

The Magic of Surplus Reality

**Developing spontaneity
and bringing about
social atom repair**



**Ali Watersong
Lyttelton
June 2008**

A thesis presented to the Board of Examiners of the
Australian and New Zealand Psychodrama Association Incorporated
in partial fulfilment of the requirements towards
certification as a psychodramatist

This thesis has been completed in partial fulfilment of the requirements toward certification as a practitioner by the Board of Examiners of the Australian and New Zealand Psychodrama Association Incorporated. It represents a considerable body of work undertaken with extensive supervision. This knowledge and insight has been gained through hundreds of hours of experience, study and reflection.

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Enquiries:

PO Box 232, Daw Park, South Australia 5041, Australia.

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The Journey

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting their bad advice -
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
“Mend my life!”
each voice cried.
But you didn't stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn,
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do -
determined to save
the only life you could save.

Mary Oliver

Abstract

The magic of surplus reality is that anything that can be imagined can be created on the stage. The borders between objective reality and fantasy are dissolved so that what is invisible can be seen; what is unspoken can be heard; past, present and future are experienced in the here-and-now and the boundaries of sex, death and age are transcended. In surplus reality a person enters the unknown, daring to live out their fantasies on the stage and become the creator of their own life. Their senses are awakened and they reconnect with the playful vitality of the child as their imagination and creativity come alive.

Surplus reality is a central aspect of Dr. J.L. Moreno's psychodrama method. It is one of psychodrama's most powerful tools to facilitate the development of spontaneity, bring about social atom repair and assist in the formation of a positive identity.

This paper reviews writings on surplus reality by Moreno and other practitioners who have built on his work. The paper refers to recent research in neuroscience to support the use of surplus reality in therapeutic work with individuals. It presents and discusses a range of applications from working with women in psychodrama groups to demonstrate the magical effect of surplus reality to create social atom repair and increase spontaneity in individuals.

Preface

My journey with psychodrama began many years ago. I first heard the term “surplus reality” on an experiential workshop led by Kay Rosaline. I set out a photo of my mother holding me as an infant. Mum is trying to smile but what appears is a grimace. All the sinews in her neck are tight and standing out. She looks terrified and is gripping on to me tensely. I am lost and frightened. With a mother created in surplus reality I experience being held and embraced in secure loving confident arms. It is wonderful! Through this experience of feeling loved and cared for, I internalise new roles and come to know that I can experience something that I had not had in my life. I learn that it is possible to make new memories in the brain and the body as I develop new ways of being. Over the following years I repair many social atom experiences through surplus reality :

- ◆ I kill my father. He was both emotionally absent and a large dominating frightening presence in the family.
- ◆ I have a surplus reality father who reads “Where the Wild Things Are” to me. This starts to heal my relationship with my actual father who never read to me.
- ◆ I am born psychodramatically into the arms of loving caring parents.
- ◆ I hand my pregnant mother into the care of a midwife and tell her that it is not my job to take care of her.
- ◆ I return to a time before conception. I know that my soul has a purpose.
- ◆ I experience a past life incarnation in which I am a minstrel and herbalist condemned to the stocks to be humiliated.
- ◆ I communicate with my spiritual source on stage in different guises: Beingness, Love, the Source, God, the Spirit of the Universe, the Goddess, the fairies at the bottom of the garden, my soul's purpose.
- ◆ I interact with parts of my body including the T-cells in my immune system.
- ◆ I re-experience many ages and stages of my life from being a baby in the womb onwards.
- ◆ I fly as an eagle, roar as a lion, flutter as a butterfly and more.

- ♦ I do things I never did: climb with my father, dance in a ballroom with my mother, go fishing with my brother. I put myself in their shoes, learning about their lives, values and motivations. I forgive and have compassion for them.

All of these surplus reality experiences assist me to develop more progressive functioning. I continue to be enlivened by the psychodramatic method and apply it in my work. I am stimulated by the value of surplus reality to bring to life a person's inner world and to have their fantasies, hopes, fears, dreams, imaginings, unexpressed resentments etc. be enacted on the stage.

My first psychodrama groups for women started in 1988 when I combined my work as an outdoor instructor with my new found passion for psychodrama. I facilitated weekend workshops entitled "The Emerging Amazon" that combined rock-climbing and abseiling with psychodrama. On these groups women used psychodrama to address the fears that prevented them from being adventurous in the outdoors and to warm up to the roles that will help them to climb the rock face or abseil off the cliff. Psychodramas were at times conducted in situ when a woman was immobilized by fear half-way up a rock face or at the moment of going over the edge on an abseil! This gave them the courage to keep going or to retreat without shame. I saw that having an internal relationship with oneself that is encouraging, caring and patient is vital for our well-being.

Over the last twelve years I have conducted many psychodrama workshops for women with a focus on personal growth and development. The purpose is to give women an opportunity to gain deeper self-awareness, develop an increased ability to act spontaneously and learn to express themselves more effectively in the here-and-now. The women benefit from the use of surplus reality and the creative application of psychodrama to the many different concerns that are presented.

Training in psychodrama assists me to gain deeper self-awareness by identifying my feelings, the thinking that underlies them and the actions and behaviours that result. Through psychodrama I increase my ability to act spontaneously and am developing a better relationship with myself: one of acceptance and compassion. It gives me the opportunity to live my life with more creativity and imagination and enriches my spirit. I am learning to be myself, to be with myself, and to be, here and now.

Acknowledgments

I thank the many people who have supported and encouraged me on my journey. Mike Consedine has been my supervisor for many years, initially for my group work, and then for my writing. I am grateful for his encouragement, patience, robust challenging and contribution to my development.

I deeply appreciate Claire Guy who willingly took over supervision in the final stages of writing, giving very clear generous feedback and fine tuning.

My heartfelt thanks to my trainers and supervisors for their wisdom, generosity of spirit and nurturing of my growing identity as a psychodramatist. These include Chris Hosking, Robert Crawford, Paul Baakmann, Sara Crane, Don Reekie. I particularly acknowledge Clare Elisabeth who has assisted me with her clear sightedness, unceasing commitment, sense of humour and love.

My primary trainer, Dr. Max Clayton, has inspired me and enriched my life with his expansive demonstration of the magic of surplus reality. Much of my social atom has been repaired through his seeing me, loving me and guiding me. I am blessed by his involvement in my life.

I value the companionship and contribution of my fellow travellers in my training and peer group on this psychodrama journey. My friends Gillian Rose, Jacqui Gough and Cathy Bourke read my work and offered suggestions. Baljit Kaur searched an obscure reference. Simon Gurnsey refined my computer skills and did a wonderful job of formatting the thesis. Dan Randow generously loaned me a lap-top computer so I could travel with my work.

I wish to acknowledge the inspiration and gift of Kay Rosaline who led psychodrama workshops for lesbians in the 1980s and set me on this path.

Without the women who have shared their stories with me, this thesis would not be possible. I am honoured to be a part of their healing journeys and I thank them profoundly for their courage and determination.

I am grateful to my friends Susan Kooy, Ardas Trebus, Morag Dean, Tor Wainwright and Soren O'Neil who feed my spirit, encourage me when I despair and share my joys.

And finally I thank my partner Bronwen Pelvin for her love and support, for her excellent editing and for continuing to believe in me and my work.

1 Introduction

The Use of Surplus Reality in Social Atom Repair

Each of us is on a journey – a journey to liberate our creative genius so we can live with spontaneity, authenticity and vitality. The poem in the frontispiece by Mary Oliver describes this gradual process of finding our own voice and coming home to ourselves. In this paper I will present my work with women on their journey.

Increasingly in my work I have come to value the concept of surplus reality and its use in social atom repair. Dr J.L. Moreno (1965) coined the term surplus reality to refer to the situation in a psychodrama where a person is enacting something that exists in her imagination and her subjective reality. It involves the expression of those things that are above and beyond what is normally expressed in life. Psychodrama enactment displays the things people say and do in actual reality and also the things they do not express, their private thoughts, feelings and actions.

Surplus reality is used in social atom repair work. According to Moreno (1934), human beings are born into a “social atom”, a social network, which continues to affect them throughout life. The personality of the child, and later the adult, evolves from the relationships with parents and other significant people with whom there is intimate contact. These core early relationships in a child's life become the template for all future relationships. Research in neuroscience showing that the physical brain structure is built and shaped by early interpersonal experiences confirms Moreno's ideas that the “social self” is developed in response to the child's first social situation (Schore, 1994). If early experiences have been good (or good enough) then a firm foundation for the development of a self which is spontaneous and original, having strong ego boundaries and a healthy level of basic trust, is established. When these early relationships have been disrupted in some way, a self which is anxious and constrained, with uncertain boundaries and an unhealthy level of fear and mistrust, is the outcome. Emotional disturbance is a result of the interactions with others.

Women who attend the psychodrama groups I conduct have frequently experienced some form of neglect, abuse and trauma in their early childhood and young adulthood. This leads to the development of a limited role repertoire with few progressive roles and low spontaneity. Often they recreate elements of their original social atom in their current work and relationship lives. In the groups there is an opportunity to heal early experiences and bring about social atom repair. By entering into the realm of surplus reality and calling forth and expressing those things which lie outside of normal life, old ways of functioning are examined and new roles and perceptions are developed. In surplus reality a person re-experiences the old conflict and develops a different warm-up and a new ending. The doubling and mirroring which may be provided in surplus reality assists these women to develop new progressive roles and more integrated functioning. They then live their lives with greater spontaneity and creativity.

In this paper these concepts will be further discussed and developed. It begins with a literature review and discussion of key concepts. The practical application of surplus reality to bring about social atom repair will be illustrated and some conclusions will be drawn.

2 Literature Review and Discussion of Key Concepts

Moreno's concept of spontaneity and creativity, his theory of personality and systemic view of roles (7.1, 7.2), along with the construct of surplus reality provide a foundational framework for conducting social atom repair.

In this review I outline Moreno's concept of surplus reality and discuss the work of practitioners who have built on his ideas. These include Zerka Moreno, Leif Dag Blomkvist, Thomas Rutzel, and David Kipper. The principles of imagination and “as if” underpin the use of surplus reality and relevant writing by Chris Hosking, Adam Blatner and Peter Felix Kellermann is presented. The way in which surplus reality brings alive the socio-political dimension of life is discussed.

The section on social atom repair considers the process whereby the effect of early experiences can be repaired through psychodramatic enactment. This is followed by reference to research in neuroscience showing that the brain is malleable and can be rebuilt and rewired through positive experiences and relationships.

Appendices are included at the end of the thesis to outline Moreno's theories, describe psychodramatic techniques and present the different applications of the method.

