

FROM ONE-TO-ONE PSYCHODRAMA TO LARGE GROUP SOCIO-PSYCHODRAMA

More writings from the arena of Brazilian psychodrama

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Zoli Figusch

INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to present the readers with this second volume of Brazilian psychodrama writings translated and edited into English. The first volume (*Sambadrama - The Arena of Brazilian Psychodrama*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2005) covered the history of the Brazilian psychodrama movement with a focus on its specific cultural identity, and Brazilian innovations and developments of the psychodrama theory, technique and practice.

However, due to its physical limitations, this first volume could only present a small fraction of this rich and fascinating psychodrama culture and its voluminous literature. Already while editing it I felt somewhat restricted by the limited number of chapters I could fit into a single book, as there were numerous other exciting and interesting writings that I would have liked to translate and make available to the international psychodrama community. The idea of a possible second anthology was born already at that time.

My objective with this new volume is to further widen the picture of the Brazilian psychodrama culture, to introduce a number of new Brazilian psychodrama practitioners whose writings are still only available in Portuguese, and to present other, equally interesting and exciting areas of the Brazilian psychodrama. The selected chapters, written by experienced and leading Brazilian psychodramatists, are structured around two central subjects: one-to-one psychodrama psychotherapy and large group socio-psychodrama, with detailed introductions to both thematic parts.

The first part presents papers regarding the theory and practice of one-to-one psychodrama, that is, psychodrama psychotherapy with an individual client and without auxiliary egos. While psychodrama is most commonly applied in group settings, in Brazil it is also widely used in the therapeutic dyad (the 'smallest possible group'), this format calling for modifications of the psychodramatic procedure and having significant consequences to the role of the therapist and the therapeutic relationship itself. Our Brazilian colleagues working in the one-to-one setting have further developed both the theory and technique of this particular working modality, and I believe that the writings introducing these developments will also appeal to practitioners in the UK, where so far there has been very little published about this particular modality of the psychodrama work.

If we think about the setting of one-to-one psychodrama as the smallest possible group, the second part of the book focuses on its polar opposite: the socio-psychodramatic work with large groups and public events gathering great numbers of participants. Although very closely related to the actual origins of the psychodrama method, working with large groups is a modality that in the UK is

more commonly applied and written about in terms of sociodrama practice. In the UK there is also a more rigid delineation between psychodrama (seen as the therapeutic application of Moreno's action method for the benefit of the individual) and sociodrama (the use of the same method with a wider social objective - the therapy of the 'socius'), while in Brazil there seems to be a more natural interchange and flow between these areas, this resulting in an approach that is more faithful to Moreno's original socioeconomic proposal. The chapters included in this second part aim to give a flavour of the fascinating and colourful experiences Brazilian practitioners have developed while working with large groups.

Although the number of anthologies drawing from a wider pool of international authors has recently somewhat increased, our psychotherapy literature is still mainly Euro-centric and USA dominated this meaning that significant material from developing countries is only rarely available. This book is the second in a series that bring the cutting edge and innovations of the Brazilian psychodrama practice into the English language, and I hope that the writings included here will be of interest for the English speaking readers. I also see this book as another building block in the bridge of international communications and networking between the psychodrama cultures of the Northern and Southern hemispheres.

And finally, something about the reasons of electronic publishing. While at the time of editing 'Sambadrama' I surprisingly easily found a publisher interested in that book, what surprised me this second time round was the much more reluctant, cautious and apprehensive reception of my proposal by the publishing houses. I am not quite sure why this is, but it seems to have become increasingly difficult to publish psychotherapy in general and more specifically, psychodrama.

On the other hand, with the ever-growing outreach and influence of the Internet, today it is much simpler to publish electronically or to use Internet publishers, maybe due to the fact that these forms of publishing are less costly and therefore pose less of a financial risk. I also see this as a creative way of making available valuable material that otherwise may just get forgotten somewhere on a dusty shelf on the pages of declined book proposals. Hence my decision to still go ahead and self-publish these papers, which I believe are well worthy to be shared with the English speaking international psychodrama community. I can only hope that the readers will agree with me after having read the book.

Enjoy!

I would welcome any comments, questions and feedback regarding the book and those wishing to contact me about any aspect of this material can do so be email: figusch@hotmail.com

Zoli Figusch
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Introduction to Part 1

The theory and practice of one-to-one psychodrama psychotherapy

Although traditionally introduced and most commonly applied as a form of group psychotherapy, in our contemporary practice psychodrama is also widely used with individuals in a one-to-one setting. No one really knows who invented or introduced this working modality, but there is a sense of it always having been around.

Moreno himself seemed to be against the use of psychodrama in a one-to-one setting, as he saw this working modality as something divergent from his original proposal, and more closely related to psychoanalysis, which we all know he vehemently opposed. In his writings he continuously stressed the importance of the presence of auxiliary egos and other group members:

The process [psychodrama] requires a director (or chief therapist) and at least one trained auxiliary ego (though the director may be forced to act also as an auxiliary ego where no one is available). Maximum learning is achieved whenever such trained assistant-therapist-actors are used. [...] Where it is applied as a method of group treatment, other patients in the group may very well serve as auxiliary egos for one another. In this fashion even *individual-centred* [the editor's italics] sessions involve in action other members of the group, who, in turn, derive therapeutic benefit from this auxiliary ego function.¹

Moreno did not dedicate much attention to one-to-one psychodrama, and did not consider it to be an important therapeutic modality, as he saw it as an example of counter-spontaneity, due to the director's inability to include others into his work. In fact, he rarely mentioned this technical possibility, and even when he did, it was in a somewhat pejorative manner:

The psychodrama à deux, a parallel to the psychoanalytic situation on the couch, has been tried from time to time, but it is interesting to point out that the psychodramatist in private practice frequently prefers to employ his nurse as an auxiliary ego to maintain his own identity as director unimpaired.²

¹ Moreno, J.L. (1969) Psychodrama Volume 3 - Action Therapy and Principles of Practice, New York: Beacon House, p.233.

² Moreno, J.L. (1975) Psychodrama Volume 2 - Foundations of Psychotherapy. New York: Beacon House, p.232.

Despite of this statement, in one his later writings Moreno also wrote that 'It should be borne in mind that psychodrama may be applied as a method of individual treatment - one patient with one director and auxiliary ego, or one patient and the director'³, and it is known that he did carry out some individual-centred work at least on two occasions: in the Rath case⁴ (a protocol in which Moreno describes his one-to-one psychodrama work with a client, choosing this working modality despite the fact that at the time he had his team of auxiliary egos already established at Beacon; this however, was a one off session with a few follow-up meetings rather than ongoing therapy), and in the psychodrama of Adolf Hitler⁵ (a series of psychodrama sessions centred on one patient [Karl] and involving a team of auxiliaries). Moreno also used to 'incorporate individual sessions into his work with marital couples', often acting as auxiliary ego himself⁶. These clinical experiences however did not seem to have any great impact on his work, as Moreno has never formally dispensed or questioned the function of the auxiliary ego. It may be also interesting to note that most of Moreno's psychodrama work consisted of one-off therapeutic acts and not ongoing processual therapy.

Despite of Moreno's opposition towards and lack of interest for one-to-one psychodrama, this working modality has quietly found its way into the everyday practice of psychodrama therapists around the world. Similarly to many other areas of the Morenian work, Brazilian psychodramatists have again greatly and creatively contributed to the development of one-to-one psychodrama. I her own book entitled 'Bipersonal Psychodrama' Cukier, a Brazilian psychodramatist wrote:

...the psychodrama performed today is not the same as that taught by Moreno [...] Psychodrama has changed and evolved, especially in Brazil. We do not have to be bound to Moreno's assertions and turn these into theoretical conserves. [...] We can pay homage to Moreno not only when we make it explicitly clear what he taught, but also when we make use of our spontaneity to create from what he left us.⁷

Similarly to Cukier, numerous other Brazilian psychodrama practitioners, many of them actually coming from a psychoanalytic background, have broken away from these conserves and started to experiment with and apply

³ Moreno, J.L. (1969) Psychodrama Volume 3 - Action Therapy and Principles of Practice, New York: Beacon House, p.233.

⁴ Moreno, J.L. (1974) Psicoterapia de grupo e psicodrama (Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama). São Paulo: Mestre Jou, p.283. See also: Navarro, M.P. et.al. (1981) 'A propósito do psicodrama bipessoal' (The proposal of one-to-one psychodrama). Revista FEBRAP, 4,1, pp.35-38.

⁵ Moreno, J.L. (1975) Psychodrama Volume Two – Foundations of Psychotherapy. New York: Beacon House, pp.191-200.

⁶ Stein, M.S. and Callahan, M.L. (1982) The use of psychodrama in individual psychotherapy. JGPPS, p.120.

⁷ Cukier, R. (2007) Bipersonal Psychodrama – Its Techniques, Therapists and Clients. www.lulu.com p.7.

psychodrama within the one-to-one setting. Their efforts, beyond generating valuable contributions to both the theory and practice of this working modality, have also resulted in some confusion of the terminology and jargon used in relation to one-to-one psychodrama.

In a paper concerning this issue Perazzo⁸ explores the polymorph terminology used within the Brazilian literature to describe psychodrama work with an individual. Among the many are: 'individual bi-personal psychodrama psychotherapy' (one patient and one therapist), 'individual pluri-personal psychodrama psychotherapy' (one patient and more therapists), 'group psychodramatic psychotherapy focused on one protagonist' (working with an individual within a group with one or more therapists), 'psychodrama à deux' (a term also used by Moreno himself) 'relationship psychotherapy', 'the theatre of two' or the most commonly used term 'bi-personal psychodrama'. I will not explore these in more detail here, as I think this would take me beyond the remit of this brief introduction.

However, in order not to confuse the reader, in the translations of the chapters included in this first part of the book I will consistently use the term 'one-to-one psychodrama psychotherapy' or simply 'one-to-one psychodrama'. Whenever using this term, 'one-to-one psychodrama' will refer to a psychotherapy setting where one therapist works with one client (without auxiliary egos) in an ongoing therapy process (rather than a one off act), using dramatization. Also, in order to maintain gender consistency in the language of the chapters, unless clearly otherwise stated, I will refer to the therapist-director-psychodramatist as he/him, and the patient-client-protagonist as she/her.

The chapters included in this first part of the book will present a theoretical background to one-to-one psychodrama, some of the technical modifications required by this setting and will also explore some of the consequences of these modifications for the role of the therapist and for the therapeutic relationship itself.

The author of the first chapter, Valéria Brito, reflects on the theory and practice of one-to-one psychodrama, trying to find the answers to the following questions: Is one-to-one psychodrama a deviation or an adaptation of the socioeconomic project? What are the criteria for choosing this psychodrama modality? What are the criteria for defining the roles and functions of the therapist and the client in one-to-one psychodrama? What are the technical differences between one-to-one psychodrama, group psychodrama and individual psychodrama with auxiliary egos? Finally, considering the limitations imposed by a group configuration reduced to the minimum, how can the dramatization be made viable?

⁸ Perazzo, S. (1992) O método psicodramático no atendimento bipessoal (The psychodrama method in one-to-one work). Temas, São Paulo, pp.40-45.

Through the use of clinical examples, Dalmiro Bustos, one of the most highly regarded pioneers of one-to-one psychodrama in Brazil, presents his own theoretical and technical contributions to the practice of this working modality. Leading the reader through his work of individual sessions, he presents a variety of starters helping the client connect to their emotions, bodily tensions and/or mental images, aiming to create room for the dramatic elaboration and resolution, while working through ego-defences.

In chapter 3 Rosilda Antonio analyses the impact of the therapeutic relationship and the dramatic action as transforming and healing factors in the one-to-one psychodrama psychotherapy of a patient suffering from depression. She presents her own shift from a medical point of view to the psychodramatic perspective and discusses the impact of this transition on the production of intersubjectivity, which is considered the main supporting factor for the development of the forces that operate within this psychotherapeutic process.

In chapter 4 Arthur Kaufman introduces an alternative approach to one-to-one psychodrama through the use of a therapeutic toolkit, consisting of a collection of toys. He describes his use of toys within the one-to-one work in order to represent facts and feelings that the protagonist may find difficult to talk about or acknowledge, as well as to represent internalized characters, using these representations as starting points for the dramatization. He also points out that, as toys may be perceived as less threatening, their use may reduce the client's needs of applying more regressive defence mechanisms.

Leila Maria Vieira Kim, the author of chapter 5, explores the concepts of tele and transference and the way these observably manifest themselves in one-to-one psychodrama psychotherapy. Within the therapeutic setting she observes, explains and analyzes the objective social inter-relations of the following four active agents: the therapist as a private person, the therapist's social roles, the patient as a private person and the patient's social roles. She argues that for the efficient management of tele and transference within the one-to-one psychodrama psychotherapy process it is necessary to understand the concept of spontaneity and its qualitative evaluation. She further emphasizes that the analysis of tele and transference in relation to the therapist as a private person is essential for the maintenance of a good therapist role.

In chapter 6 José Fonseca presents a comprehensive summary of his one-to-one psychodrama experience denominated by him as 'relationship psychotherapy', a technique developed over a period of nearly thirty years of practice. In the first, theoretically oriented part of this chapter, he presents his own view and contributions to the psychodrama theory, focusing mainly on the relational dimension of man. Using his theoretical formulations as the foundations for practice, he then introduces relationship psychotherapy through the description of techniques as well as their use through clinical examples.

In chapter 7 I will attempt to understand bereavement from the perspective of psychodrama theory, tracing grief reactions and the phases of grief back to the

developmental stage of the matrix of identity, and the child's early experiences of relating and separation. Following this, through the clinical example of a young man's unresolved grief-work, I will introduce the melting clock, a psychodrama technique applied in a one-to-one therapy setting.

In the final chapter of part 1 Moysés Aguiar explores how spontaneous theatre can serve as a theoretical and practical reference for one-to-one psychodrama psychotherapy. After examining how the five instruments of psychodrama need to be adapted to the one-to-one setting, he takes the reader on a journey from theatrical techniques, through action and verbal techniques and arriving to verbal psychodrama.

1.
**One-to-one psychodrama: Reflections on the theory
and practice of psychodrama with an individual
patient⁹**

Valéria Cristina de Albuquerque Brito¹⁰

Is one-to-one psychodrama a deviation or an adaptation of the socio-economic project? What are the criteria for choosing this psychodrama modality? What are the technical differences between individual psychodrama with auxiliary egos, group psychodrama and one-to-one psychodrama (without auxiliary egos)? These are recurrent questions...

I jotted down these questions on the margins of a page while taking notes of one of those rare lectures during my training, when one-to-one psychodrama was discussed. Although many years have gone by since, these questions have not lost their actuality. With slight variations they are continuously asked by students, trainees and supervisees. Very much present in the day-to-day practice of psychodrama directors, this form of one-to-one intervention without auxiliary egos is an instigating subject always present in training groups.

The persistence of these questions cannot be attributed to the lack of writings. Various authors (Bustos 1985, Aguiar 1988, Cukier 1992, Gonçalves 1994, Falivene Alves 1994, Perazzo 1994) have dedicated themselves to the discussion of the theoretical and practical aspects of psychodrama with an individual patient, either as a starting point for new formulations or by way of formulations that employ concepts and/or techniques derived from other psychotherapeutic approaches. While different in several of their theoretical aspects, these writings can be characterised by having modified or adapted certain aspects of the Morenian theory, or by simply having introduced techniques aiming to help the psychodramatist in facing the challenge of producing dramatization without auxiliary egos. While they do not present marked differences from the technical perspective, the majority of writings regarding psychodrama with an individual patient vary in their degree of proximity in relation to the Morenian theory. They oscillate between proposals based on intra-psychic concepts and concepts derived from other inter-relational approaches.

⁹ The original title: 'Psicodrama a dois - Reflexões sobre a teoria e a prática do psicodrama com paciente individual'. In *Leituras* 31, pp.1-6, 1999, Companhia do Teatro Espontâneo, Campinas.

¹⁰ Psychologist (PhD), psychodramatist, psychodrama supervisor and trainer, psychology lecturer at the Catholic University of Brasilia, psychotherapist at FOCUS

In order to more clearly define the position of this writing in relation to earlier ones, one possibility would be to apply distinct criteria to point out the differences between the theoretical ideas of psychodramatists, especially between Brazilian psychodramatists who stand out internationally through the volume of their writings. Although instigating and maybe necessary, such an epistemological exercise would lead to a long digression that would lead away from the theoretical and stylistically objectives of this present work. This being so, I would only like to direct those readers interested in this subject to Holmes, Karp and Watson's book (1994).

In order to place this work within the body of writings related to this subject, I consider it sufficient to state that the reflections developed within this paper are based exclusively on sociometry, that is, on the Morenian theory as a whole. In this sense the term sociometry designates the theoretical framework which comprises sociometry, socio-dynamics and sociatry. In contrast with the majority of earlier writings, my intention is to present theoretical-practical reflections that subsidize the practice of psychodrama with an individual patient, without resorting to ideas and concepts derived from other psychotherapeutic approaches.

Further to this, in order to avoid the confusion caused by the multiplicity of terms, and the attempt of neutralizing this confusion through conciliations based on external factors (a phenomenon referred to by Merengue [1992] as the 'zelligization'¹¹ of psychodrama), I consider it important to use a specific term within this present proposal. Psychodrama psychotherapy with an individual patient will not be referred to within this paper by its rather lengthy name of 'individual bi-personal psychodrama psychotherapy' (Bustos 1985), or by its better-known code-name 'bi-personal psychodrama' (Cukier 1992). I will adopt here one of its first cognomen: 'psychodrama à deux'¹² (Z. Moreno 1982). Although less sophisticated, I find this term more descriptive and it emphasises the possibility of producing psychodrama in the smallest possible group, even without auxiliaries.

Resuming old questions, I intend to demonstrate that, in spite of the blunders around it, the criticism that it has received and the obstacles that it poses, it is possible to practice psychodrama with an individual patient without major concessions to other theoretical and practical approaches. Based on the re-reading of the Morenian writings and the review of more recent contributions to the subject, I will discuss the technical management and the applicability of one-to-one psychodrama, as a result of a sociometric and socio-dynamic understanding of the therapeutic dyad.

¹¹ Term coined after Zellig, a character in one of Woody Allen's films, who similarly to a chameleon, changes according to the environment he finds himself in.

¹² The editor's note: For the consistency of the terminology used throughout the various chapters of this book, I will use the term 'one-to-one psychodrama'.

Based on the understanding that continuous questioning is a sign of opening for new perspectives, this paper aims to propitiate a new frame for old and new questions.

Is one-to-one psychodrama a deviation or an adaptation of the socio-economic project?

At a first glance the one-to-one setting may be seen as a betrayal of the Morenian proposal. It is common knowledge that Moreno had dedicated himself to the study of group phenomena, to the inter-relational dimension of the human experience. Writings regarding one-to-one psychodrama often argue that 'true' psychodrama is done in a group. Psychodrama with an individual patient would be irremediably in contradiction with a group proposal.

One-to-one psychodrama psychotherapy is often considered to be a deviation from 'authentic' psychodrama. With a bit of embarrassment some psychodramatists (Bustos 1985, Cukier 1992) enumerate a series of external reasons, 'blaming' socio-economic and/or historical factors in order to justify this 'betrayal'. Even if considered acceptable as a necessary or commercially imperative adaptation, one-to-one psychodrama continues to be seen as a deviant practice in relation to the Morenian ideas. This deviation has been 'rectified' through voluminous portions of theory (with a preference of these being derived from approaches that prefer verbal interaction), or through the systematic application of the psychodrama techniques. There is a prevailing agreement that we, Brazilians are unrivalled in this respect.

However, these arguments regarding the 'bastard' origins of psychodrama with an individual patient are easily dispensable and the blemish of betrayal quickly removable, if we resort to Moreno himself in order to recall the concept of the 'therapeutic dyad' as this being 'the smallest possible group in modern counselling, the group of two.' (Moreno 1983 p.18) In light of this conception of the group, one-to-one psychodrama is not an exception or deviation from the inter-relational concept; it is merely a modality of psychodrama.

However, thinking of patient and psychotherapist as a group is a difficult task, despite the 'words of the father'. It is difficult because it breaks away from the traditional ideas regarding clinical assistance. These traditional ideas clearly define the relative positions of therapist and patient, with the latter being seen as objectified-subject, while the former as the specialist. Considering patient and therapist as members of a group means braking away from the conserve that supports a rigid hierarchy of role differences, which assures the therapist's superiority of knowledge in relation to the patient.

As we know, when working in institutions and big groups, Moreno was surrounded by students. (Marineau 1989) It isn't surprising then - as Cukier (1992) points out - that the father of psychodrama had not left instructions for a

specific method for the management of one-to-one situations. Even so – contradicting the myth regarding the lack of their clarity – Moreno’s writings are very explicit regarding individual work as ‘a simple primary situation of two individuals with different past experiences, with different expectations and roles, facing one another; a therapist in potential in front of another therapist in potential.’ (Moreno 1983 p.20)

Defining therapist and patient as partners, members of the same group, implies assuming a different position in relation to the prevailing ideas regarding the roles of the therapist and patient. The originality of the psychodramatic intervention resides in making these positions within the therapeutic relationship flexible. The challenge we have inherited from Moreno is to work in other contexts and with fewer resources, without however abandoning his principles.

In summary: one-to-one psychodrama is not a deviation, nor an adaptation of the socionomic project due to theoretical and/or practical limitations. It is not an apocryphal psychodrama estranged from the Morenian tradition; neither is it a new development. It is one of the possibilities for action within the various options of sociatry.

What are the criteria for choosing this psychodrama modality?

Before formulating an actual answer to this question, I think it is important to introduce a small (socio-historical, so to speak) contextualization in order to set up the scene in which the theoretical elements involved in choosing one-to-one psychodrama as an alternative can be better understood.

In an instigating ‘written dialogue’ published in the Brazilian Journal of Psychodrama (1994), Gonçalves and Aguiar introduce certain arguments that synthesize the *status* of individual work in the context of psychodrama. Undoubtedly, one-to-one psychodrama is the main activity of Brazilian psychodramatists. Yet, in the psychodrama training there isn’t a specific subject module for its systematized teaching. One-to-one psychodrama is the realm where it is the most difficult to distinguish the specificity of psychodrama in relation to other psychotherapeutic approaches. Such arguments suggest that the application of psychodrama in individual psychotherapies occurs partly, if not by default, without a systematized training. Regardless of the formally established theoretical criteria, psychodramatists do not hesitate choosing to work with individual patients and without auxiliary egos.

Tangled in a contradiction between practice and theory, psychodrama with an individual patient loses its own characteristics and is (con)fused with other psychotherapeutic approaches. As it is considered a deviation, one-to-one psychodrama is not formally taught. On the other hand, it represents the most accessible alternative for a psychodramatist to start his practice. Without a specific theoretical-practical training and eager to apply his technical knowledge,

in most cases the psychodramatist will find himself impelled to look for help from other psychotherapeutic approaches. In fact, the agglutination of other references will contribute to the fact that one-to-one psychodrama becomes a deviation. In the everyday practice of one-to-one psychodrama, psychodramatists need to find justification for choosing it, or if worst comes to the worst, to find criteria of indication derived from other theoretical approaches.

Acknowledging one-to-one psychodrama as a sociatric method allows us to break this perverse vicious circularity. From a socioeconomic perspective the choice of individual work will stop being merely something convenient, will stop being a limitation or the only alternative for certain cases. From this point of view, one-to-one psychodrama is just one of the various possible alternatives and what will make it viable and give it continuity and success is the confluence between the criteria/choices made by the members of the group.

If we consider the presupposition that patient and therapist form a group, the conditions necessary to form and maintain this group should be appreciated in terms of the roles that will be performed at different moments, and in terms of the possibilities of complementariness between the individuals forming this group. The criteria for choosing the composition of the therapeutic dyad cannot be general or *a priori* established. These criteria are investigated through a specific sociometric analysis of each group.

In order to get a general outline that will enable the psychodramatist to do this analysis, we need to reformulate our initial question in more specific terms:

Which are the criteria that define the roles and functions to be performed by the therapist and the patient?

By looking for help, it is the patient who initiates the relationship. Her criteria play a determinant role in choosing a specific therapist. As part of his professional functions, it is the therapist's task to evaluate the conditions of the possibility of moving forward with the helping relationship proposed by the patient. The therapist will need to consider his available resources, his own level of training, his ability of managing other methods, the conditions that are necessary to apply these resources in the therapeutic context, as well as his own personal availability to 'be alone' with that particular patient. Based on these considerations the therapist will decide on the modality of intervention. The patient's demands (whether explicit or implicit) are also part of this complex latticework, in which the relative weight of the various possible criteria varies according to the specific characteristics of the therapist's and patient's time, space and life (hi)story.

The simplicity of this reasoning indicates that the core of the questions around the criteria for choosing one-to-one psychodrama as the modality of intervention does not concern the initial moments of the therapist-client

relationship, what is conventionally called the therapeutic contract. Independently from the therapist's degree of discomfort in relation to the weight that extrinsic criteria (economical, financial, technical, time availability) play in his decision, it is almost a consensus that such practical aspects of the therapist-patient relationship are decisive in choosing the one-to-one configuration for the work.

The doubts regarding the use of psychodrama in a one-to-one situation generally emerge when linking together the interview with the psychodramatic enactment. The therapeutic contract is merely a protocol of intentions that determines the configuration of the group context, establishing the rules that will guide the performance of the social roles of therapist and patient. In the transition from the group context to the dramatic context, on the stage, the criteria for choosing the roles of director, auxiliary-ego, audience and protagonist will require a specific dynamism once the dramatic project has begun.

As Perazzo (1994) accurately says, the individual work - even without the presence of auxiliary egos and audience - is also a situation in which multiple subjectivities are constructed. The scene cannot be disentailed from the concept of co-creation. Similarly to what happens in bigger groups, the therapist and the patient will warm up through their interaction initiated in the group context, in order to experience the theme of the session that will be incarnated by the plot. Once in action, the protagonist will represent the conflict and establish the protagonist-director relationship within the dramatic space. The roles and functions of the auxiliary ego(s) and audience will be performed in accordance with the specific demands of the scenes. The criteria for the choice and the dynamics of these roles are only defined in the very moment of the action, and not previously.

In summary, the choice of one-to-one psychodrama as the method of therapeutic intervention dispenses of an *a priori* criterion that needs to be adopted by the therapist. Within a socionomic frame of reference, this choice is based on the sociometric status of the participants, and not on norms of classifying the expression of the patient's suffering (diagnostic classification). Individual psychotherapy is not something to be indicated to certain 'types of cases'. One-to-one psychodrama is a possibility of choice for therapists who are willing to inter-act with their patients. The idea that therapist and patient constitute a group, demands - from the therapist's point of view - a continuous sociometric analysis. The elements that define and sustain the dual (one-to-one) situation are the interlacing of the patient and the therapist's limitations and possibilities, co-experienced within their relationship.

What are the technical differences between individual psychodrama with auxiliary egos, group psychodrama and one-to-one psychodrama?

The more diverse the scenic resources and available actors, the more easily a director will perform his function of dramaturge, of producer of the psychodrama. In case of one-to-one psychodrama, both the protagonist and the director's possibilities of choice are more restricted than in the case of individual psychodrama with one or more trained auxiliaries, and much more restricted in comparison to group psychodrama. Director and protagonist don't just need to be satisfied with only one auxiliary ego, but also with the 'absence' of the director while he acts as this auxiliary ego, and vice-versa. In front of this limitation of resources some psychodramatists will feel discouraged. (Carvalho 1992) A large part of the literature concerning techniques that facilitate the development of action in one-to-one psychodrama consists in an effort to stimulate the director in front of this challenge of producing psychodrama without auxiliaries.

Novice psychodramatists will usually attribute the lack of dramatizations and the occurrence of 'unsuccessful' enactments to their own technical limitations. Their difficulty of choosing and applying one or another technique is considered as a hindrance to the application of psychodrama in a one-to-one setting. There is often a tendency of focusing on the technical deficiencies in order to prevent or remedy the above-mentioned difficulties.

If however, instead of focusing on the therapist and client in isolation (each one with their difficulties and limitations) we consider the socio-dynamics of their relationship, than it can generally be ascertained that the 'failures' will not so much be due to the technical un-skillfulness, but more to the difficulty of transiting between the different positions required by the roles to be performed. Accumulating technique alone is insufficient when the psychodramatist becomes fixed in the position of specialist. Therefore, the discussion around the technical dimension of one-to-one psychodrama goes beyond the mere description of strategies that would minimize the difficulties due to the restricted number of participants.

Based on the principle that one-to-one psychodrama is a group situation, it is not appropriate to discuss the techniques in their own, but first we need to evaluate the conditions of their possible application. If, instead of only worrying about how to 'get the patient to dramatize', the therapist makes himself available to transit between the different roles and functions, then the partnership for constructing a dramatic project will have better chances to occur.

When the focus of intervention is shifted from the therapist's and patient's limitations and competencies to the interlacing of their relationship possibilities, the techniques will start to work in favour of the development of the group's spontaneity/creativity, and not just as simple tools of maintaining the traditional model. In summary: contrary to what we may assume at first glance, there are no

technical differences between one-to-one psychodrama and other psychodrama modalities. The question that imposes itself is much more specific:

Considering the limitations imposed by a group configuration reduced to the minimum, how can we make the dramatization viable?

'Psychodrama is not a cure through *action*, as an alternative to the cure through *conversation*.' (Moreno 1975, p.388 - the author's italics) Although it is a powerful tool for the psychotherapeutic process, dramatization in itself does not guarantee the development of tele and spontaneity/creativity. Looking at it as a 'should' and not as an available instrument, the dramatic enactment loses its liberating character. As Gonçalves (1994) warns: 'dramatization often reinforces the conscious theses of the client.'

The possibility of enacting conflicts does not oppose their verbalization. On the contrary, words as an indirect discourse offer the basis for words to be represented in the psychodramatic enactment. Action is not a substitute for words. And words are not a substitute for action. What psychodrama intends is to propitiate an interaction, a confluence between the various possibilities of expression.

The dialogue between the therapist and the patient forms the foundation upon which the dramatic text, the criteria for the choice of characters/actors and technical resources will be developed. 'The object of the psychodramatic research is the relationship, i.e. the understanding of the scene, which together with other scenes forms the plot. Thus what we focus on is the subjectivity of relationships, and its scenic objectiveness: the protagonist, the antagonist [...]' (Merengue 1992 p.22) It is mainly from the discussion, stories and reflections starting and emerging in the group context, that the characters and conflicts of the drama to be put on stage are outlined.

As opposed to what usually happens in larger groups, in one-to-one psychodrama the subjectivity of the therapist is more directly involved in the establishment of the protagonic climate. In larger groups this originality is diluted in the complexity of relational possibilities of the other therapeutic agents. Restricted to the role of the director, the therapist relies on the other members of the group as auxiliary egos to facilitate the development of the dramatic project. In one-to-one psychodrama the therapist's availability to listen to and to understand the patient's story, his mobilisation for the conflict that is revealed or hidden in the words, and his availability to 'give life' to the characters that emerge, constitute the warm-up process that will propitiate the dramatic action.

As Falivene Alves (1994) accurately describes, in the initial moment of enactment the therapist is the protagonist who enables the dislocation of the protagonic movement for the emerging characters. As the dramatic flow unfolds,

the therapist becomes involved in the action, plays with the protagonist. Falivene Alves also emphasises the importance of the therapist's spectator-participant function, especially in one-to-one dramatizations. 'Through his affective attachment (at times identification), the therapist intrigues himself with the plot, he listens because he wants to know more, he asks to get involved, he becomes an accomplice in order for the story to become a *drama*.' (Falivene Alves 1994, p.54)¹³

The psychotherapist's participation will propitiate the establishment of the protagonic climate, extending itself into the scene. Becoming an ally of the protagonist, the therapist makes himself available for transiting between the different roles that might emerge during the psychodramatic action. It is the protagonist's task to choose the 'time, the place, the scene and auxiliary ego she needs in order to produce her psychodrama.' (Z. Moreno 1982, p.vi) Therefore, the role of the auxiliary ego will be performed in accordance with the collation of the protagonist's and the therapist's criteria of choice for each role.

As the different characters of the protagonist's discourse are concretized within the scene, the director and protagonist will negotiate the most appropriate way of representing them. The more training the psychodramatist had in the function of auxiliary ego (function of actor/actress), the less difficulty he will have in enacting the roles indicated by the protagonist. Similarly to any other sociatric method however, even if chosen to be an auxiliary ego, the therapist is free to decline playing the role. (Moreno 1975)

One of the possible solutions that will allow the concretization of a character, when the psychodramatist does not feel at ease to do this, is to use objects¹⁴. Without doubt, this palliative strategy has some limitations, as it requires a higher degree of warm-up from the protagonist in order to play with something that is socially not interacting. Similarly, the director's insufficient degree of warm-up will restrict him in leading the dramatization through interaction with the object.

Thus, even with the use of objects as symbolic resources for the marking of the different positions of characters within a scene, the flow of the action will greatly depend on the therapist's ability to transit between the roles of director and auxiliary ego. If the director trusts 'the psychodramatic method as the final arbitrator and guide within the therapeutic process' (Z. Moreno 1982 p.xv), than there is no reason for him to be concerned that his acting as auxiliary ego would jeopardize the construction of the psychodramatic project. Even if (in his function of actor) the therapist feels unable or unavailable to play a certain character, he can act as an auxiliary ego, with a function that facilitates the expression of the

¹³ The editor's note: Falivene Alves's paper on the protagonist and the protagonic theme is also available in English in: Figusch 2005, pp.130-140.

¹⁴ The editor's note: For more details on the use of objects and toys in one-to-one psychodrama see chapter 4.

protagonist (Z. Moreno 1982 p.viii) and in this way maintain the warm-up and the flow of action.

The flexibility of roles continues in the phase of sharing. 'The protagonist should never leave with the impression of being entirely alone with his problem.' (Z. Moreno 1982 p.xii) The therapist will talk about his experience as auxiliary ego and audience. In these moments following the dramatization the function of analyst remains in the background most of the time. However, if the therapist and patient form a group that meet on a regular basis¹⁵, the exchange of impressions regarding a certain dramatization will not be restricted to the immediate time following the dramatization. The sharing, the existential, affective exchange and the associations between the protagonist's dramatization and her other life experiences can extend over various sessions.

The dramatization creates a new reality for those who participate in its co-creation. The discoveries and conquests achieved within the dramatic space will give new dimensions to relationships within other contexts too. The transformations within the action and discourse of the psychodramatic characters will create new ways of understanding the action, new relational possibilities. Dramatic enactment propitiates giving new meaning to roles and their socio-dynamics.

It is also important to point out that the transformations will extend not only into the patient's private life, but also the therapist's and especially the therapist-patient relationship.

Final considerations

The persistence of doubts regarding the viability of psychodrama with an individual patient can be seen both as a sign of theoretical fragility, and as a privileged opportunity for conceptual deepening. Chosen by various authors, the first option generally results in approximations to other psychotherapeutic approaches. Based on views and concepts borrowed from other theories, these proposals of theoretical reinforcement further strengthen the myth that psychodrama with an individual patient is a deviation from the sociometric theory. By considering the sociometric and socio-dynamic concepts as necessary and sufficient for the anchoring of sociatric practices, within this paper I chose the second option.

On this route I aim to re-formulate old questions in order to find new answers, to evoke reflection. The main objective of this paper is not so much to present solutions, but rather to offer basis for new questions. The ideas presented

¹⁵ This type of psychotherapy is traditionally referred to as processual. Considering that in an approach based on the notion of the moment, it does not make sense to understand psychotherapy as a cumulative sequence or a process, here I opted to use a more descriptive denomination.

here are a synthesis of the maturing of my own questions formulated along my own practice and have been systematized in response to the demands of my students and supervisees, as well as the work of other authors. One-to-one psychodrama does not constitute a model to be followed, but rather a framework, that is, more of a path, rather than a goal to be achieved.

I started by defining psychodrama as a socio-economic method and not just simply a body of techniques. Following this, I have established certain fundamental concepts and their connections within the different moments of the psychodrama session. Within this last section, in a synthesis of what I have presented, I'd like to unveil new challenges.

The presupposition that the socio-economic theory is a necessary and sufficient (but not exclusive) condition for the foundation of the psychodramatist's practice allows us to revive sociometric and socio-dynamic concepts in order to delineate the theoretical realm for the discussion and practice of psychodrama psychotherapy. The central idea of this paper is that psychodrama psychotherapy demands an original conception of the therapist-patient relationship.

A lot of the discomfort experienced by psychodramatists when practicing psychodrama with an individual patient results from a paradoxical situation imposed by the attempts to do psychodrama without conservative models of psychotherapy. One of the derivatives of these attempts is the dilemma of how to co-act, co-create and co-experience without 'mixing' with the patient. In spite of being more or less successful in their practice, these attempts result in theoretical discourses in which it is difficult to distinguish the specificity of psychodrama in relation to other psychotherapeutic approaches.

Contrary to what is usually assumed, the specificity of psychodrama resides more in its presuppositions than its techniques. The greatest difference between the underlying theory of psychodrama (socio-economy) and the majority of other psychological and psychotherapy theories is the definition of the human being as relational. Although repeatedly stated, this postulate is often misunderstood. Assuming that the human being is constituted through his interactions is more than the simple recognition of the fact that human beings interact. It is forming a different concept of the human being: 'the self emerges from the roles'. (Moreno 1934, p.76) It is stating that our subjectivity, understood as being unique, integrated and lasting in time, is an inter-personal phenomenon. In this sense, interacting is not just a potential of the individual's 'psyche'; interaction is what *establishes* the person and his relationships. The interaction creates the person, and not the other way round.

Based on this radically different definition of the person, psychodrama will certainly contribute very little to preserve distributions of power established by psychotherapeutic approaches developed based on theories that understand the person as a result of internal structures. The conditions that make psychodrama psychotherapy possible are co-existence and co-experience. As long as he

considers that the 'self' (person) derives from the roles and not the other way round (Moreno 1934), the psychodramatist will not fear or avoid 'mixing' with the patient. Co-creation will not be seen as a risky situation, but as an opportunity. Especially in one-to-one psychodrama, a modality with limited technical resources, it is the psychodramatist's task to try and actively create the interactions that promote spontaneity.

The traditional clinical model attributes the role of specialist to the therapist, that is, the one who will determine what the problem is and offer a solution. This is complemented by the role of the 'ill'. As Tassinari (1994) warns, by accepting this model 'the therapist stops being a therapist in order to become a social controller.' If inserted into this model, psychodrama loses its revolutionary character and becomes reduced to a mere body of techniques. Understanding psychodrama as a sociatric method is more than just a new way to describe our technique; it means abandoning older forms of thinking.

Moreno's work is characterised by its critique of the traditional models. By bringing together theatre and psychotherapy, Moreno proposes a new prerogative of roles and functions in the therapeutic relationship. Within this proposal the knowledge and relational availability of the specialist are put at the patient's disposition. The task of the psychotherapist/director is to create conditions enabling the patient/author to express and solve her drama. Through the performance and/or scenic management of various roles, the psychodramatist actively involves himself in the project of investigating and alleviating the client's suffering.

By stating that therapist and patient are both 'potential therapeutic agents', Moreno (1983) isn't 'preaching in favour of the horizontality of the relation' as Garcia (1992 p.173) suggests. The asymmetry is inherent to the social roles of the professional and client. What is proposed is that this asymmetry extrapolates the narrow limitations of a rigid hierarchy and so become a catalyst for co-experience and co-creation. In this way, the focus in the therapist-patient relationship will divert from the elements that can justify and maintain the distance between them, and it is redirected to the possibilities of complementariness and interchange between these roles.

Considered as partners, psychodramatist and patient feel freer to act in conjunction. The alternatives of expression, understanding and cure of the suffering are expanded and are accomplished as mutual choices.

Dramatization is one of the resources and not an objective to be achieved. Word and body in conjuncture form the drama and the plot. As Aguiar (1988 p.32) sums it up, we simply 'create the plot, take it to the stage, actor and author merge in the character, audience and director are the same person, the scenic solution is improvised and searched for. It is spontaneous theatre in one of its most creative forms.' Far from being a deviation from the socionomic project, one-to-one psychodrama is a challenge to our capacity of transforming it into reality within our everyday psychodrama practice.

For a coherent and original practice of one-to-one psychodrama and other sociatric methods, joining up the sociometric and socio-dynamic concepts is an imperative. If left disjointed from the view of a genuinely interpersonal world and from the theoretical body that justifies them, our methods become reduced to techniques and lose their innovative potential. Valuing the originality and applicability of the sociometric concepts allows us to describe and practice psychodrama without major concessions with other theories. I hope that this paper will serve as an incentive for further ventures onto this path.

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2. One-to-one psychodrama psychotherapy¹⁶

*Dalmiro M. Bustos*¹⁷

Within this chapter first I will present a one-to-one psychodrama session, following which I will elaborate on its technical and theoretical aspects. The second part of this chapter consists of further examples regarding the use of the applied technique.

The patient, whom I will call Gloria, had started therapy five months before the session that I will describe here took place¹⁸. Our therapeutic relationship was interrupted for two months, first due to a family event, and then due to holidays. During the first session following her return to therapy, Gloria presented fantasies of abandonment, these causing her great distress. Her fantasy was that I had left her aside in order to show her that she should make more of an effort, and also because 'other patients' were more interesting to work with. Rationally she knew what the real reasons of the interruption were; however, the power of transference fantasy did not allow her access to this information. In our next session Gloria presents a conflict with her husband and I propose dramatisation. The first scene she identifies takes place in their bedroom. It is Sunday morning, and her husband Julio is getting up. Gloria sets the scene, describes the space and, after locating the characters involved, she represents them one by one. She complains of her husband, who is unable to 'sacrifice himself' a bit, or to renounce other things for her. In Julio's role she says with ease that there is no need for this, as they can go out together in the afternoon. Having said that, he gives Gloria a kiss and leaves the room.

Gloria stays in bed confused and crying. In soliloquy she again says that her husband is an egoist. However, she stops crying, as at this moment her mother – who is spending the weekend with them – comes into the bedroom, bringing her a cup of tea. Not wanting to show her feelings in front of her mother, Gloria dries up her tears.

In role of mother she describes Gloria as good and hardworking, but someone who does not allow herself to be 'pampered'. While Julio (her son-in-

¹⁶ The original title: 'Psicoterapia psicodramática bipessoal' in D.M. Bustos (1992) *Novos rumos em psicodrama (New directions in psychodrama)* São Paulo: Editora Ática, pp.69-81.

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¹⁸ For this chapter I chose examples that demonstrate with clarity my technical management of the technique, and chose not to present other examples that, through their complexity, may hamper this objective.

law) and her granddaughter would accept her pampering, Gloria only accepts her bringing cups of tea. The others are like kitten, but Gloria isn't. Once out of her mother's role and back to being herself, I ask Gloria what she thinks about what her mother had just said; she agrees with her. I ask her whom or what would she be in relation to these kittens; she says that undoubtedly she would be an ant.

Up until this point we have been working within the traditional dramatic space. Once these two characters (the kitten and the ant) appear, I invite Gloria to put a blinder on her eyes in order to allow her to get in touch more profoundly with them.

First she takes on the role of the cat. Stroking her hair, she says that it is sitting comfortably and peacefully in its basket, 'being only concerned with itself', with having its milk and basket prepared. Although she clearly enjoys playing this role, she does it with a critical and jocose tone of voice, indicating that this is a role that she had projected onto her husband and daughter, but not identified with herself.

We move on to the role of the ant. She presents this role mainly through her hands and a constant bodily restlessness, stating that she cannot relax. I ask what would happen if the ant did relax? After becoming serious and silent for a while, she responds: 'my life would not have any meaning'. Quickly she adds that she does not need any affection or tenderness, as her life consists of work.

My intention with the interventions that follow is to explore the origins of the defence presented through the three statements: 'My life would not have any meaning', 'I don't need affection' and 'My life is work'¹⁹. I ask the ant whether these statements were always true. Clearly moved, she says that she used to be a kitten before.

'Before what?' - I ask. She doesn't manage to answer. She feels lost and I ask her to take on the role of this kitten 'from before'. Stepping into this role she describes, in a childlike voice, her well looked after, comfortable and embroidered basket, the smell around, the sun shining into the house, the milk bottle. However, signs of anxiety and restlessness start to show in her hands. 'What happened?' - I ask. 'I think I've heard that they will bring a new kitten or a new puppy. I don't like this; it will want me out of here.' She throws away the cushion that represents her basket, her place. I invite her to take on the role of the invader: it is a puppy, playful and friendly, wanting to play with the kitten. Returning to the role of the kitten she says that she doesn't even want to get near the puppy, and that she is going to find another owner, someone who will keep her happy and allow her to have her 'own' place. 'Where would you go?' - I ask. 'To a house with its owner sitting in a chair doing 'things', and where the kitten

¹⁹ The editor's note: Cukier (2007, p.112) describes in more detail some of the dramatic techniques developed by Bustos that aim to understand the origins of defensive behaviours, by trying to locate their *locus* (the relationship in which the defensive behaviour emerged), *matrix* (the 'mandate' of the defence) and *status nascendi* (the developmental process of this defence).

will settle in.' Soon after this she says that there is no sunlight and no noise at this place; that the new owner is good, but the kitten will need to start doing things. 'Why is that?' -I ask. 'So they notice that I exist.' It is at this point that the kitten transforms itself into an ant. I ask her to pause before this transformation and to think about the ant's future, a future that will make it forget about the existence of the kitten. Straight away she starts complaining about the fact that nobody cares about her, and that they always prefer the playful puppy (her sister, who was born when Gloria was 18 months old; her husband Julio; her daughter, or the other patients whom I would prefer to attend to). While she explores the experience of this situation, I observe that her right hand starts to stroke a cushion. I ask her what she is doing. After thinking for a while, she says: 'I think I want to caress the kitten.' When I invite her to talk to the kitten, she says to it that it will need to learn to share and to fight for its space; otherwise it will always need to give in (sacrifice itself) and to compensate for this loss through work. Nevertheless, it continues resentful. At the end she takes on the role of the kitten and cries softly. We finish the one-hour session by discussing the characters that emerged and their significance in relation to Gloria's life and her relationship with me. When her sister was born, she did actually live for a while with two single uncles, where she became the 'only child' again, but lost the light; there were both adults and emotionally distant.

Moreno refers to one-to-one therapy as an example of anti-spontaneity; however, we need to consider his affirmations in the context in which he formulated them, the context to which I often made references in my book entitled 'Psychodrama psychotherapy'. (Bustos 1975)

Just as psychoanalysis was developed in a one-to-one context, psychodrama was created in a group context. The two methods are different, but not discrepant. Absolutistic thinking would lead to an impoverishing reduction of the potential benefits offered by one or the other therapeutic modality. I have no doubts that an individual process will offer a more refined understanding and knowledge of the self, indispensable in a context where the only tensions arise within the relationship with the therapist. We work with a process determined by the needs of one person only. Groups should renounce to this condition, as they create a system of multiple stimuli that is more similar to the social context, offering a favourable chance to work *in situ* with the tensions emerging from the interpersonal relationships.

For a long time these two focuses were separated: the one-to-one was limited to psychoanalysis or verbal techniques derived from psychoanalysis, while psychodrama was solely associated with group psychotherapy.

After World War II new alternatives started to emerge. The ones that have influenced my own work are: the bioenergetics developed by Reich (1971) and followed by Lowen, and the gestalt therapy created by Fritz Pearls (1975). These two focuses, together with the psychoanalytic and the psychodramatic ones, are confluent in the formulation of the method I am referring to.

The main objective is the integration of an individual on their affective, bodily, intellectual and social levels.

The therapeutic operations are set in a relational bond that supports the encounter as a philosophical position, with the limitations related to its adequate application in psychotherapy²⁰. All the alternatives of this relational bond constitute the essential matrix, the promoter of changes. I denominate these alternatives, in the here-and-now, as therapeutic drama, a component of this being the analysis of transferences. In drama the real other is present: a group member, the therapist; in psychodrama the other we are referring to is an internal other, who is not actually present.

In Gloria's case, the session I presented above was preceded by another, in which transference played a central role. Through the application of the psychodramatic methodology the understanding of the previous session can be further deepened.

It is in this way that drama and psychodrama alternate, reciprocally enriching each other. Beyond this, they also rectify the potential distortions of the transference understanding, resulting from the absolutely inevitable interference of counter-transference²¹.

As all understanding of facts depends on the perspective we are looking at them from, proposing a scientist's objectivity means not understanding the actual essence of interpersonal relationships. The understanding of transference reveals certain aspects of the relationship, while it conceals others that are discovered with more clarity during dramatization.

The psychodramatic method allows the patient herself to pave out her path to insight. It is clear however that the therapist's intervention, even during the psychodramatic moment of the session, remains in force and it conditions the course of the session. The therapist will always influence by asking for a role-reversal, or by emphasising a gesture or a tone of voice, by formulating a question. Only that his interventions are minor.

Let us see now the psychodramatic method as such. In Gloria's case, I start by asking her to present a scene that shows where/what the conflict (that she has verbally referred to) is. I always ask to start with a scene that is closest to the present and 'circumstantial', aiming to gradually move from the *surface* to the *depths* (from the more superficial to the more profound), from the *warm-up* to the *dramatization* and to stimulate the emergence of spontaneity. A premature approach of the underlying conflict will create strong defences, having the same effects as an untimely interpretation. Although the most common, this is not the only way to start. I might also choose to work with a blinder from the beginning,

²⁰ For more details on my understanding of the encounter, see chapter 2, 'The encounter in psychodrama psychotherapy' in my book 'Novos rumos em psicodrama' (Bustos 1992).

²¹ I used the term established by psychoanalysis to indicate the transference of the therapist despite of adhering to Moreno's formulation, who understands the phenomenon as being of the same nature, regardless whether it comes from the therapist or the patient.

fostering a connection with the internal world. Lying down with a blinder on the eyes can lead to the emergence of three different starters.

Bodily starters. We are looking for areas of tension in the body, which are then described by the patient. According to the theory of Reich and Lowen, we are in search of areas that retain energy (blocks), affecting muscular clusters. These represent the bodily equivalent of the defence mechanisms and are responsible for disturbances of the movement and posture, including chronic osseous problems.

Once the nucleus of tension is located, we focus the attention on this using the technique of maximization, exaggerating the tension for its better recognition. Following this, we search for this tension on two other levels: the ideative and the emotional level. In order for this to happen I stimulate the free association of images, and at the same time, the recognition of the type of the associated emotion. Once these three levels are connected, the session continues with the same steps as described above.

