the length of the house, they become cleats. It is called the Buckingham wall because Les Buckingham the builder was very, very close to Rex and myself and we wanted him to let us see the construction of it. So every cleat he put in by hand and we were there and

Mike the architect was there, and they were very ceremonially put in. I see that I have the Buckingham wall from out there also in here in the painting with the stepping stones of how the whole thing is hung together by the cleats.

And then, of course, what I look at now, are my fresh curls that day, and thinking of all the jollification and how I love them and how I painted them the next day, how a neighbour came in and said, "I don't know how you do that. You can actually run your fingers through it and look how they match with the split in the shirt; they've got curls too."

It has led onto another self-portrait. But this one I believe is going to be the missing link, or the key, or the opening, or the scene setter for the event that is going to be held in March of next year (2016) at the Kaan Zamaan Art Gallery. It's going to be called *An Image Maker: 80 Years On*. It's going to be about what actually emerges with the people, the images, the written words, conversations. But suddenly when I see this one [Valerie is looking at her self-portrait] I am speechless, no words, it's the right thing at the right time [she laughs with delight]. Both of us, would I be true to say...? [Valerie turns to Rex] Oh maybe you could say something Rex...



Rex Hunton: Yes, I enjoyed it. In fact, right from when I walked through the door and saw her working there with the rip in the old shirt showing Mickey and Minnie Mouse on another shirt underneath, I secretly took a photo she didn't know I was taking and then I printed it and put it on her art table so she would find it. The reaction I got was well worth all the effort. Of course she liked it, she has painted it and there's been a lot of effort and emotion gone into that because it's one of the important paintings

that she's done; and she's done a massive amount of paintings...

Valerie: Never a self-portrait.

Rex: Never one that features the fun and the life and the skills that this one brought in. So it's been good for me and I'm glad I took the photo.

Valerie: What about the day you saw Minnie and Mickey, suddenly on the stage? What was that like?

Rex: Great. The day that I walked through and saw the rip, I had a little chuckle.

Valerie: Also the day when you came in and they were painted and you said they're here at last! You've done it. It was knowing just the right moment: setting the scene for them, the timing and the flow seemed very important and none of it was worked on very quickly. I could go on and on about it but I think you have to see it. It's really seeing it.

I think it's quite important that in the painting that I've done called *The Big Leaves* (started before, and completed after, the self-portrait) everything was created in the opposite way. I had created a new surface which was my New Zealand version of the tapa cloth surfaces of the islands. I drew nothing. I knew nothing about the surface. It worked like a dream. It was a very strong connection with the Pacific. And everything was freeform. There was no pencil line in it. It emerged as it was.



And then I thought, oh my gosh, there's something I've got somewhere that needs to come out. These were part of a big series of work I did that were all cut-outs. They were about the birth of a child. In the North Pacific, they had the birth mat, and the child, and they had the *limen imen seri*, the blue lizards, who protect the child. Most of the rest of that cut-out series has gone but I knew I had some of those lizards left somewhere.

So here they are. They were freeform out of the circle. They were in the flow and the colour of the Big Leaves. They are the protectors of new life.

It happened.



There will be no one like us when we are gone, but then there is no one like anyone else, ever. When people die, they cannot be replaced. They leave holes that cannot be filled, for it is the fate – the genetic and neural fate – of every human being to be a unique individual, to find his own path, to live his own life, to die his own death.

– Oliver Sacks

This passage comes from *My Own Life*, an article published on February 19, 2015 in the New York Times, written just after Oliver Sacks had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. He was the author of many books, including *Awakenings* and *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*. He passed on August 30, 2015.

Evan McAra Sherrard



28.10.1934 – 21.10.2015

Evan Sherrard was an elder in our association. He was involved in the establishment of psychodrama in New Zealand: an innovator, practitioner and trainer. A book is being written about his contributions to the ministry, education, transactional analysis, psychodrama and psychotherapy.

In 1991, I developed a serious cancer and Evan became my 'Instant Theologian'. From then on our relationship deepened and expanded allowing him to appreciate my art in a unique way. He remains my 'Personal Theologian'. – Valerie Hunton

I loved the way Evan would ponder over something I had said before he would reply. He did not blurt things out but seemed to think things through before coming back, often quite a bit later, with a suggestion or indication of whether I was on the right track or not. – Rex Hunton

My view of Evan is that he was defined by his consistency in being a friend. It was what gave his relating to others vitality and strength. It was his considerable gift to his friendships, his consultations, collaborations, therapeutic relationships, his teaching, supervising, and in all of his engagements and encounters. – Don Reekie

Somehow we ended up together to have shared supervision. I said, "I don't know what supervision is." He replied, "Neither do I." Thus begun a remarkable working journey that has lasted all these years. – Dale Herron

I know there is a lot of love directed my way – thank you.

I send more back. You all go well.

With my love, Evan

3rd October 2015

Saying YES: Embracing Life As We Age

Rosemary Nourse

*I am as old as my disappointments in life,
and as young as my naughtiest thought.*

- Xameb the Bushman (Pearse, 1973, p. 3)

Elizabeth and I greet each other with pleasure. I'm standing in the passage outside our office to give participants in a new group directions to our room. In greeting me she slows, but keeps moving slowly and steadily down the long passage. Her body is angled forward, her walker bearing her weight. She's the first to arrive, as she was for every session of our previous group.

When I walk into the group room Elizabeth is in 'her' chair, her walker in front of her within easy arms' reach. She and Daphne are talking animatedly, having already discovered they volunteered for the same organisation three decades ago and have a friend in common.

As I take my seat, the hubbub of conversation quiets and several people look expectantly towards me. The handles of Elizabeth's walker slightly obscure my view of her and are likely to partially obstruct some group members' views of each other. Daphne turns to Elizabeth and says, "I can't see you properly through that."

Silence.

Elizabeth leans forward and with both arms thrusts the walker away. It sails across the room. She claps, kicks her feet in the air and beams, "There it goes." She looks like a delighted three year old. Daphne responds with a smile, "Now I can." What a note on which to start a group called *Taming Anxiety!*

Context

I lead groups for WellElder, a specialist counselling agency for people over 60¹ in the Wellington region. The agency highly values being accessible and

¹ In recognition of their earlier aging, Maori and Pasifika people are eligible from 55. Thanks to our different funding sources, we have flexibility to see people under 60 who have early onset of a chronic degenerative conditions (such as Parkinson's, MS or a dementia) and people under 60 caring for a family member over 60. Anyone living in the Capital & Coast District Health Board area meeting the age criteria is eligible for our service, provided any mental health issues are mild to moderate.

affordable and, if mobility is an issue, we see people in their homes and rest homes. 55.9% of our individual counselling sessions have been held in clients' residences. Consequently our client group includes a higher proportion of people with reduced motor skills than people in this age group generally. These clients are also more at risk of becoming socially isolated.

We hold three different types of groups:

- *Saying YES to Today: Living fully whatever life's challenges*
- A counselling/therapeutic group
- *Taming Anxiety*

Each group consists of two hour sessions once a week over several weeks. Group participants have ranged in age from 57 to 94. We provide assistance with transport if people can't drive or reach venues on public transport.

Amongst others, there are two aspects of leading these groups that are fascinating and worthwhile. Firstly, I'm discovering the value of paying attention to the physical setting and taking account of group members' physical abilities and constraints. This influences how I lead. Secondly, there is such rich life experience in these groups that when I encourage interaction between group members, people readily get in touch with their skills and progressive functioning. There is gold. Let's have a look at each area.

The physical setting

Imagine the seconds as you lower yourself backwards into a chair when your legs and feet aren't sufficiently strong to hold your weight, your balance is shaky and you no longer have the security of the walker that provides stability; you can't see the chair - *scary*. A solid chair that won't slide away is critical. Chair arms to temporarily hold your weight and guide your torso are invaluable. Everyone using a walker, most people using sticks and most people over 75, all need solid chairs with arms, which are also useful in moving from sitting to a standing position.¹

Place ten solid, armed chairs in a horseshoe. It is immediately apparent they take up a lot more space than ten 'conference chairs'. In addition, space needs to be left around the horseshoe for people to access the seats. (When using a walker it's not possible to enter through the gaps between chairs.)

¹ For an excellent account of the effect of aging on all our senses see *The aging mind: An owner's manual* by cognitive gerontologist Patrick Rabbitt (2015). He elucidates and summarises research succinctly and writes with compassion and humour. I find myself laughing out loud at some passages and returning to others for the pleasure of re-reading his insights and turns of phrase.

There also needs to be space to 'park' walkers and sticks. Suddenly, what seemed a largish group space has shrunk.

In looking for suitable venues for these groups, I find one I think is close to perfect: access to the building is flat; doorways are much wider than wheelchairs and mobility scooters; there is plenty of parking directly outside, including several mobility spots less than 10 metres from the front door; the front door opens automatically and the door to the group room, while heavy, can be wedged open until everyone arrives; it has a large, easy to grip handle. The room itself is spacious and three concrete walls block all sounds of traffic and conversation from people outside the adjacent library and nearby cafe. The air conditioning makes only a faint hum. The fourth, west facing wall is glass, the floor to ceiling window framing an attractive natural landscape with no vehicles and occasional people on the path in the middle distance. A concrete overhang protects from glare, unlikely during the morning group, and blinds give the possibility of further protection.

The stackable chairs do not have arms but are sturdy and in a brief test I find them comfortable. On the second short wall there is a kitchen bench and cupboards stocked with attractive, light crockery. I am conscious of the value of tea and coffee being in the group room so group members have a short distance to walk and people who are slower drinking can bring their drinks with them as the group resumes; some people may remain seated and have drinks brought to them so the group remains together. There are mugs and cups and saucers. I've noticed that most people with slow and/or unsteady gait prefer cup and saucer. Biscuit and hot drink can be carried in one hand and the other kept free or used for a stick. Minor spills are caught.

I'm delighted.

Too soon.

As we break for tea and coffee after the first hour, Pru says she's enjoying the group but needs to leave and would like to attend the first half of each session. She's in too much pain to remain. Her fibromyalgia is being greatly exacerbated by the uncomfortable chairs. Others comment that the chairs don't provide adequate back support and are consequently uncomfortable. I ask Pru what sort of chair she would need to be in the group comfortably for two hours in future weeks and semi-jokingly she says, "A good armchair". Pat comments that the library has a few armchairs. I suggest Pru stay for morning tea with group members while I investigate chair possibilities with the library. When I wheel in an armchair piled high with cushions, Pru snuggles into it saying "What luxury" and others share out the cushions for additional back support.

Several people with hearing aids find the acoustics in the room 'deadening'. With all participants consciously talking up and hearing aids

turned to full volume, two people are straining to hear and still missing some discussion.

Light from the large window also proves problematic. With the blinds up the light is too bright for those who have had recent cataract surgery. With the blinds down those with limited vision are unable to see others clearly across the group. When we try compensating for the blinds being down by turning on the lights, they are too bright for several people and threaten to cause headaches.

We form a tighter horseshoe facing away from the glass wall, the blinds slightly down. This provides natural backlighting without glare and everyone can see everyone else in the group. With the chairs at one end of the room and closer together, people can hear almost everything and are less concerned about occasional unheard comments when they can lip read and/or catch facial expressions. Chairs need to be accessed from the front of the horseshoe, potentially creating a clutter of walkers and sticks. With people warmed up to problem solving and cooperation, fully mobile group members quickly check with neighbours where they would like their walking aids.

We finish the first session with everyone present and reporting being comfortable and able to participate. We are developing group norms of 'everyone matters', expressing our own needs and being alert to others' needs, as well as all being involved in problem solving.

Although it is obvious that facilities need to be safe and reasonably comfortable to enable effective participation, this typically requires both forethought and spontaneous problem solving once the group commences and people's specific needs become apparent in the environment.

Forethought includes having some knowledge of the room and group participants. I've yet to lead a WellElder group where hearing aids bring everyone's hearing to approximately 'normal'.¹ I find it difficult to determine how room acoustics will be for people with hearing loss, particularly as this varies with the room empty and peopled. Because there is also variation in how different hearing aids work, I have not found taking two volunteers to the room necessarily predicts the issues that we will encounter. To ensure that when we do meet everyone is able to hear, we may limit the group to ten or twelve people, sometimes fewer.