2.1 Surplus Reality

Surplus reality is a central aspect of psychodrama theory. Moreno (1946; p.12) defined psychodrama as the science which investigates the “truth” by dramatic methods. This psychological truth consists of all aspects of a person's experience, her inner and outer worlds. Psychodrama provides the bridge between objective reality and subjective reality. Surplus reality enables the invisible, intangible dimensions of life such as hopes, fears, fantasies, dreams, imaginings, unexpressed resentments and so on that have not been fully experienced or expressed, to be concretised and enacted. Past, present, and future events that are a reality in the imagination can all be displayed in the present on the stage. Zerka Moreno (2000; p.18) values surplus reality highly and says that *“the deepest catharsis in psychodrama comes from doing those scenes, those interactions, those moments that do not, cannot, and are not*

ever likely to happen in real life, for whatever reason” . Surplus reality goes beyond reality and provides the subject with a new and more extensive experience of reality (Moreno,1965; p.212).

Moreno (1969; p.11) identified four universal dimensions as the basis of the psychodramatic method. These are time, space, reality and the cosmos. In writing about the dimension of reality he differentiated between actual reality, reduced reality, and surplus reality. Actual reality is the everyday experience of our lives at home, at work and in the daily social interactions of life itself. Moreno (1946; p.182) developed the therapeutic theatre as a place in which actual reality can be simulated to shed light on a particular situation so that people can learn new ways of being. He compared this with reduced reality, or “infra-reality”, such as that experienced in an office in an interaction between doctor and patient where the power is unequal.

Moreno was influenced to coin the term “surplus reality” by Marx's concept of “surplus value”. He wrote:

“Surplus value is part of the earnings of the worker of which he is robbed by capitalistic employers. But surplus reality is, in contrast, not a loss but an enrichment of reality by the investments and extensive use of imagination. This expansion of experience is made possible in psychodrama by methods not used in life – auxiliary egos, auxiliary chair, double, role reversal, mirror, magic shop, the high chair, the psychodramatic baby, soliloquy, rehearsal of life, and others” (1965; p212-213).

Moreno (1934; p.53) defined 5 basic instruments of the psychodrama method: the Stage, the Protagonist or subject, the Director, the Audience, and the Auxiliary Egos. Concretisation (7.4) is the surplus reality technique that makes the protagonist's private world real, concrete and tangible by representing individuals, absentees, delusions, hallucinations, symbols, ideals, animals and objects on the stage in a concrete way. The task of the auxiliary ego is to portray the person's perceptions of the internal figures dominating her world so that they can be encountered externally. In talking about the function of the auxiliary role, Moreno (1969; p.17) stresses the therapeutic use of bodily contact to give the subject the warmth and immediacy of life not only in words

but in action. For example, if there has been an absence of care and nurturing in childhood a person may need to have the experience of a 'new' father or mother who acts in ways she wishes her mother or father had acted (Moreno, 1946; p.XVIII). Adam Blatner (1988; p.81) refers to this as the “reformed auxiliary ego” by which a person uses surplus reality to create a desired experience.

Moreno's original psychodrama stage was circular and had 3 levels. The lowest outside level was the level of reality where the warm-up took place. The next level was the level of the interview. The top level was the level of action where surplus reality was manifested. There was also a balcony where “super-egos”, the heroic roles such as God, the Devil, Heaven, and Hell were produced.

In surplus reality the boundaries of sex, age, and death can be transcended and elements of the fourth universal, the cosmos, can be integrated into the therapeutic process. Moreno believed that “man” is a cosmic being, not merely a social being or an individual being. The creativity of a person can evoke the creativity of the universe. Everyone can portray her version of God or the spiritual dimension of life through her own actions and so communicate her version to others.

“The image of God can take form and embodiment through every man – the epileptic, the schizophrenic, the prostitute, the poor and rejected. They all can at any time step upon the stage, when the moment of inspiration comes, and give their version of the meaning which the universe has for them. God is always within and among us, as he is for children. Instead of coming down from the skies, he comes in by way of the stage door.

God is not dead, he is alive, in psychodrama!” (Moreno, 1969, P. 19-22).

From an early age Moreno merged imagination and symbolism with reality. He claimed that a defining event in his life was his playing God at the age of four. Blatner (2000; p.14) proposes that he intuitively grasped the potential of imaginative play as a way to bend reality to the mind's fantasies and this was the seed of the concept of surplus reality. The legend of Moreno's birth introduces us to his personality seen from the perspective of symbolism and surplus reality. In his autobiography he says: *“I was born on a stormy night on a*

ship sailing the Black Sea from the Bosphorus to Constanta in Roumania..... I was born a citizen of the world, a sailor moving from sea to sea, from country to country, destined to land one day in New York harbor” (Marineau, 1989; p. 7). Birth records show that he was actually born in 1889 in Bucharest, Roumania. This myth Moreno calls the poetic and psychodramatic truth as opposed to historic truth.

“As-if”, Imagination, Magic and Play

The entire method of psychodrama is based on the principle of “as-if” and the use of imagination.

The dictionary defines imagination as “*the faculty or action of producing ideas, esp. mental images of what is not present or has not been experienced*” (Collins English Dictionary). In his Magic Charter of Psychodrama Moreno wrote that:

“Psychodrama is a way to change the world in the HERE AND NOW using the fundamental rules of imagination without falling into the abyss of illusion, hallucination or delusion. The human brain is the vehicle of imagination. Psychodrama, in training the imagination, overcomes the differences which hinder communication between the sexes, between the races, the generations, the sick and the healthy, between people and animals, between people and objects, between the living and the dead. The simple methods of psychodrama give us courage, return to us our lost unity with the universe, and re-establish the continuity of life” (1972; p131).

Surplus reality is a concept that extends and focuses the capacity for imagination and play. Imagination allows for hopes and dreams to re-enter our lives. Peter Felix Kellermann (1992; p.109–p.121) writes that the psychodrama stage is viewed “as-if” it were an imaginary arena in which anything, including the impossible, can happen. Entering into the world of make-believe brings forth the quality that Moreno (1946; p.89) called dramatic spontaneity which gives newness and vitality to feelings, actions and words and assists in energising and unifying the self. When we reverse roles we act as-if we are that other person. We enter into a future projection as-if it is real. In our imagination we can be queens, we can be slaves, we can be dragons, we can be angels. In

psychodrama men can play women and vice versa, the young can play the old and vice versa, one can talk to a dead person or to a real or imaginary hero, one can play an aeroplane or any kind of object, a body part, an idea, or even God.

Blatner (2003) notes that the root of the word imagination is “magic” and suggests that using surplus reality techniques and exploring the dimension of “as-if” is a kind of magic. He believes in the importance and value of consciously exercising imagination and that using this faculty can be one of the most vitalising and life affirming activities people can do. Kellermann (1992; p.131) proposes that psychodramatists should be regarded as “magicians of make-believe” who perform illusions that actualise the inner self of the participants.

In writing about imagination Chris Hosking (1989) says that its development can transform consciousness so that there is a greater harmony within the self. She says that the images that arise spontaneously during a surplus reality enactment will often be free from past memories, habits and conditionings and are therefore a great resource in the development of functional roles, in social atom repair and in the formation of a positive identity. Our imagination is that dynamic faculty of the mind that reveals to us something about our consciousness. Creative imagination contributes to developing hopefulness, originality, the ability to entertain new ideas and enter into different realities than our own. It leads to purposeful action and spontaneity.

Zerka Moreno (2000; p.18) observes that when we enter surplus reality we are playing in the sphere of the bizarre, lunatic and magic. Exploring these areas enables the protagonist to find new strength, creativity and integration. The freedom from all ordinary conventions in the surplus reality enactment is one of the unique therapeutic potentials of psychodrama. Surplus reality has a timelessness and spacelessness about it that puts us in touch with cosmic powers. She tells us that Moreno realized that his protagonists moved into areas which were not real to anyone else but them, and purely subjective. Psychotics are an extreme example of this. Moreno knew that he could not truly meet the psyche of the protagonist unless he lived in the surplus reality

together with the protagonist. An example of Moreno's fully entering the protagonist's world is given in his paper "Psychodrama of Adolf Hitler" (1959).

Magic and surplus reality are in the same realm according to Zerka Moreno (2000). Using the twin principles of spontaneity-creativity we return to our primordial source where everything is possible, and are transported into a magical realm where healing can take place. Reviving "the trusting child" and the ability to play are essential to healing in Moreno's philosophy.

Play is an essential human quality and has great importance in child development and in psychotherapy (Blatner, 2000; Kellermann, 1992). Winnicott (1971) says *"In playing, and perhaps only in playing, the child or adult is free to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self"* (quoted in Clayton, L, 1986). He describes three areas of reality: the inner subjective world, the external reality which is located outside the bounds of the personality, and the space between where play and make-believe occurs and where the infant tries to connect the two worlds. This "transitional space" is not unlike the psychodramatic surplus reality (Kellermann, 1992; p.118; Blatner and Blatner, 1988; p. 78).

In everyone there is a yearning to live more fully. Ordinary living requires a degree of restraint and muted emotions. Psychodrama is a vehicle for dramatising, exaggerating, maximising and enhancing dreams, passions and struggles. The technique of surplus reality brings us to new levels of experiencing ourselves in the world. We create scenes that involve intense emotions of excitement, attraction, exuberance and spontaneity. Illness results from a disharmony among the various energies in an individual, in society and in nature. For a person to become healthy she must find an integration among these various forces (Kellermann, 1992). The mind often copes with painful experiences by separating certain thoughts and feelings from ordinary awareness and from each other. The experience of reunifying the split-off elements of body and mind in the surplus reality produces an emotional release that leads to integration and role expansion (Blatner, 2000).

The emphasis on play, imagination, intuition and creativity in psychodrama gives it its magical quality. In the next section Moreno's concept of surplus reality is extended.

Surplus Reality and Surrealism

Blomkvist and Rutzel (1994; p.238) have undertaken to explore and extend Moreno's concept of surplus reality. They state that the full potential of surplus reality is often not being exploited by directors who merely use it as a technique to act out fantasies and wishes for the ego's needs (such as having a dialogue with someone dead or having a new mother or father), without taking into account its philosophical perspective. They see surplus reality as an instrument of disintegration and chaos. In surplus reality one moves from the known to the unknown, where the ego's ability to control and understand ceases. One steps into a world without limits where there is no differentiation between fantasy and reality and enters a state of "ecstasy". The psychodrama stage and the unconscious are both beyond time: past and future meet one another and unite in the here and now. *"When the drama enters the stage the protagonist and the director are in the hands of the drama and not vice versa"*. Surplus reality enables the concretisation of things that are unknown or difficult to grasp, such as a schizophrenic's heard voice.

