

**AANZPA JOURNAL #22 December 2013**



## **AANZPA Journal #22 December 2013**

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The *AANZPA Journal* is published by the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association (AANZPA Inc.).

AANZPA is an organisation of people trained in Dr. J.L. Moreno's psychodrama theory and methods, and their applications and developments in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Ordinary members of the organisation are certificated as Psychodramatists, Sociodramatists, Sociometrists and Role Trainers, and/or as a Trainer, Educator, Practitioner (TEP).

The purposes of AANZPA include the establishment and promotion of the psychodrama 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.

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 Aotearoa 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 the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association.

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For information and guidelines for journal contributions visit the AANZPA website <http://aanzpa.org/>

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# Introduction

*Kua hinga te Totara i te wao nui a Tane — The totara has fallen in the forest of Tane.<sup>1</sup>*

Welcome to the 22<sup>nd</sup> journal of AANZPA. With great sadness we announce that 2013 marked the death of Rev Dr G. Max Clayton, our beloved colleague who brought psychodrama to Australia and New Zealand and was instrumental in the founding of AANZPA. It is appropriate that a significant portion of this journal commemorates Max's passing and our members' response to it. It is also appropriate that the journal contains other articles that our members have produced over the current year. These articles celebrate the continued spontaneity of ideas flowing from AANZPA members and are a part of the legacy of spontaneity that Max has bequeathed us all.

The journal starts with a brief *Biographical Overview* of Dr G. Max Clayton's life, compiled by Jenny Hutt. Following this, in *Being and Creating: Max Clayton 1935–2013*, Jenny has collated thoughts and recollections from some of the many people Max has touched through his life and work. We hear remembrances from Jenny Hutt, Peter Howie, Phil Carter, Vivienne Thompson, Hiromi Nakagomi and Robert Brodie.

The second article, "*Just An Ordinary Max Clayton Person*", stems from a lengthy interview Peter Cammock conducted and recorded with Max in 2002, which I have edited for this journal. Max responds to Peter's questions about the progression of his 'hero's journey' into psychodrama, the people who inspired him in early life and how psychodrama suited his personality. An introduction by Peter Cammock prefaces the article. It is intended that other articles edited from the interview will appear in subsequent journals.

Next, John Farnsworth contributes an article entitled *Boundary and Flow: Max Clayton and Psychodrama in Action*. This was inspired by John participating in a workshop where Max demonstrated his thinking on the relationship between containment and flow. Max also raised important questions about how closely psychodrama and psychotherapy relate through these concepts. The article investigates each of these concerns, illustrating them by investigating how boundary and flow appear in different settings, whether with individuals, groups, face-to-face or online.

Don Reekie has written a pair of articles for this journal that share a common theme. In the first article, *The Heart of Humanity: Thinking it Through with Moreno Again and Again*, Don makes a plea for us to immerse ourselves in the totality of Morenian discourse, rather than looking at its elements as separate entities. He argues that only by doing this can we truly grasp the totality of Moreno's thinking. Don posits that each concept in Moreno's vision for humanity is appreciated best when viewed in the light of all the others. He suggests that taking them one by one often leads to misinterpretation. Worse, the psychodrama community may become distanced from Moreno's core philosophies. Embracing

Moreno's thinking as a whole enhances and refines the comprehension and application of his work. The central thrust of Moreno's thinking attends to a range of factors that together powerfully assist us to work effectively with the *heart of humanity*. Within this article Don asks you to think of social systems, individual systems, each individual person, personality and relationships, as well as their physical and mental well-being and family health.

In the second article, *Creative Genius: A Spark in a Cloud of Unknowing*, Don passionately argues that "creative genius" is not in itself a role but rather a force, present in all of us, that can propel role development and life expansion. Don illustrates this through four compelling case studies that illuminate what can happen when a psychodrama director learns to follow the protagonist and trust a wide range of interactive communications, even when their full nature may be hidden from the director and even the protagonist. Don accepts many cognitive functions of the central nervous system happen at a speed that makes conscious consideration impossible. Thus, learning is not only an intentional act but is built into our mind-body functioning. This paper considers *creative genius* as an integrative quality common in human functioning.

Rollo Browne contends in his article *Psychodrama and Insight* that insight in psychodrama can occur through the use of basic techniques such as concretisation, role reversal and mirroring, but it is not guaranteed. However, drawing on research into the neuroscience of insight, the psychodramatist can explicitly focus on simple steps to maximize the possibility of insight: setting out the dilemma, shifting to a resting state and then bringing this state of being into contact with the presenting dilemma. Rollo illustrates this with examples from his own practice.

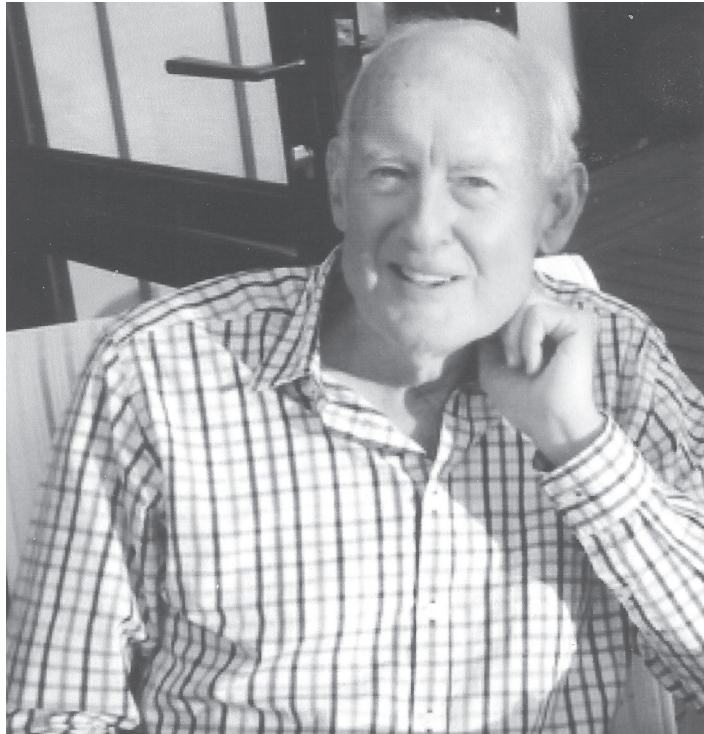
This journal also contains three book reviews. Suzanne Wallace reviews *A Clinician's Guide to Psychodrama* (2001 Edition), by Eva Leveton, a useful book when starting out as a psychodramatist, according to Suzanne. The second book reviewed is *Radical Man: The Process of Psycho-Social Development* (1970), by Charles Hampden-Turner. Kevin Franklin, the reviewer, regards this as one of the top ten books any person should read before the age of 50. Neil Hucker reviews the final book, *The Autobiography of J.L. Moreno* (abridged), finding it "interesting, enlightening, informative and challenging".

As Neil has found, challenges can come from various sources, including death. Max Clayton lived with a total commitment to developing spontaneity, vitality and 'beingness' in his own life and in those with whom he worked. Max's death calls us to do the same, thereby ensuring his life's work will continue to flourish and spread. I hope we as individuals and AANZPA as an organization can heed the call.

*Gillian Rose*  
*Editor 2013*

<sup>1</sup>This Maori proverb is used to note the passing of great leaders, as a mighty totara tree grows for hundreds of years and for one to fall is a tragedy.





Rev Dr G. Max Clayton  
27 January 1935 — 28 March 2013

A BIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

COMPILED BY JENNY HUTT,  
WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED

*Some AANZPA members have known Max over four decades, while others have met him more recently. This overview sketches key events in Max's life as a backdrop to the tributes that follow.*

Max Clayton lived his first 30 years in Victoria, Australia. He was born in Melbourne in 1935, educated at Scotch College and completed a BA (Hons) in History in 1957 and a Bachelor of Divinity in 1959, both at Melbourne University. He and Lynette married in 1958 and began to raise their family (sons Ian and David) in Orbost Victoria, where Max worked as a Presbyterian minister from 1960.

From 1965 the Clayton family lived in the United States for six years. In Berkeley, California, Max undertook doctoral studies in Pastoral Theology, specialising in counselling criminal offenders. He trained under supervision and worked with patients at the California Medical Facility, Vacaville and provided supervision and staff clinics at Napa State Hospital.

In 1967 the family moved to Washington DC where Max obtained a training residency for two years at the National Institute of Mental Health at St. Elizabeth's Hospital. He was involved in mental health services training and research, supervision, and work with individuals and groups. He undertook psychoanalysis with an eminent psychoanalyst as part of the training. Max began his training in psychodrama with J.L. Moreno and Zerka Moreno at Beacon in the later part of 1967.

During this period Max also worked as a counsellor and psychotherapist, counselling disturbed offenders with the Pastoral Institute in Washington DC. He returned to California in 1970 to complete his doctoral thesis and graduation. There he worked as a licensed marriage, family and child counsellor.

From these years in the 1960's through until 2013 Max continually refined his practice as a therapist, group worker and trainer which brought new life and interest to all those he was in contact with. He was significantly influenced by the emerging new theories and approaches in the 1960-1970's including the Laboratory Approach, Transactional Analysis and Contractual Group Work as inspired by Eric Berne; Family Therapy and their systems approach; the body psychotherapies such as Bioenergetics as developed by Wilhelm Reich; and Gestalt Therapy as developed by Fritz Perls. He was deeply influenced by the works of W.R. Bion, Dorothy Stock Whitaker and Morton A. Lieberman, Victor Frankl, Harry Stack Sullivan, Karen Horney, Kurt Lewin, Andras Angal, Rudolf Ekstein and Robert S. Wallerstein, and William Glasser. It was the psychodrama method that became the greater focus for Max and the one that he devoted a great deal of his life to, as he saw that it was a wonderful method to bring about a sense of freedom and renewal for an individual and a group. It was very apparent that in his outstanding practice as a psychodramatist Max had integrated a wealth of learning from these other fields of personality theory and group work theory. Building on these formative influences, the teachings of Rudolf Steiner further enlarged Max's view of the human being in later decades. Max, like J.L. Moreno, wanted psychodrama to be viewed in the broadest possible context — to be thought of as part of an evolutionary process, something that could assist the

fulfilment of the highest expressions of which a human being is capable.

Max and Lynette returned to Australia in 1971 and established the Psychodrama Institute of WA in Perth. Initially the groups were conducted in the lounge room of their home, but it was later to expand and relocate. Max continued his own training at the Moreno Institute in Beacon, New York where he was accredited as a Director in 1973 and as a TEP by the ASGPP in 1979. He conducted the first psychodrama training in New Zealand in 1974. In 1975, he established and was Director of the Wasley Centre, a Community Health and Training Centre, in Perth. The building included a psychodrama theatre very similar to the theatre at Beacon NY, having a circular stage with three levels, a balcony, and lights. The number of people attending the centre for professional training in psychodrama and group work and for personal development increased to 500 people per week. Max set up the first Clinical Pastoral Training Institute in Western Australia. He was a key figure in the inauguration of the Australian and New Zealand Psychodrama Association in Canberra in 1980.

Several years after Max and Chris Hosking married in Perth in 1980 they moved to Melbourne and in 1985 Max established the Australian College of Psychodrama which continued on for 28 years.

Max and Chris were based in Melbourne for 26 of the next 30 years (with four years in Wellington between 1998 and 2002). During that time Max conducted psychodrama and group work training in centres across Australia and New Zealand. He travelled to New Zealand and to most centres in Australia at least twice a year for about 34 years, offering training to thousands of trainees. Max also offered regular training in Hungary, Japan, Greece and Holland where a good number of trainees have completed their training. Many of these workshops he co-led with Chris, who also conducted workshops independently in New Zealand, Australia, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Burma. Max presented at international conferences and his workshops at AANZPA conferences were always well attended.

Max wrote a number of chapters, articles and books. Most recently he co-authored *The Living Spirit of the Psychodrama Method* with Dr Philip Carter in 2004 which was translated into Japanese in 2013. Previously Max had co-authored a chapter on psychodrama with Lynette Clayton in *Experiential Psychotherapies in Australia* edited by Dick Armstrong and Phillip Boas (1980); he contributed to *Sociodrama: Who's in Your Shoes?* by Patricia Sternberg and Antonia Garcia (1989); and wrote 'Role theory and its application in clinical practice' published in *Psychodrama Since Moreno* edited by Paul Holmes, Marcia Karp and Michael Watson (1994). Max wrote a series of newsletters to trainees and a series of training booklets: *Directing Psychodrama* (1991), *Enhancing Life and Relationships: Role Training* (1992), *Living Pictures of the Self: Applications of Role Theory* (1993) and *Effective Group Leadership* (1994).

Max was inaugural President of ANZPA from 1980-1984 and in 2004 he completed 24 years as Secretary of the ANZPA Board of Examiners. He was

instrumental in the development of nine training institutes that are now offering regular training programmes in many parts of Australia and New Zealand. Max was honoured as the first Distinguished member of AANZPA .

Max and Chris moved to New Zealand to settle in Kerikeri in October 2012, where Max died at home on March 28, 2013.



Jenny Hutt is a Sociodramatist, TEP, a Director of Psychodrama Australia and a member of the AANZPA Board of Examiners. She is based in Melbourne where she works as a coach, trainer and consultant with individuals and organisations. Jenny can be contacted at [jenhutt@netspace.net.au](mailto:jenhutt@netspace.net.au)

BEING AND CREATING:  
TRIBUTES TO MAX CLAYTON

1935-2013



# I Will Come Through a Better Person

*JENNY HUTT*

Max died on Thursday 28 March less than six weeks after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. In this heartbreakingly brief period, Max displayed courage and a commitment to live creatively; characteristics of his which have inspired many. During that time he wrote to me, "I am developing a method of freeing my self from pain and keeping myself creative and in touch with my vision. I am increasingly confident that I will come through a better person." I felt moved by his humility and his vision of transformation.

Max achieved a great deal in his life. He trained thousands of people in the psychodrama method. He was highly chosen as a trainer for his capacity to tune in with individuals and groups, his clinical acumen and his creative capacities to surprise and inspire. He committed himself to the development of psychodramatists in Australia and New Zealand for over forty years, and in more recent decades in Hungary, Japan and Greece. He wrote newsletters, chapters, articles and books. He expanded role theory. He had a strong influence on the development of AANZPA as both a professional association and as a coherent training system.

Perhaps one of his greatest achievements was his ability to warm up and be wholeheartedly present with each person and situation. In this there was very often beauty and grace.

It has been an honour to compile these reflections by Phillip Carter, Vivienne Thomson, Hiromi Nakagomi, Peter Howie and Robert Brodie to honour the life of Max Clayton. I trust that they will evoke for you as they do for me, a deep appreciation for Max's vision, his qualities and his enduring legacy.



## There is a Time for Everything

*PHILIP CARTER*

The book comes. That must be why I'm still here, muddling around and not gone up to see Max like the situation demands. I had no idea, no warning, no notification but I know immediately what it is, when Robin comes in with a parcel, a package from the courier, it's the book, I think. Magnificent. A volume of mysterious encryptions. Six years in the translation ... *here Max, look ... the book, your book, our book ... look in Japanese ... Isao did it.* Thirty minutes later I am ready, the car packed for an indefinite time away, what I do when going up North. Who knows what the ancestors have in mind.

It will be three hours driving, well gone dark by the time I will arrive. He showed me on the map last time he stayed. He was excited: *this was the lake, look, all*

*the different walks, finally, getting to go sailing, I won't travel so much ...* He was going to write. I would help him anyway I could, perhaps another idea he would grow to like. I would organise a trip for him and Chris on a yacht, perhaps a trip out to Paroa Bay, my ancestral home. "Not this weekend," he said. He was doing some work with a healer. He wasn't dying. He was healing. He had been remembering encounters he had had, remarkable people he had met. That would be a book, we thought. "I've got one for you to write, too." He would chat with me about that, when he was through with this thing.

In the last couple of weeks, I have had a pen and paper ready when I ring him. I put him on speaker phone and hunch in. "It's really good to receive things," he said. "I'm used to giving out a lot ... You know, there's a bit in me that doesn't feel worthy ... Now I'm taking in things from you and not being conflicted about them ... The day's going to open up ... It's funny how much I notice about people and what's going on with them and myself."

I phoned again. It wasn't going to work to go sailing. He was not feeling so well but yes, he would like to chat. It was a sunny morning. He was on his deck looking out over the lake. I had pen and paper ready. "I know I should be looking on the bright side of things but I'm not going to do that." Silence ... "I'm going to appreciate the beautiful world I'm in. And all the beautiful people around me." He was so full of feeling. I got it, something magnificent. It was good to write his words. I liked writing his words. I could listen to them again and hear him saying them. I wouldn't just say whatever came out of my little mouth. I could gather a clearer form to what was on the opening edge of my consciousness. The space was evocative to him. I expressed my love. "I can feel your presence," he said.

Another time he had a thing he wanted to say, an important statement, and I was so curious and surprised I got only fragments written down: "We are completely and desperately alone, when we plan these things. It is a dignified place to be in ... Let yourself enter into yourself. Come up in the here and now. There's a wellspring ... We have been squashed into a mould and punished for being individuals. Honour everything that comes up in you ... Keep thinking of me. I love you. I will be thinking of you." Nectar wept from the cultivated life of a man of conviction.

There is no mistake. The way opens to my car lights and I am on the driveway, rough, going out to some reclusive place where the sage retires and enters into the final stage, ten years to leave us his golden reflections, surely, ten years at least, the way he has looked after himself. I come into his home, welcomed by his loved ones, the guardians. He rouses, coming from a place, his eyes so blue, dense to the centre, shining as a child taken completely up in delight and wonder. He comes back to his body. He thought it was a moth that had passed across. No, it was me and The Book. Here ...

He takes the book, so beautifully crafted. His long fingers, their tender tips caress the gift. He lingers over the pages, many pages, each a delicate moment. We talk to him as though he is a child. He comes to a picture — Marilyn



Sutcliffe and Christian Penny — his finger circles around her face and out into the space between them. We bend forward ... “Such life,” he says. “Look!” It appears his forehead has swollen even more, shiny like what we are shown of the Chinese sage.

Later, he gathers us together for the night’s blessing. “Isn’t this a great universe to grow up in?” He has us formed into a circle, standing. “There is a time for everything ...”



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# Max Clayton: Designer, Role Theorist, Trainer and Practitioner

VIVIENNE THOMSON

To me, Max was a man of vision and action and the one person so far in my life experience who has unswervingly embodied psychodramatic principles. Whenever I think of him I am inspired by his spontaneity and creativity, his voice in my ear with some phrase or other that spurs me on. In my work as the Secretary of the AANZPA Board of Examiners I can see his handiwork and appreciate the brilliance of his foresight and particular skills. As I reflect on our Association, I am thankful for the robust processes that he helped to design.

The following accounts are of a few of these different areas of work in AANZPA where I experience Max's contribution.

## As a Designer

Max spent much of his life travelling to different countries providing psychodrama training. I imagine a sociometric map of his extensive connections would be a graphic revelation of his significant influence on many people in building up psychodrama around the world.

For many years, Max visited Wellington, New Zealand, running training workshops, some short, some long, some residential. The workshops were well subscribed and our region had quite a few members eager to train. As a budding sociodramatist I craved more opportunities to learn the method so I decided to initiate the establishment of a local psychodrama training institute. A small group of us presented Max with the results of a sociometric test I had conducted in the region that identified the four most highly chosen individuals the community would trust to develop and deliver a training program. Max was immediately supportive, valuing our warm up and the work we had done so far. He made a few recommendations regarding staffing, curriculum development and practicalities for us to get going. His responsiveness already demonstrated his commitment to be centrally involved in the evolution of the institute.

The decision to accredit training institutes rather than individual Trainer,

Educator, Practitioners (TEPs) was part of Max's vision of a strong Association founded on sociometry. Our work as teaching staff of institutes keeps us connected, relating to each other, meeting and working to develop and refine what we do.