We have experimented with microphones and surround sound and feedback has consistently been that people prefer un-amplified sound with control of their own hearing aids. Modelling slow, distinct speech and

¹ WHO (2012) reports that 33% of people over 65 experience disabling hearing loss and Greville (2005) reports 22.1 % of New Zealanders over 65 not in residential care as having disabling hearing loss.

speaking up help. As does, overtly checking that everyone can hear when volume drops and that people are seated to maximise their hearing. Group members may not always remember to speak audibly and I stay alert for blank or puzzled looks, sometimes prompting, “Jane, can you hear Jock?” or “Jock, I wonder if Jane could hear what you said.” One of my personal challenges has been my concern that when I am talking slowly and loudly I may sound patronising. I have needed mirroring from two co-facilitators to disabuse me of this and still have lingering doubts from time to time.

Sometimes all these approaches are insufficient. In another group, Beth and Barbara have significant hearing loss, needing people to be in touching distance to hear. Both are also losing their sight (both are legally blind). Cath has a neurological condition affecting her voice, which is soft, but blessedly distinct. She and Beth have an immediate positive tele connection. They move so their chairs are touching, Cath to Beth’s right and ‘good ear’. The rest of us move in close to them in a small circular huddle with our chairs touching. This has to be a small group, a maximum of four plus the group leader.

Some implications for leadership

I briefly considered asking Elizabeth if I might move her walker to the side of her chair. I knew she strongly values her independence. I also imagined this might draw unwanted attention to her walker early in the group, so I refrained. Daphne took initiative. Feeling seen and valued by her, Elizabeth developed a full and flexible response, and their connection strengthened. When group members are warmed up to each other, they are usually solicitous of others’ physical needs and matter of fact in problem solving. I keep a watching brief that this is happening.

When I direct people to work in pairs, everyone does not have the same opportunity to choose and be chosen unless I consider their physical abilities.

Madge walks jerkily, slowly, and with difficulty, and chooses not to use a stick. In the first session of a *Saying YES to Today* group, she sits in the chair closest to the door; the last one in the semicircle. Beside her is Edith, an obese woman who also finds moving from her chair a challenge. When people talk in pairs they turn naturally to each other. This enables Edith, who has a very small social atom, to make a positive connection in the group. However, Madge is depressed by the loss of her wide ranging community involvement and social life due to her reduced mobility. She is hoping to make new friends in the group and a focus on Edith would be a restrictive solution for her. The following week, when she is the first to arrive and heads towards the first seat, I propose she choose a different one. “Why?” I suggest that if she sits in a seat further into the horseshoe, there

will be people on either side of her with whom she can easily talk. She nods emphatically and takes a seat two thirds of the way around the group. Coincidentally, Edith is the next to arrive. Madge waves her to a chair a third of the way around the group explaining, "We will both be able to easily meet new people, as well as each other". She promptly asks Edith about her planned visit to the museum during the week and draws Pamela into their conversation as she arrives.

Often a person in a wheelchair is more mobile than group members using walkers or sticks; sometimes not. Susan has used a wheel chair for several years and handles it adroitly. When I direct people to place themselves on a continuum, I concretise where the line is in the action space and do not give any additional thought to how she will manage this. Sarah, on the other hand, has had her legs amputated in the last six months and her wheelchair looks cumbersome. Visual imagery peppers her speech, she is quick on the uptake and an eager contributor. So I trust that she will give an accurate response and be unfazed when I ask her, "If there were a line that showed how much you worry about this concern, from once a year to once a month to more often than once an hour, where would you be?" When she says, "Once a day", I create the continuum so that 'once a day' is where she is and others move to place themselves. This approach invariably involves altering the action space and temporarily moving chairs.

When spouses attend a group and one uses a wheelchair, the other partner is often used to pushing the wheelchair and sitting together, and they readily turn towards each other. This is true of David and Deidre, both of whom are unassuming. Early in the group I expect that if I ask David whom he would like to work with, he will be flustered by the attention. Also, he will probably choose Deidre. I number people one, two, one, two and direct people to choose someone of the same number. Derek is quick to move to David. Deidre looks anxiously around the 'twos' and is chosen by Diana. As I notice David establishing mutually positive relationships, I simply direct people to choose a partner. David continues to be chosen but isn't able to move easily to choose; nor does he signal a choice non-verbally. In the fourth session I ask him, "Who would you most like to talk to about this?" and with only slight hesitation he responds. The rest of the group then choose their partners.

Ted and Trish also sit beside each other. Before the group starts he talks to Beth on his left and Tom on Trish's right. She sits quietly, hands clasped in her lap, head slightly bowed. In the opening name round he adds comments. I imagine Trish wheeling him to his chosen partner and her then being the last to choose. I ask him whom he would like to share with. Trish is free to join the rest of the group in choosing.

As I aim to be inclusive, I am becoming more alert and responsive to group members' physical needs. This starts with choices about venues, group size and membership. I am intrigued how people's physical capacities and their role systems together shape their ability to participate, and this recognition stimulates me to develop ways of intervening that enable participation by taking account of, without focussing on, people's disabilities.

I recognise that when I am thoughtful about the simplest directions, such as "choose a partner", I can enhance participants' experience of the group. Not taking anything for granted expands my awareness, my capacity to be in the moment, and my enjoyment of leading.

Rich life experience

There is a depth of life experience and resourcefulness in WellElder groups. Though anxious about attending a personal development group, nearly always for the first time, people want to use their time well and gain what they can. In these groups I often need to make only small interventions to encourage and promote interaction between group members. These interactions enable people's strengths to shine through and their challenges to be normalised. They also provide opportunities for group members to learn from each other and develop their own approaches. Opportunities may be presented by something as apparently simple as a group member being late.

At the start of session four of the therapeutic group several people express disappointed surprise that Elsie is not here with some wondering, "I hope she's alright", "Maybe she decided not to come out in this weather" and "Perhaps the buses are running late". Living independently in the home she shared with her husband until his death three years ago, Elsie is a spry 93. She's about 1.3 metres tall, slightly built and has the appearance of an alert blackbird. She's been a lively participant in subgroups and at afternoon tea, her brief contributions in the whole group have been apposite, sometimes dryly humorous.

We are early in the warm up phase when Elsie bustles in, clearly pleased. When Sally asks if she is alright, Elsie nods and deadpans the details of her late arrival. As usual she had caught the bus that had arrived at the stop 150 metres from our venue twenty minutes before the start of the group. Her problem was then how to cross the road and walk the short distance without being blown over in severe gale force winds. No one at the bus stop to ask for an arm. She waits but no one comes. When a taxi drives by, she has the solution. She waits ten more minutes; no taxis. She hails the first one she sees. Initially the driver is taken aback to learn she only wants to go across the road and she fears he will refuse to take her. Then he's amused,

delivers her to the door and refuses to take her fare. Everyone claps. John acknowledges, "I wouldn't have thought of that" and Sally says, "Even if I had, I wouldn't have done it". There is a thoughtful silence. "And now?" I ask Sally. She looks hesitantly towards Anne.

In the previous session the theme had been the challenge of maintaining one's own energy, let alone interests, when caring for others. Of the ten group members, three are caring for spouses, as was Elsie in the last years of her husband's life. Sally's husband has recently moved into a dementia care unit where she visits him twice daily. Jen is parenting a troubled and behaviourally challenging grandson.

Sally says, "I'd like to have the gumption to hail a taxi to cross the road if I couldn't do it on my own." Anne replies, "I wouldn't have the guts", then looks at Elsie and says, "But if you hadn't, I'd be missing you here." John, Sally and Anne now reflect that they want to be more creative in finding ways to look after themselves and more 'permission giving' in following through. Jen and Peter nod. Group warm-up is high with everyone absorbed in the discussion. We break into groups of threes for people to generate options for themselves. The groups are lively and there is much laughter.

John has previously shared that he and his wife are missing the travel that had been a feature of their lives. The following week, he reports that he surprised her with a packed picnic basket, outdoor wheelchair already stowed in the car, and they greatly enjoyed lunch in the sun at a table overlooking the beach. She was moved by his thoughtfulness and he comments on the "deep joy of being together, even though her health is crap". Jen is amazed that after a week with a daily half hour of 'silent time together' with her grandson – he absorbed in games, she in her book – she's feeling warmth in their relationship for the first time since he's been living with her.

As they shift focus off the physical and emotional demands of caring 24/7 for a partner with a chronic, disabling condition and pay attention to what revitalises them and gives them pleasure, people rediscover vitality that nourishes them and their relationships. The strongly held but seldom fully articulated belief that self care is 'selfish' and irresponsible is giving way to more complex and life affirming solutions. As real as before, the difficulties of 'making time' for oneself are challenges to be creatively addressed and move slightly into the background.

Interest in absent Elsie is piqued by her pleasure in arriving: the group warms up to curiosity and Elsie responds to this genuine interest in her. She basks in her new role of dramatic raconteur and group's admiration of her spunk. John notices her creative problem solving, Sally her 'cheek in breaking rules' and Lily her determination to be here. Others affirm Elsie

with nods and smiles, and when they are working in threes, I hear Jen highlight Elsie's commitment to both herself and the group. Lily is struck by her patience and Ted by her determination. Each person has a new spark, a new idea of how s/he could be. These are fanned into life in collaboration with others with similar challenges and diverse solutions and strategies. Each person developing new approaches provides fresh inspiration and practical and enabling solutions for each other. The next week everyone is moved by John's love for his wife. Several people recognise that in paring back what they have enjoyed with their partners to its essence, they can continue enjoying important things in different forms as their physical abilities diminish.

A group is often one of the few, sometimes the only, place an older house-bound person may have to connect with others and the only place of being in touch with their own unique abilities, being noticed and appreciated. The latter was true for Joan.

Five minutes before the start of a *Saying YES to Today* group's third session, she walks in, greeting each of the five seated group members by name as she heads towards a chair. She asks Pam, seated beside her, how she is. Joan listens attentively, asking pertinent questions, nodding and engaging Pam. As people share in the opening discussion for the day, a theme emerges of taking pleasure in small things, pausing in our days to savour beauty, especially in the natural world. Poetically and with a touch of humour, Joan describes the pleasure of sitting in her comfy chair, warmed by the morning sun, watching the play of light on the harbour. Her warm empathy, her attention and responsiveness to each person, and her willingness to share early in the group when others are hesitant, all contribute to Joan being valued by other group members. Her spontaneity draws people together.

A little later people are talking in pairs about something they worry about. Joan looks very confused and Raewyn, her partner, looks up anxiously towards me. I join them and Raewyn reports that Joan has just said, "I have no idea how I got here today and how I'm going to get home". Raewyn is at a loss how to respond. I reassure Joan that I shall be taking her home and her lunch is being held for her. After a few seconds, her face clears, she nods, and turns back to Raewyn with a question about her.

Originally, Joan's son approached WellElder about counselling for his mother. He believed she was acting 'out of character' in not settling into her apartment in a retirement village and was not 'making enough effort'. It was soon apparent to her counsellor that Joan's dementia was further advanced than her family realised. She didn't remember the counsellor from one week to the next, nor did she recollect what they had discussed. In her professional life Joan had been a senior occupational therapist, well

known and respected by colleagues across a range of professions. Indeed, I remember attending a meeting skilfully facilitated by her about 10 years ago.

Joan's short-term memory is now compromised. I had collected her for the group and returned her home each week. When she led the way from her apartment, she became lost trying to reach the front entrance. Unable to remember whom she has met in the village, she is not making new friends and is feeling isolated and bewildered.¹

A professional lifetime of people and group skills are still very alive in, and accessible to, her. With everyone in the group wearing large typed name labels, she effortlessly and naturally addresses people by name. In discussion focused in the here and now she makes astute observations while being warm and empathic. The group is an opportunity, no longer occurring in her living situation, for Joan to participate effectively in discussion, relate to others responsive to her, and be valued for her contribution and herself.

Often being in touch with progressive functioning from earlier in life can be a catalyst for current change, both as a confidence booster and because it is more straightforward to re-engage rusty roles than develop new ones.

In session one of a *Taming Anxiety* group, Bill sits hunched, head down much of the time, his body twisted. He makes only fleeting eye contact with anyone. His comments, directed to the group leaders, are vague and when encouraged to be more specific, he struggles to do so. He chooses to sit beside me each session. As group members give him space to find his words, he starts to make eye contact. He reveals that he is recovering from a head injury.