The Liechtenstein project was set up in 1985 by a group of psychodrama directors from different countries with the goal of developing knowledge and skills in directing dream psychodramas. In their exploration of Moreno's concept of surplus reality the group studied ancient Greek theatre and tragedy in relation to the cult of Dionysus. For a deeper understanding of surplus reality they made an effort to understand the mystical world of the surrealists. In the surrealist world people and places that are usually kept separate are mixed. It is beyond rational understanding. In both surrealism and surplus reality the borders between reality and fantasy are dissolved. They note that by freeing an individual from the distinctions between conscious and unconscious, reality and fantasy, as well as time, Moreno believed that the person could become a Creator (Blomkvist and Rutzel, 1994).

Blomkvist (1994; p.251) says that the concept of surplus reality is one of the strongest psychotherapeutic dimensions of psychodrama. The cathartic experience in psychodrama is not to find a solution or a cause. It is to give a person a stage, a space where they feel free to express themselves spontaneously. They can project onto the stage their inner world and by having these different beings enacted, having a dialogue with them and reversing roles with them, they can start to integrate aspects of themselves they may have previously disowned.

Experiential Reintegration Model

Kipper (2000), in describing the principles of the Experiential Reintegration Model (ERM), says that surplus reality is the most therapeutically potent factor in psychodramatic intervention. ERM is a treatment strategy that focuses on using psychodramatic enactment to alter the experience pool of a person by providing new and intense positive experiences or by changing the outcome of past unsatisfying ones. Undoing and redoing are fundamental surplus reality techniques which allow here-and-now changes to develop. Kipper states that catharsis by itself has a limited long-term value. Emotional catharsis must be accompanied by cognitive learning to have lasting therapeutic effectiveness. ERM places great emphasis on keeping the enactment within the boundaries of a clearly marked action space. In surplus reality the limitations imposed by time, space and actual reality are temporarily removed and protagonists are liberated from the constraints of the real world. Deliberately dissolving boundaries on the stage results in powerful therapeutic effects. However, strong boundaries must be maintained outside the action space.

Socio-political Dimension

Surplus reality allows the broader systemic perspective of the socio-political culture in which a person develops to be observed. The spirit of patriarchy, of colonisation or of the Catholic Church (for example) can be concretised and enacted, bringing out the values and ideas of the dominant culture that impact on a person's role development as well as her own individual social atom experience.

McKissack (1992; p. 29) draws the connection between the Post Modern view of the world in which reality is seen to be socially constructed and in a continuous process of reconstruction¹, and Moreno's belief in the ability of each person to meet life creatively and with spontaneity. Through the process of psychodrama, enactments are produced which are concretisations of the protagonist's construction of reality. The cultural conserve, which represents the belief in a fixed objective reality, is challenged, and the ability to create, and act in, a new surplus reality, produces a new constructed reality. He says: *"the story of our life is not fixed, we can rewrite it; focus on the heroic and not the dysfunctional. To live in our new story we will have to learn some new roles, and the consequent responses of the auxiliaries in our lives will be part of the changing plot"*.

Rose (2005; p.29) has examined and contrasted psychodramatic and feminist approaches to assisting women to find the courage to dream again. She says *"it is valuable for psychodramatists to have an awareness of the basic tenets of feminism"*. To expand a person's experience on the stage it is necessary for psychodramatists to have an awareness of how the socio-dramatic elements of gender, race, class, sexuality and able-bodyism effect people. Using surplus reality to portray the essence of these structures enlarges the system.

In summary, surplus reality is one of psychodrama's most powerful tools in enabling a person's spontaneity to develop. This in turn contributes a great deal to social atom repair.

¹ Feminists have shown that the definitions of what women do and who they are was unconsciously or deliberately constructed by mainly men, for men, coming from a patriarchal world view.

2.2 Social Atom Repair

The significant relationships we experience in our early lives are the building blocks for all future relationships. Social atom repair is the process of reorganising roles to correct the effect of negative early experiences that have resulted in inadequate functioning and lack of spontaneity in adulthood. Therapeutic intervention, through psychodramatic enactment, is aimed at repairing the effect of these experiences on adult well-being by increasing spontaneity and promoting the development of new roles and role systems.

Moreno (7.1) highlighted the systemic nature of experience hypothesising that emotional disturbance was a result of interactions with others and hence could be repaired through interaction. He referred to therapy sessions as “social atom repair work” and thought that psychodramatic therapy gives people an opportunity to relive their lives and to change these interactions (Buchanan, 1984). The essence of Moreno’s approach to therapy is action. He observed that language is a fairly late development in a child, but we are interacting from the moment of birth (and even before we are born). Much learning goes on in the first two years of life before language. He saw human beings as improvising actors on the stage of life and concluded that a more primary level than speech needed to be tapped - the level of action (Moreno, Z., 1989).

The infant is born with spontaneity (7.2). From then on, what happens in a child's and young adult's relationships more or less fosters spontaneity. The experiences in the original social atom, and subsequent social atoms, determine whether spontaneity is supported and allowed to grow and develop, or whether it is inhibited. If early experiences have been good enough, and adequate doubling and mirroring (7.3) has occurred, the child's creativity and spontaneity is encouraged and allowed to flourish. Her developing role system will be mostly progressive and adequate to whatever life presents. However, when these early relationships have been disrupted in some way and there has been a lack of adequate doubling and mirroring, damage occurs to the fabric of the child's social atom. Spontaneity is inhibited and the child does not integrate a sense of self-worth. She tries to manage her situation and make sense of her world by developing coping roles. These survival strategies defend the child from the pain of overwhelming feelings. These coping behaviours become

fixed, rigid and hard-wired into the brain. In adulthood they may become fragmenting roles (Clayton, 1992). For example, when a child retreats in the face of her father's anger she is enacting a coping role which could be seen as a creative solution at that time; in other words a survival role. However, when she continues to reenact this role in response to anybody in an authority position in adulthood long after the danger has passed, fragmentation has become the central organising gestalt of the personality (Reekie, 2007). Roles developed in our original social atom tend to be re-enacted over and over again in our lives. Moreno (1946) referred to this re-enactment of roles as social atom behaviour. Those whose functioning is undeveloped and lacking in spontaneity will not regain spontaneity and vitality without social atom repair.

Social atom repair refers to any reorganisation of roles or any development in the relationships of a person with the outer world (Clayton, 1993). It involves a rekindling of the vital spark of spontaneity as new roles and role relationships are created. It is the process of rewriting a person's script and updating and expanding the social and cultural atom: often it means addressing some message or unconscious belief system that is no longer useful. Changing old scripts and the establishment of new ideas about the self and others is a prime goal of therapy. Social atom repair involves an immediate corrective emotional experience where feelings are discharged and new insights and perceptions are gained as the person generates a different idea about the external world (Clayton, 2004). Old habits are broken and old warm-ups drop away as she is released from old memories. A new warm-up to life develops with the emergence of new functioning. The person can live in a new way where the ability to enjoy life and the ability to receive are strengthened. As the person changes there will be a change in her current social atom as she forms new relationships with people who support and nurture the development of healthy roles, while previous dominant relationships recede into the background. Social atom repair results in an expanded role repertoire and a greater personality integration, enabling a person to live a more creative and satisfying life.

Effective interventions to bring about social atom repair are based on an analysis of the social and cultural atom of a person. The production techniques developed by Moreno (7.4) are used in the warm-up and enactment to promote

spontaneity and creativity in the protagonist that result in new roles and role systems being developed .

2.3 Psychoneurobiology and Psychodrama

Psychoneurobiology is the growing body of scientific research into the relationship between the psyche (emotions, spirit), the neurons (nervous system, mind) and biology (body). Social interactions early in life (including in the womb) result in the stimulation of both neurotransmitters and neural growth hormones that participate in the active building of the brain (Schore,1994). Fear, stress and trauma all affect brain chemistry and trauma memory is stored in the body (Pert, 1999). However new research in neuroscience shows that the brain is not a static entity. Recent technological advances in brain imaging reveal that the brain is an organ that is continually being built and rebuilt in response to experiences. The brain is malleable and there is evidence that neural functions change and grow as a result of new positive experiences and enriched environments (Cozolino, 2002). Psychodrama with its emphasis on experiential learning through enactment provides just such an enriched environment. Cozolino (p.62) states that the involvement of affect and cognition appears necessary in the therapeutic process in order to create the context for integration of dissociated neural circuits. In psychodrama a catharsis of integration is achieved through the expression of feelings coupled with the cognitive insights that occur through the enactment. Harvard researcher Bessel van der Kolk is quoted as saying that experiential, body-based therapy is the treatment of choice for trauma survivors (Wylie, 2004). Raimundo (2002) writes that psychodrama and other experiential methods change brain chemistry, can reverse the effect of trauma on the brain and enable the mind to build new pathways. Hudgins (2006) identifies a number of studies demonstrating the effectiveness of experiential psychotherapy in working with trauma. This confirms Moreno's ideas about the potential for social atom repair through experiential action methods. He taught that the body remembers what the mind forgets. The best route to recapturing body memory is through expressive methods such as psychodrama that use the whole person in action (Kellermann and Hudgins, 2000). The new neuroscience research suggests that entering the realm of surplus reality and having new positive experiences

and relationships in psychodrama stimulates the neural plasticity required for new learning and assists the brain's ability to be rewired and rebuilt. This hypothesis opens up areas of research using brain imaging technology to demonstrate psychodrama's impact on neural functioning. Charmaine McVea (2007) is currently using efficacy based research that investigates protagonists' change processes during psychodrama.

2.4 Summary

The magic of surplus reality lies in the use of the imagination and play on the psychodrama stage to fully experience all aspects of our world, both subjective and objective. Enactment in surplus reality wakes up the senses and brings us alive as we experience ourselves and others in the here-and-now. For a period we live in Kairos time rather than Chronos time².

In this chapter we have seen the expansiveness of the psychodrama method that allows anything we can imagine to be enacted on the stage. In surplus reality the borders between objective reality and fantasy are dissolved and the boundaries of sex, death and age are transcended. Interactions that cannot happen in real life, visions for the future, dreams, fantasies, internal dialogues, conversations with God, the body or the spirit of patriarchy (for example) are possible. The range of ways in which Moreno's concept of surplus reality is being extended by current psychodramatists has been reviewed.

The application of the psychodrama method in all its forms (7.5) assists people to examine old ways of functioning and develop new ways of being, reorganising roles and bringing about social atom repair. Trauma recovery and undoing and re-doing past negative experiences are made possible through surplus reality enactment. New memories in the brain and body are created as neural functioning is stimulated by the enriched environment in the psychodrama group. Surplus reality enactment increases spontaneity, vitality, originality and creativity. As the role repertoire expands there is more flexibility and consequently more enjoyment of life. In the next chapter the practical application of surplus reality in work done with women is presented.