Max led trainer development workshops in both Australia and New Zealand, assisting the development of curriculum and building effective training institutes. Later on, as institutes and the Association matured, Max commented on our appreciation of our long-standing relationships and that we tended to want to work together. He suggested we federate, and shortly after the New Zealand institutes formed the Federation of Training Institutes in New Zealand (FITNZ) and in Australia the Australian Federation of Training Institutes (AFTI). These organisations have met every year for the past 15 and 13 years respectively. Just this year the Australian Federation has formed one institute.

Part of setting up the Federations required the development of legal documents. After a consultation with a lawyer, Max took one look at their proposed constitution and declared it full of unnecessary legalese and, within a few minutes, had drafted a plain English document that has stood the test of time. Max's impressive linguistic ability is also apparent in cleverly crafted documents such as the Training and Standards Manual and the Examiners' Guidelines. Working with Max's writings I have come to appreciate their clarity and comprehensiveness. In addition to the formal documents of our Association, I frequently re-read various of Max's works including assessment reports and articles on role.

## As a Role Theorist

One distinguishing feature of AANZPA, and Max's leadership, is the development of role theory. There are several stand-out moments in Max's teaching on role theory. I remember one workshop where Max called someone a jerk. I was a bit startled to hear this at the time but realized that it was not meant in a pejorative sense but as a literal description. It was an apt role name as the trainee started one thing, stopped abruptly, and immediately started up with something new. The trainee's stop start functioning caused everyone in the group to feel jerked around. The trainee himself felt like a jerk, again not in a shameful or self-denigrating way but as an accurate portrayal of his being. This realization was the beginning of his role development in this area.

On another occasion, during the afternoon tea break in a trainer workshop, a group of us including Max were chewing the fat. Max began fooling around engaging as a cowboy chewing tobacco and speaking in a broad American cowboy drawl; and then he spat. I was repulsed by the tobacco chewing and the spitting. Max teased me, asking me, still in role, why I didn't like to chew. Didn't I like the taste and the sensation of the baccy? He goaded me to try some. The scene, although funny and absurd, was completely credible and relevant. The learning

for me was about warm up, spontaneity, will and play and their part in developing role repertoire.

In yet another training session Max had frozen an enactment of a scene from Goldilocks and the Three Bears. He focused in on one of the bears, getting us to name the role, noticing a whole gamut of aspects of the bear's expression to help generate role names. Grappling with the task we finally came up with a role name to which Max said, "How do you explain the tear in his eye?" The learning for me was about the finesse of capturing the whole of a person's functioning.

Another time, in a small work group doing vignettes, Max was a protagonist and chose me as one of his auxiliaries. I was a friend in Greece chatting over a coffee. With minimal scene setting we quickly got into an animated conversation. I felt free and absorbed in the role; I *was* his Greek friend. Then something in the conversation caught my attention and I fleetingly lost connection with Max as I thought of my own situation. Max felt this loss of connection and asked me something relevant to the scene. When I replied he said he didn't believe me. In that interaction my experience of role as a dynamic relationship was palpable.

Max's inventiveness and playfulness, his immediacy and attention have produced many poignant learnings for me about role. I continue to learn.

## As a Trainer

I have loved Max's superb training and recall a particular training session in which he worked sociodramatically demonstrating his skillfulness and craftsmanship. This was a 10 minute process in a workshop when, just before morning tea, two people were vying for being protagonist. Rather than make a sociometric selection, Max chose to direct a negotiation that I wished I had recorded. He clearly differentiated between positional bargaining, where each person haggles until they reach a compromise where usually at least one person doesn't get what they want; and interest based bargaining, where the art is to reach agreement through acknowledging the different warm ups and role relationships. The resolution was very satisfying for the whole group as, together, we generated a creative and inclusive outcome. I have applied my learning from that brief session on many occasions as I have worked with managers and unions.

I expect that all trainees could similarly recount specific insights and abilities they have gained as a result of Max's training.

## As a Practitioner

Moreno hypothesised that "the nearer two individuals are to each other in space, the more do they owe to each other their immediate attention and acceptance, their first love." (*Who Shall Survive?*, 1953) I have experienced this with Max like no other. He had a tremendous talent for quickly making a role assessment,

homing in on what is important with genuine interest and appreciation of the other's experience. In such moments, when there was mutuality in the relationship and Max's timing spot on, the experience was of exquisite beauty and tenderness. At other times, the experience could be excruciatingly painful and, although difficult and unpleasant, remarkably accurate and ultimately developmental. I remember the relief he brought with the simplest statement or the delicate touch of his hand that could make you feel recognized and understood.

I admired his diligence in attending to mind, body and soul. He was fit, regularly running, walking, enjoying his physicality. One workshop he arrived back a few minutes late after lunch panting as he took his place in the group. He told us he had just climbed a mountain!

Max's engaging personality meant that once met, he is never forgotten. In his capacity as a designer, trainer, role theorist and practitioner, Max has affected us all with his great vision, and his pioneering and adventurous spirit. He challenges us to be lively, engaged directly and spontaneously with each other, always developing our ability to generate anew. Integrating his teachings, our practice serves as a living memorial to him. I know I am a better person for having known him and I for one will endeavour to live my life as fully as he did.



Vivienne Thomson is a Sociodramatist, TEP, staff member of the Auckland Training Centre for Psychodrama and Secretary to the AANZPA Board of Examiners. She lives on Waiheke Island in Auckland where she works as a trainer and consultant. Viv can be contacted at [viv@algate.co.nz](mailto:viv@algate.co.nz)



# Max: A Thousand Winds

HIROMI NAKAGOMI

*Please do not stand at my grave and weep  
I am not there, I do not sleep  
I am the sunlight on the ripened grain  
I am the gentle autumn rain*

*I am a thousand winds  
I am a thousand winds that blow  
I am the diamond glint on snow  
I am a thousand winds that blow*

*Please do not stand at my grave and cry  
I am not there, I did not die  
I am the swift rush of birds in flight  
I am the stars that shine at night*

Lyrics based on a poem by Mary Elizabeth Frye (1932)

I was profoundly grateful to Chris Hosking for giving me the opportunity to sing this song, *A Thousand Winds* at Max's funeral.

When I saw Max lying in a boat-shaped coffin in a room of his house the day before the funeral service, he was smiling and looked gratified. I had a strong sense that even though his body had ceased living, his spirit was abiding everywhere. It was hard to believe he was dead.

Chris told us that Max was extremely happy to hold the Japanese translation of 'The Living Spirit of the Psychodramatic Method' in his hands. The copy of the book was brought to him from Japan when he was very close to leaving us. Isao Matsumoto, my psychodrama colleague, took five years to translate the big green book and it was published towards the end of March. Isao sent copies to Max and co-author Philip. What an amazing epilogue it was! But I don't think it was a coincidence.

I met Max for the first time in Melbourne in 1987. I was an audacious enough explorer to join Max's psychodrama training group in Melbourne in 1988 when all of my family were living there and I myself was in search of psychodrama. I was the only Japanese person in the group, the only non-English-speaker. Even now, I can remember those days quite clearly.

I was often very surprised and impressed with what Max said and did and how the participants responded in the group. He taught us, "Reflect the whole person in the mirror!" Many years later I found this enigmatic line was in fact the secret to his map of the psychodrama universe.

Since the 1990s Max has been to Japan many times. In 2003 Isao began to organize Max's workshops. Max became a great explorer and a lover of the culture in Japan. He loved Japanese food. He loved the nature of Japan. Because I acted as Max's interpreter, I learned a lot about him, his ways and his ideas about practicing psychodrama and training people professionally and personally. It was a great privilege for me to play such an important role. The task of interpreting was filled with challenges and treasures. I kept on building a strong relationship with him through the constant workshops and friendly companionship every year in Japan. More and more Japanese people became interested in Max's way of training people. We wished we could organize his workshops forever.

Above all I was deeply impressed by the idea of systemic role theory in the four training books written by Max which I applied myself to studying. They gave new meaning to my life. I found it a very satisfying way to look at people. As we were usually being taught to focus only on a person's problems or trauma in psychodrama training in Japan, Max's way appeared to be very different and fascinating to me. But I could not tell what was actually making a difference at first. Though it took such a long time for me to start to apply it in my work and to run my own groups, the four training books always continued to be a lifeline for me in practicing the psychodramatic method within the Japanese culture.

The role training book, which is the second of the four training books, has been translated into Japanese and it is now being published. How happy I will be to see Max's many Japanese fans being delighted to have a translated role training book! To translate his training books into Japanese will be my life work, which I find is the best way to overcome his absence. Max will always abide with us as A Thousand Winds.



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# Reflections on Max Clayton and His Determination to Progress Psychodrama

PETER HOWIE

I have many memories of Max in my life: many recollections of times when he had been extraordinary, and ordinary, both. In considering the experiences that stand out for me I realise there are many areas that I want to celebrate.

One is the remarkable way I saw Max hang in with a person. This had great value for me, for the group, and especially for the protagonist. Sometimes this was from an auxiliary role, and sometimes when he was directing. I witnessed his extraordinary capacity to not move aside when everything in me said: "Please move aside Max" or "Let's not go there. Aye yi yi!" This modelling assisted me to appreciate a group member's reactive fears, rather than try to reject, mollify or destroy them.

I am reminded of a character, Frank Underwood played by Kevin Spacey, with similar qualities from the *House of Cards* TV Series. He explains about a colleague, "You see, Freddy believes that if a fridge falls off a mini-van, you better swerve out of its way. I believe it's the fridge's job to swerve out of mine."

I saw Max being steadfast, hanging in there, way past the point others might, and this producing extraordinary results for me and others. When I first met Max after spending my lifetime swerving, I began to appreciate the value of being unwavering, steadfast and resolute.

Max was one of our Association's and community's few full time psychodramatists and trainers. This allowed him to continually think about, reflect on, and develop his thinking, style, and application of the method. Each time I trained with him he would undoubtedly bring a new take on our method. He might arrive at the workshop with a yen to explore and teach us about doubling. Perhaps he said something like this: "You know how you hardly use doubling, (nods from the group), well let's really go into that area and make it a part of what you do from here on in." I remember a series of sessions where he called everything 'doubling'. I got part of what he meant at the time, and spent a lot of time subsequently considering doubling, and the many and varied ways it can be applied to sustain interaction with group members and with people in my life.

Max kept finding different takes on life, and different takes on directing,

learning, group work, and Morenian philosophy. I can recall many examples of Max turning up to our Brisbane residential workshops and emphasising something entirely fresh.

One year he began inviting group participants to express their appreciation of one another. He would say "I notice you looking at Vicki across the room. You seem positive towards her." And the response was "Well, yes I am appreciating the effort she is making." To which he responded "Well can you express this to her?" Sometimes in this group the group member did. Sometimes the group member couldn't. Sometimes the group member argued the value of doing it at all. Sometimes Max resorted to spontaneity development to assist self-presentation. Sometimes he would engage in a Socratic dialogue such as "What might stop you expressing this appreciation? And other times he might engage in guerrilla doubling such as "Yeah, they'll just get a swelled head, won't they? And anyway, they weren't that good. I could have done better." (Or maybe I am remembering me doing that last one!)

I discussed this with Max once, his continual refining and expanding psychodrama theory and practice. I suggested that he seemed to be miles ahead of the game and my hypothesis was that it was due to his being deeply involved with the method, and training folk in them, most of the time. He said he thought that that was about right, and that small smile of his crept slowly onto his face, as he considered what I was saying.

I recently put together a workbook for trainees wanting to develop their capacity for working with roles by improving the simple ability to name roles. I spent a short time hunting out the few books on role theory. Once trainees appreciated the systemic nature of role theory I wanted to focus on the naming of roles. Role naming is after all a creative enterprise and not all that easy or easily sustained.

After much hunting, I revisited Max's book *Living Pictures of the Self*, a marvellous book on so many levels. In there I found a couple of lines towards the front where Max suggested starting by generating adjectives about what someone had demonstrated. He suggested following this by naming the verb function being demonstrated. Finally he suggested putting two of them together and experimenting that way. I'd read the book a few times, and never remembered him writing this! When I applied this simple process in the groups I was working with, trainees became role-naming aficionados.

Max had written that book many years previously and I had enjoyed his take on leadership towards the end, reading that chapter about a zillion times, without regularly returning to the earlier parts of the work. This is an example of Max bringing many important elements, ideas and points of view to bear on psychodrama, many of which I simply missed in my rush to practice.

One of Max's enduring legacies is to have encouraged me, and many others, to think long and hard about what we are doing, as well as work out just what thinking actually is. I clearly remember Max suggesting, "It is all in the warm-

up.” Well I have been thinking long and hard on that for many years. And I now believe it is all in the warm-up. Finally I was able to convince a university supervisor, and those involved with admissions and scholarships, that warm-up is worth researching and that I could be the one to do it for my PhD.

Max’s reference greatly assisted me to re-enter university in 2004 to start a Master of Education program. My science degree from 1975 had mostly passes in the grades column. However, Max, in the reference, expressed his conviction that I could do the work required, to a high level. In that case he was right and I did, which helped when applying for the PhD. I had wished Max would be around to see and critique what I write on warm-up. I understand Max had wished to be around longer to do quite a bit of writing. I reckon that was a hard one for him to give up.



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# Recollections and Reflections on the Life of Dr G Max Clayton

*ROBERT BRODIE*

Max was a big Man.

Max saw himself as a cosmic being participating in the ongoing creative evolution of this world in all its dimensions throughout the ages, past and future. Every person he came across, at some point, he also saw through this lens. I think he dreamt of dwelling in a world of giants and longed to be met with strength and independence and a deep willingness to engage, to encounter.

He sought to embody the principles that he taught as he understood the work of Jacob and Zerka Moreno. He lived as an existential hero. He enacted his knowledge that spontaneity is trainable, that the more spontaneity is called forth by life and other human beings, the more the human's capacity to be spontaneous is developed.

A consciousness Max valued greatly was to dwell in a naïvely magical world. The naivety of the child where everything is new all the time, was of huge appeal to him. He spoke of this magical sense being an essential experience. However he did not simply sit back if the magic did disappear. He strove all the time to bring newness and freshness and life into situations that he was in. As we returned to a group of friends at a celebration one summer evening, he nudged me with his elbow saying "Let's see what we can get up to here." We became companions in a boyish adventure.

Most people who came across him found it difficult to be neutral to him. Those who could rise to the ongoing spontaneity test, which I think he knew was his work to present to people, sought him out.

Max had great and active faith in each human being's creative capacities. He taught his trainees to see that the other in front of them is seething with spontaneity. He treated people as though they were so seething, without sentiment. And of course many rose to this and did become more full of creative life.

He was capable of sustaining the most intense intimacy. A friend has spoken to me of the first time in her life that she felt listened to. She had shared with Max something of her own reaction and was met with silence. After a time Max responded to her thoughtfully and pertinently and this woman who had been very active in communities and raising children experienced for the first time in

her life that she knew of, that she had been truly heard.

I felt something of the same myself in January of 1980. This was in Canberra at the commencement of a psychodrama training workshop coinciding with the inaugural meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Association of Psychodramatists, Sociodramatists, Sociometrists and Role-Trainers, Inc. of which Max was a founder. At the opening session of the workshop he directed me in a drama revisiting my experience of my relationship with my father who had died many years before. For the first time in years of therapy, I had a companion who was capable of seeing and feeling me and being my companion in this tangled, confused, pain-filled territory.

In very few economical words, Max would offer a concise and insightful assessment. I remember being at a training workshop speaking to another group member when Max made a side comment that I was good at creating a tangle. There was no further elaboration at that point and I sought none. However, over the years I have become aware of how prodigiously proficient I am at this particular ability. I am grateful for the wake up.

He would never give up on people or projects. I remember on the wall of his office in Caulfield a picture of a horse chained to the ground against a stormy sky struggling with straining muscles, bulging to get free. This seemed to capture something essential in Max. He did not believe in giving up, even on what seemed impossible to others, nor did he give up on others.

One favourite memory of Max's enduring playfulness sees us in Brisbane in the lounge room at a university college after the final day of the conference. We are watching the last night of the Australian Open tennis championship. Max had an ongoing interest in competition sport. I know of tennis and the cyclists' Tour de France and more passingly Australian Rules Football. Several of us present have been following that tennis competition and its players and there is a atmosphere of warm playful companionship accompanied with a glass of good red Australian wine. This is 2006 at the time of John Howard's Prime Ministership of Australia. During a commercial break, Max, somewhat shyly, performs his acutely observed impression of John Howard. He has him to a T. The same slightly hurt puzzled eyes and face and pain-blockers voice. We are very entertained. Another of his more well-practised and performed impersonations was of John Wayne. He had the gunslinger down pat. Clint Eastwood, as a favourite actor, exemplified much of the human capacity for standing solid on the side of life and relationships as he dealt with forces seeking to destroy and demean ordinary folk.

I remember organising workshops for Max to come across to Adelaide to conduct training in the 1980s. He was very careful and patiently caring as we discussed finances and his fee when my budget went awry through low numbers. This meticulous approach in dealing with figures was evident too in giving directions when driving.

An achievement of which Max was particularly proud was the building of a

Morenian psychodrama stage at the Wasley Centre in Perth. It had 3 levels of warm-up, a balcony and stage lighting, clearly based on the theatre at Beacon, New York. I spent a year in residence at the Wasley Centre to complete the bulk of my psychodrama training in 1981. It was a thriving community of psychodramatists, trainers, and various other practitioners. There were over 300 folk each week attending groups and individual counselling, supervision, training and psychotherapy.

Another of Max's dearest accomplishments which probably also occasioned him some of the greatest pain was the building of the community of psychodramatists in Australia and New Zealand. Now that he is no longer active in the psychodrama world, the strength of the relationships that he developed between those he worked with is becoming evident. He actively sought not to make himself central but to make each person central and capable in their relationships, quality relationships, with others.

Among Max's most significant works was the formation and development of the Board of Examiners of ANZPA. He carried out this work faithfully for 24 years. His wisdom and compassion were experienced by the membership as a whole through his participation in the writing of the Training and Standards Manual, the development of accreditation of institutes and assessments of practitioners. Lynette Clayton and he collaborated over many years, along with, in the early days, Tom Wilson and Teena Lee-Hucker. As the Secretary of the Board of Examiners he engaged in much sensitive communication with a wide range of organisations, institutes and individuals, across the Tasman and overseas. If you have received any communication from him I recommend that you go back and read it with eyes afresh for it is likely to have wisdom that you have not recognised.

Jointly with Chris Hosking, his wife and dear companion, he nurtured an increasingly refined aesthetic and interpersonal sensibility amongst those with whom they worked tirelessly in annual workshops and in their involvement with the various training institutes and in other functions of the Association.

Shortly after Max died, in various sessions in Melbourne and in other places, particularly Adelaide, over and over again I found that individuals were able to remember their encounters with Max in vivid detail. He lit many lights throughout the world, notably in Japan, Greece and Hungary as well as in New Zealand and Australia.

Many continue to have a sense of his ongoing life and presence, so using the past tense doesn't quite fit. Sifting through the richness of his range of roles and abilities and accomplishments will continue for the rest of time. Much remains to be mirrored.

Towards the end of his life Max said some words which have been widely quoted and which do summarise his work and his devotion to spontaneous, authentic life. He said these words to a group in Hungary.