Emotional starters. We can focus our attention on emotional states such as aggression, sadness, distress or anxiety, which the patient is unable to link up with their possible causes. The level of tension can be very high with a tendency of its premature discharge (false catharsis). Some therapists' anxiety can lead them to encourage discharge that lacks of therapeutic value and will only result in a momentary alleviation. When an emotional state emerges, especially if this is aggression, the warm-up will need to be handled in such a way that it allows the containment of this state, until its contents can be explored, encouraging their discharge only when this is necessary for the diminishing of tension to a level that is compatible with the elaboration.

Ideative or mental starters. As the starting point of dramatic work we can use a fantasy, a memory or intellectual image. When this happens, the action will need to lead to the dramatization of this starter in order to investigate and elaborate its contents.

I mentioned above the use of a blinder. When aiming to stimulate connections with the internal world, simply eliminating the sense of sight will facilitate the patient to get in touch with her internal experiences, this being an efficient promoter of regressive states. Obviously, a blinder should not be used for patients with strong paranoid defences.

Once the material initially connected to the emotions, bodily tensions or images has emerged, the aim of the method is to create room for the dramatic elaboration. In order for this to happen, the protagonist and antagonist need to emerge, leading us to the identification of the conflict.

In Gloria's case the ant is a reactive character, born out of envy and the fantasy of estrangement, condensing laboriousness as well as an intense and denied voracity. The kittens represent her repressed affective needs. Dramatically the ant condenses one aspect, while the kitten another. Thus, this localized but unexplored tension receives a dramatic structure allowing free play

that will reveal the underlying dynamics. This opening is essential and it operates as a metaphor that opens the way for elaboration.

The attributes of the characters also reveal the regressive level towards which the work is heading. In Gloria's case, the emergence of kittens and ants indicate, right from the beginning, the infantile level she would be heading towards. The choice of characters is strongly indicative: for example, Aladdin's lamp may appear in clear connection to omnipotent fantasies, deserts may appear as depositaries of states of privation and solitude. This language is closely associated with the language of dream material. Generally speaking, in comparison to emotional and mental starters, bodily tensions will indicate more regressed levels.

Once the central conflict is identified, we search for the meaning and significance of the free dramatic play, using role reversal, this propitiating an interaction between the different characters. Being the kitten represents Gloria's primary needs related to the birth of her sister as well as feelings of exclusion and envy; the ant is the result of a reactive retreat into laboriousness. In the dramatic language, when talking about the cat, the ant calls it an idiot, for being very exposed and dependent; while the ant only relies on itself and does not need to be looked after. Autonomy being her only option reveals the reactive nature of this character (the ant); more mature dynamics would allow for the alteration of autonomy and dependence.

The free dramatic play following the identification of characters reveals further aspects, like the super-egoic defence for example. In Gloria's case the ant was extremely moralist; in other cases we may see aggression against the self, denial of reality etc.

Certain dramatic techniques will not change significantly when dramatizing without auxiliary egos: the soliloquy (a kind of monologue of the protagonist), the interview (the therapist's colloquial or interpretative dialogue with the patient, while the patient is in her own role or the role of other internal characters), concretization (giving concrete structures to tensions and feelings), or maximization (magnifying the expression of a tension in order to get it recognized). Other techniques will need to be adapted: the role reversal for example, as there are no auxiliaries to take on complementary roles. Only in very few situations would I suggest that the therapist assumes the role of the auxiliary ego, taking on the role of one of the characters. When doing this, it is important that he does it only very briefly, as he may find himself 'carried away' by the action, thus losing his role of coordinator of the dramatization²².

²² When doing individual work, I do not use auxiliary egos for two reasons: the first is to respect the necessary one-to-one realm. The second is more of a financial reason; using auxiliary egos would significantly bring up the cost of sessions..

The type of dialogue the therapist establishes with the characters is fundamental, because through the transference, this reveals aspects of the therapeutic relationship.

When talking to the moralist ant, it attacked me; at a certain point it even confronted me, telling me to mind my own business. This omnipotent defence had appeared various times, 'filtered' through gestures, tone of voice, intonation, etc. On the other hand, while having dialogues with the cat, it made me get closer and closer, as it spoke quieter and quieter. What this means is that the drama of the therapeutic interaction in the here-and-now pursues and gives new meaning to the psychodramatic action, and my own reactions will guide me through the session.

Once the defensive aspects are revealed and the dramatic interaction understood, it is important that we create the conditions for reparation. While the ant was an adequate option at a certain moment of Gloria's life, we need to make the patient aware of the importance of the search for other options. Every defence is linked to the set of conditions that justify its development. It is well known however, that even with the disappearance of these conditions the defence continues, developing into a neurotic defence²³. In Gloria's case, her ant or laboriousness continues independently from the factor that produced it, this having an impoverishing effect on her life experiences. This type of defence leads her to an existential position from which the possibility of receiving affection is excluded.

I have always been concerned about a potential danger of the psychotherapeutic work, namely the possibility of falling into the trap of blaming the parents for the patient's difficulties, thus reinforcing a victim role. What is essential is to understand the applied defensive behaviours, adequate in the conflicting situation, but which later on become impoverishing. As it was her who resorted to these mechanisms, it is also possible that she becomes the craftsman of their reformulation.

The dramatic resolution: it is well known that in Moreno's view, the catharsis of integration has a predominant role. He defines this as the discharge of accumulated tensions that culminates in the process of elaboration; he also understands it as everything 'being put out there', the essence of the dramatic montage. Within the context of one-to-one psychodrama psychotherapy the catharsis of integration has a secondary position, and it is understood in accordance with the first part of the above definition. The discharge of distress, depression or aggression is important during the initial sessions, as their excess impedes the creation of a reflective space, which is fundamental for any type of psychotherapy. We know that Freud had abandoned the idea of catharsis, because of its methodological link to the hypnotic method.

²³ The editor's note: For more details regarding the reparative dramatic work of defences see Cukier (2007, p.116).

Later on he replaced it with the elaboration (elaboration in its primary sense, and not as a synonym of working-through), with his method basically consisting of changing - through free association - the unconscious into conscious. Similarly to Lowen, Moreno and Pearls have revived the utility of tension discharge, not as opposing to elaboration, but as an essential part of it. If looked at as choices or alternatives (catharsis versus elaboration) they will negatively and artificially oppose each other.

Discharge in itself does not have meaning, except maybe that of alleviation, but even this is temporary, unless it is part of a process of elaboration. At the end of Gloria's session the quality of her weeping indicates and discharges restrained tension, the denial of her need for love and also the relief feeling that this wasn't the natural order of things, but the result of her defences. This type of discharge, if followed by insight, is very useful. Actually, as the therapeutic process progresses, the need for discharge lessens and insight becomes the dynamic centre of the process.

There is no doubt that the role of catharsis also depends on the patient's type of personality. Clearly, for someone obsessive discharge will have a fundamental value, because their characterologic armour is very strong and the benefits achieved through catharsis are very important.

The same is not true in the case of psychopathic personalities, for whom discharge may reinforce the tendencies of acting out. The therapeutic strategy in these cases is to maintain the patient in pre-discharge tensional states, making them distance and objectivate, creating the reflective space that they need.

Clinical examples

Maria Clara

This is a piece of work carried out with a 'travelling' patient. We meet on a monthly basis, comprising three or four sessions into one or two days. This is a working modality I started to use more than twenty years ago, in order to work with people who come to therapy from distant parts of the country. I wrote about this experience in my first book, 'El Psicodrama' (Bustos 1973). As the outcomes were very good, I still continue to work with travelling patients regularly, maintaining their number around six to eight. Further to this, I myself have also become a traveller; since 1975 I have been travelling regularly to Brazil, where I see individuals and groups on a monthly basis.

When selecting patients for this type of work I exclude from treatment those presenting acute symptoms or severe pathological pictures. When crises appear during the treatment (in between the monthly sessions) I introduce an alternative auxiliary therapist, who also attends the monthly sessions and is familiar with

the procedure for the eventuality of the appearance of critical symptoms. During the monthly sessions at times I also use them as auxiliary egos. Generally, during the sessions the conjuncture becomes secondary, with the work being focused on the structural aspects. Patients generally have a more participative attitude, feeling responsible for making the most of their time. Resistances appear less frequently than in the case of continuous regular work.

Let us return to Maria Clara. She is a thirty-four years old psychotherapist, who came to therapy after three years of not having any therapy. Previously she had been in analysis for six years, four times a week. She has been divorced for five years and is the mother of three sons: a fifteen, a thirteen, and twelve years old. She often says that she is in therapy to gain a 'different' therapeutic experience, in order to clarify certain things and ambiguities. She has a shy attitude within the verbal context, but is much more open during the dramatic sessions. The session I will present below took place following her second psychodrama.

She arrives looking distressed, saying that she has forgotten everything that had happened in the previous session. This displeases me, as for the first time she had engaged in good communication (during the previous session). She says she had a dream following our last session. Maria Clara's expression makes me think that there may be an important message in the content of this dream. In order to avoid the risk of double inscription, I prevent her from telling me about the dream: if a patient tells her dream before the actual dramatization, this may turn into a libretto that impedes the later development of spontaneous action.

In soliloquy, this preceding the dramatization as a warm-up, Maria Clara talks about feeling upset and fragile. She is alone, as her children are spending the weekend with her ex-husband. Before going to sleep she phones her sister, but cannot get through; she takes a sleeping pill and goes to sleep.

The first images of her dream are not too clear. It is a place where there are ashes; it seems like a crater and at its bottom there is a person saying that she is an old cook from her mother's house, but who doesn't resemble her, as she is much wrinkled and has no teeth. The old woman laughs and calls Maria Clara. Somehow she gets hold of a yellow brick, with which she builds a wall that hides the old woman at the bottom of the crater. Following this a dark, bearded man appears, who leans against the wall and it collapses. Maria Clara runs in order to avoid the fall, and she is furious.

In role of the old woman (the first character to appear) Maria Clara says: 'I am a grandchild of free slaves, I don't have anything, I am black and only know how to serve others. They all use me, take advantage of me and then throw me into the well.' Maria Clara likes her a lot and promised to always look after her, but at the end she has also forgotten about her. As revenge, she will put a spell on Maria Clara.

Returning to her own role, Maria Clara turns her back to the old woman, saying that she doesn't want to see her. She always made her feel disgusted.

What kind of disgust? – I ask. ‘The same that I feel when I touch my genitals.’ She recalls that her sexual relationships are always painful. She also recalls her sexual relationship with her sister; it was pleasant and enjoyable, because she did not have to endure the penetration. This happened when she was 19 years old, and her sister defined herself as being homosexual. Moving on with the dream, Maria Clara says that it is best to cover up the old woman, ‘together with everything else’; cover her up completely with some bricks, as ‘we women are servers by nature, something incomplete and deformed.’

Next she reverses roles with the dark tawny, bearded man. He is arrogant, and says that he is only passing by and enjoys thinking ‘how that wall will collapse on that stupid woman’. I ask who he is. After thinking for a while he says that he doesn’t resemble anybody, the only thing about him is that he is tawny. When saying this he smiles and adds: ‘Or is it Moreno?’²⁴ (referring to the creator of psychodrama, and obviously, through condensation, to me). As we have come to the end of the dramatization of the dream, I ask Maria Clara to stand at the centre of the space where the dramatization happened. With the exception of some cases, I usually do not apply the method consisting of dramatizing a second version of the dream, in which the protagonist would recreate the dream in a way she would like it to be. This method – that I learnt with Moreno – has never really proved itself useful, and I prefer to use the dream as if it was a starting scene, later on linking it up with other scenes that bring new meaning to it. I consider the dream as a condensation of images that need to be unfolded for their elaboration.

It is with this objective that I ask Maria Clara to place herself at the ‘centre of the dream’, allowing herself to be impregnated by different stimuli and doing a soliloquy. The first thing she says is: ‘If I don’t harden up they will destroy me.’ I ask her to clarify who would destroy her. ‘My husband.’ I invite her to show me how this would happen.

The second scene is practically a rape scene. She is eighteen years old, while her fiancée is twenty-six. This is her first sexual encounter, and following it he accuses her of not having been a virgin. This is completely wrong, as Maria Clara’s relationship with her sister (which had no penetration) happened after this episode. Maria Clara cannot trust anybody, her mother is very critical. The only way out is to close herself up, to harden up. She will get married; however nobody will ever really penetrate her. This is the only way to fight against slavery. I ask her to intensify (maximization) this hardening, until she starts shaking. I tell her that now she is at the centre of the volcano; actually, that she ‘is’ the volcano. I give her a racket, which she grabs with both hands and starts discharging her anger by pounding at a cushion shouting ‘son-of-a-bitch!’ As doing so, she bites her lips, closing them tightly, her mouth becoming the wall. I give her another cushion to bite, which she does with a lot of anger. After the

²⁴ The editor’s note: tawny in Portuguese is ‘moreno’

catharsis, we can start elaborating verbally on the transference aspects that have appeared that made her see me as one of the sadistic men who would deceive her. In front of this it was preferable to show indifference and to close down. At this moment she recalls a Spanish song called 'Build the wall'; she says she needs to learn to distinguish in front of whom she would need to raise or let down the wall.

Sessions like this clearly demonstrate a dynamics that beyond having great utility in themselves, can also serve as constant reference for later sessions. This has allowed us to work through Maria Clara's issues with men, with her father, her feminine identity, her constant guilt towards her mother whom she would never be able to like and who 'was born old'. The transference relationship has also allowed us access to other aspects, to the careless arrogance that she expects from those who can help her, the use of power to subdue her, etc.

Andres

Andres is a forty-three years old psychotherapist, married with two children, who came to therapy because of his depression. He has a good professional performance. After a series of significant dramatizations, we go through a period of improvement. He reveals a good sense of humour and we laugh a lot, until I ask him whether he has achieved his therapeutic objective, and whether we need to start thinking about ending his therapy. His reaction is over the top, accusing me of wanting to get rid of him. After a few minutes of this heightened response, he says that he is very afraid of moving forward, because as he started to feel less and less depressed, his wife has started to seem less and less interesting; they did not find common topics for conversation and did not have sexual attraction. While depressed, all this remained unperceived; she was good to him, took care of him and supported him, but now none of this happens anymore. He is afraid of having to face a separation, something that makes him frightened. This happens to many couples who are only united by the illness of one or both of them. Andres has a deep sense of guilt, he is ashamed, but his ideological posture does not allow him to admit this; he has never cheated on his wife, justifying himself with a thousand rationalizations. He is disorientated. It is clear that depression represented for Andres a preferable alternative to the disorientation that he expresses at the moment.

I ask him to set up a scene with his wife, which we will use as the starting scene. He introduces Lidia, engaged in a thousand activities, a mindful housewife and good professional. The scene takes place in their bedroom, both are reading before going to sleep. In soliloquy Lidia (played by Andres) says that she has lost all interest in her husband, and that she feels the same is happening to him. 'I assume sooner or later someone else will appear for one of us, and we

separate.' Since Andres has got better, all this has become more evident. She says this in a doubtless tone of voice. Returning to being himself, Andres says that this is despairing. I ask him to concretize his despair with the objective of further deepening its essence. He says he is in a whirlwind that takes him to the time when he was very small. He was bored watching the leaves disappearing in the gutter. He felt ugly, weak and that no one could like him. In the gutter he sees his own image and this repulses him. I invite him to talk to his image. He says it is horrible, but shows interest for the conversation. In a role-reversal with his image the same situation repeats itself. He says at one point: 'I don't know why we are struggling so much if, at the end of the day, we are the two sides of the same coin.' I ask him to take on the role of this two-sided coin. He steps into the role and I invite it to tell me its story. It used to be together with other similar coins in the chest of a pirate woman, until one day an earl bought it separating it from the other coins and sending it as a present to his lover. 'Why did he choose exactly this coin from all?' - I ask. Because it was the most beautiful one and he wanted to give it to the most beautiful of his lovers to wear it in her neck. All this is told in a tone of voice of fairy tales. Since the appearance of the gutter image we have been working with the blindfold. In the neck of the lady the coin feels good, this is its place. 'I am hers.' 'How about her? Is she yours?' His expression changes with anger appearing first, then distress. 'At least they could take me off her neck when they sleep together. I don't want to hear them.' He gets agitated with distress. He says he is at a crossroad: getting away from this woman's neck he would be reduced to nothing; while if he stays, he would need to listen to all this; even if covering himself with a cushion he can still hear the groans of this woman. There is however a way out: as it is made of gold (until now this hasn't been revealed) it is clear why the pirate woman had stolen it in the first place. She would be its new owner, and she doesn't have a lover. However, she would only want to own the coin.

I ask Andres to distance himself a bit from the story of the coin and to think about it in its totality. He says that it is very similar to his story, but it manifests itself in a way that he never felt before. I ask him what he wants to do with the coin. He smiles and says: 'I think I have to refund it.' I tell him to do this. He puts it somewhere warm and says that he feels his body loosing its shape, that he doesn't want to get cold, because if he does he would take on the form of his chaste; he doesn't want to return belonging to anybody, or to be anyone's 'little jewel', referring to his image of a model child, model student, model husband, etc.

I draw his attention to the expression he used: 'refund' and its double significance. This semantic pointer leads us to other meanings (scenes)²⁵; the auto-destructive behaviour that is inferred from the phrase 'I have to refund it'

²⁵ As I described in my book 'Psychodrama psychotherapy' (Bustos 1975) pointers (or indicators) can be semantic, syntactic, affective and gestual.

becomes evident in the scene that seems connected with what I pointed out: his fiancée abandoned him when he was seventeen, and as a result of an impulse he took rat poison – the myth ‘I either belong to a woman, or I die’ emerges again.

Later sessions enabled us to understand depressive aspects of the myth; when this becomes conscious, it loses its greatest power: establishing itself as part of a natural order. Similarly to the Chinese boxes, the sequence of sessions opens successive spaces for the understanding of the localized conflict.

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3.

Dramatic action and inter-subjectivity: One-to-one psychodrama with a depressed patient²⁶

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Introduction

The origins of this paper are permeated by a series of questions regarding the relationship between my role of psychodramatist and that of psychiatrist. My own experience of being a client in psychodrama psychotherapy has enabled me to discover the meaning of relationship, interaction, sociometry and co-creation. Psychodrama has got into my blood-stream and irreversibly contaminated the way I see the world. Already a qualified psychiatrist at the time, I chose psychodrama for my psychotherapy training.

My psychodrama studies have brought me conceptual elements that I integrated with what until then had been just an experiential knowledge. These studies involved elements of practice, supervision, study groups, self-directed groups, teaching, institutional work – shaping a long process of maturing of my psychodramatist role.

As a psychiatrist, I was introduced to a knowledge based on a positivist perspective that perceives the truth to be a direct correlation between the knowledge and its object. It assumes that the object exists ‘in itself’ and it is there in order to be understood through observation. A good observer should not allow his subjectivity to ‘disturb’ the adequate perception of the phenomenon. In this way, psychiatry tends to isolate man, delimiting a realm of psychopathology that sees psychological suffering as something in itself, and related to factors that belong to the suffering individual (the so called environmental factors are considered ‘unchaining’, without a definition of what is understood by this ‘unchainment’). Psychological suffering is studied as a deviation from the norm (statistic concept) that needs to be individually corrected. It proposes the use of psycho-pharmaceutics as primary treatment, and psychotherapy – if necessary – as a form of support, focusing on the adjustment of the individual to her environment.

²⁶ The original title: ‘Ação dramática e intersubjetividade: Psicodrama bipessoal com uma paciente deprimida’. *Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama* 10, 2, pp. 23-52, 2002.

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The above are two conflicting approaches and managing this conflict makes part of my everyday practice. Of course, I notice therapeutic effects both in the medication as well as the psychotherapeutic intervention. However, these effects are not *equally* therapeutic. While the efficiency of drug treatment is assessed through its suppression of the symptoms, psychotherapy aims to understand and transform the relationship of man with himself and with his own life.

When I decided to write this paper, I was immersed in these questions. As a starting point, I decided to use the individual psychodrama work with a depressed patient, who had got better without using anti-depressive medication. This was an intense and rewarding process that has been transforming for both of us. The psychiatrist and psychodramatist within me were in constant discussion regarding certain issues: how can I understand the therapeutic relationship and dramatization as transforming and curing factors within this process? Would it possible to revise the diagnosis of this patient from a psychodramatic perspective? How can I make the transition between a positivist psychiatric view and the psychodramatic perspective that understands man as relational?

These are the questions that I will try to address within this chapter.

Introducing the patient

Cintia is a 45 years old architect working at a state owned company; her hobbies are painting and photography. She comes from an aristocratic family, where she has learnt to be 'good' and not to show anger or negative feelings. She had a 'normal' childhood, but remembers *getting out of her mother's lap too early*; her mother had various other children to look after, with Cintia being her fourth among five daughters and a son.

She is married to Otavio, a retired executive who is fifteen years older than her. He is an authoritarian man, whom she always saw as very strong 'with ready made answers for everything'. They don't have children. According to Cintia, their relationship was always dominated by him; he tends to dismiss all her initiatives that may differ from his own ideas. She submissively accepts the situation, feeling hypnotized by him.

For about a year they have not had sex. Following a diagnosis of benign prostate hyperplasia he says he considers himself impotent. In principle she had questioned this, but eventually has agreed to it.

As Cintia was feeling very depressed, distressed, despondent and found herself crying easily, in 1996 she looked for treatment. She had no disposition to work, to eat or even to bath. She felt as the worst of women. She had never felt like that before and was getting worse every day. She attributed her state to the difficulties in her marriage.

I diagnosed a Depressive Episode (between light and moderate) F32.10, as described in ICD-10²⁸, and proposed psychotherapy with the joint use of anti-depressants.

A week after our first assessment session, she returned for a second interview reporting that she felt better and more confident. She did not take the medication as she was concerned about the side-effects. However, she had thought a lot about our conversation, feeling alleviated that I had said she wouldn't need to resign from work, but only take medical leave. She had thought she was disabled and that she would need to spend the rest of her life at home, only with her husband and giving up other things in her life.

In front of this improvement of her symptoms I did not insist that she takes the medication. We agreed on having one-to-one psychotherapy, once a week.

I kept to myself certain questions and hypotheses: a) regarding such a quick improvement of her symptoms, I thought that this was related to the establishment of our relationship; the 'remedy' was a result of our interaction that gave her a new perspective; a therapeutic alliance was established; b) regarding her relationship with her husband – she was referring to him as being the villain, while herself as the victim; I thought about the marital relationship as the realm of investigations: we had to discover together who was this woman who intensely attached herself to a man whom she saw as a villain.

The psychotherapeutic process

During the early stages of this process we looked at Cintia's difficulties in her relationship with her husband. Initially she presented situations with which she attempted to convince me that her husband was oppressing her, while in the dramatizations her way of reacting to him were presented: 'the little good one', 'the worm', 'the slug' were some of the characters that emerged at this stage, with whom she dramatically interacted.

The session described below took place during the sixth month of her therapy and it illustrates this stage of the process.

Cintia arrives to the session complaining about being 'the little good one' in relation to her husband. She doesn't manage to change. When asked to show me a situation where this happened, she says this was the day before when she had arrived from work with the intention of sorting out some of her things and then going to sleep early. However, soon as she had arrived her husband called her to keep him company and to watch a film together on TV. Although it was against her wish, she gave in. I suggest the dramatization of this scene.

²⁸ International Classification of Diseases - 10th edition - published by the World Health Organisation.

She sets the scene up: the living room of her house, her husband sitting on the sofa watching TV. She arrives around 7 P.M. and starts the conversation:

C: Hi, how are you?

O: Hi Cintia. Make something for supper, then we could watch a good film on TV; a horror film.

C: Listen, I was thinking that I need to get up early tomorrow. I have to do an important presentation ... I think it is better to leave the film for another day. (She talks cautiously, as if she was concerned about his reaction.)

O: Cintia, you are thinking about your work again! They pay you so badly, and you know that you don't even have to work. You are out all day and I need to do everything here alone. I miss you so much! (In the role of Otavio she talks as a victim, with the clear intention of making Cintia feel guilty.) And today I'd like to spend some time together, watching a film.

C: (silence...)

T: Tell me what are you thinking Cintia?

C: This is how it is; I feel guilty. I hate horror films, but end up agreeing and staying with him, watching it. If I disagree, he would come with loads of arguments and would manage to convince me. I play the little good one and pretend that we are together, telling myself that it is only for this one time and that next time I'll do what I want. But I'm tired of all of this, and don't know how to get out of it.

T: As 'the little good one' is already here, let us see how she interacts with you. Step out of your role and show me what 'the little good one' does.

LGO: (Cintia in the role of 'the little good one') Just leave it, it doesn't cost anything watching the film, and besides, you don't even need to pay attention; you can think about your presentation tomorrow.

C: But I don't want it this way; I want to say to him freely what I want to do, and besides I am tired and wanted to go to sleep early today. Even if I don't earn a lot, I like my job, I am a prestigious professional and this is important for me.

LGO: Be quiet! (I ask her to physically show me how she acts towards Cintia. She picks up the cushion representing Cintia, squeezes it with both hands and talks with the authoritarian and energetic attitude of someone who doesn't allow any discussion.) You shouldn't show what you think; what would happen if you did? You can't expose yourself! Don't do this!

T: Little good one, say to Cintia: 'You can't show your needs because...'

LGO: If you show your needs, no one will accept you; everybody will think that you are ridiculous!

C: (Visibly moved, perplexed and surprised with the things that are emerging.) That's right. I have a feeling that if I exposed myself I would end up dying. I think I created 'the little good one' in order not to feel this way.

T: What is your response to 'the little good one'?

C: I don't respond; I just get paralyzed and do as she tells me. I can't do anything different.

T: Listen Cintia, it looks like it wasn't Otavio who convinced you. It is you who are convinced by 'the little good one' in order not to confront the fear of exposing yourself and the feeling that you may die in front of other peoples' criticism.

C: (Still under a strong impact, as if she was astonished by what she has discovered.) Yes. My God, I didn't know it was 'the little good one'! I am stunned! It seems like I am finding bits of myself that I have not known. But I'm loosing all this! I am a bit dazed, I don't know yet whether I will manage to free myself from this 'little good one'.

T: O.K. Let's sit down.

The session was coming to an end and we used the remaining time to elaborate on the scene. She looked astonished, 'floating'. She couldn't explain what had happened to her. On her way out she said she always got emotional during the sessions.

Recognition of Cintia's internal world

My intention with the above dramatization was to create a setting for the exploration of the climate that had imprisoned the client, without her being able to get out of it. Verbally we had already worked with the role of 'little good one'. It was important to outline her behaviour, a crystallized role that she performed in an alienated way. Slowly, Cintia started to shift the focus of her attention from her husband's behaviour onto her own ways of reacting, questioning what was happening inside of her. During this process she recovered her own responsibility regarding what was happening to her, instead of projecting her difficulties onto her husband. We could say that she had started to recognise herself, starting to see herself separate from her husband; although still with great difficulty, she started to get closer to her own material. She found it strange to think of herself as someone who acted in such a way, and that this way of acting had consequently produced a lot of her suffering. It was necessary that she re-lived the conflicting situation and that she entered this fully, making discoveries for herself.

For this we use dramatization. Firstly, it is very different when the client merely tells the facts. Sitting nearly immobile, the body remains alienated from the facts. When on the stage, the body moves and expresses itself. The gestures will reveal her emotions; as she walks around she also enters the climate of her imaginary and starts to produce. The body is in action and will create a bridge between the imaginary and the scenic space, creating on stage, in the 'as if', the

imprisoning plot of the drama. And, through performing roles, she more than just re-lives the situation: she experiences it critically, with the ability to observe. Through her own actions she will interpret these and discover their meaning. Seemingly, this is scene repetition. Because this action within the dramatic context, in a state of spontaneity, will unfold the threads of the various plots of which the protagonist wasn't aware of. And she is surprised and perplexed with her dramatic insight. 'That's right. I have a feeling that if I exposed myself I would end up dying. I think I created 'the little good one' in order not to feel this way.'

Recovering projections

Cintia discovered that she had an internal world, but also found it strange to recognise that there was something inside her producing her own distress. As the following session demonstrates, she resisted this thought and returned to project onto her husband the responsibility for her suffering.

Cintia reported having had a moment of great distress during the week. The scene: she came to São Paulo together with her husband, bringing him to his psychotherapy session. They had agreed the time for her to pick him up, but she got delayed due to traffic. On arrival she saw that he wasn't at the agreed meeting point and panicked, imagining that he would be furious with her, and that she - in spite of her reasons - would not be able to defend herself. In fact, her husband was patiently waiting for her at the newsstand. Nevertheless, for a long time she was feeling distressed, as if what she had imagined happened in reality too. I suggest taking this scene into the dramatic context.

Cintia is resistant at first, saying that her husband did not react rudely to her; she tries to convince me that the furious man she imagined did not exist. I tell her the following:

T: Cintia, we do actually know that he did not react critically; however, it seems *as if* before you two met, you had met with a man who was furious with your delay, *and it was in relation to this imaginary husband that you got distressed*. Should we see this imaginary scene, in order to better understand your distress?

Having been able to separate the reality of the fact that actually happened from the reality of the imagined fact, she agrees and we set up the scene:

T: O.K. you are driving your car, you have just arrived to the meeting point and can't see him. Think out loud.

C: (in role of herself) Oh my God! Otavio is not here and he will be furious with me and I won't be able to react. As usual, I won't be able to assert myself.

T: Reverse roles with Otavio in that moment when he arrives and sees you.

O: But what delay is this?! You know I can't stand when people are late, and if we have agreed something you need to stick to it! Beyond, I don't know why you had to go to work; your job is not even a big thing!

T: Reverse roles with Cintia.

C: (shrunk and very tense in soliloquy) This is what happens, I am distressed and I don't know what to do or say.

T: Very well, so you don't need to do anything. Just submerge into this distress and say 'I feel as if I was...'

C: As if I was a rag!

T: Ah, a rag! What is this rag like? Is it very dirty? Is it one of those that people stand on and wipe their feet? It must be very dirty and used, mustn't it? (Therapist wipes her feet on a piece of carpet marking the scenic space.)

C: That's how it is indeed. (Starts to laugh at what the therapist does.)

T: Well, we have got here a very dirty, ugly and used rag that everybody stands on wiping their feet. (Repeats the same gesture various times, playing with this, while Cintia laughs and loosens up.)

C: Yes, that is how it is. Very ugly, dirty and used.

T: O.K. Cintia, step out of the scene for a bit and let us take a look at it. Take a look at Otavio and the rag in which you feel you are transformed every time when he criticises you. When someone criticises you, you feel like a rag, feeling an enormous distress, because it seems like you stopped existing; you get all confused with this rag. For this reason you cannot react, because you don't feel like a person anymore, but just as a rag and this is really very distressing. But don't forget, you are not just a rag; although this is a part of you, it is not all of you. We both know that you are much more than this; you have already showed me many of your other sides here and I'm sure that there are many other things within you than what you have brought here or of what you yourself are aware of. It happens that in front of criticism, like that of Otavio's, you feel like a rag and get confused with it.

C: (in mirror) It is true. Every time someone criticises me, and not just my husband, I end up feeling terrible, as if I was a rag. It really feels like I don't exist, that I am nothing.

T: Yes. Come here. You, Cintia who is doing therapy with me here, are between the Cintia of this scene and the rag she turns into when criticised. Just stand here in the middle.

C: (Placing herself between Cintia from the scene and the rag, turning her back towards the latter) O.K. I'm here.

T: Have you noticed that you turned your back to the rag? I will tell you a secret. When turning our back on something that frightens us, this thing usually will get us from the back and dominate us. The best way of confronting a fear is facing it, because this way we can get to know it and learn how to deal with it. Carrying on turning your back on it is like running away and you won't

learn how to deal with the situation. It was for this reason that I said it does not matter if you don't know how to deal with your husband; if you manage to learn to deal with your fear and anxieties, you will know what you should do with him at times when you need to respond to him.

C: (Turns to face the rag while I am talking) I think I understand it a bit better; the penny is dropping.

T: That's good. We will also need to understand better the story of this rag, how and why has it appeared in your life? But this is for another session, OK?

C: OK

We finish the session, as Cintia reports feeling more alleviated.

She arrives more relaxed to the next session, saying that she is feeling much more alleviated. She continued to often feel distressed, but not through the whole of herself; this was just one of her aspects and she felt more able to better observe what this feeling was like. She managed to perceive in what way the feeling of being a rag appeared and she even started to have some fun with this. At a certain moment over the previous week when the feeling as a rag appeared, she took an object to concretise this character for herself in order to be able to see that it was only a part of her, and not her whole being.

She also reported something positive. She talked to her husband about attending a conference and found herself surprised by the fact that he did not react negatively. She knew that eventually he will start to blackmail her, as he has already started doing so by saying: 'But how do you think I will manage alone during those two days?' She told him that he should ask his own therapist about what to do in case he felt bad. Although she didn't feel completely confident, she has managed to think better and to use different ways of being in the relationship.

With the above described session I intend to stress a couple of points. Cintia was very tense, as if she had been walking on a minefield that filled her with terror. My intention was to help her create metaphors within this distressed climate, which would help her to explore it. It is important to note that at the beginning of the session her level of spontaneity was extremely low. She was able to rationally understand the differentiations I was making between the external and internal world, the group context and the dramatic context, the real and the imaginary husband; however, in her experience all these things were mixed up, presenting a threatening climate in front of which she was petrified. (This type of experience is characteristic to the first universe described by Moreno: there is no differentiation between fantasy and reality and no distinct recognition of the I and the other. This mixture of fantasy and reality is experienced in the marital relationship, as if she was saying: 'I think he will kill me if I'm late - he has already killed me; he treats me like a rag, I feel like a rag, I am a rag.')

While performing roles in the scene, her anxiety level was reduced and she became more spontaneous. I noticed that she felt more at ease while in role of her aggressive husband; in her own role however, she returned to the undifferentiated experience of anxiety. The use of metaphors had proven to be useful for the elaboration of this anxiety – by creating the character of the rag, a world parallel and analogous with Cintia's world was established; through performing the role of the rag, Cintia managed to distance herself and this helped her to discriminate her feelings.

She needed specific help in order to move from the scene with her husband to the 'rag' scene: *I played with this character*. Trivial as it may seem, but the fact is that from this moment onwards her anxiety has markedly diminished, she became spontaneous and an opening for elaboration was created. When Cintia had created the rag, this seemed as a horrible object to her with which she was deeply identified. While playing with this character, I was also telling and doing different things to her: I am not scared of the 'rag' I don't abandon it, nor do I treat it badly; I also don't confuse the 'rag' with Cintia herself – when playing with it and investigating this character in front of her, I show that the 'rag' is just a part of her and not the whole of her. I acted as someone who did not perceive her as if she was a 'rag' and my view may have functioned as a mirror in which she saw herself in a new way. She managed to make use of some of her other resources that until then had been submerged in her feeling of being a 'rag'. She started to have dramatic insight.

Resistances to the therapeutic process – a threatened alliance

The process described up until now could give the impression that everything happened quickly and easily. In fact, this is not exactly true. Up until the point of introducing and understanding the different characters, the process had flown with ease, with a well-established and good therapeutic alliance. In the following months however, the atmosphere of Cintia's home became more and more tense. She started to pay more attention to her feelings in relation to her husband's reactions to her suggestions. It was extremely difficult for her to identify with and admit 'negative' feelings such as frustration and anger; she tended to deny these and project them onto Otavio. The therapeutic process put her face to face with these feelings and this made her very anxious as she did not know what to do with them. She was concerned about arriving to a stage where the only option left would be separation from her husband. She came to say that her main objective was to transform her husband, to help him become healthier. She was un-resigned when he interrupted his own therapy, as she was hoping that their conflicts would be resolved as a result of a change in his attitude. It took her a long time to recognise that he did not want to change and she got

irritated with me when I pointed out that her husband, as she had presented him to me, seemed unwilling to change, him actually telling her this.

During our sessions Cintia kept talking about difficult situations that happened during the week, but she did not want to dramatize. A sense of tension developed in our relationship. I felt impelled to encourage her to resolve her problems, various suggestions of how to proceed crossing my mind. Although I did not consider it appropriate to tell her about these suggestions, I noticed that I was 'rooting' for her to free herself from that 'horrible man', to separate and become a 'free and settled' woman in life. I knew that she was responsible for her own suffering, but *I had a rooting feeling* for her to choose the 'liberated Cintia' instead of listening to an 'apathetic Cintia, who - as if she was old - has given up life.' It took me some time to clearly understand the feelings she evoked in me. I realized that I was also projecting onto this patient my own desires of accomplishment, that I wanted to transform her into a 'therapeutic success', due to a number of personal reasons. On the other hand, I also noticed that she was behaving in a way that tried to evoke in me someone who would save her from her difficulties, who would make choices for her, who would resolve her issues. Only when I became aware of this dimension of our relationship, was it possible for the following session to take place.

Cintia arrived complaining of apathy, not feeling strong enough to resist her husband's pressure. She wanted to visit a new photo exhibition and didn't know how to tell him about this and how to confront his reaction. She wanted to destroy this apathetic side of her, but felt dominated by it.

I concretized this apathy with a cushion. Immediately she expressed repugnance towards it. I noted her difficulty with relating to it and she agreed. I took on the role of her apathy saying:

'I don't want to think. I don't want to have to decide anything. I want someone else to do all the choosing for me. Enough! I don't want to think! I want Otavio to think, to choose; he should know what is best for my life, as I don't. I don't know what to do with my life, and it is better if Rosilda (the therapist) thinks for me, working out a way to stop my suffering.'

Watching this, Cintia immediately started to interact, questioning her apathy:

C: But you can't be like this! Your life is going to be a hell, you will be depressed.

A: (therapist continuing in this role) I don't want to think. If depressed, I take a pill or I ask to be hospitalized, or who knows, some natural medicine, as I don't like drugs.

C: That's how it really is, I don't know what to do; my God, what a predicament, someone please help me!

I return to my own role and ask how she is feeling. She says she doesn't see a way out of all this. I suggest that she continues to interact with her apathy. She tells the apathy that she does not want to accept being like that, as this is horrible, but she doesn't quite know what to do.

I step into the counter-role of apathy, the role of someone 'who knows and does everything': 'Be quiet! You are not allowed to think. It is me who does the thinking here! You only do as I order. I know what is good and what isn't good for you! And something else: you are going to eat bean-stew!' (Cintia hates bean-stew, while her husband loves it).

The dialogue continued in the same manner for a few minutes and as it was developing, Cintia realized how she tended to leave the choices and chances of her life to someone else.

In the following session she talked more clearly about her tendency to leave the thinking about her life to her husband or me, but couldn't explain why. She started to become aware of and to think about her own functioning; she started to think! She also noticed something very important: she wanted to be happy and thought that the only way of saving her marriage was by investing in her own happiness. She started to say things that were challenging of her husband's wishes, on many occasions she confronted his negative reactions, but also, he started to treat her much better compared to how he was with the 'little good one'.

Cintia was becoming aware of how she established relationships in life (and for her, life now meant more than just her husband) and I became more aware of the factors I experienced in our relationship; both factors of a personal nature, as well as feelings evoked in me by the patient's projective identification.

Considerations regarding psycho-dynamics

Although she had presented certain well-developed roles (for example her professional role), none of these seemed to occupy a distinct place in Cintia's life. During the therapy process she only seemed to exist as Otavio's wife. Therefore, in order to gain an initial psycho-dynamic understanding of this patient, it is worth analysing the relationship of this couple.

From the beginning of their relationship there seemed to be a mutual fantasy of having found their 'other half' in each other. She had found in him the 'strong man, who knows everything'; while he had found in her the woman who would never abandon him (she was his second wife). According to Bustos (1992, p.88-89), this is a supplementary relationship, in which there is no awareness of the relationship itself, nor of the existence of different people (in other words, this is a symbiotic relationship). The two partners form a whole, within which one supplements the other.

For years Cintia had tried to abolish her wish for differentiation, subordinating herself to her husband, feeding a fantasy of managing to feel herself complete by transforming herself into his extension. Her depression was the first factor to break this scheme. Psychotherapy was the other. In therapy, she started to differentiate herself and to recognise that she was frustrated in her

marriage. She became more aware of their relationship, although she had difficulties to claim her autonomy. Their relationship had started to show characteristics of complementariness, with complementary-roles of the dominating-dominated type (the dragon vs. the little good one). The way out of this complementariness started to be outlined as she managed to recover her aggression projected onto Otavio and as she stopped inciting his domineering of her; in other words, she stopped inciting him performing his pathologic internal complementary role.

Based on the characteristics of Cintia and Otavio's relationship, we can think of a psychodynamic psychodramatic diagnosis of this patient. Cintia wanted someone to think for her and to take care of her. It was a need to live in a satisfactory relationship of total dependence (I remember her telling me: 'I got out too early of my mother's lap.'). According to Bustos, this dynamic is characteristic of cluster one, and is 'responsible for the functions of dependency and incorporation.' (Bustos 1990, p.76)²⁹ The way Cintia was performing her role of wife was strongly marked by the elements of dependence of a daughter whose needs have not been met. It was in her role of wife that her anxiety would emerge and she would lose her spontaneity. Being a woman was unknown to her. At a certain advanced point of her therapy she said: 'I don't know how to be a woman; I am afraid of the idea of my husband getting better, because then I would need to leave being her saviour or nurse in order to become his woman – and I have no idea of what this means.' In order not to experience this difficulty, she created the 'little good one'. The price she paid was high: she lost her autonomy and became depressed. She wanted an experience of plenitude, but without having any knowledge of this kind of relationship, she chose someone who reproduced and perpetuated its very lack. It also wasn't by chance that she had conformed to her husband's sexual impotence. Having an impotent husband meant not having to deal with sexual stimuli. In spite of denying conflicts regarding sexuality, Cintia did not present a special interest regarding this, and when referring to sex she always did this in a dissociated manner, as if sex would be something incorporeal, a kind of activity that should be present in a marriage in order to satisfy what was expected. Moreno related the sexual role to the interaction patterns between the mother and the baby in the feeding process. (Moreno 1975 p.28) Cintia was unable to adequately perform her sexual role because she had not satisfactorily developed her own daughter role; she did not experience satisfactorily the dependent and symbiotic aspects within this role. Consequently, she did not know how to get in and out with integrity of an encounter relationship that would require commitment without losing herself and distancing without abandonment. Therefore, she presented difficulties related to the symbiotic phase of the matrix of identity and thus, problems

²⁹ The editor's note: For a more detailed description of the different dynamics characteristic of the role clusters, see Bustos's chapter in Figusch (2005).

related to the development of her identity in the roles of the maternal-dependent cluster. This diagnostic understanding is also based on what Fonseca (2000 p.79) calls 'relational psycho-socio-dynamics', making links between the relationships of the matrix of identity and the internalization of relational models – a concept used in relational psychoanalysis. It is worth stressing that, when talking about the relationship and relating, Fonseca also emphasises its opposite pair – separation, understanding this as an inherent and basic part of personality development and the ability of the individual of achieving the 'learning of relating-separating'.³⁰

Based on the above presented conception, a diagnostic approach to Cintia's case could include something of the type: moving from a psychiatric view that has detected 'depression' (understood as the description of symptoms that deviate from the norm) to the perspective that perceives a melancholic nucleus produced by someone who did not resolve the loss of (or separation from) the desired lap, which she never satisfactorily had. Here, I understand melancholy as the suffering due to the absence of the maternal lap, a shortcoming which imprisoned Cintia and prevented her from creating new ways to commensurate herself with what she was initially lacking.

Discussions

At this stage I would like to further elaborate on my understanding of two factors that I consider primordial in Cintia's psychotherapeutic process for the transformations that took place: the *therapeutic relationship* and the *experience of dramatic action* within the one-to-one setting.

1. The therapeutic relationship

In Moreno's understanding human beings only exist in a relationship. The 'I' can only exist together with a 'you' and it will only be accomplished in relationships through the interactions of roles.

Another of Moreno's considerations regarding the human being is that he is a creator, that is, man is always in transformation. A healthy man is a creative man (as opposed to the 'robot-man'), who doesn't just transform the world, but also transforms himself.

We can therefore say that in the Morenian conception relationship is a creative relationship, in which the relation itself and the individuals involved in it are in continuous transformation. This is the opposite of a crystallized relationship in which spontaneity is blocked. In a non-crystallized relationship

³⁰ The editor's note: For more details see chapter 6.

there isn't a ready and complete 'I' relating to a ready and complete 'you' - the I and the you are established in the inter-subjectivity, and are the outcome of a shared and co-created experience.

Understanding relation as a realm of creating subjectivity allows us an assessment of the degree of health of a relationship through the greater or lesser presence of spontaneity. A relationship with little spontaneity tends to be characterized by the crystallization of individuals in their roles.

In psychodrama it is common to assess the health of a relationship through the presence or absence of the tele factor. As it happened, Moreno defined tele in a confused way: in spite of perceiving it as something inter-personal, at various points in his writings he put it on the same footing with perception (therefore individual). This has resulted in various distortions, as for example considering tele to be the ability to perceive the other correctly. Tele is a relational phenomenon and, according to Aguiar's (1996 p.10) definition, it is the encounter of spontaneity within a common dramatic project. This is a definition that implicitly implies the idea of creative transformation of the relationship, that is, the idea of encounter. Therefore, tele is defined more as a joint move in the direction of creative spontaneity, than through perceptive elements.

Moreno defines transference to be the opposite of tele, considering this to be the pathological branch of tele. Perazzo disagrees with this statement, as in his perception, although inter-communicating, tele is an inter-personal phenomenon, while transference is an intra-psychic one. (Perazzo 1994 p.46) According to Bustos, Perazzo and Aguiar, tele and transference always co-exist in a given relationship. This co-existence can even prove synergic, where both factors can contribute towards co-creativity. What will determine whether transference is pathological or not, is if its presence produces anxiety and obstructs the flow of creative spontaneity, or if its presence is stimulating for the realization of the dramatic project. An example of this would be what in psychoanalysis is called 'friendly transference' - 'where a collaborative relationship is established, a sublimed investment in the analyst, (...) this acts as the engine of the cure, while the erotic and the hostile transference work as resistance.' (Baremlitt 1992 p.27) Friendly transference contributes to the establishment of the therapeutic alliance.³¹

In her second assessment session Cintia said that, following something I had said to her in our previous meeting, she started to look after herself better. We could think that at that moment tele was present, as both myself and the patient exhibited a common dramatic project: psychotherapy. It is true that in that moment our objectives were convergent and an opportunity favourable for the creative complementariness of the therapist and client roles was created, making it possible to engage in psychotherapy. However, as it can be seen along the description of this process, Cintia also assumed an attitude of putting herself

³¹ The editor's note: For more details on tele and transference see chapter 5.

in relationships where the other would think for her and she tried to encourage me to become the person who would discover 'her' cure. I think that these were the transferential elements present at the establishment of the initial therapeutic alliance and they were active with more or less intensity during the therapy.

Therefore, our relationship was characterized by presenting both telic and transferential elements. It is important to recognize these interactional qualities and to make use of them for the development of the dramatic project of the cure, understood as the liberation of creative spontaneity. If the presence of transferential elements is very intense, this impeding the spontaneous-creative flow of the relationship, then the work should be focused on the relationship itself - working through the client's experiences of the therapeutic relationship should be a priority. When however, the telic elements predominate, working with other contents of the patient becomes possible.

I would like to highlight here certain characteristics of the therapeutic relationship that give it unique dynamics and determine the limitations and possibilities of its scope.

The asymmetry of the therapeutic relationship

As Bustos (1992 p.42) points out, the responsibilities at the two poles of the therapeutic relationship are different. This means that all the therapist's actions, whether an intervention, an interpretation, a proposal for dramatization or a sharing, need to be submitted to the client's needs in order for them to be adequate and potentially therapeutic.

The introjection of the therapeutic relationship's relational model

Clients tend to introject the model of the therapeutic relationship both in their relationship with themselves, as well as others similar to them. It is as if the client would find a new mirror in the therapist, seeing herself through the eyes of this other 'you', and discover things that were unknown to her. Of course, this is not a peculiarity of the therapeutic relationship; it happens that within this relationship the therapist is invested with idealizations and his looks and attitude are given powers that are not present in other symmetric relationships of the patient's life.

Attitude directed towards encounter

I use the word encounter in the sense of this being established between people in an I-you relationship, as described by Martin Buber. Following on from Buber's ideas, Fonseca writes: 'man becomes I in his contact with a you'. (Fonseca 1980 p.38)

The management of transference

In his original definition of this phenomenon Freud (1973 p.1560) talks about loving and hostile feelings towards the analyst; feelings that do not have real foundations. In his view, these feelings appear as resistance to the analysis. Bustos (1979 p.39) however, understands transference both as being a defence (resistance) and as repressed (resisted) material.

According to Moreno (1983 p.23), transference is an inter-personal phenomenon that appears in a certain role.

Synthesising the above perspectives, in my view transference is an intrapsychic phenomenon; it manifests itself in a certain relationship, in a certain role. It has a repetitive character and tends to manifest itself in a stereotypic (and therefore not spontaneous) manner in various relationships where the individual performs roles belonging to the role cluster in which the unresolved conflict was originally experienced, this conflict being at the root of the transference in question.

It is important to recognise the signs that may identify the presence of transference and to distinguish this from tele. According to Bustos (1979 p.41), the manifestation of transference is accompanied by the increase of anxiety. In his view, in transference 'something has changed in the discourse, in its semantic, syntactic, affective or gestural aspects. The profound encounter breaks down, and in order to re-establish it, we need to clearly understand why and how it has broken down.' (Bustos 1992 p.47)

When predominated by tele, the dramatic project is congruent and co-creation is present. In the section where I wrote about the threat to the therapeutic alliance, the manifest dramatic project was maintained: our objective continued to be the construction of the therapeutic process. However, another, latent project had also emerged putting obstacles in front of the first one. How? Cintia wanted someone to think for her, not wanting to be independent and responsible for her own life. She avoided this anxiety by encouraging others to think for her. In psychoanalytic terms we could say that her defence mechanism was projective identification, through this projecting onto someone else a part of herself that was alien for her and producing anxiety, and she encouraged this other to play this projected part.

By linking it to the concept of reverie³², Almeida further develops Bion's contribution to the concept:

Reverie is the analyst's potential to receive, assess, 'des-intoxicate', metabolize and re-modify the projections, returning them in a clarified and tolerable form to the analysed. This is similar to how the maternal intuition is able to deal with the child's anxieties: the mother takes care of the frightened child and calms him down with affection. (Almeida 1996 p.66)

This mechanism worked successfully with Cintia's husband, with whom she developed a symbiotic relationship that culminated in her depression. With me she attempted to create the dramatic project of a child, who does not yet feel sufficiently ready to leave the lap (a feeling she reported to have had in relation to her mother). At first I felt seduced to complement her child role, which needed my lap. However, when I managed to perceive and elaborate on what was happening (the similarity with the analyst or mother described above regarding the reverie), this enabled me to propose the dramatization in which the conflict between the characters of 'apathy' and 'the one who knows everything' became evident. This dramatization allowed us to unveil the latent dramatic project and to separate this from the manifest one. Therefore, we were able to co-create an arena for the elaboration of her other relationships and spontaneity has returned into our relationship.