² The ancient Greeks had two words for time: Chronos and Kairos. Chronos refers to chronological or sequential time. Kairos means "the right or opportune moment to act". It signifies an undetermined period of time in which something special happens. It has a qualitative eternal nature where awareness of everyday time diminishes and one is very present.

Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

Mary Oliver

3 Description of the Work: Social Atom Repair in Groups of Women

I run psychodrama groups for women, both weekend workshops and weekly sessions. The participants have low levels of trust and high levels of anxiety due to inadequate doubling and mirroring in their early lives. They benefit from being in a women-only environment. Some have had negative experiences with significant men in their lives so they choose to be in a group without men. For others they have had difficult experiences with significant women in their original social atom and they decide to confront these issues by being in a women-only group. Many come because they enjoy the ease and support of being in a group with all women. Dayton (2003; p. 179) refers to research that suggests that some women benefit more from all female groups.

The low fee and sliding scale enable women on low incomes to experience psychodrama. They come to gain deeper self-awareness and to learn to express themselves more effectively. They hope to improve their self-esteem and their ability to be assertive, to explore relationship difficulties, to face issues of grief and illness and improve their ability to enjoy their lives (7.6).

The poem “Wild Geese” by Mary Oliver introducing this section reflects the culture that will support these women on their journey of healing and personal growth. It speaks to the importance of acceptance and gentleness required in relationship with oneself and reminds us that we all belong “in the family of things”.

In order to live a full and satisfying life we have to like and accept ourselves. Many of the women who come to these psychodrama groups reject and judge themselves harshly. They disconnect from their feelings and find it difficult to speak up for themselves or set firm boundaries. Some are very angry and operate from a role of “blaming victim”. Most have an over-developed “care-taker of others” role and under-developed self-caring roles. They feel powerless and experience lack of choice in their lives. Coping and fragmenting roles have arisen through the relationships in their original social atom. Many are not able to reverse roles. They are stuck at the developmental stage of the double and mirror (7.3). They will benefit from becoming more self-accepting and learning

to support themselves positively. The first step in this process of growth is to get to know themselves and learn to trust in their own experience.

The groups provide a gentle introduction to psychodrama for those new to the method and a community of support and encouragement for those with high levels of fear and anxiety. By providing a safe accepting environment the group acts as a kind of surplus reality Universal Matrix of All Identity (7.3) creating a community of care and belonging.

At the start of a group identity and inclusion issues are paramount. An environment is created where participants will reveal themselves, express themselves and feel free to take risks and experiment. In the first session attention is given to creating these norms. After some warm-up activities designed to connect them up with themselves and each other, they are invited to create a sculpture. Using fabric and objects in the room they set out and name the qualities of the culture that will assist them to achieve their purpose in the workshop. Slowly they gain the courage and trust to reveal themselves, express themselves and be themselves. They see their experience mirrored in the other group members and this brings them out of isolation. To be listened to, accepted and validated (ie. doubled) and to feel seen and heard (mirrored) is a new and healing experience for these women. By its very existence, the psychodrama group is contributing to social atom repair. As they experience being in an environment so very different to the one they have grown up in, they experience a different quality of relationship. Because of the warm-up created in the early stages of the group the women start to develop trust, self-acceptance and self-awareness. Gradually a sense of belonging grows. With the doubling and mirroring they receive they grow and explore, discovering how to be authentic. Once they start to feel held and safe, change can occur. They try out new behaviours that are more life enhancing than the old conserved roles. In this environment of trust dramas are produced that develop creativity and spontaneity. From this solid foundation group members become more robust and independent. Some then go on to participate in experiential workshops with other psychodrama directors thus expanding their experience and role repertoire. Some group members have gone on to start training in the method.

Surplus Reality Enacted

This chapter examines the potential of surplus reality to increase spontaneity and creativity and its effectiveness in developing and strengthening new roles. The sections are entitled The Ideal Parent, The Drama of the Body and Murdering Mother. The reader will become familiar with the technique of expanding reality on the psychodrama stage to include anything from the imagination. Clients' names have been changed to respect their privacy.

3.1 The Ideal Parent

In this section I describe and discuss three examples of enactments in which the protagonist strengthened previously undeveloped self-parenting roles.

A person who has not received adequate doubling and mirroring is unlikely to develop loving self-caring roles. Evan Sherrard (1983) proposes that in order to address difficulties in the early social atom the development of an “*effective psychodramatic role of self-caring parent*” is necessary. He goes on to say that this “ideal parent” will nurture internal “child” roles and achieve social atom repair. Sherrard advises that such roles should be developed as early as possible in the therapeutic process. With a cluster of effective roles for self-parenting, the protagonist is able to face early scenes in her original social atom in which coping or fragmenting roles developed and act in a new way.

Attending to Jane

Jane is attending a psychodrama weekend workshop. She has considerable experience of psychodrama. She says she finds it challenging. She feels self-conscious when she is being watched. She is often overwhelmed with anxiety. She wants to be more spontaneous and speak out in a group situation. I notice there is some development in her abilities due to previous work.

Early in the group Jane challenges another group member and then feels ashamed for speaking out. Later she puts herself forward as protagonist. She warms up to a scene where she feels over-exposed and “put on show”. When Jane is mirrored, she says to herself: “*You felt unattended to, no-one was there to support you*”. In role reversal she is relieved at this acknowledgment and welcomes the embrace from her caring self. For the remainder of the workshop she expresses herself openly and freely in the group.

Jane and her Father

In a later workshop Jane is conflicted when her desire to express herself freely is inhibited by her anxiety and self-judgment. She again feels unable to speak out. When the conflict is concretised she warms up to a scene when she is three years old. She is holding hands with her father as they walk down the street. She skips happily beside him. Suddenly he shouts aggressively at her to stop. She immediately freezes. With maximisation and doubling from the director, she curls up in a foetal position, crying and terrified. This urge to curl up and cry is allowed full enactment. Jane is then invited to step outside the scene and chooses an auxiliary to act for her in the scene. After a reenactment she is asked, *"What does that little girl need?"* She answers, *"Comfort and tenderness."* She is directed to, *"Go and give her what she needs."* Almost without hesitation she moves over to comfort the frightened child. She promises her that she is safe here and that she will protect her from any further harsh treatment by her father. She eases the little girl's fears holding her securely, stroking her and talking to her. Gradually the little girl becomes relaxed, trusting and confident. Jane is then directed to let her father know how this experience affected her. She says to him with much feeling:

"It was awful!"

Her father is remorseful and says:

"I love you more than anything, but I couldn't show you".

He is interviewed and asked:

"What happened to you that you couldn't show her you loved her?"

In the role of Henry (Jane's father) Jane chooses auxiliaries to take the roles of his mother and father. In the enactment that follows it is revealed that Henry's father died when he was 6 months old. In the drama his father says to him:

"I was so proud of you Henry, you were my first born son".

His mother admits regretfully that she had to do what she could to survive after her husband's death. She married a man who treated her and her son badly. In response to these revelations Henry expresses his grief to the father he didn't know. He then turns to Jane and embraces her saying *"I love you"*. Jane's

father has warmed up in a completely different way. He is now present with his daughter instead of being absent as he experienced his own father. He is warm, open and loving as he holds Jane in his arms. In her own role Jane welcomes her father's embrace and weeps as she feels relief and love.

Discussion

When Jane initially challenges another group member then withdraws in shame she is like a rosebud that opens up too early in spring before the frosts are over and consequently gets caught by a late frost. Seeing herself mirrored increases her spontaneity and she is able to warm up to herself in a positive way. She tunes into herself, puts words to her experience and validates her own reality. She is an ***attentive gardener***. Moreno's stages of the double and the mirror are crucial in personality development to establish a solid sense of self. Doubling builds self esteem, self acceptance and trust in the world, while mirroring enables self awareness and a growing sense of identity (7.3, 7.4). Jane is lovingly reparenting herself and social atom repair is occurring.

Jane has previously done considerable personal work and has already internalised self-caring behaviour shown by her ability to warm up quite quickly to progressive functioning. However, coping and fragmenting functioning that has developed through lack of adequate doubling and mirroring in childhood can have a strong hold and she may need to do several dramas around the same issue to strengthen new ways of being.

In the second illustration, Jane and her father, Jane warms up to what Moreno (1946) called the locus nascendi and status nascendi – the place and moment when it begins. This is the magic of surplus reality – we can enact any moment in someone's subjective experience of life as if it is occurring here and now. As Jane skips down the street holding hands with her father she is a ***trusting lover of life***. When her father shouts at her to stop he crushes her vitality and silences her. He is like a harsh hailstorm that destroys the delicate rosebud. In response to this ***harsh hailstorm*** Jane shrivels up and becomes a ***frozen mute***. Withdrawing and going silent is a survival strategy. However this time she is not alone. When she is doubled by the director spring has arrived and the thaw begins. With maximisation the ice melts and becomes a free flowing

stream. Maximisation is a tool that expands and intensifies experiences of the psyche far beyond what is possible in ordinary life. There is a catharsis of abreaction as Jane sobs expressing the fear and distress she could not bring out in the original situation with her father. This new expression is more physiologically consistent than the adaptive coping response of shutting down and withdrawing. If she had been able to express the hurt and anger as a child and have these feelings heard, there would be no need to hang onto them into adulthood.

When Jane chooses an auxiliary to be herself in the scene and there is a re-enactment seen from the Mirror/Observer position, she warms up to self-caring roles. The work she has done and her life experiences have provided her with the resources to enact the roles of an effective parent with little coaching. She is a **warm nurturing cocoon** as she gives her child self the comfort and reassurance she has longed for all her life. The enactment in surplus reality has enabled her to give and receive love and care at a deep feeling level. You can almost see the neural circuits being rewired as the catharsis of integration occurs!

Because of her new experience Jane is now free to be authentic with her father. She feels encouraged to confront her father about his behaviour and he responds in a new way. This demonstrates the beauty of the systemic way of working. Systems theory is an integral part of Moreno's work. Once one part of the system has changed and become more spontaneous, there is the possibility of change in other parts of the system. The use of surplus reality allows the exploration of multi-generational experiences. Interviewing for role with Jane's grand-parents involves the director as a **double, mirror, naïve enquirer and sociodramatist**. With enquiry there is an expansion of thinking and feeling and the beliefs, values and culture of the family system become clear.

Because of surplus reality Jane can reverse roles with her father, experience the world through his eyes and express the grief that he has been carrying his whole life. This is a further catharsis of integration and enables her forgiveness

and reconciliation with her Dad. She has greater understanding and compassion for him and has a new relationship with him.

Jane is developing her capacity to be courageous, authentic, loving and self-caring and her need to anxiously withdraw in shame is decreasing. She is a woman with a desire to build authentic loving relationships and be free to express her truth and creativity. Elements of Jane's functioning point towards a progressive central organising gestalt (Reekie, 1987) of a **trusting lover of life**. Her social atom is being repaired and she is developing new assertive self-determining roles that are adequate and progressive.