Arriving in good time for session four, Bill takes a seat opposite me and beside Enid, with whom he has several times worked in a pair or threesome and they chat until the formal start. We asked people to 'catch an anxious thought' during the week and I ask about their experience. After two people have spoken, Bill squares his shoulders, glances quickly around the group, looks briefly at me, then takes a breath and launches in, "I was feeling I couldn't keep going like this, always expecting the worst, always expecting criticism..." Head downcast, he takes a rasping breath. As he pauses, the group is with Bill, everyone intently focused. I direct him to look briefly at two group members. He glances left towards Enid who nods encouragingly. Looking right to Colin, he can't help but catch some of the warmth from other group members. He continues, his tone firmer, "Then I

¹ In *Contented Dementia* Oliver James (2008) presents the SPECAL method. The person with a dementia is valued and validated through doubling, though James does not use the term.

thought, 'We talked about how to deal with our thoughts, different ways of doing this' so I took out the piece of paper (a handout from session three) and worked through the steps and I felt better, much better. Then I thought, 'I've let this [anxiety] become a habit and it's a habit that doesn't help my life or everyone around me.' So I looked at the paper again and realised that I **do** have strengths to tackle this. I gave up smoking and I gave up drinking. If I could do those, I can give up the habit of being anxious." He slumps in relief and exhaustion. Then, with a wan smile, Bill looks more slowly around the group, taking in their warmth and encouragement.

People in WellElder groups have such varied and rich life experience. This is often not obvious from their presenting issues or circumstances and sometimes not readily apparent from their current roles. People do not skite about their professional or personal lives or accomplishments. Seldom, if ever, do they talk in their day-to-day lives of the adversities overcome that have helped shape their current strengths: giving up a child for adoption, having a child die, being a refugee, staying in a loveless and violent marriage for 50 years, becoming a widow, the grief of 'losing' a loved life partner to a dementia, shaping a new purpose post retirement, deciding to live independently as long as possible with a degenerative condition, a rift with adult children, etc. As they reveal themselves in a group and have others respond to them, people discover anew attributes they have lost touch with, become aware of abilities and strengths they are currently using but not having recognised by others or themselves, and sometimes develop new roles. These attributes are enacted in the here and now of the group. I feel wonder and privilege that I lead these groups.

At times I question my role as leader. When I reflect on the richness of the group, I become grounded in my purpose of promoting awareness through group interaction and marvel at how small an intervention is usually needed. I am discovering a gentle touch as a leader and realising that in this context it is usually enough – effective and satisfying.

Conclusion

I'm committed to all our clients, and anyone eligible to be a client, being able to attend and participate in our groups. In working towards this, I am learning to pay greater attention to the group environment and becoming more sensitive to the interplay of the environment, people's physical abilities and limitations and their roles that enable and limit their involvement.

I am frequently moved by people's courage and determination and generosity towards each other. I repeatedly experience people choosing to go with their motivating force, finding ways to live fully and vibrantly,

saying YES to themselves and life, sometimes in the face of considerable difficulties.

I love this work!

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Rosemary was the manager and clinical leader of WellElder through its establishment and first seven years. She has stepped down from these roles to spend more time with clients and is enjoying doing so.

Psychodrama and Infant Mental Health: An Essay and a Conversation

Patricia O'Rourke and Heather Warne

The context for the work is an Infant Therapeutic Reunification Service. It is a joint health and child protection initiative in South Australia that works with 0-3 year-old infants who have been abused or neglected and their parent/s. Abusive parents come to the Service with minimal relational capacity and often actively work against being in relationship as their whole experience of relationship has been frightening. The focus of the work is learning to be in relationship.

The client in the story has generously given permission for the work to be published and presented.

Patricia O'Rourke: The reason for putting this piece of writing about this work into the psychodrama world is its eloquence. This work, and how we do it, is a synthesis or integration of psychodrama and infant mental health principles that enlarges both areas.

First the essay...

Moments from inside an Infant Therapeutic Reunification Service¹

He turns up regularly, weekly, though sometimes late. Today he's on time, and sits awkwardly in the waiting room. He's thick set, 24 years old, pumps weights and drinks Red Bull. He never wears a jumper. His baby, a girl, soon to be a toddler, sits in her pusher, face slightly dirty, big blue eyes alert, wispy hair awry and poking out from under a red and white knitted hat with red pom poms dangling from the ear flaps. Her feet are bare. Today she grins at me, a wide toothy smile – she has a big gap between those two front teeth, and she looks just like her dad. Although her paternity is obvious, in the beginning it was contentious and required scientific verification.

¹ This essay by Heather Warne won the 2015 Ann Morgan Prize. The Ann Morgan prize was created by the Victorian Branch of the Australian Infant Mental Health Association to invite contributions that illuminate something about the infant's experience and also to be a forum for creative writing not bound by the rules and restrictions defining many professional publications.

He is less effusive in his greeting, doesn't directly say hello. He's a bit shy, socially awkward. The greeting is important. Sometimes our parents can't share, not even with their infant, and it can be a mistake to greet the infant first; if the parent flickers, and turns away just slightly with dry displeasure, we're off to a bad start. This dad is not like that, but he is on the edge of his comfort zone, here under duress. Mostly he warms up as we trundle down the corridor, through the grey security door then right, left, left and into the playroom. He reminds me of a friendly but slightly inept bear with a dolly in a flimsy toy pusher.

Usually he connects with me, on his own terms, by way of cars. He relates his latest mechanical exploits – the new shockers he's just installed on the V6, the deal he's wrangled for good second-hand tyres, and after this (meaning the session), he's off to the wreckers with his dad because the timing belt is on its way out. I will ask him again, a little later, about where the baby will be and I'll say something like, 'Wow that's a long time for her to sit in the car ...' And he will say, 'Oh she's used to it,' and I will grapple with how much of a problem it is in the general scheme of things.

But today it's a bit different – he sucks on his can of Red Bull and fiddles with his phone as he pushes her along. He's not looking at me. Just as we get to the room his phone rings, and he says can he answer it? Perhaps he's remembering last time, when, sitting on the floor with the baby, I relayed what I felt, what the baby might feel, as he texted back and forth to one of the candidates he's vetting for a relationship. Perhaps he's remembering something of that conversation, carefully delivered with humour and empathy, so as not to shame him. I said how I felt alone and forgotten right then and there, while he held his phone, in his hands and his mind, and it was probably like that for his baby too. He scrabbled about, keen to tell me that the 'chick' on the receiving end of his attentions was only free now, since it was lunchtime... How would he manage, I wondered out loud, the romance and compulsion of a new relationship, while caring for a baby? Easy he said, we'd only do stuff where she could come too. He has criteria, has learned from his mistakes, he says. Good with kids is on top of his list, and he can provide details.

But maybe he did feel criticised, or there's something else on his mind. Whatever it is, the baby is here, however he feels, and how does he manage that? She's off by herself, busy with the toys, but she looks at him more than when they first came; she was eight months old. Now she's almost walking and he's keen for her to be properly mobile. Small babies are not really his thing.

There's no doubt she's in his heart, I can feel it in the room. He no longer goes out drinking, he doesn't tangle with the law. He's solid and reliable and committed. He's recently been shopping for her, for new clothes, and,

apart from the hat, she's decked out in pink. Sometimes she arrives buttoned at the front when I'm pretty sure the buttons belong at the back. Her bottles are clean, and he tells me she gobbles up the vegies he cooks for her. She's healthy, growing well, and meeting her developmental milestones – a far cry from the emaciated, silent, dull-eyed infant who arrived, aged four months, precipitously into his care.

Our Service, small, committed, and meagrely resourced, works with infants and parents at risk. All of our clients are involved with the child protection system. Our job is to put the infant first. We grapple with the complexities of parenting capacity assessment, out-of-home care, early decision-making in the best interests of the infant and within their developmental timeframe, and where possible, intensive therapeutic support with the infant and their parent/s or carer/s. Most of our therapeutic work is with mothers and their infants, most of the fathers are violent and don't have what it takes.

This father, however, is not violent, and took on his daughter's care when the mother couldn't do it. Within the hour he'd said yes, and had rallied his network and the basic necessities – cot, nappies, bottles and formula, singlets and grow suits and blankets. Fatherhood was huge for him, and he took it on. She arrived from her mother via a child protection worker, a haunted shell. Her mother was homeless and mostly drugged. This infant, like many we see, had witnessed violence, ugly and terrifying. She was left alone, to scream and despair, her bottles filthy and unfilled. She spent days at a time with mere acquaintances when her mother failed to return. She'd been seriously ill and was way too thin, admitted to hospital for 'failure to thrive'. Her body told the story. Her mother, repeating her own history, did not know how to do it differently.

He had fallen into a relationship of sorts when the mother was 'up'. They met through a friend, and for a few good weeks, she was fun loving and affectionate; then she moved in. She needed somewhere to stay. They talked about children, but she didn't stay faithful. He found the evidence on her phone. By then she was pregnant, and stealing his money, and leaving her other child in his care. He left, or threw her out, it's not clear which. He never went back. She alleged that he threatened their unborn child and took up again with a man who beat her. The father, our client, wasn't at the birth, and she disputed paternity. Hence the test.

He's not good at relationships, he says. As a boy he was angry, difficult to manage, and struggled at school. He received a dual diagnosis that has stuck. Asperger's Syndrome and ADHD. Heavily medicated to keep him compliant, he gained huge amounts of weight, and thus dulled and conspicuous, struggled more at school. He started drinking and thieving, and 'got in with the wrong crowd'. It seems no one heeded that he lived in

fear, his father drank and abused his mother. When his parents separated, home was a toxic soup of blame and acrimony. When we talk about it now, he glides over the pain, says his father has given up the drink, goes fishing instead, and that he, the grandfather, has Asperger's as well. The idea that something else was going on is very difficult to face and he doesn't appear to have taken in the recent psychiatric opinion that he was labelled wrongly...

He says he doesn't think his baby has Asperger's, and I agree. We edge about it some more. Trauma can look like Asperger's, I say, and again we talk about her brain, what all those stress hormones do to a small baby, how she learned not to rely on anyone and what she needs now. He says he's getting better at that, and I agree. At some point, he gathers her in, a bit rough, but he holds her close and for a moment she snuggles in. She goes to him more. There's an authentic quality in what he says, and I trust it. He says he's not good at the feeling stuff, and finding a way to say things.

And so it goes. We talk about the past, and what happens in the moment. I try to give to him what I want him to give to her. I wonder what he's thinking and feeling, what does he imagine she's thinking and feeling, tell him what I see him doing, let him know that I like him and know him to be a good person, understand that parenting is hard. Especially when you weren't expecting it and are going it alone when you really want a family, different from when you were little. Back and forth we go, between the baby and him, including both. What do you think that's like for her? Did you see what she did when you sat on the floor? What do you think it's like for her to see her mother? Is she any different when she gets home? This sounds like an interrogation, but I hope it's not. It's to and fro, joining them up, making links that weren't obvious before.

And I talk about how weird it is to come in here and talk to someone as old as me in ways that he's not used to and not comfortable with and is anything we're doing here helpful because sometimes it's hard to tell... and at regular intervals he talks about cars. He's not deterred by my ignorance.

Although awkward and at times repetitive, these sessions are not that difficult. Despite some worries about the time this baby spends in the car and wrecking yards, and sitting in her playpen next to the latest being worked on vehicle, this dad is good enough. He knows his baby, thinks about her, plans for her. He accepts help. And she relies on him. She makes a beeline for him when she's hurt or frightened, looks for him and cries when he's not there. Though she's too self-sufficient, and cruises the furniture on tiptoes, and parts of her are hidden, she is safe, and held in his arms and mind.

Not so, for others that we see. Young infants, for example, with unexplained bruising or broken bones, the ones who hold themselves rigid

and stare with hopeless eyes into the distance, the ones who look down, with flat lifeless faces and their hair worn away in telling patches from too much lying down or rocking back and forth. The ones who spit up their milk and scream without warning, or the ones who are eager and over-bright and latch on to strangers with desperate eyes. These are the ones who are not safe and not seen, and exist in helpless desperation.

As I recall the many such infants who come in through that grey security door, part of my brain disengages, and something else, akin to instinct, takes over, as it does in the room. The language of young infants is powerful and primitive. It is as if they speak through the feeling states that they evoke, how they hold themselves, and where they look. Infants cannot lie. They cannot help but tell the truth of their experience, the truth of their connection with the adult who holds them. Feeling states that are difficult to bear invade the room. Helpful theories and models simply evaporate, and, just as the infant cannot escape, I feel as if I am living on wits alone, with nowhere to hide. Trapped in their bodies, exquisitely sensitive, and helplessly vulnerable, the infant has no choice in the matter ... the best they can do is to not look, hold themselves rigid, go still and silent and sometimes floppy, or overly bright and wide eyed, whichever serves them best. There's such rawness in the room, so much excruciating need. And there is always more than one baby, though only one is visible. The mother's infant self, as well as mine, are also present.

The mothers we work with are always wounded, horribly wounded, and champions of survival. They say the things that, logically, we would want to hear, and they trust no one.