The work of reconstruction

In the above example the dramatization did not set out to reveal a regressive scene in which the baby, prematurely deprived from the maternal lap would emerge, as this could have been expected following the exploration of the links that configure the 'transferential route' (Perazzo 1994 p.58) and lead to reparatory action.

³² The editor's note: Klein wrote about the process which provides a connective tissue in the personality. In her view, the basis of a feeling of integration, of steadiness, of inner security, is the consequence of the introjection of an object who loves and protects the self and is loved and protected by the self. Bion has further developed Klein's theory, stressing the *function* of this introjected object, which is essentially to make feelings thinkable, understandable and therefore tolerable. He described how it is necessary for a healthy emotional development to have the experience of a parental object who can receive a cluster of sensations, feelings and discomforts that the child cannot give a name to and is therefore unable to think about. The function of this object, defined by Bion as 'alpha function' or 'reverie' is the one of keeping in the mind, giving a meaning, making thinkable those feelings for the child also. It is necessary, in order to fulfil this function that the parental object should be able to tolerate the psychic pain the child cannot tolerate himself. After repeated experiences of this containment, such a function can be internalised by the child as he grows up and gradually becomes able to better deal with his anxiety within his own mental space. (Williams 1997 pp.123-124)

For Cintia, it seemed that she was born on the day she met Otavio. When questioned about the times before this, she gave a stereotypical answer: 'I didn't have problems, everything was *normal*.' Bit by bit, this 'normal' from before her marriage was described as a series of warm and extinguished feelings, feelings of emptiness and abandonment. Her family was formal and distant, and did not tolerate the expression of any intense feelings. Her contact with such an authoritarian husband obliged her to confront the feelings she had never learnt to recognize in herself, her anger, frustration and needs. Therefore, her statement these characters (feelings) were born as a defence of the distress of marriage was true. In a certain way, part of her was also only just born within this marriage, and she had enormous difficulties to recognize, accept and welcome this new-born Cintia. On the other hand, in order not to feel the anxiety of this baby whom she could not recognize and take care of, she created the 'little good one', the 'worm' and the 'rag' - victims of an angry and mad dragon which, unable to recognize in herself, she projected onto Otavio.

Within the therapeutic relationship she found recognition, acceptance and containment of her inner dragon. She managed to slowly recover first her anger and anxieties, in order to later also recognise the famished and deprived baby that she had inside of herself.

She started to recover some of her feelings from her life before the marriage, her ability to talk about feeling deprived and alone during her childhood. In doing so she recovered what she was missing, the baby she could never see, because of never having felt seen. It was interesting that during this stage, she started to pay more attention to television and billboard adverts showing babies.

We can say that the 'reparatory action' did not happen based on the patient's recollections. Strictly speaking, it wasn't an exploration and elaboration of transference in the sense of how this was described above. It was a reconstruction of her identity and of her story. In their vocabulary of psychoanalysis Laplanche and Pontalis refer to 'construction' as a 'term proposed by Freud to designate an explanation by the analyst which is more extensive and further removed from the material than an interpretation, and which aims essentially at the reconstruction of a part of the subject's childhood history in both its real and its fantasy aspects.' (Laplanche and Pontalis 1988 p.88) Further on, under the same entry of 'construction', a quote by Freud is reproduced: 'Quite often we do not succeed in bringing the patient to recollect what has been repressed. Instead of that, if the analysis is carried out correctly, we produce in him an assured conviction of the truth of construction which achieves the same therapeutic result as a recaptured memory.' (Laplanche and Pontalis 1988 p.88)

2. Dramatization in one-to-one psychodrama

One-to-one psychodrama is a form of assistance involving only of two people - 'the therapeutic dyad' - as Moreno (1983 p.18) called it. Aguiar refers to one-to-one psychodrama as this being 'spontaneous theatre in one of its most creative forms'. (Aguiar 1988 p.32)

However, before the actual dramatization in one-to-one psychodrama, there is another question to answer: Why dramatize?

During his Viennese period, while profoundly interested in the creative man and the study of spontaneity through the Theatre of Spontaneity, Moreno talked about the process through which, while dramatizing a scene and so experiencing it for a second time, we free ourselves from the first experience. (Moreno 1984 p.108) When dramatizing it, the individual does more than just telling her story; she re-creates it. This is an opening for the state of creative spontaneity, with an experience of this being liberating, an experience of freedom. The state of spontaneity within the scenic space has a revitalizing effect, an effect the patient will not experience when simply giving a verbal account of her story. This avoids rationalizations that aim only to distance the individual from being in touch with her true feelings and it creates possibilities to find solutions for her life. Of course, talking also has its place and meaning when elaborating situations experienced in a dramatization, or when verbalizing feelings and fantasies experienced within the therapeutic relationship.

Another aspect mentioned by Moreno, and which is directly related to the healing potential of psychodrama, is the possibility of laughing at something that until then was only seen as sinister or tragic. Mascarenhas adds, that in the dramatization the protagonist initially only sees herself as being imprisoned by feelings of nightmare, strangeness and surprise. Through creation however, in her production she recognises the representation of facts from her life up until then denied or dissociated. 'Beyond the fright or together with it the joy of discovery emerges together with the joy of having created something aesthetic; this is the marvellous, with a sense of plenitude and reparation.' (Mascarenhas 1995 p.30) This shift from the sinister to the playful happens through the development of the protagonist's observer ego, whom then can start to look at her own production from a different perspective and give it new meaning.³³

Another important point is the involvement of the body. Moreno writes that 'there are profound layers within the psyche, which are impenetrable for the technique of word association, because these layers are situated beneath the formulation of language.' (Moreno 1984 p.133)

Finally, there is also the interpretative function of dramatization. According to Almeida, this interpretative function is fulfilled through the action itself. In his view interpreting means symbolising and he compares dramatization to play,

³³ The editor's note: For more details see Mascarenhas's chapter in Figusch (2005).

therefore having the statute of symbolization. He notes that dramatization, as a poetic expression of play, is a form of interpretation in itself: 'a good dramatization, if carried out appropriately, dispenses of explanatory words. An understanding attitude is enough. The dramatic interpretation is *in the action*.' (Almeida 1994 p.7)

Let us go back to our initial question: Why dramatize?

In order to awaken the creative man, the only one able to heal. During the dramatization the protagonist re-creates her illness and expulses it, by playing it out in the scenic space. She gets surprised by it, laughs at it, and transforms it. She isn't any longer dominated by it, she is its creator and she integrates it. By the means of the creative spontaneity, what until then was sinister or tragic, has now changed into something playful, and through this new meanings and possibilities are created. It isn't just the illness that was re-created and new meaning given to. The protagonist and the group will also leave this process renewed, vaccinated against the ghosts they created and which (through the dramatization) they have expulsed and integrated at the same time.

In the following, I would like to point out certain specificities of the dramatization in one-to-one psychodrama.

The dramatic action in one-to-one psychodrama

Compared to larger groups, in one-to-one psychodrama the dramatization involves the director more closely. The number of participants is reduced, the use of auxiliary egos limited and there is no audience. Characters are represented by objects; the patient steps into the space marked by these objects, performs the different roles and gives continuity to the scene.

On the other hand, it is often important for the therapist to step out of the director role and take on the role of the auxiliary ego in order to support, maintain or recover the protagonist's warm-up within the scene; or even to explore the sociometric climate of the dramatized relationship, a function that the auxiliary ego is able to perceive through experience, being inside the scene. While taking on roles during dramatizations with Cintia, I many times got hold of aspects that I would have missed from a distance and I was surprised with the things I was able to create within a role and that I discovered what 'I knew without knowing that I knew it.' Of course, this phenomenon becomes possible given that it happens in a spontaneous state and in a telic realm.

The transition between the roles of the director and auxiliary ego has to be done carefully, as while the therapist acts as auxiliary ego, the scene has no director. One of my own criteria for acting as auxiliary ego is to make a precise intervention that aims to clarify a certain question or doubt regarding a certain character, which the protagonist does not manage to play well. It can happen that the protagonist cools down (looses the warm-up) in a certain role or that she

performs it in a stereotypical way, this resulting in a decrease of the scene's spontaneity level, with the protagonist ending up presenting rationalizations or wanting to get into a conversation rather than carrying on with the scene. At these moments I encourage the protagonist to carry on with the interaction and I step into the counter-role in question, holding this until I notice that her state of spontaneity was recovered again, and the protagonist becomes able to perform the roles of her scene alone, moving on with the exploration of the conflict. It is a moment that requires caution and the therapist needs to be ready to interrupt the scene, if necessary, in order to investigate other possible reasons (for example transference issues) for the protagonist's resistance to the dramatization.

Brito³⁴ analyses the conditions of a good transition between the therapist's roles of director and auxiliary ego in one-to-one psychodrama. In this author's opinion, the possibility of this transition to take place without major difficulties depends on the therapist's availability to migrate from one place to another, instead of being only concerned with the dramatic production itself. She further adds that the therapist's openness for co-existence and co-experience will help this transition, within which the therapist is 'not afraid of and does not avoid mixing with the patient' in his search for a spontaneous and creative interaction. (Brito 1999 p.4-5) I would only like to amend one thing: in 'not being afraid of and not avoiding the mixing with the patient', what gives effectiveness to the psychodramatist is his ability to move in and out of this admixture and consequently, his ability to make links between the inside and outside of the 'admixture'.

This transition will not necessarily threaten the scene. As Cukier writes: '[...] even if at times we feel confused, I don't think that it is the fact of acting in the dramatizations that is responsible for this confusion, but the emerging material.' (Cukier 1992 p.25)

In order to create a favourable atmosphere for co-creation, the therapist's attitude in one-to-one psychodrama is especially important. Falivene Alves highlights the therapist's 'function of spectator-participant' in one-to-one therapies. (Falivene Alves 1994 p.54)³⁵

Fonseca (1999 p.314) also draws attention to the importance of the therapist's ability to create a playful atmosphere, which is essential for insight and elaboration. An example of this in our work with Cintia was the scene when I played with the 'rag'; as a result the patient managed to get out of the tragic climate and enter a more relaxed one, offering her more possibilities to elaborate the conflict of this scene.

When the level of spontaneity decreases, it is important to carry out a judicious analysis of the situation, trying to find out on which level did the block appear - is it on the level of the scene's sociometry or on the level of the

³⁴ The editor's note: See chapter 1.

³⁵ The editor's note: For more details see Falivene Alves's chapter in Figusch 2005.

therapeutic relationship? Brito writes: 'The idea that therapist and patient constitute a group, demands - from the therapist's point of view - a continuous sociometric analysis.' (Brilo 1999 p.3) Otherwise the work may get depleted, this resulting in the well known sense of the client feeling ridiculous while dramatizing; and the worst that can happen is attributing to the technique a responsibility that doesn't belong to it, instead of trying to find in the relationships (of the patient, the therapist or the therapeutic relationship) the scene that cannot be revealed.

Let us now return to Cintia's therapeutic process.

Considerations regarding the applied psychodramatic techniques

The considerations I intend to present here refer to the observation of the effects of the use of psychodramatic techniques within this one-to-one work.

Dramatizing scenes of conflict within the marital relationship

During the first months of Cintia's therapy we frequently dramatized everyday scenarios. The scenarios and the characters were marked out by cushions, while the scenic space was outlined by a rug I have in the centre of my consultation room. The work was focused on the sociometric exploration of the scene(s), during which Cintia performed the different characters involved. I interviewed them and/or suggested that they interact. I wanted to gain a better understanding of her internal and relational world, but also to adjust the patient to perceive herself from other roles and mainly, to see her husband from his role.

This work has led to numerous results: the more she dramatized, the more her spontaneity developed and she found herself surprised with her discoveries. She became more aware of the way she related to her husband. She developed her observer ego.

Dramatic performance of aggressive roles

Performing the role of her husband and his authoritarianism has enabled Cintia to get in touch with feelings of her own anger that she used to repress. During the work I invited her to produce metaphors of her relationship. This is how the images of the dragon vs. the worm, the general who lives in the quarter vs. the obedient private, etc. emerged. I was interested, at first whether she could take on and perform these roles, developing their plot. Initially she was frightened, but later on she became freer and enjoyed herself. Finally, she started to inquire about how these characters were related to aspects of herself.

Creating characters – a new way of thinking

Cintia produced characters as metaphors for her distress. It was as if she became able to name the feelings that seemed incomprehensible and 'a bit mad' to her. As she became able to create metaphors for highly anxiety provoking situations, she managed to recover parts of herself that until then were chaotic and disorganised, these parts starting to have their identity, structure, and story. By creating a new way of thinking, and a language to express chaotic and undifferentiated parts of her internal world, her personality became more integrated and she got used to the power these parts had, enriching herself.

Dramatizations without structured scenes

On occasions when Cintia brought vague or partial complaints, her distress of a frightening and tragic atmosphere (these being characteristic undifferentiated experiences of the Morenian first universe), it was not possible to dramatize with structured scenes. When in touch with these experiences, the patient doesn't have a clear notion of context, space or time; she would only report, when able to do so, vague and undefined feelings, or often would express herself through gestures – that the therapist needs to be able to detect and point out.

On these occasions we worked sitting down; however, not necessarily only verbally. I concretized her feelings with cushions, placing these in the centre of the room or closer to her, asking her to observe the feeling and tell me what she was able to perceive; or, if possible, to interact with the feeling. Often, the interaction that occurred was a twitch of her mouth. I pointed this out: 'When this affliction appears, you pull a face, don't you?' She smiled and loosened up (increasing her level of spontaneity) and managed to distance herself from the situation, observing it better. It was as if I had placed her in a mirror position in order to observe the scene from a distance. By doing this she was then able to think and elaborate a bit more on the material that had emerged. At times she couldn't say what a certain feeling represented, and so I stepped out of my director role and into the role of the auxiliary ego in order to do a double – this often helped her to talk about how she felt, and she seemed to welcome the double; it seemed that she felt accompanied. As I didn't have another auxiliary ego, I always had to stay attentive of returning to my director role in order not to lose the management of the session and to help her elaborate on the emerged material.

The stage as a mirror of the self

The experiences of the dramatic context had such powerful effects that Cintia identified the scenic space as her own internal world. Arriving to the sessions, she looked at the rug saying: 'Where did we stop last week? Oh, yes. It is that volcano that I don't want to see.' I mentioned the volcano in this instance, but she started nearly all the sessions in the same manner: she looked at the rug and 'saw' on it the theme she had not finished with, the character who still dominated her, a difficulty that she had not managed to overcome yet. She already clearly separated the group context from the dramatic context, with the two both being present at the same time during the session. She was able to move from one to the other and to link them up, developing through these shifts her thinking about herself.

This is a characteristic exclusive of psychodrama. And it also gives it extreme richness. Cintia discovered a stage inside of herself, discovered that something inside her created characters and learnt how to interact with these. She developed a new and very important role, that of the conscious author of her own plot. Without knowing it, she became a dramaturge and thinker of scenes about herself.

Conclusions

The objective of this paper was to present the issues related to the therapeutic relationship and the dramatic action as healing factors in the therapeutic process of Cintia's one-to-one psychodrama.

In my understanding, the therapeutic relationship offers conditions for the establishment of a new bond, in which the therapist attentively follows the manifestation of transference, but also offers his spontaneity for the co-creation of an unprecedented relational model, which enables the patient the develop new ways of relating. Their relationship creates a realm of inter-subjectivity in which both the therapist and the client are transformed, at the same time as they explore this transformation. As we are dealing with a relationship that is in the client's service and therefore asymmetric, the therapist should use his subjectivity as a therapeutic instrument.

The psychodramatic action introduces a realm of expression and creation that integrates cognitive, sensory, emotional, imaginary and symbolic aspects, contributing to the development of a new language and a new way of thinking, through the experiences of the here-and-now and the as if.

The dramatization brings an opening for the state of creative spontaneity, through which the protagonist recreates her story, giving it new meaning. It allows access to the deeper layers of the psyche, which may not be accessible through an exclusively verbal approach. It allows access to sinister and

unspeakable climates and to create the path towards the pathetic and the playful. Getting to the playful results in the liberating experience of creating new meanings and possibilities.

In Cintia's case, the dramatization presented specific characteristics: the dramatization of scenes of the marital conflict and of the aggressive roles made it possible for her to recover the material she projected onto the husband and to recognise her internal world. The production of metaphors (characters) created a language through which she learnt to name her feelings. Dramatizations with unstructured scenes were a very valuable resource for working with partial sensations that provoked high distress in the patient. The dramatic action as a whole has helped her to recognize and integrate parts of her personality that were alienated from her identity and to learn to think in scenes about herself.

My original approach to this patient came from a psychiatric perspective. I carried out a clinical assessment and formulated a diagnosis based on the ICD-10 and proposed the use of medication. This was an intervention which had as its criterion of healing the remission of symptoms presented at the time. However, as the psychotherapeutic process started, I developed my work with another concept of healing: the liberation of creative spontaneity, that is, the individual's ability to create new relationships with herself and the world, stepping out of the relational cultural conserve that had kept her imprisoned.

This change of conception was accompanied by the shift from a psychiatric perspective to a psychodramatic one. This shift happened as I started to take into account the existence of my own relationship with the patient, and the effects of this on her treatment. Beyond this, this transition was also accompanied by a change from the psychiatric attitude preoccupied with the recording and enumerating of symptoms, to a psychotherapeutic attitude, which concerned itself trying to find meaning between what the patient presented and her relational (real or imaginary) world. In order for this shift to happen, it was necessary to think about man as a relational being.

I tried therefore, to find a different diagnostic understanding that is compatible with the psychodrama theory. The concepts of role, matrix of identity and clusters have allowed me to understand the relational dynamics of Cintia. However, in order to obtain a more detailed understanding of her intra-psychic functioning, I turned to elements of relational psychoanalysis (for example: projective identification, 'reverie', construction, transference), concepts aimed to understand the relationship, its mechanisms and the production of inter-subjectivity, this being the area I intended to explore within this work.

While writing, I covered certain aspects from the approach of psychiatry, psychodrama and psychoanalysis. Different forms of approach that develop distinct conceptions refer to different realms of knowledge. These are paths that cross and interweave, forming a texture, fabric and structures under continuous construction. A fabric made of knowledge, of questions, of answers, of not knowing, of mysteries, of disagreement, of knowing, of ignorance. While writing,

I used references that seemed adequate for weaving the fabric of knowledge that I today have regarding the therapeutic process of Cintia. Psychodrama was my main source. It is indispensable to go back to its roots, to untangle them, to get to know them. Its transformation is the result of the experience of each psychodramatist, building and sharing their knowledge. The perspectives depend on where to direct our gaze. My gaze is directed towards integrating psychodrama with other forms of knowledge; I believe that the theoretical references of psychodrama (not just the clinical ones) can be enriched by other areas of knowledge that are compatible with the concept of relational man.

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4. Play in one-to-one psychotherapy³⁶

*Arthur Kaufman*³⁷

Introduction

When thinking about the use of toys in the psychotherapy of adults, it needs to be taken into consideration that the toys destined for children are made by adults, based on the values of the 'adult world', or at least, what the adult thinks is good for the child to play with. In this sense, toys are nothing else than concretizations of the figures and characters of the internal world of adults.

The most studied and widespread psychotherapy techniques are the verbal ones; more recent experimentations however have created opportunities of learning new languages (the language of modelling, corporal and dramatic languages) that according to Fiorini (1976) 'have been relegated to the age of healthy child-play by a repressive culture.'

'Play is the movement of freedom' says Bally (1964). While Groos (in Bally 1964) argues that 'the purpose of play is the elimination of hostile feelings and fear.'

According to Huizinga (1971), if we try to sum up the formal characteristics of play, we could consider it as a voluntary activity or engagement, performed within clearly determined time and space boundaries, following freely consented, but absolutely obligatory rules, endowed with a purpose in itself; it can be consciously taken as 'not serious' and external to habitual life, but at the same time able to intensely and totally absorb the player.

In Freud's view (in Aberastury 1962), play is the repetition of traumatic situations with the objective of working through them; by doing actively what he suffered passively, the child manages to adapt to reality. Therefore, Freud considers the inhibition of play to be an indication of neurosis: a child who doesn't play, will not work through difficult everyday life situations, and will pathologically channel these into symptoms.

Non-directive play-therapy - according to Axline (1972) - is an opportunity given to children to expand through playing their feelings of tension, aggression, fear and insecurity, in such a manner that when reaching a certain emotional

³⁶ The original title: 'O jogo em psicoterapia individual'. In *Revista da FEBRAP* 1, 2, pp.82-86, 1978

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stability, they will perceive their ability of accomplishing themselves as individuals, of thinking for themselves, of making their own decisions, of becoming psychologically more mature and therefore of 'becoming a person'.

Moreno (1972) states that an ill person is the result of a system of disabled relationships, and this, instead of stimulating the faith in oneself and one's own spontaneity, will lead to the development of a cult of submission, dependency and subordination, considering untouchable the things that already exist around this person.

The objectives of this paper

1. To try and create a 'psychodrama-group of the internalized characters of the patient's social atom' (Moreno 1972)
2. Through the use of symbolism and fantasy to facilitate the expression of feelings related to people, objects and facts.
3. To find a more 'emotional' form of treatment that may be indicated for people whose strongest defence mechanisms are rationalization and intellectualization.
4. To commensurate a training of spontaneity and creativity.
5. To create a new work instrument.
6. To adequately apply this new instrument.

The working method

The experience to be described below combines playful elements (toys) with the psychodrama technique in the one-to-one psychotherapy of adults.

The toys are usually kept in a cupboard in my therapy room and taken out from there when needed. The same collection of objects is used by all patients. I usually don't determine which objects should be used in a certain scene; choosing the right type and amount of toys is the patient's responsibility.

The images are set up by the patient with the aim of externalizing an internal situation. Being concretized within the dramatic context will allow an easier therapeutic handling of this internal image. From the confrontation of the internal image with the external one, the possibility of a new internal image emerges, that is more adequate to the external reality.

The propelling spring of this work is the possibility of relying on objects in order to carry out dramatizations in one-to-one psychotherapy sessions. When collecting the toys, I thought of situations that frequently appear in therapy: affective, familial, sexual, aggressive, professional, etc. conflicts. Therefore, I selected objects that could be representative of these situations.

Having got all this material, I still had not had an idea of how they could work as a whole. After using them for some time, a unit, a synthetic work instrument started to take shape, in form of a therapeutic kit. Some toys are used in more specific situations, while others tend to be used as 'support' in various situations.

Part of this kit at the moment are: the Atmax (a game with connectable acrylic elements in the shape of rings and discs), toy soldiers, puppets, the 'family', baby-dolls, gendered dolls, whistles, tambourines, toy animals as well as cushions, small benches and chairs and pieces of coloured and printed fabric.

The therapeutic work

Bustos (1975) uses the term 'psychodrama psychotherapy focused on the individual' for all forms of psychodrama psychotherapy where the attention is focused on one person. One form of this is 'one-to-one psychodrama psychotherapy', without the involvement of auxiliary egos. The action is carried out through dramatic representations, in which the patient performs all the roles; occasionally the therapist may also play some roles.

Verbal interventions according to Bustos (1974) consist of the following: colloquial interventions, remarks and interpretations. The applied *psychodrama resources* are: the role-play of internalized characters personified in the dramatic scene (when a person from the patient's social atom is 'brought' to the session through role-play), soliloquy, role reversal, the therapist's direct intervention, dialogue, the concretization of symptoms, non-verbal action and the dramatization of dreams (onirodrama).

Carrying out and evaluating the work - Clinical examples

Suely

Suely is a twenty-three years old single medic, with complaints of shyness, isolation and passivity. She has very few friendships, has never been to a party, has never had a boyfriend and feels ashamed to go to the beach because of her obesity. She only talks to her father about medical school and medicine. She describes her mother as a 'super-mum', at times feeling that she is an adopted daughter. At university she has isolated herself from her colleagues, referring to herself as 'the boring'. She shows a need to do well in everything she undertakes, describing this as the 'need to always be good.'

During the first few sessions our initial contact was difficult, Suely presenting herself to be very rationalizing and competitive and showing a lot of resistance to allowing herself to get in touch with any feelings.

During our fourth session she says that 'people find her aggressive'. I ask her to create a symbolic image of her aggression using toys. She doesn't like the idea too much, but eventually agrees. She places a 'barrier' (a small bench) between an armed soldier (her) and a 'dead' doll (people). We use psychodrama in order to work - through functional approach³⁸ - on the fantasy level with this image constructed with toys. She lies down on the floor and takes on the role of the doll, who complains of 'being dead' as the soldier has killed her out of meanness. Following this she reverses roles with the soldier. The soldier says he killed the doll, because he couldn't be as happy as the doll was; he killed her because of feeling very envious.

During our discussion following the dramatization Suely says that she feels bad, because it was very difficult for her to admit being 'aggressive and envious'. She talks about her feelings of envy and anger towards her sister, because her weight-loss programme has been successful.

In our sixth session she reports her wish for being a 'normal' person, that is a 'person equal of others'. As she doesn't manage to explain what exactly this means, we resort to the use of the Atmax. She builds a very disjointed and abstract symbolic image (rational or conceptual approach³⁹) with the following components: work, recreation, day-to-day, love, hope and ideal. There are no people (relatives or friends) present in this image; love is valued as something abstract and remote; while work is very prominent (it stands out). I try to point out that this image of a normal person is her actual self-image, to which she agrees.

During our 18th session she tells me that she is frightened and that she is not losing weight anymore. She cannot define what frightens her. With the use of toys we do a symbolic dramatization. Using the Atmax, she builds a very tall structure, placing a naked baby-doll, clinging onto the top of this structure. She says it is hanging on a very fine thread, this thread consisting of work, food, Debora (her friend) and I (therapist). It is noticeable that although presently she feels the danger of falling, there is still a positive aspect to this structure, namely that she had constructed it herself and that she managed to climb it.

In another session she talks about her grandmother being taken seriously ill. With the exception of Suely and her father no one knows how serious the grandmother's illness is, but her father doesn't seem to care a lot. As a result she is the one who takes care of everything: she has to visit her grandmother, she needs to take the necessary arrangements, has to hide the fact from the family, and still go to work at the hospital and do her shifts. She says this situation is wearing her out and she can't manage anymore. Using the toys she sets up a symbolic image: two couples and a girl sunbathing on a beach. Further back is a high barrier (a small bench), with an armed soldier standing on it. On the other

³⁸ The dramatization happens on fantasy level.

³⁹ Dramatization is symbolic.

side of this barrier there is a person lying on the floor (a doll), maybe ill, maybe dead. Through the use of functional approach we bring this image to life on the fantasy level: the girl makes an attempt to cross to the other side of the barrier in order to help the person lying on the floor, but she is obstructed by the soldier.

Her most important observation was regarding how the 'girl' felt being left on the beach, near the two couples (probably also representing her active and inhibited sides), in a way that - even if putting herself in risk by doing so - she always needs to find something to do in order to feel useful, important and not to have the feeling of 'being left'.

For a number of sessions Suely was expressing anxiety in relation to an exam at medical school that was approaching. Following a few verbal sessions with her anxiety running high, we resort to dramatization using the toys.

I ask her to create a symbolic image of this exam. She places in the fore-front a small chair with a doll sitting on it in front of a piece of fabric (her doing the exam); behind there is a fallen, 'dead' doll (the way she would feel if she failed); at the side of the bench there is an armed soldier and in front a puppet of 'mature age' holding hands with a doll, both lying on the floor (the doll is Suely and the puppet is the hospital, 'very unrewarding, but at least familiar'); in front of these two there is a pink doll (an objective to be achieved).

After having put the image together, she smiles, arriving readily to the conclusion that the 'unrewarding but familiar' puppet represents, through identification, her father, who probably would not show any enthusiasm if she passed the exam, but would be very critical if she failed. She remembers that when passing her university entry exam her father did not congratulate her; he merely said that she 'only did her duty'. Then she says that she has never thought about what her father's expectations may be, but only now she understands how important his approval of this exam is for her relationship with him.

Valter

Valter is a forty-four years old single man living with his parents. A few years earlier he started a Law course, but interrupted this half way through. Presently he doesn't work and hardly leaves the house, being sustained by his parents. He presents difficulties in his relationship with them, sporadic auditory hallucinations, fear of people on the street, persecutory ideation and preoccupation with himself.

He arrives stirred up to one of our sessions, complaining about his mother's (65 years old) shouting that 'unnerves' him. She shouts for no reason, swears and accuses her 81 years old husband of having various lovers. Valter complains for a good few minutes and finishes by saying that today he felt like punching his mother, but contained himself.

I suggest that he creates a symbolic image of his relationship with his mother, using the toys; a suggestion he accepts. He picks up the pair of gendered dolls and lays them down side-by-side, saying that these are his mother and father. He places the doll representing the mother facing down and places three big whistles over her body, representing her aggression. In front of them he places a baby-doll representing him, with a revolver in his hands 'to shoot mother'. Close behind this baby-doll there is an armed soldier, the 'superman' Valter would like to be. Next to this is a male puppet (of 'mature age') representing their neighbours.

Once the image is complete, I ask Valter to describe it as if it had been constructed by someone else, and to give it a name. He calls it 'frolic'. With difficulties, he describes the image, at times forgetting about my instruction to do it as if the image has been set up by someone else.

Following this, entering the level of fantasy, I ask him to take on the role of 'superman', and to take a look at Valter down there. According to superman, despite of being 44, Valter is a child who needs protection; he says that Valter's only chance to grow up is to be far from his parents and to get a job, but he doesn't have the will power to do this. I ask superman to talk to Valter and he says: 'Can't you remember that during this last journey you managed to be far from them; you managed to go to the cinema alone, to do the shopping, walking? Why don't you carry on?' Following this he takes on the role of the neighbour: he introduces himself, saying that he is Portuguese, the owner of a grocery where Valter's family do their shopping. He says he is a person who 'likes spying on the life of others'. The racket Valter's mother makes irritates him, he doesn't understand why all this shouting; 'maybe because one of them was unfaithful.' With regards to Valter he thinks that 'he is a strange person who doesn't work, he must be ill, maybe lost his marbles', as I already said this to my wife.'

Following this I ask Valter whether he wants to take on any other role. He says he did want to play the role of his mother, but now he doesn't anymore; he feels calmer. He bends down and removes all the aggressive objects from the scene, placing mother and father together, facing each other. He also removes the neighbour and the baby-doll, only leaving superman, who now is him.

He says he left his parents together, because he was feeling very guilty for having been so aggressive towards his mother. When I point out that having become superman so suddenly and without any effort seems more of a magic act, he replaces the soldier with a male puppet (the 'youngster'), saying that 'he is an ordinary man then'. He picks up this puppet, takes it to where his mother is and makes him give her a kiss. He says that 'they will chat and watch television after..'

Sonia

Sonia is a single, 18 years old university student.

She came for therapy stating specifically that she could only attend for a maximum of three months, as she was intending to spend at least one year abroad. Her parents are against the idea of her travelling and Sonia is not sure about her real reason for wanting to go: 'is it an experience or an escape?' Other problems she reports are relationship difficulties, especially with men. She has a good intellect, but shows great difficulties in expressing feelings.

In one of our sessions I ask her to create an image of her present life, using the toys.

She creates a very rich image: on a yellow piece of fabric, representing her constant discreet indisposition and anxiety, three interconnected scenes are set up. Next to the fabric a few small cars are laid out at random, representing her various activities.

The first of the three scenes consists of a baby-doll lying on the floor with a revolver over her body in front of an armed soldier: it represents how she feels in relation to her father. A bigger, pink doll (Sonia grown up) comes out of this scene entering a new scene: a laid down female marionette with another three sitting around her; beyond these three there is another gendered doll (bigger than the marionettes), also sitting, representing Sonia's friend Vilma who is 'tall, slim and has short hair.' When trying to represent Vilma, Sonia initially gets confused and chooses a male doll; she only swaps this for a female one when I point this out. In relation to this scene she says that it looks like she has died and the others are doing the wake. Finally, another large baby-doll appears sitting, surrounded by musical toys (whistles, tambourines); although the doll itself is sat on the yellow fabric, these objects are placed off the fabric. This image represents Sonia abroad, with 'a nice bunch of people', where she can give vent to her affectivity, where there isn't any more anxiety.

Interpreting the whole image, it seems to be dealing with birth, death and re-birth (as a new way of existence), where the journey would represent the re-birth, despite of this being linked to death (separation from family and friends).

Regarding the confusion of the gendered dolls, representing her friend Vilma, Sonia at first said that it was just a mistake, but after a long pause - in which her body expresses tension - she tells me that 'having had so many difficulties in her relationships with men, she has thought various times about the possibility of having *something homosexual*, this leaving her anxious.'

Finally, we return to the first scene that had so much aggression in it. She thinks it is not worth to confront her father, because she would either not return to Brazil, or if she returned, she would not want to live with him anymore. Working through this issue she realised how the image of the armed soldier had been transferred onto all male figures in her relationships.

Silvio

Silvio is a 35 years old civil servant, married, good intellectual ability, has had various psychiatric hospitalizations the last one a year and a half earlier.

During our last few sessions he has seemed withdrawn, saying that he feels 'suspicious and has persecutory ideas'. He thinks 'the illness has returned', but he is willing to be treated without being hospitalized.

In the session to be described, following a warm-up in which Silvio talks about his impressions and his illness, I ask him to set up an image (using the toys) of the persecution he has been feeling.

Through intuitive-emotive approach⁴⁰ we engage in an actual dramatization within a three-dimensional scene: he sets up a bar with its owner and on the side a newspaper stand with a news vendor. In front of the bar two police cars are stopped. There are some policemen sitting in the cars, while others are at the bar, drinking coffee and making inquiries. Silvio, represented by a puppet, is inside a flat across the bar, watching.

In soliloquy he says that he is watching the police who may be looking for him, because of a girl who lived in his friend's block of flats has committed suicide. The police want to ascertain that this wasn't a homicide, and as Silvio was in the block visiting his friend, he may be considered a suspect. He feels sick every time when walking by a police car.

Following this he takes on the role of the bar owner and the news vendor. They both report seeing the police, who are probably looking for car thieves. Finally Silvio takes on the role of one of the policemen, who says that he doesn't know Silvio; they only came to the bar for a coffee.

During our discussion following the dramatization Silvio associates this scene with another that had happened to him when he was six years old. He went out together with his mother and sister. At a certain point his mother went into a shop and asked the children to wait for her outside. After a short while Silvio's sister tricked him, saying that their mother had already gone home. He then also decided to go home alone; when finding the door locked however, he started to cry. A policeman appeared and seeing him there wanted to take him to the police station. He refused to go, crying, but eventually gave in. Half way towards the police station they met his mother, who was now returning home; he was given back to her and the fear was gone.

In our following session, Silvio presented evident improvements, managing to attend our appointment alone, and reporting a softening of the symptom.

⁴⁰ Dramatization is real and is related to the experience or the related facts.

Evaluation

Toys were used in specific situations during therapy. I have not had the experience yet of them being used in all (if this is possible), or at least the majority of sessions of a certain patient.

In my understanding and in light of my experiences, the following considerations are possible:

Using the space freely according to their needs experienced at different moments of their therapy was useful for all patients. The significance of this flexibility resides in the fact that defences constantly become rigid in the verbal discourse and in the fixity of stereotyped roles.

In Suely's case, looking at her last session described above, we can observe the unconscious identification she made between the hospital and her father; she was able to notice this identification without the help of interpretation and by 'living' the situation as the image was concretized in front of her. In one of her sessions described above the use of Atmax has also been presented.

With regards to Silvio, this technique seems to be promising in the psychotherapy of schizophrenia. With the help of playful elements it is possible to dramatize delirious ideas and to better understand their contents, at times making links between these and certain childhood experiences.

The same can be said about Valter: through the dramatization he revealed (with more facility than verbally) his difficulties in relation to his parents, his self-concept of mental illness, the prejudices of which he considers himself a victim of, his ideal man (superman). It is worth remembering that Superman, this comic-book character, had a double identity: descendent of a planet destroyed by a catastrophe and endowed with prodigious powers, Superman lives on Earth under the modest appearance of a timid journalist, Clark Kent. The myth of Superman satisfies the yearnings of Valter who, feeling humiliated and restricted, dreams of being an 'exceptional being', a 'hero'.

Sonia's session seems to be connected with Mircea Eliade's (1963) ideas regarding the individual's return to the origins (*regressus ad uterum*), more widespread in non-European cultures and perceived as a possibility of renewing and regenerating a person's existence. According to Eliade, 'the return to the origins' prepares us for a new birth that does not reiterate the first, physical birth. It is more a re-birth of a spiritual order, or in other words, a means or access to a new form of existence (a gateway to sexual maturity and 'spiritual opening'). In Sonia's above described session, the dramatization reveals a spiritual re-birth, an opening for a new and happier existence, with greater potential for affective satisfaction.

Regarding the toys that were used, I would say that the Atmax is usually used for setting up family scenes, the concretization of affective situations and symbolic images of feelings; it is attractive not only due to its constructive structure, but also because of its colours that always have some meaning. The

genderless baby-dolls were most often used on occasions when the patient felt very small, young and defenceless in front of a threatening situation (for example, in relation to parents or authority figures). The soldiers were used to facilitate the expression of aggressive feelings, when there was a difficulty to verbalize or adequately act on these. The gendered dolls were evidently used more in situations of affective and sexual difficulties.

I believe that the objectives I set out at the beginning of this paper have been achieved:

1. It is possible to use toys in order to represent internalized characters of the patient's social atom and then resort to the psychodrama technique.
2. Facts that are difficult to be told, feelings (related to persons, objects and facts) that are difficult to be described or acknowledge, appear with much more clarity for both the patient and therapist, at times propitiating insight during the setting of a scene.
3. As a consequence of the above point, the patient has less need to resort to more regressive coping mechanisms, mainly because she considers this way of working with her problems 'more inoffensive'.
4. As indicated by the theory, and as I tried to demonstrate through the above clinical examples, playfulness and psychodrama promote spontaneity and creativity training.
5. The new work instrument has emerged spontaneously together with the development of a 'therapeutic kit'.
6. Through the presentation of clinical examples I tried to demonstrate in the most appropriate manner the application of this material.

I believe that the technique and the theoretical framework around it can both be further developed.

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5.

Tele and transference in psychodrama psychotherapy⁴¹

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Tele and transference are interpersonal phenomena that can be observed, explained and analysed through the dynamics of the transit of contents present within the affective relationship established in the social inter-relation of two or more people.

Based on the consideration that social inter-relations will indispensably comprise four 'active agents' – the private persons of the interlocutors and the social roles of the interlocutors that they perform in the moment of establishing an inter-relation – we can presume that the understanding of the established structure and dynamics between these four agents in the objective external space can serve as the *locus* for the synthesis of theoretical knowledge regarding the concepts of tele and transference. These thoughts will be developed within this paper⁴³.

Using Moreno's role diagram II. (Moreno 1946 p.156) as *matrix* (focus), I propose figures 1 and 2 to represent two hypothetical persons, person A and person B respectively:

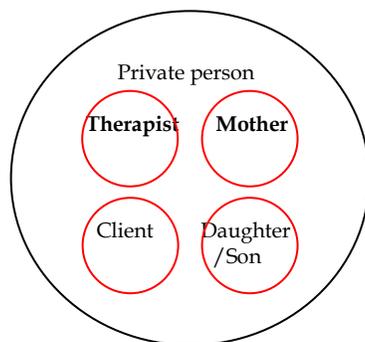


Figure 1. The social roles and private person of person A.

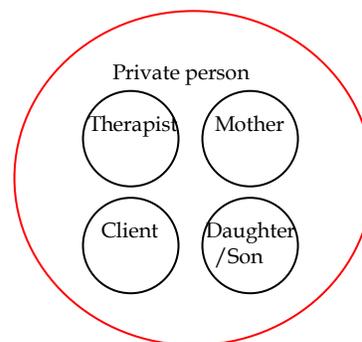


Figure 2. The social role and private person of person B.

⁴¹ The original title: 'Tele e transferência na terapia psicodramática'. In *Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama* 14, 2, pp.89-101, 2006.

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⁴³ Through questions regarding their use within the psychoanalytic theory and practice and their possible extension into the psychodramatic theory and practice, Professor Ryad Simon has contributed to the clarification of the theoretical structuring of the tele and transference concepts. I believe that such a dialogue regarding differences and similarities enables us to transcend the 'sociological' barrier that exists between different therapeutic approaches.

In figure 1 the larger, black circle represents the total private person, indicating that person A presents a well-delimited and self-recognised identity. The smaller red circles (in the original diagram these are dotted circles) represent two 'similar' social roles (mother and therapist) in which the person operates and their complementary roles (daughter/son and client) that are grouped into the same 'role cluster' (*cluster effect*). The private person exists 'behind' the social representation of these roles. Based on this information we can presume that person A performs these social roles in accordance with the socio-environmental rules; however, he will maintain the characteristics of his private person within this (role) performance. Therefore, as the uniqueness and individuality of his psychological life will put imagination and creativity into the service of concrete reality, it will become possible to reorganise his experience of this reality through the renewed and more adequate responses given to problem situations. Thus, person A becomes able to give adequate solutions to his problems, being satisfied with the results that were obtained and have no sense of conflicts. In other words, we can assume that person A presents a good development of the *s* (spontaneity) factor. Spontaneity (Vieira 1992, pp.50-51) is the ability to give new or transforming responses to old situations, as well as to act 'adequately' in front of new situations. In my understanding of Moreno's writings, the term 'adequate' is not the equivalent of adjusted (attending primarily to external expectations) nor of regulated (attending primarily to internal expectations), but it means integrated. Giving responses in an integrated manner means having a clear 'perception' in the 'here-and-now' of oneself and the situation, and trying to transform the unsatisfactory aspects of this situation.

In figure 2 the 'active agents' of person B present themselves in the opposite way to those of person A. The larger red circle (a dotted circle in the original diagram) represents an identity organised in search of social recognition. This process is established through culturally very structured social roles (the smaller black circles). Thus, in order to be 'accepted' or to 'feel loved', B's private person will be submitted to the powerful social and cultural stereotypes that dominate the human environment. B will find himself split between the needs of his private person and the social dimension of the roles he performs on a daily basis (role-person primary conflict). Therefore we can assume that B may be able to give adequate solutions to problem situations (as he has culturally well structured social roles) and that he may or may not feel satisfied with the given solutions, and therefore remain feeling conflicted. In other words, he would present little efficient adaptation and would maintain an instable equilibrium of emotional survival.

Ryad Simon (1989 p.14) defines 'adaptation as the set of responses given at different moments by a living organism to situations that will modify this organism, allowing a maintenance of its organisation compatible with life'. He proposes the use of this concept as a criterion in the early diagnosis of individuals who need help, for presenting a problem which's complaint has not

yet been expressed. The use of this concept is justified as we are talking about a criterion that requires movement, the ability of dealing with changes and malleability. In other words, beyond being continuous, adaptation also requires more effort as it extends in time and in space. According to Simon (1989 p.15-16) it is possible to assess adaptation based on the adequateness of the person's set of responses for the satisfaction of his needs. He further adds that 'considering that in life nothing repeats itself, adaptation, in order to be well adequate, obliges us to find new responses to the ever changing situations. And this leads us to the notion of the efficacy of adaptation'. The smaller the effort required for the completion of a task, the greater this efficacy; this can be quantified by the following formula:

$$\text{Adequacy} = \frac{\text{Beneficial result}}{\text{Psychological energy}}$$

Simon started from the assumption that 'in order to maintain the adaptation, the person needs to find solutions' that:

1. truly solve the problem
2. bring satisfaction, gratification and pleasure
3. are free of intra-psychic conflicts (in accordance with the person's internal value system) and of socio-cultural conflicts (in agreement with the external value system).

Taking these criteria into consideration, Simon proposed three possible categories of adequacy in front of problem situations:

- a. adequate response: all three of the above criteria are met - the response resolves the problem and gratifies without conflict
- b. insufficiently adequate response: only two of the above criteria are met - the response resolves the problem; however, it only gratifies or does not present conflicts
- c. very insufficiently adequate response: the person only resolves the problem, but remains unsatisfied and with a sense of conflicts.

According to Simon (1989 p.17) 'the adequateness of responses in front of the difficulties should be verified in relation to the nature of the problem in question' and in this sense adaptation as a whole will comprise the following four areas of functioning (Simon 2005 p.25):

- a. affective-relational (A-R) area: this includes the person's set of feelings, attitudes and actions in relation to himself (intra-personal affective relations) and in relation to the other (inter-personal affective relations)

- b. productivity (P) area: comprises the person's set of feelings, attitudes and actions in front of any productive activity (work, studies, etc.) considered as the main activity within a certain period
- c. socio-cultural (S-C) area: this refers to the individual's set of relationships with the values and customs of the culture the person lives in (social organization, community resources, social pressures)
- d. organic (O) area: involves the organism's healthiness, anatomic state and physiological functioning as a whole, as well as feelings, attitudes and actions related to the person's own body, hygiene, alimentation, sleep, sexual activity, and clothing.

In Simon's view, when within all four of the above areas 'the individual's set of responses can be considered as *adequate* then the adaptation is classified as *efficient*. When in one or more of these areas the set of responses is considered *insufficiently or very insufficiently adequate*, then the adaptation will be classified as *non-efficient*' (Simon 2005 p.20)

Taking into consideration the adaptation within the four areas, Simon has developed the following diagram in order to operationalize the diagnostic assessment:

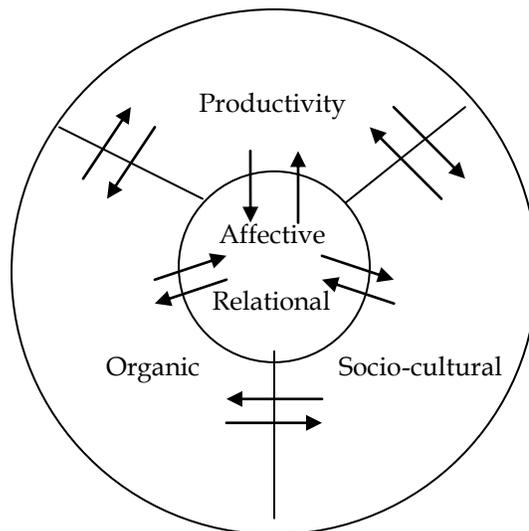


Figure 3. The diagram of radial and co-lateral interactions between the four areas

Based on his clinical experience, Simon noted that the affective-relational area is the most important one, as it influences the development of all the other areas; in the above graphic representation this is reflected by the two-way radial inter-relationships of the A-R area. In terms of their importance the productivity area is in second place in determining adaptation. In order to quantify these two areas (A-R and P), in his research Simon has attributed them a weight, according to

their adequacy's relative importance in the composition of the global efficiency of adaptation. Thus he had in view the diagnostic quantification of adaptation as shown in table 1. He also added that the aspects related to the socio-cultural and the organic areas, as well as the co-lateral inter-area interaction should be considered in the diagnostic qualification.

Punctuation Area	Adequate	Insufficiently adequate	Very insufficiently adequate
Affective-relational	3	2	1
Productivity	2	1	0,5

Table 1. The quantification of the affective-relational and productivity areas

Based on the above quantification there are five different, more or less efficient adaptive groups, presented in table 2.

Group	Diagnostic category	Sum	Punctuation	Clinical description
1	Efficient adaptation	3+2	5,0	'Normal' personality with rare neurotic or characterologic symptoms.
2	Slightly inefficient adaptation	3+1 2+2	4,0	Light neurotic symptoms, light characterologic traces, some inhibition.
3	Moderately inefficient adaptation	2+1 1+2 3+0,5	3,0 to 3,5	Some neurotic symptoms and characterologic traces, moderate inhibition.
4	Severely inefficient adaptation	1+1 2+0,5	2,0 to 2,5	More limiting neurotic symptoms, restrictive inhibitions, rigidity of characterologic traces.
5	Gravely/critically inefficient adaptation	1+0,5	1,5	Disabling neuroses, borderline, non-acute psychotics, extreme characterologic rigidity

Table 2. The Operationalized Adaptive Diagnostic Scale (OADS): quantitative classification and clinical description.

We can observe that each adaptive diagnostic category will correspond to an interval of quantitative punctuation. The 'sum' column presents the different possible combinations of the two areas used for the diagnostic quantification, the first figure always referring to the affective-relational area, while the second to the productivity area.

The use of OADS has made it possible to quantitatively measure the level of a person's spontaneous response, as well as their diagnostic classification and clinical description. Based on this information we can achieve a better understanding of the prognosis and the necessary guidance for each diagnosed person. For this it is assumed that the ability to respond to problem situations is directly proportional with the person's previous efficiency of the adaptive ability. In other words, the responses required by a new situation will depend on the person's repertoire of responses acquired throughout his whole life, on his 'common sense', and on his creative ability to generate new and more adequate solutions. According to Simon (2005 p.32) we need to understand 'the outset, the evolution and the tendencies of repetition in the choices of inadequate solutions given to problem situations by a person, as well as the reasons of this propensity.' This diagnostic method has been used for the development of the clinical ratiocination necessary for the planning of Short Operational Psychodrama Therapy, aiming to impede the propagation of these repetitive tendencies and to help the person in his discovery of more adequate solutions in his life. If we return to our two hypothetical persons named A and B, we can conclude that A has a well developed s (spontaneity) factor and would be classified in group 1 of the OADS. On the other hand, considering that B's productivity is adequate (in spite of the low level of creativity required by culturally strongly structured social roles and his primary person-role conflict), depending on his level of satisfaction with his solution to the problem, he would be classified into group 2 or 3 of the OADS. The brief therapy may be good suggestion for B, in case he lacked the financial means or motivation to engage in long term therapy.

We need to stress that in Moreno's view (1993 p.228-30) a social role is assimilated through 'the conditioning, the perception and the externalization' of this role's stereotypes and its possibilities for experimentation in the cultural conserve. Thus, 'the social roles are determinant factors for people's cultural character'. As the person surpasses his degree of perception of an already known role and transfers his experimenting onto a new, not yet represented role, 'similar roles' will group into role clusters. The ability to differentiate between roles belonging to the same cluster is directly linked to the person's ability of accessing the different social roles and to the diversity of social identification models offered by the culture he belongs to. Thus the objective external environment can enable a wider perceptive opening and it can expand the person's possibilities of action, this consequently leading to a greater capacity for autonomy in his choices to be made. Therefore there is a choosing process

underlying the spontaneous action that may allow - through emancipator actions - a 'cut' of the blind repetition of the past. According to Moreno, it is the spontaneous action's transforming character that warrants the person's creative condition, that is, it allows him to change his relationship with the world. In Moreno's view (1993 p.132) the human being has a reservoir of creativity, but in order for this potential to become manifest and explicit, there needs to be 'room' for spontaneity. Thus the s factor - 'the individual's ability to adequately meet every new situation' - tends to flow 'in the direction of another person's spontaneous state'. The sensitivity or affective relational perception that permeates the contact between these two spontaneous states is denominated as *tele*.