Wonderwoman

Stephanie has been working in individual therapy with another therapist on the abuse she suffered in childhood. She has come to psychodrama to “get in touch with her feelings”. During the course of a drama she becomes immobilised as she attempts to confront the perpetrator. Expanding the system and other interventions fail to warm her up in a different way, and she remains stuck. She is then coached to call on someone like Zena Warrior Princess to help her. She immediately comes alive saying, “I’ll get Wonderwoman!” She finds a “laser gun” and a colourful Wonderwoman cape to wear and organises a fleet of flamingoes to be her army. After a vigorous struggle she fights off the perpetrator expressing her rage and indignation. She then comforts her frightened child self. She cries as she makes a new relationship with herself – one that is nurturing and protective.

Discussion

In this example the imagination and creativity of the director stimulate those of the protagonist. Entering into surplus reality and enacting the metaphor that emerges increases spontaneity.

I have a moment of anxiety when Stephanie stays stuck despite the interventions. She is immobilised and unable to act as am I. We are both **frozen rabbits caught in the spotlight**! Spontaneity is minimal. We both need help. However I have a strong role of **believer in the creative genius** – the belief that somewhere in the protagonist's system is the health she requires to take the next step. As yet I do not know where. I walk around the stage and the

picture of Zena Warrior Princess comes to mind. The action of moving my body frees up my creativity and imagination and enables the shift from **frozen rabbit** to **creative genius**. This image from my imagination stimulates the protagonist's own imagination and she warms up to her own fantasy protector.

There is a transformation when Stephanie becomes **Wonderwoman**. She is creative and courageous and she has an army of **furious flamingoes** as companions. She experiences a new sense of her own power. She is developing a cluster of progressive roles with elements of organisation, playfulness and creativity. She loves and values herself and as her spontaneity increases her social atom is repaired. She will carry forward these new roles into other aspects of her life.

When there has been abuse or trauma in a child's life fragmentation is the outcome. As the director it is important that I ensure that re-enacting is not a re-traumatising experience for the protagonist. Establishing a strong positive relationship with Stephanie so that she knows I am alongside her and will not abandon her is crucial. Doubling and entering her world as a **compassionate companion** creates an openness in her so that she can respond to my creativity.

Having a cluster of effective psychodramatic roles of self-parenting created in surplus reality to repair the lack of doubling and mirroring in the original social atom is one of the core therapeutic tasks that can be accomplished in psychodrama.

In the next section we will look at another use of surplus reality in which parts of the body or physical symptoms are dramatised and given a voice.

3.2 The Drama of the Body

The body is the royal road to the unconscious (Moreno, Z.,1989). Our bodies are communicating with us (and other people) all the time, but often we ignore their attempts at conversation. Through physical symptoms and body signals it expresses information that has not yet surfaced into consciousness. Unresolved emotional experiences may be somatised in the body. In this section I present three examples that demonstrate that concretising body experiences in surplus reality increases awareness and gives new insights.

Giving the Voice a Voice

Jane, whom we have already met, consolidates her work in a later workshop. She sets out 2 worlds: a world where she speaks with ease and another world where she has lost her voice. Her voice is concretised. Immediately she warms up to a scene from her adolescence. The family is choosing a puppy. Jane is very excited. Her mother is critical. The puppies are playing noisily. Suddenly her father explodes. *“Stop that noise!”* he yells, kicking the food bowl across the room. The puppies cower in fright, whimpering. At this Jane shouts: *“Stop it! Look how frightened they are!”* Her voice is clear and strong as she informs them how their behaviour has affected her. After several interactions she softens and expresses her sadness. She embraces the auxiliary playing her voice saying: *“I’m going to keep you. You’re really important!”* The drama ends with Jane playing and reversing roles with the puppies. With coaching and doubling from the group she howls at the moon. She has reclaimed her voice.

Discussion

Initially Jane is open, authentic and trusting and her anxiety is low. She is an example of someone in transition from an old fragmenting role system to a new progressive role system.

When she says she has lost her voice she is using a metaphor to describe her experience. Metaphor operates in the realm of image and provides a bridge between the felt experience in the limbic brain and the words used to describe it in the neo-cortex. *“When it is exact, metaphor evokes an integration of mind and body by making the nonverbal verbal and thus deepening our experience of it. Metaphor can teach us to think with our bodies and feel with our minds, as*

well as thinking with our minds and feeling with our bodies” (Carswell and Magraw, 2003). Surplus reality enables the metaphor to be produced on stage. Jane's voice is concretised as a separate physical entity with which she can have a dialogue. This is a powerful intervention. It increases her warm-up and memories from her original social atom emerge. When someone is enacting a drama she is in a highly suggestible, almost trance-like state. Rational thought is suspended and she enters the realm of the imagination to have a conversation with those things with which communication is not usually considered possible. In the resolution of this drama Jane experiences reuniting with her voice in a very concrete way. This frees up her spontaneity.

Giving the Legs a Voice

In this example group members are directed to identify where they might be holding tension or feeling pain in their body. Lesley feels tension in her head, neck and shoulders and her legs feel achey and weak. She chooses auxiliaries to enact each of these bodily experiences and interact with her. In the role of her legs she says *“I'm ready to run in case something bad happens!”* She reveals that her father used to hit her when she was little. She remembers pleading with him not to do it. When this is enacted and mirrored Lesley is outraged and confronts her father saying, *“Why did you hit me? This is no way to treat a little girl!”* He becomes remorseful asking for her forgiveness. She softens towards him and father and daughter embrace lovingly. She then turns to her child self telling her she will protect her and she will never let anyone hurt her again. There is an emotional release as the child cries and grieves.

Discussion

Our bodies speak to us in many ways. As a producer of a drama I am alert to body clues. I tune into the protagonist's experience and notice the smallest movement or flicker of facial expression. Maximising, mirroring and concretising give more consciousness. Conflicts are brought to light. Through experience I am developing the capacity to recognise and work with increasingly subtle body messages.

Lesley becomes more conscious of what her body is revealing. When she becomes her legs, memories of being hit as a child emerge. I have noticed that bodily symptoms experienced in psychodrama often arise from an original

social atom experience. When traumatic experiences occur often the pain is not released. *“The symptoms of trauma are the result of a highly activated incomplete biological response to threat, frozen in time. By enabling this frozen response to thaw, then complete itself, trauma can be healed”* (Kellerman, 2000). As a child her impulse to run away was prevented so that she somatised the experience. Her body stores the fear and the memory of the urge to run although this memory has not been accessible to her cognition. By giving her legs a voice through the use of surplus reality she can release the feelings that have been frozen inside her. Catharsis is an intense body/mind/emotion event. It breaks up body armouring and allows us to experience our bodies in ways that are more appropriate to the present circumstances. Lesley warms up in a different way once she has expressed her anger and her grief to her father. She is no longer a powerless child and confronts her father with the outrage she has had locked in her body. Because of work she has done previously on her relationship with her father she can reverse roles with her father and then forgive him. The enactment has helped her to integrate the painful experience of her father's hitting her and process it cognitively. There is a recovery of spontaneity and a new ending of empowerment to replace powerlessness and fear. She has a new relationship with herself. Surplus reality has assisted to repair the hurt from her childhood.

The Spirit of Arthritis

Jenny has arthritis. She says: *“it's time to let go.”* In an individual session she chooses a tight screwed up ball to be herself suffering from arthritis. She has a vision of herself free of arthritis and chooses a cat to symbolise this. She picks a driftwood stick with a vine wrapped round it to be the spirit of arthritis. It is harsh and demanding. In role reversal she suddenly sweeps everything off the stage shouting: *“I don't need you anymore. I don't want you as a crutch”*. She looks at the spirit of arthritis, laughs and says: *“You look like Aesculapius's staff, the symbol of healing.³ I want your healing. You've given me a lot, but I don't need the crutch anymore.”* She concretises the gains from arthritis such as: slowing down and paying attention, receiving care from others, freedom

³ Aesculapius is known as the father of physicians. The son of Apollo, he was a demigod known for his skill in curing sickness. His staff has a serpent twisted round it as a symbol that he was powerful over evil – the serpent being the symbol for evil in Greek mythology.

from mundane tasks and permission to stay at home. A week after the session she phones to say that her blood test shows that the acute arthritis is in remission.

Discussion

In this case, Jenny carries the conflict in her body as arthritis. Through concretisation she gains insights into the nature of the illness. The pain she experiences forces her to take it easy. This is the “gift” of arthritis. However she does not want the pain of arthritis. We could hypothesise that the ***harsh task-master*** displayed initially as the Spirit of Arthritis originated in her original social atom – the result being that in her current life she is not able to slow down unless forced to by pain. Social atom repair can be achieved by working with current life experience and developing progressive roles in the here and now. In the enactment the spirit of arthritis is transformed. There is no more conflict. Jenny develops her capacity to pay attention to her pain and care for herself in appropriate ways. She is becoming self-determining and doing what is right for her not what she “should”. Surplus reality allows Jenny to individuate and be in touch with her motivations and desires in the present.

In summary, using surplus reality to enact what is in the body deepens the person's warm-up and facilitates greater consciousness. It enables full expression and brings about greater vitality and creativity. By focusing on the physical, the action component of a role is given primacy which allows the feelings to emerge and the mind to be less dominant. Experiencing the world through our bodies and entering the realm of the emotional, metaphorical and sensory core of our being opens us to a wider range of possibilities. A richer, more expansive life is the outcome.

The final case study, Murdering Mother, demonstrates that using surplus reality to express rage within the boundaries of the stage provides an outlet that prevents the danger of acting out in the world and frees up the underlying feelings of grief and longing in a catharsis of integration.

3.3 Murdering Mother

In this section I present a case that shows that surplus reality can assist a person to release and integrate violent feelings frozen in time. When someone has felt powerless and had control taken away in infancy, her survival is achieved by shutting down her feelings and/or turning them in on herself. The experience of expressing these held back feelings and enacting them in the original relationship gives a sense of mastery and of taking back control. Surplus reality enactment enables the safe release of powerful feelings within the boundaries of the psychodrama stage and prevents the danger of acting out in the world.

Sue is in her forties. She has been variously diagnosed by mental health services with depression, anxiety, social phobia and border-line personality. At our first meeting she spoke in a lifeless monotone telling me that she is in this world to be punished, and that everyone leaves her. Up until recently her life has been chaotic, characterised by abuse, rejection, drinking and other self destructive behaviour. She has felt powerless and blamed others. Initially in therapy she was convinced that I would reject her and at times did things to test me. Gradually her trust has developed and a firm relationship with me has been established. She has benefited from the doubling and mirroring she has received.