*Light*

*You know, what comes into my mind is,  
there is light and there is darkness.  
there is always a bit of light.  
stay with this light,  
just with that little bit.  
don't look for a bigger one.  
stay with what you've got.  
it'll grow.  
stay with the small light.  
very important.  
stay with it.  
don't stay with what you haven't got.  
light is light.*

Max Clayton



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## **“Just an Ordinary Max Clayton Person”**

*FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH MAX CLAYTON BY PETER CAMMOCK*

*EDITED BY GILLIAN ROSE*

*INTRODUCTION BY PETER CAMMOCK*

# Introduction

I met with Max on 26 September 2002 in his home in Eastbourne, Wellington. Our conversation took place as part of research I was conducting for my book *The Spirit of Leadership*. The focus of the book is on the life journeys that led people into their vocational callings. Having participated in a psychodrama weekend with Max a few years earlier I was confident that he was someone who experienced his work as a calling rather than just a job or career. My assumption proved to be correct. We had a wonderful conversation in which Max related his early life experiences and told the story of his journey into psychodrama. His story has all the elements of the early intimations and later invitations that precede a significant life's work, and perhaps provides a little more understanding of how he was able to make such an extraordinary contribution through his work. It was a great privilege for me to hear Max's life story, and although it was over a decade ago I remember our conversation well and with great warmth and appreciation. In my book the final quote I referenced from our interview covered Max's reflections on his life and the deeper elements that surrounded it. This quote says much about Max's life philosophy and I think is a fitting preface to the fuller interview that follows.

*Sometimes I do lose myself in the sort of immensity of the universe and feel at one with it. I wouldn't think of myself as a very spiritual person. But I think that spirit is the most significant thing in a human being. And I tend to think that when I start to be a bit more in touch with my spirit, or my 'I Amness' that I feel one with the universe. Look I used to not think very much about Carl Jung and I didn't think very much about synchronicity. And I didn't think very much about the universe bringing things. But I do now. And I'm sure, none of these things that have happened to me, happened by chance. I'm sure. I'm sure that the good teachers I've had haven't just come to me by chance. But then, I can't prove that. All I can do is say that I have a tremendous sense of wonder and awe about these things that have happened.*



Peter Cammock teaches and researches leadership at the University of Canterbury where he has been the Director of Executive Development. He is the author of two books, *The Dance of Leadership* (2001, 2003) and *The Spirit of Leadership* (2008, 2009, 2013) and is an enthusiastic psychodrama trainee.

# In Max's Own Words

## Becoming Expressive

I suppose my interest really was in folks becoming expressive. From my early years on I was often quite expressive. I certainly enjoyed being expressive. When I was very, very young, the doctor told my mother I was going to die; he said probably within a few days. The reason being that I vomited up all my food. My mother was breast-feeding me and I just vomited up everything. She gave me various formulae. The doctor said, "Well none of it's going to work, he's just going to die". My mother was a very determined woman; she didn't agree with the doctor. She kept mixing new mixtures and fortunately she found one that I didn't vomit up anymore. Afterwards, I cried and moaned a lot apparently. I'd wake up and cry and my father would take me for walks at night-time and calm me down. So I must have been very expressive because my family and relatives all talked about me making a lot of noise when I was young.

I definitely value the times when we'd be sitting around the dining room table when I was quite young and my father and mother would be having a conversation, or they might be reprimanding my brother or sister or me. I would often answer back and I would often be reprimanded for answering back, but I just couldn't stop myself from making comments about what was going on. Comments about the family and family interactions.

The same thing happened at school. Mostly I was pretty quiet. But from time to time I would have my say. And I used to have friends and I'd be pretty expressive with my friends. I enjoyed playing football and running and tennis, walking in the bush and cross country running and all those things. I just loved to express myself.

The household I was growing up in, sometimes there was conflict and that got me reflecting about what was going on and what was happening. About my father and my mother and my brother and sister. There were many other relatives living nearby in Melbourne and I had a lot of interaction with them, and I did a lot of reflecting.

But my father and mother were pretty expressive, especially my father. My father was a teacher and I certainly identified with my father. Even though I had conflicts with my father, I also identified with him, especially his ideals. I liked his expressiveness. He was lecturing a lot. He wrote books. He wrote school text books and I liked that. There's no doubt he had a lot of influence on me becoming expressive, quite apart from me being an Aquarian. Later on in my life I did discover I was an Aquarian, even though my family didn't believe in astrology. Everything said about the Aquarians fitted for me very well. Me having big mood swings and being very enthusiastic and getting quite low spirited; later on, quite depressed. And then coming out of it and getting very involved and full of

life again — but often big swings in my moods.

My mother was always very encouraging. She was very interested in me. Very interested in what I did. She wanted to know how I was going at school. Then there were some teachers at school who were very expressive people and I liked them a lot. I definitely identified with some of my teachers. There was the teacher who taught gymnastics. I definitely accepted him and what he did to a great degree. I loved everything he did. I liked the gymnastics. I liked the way he taught. He was very enthusiastic, very encouraging and full of life.

## School Days

My first teacher at school was again very expressive, very alive, very interested. Got me playing, experimenting, drawing and I felt very easy and free. I just loved to express myself in her class. I arrived there and because I was Mr Clayton's son I was expected to be able to write and read and do sums and be pretty brilliant. So she put me in a higher grade. People were sitting there doing sums and I had sums in front of me to do and I couldn't do them. I looked at the others and I was just copying what they were doing. She came along and had a bit of a chat and she said, "Come out of your seat". She took me to the back of the class. It was full of Tinker toys and other toys. I'd never seen so much stuff, it looked fantastic. There was a carpet on the floor and she said, "Sit here and enjoy yourself".

I sat there and enjoyed myself for two or three weeks just making things on my own while the other people were doing stuff. Then after that she said, "Oh come and sit in this row". And that was the first row, you know, which I should have been in, in the first place. I think that was very significant, actually. Being able to not have any shame that I couldn't do these tasks. I did feel pretty upset that I couldn't do these tasks. But she didn't mind at all and she just put me in a spot where I could just gradually feel at home there. I felt really at home in that school. It was fantastic.

I had a lot of teachers like that. Later on in secondary school I had a Latin teacher who most people were very frightened of because he used to come in and speak with a loud voice and he'd often shout. He'd come into the room and he'd say, "Right, George what's the third person participle of ...", and then he expected to get an answer. But if someone couldn't answer he'd just ask someone else. He was very expressive. He would teach about famous Roman people: poets, authors, generals and senators, interesting women; about the politics and social life, the economic life.

It was just extraordinarily interesting. He was so involved in the subject. He would often get very worked up about a particular bit of writing, usually one of Cicero's speeches, and he would stand on a chair. Then he would climb on to his desk and he would give out this speech standing on his desk. Then he would come down on to the floor again and walk around. He would introduce

competitions in the class. It was very alive, very good, I loved it. There was another geography teacher who had a similar personality. He would take us on excursions. He was very involved in the subject and he would give us projects to do on interesting things.

Then there was another teacher who was in charge of drama in the school and he would produce plays. I wasn't very interested early on. Then I decided I would audition for a play. I got the part of Robert de Baudricourt in George Bernard Shaw's *St Joan*. He's in the opening scene. And I got very expressive. I just blossomed when I acted in that play. I acted in other plays and I travelled to Tasmania with this company and acted. Sometimes I'd forget my lines and I'd ad-lib and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I was good at acting but I didn't pursue that. My family wasn't favourable toward acting because they were in a religious group that was very strict and they didn't believe in things like movies or stage acting; stuff like that. Although my father and mother were favourable towards Shakespeare's plays and certain other plays. But they certainly never wanted me to be an actor. I was definitely tempted. I think I would have been pretty good actually as an actor. I think I would have been quite fulfilled.

## Wanting to Create Something

Look, when I was a young boy, I used to go and listen to my father preaching in a church. Quite often I would walk home, sometimes with my brother or my sister and sometimes on my own at nighttime. Walk home for about a mile and the stars would be shining. And I remember one particular night feeling quite a bit, being in the presence of the stars. I think this has got something to do with this hero's journey actually. I certainly felt a lot. I felt a sense of wanting to create something; really do something in this world. This was when I was quite young, probably about 8 or 9.

Then when I was a teenager, there were quite a few people who influenced me in a significant way, apart from my teachers at school. Most of these people would have been preachers in churches or teachers in a religious setting, not necessarily a church. There was David Scott for example, who was a master in the school where I was, who was involved in a religious group called the Crusader Union. One of my relatives was the founder of the Crusader Union in Victoria. Anyway, I got introduced to it when I was a teenager.

My brother was going to the Crusader Union group at school, at lunchtime, and they usually had a speaker and some questions. The speakers would speak about something to do with the Bible, or Christ, or faith, or vocation. Then there'd be lots of speakers who'd come along. It always had a message that you could express Christ wherever you were. Anyway I was always pretty interested in this. I certainly identified with what they were saying and I became a regular part of this group. The last part of my schooling, this teacher came along and asked me to be the leader of the Crusader Union group. I didn't know I could do that

but he was very clear that he wanted me to be the leader and that I was the right person. And I said I would.

## Leadership and Meaning

So that got me definitely in a leadership role and sort of being out front. And I was identified with this group in the school, with my friends. Most of them weren't part of this group, some of them were, but most of them weren't. Hardly any of my friends were. So I felt pretty different quite a bit of the time. With a lot of my friends I felt pretty different. Even though I continued to play sport with them and socialise and have a good time. But it wasn't a peaceful sort of a time.

I certainly felt a great sense of meaning in my life when I was part of that Crusader Union group. This was a time that definitely enhanced my sense that I had something to contribute to the world. Because I was so well motivated I had interesting chats with people. When I went to the university I used to chat people up. I wasn't using religious language all the time, or probably very rarely. But I was interested in having chats with people and lots of people would start discussing things with me; about what they thought about life and what it was all about. I guess we had philosophical chats. Often I found they would go away and come back and say, "Oh that was very helpful you know, that conversation". And I realised that some of the things I was doing were actually quite helpful. That started at school, people would give me feedback. I think that's really where this thing started. Where I started to realise, through the conversations and getting feedback, that people benefitted from being with me. And I was astounded. I thought "Gee, that's good".

## Awakening Imagination

Then there was a person called Montague Goodman who used to write religious literature. Came out from England and stayed at my parents' house and he had a big influence on me. There was a missionary from the Congo, called J. Alexander Clark, who'd walked across Africa four or five times and knew Livingston and had been given the highest order of merit by the king of Belgium. He was very inspiring when I met him.

These different people they really awakened my imagination a lot. I had a relative who was my great uncle. His name was Ernest Clarke and he was married to Minnie Clarke. They'd been missionaries in China, in Western China, all their lives. From the early twenties on. They'd learned to speak Mandarin and the other Chinese lingo. Ernest used to speak in a rather boring voice, but he was tremendously interesting speaking about China and his life there.

They were inspiring people. I used to think to myself, "I think I'm going to be a missionary in China". But I found it all pretty scary because at the time there were some pretty scary things happening in China. I thought I'd probably

lose my life there; but it was the idea of being a missionary in China.

Then I met this man from New Zealand while I was at the university. It would have been my third year at the university, I think. He was giving some electives in the university and I was driving him around and he would chat to me about his life. He was doing a lot of good work with alcoholic people. That's when I started to think that I could become a minister, when I was with this guy who was a minister. I was associating being a minister with counselling with alcoholics. And counselling with the wide range of people that this guy would chat to me about when we were driving along. I thought, "Oh, that's interesting". And it sort of fitted with me having had conversations with people that seemed to be helpful. So already I'm developing a particular identity. I just felt my real thing was I wanted to be involved in counselling and psychotherapy; probably while I was a minister in the church I thought at that time.

### **Floored (for the last time)**

The main influence there was meeting Seward Hiltner from Chicago. He was in the Chicago Divinity school; subsequently was a professor at Princeton. He came to Melbourne and he was teaching and I was in some of his classes. There were two things that got me in. One was his flowing style of teaching and the stories he told. There was plenty of illustrations as well as theory, so there was a good integration of theory and practice. I could imagine what he did. I could just see what he was doing, it was easy to see.

He organised a role play and he got me to be the minister in this role play. He played the role of a member of the church who had marital problems. I set up my office and he arrived at my office, knocked on the door and I asked him in. He was insisting that I meet with him and his wife to sort this problem. He wanted me to persuade his wife to take this course of action. I knew that was wrong and I wouldn't do that. But I was so frozen, you know, I could hardly think of what to say. But I knew how to say "ah ha", and I knew how to reflect a few things back. But he kept pressing me. He was starting to criticise me, because I wouldn't do this thing that he was asking me to do, which I knew wasn't the right thing to do at all.

So I was doing this in front of quite a large class. Afterwards I felt tremendously embarrassed and defeated and I felt I'd done an awful job. I felt I'd shown myself up in a very bad light. I thought probably I'd never be any good as a counsellor. So subsequently I brought all the books that Seward Hiltner had written and I read them all. I thoroughly absorbed his teachings and I started to practice it.

I found after this experience, after that, I was never floored. No matter what a person did, I don't think I ever got floored like that ever again. I bought Carl Roger's stuff and that made sense to me. Then I met a psychiatrist in Melbourne who took an interest in what I was doing and used to give me some supervision. I used to write notes of what I was doing and he'd write back and I'd occasionally

see him in Melbourne. He was in charge of child psychiatry at the Royal Melbourne hospital. Anyway I saw quite a bit of him.

Then, when I was studying at the University in my fourth year, I was sitting at the library and I just had this experience where I felt, “Gee! What am I going to do with my life?” I felt very strongly I should be a minister in the church. The trouble was I was part of a religious group that didn’t have ministers. So I was a bit stuck there! Shortly after that I joined a church — I joined the Presbyterian Church.

I had dreams about it. Oh, there was Billy Graham coming to Melbourne and I was a Billy Graham counsellor. But all those things were all in line with me feeling I had something I really needed to do. I didn’t know quite what it was. But when I thought ‘ministers’ that fitted the best at that time. I applied to be a candidate for the ministry. I was accepted, to my astonishment, since I hadn’t been in the Presbyterian Church very long at all. I completed my degree at the University of Melbourne; I’d done half a law degree so I quit doing the law degree and I did my theology degree and then I did a divinity degree. Then I was a minister.

## The Motivating Force

But the motivating force, the driving force . . . I suppose I did experience *this desire to do something in the world* as a driver, or a driving force. It wasn’t a cruel driver, but it was a very strong motivating force. It was something that made me very restless. In my life, I’m not a peaceful person. I don’t experience peacefulness often. I’ve got a sort of a driving energy. I don’t sit there very happily for a long time reading a book. I don’t very happily sit there writing, writing, writing, for long hours. I’ve got to get up and go for a walk or go and chat to somebody. I’ve done my best writing when I’m doing counselling or psychotherapy sessions. Often I’d do writing for 2 or 3 hours and then I’d do psychotherapy sessions before and after and then do some more writing. I guess I feel things should be all of a piece. All one life, sort of thing.

I’ve got a tremendous sense of vocation. It’s not a job I’m doing. I used to conceive of it as helping people. When I started getting into this area, at the university, and subsequently, I always conceived of it as helping people. People would ask me, “What do you want to do?” I’d say, “I want to help people”.

Now I laugh at that quite a bit. Although it still means quite a bit too. Like *real* help for people. In the sense that Eric Berne discussed, people rewrite their scripts and re-order their lives. I’ve come to see, more clearly than I used to see, that the most important thing is for something to develop within *myself*. Well, within myself and in my outward life, the way I organise my life. So, especially since I stopped working in Perth, especially since then, I’ve paid much more attention to organising my daily life so that it’s got more balance in it. I do more study now than I used to do in Perth. I do more reflection. I walk in the bush more. I go to movies. I go to shows. I interact with people. I go out to dinner more often now. Just little meals with people in their homes or in a restaurant.



I do my training in a different way. I'm more relaxed than I used to be. I'm probably less fiery. I can be fiery, but I'm much less driven, I think, now, than I used to be. I do my counselling in a much better way. It's more relaxed. I'm quieter in myself than I used to be. I'm enjoying life a hell of a lot more now than I used to. I am more at peace with myself than I used to be. But I don't think I'll ever be that peaceful.

I've got a much different notion about the work now, in my vocation. There's much more emphasis on the fact that I've got to be alive within myself. I'm full of energy again and I think it's due to the fact that I've given a bit more room for myself. And the work goes better. The work is miles better, from my point of view.

## As Ordinary as I Can Possibly Be

My mission is to be as ordinary as I can possibly be. Just an ordinary Max Clayton person and get with people in an ordinary way and teach. And if I warm up, and if they warm up, I warm up and I do better. But basically I'm just getting together and seeing what emerges.

I used to not think very much about Carl Jung. I didn't think very much about synchronicity and I didn't think very much about the universe bringing things. But I do now. And I'm sure none of these things that have happened to me, or you, happened by chance. I'm sure that the good teachers I've had haven't just come to me by chance. But then I can't prove that. All I can do is say that I have a tremendous sense of wonder and awe about these things that have happened.

I came over to New Zealand with Chris, a bit over four years ago. I left a good work in Melbourne and I thought, "Oh, I want to go and live in New Zealand". Chris said, "Well why?" I couldn't say. I just had a feeling for it. Things have been good for me in New Zealand. Things have opened up for me here. I've learned a lot while I've been here, the last while. And I think, well, the universe has brought these things to me. I've done something too, I suppose, but to me it's just incredible, how things have just, emerged. It's just an incredible sense of being given to, all the time.



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# Boundary and Flow: Max Clayton and Psychodrama in Action

*JOHN FARNSWORTH*

## *ABSTRACT*

What has containment to do with the vitality of the psychodramatic method? In this article, John Farnsworth recalls a vivid demonstration by Max Clayton in 2002 of how containment and flow relate to each other. Max also raised important questions about how closely psychodrama and psychotherapy relate through these concepts. The article investigates each of these concerns, illustrating them by investigating how boundary and flow appear in different settings, whether with individuals, groups, face-to-face or online.

## *KEY WORDS*

Containment, flow, Max Clayton, boundary, psychodrama, psychotherapy, Winnicott

## **Introduction**

In 2002, now eleven years ago, I took part in a workshop run by Max Clayton and Chris Hosking. At one point, Max got into a disagreement with a psychotherapist in our group. Those who have worked with Max might say this wasn't so unusual. In this case, it led to a memorable moment from an insight that emerged in a short demonstration Max gave to the group.

Afterwards, Chris Hosking approached two of us and asked if we could write up the interaction. Often, she said, such moments in Max's work were lost because no-one recorded them. We agreed, but struggled to make something more of it, despite making several attempts. I know, for myself, the demonstration offered something I couldn't grasp at the time. However, the moment has stayed with me and now, eleven years later, I can finally put some flesh on the bones of the idea he presented.

What I write now may be different to what Max had in mind. Again, this is not an unfamiliar experience with him; some of his teaching was suggestive and required slow absorption rather than simple explanation. So it has been with me,

and I will cross between psychodrama and psychotherapy to develop the ideas he demonstrated as I think he meant them. I will also move from group to individual work, and from face-to-face engagements to online interaction to explore the larger ideas he developed through his enactment.

What was the focus of Max's demonstration? It moved between the ideas of flow and containment. These are common both to psychodrama and therapy, though we may not often bring either to mind. They can largely function out of awareness, but Max's demonstration brings them to the fore.

Containment is a central concern in therapeutic work. It is often related to other terms: boundary, holding or frame, and implies safety and security. Breaches of boundaries produce disruption, anxiety, confusion and uncertainty. Flow, in contrast, is closer to a state of being: an experience, sometimes an optimal one, that connects the self together or the self to others (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Both flow and boundary, flow or containment extend well beyond psychodrama as part of our experience in everyday life. The questions Max raises are how each relates to the other and how we utilize them in our work as psychodramatists.