The term *tele* (*zweifühlung* = mutuality) was used by Moreno to designate the perceptions that occur on the affective-emotional level between two people, becoming able to mutually perceive each other. That is, through the use of their sensibility they allow themselves to feel what happens in the other's private person, doing this 'in a simultaneous and reciprocal way that can be noticed by a third person.' (Almeida 1993 p.33) Therefore, in order to establish a *tele* relationship these two people need to be available to 'put themselves into the other's place' (the ability to role reverse), in the present (here-and-now) in order for the affective currents and the way these are transmitted and captured to transform their relational experience. According to Simon, the term '*tele*' is very similar to the term '*empathy*'. In 1901 the German psychologist Lipps introduced the term *Einfühlung* (likened to *Zweifühlung* - that translates as the 'feeling of two' or 'reciprocal affectivity'); this was translated into English by Titchener as '*empathy*' and later further expanded and defined by the American Dymond (1949) as 'someone's imaginary transposition to the thinking, feeling and action of the other.' However, when talking about empathy in the therapeutic process, we refer to the therapist's empathy towards the patient. While in the case of *tele*, this empathy would be reciprocal: from one person to the other and vice versa. Furthermore, we also know that beyond *empathy*, *tele* also includes *intuition*, elements that Simon (2005) considers as necessary in order for the therapist to be able to perform his role well. The *therapist's counter-transference* would correspond to the disturbance of these elements, and therefore the disturbance of *tele*.

When focusing our attention on the moment, 'we open our heart' and mind to an experimentation of the facts through a 'new perspective', as if it was the first time that we experienced that very situation. Thus we put our creative potential into action, freeing ourselves from the repetition of the past and the anxiety of the future, through the emission of spontaneous responses given to problem situations. Therefore, the moment - the point of intersection between the past and the future - constitutes the greatest strength of the human being, and can be represented as in figure 4:

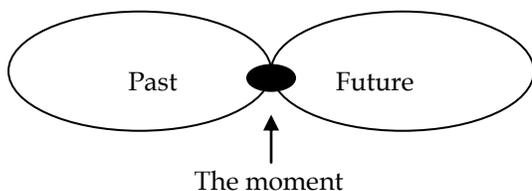


Figure 4. The model of representation of the moment

On this figure (Vieira Kim 1992 p.48), the symbol of infinity represents the course of the life of the human being, with the intersection point representing the 'here-and-now'. In a therapeutic situation the 'now' can represent the actualization of past affective experiences, re-lived in the inter-relation of the patient and therapist, or it may also represent a 'future projection' experimented with in an anticipatory way, within the inter-relation.

Tele and transference in psychodrama psychotherapy

Tele and transference are interpersonal phenomena that can be objectivated as facts in the psychodrama therapy, and that depend on the therapist's and the patient's ability to present, or not, a correct intuitive estimation of each other's private person.

In Moreno's view (1993 p.286) 'the tele relationship is a universal factor: [...] a complex of feelings that attract one person towards another and which is evoked by real attributes of the other person - individual and collective attributes.' He warns that every therapist needs to pay attention to tele, because this phenomenon interferes in the attraction, repulsion or indifference 'in relation to certain patients, as a result of their real individual attributes, and the same is true for patients. Therefore, it is maybe due to the tele factor that the therapist will be successful with some patients, and will not be successful with others.' (Moreno 1993 p.287) Simon (verbal communication 2006) believes that '*being successful* is related to positive counter-transference, while *being unsuccessful* is related to negative counter-transference.' In his view:

it is the counter-transferential diversity that determines the analysability of the patient and not their transference. [...] When the patient's transference evokes the analyst's counter-transference, this has to do with the analyst's peculiarity and not any special quality of the transference of the analysed. (Simon 1991 p.22)

However, Moreno (1983 p.54) emphasises that the therapeutic process is a social inter-relation and its efficiency will depend - similarly to all other inter-relations - on the two-way awareness and acceptance of the flow of the tele. Through the tele factor, therapist and patient will unveil within the therapeutic

setting each other's depth of life and character. The mental processes of the therapist's psyche, which are related to those of the patient, will endow this relationship with specific emotional needs, involving four agents: *the role of the therapist, the role of the patient, the private person of the therapist and the private person of the patient*. The effectiveness of the therapeutic relationship will depend on the interaction of these four agents.

In Moreno's view *transference* (*Übertragung*) is a pathological tele relationship that needs to be acknowledged, recognised and elaborated until it is set free from past ties. According to Laplace and Pontalis the phenomenon of transference is defined as 'infantile prototypes that re-emerge and are experienced with a strong sensation of immediacy', constituting itself as 'a particular instance of displacement of affect from one idea to another.' (Laplace and Pontalis, 1973 p.457) In Melanie Klein's view (1952) the transference phenomenon appears naturally at the beginning of the human being's life, being fundamental for his affective development. During the first year of the infant's life, the first Mediating Agent – the one that develops the mother function – plays an essential role in transforming the projective identification into the ability to differentiate the internal word and the external reality, helping in the forming of the identity. The infant needs immediate satisfaction of his needs, and as he feels unbearably frustrated in his relation with the external environment (that does not work magically and an extension of the infant), the infant feels impotent and transfers the omnipotence onto an idealized object, created by his fantasy in order to attend to all his needs. At this stage he will oscillate between aspects of reality impregnated by fantasy and aspects of fantasy impregnated by reality. The internal parents – *imagos* of the parents in the unconscious – are the result of this process of introjection/projection, which, through a distorted perception of the real parents, introjects them as cruel parents (monsters and beasts or gods and fairies) and *transfers* these *imagos* onto the relationship with the real external parents. It is the first mediator's role to offer a protective and loving psychological environment, which will allow the occurrence of the differentiations that are necessary for the construction of the psychological and cultural identity, through the solid establishment of a good object within the Ego.

Through the representation of everyday scenes that unveil her identifications and conflicts, the use of the psychodrama process facilitates the concrete figuration and expression of the patient's private person. In this way, the *transference phenomenon* becomes detectable as an *observable fact* during dramatization, through its *concrete representation* (comparing actual and past scenes) and *symbolic representation* (through intermediary objects). Therefore, this method creates 'room for inter-locution and inter-action' where, as in a theatre, the patient can externalize her private person; within this theatre the patient/dramaturge can organise and name the characters that inhabit her internal world, the patient/actor can re-live in the here-and-now the interpersonal (transferential and tele) relationships that interfere with her inter-

relation with the world, and finally, the patient/spectator can reflect on her own behaviour externalized in the dramatic context and she can incorporate the co-constructed theoretical references. In this way therapist and patient become subject of the knowledge and a solid ground is created for experimentation between the practice, theory and 'in situ' research. Through the dramaturge's planning, her own life is 're-invented' and 'rehearsed' on stage (logical level). The experiences of the actor's affections and mind projected into the characters represent the psycho-logical level. Thus the spectator becomes able to see herself from the outside and to incorporate what the social context mobilises (meta level - psychological). Therefore it is assumed that in psychodrama therapy the interaction between these three levels enables the reorganization of repetitive actions (compulsion for repetition - alienation), this leading to renewed responses to old situations and new, more adequate responses to new situations. That being the case, this method promotes the development of the ability for critical reflection on one's own thoughts and actions, within an internal psychological space that propitiates the building of knowledge for a better understanding of conflicts, problem situations and their resolution at the present time.

In the therapy process both the patient and the therapist may get involved in unconscious projections. At once, the transference in the therapeutic relationship will become a two-way phenomenon: *the patient's transference in relation to the therapist and the therapist's transference in relation to the patient*. For this reason Moreno suggests the substitution of the term counter-transference with the 'therapist's transference'. According to Simon (1991 p.24) the therapist's transference reaction in relation to the patient will cause an emotional disturbance that will affect his perception, wanting to relieve both himself and the patient from the psychological suffering. By doing this, his awareness and understanding will get blocked or distorted, and so impaired. Thus, the therapist will tend to hold the 'place of the internal object' projected by the patient onto his private person, 'loosing the role' of therapist and therefore failing in his objective. I believe that in this situation, roles that belong to the same cluster (for example the role of providing mother and the therapist role) can get confused, if the roles experienced in the therapist's past (for example the role of mother and son/daughter) have remained unsolved within the primary conflict with his private person. The absence of adequate cultural models or the lack of training in the (therapist) role can also be among the causes of this situation. According to Moreno (1974 p.85), 'transference difficulties are not always part of the patient's neurosis; these may often originate in the therapist's inability to respond to the demands he is facing.' In Simon's view, beyond the difficulties of dealing with one's own empathy and intuition,

in the analyst's psyche there exist rigid defensive states that correspond to the personality structures that have not been modified through his didactic

analysis, and which are inaccessible to self-analysis, because they 'manifest' themselves 'silently' (areas of the mind subject to profound repressions and rigid splits), that may appear in the form of inattention or selective disinterest for example. These can hardly be called counter-transferences as they don't depend on the transference of the analysed. (Simon, 1991 pp.21-22)

Simon further adds that in this case the therapist's counter-transference would be welcome, because it would point out areas that are accessible to understanding, evolution, plasticity and interpretation. Therefore, in both Simon's and Moreno's (1993 p.286) view 'the psychiatrist's self-analysis does not constitute sufficient guarantee in this process [...] just as the patient, the psychiatrist involved in the process also needs to be analysed by others during the treatment.' The therapist's analysis by other therapists may foster the development of 'humbleness' in order to allow himself to be taught in his professional role, and it may also foster the need of the constant verification of his interpretations' validity (when using the double or during the phase of elaboration and analysis). Seeking supervision is also essential for the therapist to clarify his transference responses in his unconscious involvements in his 'collusions' with the patient within the therapeutic setting, in order to revert these into instruments of empathy and intuition serving the tele.

Understood in this way, I think that the tele phenomenon - as a basic quality of psychodrama therapy - should foster the appreciation of both the therapist's and the patient's private person, as well as the formal situation of the therapist's and the patient's social roles, that exist through the social precept.

Final considerations

Tele and transference are phenomenon that tend to establish themselves between private persons, and may transcend to the social roles of the patient and the therapist, depending on this mutual relationship being more or less healthy. It is expected however, that the precautions taken by the therapist in his own therapy and supervision, will alert him about the boundaries of these roles, and make him more open for his empathic and intuitive abilities. As the transference phenomenon emerges, the therapist needs to analyse which of the patient's internal characters are being projected onto him, in order to help the patient discriminate and differentiate between his private person and the role complementariness established within the objective external reality. This can be fostered and achieved through the concretization of the patient's internal world within the psychodramatic process. If the therapist's intuitive ability is used for the benefit of the patient's private person, new windows will open for perception and tele will become possible. Therefore, tele and transference mediate the therapeutic process and the more we get involved in the decoding and analysis

of transference, the greater the opening for tele will be. As Fonseca (1980) wisely states, similarly to the movement of a pendulum, the more the therapeutic process regresses to earlier phases, the more power it will gain to progress towards the flow of vital energy that will expand and deepen. The development of the therapeutic process can be verified through the renewed responses to old situations and the new, more adequate responses to new situations that appear in the objective external reality. Its qualitative evaluation can be deduced through the use of the OADS. The better the therapist knows himself, the more the boundaries of the patient's therapy will broaden. So, if to live means to re-create oneself, than we need to create a new direction for the psychodrama training courses and the 'psychodramatic instrument', in order to 'support' the therapist to become a 'good enough' social mediator. As Simon (1981 p.71) says: 'A patient can always leave an inapt therapist and look for another. But what about the inapt therapist; how will he look after himself?'

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6. Relationship psychotherapy: A minimalist psychodrama⁴⁴

*José Fonseca*⁴⁵

'A soul is never sick alone, but always through a
betweenness, a situation between it and another
existing being'
Martin Buber: *The Life of Dialogue*

Relationship psychotherapy⁴⁶ is a technique derived from psychodrama and it can be seen as a minimalist version of psychodrama. I understand *minimalism* as a tendency to simplify and as the reduction of the constituent elements of something⁴⁷.

The origins of relationship psychotherapy go back to the anxieties regarding how to adapt group psychodrama techniques to one-to-one psychotherapy. It emerged as a result of reducing a two hour long group psychodrama session to a fifty minutes long individual psychotherapy session and of the unification of the director and auxiliary ego roles. However, this does not prevent its development within groups as well.

The expression *relationship psychotherapy* emphasises the presence of a relational philosophy within the therapeutic work. At the one hand it promotes working with the patient-therapist relationship; on the other, working with the relationships of the patient's internal world. In other words, it is based on the *I-You* and *I-Me* relationships. Relationship psychotherapy proposes the pragmatic observation and understanding of the relational phenomenon. The 'diagnosis' (in the sense of knowledge) of the *inter* is the means through which the patient can arrive to the diagnosis of herself, or the awareness of herself.

⁴⁴ The original title: 'Psicoterapia da relação: um psicodrama minimalista'. Previously unpublished paper.

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⁴⁶ Relationship psychotherapy and dialogue psychotherapy were terms coined by German (Weizsacker, 1949 and Trub, 1985) and American (Hycner, 1988) psychotherapists, who similarly to me have been influenced by the ideas of Martin Buber (1970).

⁴⁷ Minimalism was also an artistic movement developed during the second half of the 20th century, having influenced music, plastic arts, dance and literature.

As an attempt of integrating theory and technique, the two sides of the same coin, within this paper I intend to integrate the theoretical roots and the therapeutic action of the relational perspective. For this purpose I would like to use the metaphor of the map and the land, according to which the map would correspond to the theory and the land to the practice, with Bateson's (1986) rectification that there is an affective-intellectual coding between the report and the reported event.

In the following I will present certain aspects that don't only outline the theory, but which also support the practice of relationship psychotherapy. I hope that this (also minimalist) theoretical framework will serve as an axis for the understanding of the text as a whole.

Theoretical aspects

The relational dimension of man

The relational dimension of man can be visualised through his place within the universe. Man is part of the organic matter forming the Earth that together with the other planets revolves around the Sun as part of a larger galaxy: the Milky Way. This then belongs to an infinite set of galaxies forming the Universe or the Absolute. Through belonging to this great astronomical relational system, the human being influences and is influenced by it (ecology). Man is inserted into a universal relational network – cosmic sociometry – that is an extension of his social and family network – sociometry.

The Absolute All galaxies Milky Way The Sun All the planets	
Earth	{ Man The Matrix of Identity Brazil South America Civilizations (Cultures) Ethnicities Humanity Organic Life
The Moon	

Phenomenological-relational posture

The expression *phenomenological-relational*, as the reader has probably guessed, is a play of words intending to stress the relational dimension within the phenomenological-existential philosophical perspective.

The phenomenological perspective postulates the 'capturing of experiences without the use of explanations, aspiring for the clearest and most exact information regarding a subjectively experienced event.' (Almeida, 1988 p.33) It is important to stress that the method of perception belongs to the realm of *what?* and *how?* While the explicative-causal method belongs to the realm of *why?* This latter refers to the physical and natural sciences and is in search of the causes of a phenomenon.

With regards to the realm of psychotherapy Moreno was critical towards the overstatement of psychological determinism or the explicative-causal method: 'The desire to find determinants for every experience and for these determinants further determinants farther back, and for these determinants still more remote ones and so forth, leads to an endless pursuit of causes.' (Moreno 1977, p.102)

Relationship psychotherapy prefers the questions *what?*, *how?* and *what for?* I would like to further add to these the question *why not?* which functions as an incentive for action. Taking us to the past, the question *why?* and its overstatement leads to sterile intellectualizations. The obsessive attempts of explaining the past follow the same doubtful logic as future predictions.

Why? can be a natural outcome of the therapeutic action, but it should never be its objective as such. Ascertainment (insight) precedes explanation.

Relational psychology

Relational psychology studies man through his relationships: *I-Me, I-You, I-Him(Her), I-Us, I-You, I-Them*. This is the predominant perspective of the works of Moreno (1977), Buber (1970) and Bowlby (1980). While psychoanalysis postulates that the libido is in search of pleasure, according to the relational perspective, man is in search of relationships. In this respect we talk about relationship *instinct* or *impulse*⁴⁸.

Human beings are born into a primary relational network called the *matrix of identity*. (Moreno 1977) The development of the new being's identity is the result of the interaction of biological, psychological and socio-cultural factors.

⁴⁸ More recent social neuroscience research (fusiform cells and mirror neurons) have demonstrated that our brain has been programmed to relate. (Goleman 2006)

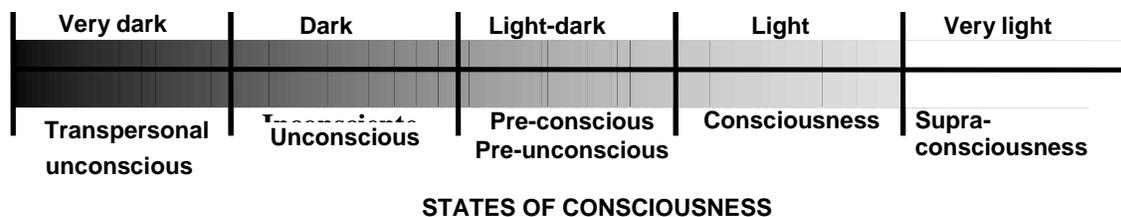
The psychology of the consciousness

The psychology of the consciousness seeks to focus on the human being in a certain *moment* of his life, according to the degree of his consciousness of this moment.

Just by closing our eyes and focusing our attention on our body, we can arrive to a different degree of consciousness compared to the immediate moment before doing so. In the case of internal psychodrama for example, through visualization the person arrives to a state of consciousness that is different from her everyday consciousness. This modified state of consciousness propitiates a new understanding of oneself.

Sleep has different degrees of depth ranging from the hypnagogic state (the state between being awake and falling sleep) to profound sleep. Being awake also presents different degrees of wakeful states. The lower states of consciousness represent a robotized or automated state of living. While the more widened states of consciousness correspond to our 'waking up' to new realities.

I use an analogy between the consciousness and light in order to illustrate the variations of conscious states. The two extremes or poles are represented by a very dark and a very light point respectively. Between the two there are different variations of light and dark. Light-dark corresponds to the pre-conscious or pre-unconscious; for example Jung's (1954) collective unconscious. The light area refers to consciousness, while the very light to the supra-consciousness. This latter is related to states of consciousness experienced in special, unusual moments - peak-experiences - as the encounter described by both Moreno (1977) and Buber (1970).



The matrix of identity

a) Moreno's original concept

Moreno (1977) describes the matrix of identity as the child's relational learning process; based on this idea he delineated a child development theory and consequently the outlines of a personality theory. As the name also indicates, the matrix of identity refers to the development of identity. It is the cradle of the

awareness of who we are and of what we are worth in our relationships (the concept of self-worth).

Originally, the matrix of identity was described as having five phases. The first one corresponds to the infant's complete identity with his environment. In the second phase the child will focus his attention on the 'other', partly estranging the other from himself. The third phase will separate the 'other' from the continuity of the experience, while in the fourth phase the child becomes able to play the role of the 'other'. In the fifth phase the reversal of identities is complete: the child is now able to play the role of the 'other' in the presence of a third person, who then plays the role of the child. These phases of child development will form the psychological bases for all processes of role performance. In some of his other writings, Moreno (1974) proposes only three phases: the phase of identity between the I and the You; the phase of recognition of the I; and the phase of recognition of the other. From total undifferentiating and unity the child moves to the other extreme of role reversal.

b) Contributions to the matrix of identity

While describing child development, the Morenian matrix of identity has left some gaps for other ideas regarding this subject to be introduced, without necessarily losing the original phenomenological perspective. I see this developmental process as a spiralling movement with stages that inter-penetrate without necessarily following a rigid chronological order.

The constituent elements of this process are arranged logically following a gradually developing complexity, in which earlier phases are incorporated into the later ones. The matrix of identity is internalized by the adult as a live sociometric structure always ready to be activated, both with the objective of influencing and being influenced by new experiences.

Let us now see a brief didactic description of the positions or states of the matrix of identity:

1. *Undifferentiation* – The human being is a cosmic being who comes from the cosmos and returns to the cosmos. The cosmos is his cradle and deathbed. After being born, the human being will follow a slow process of individualization. Initially, the infant cannot distinguish between the I and the other.
2. *Symbiosis* – The experience of cosmic oneness starts to be diluted. The child is on the path towards an identity. He starts to distinguish the other, the You and the world, but he still can't do this completely. He continues to be connected through a psychological umbilical cord, which at times allows for a double relational dependence.
3. *The recognition of the I, or mirror phase* – The child develops to a state of being able to recognise himself, of discovering his own identity; through a centripetal movement he is focused on himself. From a somatic perspective,

he starts to become aware of his body; he perceives being separate from mother (You), other persons and objects. The process of the *recognition of the I*, or *mirror phase* is present throughout our whole life. However, it presents certain peak moments, the most important and fundamental one being the first one, in early childhood. The second peak moment takes place during adolescence, while the third comes with senility. We could also add the experiences of becoming a mother-father as forming of the identity. The human being is in a constant process of getting to know himself, a process that never ends.

4. *The recognition of the other* – The *recognition of the I* and the *recognition of the other* happen simultaneously. At the same time as the child recognises himself as a person, he also starts to perceive the other. There is a focusing on the other, a centrifugal movement towards the other. The child discovers that the other feels, reacts and responds.
5. *Corridor relationships* – In Moreno's (1974) view, with the recognition of the I and the other the 'breach between fantasy and reality' is established, that is, the child acquires the ability to distinguish the real world from the fantasy world. Now, every time there is another in front of him. Therefore, the child believes that people and objects are his exclusive possessions. He feels unique and central: 'You are mine and nobody else's.' As his sense of possession does not concretize according to his desire, the child experiences frustration. The counter-part of this experience is the possibility of learning humbleness.
6. *Pre-reversal, or taking on the role of the other* – The child performs roles spontaneously. In his playfulness he 'is' a dog, a tree, a doctor, a cartoon hero. Moreno (1975) explains that in the state of cosmic identity the child had felt everything inside of himself; now he tries to recover what he has lost through the performance of role of people and objects, according to his understanding of the real and the imaginary. She will play mother to her doll or younger sibling, thus 'training' herself for the later role reversals. I denominated this position as *pre-reversal of roles*, in order to distinguish it from the complete role reversal.
7. *Triangulation* – This position introduces a jump in the relational complexity. After a jump from the cosmic unity to the dual relationship, now there is a jump to the triangular relationship. There is a *Him!* The I, You and He form the vertexes of this relational triangle, while the sides consist of the *I-You*, *You-Him* and *I-Him*, foreboding the future *I-U*s. The child perceives the distancing of the mother as her search for something the child does not have. What is she looking for? This implies the existence of an enigmatic third (person) who supposedly gives something to mother that the child cannot give. Therefore this third person is depriving (as he steals mother away from her living together with the child), and at the same time giving (as he supposedly offers her something). In the same way the child pursues his mother, she also pursues someone else. Through the mother a bridge is built

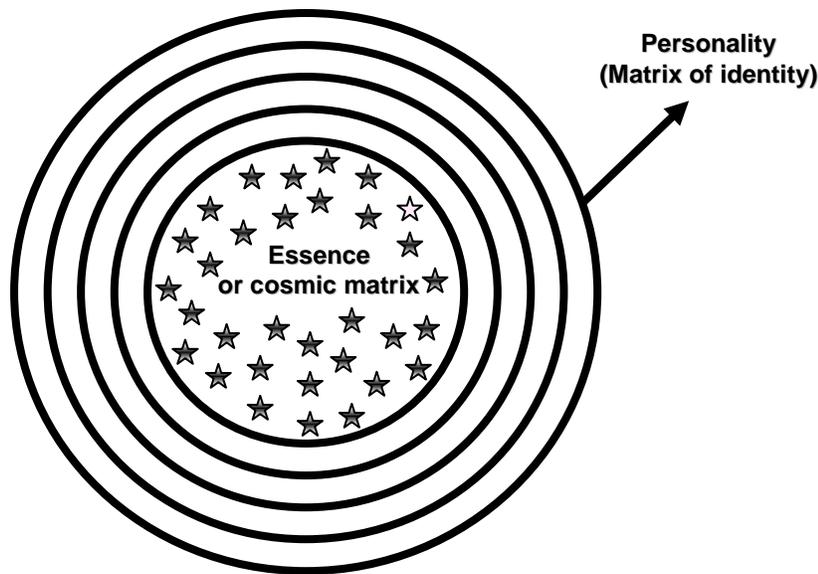
between the child and the third person. The child gains access to him and his love. This re-positioning establishes a new relational order that will serve as a model, which in the future will allow the person to take up not just one but all three vertexes of the triangle. Triangulation will teach the child that others can develop independent relationships with each other, without this necessarily meaning an affective loss. This stage represents a qualitative development of the relational world. Now the child is able to relate to the *You (I-You)*, to relate to *Him*, who represent another *You (I-Him)*, to accept the *You-Him* as an independent relationship, and to be part of a relational gestalt (*I-U*s).

8. *Circularization* - Having surpassed the triangulation, the child is now prepared to include more people - more than two or three - into his relational dimension. While feeling equal with his mother in a search for another - this having been outlined in the triangular position - the child now devotes himself to the discovery of his relational siblings. From the *matria* (mother), he moved to *patria* (father) and then *fratria* (siblings-fraternity). In other words, from the solo he moved to the duet, then the trio, now the quartet and eventually to the circular social orchestra. Circularization beholds the period of socialization. It represents the human being's definite entry into the sociometric experience of groups. It transcends the *Them* and arrives to the warm circle of *Us (I-U*s). Within this process, the universal desire of *social inclusion* is developed.
9. *Role reversal* - After all this 'training' the human being becomes able to accomplish reciprocal relationships, which means putting himself into the other side of the relationship, tuning into and understanding the feelings of the other. Role reversal is under the protective shield of empathy, of double (two-way) empathy, that is the tele phenomenon, as described by Moreno (1968). The ability of role reversal is a sign of relational maturity.
10. *Encounter* - The culmination of role reversal or the telic apex of a relationship is the *encounter*. This is an important concept, both in philosophical terms and as an existential dimension. We have followed the path from the cosmic cradle (undifferentiation or oneness) to the reversal of roles; a path that has been compared to the expulsion from paradise. Every step is like yet another disillusion from returning, as if there was a force pushing forward and another pulling back - an impulse to return. However, the hope of re-experiencing the cosmic existence continues. On his path forward man may surprise himself with the encounter, even if this only represents a transient moment. Those involved in this encounter merge in a cosmic 're-union'.

Essence and personality

The human being arrives into the world as essence or cosmic matrix that corresponds with his micro-cosmos. This micro-cosmos has the same 'substance' or 'energy' as the macro-cosmos. Within the religions the idea of God 'inside' of man, or 'above' him in heaven, is common. Man connects to the universe through his essence, and to the Earth through the bio(body)-psycho-social (personality). Body and personality therefore correspond to the involucres of essence, and are the objects of traditional medical and psychological studies. Therefore, we have two perspectives: a vertical one through the essence (cosmos); and another horizontal one (earth) through the body and the personality. Man is at the intersection of these two lines. The essence corresponds to the unnamed part of man, while body and personality carry a name: John, Joseph, Mary.

These observations make the understanding of the encounter concept easier, as a situation in which the involved persons suddenly present a dissolution of their personalities and the consequent contact of their essences - a moment of liberation of their *divine spark*. (Moreno 1977)



ESSENCE AND PERSONALITY

Relation-separation

Now I would like to consider the psychodynamic position that structures the *learning* of *relating* and *separating*, which actually constitute the two poles of the same process: *relation-separation*. This position outlines the foundations of how the later adult will establish relationships and separation from these. This process coordinates the 'learner' regarding how to *be together* and how to *be alone*. The dialectics of opposites (nature's *law of two*) regarding relation-separation is

always present in the life of the human being: sperm and egg, separate and united (egg), pregnancy and birth, maternal care (maternity) and its loss, life-death, etc.

According to observations, the child initially relates in a generic manner to the human beings who surround him, accepting their care without discrimination. Through his neuropsychological development, he will start to relate using a preferential order (primary sociometry) in this way becoming able to choose between people. In our culture the first choice is the mother, but it is not rare for a grandmother, a nurse or for the father to be this first choice. By observing the relational world of the child we can note that there are preferential choices within this with a gradation between these choices, similarly to how the adults, according to different criteria, choose their friends, sexual partners, spouses, etc.

The child 'hopes' that his chosen person will not only feed him, but will also lovingly take him into their arms. We can denominate this expectation of the child as *anxiety-hope*. With the concretization of this desired contact, the small being will not only feel his hunger satisfied; he will also feel the pleasure of physical contact, of relating. The pleasure of this experience will lead to the baby's feelings of *joy* with the shared moment, this being the seed for later feelings of happiness. These positive feelings will be then internalised forming the basis of an optimistic outlook on life. This cycle, reiterated throughout the neuropsychological development constitutes only one side of the process, and it is complemented by the concurrent experience of separation.

Let us consider now the pole of separation. Every time that the chosen person threatens to leave or actually leaves, the child will experience a series of reactions. The first reaction facing an imminent loss is *anxiety-fear*. With the concretization of this loss or abandonment *anger* (the base of hate) emerges. The third stage consists in *sadness* that results from the experience of loss. The fourth and last is the resolution of the process, that is, after a while the child returns to feel well, as he will calmly relate to his momentary carer. These stages will repeat themselves various times on a daily basis, and throughout the whole life of a person. I would also like to add that there are also affective counter-parts (responses) of the caring adults in front of these emotional manifestations, this resulting in a relational network, a *micro-social atom* of attractions, indifference and rejections, which constitute the *primary sociometry* of the child and his matrix of identity.

As a result of his pleasure of relating to his loved ones and the inherent suffering of separation, the child will develop relational strategies in order to reduce or avoid the pain and to prolong the pleasure. This defensive process is called *shock absorber* or *defence*. These shock absorbers or defences will then be incorporated into the person's way of being, becoming part of their personality. The *marks* of the different stages of learning how to *relate* (anxiety-hope, pleasure-love, joy-happiness) and how to *separate* (anxiety-fear, anger-hate,

sadness-depression), with the addition of the mark of *shock absorbers* or *defences* will form the *internal partial selves*, which in their turn outline the main and secondary traces of the forming personality, as we will see this next.

RELATING	SEPARATING
Anxiety/hope	Anxiety/fear
Pleasure (of being together [love])	Anger (hate)
Joy (happiness)	Sadness (depression)

Resolution – internalization – the development of shock absorbers or defenses

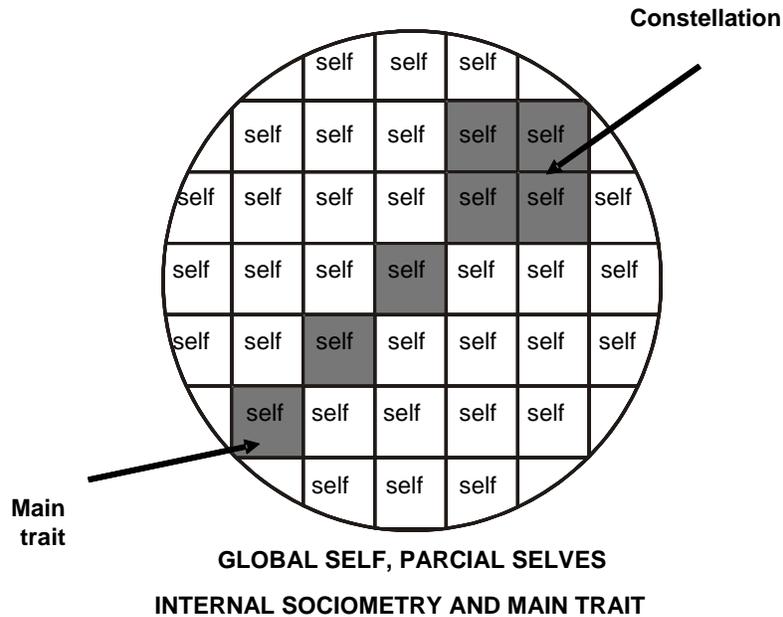
The gallery of selves: global self, partial selves, real self, apparent self, false self, observing self and the profound self

At a certain stage of his development the child will present a discriminatory activity that forms part of the forming of his identity. Through the means of his sensations, feelings and thoughts he will gradually discriminate between *inside* and *outside*, between *good* and *bad*, between *fantasy* and *reality*, between the *partial* and the *whole*. The infant-breast relationship is partial, while the child-mother relationship is whole. Therefore, relationships are internalized in such a particular way that they will always represent partial perceptions of the whole. Firstly because the whole is a utopian or idealized measure, and secondly, because the child is in a state of neuropsychological immaturity and his perceptive processes are rudimental and partial.

The *internal partial selves* emerge from the process of successive partial internalizations of the primary relationships, in which different identifications take place. Thus, in an A-B internalized relationship the *internal partial self* will have characteristics of A, of B and of AB, relating to the captured relational climate. If we suppose that relationships are also internalized as *good*, *bad* and *neutral*, we could conclude that there are *positive*, *negative* and *neutral partial selves*. The child internalizes a cluster of maternal, paternal and fraternal relationships, within which good and bad are only the two extremes of a gradual process. These clusters, when devoted to common functions, become constellations of *partial selves*; for example the constellation of *ensor selves*. The most used constellations will then outline grooves within the forming personality – the main and secondary traits.

The *global self* consists of infinite numbers of internalized *partial selves* that seek to be revealed through the social or therapeutic performance of roles, wanting to leave latency and gain freedom. There are for example the roles that

are difficult or impossible to be performed within the social context: the role of God, the role of the Martian, of the assassin, etc.



The *internal partial selves* expressed through dream characters can be re-experienced through the role performance of dramatic action. When performing a dream character within the dramatic action, the protagonist doesn't only work with the psychodynamic content of this character, but also carries out a psychodramatic exorcism of this *partial self*. By *psychodramatic exorcism* I mean a process that at the same time is cathartic and re-integrating.

To the many selves that populate our psyche, we can also add the *apparent self* - what we appear like or believe to be - and the *real self* - what we really are and are reluctant to recognise. The *real self* acquires the condition of metaphor here, as it works as a parameter of something imagined that we never actually achieve. The over-development of the *apparent self* will lead to a *false self*.

I also include within this collection of selves the *observer self* - this is not something that applauds or criticises, but the self that adequately captures *who and how* we are. Personal growth is directly linked to the development of the *observer self*, and it is also through this self that a psychotherapy process can become successful. The *observer self* maintains an adequate distance allowing a fair assessment of the *internal partial selves*. It functions as a non-judgemental eye (a third eye), it's main function being to ascertain and verify. We are talking about a kind of internal therapy.

If we think about the motto '*Know thyself*' as a metaphor for the never-ending but always feasible journey to self-awareness, than we need to link this together with the concept of the *profound self*. Similarly to the different layers of

an onion, when we arrive to the *real self*, another one presents itself, and then another, and so the great search is always for a *profound self* situated at the personality's boundaries with the essence.

Internal sociometry

The *global self* reveals a relational dynamics of its constituent *internal partial selves*. These may present as more or less harmonious relationships, and they can be silent, make harmonious sounds, or make a great clamour. The constellations of *partial selves*, dedicated to a common task, may present fluency or blockage in their functioning.

Therefore, we are talking about an internal sociometry that is being expressed and concretized in the dramatic action. Through role performances the *internal partial selves* and their relational network become visible. Human beings live in external social groups, carrying an internal group inside themselves. In this sense the intra-psychic can be understood as the inter-relations of the *internal partial selves*. It is worth noting though, that the 'intra-psychic' is also an 'inter' (internal). When working with a person's internal group, one-to-one psychotherapy acts, in a certain way, also as group psychotherapy.

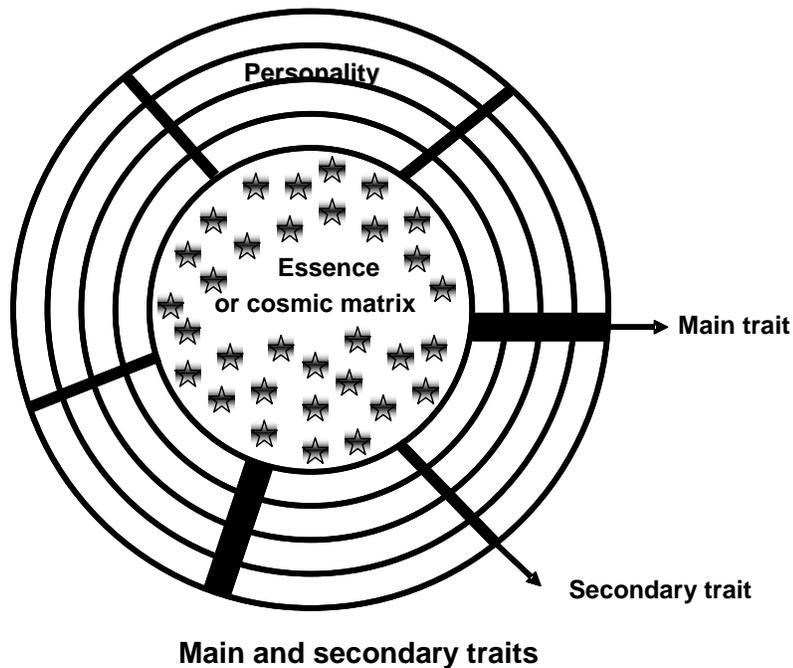
Main and secondary personality traits

The feelings involved in the neuropsychological development lead to the emergence of a variety of relational strategies that aim to stop the pain of separation and loss. This set of psychological reactions delineates the profile of *main and secondary personality traits*. This learning stage will leave the marks of relational security-insecurity on the future adult. According to the psychiatric-psychological jargon, these strategies are commonly referred to as hysterical, phobic, obsessive, schizoid, paranoid, etc.

The personality consists of a few *main traits* and various *secondary traits*. The arrangement of these traits delineates the basic characteristics of a person. The *main traits* constitute his trade mark; within them reside the best qualities and the greatest difficulties of a person, that is, depending on their fluency, they may present both skills as well as incompetence. A person may present tolerance as a quality and submission as a difficulty. Another may present elements of reflection, organizational and planning skills on the one hand, and a tendency for over-intellectualization, mental rumination and affective distancing on the other. Traits always have a spontaneous-creative potential for development. Therefore, we are talking about fluency and blockage, or the equilibrium and disequilibrium of a trait. A trait may flow with spontaneity and creativity, it may just be functional, it may be deficient, or it may be even blocked. These latter two

cases will lead to disequilibrium in the organisation of traits, in such a way that this will produce symptoms.

In tense situations, the out of balance trait may seek support from other emerging secondary traits. An obsessive personality for example may present phobic or depressive traits in a crisis situation. The crisis may also precipitate the aggravation of the trait or its lack of functionality. For example, the same person mentioned above may present an exaggeration of control, cleaning and organisation, or may become unable to perform these, succumbing to the lack of control, dirtiness and disorganisation.



Tele-transferential system

Psychoanalysis developed from working with neurotic patients. Freud noticed that patients projected elements of their internal world onto the therapist – *transference*. Moreno’s studies of human communication were based on persons considered normal, and he observed that some spontaneous theatre actors had developed a magical relational tuning among them. He denominated this mutual relational short-circuit as *tele*.

These two perspectives complement each other. The concept of *tele* has filled in some of the gaps some post-Freudians were in search of. Anna Freud (1974) accepts that there is also a *real* relationship between the patient and analyst. Greenson (1982) has coined the term *working alliance* aiming to describe the relationship of the patient’s healthy aspects with the analyst within the therapeutic project.

Transference isn't just a characteristic of the psychoanalytic setting; it happens anywhere and in any relationship. It doesn't necessarily need to be two-way, but this may also happen - counter-transference. Tele is always a two-way empathy. *Tele* and *transference* represent different relational qualities of the same communication process: the *tele-transferential system*.

Transference is a natural manifestation of human relationships. Here I mean pathological transference, when its quality and/or quantity will present inadequately in the relationship. Within the same relationship there is a continuous oscillation of tele-transference that varies according to time and space. The *tele-transferential system* between A and B for example will go through changes, especially when others (C, D, E) are also inserted into the relational network.

Similarly to other parts of this text, here again we come across a notion of gradation. When using this parameter, at its extremes we'll have the exaggeration of what is typical. Thus, the culmination of tele would be the *encounter*, while the apex of transference mental illness. We, mere mortals, oscillate between the two.

As we saw, the personality (*global self*) is composed of infinite *partial selves* that are expressed through roles. The interaction between the different *partial selves* will establish internal tele-transferential relationships. Therefore, we talk about *auto-tele* - also mentioned by Moreno, and *auto-transference* - a concept not mentioned by him. Someone who believes to be Napoleon 'projects' megalomaniac elements onto himself and therefore presents auto-transference.

The perfect auto-tele is that of God's - *I am what I am*. Human creatures have numerous blind spots and distorted perceptions regarding themselves. A person is never exactly what he imagines to be. Through close and successive perceptions regarding oneself, auto-tele increases. Psychotherapy therefore is a process that aims to improve auto-tele and to reduce auto-transference. *Auto-tele/auto-transference* is a system that studies the individual's relationships with himself. *Tele-transference* studies interpersonal relationships. The *tele-transferential system* studies the individual's relationships with himself and the world.

Similarly to nature's electromagnetic fields, thermodynamic potentials and quantum fields, relational networks also establish 'energy' *fields* that express the variations of the *tele-transferential system* in time and space. Thus, we have an internal relational field manifesting itself in the tele-transferential state of the internal partial selves (internal sociometry); and an external relational field that corresponds to the tele-transferential charges (positive, negative and neutral) that exist within the social network the person is inserted into.

The infant's development within the matrix of identity initially takes place through the psychosomatic roles, which are responsible for the infant's first interactions with its environment. Sequentially, the next roles to develop are the psychological or imaginary roles that are responsible – as their name also indicates – for the world of imagination (both conscious and unconscious). Initially, the child does not distinguish between reality and fantasy. As the result of this discrimination (the 'breach' between fantasy and reality), the social roles will emerge, these being performed within the context of socio-cultural reality.

Through the performance of the psychosomatic and imaginary roles, different modes or modalities of functioning develop, which will then mark (effect) the social roles. Let us briefly overview how this happens. During the neuropsychological development an internal and external conscience is established, and as a result a movement between these two, an internal-external conscience also develops. The child will start to perceive what and how something enters him, and also what and how something exits him (recognition of the I), as well as what and how can he place something inside the other, and what and how he can receive something from the other (recognition of the other). In accordance with these possibilities two relational phases are established in the developmental process; the incorporative-eliminatory phase and the intrusive-receptive phase.

Depending on the psychological circumstances, or affective climate experienced by the child, the roles that develop within these phases will have different characteristics. In a general sense we can say that the incorporative element of the incorporative-eliminatory phase is responsible (at different degrees and intensities) for the 'learning' of how to *receive-take-extort (rob)* and its opposite of how to *refuse-reject-repudiate (disgust, repugnance)*. These constitute different ways (modes) of experiencing what enters and how it enters the boundaries of the individual. The eliminatory element of the incorporative-eliminatory phase is responsible for the 'learning' of how to *give (emit)-project-throw (expel)* and its opposite of how to *preserve (save)-retain-capture (seize)*. These represent different ways (modes) of experiencing what and how it exits the individual.

Similarly, the intrusive-receptive phase, according to its mode of action, leads to different role modalities. The intrusive element of this phase is responsible for the learning of how to *enter-penetrate(explore)-invade(conquer)*. It represents different ways (modes) of entering the boundaries of the other. The receptive element embodies the learning of how to *receive-defend-conceal*. These represent different modalities of receiving the other within oneself.

⁴⁹ The editor's note: For more details on roles and their modes see also Fonseca's chapter in Figusch (2005).

The different modes and modalities of roles can be studied not only through their degree and intensity, but also through their content of activity-passivity (masculine-feminine) while being performed. The analysis of human attitudes and behaviours (as expressed in the performance of roles) can be enriched if we consider their characteristics in accordance with the relational circumstances within which these appear. In this sense the concept of health and pathology are more to do with the flexibility and adaptability of a role within a relationship (with its counter-role), than with an aprioristic analysis of its value. Depending on the relational equilibrium that exists in the studied relationship, different degrees of the same mode (for example, enter-penetrate-invade, or receive-defend-conceal) may be considered adequate or inadequate. Being 'invasive' for example is considered inadequate in case of a thief, while it is seen as adequate in case of a soldier 'penetrating' the enemy's territory. Similarly, sexually 'invading' a woman (and making her pregnant) without her consent is considered an aggressive act; but it is also considered aggressive if a woman sexually tempts a man 'concealing' her intention of becoming pregnant.

I hope that my presentation of all the above theoretical considerations will serve as a thread leading us to the practice of relationship psychotherapy, that is, we will understand how the theoretical map of this technique is connected to its clinical use.

Technical aspects

The session

A relationship psychotherapy session may take place in the *here-and-now* or the *there-and-then*. When working in the *there-and-then*, the analysis is focused on the patient's⁵⁰ outside relationships (outside); while working in the *here-and-now* focuses on the patient's relationship with the therapist (inside). From an existential perspective, the *here-and-now* always underlines the recount of the *there-and-then*. Therefore, the therapist will have an 'eye' *there* and another *here*. Relationship psychotherapy revives the value of one-to-one sociometry, discounted by Moreno in the name of group sociometry, but it uses the reference of group sociometry for the study of the patient's *internal group*.

The session develops through verbal interaction (dialogue, interventions and interpretations) and *dramatic action*. This latter involves the performance of roles from the patient's internal world, represented by her and the therapist. This

⁵⁰ In all the following examples I use the traditional term *patient* due to the simple fact that I come from a medical background and refer in this way to everybody I attend. However, I accept that there may be semantic objections to this.

aims to mobilize the rigid internal relationships. In other words, we aim to introduce a spontaneous flow within the patient's *internal sociometry*.

Dramatic action

The scenes develop within the here-an-now of the session and there isn't a chronological delimitation of time: everything is present. There is no marking and scene setting; there is no spatial movement, not even during role reversals, with a very few exceptions. Patient and therapist are sitting and engage in a dialogue from their own roles, or through the performance of the patient's internalized roles. The therapist acts as a kind of mix between psychodrama director and auxiliary ego. At the same time, he is a verbal therapist and a therapeutic actor. Dramatic action is followed by verbal elaboration. Relationship psychotherapy uses agile technical instruments, allowing quick dramatic incursions to the psychodynamic target, returning immediately to the verbal base of the session. Various dramatic actions may take place within the same session.

Role performance and role reversal

Role performance (role taking) and *role reversal* are the most frequently used techniques in relationship psychotherapy. The therapist will take on an internalized role of the patient, first played by the patient, or he performs the role directly, shaping it according to the interaction. Clearly, this second option needs some previous practice. For example: 'I am your father, talk to me.' Later on: 'You are your father and I am you.'

Following such a role performance, the therapist often finds himself surprised with what he *knew* about the patient, but wasn't aware that he knew it. For example, when doing a double-mirror, the therapist becomes aware of psychological contents of the protagonist that previously had been unknown to him; a true insight of therapist in relation to the protagonist. The role play carried out by the patient and therapist facilitates their *co-unconscious* communication.

Another interesting aspect is that the simple performing of roles in itself, without being concerned with possible psychodynamic contents, is invigorating for the participants. I believe that through performing the role of the other - that is, letting go to our identity (even if just partially), *receive* the other, and then return to our own identity - a subtle modification of consciousness takes place, this freeing up energies that will manifest in the well-being of the participants.

In the following examples T stands for therapist and P for patient.

A patient talks about her difficulties with her new manager. She fears being un-welcomed, and this has happened with other managers before. There is a transferential parallel in her relationship with the therapist.

T: *I will be your manager for a few minutes, o.k.?*

P: O.k.

T (manager): *Did you want to talk to me?*

P: I have put together the worksheet you asked me.

T (manager): *Very good. Anything else?*

P: That's all.

T (manager): *You look worried...*

P: That's right. I would like to be efficient.

T (manager): *Do you have doubts?*

P: At times. I would like some reassurance. I don't know whether I am getting on well, that is, whether I do what you would like me to.

T (manager): *Are you worried about pleasing me?*

P: Yes.

T (manager): *Are you afraid that I may fire you?*

P: I think there is more to this.

T (manager): *What is it?*

P: I don't know. I only know that I need to know for sure that you like me.

T (manager): *How do you perceive me?*

P: As someone who resolves everything with exactitude. You are assertive. I admire this ability.

T (manager): *Would you like to be like me?*

P: I would.

T (manager): *Are you not assertive like me?*

P: No, I'm not. I am always worried about your opinion. I keep saying to myself: 'Do you think he will like it?' I spend my time trying to work out the best way of saying things, of behaving...

T (coming out of the role of the manager): *Now let us reverse roles: you play the role of your manager and I'll be you.*

P (played by the therapist): *I am anxious and worried about pleasing you. I would like you to have a good impression of me. I admire the way you are, your assertiveness. I am never sure whether my way of saying or doing things is right, whether I do something wrong, whether I say something silly. Not like you. You always know what you want!*

Manager (played by the patient): *Where do you get this idea from?*

P (played by the therapist): *I think it is between the lines of our conversations. The way I look at you must show the admiration I feel for you. I also want your admiring look.*

Manager (played by the patient): *But I don't necessarily have to admire you.*

P (played by the therapist): *For me this is fundamental. I do everything I can to please you.*

Manager (played by the patient): I think you are a bit mad!

P (played by the therapist): *I only need some acknowledgement! This is something I have with my managers. Well, some of it is to do with you, and some of it isn't.*

Manager (played by the patient): I think it isn't to do with me.

P (played by the therapist): *Who is it to do with then?*

The patient comes out of the role of the manager and tells me that her first job, still in her teens, was at her father's office.

T: Why don't we have a conversation with your first manager, your father? If you play yourself, I'll play the role of your father.

The action continues with the exploration of the daughter-father relationship, and then with the patient-therapist relationship.

Double-mirror

The *double-mirror* synthesizes the double and mirror techniques of classical psychodrama. The therapist is facing the patient (mirror), doubling her. It is like a conversation between the self and another self of the person, played by the therapist. In the below example the therapist will act as the *double-mirror* for the patient.

The patient presents with a lack of social pragmatism that developed during his political fight against the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964-1984). The period of the dictatorship constitutes a constant theme of our sessions. He has been hospitalized various times and his social atom has shrunk to the point of being mostly reduced to relationships with doctors and psychologists. He is unable to take on role of others or to reverse with these. The therapist attempts to use the double-mirror technique.

T: *I would like to discuss with you the importance of this political episode in your life. I know that you don't like to take on the role of others. Therefore, you will continue to be the patient, and for a few minutes I will also be the patient, as if you were having a conversation with yourself in front of a mirror.*

P: O.K.