Sue's birth was unplanned and she learned as a child that she was not wanted. Her childhood was punctuated with frequent physical and verbal abuse from her parents. She was told she was a difficult child, constantly criticised and informed that she had a mental illness. She ran away many times. As a teenager she was gang raped which resulted in her first child. Later she was terrorised by her gang member partner and gave birth to her second son, now aged sixteen. He has recently returned to live with Sue after being in foster care for much of his life.

Sue is very angry but her anger has been turned inwards in depression and self-harming behaviour. She has experienced very little nurturing in her life. Her Nana was the one person who did love her and as a child she spent as much time as she could with her. They shared a love of animals. Sue is still hoping for her mother's love.

At the first workshop Sue attends she wants to leave. This has been her habitual way of dealing with frightening situations: to run and hide; both in actual reality and psychologically by dissociating. Doubling assists her to stay.

In a subsequent workshop the warm-up involves women in pairs taking turns to be the best grandmother and loved grandchild. In these groups many of the participants come from a background of abuse and abandonment which manifests in a damaged relationship with the self. This surplus reality exercise gives the women a new experience of nurturing and being loved. Sue warms up to her relationship with her dead Nana. She states clearly that she wants to do a drama. This is a new role for her to take the initiative like this.

The drama

Sue sets out a scene from 10 – 15 years ago. She is in the hospital room with her Nana who has had a bad fall and is critically ill. Sue is desolate to see her Nana so sick and cries telling her she loves her, something she was not able to do at the time. Her parents decide to continue with their holiday plans despite Nana's illness. Upon hearing this Sue becomes very angry. Her mother minimises the seriousness of Nana's condition and implies that it is Sue's mental illness that is distressing her. Sue is directed to maximise the anger she feels. This is the first time she has confronted her parents. The following dialogue takes place:

Sue: *"I'm disgusted. This is your mother. She's really sick."*

Mother: *"She'll be all right. Stop making a fuss. You're just upset because of your mental illness."*

Sue: *"I hate you. You never wanted me. You always rejected me. And you're doing it to Nana. She's your mother!"*

(Turning to the Director): *"I want to kill her!"*

Director: *"This is psychodrama. Anything can be enacted here. How do you want to kill her?"*

Sue: *"I want to hit her with the shovel and then bury her!"*

A new scene is enacted. Props are organised to assist her. She warms up quickly and has a catharsis of rage as she hits cushions held in front of the

auxiliary playing her mother. She shouts at her mother: *"It's not me who's mentally ill, it's you!"* She yells and screams and continues to hit her mother until she is spent. She enlists the help of group members to help her bury the body.

After this enactment Sue is enlivened. She turns to her Nana and tells her how much she misses her. She weeps as she expresses her grief. Nana embraces her saying: *"I love you. It wasn't your fault that your parents rejected you."* In her own role Sue tentatively receives this new knowledge and then warms up further, crying with relief as she experiences in word and action her Nana's love and acceptance .

Discussion

Sue warms up to a range of expression in response to the lack of doubling and the negative mirroring she received in her life. Under conditions of childhood abuse fragmentation becomes the central organising principle of personality. Fragmentation occurs when there has not been enough doubling by significant adults for the child to integrate a sense of self-worth. She tries to make sense of her world and to survive in it by developing coping ways of being. The aim of these coping behaviours is to keep the child from the pain of her overwhelming feelings. In Sue's case she copes by withdrawing, freezing, running away – if not literally then psychologically by dissociating (going away) or by going against with blaming, judging herself and others and self-harming behaviour. She has internalised the harsh critical rejection she experienced in her original social atom and continues to reenact this in her life over and over again. These elements of Sue's being suggest a central fragmenting gestalt (Reekie, 2007) of **despairing self-annihilator** that encapsulates the complexity of her experience before she begins psychodrama. At the same time her willingness to start counselling and attend psychodrama groups alert us to her embryonic impulse towards health.

In the first workshop Sue is terrified and wants to leave. Being doubled enables her to stay despite her fear. By letting the group know her experience and feeling accepted and supported she warms up in new ways. People who have a very fragmented role system require extensive doubling so that trust, self-worth and self-acceptance is built (7.3, 7.4).

In psychodrama surplus reality may be used to enact a fantasy that has not been, and cannot be acted out in actual reality. In the drama Sue expresses her rage and enacts the fantasy of killing and burying her mother. Rage and anger often overlay feelings of loss and dependency and the need for love and acknowledgment. The anger is more accessible than the vulnerability. Therefore the layer of anger must be experienced before the layer of love, grief or need can be seen. The catharsis of rage expressed allows the catharsis of longing to be experienced. With maximisation and coaching Sue expresses the anger outwardly towards her mother that she has previously turned inwards. Her warm-up deepens and frees her up to experience other feelings of grief and longing. Alice Miller (1981; p.83-84) says that it is not the abuse or trauma per se that causes the difficulty in later life, but the inability to express the feelings with a trusted person at the time: *"If this pain could be risked and experienced, there would be no depression, but for that a supportive ("holding") environment would have been necessary at the crucial time"*. Healing comes about through the cathartic expression of feelings and the cognitive insights that accompany this. Trauma often leaves people with a feeling of victimization and powerlessness. The opportunity to release the pent-up emotion is usually very healing. By enacting her fantasy of murdering her mother Sue gains some power and control in the system and moves out of the frozen state of helplessness.

Psychodrama is a physical method. However it is very important that no-one gets hurt and there is no violence. Different techniques are used to assist expressions of rage and anger on stage:

- ◆ Group members hold big cushions for the protagonist to kick, punch or push against.
- ◆ Batons or strips of sheeting with a knot tied at the end are used to smash the floor or a cushion.
- ◆ The protagonist is coached to breathe deeply and bring the sound out from her belly so she does not strain the larynx.
- ◆ Several people hold the protagonist firmly by the legs, arms and shoulders so that she must use all her strength to free herself.

- ♦ The protagonist lies on a mattress on the floor while several people hold her down and she then fights them off.
- ♦ Auxiliaries need to provide enough resistance so that the protagonist fights hard but not so much that she cannot break free.
- ♦ Group members double the protagonist expressing anger to avoid a warm-up to shame.

When Sue tells her mother that she is not mentally ill her warm-up increases. She is like ***Daniel entering the lion's den***. There is the development of the ability to act decisively and the consequent experience of power, dignity and satisfaction. The catharsis of her pent-up hostility in murdering her mother permits her to experience the positive feelings that her rage has blocked. Through the surplus reality enactment she can now express the longing and grief to her dead grandmother that she could not in life. In role reversal as Nana she comforts and reassures. Sue has the experience of giving and receiving love as herself and Nana. As she experiences her deep need for connection as a ***yearning soul*** a new set of progressive roles emerge. These function to soften her, enabling her to deepen her trust. Old fragmenting ways of being are diminishing as more progressive functioning comes to the fore. The fractured relationships in her original social atom are being repaired as she develops a more solid sense of self. The use of surplus reality has brought about an increase in spontaneity and a reduction in anxiety.

Sue was not able to reverse roles with her mother to learn why she was so rejecting. When people have not experienced adequate doubling and mirroring necessary for healthy development in their original social atom, there needs to be significant social atom repair before they can get to the stage of role reversal.

In a drama such as this the integrative phase of sharing is important to assist the protagonist to move from the surplus reality where she is in an “altered state” back to the here and now reality with the group. Sharing is a way to ground and integrate the protagonist as well as a time for group members to de-role and connect up with each other.

Sue has continued to attend psychodrama groups and participates more fully each time. In a drama several months later she playfully directs a herd of horses to create a barrier of manure between her mother and herself. She is developing the ability to be creative and playful, to speak her truth, to be assertive and to set limits. She struggles at times to maintain the growth of progressive roles because of the entrenched nature of the original social atom roles. However, in the groups, in individual therapy, and in her new friendships, she is experiencing acceptance, respect, safety and trust. Her current world is so different from the one in which she grew up. She is receiving the doubling and mirroring that was lacking in her childhood. She is able to grow, explore and discover healthy ways to be in the world. She is in the process of creating a new social atom, one that is supportive and nurturing. She is making new choices for her life, feeling empowered and becoming more independent. She has let go of the fantasy that her mother will change and give her what she needs. She is learning to parent her adolescent son. She has been discharged from mental health services, has paid work and volunteers in an animal shelter. The central organising factor of her developing progressive gestalt is of a woman committed to making a better life for herself, living with love and not fear.

The illustrations in this chapter demonstrate some of the many ways that surplus reality develops spontaneity, brings about social atom repair and enlivens the process of healing and change.

4 Implications

Surplus reality is one of psychodrama's most powerful tools to facilitate the development of spontaneity and functional roles, bring about social atom repair and assist in the formation of a positive identity.

In order to tap the healing power of surplus reality the psychodramatist will have the courage to enter the unknown. A central component of the training is the development of the imagination so that the producer can participate wholeheartedly in the fantasy world of her protagonist. The ability to access and stay alive to roles of *magician*, *spontaneous actor*, *playful companion* and *believer in the creative genius* will enhance the potency of the practitioner. The capacity to act with flair and confidence and to be willing to enter a person's world and co-create the drama will need to be developed. Awareness of the sociodramatic elements of gender, race, class, sexuality and able-bodyism will assist the psychodramatist to use surplus reality to expand a person's experience of these influences.

Imagination, fantasy and playfulness are essential elements of healthy living. Psychodrama utilises and cultivates the imagination and extends the capacity for play. Surplus reality develops the ability in the protagonist to shift back and forth between the reality of the imagination and actual reality. Events that have never happened, cannot ever happen or will never happen, but are experienced in the mind are produced on the stage so they can be explored and expanded. Creative imagination contributes to developing hopefulness, originality, the ability to entertain new ideas and enter into realities other than our own. It leads to purposeful action and spontaneity.

The template for all future relationships is laid down in infancy. When there has been an absence of adequate doubling and mirroring, surplus reality provides new experiences of hope and possibility. While we may not be able to really get exactly what we want, we can gratify these desires to a satisfying degree. Surplus reality can provide the expression and fulfilment of unmet act hungers – enacting the reality that never happened but has been longed for. Healthy, functional, adequate roles of self-support, self-acceptance and assertiveness

experienced in the imagination and enacted through surplus reality are internalised and replace outdated ways of interacting.

Revisiting past events in surplus reality with support and witnesses, expressing the feelings unable to be expressed at the time enables a person to redo the old experience and have a different outcome. Events are staged and words spoken that never happened in reality. Therapeutic change occurs through a corrective emotional experience as feelings are discharged accompanied by cognitive insights. Playing with new ways of being diminishes over-developed coping roles.

Visions for the future can be explored using surplus reality, assisting a person to visualise a different reality from the one currently experienced. In this future projection technique the protagonist is encouraged to imagine not only some reasonably probable attainment but to go further and elaborate that culmination of long effort by imagining the presence of a super-hero or ideal person who makes a speech or presents an award.