'Good mother, no drugs, no violence, reformed, unfairly treated, love my baby, baby perfect, a few past hiccups but all good now. No one will listen, it's so unfair, I've done nothing wrong, I really am a good mother, had a few issues keeping things tidy, I'm not seeing the father, the baby is perfect, my world, my life, I'll do anything for him. I will get him back, I know it. It's just a matter of time and showing up here. I've done everything they've asked of me.'

How can she believe, though we've made it clear, that her best chance is to tell the truth? In her mind the truth, some version of this, would surely seal her fate: her childhood, or what little she remembers of it, was awful. She didn't feel safe, wasn't safe. From early on, she knew violence, abuse, neglect, terror, abandonment, and utter aloneness. She learned to numb herself. At some point, often very young, she fell pregnant. The promise of a baby, as if by magic, would fill the void. Here at last was someone who would love her, and not leave her.

It was not as she'd hoped. The infant screamed, was helpless, needed her. There was no one to help, she trusted no one to help. The partner, jealous,

became more violent. She did her best, but sooner or later, she spiralled down, and reports were made. Or even worse, she'd been through it all before, once, twice, three times or more, and they took the baby early, straight from hospital...

We search for the signs that show she recognises her part. She has, though she did not mean to, hurt her baby. Either directly, or indirectly, either way the baby was not safe, as she was not safe. She has to see that she has done to her baby what was done to her, and to face the shame of that. She needs to face and to feel what that was like for her baby. Then we can work with her, that little chink in her armour.

The process will be long, imperfect and blundering, with moments of triumph and no guarantee of success. We will sit through session after session of rage and blame, anguish and grief. It will be the infant who leads the way; he will turn in circles, or back away, he will spill his jumbled world onto the floor. We will sit with chaos, sit in chaos, amongst a sea of plastic coins, pots and pans and teacups, dinosaurs and crocodiles, wild animals and items from a doctor's set. It will be a long time before the train tracks join up and the train doesn't crash. We will wait for the crocodiles to move out of the doll's house. We will try to make sense of it all, and see through the infant's eyes.

My part will be to show up regularly and willingly. The process will challenge me to the core, to sit with what is not contained, to hold a boundary, to stay thinking and connected, with myself and them. At best we will build enough safety for a real relationship to emerge, one in which vulnerability can be shown, pain can be held, and soothing experienced. It will be difficult to get there. The work requires a team, regular supervision, and a shared belief that change is possible; intergenerational trauma does not have to go on and on.

They're back, the dad and his baby. They're fifty minutes late. I go to the waiting room, pleased to see them; I thought they weren't coming. She's straining to get out of her pusher, and missing a sock. He's dishevelled but upbeat. They have been on holiday to see his mum and celebrate the baby's first birthday. They've been on the road since early morning, have just arrived in town. I take a breath and imagine them, flying down the highway in the V6 with the spoiler on the boot and her strapped into the baby seat, staring out the window with eyes glazing over, or asleep. I'm glad they're safe. It's not that he's keen to see me; he's in trouble with his social worker for missing access, and he didn't dare not show up. Nevertheless, he bubbles with news. His mum is proud of him, she even said so, and they went camping, all together, and cooked lamb on a spit. The baby had a great time too, he said, and his best mate has just become a father. He wants

to move back to the town he grew up in. It's as if in claiming his baby he has also been claimed, back into his family.

A while ago I asked if I could write about them, and told him why. He laughed, a bit bemused and said 'yeah, sure', as long as he didn't have to write anything.

The next thing, he says, will be to take her fishing, out in the boat. I feel instantly queasy, and I say so. He's been thinking about that, the way he got his sea legs was to get started early, when he was five. She's only one, I say. We'll just do little trips, he says, and if she's not okay, we'll turn around and go back in. He's saving up for a very small life jacket.

Discussion

Heather Warne: It's interesting to think in terms of psychodrama about this piece of writing and my work generally as an infant mental health specialist, because I've been in a supervision group with you for the past 12 years, and everything I've learned is about using my self in relationship as the agent of change. I think it would be helpful if you said something about how you have been providing supervision to workers in the field of infant mental health and then I'll talk in a bit more detail about what I've learned.

Patricia O'Rourke: I've been providing supervision as a psychodramatist for a number of years now to groups of infant mental health workers from all different backgrounds. These workers have never been to any other psychodrama event. It's been very valuable, I think, because the work with infants is so preverbal and psychodrama has so much to offer in this area.

Heather: Yes, and managing intense feeling states is such a big part of the work. In fact, I think it's at the heart of the work, which was what I wanted to convey through the essay. It's through supervision that I've gradually become more aware of my own feeling states, and am better at tracking my feelings moment to moment. I know if I'm present or not present. I'm not afraid of my feelings and have become more accepting of my own sadness, fear and rage, as well as joy and excitement.

I'm also much more able to be with other people in an immediate way, feel with them, double them and stay with those feelings. I don't try to make other people not feel whatever they feel. I'm also less likely with clients these days to think it's 'all about me'. I use whatever feelings are in the room as information, rather than evidence of my own dysfunction.

On a more challenging note, I've learned that how I am in the room with a client really affects the outcome of a session, and that what I'm not conscious about in myself plays itself out in the relationship. For example, if I am rejecting of aspects of myself, I also reject that same thing in my client.

It is still a difficult thing to manage the very deep feelings that get triggered in me by injured babies and I can get shut down and rejecting around that, but as my supervisor, you're alert to that, which is a good thing!

I also think about roles these days and understand what it is to develop a new role and to help others to do this. For example, to assist parents to develop new roles around parenting, such as learning to think about what drives children's behaviour so that they become more tolerant and kind.

In fact, I've learned an awful lot from supervision in an organic kind of way. This conversation has made me more aware of the actual elements of what I've learned. I could sum it up this way – supervision has helped me to bring realness into the therapy room as well as spontaneity, the ability to really be with my clients, and to trust in the process of relationship, so thank you!

Patricia: It's great that we have the opportunity to continue building on those understandings. For example, at our most recent supervision session, we were able to work with the developmental progression from doubling to mirroring, where we saw from the video you brought that he doesn't need doubling so much now, he needs mirroring, and you needed mirroring in our supervision. In that moment (in the session), you didn't know how to mirror him because like everyone else, you haven't had enough mirroring. When I saw him, and you with him (in the video) you were feeling yourself getting bored to death by his endless talking about cars. We saw together that in the absence of him getting a mirror from you, he's gone off into his old coping role which he probably developed with his dad as a way to have some relationship with somebody. In this role, he yabbers on about cars – which is a bit downgrading of it because I'm sure that it's an interesting conversation at different times, but here in your conversation, he's using it to gently dust you off... lift you up and dust underneath and pop you back and carry on talking about the gear box...

Heather: Well it was the engine mounts that were snapping this week and the engine was bouncing around under the bonnet and I thought, it's getting more and more extreme, and that had me thinking that there's something I'm really missing here because the engine's about to fall out...

Patricia: It's a very interesting analogy; the engine mounts are snapping, the engine's bouncing around. If you were doing a psychodrama enactment, you might invite him to create the engine and the mounts and the snapping. He would be those things that he's describing to you. But you can't do that in our work like that – the baby's there for a start and it's a different kind of

process – it's not the contract. But you mirror and you double because you know these things, you have practiced them.

The writing process is a sort of doubling process in your self. It's like a production. Instead of actually producing the action on the stage you've produced it on the paper.

Heather: I find writing very enlivening. Through the writing I get immersed in the 'drama' and the felt sense of the session and at the end I feel more settled and have a new perspective. It's like an un-jumbling process that feels satisfying. And this is also how I feel at the end of a supervision session where I've really allowed the messiness of the work and my feelings about it to spill out into that trusted space.



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Heather now works as an infant mental health specialist with the Infant Therapeutic Reunification Service based at the Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide and maintains a small private practice.

Heather sustains herself by spending time with her grandchildren, writing, and occasionally getting to dig holes and plant things in her garden.



Psychodrama: Descendant of the Shamans

Katherine Howard

Psychodrama can be seen as a bridge between shamanism and psychotherapy ... Moreno's life and work embodied a confluence of magic, science and religion. (Landy, 1986, p. 70)



Photo of Grandmother Tree courtesy of the author's friend, Sequoia Krop

I have come to view shamanism as a predecessor of psychodrama: an ancestor. Perhaps shamanism lives in psychodrama, and psychodrama in shamanism. Perhaps they are siblings. Psychodrama and shamanism live inside me, intertwined and side by side, intimately connected. This is my world, my world view. This article is an exploration of the links between psychodrama and shamanism. As a beginning, I invite you to journey with me on a vision quest. This will serve as a grounding for later discussions.

The Vision Quest

I walk up the mountain. I feel like Saucepan Man from my favourite childhood book, Enid Blyton's *The Magic Faraway Tree*. I am delighted to be clattering in the way of the saucepans but loaded and awkward nevertheless. I remember my childhood times of climbing a tree and reading for hours, perched amongst her branches, becoming all the characters in those pages. I have my tent, my bedding, my clothes, 10 litres of water - all on my back or hanging from hooks and belts on my body. I walk to Grandmother Tree. Ancient mother of this land. Protectress.

I am Grandmother Tree. My back is bent from the many, many years of standing on this mountain, bending with the wind. My trunk is charred where fires have licked at my bark, and never quite demolished me. My leaves and great candle like cones are the signs of my proud fertility. My roots reach far into this dry brown red earth. I feel my sisters and brothers through this earth-far far away. I sense the ancient oaks, Gog and Magog on the other side of the earth, and nearer, my children and grandchildren, growing vigorously around me. I am old, so old. It is rare to see a human. A thing barely noticed. Today, I feel generous to this creature trudging past me, up the mountain. She stops beside me and turns. I feel her probing, her questing, her respect, her love. She bows toward me, and turns to continue on her way.

I am myself. Grandmother Tree speaks to me: "Go well. I am with you". I have a deep sense of trust that settles in my womb, a globe of warmth and 'rightness'. I send a ray of warmth and trust toward Grandmother Tree, as I bow toward her with gratitude and respect.

I climb. The rocks around me are ancient serpentine, green and brown and white, protruding from the earth, large and small, rough and jagged, barely worn; just as they were when spewed up from a nearby ancient volcano aeons old. I stop. There is a clearing amongst the stones where I will camp.

I am Serpentine. I remember my birth; that fiery, molten time at the centre of this earth. My kin were sent in all directions. We are connected. I have been here since my birth, changing from molten into hardened stone. I have been brushed by creatures: kangaroos, snakes and lizards. Very occasionally, and only as if dreaming, have I seen the dark hand of a human in all those centuries. And now there is one, light of skin, standing right here, dropping large objects. She exudes a sense of purpose. And then her hand is on me gently caressing. How strange.

I am myself. The Serpentine stone feels hard against my hand. Rough, sharp. I remember standing on Bridhe's beach on Iona mere months ago, and marvelling at the rounded green serpentine pebbles that cover the beach. And now I am here, touching their kin. I have with me a sacred stone that found me on Iona; a Serpentine, my Womb Stone. This sacred stone is memory of the centre of my being, my essence, my soul. I place the sacred stone, my Womb Stone, on this Serpentine. I have a sense of them fitting together, linking, like an ancient jigsaw puzzle. Mutual trust is here in this relationship. This mountain will be my questing place for three days and three nights.

I have created a sacred circle. I take off my clothes and lie down on the Earth. Base Camp is a long walk away. Down the mountain. There are no paths formed by human feet. My power animals, Bat and Falcon, are here. And my spirit guides, Bidy and Mary. They are my companions on this journey. We have constant conversations, often loving, and sometimes argumentative, but always fully present to each other.

Dusk is falling. The air is cooling. Clothed again, I hear other Questers in the distance, drumming to the rhythm of the failing light. I smell smoke. I look across the tree tops to the next ridge and see a line of fire approaching. Redder and redder as the sky gets darker and darker. There are flares of fire as she creeps closer and closer and devours the dry shrubs in her way.

I am Fire. I am red and orange and yellow and searingly hot. I want to spread and consume. I lick gently at this shrubby bush and I am deeply satisfied when it bursts into flames. I belong here. This is my time. It matters not to me who is in my way. My path is my own.

I am afraid. I imagine walking back down the mountain in the dark, crashing through the bush, the smell of smoke choking me as I run from the fire. And what about the safety of my fellow Questers? I dig through my gear to find the walkie talkie. The walkie talkie mocks me as I make the decision to call. I detest being vulnerable and afraid. I hear my spirit guide tut-tutting.

"Get on with it," she says. "Haven't you learnt yet. You are strongest when you are vulnerable."