T in double-mirror: *In the 70's everything was different, we were important. Our friends valued what we were doing. They looked at us as heroes. The army was afraid of what we were able to do. And because of this they persecuted and killed. It was very exciting. Now our life has become monotonous. We lost our importance. I miss those times!*

P: I miss them, but I wouldn't like the dictatorship to return.

T in double-mirror: *When we 'retired' from politics, we retired from everything. We can't ever go back to work, can't ever do anything. It was total retirement. A kind of social anaesthesia.*

P: Oh yes, surely! Today we don't do anything.

T in double-mirror: *Are we retired from institution X or from the 'profession' of being subversive?*

P: I think that we retired from everything. Today we are an apprentice of life. We watch everything from a distance, and can't participate anymore...

T in double-mirror: *At least we have the doctor and the secretary. (As mentioned above, the doctor and his secretary were part of the patient's social atom.) The other day we were talking about how when we need to see someone, this means affection for us. (The therapist attempts to enter the patient's emotional world.) I think we feel affection towards the doctor and his secretary. It would be good if we could come more often for these sessions.*

P: It would be good, but I have their telephone numbers, so if I need, I just give them a ring.

T in double-mirror: *I think they consider us important.*

P: I have never done psychotherapy with a doctor. Before I thought that all psychiatrists were crazy. For the first time I think that he may not be so crazy after all.

T in double-mirror: *Yes, and we understand crazy.*

P: The other doctor only gave me medication. I thought all doctors are like that.

T in double-mirror: *Yes, a doctor can give more than just medication. And I think we are feeling better, don't we?*

P: We are better.

T in double-mirror: *At least we manage to get out of the house.*

P: That's for sure. If we didn't feel better, we wouldn't manage to come here.

T: *Now I will stop playing you (double-mirror) and will return to my own role of therapist. How did you experience this conversation between patient and patient?*

P: Ah, I thought it was funny, interesting. It is like a theatre.

T: *It is a theatre, a therapeutic theatre.*

Interview in role

Another possibility for role playing is the *interview in role* technique, that is, when the therapist, in his own role, interviews an internal character played by the patient. Example: a 23 years old patient presents difficulties in talking about his relationship with his father. I propose dramatic action.

T: *You will be your father. I will continue being me. What is his name?*

P: John.

T: *Just like yours?*

P: Yes, I am John junior.

T: *So, let's start. John, I have just started psychotherapy work with your son, and I would like your cooperation.*

Father (played by P): Junior is a boy who hasn't found the path yet; I think his time hasn't come yet. Maybe one day a good job will appear. I already told him that if he wants to go back to his studies, he should do so. If he doesn't want to, there is no problem.

T: *Would you sustain him until necessary?*

Father (played by P): For the time being I can.

T: *Could you sustain him until the age of 25, 30, 35?*

Father (played by P): Until his time will come. He is still a boy.

T: *He isn't just a boy, is he John?*

Father (played by P): 23 years old. Don't you think he is a boy?

T: *I don't think he is just a boy. For me, he is a young man.*

Father (played by P): I am concerned, because he did not accept me separating from his mother.

T: *Here in our session he says: 'After my parents separated, I have got all muddled up.' He sees this separation as the reason for all his difficulties, but I am not sure if this is all that it is to it. How was he before your separation?*

Father (played by P): he never liked studying, but went to school. Then, he was different. I would say lazy, but it isn't right to say that. He used to say that he couldn't pay attention during lessons, that he was thinking about silly things, that he was afraid. Me and my ex-wife argued a lot. I was a bit violent with her, but not with the children. This woman is worthless doctor! This boy, Junior, I have some doubts about whether he is really my son. People say he looks like me, but I don't know.

The patient comes out of role and starts to cry.

Techniques of internal visualisation: videotape and internal psychodrama

Using an analogy, while classical psychodrama is like theatre, the therapeutic techniques of internal visualisation are like cinema. These are also related to meditative techniques. They both work within the realm of *non-thinking*. If we metaphorically consider thoughts as the carriages of a moving train, two possibilities of exploration are open to us: to observe the passing carriages (as in the *association of thoughts*) or to observe the *empty spaces* between the carriages. Meditation and internal psychodrama are related to this second possibility.

Daydreaming (day-to-day automatic imagination) is often mistaken for visualisation, when the two are actually opposites. Visualisation is achieved

through deliberate focused attention, that is, through a conscious effort. Daydreaming however is the result of distraction, the lack of attention. While during visualisation one is active, the person remains passive while daydreaming.

Dreams are an exclusive form of 'cinematographic' work. We are natural dramaturges and filmmakers. Internal visual images are the kin of dreams and hallucinations, constituting personal products with the undeletable marks of the unconscious.

Some people find internal dramatization easier than classical dramatization. The same is true for role playing and role reversal. In classical psychodrama, dramatization requires spatial movement of the body, and therefore a concrete bodily engagement with the action and its consequences. For example, it is different to physically attack someone – attack in the *as if* of a classical psychodrama scene – and to attack, with refinement, through the means of imagination in an internal visualisation.

Let us now see how the *videotape* and *internal psychodrama* techniques work in relationship psychotherapy.

a) *Videotape*

The videotape technique consists in re-experiencing something that happened in the remote or more recent past, through the use of internal visualisation. It is a *presentification* with closed eyes. It can be done *focused* or *in mirror*. When focused, the person is part of the scene, she is in action, and relates the events from this position. In case of the second option the person sees herself in a scene, and relates the events from outside. These options enrich the psychodynamic work with the scene.

The same procedure is followed when working with dreams. The feelings are presentified, and the therapist includes himself into the situation, having a dialogue with the protagonist. For example, in a dream:

T: *Close your eyes and visualise the situation.*

P: I am in a strange place.

T: *How is this place?*

P: It is an old room, with curtains and rugs. It reminds me of the 60's.

T: *Are there people around?*

P: Yes, at the back, I see an ex-girlfriend.

T: *How are you feeling?*

P: I feel apprehensive.

T: *Pay attention to your body and try to localise this feeling.*

Or:

T: *Take a look at yourself from outside and see how you are in this scene.*

And so on.

b) *Internal psychodrama*

I prefer to denominate as *internal psychodrama* the process applied when there isn't a specific work material around. The person undertakes a journey observing the succession of spontaneous visual images that appear inside of her: a waking dream.

We start by focusing the attention on the bodily sensations that are present. It is suggested that thoughts are being left aside. The attention is focused on the internal visual images (shapes, colours and scenes) that emerge. The person is encouraged to let her internal film run, as seen through her *internal eyes*. The protagonist is the guide, while the therapist only follows. At times psychodramatic techniques are also applied; or other, cinematographic techniques: *close-up, zoom, panoramic view*.

An example: within an internal psychodrama, the visualisation of shapes and colours had preceded a sense of the person flying. She flew through clouds and caught a glimpse of tiny things down below. Later, she saw herself sat on a bench in an open place. She felt alone and became emotional. Bit by bit she started to feel being accompanied. After a few moments of wait this company presented itself in form of a loved being whom she had lost. This was followed by a farewell and the recovery of feelings contained within the relationship.

The dynamics of action

The action of relationship psychotherapy comprises both the dramatic and the verbal dimension. With regards the verbal part, this counts on the usual actions of psychoanalytic psychotherapies. The elaboration represents the attempt of offering insights or to expand on these, with the objective of re-constructing the self-image, or the telic perception of the surrounding world. This happens in the actual verbal context of the session, or following a *dramatic action*. I use this expression in order to distinguish it from the dramatization of classical psychodrama. The *dramatic action* consists of a dramatic incursion during the verbal context of the session and presents three movements: introduction, development and resolution.

The dynamics of the dramatic action expresses itself through the means of dramatic insight and the catharsis of integration. The first refers to the enlightenment of a previously obscure psychological content. The second refers to a dramatic process that involves the disorganisation of a conflict with its consequent better re-organisation, in a way that the person catches a glimpse of something new on their existential horizon.

Relationship psychotherapy aims to create a playful working space, an intermediary zone between the outside and the inside, between the conscious and unconscious: the spontaneous-creative space of the relational co-conscious and co-unconscious. (Moreno 1977) In some way, the dramatic action reminds us of play-therapy: through 'play' we deal with 'serious' things.

I hope that the reader has been able to follow my attempt to outline relationship psychotherapy as a technical procedure derived from psychodrama and founded by theoretical elements derived from Moreno (1977), Buber (1970) and Bowlby (1980), as well as other authors⁵¹, whom I see as belonging to a category that I denominated as *relational psychoanalysis*. Within this sense, I couldn't leave out Freud (1968), who was the actual creator of what I call relational psychoanalysis, as it was him who described the triangular network of the Oedipal complex, the one-to-one sociometry of transference/counter-transference, and the co-unconscious communication within the analytic setting.

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⁵¹ Alexander (1965), Balint (1966), Erikson (1976), Fairbairn (1975), Fromm (1970), Greenson (1982), Guntrip (1973), Horney (1966), Kohut (1984), Sullivan (1964) and Winnicott (1990).

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7.

The melting clock: A psychodrama technique for grief work in a one-to-one setting⁵²

Zoltán Figusch⁵³

Losses accompany all of us throughout our whole life. Loss however, doesn't only mean the death of a parent, a family member, a close relative or a friend. We may lose someone without that person actually dying: we may separate from a lover, a partner, a husband or a wife, or we may be abandoned by a parent or by a significant other. Beyond losing persons we may also lose our ideals, beliefs, dreams, hopes, possibilities, jobs, health, or even some of our roles.

However, the loss that affects us most deeply - through its irreversibility and definiteness - is the loss by death of a significant other from our social atom (our extended circle of relationships). With the disruption of socio-emotional relationships, our socio-emotional existence also gets damaged; with the death of a loved other we also lose a part of ourselves. Our social atom becomes smaller and smaller and if we don't rebuild it, we may reach a state of 'social death', which at times may be even worse and crueler than the actual death.

Bereavement unchains a whole series of responses, denominated as grief reactions. My intention within this paper is to try and understand these grief reactions from the perspective of psychodrama theory, and to trace back their origins to the matrix of identity, the bio-psycho-socio-cultural placenta of human development. Following this, through the clinical example of a young man with learning difficulties, I will present the psychodrama technique of the 'melting clock'; a technique that I developed during the course of our one-to-one psychodramatic grief-work.

The *locus nascendi* of grief reactions

Grief reactions can be traced back to the developmental phase of the matrix of all-identity (the first universe), and more specifically to the infant's early

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experiences of *relating* and *separation*. Loss by death can be considered as the loss of a significant relationship, as an irreversible separation from a significant other.

From the moment we are born we start to interact with the persons and objects of our environment, these interactions forming the basis of socio-emotional learning and development. During the course of this process, we internalize various aspects of the significant others from our social environment, and as a consequence, when we lose someone important, we also lose a part of ourselves. From a sociometric perspective we could say that we exist through our relationships, through our interactions with others.

The psychological development of the child is a long and gradual process, its starting point being the symbiotic relationship between the infant and his mother, between the infant and his environment. This initial phase of development is characterised by the infant's inability to differentiate between himself and others (undifferentiated all-identity), the infant only gradually becoming able to distinguish himself from others (the recognition of the *I* and the *other*, or the phase of differentiated all-identity). The experiences of this process will structure the child's learning of how to *relate* to and *separate* from others, relating and separating representing the two opposite poles of relationships. (Fonseca 2003)⁵⁴

Let us look at the experiences that structure our relationships, starting with the pole of *relating*. We saw that within the phase of undifferentiated all-identity the infant experiences all things, persons and objects of his environment as one individual manifold, in an undifferentiated manner. Consequently, he relates to all human beings in his environment in a generic manner, accepting their care without discrimination. Only later on does he acquire the ability to choose between people, the mother (or main carer) becoming his preferential or primary choice. Infant and mother will continue to form an organic unit of functioning and interaction.

Beyond fulfilling the basic biological needs of the infant, through her secure holding, the mother also fulfils his emotional needs as well as his needs for interaction. Even without doing anything specific, the mother's presence can be structuring in itself. As a result, the infant develops a *positive anticipation* in relation to the care of the mother. He anticipates that beyond satisfying his hunger and making his discomfort disappear (physical needs), his mother would also pick him up, talk to him and interact with him, that is, she will also satisfy his emotional needs. Fonseca (2003) denominates this optimistic anticipation as *anxiety-hope*. Through the concretization of this positively anticipated and hoped contact, the infant will experience *pleasure/love*: the pleasure of being together, the pleasure of relating. This pleasurable experience will manifest itself in the infant's feelings of *happiness* and *joy* with the shared moment. According to

⁵⁴ See also Fonseca's chapter 6.

Bustos (2001) this pleasure will persist as the background of subsequent experiences, that is, the internalization of these positive feelings will result in a positive and optimistic view of the adult relationships.

We could conclude that this experiential sequence of *positive anticipation (anxiety-hope) – pleasure/love – happiness* is related to gains and to life. It represents the infant's blueprint in his learning of how to *relate*, of how to 'be together'. In the subsequent phases of the infant's development, these experiences will also be reiterated in his relationships with other persons of the matrix of identity.

However, as Fonseca (2003) points out, relating only represents one pole of our relationships. As the infant learns how to 'be together', inevitably he also needs to learn to 'be alone'; that is, together with learning how to relate, he will also need to learn how to *separate*. Already around the age of eight months the infant starts to react to the absence of his mother (separation anxiety), as she represents an important emotional and affective relational object for him. This is the first step towards establishing an object relationship; or, in psychodramatic terms, the second phase of the matrix of identity – the beginning of the recognition of the *I* and the *other*.

In the absence or the threat of absence of the (m)other (the main holding figure) the child will experience a whole series of new reactions that differ from those of the experience of relating. We saw that when positively stimulated, the infant responds with hope, pleasure/love and happiness. In front of imminent loss however, his first reaction is *anxiety* or *anxiety-fear* as Fonseca (2003) denominates it. (Fonseca considers anxiety-fear to be the opposite pole of anxiety-hope [positive anticipation], the infant's experience of relating.) With the actual concretization of this absence, *anger* and *aggression* appear (that is, *displeasure/hate* that manifests itself in the infant's crying and kicking), this being followed by feelings of *sadness* for the loss. However, since after each period of absence the mother returns, the infant eventually learns to relax in her absence, that is, he reaches a *resolution*.⁵⁵

Thus, the experiential sequence of separation can be summed up as: *anxiety (anxiety-fear) – anger and aggression (displeasure/hate) – sadness – resolution*. While the experiential sequence of relating is connected to gains and life, the experiential sequence of separation is strongly connected to loss and death.

As a result of the pleasure of relating, and of the displeasure of separation, the child will try to diminish and avoid the negative experiences and to extend the positive ones. These tendencies are denominates as *shock absorbers* (Fonseca 2003) or *defence mechanisms* (Bustos 2001), and will be incorporated in the child's developing personality. These primary learning experiences of relating and separation will also reflect in his adult relationships and, as Bustos (2001) points

⁵⁵ This resolution will not be achieved in cases of abandonment or desertion, leading to negative experiences (denominated by Laing as 'basic ontological insecurity') that may greatly hinder later development. These experiences may jeopardize the child's emotional survival.

out, if someone goes through the matrix of identity with positive experiences of relating, these will help him accept more easily later moments of loss. Thus, the disappearance of the object (mother) from the visual field of the infant can be considered as the first step towards the configuration of the concept of death, while separation the blueprint of grief reactions.

It is important to mention however, that the child is not able to understand death before he acquires language and the sense of time, before he understands causal relationships and before he can differentiate between the animated and the unanimated – that is, before he reaches the breach between fantasy and reality⁵⁶.

The phases of grief

Grief reactions represent a particular case of the above described separation reactions; they are the derivatives of the anxiety-anger/aggression-sadness-resolution sequence. However, while the separation experienced by the infant is reversible (since the mother returns), separation by death is irreversible and definite, this resulting in certain changes of the sequence.

Let us then see the sequence of grief reactions that appear following the loss by death of a significant other from our social atom. According to the sequence described by Pap (1997), the first and immediate response to the death of a loved and important other is *shock*. When working with such fresh grief in psychodrama, an accepting, supportive and consoling attitude is needed both from the director and the group, which can most simply be achieved by sharing. At this stage the bereaved is usually not ready to look deeper into her loss (through dramatization); this is not a time for confrontation and analysis.

This initial shock is followed by *denial*, the phase of emotional non-acceptance. As the word denial suggests, at this stage of her grief reactions the bereaved does not accept the death of the other, she refuses to emotionally live through this experience, and she does not consider it as an issue. Therefore, grief in its stage of denial is nearly never brought into psychodrama consciously. It may however, be brought into the session indirectly, through an issue that does not suggest or start as grief-work. In these cases the therapist needs to keep an extra eye open in order to recognize the real issue behind the surface.

⁵⁶ In an anthropological study Landini (2002) tries to find the origins of the breach between fantasy and reality. He concludes that this breach appeared during the course of human phylogeny and is related to the humanoids' discovery of mortality. The realization of being mortal (it was at the time of the Neanderthals that the first graves and the cult of death/dead appeared) had taken man beyond the existential experience of reality: the imaginary emerged together with the psychodramatic role. Ontogeny (the individual development of each one of us) is thus a repetition of phylogeny.

After denying it, the bereaved faces the loss, this resulting in strong reactions of *anger* and *aggression*. A lot of the grief processes get stuck in this phase, because we feel it is inappropriate to be angry or to have any negative feelings towards the deceased. Negative thoughts and feelings are therefore often repressed, or the bereaved may turn her anger/aggression against herself. This self-blame and self-reproach may be the result of arguments we had with the deceased before their death; we feel guilty for having hurt them, or having been hurt by them, their death impeding us from making up for these 'incidents'.

The next phase of grief reactions is the *depressive* phase, the acceptance of the loss. These feelings of *sadness* may be present, with more or less intensity, throughout the whole grief work. Only after the acceptance of the loss (and as a result of this acceptance) can the bereaved person reach the last phase of the grief process: *resolution*. Resolution means making peace not only with the fact of death, but also with the deceased and with ourselves. Resolution is the closing of grief work; it enables the bereaved to say good-bye and to let go of the deceased – to let go of the bad and to hold on to the good.

According to Lindemann (1944) and Vikár (1997), before reaching resolution, another phase may also occur in the grief process: the phase of *symptom formation by identification* or *partial identification* with certain characteristics of the deceased. 'This is the appearance of traits of the deceased in the behaviour of the bereaved, especially symptoms shown during the last illness' of the deceased. (Lindemann 1944, p.142)⁵⁷

It is important to mention, that the grief process does not necessarily follow the above described *shock – denial – anger/aggression – sadness – resolution* sequence. The bereaved may go through some of these phases quickly, while some others may take longer; they also may swap or overlap and so cannot always be clearly separated. The bereaved often first needs to express more positive feelings towards the deceased (such as love and gratitude), before being able to air her pain, anger or reproach, thus eventually reaching resolution. What is true however for all grief processes, is that these phases take place step by step, that is, coming to terms with death takes time.

This usually happens naturally, the bereaved going through the various phases of grief in her own rhythm. At times however, she may get stuck in a certain phase, unable to reach resolution in a natural and spontaneous manner. Lindemann (1944) described this as pathologic grief that may in turn develop into a series of morbid grief reactions⁵⁸.

⁵⁷ Based on clinical observations of terminally ill adults, Kubler-Ross (in Perazzo 1986) described the grief reactions experienced by these patients in relation to their own death. She distinguished the following five consecutive phases: *denial – anger – bargaining – depression – acceptance*.

⁵⁸ When describing morbid grief reactions Lindemann (1944) differentiates between delayed reactions (a delay that may take a few weeks, months or even years) and distorted reactions

This is when psychotherapy may become necessary in order to enable the bereaved to complete the grief process. The objective of the therapist in these cases is to allow the bereaved client to go through all the phases of grief, by bringing to the surface her repressed feelings, and by helping her liberation from the stuck relationship with the deceased, her readjustment to a new environment in which the deceased is missing as well as the formation of new relationships.⁵⁹

In the following I will present a clinical example, in which one-to-one psychodrama was used to help a client reach resolution for his unresolved grief.

The melting clock

Frank (not his real name) was six years old when his grandmother had a heart attack. During her hospitalization she recovered, but died not long after she had been discharged. At the time Frank's parents did not support or comfort him in his grief and so the memory of the loss of his Nan became extremely painful for Frank and remained unresolved. Had his parents been able to facilitate his grief and offer him appropriate emotional support, they would have probably enabled him to process the loss at a level appropriate to his age. Vikár (1997) points out the reason why this may be difficult is that the adults in the bereaved child's social atom are also strongly affected by the loss, creating emotional instability around the child. Based on his therapeutic grief-work with children, Vikár further adds that in the lack of the parents' emotional support, therapy may provide this sense of safety for the child. He compares therapy to a transitional object that offers emotional safety in the absence of the mother.

At the age of 20 Frank presented clear indications of unresolved and delayed grief reactions. The thought of his Nan's illness and death was anxiety provoking and frightening for him, this evoking strong resistances and painful memories. He also carried a lot of anger, a reaction that was discouraged and occasionally even punished by his parents when Frank had been a child. He was not able to accept and appropriately express his anger, and considered it as wrong and dangerous. In terms of the above-described sequence of the grief reactions we could say that Frank had not overcome the phases of anger/aggression and sadness, and so had not reached a resolution over his Nan's loss.

(such as over-activity, the development of a psychosomatic disease, lasting loss of patterns of social interaction and social isolation, hostility, activities detrimental to the bereaved person's social and economic existence, agitated depression, etc.)

⁵⁹ In Bowlby's (in Perazzo 1986) analytical view this means de-structuring and re-structuring the ego, through the withdrawal of the libido from the lost object. He defined grief as the repetition of the infant's first object loss, as the origin of the persistent search for the lost object.

These reactions had been clearly concretized during the psychodrama sessions: Frank chose a small teddy bear to represent his 'young frightened self', embodying both his fear and painful sadness. Frank's represented his disowned and unaccepted 'aggressive self' (anger) by a white duck. Finally, his 'considerate adult self' was represented by another, nearly identical duck, this suggesting that although Frank had recognised the 'aggressive self' as being part of him, he was not yet able to accept and integrate this with his 'considerate adult self'⁶⁰.

When working with unresolved grief, psychodrama offers the possibility to recall a deceased significant other within a scene and to re-encounter them. In psychodrama it is also possible however to go beyond the simple re-enactment of a past encounter; the technique of surplus reality enables the protagonist to have an encounter with the deceased that did not actually happen in the reality of their relationship. Thus the bereaved protagonist has the chance to experience and express her feelings and thoughts toward the deceased in their complexity and variety. The emotional discharge and intellectual understanding of this psychodramatic encounter may help the protagonist to process certain aspects of her unresolved grief by gaining surplus insight and surplus understanding.

Blatner (1973, 2000) suggests deathbed scenes and the technique of the final encounter, which focus the needs of the protagonist with a literal deadline for action. 'You have five minutes to talk to him before he dies. Now is the time to make your good-byes, ask your final questions, and express your honest resentments and appreciations.' (Blatner 1973, p.70)

In an early session Frank set up a scene from his childhood when together with his parents he visited his Nan in hospital. He was too frightened to enter her room and decided to stay outside on his own, sitting in a dark and cold corridor ('young frightened self'). Perazzo (1986) points out that parents and hospitals tend not to allow young children to visit seriously or terminally ill relatives, in order to keep death out of their sight. Thus, beyond repressing their grief process, they also block the children's ability to express their feelings. Even though it seems that in Frank's case it was his own decision not to visit his Nan, the effects were the same: his feelings of fear and sadness became repressed without these being externalized and processed.

Later on during the therapy Frank revisited this hospital scene, stating that he 'needed to do something there' - a clear indication of his unresolved grief. In a surplus reality scene his 'considerate adult self' actually managed to enter Nan's hospital room and expressed some of his feelings related to her death; however his 'young frightened self' continued to sit outside in the corridor. A final encounter (Blatner 2000, p.45) suggested at this stage was rejected by Frank,

⁶⁰ A lot of the therapy work addressing this 'aggressive self' had been done before the actual grief-work was introduced, and so will not be discussed in detail within this paper. However, further references to this self will be made in the following sections.

indicating that more work needed to be done in order for him to reach resolution in his grief process.

Surplus reality scenes (such as the deathbed scene and the final encounter) may enable protagonists to work with and possibly resolve certain aspects of their unfinished grief-work. However, as Frank's example indicates, it is very unlikely that only one such surplus reality experience will fully resolve the grief of a bereaved protagonist and enable her to let go and say good-bye to the deceased in real life too.

Ongoing one-to-one psychodrama psychotherapy may offer a different possibility to work with such unresolved grief. In contrast with ongoing psychodrama therapy groups where protagonists and issues presented by them rotate, in one-to-one psychodrama we work with only one client, who has the psychodramatic stage available only for herself at all times. As Mérei and Vikár (1997) point out, this client being the only protagonist, the sequence of her therapy sessions will end up being edited into a continuous whole, the psychodramatic space thus turning into a space of interconnected memories. This montage-like adding up of the sessions offers the possibility to bring onto the stage a more complete story of the protagonist's relationship with the deceased, a story illustrated through various images and scenes, its positive and negative aspects, its conflicts and harmonious times, etc.

In grief-work this panorama of the relationship enables the bereaved protagonist to revive the deceased inside herself, to bring back to life memories and to process experiences. But, beyond creating a continuous line of past memories, it is also possible to create a montage-like sequence of surplus reality scenes, by editing together a series of sessions when the protagonist works in surplus reality. Thus the time available to say good-bye and letting go of the deceased can be extended, and grief reactions can be worked through more thoroughly in order to reach resolution. I named this technique after Salvador Dalí's well-known images of melting clocks, representing a surrealist and dream-like vision of the flexibility and relativity of time. However, while Dalí suspends time in *sur-reality*, the psychodrama technique of the melting clock suspends time in *surplus-reality*.

I introduced the technique of the melting clock following the session when Frank had revisited the scene set in his Nan's hospital room. We were in Nan's living room shortly after she had left hospital and Frank mentioned that there were certain things he 'should have done'. When in role of his Nan, he also made clear that she needed to explain a lot of things about her illness and death to 'young frightened Frank'. While in this role (Nan), Frank managed to voice how difficult letting go was for both of them, and had a long, emotional and comforting conversation with 'young frightened Frank', touching on many painful issues and feelings. Frank had the chance to replay this scene in the role

of his 'young frightened self' (receive the comfort) as well as to watch it in mirror (being in the role of his 'considerate adult self'), this latter leading to an emotional catharsis.

It was clear however that Frank needed more time to resolve his grief process; there were many more things to say and to do before he could let go of his Nan. In the therapy room I had a big wooden clock with movable hands, which I gave to Frank asking to show me what time this encounter in his Nan's living room took place. After he set the clock to 3p.m., I gave him the following instruction: 'Now it is early afternoon and we have until midnight. This will be your special time with Nan to do the things you should have done and say the things you should have said. We will not be able to stop the time, but we can slow it down, so you will only get to midnight when you are ready. Time will move forward at each session, but you decide how far. At the end of each session you will stop the clock at any time that feels comfortable and we will take it from there the following week.' This is how the melting clock was introduced and how Frank's time with his Nan was suspended in surplus reality, Frank gaining control over the time he needed to say good-bye. Our subsequent sessions continued in surplus reality, with the objective to reach midnight (resolution) when Frank was ready.

3-5p.m.

At the beginning of the next session Frank moved the hands of the melting clock forward, stopping '*dead on five*'. He gave himself two hours of surplus reality time, during which he would watch TV with Nan and then do some washing. Setting up the laundry and opening the big wash-basket (a box full of costumes, pieces of colourful fabric and hats that I kept in the therapy room) evoked various memories linked to his Nan, these leading into a conversation between them about the life cycle and death. In role of Nan Frank reassured his 'young frightened self' that even if she'll be gone, she would be 'up there (pointing at the heavens) looking out for him'. Death was addressed in a less frightening way, leaving 'young frightened Frank' a bit more relaxed.

5-6p.m.

The following session Frank moved the hands of the melting clock from 5 to 6p.m. He said that Nan would have a nap at this time, 'giving a rest to her old and tired body' - a real metaphor of death. Through role reversals between Nan and Frank the duality of body and spirit was discussed and Frank was left more reassured knowing that after letting go of Nan's old and tired body her spirit will stay with him and continue to live inside his heart. Some of 'young frightened Frank's' fears and anxieties were addressed, bringing this part of his self closer together with his 'adult considerate self' (integration).

6-7p.m.

Our next session coincided with Frank's 21st birthday, a good opportunity to further strengthen his adult role. During the earlier sessions Nan had mentioned that she regretted not being able/alive to see Frank as an adult. It was from 6 to 7p.m. surplus reality time that Nan had finally had the chance to meet the 'tall, strong, hard working, kind, helpful and caring' adult Frank, who had managed to find balance between his 'considerate adult' and 'aggressive' selves⁶¹.

7p.m. seemed to be a turning point in Frank's grief work. He became more grounded in his adult role, he had further integrated his 'aggressive self' (by processing and taking ownership over some of his anger); while his 'young frightened self' seemed to appear less and less, indicating that his emotional pain and sadness had lessened. Although he had still not reached resolution, he awaited the last hours of his day with Nan with less anxiety. He had also managed to internalize some aspects of his Nan – namely her spirit.

7-8p.m.

Having been indoors all afternoon, Frank and Nan went for a walk in the park between 7 and 8p.m. Frank set up a few swings with Nan sitting on one of them and his three inner selves on another. Pointing at his 'young frightened self' he said: 'He is still there. A bit better, but still there.' In role of his Nan (s)he acknowledged that she was also a bit frightened of going up there (pointing to heaven), but added: 'You need to think with your heart and also think with your head (clearly addressing both the adult and the young). I am in your heart. And you will need to keep looking up, because I will be there looking down on you.' Frank had further internalized his Nan's surviving spirit, separating it from her dying body, while his 'young frightened self' received more comfort. At 8p.m. they returned to Nan's house.

8-10p.m.

Frank and Nan spent the next two hours back in the sitting room, where an emotional conversation took place between them. Putting an arm around his Nan, Frank told her: 'Even though I know that you'll be up there, it is painful, because I won't be able to see you.' In role of Nan (s)he replied: 'It is also painful for me, because I won't be able to see you again. But you are a grown-up and you know how to think with your heart.' Frank managed to acknowledge and express his sadness and emotional pain from his considerate adult role, showing signs of acceptance of the loss. He finished the session in this adult role and without being frightened (the bear representing his 'young frightened self' was

⁶¹ As mentioned above, a lot of the work around Frank's aggressive self had been done in the earlier stages of his therapy, before introducing the melting clock technique.

not even brought into the session), an indication that he was very close to reach the stage of resolution.

10p.m.-midnight

When starting the following session, I wasn't certain whether Frank would reach midnight or stop the melting clock some time before that. However, he came into the session with the words: 'I *upset* the clock (he set the hands on midnight), I am *dead* nervous looking at it' – his words indicating that although upset, he was ready to finish his grief-work.

Before moving into action it was important to reinforce Frank's newly consolidated adult role, by reminding him of the long and arduous journey he had completed and of how he had managed to integrate his 'aggressive' and 'young frightened' selves into his adult role.

We then moved on to a scene set in the church, where Nan's coffin lay open, with Frank and his family standing around. Frank had told Nan how much he would miss her, closed the coffin making sure that Nan's spirit (represented by a red rose) wasn't locked in and gave a farewell speech. It was this moment that Frank reached resolution and became able to say good-bye and let go of his Nan.

We moved on to the scene of the funeral. As the coffin was wrapped in a comforting brown blanket (comfort both for Nan and Frank) representing the soil, Nan's spirit ascended to heaven. Frank looked up and completed his grief-work with the following words: 'I know you are up there, having a rest and looking down, seeing what a strong, hardworking and kind adult I have grown into.' He seemed to have made his peace with the fact of death as well as his conflicting inner selves.

Conclusions

Within this paper I presented grief reactions through the prism of psychodrama theory, and the psychodrama technique of the melting clock developed in order to help a protagonist reach resolution in his unresolved grief process. Working with surplus reality helped this protagonist to gain a surplus insight and understanding of his delayed grief reactions, this technique catalyzing his grief-work that had become stuck at an early age.

Working around the melting clock allowed Frank to work and live through the repressed feelings related to the loss of his grandmother. Feelings that he could not share with his parents became possible to express and share in the therapy process. The sequence of surplus reality scenes helped him to express his feelings of fear and sorrow and to process the emotional pain of the bereavement.

According to Pap (1997), a properly led and finished therapy process will enable the protagonist to complete the therapy work, to take on and try out new

roles and to develop new relationships. The melting clock seems to have enabled Frank to do all this: he completed and resolved his grief process; he further developed and strengthened his adult role by working through and integrating the frightened and aggressive aspects of his self; and finally, he managed to liberate himself from the symbiosis with his deceased grandmother and to find an acceptable formulation of his future relationship with her. Processing this loss had helped Frank to further develop, to renew himself and to spontaneously and creatively re-born from the experience of death.

In all healthy therapeutic processes, whether group or individual, it is important to define from early on the time scale of the therapy. Clients need to know how much time they have available and how long the therapy will last in order to naturally finish the therapy process by the designated closing time. The technique of the melting clock follows the same principle, only that it allows the protagonist herself to set the time scale for her grief work, thus enabling and empowering her to process her loss in a more flexible manner and to reach resolution in her own natural pace.

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8. Spontaneous theatre and one-to-one psychodrama⁶²

*Moysés Aguiar*⁶³

Within this chapter I will examine how spontaneous theatre as a theoretical-practical frame of reference can be applied to one-to-one situations where we only have the therapist/director and the client/protagonist⁶⁴.

It is worth remembering that classical psychodrama, without the contributions of the more recent experiences of spontaneous theatre, traditionally was seen as a work instrument for groups, and therefore inadequate for individual work.

However, we need to take into consideration that what is referred to as 'classical psychodrama' is far from being unanimously understood in terms of what this means. Both spontaneous theatre and psychodrama psychotherapy have had eighty years of history, going back to the time when Moreno first carried out his experiments within this field, with the enthusiasm of his youth and the cultural effervescence of that era.

Since then, as it happens to all simple ideas, his method has been adopted by a continuously growing number of professionals. All these followers have had significant contributions, some more than others, both regarding the applied practice and the theoretical reflections; as a result today's procedures as a whole represent an enormous development in relation to Moreno's original proposals.

One example of this is one-to-one psychodrama, which due to a series of circumstances has become so different from classical group psychodrama that the question may arise: is this still psychodrama?

A historical panorama

⁶² The original title: 'Teatro espontâneo e psicodrama à deux.' In: Jensen, K. *Psychotherapie psychodramatisch*. Shaker Verlag, Aachen, 2001.

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⁶⁴ The editor's note: The original Portuguese paper consists of two parts: in the first part Aguiar presents his more general reflections regarding spontaneous theatre - and in extension psychodrama - as a modality for working with groups. As the contents of this first part are nearly identical to another chapter already published in English by Aguiar (chapter 9 in Figusch [2005]), I chose to only present here the second part of this new paper, focusing on how the principles of spontaneous theatre can be applied to one-to-one psychodrama.

The *locus* is Brazil, an immense laboratory-country. Let us have a quick look at the historical circumstances that presided the adoption and development of psychodrama in this part of the world. Although the very first psychodramatists had emerged during the mid-twentieth century (through the influence of pioneers from France), the boom happened at the end of the sixties with an impulse strong enough to maintain its accelerated growth until the end of the next decade, its epicentre being the International Psychodrama Conference of São Paulo in 1970⁶⁵.

At the time our nation lived under the violent political oppression of a military regime, very efficient in dismantling attempts of meetings and gatherings related to any political ideas that were different from those defended by the regime.

On the other hand, within the realm of psychology and psychiatry, the extremely elitist psychoanalytic practice was only available to a very small and economically distinct section of the population. There was such a degree of restriction, that even professionals within this area – at the time making part of the 1% of the population who had access to university level training – struggled to support the financial onus of a psychoanalytic career. This search for psychoanalytic knowledge was also coupled with a lack of alternatives.

Thus psychodrama emerged in response to the imperious social needs: on the one hand, the opportunity of meeting in groups without the risk of repression, as this was a psychotherapeutic activity and consequently (in principle) above any suspicion; on the other hand, the need for a working and training tool that would include personal therapy at a reasonable price.

Possibly as a result of this, psychodrama spread very quickly, both in terms of the number of professionals seeking this form of specialization, and in terms of the dimensions of the clientele (nearly all consultation rooms were filled with groups and more groups of psychodrama psychotherapy).

The speed of expansion however, inevitably also meant a loss of quality. The image of psychodrama, very seductive to start with, was bit by bit worn out, and it got impregnated with a negative valuation: psychodramatists were seen as superficial and irresponsible.

An era of purification and refinement followed. A significant number of professionals became disappointed and started to look for alternatives that they considered having more solid scientific foundations, and therefore more tenable. On the other extreme, a great number of professionals who had adhered to the easy hedonism apparently offered by psychodrama ended up being abandoned by their clientele and disappearing from the scene.

Those who remained were the ones who understood that a good outlook for psychodrama was linked to the diligence of developing it further, as well as the

⁶⁵ The editor's note: For more details on the development of psychodrama in Brazil see chapter 1 in Figusch (2005).

recognition that they were dealing with an alternative that, although incipient, it seemed valid and promising.

In order to further strengthen psychodrama they had to focus on not where the tillage had been already done, but on the development and exploration of new areas. When mining for gold a lot of sand and valueless gravel needs to be removed, because the precious ore is hidden in these elements considered 'useless' and therefore disposable. Similarly, various wrong paths had to be tried out - some are still around today - in order for psychodrama to be able to provide a significant amount of new knowledge and new developments.

Psychodrama with a single patient

Within the above described process there always has been a challenge: how could a lone working professional attend individual patients using the psychodramatic framework? The neo-psychodramatists, trained in psychodrama after previously having trained in other backgrounds, resolved this challenge by dividing themselves: they used psychodrama in their work with groups, while in their individual practice they used the technique they had learnt before (the most common being psychoanalysis). This solution however, was only viable to those professionals who could rely on a double background, and so left the real dilemma unsolved.

Moreno himself has frequently come across this problem, and his solution was to recruit relatives and professional colleagues, available to form an *ad hoc* group.

This would not be considered as a therapy group or group psychotherapy in the sense of working with various patients who came together under the direction of a therapeutic team. This was a very peculiar group with no indication that the socio-dynamics of this improvised group were considered as relevant for the work with the protagonist. As it was decided beforehand who the protagonist would be, they weren't the emergent of this provisionally formed group. The meaning of their 'illness' was searched for in the characteristics of their social atom or the larger community they belonged to, as for example in the 'psychodrama of Adolph Hitler' (the Karl case) (Moreno 1959), which gave a special colouring to the protagonist concept.

However, the *hic et nunc* group was not considered as the *matrix* of the (hi)story that was represented. The participants merely performed the counter-roles indispensable for the enactment, receiving from Moreno as director very specific tasks in order to make the work viable.

For this reason the action did not exactly take the shape of collective creation that would be the product of group spontaneity; this was more of an improvised theatre whose actors received a script worked out in the moment by

the director or by the protagonist, having to restrict themselves to the tasks they were asked to do.

These experiences of Moreno inspired – as psychodrama was spreading across the globe – the establishment of professional therapeutic teams (director and auxiliaries), who would be able to attend the needs of the patient's dramatization. The practice recommended that, if it wasn't possible to work with various auxiliaries, to have at least two, one male and one female, in order to facilitate the representation of gender specific roles. As a maximum concession, it was expected to have at least one auxiliary, preferably of the opposite gender to the director.

In the development of Brazilian psychodrama however, economic factors tend to override to above criteria. What this means is that any setting posing the necessity to remunerate more than just one professional, this resulting in an increase of the costs, will usually prove to be unviable for the vast majority of potential clients. One-to-one psychodrama has appeared mainly as a result of this.

In order to make one-to-one psychodrama viable, numerous technical modifications were experimented with over the years. I will not present these in great detail within this chapter, as I have tried to do so in one of my previous writings. (Aguiar 1988) My objective here is try and describe some of these adaptations from the perspective of spontaneous theatre.

We are talking about a very specific perspective based on some presuppositions that are not universal within the professional realm of psychodrama, and which – above everything – constitute a proposal of practical-theoretical investigation. Its uniqueness doesn't have exclusive aspirations; it yearns to revitalize psychodrama both through a de-constructivist challenge as well as the discovery of new possibilities.

The theatrical concept of the protagonist

In the language of psychodrama the term protagonist is nearly always used as a synonym for client. Or, in a more rigorous sense, as the client who brings the personal issue that will be dramatized.

Similarly to other scenic arts, in theatre the protagonist is the central character of the story that is being told and this character is represented by an actor (just as all the other roles are represented by other actors).

In classical psychodrama actor and central character of the plot are merged, as the enactment intends to reproduce an episode from the personal life of the person bringing the issue and who is invited to concretise this on stage.

In the case of spontaneous theatre this overlap in the protagonic role between the actor and the character does happen with certain frequency; however, it is not *conditio sine qua non*. But even when the main role is not

performed by the same person who brings the seed of the story the protagonic character will continue to be central for the structuring of the narrative.

What is at the foundation of this spontaneous theatre process is the presupposition that within the protagonic character socio-historical forces intersect and that the collective production of the character's story (not necessarily the actor's) enables the liberation, circulation and the management of these forces. The contributions of the other participants – actors, spectators or technicians – not only reinforce and make viable, but also legitimize the protagonization.

It is true that in some situations the person proposing the story can be seen as the group emergent, that is, the most eloquent mouthpiece of these forces in that certain moment. In theory however, any member of the group can be considered a witness of the story. In other words, just as any apparently peripheral account may become extremely significant, any member of the group may be entrusted to represent – in the dramatic context – the central character of the scene. All roads lead to Rome!

In one-to-one therapy, by definition and convention, the client brings the protagonic story⁶⁶. And, also by definition and convention, the client is the actor who will assume the central character of this plot. At times this central character may be someone else (not the client); there is even a possibility of the client not wanting to be included in the represented story.

In all cases however, we could say that the story that has been brought/constructed translates the socio-dynamics on two levels: that of the group context and that of the social context.

In one-to-one therapy the group context consists of the therapist-patient dyad (or director-protagonist dyad, if we use the terminology of spontaneous theatre). The social context, in a stricter sense – from the protagonist's point of view – refers to the spaces that are her own and which she doesn't share with the director; from the perspective of the dyad, the social context refers to common spaces and mainly to the community and society in their more exact aspects as well as in their widest possible sense.

The size of the group

Group phenomena tend to vary according to the numeric composition of the group. For example: triangulation and the excluded third - phenomena characteristic of groups of three – do not appear in groups of two, and are relatively rare in groups of four. Alliances that become possible in groups bigger than four members do not even exist in smaller groups. The following and

⁶⁶ In a more daring approach we could think that the therapist himself could be the bearer of this story and that in fact (as it often happens) could unconsciously impose his own version. I however, don't believe that we are mature enough to assume this fact in its full plenitude.

control of individual behaviours only become possible in groups with adequate number of participants, while mass behaviour can only occur in groups that are sufficiently large to generate a certain anonymity. In contrast, it is much easier to identify collective movements in larger groups - where the group more clearly imposes itself over the individual - than in smaller ones. The box of affective resonance of larger groups is more potent than that of smaller groups.

For all the above reasons working strategies developed for large numbers do not always apply to small groups, and vice-versa.

In the specific case of spontaneous theatre - and consequently of psychodrama - this difference is relevant. Not only in technical terms, as the challenges of these can be easily solved if we count on the creativity of the director and his team. The greater challenges are of a theoretical nature, such as the understanding of phenomena and conceptual instrumentation. In case of one-to-one psychodrama, the sociometric perspective allows us to go beyond the traditional understanding of the transference and counter-transference phenomena, as occurrences at the level of the psyche of both participants of the dyad. It is possible for example, to look at the relational movements from different angles, such as the roles in play; the way the mutual expectations and complementarities are actually constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed; the phenomena of the dual relation itself that cannot be exclusively attributed to the arbitrariness of the involved individuals' fantasies; the creative complementarity (tele). Particularly significant is the possibility of identifying and exploring the more extended social atom that includes relationships that play a significant role in the common experience (although physically not present) whether these are actual, residual or virtual relationships. And so on.

In large groups the task of collective construction allows the director to concern himself with the technical functions of coordination, practically without needing to get operationally engaged with other tasks, such as the proposed warm-up exercises, personal statements, the accounts of stories, the suggestions regarding the narrative that is being constructed, the role performances within the dramatic context, etc. As a result the director will expose himself less as a person, limiting himself to what naturally would become more visible of him through the typical and exclusive actions of his role, or to what he voluntarily is prepared to offer to the group (sharing, for example).

In case of one-to-one work it isn't possible to achieve this distancing in the same way, and the task of co-creation requires that information regarding the director extrapolate the interventions of technical nature, requiring of him to offer material of his own personal experience (stories, feelings, fantasies, etc). This offer can occur in various forms: disguised from the therapist himself, disguised from the client, by his own will or by being compelled, with greater or lesser subtleness, with an open and honest manner or a timid and secretive manner. Using a conceptually less rigorous expression, we could almost talk about an almost co-protagonization. Such is the required degree of the director's

involvement that the protection of the therapist's privacy, varying from professional to professional, is to do with his personal boundaries and his sensibility to identify what is more or less helpful to the process, the judgement of each one.

From the group to the one-to-one, in practice

How do we transpose group practices into the one-to-one psychodrama setting? To start with, let us consider the five classical instruments of psychodrama – the director, the auxiliaries, the protagonist, the stage and the audience – and see how these are applied.

The director

Although one of psychodrama's most revolutionary proposals was attributing the therapist role to all of the group members, in practice a hierarchy has been established, with the therapist occupying the highest rank, followed by the team's auxiliary or auxiliaries, and finally the patients. This phenomenon would deserve a more detailed discussion if we wanted to further submerge in its meaning. I mentioned it here because in one-to-one psychodrama the role of the therapist is much more clearly attributed to the director, taking away from the client some participation and responsibilities that would be more clearly recognised if the therapeutic roles were truly diluted between the two members of the dyad.

As a spontaneous theatre director, that is co-ordinator of the process of scenic production, the director will face certain specific challenges:

1. He needs to make it clear to the patient that the therapy will have group spontaneous theatre as its strategic reference point, clarifying all the adaptations that have been proposed, in a way that does not aim to obtain the patient's submissive agreement, but her co-participation in this creative process. The clearer the reason behind every instruction, the better.
2. The warm-up as a preparatory phase for the spontaneous act cannot be overlooked. All aspects normally desirable in terms of preparation should also be taken into consideration in one-to-one work: the bodily engagement, the grounding, the team's commitment, the preparation for actor and author roles⁶⁷. Without this caution the patient may feel awkward or even ridiculous. Even if this phase takes some time, it is well known that it is a valid experience in itself.

⁶⁷ The editor's note: For more details on the preparation for the roles of author and actor see chapter 10.

3. Challenges regarding the elements of the scene; the use of ornaments/objects to facilitate the identification with a character; resorting to auxiliary elements such as lighting, sound and objects. What is needed in this case is to take care that the exaggeration or the un-timeliness doesn't appear as artificialism, which could lead to undesired effects.
4. As he alternates between the functions of director, actor and spectator, the therapist needs to use some kind of coding to communicate his changes of role to the patient.
5. It is indispensable for the director to be attentive to the patient's possible role confusions. This is especially so in relation to physical contact that may be required during the enactment of a scene. It is the 'mother' who embraces the 'daughter' stroking her hair in the dramatized story; it is not the therapist embracing the patient, whichever the inference that can be done to a scene like this. Role reversal is a psychodramatic resource highly recommended in such situations.

The auxiliary

As there are no auxiliaries as such, in one-to-one psychodrama one of the following alternatives should be considered: a) the protagonist plays all the roles, or b) the director at times will also act as an actor. In both cases objects are used (the most common ones are being cushions) in order to mark the presence of characters for whom there are no available actors.

It is important to be aware of the risk that the enactment does get impoverished due to the lack of actors who would perform the roles required by the protagonist. However, as patients' spontaneous statements indicate, even with these limitations dramatization is a powerful tool for psychotherapy.

In cases when the patient plays all the roles required by the scene, she will alternatively take on various characters, according to the development of the scene. The great limitation of this resource is that it is much more difficult to reach the emotional climate that is indispensable for a good improvisation.

When the director opts to join his own function with those of the auxiliary, the scene will develop with two actors, the protagonic role always belonging to the patient (with the exception of role reversals), sharing the rest of the roles between the patient and the therapist. The director may also choose to just give voice - from the outside - to the complementary characters, while stimulating the imagination of the only actor in the scene to visualise these.

With the director acting, scenes involving only two characters can be lively and can achieve a high level of dramatic performance. The risk that the therapist needs to be aware of when using this strategy is that his (therapist-actor) words may be heard as a 'competent statement', that is, that client-protagonist may take them as advice, suggestion, seduction, assessment or interpretation, this making

the inter-relation of the characters more difficult. On the other hand, the opposite risk is that the therapist will try to use the character he plays to send a message to the client. This practice is even advised in some psychodrama circles, attributing to the auxiliary the function of making in-scene interpretations, based on the roles that they perform. Adopting this alternative can bias the process of co-creation, virtually jeopardizing the constructivist proposal of spontaneous theatre.

The protagonist

As we have seen, using a more careful technical terminology, the protagonist only exists when we dramatize, and it corresponds to the central character of the plot presented on the stage. Therefore, the protagonist is an element that belongs to the dramatic context. Within the group context it is more appropriate to refer to the person who presents and polarizes the collective emotions as the group emergent.⁶⁸

However, the extrapolation of the protagonist concept into the other contexts carries within it the idea of scenic and socio-dynamic centrality, that is, the protagonist is the person who (as in the dramatization) centralizes the events and establishes herself in a reference for the definition of the social atom and its relational angles.

The psychodramatic protagonist is the group emergent taken to the stage and transformed dramaturgically, a reference for the understanding of the group processes that are happening.

In the classical version of psychodrama the story represented on stage is the story of the group emergent, whom then is transformed into the main actor and consequently the main character of the enacted story.

The perspective of spontaneous theatre opens new possibilities, as it is accepted that the enacted story may be pure fiction; fiction that at the same time masks and also reveals less evident aspects of the protagonic actor's life and her insertion into the collective that she is part of.

In one-to-one psychodrama there is no group emergent who will become protagonist; by contract, the protagonist role is given to the patient, in the same way, as it is the therapist's task to direct. However, the attention doesn't necessarily has to focus on the patient's internal adaptive processes revealed in the interplay of her fantasies, emotions, thoughts, desires, defences, attacks, etc.