## The Demonstration

We were halfway through a training group in Auckland when a debate arose about the necessity for containment. It became intense as a psychotherapist insisted that safe therapeutic work couldn't take place without containment and boundaries, and Max repeating that it could. Finally, he said, 'I'll show you', and set out a demonstration. He began by saying that containment implied a form of leaking was taking place. To illustrate this, he called a protagonist onto the stage:

Max	Let's create containment.
Protagonist	<i>Walks over willingly to engage in the role</i>
Max	Be a spring.
Protagonist	<i>Thinks to herself:</i> Oh God, I'll just be a little bubbling spring. <i>She stands still on the spot and raises her arms a little.</i>
Max	Don't go like that on me. You don't have to stand up. Springs don't have to stand up. They can go down.
Protagonist	<i>Warms up to the role and falls onto the floor.</i> Bubble, bubble, bubble.
Max	Be the living waters.
Protagonist	<i>In a full voice</i> Bubble, bubble, bubble, I am the living waters. I am flowing out to everybody.
Max	There are two ways to begin a group. It needs to be called to order in some way so that it can gather the force necessary to focus on being a group. This doesn't require containment. What we have here is a spring that implies a flow of energy. This energy enables a warm-up to take place so that a focus develops

on the progressive and functional aspects of a role. This extends, not contains experience, and this is the difference between psychotherapy and psychodrama. In psychodrama, the development begins from the inside and works towards the outside. Containment comes from the warm-up: it means that a functional role development contains the self in its role functioning.

Max throws out a wealth of ideas in his comments, even as he is demonstrating just one of them. He links flow to energy to warm-up to functional and progressive roles. He describes how the warm-up extends, rather than contains, experience and he contrasts an idea of psychotherapy with one of psychodrama. In this, he implies psychotherapy holds experience within an individual whilst psychodrama moves outwards. That is quite a number of ideas; they become more intriguing when he also suggests containment isn't irrelevant; in fact, it comes from the warm-up.

What are we to make of all this? At the moment Max was proposing these ideas, there was little time for the group to take them in. I remember my own intrigue and involvement, but little clearly beyond this. In hindsight, however, some ideas begin to stand out.

## Opening out the Demonstration

The key issue was this: what was the disagreement between psychodrama and psychotherapy that first led to this enactment? It isn't directly stated, but it's about the central notion in psychotherapy that an individual needs holding or containment. Max demonstrates this isn't so. However, Max's remarks still leave open differences between 'flow' and 'containment' as constructive experiences. This opens the issue out beyond modalities to something wider. What is flowing and what needs containment?

One clear answer relates to the alternation between spontaneity and anxiety (McVea, 2009). In the face of overwhelming anxiety, individuals fragment. A common response in psychotherapy is containment: a way of holding these disintegrating fragments together. Without containment, energy dissipates or, as Max puts it, leaks away. That possibility is present at the beginning of a group and an anxious, restricted warm-up can result. This is the second of the two ways Max suggests a group can begin, though he doesn't explicitly name it.

The unnamed alternative is spontaneity: the gathering and focusing of energy, with an outward, curious exploration, just as Max describes. For this to happen, a group 'needs to be called to order' so that it can become an increasingly integrated, energized entity. Who calls it to order? Max doesn't say but he is likely to have Moreno's thinking in mind. This relates to gathering together scattered role fragments, whether these are in an individual or a group. As

Moreno (1980: 56) writes of an infant at birth, it forms its world 'on the basis of small and weakly related zones, scattered unevenly over the body.' Each zone 'is the focal point of a physical starter in the process of warming up to a spontaneous actuality state — such state or states being components in the shaping of a role'. The coalescing role takes place in the presence of a warm auxiliary other; in the case of a group, the director as an auxiliary ego.

This might seem to close the issue, by emphasising the high value of a flow in warm-up and spontaneity. Yet, this is where the complexity of Max's thinking becomes evident. He brings back the idea of containment: 'containment comes from the warm-up', not just flow, and the warm-up itself 'contains the self in its role fragments'. Containment, far from being banished as a cautious therapeutic concern, suddenly takes its place by contributing to the flow of gathering spontaneity. How can this be?

## Flow and Containment

Flow and containment are both intrinsic to Max's original demonstration. They are also intrinsic to the psychodramatic method as a whole. In the demonstration, the image is a bubbling spring. A moment's thought reminds us that a spring, or any tributary, is contained by its banks. Without them, the energy of the water flow seeps away into the surrounding land. As the anthropologist Tim Ingold (2011: 14) describes it, 'Imagine a river ... it just flows without beginning or end, scouring the banks on either side and picking up speed in the middle'.

Psychodrama work, itself, is also contained in a number of ways. For example, the room in which it takes place is a container; the horseshoe shape of the chairs is a container; the stage becomes a boundary and the mode of production itself safely contains the powerful emotions that are generated. These all help to contain emotional 'leakage'. Of course, such containers also function to assist the warm-up, and to focus it. This explains why the image of the bubbling stream is so effective, because the image illustrates the same process taking place on stage: the psychodrama boundaries containing and focusing energy in just the same way as banks do with the energy of the stream.

Such boundaries are, again, containers for anxiety. They create a secure setting without distraction, secure enough that they can be readily taken for granted. This security, just like the security of a warm auxiliary ego, supports the warm-up and functional role development. The psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott (1990) referred to this in a speech he once gave, pointing out that no-one in the room ever considers the roof above them might collapse: this was the unconscious security in the room. For many Christchurch residents, such a remark is now tragically pregnant with meaning, since it has become just what they fear.

## Winnicott, Holding and Containment

Winnicott is thinking of a building as a form of holding or containment (Gamble, 2007). It is a tangible idea, arising from the earliest physical interactions of holding and handling children: nestling, cuddling, stroking, embracing or manipulating their small frames. Boundaries are warm arms, laps, bodies. The security they provide comes from the moment-to-moment interplay of child and adult. Second by second, the interaction of touch, voice and look creates pleasurable experiences that, repeated over and over, become associated with what we learn to be safe, flexible boundaries. Boundary and relationship become fused through the mix of security and exploration. These interactions also promote multiple warm-ups to roles and relationships as the child sits or squirms. Here, psychodrama and psychotherapy are very close in how they understand the developing child.

Holding is a richly suggestive idea. It symbolizes this world that gradually becomes internalised: the secure home environment of earliest childhood. Home, as TS Eliot wrote, 'is where one starts from'. When it functions best, it is largely invisible (Winnicott, 1960). Mitchell and Black (1995: 126) write of Winnicott's ideas, that the mother 'protects the child without his knowing he is protected', and that unconscious protection sets the stage 'for the next spontaneously arising experience.'

Mitchell and Black's description is almost identical to Max's with the warm-up, but offered through a psychotherapeutic lens. The mother functions as the child's auxiliary ego, supporting an inner security that allows the child to create and explore: to flow, in just the way Moreno describes with an infant.

In contrast containment, a concept most linked to Wilfred Bion (1959), involves a mother containing a child's intolerable anxiety when it encounters unbearable experiences threatening its tiny, fragile boundaries. The parent's care and soothing attention absorbs and transmutes its overwhelming fears. In therapy, holding and containment are often used interchangeably, despite their different origins (Parry, 2010). Yet, both in their own way, address early anxiety and how it is managed.

## Fragmentation

The alternative experience, for a child or a group, is fragmentation. Boundaries, once more, are key. I discovered this myself through a dismaying experience some years ago. I was running groups for international students at Otago University: young managers who were learning interpersonal skills through constant face-to-face interaction in small and large groups. I utilised psychodrama methods throughout their learning. Cohesion in one group, which included a number of American students, was especially strong because we had jointly endured the events of 9/11. This tragedy happened to fall on the day we met, but it fostered in us a genuine, empathic engagement well beyond normal

university teaching. The group also fought its way, over thirteen weeks, through other conflicts and reconciliations. So, in the last week, imbued with confidence, the students asked if we could hold our final group outside. It was a warm spring day and they wanted to celebrate what we had achieved. My mistake was to agree. Once outside, on the grass, by a calm river-bank, the group's focus simply melted away. The men were distracted by pretty girls, passing students stared at us, and our group became aware of friends close by. Our conversation became stilted, individuals became self-conscious, and the group's cohesion dissolved. It was a disappointing close to our work together. Without the boundaries of the familiar room to contain us, our warm-up leaked away, just as Max describes, diffused in a general, low-level distractedness.

Boundary and flow are central to Max's demonstration, but they are part of common human experience beyond the confines of a workshop. What we enact in a workshop we enact everywhere, and this is implicit in Max's teaching. Boundary and flow constantly intermingle with ordinary life. For example, the German philosopher Martin Heidegger writes of life as dwelling: as both a fixed enclosure and an ongoing activity, the act of dwelling on the earth. Even an ordinary room, he writes, is not just an enclosure but an opening, one that enables growth and movement, as we pass to and from it, much as Max describes (Heidegger, 1971). As Ingold (2011: 147) puts it, 'life in this sense is lived in the open, rather than being contained within the structures of a built environment'. Boundary and flow intermingle.

How does this assist the psychodramatist? In a number of ways. It enables us to think about sociometry, warm-up and role development whenever we are faced with different configurations of boundary and flow. This enables us to act as a better auxiliary with whomever we are engaged.

## Interacting Online

A context in which this kind of interaction is increasingly common is virtual reality: the mingling of online worlds. When we are on Facebook, tweeting, texting, using social media or email, there are no physical boundaries. Isn't this like the students' riverbank? How do we develop or sustain a warm-up when the very foundations of time and space can be fragmented or invisible? Interactions can take place over time, episodically and sporadically, and can reach across vast distances; alternately, networks can fail unexpectedly, or contacts become unreachable. Few of these experiences are met in quite the same way face-to-face, yet they are intrinsic to boundary and flow.

I will illustrate this through a Skype session. Over two years, I had seen a client in the room at my Dunedin practice. We had developed a warm and reliable relationship and much useful work had taken place, even when she was working out of the country for extensive periods. Earlier this year, she moved to the North Island and I was confronted by a new experience: continuing our work by



Skype. This was a new experience for me, and one, initially, I found very difficult. The internet connection frequently collapsed, or her image pixillated and her voice became robotically distorted. She uses an iPad which she tilted up or down and I often found myself viewing just the top of her head or the ceiling in her room. Recently, the cat took to perching on her shoulder and that was all I saw. For her part, she was overwhelmed by how difficult she found the move from Dunedin, about the anxieties of new work, new friends, of managing her husband's illness and other family relationships.

I found myself distracted and unable to think. My warm-up fluctuated unexpectedly and I needed all my spontaneity to manage the disruptions of lost connections and pixillating images. My own roles as therapist threatened, at times, to fragment without the containing safety we had once shared in my room. We oscillated, at times, between the two warm-ups to which Max referred.

What sustained me, in the end, was learning to pay close, moment-by-moment attention to the fragments of interaction available to me. When there were picture difficulties, I would listen intently to what she said; when her voice distorted, I kept alive the felt sense in myself of what had just transpired between us. When the connection was lost, I attended to the disruptions between us once we reconnected. Over time, the more I sustained my own, continuous calm, the more the relationship, too, was sustained in this uneven environment. Jointly, we reached across time and space not just to sustain the relationship, but to build it in new ways that met the anxieties in her new world. This closely matches Max's comments that 'a functional role development contains the self in its role functioning'. In this virtual context, once I could sustain my own warm-up, I could assist, as an auxiliary, my client's role development in her new world to develop new roles and responses to it. Before this, there were moments when we were both in coping roles. What was crucial to me was to learn how to attend in new ways: I had to extend my own role repertoire by shifting fluidly between close listener, close observer, close self-observer and patient sustainer, both of herself and myself. In response, her spontaneity increased and a sense of purpose, focus, thoughtfulness and lightness emerged. Our separation became a new form of engagement.

Within this interaction there was both boundary and flow. The boundaries seem nearly invisible: but there were many: the reliable times we'd established for the calls; the agreed length of the sessions; even the boundaries of the screens on which we saw each other. There were also our separate spaces: our dwellings, North and South Island, with which we enclosed ourselves, away from others. Within these rooms we had our own reassuring objects and associations: familiar chairs, furnishings, objects; in her case, there was also her cat. Boundaries, in this context, are not only physical. Instead, they are repeated associations that build up a sense of trust and reliability. Through repetition, these sink into the background and form the facilitating environment (Winnicott, 1965) that sustains the interactions in the foreground.

When we learnt to tolerate network disruptions, I also began to see how we both placed a huge, largely unconscious reliance on the going-on-being (Winnicott, 1990) of the internet connection. It didn't hold us very well. Yet, between us we could develop new roles (active attender, active responder) in response. These new roles then assisted us to gather her role fragments together — the anxiety she may experience in other settings — so that a gradually expanding flow of spontaneity and confidence could emerge over time.

Central to these interactions was our moment-to-moment engagement, once I could fully grasp this. Let me now return to Max's demonstration and use this to illustrate more fully how boundary and flow intersect in his enactment.

## Analysing the Demonstration

In the demonstration, tracing the moment-to-moment development, we can see how it reveals in action the very points Max is making. To do this, I will use the method of sentence analysis which Max himself developed (Clayton, 1993). We can also see the gathering flow of thoughts and feelings and how this draws together the group as it participates.

Max begins: 'Let's create containment.' Before this, there was just a dialogue between him and a psychotherapist. The rest of us were listening but not yet engaged. At this instruction, we begin to warm up to an enactment. The instruction also reflects what Max teaches at the end of the enactment: a group 'needs to be called to order in some way so that it can gather the force necessary to focus on being a group.' This is what he does at this moment. Our group begins to focus on what containment and flow involve. Max's next instruction enlarges his role as the inspired creator: 'Be a spring'. But it invokes only a very low level of warm-up in the protagonist: 'Oh God, I'll just be a little bubbling spring.' She stands still on the spot and raises her arms a little. Her counter-role is the bewildered complier; if we were to double her at this moment, we might add to her thinking 'What does he want from me? How am I supposed to be a spring?'

She finds out in the next moment when Max gets more strongly in relationship to her: 'Don't go like that on me.' Max spontaneously takes up the role of provoking engager. He, himself, is already a bubbling spring of spontaneity: another well-developed role of his own. As a group, we become more actively engaged in this interaction. Imaginatively, Max also expands his own role, becoming both a double and an instructor: 'You don't have to stand up. Springs don't have to stand up. They can go down.' He has swiftly role reversed with her, identifying the source of her hesitation, and providing her a way to expand her own role by getting on the floor. We can see the gradual gathering together of role fragments as her warmup deepens, her spontaneity extends and she responds. As a group we, too, are drawn together by a common curiosity towards what's developing in front of us. Where is this going? There is a joint warm-up to

curiosity and involvement taking place. At the same time as the protagonist becomes a flow on the floor, there is a growing cohesion amongst all of us, unifying our warm-up as a group of enlivened learners.

Now, the protagonist fully takes up the role: 'bubble, bubble, bubble.' At this point, she is squirming on the floor, to our delight and amusement. We become fully involved ourselves. Max heightens her warm-up: 'Be the living waters'. Her response moves her from role taking to role creation. She says in a loud voice: 'bubble, bubble, bubble, I am the living waters. I am flowing out to everybody.' The role has been fully created from initial role fragments. We, as a group, feel connected to her, not just as individuals, but as an involved collective. Her role, and the group, are both fully created at this moment, both focused on the learning that is emerging from Max's production.

Now, Max's teaching can take hold because our experience fully matches what he is about to say: the enactment creates a flow of energy, with a warm up to the progressive and functional aspects of a role. It has also extended the protagonist's experience because, doubled by Max, she has risked looking foolish by writhing on the floor. Her initial anxiety has been transformed into spontaneity and, as Max says, this development has moved from her inside, as invisible thoughts, to the outside, as action and expression. Now the containment of the role comes as her role fragments cohere in the creation of the bubbling spring. Likewise, her sense of self is contained by her absorption in the role she has created. In Max's words, it contains herself: the self in its role functioning. As a group we, too, are contained and integrated by our common absorption in the enactment. At this moment, we most fully become a group.

At this moment, boundary and flow, containment and flow work hand in hand. 'Containment' hasn't been something external to the psychodrama method, but something created through it. Moment by moment, it has been built out of the interactions and the emerging warm-up, establishing trust and exploration from each successful interchange.

If we relate this to other boundaries: the room, the horseshoe of chairs, the reliability in the repeated structure of psychodrama sessions, we can grasp something more. Secure boundaries are always associated with such moments of reliable human relationships. Our associations are built out of them: they are built out of moments of flow. When we see a horseshoe of chairs, if we have had earlier, good experiences, these become the background, or setting, for potential future good experience. In Winnicott's language, they become part of the holding environment. The horseshoe symbolises this: it can be forgotten while we get on with the drama in front of us.

Barbara Dockar-Drysdale (1990), expressed this very clearly with children, describing how they move first from experiences (flow), to realization where they make sense of the experience (Max's teaching in this case), to the final stage of symbolization (containment, symbolized as the bubbling spring, or a horseshoe of chairs).

Fully symbolised, emotional associations remain as a silent backdrop to awareness whilst we attend to the present. Neurolinguistic programming (NLP) describes this as a form of anchoring: linking a feeling to something that stabilizes a particular internal state that we can recall later (Dilts n.d.). Without this, experiences leak away, as Max first described. In this way, flow, boundary and containment become constantly intermingled, sometimes background, sometimes foreground.

## CONCLUSION

Max's teaching arose from a disagreement between different perspectives in psychodrama and psychotherapy. Yet, what emerges from this encounter highlights the room for a generous exchange between perspectives. Neither side needs hold onto its suspicion of the other: each can move from their containment, their respective cultural conserves, to an experience of flow, perhaps risky, in the exchange of ideas between them.

Also, Max demonstrates a principle in the safety of a psychodrama workshop. As I've illustrated, it can be applied in very different contexts, whether it's face-to-face or across space and time afforded by digital technologies. In each case, boundary and flow work hand in hand to create, sustain and enlarge progressive functioning. In each, the building of relationship underpins the creation of safety and spontaneity. It is what Max himself enacts, and models, in the process of teaching these very principles. It is one of the many gifts he has left us.

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# Heart of Humanity: Thinking it Through with Moreno Again and Again

DON REEKIE

## ABSTRACT

Don argues each concept in Moreno's vision for humanity is appreciated best when viewed in the light of all the others. He suggests that taking them one by one often leads to misinterpretation. Worse, the psychodrama community may become distanced from Moreno's core philosophies. Embracing Moreno's thinking as a whole enhances and refines the comprehension and application of his work. The central thrust of Moreno's thinking attends to a range of factors that together powerfully assist us to work effectively with the *heart of humanity*. Within this article, Don asks you to think of social systems, individual systems, each individual person, personality and relationships, as well as their physical and mental well-being and family health.

## KEYWORDS

Moreno, humanity, health, psychodrama, canon of creativity

## Introduction

I have rediscovered the idea that in order for anyone to comprehend the elements of a system cohesively they must be prepared to immerse themselves in its universe of discourse. In order to 'get' Dr Jacob L. Moreno, you and I need to immerse ourselves in his universe of discourse. Dr Moreno produced a tremendous supply of clues and statements, and has a unique way of perceiving and penetrating the human condition. When we gather his core concepts, guided by his canon of creativity, we can view each concept or methodology more adequately.<sup>1,2</sup>

A universe of discourse may be defined as referring to the set of entities that a model is based on.<sup>3</sup>

Here I am thinking of the set of entities from Moreno's thinking and work

that run deep throughout his philosophy, theology and through all his work. I am convinced that Moreno's ideas penetrate and open up the *heart of humanity* and its nature. None of his concepts, theories or methodologies are truly meaningful in isolation. The entire panoply is essential to comprehending each part. Each is inseparable from the whole. Each is dependent on all the others together. We cannot comprehend 'role' without 'canon of creativity', the 'four universals', the 'phases of spontaneity development', and all the rest.<sup>4,5</sup>

If we work from this position, rather than assume that we have already 'got' it, then our practice, communication and training processes will be strengthened. When people experience psychodrama and fall in love with the method they learn the methodologies, apply the techniques, enter its culture and adopt coherent attitudes. They can easily take for granted they have a psychodrama base from which to focus on each concept or method separately. Experiencing immersion in the psychodramatic method is a significant base that serves practitioners well. I am asking you to consider that it is not enough. We can do better by holding to Moreno's complete frame of reference — his universe of discourse.<sup>6</sup>

## Exploring Moreno's view of humanity beginning at its core

The whole is crucial yet one factor is I believe key to all else. I will begin by writing about it as an unnamed factor at the *heart of humanity*. Play along with me please. Think of a baby in birth. The mother's body is organised to expel the child to become an air-reliant creature. A midwife coaches the mother to access her embodied abilities for this purpose. We may not be justified in fantasising that the neonate collaborates in achieving an escape, nevertheless, transfer of this small person from a tightly bounded liquid environment to one of air, with its incredible expansiveness, is a shocking demand to meet the new. To this point, the babe in the womb is attached to a governing placenta controlling its development. Suddenly it is thrust into the open-air-world. The child then experiences comfort of mindful coddling from the womb's owner. Wonderfully, the babe survives the shock, and with its critical temporary reflexes, breathes for the first time and soon will suckle for the first time.<sup>7</sup>

Imagine at the *heart of humanity* is a factor which enables us to deal with each challenge we meet. This factor pushes us towards surviving, and even more — towards thriving. It is not confined to humanity. It is fundamental to creation and all life. Other primates have births similar to ours. Even rats and pigeons are the experimental base for appreciating how human behaviour works. Animals, even primitive reptiles, are organised to vary their responses for survival. Cells in central and peripheral nervous systems respond to the same principles of renewal.