Base Camp does not know of the fire. They respond.

The Base Camp response is illuminated several weeks later, on the psychodramatic stage, when I am directing an enactment. Two women from Base Camp, including the protagonist, climb the mountain to observe the fire. They see a strange golden globe of light between the trees. They reverse

roles with the light. Through continued role reversals, a relationship is developed. The golden globe of light is mysterious in origin. It says, "all will be well." The women warm-up to being practical and knowledgeable, attributes they now recognise they have in abundance. They see that the nature of the fire is that of controlled back burning in low shrubbery. They thank the golden globe of light and return to Base Camp, where they once more contact me on my walkie talkie.

Back in my Vision Quest, and after I have received the call from Base Camp, I am able to talk to the fire. My fear has settled. I let the fire know that I have accepted her purpose and I am no longer afraid. Sleep comes easily that night.

The third night of Vision Quest is traditionally the night of *Crying for a Vision*. After fasting for three days and three nights, we, the Questers and the Base Campers, all in our separate places, drum for hours intending to remain awake all night; crying and calling and waiting for a Vision. I am in the place between sleeping and waking. I Vision:

As I watch the black sky and the dots of sparkle, a star streaks across from right to left. I feel excited. Is it real? Is it Vision? What is the difference? Some minutes pass. A star streaks across the sky from right to left. In that moment, the earth and the trees, the cosmos and the stars and all the life that is contained there, become one giant living globe, of which I am one small interconnected part. Am I different from the star? How are we connected? Some minutes pass. A star streaks across the sky from left to right. I am the star. There is no difference.

The Vision Quest is a shamanic journey and a psychodramatic journey

The construct of the stage does not exist in shamanism. The stage is *Where I Am*. And my shamanic relationships are often not expressed in action. Yet the doubling I receive from my power animals and spirit guides is just as enabling as that which I receive on the psychodramatic stage. The role reversals I perform with the trees and the rocks enable me to know the world through their senses, and for them to know the world through mine. My role development as a healer and a teacher has been supported.

I was excited to find J. L. Moreno (1946, 1978) talk of precedents for psychodrama. "In primitive dramatic rites the aboriginal performer was not an actor, but a priest. He was like a psychiatrist engaged in saving the tribe, persuading the sun to shine or the rain to fall. In order to draw from the gods or from natural forces an appropriate response, methods of

pretending, persuasion and provocation akin to primitive psychodrama may have been widely used." (1978, p. 13).

He tells the story of a man of the Pomo Indians (Californian coast) who had been frightened into illness by an encounter with a wild turkey. The story as told by Moreno, tells that the medicine man became the wild turkey and this created a new response in the sick man.

The shaman and shamanism

Medicine man, medicine woman, priest, priestess, shaman, shamanka; are all titles that have been used interchangeably in many different cultures, in many different lands, over many thousands of years. I have learnt a great deal about shamanism from Jane Hardwicke-Collings (2014), founder of the School of Shamanic Midwifery. The shaman has many roles in a community. She (or he) is often the healer, perhaps using herbs or other medicines from the natural world. The shaman may have the gift of vision or 'the sight', attending to the gate between the worlds and often acting as a gatekeeper. She is the creator and leader of rituals and ceremonies. The shaman midwives lead transitions for individuals and groups in the communities they serve. They midwife birth and new beginnings, they midwife death and endings, they midwife significant change.

There are a range of principles that underpin the modern practice of shamanism. Some of these principles include: that there is an essential energy that permeates and connects everything; that there are realms that are seen and realms that are unseen and these realms are but aspects of the one reality; the keys to an onward journey and soul-based choice are the use of the will and volition (Hardwicke-Collings, 2014).

The connections to psychodrama in these basic concepts beckoned me. I wanted to make sense of these connections. There are five areas that have become significant: psychodrama as revelation, surplus reality, the drama of the soul, the theatre of truth, spontaneity and creativity. Let's look at each area.

Psychodrama as revelation

In *The Passionate Technique*, Antony Williams (1989) distinguishes between psychodrama as therapy and psychodrama as revelation.

In psychodrama as revelation ... the drama is a personal epiphany, a revelation of personal history and potential, an education and support for the passion to know the meaning of one's experience, and the drive to find, show forth and enhance the inner spirit. Psychodrama as therapy is neither 'higher' nor 'lower' than psychodrama as revelation: it merely has a different purpose; the solving of problems (p. 225).

My Vision Quest, and other shamanic journeys I have taken, can be considered psychodrama as revelation. I am also aware of the many times when directing a psychodrama, I have encouraged the protagonist to introduce their power animal, or spirit guide to the stage. Through the use of psychodrama techniques, role reversal in particular, the protagonist has been able to warm up to the 'problem solving', which is actually development of a new role, often a new way of being. Shamanic entities can also be used in psychodrama as therapy. Perhaps the double in psychodrama was centuries ago the shaman or the power animal.

Surplus reality and the matrix of life

In psychodrama as revelation, the *full subjective one-sidedness* of the protagonist is totally supported and explored (Williams, 1989). Full subjective one-sidedness requires the use of techniques to explore both the seen and the unseen realms.

With delight, I read Zerka Moreno and her colleagues: "On the psychodrama stage ... everything has soul and spirit. ... On the magical psychodrama stage we do not separate realities. Psyche and materia are the same thing – everything comes alive." (Moreno, Blomkvist, & Rutzel, 2000, p. 74).

When in the shamanic matrix of life, the earth is alive, the cosmos alive, all beings and creatures and matter have a life within them that we can access and communicate with. There are seen and unseen worlds. The sense of oneness and living connection can sometimes be seen as divinity. Some people may say real and unreal worlds.

Is it real when I am Falcon? It is certainly 'unseen' by all but me, through Falcon's eyes. Is it unreal when a protagonist on a psychodrama stage becomes a golden globe of light? How can it be unreal when we all see her become that light? Seen or unseen, real or unreal, or even divine; this sense of living connectedness, in the here and now, with all things, is central to both shamanism and psychodrama.

In psychodrama, this aspect of shamanism is elucidated by the term surplus reality. "Surplus reality can be defined as an intersection between different realities, known and unknown, where the ego's ability to control and distinguish ceases." (Blomkvist & Rutzel, 1994, in Moreno, Blomkvist, & Rutzel, 2000, p. 23).

Role reversal is a key psychodramatic technique of surplus reality and is experienced in vision quests and other shamanic journeys; I am Grandmother Tree, I am Bidy. A relationship is developed between roles when role reversals continue over time, no matter which realm the roles originate in.

“A shaman is one who flies between the worlds, and who has a foot in both worlds – that of the seen and unseen” (della-Madre, n.d.). This is also true for psychodramatists; director, protagonist and auxiliaries. J. L. Moreno (1947, 1983) explains how having a foot in both worlds, life and fantasy, brings forth the birth of true existence:

Life and fantasy become of the same identity and of the same time. They do not want to overcome reality, they bring it forth. They re-experience it, they are master: not only as fictitious beings, but also of their true existence. How could they otherwise give birth to it once more? (1983, pp. 90-91).

Is it possible that this ‘true existence’ is that essence of me, and of all, which is soul?

The drama of the soul: Soul transformation and healing

Shamans are the healers of their communities. They believe that any illness, of any kind, is a reflection of loss of the soul, or a part of the soul. Psychodrama has often been called the drama of the soul. I think of the soul in a similar way to Sue Monk Kidd (Kidd & Taylor, 2009): “Soul – an immortal essence like the spirit, the rich, inner life of the psyche, the deepest impulse of which is to create wholeness.” My deepest impulse to create wholeness, my soul, continues to lead me to the psychodrama stage *and* to shamanism – sometimes embodied in an auxiliary on the stage, sometimes embodied in my power animals and spirit guides.

When, as a psychodrama director, I instruct the protagonist to walk and soliloquise, to concretize or make bigger some small unconscious movement or body posture, or to become some oppressive force that is responded to from a role deep within the protagonist’s psyche, often with strength they did not know they had; these are times when we see the presence of soul on the psychodrama stage. Soul is present when an auxiliary takes up the role of a camp toilet, Grandmother Tree, or the golden globe of light. My soul is present in my relationship with my Womb Stone. This is the soul creating wholeness.

Zerka Moreno (Moreno, Blomkvist, & Rutzel, 2000) is “a profound believer in the transformation of souls. Our body is something that we just shed. It is really not that important. It is lent to us and we are responsible for taking care of it. Far more important is what you do with your soul.” (p. 53). It is a learning in vision quests, in shamanic journeys and on the psychodrama stage, to trust the soul, my soul, and the souls of others, to take the lead.

Jane Hardwicke-Collings (2014) says that, “the shamanic midwife as healer holds the space for the healing to happen rather than to make it happen.” This is also what a psychodrama director does when he or she

follows the protagonist's warm-up during the drama. Psychodrama techniques are used to create and hold the space for the healing, for the development of progressive roles. Shamans have a relationship orientation and within the relationship, the shaman encourages their clients to be active participants in their own healing, to take control (Tedlock, 2005).

In psychodrama, the warm-up is to the role relationships and the director works to enable autonomy in the protagonist through the skilful use of psychodrama techniques and the powerful holding of space. This provides adequate safety for the development of spontaneity and creativity, the retrieval of the soul; that deepest impulse to create wholeness. The psychodramatist as shaman.

Spontaneity and creativity

I have long loved the dynamic movement in Moreno's (1934, 1978) Canon of Creativity. Moreno describes the universe as "infinite creativity" (1978, p. 39) and spontaneity as an unconservable energy. He talks of a total operation of spontaneity – creativity – warming-up: the act/actor/conservé.¹ Spontaneity is the revitaliser of the conserve. Shamanic journeys and psychodramas are enactments of spontaneity and creativity, the movement of warm-up to create new roles, and a new way of being.

My relationship with Grandmother Tree and my ability to reverse roles with her have given me a new strength of relationship with the land upon which she stands. This has been enlivening for me, as I feel the birth of a sense of belonging that I have not had before. My spirit guides and power animals constantly challenge me and give me new perspectives. This enables me to act spontaneously with new responses to old situations. I have a sense of revitalisation and an enhanced capacity to create.

My deepest impulse to wholeness is the warm-up. My soul is the energy that keeps me moving. Spontaneity is found on a shamanic journey in the moment I see my Womb Stone lying on the beach amongst thousands of other stones. I pick her up and begin to speak to her. Creativity is the bond between us, the relationship of our knowings. The conserve for now is the woman I am at the deepest place in my being as I walk through this world, and the way this woman then works as a psychodramatist and shamanic midwife.

"In the shamanic traditions, health is more than the absence of physical suffering. It is an exuberance and a feeling of vitality and passion for Life." (McGarry, 2005, p. 8). This could also be a description of spontaneity. The Canon of Creativity is a snapshot of vitality and passion for life.

¹ See Canon of Creativity diagram on p. 46 in Moreno (1978).

The theatre of truth, thoughtful analysis and action

To 'shamanically' heal, one must take on the attitude of a warrior, a warrior for Truth, who faces challenge, willing to do what is right, rather than what is comfortable. (McGarry, 2005, p. 8)

As well as the drama of the soul, psychodrama is also known as the 'theatre of truth'. In shamanism and in psychodrama, the choice is mine to take up the truth, and to act upon it.

Max Clayton (1993), in his book *Living Pictures of the Self*, encourages us to take the integrative step after the vision:

Visions of creative living have been expressed in the lives of many individuals, although many visions float around in the consciousness of individuals due to their being caught up with wishful dreaming. An important factor in bringing this vision down to earth is thoughtful analysis. (p. 1)

When he talks of bringing this vision down to earth, Max Clayton is speaking of the psychodrama stage. He could also be speaking of shamanic healing journeys. I would add to his 'thoughtful analysis' the importance of taking action.

What actions do I take in my life after a vision quest, after a shamanic journey, or after a psychodrama? If I do not give thoughtful analysis, if I do not take action, to act upon the truth, does the healing occur?

Reflection

This article has been a process of dreaming and visions. A process of extended thoughtful analysis and accumulating these thoughts; comparing and contrasting with the thoughts of others, both spoken and written. The actions of constructing and writing the article, seeking feedback, re-writing and re-writing, is the theatre of truth. It is profoundly healing for me to express my truth in relationship with the psychodrama community.