Surplus reality makes the unconscious conscious. Producing the sensations in the body and concretising somatised feelings using surplus reality, increases self-awareness. The immediacy of the production of what is being expressed in the body cuts right to the core of the experience.

Scenes can be created in surplus reality in which people play out experiences that involve intense emotions. For most people ordinary living requires a degree of restraint and intense feelings tend to be toned down. Yet humans seek to express themselves fully and yearn to feel deeply and intensely. Psychodrama is a vehicle for dramatising, exaggerating, maximising and enhancing our dreams, struggles and passions. Surplus reality allows all the unexpressed aspects of a person's being. Enacting a fantasy such as murdering mother on the stage allows the release of frozen feelings of rage and the feelings of longing and dependency underneath to be brought to light. It would be counter-productive to act this out in real life, but in the surplus reality realm on the stage, the individual can fully experience her rage and sense of betrayal. The freedom from all ordinary conventions in the surplus reality enactment is one of the unique therapeutic potentials of psychodrama.

Fantasy often involves symbols and metaphor which have an emotionally evocative power. These images serve as channels of inspiration from the creative subconscious. The mythic dimension of life (our heroes, goddesses, spirits, dragons) can be cultivated and given expression in surplus reality without a need for interpretation, giving us a sense of personal mythology.

When a person experiences the transforming power of surplus reality, her spontaneity increases. Warming up to a spontaneous state leads to highly organised patterns of conduct and the individual acts congruently with no conflict between feelings, beliefs and actions. She is less anxious in her interactions with others and she has an adequate response to any given situation. She builds healthy relationships with people thus creating a new, more life-enhancing social atom. New progressive roles that have vitality are developed as the old roles are modified, old warm-ups drop away and the protagonist finds new strength, creativity, and integration. Self-awareness and self-acceptance grow as she consolidates a stronger sense of self.

In summary, surplus reality provides an opportunity to

- ◆ learn to play
- ◆ develop the imagination
- ◆ experience and internalise new progressive roles (role development)
- ◆ have new positive experiences
- ◆ change the outcome of past unsatisfying experiences (social atom repair)
- ◆ express the unexpressed
- ◆ enact a fantasy
- ◆ increase self-awareness
- ◆ enter the realm of metaphor and symbol
- ◆ explore future situations
- ◆ create experiences that complement or remedy the stark realities of the ordinary world

- ♦ add enchantment and celebration to elaborate the beauty and significance in our life and elaborate a sense of personal mythology
- ♦ have a safe place to maximise and express intensity of feeling and desire and expand into the abundance of life

The psychodramatist will be alert to the myriad of opportunities to bring the surplus reality of the system alive. The practitioner will have a well developed creative imagination and the ability to play. By using the dimension of surplus reality, the psychodramatist is modelling a way of being in the world that unleashes a person's power to be spontaneous and assists her to achieve her own creative potential.

As I apply psychodrama in my work I am developing my dramatic artistry and creative imagination. My ability to work with and play in the unknown is increasing. The more I use surplus reality the more I appreciate its magic and potential to transform and expand the human spirit.

5 Conclusion

Applying our imagination to our own world enlarges our experience of the world. The magic of surplus reality is in going beyond that which is prosaic and mundane and daring to fully live out our fantasies and imaginings on the psychodramatic stage. Psychodrama and its use of surplus reality addresses the deep hunger to feel and struggle and expand into the abundance of life, and explore our creative potential.

Moreno's concept of surplus reality, underpinned by his theories of spontaneity, creativity, personality and role, provides a foundational framework for conducting social atom repair and expanding the possibilities of a person's life.

This paper considers some applications of surplus reality when working with groups of women. The use of surplus reality assists in social atom repair as old warm-ups drop away and spontaneity and creativity increase. The role repertoire is expanded with the incorporation of new progressive roles resulting in more integrated functioning. As the women experience their own creative genius, their ability to love and accept themselves is strengthened, their capacity to give and receive love is expanded and their enjoyment of life is increased. They develop new ways of being in the world and positive identities.

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7 Appendices

7.1: Moreno's Personality Theory

In Moreno's personality theory, the culture and systems of the original social atom/family of origin are primary in the development of the personality. Moreno (1934; p.24-42) defined the social atom as the nucleus of relations around every individual and stated that it is the smallest social structure in a community. The original social atom consists of the family ⁴ into which a person is born and the other important people in the formative years of her life. The cultural atom is the pattern of roles and role relationships that develops around an individual in response to other elements of the social atom. Moreno created a new science, which he called sociometry, to measure the nature of relationships within a group. He considered sociometry to be the foundation of psychodrama. He used the term tele to describe the process of the flow of feeling between people.

Role theory was developed by Moreno as a means to conceptualise and understand personality and relationships. He stated that every individual is characterised by a certain range of roles that dominates behaviour. The roles were learned in the original social atom and are repeated as similar situations are confronted in life. The values and beliefs of the particular culture in which the person grows are also internalised as part of the role system. A role is the functioning form the individual assumes in the specific moment she responds to external events involving other people or objects (Moreno,1946; p. II-VI). It consists of thinking, feeling, and action components. All three must be present and congruent for a role to be adequately enacted.

Moreno (1946; p. IV–V & p.73–77) described three types of roles that emerge at different stages of personality development: psychosomatic roles, psychodramatic roles and social roles. Building on Moreno's work, Dr Max Clayton (1992; p.59) has classified roles into three categories: fragmenting, coping, and progressive. Role theory and role analysis is a continually evolving

⁴ A family may consist of mother, father, and siblings. In Maori culture the whanau or extended family is significant. Increasingly families are being defined in a more expansive way as different combinations of adults and children live together. (eg. Step-parents, gay/lesbian parents.) The social atom includes dead or absent people as well as animals.

area of psychodrama. Don Reekie (2007) presents the idea of a central organising gestalt that encapsulates the unique particularity of an individual's functioning in any context.

Role theory highlights the systemic nature of personality functioning. Moreno (1934; p.47 & 1946; p. II) says that roles do not emerge from the self, but the self emerges from the roles. The self is a system of interacting roles of different kinds that are dynamic and open to reorganisation.

7.2: Spontaneity and Creativity

Central to Moreno's theory of personality are the concepts of spontaneity and creativity. In the Doctrine of Spontaneity-Creativity (1934; p.13-14) he says that the universe is infinite creativity, but that creativity without spontaneity becomes lifeless, and spontaneity without creativity is empty. Creativity is the arch substance, the "what", and spontaneity is the arch catalyzer, the "how". He describes the Canon of Creativity which shows the relationship between the warming up process and spontaneity that enables creativity to emerge. The end product of this process he calls the cultural conserve. Spontaneity, or the "S" factor, functions only in the moment of its emergence, in the here and now of the present. It cannot be conserved or stored. It propels the individual towards an adequate response to a new situation or a new response to an old situation. Spontaneity is the urge towards creation, growth, expression and health; a readiness to engage in whatever life presents, and to respond as required. It involves flexibility, originality, creativity, newness, vitality and appropriateness. Moreno (1934; p.14) says that *"a great deal of Man's psycho- and socio-pathology can be ascribed to the insufficient development of spontaneity"*. A lack of spontaneity generates anxiety and conversely, as spontaneity increases, anxiety diminishes. Spontaneity can be trained.

Moreno (1946; p.51) proposes that the capacity for spontaneity is a combination of hereditary and relationship factors. The original spontaneous act is the moment of birth when the baby leaves the mother's womb and responds to the new situation of adapting to the outside world. Birth provides the prototype for all subsequent learning situations. It is *"the soil out of which later the spontaneous, creative matrix of personality grows"*.

7.3: Moreno's Theory of Child Development

The first stage of personality development where there is no differentiation between the baby and her surroundings is the universal matrix of identity. Mother and all objects are experienced as extensions of the infant's own being. Moreno (1946; p.59) sees the mother-child relationship from the beginning as a two-way relationship which involves co-operative action rather than individual behaviour patterns separated from each other. This is tele at work. The “good-enough” mother or caregiver is in the role of double: she enters the baby’s world, senses what she is feeling and gives voice to her experience. If the baby cries, mother's face shows concern and she puts words to what she thinks the baby is communicating, at the same time attending to her by feeding or changing nappies etc. The baby learns that her needs will be met and has an experience of being understood and accepted. A good foundation will be laid for the child to trust the world. This is where self esteem is built. Security, belonging and self-acceptance grow through doubling and a sense of self begins to develop.

If, however, the mother or caregiver does not meet the baby's needs or is not emotionally present, the infant will not learn to trust her own experience and her developing sense of self will be negatively affected. The quality of the doubling in this first universe has long lasting effects on the infant's development. Good doubling establishes a sense of a world that is stable, trustworthy and responsive for the child. It is the period in which the emotional foundations of learning are being built. Moreno (1952; p.243-273) says:

“This first relationship that we have, to that other which is part of you, is the most intimate, the most exclusive and the most sensitive relationship to which we belong. According to the treatment the infant receives, expectations of mother and others are established and lay the ground for future role exchanges between the infant and significant others”.

As the child matures she becomes less dependent on the mother as double. She emerges gradually out of this state of all-identity into a state of differentiated identity, and she increasingly becomes aware of herself as separate from other individuals and objects. This is the stage of the mirror

when she discovers her boundaries and sees herself reflected in the other. Moreno (1952; p.243-273) describes the infant's encounter with an actual mirror as an important turning point in her concept of self. The child recognises the stranger aspects of herself and integrates these into her growing sense of identity and individuality. If the adults around her reflect and repeat the child's actions and acknowledge the child's efforts and initiatives, she will develop autonomy and independence. This is the beginning of self-awareness. If there is not adequate mirroring the child does not gain self-awareness and will develop self-doubt instead of independence.

In Moreno's final stage of child development, role reversal, the child learns to give up her self-interest and become the other. By copying others and playing at different roles by herself and with peers, the child learns to recognize the other, stand in the other's shoes and appreciate the world through her eyes. She learns the consequences of her actions.

Optimum healthy development occurs when the tasks of each stage are successfully completed. Each stage therefore provides a foundation for the next. If the mother has been unable to attune to her infant consistently and the baby receives very little doubling, this creates difficulties for learning through mirroring. If there has been inadequate doubling and mirroring in a person's development, there will be difficulties, or even impossibility, in reversing roles with another person.