Plant life deals with seasonal variations and meets evolutionary challenges, as



did plants washed from South American flooding rivers to the Galapagos Islands. In brief evolutionary time of millions of years, these plants adapted precisely. Fauna was similarly carried across the ocean. Do not let us miss that in the shorter term, both fauna and flora survived river torrents, half an ocean, exposure to every element, and an inhospitable landing. They survived millions of evolutionary years of adjustment — one day at a time.

There is a fundamental difference with humans in regard to this fundamental factor. We have qualities of consciousness, mindfulness, self-reflection, values and ethics. Animal brains have twinned flows of activity with capacity to determine and achieve accurate movements in play and hunting. Their brains work on synchronised organisation to move intentionally at speed. They are able to anticipate the effects of their movements and those of the other in leaping to seize prey or playmate. Humans have twin flow of brain function producing dual flows of consciousness. We have ability to be both actor and a coach from an audience position within ourselves. We compound this aptitude by our ability to reflect on the past and project into the future. This enables us to dramatically imagine ourselves in quite other places and even talk to ourselves there. We can plan actions to reach goals that may require complicated pathways. Our human brains not only learn, they learn to learn, and learn to learn to learn. Some of us learn to learn down to even deeper levels. This capacity, with other abilities we have noted, increases our choices moment to moment.<sup>8,9</sup>

Let us tighten our focus on our target factor. This factor sustains and builds up our freedom to act purposefully. We humans think and feel. Values develop as we form preferences. We respond intentionally. We extend our selves with novelty. We have the capacity to learn about the processes of learning as we learn. Learning new skills is not only an intentional act, learning is built into our body-mind functioning. Being free to be ourselves does not depend on deliberation: we tend to think of ourselves as always consciously in control of our choices and actions. Many cognitive functions happen at a speed that makes conscious consideration impossible.

There is no reason to think that unconscious action is not fully within the integrity of a person. We make many choices and reflect on them. Over time, we develop a certain consistency in our values and ethics. The range of “functioning forms” we take in a variety of social situations reveals a unique way of being the self we are. As we develop and strengthen a freedom to be ourselves, others come to see our character. They say they know us. They dare to predict, or take for granted, our future actions.

Perceptions are in part a result of cognitive pressures to make meaning and find consistency in what we observe and experience. Even so, it is believable that each human being has the capacity to develop patterns of functioning that have consistency. It is also reasonable to suggest that we may generate a free flow of energy to act with creativity, originality and vitality.

I will follow Jacob Moreno’s naming of this factor the S factor. I view raw

spontaneity as the primary and fundamental factor at the *heart of humanity*. I view Moreno's S factor as the human refinement and control of their spontaneity for ethical and loving purposes.

The S factor is at the core of Moreno's thought. To comprehend it in action we need the F factor, the functioning forms we take in being ourselves. The F factor (role) pulls in the CC factor (canon of creativity). We cannot ignore the W factor (the circling warm up evoking interactions that spark creativity). We orient and direct our focus to engage our S factor, which catalyses and propels the C factor (creativity) into action. There is provocation to both expansiveness and restrictiveness from the cc factor (cultural conserve).

### Possible factor tags Don plays with

S	Activating, energising, catalysing & freeing	<i>spontaneity</i>
W	Directing, orientating, attending & generating	<i>warm up</i>
C	Producing, constructing, imagining & innovating	<i>creativity</i>
F	Person's functioning-form & interactive-cultural-element	<i>role</i>
cc	Establishing, regularising, grounding & securing	<i>cultural conserve</i>
T	Conscious & unconscious multi-level-connection & relating	<i>tele</i>
M	Moving, changing, transforming & communicating	<i>movement</i>
P	Encompassing, extending, fulsome & invigorating	<i>passion</i>
SCA	Smallest group of society for personal homeostasis & interactive relationships between members	<i>social &amp; cultural atom</i>
Ut	First of 4 universals: point in & continuities of existence	<i>time</i>
Us	Second of 4 universals: particular & expansive existence	<i>space</i>
Ur	Third of 4 universals: existence underlying appearance	<i>reality</i>
Uc	Fourth of 4 universals: all existence apprehended or not	<i>cosmos</i>
sr	Reality inside and beyond the immediately real	<i>surplus reality</i>
st	Ground and space where life, action drama happens	<i>stage</i>
pr	First actor creator whose life drama is focus & vehicle	<i>protagonist</i>
ax	Those entering, assisting & building up a life's drama	<i>auxiliary</i>
au	Group seeing, experiencing & resonating with a drama	<i>audience</i>
Dr	The one charged with artistic production & dramatisation	<i>director</i> <sup>10</sup>

### Thinking it through with a fresh open mind

Why am I choosing to complicate things by giving these factors a letter, instead of a word? Why don't I just use the words Moreno introduced — or rather co-opted?

Those words simply do not convey Moreno's meanings. I choose to break

myself away from words that cause misconceptions of Moreno's vision. It is awkward to be pushed to read the word 'factor' and a single letter. Words are comforting. It will not be helpful to use the initial letter alternatives forever. My challenge is to escape from the traps of inadequate words in order to explore Moreno's meanings without their restrictions. I want us to dig deep into Moreno's universe of discourse.

It will assist me to take an artist's open mind to Moreno's expansive poetic vision. "For my part I know nothing with certainty, but the sight of the stars makes me dream."<sup>11</sup>

I think it is good that the term S factor carries no meaning until we fill it up with Moreno's meanings. It requires us to identify Moreno's intentions, take in his view of humanity and bring our experience and reflection to bear on each piece of his Morenean panoply.

Even the word "psychodrama" presents continual problems — movies with a 'sick' psychological plot, political fracas and therapies with reckless acting-out come to the minds of the uninitiated. I really like the word. For me it is associated with life, health and community. I have several brief descriptions of what psychodrama is. The consistent response when I present one of these to a stranger who questions is fascination. I do not want to discard the other words either. I want to remove them temporarily so that I can freshen up my conserved thinking. It is invigorating to approach concepts anew and explore how each interacts with all others.

## Is the S factor essentially healthy and good?

I cannot believe that the S factor is other than good. The phases of S factor development indicated by Moreno J.L. & Moreno F.B., are presented as essential pathways to developing freedom, authenticity and creative action. S factor cannot be other than one that is healthy and guided by sound ethical choices. Moreno produced methodologies that promote S factor development in adults after our human community has failed them in childhood. Moreno realised these interventions are needed because of the frequent inadequacies of early group life. Inadequate S factor and other inadequacies in parents result in their children becoming depleted or retarded in S factor too.<sup>12, 13</sup>

When Moreno chose the word 'spontaneity', it already included impulsivity and recklessness. He differentiated 'controlled spontaneity' from 'pathological spontaneity'. When he wrote *Spontaneity Theory of Child Development*, with his wife Florence, in the journal *Sociometry* in 1944, he had begun to add the term 'S factor'. I believe Moreno's mind had a cohesive surety of focus — within wide sweeps of philosophy and a myriad of concepts. He could easily tolerate logical looseness here and there. He has left us the word 'spontaneity' and the term 'S factor energy'. Spontaneity, as a universal energy, has effects that are neutral, as is nuclear energy.<sup>14</sup>

I claim that Moreno's focus is to promote an ethical imperative. His S factor fits with that, while spontaneity more broadly is an indispensable raw energy propelling nature's abundance. In itself spontaneity is neutral; neither good nor bad. Humans can access spontaneity's energy for good or ill. Moreno worked to access and direct spontaneity towards acts of creation, to release genius, to give freedom and to realise potential. Without spontaneity human endeavour, even survival, is viewed with pessimism. *Who Shall Survive?* is a treatise calling for spontaneity in community health and collaborative action. Moreno's purpose is to carry the power of spontaneity forward, with the intention of creating a human society that is a community of 'I gods'.<sup>15, 16</sup>

Spontaneity can be uncontrolled, pathological, impulsive, manic, vengeful and destructive. I doubt it is possible for spontaneity to be consciously directed for wrongful or damaging purposes. In pathological spontaneity, a person is more likely to have lost control. Intentional wickedness and calculated premeditation can have creativity, but I think it is likely to be conserved, rather than be catalysed by spontaneity.

Moreno treats the S factor as promoting health, as a capacity to be developed and as an energy that can be generated — but not be stored. It is a factor whose five qualities: vitality, creativity, originality, adequacy and flexibility, promote freedom of choice and action. It is related to 'warm up' and catalyses 'creativity'. It can take a conserved opus and perform or reproduce it with fresh S factor. When a conserve is a trap of repetitions, S factor can break the spell.<sup>17, 18</sup>

Moreno presented the S factor as essentially healthy, adequate and appropriate to the context and purpose. When he published *Who Shall Survive?* in 1934, he proclaimed his science and genius for correcting and advancing society and healing community living. The book reveals sociometry as the science of relationships within society and at the *heart of humanity*. The authenticity of the S factor's ethics is open to testing in human functioning. Human capacity to develop S factor may be retarded, depleted or damaged. This results in people desperately needing social and cultural atom repair (SCA factor) and assistance to develop both S factor and adequate F factor.<sup>19</sup>

## M factor

Zerka Moreno addressed a throng of international psychodramatists at Oxford in 1994, posing the question "Why did Dr Moreno create psychodrama?" Her answer was: "Because he recognised that *movement* precedes language in development, and is the highway to the psyche." Movement, and reciprocity in response to movements, are the earliest signals within relationship. Movement articulates and amply expresses states and levels of emotion and well-being. In the infant the S factor is active, W factor is significant and F factor (particular ways of being him or her self) is already being noted by the family.<sup>20</sup>

People who aim to work cooperatively with others need to learn to read the

movements of the body as well as recognise words and paralanguage cues. Psychodramatists like other helping professionals take this seriously. I strengthened my ability to attend to psychosomatic cues by meeting with colleagues in a three person Milton Erickson induction exercise for over two years. We met fortnightly for two hours equally divided between being client, guide and observer. The client relaxed himself with eyes closed for thirty minutes, the guide spoke to him quietly continuously responding to each change in light or sound and every body cue of the client by naming them. Ten minutes discussion led by the observer concluded each segment. AANZPA training has, from its beginning, given close attention to developing abilities in observation, being an auxiliary, a double, a mirror, and in maximization.

The psychodrama director detects tiny physical movements during an enactment. The protagonist, a man in his late fifties, is feeling defeated. The face muscles, the body posture, and the tension of musculature are no longer those of an adult. Unfocussed eyes gaze middle distance, voice tone has changed. The director realises the protagonist is now a boy — feeling at risk and with antennae bristling. The director asks: “Where are we?” A young boy answers: “I am in my parents’ house. I am going through a drawer in the old chest.” The direction is: “Set up the scene.”

Neurological findings of recent years, and the practical applications of them, provide a rich harvest of remarkable information and technology. Often there are choruses claiming confirmation of this or that established practice or theory consequent on a neurological finding. It should not surprise people whose practice has been efficacious, when investigation of an entirely different order confirms their experience. Investigations can only reveal what is, and has always been, the reality. There is not a new reality. Reality is the same as that Moreno and many others plumbed. They followed the evidence of behaviour. Moreno observed the F factor, S factor and SCA factor.<sup>21</sup>

## Conclusion

I have attempted to get inside Moreno’s view of the *heart of humanity*. I want to see Moreno’s methodologies and concepts in the light of his broad philosophical view. My aim is to see everything from his universe of discourse and follow my logic and experience where it leads me. I have not systematically examined the whole Morenean panoply. I have started from the S factor and connected with other concepts I believe are inseparable. I hope others might follow their own logic and experience in expanding appreciation of Moreno’s universe of discourse.

## ENDNOTES

1. Jacob Moreno's diagram Canon of Creativity illustrates the dynamics of warm up (W) constantly circling and responsively sparking creativity (C), catalysed by spontaneity (S) and resourced/impacted by cultural conserves (cc). See "Who Shall Survive?" Student Edition (1993) pp. 16-19. (Moreno 1934)
2. The term "methodology" is defined by "The Pocket Oxford Dictionary" as: "Science of method; body of methods used in an activity". Applications of psychodrama are usually described as methods and techniques. Rollo Browne, in his AANZPA Sociodrama thesis followed Bullock et al, 1988, p. 525 in using the term "methodology" in a wide sense to include a general investigation of the aims of a discipline, the main concepts, the methods used to achieve its aims, the principles of reasoning and the relationships between sub-disciplines. (Browne 2005)
3. The term "universe of discourse" is generally attributed to Augustus de Morgan (1846). It was also used by George Boole (1854) in his *Laws of Thought*. (de Morgan 1846)
4. Zerka Moreno wrote: "Dr Moreno long wished his work to be identified as a way of life, instead of merely categorised as a therapeutic procedure. He further declared that instead of looking at a *person* as a fallen being everyone is a potential genius and like the Supreme Being, co-responsible for all of mankind. It is the genius we should emphasize, not the failings." (Moreno 2012)
5. Panoply is a complete suit of armour and indicates a full complement, a full or splendid array.
6. Zerka Moreno wrote "Psychodramatic Rules, Techniques and Adjunctive Methods" laying out basic tenets of the method. (Moreno 1969)
7. Jacob Moreno wrote in "Who Shall Survive?" that birth is a prime example of spontaneity — see the Student Edition 1993, p. 14 (Moreno 1934)
8. I wrote in the AANZPA Journal of dual flows of consciousness contributing to the way our functioning forms operate. (Reekie 2009)
9. Gregory Bateson wrote about levels of learning in a paper: "Logical Categories of Learning and Communications" in Part Two of *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. (Bateson 1972)
10. I use the tag "SCA factor" (social cultural atom) here to include all aspects of what Moreno refers to separately as social atom and cultural atom (Moreno 1934), as well as those elaborated by Ann Hale who reports that Dr Moreno wrote, "the distinction between them is artificial" and "there is one social atom viewed from many perspectives". She also reports in Endnote I in her "Sociometric Processing of Action Events", that Anton Barbour revealed Dr Moreno told him that "psychodrama, sociometry and group psychotherapy are open systems which can admit new information." (Hale p.17 1981 & Hale et al 2002) It is also important to note the features of cultural atom that Lynette Clayton took account of in following her work with clients. (Clayton 1982)
11. Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo July 1888 paraphrased: "For my part I know nothing with certainty, but the sight of the stars makes me dream." (van Gogh 1888)
12. Jacob Moreno & Florence B Moreno wrote "Spontaneity theory of child development". *Sociometry*, 7, pp. 89-128, republished as "Principles of Spontaneity" in *Psychodrama Vol. The First*, 1946 (Moreno & Moreno 1944)
13. Jacob Moreno wrote in "Who Shall Survive?" "Spontaneity operates in the present, now and here; it propels the individual towards an adequate response to a new situation or a new response to an old situation. It is strategically linked in two opposite directions, to automatism and reflexivity, as well as to productivity and creativity. It is, in its evolution, older than libido, memory or intelligence. Although the most universal and evolutionarily the oldest, it is the least developed among the factors operating in Man's

- world; it is most frequently discouraged and restrained by cultural devices." See the Student Edition 1993, pp. 13-14. (Moreno 1934)
14. Jacob Moreno wrote in "The Future of Man's World": "Spontaneity appears to be the oldest phylogenetic factor which enters human behaviour, certainly older than memory, intelligence or sexuality. It is in an embryonic stage of development but it has unlimited potentialities for training. Because it can be tapped directly by *humans themselves* its release can be well compared with the release of nuclear energy on the physical plane." See [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) (Moreno 1947)
  15. Jacob Moreno commenced his introduction to his opus "Who Shall Survive?" with the sociometric assertion that: "A truly therapeutic procedure cannot have less an objective than the whole of *humankind*." See the Student Edition (1993) p. 3. This surely begins an ethical enterprise. His "Preludes" p. xci, in "Who Shall Survive?" takes this further: "One may think here of the atomic bomb; the bomb is neutral, it does not take sides, it will serve the one who has it, the master. It seems to be the same way with all scientific methods, they cannot be harnessed in favor of one or another cause. A particular form of sociodrama, however, is an exception to the rule, the group-centered form. Here the problem and presentation are not coerced upon the group by a mighty dictator-director but they come from the group. If true spontaneity is permitted to the members of the group the denaturalizing tendencies have to give way sooner or later to the spontaneous aspirations of the participants. The group centered form of sociodrama, unless prohibited by law, is a natural ally of democratic processes." see <http://www.asgpp.org/docs/WSS/WSS%20Index/WSS%20index.html> (Moreno 1934)
  16. Jacob Moreno wrote in "The Future of Man's World" p. 22: "Every new step in self-realization and self-expansion will amount to a total revolution if the situation of *Humankind* on a more superior plane is compared with his situation on a more inferior plane. The I-Self-God process has obviously no relation to the idea of the Man-god and similar anthropomorphic allusions. We are not concerned with the godlikeness of a single individual but, to use a religious simile, with the godlikeness of the total universe, its self-integration." See [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) (Moreno 1947)
  17. When spontaneity is low, there will be a lack of role flexibility, while increased spontaneity activates a person's innate creativity and generates new, more effective roles. Moreno in "Who Shall Survive?" (1993/1934) proposed that spontaneity is the freedom to mindfully generate and direct responses to meet a situation with "vitality, creativity, originality, adequacy and flexibility" as Clayton and Clayton noted in their chapter of "Experiential Psychotherapies in Australia" p. 91. (Clayton & Clayton, 1980)
  18. Jacob Moreno drew a diagram in "Who Shall Survive?" of his canon of creativity (see endnote I. above) in the footnote he wrote that cultural conserves "need to be reborn, the catalyser spontaneity revitalizes them", see "Who Shall Survive?" Student Edition (1993) p. 18. (Moreno 1934)
  19. Jacob Moreno wrote in "Who Shall Survive?" "The pivotal point of dialectic sociometry is that sociometry returns the social sciences to the 'aboriginal' science from which it came — 'ethics'; without, however, giving an inch of the objective goals of scientific method. Sociometry is the social ethics par excellence. Behind the front of the sociometric operations there are hidden a number of ethical principles." See the Student Edition 1993, p. 86. (Moreno 1934)
  20. Zerka Moreno spoke of "movement" not language being the "highroad" to the psyche. Jacob Moreno wrote in "Psychodrama Vol. The First" p.157, of "roots", suggesting "Mead and Freud believed, for different reasons, that language is the main root of psychological analysis". (Moreno 1946)
  21. Jacob Moreno was particularly perspicacious. Unfortunately his theatre, sociometry and body movements focus, though influential, have been little acknowledged in psychology. His observations have

also anticipated much understanding of behaviour uncovered recently by neurological research. An example is in biomechanics of elegant prosthetics, where methodologies are consistent with Moreno's work with movement. A CNN TV programme called "The Art of Movement" records the latest advances in biomechanics - bionic limb prosthetics, enabling agile walking and dexterous arm, hand and finger articulation. Control is by thinking. Upper limb prostheses placed over an upper arm stump, with electrodes in the area of neurological connections provide stimulation. These are identified with sensations as if movement were occurring in the phantom limb. The nervous system itself takes command of the prosthetic arm. An occupational therapist trains the arm and hand by coaching the recipient to imagine their movements. The adroit flow of movement is achieved by imagining and then acting as if — or role-taking. It is pure psychodramatic experiment and discovery. (CNN "The Art of Movement" 2013)

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# Creative Genius: A Spark in a Cloud of Unknowing

DON REEKIE

## ABSTRACT

This article presents the author's conviction and work showing that a psychodrama director learns to follow the protagonist/client and trust a wide range of interactive communications. Their full nature may be hidden from the director. The protagonist can be unconscious of specifics or relevance. The writer accepts many cognitive functions of the central nervous system happen at a speed making conscious consideration impossible. Learning is not only an intentional act but is built into our mind-body functioning. This paper posits that the instances described involve dynamic inter-play of S factor (spontaneity) and C factor (creativity) within the Morenean universe of discourse, and considers *creative genius* as an integrative quality common in human functioning.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

## KEYWORDS

*creative genius*, genius, creator, creativity, spontaneity, psychodrama, director, protagonist, surplus reality, tele and telic

## Introduction

When I think *creative genius*, I think force. I see it related to and an expression of S factor. Moreno wrote of genius being activated by C factor. He recognised genius is a power or quality; C factor catalysed by S factor enables genius to be effective.<sup>4,5</sup>

The words *creative genius*, do not describe a role. There is no 'functioning form'. There is no indication of thought, feeling or action. For Moreno a role is interactional, interpersonal and unique. I believe psycho somatic, social, socio dramatic and psycho dramatic dimensions are all present in every role. A role may be taken by modelling on another. It may be played with fluency and aplomb. A role may be created when functioning at heights of S factor. It is too easy to say: 'in a role', 'has the role', or 'taking the role', suggesting roles are entities separate from humans that can be 'put on'. Role is the whole way a

person is, in a creative moment of being themselves in response to a specific situation.<sup>6</sup>

## Creative genius in clients of a psychodramatist

I meet a client and I think *creative genius*. Whatever their abilities, range of knowledge, skills or development, I put my faith in their active combination of S factor and C factor. A creative integrative and protective self makes sense of what people sometimes describe as 'resistance'. I meet a client who thinks they have little 'going for them', I glimpse *creative genius* and I remind myself that it is impossible to kill off S factor. My positive expectations promote respectful reciprocity.