Right now, in my practice, I see psychodrama and shamanism complementing each other – as siblings. They are both alive in the here and now. There is an appreciation and valuing of the sacred in shamanism that is also alive in psychodrama. Moreno's (1947, 1983) vision of an enchanted realm continues to beckon me.

there is ... a first universe which contains all beings and in which all events are sacred. I liked that enchanting realm and did not plan to leave it, ever. (1983, p. 3)

Grandmother Tree

*I am you
I am walking with soft feet
Breathing the air with a soft body in constant small movement.
I touch with fragile hands
I see with seeking eyes.
I am you,
My skin is thin.
I marvel at my transience.
I see Ancient land, Mother Ocean, a challenge.
I am you,
I feel displaced.
I yearn for other things, other places other people. Other.
There is always somewhere else, something else,
I am you.
I know Difference.
I feel love..... and fear,
I feel anger..... and joy.
I am you,
What is this thing of holding on?
There is only impermanence.
I am you.
I look to Grandmother Tree
I feel good to come home.
To myself.*



*I am Grandmother Tree.
Come be with me.
I know you. In every brown and green and uncurling leaf, I know you.
In every branch and twig reaching out to the cosmos, in the flow and beat of my sap and the
searching delving strength of my roots. I know you.
The soul of you. The whole.
Come- be with me- you will know me too.
Everything that has been and everything that will be is alive in you and me right now.
We have bowed our backs to the weary wind of time.
Our seeds burst forth with new life.
We have endured searing flames for the sake of the bursting.
There is a fresh wind, creating space for the new.
We have spontaneity you and I- an energy of magic quicksilver fuelling our responses to
happenings around us.
Be with me. Remember the Magic.
Wonder at the oldest of knowings.
We are Warriors of the Knowing- warriors of creativity and action.
Listen and watch now.
There is a fresh wind, creating space for the new.*

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Moreno's Scientific Methodology: By, Of and For the People

Walter Logeman

The chief methodological task of sociometry has been the revision of the experimental method so that it can be applied effectively to social phenomena. (Moreno, 2012, p. 39)

Abstract

This paper¹ is an exposition of the scientific methodology developed by Jacob Levy Moreno. It is based on an extensive reading of his writing and the discovery that the heart of his philosophy includes a research paradigm that incorporates human spontaneity and unpredictability. Six principles have been identified and formed into a working description so that research may be by the people, of the people, and for the people. The paper invites a greater consciousness of this research methodology. The author hopes that practitioners of psychodramatic methods will be encouraged to apply it in their work.

Key Words: Jacob Levy Moreno, social science, scientific methodology, principles of sociometry, psychodrama, experimental design, spontaneity.

Introduction

Early in my reading of J. L. Moreno, I was inspired to discover that he devised an approach to social science that included both the psychological depths and the empirical demands of science. Scientific innovation is a driving force in his work. Moreno devised ways to ethically and accurately investigate people. He found a way to overcome the difficulty for science that humans are unpredictable, complex, and capable of imagination that has no bounds.

Moreno's dramatic methods: role training, spontaneity training, sociodrama and psychodrama are practiced to this day (I will use the term psychodrama to cover them all). The methods have a built-in capacity for measurement, with a potential for research. However the *methodology of social science*, the research potential of the methods, is not so widely understood or implemented, at least in the English speaking traditions I am familiar with. The science he proposed is overshadowed by the therapy he devised. This is true generally and it was for me in my training. I read about

¹ This paper is based on a more detailed monograph (Logeman, 2013).

his hopes for a new science but they were not so relevant to me or to many others as we focussed on sorting out our lives. It appears this was experienced by Moreno (1978): "Everyone wants to do therapy..." (p. 695).

Moreno, scientist

Jonathan D. Moreno, in the introduction to his father's autobiography, describes Jacob Levy Moreno as "a religious prophet or a wizard or a guru ... he was all of these and a scientist." (Moreno, 2011). Scientific motivation and innovation was there at the beginning of his work. Moreno's science can't be understood without his whole philosophy and work. And his work can't be fully appreciated without grasping his scientific motivation.

Action and theatre were central to the formation of Moreno's approach and both were related to his theology and science. He wrote in the preface to *Theatre of Spontaneity*, first published in 1923, how that book "marked in my work the beginning of a new period: the transition from religious to scientific writing" (Moreno, 2010, p. 17).

Moreno's (2012) delight in the power of the stage as a research tool was evident when he wrote of this early discovery:

The theatre was a safe retreat for unsuspected revolution and offered unlimited possibilities for spontaneity research on the experimental level. Spontaneity could be tested and measured... (p. 17).

An amazing insight: theatre as a laboratory, indicating that social science has origins going back to the ancient Greeks and beyond. I have been in dramas where we enacted war and fought for peace and in those microcosms we explored what was possible. While the focus for these sessions was largely personal and group centred, I am now inspired to think how, with an additional warm-up, they could produce social research outcomes recorded to integrate new knowledge with the web of the old.

People are not objects

Moreno (2013) had an idea of the unique nature of human beings because of their autonomy and the power to create and destroy. This was an observation of the way people are and how they are different from machines. People are *conscious*. This is a profound fact: I am I, I can act, I can relate. Valuing these qualities in a person is something he shared with Martin Buber.

Moreno and Buber were contemporaries¹. Both men valued encounter. Both understood the ability to form an I-Thou relationship as a distinctly human quality. According to Buber (1972), science belongs to the I-It world. He wrote of the I-Thou relationship:

The world that appears to you in this way is unreliable, for it appears always new to you, and you cannot take it by its word. It lacks density, for everything in it permeates everything else. It lacks duration, for it comes even when not called and vanishes even when you cling to it. It cannot be surveyed: if you try to make it surveyable, you lose it. (p. 83)

Moreno, while having a similar understanding of the I-Thou relationship, believes investigation is possible without destroying the I-Thou-ness. We don't know if they ever discussed these things, however I imagine a conversation about the difference Moreno may have had with Buber that would stimulate his resolve and focus his work. I can hear them talking:

Buber: As soon as you can measure it, you have not seen it in its fullness. Connect with people and you are in a sacred space. This disappears if you step out to observe it.

Moreno: I'm with you when you say to connect with a person you need to meet, to encounter the person. That is different from the world of things. But, Martin, we *can* measure the relationship with people AND remain in the I-Thou world. We can create encounters and make the experience of measuring the relationships part of the encounter.

Buber: You can't convince me that it can be done. Once you are an observer, the encounter is over. Thou becomes an It, an object.

Moreno: It can be done, but with great difficulty. The world is not ready for encounters that are conscious, observed and measured. New theory, education and practice are required for this venture. Observation would not be at a distance but right there in the relationship. A method will need to be created; a method for investigating the I-Thou. A sociometry. Using the physical and biological sciences with people, you and I agree, would not be in the sacred realm of authentic meeting.

¹ Zerka Moreno (2007) published an item, *Moreno's Influence on Martin Buber*, in the Psychodrama Network News. She highlighted the importance of psychodrama as a means of creating encounter. The opening paragraph follows: "Dr. Robert Waldl from Vienna, who presented at both the New York and Miami conferences, has discovered that J. L. Moreno influenced Martin Buber in his ideas of The Encounter. Moreno started his publications from 1914 onwards under the title series *Einladung zu einer Begegnung*, or *Invitations to an Encounter*, predating Buber's *Ich und Du*, or *I and Thou* by nine years. A transcript with illustrations is published on Adam Blatner's website (Wald, 2010) and includes links to the thesis (in German)." (p. 6)

Buber: True encounter is hard enough and rare enough now. People are new in every moment.

Moreno: Yes. It will be a science of the here and now. People will participate in its creation. They are creators, like God, and they can consciously create something new. When people warm up together, to understand something, to create something, in spontaneity they will investigate and transform themselves at the same time. I'm going to make this happen; it is the only way we shall survive.

Buber: But is it ethical to have an agenda like this for other people?

Moreno: The new science will include participants' true motivations; what moves people to action. If spontaneity can be maintained it will be a democratic science and ethical in its foundations.

Moreno developed a way to measure relationships by incorporating mutual *conscious investigation* into the encounter. He called it sociometry. It embraced the ever-changing nature of people and in-the-moment nature of relationships.

Sociometry adds a research component to organizational or personal development. This is summed up succinctly in Moreno's (1978) seminal work *Who Shall Survive?* This quote is a key to understanding the whole book:

What, precisely, is sociometry?... It is the sociometric revision of the scientific method of the social sciences that will gradually make such a thing as a science of society possible. It gives its subjects research status by changing them from subjects into participating and evaluating actors; a social science becomes sociometric to the degree in which it gives the members of the group research status and the degree in which it is able to measure their activities; it goes to work with actual or prospective groups and develops procedures which can be used in actual situations. It puts an equally strong emphasis upon group dynamics and group action as upon measurement and evaluation. (p. 18)

The titles of some of his other writings also indicate his focus on science. The journal he founded was called *Sociometry: A Journal of Inter-Personal Relations and Experimental Design*¹. His book, *Sociometry, Experimental Method and the Science of Society; An Approach to a New Political Orientation* (Moreno,

¹ The journal changed to that name in 1951 (Vol XIV, 1) to "pay increased attention to the area of research with which sociometry has identified itself from the very beginning—the area of experimental design in the social sciences. Because of the growing need for deepening our knowledge in this area and in order to emphasize our desire to be of service we have broadened the title of this journal." – editorial

1951), is a treatise on method written to establish a new way of doing social science.

A third form of science

Moreno thought scientific methods devised for the physical sciences were not applicable to humans. Moreno was part of a movement against a long tradition of positivistic science that invalidated introspection as a way of knowing. He wrote that John Stuart Mill, who advanced the experimental method in science, “came to the exasperating conclusion that the experimental method cannot be applied to the social sciences, their subject matter being too complex” (Moreno, 1978, p. 71). Alongside the observational sciences and the physical sciences, Moreno insisted that sociometry is the third form of science; a science of humankind (see Moreno, 1978, pp. 358-359). A bold claim!

The experimental method in the social sciences was handicapped as long as it tried to follow the physical model; it really got under way in the first half of the twentieth century under the leadership of sociometry...
(Moreno, 1951, p. 13)

Moreno (1978) acknowledged his scientific methodology for investigating people was incomplete, and a “worldwide project – a scheme well-nigh Utopian in concept” (p. 121). In the many decades since Moreno proposed that a social science was possible there have been advances in sociology and psychological research. I invite psychodramatic practitioners to revisit the scientific methodology and values that Moreno proposed. To what extent is research sociometry applied? Can sociometric experiments lead us forward in understanding and advancing society? Those who grasp the power of Moreno’s work for therapy and social reparation are in a good position to also create groups specifically for a scientific purpose.

I identify and offer six principles distilled from Moreno’s writing to encapsulate his social science methodology.

Six principles of sociometry as a research methodology

“Sociometric procedure is not a rigid set of rules, it has to be modified and adapted to any group situation as it arises” (Moreno, 2012, p. 27). The researcher needs to be spontaneous and work with what emerges as the research proceeds.

The psychodramatic methods all include investigation, assessment and experimentation. For the methods to make a contribution to science, to become research, requires an *additional conscious focus* to contribute to human knowledge. For those familiar with dramatic methods this is a small but significant step. Moreno is explicit in how this is achieved and the following six principles summarise his approach.

Table 1. Six Principles of Moreno's Research Methodology

1. Warm-up
The researcher and the participants become informed, ready, willing and able to participate in a research project
 2. Action in the here and now
Participation is done in action, in the moment. Learning is experiential
 3. Gradual inclusion of extraneous material
Group process attends to the discrepancy between the overt and the underlying motivations
 4. Co-action
Participants in the group become researchers, and the researcher becomes a participant
 5. Adequate motivation to create change
Participants feel that the experiment is in their own cause
 6. Collaborative recording and publishing
Recording and publishing is designed and integrated into the project by participants
-

1. Warm-up to research

What determines the extent to which a group is an experimental research project? The main factor is the warm-up. The researcher and the participants consciously embrace a research project by coming together for that purpose.

“The theory of sociometric testing requires that the participants in the situation are drawn to one another by one or more criteria” (Moreno, 1978, p. 99). If the warm-up includes research, then participants will embrace a research purpose.

Example: A few years ago in Christchurch a group of psychodrama practitioners met with the aim of trying out different ways of naming roles and seeing what were the most useful ways in their professional practice. The aim of the meeting was to develop role theory, and the warm-up led to a collaborative day. We concluded that short descriptions of roles were often more effective than the traditional adjective plus a noun.

2. Action in the here and now

Zerka Moreno said in her session at the Oxford international conference in 1994, "Dr Moreno created psychodrama because language is not the high road to the psyche, but movement is. From the earliest moments our actions communicate throughout a non-verbal period of life. Action is prior to

language" (Holmes, Karp, & Watson, 1994, p. 78). Moreno (1978) has a "Rule of universal participation in action" (p. 62). By being in the action the researcher gains something: "he is having experience, experience *in situ*; he is learning" (p. 62). Research, when in action and in the moment, evokes spontaneity: "Spontaneity operates in the present, now and here..." (p. 42).