The dramatized story will also transport into the therapeutic space a fragment of the social network (as the patient sees it) with a certain sociometric configuration and the socio-dynamics of the dyad meeting there and then.

⁶⁸ The editor's note: For more details on the concept of group emergent see chapter 8 in Figusch (2005).

It is within this plot that a conflict becomes evident (the idea that this conflict is psychological by definition is not universal) and that the attempts to overcome this and open new possibilities beyond the already known and established ones are experimented with.

The stage

The question of the stage – as one of the instruments of psychodrama – is inserted into another, wider issue, that of the semiotics of the therapeutic setting, both in terms of the message it conveys, as well as the possibilities it offers.

Without doubt, if the work proposal – instead of confining itself to the dominion of words – involves bodily movement, this evidently will demand a wider space, used in a way that can promote both the discrete and cautious movements, as well as the more exuberant and less controlled ones. In other words, the physical space of psychodrama therapy has some of its own characteristics not only when working with groups, but also in the case of one-to-one work.

Since Moreno, who has suggested various stage designs himself, in the psychodrama tradition there have been various positions regarding the stage as a work instrument. The demarcation of the scenic space has some evident advantages: a) it represents the difference between the theatrical and non-theatrical; b) it has language value in itself; c) it enables aesthetic creation; d) it increases the resources of the creative process; e) by delimitating the different contexts, it helps avoid these to be invaded or confused.

This scenic space can be previously defined with a stage set on a different level (or levels, with a balcony or its equivalent height of the gods and heroes) as part of the ambience's architecture; or, this can be done by the group themselves according to the needs and convenience of the moment. In this latter case the boundaries of the scenic space can be simply verbally agreed, or they can be physically marked out (for example with masking tape on the floor). It is also possible to work without this demarcation, in theory occupying all possible space within the room (or even outside it). Losing the advantages offered by architecture on different levels and by marking out precise boundaries can be compensated for with the widening of the limits of creativity.

Making good use of the space elements however, depends on the good preparation of the participants who should explore it in all its potential, experiment with the body-environment relationship, in order to get familiar with the physical environment in which they will work. These recommendations are valid both in the case of group work and individual psychotherapy. And these precautions may be less important if the chosen therapeutic option is limited to the use of words.

The audience

According to the western tradition of the last centuries, a theatrical event consists – by definition – of two categories of participants: the actors and the spectators, that is, there is no theatre without a minimal relational structure that connects the stage and audience.

On the stage a story is scenically presented to an interlocutor who should gain some kind of knowledge from it. Even in the most rudimentary modalities of theatre – including those based on the tradition of collective celebration – the actors use communicational resources with the objective of making the spectators see and feel the facts that are being presented.

The form of narration may vary, from pre-illusionist and pre-realist manifestations, through story-telling, to the perfect mastery of scenic language – which involves, beyond the actors, all choreographic, sound, visual, lighting and architectural resources – through which it is sought to ‘convince’ the spectator that the facts are happening there and then in front of them.

‘The place where we watch from’ is also subject to variations. The stage-audience relationship can be structured in the most different forms, in theory allowing for an infinite number of creative possibilities. Just to mention a few of these, there are the classic architectural models, with a curtain symbolising the fourth wall, the theatre in the arena, the peripatetic sceneries, the infiltration of the audience by the actors, the physical non-delimitation of the scenic space, and so on. However, it is fundamental that the two polarities (actors and audience) are both present; in the absence of this polarity that event could not be described as theatrical.

This structure is maintained in spontaneous theatre; however, the actors can be part of a professional team, or can be recruited from members of the audience.

In one-to-one psychodrama the group being reduced to one director and one actor – there is no surplus to form an audience. Therefore, strictly speaking, the psychodramatic instrument of the audience will cease to exist in one-to-one psychodrama.

In case of spectacle-theatre, this would mean its very destruction due to the disappearance of one of the two polarities of its constituent axle (the stage-audience relationship). If we consider however, that spectacle-theatre is just a more contemporary version of the encounter-theatre that had existed before the transformation suffered during the middle-ages (due to the indoctrination by the Catholic church), then the absence of the audience doesn’t appear as a disaster, at least in theory. Theatre is a communal experience and it doesn’t matter if this community is large or small.

From a practical point of view, this issue may not be considered too relevant, especially because creativity exists for itself, to overcome impasses and through it a way out, a minimally satisfactory operational form is always found.

As an illustration: we could make up the social atom of spontaneous theatre imagining the existence of an audience and establishing with this a virtual link. (Aguiar 1990) Or, as we saw, the therapist himself, who can alternate between the positions of director and actor-antagonist, can also provide for the absence of the audience by taking on the role of the spectator.

One of the most common complaints in the attempts of dramatizing in one-to-one work is the client's sense of restriction when asked to become an actor in this strange theatre, exposing herself in front of the only spectator, who at the same time directs and challenges her in a situation that may slip into the ridiculous. One could say that a good warm-up can solve this problem, being the director/therapist's task to identify and create strategies in order to achieve this objective.

There are numerous well-known resources that could be used for making the enactment viable. Even action techniques – although strictly speaking these don't necessarily constitute psychodrama (Williams 1989) and even less so a theatre session – acquire a privileged position here, as many of these are especially adequate for individual work. This will be further discussed later on.

As there isn't an active and well-defined audience, the affective containment that a group could offer will not be created, and so it is the director's task to compensate for this shortcoming. Some patients even prefer it this way, as they feel safer, mainly due to their acceptance by the director, while in the group, even if the virtual sociometric choices may be positive, there is always the risk of rejection and reprimand.

On the other hand, the inexistence of a larger group will restrict the potential for co-creation (this will take place within the therapist-patient dyad), which in spontaneous theatre is the task of both the group members participating in the scene and those who continue as spectators. Thus the unique experience of tele-relationships propitiated by the group setting and by the tasks carried out by multiple hands, is more restricted.

Despite all these difficulties we can still take the model of group psychodrama as our basis for individual work. There are various factors that allow us to conclude that it is worth using this resource: the statements of patients, generally much in favour of dramatization; the visible affective mobilization; and the positive results in terms of the transformation in the life of clients, etc.

The text

Classical psychodrama techniques have a dramaturgical function, namely that they serve the elaboration of the dramatic text. In a certain sense we could consider the text as the sixth instrument of psychodrama, if it wasn't the fact that

the other five could be – in theory – in the service of its production. It is important to remember that in spontaneous theatre the text has certain specific characteristics, among these the author-actor's simultaneous catharsis with the audience's.

The prime material for the production of the text may vary, just as the dramaturgical style will also vary in accordance with the criteria offered by the director. In a first approach we can identify at least four modalities of texts: journalistic, retrospective, prospective and fictitious texts.

The *journalistic texts* are those that, through the scenic action seek to investigate and give an account of facts. The director will try to most faithfully reproduce on the stage events that happened or are happening in the social context. The objective is to make evident possible obscure aspects of the given experience or vital area. It doesn't matter too much if the events in question are usually classified as 'external', 'objective' or 'internal', 'subjective'. Strictly speaking this dichotomy has been discarded in favour of an approach that looks at the phenomenon in its wholeness, thus avoiding the waste of effort in the attempt of establishing delimitations and of sustaining all the consequences of this, without any effective gain in the understanding of the subject, or the help that is meant to be given to the subject. The aim is the most complete clarification of the chosen situation; once this has been explored the research is finished. When working with larger groups, if the fact that is being covered (covered in a journalistic sense) counts on the participation of more than one group member, than the contribution of all is expected in order to reach a description of good quality.

Retrospective texts (also called regressive, or retrogressive scenes) foster the creation of a plot that in some way will reproduce a past event of a conflicting or traumatic nature that makes part of the protagonist's history. This reproduction is generally done in such way that it allows the feelings of the original events to be revoked. Based on this an attempt is then made to 're-direct the facts', looking for a more favourable, possibly reparatory, outcome. An important variation of these retrospective techniques involves the promotion and unchaining of retrogressive pictures, aiming to reach an early (primitive) experience of a nodal character, the reproduction of which would be the object of re-creation enabling the protagonist to reconstruct the foundations of her affective life.

Prospective techniques on the other hand, propose the opposite route: that is, to start from a present critical situation and explore the fantasies regarding its possible developments, enacting the imagined future. These would be like more up to date versions of primitive hunting rituals: the dangers are anticipated and experienced in the present, which will allow not only to catch a glimpse of them and weigh them up, but also to expurgate groundless fears, looking for positive energies that are able to mobilise all the resources for a successful confrontation of risky situations that are approaching. Therefore, these constitute more than

just a mere rehearsal – they act as a kind of operational training, as Moreno himself used them in his early experiments. It is a true warm-up for spontaneity.

Strictly speaking all the above techniques (journalistic, retrospective and prospective) are also fictitious, as the scenes represented on stage are the outcome of instantaneous improvisation, of the co-creation involving the protagonist and director (in group situations also the other actors and the audience). Their intention of reproducing the reality is knowingly just a mere force of expression, as even the protagonist's so called 'internal reality' will suffer modifications in function of other 'internal realities' that cross each other at a certain moment.

The actual *fictitious* techniques are based on the principle that every enactment is metaphoric and therefore, it doesn't matter whether we construct a scene that 'imitates real life' (as described by a certain person) or we imagine an assumedly fictitious situation. The immediate trigger for creation may be the account of an experience or of a fantasy, but the proposed task is to produce a 'completely' imaginary scene. Similarly to a hologram, the structure of the fictitious characters' relationships tends to reproduce the structure of group relations (or dyad in one-to-one psychodrama) involved in the production, in the same way as the protagonist's relationships within her personal story will illuminate not only what happens in the group as a phenomenological unit, but also what happens in the society in which the group and the protagonist are inserted.

All the above dramaturgical options are in the service of the theoretical presupposition embraced by the professional using them, which determines variations that range from the ingenious role playing of Moreno's early experiences, through the interruption of the scene in the moment when the unconscious manifests itself (the Lacanian version), and to the strategic interventions of systemic psychodramatists and the dramatic multiplication of the Argentine tradition⁶⁹.

From the theatrical to the verbal: a strange journey

There is another interesting route to compare group and individual work, which would be trying to map out psychodrama following a path that starts from more radically theatrical psychodrama, to the other extreme, a kind of psychodrama paradoxically denominated as verbal psychodrama or psychodrama without the body. Between these two extremes there are an infinite number of potential practices incorporating resources that are closer to one or the other of the two extremes.

⁶⁹ The editor's note: For details on dramatic multiplication see chapter 12 in Figusch (2005).

In order to facilitate our journey, let us work with the idea that psychodramatic practices can be grouped in three larger classes: theatrical techniques, action techniques and verbal techniques.

Theatrical techniques

These include all procedures that have theatres as their reference point. I am using plural deliberately, because within the realm of scenic arts there is an *air de famille*, a multiplicity of modalities sheltered under the same umbrella making these so different among themselves that often it seems they have nothing in common.

When referring to them – to the theatres – however, we agree that some of their characteristics can be taken as reference points for the work that develops within the realm of spontaneous scenic arts.

One of these aspects is the aesthetic concern. As any other artistic modality, theatre seeks beauty. In spectacle theatre the scenes don't just have to be comprehensible and convincing, but they also should be touching the spectators and mobilize in them some kind of aesthetic feeling.

We don't just dramatize for the sake of mere dramatization. Enactment is a language, which seeks to transmit to the interlocutor a specific content, a given perception of life and the world, with the implicit wish for the interlocutor to also capture the same meaning and experience. To represent means communicating.

But the semiotics of spontaneous theatre expands this reference and considers that in order to be a theatre that is seen/watched, it also needs to be lived, through the unique experience of collective creation. In this sense, spontaneous theatre as a spectacle poses a range of questions that go beyond and are different from the reflections of conventional playwrights. As the production is improvised and relies on the participation of many people, a new area of interaction is established, which is crucial for creating something aesthetic: the subgroup of 'professionals' work together with the subgroup of 'lay people'.

The complexity of the theatrical process allows us to understand it as something that is not reduced to the mere spectacle, even if the main idea is that this is its highest point and that everything that surrounds and precedes it exists in terms of it. This is the expectation of both those who dedicate themselves to the theatre and the audience.

Thus, it is possible to choose one of its phases and transform it into a kind of autonomous laboratory in which we produce and experiment with the creative interaction among the people in it involved. We could choose an earlier phase of spectacle theatre, or a later phase. The earlier phase can be the dramaturgical moment (the moment of the author), or the moment of preparation (the moment of the actor).

Encounter-theatre however, that involves the whole community as in a great feast (which at the same time is spectacle and celebration), offers a different working model, in which the author-actors devote themselves to the creative process, transporting the virtual spectators to such a distant horizon that the theatrical experience becomes entropic. Or, it brings them so close that the interlocutor becomes the other here-nearby, a partner in the same adventures and misadventures. It is like a family banquet, with plenty for the members present, however without people invited to admire the beauty of the visual or the flavour, or to share the emotions experienced there.

At the heart of theatrical techniques reigns omnipresent the criaturgic exploration of conflicting situations. That is, we take an existential conflict and create something around it, a story representing it and that brings to the surface the multiple efforts to overcome it, pointing out the contradictions, paradoxes, powerlessness, narcissistic wounds, and questionable complementarities of all those involved in crisis situations. From chaos to something new: it is the hope that inspires the creative process.

Action techniques

The fundamental difference between action techniques and theatrical techniques is that in case of the action techniques the stage-audience polarity is not present as the group does not have a communicational task, while this task is intrinsic to theatrical representations. In theory all members of the group can be involved in the same activity; even when some of the group members are not involved in the action, those who are do not do this in order to be watched by the others (which would be essential in spectacle-theatre).

Another key element of theatrical scenic production is the protagonist (the central character of the plot); however, when using action techniques it isn't compulsory to have a protagonist.

If, when using action techniques, the group is focused on one of their members, the protagonic nature of this person will acquire different characteristics: she may simply be the patient on that occasion, that is, the person who has the opportunity to work and see her problem being worked on.

The action techniques that are closest to the theatrical techniques are the *dramatic games*. In these the proposed action happens through characters, whose interactions may even lead to the construction of a story, or at least scenic fragments. Just as in the case of proper theatrical techniques, we play with fictitious elements, even if the characters represent figures corresponding to the social context, to 'real life'.

There are certain aspects that are of fundamental importance in case of theatrical techniques: the volume of sound (sufficiently loud to be heard), the placing of actors within the scenic space (this should foster visibility and

aesthetic potential), the 'clarity' of the scene (avoiding parallel scenes, actors on stage not involved in relevant action, or elements that distract the spectator's attention). These aspects however, may be dispensable to certain extent in the case of dramatic games.

Strictly speaking dramatic games are destined for the training of actors, offering exercises of character construction, of individual and collective improvisation, of simulation, of interaction between characters, of exploration and development of the actor-character relationship. However, as in the case of Grotowski's more recent proposals, these exercises also represent an inexhaustible potential for the personal development of the actor, as they mobilise important aspects and adaptive processes of his life, allowing him to get in touch with areas that are normally dormant and insufficiently explored. So these exercises don't only foster the practicing of the functions of the theatre actor, but can also result in vital transformations of far reach.

It is for this reason that in psychodrama, dramatic games have a privileged role, in some cases surpassing even the importance of scenic techniques, that is, the proper theatrical techniques. Some dramatic games have become classical: the empty chair, the magic shop, shipwrecked on a desert island, etc.

Moving a bit further away from the theatrical procedures, we arrive to the *pre-scenic games* that do not involve any type of dramaturgy, and merely explore the potentials of corporal communication that is normally embedded in the enactments. These games consist in substituting verbal communication, or expanding this with resources of concretization, which leads to both the simplification and enrichment of messages. When verbalisation is structurally poor or prolix, the physical concretisation of ideas (using space, body and objects) will foster the better organisation and planning of these ideas, and will eliminate confusion and the lack of apparently disintegrated focus. On the other hand, by searching for different forms of expressions, new aspects of the described situation may become evident, this resulting in a deeper understanding of this situation.

The most common form of pre-scenic games involves the construction of corporal images or sculpts expressing a given feeling or a certain relationship. These images may be static or fluid, depending whether we focus on structure or movement. In group situations, through the collaboration of various people, very rich and complex sculpts can be created; the same happens when we allow for the use of material resources such as furniture, objects, ornaments, etc.

The most well known pre-scenic games are the family photo and the image of the social atom. These enable the exploration of intra-group relationships (the 'protagonist's' group of reference), especially when coupled with classical psychodrama techniques (soliloquy, double, mirror, role-reversal), dialogues between the 'characters' and the director's interview of these 'characters'.

Another interesting pre-scenic game is the autobiography, in which different phases of a person's life are marked out with objects and/or people, which then can be explored in the same way as images.

Many psychodramatists use scene setting – as it occurs in the phase of specific warm-up – considering this sufficient for the desired investigation, especially if within this phase a relevant degree of emotional involvement is achieved. I consider this approach to be another form of pre-scenic games, as the actual scene does not develop further, and we don't move into the theatrical context.

Still within the repertoire of action techniques are the *theatrical games*. These are exercises normally used in the preparation of actors, but which also have a great scope for common people, because they widen their perceptive, expressive and inter-relational possibilities. They mainly impact on bodily awareness and sensitisation (self-awareness regarding sensations, feelings, emotions, drives, tensions, conflicts, postures, attitudes, movements and reactions) as well as other, but equally important 'intellectual' aspects, such as fantasies, associations, reminiscences, resonances, desires and so on. They may also focus on the perceptive ability, in the sense of observing the expressions of others and trying to identify their psychological meaning, and consequently becoming able to 'take the other into consideration' or 'to put oneself in the other's shoes'.

Theatrical games can also be used for the development of the expressive potential, allowing going beyond the verbal communication of our world in the process of discovery. We work with the idea that communication can have different intensities and that it is unequivocal in all aspects.

The focus of these exercises however is not necessarily solipsistic, that is, it doesn't need to be limited to the individual. It is possible to work simultaneously with someone's relationships both with the physical space as well as their companions, relationship here being understood not as the 'internal' repercussions or representations of an other's (object, animal or human) presence, but as a two-way process, a phenomenon in itself. In games involving the complementariness of communication there isn't a protagonist as such (in the strict or analogical sense of the concept), as the object of the exploration is not exclusively one or the other of the involved people, but all of them and what happens between them.

Finally, there is another modality of action techniques, denominated as *general games*. These include all play(ful) activities, whether individual or group, that are not directly related to the dramatic action. The objective of these games is generally to promote group integration, or to induce a certain physical, emotional or mental state.

Games promoting group integration involve exercises designed to gain knowledge of one another, starting from sensory exchanges from a distance, through superficial physical contact and to the exchange of biographical and confidential information. Achieving socio-affective closeness is strongly related

with the tasks proposed to groups, this being important both operationally and in terms of co-creation, when this is one of the established objectives.

In already established groups facing some form of dysfunctional tension, games can be used as a strategy to overcome badly or unresolved conflicts (for example, confrontations, 'wars' between sub-groups, competitive games).

I would also like to mention here some other games: games of time-space integration, with the objective of exploration the rhythm, the control of space, or the space-movement relationship; communicational games, aiming to develop the skills of expression, perception and complementariness; bodily or corporal games aiming to gain awareness of the body, to explore all its potential, and which include relaxation, un-inhibition, stretching, integration, awareness and so on. And this list could be endlessly extended, as exploration and creativity always works towards further widening the possibilities of the human being's development, opening up new alternatives and enriching his repertoire with direct and significant impacts on his spontaneity.

I would like to emphasise again that these strategies developed for group work can be adapted to situations of one-to-one work, and offer creative inspiration for the development of specific strategies for this new situation.

Verbal techniques

Verbal techniques are those focused on the process of producing text, without necessarily involving the body. In order to gain a better understanding of their potential, we can distinguish various sets of verbal techniques that will have certain similarities between them.

The first set could be described as *psychodramatic verbal techniques*, because in a certain way they reproduce - on a verbal level - what could happen dramatically. The so-called internal psychodrama⁷⁰ is the best known of these techniques. Similarly to the strategies of directed dreams, the protagonist is invited to lie down, close her eyes and to yield herself to her imagination. The imagined enactment will then be verbally reported as it is being produced. The director will use the traditional resources of spontaneous theatre dramatization and will intervene when necessary, making suggestions and in this way participating in the creative process him and the protagonist have embarked on. In group situations involving more than two people, the other participants will observe.

The same process can also be carried out with group members sitting in a circle, facing each other with their eyes open. Without any corporal involvement, the protagonist will explain the development of scenes; group members will take on different roles and say their respective lines; the director will give his

⁷⁰ The editor's note: For more details on internal psychodrama see chapter 6.

instructions, resorting when necessary to psychodrama techniques of exploring the sub-text. Those not playing a role will only accompany the event as observers/listeners, except when authorized or invited to offer their contribution as in the theatre of audience. Similarly to the stories taken onto the stage, the creation is collective, but without an actual enactment. In conventional theatre this strategy would correspond to the dramatic reading of the play (story-telling) in which the actors only read the words of the characters, giving life to the text.

The creation of the story however, may not go even as far as the assumption of roles, that is, the characters of the explored story may not even be verbally represented. The group members are all co-authors, offering their contributions within the rules of the applied format. By making questions, offering resources and alternatives and facilitating the imaginative process the director encourages the production of a shared story. The different forms that can be developed based on this principle constitute the *dramaturgic verbal techniques*. This strategy is usually used in the warm-up phase of the theatre of the audience, in order to obtain from the group's collective imagination the story that will be taken to the stage as the starting point of the next phase of creation, the scenic performance of roles.

Another set of techniques is the *descriptive verbal techniques*, characterised by the direct investigation of the sociometric relations of the patient's social context. The focus is on the so called 'real life', aiming to identify and describe the main characters, their respective roles, the sociometric configurations, the forces and criteria of attraction and repulsion, the dramatic projects of each investigated atom.

Using a socio-historic perspective may lead to the identification of determinants situated in the wider community and political-economical relations, including even myths and ideologies. Genealogic exploration and the exploration of geneograms also belong here.

Although this approach may be considered less creative than the earlier ones, it represents a task of four hands, and - independently from the 'objective results' - is characterized by the process of collective knowledge building. Although apparently very rational, this form of investigation can mobilize significant feelings and provide a sense of responsibility for one's own life.

The last among verbal techniques are the *narrative verbal techniques*, in which the patient is simply encouraged to relate facts of her everyday life, involving significant others of her social atom, dreams, or even apparently banal situations. These techniques are inspired by the motto 'live and tell stories'. The therapist acts as a curious interlocutor, an attentive and inquiring listener, who helps to eliminate the dispensable comments and generalizations from the narrated story, as well as to focus on identifying more obscure aspects of the related scenes.

This approach helps the patient to relinquish stereotypical aspects of the narrative, such as the repetition of complaints, the description of symptoms, self-blame and self-depreciation, the defence of one's own innocence associated with

the condemnation of the relational others, psychological explanation, and so on. Attempts to apply any kind of interpretation to the narrated facts or to try and make links between them are discouraged. The therapists will try to disengage from interpretative postures, or parental and educative attitudes. A wider and more careful perspective is encouraged, able to identify life scenes that have previously been unnoticed.

This working model is similar to what a playback theatre director does in relation to the narrator. On the other hand, similarly to psychoanalytic free association, based on the model of dramatic multiplication⁷¹, the sharing of resonances is encouraged, that is, the sharing of the facts that have surfaced as a result of earlier stories. The aim is to produce a sequence of scenes that are connected metaphorically and not metonymically.

The therapist may opt for a more discreet involvement, as a mere interested and encouraging listener, or for a more engaged position, making himself available to also tell stories, sharing with the patient his own resonances. In this latter case, even if this is not intentional, the therapist's stories will have the weight of an interpretation of the patient's stories, which can be positive or negative, depending from which perspective we look at this phenomenon. On the other hand, the sincere exposition of one's human character can be a favourable aspect of this strategy. The level of co-creation, here, may vary significantly, although the participation continues to be indisputable.

Whether these are reports of scenes witnessed or actually experienced by the patient, dreams or fiction, at the stage of creating an ending to these stories an approach of open composition can be applied. Instead of looking for just one ending, the patient can be helped to multiply the alternative conclusions, without necessarily needing to choose one of these.

All the above-mentioned verbal techniques can be used, with the necessary adjustments, regardless of the size of the group. Some of them, as we have seen, will allow a greater participation of the group as a whole. Others, focusing only on one of the group members, will leave others in the position of mere spectators. These latter techniques may be more adequate for one-to-one psychodrama, given that from the perspective of spontaneous theatre the socio-dynamics of the group should always be taken into account when directing the work, this becoming practically unviable when adapting a model that excludes the spectators from a more active participation.

Verbal psychodrama

The technical difficulties of adapting group psychodrama to the one-to-one therapeutic context have resulted in many psychodramatists adopting a practice

⁷¹ The editor's note: For more details on dramatic multiplication see chapter 12 in Figusch (2005).

that, at least apparently, has nothing to do with psychodrama, that is, an entirely verbal psychotherapeutic approach. This is a bit of a shame, because the therapeutic potential associated to the physical involvement and collective creation, both characteristic of improvisational theatre, ends up being lost as a result.

Although it may be strange to think about psychodrama without dramatization, its kinship with the psychodramatic proposals cannot be disregarded. And, as these approaches also belong to the same spectrum, it is more preferable to create room for interchange and mutual fertilization, than to condemn the infidels and send them to the stake.

In the history of Brazilian psychodrama, when leading purely verbal sessions, psychodramaists often feel ashamed and self-critical of their indolence, incompetence, or for being victims of a cultural slant that prefers rationality. This has been a common feeling shared in supervision by practitioners using approach. Bit by bit however, although still timidly, the first writings regarding this subject have started to emerge, providing some reflection regarding the pioneering efforts to warrant an adequate theoretical foundation and empower the practical resources of this working modality.

Spontaneous theatre has contributed to the development of this technique through focusing on the dramaturgic function, that is, through a more profound exploration of the process of theatrical text construction, even if simultaneous enactment – an original feature of spontaneous theatre – has ended up being sacrificed.

Encouraging the production of text tends to be closer to proper psychodramatic work when the therapist offers his more active participation in the creative process, instead of just directing it from the outside. The involvement of the patient in this task, with therapeutic help, can result in the author's catharsis and benefits resulting from the experience of co-creation.

Similarly to other psychotherapy models, the therapist may eventually introduce comments that reflect his own view of the related facts and invented stories. Implicitly or explicitly, these comments will inevitably adopt as reference his own theoretical, philosophical, scientific, religious, etc. perspective, with all the risks that this involves.

Strictly speaking, these risks are present in all forms of therapeutic intervention. If it wasn't through the therapist's analysis, opinions, interpretations and judgements, their presence would still be noticeable through the chosen method's own language. It is the therapist's degree of awareness regarding these risks that makes the difference.

Conclusions

At the present developmental stage of one-to-one psychodrama, its *modus operandi* is still lost somewhere between the non-psychodramatic individual working models and strategies belonging to working with larger groups.

The perspective of spontaneous theatre – a model also designed for working with large groups – can offer significant contributions to one-to-one psychodrama, as it provides parameters that are both daring and solid.

Similarly to one-to-one psychodrama, spontaneous theatre is also trying to find its place in our present world, to recover its historical uniqueness and to respond to the demands of post-modernity. These demands are significantly different from the conditions that surrounded the emergence of the great majority of therapeutic practices that exist today and cry out the message of the sphinx of our time: decipher us or we will devour you.

I believe that as the new proposals become more popularized, and as more professionals embrace them with seriousness and the determination to further develop them, the growing body of accumulated experience will supply subsidies for a thorough reflection, able to provide important feedback for its continuous development.

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Introduction to Part 2

The theory and practice of large group socio- psychodrama

While part one focused on the use of psychodrama in the context of one-to-one psychotherapy, this second part will present some of the applications of psychodrama in large groups (groups from over fifty to ten thousand participants).

Before moving on however, I would like to clarify something about the use of the term 'psychodrama' in the Brazilian literature. While in our western psychotherapy culture the word 'psychodrama' tends to primarily refer to an ongoing individual or group psychodrama psychotherapy process (and so is more separated from the sociodramatic practices), in the Brazilian tradition the same term is used in a more generic way to describe all forms of Morenian action methods. It is more of an umbrella term covering not just processual psychodrama psychotherapy, but also a wide range of other applications such as sociodrama, spontaneous theatre, public and open psycho- and sociodrama, street psycho- and sociodramas, living newspaper, playback theatre, etc.

I remember the time when I first arrived to Brazil and started attending 'psychodrama' events; I was feeling somewhat confused and shocked, as to whether the events I witnessed were psychodrama (as I knew it), or not. It took me a good while to understand and come to terms with the Brazilian usage of the word.

In order not to confuse the reader with the terminology, I eventually chose the term 'socio-psychodrama' when looking for an appropriate title describing the large group work presented in the following chapters, as I feel this captures more accurately the essence and character of this work. Some of the Brazilian authors also prefer to use this denomination, while others tend to use the above mentioned more generic 'psychodrama', or more specific terms reflecting their technical orientation, such as sociodrama or spontaneous theatre. However, regardless of their terminology, all the papers included in this second part will focus on the theory and practice of Morenian action methods with large groups (socio-psychodramatic work with large groups), rather than processual group psychodrama psychotherapy.

Moreno himself believed that psychodrama should be taken beyond the walls of consultation rooms and it should reach out into the community, society and the whole humankind.

The true subject of socio-[*psycho*]drama is the group. It is not limited by a special number of individuals, it can consist of as many persons as there are human beings living anywhere, or at least as many as belong to the same culture.⁷²

He also argued that:

The difference between psychodrama and sociodrama [*or socio-psychodrama*] should be extended to every type of group psychotherapy. A difference should be made between the individual type of group psychotherapy and the collective type of group psychotherapy. The individual type of group psychotherapy is individual-centred. It focuses its attention upon the single individuals in the situation, of which the group consists, and not upon the group in general. The collective type of group psychotherapy is group centred. It focuses its attention upon the collective denominators and is not interested in the individual differentials or the private problems which they produce.⁷³

In Brazil, this type of collective group psychotherapy is very much alive, and as Baptista points out, the socio-psychodramatic work carried out by the Brazilian practitioners within their work with large groups

has various forms of application, following operative, pedagogical or therapeutic objectives. Some of the most traditional methods used within this work are: public psychodrama, spontaneous theatre, living newspaper, sociodrama, dramatic multiplication, the Brazilian playback theatre, re-plotting, etc.⁷⁴

Socio-psychodramatic practices focus on the social roles of the involved groups or institutions, differentiating these from the more personal roles, and maintaining the privacy of these latter. Menegazzo and his colleagues⁷⁵ stress that this kind of work should always be carried out on the level of social roles and relationships without 'contaminating' it with individual transference fantasies. The objective of large group work is to explore and improve these social relationships, to promote spontaneous and creative forms of behaviour, to improve interpersonal skills, to enable participants to find solutions to collective problems, to help each participant understand their own role within the larger group or community this leading to social development, and to reach collective community catharsis. As Baptista points out, the closer we arrive to achieving these objectives, the more successful the group/community will be in their social, preventive, developmental and responsible functioning. And,

⁷² Moreno, J.L. (1946) *Psychodrama - Volume 1*. New York: Beacon House, p.354.

⁷³ Moreno, J.L. (1946) *Psychodrama - Volume 1*. New York: Beacon House, p.364.

⁷⁴ Baptista, T.T. (2003) *Psicodrama com grandes grupos (Psychodrama with large groups)*. *Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama*, 11, 2, pp.159-164.

⁷⁵ Menegazzo, C.M., Tomasini, M.A. & Zuretti, M.M. (1995) *Dicionario de psicodrama e sociodrama (The Dictionary of Psychodrama and Sociodrama)*. São Paulo: Ágora, pp.197-199.

the greater the number of participants in the group, the greater the repercussions of this success will be, as we can assume that each group member has the potential to further multiply these experiences within other groups they belong to.⁷⁶

So, let us now see some examples of how our Brazilian colleagues think about and apply socio-psychodrama in their work with large groups in order to try and achieve the above objectives.

Anna Maria Knobel, the author of chapter 9, presents the history, theory and practice of working sociodramatically with large groups. Following a brief description of the sociodrama method, she presents Moreno's experiences with this working modality and then the theoretical and technical aspects of what she calls the Brazilian contemporary sociodrama model, including practices such as the Brazilian form of playback theatre, spontaneous theatre, video- and tele-psychodrama, and the work of the 'Vagas Estrelas' Group.

In chapter 10 Cida Davoli establishes the criteria that have led to the different denominations given to the spontaneous theatre and identifies these criteria within the make-up of groups in the social context. She argues that, whichever denomination we use for the spontaneous theatre, its methodology will always be the same. Following this the author presents five stages of the warm-up process that she considers necessary to help the group become spontaneous and creative in order to collectively create spontaneous theatre. She believes that both spontaneity and creativity are states that need to be previously prepared and then maintained during the process. The five stages of the warm-up process presented in this paper are: adaptation to the environment, grouping, preparation for the actor role, preparation for the author role and preparation for the audience role.

Arnaldo Liberman, the author of chapter 11 looks at difficulties that may arise when working with personal and private material within public psychodrama or sociodrama sessions. Presenting their intimate issues in a public session can be potentially exposing and harmful for the individual. The author introduces the sociodramatic technique of 're-plotting', designed to disguise and protect the identity of the individuals whose issues are being worked with within the session. Re-plotting inserts the individual creative process into the group process; it uses written material, as well as dramatic and theatrical expression and action. It aims to inter-connect the life experiences of the participants and to allow an emotional discharge.

Through the use of the director's soliloquies in different contexts, in chapter 12 Luiz Contro presents his experience of coordinating a large group, and his impressions before, during and after the event. As a backdrop, he outlines theory and technique based on which his work was carried out.

⁷⁶ Baptista, T.T. (2003) Psicodrama com grandes grupos (Psychodrama with large groups). *Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama*, 11, 2, p.163.

In chapter 13, after a brief presentation of the history of newspapers as a means of communication, the authors, Elisabeth Maria Sene Costa and Terezinha Tomé Baptista, re-introduce the living newspaper with the intention of reclaiming its value as a psychodramatic work modality. They highlight the cathartic effect the living newspaper has on the individual and emphasise its potential as an instrument for group and social analysis. The origins and structure of the living newspaper are briefly presented together with some theoretical considerations derived from the practical use of this method.

Chapter 14, also written by Cida Davoli, is an account and the processing of a public psychodrama that took place in the municipal park of one of Brazil's state capital cities, Belo Horizonte, as part of a project of the Training and Scientific Department of the Brazilian Psychodrama Federation (FEBRAP), entitled 'Scenes in the community', within the 13th Brazilian Psychodrama Conference.

In chapter 15, Marisa Greeb the coordinator of the Psychodrama of São Paulo City, an unprecedented event of public street psychodramas, conducted simultaneously in 158 locations and involving 700 psychodramatists and around 10,000 participants, describes her experiences and thoughts regarding the organisation and impact of this event. She also presents the 'Escenas de los pueblos' (Scenes of the people), an even larger event of simultaneous socio-psychodramas involving ten Latin-American countries.

And finally, in chapter 16, Regina Monteiro looks at spontaneous theatre as one of the most adequate instruments offered by the psychodrama method for social outreach, as it opens up imagination and creativity with the aim of achieving social transformation and awareness. Her proposal is to work closely with the community and carry out spontaneous theatre acts on streets, in public squares and neighbourhood associations. She argues that we shouldn't just passively wait for people to come to us, but we should go out to them in order to enable debate and an exchange of experiences. The author believes that as citizens we should be on the side of people, as the social commitment of the psychodramatist is an ethical imperative.

9. Large groups: History, theory and psychodramatic practice⁷⁷

*Anna Maria Knobel*⁷⁸

Since the 1970s many practitioners have been systematically working with large groups in Brazil. Initially, in psychotherapeutic psychodrama acts, this work had a protagonic focus. More recently, the focus has been educational, political and prophylactic, dealing with the different socio-cultural perspectives pulsating within the existential, social and institutional day-to-days of the biggest South-American country, a nation full of contradictions, contrast and extraordinary diversity. Such processes enable the broadening of social awareness and the development of citizenship, and also demonstrate a great nation-wide effort of some practitioners in the prevention of AIDS and other sexually transmitted illnesses. Further to this, new working modalities are being established at professional encounters, mainly at the opening and closing sessions of conferences, these having generated a rich amalgamate of shared methodological experiences, an interesting pool of working styles and of epistemological reflection regarding the method itself.

Thinking about the reason that have led to a significant drop in the number of psychotherapeutic acts carried out with large groups over the past few years in Brazil, I have arrived to think that this may be the result of the following causes: the speed with which certain people disclose their most intimate issues within a large group as an attempt to free themselves of distress; the excessive personal exposure and its disastrous consequences such as pain, guilt, psychological disorganisation and the limited affective containment of this *locus*. As Almeida (2002) points out, all these factors have deflected such practices from the Morenian ethical values of engagement with life, the stimulation of telic spontaneity, of creation and freedom. These reasons have contributed to a significant transformation of the objectives and characteristics of the contract when working with large groups.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ The original title: 'Grandes grupos: história, teoria e práticas psicodramáticas.' In: Fleury, H.J. and Marra, M.M. *Práticas grupais contemporâneas (Contemporary Group Practices)*. São Paulo: Ágora, 2006, pp.213-233.

⁷⁸ Anna Maria Knobel is a clinical psychologist; psychodramatist; psychodrama trainer and supervisor at the FEBRAP; psychodrama trainer at the Sedes Sapiente Institute

⁷⁹ The editor's note: In chapter 11 Liberman presents some of the ethical limitations of working with large groups.

Nevertheless, I do think that there may be exceptions from these limitations, in cases of public victimization, when the redemption and recovery of dignity and the elaboration of humiliation and pain often need to take place in the presence of the community. The logic behind this necessity seems to be that suffering that was caused in front of everybody should also be resolved in the presence of everybody. Included here are among others, situations of suicide committed by family members in public spaces of the city, abuse committed by the authorities, traumas resulting from urban violence, discriminatory acts based on different types of preconceptions and prejudice. However, in order for this process to take place within the large group, the suffering of the participant in itself isn't enough. It is necessary that the whole group connect with this pain, feeling it as the pain of each and every one of them. We also need to respect Kellerman's advice, who states that 'it is not recommended to do a sociodrama of the crisis during or immediately after the catastrophe.' Citing Bustos, Kellerman further adds that 'such a sociodrama will need a certain distance from the real drama.' (Kellerman, 1998, pp.51-68) This rule is unavoidable, because a certain emotional distancing is indispensable for the elaboration of what was experienced and, if the protagonist is still under the immediate impact of the traumatic situation, exposing her to its dramatic enactment would only mobilise her distress and defences used by her to endure the situation. Protecting the group members from this kind of repetition is one of the group coordinator's functions.

Let us now have a look at the foundations of the psychodrama work with large groups.

Sociodrama as the method

Groups with more than fifty or sixty members request work of a sociodramatic nature, as in these situations 'the true subject of the sociodrama is the *group*. It is not limited by a special number of individuals, it can consist of *as many persons as there are human beings living anywhere, or at least as many as belong to the same culture.*' (the author's italics; Moreno 1946, p.354) Based on this affirmation it is evident that for the sociodramatic work with large groups the general behavioural and affective guidelines and patterns shared by the group are more important than the actual number of its participants.

These sets of common attitudes form what Moreno (1934, p.352) described as the *role nucleus* of that culture. According to him, the particular ways each individual interprets a role, will give a unique colouring to this common substratum that the majority of participants will recognise and experience as their own and befitting. In other words, the *individual differential* traces of the social roles (the personal colouring that each individual gives to the roles) are

anchored in the *collective denominators*⁸⁰ present in each culture, the sociodramatic angle of roles.

Thus, the focus of the large group coordinator is to map out and make explicit the collective denominators of the roles that pulsate intensely and lively within the group at that moment. He also proposes the public enactment of the most significant *dramas* experienced in a shared way within the social space, aiming for catharsis and the collective elaboration of what was experienced. All these actions demonstrate the containing and active posture of the coordinator, offering a 'forum in which the group with its collective problems can be treated with the same earnestness as the individual is treated in a consultation room.' (Moreno 1946, p.363)

The welcoming and the respect help the participants deal with their fears and distress, diminishing the sense of persecution and hostility that are present in the large group, as described by Weinberg and Schneider (2006).

However, before describing some of the more contemporary conceptual tools that enable us to understand the different aspects of the dynamics, the evolution and organization of the relational structures present in large groups, I believe it would be interesting to first re-visit the locus of origin of the psychosociodramatic work with large groups.

Historical background

Working with large groups has been linked to psychodrama since the beginnings, as according to Moreno, the first official use of the method took place in Vienna, on the 1st of April 1921, between 19.00 and 20.00 hours, at the Komoedian House, a theatre space offered by the father of one of the actresses from Moreno's spontaneous theatre company. He describes the following experience:

I stood that night alone, fully unprepared, before an audience of more than *one thousand people* (my italics). [...] It was an attempt to treat and purge the audience from a disease, a pathological cultural syndrome which the participants shared. Post-war Vienna was seething with revolt. It had no stable government, no emperor, no king, no leader. [...] Austria was restless, in search of a new soul [...] It was my aim to tap sociodrama in statu nascendi and to analyse the production. If I could only turn the spectators into actors, the actors of their own collective drama, that is the dramatic social conflicts in which they were actually involved, than my boldness would be redeemed.

Later on he further adds:

⁸⁰ Here I am referring to Moreno's statement that: 'every role is a fusion of private and collective elements. A role is composed of two parts - its collective denominator and its individual differential.' (Moreno 1934, p.75)

But it must have been a very difficult test; nobody passed it. [...] and the world remained leaderless. (Moreno 1946, p.1-2)

Today, many years later, we know that it was the absence of adequate theoretical-technical recourses that impeded the coordinator to deal with the difficulties inherent to this task. It was not possible to map out the main difficulties that pulsed in that group in crisis as a reflection of the Viennese society itself; there was no containment for the inter-personal tensions, nor direction for the potential collective proposals.

Moreno (1946, p.2) concludes: 'The Viennese press the next morning was greatly disturbed about the incident. I lost many friends, but registered calmly: *Nemo profeta in patria*⁸¹ and continued to give sessions before audiences in European countries and the United States of America.'

Nevertheless, in Moreno's own description of this event some of the objectives of working psychodramatically with large groups are already outlined: to identify and work with events, cultural tensions and collective crises; to make each participant become an active agent of social transformation, channelling proposals of the group itself; to create procedures able to develop *sub species momenti* and *sub species loci* (Moreno 1946, p.361) in the moment and at the place of conflicting events, and to develop responses to what is happening.

Despite of this experience having been unsuccessful, an innovative field of action was formulated already in 1921, a kind of practice that during the twenty years that followed gained more theoretical consistence and a wider technical arsenal.

Up until 1925, still in Europe, Moreno worked with improvisational techniques and the Living Newspaper⁸² at what he called the Viennese Spontaneous Theatre.

In the United States his interest turned toward educational and institutional practices carrying out projects in penitentiaries where, according to Zerka Moreno, 'based on the complementarity or similarity of their personalities, he brought together the prisoners so that they could help one another' (Z. Moreno, Blomkivist and Rützel 2001, p.128), and also at the New York State Training School for Girls, where he developed and applied a complex set of instruments measuring relationships in order to discover how the informal affective interactions took place among the five hundred internees.

Through this work Moreno noticed that the origins of the disarrangements between the participants of a group situation often pointed beyond the participants' individual characteristics or relationships, and were linked to factors like the development of the group as a whole, the type of organisation the

⁸¹ No-one can be a prophet in their own country.

⁸² The editor's note: For more details on the Living newspaper, see chapter 13.

group presented, and the level of the group's saturation⁸³ with certain minority elements. These circumstances tend to alter the equilibrium between the feeling of well-being and threat, which are important for the maintenance, the survival and the functioning of the group.

With regards to the dynamics that go beyond the individual, Moreno describes certain constant forms of group functioning, which he denominates as *laws*. Such constancies (Moreno 1959, pp.48-49) within the group are:

- the highest forms of social organization have evolved from the simple ones (sociogenetic law)
- there are stable relational structures, the sociometric networks, that based on mutual empathies will organize themselves within the constantly transforming social currents (the law of socio-emotional networks)
- groups approach or distance from each other based on the forces of attraction or repulsion that exist between them (the law of social gravitation). When the negative forces are more intense than the positive ones, group members will have greater difficulties in achieving their objectives.
- the distribution of affect within groups is uneven and cumulative: isolated or little respected individuals tend to be marginalized, while those who are more liked tend to have a high degree of acceptance, even when there are great alterations in the number of participants (socio-dynamic law)

It is important for a group coordinator to be aware and familiar with these supra-individual dynamics in order to be able to recognise them, as the mere passing of time or the natural changes of the group tend to maintain the status quo in terms of the positions of those who are marginalized, relationships based on prejudices, beliefs or antipathies based on inter-racial, ethnic or cultural origins. In order for transformation to happen, the group leader's direct interventions are necessary.

Now that we have re-visited the origins of the method, we can return to the description of one of the Brazilian models of working with large groups.

I would like to stress that the theoretical/practical device that will be described below, and much used in Brazil, is a *theoretical construct* that has been developed for some years and has been constantly refined by the creativity and competence of Brazilian psychodramatists working with large groups. Despite of being faithful to the classical Morenian practice, this original way of working with large groups also moved on in the understanding and management of what happens in less structured large groups.

Let us now see the elements of this conceptual model.

⁸³ The level of saturation indicates the maximum number of elements from a minority group that can be absorbed by the majority without this creating tensions or social collisions among them. (Moreno 1934, p.560)

The theoretical-technical axis of the contemporary sociodrama model

As I have previously pointed out in a paper (Knobel 1996) presented at the 12th International Conference of Group Psychotherapy in Buenos Aires, the first actions of the director when working with recently formed groups (and especially very large groups) is the *centralization of communication* and the *promotion of warm-up*⁸⁴, these being in the focus of his attention. In order for this to happen, the director describes the objectives of the activity, and requests that the participants adhere to the group contract and the other, *ad hoc* agreed basic rules of good togetherness. These actions aim to create shared states that offer some containment for the initial feelings of insecurity. The coordinator may also suggest brief exercises of relaxation (stretching, yawning), of tension discharge (the movement of the arms, the legs, the neck), of exploration of the work space's different levels (high, low, medium), of acknowledgment of the other participants (looking, greeting, winking), these actions aiming to lessen the tension of the group members and of the coordinator himself. Following this the coordinator will introduce the specific characteristics of the sociodramatic method, that is: acting in the *as if*, which at this stage mainly involves the experience of structured dramatic games and the creation and interpretation of characters.

The director's next move is to attempt to respond in a syntonic way to what I described as the *moment of isolation*⁸⁵ in the large group. These are proposals that aim to contain the anxiety and persecutory feelings that are generally very intense at this stage of the work. In order for this to happen, the coordinator introduces different introspective experiences, such as: experiences of guided active imagination; self-awareness in relation to the body; recalling situations or experiences linked to the theme or the roles evoked by the group. These proposals will help each member to connect with their own rhythm, with their fantasies and expectations in relation to what may happen in and with the group.

The coordinator will also request quick contacts between the participants in order for them to exchange these individual experiences. By encouraging approximations mobilized by feelings of sympathy or attraction, he supports the participants' impression that it is safer to be together with their equals. Beyond this, such moves will also allow the director to detect what is happening, as they map out the emotions, feelings and fantasies that pulsate in the group in that moment.

Equally, specific *profiles of identity* may emerge related to aspects such as ethnicity, nationality, profession, age, gender, etc. The areas of exploration will be defined in function of the event's objectives. In an encounter of professionals for example, it would make sense to map out the theoretical and institutional

⁸⁴ The editor's note: For more details on the warm-up of large groups see chapter 10.

⁸⁵ This term incorporates the directions or tendencies of the relational structures described by Moreno (1934, p.202) when analysing groups of infants.

affiliations of the participants; in an event open to the public it may be interesting to find out which region of the city the different participants come from, and so on.

Following this, the coordinator will acknowledge and elicit the *common role nuclei* that are present in the group, distinguishing the different *role identities* that may operate as anchors of the group's shared emotions and scenes. This is what we call the *moment of horizontal differentiation*, in which the participants like to present their uniqueness and to observe that of the others. The action is individualized, but geared to the others. There is an atmosphere of rumbling and confusion, but which is also interesting for separating out the forces that pulsate in the group. By promoting actions that increase the security and the potential of the participants, both individually and at the level of subgroups, it is the coordinator's task to validate difference and diversity. At this stage generally it is already possible to make proposals that are based on the different role identities, as well as to suggest projects that can be taken further. Normally, this will be a result of successive choices and decisions made by the participants with the help of the coordinator.

Let us now see some examples of how the *common role nuclei* may be revealed based on the plots suggested by different participants. In a sociodrama focused on the urban violence of big cities, a scene emerges where a driver is robbed. This fact is represented from various perspectives: from that of the victim, the thief, the passer-by, another driver. In a project of sexual education a conversation develops between an HIV positive person and an adolescent interested in sex and the use of condom, these characters being played by several of the participants presenting the advantages of this form of protection in front of sexually transmitted illnesses. In a program organised by the São Paulo city hall for the inclusion of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and trans-sexual users of the health services, the following scene emerges: a transvestite is called into the doctor's room by the name that appears on their ID card (Joseph), but as they are dressed and feeling as a woman, they are ashamed to respond. Various versions of this scene are played out until a secretary, taking into consideration the client's shame, eventually calls them in a very discreet way, this allowing them to attend the medical appointment with dignity.

We can clearly note that the repercussions of each sociodrama are very different. In the first example, from the common citizen's point of view, all thieves seem to be the same: violent and cruel; from the perspective of the young man in need however, he has his excuses for getting involved with crime. The victims' experiences are basically all the same: fear, impotence and anger. What is important in such cases is to run through a range of possible and shared ways of subjectively responding to these kinds of disastrous events, facilitating the public catharsis of humiliation and the recovery of lost dignity, fostering the emotional expressions and the alleviation of distress. The actual social life will hardly change as a result of these kinds of actions. In case of the sexual education

work however, there are already some expectations for behavioural changes, promoted by the information and awareness gained through experiential understanding regarding the possible forms of sexual contamination. In case of the project with the health centres the expectations are even greater: the lessening of the workers' preconceptions and prejudices in relation to minority groups, and their consequent inclusion into a more dignified system. As we have seen, the reach and applicability of these procedures may greatly vary.

It is also evident that in this kind of work it is irrelevant to define the concrete person who brings a role to life, as the characters will agglutinate aspects of everybody. What is important is to demonstrate the multiple variations of this common substratum invented by different participants, as these will point towards the malleability that these identities can have within that social context.