I witness a psychodramatist with T factor (tele) tuned to 'accurate empathy' in meeting a client. Tele is sometimes compared with a telephone conversation. It is more like two physicians with stethoscopes listening to the other's heart. It is not telepathy. It includes knowing in a place of unknowing. The psychodramatist attends to the protagonist's narrative and their interpersonal functioning forms. Reciprocally, the protagonist reads the psychodramatist. Although their awareness is calibrated differently it is not necessarily less acute. Both parties accept, trust, and open to each other. The psychodramatist is comfortable in silences, and alert to a range of communications, including their own mind/body experiences.<sup>7,8,9</sup>

*Creative genius* may work to protect by prompting avoiding engagement, even as far as isolating into pre-verbal functioning forms. Pathological spontaneity may initiate a battle of wits with self and the psychodramatist. The client may be fighting as if against alienation or drowning.<sup>10</sup>

A person meeting a situation with coping responses will also seek embryonic progressive freedoms. I believe *creative genius* is always moving to provide protection and promote health. In enactments a protagonist can build spontaneity, develop roles and repair social and cultural atom, sometimes without either psychodramatist or protagonist identifying the specific realities impacting the client's life.<sup>11,12</sup>

## Stories of working with creative genius

### 1. *When a trusted world falls apart*

A lead psychologist in a psychiatric hospital invited me to collaborate with the charge occupational therapist, to work with a group of women in a community established to prepare them to live in small group homes in the community.

A generalised reinforcement economy is working successfully for most of the patients. They have access to a shop using tokens while privileges and outings are gained by approved behaviours. We are asked to work with those whom the token economy scheme has failed. These women, diagnosed as 'residual

schizophrenics', have been hospitalised for over twenty years. They have been 'excellent' compliant patients, always ready to help, nearly always smiling but never innovative. Their new environment is alien. They become depressed and uncooperative, but are neither hostile nor rebellious. They do not earn tokens. Their hygiene, self-care and time-management disappears. They stay in bed in the morning, resentful if chided.

My colleague and I organise regular groups and devise activities where oral communications are deemphasised. We invite them to play games, construct objects, and paint giant pictures together. All require communication. We often join in but make no guiding initiative. Sometimes we introduce games with an element missing and they create a variation themselves to make the game work. In three months they are organising their group sessions and choosing their activities together. They look after their own needs and they communicate with each other and their staff.

Soon they are taking their turn in flats on campus learning to be a responsible collective as a step towards half-way housing. For many years, they have fitted to staff requirements, and been rewarded by approval and privileges. They have experienced the token economy as a barren social environment. Engaging in the group activities opens a stage on which they generate their *creative genius*. Enjoyment of their interactions and appreciation of their relationships with one another offers greater leverage than tokens. As a by-product they earn tokens and access the shop.

## ***2. A great deal of pleasure over not very much***

In the same psychiatric hospital in a villa housing forty psychotic and severely intellectually handicapped patients, I co-lead a group with an occupational therapist. Staff have assessed patients' behaviours as requiring strong containment. We aim the group at socialising, introducing collaborative creative activities. The eight men respond with impulsive displays of enthusiasm. Their individual activities have a low level of intermittent interaction. None has more than primitive language. They communicate through movements and grunts. Their intellect and physical coordination is almost non-existent. Yet their *creative genius* is unmistakable. Not by evaluating what they produce, but by observing their pleasure at their efforts. It is similar to toddlers building with blocks or colouring on paper.

## ***3. Step-by-step from unknowing to surety***

A woman client, in her fifties, comes to consult me. She is disturbed at her intense irritation towards her mother. They have never been close, but she is earnestly caring for her mother, whose deterioration necessitates residential care. Having responsibility for overseeing her mother's move infuriates her. She fears being abusive. There are no clues to the origin of her powerful experiences.

After giving a brief explanation, she sits closed off. I ask her to close her eyes,

prompt relaxation and suggest she allow colours and shapes to enter her mind. She speaks quietly. There are balls, cubes, pyramids and indeterminable shapes — all with strong colours. I encourage her to touch, lift and move the objects. She speaks of arranging them, opens her eyes, rises and carries the surplus reality objects. She sets them down, and after rearranging them bounces the balls, absorbed in her experiences and making little comment. I suggest she place any objects she chooses in a box. She puts some in, arranges them and takes some out — then closes the box. The session concludes with her reflecting on her experience, and expressing her interest in having strong feelings at certain points of the process.

She returns four times over a few weeks. Each time she reports that she lives with her box and explores her objects. She speaks of satisfaction at being able to put them back in the box, close it and return to it when she chooses. Her intense anger is easing. She resettles her mother, and is satisfied. Sessions are all in action. I do not know what the shapes represent nor do I know whether she knows.

Two years later, she asks for an appointment. In the intervening time, childhood memories have gradually opened and she now knows what the nature of her work had been in the earlier sessions. Six sessions followed.

Fifty years earlier, between the age of six to nine, she had had a weekly music lesson. Her mother had taken her to each lesson and sat outside the room. Through the window, she had been able to see the statue she called “Mr Richard John Seddon”. The music teacher had sat alongside her on the stool sexually interfering with her. Her mother, waiting outside the door, had been beyond an impenetrable barrier. Her mother took her home, and had been in her life all week every week. As the years passed, silence had grown to an irreducible giant. On the stool, with music sheets before her and her fingers moving over the keys, she had frozen within. Mr Richard John Seddon had been her only witness and life companion. She had felt his presence. She had respected and trusted his reliability. She had known from what she had learned at school that he had been a good man for her country.

In enactments during the sessions the woman makes a strong relationship with the little girl she had been. Mr Richard John Seddon is again her witness and seems almost a friend. She encounters her mother in surplus reality. Becoming her mother in role reversal she experiences shock, pain and distress. As the woman she is now, she meets her mother woman to woman. She meets and converses with her mother at many different times in her life. Her anger is white hot. Her heart does not close off. She weeps for herself as child and for her mother who has never developed resources sufficient for responding to her daughter’s need.

As woman she chooses to confront her music teacher, with Mr Richard John Seddon and her mother by her side. Her mother is as she had been when my client was a child. My client explains to herself as child what she will do and that

she is not going to have her present. The confrontation is full in its ethical anger and clarity of purpose. Total rejection is not in doubt. She is not spiteful, nor vengeful. Her reunion with herself as child is lovingly secure.<sup>13</sup>

She is now able to be with her mother as she wants to, and is content with that.

I hypothesise that as child and woman she has *creative genius*. Embryonic roles have been forming. She has acted positively to develop herself. She has directed her life meaningfully to satisfying ends. Many in her community value her, yet they see her as shy and withdrawing. Her mother's S factor development was stunted. In turn, her inadequacies contributed to her daughter's lack of development. This continues into the girl's womanhood. Her *creative genius* guides her therapeutic work. My S factor gives me freedom to be with her creatively as an assistive companion on her journey. T factors are mutually positive. The relationship is trusting and open.

#### ***4. Raising a sword in a baronial domain***

A heavily depressed man in his thirties consults me. His wife is completing eighteen months of psychotherapy. As her depression lifted, he has become depressed. Just three weeks before he came to me, his employer made him redundant from a long secure employment.

I invite him to name his purpose. He speaks about the people around him, including his wife. Speaking of his father and brother he is pained and angry, yet heavily restricted. As he speaks, a scene forms in my imagination. It is not visual but I have a powerful sense as to its details of space, time, place and relationship. I have learned to trust my non-visual awareness. I speak to him: "I see you and your brother as sons of a baron in medieval times. Your family is rich in lands, bears arms and are armoured with fine horses to travel on. What do you make of that? How do these men deal with each other?"

He draws an imaginary sword, swings it aloft, sheaths it and without question picks up the story, engaging strongly. We both learn a great deal about this man's social and cultural atom and his family of origin — in which these interactive functioning forms have developed. I ask how this medieval family deals with problems. There are stories of battles, deceit, betrayals, favouring of the younger brother and his own vanquishing. I say: "Let's see if we can build up this vanquished son". In his enactments he strengthens his relationships with his friends and followers, increases his battle skills, develops his ability to encounter, and puts his case to his father.

Incomplete as this is in one session, when he returns a week later he has phoned his brother, now in Australia, and has had a friendly chat. He is keen to explore the Baron's realms. He warms to encounters with intensity and flow.

He comes to his third session, having visited his father without bitterness or accusation and has begun a new style of relating. He and his wife have begun to open some concerns she has not been able to raise previously. He has applied

for, interviewed for and gained a job with a company he has had dealings with in his previous employment. He says: “Next week I’ll be at work. I’ll get back to you if I need to.” He never has.

This client’s *creative genius* and my psychodramatist’s S factor produce a journey. He is the journeyer and self-director. I am a companion audience member and artistic director.<sup>14</sup>

As I engage with this client the phase of protagonist spontaneity development is crucial. He arrives depressed and disheartened. As he speaks of work and his relationship with his partner his affect is flat — spontaneity is low. Speaking of his brother and father, his feelings are in tension. He becomes awkward and restricted. He is depressed. He is not pre-verbally autistic. He is, not, in an undifferentiated matrix. His original family social and cultural atom context has him bursting with agitated energy. He is able to enter a role by both role taking and role reversal. He is not ready for identity reversal and does not yet experience self-realisation. He is ready, able and warmed up sufficiently to engage interactively and in surplus reality.

His challenges fit with his boyhood when sagas had vitality in surplus reality. My imagination responds with a medieval saga. My scene setting is sufficient to spark his interest. He opens to his narratives and to self-direction. I witness this man being director, then actor, then actor-scriptwriter. He moves quickly. He lifts the sword in taking the role, hoists it to play a role fluently and flourishes to create new roles — he is scripting in the moment.

It is possible for us to activate a functioning form inside ourselves. We can have experience within ourselves of taking, playing or creating a role without enacting it to the world outside us. A client may be operating at any of these levels of S factor and may make rapid shifts between them. A psychodramatist recognises psychosomatic cues, can double body movements and sense experiences and responses. It is T factor (telic) connection that alerts a psychodramatist to developments in the client’s S factor. When the psychodramatist recognises a client’s specific functioning form and then reveals it to them, it can assist them to recognise their self too. Action becomes more possible and movement, interaction, finding of voice, daring to be, in turn lead to discovery and development. *Creative genius* is at work.

## Implications

*Creative genius* is an element in human functioning that integrates the factors identified by Jacob Moreno. I choose to name them S, C, F, T and W. It works to protect the self while promoting progressive development. Often a psychodrama director needs an act of faith to move into the unknown with a protagonist’s *creative genius*.

I have drawn on specific examples where moving without knowing while trusting the client is highly evident. My development of S, C, F and T factors is



crucial to my ability to be with him. I accept T factor as a two-way relationship that generates deep appreciation, vital recognition and trust between people. I am certain that it is not just interpersonal relating with accurate empathy. Clients frequently offer clear reports of their purpose, narrative of events or mind/body experiences. I find in my work with clients, regardless of how equipped they are to engage openly, it is of great assistance to them for me to be a companion who is steady and trusting in areas of unknowing.

In the end, *creative genius* is a theological concept. To 'get' Moreno and not just 'get' to grips with his philosophy but to be capable of living and working with his methodologies we must 'get' his theology of interpersonal relations and his ethics. We will be greatly assisted to 'get' a hold of him by reading his *Words of the Father*, or better still listen to Moreno recite it and then speak to it in James Sacks' interview with him.<sup>15, 16</sup>

Moreno sees us all as creators. You and I are creators. We are creators of our selves. There are genes, but there is no you or me until we create ourselves. We create consciously, unconsciously and always in relationship. Another significant Morenean idea concerned fathering. Moreno said "I am my own father". We are our own parents. We are father and mother to our selves. Moreno said, God is not dead, but we can only discover the meaning of god as we recognise that we are all 'I gods'. Then we can recognise ourselves and realise that if we humans act on the *creative genius* that is in us we are and must be creators.

Moreno sees an ethical imperative for humanity. The answer to the question *Who Shall Survive?* is both theological and ethical. What differentiates the factors S, C and all the other Morenean factors from their raw origins in nature, is loving and ethical human interpersonal choice. The malevolence and heroism of Disney's anthropomorphisms is probably misleading. We know malevolence, heroism and altruism are human qualities. Raw creativity and spontaneity propel us to act and create. We can create both good and evil. Humans act selfishly, destructively, foolishly and cruelly. Moreno passionately calls us to an ethical and theological pathway. He proposes that we be scientists and theatre producers; that we experiment to discover the *heart of humanity*. He calls us to be 'I gods'. He believes we are to be good and loving as we create our interpersonal relationships.

*Creative genius* operates in every one of us like a guardian spirit sparking creativity propelled by spontaneity.

### Postscript

It is perhaps appropriate that the son of Zerka and Jacob is a professor of bio-ethics. Zerka was hugely proud of Jonathan's work on the President's Commission on Stem Cell Research.

### ENDNOTES

1. My psychodrama trainers taught me to be open and welcoming to the unknown. Max Clayton 1987 said: "The

best place to be for a psychodrama director is 'up shit creek without a paddle'. Then all you have is your spontaneity." Warren Parry 1987 said: "It's the director's job to track the protagonist or client. You watch and follow. The way you follow is to think there are no stepping-stones. You see where their foot is about to set down and you lay a stone for them to step on." Jacob Moreno wrote in "Creative Theory of Personality: Spontaneity, Creativity and Human Potentialities", "... creational qualities are what they become through the spontaneous confluence of sub conscious, conscious, emotional, intellectual and spiritual elements, as they are at the disposal of the nervous system in man" *and woman*. (Moreno 1966) He also wrote: in "Psychodrama Vol. The First" p. XV, "Just as in a dream, so psychodrama appears to be an exposition of unconscious dynamics." "... directing *depends* chiefly upon the protagonist to provide the clues as to how to carry on the production." (Moreno 1946) Zerka Moreno wrote in To "Dream Again *a memoir*": "With the passing years, I stopped thinking of myself as a psychotherapist, because it became clear that I do not heal any psyches. Protagonists themselves do the healing. My task is to find and touch that autonomous healing centre within, to assist and direct the protagonist to do the same. I am merely a guide in the wilderness, clearing away obstacles so protagonists can find their very own path." (Moreno 2012)

2. In my article "Heart of Humanity" in this Journal I write: "Learning new skills is not only an intentional act, learning is built into our body-mind functioning. Being free to be ourselves does not depend on deliberation. We tend to think of ourselves as always consciously in control of our choices and actions. Many cognitive functions happen at a speed that makes conscious consideration impossible." (Reekie 2013)
3. The lettered tags for alternative terms throughout this article are those I have played with in my article Heart of Humanity in this journal. You will find a full list in a frame on the third page.
4. The "Oxford Dictionary" defines "genius" as "creative and inventive capacity", "exceptional or creative power", as a "tutelary spirit of person or place", "a guardian which serves to protect" and "a spirit influencing a person for good or ill". (Clarendon Press, Oxford, UK)
5. Jacob Moreno considers that genius is an attribute people have to greater or lesser extent. Probably very many have it to a high degree. Mostly they fail to create to their potential. Moreno says *C factor* is crucial for creation to be generated, and *S factor* is the catalyst. Moreno wrote in "Who Shall Survive?" (see Student Ed. p. II 1993) that in the examples of genius Michelangelo, Beethoven or Jesus creative capacity is activated: "Each has attributes of genius; many others have equally so, but activation of creation does not happen because of a lack in *S factor*". (Moreno 1934) Moreno wrote in the "Words of the Father": "The universe is infinite creativity ... the highest common denominator ... of *humankind*" (Moreno 1920)
6. In my 2007 article "Becoming Jane", I write (page 49 ff) of role as essence of being with explanatory power to open up the whole way of being a person has. (Reekie 2007)
7. In 1951, Carl Rogers published "Client-Centred Therapy" — the work he is best known for. Roger's core goal for implementing his rules was to have the client actualise his or her own inherent potentialities. Clinician's "accurate empathy" is seen to help a client move towards self-actualisation. (Rogers 1957)
8. Jacob Moreno wrote in "Psychodrama Vol. The First" p. XI "The telic relationship between protagonist and therapist and the significant Dramatis Personae of the world which they portray are crucial for the therapeutic progress." (Moreno 1977) and "By role reversing a *person* tries to identify with *another*. Co-conscious and co unconscious states in *the* two individuals are interlocked and interactive." (Moreno 1946)
9. Jacob Moreno wrote in "Psychodrama Vol. The First", p.157ff "Role playing is prior to the emergence of the self. Roles do not emerge from the self but the self emerges from roles." "Role theory is useful in making a mysterious concept of the self tangible and operational." "Function of role is to enter the unconscious from the social world and bring shape and order into it." (Moreno 1946)
10. Jacob Moreno & Florence B Moreno wrote "Spontaneity theory of child development". Sociometry, 7, 89-