Example: Various ways of doubling are described in psychodrama literature. In a training group, doubling was explored in action. Trainees gained a lived experience of a variety of processes. They reported on their learnings. This is a form of action research.

3. Gradual inclusion of extraneous material

A group may meet for an agreed specific research purpose, yet they will raise matters that are not directly related to the task in hand. Moreno (1978) speaks of the "Rule of 'gradual' inclusion of all extraneous criteria" and "the slow dialectic process of the sociometric experiment" (p. 63). He also speaks of a "rule of dynamic difference". This term is used to describe contrast of the formal agenda and the private aspirations (p. 62). The quality of research depends on the dynamics being revealed through group process and the relationships having high authenticity. In a sociometric research group, there will be personal discovery and relationship building as the actual experiences of group members are incorporated with the stated purpose of the group.

Example: A group of executives had the task of planning for the succession of the CEO. There was resistance to what appeared to some to be an obvious choice. The task became easier once the history of an error of professional judgment was revealed.

4. Co-action

Gene Eliasoph, one of the first psychodrama practitioners, tells how in 1954 he heard Moreno say, "We are all patients in this group, and we are therapists as well for one another. I will learn from you and you will learn from me, and who knows, we may be the first group to fly to the moon!" (Nicholas & Eliasoph, 2002). Moreno (1954) was speaking of therapy here. The same principle of co-action applies to research methodology:

The actor must become an observer of himself and an actor towards the observer. And the observer must become an actor towards the observed and an observer of himself; one must co-act with the other, a meeting is taking place. ... The methodological problem ... is to bring the act into the observer and the observer into the act. (pp. 358-359)

"The safest way to be in the warming up process yourself is to become a member of the group" (Moreno, 1978, p. 62).

In this setting, the researcher becomes a participant and the participants become researchers. There is mutuality. This is an encounter and role-

reversal. Each becomes the other "...each is carrying on his 'own experiment'" (p. 62) "...a social science becomes sociometric to the degree in which it gives the members of the group research status" (p. 18). Moreno speaks of being in *two groups at once*; one personal, the other a group of researchers (see pp. 62-63). He is talking about two aspects of the same group. An analogy is a psychodrama training group, where the training purpose, i.e. learning the method, is held strongly as people do personal work. In a training group members are also in *two groups at once*. People will take on different roles in the group at different times.

Example: A group of trainers plan to meet to explore the best way to work with relationships using the psychodramatic method and to develop the curriculum. The group devises how they will proceed as part of the group process, including experiments in their own life with their spouses and partners. These trainers become researchers at the same time as they are exploring relationships in their own lives.

5. Adequate motivation to create change

The first two sentences of *Who Shall Survive?* (Moreno, 1978) elucidate the connections between knowledge, unity and change:

A truly therapeutic procedure cannot have less an objective than the whole of mankind. But no adequate therapy can be prescribed as long as mankind is not a unity in some fashion and as long as its organization remains unknown. (p. 3)

For Moreno (1978) the purpose of knowing is to make changes that can be both universalised to all of humanity and also deeply personal.

In order to give every member adequate motivation to participate spontaneously, every participant should feel about the experiment that "it is his own cause, and not for the one who promotes the idea—the tester, the employer, or any other power agent." ... This should not be an experiment of nature without the conscious participation of the actors, but one consciously and systematically created and projected by the total group. (pp. 62-63)

Research can be motivated by external conditions, such as the researchers' desire to secure recognition and funding by the state or insurance companies. Moreno uses strong words when describing the neglect of the motivations of the people to be studied. The task of sociometry is "to correct the most flagrant error of methodical insight which has made social research trivial and confusing, while deteriorating its outlook" (Moreno, 2012, pp. 38-39). The researcher needs to enable participants to become conscious of their motivations. Moreno encourages a full encounter that is maintained at the same time as there is investigation of the relationships.

Example: The ‘citizen scientist’ movement where ordinary people take control of their health data, for example, making it public and running their own experiments about themselves, for themselves¹. The spirit of this movement where people unite to research common needs can inspire psychodramatic research.

6. Collaborative recording and publishing

Science includes the integration of new knowledge with the web of the old (Kelly, 2010). The purpose of science is to contribute to knowledge, hence the recording and publication of findings is an important step in a research project.

There are more publishing options available today than in Moreno’s lifetime. It is possible to innovate effective, inclusive recording and publishing that is of benefit to participants. It is increasingly easy to publish text, audio and video on the Internet and such data is more accessible and can be discussed online. Media transformation impacts the nature of science. Moreno advocated for the integration of recording into the group process:

Recorders, observers, and analysts are made natural parts of the group process: they are given a function of immediate usefulness for every participant. (Moreno, 2012, p. 43)

Example: A group of trainees collaboratively identify the principles involved in creating a group-centred warm-up and share the written summary with other trainees and trainers. Simple recording and allocation of writing tasks, such as editor, can lead to anything from handouts to flyers, articles and books. Sharing knowledge for posterity is an aspect of the scientific journey.

Integrating the six principles: A research methodology

These six principles outline Moreno’s philosophy of experimental design and form the basis of sociometry as a research methodology. The phrase, ‘near sociometric’ is used knowing that these aspirations can’t always be attained (Moreno, 1978, p. 102). The phrase, ‘maximum spontaneous participation’ (Moreno, 2012, p. 25) sums up the integration of these principles concisely.

These principles have been incorporated into other research modalities to varying degrees. Action research, for example, has its origins in what Moreno calls a secession in the development of sociometry by the followers

¹ The Wall Street Journal of 20th May 2015 illustrates how the power of citizen science can threaten those in power.

of Kurt Lewin. He described this in a paper in 1953 that was reprinted in the following year in the Preludes to *Who Shall Survive?* (Moreno 1978, pp. xcvi-cviii). Now more than sixty years later, Action Research has developed collaborative research methods. Psychodramatists and action research practitioners can learn from each other. The *Handbook of Action Research* (Heron & Reason, 2001), especially Chapter 16: The Practice of Co-operative Inquiry: Research With Rather Than On People, is an example of this.

It is understandable how research might be overlooked when the experimental method used includes deeply respectful encounters that are therapeutic. The potential for publishing results can be lost in the dramas of the moment. Awareness of the six principles may assist experimentation to be conscious and explicit.

Turning the tables: Morenian methods in the physical sciences

With extraordinary belief in the power of his methods, Moreno (1978) predicted his third science, sociometric research, would impact on the physical and biological sciences:

By the third millennium or thereabout a new position will crystallize. It will be a reversal of the old. ... Indeed, the leadership in scientific method and discovery which has been for nearly two and a half thousand years in the hands of physicists will pass to social scientists, and just as the social sciences were dependent upon the physical sciences for hypothesis and methods, the social sciences will some day help the physical sciences to understand and run the physical universe. (p. 31)

We are now in that third millennium. We know that physics has undergone paradigm shifts into quantum realms. Even at levels far less abstruse than the quantum, enactment on a stage can assist in the physical sciences. Consider this description of Richard Feynman, pioneer of particle physics, showing the power of role reversal, in this case with an electron:

Feynman's essential insight was to place himself once again in the electron, to see what the electron would see at light speed. He would see at light speed. He would see the protons flashing toward him—and they were therefore flattened relativistically into pancakes. (Gleick, 2011, loc. 7016)

As a psychodramatist who is tuning in with Moreno, I can see a glimpse of the possibilities. Our first task is to bring the principles and practice of sociometric research more consciously and fully into our own psychodramatic work, where it is already present to a remarkable but underdeveloped degree.

Conclusion

In this article, I have attempted to explicate the essence of Moreno's wide-ranging writing on scientific methodology by identifying six principles of sociometry. My hope is that this brief summation will lead practitioners, trainers and trainees in the psychodramatic methods to:

- study and evaluate the sociometric literature
- engage in work that has an explicit research purpose using the six principles
- on occasions, add an explicit research component to everyday psychodramatic work
- develop research that is deeply aligned with the motivations of the participants
- be more conscious of the research aspect of the term 'sociometry'.

Moreno was a visionary. He dreamt that his scientific methodology would enable people to collaborate; that together they would go beyond the surface structures of the group and reach levels of ethical spontaneity, unleash creativity, and channel deep motivations into action. The possibility exists that sociometry is a key to the survival of humanity.

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The 19th International Association of Group Psychotherapy Congress: Reflections and Learnings

*Neil Hucker, Peggy Cook,
Annette Fisher and Kate Cooke*

2015 Congress

Neil Hucker: From all corners of the globe we came to Rovinj on the Croatian Istrian Peninsula, like invading armies and their cultures have done for thousands of years. We came to participate in the 19th International Association of Group Psychotherapy Congress (IAGP), and like other cultures that have come to this place, we contributed and enjoyed the beautiful walled city and the ancient cobblestones.

The congress theme, *Desire and Despair in Times of Crisis*, was infused with reparation and rebuilding after the devastating civil war of the nineties in Croatia, and the very immediate conflict within the IAGP following the precipitous and controversial resignation of the President and the President Elect.

Over four days the daily large group facilitated by different leaders and methods, gradually made overt many of the hidden dynamics that had contributed to the resignations. I was particularly impressed with the leader who applied the principles of active listening in a large group setting. I think this meeting in particular warmed up the organization's members to a healthy catharsis of integration, which progressed to the election of a new executive and the much admired Kate Bradshaw Tavon from Sweden as the new president.

I found the format of the Congress, with on-going daily small groups and a large group, quite integrating for the 400 plus attendees. It is de-conserving to compare and contrast the many different, creative ways that group therapy in general, and psychodrama group therapy in particular, are practised throughout the world. These triennial IAGP congresses do always carry a certain territorial tension between adherents to psychodrama, group analysis and large group analysis, and organizational facilitation. At this point, there is a warm-up to inclusiveness, but there is a counter warm-up to establish a separate international psychodrama organization.

These congresses highlight the amount of group work that is being done throughout the world, and the very violent and often on-going traumatic

damage to people from the warfare waged by political groups. The youth of our Australian culture, as we try through multi-culturalism to create a united nation, contrasts with the many ancient cultures that people bring to this conference, and indeed bring to Australia. Our common humanity and compassion, interest in relationships and the groups we live in, all created a wonderful warm-up to intimacy, which allowed our underlying commonality to be experienced.

The Congress highlighted the more frequent use of pre-planned action warm-ups, rather than leader-facilitated group interactive warm-ups as taught by Max Clayton. I have brought back with me the effectiveness of the group active listening format for large groups or for any group working through a process. My belief in the value and importance of group therapy has been confirmed at this congress, as has the tremendous value of having an AANZPA presence there.

Peggy Cook: I think people were approaching this Congress with some trepidation because the President and President Elect resigned before it. I knew this because it was talked about both online and with my friends who are IAGP members and who were shocked about it. The Congress was called, *Despair and Desire in Times of Crisis*, and it addressed the crisis in the IAGP membership caused by the resignations, and as well as the despair and desire experienced by IAGP members who are directly affected by the wars in Africa and the Middle East,; and by the wars in Croatia and Serbia, which is the region we were in. Nevertheless, the Congress had a most welcoming feel and a positive and supportive energy that encouraged participation and openness. Each day keynote speakers talked about their work in places of great crisis.

Our Experience of Presenting at the Congress

Kate Cooke: I think the group that the four of us ran together, *Applying a Range of Modalities to our Clinical Practice as Psychodramatists*, went well. We aimed to present to an international audience to see if others related to the translation work we are endeavouring to do. Each of us presented our thoughts on aspects of our work in one modality and how that modality links in with psychodramatic concepts. We are interested in the possibility of expanding our thinking and understanding in both the alternate modality and the psychodrama modality. In addition to a few from Australia and New Zealand, at our workshop were those from Panama, Spain and Japan. The four of us presented what we had to say clearly and succinctly. We drew on our spontaneity to present our work and this seemed to have an enlivening effect on participants.

Annie Fisher: It greatly assisted us that our conference session developed through us meeting together for eighteen months. These meetings followed a decision at the 2014 AANZPA Conference to start a peer group of clinicians interested in translating our work so that it could be understood by both psychodramatists and medical professionals.

Kate, as convener of this peer group, assisted us to connect with each other. This aided the emergence of positive tele and shared purposefulness so that we were able to develop our ideas, learn to understand each other's approaches, and gain the confidence necessary to present at the AANZPA conference.