Other well known theories of personality support Moreno's assertions about the stages of child development. Erik Erikson (1950) identified eight stages or tasks of human development from birth to death. The first four covering childhood are trust vs mistrust; autonomy vs shame and doubt; initiative vs guilt; industry vs inferiority. Attachment Theory is based on the belief that the mother-child bond is the essential and primary force in infant development. It forms the basis of coping, negotiation of relationships and personality development (Bowlby, 1988). Observing young children's interactions with their primary care-giver, developmental psychologist Mary Ainsworth (1978) identified four principal patterns of attachment: secure attachment; insecure/ambivalent attachment (anxious resistant); insecure/avoidant attachment (anxious avoidant); and

disorganized attachment (O'Rourke, 2005). The pattern of attachment experienced in childhood determines the mental health of the adult (Bowlby, 1988; Porter, 2003; Lyons-Ruth, 2006; Lewis et al, 2000).

7.4: Psychodramatic Techniques

Moreno (1952; p.243–273) developed three techniques in psychodrama that are specifically related to the stages in the development of the infant (Appendix 7.3): the double technique, the mirror technique and the role reversal technique.

Doubling

The stage of the double is the stage of identity and self-esteem. If a person is having great difficulty in accepting herself and is facing the areas of self esteem and trust, then the double is an effective intervention. The double in psychodrama stands closely beside the protagonist, taking on her posture and physical movements in order to attune herself to her. The double enters the protagonist's world and expresses thoughts and feelings that she is unable to express. However, it is more than empathy, which is a one way flow of feeling - this is a two way flow of feeling, ie. tele. The task of the double is to increase the warm-up of the protagonist to herself. It makes possible a knowing of the self that would be too difficult or frightening to acquire on her own (Turner, 2002). It assists the person to recognise, accept and trust her own experience and enhances her ability to accept herself.

To have the capacity to be a double for another requires one to grow beyond the stage of the double and mirror to be able to role reverse. The double acts as support, enabler and interpreter and requires a high level of sensitivity and respect. It is an act of love.

Mirroring

The stage of the mirror is the stage of recognition of the self. The mirror technique involves the protagonist's role being taken by another member of the group, or several others sequentially, so that she can view herself from outside the action space as if in a mirror. This “instant replay” allows a more objective view of the scene. The director may stand alongside the protagonist as a witness looking out at her world with her. The purpose of mirroring is to

increase awareness both of the self and the system in which she is embedded and to enlarge her experience of self. This expansion of consciousness enables a person to warm up to something new. Through the use of mirroring a person becomes conscious of the many adequate aspects of her functioning as well as those aspects that require further development. Mirroring minute physical responses assists the development of emerging progressive functioning. Clayton (1991) observes that any behaviour by other people that enhances a person's awareness of her physical body, impulses, emotions and feeling will further that individual's autonomous development. There is an encounter with the self that may involve noting a discrepancy between intention and action as she gets to see herself as others see her. Spontaneity is heightened, the protagonist is provoked into action and new roles emerge.

The use of psychodrama techniques of doubling and mirroring in a group or in individual therapy can build up self acceptance and self awareness. Old warm-ups will drop away into the background of a person's functioning as new roles develop and strengthen, and progressive functioning comes to the fore. The lack of adequate doubling and mirroring in the person's original social atom can be repaired.

Role Reversal

The stage of role reversal is the stage of recognition of the other. Role reversal occurs in psychodrama when the protagonist takes on the role of “the other” in her drama and an auxiliary plays the protagonist. At the start of a psychodrama a director will often have the protagonist reverse roles with all the people on the stage to experience the system from different points of view. In the course of this, the director warms her up to the roles of the significant others by interviewing for role and through the production of interaction. By having the protagonist experience herself and the rest of the world through the eyes of the others, she develops a larger perspective on the self and greater flexibility. This mirroring leads to greater self awareness. By standing in the other's shoes she gains greater consciousness of the values of the other people and warms up to different role systems than the one she enacts as herself. This broadens her role repertoire and over time results in the integration of new behaviour into her life.

Role reversal allows insight into what might be motivating another person. This can increase the person's empathy for others when she experiences them from the inside, subjectively, rather than just seeing their outward behaviour. Through role reversal the protagonist can become aware of the interpretations and projections she places on other people, thereby providing a way to correct perceptions and go beyond them.

Concretisation

Concretisation is the surplus reality tool that makes the protagonist's private world real, concrete and tangible by having both actual reality and surplus reality externalised and displayed in a three dimensional form on the stage. The psychodramatist says: *“don't tell me, show me”*. Concretisation allows the protagonist to experience physically what has been experienced psychologically. It requires the suspension of the usual ways of seeing and the entering into the imagination to act “as if” this really were the thing represented. The function of concretisation is to facilitate warm-up and the emergence of roles.

Other Techniques

The other psychodramatic production techniques of scene setting, interview for role, maximisation, modelling, coaching, aside and soliloquy all assist in expanding and opening out a person's inner experience and bringing out the surplus reality elements in the system.

7.5: Applications of Psychodrama

Psychodrama is applied in many ways to develop spontaneity and achieve social atom repair:

Classical Psychodrama

In this approach, psychodramatic enactment is used to face and resolve developmental issues by reenacting painful or frightening scenes from childhood in a controlled group setting with witnesses and support. The cathartic release of frozen feelings and the accompanying cognitive insights, result in a new map of the world being created: the psychodramatic enactment ensures that the psychodramatic child is properly brought up (Sherrard, 1983). An effective role of self-parenting can be developed to support and nurture the

internal “child” roles so that old ways of functioning can be examined and new roles and perceptions can be developed. Using surplus reality to give a person what they did not have in life itself, eg. an experience of the good mother or father, brings about social atom repair.

While Moreno himself favoured a “horizontal” social-systems approach to psychodrama, Zerka Moreno, his wife and co-creator, favours this “vertical” approach that concentrates on a primal past experience (Fox, 1987; Williams, 1989; p11).

Psychodrama in the “Here and Now”

In comparison to classical psychodrama, social atom repair is also achieved by addressing current difficulties in the here and now. The enactment of a scene or a theme and the move into surplus reality throws the protagonist into a different state that cuts across old habits. The person re-experiences the old conflict and develops a different warm-up and a new ending. She experiences both a catharsis of abreaction where feelings are discharged, followed by a catharsis of integration bringing new awareness and insight. Because the dysfunctional roles will have been enacted many times over the person's lifetime, the new roles will also have to be enacted many times to gradually create new pathways in the brain.

Role Training

Role training is a more focused way of achieving social atom repair by concentrating on one specific role (or an aspect of a role) in a particular situation where difficulties are experienced. It is the application of the principles of role theory and of psychodrama techniques to specific, limited aspects of human functioning so that goals for work or one's personal life are achieved more adequately (Clayton, 1992). By working with a person to modify one aspect of her functioning by training a new role or strengthening a progressive role, social atom repair is effected in the here and now.

Sociodrama

Sociodrama addresses the wider social and cultural issues facing a group. It uses spontaneous drama to examine the nature of the values and interactions between various groups in society. It gives group members the opportunity to

improvise, enacting a wide range of roles of people who are unlike oneself. By exploring the value systems of a range of sub-groups, people become aware of a wider range of role systems. Everyone's spontaneity is increased by being involved.

Surplus Reality

Entering into the realms of fantasy and dreams through surplus reality enactment enables a person to experience things that are not possible in real life. Involvement with the auxiliaries in a world of the imagination warms a person up to playing and exploring. These roles become integrated into the person's life, expanding her role repertoire and assisting in social atom repair.

Group Experience

The experience of being in a group, where a person has different experiences to those had in her original family, produces social atom repair. The accepting presence of the group leader and group members enables her to generate a new idea about the external world. There is a discrepancy between what she experienced previously with family members and what she experiences now in this group so she can stop relating to the old experiences. There can be a reality check to stop the fantasy about what others are thinking or doing as she changes her sociometry. As the sense of isolation is broken down, she feels more hope and knows that there are more resources available (Clayton, 2004). The sharing or integrative phase of a psychodrama has the effect of reducing isolation as the protagonist experiences the responses and respect of others. Group members in turn re-examine their sociometric links with each other.

Spontaneity Training

Spontaneity training assists a person to become a spontaneous actor and respond in the here and now. Learning to play through games and spontaneity training exercises frees a person up in other areas of their lives. Moreno first became interested in psychology by observing and joining in children's play in the gardens of Vienna, Austria. He was impressed by the great amount of spontaneity in children and became aware that human beings become less spontaneous as they age. It is from these observations that he developed his Theory of Spontaneity and Creativity.

The Play of Life

Developed by Carlos Raimundo (2002), the Play of Life derives from psychodrama and the work of Argentinian Dr Jaime G. Rojas-Bermudez. This method allows a person to transform intangible feelings and subjective information into visible three-dimensional representations using small play figures on a small stage. Raimundo states that using the Play of Life or other experiential and ludic methods (such as psychodrama enactment) enables the mind to develop healthier and more appropriate reparatory mechanisms (ie. new brain wiring) to compensate incomplete or damaged structures. Psychodrama and other action/experiential methods stimulate the limbic system rather than just restricting communication to the neo-cortex.

Therapeutic Spiral Model

The Therapeutic Spiral Model was developed to assist in social atom repair with trauma survivors. Kate Hudgins (2002) says that *“any person who has experienced trauma knows the need for developmental repair. Psychodrama uses the concept of surplus reality to enact scenes of restoration and repair for trauma survivors. Ego strength and containment are increased, expression of feelings is enabled, and new healthy self care behaviours are learned”* The containing double is a central aspect of this model.

7.6: Workshop Flyer

WEEKEND PSYCHODRAMA GROUP FOR WOMEN

conducted by Ali Watersong

August 31st – September 2nd 2007

About the Group

In this workshop you will have the opportunity to gain deeper self-awareness, develop an increased ability to act spontaneously and learn to express yourself more effectively in the here-and-now. Psychodrama, sociometry, sociodrama and role training will be used to explore issues of self-esteem, assertiveness, relationships, grief, illness etc.. You will find new ways of being that enhance your sense of self-worth and appreciation. This group is suitable for you if you have a desire to improve your relationship with yourself and with others; to enrich your spirit; and to live your life with more creativity and imagination.

No previous group experience is necessary.

About the Group Leader

Ali Watersong is an experienced counsellor, group leader and advanced trainee who is approaching assessment as a psychodramatist. She has led numerous groups using the psychodrama method over the years. She is an associate member of ANZPA.

Venue: **Risingholme Community Centre
22 Cholmondeley Ave., Opawa.**

Times: Friday evening: 6.30pm – 9.30pm.
Saturday: 10.00am - 6.30pm;
Sunday: 10.00am – 5.00pm.

Cost: Unwaged/Low income \$90.00
Waged \$170.00

Applications: **A deposit of \$20.00 (non-refundable after August 24th) will secure a place.**
Register early as participant numbers are limited to a maximum of 12.

Send your deposit with your name, address, and phone number to:
Ali Watersong, 13 Brenchley Road, Lyttelton.

For more information- phone Ali: 328 7105

email: watersong@paradise.net.nz