- 128, republished as “Principles of Spontaneity” in “Psychodrama Vol. The First” 1946 Section IV, which covers over one hundred pages concerning spontaneity and S factor. They trace the development of spontaneity from when a baby is dependent on, and psychologically undifferentiated from, a mother, through to strongly developed realisation of self and freedom to act. (Moreno & Moreno 1944)
11. In my AANZPA Journal article “Becoming Jane”, Vol. 16, 2007, I write about the importance of not only seeing the coping strategies, but to discern the embryonic “functioning forms” that are developing. This requires us to consider what the coping strategy’s purpose is. Then we think, what would the individuated functioning be, if it could be activated. I believe it is essential in encouraging development for us to respond to the tiniest efforts towards individuation. (Reekie 2007) Moreno wrote of “embryonic roles” referring to infancy when pre-verbal sound making, movements and autism are evident. He noted that then there are psychosomatic dimensions of role, where will and feelings are strong but organised action and language are not developed. He writes: “The infant lives before and immediately after birth in an undifferentiated universe which I have called ‘matrix of identity’. This matrix is existential not experienced. It can be seen as the locus from which, in gradual stages, the self and its branches, the roles, emerge. These roles are the embryos, forerunners of the self the roles strive towards clustering and unification.” “Psychodrama Vol. The First”, p. 161. (Moreno 1946)
  12. Jacob Moreno wrote in “The Future of Man’s World”: “This is why I chose the course of the theatre . . . ‘By the grace of God’ an ‘idee fixe’ became my constant source of productivity, it proclaimed that there is a sort of primordial nature which is immortal and returns afresh with every generation.” (Moreno 2012)
  13. I will not produce re-enactments of early life wounding and violation. Before enactments where an adult chooses to confront a violator from childhood, I work to connect with recalled or imagined scenes prior to them first being wounded. Then, in “future projection”, they enact their desired life developments. In the enactments with this woman, I choose to produce a drama with secure companions as sturdy bastions. In my view there is no value or useful purpose in a protagonist confronting a violator in the context of an abusive event. As a child they had no equality in power differentials, which makes the enactment stacked against them once again.
  14. Zerka Moreno addressing the IAGP Congress in London 1998 on “Ethical Anger”, described a triad of relationships when a psychodramatist works one to one. It echoes Moreno’s “five instruments”. Zerka sees both client and psychodramatist moving between “director”, “actor” and “audience member”.
  15. Paul Johnson, the theologian who developed Process Theology, following the philosophy of Whitehead and Russell, wrote in “Psychology of Religion” (1945) arguing that Moreno introduced an interpersonal theory of psychology. (Johnson 1945)
  16. Jacob Moreno’s “Words of the Father” is available through [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com). It can also be heard in the 1963 interview with James Sacks where Dr Moreno speaks of our taking responsibility for all creation, which “requires the challenge to see oneself, each of us, as ‘god’ or as of no value. We are existentially challenged with fear and inadequacy against our becoming an ‘I god creator’. Creativity is seen to be in everything and we are to be god and we are capable of that role and task. God — cosmic, other, love, scientist, has intense personal reality in each of us. We are the creators. The universe is infinite creativity. Past present or future are all bound together by the principle of inclusiveness. I have to assume responsibility for all things. There is no limit to the responsibilities that are ours.” (Moreno 1920) Hear it on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zngVciTk2X0>

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# Psychodrama & Insight

*ROLLO BROWNE*

## *ABSTRACT*

Insight in psychodrama occurs through the use of basic techniques such as concretisation, role reversal and mirroring. But it is not guaranteed. Drawing on research into the neuroscience of insight, the psychodramatist can explicitly focus on simple steps to maximize the possibility of insight: setting out the dilemma, shifting to a resting state and then bringing this state of being into contact with the presenting dilemma.

## *KEYWORDS*

insight, intuition, spontaneity, creativity, brain wave, catharsis, warming up.

## **Introduction:**

One of the particular strengths of psychodrama is that it assists people to get a fresh perspective on themselves and the situations they are in. That is, a realisation, or an overlooked truth becomes powerfully apparent to the protagonist during a drama. It might be about what they must do or what they need to pay more attention to. It could be that the protagonist begins to see something for the first time or perhaps that the drama leads them to a new decision about the presenting issue. In other words they get some insight.

Insight matters because as practitioners we are vitally interested in healing and change. Although we learn from others' insights or comments, their effect is nowhere near as powerful or as lasting as our own insights. Hence, any processes that specifically assist a person to gain their own insights are extremely valuable. This is as true in leadership and decision-making as it is in counselling, supervision or therapy.

Insight is not the same as intuition. Psychodrama directors are trained to pay attention to intuitive responses in themselves and in their protagonists. Where an insight is "a new idea, or sudden understanding of a complicated situation" (Jung-Beeman et al, 2008:I), intuition, in contrast, usually has "no insight into the logical relations, but simply an impetus, judgment, hunch, or behavioral response" (Liebermann, 2000:III). The difference is between an 'aha' and a gut feeling.

It makes sense that intuition is experienced in the body, coming to awareness through older, more survival-oriented parts of the brain (basal ganglia and limbic structures). Once it is brought into awareness, an intuition can be tested. If the director acts on her gut feeling then she can learn from the result. In this way intuition can be seen as a prelude to insight, that is, to realising something new, an 'aha'.

The question is, how can a producer maximize the possibility of insight emerging? Let us first turn to an example of insight arising from a psychodrama enactment in a personal development group.

### The Knot in her Stomach

Susan wants to focus on her relationship to her work, to her clients. She sets a scene in a client's house where the father and teenagers begin to argue and swear at each other. As the argument develops a 'knot' forms in her stomach and she knows that something is wrong. The following is an excerpt from the drama.

Director	Choose someone to be Susan and become the Knot in her Stomach . . . Yes, place yourself as the Knot showing with your whole body how you affect Susan.
Knot	<i>fiercely</i> : I'm all around you, holding you tight. This is not right. You have to get out of here. I'm not letting you push me away again.
Susan	<i>reasonably</i> : No, no, it's OK, I'm here to do a job . . . I have to do it, I'm a professional! . . . They need my help. You're just thinking about your own needs and getting in my way.
Knot	That's what you always say. You never notice me. I'll start screaming if you don't listen. I'll hold you even tighter.
<i>Susan drops to the floor wrapped up by the Knot in her Stomach.</i>	
Director	Choose someone to be you there and come over and have a look at this moment.

I later ask Susan what part of the drama was most meaningful to her. "Me on the ground, with my Knot wrapped around me — holding me tight and not letting go — whilst my clients fought in the background. That moment was the first time that I saw my Knot as something real, as something that was a part of me and as something that needed as much love as the rest of me."

Susan's first insight came from being physically held by her Knot, and taking up the role of her Knot through role reversal. A second insight came from seeing the scene from the mirror position. Susan described the new perspective she came to. "I saw the Knot as protection. Warning. My body's own red flag. Since then, I have made a conscious effort to think of my Knot as a something to be noticed. As a part of me that I shouldn't run from or feel threatened by."

While Susan identified the concretisation of the Knot, role reversal and mirroring as assisting her to gain insight, there are many other factors that also contribute. These include the use of a stage, maximising expression, and the use of auxiliary egos. Behind these are fundamental concepts in psychodrama:

- the use of surplus reality to make real something that is an internal physical experience and to give it a voice;
- the warm up of the protagonist to enter deeply into the drama and live in the moment with what emerges;
- a belief in the creative genius of the protagonist;
- the quality of relationship between the protagonist, the director and the group.

In addition, through the use of action the protagonist has warmed up to the physical sensations and feelings that had previously been set aside in order to do her work. In this way she is reconnecting to more of her whole being.

So many aspects of psychodrama contribute to the process of gaining insight that it is not really possible to say how insight is actually achieved. The closest psychodramatic description is from Moreno's Canon of Creativity where "*the operational manifestation of the interacting spontaneity-creativity is the warming up process*" (Moreno, 1993:17). The individual warms up to a stimulus. When the warm up deepens sufficiently at some critical point spontaneity emerges as a spark that is the catalyst for a creative act such as an insight. But how does the spark for insight emerge? When a protagonist warms up to their spontaneity, creative expression emerges, although it is not always insight. Many other forms of creativity are possible, such as a song, a stillness or perhaps a gesture of forgiveness.

In psychodrama insight also occurs in the catharsis of integration. The dramatic enactment is essentially a process of continually deepening the warm up, and as a consequence of this spontaneity increases and is expressed. At some point there is either a full expression of feeling followed by a catharsis of abreaction, a sense of calm after emptying out the emotion and physical charge held in that scene; or a catharsis of integration, where there is a sense of insight into what has been happening and what might be a way to progress the situation. In Moreno's words, the protagonist's "own self has an opportunity to find and reorganize itself, to put the elements together which may have been kept apart by insidious forces, to integrate them and to attain a sense of power and relief, 'a catharsis of integration'" (Moreno, 1993:57).

Again, this does not describe how insight is achieved, just that it happens and its healing effects. Let us now turn to what research into the brain is suggesting.

## What can we learn from neuroscience?

Jung-Beeman et al (2008) conducted an experiment using fMRI scans (functional magnetic resonance imaging) and EEGs (electroencephalography) to measure what was happening in their subjects' brains during moments of insight.

They gave each subject a number of compound word problems that could be solved either analytically or by insight. Here is an example.

What one word would complete a compound phrase for the following 3 words: Heart, Potato, Tooth?

The answer is *Sweet*, creating the words 'sweetheart', 'sweet potato', 'sweet tooth'.

In this experiment people generally solved half of these problems within 30 seconds.

Each three-word set was projected onto a screen while the subject was inside the fMRI scanner. If they solved the problem, the subjects identified whether they had worked it out by trial and error (analytically) or they just knew the answer (insight). The researchers eliminated the data from analytically-solved problems and looked for patterns in the insight-related data. The fMRI results showed that while there is no insight area of the brain, the anterior temporal lobe of the right hemisphere, where semantic information is integrated, was involved. In other words, making new connections between distantly related items. One conclusion is that the process of insight is strongly driven by the right hemisphere (not the logic-oriented left brain).

They also conducted interviews on the state of mind or mood of their subjects going into the experiment. They found that mood is very important for insight. Subjects higher in anxiety solved fewer problems with insight, while those in a positive mood solved more problems and used insight more often. This accords with the psychodramatic axiom that spontaneity and anxiety are inversely related (Franklin, 1988).

Most interestingly the EEG data showed distinct patterns in brain wave activity. Jung-Beeman et al found that one second prior to the moment of insight, there was a spike in the Alpha wave (relaxed undistracted state) followed by a spike in the Gamma wave<sup>1</sup> at the moment of insight, see graph below.

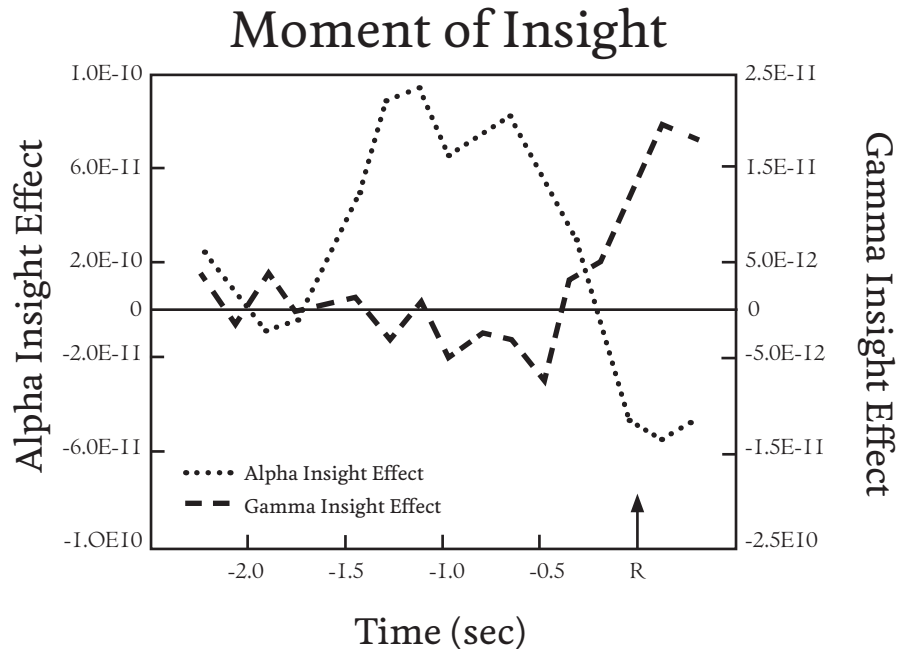
Jung-Beeman and his colleagues hypothesised that the Alpha wave spike meant that the brain becomes very calm and eliminates the normal visual input from the problem words (the technical term is 'sensory gating'). Hence distractions are eliminated, allowing the more distant and less obvious possibilities to emerge from regions of the brain other than the analytic part known as the prefrontal cortex. When the connection is made the Gamma wave spikes, a new neural link is made, and the insight arrives fully formed.

In the unconscious process leading to insight, the brain appears to get out of its own way, this allows looser connections to be made and in this context, the



'aha' emerges. This requires a quiet mind. For insight, it is important to let the brain idle, reducing activation of habitual thinking patterns. When the brain starts on a train of thought and follows its own logic, it becomes very hard to pay attention to the less obvious possibilities (Rock, 2009).

FIG 1: BRAIN WAVE ACTIVITY LEADING UP TO R  
 — THE MOMENT OF INSIGHT (JUNG-BEEMAN ET AL, IN ROCK 2009:83)



### What might this imply for psychodramatists?

The simplified sequence appears to be:

1. Ask the client to concretise the problem situation or dilemma. This is likely to engage their conscious analytic brain.
2. Shift to a resting state, whereby the client lets go of the dominant train of thought. Existing stimuli (especially visual) are excluded so that attention can be paid to distant loose associations
3. See what emerges.

The critical part is the shift away from the habit of existing thinking to allow room for insight or, at the least, intuition. Many protagonists have thought about the issues they present before seeking help. As they present their dilemma to the psychodramatist, they are outlining their analysis.

## Paddling On The Harbour

In my coaching practice I ask my client, Tony, to set out a dilemma as a desktop sculpture using an array of everyday objects to represent different elements of the situation, including an object for himself. He wants to resolve a stuck situation where the family is in turmoil about repeated moments of tension and conflict with his 15 year old son.

Tony creates a sculpture of the dynamic around his adolescent third son pushing to find his place, on the edge of the group, while he, his wife and older sons occupy the central space, busy in their separate lives. The connections are displayed through the use of closeness/distance, the sizes and orientations of the objects used. He nods when he is done, satisfied with what he has set out.

I take Tony to another part of the room and ask him to warm up to a time when he feels most in his being, at one with himself. He creates a scene paddling his kayak on the harbour, smelling the early morning air, the wind in his face, riding the shifts and currents as he paddles surely and confidently. He breathes deeply, experiences the delight.

Director            Keep paddling, feeling yourself there. In a moment I'm going to ask you to do something and I want you to immediately respond without thinking ... The morning sun is warm on your face ... You can hear the seagulls. Now go and put your hand on the part of the sculpture where you feel the most hope.

*Tony immediately stands next to the keys that represent his youngest son.*

Director            Express yourself.

Tony                *feeling strongly:* He's alone. I've assumed he was doing fine but he's isolated, struggling to be seen for who he is. I get excited by my own creative projects and where the others are up to in theirs. Everyone else has worked out what they need and is getting on with their lives. But not him.

Director            What are you hopeful about?

Tony                *lovingly, tears in his eyes:* He's the one who will create the path. It's just that we're fighting him by being over-involved with ourselves. Especially me.

Clearly Tony is struck by the clarity of his knowing where to start. He values this. His insight is not yet a plan. It needs more work to be put into practice but he will remember the moment when he simply knew the answer.

In psychodramatic terms, the second scene on the harbour evokes a time and place where he feels free and can access his spontaneity. He is turned away from the sculpture, has no immediate visual reminder. His attention is taken up with his direct sensory (bodily) experience of being at one with himself. This sense of life and potency is then brought into the first scene where he is stuck. He

places himself where he feels hope. The language of hope calls on his feeling, a different part of his being than that typically engaged with problem solving. Something new emerges.

I am consciously activating a different state of being, involving his senses, engaging his right brain. The setting out of the sculpture is still with him of course. He has seen it as a whole picture with its strong and weak connections. He quietens his mind in the experience of paddling on the harbour. The call to move swiftly asks him to act from his whole being on a feeling criteria, rather than a thought. Once he is in position we can explore what is behind his decision. At this point it might only be a gut feeling, an intuition, or it might be an insight complete with logic. Once the starting point is there we can take the next step in creating a workable plan.

## Conclusions

It is clearly possible to maximize the likelihood of insight. Directing a psychodrama where the protagonist warms up to their spontaneity is likely to do this. But the director can be much more specific. As in the example given with Tony, the director can set a scene for each of two systems, one with the presenting dilemma where there is little spontaneity, and a second where the protagonist is in their being, potent with spontaneity. Insight is most likely to emerge when the spontaneity of the second system is brought to bear on the stuck situation. Rather than waiting to see what happens, the psychodramatist actively directs attention back to the presenting dilemma. The work continues from there.

It is interesting how Moreno's image of a spark of spontaneity catalysing a creative act appears to be showing up in neuroscience. Insight is a creative act of the unconscious as the brain shifts its state, getting out of its own way, and two or more ideas become linked. Jung-Beeman hypothesised that the Gamma wave spike showed a new neural connection being created, an electrical spark that catalyses the insight.

As a psychodramatist, I love the focus on the protagonist reclaiming and releasing their spontaneity. It makes perfect sense that we each value our own insights more than others' insights into our situation. Our insights are keyed into an exhilarating felt experience, and become linked to that feeling in our memories. Hence we are much more likely to remember them and to act on them.

Susan later wrote a reflection, "Now that a few weeks have passed since my drama, I have had the time to reflect on what new awareness I may have developed since. A few things strike me as potential learnings — however the most important, and the one that I would like to have typed (and immortalised!) in black and white — is that I am now far kinder to myself when I am sitting with a client. Or trying to be kinder. I no longer sit, mind solely focused on being all that I can be for my client — I leave a section focused on me. I almost sit, listening out for my 'knot', knowing that if it does appear with its clenching and anxiety-provoking grasp that I will be able to take care of it. And that will be okay."

Thanks to Susan and Tony (not their real names) for allowing me to draw from their work to write this article.

## FOOTNOTE

- <sup>1</sup> Brain waves are grouped as follows: Delta (0-4Hz) deep sleep; Theta (4-7HZ) drowsiness; Alpha (8-13Hz) relaxation; Beta (13-30Hz) alert; Gamma (30-100Hz). While there is no agreement on the specific function of gamma waves, they are thought to be able to link information from all parts of the brain and hence make new neural connections.

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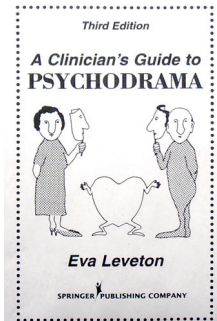
For the puzzle lovers, here are a few additional compound word problems. Find the single word that completes each trio. Notice if you are analytic or if the answer just arrives complete in your mind.

Child, Bird, Scan  
Playing, Credit, Report  
Barrel, Root, Belly  
Sore, Shoulder, Sweat



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# Book Reviews



## *A Clinician's Guide to Psychodrama*

by Eva Leveton  
Third Edition,  
Springer Publishing Company,  
New York, 2001

Reviewed by Suzanne Wallace

My interest in this book was aroused as soon as I opened the front pages and scanned the contents page. I was instantly alerted that this might be the simple guide to psychodrama that I had always wanted. I reflected on my experiences many years ago, as a beginner psychodrama trainee, when I began experiential training with no understanding of the basic methods underpinning the action. At that time I would have benefited from having available a clear and simple guide to the method. Later, as a beginning clinician, I lacked a simple, straightforward text for reference on a day-to-day basis, both for my own guidance and for the education of students and other staff in the hospital in which I worked. Many years later, as an experienced clinician, I would still value such a guide. As a trainer, I would value a textbook to provide relevant, excellent and enlivening ideas and information to trainees. The book by Leveton appeared to be just the one that might meet all of these needs and I was delighted to read it.