Once the *common role nuclei* present in the group are mapped out, the process of *identification* may follow, which, according to Moreno, can happen on two levels: *subjective identification* (in terms of the personal history of a certain participant) and *objective identification* (attitudes and behaviours that are more frequent and predominant in a culture).

The first process (subjective identification) reveals the possibility of the intrusion of different subjectivities into the shared reality. I believe that when very intense individual emotions burst into the large group, the coordinator should accept and acknowledge them, trying to find ways of their metaphoric expression, without however entering the personal plot that triggered them. The reason for this is that in most cases the group contract does not authorize the director's psychotherapeutic function. An example: in an experiential event focused on the professional role of the psychotherapist, one of the participants, while in the role of a delicate and light ballet dancer, started to cry in a very intense and heartfelt way, without anyone knowing why. In response to her crying the director interrupted the scene, asking whether she wanted her sadness to be received by the group. With her permission various participants wove their arms together, rocking her until she calmed down. Then she reported that while dancing lightly and freely she had remembered her dead brother. Her pain was acknowledged, contained by the group, and named. Following this the work on the role of the psychotherapist resumed, having been greatly enriched by the commotion and engagement of everyone.

Certain expressions stemming from the group may also indicate processes of *objective identification*, as suggested by Moreno. In Brazil's big cities violence occurs regularly in public spaces and the experience of this is shared by many of the inhabitants. Many participants are usually able to relate to the grief for a lost relative or the various forms of institutional abuse that have been part of the day-to-day life of Brazilians for years; these may present collective role dynamics that can emerge in the scenes of one or more group members, concretized in dramatic plots validated by the participants of the large group. These are the *moments of*

vertical differentiation, when an individual or subgroup is in the centre of the action. Often within a single scenic focus the desire of a whole multitude may be condensed. For this to become possible a series of distinctions and choices are necessary, organized in concentric levels of representability and through the inclusion of the majority of the group's feelings and thoughts at that moment. Thus, these types of scenes will map and play out the different forms a common drama may take in that social context.

At this stage, as the group is already sufficiently warmed up for spontaneous production, the suggestions coming from the public will flow with timing and commitment/involvement, revealing paths that mobilize everybody. Whether with one or multiple foci, scenes will follow each other, because as Aguiar points out: 'the group themselves will work out an interpretative synthesis of their experience through the means of the story's plot created and enacted by everyone.' (Aguiar 2005, p.143)

As we can see, the subjective and social journeys, actions and outcomes of the sociodrama with large groups confirm Weinberg and Schneider's (2006) view regarding the specificity of this space as being a promoter and facilitator of feelings of social belonging, of citizenship and of the assumption of more active roles, interfering in the manner how each person subjectively adapts to the given culture.

It is evident that, through play and playfulness, sociodramatic group plots will lead to interesting universal experiences, produce new elements of subjectivity and overthrow processes focused on a single identity. Within this process we have to stop to think about what happens on the stage as something related to the situations incarnated by the individual participants in the space of their shared reality, and we need to recognise and encourage the value the collective management of play and the multiple facets of theatrical acting.

However, despite of the richness of this type of collective experience, Kellerman (1998) is also right when stating that classic sociodrama has limited resources for resolving inter-group conflicts on the level of social reality. Therefore, professionals interested in working with this kind of issues will have to enrich their practice with contemporary theories of human conflicts, as these rely on models and strategies attempting to transform these conflicts through cooperation.

Beyond this method focused on the roles, relational structures and criteria, sociometry also has another instigating model of working with large groups.

Spontaneity centred work

The main techniques used with large groups with this focus are: the Morenian spontaneous theatre, the playback theatre (created by Jonathan Fox

and Jo Salas in 1975) and its half-brother the Brazilian *Teatro de Reprise*, as well as practices that rely on rehearsed plays that can be presented live with the participation of actors, with the use of videos or cinema footages.

There are many Brazilian practitioners using spontaneous theatre in sociodramatic acts. The Brazilian Journal of Psychodrama has published interesting theoretical writings as well as reports of public events using this method. I would like to highlight the writings of Monteiro⁸⁶ (2004) and Aguiar (2005)⁸⁷, who through their passion, competence and pioneering, have created a school of this working modality.

For the last twenty years Ronaldo Pamplona (2001) and Carlos Borba have been working on an interesting project of tele-psychodrama⁸⁸ that allows the multiplication of experiences by presenting them on television, with the help of psychodrama directors at different locations and with the objective of developing educational, prophylactic and even psychotherapeutic processes.

Regarding groups that follow pre-rehearsed dramaturgy, I would like to briefly comment on the work of the 'Vagas Estrelas' Group, for a series of reasons: firstly, because I am part of this group as the director of the psychodramas that follow the theatrical enactment; secondly, because this group has been the pioneer of this technical modality, since reproduced at an instigating rate by others; and mainly, because it represents an interesting device for working with large groups.

Founded and directed by Camila Salles Gonçalves, this group has been doing a certain type of work in which 'synthetic and artistic means of presentation of *family dramas* use cinema, video, theatre and psychodrama in order to promote a dialogue between different languages and to benefit from the creative understanding that this work can promote.' (Gonçalves 1998, p.43-50) Within the cited paper Gonçalves presents the conceptual basis and the characteristics of the work of the 'Vagas Estrelas' Group.

The first presentation of the group took place on the 18th of October 1997, at one of the monthly socioeconomic encounters of the psychodrama training course run jointly by the São Paulo Psychodrama Society and the São Paulo Catholic University, in the theatre room of the Rio Branco College, on an fifteen metres wide Italian stage, with lighting and sound equipment, a video screen and a piano used by some of the characters. The audience, sitting in comfortable chairs, comprised around two-hundred people, who were intensely mobilised by their interventions.

The psychodrama that develops from the initial dramaturgy, presents some of its very own characteristics that differ from the classical Morenian model.

⁸⁶ The editor's note: Monteiro's paper has been translated and included in this book (chapter 16).

⁸⁷ The editor's note: For more details on Aguiar's work with spontaneous theatre, see Aguiar, M. 'The theatre of spontaneity and psychodrama psychotherapy', chapter 9 in Figusch, Z. (2005).

⁸⁸ The editor's note: For more details on tele-psychodrama see chapter 15 in Figusch, Z. (2005).

These characteristics are: cultural cannibalism, working with the private in public, the co-unconscious routes, and the tragic existence.

What makes this psychodrama practice different from so many others?

The work starts with the ritualized embodiment of one of the theatrical script's characters by a participant of the public, who will experience their own drama from new perspectives conforming to the factual axis of the plot. The structure of the plot will be gradually modified in a compatible and coherent way with the story.

The dramatization that follows will allow for the protagonist's biography to remain hidden, as she is invited to participate in the vicissitudes of one of the story's characters. She will act as if she was that character, but with allusions to and led by her own experiences, this creating an interesting scenic alchemy, protecting her privacy and motivations. She becomes involved in a plot that transcends her, as the plot, the scenic effects, the music and the theatrical carpentry will make the experience intense. Statements made by participants some time after such events reveal the emergence of interesting processes of catharsis, insight and elaboration of personal situations.

Another mobilizing aspect of this type of psychodrama is linked to the fact that the interventions that emerge are created by individuals coming from a certain audience that came together on a certain day and at a certain place, arriving onto a stage with certain actors, directed by a certain director. The scenes thus created present visible and invisible aspects of many lives, with the possibility of moving between present, past and future, between individual and collective drives. These paths are mobile and ever-changing, following ever-surprising co-conscious and co-unconscious routes.

The dramas put into scenes are anchored in a certain type of existence which, according to Volpe (1990) sees man as 'fundamentally lacerated by ambiguities, as at one hand he is tied to determinants that are beyond his control [...], and on the other hand constitute an open space for a freedom to be conquered.' This is a tragic existence where there are no easy solutions, one of these being the 'danger of the director getting drawn into his narcissism and believing that he can change everything' (Buchbinder 1997), taking the group with him and creating the illusion of the *as if* being a magical place that can free us from all suffering. The work of the Vagas Estrelas Group proposes exactly the opposite of this: we believe that life can only become possible through the experience of conflicts, the acceptance of pain, the incorporation of the facts of the past and the transformation of their meaning and significance.

As a closing thought I would like to say that although the trade of the large group psychodrama coordinator is often poetic, synchronous and subtle, it also ventures into unstable, dense, ambiguous or even chaotic territories, where happy scenic work is impossible. For those who make themselves available for working with large groups, being able to bear the breaking away from the

playful matrix of psychodrama and to consider this as merely one of the different point of views within the universe of our practices, is a fundamental condition.

I would like to close this paper with the words of Clarice Lispector:

[...] someone who was completely free from the conventional and utilitarian solutions would see the world, or rather would take on the world, in a way that no artist has ever seen or done before. That is, in its totality and true reality. (Lispector 2004, p.172)

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10. The spontaneous theatre, its terminology and the warm-up to dramatization⁸⁹

*Cida Davoli*⁹⁰

The spontaneous theatre emerged in Vienna at the beginning of the 20th century in contraposition to traditional theatre and has the following characteristics: the dramatization happens in the 'here and now'; production, creation and rehearsal emerge and develop in the moment of the dramatization; it does not follow a ready made script or text; the authors emerge from the audience while the dramaturge becomes the drama's main actor from the beginning until the end of the 'spectacle'.

Through this new form of theatre Moreno - creator of the spontaneous theatre - intended to achieve both personal and social development. In terms of personal development, Moreno believed that the individual could change and transform through, what he called, the 'action insight', a process of experimenting and re-experimenting. That is, the *acting out*. As a result of this, she would reflect on and transform her behaviour. Regarding social development on the other hand, it was one of Moreno's dreams to use theatre as a means of social reorganisation.

With the objective of producing spontaneous theatre, a specific methodology was gradually developed; a methodology that was different from that of the traditional theatre, and which today is known as psychodrama. Therefore, the principles of the spontaneous theatre are (or should be) still present in our actual psychodrama practice.

Today, the psychodrama practice has various denominations, without the criteria of this diversity being clear, and with the criteria of the spontaneous theatre seemingly having been abandoned at times.

I will start this paper by stating how I think about and understand the practice of the psychodrama process. Following this, I will try to clarify what would lead to the different terminology and denominations.

All psychodramatic proceedings are in search of spontaneous and telic relationships that are achieved through collectively created and experienced role-

⁸⁹ This chapter is based on the following two articles by Cida Davoli: 'O teatro espontaneo e suas terminologias.' *Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama* 3, 1, 1995, pp.15-20; and 'Aquecimento - Caminhos para a dramatização.' *Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama* 5, 1, 1997, pp.51-61.

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play, this involving both the protagonist and her auxiliary ego(s). The conflicting issue, originally brought in and presented by the protagonist will be broadened through the new prospects and contents of the complementary roles. This experience of a new situation, or an old situation re-lived in the here and now (and therefore new), demands spontaneous responses from its participants in order to achieve co-creation (tele). It is through this prism that I see and identify the socio-psychotherapeutic character of the psychodrama process – of which Moreno had dreamt of so much.

I would like to also mention here the protagonist as an instrument of the psychodrama practice. In Moreno's view, the protagonist is the main author of the spontaneous theatre. In my understanding, the protagonist is the conductor within the developing scene in the dramatization. She is indispensable: she is indispensable for the director, as the director will rely on her in order to develop the dramatization; and also indispensable for the auxiliary egos, as the protagonist is the one signalling the adequateness of their responses, her being the main author of the plot.

Having clarified the above, now I will return to my initial proposal. Based on what criteria do we give different denominations to proceedings that have their objectives and methods in common? What differentiates public psychodrama from sociodrama? Let us try and untangle an old misunderstanding that exists among us, psychodramatists, due maybe to the incorrect translation or possibly the misinterpretation of the literature. We often hear that in psychodrama the 'protagonist is the individual'; while in sociodrama 'the protagonist is the group'. However, let us go back to Moreno's (1978, p.376) statement: 'The real subject of sociodrama is the group.'

In my understanding, when talking about the subject, Moreno refers to the object of his investigation, and he does not use this word as a synonym for protagonist (one of the instruments of psychodrama). This confusion between subject and protagonist has generated different practices, and consequently different denominations, leaving to the side the characteristics of the spontaneous theatre, which I mentioned at the beginning of this paper.

If we stay faithful to the Morenian theory, the *subject* of the psychodramatic proceedings is always the group, as the group (in an inter-relational sense) is the *locus* of health and of illness; it is within the group that roles and complementary roles develop (starting at the early stage of the matrix of identity), and it is within the group that spontaneity can emerge. Therefore, we should differentiate between the object of investigation (group/inter-relationships) on the one hand, and the method (instrument/protagonist) on the other.

Citing Moreno (1978, p.376) again:

It is the group as a whole that should be brought onto the stage in order to resolve its problems. [...] However, as the group is merely a metaphor and does not exist as

such (per se), its real content consists of the inter-related people forming the group, not as individuals, but as representatives of the same culture.

In conclusion of the first part of this paper, and paraphrasing Moreno we could say that the subject of all psychodramatic proceedings is the group, regardless of the denomination we use.

So, if the psychodrama process is the same, just as the subject of this process is the same, how do we make sense of the different denominations?

When talking about the group, we can think of different types of groups, that is, the different ways these groups form. I believe that this may help us identify the possible criteria for the different denominations. Let us see the following classification of human groups: a) multitude; b) crowd; c) gathering; d) primary group, and e) secondary group.

We talk about *multitude* in the case when individuals find themselves united in great numbers, without having explicitly decided or planned to do so, each individual at the same time aiming to satisfy their individual objective. This multitude can be characterised by the following: people show passivity towards everything that would not satisfy their individual objectives; very little or even no interaction between its members; quick propagation of emotions onto the whole of the united people, this resulting in transitory and paroxysmal collective actions, or collective apathy that is impenetrable to nearly all interventions. The *multitude* is characterised by the solitude of its participants.

We talk about *crowd* when individuals voluntarily come together in search of likeness and similarity. The crowd has a limited number of members and it will only last as long as the similarity between them persists. An example of this type of group is the adolescents.

The third type of group would be the *gathering*. This denomination refers to the group of people (regardless of their number) who come together with a more or less regular frequency, with group members having relatively consistent common objectives. However, not all members work actively towards these objectives, leaving this to their representatives or leaders. Outside the meetings, members would not pursue these objectives.

The *primary group* can be described through the following characteristics: a) a high degree of inter-individual communication and perception; b) an active pursuing of the common objectives by the members; c) affective relationships between the members, that can be intense (sympathy, antipathy, etc.); this may result in the forming of sub-groups based on affinity; d) a strong sense of interdependence and feelings of solidarity, that will manifest between the members outside of their meetings and common activities; e) clearly differentiated roles among the members; f) the group will set their own norms (group language and code).

It is also characteristic of the primary group that members develop behaviours aiming at the preservation of the group as physical reality, as well as

behaviours aiming at progression that will provoke change in the relationships between the members, in the internal organization and in the segment of physical or social reality within which the group had established its objectives.

The *secondary group* is a social system governed by juridical, economical, political, etc. institutions and functions within a particular segment of social reality. We also call them *organizations*. Its characteristics are the following: a) it consists of a set of people who follow the same determined objectives, these being identical or complementary; b) it has a set of functional structures that govern the inter-relationships between its component parts and which determine the roles of each individual. In these groups the established relationships between the individuals are functional.

Having established this general framework of the different types of human groups, we can now try and work out to which one of these the psychodramatic proceedings are aimed at. In my view the only difference is in the composition of the group within the social context and the possible consequences of this.

As psychodramatic proceedings we can distinguish the following:

- A. sociodramatic proceedings
 - A1. sociodrama
 - A2. public sociodrama or axiodrama
- B. actual psychodramatic proceedings
 - B1. psychodrama
 - B2. public psychodrama or open session

I would like to emphasise that both in the sociodramatic (the drama of the *socius*) and the psychodramatic (the drama of the *psyche*) proceedings the drama will be revealed in the psychodramatic context through the role-play involving the protagonist and the antagonist. I would also like to remind the reader that by their definition, roles contain both private and collective elements and therefore *role-play* refers to the play of 'roles' in any of the proceedings; role play does not mean, as it is mistakenly thought, that in the psychodramatic proceedings private roles are played out, while in the sociodramatic proceedings the collective roles are played out. Considering that these two elements are fused within the 'role', such differentiation would be impossible.

Within the sociodramatic proceedings, the subject-group already exists in the social context and it is sociometrically consistent from the point of view of certain already established and defined social criteria.

In case of the psychodramatic proceedings the group also already exists in its social context prior to the psychodramatic event (at least in the sense that its members are all part of the group of humanity). Sociometrically speaking however, they have a less consistent texture, given that the social criteria are diffuse and not well defined.

These preliminary compositions of the social context will start to delineate the peculiarities of the psychodramatic process.

Let us see how groups are formed in each denomination.

Considering the characteristics of the *primary group* we can identify this type of composition in sociodrama (work related groups, family, etc.), whether that occurs as an ongoing process or an isolated act.

In case of processual psychodrama or psychodramatic psychotherapy, the composition of this group (at least initially) would be what we denominated *multitude*. However, as this process evolves (process in this case meaning the continuity of the sessions), the multitude will gradually lose its characteristics, at the same time adopting the characteristics of the *crowd* (with regards to the similarity between members – for example, psychodrama clients), or even the characteristics of the *gathering* (with regards to the similarity of their objectives – for example, the search for personal development).

The group that arrives to and attends a public sociodrama is a *secondary group*, or a sample of a secondary group. Members of this group are part of wider social organisations, or they are brought together by a certain organisation and the theme of the public sociodrama (for example, AIDS, everything ends in pizza, etc.). Certain psychodramatists have denominated these events as axiodrama.

At public psychodramas on the other hand, the group is formed by samples of the *multitude*. Due to the fact that these are isolated events, or even when repeated they are attended by different individuals, the composition of this group (at least in the social context) continues as multitude, and therefore differs from that of the processual psychodrama.

I would like to emphasise again that these compositions refer to the social context. Within the group context – through the warm-up, which will be presented in the second part of this chapter – any of these compositions will transform into a *gathering*, in the sense of having a common objective for the duration of the psychodramatic event. This common objective is what we call the ‘dramatic project’. This project will only last as long as its participants are assembled together and they will not pursue it individually once the event has finished.

As mentioned above, through the warm-up all of these groups will transform into a *gathering* and will continue as *gathering* for the whole duration of the psychodramatic proceeding. Nevertheless, their original composition (multitude, primary group or secondary group, etc.) will generate different sociometric nuances within the group context. And, as it is from this group context that the protagonist will emerge, these very nuances will also affect the dramatic context. From here we can extract the evident peculiarities of each proceeding, this leading to different denominations.

I would also like to point out that the degree of depth or intimacy that we work with in the dramatic context, is much more a reflection of the other contexts (social and group context), and not a result of whether we call it psychodrama, sociodrama or any other denomination.

Returning to my original objective, that is to search for the criteria that would explain the different denominations used for similar proceedings, I think I have located these within the original composition (social context) of the groups that participate in each of these proceedings.

It is clear however, that we also use some other denominations for the same psychodramatic proceedings, without having clarity of the criteria. Such expressions are for example: open session, spontaneous theatre, therapeutic act, or living newspaper.

Following the criteria of group formation set out above, we could say that the terms open session or therapeutic act could be synonyms of psychodrama or sociodrama (whether public or not). Using one or another such synonym can generate confusion, not only among us psychodramatists, but also among those who participate in these events. Unless we use these denominations to the expense of the more established ones (psychodrama and/or sociodrama) based on our psychotherapeutic slant or bias.

And what would then *spontaneous theatre* be? In my view, spontaneous theatre is the actual psychodramatic proceeding, described in detail within this paper. This is the name Moreno used for the method of representing the drama of the 'here and now'. In case this drama is fictitious, we talk about spontaneous theatre; if it (the drama) originates in the news of the day, we call it living newspaper; if it originates in the personal life of the dramaturge, we call it therapeutic theatre. However, what he fundamentally searched for was the birth of the spontaneous man, of the spontaneous actor, as opposed to the dramatic actor who is involved in the cultural conserve. The spontaneous actor, creator of his own script within a determined context of co-creation, can only emerge within the spontaneous theatre, regardless of its denomination.

Even when we consider all the elaboration and refinement that sociometry has given to the method, we need to remember that it always has been and always is the spontaneous theatre that happens on the socio-psychodramatic stage. Let us see in the following how groups can be warmed up to the spontaneous theatre.

Warm-up – pathways to dramatization

All play creates a world within another world – a territory with its own rules and laws – and we could say that theatre is the most stable of the many

enchancing palaces that the puerile humanity has ever built. The distinction between life and art starts here. (Bentley 1982 p.46)

The experience of directing spontaneous theatre with an open public⁹¹ has made me think of ways to further develop and deepen the warm-up phase of the psychodrama process. Since my focus in dramatization has been the creation of a scene centred on a protagonist and co-created by the rest of the group, I felt it was also an imperative to find new forms of warm-up that make this focus viable. Already existing warm-ups were in the service of dramatizations with other focuses (that is, not necessarily creation) and therefore inadequate for my objective. What I propose here is to present certain ideas regarding the warm-up that have resulted from my investigations.

The public present at these spontaneous theatre performances had demanded some preparation that would make them apt for the unfamiliar activity of making theatre – not conventional, but improvisational theatre. This public needed to be transformed into a proper group (different people united with the same objective) in order to become able to create and co-create a plot, to play its characters, giving form and sequence to the story co-produced by the group, having a clear beginning, middle and end. All this needs to be achieved in about an hour and a half, the average length of a conventional theatre piece.

If my objective is to enable the members of a group to creatively, spontaneously and collectively dramatize a scene (that is with the contribution of all members), than the group warm-up⁹² should enable and prepare them for this. In contrast with the psychodramatic tradition, that considers warm-up to be a ‘distant relative’ of the dramatization or even of the sharing, I have started to think about warm-up as a ‘close relative’ of, or even as the matrix of creation. Just like in the case of the soil being prepared for sowing, the plant that will grow from this soil will be a reflection of the preparation. The director needs to pay close attention to this phase. A good deal of the richness and beauty of the dramatization (its spontaneity and creativity) depend on the preparation of this ground. It is here that the group’s sociogram will start to get outlined with its preferences, choices and rejections; it is here that the first outlines of the manner group members relate to each other and the director will appear; as well as an indication of how the work and co-creation will develop. It is during the warm-up (through its exercises) that the aesthetics of the dramatic project will start to be delineated. This phase should contemplate and engender all these aspects.

⁹¹ I am the director of the Spontaneous Theatre Company that has performed spontaneous theatre presentations on a monthly basis in public places for the last three years.

⁹² I prefer to use the term ‘group warm-up’ instead of ‘unspecific warm-up’, because in my view the whole of the warm-up should prepare the group for dramatization, therefore being very specific. For what traditionally is called ‘specific warm-up’, I use the term ‘dramatic warm-up’.

In the following I will look at the five stages of the warm-up that are interrelated. I have separated them out with a didactic purpose into the following: a) adaptation to the environment, b) grouping, c) preparation for the actor role, d) preparation for the author role, and e) preparation for the audience role.

A. Adaptation to the environment

Within this stage we have to focus the attention of the members onto the ambient where the spontaneous theatre will take place. It consists of acknowledging and recognizing the ambient and the physical space where we will work, by familiarizing the individuals with the space's different dimensions, such as size, height, distances, sound, smell, etc. The aim is to allow people to discover the physical possibilities and opportunities this ambience propitiates. These physical aspects may seem little relevant for those who in their dramatic work focus on the internal of each individual; for me however, my objective being creation and co-creation, this physical aspect is very important as we can only create using the elements that are available to us (nothing is created, everything is transformed). And the physical space is one of these elements. All exercises applied at the stage of adaptation to the environment can be carried out either individually or in group (in pairs, trios or the group as a whole). What we cannot forget is that the ambient should be well known and acknowledged.

Another objective of this stage is to make the group feel comfortable and at ease with the space they will be working in, diminishing the tension and anxiety that may be around. We do all this in order to facilitate creation.

B. Grouping

In order to change a gathering of people (whatever their background) into a group, we need to prepare them for grouping. Chekhov (1996, p.41) wrote: 'Only artists who are united by their true sympathy for collective improvisation will experience the happiness of unselfish and common creation.' In order to form such an improvising body, of which this master of Russian theatre talks, it is important that the participants of the spontaneous theatre can get to know each other. However, this knowledge of one another should not be restricted only to the concrete aspects of life within the social context, such as age, gender, place of origin, education, etc. The grouping aims to recognize and acknowledge a group that is involved in a common dramatic project that is making spontaneous theatre. In order for this to happen, the participants will need to learn the attributes and characteristics of each other, as experienced in the group context (i.e. expectations, availability, artistic qualities, readiness for improvisation),

which later on will be also experienced in the dramatic context. While people are getting to know each other, the group is also prepared for the group work. The group need to find ways of working together.

With the ambient and the group acknowledged (or in the process of being acknowledged), and making sure that this knowledge does not get depleted, it is important that the group is able to carry out group exercises within the physical space. It is at this stage of the warm-up that we can create, teach or facilitate one of the most important objectives of spontaneous theatre, namely to work with the group within the group.

Suggested proceedings that can be followed within this stage are group exercises within the physical space, such as acknowledgement of the size of the group, the volume it takes up within the room, etc. Establishing the group's rhythm is fundamental for collective creation. The whole group should perceive and identify with this rhythm. This is another element that contributes towards creation.

Another important aspect of this warm-up stage is what we could describe as 'while cooking fish, keep an eye on the cat'. In other words, to teach, train and develop within the group the inter-dependence and complementariness of the individuals and their actions. The members are requested to do exercises during which they need to pay attention to themselves and, at the same time, to their work colleagues. Warming up to listen, respond and complement the actions of the other is very important in such a narcissistic and individualistic world that we live in. By preparing group members to complement each other, we open another path for spontaneity to emerge within the group and within the dramatization.

Beyond enabling collective creation by the individuals, these warm-up exercises will also create sociometric networks within the group that will keep transforming as new tasks are being introduced. This sociometric plasticity is and will be fundamental in order for spontaneity to be present in the dramatization.

As at this stage we already may have a group, we can now move on to our next task: to warm up individuals for the roles of actor and author.

C. Preparation for the role of actor

Everything that happens on the stage is a metaphor, and it has the intention to reveal something from reality.

This represents one of the great difficulties we face in our work: to prepare someone to become a spontaneous actor. In order to give veracity to the plot that is being dramatized on the psychodrama stage, this person will need to bring

and give his personal emotions and aspirations to the character created by him or another group member.

As Bentley (1982, p.165) writes: 'This is the moment when these characters emerge in a scene and demonstrate their existence; it is the moment when the characters open up what is in the roles.'

Boal (1995, p.37) further adds:

[...] whether dangerous or not, it is there in the depths of the person, that the actor is obliged to seek her characters. Otherwise, she would be a mere conjurer or jongleur, playing with her characters, but with no proximity to them; a puppet-master controlling her puppets, at a safe distance. Or, at its most extreme, a manipulator of mannequins, whose contact with her characters is hardly skin-deep. No. The actor does not work with mannequins, marionettes, balls or rods. The actor works with human beings, and therefore works with herself, on the infinite process of discovering the human.

In order to achieve this, I aim to create emotional, physical and/or corporal situations for these to be experienced by all of the group members, based on different characters. My aim with this is to facilitate or create bridges between the actor and the characters.

As Moreno (1983, p.56) wrote: 'The spontaneous actor is a centrifuge. The essence of the role is not in a script, as it is in the case of the traditional actor. It is not in the space outside of the self, as it is in the case of a painter or sculptor, but it is part of his very self.'

When this bridge between actor and character is established, what we see on the stage (and therefore a metaphor) is extreme veracity. It is truly moving.

This bridge is achieved through the actor's physical preparation. His body needs to be available to be inhabited by different characters. As all the above-mentioned exercises require the use of the body, this (the body) will also be prepared for the dramatization. It should be prepared for the action and interaction, for the search of the intention behind the action. It is a body for making theatre. It is a body ready for the dramatic action, ready for the relationship between two or more people.

Its voice also needs to be prepared, discovered and explored.

It (the body) should also learn, recognise and identify the numerous possibilities that the stage might offer for the scenic representation. Whichever position the actor/author chooses, we always need to make sure that it is visible from the audience (after all, theatre is a place where we watch). Moreno created a diagram of positions on the stage. Generally this preparation is done during the actual dramatization.

In order for it to be spontaneous theatre, when author and actor are the same person, this warm-up stage often prepares for both of these roles; however, the actual role of the author has some further characteristics that will be described in the next section.

D. Preparing for the role of author

This is the moment when we will construct the dramaturgy of the group. I would like to draw attention to two aspects that I consider important within this stage.

The first aspect is to help prepare the authors create a scenic language, as opposed to a literary one. Many dramatizations get lost or depleted because they are based on an abstract and literary story. We can see this dramatic despondency in classic, mainly clinical psychodramas. If not treated dramaturgically, the interpretation and enactment of stories based on personal content may become unworkable. By 'dramaturgical treatment' I mean creating characters⁹³ in action, located in a specific time and space. What is called character is often actually characteristics or attributes of a character. Let us take 'anger' as an example. Anger is not a character; the author should be able to create a character who feels angry in relation to someone, within a certain context in a scene. This is what I call scenic language.

It is at these moments that the warm-up of the actor can contribute to the role of the author. The person can put into words what he had corporally already experimented and experienced. At times however, we may follow a different path: first we create a character with a script, and it will be following this that the actor will create (and experiment with) gestures, ways of walking, etc.

Whichever path we follow, the authors/actors should be prepared to give continuity to the story. It is the dramatic conflict that will guarantee this continuity. This conflict is maintained through the opposing desires and aspirations experienced by the protagonist and the antagonist.

The second aspect of the preparation of the author is linked to the fact that in the spontaneous theatre creation appears in a collective form. But how do we write a story with so many different hands? In my view this is the great challenge that can and should happen in spontaneous theatre.

The authorship, or rather co-authorship, develops together with the dramatization; however, the dramatization will progress at the same time as to co-authorship is sustained. It is in this respect that the warm-up for the actor role can contribute to the development of the author role. We put into words what we have previously done with the bodily action.

The whole of the previous warm-up, carried out with great care and discipline, aims to prepare and enable the group to interdependently create and represent during the whole of the dramatization. In order to be truly

⁹³ According to Aristotle, the character is a result of the interaction between the *diandia* (thinking) and the *ethos* (action, act, choice).

spontaneous and creative, the group, actors and authors all need to be prepared, that is warmed up.

Moreno (1946, p.36) writes:

The Impromptu agent, poet, actor, musician, painter finds his point of departure not outside, but within himself, in the spontaneity 'state'. This is not something permanent, not set and rigid as written words or melodies are, but fluent, rhythmic fluency, rising and falling, growing and fading like living acts and still different from life. It is a state of production, the essential principle of all creative experience. It is not given like words or colours. It is not conserved or registered. The Impromptu artist must warm up, he must make it climbing up the hill. Once he runs up the road to the 'state', it develops in full power.'

E. Preparation of the audience

After having chosen the actor/authors, we move on to the dramatization. The rest of the group at this point become audience and they need taking care of. All group members were warmed-up to be actors/authors, but only a few will actually get onto the stage, while the others remain in the audience. However, all their warm-up cannot and should not be lost.

The audience of the spontaneous theatre needs to be prepared to participate in the dramatization. This participation may happen voluntarily or at the director's request. The warm-up done previously should enable voluntary participation. The director however needs to stay attentive to the audience, making sure that he sustains their warm-up. In order to achieve this he can call for new characters or new scenes on the stage; he can ask for a musical background using instruments or even voice. Another way of keeping the audience warmed up is asking them to imitate a certain character, or to repeat a certain phrase of a character, aiming to reproduce within the audience a certain emotion experienced on the stage. We can also ask the audience to accompany a scene by producing sound effects to it. Sound effects can also be used during the grouping stage, turning it into an organized manifestation of the audience. However, it can be created and agreed upon at this moment (preparation of the audience). What is important is that the audience has organised forms of participation in the dramatisation.

What I want to stress within this preparation is that members of the audience should constantly be ready to participate, as actors, authors or even as audience. But in order for this participation to be spontaneous, it always needs to be joined up with the plot that is developing on the stage.

Through their role everybody, including actors, authors and director, is responsible for the scenic representation and for the group dramaturgy.

I said earlier on that the warm-up is like the soil that is being prepared for cultivation. The better we prepare it, the better the harvest will be. The more we

warm up the group, the more beautiful, revealing, intense and complete the dramatization will be.

Although my object of investigation in this second part of this chapter was the warm-up, I am sure that I have not fully explored this topic here. Maybe it can't even be fully explored. But I would like to stress that even if in an incomplete way, I stayed focused on it with discipline. And I insist on the importance of discipline, even if this may seem contradictory to the idea of spontaneity and creativity. Stanislavsky (1991), a master of theatre tells us that 'ferrous discipline [...] is absolutely necessary in any group activity. [...] This is even more so in case of a theatrical activity. [...] Without discipline the art of theatre cannot exist.' Although he refers to the conventional theatre, I believe that in the case of the spontaneous theatre we also need to have clear rules in order to achieve the process of creation. According to Grotowski, another master of the scenic arts, 'creation cannot exist without discipline.'

It is in order to establish the rules, or rather the discipline of creation that we need to investigate the warm-up process.

Although when directing spontaneous theatre I focus on creation, what I really hope to achieve is that the participants can learn to live as part of groups, to create collectively and to perceive and understand the relativity of our individualities.

I hope I am on the right path...

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11.

Re-plotting – The individual plot, re-plotting in the group, and the dramatic action as an agent for transformation: A sociodramatic proposal⁹⁴

*Arnaldo Liberman*⁹⁵

Introduction

In 1993 I met Zerka Moreno at a psychodrama conference with the theme 'The evolution of psychodrama' in São Paulo. We had a chance to have a conversation and I asked her if Moreno's interest for sociodrama had diminished as he focused more and more on psychodrama? Zerka told me the following:

Moreno had to earn his living as a psychiatrist and you don't get money for sociodrama. He was always interested in working with the issues of social welfare and believed that this should be done in a systematic and scientific way and jointly with sociometry. He did not believe that psychodrama and sociodrama can heal everyone, but wanted to change the world we live in into a better place. Moreno believed that if we created a sociometry of the whole world, we would be able to work more efficiently with the problems we have. He was a utopian. He wanted to create a better world, where everybody has a free choice, and where these choices would be made not only for our pleasure (which is quite important), but also to endeavour. Sitting down at the same table with someone we don't like may not be healthy; so we choose with whom we will have lunch. It is important to be allowed to make these choices: to choose the people we can work with better, to choose the people who inspire us. In this way we can achieve a much higher degree of integration and mental health.

In the psychiatric hospitals often it wasn't the patients who represented the problem, but the teams who worked there. Professionals created more problems than the patients. Once, Moreno was asked if he could do sociodrama sessions with the employees of the Menninger Clinic, a well-known psychiatric hospital. He answered: 'I could, but if I do you will lose your employees and will need to find some new ones.'

It is important to remember this: the people with whom we share our time and our space should be the standard for the way we live – these are dynamic categories of

⁹⁴ The original title: 'Retramatização – A trama individual, a retrama grupal e a ação dramática como agente de transformação: Uma proposta sociodramática'. *Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama* 3, 2, 1995, pp.25-39.

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life, which were overlooked by psychoanalysis. Moreno tried to bring therapy closer to life, going beyond life. He believed that people, who get hurt by life, should be healed by life.

Moreno brought together the theatrical stage with psychiatry and the different branches of social science (sociology, anthropology, education, etc.), which resulted in a new way of working with and treating individual and social suffering. (Moreno 1975 pp.408-409) By doing this, he contradicted some of the norms commonly accepted since the time of Hippocrates; the norms stating that medical treatment should stay within the consultation room and should avoid any kind of practice that could be considered as exhibitionist and spectacular.

We find ourselves facing a question, related both to public psychodrama and sociodrama sessions: what kind of private issues can we work with in these sessions, considering that it could be potentially harmful for the individual to expose her more internal and intimate issues within these settings? This has become one of my major worries as I was directing public psychodramas and sociodramas, feeling that I exposed people without the guarantee that their issues would be dealt with carefully and respectfully by those present at the session, or would be followed up later on. In this paper I will present a sociodramatic technique that I created in order to help individuals bring their issues to the surface, but without being identified.

Re-reading Moreno. Re-plotting: the etymology of re-plotting; Arachne; Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos; the power of the Gods; rites and rituals

Moreno revived Aristotle's concept of catharsis, a psychological phenomenon experienced by the spectators of a tragedy. Aristotle used catharsis to explain the peculiar aesthetic and moral effects of the dramatic content but in Moreno's view, he only had a vague idea about the effects catharsis could generate. Although it could have been explored for practical and scientific purposes, catharsis was ignored and forgotten for a long time, until recovered by Moreno's psychodrama method. (Moreno 1946, p.xiii)

By encouraging us to get out of the consultation room and encounter people, psychodrama and sociodrama bring back to life the open spaces, the dramatic action and catharsis. Moreno worked in accordance with this: he played with children in the parks of Vienna, he worked with prostitutes in Am Spittelberg, and refugee camps in Austria (Mittendorf) and Hungary (Szolnok), he carried out a sociometric research in the Sing Sing prison and worked intensely with groups at Beacon, New York.

In Moreno's view, if we want to have a real encounter with theatre, than we need to look at theatre with the eyes of small children. For children, everything that happens is real: there is no play-write or director; the stage is part of the real world, and the actors are real people. For them everything that happens is part of

life itself, until they eventually lose this belief by the disillusion of discovering representation.

This original unity of the fantasy and reality, characteristic to the child's thinking process, eventually comes to an end. Fantasy and reality become differentiated and continue to develop as two separate dimensions of experience. We could say that psychodrama is an attempt to undo this duality between fantasy and reality, and to restore their original unity. (Moreno 1975, p.409-10)

In order to restore this unity between fantasy and reality we don't necessarily need a playwright, if we consider that each person has their own script, filled with life experiences, anxieties, conflicts, joy, etc. The question is how can we transform a simple spectator into the author of his own drama? How can the psychodrama director facilitate each person to freely and individually express their gestures, words and feelings within the context of a group?

According to Moreno, people live in, what it seems to them, an entirely private and personal world. But these private worlds actually consist of mainly collective elements, and only smaller fragments of them are intimate and personal. Every role is a fusion of private and collective elements, and so has two sides or aspects: a personal and a collective one. The roles that represent collective ideas and experiences are called *sociodramatic roles*, while the ones that represent individual ideas and experiences are called *psychodramatic roles*. These are two forms of performing roles that can never be really separated from each other.

Psychodrama was defined as an action method that deals with interpersonal relationships and personal (individual) ideologies, while sociodrama as an action method dealing with inter-group relations and collective ideologies. (Moreno 1934, p.87)

As I already mentioned, in the following I will describe a group technique that intends to preserve the privacy of the individual, but in the same time allows access to it. In this approach, the individual creative process is very important. I consider this creative process as a contribution to life that originates from a personal and individual vision; it is a unique moment, solitary and striped from the collective influence. What I propose is the insertion of this individual creative process into the group process and the use of theatrical and dramatic expression with the objective to inter-connect personal experiences and to achieve an emotional discharge.

In this technique I also use written text, not so much to take notes, but as a means to unchain a vital liveliness in the interpersonal relationships. I start off with the psychodramatic roles (connected to the individual and private life experiences); move on to work with the group and the sociodramatic roles, and eventually return to the psychodramatic roles again.

I denominated this technique as 're-plotting'. In order to explain what I mean by re-plotting, first I would like to give the etymologic definitions of the

words *plot*, *to plot*, *to re-plot* and *action*. The following definitions are from the 'Novo Dicionário Aurelio' (Ferreira 1989)⁹⁶:

plot [in Portuguese '*trama*' from the Latin *trama*] 1. the crosswise yarns that fill the warp yarns in weaving, 2. the story or plan of a play, novel, etc., 3. intrigue, conspiracy, 4. crafty or tricky action, behaviour or conduct, 5. entanglement, web, 6. in Brazil, exchange, bargain

to plot [in Portuguese '*tramar*'] 1. to pass the thread between the yarns in weaving; to weave; to interweave, 2. to devise, to plan, to contrive, 3. to intrigue, to scheme, 4. to devise a conspiracy; to conspire; to plot against an established order

to re-plot – to plot again

action [from the Latin *actione*] 1. the act and the effect of the act; acting, act (deed), done, task, 2. the manifestation of an activity, force or energy, 3. [physics] the way a physical body acts towards another physical body; effect, 4. the capacity for movement, 5. the sequence of events in a play, film, novel, plot, etc., 6. [ethics] a responsible behaviour or conduct; the fulfilment of a wish, desire or will which is free and conscious, 7. [philosophy] a process that occurs naturally or as a result of somebody's will and leads to the creation or to the change of reality. (The Collins Concise Dictionary of the English Language 1982, p.15 and p.878)

In my view our personal plot consists of different threads. Our ancestors and parents pass some of these threads on to us, so some elements of their personal plots become part of our own plot. But we also create new threads and new possibilities of our own. This is an endless process in which we are both free and bound at the same time, similarly to Arachne from the Greek mythology.

According to the myth, Arachne a princess of Lydian Colophon was so skilled in the art of weaving that Athena herself could not compete with her. Shown a cloth into which Arachne had woven illustrations of Olympian love affairs, the goddess searched closely to find a fault but unable to do so, tore it up in a cold, vengeful rage. When the terrified and humiliated Arachne tried to hang herself from a rafter, Athena turned her into a spider and the rope into a cobweb, up which Arachne climbed to safety. She was condemned to weave for the rest of her life.

⁹⁶ The editor's note: when translating these definitions I also consulted the 'Collins Concise Dictionary of the English Language' (1982) while, at the same time trying to stay faithful to the original text.

This myth is a reminder of our on life, where we get in contact with others; we weigh up each others strength, interact, cooperate and compete with each other. The web/plot is ready, and the threads are made and woven by us.

In our work we often encounter issues related to Arachne, transcending the gods and our parents, committing the sin of hubris, of insolence. In the Greek mythology there was a law that mortals were not allowed to surpass the gods and nobody was allowed to break this law. We are children of our parents who are also children of their own parents. We are condemned to weave at the same loom (as our parents), and in order to continue to exist, also to become parents.

Junito de Souza Brandão (1985) wrote about the three conjoined Fates in the Greek mythology: Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos (in Latin they are called '*Parkas*', meaning 'the ones who give birth to death'). The etymology of their names reveals that, in the ancient Greece it was believed that life and death were subordinated to the 'thread of life', to the condition of tying and untying, and this is why the Parkas are essentially spinners. Clotho (from the Greek word *klotein*, meaning to spin) spins this thread on her spindle and holds all threads of life; Lachesis (from the Greek word *lankhanein*, meaning to measure) measures the thread of life by her rod; while Atropos (from the Greek words *a+trepein*, meaning 'she who can not be turned') holds the shears, ready to irreversibly cut the thread of life.

The technique of re-plotting is in search of these threads. It does not ignore or deny their existence, but tries to understand how they were tied together, how they fit together and what different possibilities they may open up.

Citing Dumezil and Eliade, Brandão (1985) wrote:

[...] the power of a god consists in the fact that he can tie or untie. Those who know how to make knots and how to undo them have absolute power, just like Mithras (the Persian god of light), Varuna, Zeus, Romulus or Jave. [...] Varuna, 'the one who ties', is represented with a rope in his hands. It is important however to clarify that tying and untying can be interpreted both positively and negatively. Similarly to the Greek *pharmakon* (meaning medicine), it can be beneficial or poisonous. Varuna punished the ones who didn't respect the laws by 'tying' them to illness, impotence or death.

In one of his lectures Brandão (1986) also talked about the rites and rituals of the knot. People attended the annual festival of '*senones*', described by Tacit, bundled. Magic knots and laces were often used against enemies and to protect from witches, wild animals, illnesses, sorcery, death and demons (hence the ancient tradition of tying and bundling up the dead). Roman prostitutes used to tie a tag with the name of their lovers to their right thigh in order to make them return. Jave, the lord of the living and the dead, is represented with a net in his hands, ready to punish the sinners. For the Greeks the thread of life represented human destiny. As Homer wrote in the 'Iliad': like all other mortals Achilles 'had to follow his destiny, his thread of life that started to spin on the day his mother

gave him birth'; or, Ulysses 'followed his density, which the spinners span for him', etc.

In the technique of re-plotting we start with individual thoughts and feelings (threads and plots); then working in groups we create sociodramatic stories (re-plotting), and with the help of theatrical and dramatic techniques (dramatic action) these stories are acted out in order to achieve profound life experiences, and to address interpersonal relationships as well as collective ideologies.

The process of re-plotting: the group; the warm-up and the selection of themes; the three groups; first movement (writing down the plots); second movement (re-plotting); third movement (dramatic action); fourth movement (talking to the characters); sharing.

Re-plotting is essentially a group process but its efficiency depends on the contribution of individuals. In order to get the right number of group members, we need to take into consideration that they will work, write, read, and elaborate written material together. In this section I will describe the different stages of the re-plotting technique: the warm-up, the selection of themes, the writing of the individual plots, the collective re-writing of the plots (or re-plotting), and the dramatic presentation of the plots followed by conversation.

When working with re-plotting we need to plan the warm-up carefully because the rest of the work is going to develop from here. In the following I will describe a warm-up exercise that I often use when working with re-plotting. My intention for doing this is not to question the value of traditional warm-ups used in psychodrama and sociodrama, but rather to enrich them with this new proposal.

In his book on the construction of the character, Stanislavski (1970, p.51) wrote: 'People usually don't know how to use the physical body they were given by nature. They don't know how to develop this instrument and how to maintain it.'

While thinking about the different ways of using our body, I realised why walking is such an important (physical) starter. I also thought of some innovative ways of using walking: for example, walking sideways or backwards and gradually speeding up or slowing down, the aim being to change peoples' tendency of walking in the same rhythm and the same direction. We often give the simple instruction to 'stand up and walk around' when people are sitting down comfortably. Although this can energise the group, it also misses out on some other possibilities, like for example: 'lay down on the floor', 'kneel down', 'stoop or bend your back', 'stand up straight', 'stand on your toes', etc. I associated these bodily positions with the following labels: 'very low level' (for

lying down), 'low level' (for kneeling), 'medium level' (for bending down), 'high level' (for standing straight) and 'very high level' (for standing on toes). We can further combine these bodily positions with the movement of the eyes, for example: high level looking down, medium level looking up, very high level looking straight, etc. In this way we have a greater variety of physical exercises that combine body posture and vision.

Just as the objective of re-plotting is to see our personal history from a different perspective, through the use of body positions and movements, the aim of this warm-up exercise is to allow people to experiment with new bodily possibilities. Hopefully this will also allow the emergence of new thoughts and feelings.

I also often combine the different bodily movements with sound. I tell the group for example, that the instruction of 'high level' can only be carried out after I clap my hands. Beyond introducing the use of another of the senses, working with sound also allows us to read the communication between the director (emitter) and the group members (receptors). As group members don't always manage to synchronise their movements with the sound, at this stage participants often lose concentration, this leading to some fun. Some of these instruction sequences however, achieve a better tuning of the group; in other words, what the director emits is received and understood by the others.

Following these movement sequences I again return to working with the sense of sight. I ask the group members to close their eyes, to disconnect from the outside world and this time to look inside and focus on the more intimate and personal. The ancient Greeks believed that blind people had a special wisdom, they had the power to see the future and they were able to see what others could not see. 'The vision of Teiresias⁹⁷ ('the one who can see') was an inner vision. [...] Blind people (like Teiresias, Ophion, Polymnestor or Phormio), were often considered to be *oracles*. They could see from the inside to the outside, from the darkness to the light.' (Brandão 1985, p.176-7)

Although achieving a sense of togetherness in the group is important, the plots should emerge from the individuals, from a chain of stories, moving from the intimate and private towards the public, from the darkness towards the light, from the drama to the plot and the sociodrama.

I start with a brief discussion about the meaning of the word 're-plotting' and make it clear to the group that the work will be divided into stages and movements. Following this, I move on to the actual specific warm-up.

⁴ The editor's note: Teiresias was one of the oracles in the Greek mythology. One day he accidentally surprised Athena in a bath and she laid her hands over his eyes and blinded him. But she also gave him inward sight by way of compensation.

In accordance with the above-described physical exercises, I ask the group members to start walking around at a comfortable pace and move their bodies. Then, I encourage them to try out different ways of walking, by introducing the different levels ('very low', 'medium', 'high', etc.), also combining these with the movement of the eyes (sight).

After this, I ask the group members to start looking inside themselves and to think of the words, themes and plots that come to their minds and they would like to work with. These words are then written down and the members will choose some, these representing the themes they will be working with on that day.

After the selection of themes, I ask the group to divide themselves in three smaller groups. Everybody is free to choose which group they want to belong to, but making sure that all three groups are roughly the same size. I give out pen and paper and ask each individual to note down which group they belong to (group 1, group 2 and group 3) but not to write down their names or anything else that could identify them.

Here we arrive to the first movement of the re-plotting technique, that is, *writing down the individual, personal plots*. I remind the group members of the themes they have chosen to work with and ask them to think of situations from their own lives that are associated with these themes. These can be situations that cause them distress, difficulties, happiness, etc., or any other situation that is significant in some way. I ask them to write down these situations or plots, together with the people involved and their brief characterisation. I usually allow about 10-15 minutes for this.

Then, I collect the papers from each group and redistribute them in the following way: I give the plots written by the members of group 1 to group 2; those written by group 2 to group 3, and those from group 3 to group 1.

This is the beginning of the second movement, the actual *re-plotting* or *collective re-writing of the individual plots*. Based on the individual plots they were given, I ask each group to collectively write a story. I also ask them to try and include in the story all the characters, situations, feelings, etc. that were mentioned on the pieces of paper. They need to create a script, divide it into acts and add dialogs to it, because in the next movement these stories will be dramatised and presented. In order to facilitate the communication and involvement of the group members, auxiliaries join each group at this stage. I allow about 15-20 minutes for the writing of these stories.

When the stories are finished, I redistribute them in the following way: group 1 will receive the story written by group 3 (with the characters and situations originally written by group 2), group 2 will receive the story written by group 1 (with the characters and situations written by group 3), and group 3 will receive the story written by group 2 (with the characters and situations written by group 1).

In the third movement (*dramatic action*), each group will prepare and do an enactment, based on the stories they were given. The auxiliary egos help prepare these enactments by elaborating the different characters, the text and dialogs, the scenes and by helping with the make up, costumes, etc. (preparation time: 15-20 minutes). Each group will prepare their 'play' and present it in turns to the other groups.

At the end of each enactment, the audience is invited to have a *conversation with the characters*. This is the fourth movement. At this stage everybody (including the ones who did the presentation) is allowed to talk with any of the characters without being interrupted. People are allowed to express and say anything they think or feel. If someone who is playing a role in the presentation wants to address another character (or even the character he plays), they can come out of role and an auxiliary ego will take their place.