Not only was our session successful, we also developed a successful form of peer review. Following the AANZPA conference workshop, we decided to attend the IAGP conference in Rovinj, Croatia, and to send an abstract for consideration. We were accepted.

Despite some difficulties with the venue and the time being cut to one hour, all went well. Kate was a skilful group leader connecting group members, warming them up to the session and dealing with obstacles that came up.

We had fifteen minutes each to present our respective topics: Peggy on *Transference*; Neil on *Considering the patient in the context of their life, their relationships and their cultural conserve*; Kate on *a Case study of a woman with a personality disorder*; and myself on *Encounter and role reversal: a case study*.

Some people said how grateful and amazed they were by our workshop; loving our spontaneity and clarity. One regarded our presentation as important, as there has been very little focus on translating psychodrama to the medical world. A participant from Panama City went out of his way at a social function, and with tears in his eyes, told me how much he had loved our vitality and valued the passion and love we have for our work. He said, "No sign of burn-out." This encounter touched me deeply and we 'really met' with role reversal. It is this kind of meeting that touches my human spirit and stays as an imbedded memory.

Gleanings from the Congress

Kate: International psychodramatists brought playfulness not just to the conference group, but the community in Rovinj. Leandra Perrotta, a psychodramatist who lives in Sydney half the year and Italy the other half, ran a community trust building activity in the town square one evening. Self-selected people, including me, were asked to close their eyes and move through the crowd who were trees. The trees were to guide us and keep us safe. I experienced that warm, wonderful sense of being held by the large group. It was guided in commentary by the leader and mediated somewhat by the music she played.

Annie: The experience of the Northern Hemisphere is very different for us from Australia or New Zealand in the Southern Hemisphere. There is rawness in the North due to current and past social and political upheavals. A pre-congress workshop entitled, *The Social Unconscious in Clinical Work and Professional Life*, conducted by Earl Hopper, a group analyst, proved to highlight these differences.

Some of the participants were Serbian and Croatian who not so long ago were at war. Many others had experienced war, displacement and political conflict. I was curious to learn about how people can resolve the past following a war. I wanted to know how people learn to live with each other after these atrocities and suffering. Of course there is not a short answer. By being together with 14 participants for two days, I think we all learnt a little more about putting ourselves in each other's shoes and developing compassion, which allows us to have a greater ability to role reverse.

Peggy: A highlight for me included being directed in an Analytic Musical Psychodrama by Ariella Barzel and Monica Tann, from Argentina and Israel, who spoke very little. They encouraged expression with sound and song; in me and in the group. Using our voices without words or few words enabled us as a group to go to a strange state where words were not necessary to communicate.

Kate: Susan Gantt, from America, led a large group using the method of Systems Centred Therapy. This uses subgrouping to contain a system's tendency to chaos, through the method of creating functional boundaries within the group before differentiating. Functional boundaries contain and clarify communication. There is concretization of the subgroups in this method so that functional boundaries can become apparent and there is a commitment to moving on only when each speaker has been heard and understood. There is also a commitment to get to the facts, not opinion or hearsay. This was particularly impressive as there were many secrets and lots of shame and protective defensiveness in the upper levels of the organisation and what was produced via this method was honesty and a release from guilt and shame.

Annie: Attending the same one and a half hour group for the four days of the conference, *Thinking about our work*, was of great assistance to me as a participant in a large congress. This experience created a sense of safety, a place to reflect, and provided an ongoing learning experience. Walter Stone is a psychodynamic psychotherapist. Psychodynamic psychotherapy is a form of depth psychology, the primary focus of which is to reveal the

unconscious content of a client's psyche in an effort to alleviate psychic tension. In this way, it is similar to psychoanalysis. Walter was a wise mentor and I gained a good deal of learning about group dynamics, sibling rivalry and forgiveness.

Walter places particular importance on the effect of relationships between siblings on a person's psychological development. The interesting aspect for my learning was to remind myself of the importance of the positive aspect of sibling relationships.

Back in Australia after the conference, a fifteen year old girl, May, was referred to me for psychotherapy. Her mother had died two years before. Following the first interview, I suggested she come to her next session with her elder sister and brother, as their relationships had become distant since their mother's death. This intervention was a direct result of Walter's workshop. I encouraged the siblings to share their grief, coaching them to listen, and be accepting and gentle with each other.

I gained further understanding about forgiveness through my participation in this workshop. Modern trends talk in terms of behavioural therapy to achieve forgiveness. Walter shared with us that forgiveness can occur when the narcissistic hurts and injuries begin to diminish and one is able to let go of anger and rage. As a psychodramatist I say, "Following social atom repair, progressive roles can emerge and fragmenting roles move into the background. This allows for positive relationships through the learnt ability to develop positive tele."

Several other memorable sessions also moved me. The final sessions for the first three days of the congress were two large groups; one psychodrama and the other analytical. I chose the analytical group. There was an opportunity for debriefing and expression of any matter one wished to bring forward; mostly volatile and passionate contributions. It was both lively and contained. The two mediators made very few interventions. When the group closed it felt like a good end to each day.

Jorge Margolis, from Mexico, worked with soldiers in Guatemala after a civil war. His brief was to assist 3,500 soldiers to return to civilian life. His presentation was a video about the program he conducted. Using leaders from the soldiers, he organised small groups. The participants were encouraged to remember the life they had before the war. They had been farmers and it was very moving observing them recall their pre-war existence as preparation to return to their farm life. The soldiers were also assisted to surrender their firearms. As they had a particularly strong attachment to their guns, the soldiers were treated with great respect and they were assisted to 'lay down their arms' with moving enactments and rituals.

On the last day of the congress there was a Keynote Symposium with *Terror* as the topic. Maria Rita Kehl, from Brazil, shared with us her experience of being a member of a *Truth Commission* following the unexplained disappearance of a number of people in her country. This assignment was not successful. Being a heroic women, she revealed to her audience that she is committed to continue pursuing the truth and finding the bodies of those who have disappeared, as a way of resolving some of the deep political rifts in her country.

I came away from the congress with a deeper sense of connectedness and understanding of international affairs and appreciating being a citizen of the world. The congress opened my mind to my own predigests and expanded my abilities to embrace and address broader worldly concerns.



Annette Fisher is a psychodramatist and TEP. She is a psychodrama trainer with Psychodrama Australia at the Sydney/Canberra Campus and the Adelaide Campus. As an artist, she highly values the creative arts and its contribution to human development. She has a private practice and is a consultant to organisations.

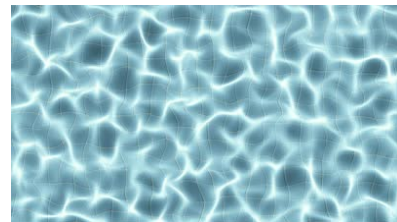


For the last 8 years, I have worked as a qualified psychotherapist. When I worked in education, I fell in love with the psychodrama method and consequently became an accredited role trainer. With role training as an excellent educational tool, I conducted training groups in parenting, team building, and communication skills. Then as I moved into counselling and psychotherapy work, I looked to psychoanalysis for more depth and understanding of the human mind. The combination of psychodramatic and psychodynamic training enables me to work in a clinical setting with individuals and couples. – **Peggy Cook**

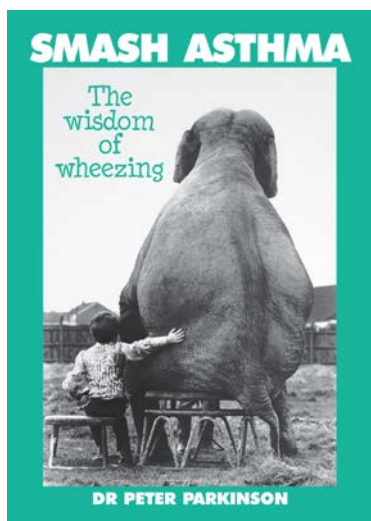
Dr Neil Hucker practices as a consultant psychiatrist in private practice in Melbourne and has been a Fellow of the RANZCP since 1983. He is also an AANZPA accredited practicing psychodramatist. He is participating in the translation group because of his long term interest in psychodrama and its application in psychiatry. His special interest is in applying his "renovation therapy" to the difficulties experienced by people diagnosed with personality disorders.



Kate Cooke is expanding her identity as a psychodramatist and increasing her comprehension as a comprehensive nurse. She loves writing, reading, and watching really good dramas on TV. As well, she hauls her old body up the tissu (silks), thru the water, and up rocks attached to a belay. Her goal is to be able to do the splits by the time she is 70.



Book Review



Smash Asthma: The wisdom of wheezing

by Dr Peter Parkinson

Resource Books, 2015

ISBN: 9781877431708

RRP \$20.00

Reviewed by Caril Cowan

I am excited by this book for several reasons. Firstly, it incorporates the physiology of the work of psychodrama in a way that I do not think has been done before. Secondly, the examination of asthma through case studies identifies and challenges the co-dependency between medicine and the pharmaceutical industry. This is done with humility, but also with the rigour of a scientifically trained medical practitioner using his knowledge, professional experience and rational deduction. Thirdly, there is a memoir aspect to the writing that steps the reader through the author's thinking and the complex medical aspects in an easy understandable way. The style is lyrical and entertaining. Read over coffee or tea and one can almost imagine chatting and laughing with the author.

Peter has had a long career in this work. He was trained in the scientific method. He is well used to critiquing research and distinguishing knowledge from suppositions. He brings this to his medical practice, combined with the wisdom of medical staff from yesteryear: 'listen to the patient'. Additionally, he explores the placebo effect and the adjunct effects of kind and loving attention. He combines scientific knowledge and logic to formulate a range of hypotheses, which he then tests. I love the discussion of the alveoli sphincters: "I ... can't imagine that the body ... (has) 800,000 very intricate and complicated sets of muscles and glands, for the sole purpose of making a disease called asthma. It just does not make sense." I have never considered how many alveoli I have, yet my life is dependent on their healthy functioning!

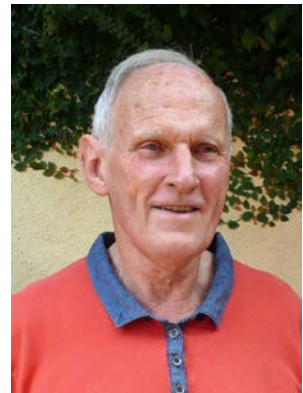
The theme of adrenal exhaustion/depletion and stimulating the adrenal matrix is intriguing. The blood levels of adrenalin in people attending accident and emergency departments have been measured and most people have high levels of adrenalin. Unexpectedly, people with asthma have very

low levels. The first response to such information is to assume that this is an aspect of the illness to be corrected by medical intervention. However, Peter kept asking important questions and made unexpected links. People with asthma may have excellent reasons to have 'turned off' their adrenal matrix. During psychodrama enactment, Peter and his trainers and colleagues identified body responses consistent with adrenal collapse or 'turnoff'. With integrative catharsis, the adrenal matrix can be stimulated and kicked back into action. A stunning example is described on page 169: "Pat's 5'3" being had ... totally regressed to the terrified and wheezing 11 year old ... she took an enormous breath." It takes about 30 seconds for the blood to circulate around the body, so it takes about 30 seconds "for her to turn from wheezing, pale and blueish to bright scarlet and scream 'HELL NO'." He sees evidence of the adrenal system being turned on. This woman's asthma was cured. She now supplied her own adrenalin.

This book is about so much more than just asthma and wheezing. A subtitle to the main title would better reflect the breadth of coverage of the book. Acutely aware of the need to measure the effectiveness of psychodrama, Peter has computerised the family/whanau/social atom. This enables clients to review how their relationships are changing to include more 'good' people in their lives, while setting limits and distancing from unwanted people. Carefully stepping the reader through the process with many examples, Peter demonstrates the graphing a person's functioning in psychodrama sessions and the related role development. Points such as when there is no suicide risk and when the person is ready to be discharged are identified.

This book is an exceptional addition to psychodrama's body of work. If you are exploring psychosomatic roles, you need to read this book. If you want to demonstrate the effectiveness of your practice and you are working with individual people or a group, you will do well to explore the family/whanau/social atom scorer.

Book available online at resourcebooks.co.nz





AANZPA Conference 2016 | Sydney



Artwork: "An Unexpected Perspective" by Jenny Postlethwaite

"THE TRUTH IS IN THE RELATIONSHIP"

"... Moreno's vision was so comprehensive with him one worked all the time, because life was constantly presenting itself to us. Everything was about relationships – ours to each other, extending to our near and far social atoms..." Zerka Moreno

Conference: 20-24 Jan
Pre-Conference Workshops: 19-20 Jan
Post-Conference Workshops: 25-26 Jan