In the prologue Leveton describes her reason for writing her book. "My goal is to provide the reader with an informal compendium of psychodramatic techniques and to describe in some detail, my style in applying them." (p x) This is an accurate description of her work. Leveton commences her book with an account of her own introduction to psychodrama. Leveton, a psychologist, describes herself as having been a highly skeptical and timid novice, a situation that is familiar to myself and, I believe, many others. She then describes her work in a day treatment centre, in a psychiatric ward, in family therapy, with individuals including indigenous American Indians. In all these settings she endeavored to introduce psychodrama, believing in its healing qualities. Leveton also combined psychodrama with her interests in trance and drama therapy.

### *Key concepts and relationship to Morenean theory and practice*

Leveton's book outlines, in simple straightforward language, the main techniques used in classical psychodrama as envisioned by Moreno. The first two chapters

introduce the beginning stages of running a group, addressing issues of authority and seating. Chapters describing warm up, the double, role reversal, the sociogram, the empty chair and closure follow. Leveton then includes several special interest chapters, including character studies, issues related to personality, scene making, magic shop, masks, spontaneity and dealing with resistance. Two chapters are devoted to clarifying differences between trance and psychodrama and between psychodrama and drama therapy. She concludes her book with a chapter outlining three case studies and provides a very helpful glossary.

### *Appraisal of the content*

The first chapter deals with authority and the second addresses seating arrangements. These very important issues are usually only briefly touched on in books describing psychodrama or group therapy. However, they are crucial to the formation of a group and are especially essential topics for the new group leader. It is a delight to see them included here and given space for detailed consideration.

The third chapter addresses warm up. Leveton commences this chapter by candidly relating her experiences as a novice clinician and details the methods and benefits of warm-up, providing many examples of practical application. I was particularly delighted that she gave examples of her work in difficult environments, such as an acute psychiatric ward, rather than only describing work with community groups or professionals who were largely psychologically intact. Following this, Leveton provides a practical compendium of ideas and instructions for verbal and non-verbal warm up activities. For each activity Leveton provides a step-by-step instruction, including directions and discussion. Some of these activities may be familiar, some new. However, the generosity of Leveton in giving these to the reader is a real gift to the learner and expert alike.

The fourth chapter addressing doubling is also a generous gift. As with the previous chapter on warm up, Leveton describes her personal experiences with doubling, gives an explanation of doubling and follows this with an instructional compendium of styles. The styles include the neutral double, the humorous double and the oppositional double. She then describes methods of making the double a physical entity, the double as counselor, the collective double and the stubborn double. The last part of this very useful chapter addresses the issue of doubling as an adjunct to therapy. The rest of the chapters follow the same constructive, comprehensive and helpful pattern, with Leveton not only providing simple to understand, helpful explanations, but also practical suggestions that may be immediately implemented.

There were two disappointments. The first is that Leveton did not include an account of Moreno's role theory. I feel that this is a grave omission. It may lead the reader to assume that the practical techniques so well described by Leveton amount to the "whole story" and that one may practice psychodrama techniques

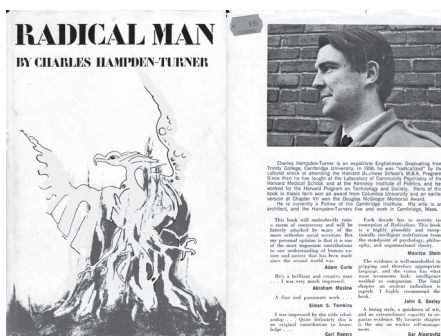
with no need for deeper understanding. A chapter with a summary of the main points of Moreno's theory would have been helpful and made this book much more complete as a reference. The second omission is that Leveton fails to mention the role of group process in the conducting of a psychodrama group. This is also a serious omission as the beginner clinician or trainee may not realise the power of group process as a force influencing the group. This book would have been more complete if it mentioned the role of group process in the formation and ongoing journey of a group. There is a reading list provided at the end of the book but again there is no mention of group process and little on Moreno's role theory. However, these omissions can be overcome with additional reading.

### **Conclusions**

Is this the simple guide to psychodrama that I had always wanted? Yes, in part. Leveton has met her goal of providing an informal compendium of psychodramatic techniques and describing her style in applying them. With the caution that additional reading is required, particularly regarding Moreno's role theory and theories of group process, I recommend *A Clinician's Guide to Psychodrama* (Third Edition) by Eva Leveton. Those who would enjoy this book and benefit from its many ideas are clinicians working with the psychodrama method, trainers, trainees, students of the method and those who wish for a succinct, informative guide to practical day-to-day leadership of a psychodrama group. I recommend this book as a source of inspiration for those times when creativity seems to have flown out of the door and there is a need for a concise manual of ideas to stimulate and inspire.



Suzanne Wallace has worked as an Occupational Therapist in acute inpatient Psychiatry since 1982. She was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 1992 for her work with young women suffering eating disorders. Trained as a Psychodramatist and T.E.P., Suzanne is interested in all aspects of spiritual endeavour and experience. She lives with her dog, Teddy, in Perth, Western Australia.



## *Radical Man: The Process of Psycho-Social Development*

by Charles Hampden-Turner.

Cambridge, Massachusetts:

Schenkman.

1970

Reviewed by Kevin Franklin

Karen Horney (1885-1952), J. L. Moreno (1889-1974) and Charles Hampden-Turner in *Radical Man* stand on common ground. They highlight *anxiety* in human functioning; the cause of neurosis according to Horney, for Moreno anxiety is *nothing* but spontaneity-lost, and for Hampden-Turner it is cause of anomie. He writes (p. 392) "... insofar as any single problem holds other problems in its thrall, I would say that the central issue is our individual capacity to tolerate the fires of existential anxiety."

My world view as an isolated young man was challenged when I read *Radical Man*: I painfully recognised myself in this writing. My life was eventually turned around. What follows is a mature reflection and guide for those contemplating taking the tour.

Hampden-Turner draws on ample research evidence to describe Radical Man. And Radical Man requires a 'new' process of psychosocial development described in Chapter III: *A Model of Psycho-Social Development*. Radical Man is an enabled solution to existential angst, and then in contrast is Man's restrictive solution in Chapter IV (*Anomie — The Failure of Existence*). Anomic Man, to coin a term, is Every Man.

In a *theory of role* perspective — from absent spontaneity in the *role-taking* Every Man to spontaneous creativity in integrative *role-playing* — Anomic Man and Radical Man are polarisations of a theoretical continuum of spontaneity. In Hampden-Turner's theoretical dissertation at the Harvard Business School he has, albeit unwittingly, gathered a vast body of evidence to support and describe this theoretical expression of the psychodrama paradigm. Central to his thesis is the failure of Every Man to challenge and transcend his reactive-fear via *integration*. And from that continuing failure, and spontaneity-lost, instead instituting a restrictive reaction of *phobia* (p. 297). With 2013 hindsight we can better see how a survivalist mentality of coping can lead from anxiety to depression, to pre-emptive suicide and alternatively in reaction to 'shoot-em up' radicalisation.

Polarisation in everyday living, sexism for instance, is expressed in theory as complementary versus symmetrical relationship. Radical Man is freedom oriented because he or she enters into collaborative dialectic with others to



transcend their outrage sense of male and female as opposites. Why the outside observer role of Anomic Man? He writes (p. 263) “we nearly all become authoritarian in situations of sufficient danger and perplexity, like being locked up in a ward with paranoid schizophrenics.”

Hampden-Turner's *Radical Man* is not on fire with opposition: instead radical men and women identify with and are on fire *with the plight* of the paranoid schizophrenic. Implicitly, *role reversal* with sociometrically distant others is a goal to be achieved; *not* avoiding, *not* terrorising and *not* subjugating. Like Karen Horney he writes that *not* transcending is the vicious cycle. He addresses a familiar existential question: *To be or not to be?*

He describes a process. *Radical Man* is about experience but is not experience; Logos, *not* Eros. Potentially, this content orientation without also living the resistance experienced in role-playing can become further fodder for the anomic-dogmatism of intellectualism or the anti-intellect reaction of oppositional shoot-em up radicalism.

In *How to Read This Book* (p. xii) he gives good advice. This book is dangerous to a world view of fixity such as I had in the mid-1970s. For example he writes: “If you already object to the basic premises of traditional social science you may omit Chapter I which will only provide you with extra ammunition.” In retrospect — in my then “pitiless moralizer” of *Every Man* — I should have taken his advice. In the mid-1970s I was beginning psychodrama training, reading Morenean method and Hampden-Turner's process. My mother died suddenly. I was teaching science and Human Biology. I was a *Coming Out* gay-man in a homophobic government educational system with its phobic demand characteristic of “control”. My disturbing wish and reactive fear creating an overwhelming existential crisis. My internalised ‘parent’ was inadequate to the task of fixing ‘the fix’. Ask yourself: *Do I really want to read this book?* Today I'm glad that I did.

If you do you'll find a book in 12-chapters. Chapter I characterises Conserved Man and Chapter II describes Radical Man as his dialectical twin. This description personifying the role-taker — role-player continuum, is the psychodrama paradigm: and for *Every Man* the existential angst of paradox and confusion that is Man and his Shadow. Paradox and confusion are implicit in psychodramatic production. These are backgrounding chapters; interesting, challenging and confirming if you harbour disappointment in the modern social sciences. Now, as in the 1970s, ‘social’ sciences stubbornly excluding a humane expression of *social*, from Latin *socius* meaning *companion*.

In Chapter III Hampden-Turner also presents his thesis: *Man exists freely* (p. 31). This is followed by nine elements of his dialectic model of learning. These are presented as a learning cycle which spirals up or down (p. 33). A dynamic-model of learning is familiar to us in AANZPA as forward to health or backward to fragmentation: these are from the ‘socially’ constructed coping that is Anomic Man's *shadow*-personality.

A reader might not understand Hegelian dialectic used in this learning model of thesis writing. A dictionary search shows Hegelian dialectic to be *an interpretive method, originally used to relate specific entities or events to the absolute idea, in which some assertable proposition (thesis) is necessarily opposed by an equally assertable and apparently contradictory proposition (antithesis), the mutual contradiction being reconciled on a higher level of truth by a third proposition (synthesis).*

He writes (p. xii) of Chapters III and IV that these “should be read by anyone seeking to get the most out of this book.” Hampden-Turner assumes a psychosocial model of reality with its inherent push-factor of creativity. Missing from his thesis-book is the third and higher Hegelian proposition, for instance, an integrated whole *Universal Man*. All theory has limits including the current psychosocial models of Man. Radical Man exhausts the psychosocial paradigm: Creativity without spontaneity is that limit.

Exemplars are given in Chapters V-XII. Psychologists could profitably read Chapter V: *Dissent and Rebellion in the Laboratory*. Chapter VI: *Development and the Social Structure of Formal Systems*, speaks to everyone. Trainers would benefit from Chapter VII: *Rebellion, Growth and Regression in Training Groups*.

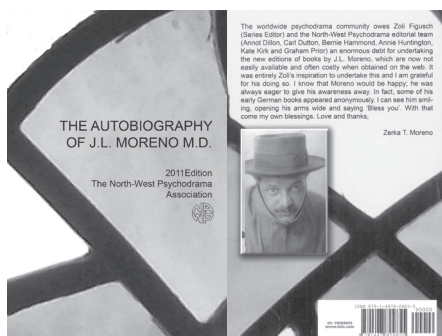
Moreno gave us a method-plus account; a *how* of psychosocial development. *Radical Man* is descriptive of development but without method it lacks the *how* of personal-professional practice. Though psychosocial-oriented work is generally blind to Universal Man's integration, psychodramatists will find these complementary. He comprehensively describes anomie — people fallen into coping with spontaneity-lost. This work mirrors the psychosocial paradigm with its unresolvable existential angst from fear of creating without spontaneity; this paradigm creating Disorder.

This book is dangerous to a cold at heart pitiless moralizer and to anomic men and women needing a warm response in a world dominated by fixity. To finish this review I quote Hampden-Turner's conclusive words (p. 381):

*The point is to act spontaneously from the deepest ethical and human impulse and to discover yourself in a fervent embrace with the complementary human impulse touched off in others. The basic dichotomy of individuality and intimacy is transcended when the lonely act calls forth a warm response.*



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## *The Autobiography of J.L. Moreno M.D. (Abridged).*

By Jacob Levy Moreno  
The North West Psychodrama  
Association, UK.  
2011 Edition. Lulu Prints.

Reviewed by Neil Hucker

This 2011 Edition of Moreno's autobiography brings together works previously published in the *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama and Sociometry* in the Spring and Summer of 1989<sup>1</sup>. As noted by Jonathan Moreno in his erudite foreword to the 1989 version, it was an edited 124 page version of Moreno's five hundred page original autobiographical reminiscences, written several years prior to his death in 1974. This current edition has been re-edited by Zerka Moreno. We are indeed lucky to have this recording and editing of his autobiography by Jonathan Moreno his son and Zerka T. Moreno, his second wife.

I enjoyed reading the book and found it interesting, enlightening, informative and challenging. A very personal disclosure of the wide range of social relationships, experiences and influences that warmed up Moreno's creativity. In comparison to Moreno's *Preludes to My Autobiography*, which focuses more specifically on the 'scientific' development of his work, this autobiography shares with us more of Moreno's intimate living out of the foundation stones and development of Sociometry and Psychodrama. The chapters as written provide an adequate chronological sequence to the many parallel themes and experiences that Moreno was involved in during his life. The book covers the whole period of Moreno's life from his birth in 1889 to the years just before his death in 1974.

In the beginning Moreno describes significant events in his early years, from his birth in 1889 to his settling back in Vienna in 1904, which are very intriguing and exotic. Growing up in a prosperous, supportive, extended Sephardic Jewish family provided plenty of scope for Moreno's innate charisma, intelligence and creative genius. Bolstered by his "independent air; difficult to manage, self-willed" (p. 32) temperament, Moreno's adaptability to live fully in the situations he encountered and created is shared very openly and needs to be seen in the context of the times.

Moreno's description of moving from Bucharest to Vienna to Berlin, Istanbul and back to Vienna around the turn of the century gives a very vibrant picture of the different cultures he had to adapt to and the importance of the support he got from his original social atom. Nevertheless in the background the impact of anti-Semitism is never far away.

Choosing to move back to Vienna when he was 14 and enter fully into the philosophical, theological, theatrical, psychological and political revolutionary fervor of the pre-WWI Europe, was a wonderful warm up for Moreno to be in creating mode on all fronts. In particular was his religious focus on the spontaneous creating function of God. To warm up to this in himself, Moreno played out the role of God on the first day of creation as he perceived it.

Moreno's reflections on this time indicate an adequate degree of self-objectivity which accords with his view that he was able to rein in any megalomania to a 'megalomania normalis'. "The only way to get rid of the God syndrome is to act it out" (p.47). This theme, of the extent to which his playing the role of God the creator could at times overwhelm him, comes out through the book.

Moreno attracted a group of friends in Vienna who supported him developing a 'religion of the encounter'. This group provided social support for groups of refugees and gave freely, "committed to sharing the anonymity, of loving and giving, living a direct and concrete life in a community with all we meet" (p.51). Very involved in the social changes of the times, his foundation premises for sociometry, group functioning, spontaneity-creativity, spontaneous enactment and the importance of love, all blossomed out of his underlying 'contention' to try religion again, but this time "improved by the insights which science has given us".

Chapter 5 outlines Moreno's early medical career which was influenced by the advent of WWI. Not allowed to enlist he describes eventually working in refugee camps, where opportunities emerged for the developing social scientist, the sociometrist, to trial new ways to assist the refugees to group and enhance their social relationships.

Chapters 6 and 7 detail parallel themes in Moreno's life during and after the end of WWI. Chapter 6 focuses more on his life in Vienna where Moreno continued to fully immerse himself in the rich intellectual and artistic changes occurring at the time. Reading Moreno's remembered creating process is illuminating, as he recalls being influenced by his reading on religion and philosophy, particularly existentialism and his reactions to Marxism and psychoanalysis. Becoming actively involved in spontaneous drama through his Stegreiftheatre "with its goal of one hundred percent spontaneity" (p.83), all fed into his creating process. But Moreno was forced to realize that his impromptu theatre had its limitations for both the actors and the audience. This disappointment was instrumental in Moreno diverting his energy and creativity into the "therapeutic theatre" (p.84) and the development of psychodrama.

Publishing and editing his and others writing in the existential journal *Daimon* and producing his own books anonymously, brought Moreno in contact with many creative people.

In Chapter 7, Moreno describes his move to live in Vosslau after the end of WWI. Getting way from Vienna allowed him to continue practicing as a doctor anonymously. He maintained contact with his friends in Vienna as the violent

political battles between National Socialism and Communism escalated and increasingly targeted creative freedom and whipped up anti-Semitism. Eventually this spread to Vosslau. In Moreno's reminiscence of his time in Vosslau, we are again privy to the more personal journey he was on, exploring his intimate and loving relationships with women.

Foreseeing the coming Holocaust, Moreno wisely decided to leave Europe and make his way to the USA in 1925. Gaining entry to the USA was helped by Moreno bringing a radio device that was eagerly anticipated and eventually provided helpful royalties. Moreno's description of his personal warm-up and the acceptance and integration of his sociometric and psychodrama works into the USA, highlights the many influential people he was able to inspire and the many creative relationships he established. The development of Sociometry, his method to measure social relationship functioning that had productive social outcomes, was taken up and explored on a large scale. Supporters in psychiatry, the forensic system, the military, educational institutes and other support organizations were able to incorporate his integrated work/research method.

I found it rather breathtaking, the amount of clinical work, research, social involvement, promotion and writing Moreno was able to produce and co-create with a wide range of professionals. Along the way there was also antagonism from many other professionals, particularly certain psychoanalysts which is described in ways that highlight the self-willed power of Moreno's own convictions. His reflections indicate awareness that his personal style could antagonize others and that this may have lessened the acceptance of his work by a broader spectrum of the professional community in America. On the other hand without his strong entrepreneurial style and belief in his sociometric findings, the conserved forces arraigned against creative change may have destroyed Sociometry and Psychodrama.

The final chapters focus on the central people in his evolving social atom. In his "The Search for a New Muse", this highlights the creating protagonist's need for auxiliaries, the co-creators. Moreno acknowledges the many helpers along the way but in particular in terms of a muse he expresses his gratitude to his brother William, his first wife Florence and of course his most expansive co-creator his second wife Zerka.

Of particular importance was the help provided to convert his spontaneous productions into readable, grammatical English and German. This certainly required deeply involved and committed co-creating auxiliaries, as this autobiography attests to. At certain points throughout this autobiography, Moreno states that he had carried an underlying disappointment that all of his work had not achieved the worldwide spontaneity that he had hoped for. But he did have hope that those who had experienced the creative genius within and interpersonally would continue to create and live the 'Godhead'. On page 62 he states, "the religious tenets I have always held, when removed from their metaphoric shell, contain the most revolutionary kernel of my work". Later he

concludes that “one of the first blueprints might have been a universal axio-normative order of the universe” (p.62), from which would follow the ‘ingredients’ of the sociometric system: the idea of proximity and the metric, the love of the neighbor and the idea of the meeting, in addition to the factors of spontaneity and creativity.

I have found that reading this autobiography led me into a fuller doubling of Moreno’s personal creating experience which I think provides an exciting integrative experience of the locus and status nascendi of his creating genius. It also gave me a deeper understanding of the ‘godhead’ concept — being fully the creators we are.

### Footnote

<sup>1</sup> The Autobiography of J.L. Moreno, MD (Abridged) Vol 42. No. 1, Spring 1989 and Vol. 42, No. 2, Summer 1989

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