This is a very important moment because the emotions and feelings evoked by the dramatization can be expressed. The director should always position himself close to the person who talks, being aware that they may express very strong, uncontained, or even aggressive feelings towards the character they are addressing. It is also important to clarify who is the character being addressed, because this can often be an internal character.

After this conversation, the second and the third group also present their enactments, each followed again by a conversation between audience and the characters. Then, I also make some of my observations as director and open the space for sharing. It is also my responsibility as director to close the session appropriately.

Considerations

Although they are inter-connected, each stage of the re-plotting process can be analysed separately. Just as we can examine separately a single day, hour or event, or in psychodrama a dramatisation or a scene, each movement of the re-plotting session can also be analysed and looked at in its own.

I often wonder how much richer these stories would become if the groups had more time to re-plot them. What fantastic material could arise if after each dramatization and conversation we would gather further plots for a later re-plotting! How many new plots come to mind while simply watching re-plotting, and get forgotten because they are not talked about or written down? It is a bit like our dreams, if we don't write them down straight away after waking up, they return to the unconscious.

How much more beneficial would it be for the group if each person could spend more time playing a character and really experience it in depths by more role-taking and role reversal. Since many of these re-plotting sessions are public, unfortunately they don't always allow a deeper and more elaborate examination

of the themes and plots brought into the session by the individuals and the group. If we were able to take one of these texts every day and re-plot them, this would promote the state of spontaneity and creation, the 'essential principle of all creative experiences'. As Moreno (1946, p.36-37) said: 'If we apply the technique of the spontaneous state to the drama, a new art of theatre will emerge.'

The suggested warm-up allows more freedom in the movements and, by introducing the sense of sight and hearing as well, its potential and associations can be further expanded. Putting out the lights can also facilitate the emergence of themes; it is likely that certain themes would not emerge with the lights on. This is why I ask the group members to close their eyes when searching for themes. Internal psychodramas⁹⁸ often work with this suggestion and achieve significant outcomes when working with internal life experiences.

In the re-plotting technique warm-up should be used in preparation for each particular movement and not just simply as the opening phase of the work. Each movement has a specific focus of action and so the director needs to make sure that people are engaged at all time. In this sense we could say, that the *first warm-up* leads up to the selection of themes and plots, and that this is the director's task. The *second warm-up* (warming-up for re-plotting) can be facilitated by the auxiliaries, and it aims to energise and help the involvement of as many group members as possible. It is characteristic of the human being that in big groups people tend to disappear more easily, but this effect can be reduced by the presence of auxiliaries. The *third warm-up* prepares the groups for the dramatization and can be facilitated by bringing in costumes, make-up, props, etc.

Street theatre companies in the North-East of Brazil, often use massive pieces of fabric as 'backdrops' in their plays. These backdrops are very important and creative elements of the performance, because they can serve as a house, costume, the sea, a tree, a table, etc., giving great richness and plasticity to the performance. As the set designer Gianni Ratto said, a simple piece of fabric can 'catch the attention' of the audience and so it becomes a very creative component of the scenery.

When directing, Zerka Moreno together with her protagonist, carefully sets up the different elements of a scene, dedicating a great deal of time to details (doors, windows, sofas, tables and even pictures on the wall) before starting the actual dramatization. She believes that doing this is extremely important in the warming-up of the protagonist. I am impressed by Zerka's vast knowledge of theatrical techniques and by the clarity of how she manages the different scenes. When directing, she always positions the protagonist, the auxiliaries and herself

⁹⁸ The editor's note: Internal psychodrama is a technique developed for one-to-one psychodrama work. For more details see chapter 6 and Fonseca, J. (2004) pp.87-98.

in a way that the audience has a perfect view of everything what happens on the stage.

When directing psychodrama, sociodrama or a re-plotting session we often don't have enough time available for such a careful and detailed warm-up, but still we can't deny its importance. Every time when working, I take as much time as possible, but still have the impression that I haven't got enough time.

The *fourth warm-up* is achieved by the actual dramatization, and it happens before the conversation with the characters. This conversation allows emotional discharge and a possibility for catharsis. Group members encounter characters that belong to their internal world, but they can confront them in the external world.

Re-plotting was designed in a way that the group members who wrote the original personal plots and the group members who re-wrote these plots are all in the audience when these re-plots are being enacted. It allows each person to watch the characters of their own drama, and it also allows the group members who wrote the re-plot to watch it being presented. In this way all audience members are strongly connected to what is happening on the stage.

Working with groups has a potential for countless possibilities and ways to work; every event or act has the potential to create situations that will deepen the perception and understanding of both the individual and the group.

The director needs to be aware that the material that arises from the group sometimes can be a result of their initial anxiety related to the work and so he needs to allow time for more internal, personal, traumatic, painful, essential, psycho- and sociodramatic themes to arise. He also needs to keep in mind that some of the feelings and emotions evoked in the group members are only temporary and will not necessarily become part of the group's actual work.

The first movement (writing down the individual plots) consists in the first selection of the themes that the group will work with later on. It would be interesting to check in the closure whether the group choices (themes) overlap with these individual plots. It is also interesting to examine what are the criteria of choosing when the three groups are formed. The proposed plots may be partially a result of this if we consider that telic choices are made based on non-verbal perceptions of each other.

The second movement (rewriting of the plots) is an important part of the re-plotting process. Each group works with the material (plots) provided by other people without knowing whom this material belongs to. They work not so much with the actual plots, but with the threads of these plots.

The third movement (dramatic action) emphasises the importance and significance of dramatization, as Moreno also suggested it.

The fourth movement (dialogue, interaction) gives the possibility for each person to make sense of their own experience. We need to keep in mind that each

of these dialogues open up the possibility for a new re-plotting or an individual psychodrama.

Conclusions

The sociodramatic technique of re-plotting allows the individual to bring private and personal issues into the group, without being identified by the other group members, that is, with respect for the individual's privacy. The themes brought by each group member become externalised expressions of intra-psychic conflicts, expressions of the contradictions between social forces and hierarchies, as well as reminders of social and family issues; there are more than just simply individual life experiences.

These themes allow each individual to make their own contribution to the sociodramatic roles, and similarly to a kaleidoscope, they allow each person to create their own view, their own critical, emotional and enlightened image of the dramatic scene. Each movement further enriches this image, by presenting different aspects of the same experience and by giving it meaning, location and significance.

Through the use of dramatic elements, re-plotting draws the individual out of their solitude and isolation and it allows the expression of the self, with all their life experiences reflecting both the richness and misery of human existence.

The re-written plot doesn't belong to one or another person. It is a collective production, it is the outcome of the participation and inter-connectedness of each group member, and so it doesn't expose the individual but rather the human nature.

Re-plotting is a sociometric tool that, using the power of the group, examines human relationships and results in profound experiences. It is based on Morenian principles, it works with group spontaneity and creativity and it uses theatrical elements, which had such a great impression on Moreno. It livens up our cultural conserves and allows the group to work with new emotional possibilities.

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12. Soliloquies of the director: Interventions in a large group⁹⁹

*Luiz Contro*¹⁰⁰

Introduction

Following various conversations with my colleagues, trainers and even my own students, I have become more and more aware of the urgent need for papers exploring psychodrama in its 'making'; the need of some reflection regarding the alternatives of directing in certain given situations. By allowing to follow various potential routes, the psychodrama methodology opens a wide spectrum of possibilities, and consequently needs a cartogram on which we can rely on in order to identify and evaluate routes already experimented with or to be experienced. This paper is an attempt to respond to this demand. I will present soliloquies of the director who, alone in the stage-wings and with the stage-lights dimmed, outlines his thoughts about the beginnings of the process of co-creation to be carried out, re-organises the project while in process, and evaluates it after it has finished. I will also follow his steps, feelings, doubts and 'new ideas' on the stage, while working with the group.

As it happens with all accounts written after the described event, the distance from the *status nascendi* of the event has allowed me to outline, for didactic purposes, the backdrop on which the director relied on when choosing one or another route or intervention.

In the stage-wings

I am invited to coordinate a psychodrama introductory course during the study week of a psychology school. I start pondering about how to lead this work. As the event approaches and some of its details become clearer, some of the ideas I originally had in mind are transformed. One of these ideas was related to the number of around thirty participants that I suggested to the organisers. Their proposal (or rather demand) was to work with a group of one

⁹⁹ The original title: 'Solilóquios do diretor: intervenção em um grande grupo'. In: *Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama* 14, 1, pp. 67-77, 2006.

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hundred people, as a great number of both students and professionals had expressed a strong interest in the course (the work takes place in a small city, a long way away from the big urbane psychodrama centres). Feeling motivated by this great interest and excited by the challenge of linking up theory and practice within a period of six hours to such a large group, I accept their proposal.

Regardless of the conditions, such as the ones described above for example, my first step of preparation is always led by some methodological questions that I will try to respond to. My answers can only be tentative though, as we are talking about an attempt to anticipate the reality I am going to face. What kind of group or gathering is this? What may be the expectations of the participants and which one of these will I be able to meet? This is part of my warm-up in the stage-wings for the roles of director and trainer, but it will also extend onto the stage through the activity to be concretized. These are moments of transition from the more general dramatic project established between the organisers of the event and the invited professional (who is already starting to develop his functions that will help him achieve the outlined objectives), to the more specific dramatic project (at this stage still in a process of 'unilateral' gestation) to be developed between the director/trainer and other, at this stage only virtual participants¹⁰¹.

Taking into account the peculiarities of the event I am about to describe, I find myself facing and trying to answer the same questions. It will be a gathering formed by various sub-groups (psychology students ranging from their first to fifth year, as well as already qualified psychologists). Therefore, I will need to think about the need of bringing this gathering as close as I possibly can to being a group: I will need to achieve a certain minimum level of complicity and participation involving all of us; clarity regarding the desired and supposedly common objectives; a certain degree of familiarity and integration among the members. This gathering consisting mainly of psychology students may reveal an eagerness of getting to know the method, as their demand for this mini-course demonstrates¹⁰². Being still in the stage-wings I cannot know the reason for their thirst, and consequently I cannot know either how to position myself in relation to it. I would need to be in the group context or on the stage to find out about it.

¹⁰¹ Unilateral is in inverted comas, as the virtual participants will influence the director's choices already at this stage. As Falivene Alves (2003) pointed it out, the dramatic project is always relational. In this case however, we may think that the general dramatic project (described as being developed between the organisers and the invited presenter) and the specific dramatic project (to be developed between the director and his virtual participants) are only preliminary stages linked to the sphere of expectations, and that these may or may not be effectively confirmed during the accomplishment of the dramatic project concretized in the micro-politics of the participants relationships. This being so, *pre-dramatic* project may be a more appropriate description of these initial phases of the work. Later on I will return to this idea.

¹⁰² The hundred places for the course had been very quickly filled and even a waiting list was set up in case some people dropped out.

Based on the information I have, initially I think about a warm-up in which participants would be divided into sub-groups in order to get to know each other better. But many of them already know each other! What is a sufficient level of complicity that would result in the satisfactory development of a collective plot? After all, one of the pre-requisites of turning relationships permeated by telic ingredients into a dramatization in which conflicts can be worked through with creativity and spontaneity is to create a climate favourable for this by the use of warm-up. It would be interesting to experiment with different formations of sub-groups in order for everybody to have a chance to find out at least something about everybody else. This however, is impossible to be achieved in such a short time with a group of a hundred people. What may be viable is to have at least to rounds of sub-group formations.

On the other hand, it may be also important to map out the already formed and existing sub-groups, as this would provide us with a snapshot of our group cartogram to be outlined. This may serve as a starting point for the later development of the process: delineating the group identity in that particular moment based on sociometric guidelines. Working with the sense of belonging may contribute to the establishment of a certain degree of trust in relation to the work. This means identifying a familiar territory in order to later catch a glimpse of other possible ones that may be similar, not desired or imagined ones.

Taking this second perspective also into consideration, I think about two steps of divisions into sub-groups. The first one is the search for common identities and territories: first year students forming one sub-group, second year another, and so on. In the second step the sub-groups would be formed based on the criteria of people not knowing each other.

What are the tasks these sub-groups would face? In case of the sub-groups of people who don't know each other, some kind of introductions. What kind? It can't be something that will result in lengthy conversations, as this would jeopardise our two hours reserved for the experiential work itself, followed by another hour of technical and theoretical processing, in an attempt to offer some basic understanding of psychodrama. The actual time to be spent with the sub-groups will be determined by the aims we'll try to achieve by using them, as well as the size of the sub-groups. If we had larger sub-groups with around fifteen people in each, this may not make the development of the desired closer contacts viable. Having smaller sub-groups on the other hand, would increase the number of these, this resulting in the participants finding out very little about the diversity of the group as a whole. Having ten people in each sub-group seems a reasonable solution to me. In case of the sub-groups of people who already know each other the task would be to create something illustrating the identity that brings them together. This would already lead to a first round of self-presentations of one sub-group to the other. In the second step, in the sub-groups of participants who don't know each other, people would need to tell their names, year they are attending at university, or in case of those already qualified,

to say where and when they qualified. And in order to go beyond the merely bureaucratic bits of information, they would also each need to find a word that would express something about them.

But where would this warm-up lead to, beyond the desired forming of a group? What way will I choose to work with this group? At times like this, I rely again on my technical and theoretical knowledge in order to be guided into a direction where I feel more comfortable. Inviting them to identify a scene, character, image, sensation or feeling chosen by the group or that emerges from the group, is one of the ways that can help identify among the various themes present in the group the one that stands out most in that particular moment. (Contro, 2004 pp.115-117) Within the dramatic context this then may or may not become a protagonic theme¹⁰³. Based on this chosen scene, image, sound or feeling, a character will then be created (this character may be closer or further away from the real life of the actor who will incorporate it) in order to facilitate the collective construction of a plot. Taking this into consideration, in case of the event described here, having two hours working time with a group of one hundred people, impels me to be as objective as possible, trying to aim for a constant clarity of our focus. Therefore, I may go straight for the development of a central character.

Having defined this character would mark the end of the warm-up phase. Beyond the necessary integration of the participants, a sense of group togetherness will be also achieved through the warm-up, and as a result of the request to create a character representing the group. Thus, in the first round of forming sub-groups by identification, each sub-group will represent a character that will distinguish them. In the second round of sub-groups formed by participants who don't know each other, another instruction will be given following their introductions. They will be asked to complete the following phrase: 'If I was to tell a story today, my central character would be...' Then, each sub-group will choose someone to represent their character, as we know that these choices are never just accidental. This is another phase when we use some kind of criteria. In most of the cases groups usually choose the person who suggested the character most of them can relate to, this person in some way being the one mostly warmed-up to appropriately sum up the inter-relational fluxes within the group. In case the chosen person is not available to play the character, someone else will usually step in demonstrating another kind of warmed-upness, namely the readiness to be an actor, which then will be made use of.

Having ten sub-groups will lead to ten characters. Each will be duly introduced and presented to the audience, who will then choose the one that will initially lead to the development of our plot. There is nothing else I can plan for

¹⁰³ The editor's note: For more details on the protagonic theme see Falivene Alves's (1999) chapter in Figusch, Z. *Sambadrama - The Arena of Brazilian Psychodrama*, London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley, 2005, pp.130-140.

what will follow from there. We have arrived to the strange beauty of improvised theatre.

All what is left is to plan the second half of the mini-course that will take place in the afternoon. I believe that continuing with the same format as used in the morning (experience followed by processing) would be interesting, as it would enable a new dialogue between theory and practice. I assume that by the afternoon this gathering of people would become more of a group, being more warmed-up for the work and presenting more integration among the members. Hopefully, they will be also a bit more trusting of me, all this allowing us to follow a different direction during this second, afternoon phase. Who knows, we may arrive to a scene or story from one of the participants' life that would symbolise one of the significant themes that are around in the group. This could be a possibility. It would be another way of demonstrating the use of psychodrama. I'll keep that in mind!

On the stage

Up until now - in the morning session - nothing has made me change the course of direction of what I have originally planned. We arrived to ten characters, Joan D'Arc being one of them.

The scene involves the heroine and a woodcutter who has come to be paid for a job he had done for her. However, she does not want to pay him. Their dialogue gets stuck and neither of them wants to change their positions. I take the author/actress (Contro 2004, p.28) out into the mirror position in order to explore different alternatives, and she immediately, after moving out of the dramatic context and without any questioning from me, realises that the represented scene is a reproduction of an event from her real life. She doesn't say what event this is, but becomes emotional and stands slightly behind me, as if she wanted to hide from the audience. I check out with her my perception that this is something she does not feel at ease to share with the group. As she agrees, I turn to the audience in order to avoid their cooling down and not to lose the 'fine thread' that interlinks the social, group and dramatic context. Looking back at this moment from after the event, I think that beyond being an opportunity to offer psychodramatic pointers to the students, this was also another moment of soliloquy for me as a director, when I was looking for theoretical and technical resources on which I could rely on in order to find new alternatives in response to the impasse brought to us by the author/actress of our plot. She was representing the hesitation of us all, whether to continue with this scene originating from the social context, represented within the dramatic context, and then through the use of the 'mirror' observed from the group context. Within those few brief seconds the theme of 'fear of being exposed' was concretised. This was the challenge to be overcome.

I believe that it wasn't a wasted moment, as my comments to the group regarding the different contexts, although at first tentative, have actually led to the answer. In the surplus reality of the dramatic context, while something private may have been exposed by becoming public, this private thing was also protected by being dressed up into a character. Thus, the possibility of further developing the plot emerged, this being fuelled by our actress's repertoire of life, but under the mantle of a fictitious story. Added to this, during that moment of hesitation, it also appeared to me, that in spite of having only spent a short time together, there was a certain degree of trust from her (actress) and the audience of our relationship. I suggested that we carry on experimenting with the scene from the character's point of view, however, without the actress needing to make any references to her private story, and also assuring her that we will work carefully and if she at any point decided to interrupt the story we are creating, her wish will be respected.

With her agreement we return to the scene. Not for long however. The story develops permeated by ethical and moral questions regarding the woodcutter's work and whether there is or isn't an obligation to pay him; is there indebtedness or not? Did he do his job as expected? Despite trying out different variations, the conflict, duality and collision between the two antagonists persist. Our author/actress indicates that she is at her limits. I make another proposal to the group. Looking back at this moment in hindsight, I see this proposal as an important pointer that gave me direction within the psychodrama methodology, a pointer to collective creation. This proposal was based on the concept of the protagonist, and the idea that if the chosen character and scene are truly representative of the group involved (Falivene Alves 1999), then we can explore this with different authors/actors, thus gaining a wider range of perspectives regarding the theme under examination. We maintain the same scene with different actors rotating, as long as the audience is also interested in participating and developing something new, or in further deepening certain aspects of the presented relationship dynamics. Variations on the same theme until the group feel satisfied. So this is what we do.

This is followed by group members sharing their identifications with or feelings related to what the protagonisation has revealed or aroused. Finally, we have an explanatory lecture, guided by the processing of the event.

In the stage-wings between two acts

During the break between the two sessions I feel uncomfortable with what I had previously planned for the afternoon. Is the 'fear of being exposed' a message from the group regarding how I should lead the rest of the work? Could this be the central theme that permeates the group? Encouraging the emergence

of one of the participants' private story in order to be represented could go against this message. What other route may I be able to explore?

These questions are aimed to better outline my role of director and to better understand the functions that I should focus on at this particular moment. We have come together with the objective that the participants find out a bit about psychodrama. This is our project. I return to one of my previous soliloquies from my preparation for the event: *'This gathering consisting mainly of psychology students may reveal an eagerness of getting to know the method, as their demand for this mini-course demonstrates. Being still in the stage-wings I cannot know the reason for their thirst, and consequently I cannot know either how to position myself in relation to it. I would need to be in the group context or on the stage to find out about it.'* This interest for psychodrama is a theme that still has not been clearly outlined, but which certainly permeates the whole group.

In order not to follow a path that may lead to making someone feel exposed, it could be more adequate to focus on sociodramatic aspects. How about identifying what the participants have got in touch with during the morning session in order to maintain the continuity of the work? We could work with the emergent group theme (thinking again about the protagonic theme), but this time, instead of exploring this through a character, we could use images. This is another way of demonstrating basic instrumental alternatives to the group.

Back on the stage

With the aim of achieving better integration, I instruct the group to outline the most significant impressions resulting from our work in the morning. Images emerge from the ten reunited subgroups (the subgroups that formed based on the criteria of knowing very little about each other). When asked to choose one of these images, we are presented with the image of a pair of scales, its two trays representing the dichotomy between reason and emotion. We explore this image by different actors taking on the role of the scales and experimenting with the relationship and dialogue between its two trays; we arrive to the conclusion that there is a central dichotomy splitting the group at that particular moment. In the two trays of the scale are psychodrama and psychoanalysis, each one telling us and justifying why they should weigh more. Emotion and reason, known and unknown are some of the other dichotomies, reminding us again of the polarities.

This reminds me of the old contraposition Moreno made regarding the same subject (psychodrama vs. psychoanalysis), this displeasing me slightly as we are reproducing old discussions. However, as the group consists mainly of psychology students, I reconcile myself thinking that for them this is a new issue. This is where this particular group is at the moment, and this is their central need. With these thoughts in mind I suggest that we creatively look for

alternative ways of playing with these polarities. The image goes through various transformations as we identify similarities, new differences, areas of connection and distance between these polarities. We arrive to the conclusion that neither psychodrama nor psychoanalysis is right or wrong, as when choosing one over the other we make these choices in terms of paradigmatic, ideological and other kinds of identifications.

I feel pleased as we arrive to the sharing, as we managed to encompass the protagonic theme through a more sociodramatic focus; my satisfaction is shared by the more senior students and the already qualified psychologists. I find out however, while sharing with the group my decisions made in the break between the two acts, that although afraid of being exposed by it, the younger students have had the expectation of seeing a more 'psychodramatic' act taking place. According to some of their testimonies, this would have been a chance to see psychodrama applied in a psychotherapeutic proposal, and through this they could have gained another kind of knowledge that could distinguish psychodrama from psychoanalysis. Again I feel a certain degree of disappointment due to my expectations that the event should reach an ending that would be satisfying for all participants. However, I need to take into consideration the participants' great heterogeneity of knowledge and experiences. I also remind myself that it was me who accepted the challenge of running a course under these circumstances. Therefore, once again I have to try to consider at least some of these needs. As we are approaching the end of the experiential part and the beginning of the lecture that follows this, I suggest that we explore some of these issues further within the lecture; and this is what we do.

In the stage-wings after the event

Even after all my considerations regarding the reasons for the dissatisfaction of some participants at the end of the event, their dissatisfaction continues to bother me. Was there something missing during the unfolding of the event that, despite of the prevailing natural heterogeneity of the participants, may have led to a more homogenous sense of a positive outcome? Would it have satisfied the expectations of a greater number of people, if I had followed my initial proposal of working with scenes and stories from the participants' private lives? Or is it my good old narcissism that does not leave me in peace, being extremely exigent and wanting everybody's constant recognition? Knowing myself a bit, the probability of the answer being 'yes' to this last question is quite high. The other questions, beyond of needing an answer or collective answers, belong to the realm of predictions and prophesy, an area that I know nothing about.

However, something within these soliloquies is starting to make sense. The expression '*if I had followed my initial proposal*' opens up a space, where I can, at least partly, locate the reason for my uneasiness.

It is clear to me that when working with psychodrama tools, we do not create anything on our own. We certainly play our part, but always in a dialogue with the other participants. In other words, it is the director's task to recognise that the group is asking for the continuity of the work to be maintained without exposing anyone, and to find alternatives for achieving this. Therefore, not having checked this assumption out with the group meant that I relied exclusively on my own perception. And even if the group had not been aware of their real needs at that point, I could have offered them the two options, so they could have made a collective decision. In this way, we could have felt jointly responsible for the direction we had chosen. And theoretically, given the heterogeneity of this group, if a choice had been made, this could have also reduced the number of expectations the group wanted to simultaneously consider.

To further consolidate this reflection, I again return to the concept of the dramatic project. I would like to dispel the confusion often associated with this concept resulting from the statement that 'the director's dramatic project' is exclusive and individual, and would like to clarify that the dramatic project is a collective creation that interlinks the different roles, its objective being to achieve a commonly outlined project. I would like to stress that the dramatic project never happens in an exclusively individual way (that is, it is never the *director's* dramatic project), as already in the first stage of the process (the pre-project) the dramatic project is established and developed in relation with those who buy our services; while in the phase of the director's warm-up and preparation, it is developed in relation with his still virtual partners. Within both these phases (pre-project and warm-up) as well as the transition between them, the expectations of both sides involved are elucidated or inferred. Ignoring these would mean to disregard aspects of the dynamics that are already present at these early stages, and consequently creating possible blind-spots. Therefore the denomination 'pre-project' stresses the importance of these early stages of the dramatic project, related to the elaboration of the contract and its latter fulfilment.

In other words, as a tool, the dramatic project extrapolates the surroundings of the dramatic context. It aims to transit between the social, group and dramatic contexts. The example I am referring to: in the social context of the stage-wings 'between the acts', in spite of having tried to understand the group dynamics manifest during the morning session, I did not fully take into consideration the contributions of my interlocutors, which could have been put into practice while creating the group context of the next act. The dramatic project continues to exist in the stage-wings, even if the actors, audience and director are momentarily not together. The play reverberates even when there is nothing yet to be enacted.

Although somewhat calmer, my uneasiness still continues.

There is a message still to be clarified in the phrase *'According to some of their testimonies, this would have been a chance to see psychodrama applied in a psychotherapeutic proposal, and through this they could have gained another kind of knowledge that could distinguish psychodrama from psychoanalysis.'* Maybe in order to be able to choose, through identification, one or the other path, first it is necessary to become familiar with both of them. Therefore, there were good reasons for the more junior students' dissatisfaction expressed in the above phrase. As it happens, there could have been various *'different ways'* of considering their expectations. I could have more strongly emphasised the possibilities and potential sociodrama has as a specific psychodramatic resource. In hindsight I also realise that when closing the experiential part of the afternoon session I did not make enough connections to the theme that was running through our work during the whole day. After all, I started this afternoon session with the instruction to *'outline the most significant impressions resulting from our work in the morning'*, that is, I intended to thematically link the process together.

And thinking back at further links that could have been considered, I realise that we used an institutional perspective in the choices we made (based on personal identification) between psychodrama and psychoanalysis, this being only one of the possible angles we can look at this issue. The lacking knowledge of students regarding the psychodrama method (hence their great interest for the mini-course and their difficulty in establishing certain types of comparisons in order to structure their knowledge) is due mainly to the fact that their training institution did not offer opportunities like this workshop on a regular basis. The great demand for this mini-course is due to the fact that within the psychology curriculum psychoanalysis has an almost monopolized position in relation to other modalities. The university provides a training towards which students have a critical attitude for being incomplete, as this was demonstrated in the scene that emerged during our morning session: the woodcutter carries out a job that Joan D'Arc (representing the students) is reluctant to acknowledge.

Had I decided to further explore this territory, I still would have not had any guarantee to *'completely satisfy'* the students. However, this again is only just speculation; the realm of predictions and prophesy. But, it would have been a path which could have led us to a better understanding of how the method (through the use of sociodrama) can contribute to reveal the dynamics of personal relationships, in this case the students' relationship with the training organisation. Having suggested to try and find a more satisfactory way of arriving to the conceived final image (*'to arrive to the conclusion that neither psychodrama nor psychoanalysis is right or wrong, as when choosing one over the other we make these choices in terms of paradigmatic, ideological and other kinds of identifications'*), was an example of co-creation through which we reached a momentary resolution of a predominantly individual character. We did not

pursue the more collective perspective of identifications through belonging to student groups, this also including the already qualified professionals.

My inclination to consider this collective perspective as both necessary and complementary is due to following reason: in my practice I try to avoid processes where an alienated character could be attacked. In the trenches of the individual the collective forces tend to stagger.

I think that the protagonic theme (Contro 2004, p.38) - the impasse related to the limitations of the institution's curriculum - composed of different correlated themes (the fear of being exposed and the need to learn about other approaches), wasn't fully explored. As it was present throughout the whole of the developing plot, identifying the protagonic theme could have helped us outline the cartogram in construction (or the already existing one) and could have offered more direction, understanding and guidance.

What could have blinded me not to see this perspective at the time? It could be the fact that my initial contacts in preparation for this work were with the president of the academic department and with the course coordinator, who were both very welcoming of me. In relation to them I may have slipped into the complementary role of someone intimidated and not wanting to get in conflict with the organisation. In other words, I may have been contaminated by the 'fear of being exposed' (correlated theme). It may be also to do with the fact that the information regarding psychodrama and other therapeutic approaches not being part of the curriculum during the initial phases of the psychology course (protagonic theme) was given to me in form of passing comments in the stage-wings.

As we have seen, the stage-wings - even if they are in the shadows - are an essential part of the spectacle. The pre-project is inherent to and inseparable from the dramatic project. Not paying attention to what happens in the stage-wings and during the pre-project may lead to losing sight of aspects that are important, but may not be fundamental for the quality of what is being co-created. These are aspect such as the starting of rehearsals, the preparation for playing characters, establishing the participants' common objectives and all their different expectations that may be around. It is part of the director's role to take all this into consideration as live and pulsating components of the picture, symphony, or play to be composed. It is art in the process of being created.

Having identified these further causes of my uneasiness, I can momentarily leave it to rest. This short piece of processing of the events in the stage-wings will help me do the fine tuning for future interventions.

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13.

Living newspaper: A creative and cathartic event¹⁰⁴

Elisabeth Maria Sene Costa and Terezinha Tomé Baptista¹⁰⁵

The aim of this paper is to revive the living newspaper as a valuable psychodrama modality rich in cathartic effects both for the individual and the group, with a potential for group analysis and social reflection.

We work with this technique (as director and auxiliary ego) in schools, symposiums, conferences and groups of our private practice; however we consider that it can be applied in a much wider area. The living newspaper is a mobilizing dramatic resource with potential for profound experiential group work that is permeated by recent socio-cultural events. Areas where this technique can be used include mental health, education, industry, companies, religion, etc.

For years the living newspaper was considered by Moreno a 'valuable sociodramatic invention'. (Moreno 1975, p.416)

Dramatized news evoke a whole series of potential reflections, such as the effects and repercussions of the living newspaper on the group and the individual among many others, what we will try to focus on within this paper.

The newspaper: its history and significance

The history of the newspaper as a means of propagating news goes back a long time. The first forms of communication appeared as stone and clay tablets, drawings and paintings found on rocks and in caves, hieroglyphics, etc., dating back millennia.

¹⁰⁴ The original title: 'Jornal vivo: O evento coletivo criador e catártico'. In *Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama* 6, 1, 1998, pp.17-28.

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In the ancient Egypt, eighteen hundred years B.C. news began to be passed on orally.

The first handwritten news appeared in ancient Rome and were called *Acta Ciurna*, *Acta Senatus* and *Acta Publica*. With the invention of printing by the German Johann Gutenberg, news appeared in printed form for the first time in the fifteenth century. German newspapers were the pioneers of printed news and eventually spread to the rest of Europe and the world.

Generally speaking, newspapers are vital for society. They fulfil the human need to communicate, to inform, to be informed, to discuss, debate and to give opinions. Nowadays newspapers are published daily, supplying the public with reports, commentaries and opinions regarding actual up-to-date facts. They provide entertainment, publish announcements and communiqués, actualize information, render services, announce events, suggest alternatives, correlate facts, etc. They are considered powerful tools for formulating opinions. Their services offer, in a mediate way, a great variety of political, educational, cultural, financial etc. nuances, allowing the reader to place himself within an up-to-date world as well as to orientate and establish himself according to this configuration.

Through transmitting social, political and cultural information, daily newspapers enable the reader to identify himself as a component and participant of a context that is greater than his more immediate and close network of contacts. They concretize the social context through larger, more distant, influential and abstract institutions (politics, education, economy, etc.) that transcend the group context as it is experienced on a day-to-day basis (groups to which the individual belongs: family, friends, colleagues, study groups, etc.).

News expand the world, and through them the individual finds himself belonging not simply to his known and immediate sociometric network, but also to a greater structure that can influence, interfere and contaminate the relationships of his immediate group.

Moreno's interest for newspapers dates back to February 1918, when the first edition of 'Daimon' was published. He was editor and associate of this paper and also published some of his own writings here. This paper intended to be a means for expressing Moreno's and his colleagues' view of the world, and it was edited for five years. Even its name changed a few times: in 1919 for 'Der Neue Daimon'; and in 1920 for 'Die Gefahrten'. In 1919 the structure of the paper changed and became a 'corporate of the six owners: Jacob Levy Moreno, Alfred Adler, Fritz Lampl, Albert Ehrenstein, Hugo Sonnenschein and Franz Werfel' (Marineau 1992, p.66-67).

In Moreno's view, although it is in written form, the newspaper is strongly related to the concept of the moment, because it is the spontaneous and live expression of the actual reality and of the present. According to him the newspaper:

[...] has a natural affinity to the form of the spontaneous drama, which requires for its unrehearsed, immediate form an equally spontaneous and immediate content, for instance the ever new and ever changing social and cultural events which are flashed from moment to moment to the editorial office of a newspaper. In this sense, the living newspaper was not only dramatic, but rather sociodramatic. (Moreno 1946, p.357)

The origins and definition of the living newspaper

The living newspaper was a derivative of the Spontaneous Theatre (Stegreiftheater) and it was created by Moreno when his main interest turned towards theatre, leaving medicine to become only a secondary concern. The objective of the Viennese Theatre of Spontaneity (1921-1923) was to revolutionise traditional theatre, from which it differed in basically four characteristics:

- 'the elimination of the playwright and the script
- the participation of the audience, since it is a theatre 'without spectators'. Everybody is a participant, every individual an actor
- the actors and the audience are the only creators. Everything is improvised: the play, the action, the theme, the words, the encounter and the resolution of the conflicts
- the traditional stage disappears and is replaced by the stage-space, an open space, the space of life, life itself.' (Moreno 1984, p.9)

Being 'used to depend on the cultural conserves of the drama and not trusting spontaneous creativity' (Moreno 1984, p.9), both the public and the press presented a great resistance to this new theatre, expressing some doubts regarding the spontaneity of the actors (arguing that a good and spontaneous theatre play assumes long and tiresome rehearsals) and the impossibility of real spontaneity in the dramatization (arguing that on some occasions these seemed to lack vibration and were not too convincing).

Disappointed with such comments, around 1922 - what today is regarded as his 'theatrical and therapeutic phase' - Moreno created the living newspaper (later on more appropriately named 'dramatized newspaper'). 'It is a synthesis between drama and newspaper, therefore differs in essence from the medieval and Russian custom of a spoken newspaper. The dramatized newspaper is not a recital of news; life itself is enacted. The events are dramatized.' (Moreno 1946, p.356)

The starting point for the dramatization when working with the living newspaper is a piece of news, while the work itself is collective. The headline is always chosen by the group and there is no script to be followed.

According to Moreno, with the creation of the living newspaper the roots of sociodrama were concretized: the themes that are addressed are necessarily collective material (social, literary, poetic, etc), drawn from a public source

(usually daily newspapers). Moreno wrote: 'The intention is to make the expression on the stage spontaneous in form (impromptu) as well as in content (the news of the day).' (Moreno 1923, p.38)

The beginning of the dramatization is usually anarchic and disorganised. The 'heat' of the news thrills the participants (especially if the chosen theme has a strong social connotation). People watching from outside often have the impression that chaos was established.

We don't know exactly how many times and when Moreno presented the living newspaper in Vienna. He only wrote that similarly to the theatre of spontaneity, the living newspaper and the therapeutic theatre were practiced at the Vienna Stegreiftheater, between 1922 and 1925.

After immigrating to the USA, Moreno presented the first living newspaper on the 5th of April 1931, at the Guild Theatre in New York. In the following years his work became popular in the whole country (through the Movieton News, the March of Time and the Living Newspaper of the WPA - forms of the dramatized news that differed from the one originally proposed by Moreno)¹⁰⁶, but living newspaper came to an end in 1940.

The structure of the living newspaper

The phases of a session

Living newspaper follows the same phases as a psychodrama session, that is warm-up (that can be unspecific and specific), dramatization and sharing.

1) The aim of the unspecific warm-up is to aid and promote the relaxation of the body, the introduction of the group members, the integration of the group, and focus on the actual task. Based on certain sociometric criteria, at this phase sub-groups are also formed. Group members are given news from a daily newspaper (by the auxiliary-egos) and will search and choose those that they would like to dramatize. The suggested news, the way these are discussed, the way consensus or group choice is achieved, the discussions, the involvement of the participants, etc. supply information regarding the group dynamics. During the decision-making process aspects of competition, rejection and complicity often appear and can be observed from the outside.

¹⁰⁶ According to Moreno, these events 'trivialized and distorted [his sociodramatic project]. As soon as the living newspaper is used as a frame for writing a nice and polished play, all the conventional trappings of the theatre automatically come back into operation.' (Moreno 1946, p.358) These are the very elements that the living newspaper intended to overcome.

2) The specific warm-up begins after a specific piece of news has been chosen for dramatization¹⁰⁷. When different subgroups choose different pieces of news, usually sociometric resources are applied in order to decide which of these is the most attractive and appealing for the participants. Following this the subgroups dissolve. The group members will define their characters, they assist each other in the distribution of roles, decide about the scenes, scenarios and their sequence.

3) The phase of dramatization consists in the actual dramatization of the piece of news chosen by the group. Its objective is that the dramatic representation of the chosen scenes should flow freely. The piece of journalistic news is now enacted with the effort of the whole group. The montage and performance of the theatrical piece happens on the stage, usually going off a social fact. Fantasy and reality are both important components of this production; the main resource being action, 'spiced' with strong emotion.

According to Menegazzo (1995 p.58), 'representation is a means to invoke certain sensations and feelings. [...] Therefore we can say that dramatic representation is the presentation of an episode that intrinsically has the power to evoke interest and to affect, or in other words, to mobilize feelings through the development of one or various actions.' This author also emphasises, that the human being 'engages with his whole body, feelings, values, thinking and capacity for decision making in the actions of a dramatic representation' and 'beyond the possibility for elucidation, dramatization also enables certain changes within the person.' (Menegazzo 1995, p.59)

4) Sharing is the phase of exchanging and witnessing the expression of emotions and reflections, this being a cathartic moment for the group members. Many of the participants report strong involvement with the recently created work and it also often happens that they express surprise for the emotional repercussions resulting from a plot that arose from a 'simple' newspaper note. It is often stated that the impact of what is experienced on the stage is fundamentally different from just simply reading or hearing the news. The involvement of group members with the different institutional groups is discussed, often expressing the need to become more involved in the social context, as opposed to just contemplate it. Participants often express how much they value the living newspaper as an important means to expand their personal perspective on institutions they belong to and to question their involvement in the social context.

¹⁰⁷ Usually the time designated for the activity is only enough for the dramatization of one piece of news, because the dramatization of more news could 'exhaust' the participants' and become counter-productive.

The functions of the director

Among the functions of the director we need to mention the following: the directing and organisation of the production, the structuring of the enactment, the warm-up of the participants for the production, the actual dramatization, the handling of techniques (techniques that promote co-participation, co-action and authentic expression within the dramatic scenes) and the maintenance of the proposal made by the group. It is important to point out that during the initial phases of the session the director needs a more present and directive attitude than in the latter phase of the production.

The functions of the auxiliary egos

The main function of the auxiliary egos is to facilitate the development of the work, by supporting both the director and the participants and to stimulate the group in the choosing of the news and the production of the spectacle. In accordance with their role of spontaneous actor, and in response to the request of the group members and the director, auxiliary egos interact with the characters and intervene in the scenes.

Psychodramatic techniques

The most frequently used techniques that promote the understanding among the participants and facilitate the organisation of the scenic space are: self-presentation (of the chosen character), soliloquy, freezing of scenes, double, mirror, role reversal and the interpolation of resistances. (In order to stay focused on the main topic of this paper, we will not present these techniques in further detail.)

Considerations regarding the living newspaper

The living newspaper has a wide range of possible applications. As Aguiar points out, the living newspaper stimulates imagination and it aims 'to offer an imaginary unfolding of events as well as an expression of the feelings evoked and generated by these events.' (Aguiar, 1988 p.22) Regarding the theatre of spontaneity, Aguiar (1988 p.28) further adds: 'it is an encounter between the individual and the collective, where the private becomes public and the public also becomes private.'

Based on our observations gathered from the application of the living newspaper, in the following we will present some considerations regarding the effects and efficacy of this technique.

The dramatized journalistic fact and the emotional reaction of the actor

In comparison with written news or news divulged through other means of the media, when experienced dramatically news are perceived and incorporated on a more emotional level. From being an 'intellectual' message it changes into an 'emotional' message. The involvement of the actors is unquestionably more intense when experiencing the piece of news through a scene, than when simply reading it or talking about it. The roles performed within the dramatic context follow a spontaneous direction of the plot and are presented with an essentially innovative and creative content.

It often happens that in the 'heat' of the news actors get so involved that they feel as they would be part of those characters. At times they give the impression as if they have come out from the real scene of the tragedy and directly onto the stage.

According to Volpe: 'we don't actually talk about *spectacle* but about Drama, that is an event that allows to transform and give new meaning to the moment, because it enables the actor to bring both fantasy and reality onto the stage in order to later separate these.' (Volpe 1990, p.72)

The internal world of the actor and the character experienced on the stage

The actor is personally and subjectively affected by the reality of the conflicts experienced in the 'here-and-now' and in the 'as if'. The metamorphosis that starts with the role taking of psychodramatic roles and slowly develops during the scene will at the same time evoke spontaneous associations within the actors, impelling them to make comparisons with the roles experienced in their internal world. The characters experienced through the dramatization will evoke memories and feelings that are directly related to the actor's own personal plot. (Although it is not the aim of the living newspaper to work with these personal issues, their repercussions will enrich the individual, at least in the sense that they expand and broaden self-perception.)

Comments made at the end of sessions and the affective connotations that these have, indicate a certain emotional 'shock'. During sharing at times we hear statements like 'I feel sick', indicating that certain transferential connections appeared: while performing a psychodramatic role, aspects of personal roles from the actor's own life became activated.

The warm-up and the creative role performance

According to Moreno, every individual is a role-player.

As participants of the living newspaper perform one or more roles without a pre-established script, this can enhance their role-playing ability. All they have is a theme, a piece of news, a drama. As the warm-up and the dramatization unfold, participants will loosen up and get more involved in the representation of roles, presenting an increased degree of freedom (role-creating).

Often the role performance of the actors seems to follow stereotypes (*a* business man, *a* family of a fatal victim, *a* victim of an accident) at the beginning of the dramatization. However, as the work unfolds, actors become more involved and spontaneous, while the characters become more authentic and original, and less caricature like (*the* business man, *the* family of a fatal victim, *the* victim of an accident). As the warm-up develops, spontaneity and creativity are freed up, facilitating the role performance, thus allowing the actor to take part (with all his personal baggage) in the delineation and construction of the character(s). (Therefore, during the development of the activity, participants may experience the different phases of role development, as described by Moreno: role-taking, role-playing and role-creating).

Conclusions

Based on our observations we concluded that the living newspaper has been relegated from the practice of contemporary psychodramatists. We came across very little use of this psychodrama modality and found very limited theoretical contribution to the topic. Although it was very popular for some years, Moreno stopped using it in 1940 and wrote very little about the theoretical basis of this work. He listed a few reasons for why he saw the living newspaper as a 'failure':

- he was disappointed with the way the method was used in America by the *Movieton News*, the *March of Time*, *W.P.A.* etc.
- the absence of a more profound and charismatic meaning of the method
- the reserved and ironic response of the press.

Nevertheless, the social and sociodramatic scope and significance of the living newspaper cannot be denied. Resuming the idea that the living newspaper is at the 'root' of sociodrama, it is important to highlight some of the definitions of this latter concept):

- it is one of the methods used in *sociatry*, considered the therapy of social relationships (Moreno 1974, p.39)

- it is a specific type of psychotherapy, dealing with social and collective aspects of problems, where the protagonist is always the group
- it is an active and profound method of investigation of the relationships formed within groups and of the collective ideologies represented by these groups (Fonseca 1984, p.11)
- it is a method that is trying to subjectivate the objective reality (in this sense is in contrast with psychodrama that tries to objectivate a subjective experience).

We believe that the living newspaper is a dynamic, engaging and cathartic method, implementing psychodramatic techniques. It allows us the examination of social, inter-group and intra-group issues, and also evokes individual 'themes'. It is a specific way of practicing sociodrama, its specificity being in the unspecific warm-up, when group members come into contact with different journalistic materials, gathered from different sources. These are offered for the group to be read and discussed in order to choose one of these news that the group would like to represent on the stage. It is important to point out that, at a conscious level, the chosen material reflects the group's involvement with the chosen theme(s), however, in most cases, it can also reveal certain intra-group dynamics, related to the co-unconscious level.

We would like to emphasise the importance of this method as a collective creative event, that enables the questioning and analysis of social themes of the moment, and to highlight its cathartic effects both for the group and the individual. We propose the rescuing and revival of this psychodramatic method and would like to see it used more often by psychodramatists through sociodramatic activities.

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14. Psychodramatic scenes: Liquid psychodrama¹⁰⁸

*Cida Davoli*¹⁰⁹

Psychodrama is a unique experience. Talking about this experience means translating the dramatic language into a written one. It is like trying to describe a kiss. The act of kissing is usually delightful and exciting, at times even repulsive. When trying to describe it to someone (whether verbally or in writing) we cannot transmit the actual experience in its totality. There are however poets, able to write about the kiss, taking us to another experience, as particular as the real one, transcendent. Real pieces of art work have been created about the kiss, such as Gustav Klimt's 'Kiss' for example. However, this is another story...

The waters of Belo Horizonte¹¹⁰

As inside us we all have a bit of an artist as well as a fool, I will describe within this chapter what happened on the 12th of June 2004 in the Américo René Giannetti Park, in the heart of the beautiful Belo Horizonte, in the mysterious state of Minas Gerais¹¹¹, full of mountains, valleys and abundant rivers. This event was part of the 13th Brazilian Psychodrama Conference, with the theme of 'Scenes in the community'.

In order to include this event at the conference I needed the authorization of an organisation belonging to the Brazilian Psychodrama Federation. As at the time I was not a member of any such organisation, I had to overcome a series of obstacles in order to be able to direct at the municipal park.

The water – my desire to direct – wanted to flow, but its flux was blocked by these obstacles. Even though I had well recognized experience in directing public events and in working with large groups (even at previous conferences), the scientific committee insisted that I have this authorization. I approached directly some of the conference organizers, asking for their permission to my

¹⁰⁸ The original title: 'Cenas psicodramáticas: Psicodrama líquido'. *Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama* 14, 1, 2006, pp.79-90.

¹⁰⁹ Psychologist, psychodramatist, spontaneous theatre director, trainer and supervisor of the Brazilian Psychodrama Federation

¹¹⁰ The editor's note: Belo Horizonte is one of Brazil's major cities; its name translates as 'beautiful horizon'.

¹¹¹ The editor's note: Minas Gerais is one of Brazil's biggest states, famous for its mining industry.

participation. Among the psychodramatic 'scenes of the community' I was looking for a space where I could include my own event. What motivated my request even more was the fact that working with communities on the streets had been one of my main interests in psychodrama; I am one of the coordinators of the public psychodrama sessions held at the São Paulo Cultural Centre. In 2001 I was involved with the event entitled 'The psychodrama of São Paulo city' and in 2002 in the 'Psychodrama of the Americas'¹¹². (Davoli, 2005) My willingness had got even stronger as this event – Psychodrama in the community – was part of a research project carried out by the Training and Scientific Department of the Brazilian Psychodrama Federation (FEBRAP), and in this way I could have had broader dialogue with other colleagues regarding this form of practicing psychodrama.

My efforts however have paid off. Acknowledging the significance of my request, the organizers very kindly made an exception allowing me to direct, which made me very happy. For this reason I would like to officially thank the organizers of the conference and the scientific committee for *allowing the waters to flow*.

I saw all this as part of my warm-up to directing this psychodrama. There are some parallels between my inclusion onto the list of the conference directors, and the paradoxical inclusions that took place in the park that afternoon. When blocked, the water finds new routes, as it needs to continue flowing.

Choosing the right location for a street psychodrama is very important as, beyond it being a place where people go by or where they stop, it also needs to have the potential for creating an atmosphere of intimacy when a scene is created. Everybody should have a good view of what is happening, regardless whether they participate in the scene or represent the real or the virtual audience (that is, the passers by). Good visibility fosters the impact on the public, allowing new scenes to emerge. We shouldn't forget after all that theatre is a place where *we watch*.

When directing in an open space I invite psychodramatist colleagues to support my work. I put together a team for that specific occasion. I ask them to help me identify all the photograms that may occur. Others are asked to help setting up the scenes by acting as 'professional' actors.

I also always try to find a phrase, a question, a leitmotiv¹¹³ on which I can rely in order to maintain the continuity of the event. Some of these that I used on this particular day were:

- Can you see something on the horizon?
- Beautiful horizon, isn't it?

¹¹² The editor's note: For more details on these two events see chapter 15.

¹¹³ Leitmotiv is an idea or a phrase that is repeated often in a book or work of art. It originates from music, meaning a short tune in a piece of music that is often repeated and is connected with a particular person, thing or idea.

- Those who love Belo Horizonte have a way to show it (inspired by a sticker seen on local cars).

Diving into the water

2 P.M. We are at the public space. Having noticed the team's activity, the microphones and the video-camera, some people start to approach us. I introduce the leitmotiv at this point in order to try and bring together dispersed people.

The story starts at the public square with an older gentleman who says he only came to watch, not to participate.

A drunk tells us that he was resting in the park, when a guard came to expel him. In playback style I set this scene up with my auxiliaries. Another drunk appears who, watching the scene, tells us that he was peeing (there are no public toilets in the park – *sic*) and the guard expelled him. This scene is enacted. Looking at it, he says that all he has left is being unemployed; he studied a lot, but now doesn't have a job. Marcos, the second drunk, opens a folder he is carrying with him and shows us all his diplomas and certificates kept there. There are a lot of them. He says it is bad enough for him now, but it is only going to get worse in the future.

I ask the actors to set up scenes of Marcos's present, past and future. I use the technique of dramatic multiplication¹¹⁴ of this scene, with the participation of my own as well as spontaneous auxiliary egos. The scene is big and well visible at the public square. Its aesthetic power and visibility make an impact on Rodrigo, who passes by exactly at this moment. He stops and watches. One of the auxiliary egos catches his attention and he calls me. He says: 'The same has happened to me.' The scene in front of him is silent; therefore what he identifies with is a movement, an expression, a shape, a feeling. Theatricality.

I invite him to tell us what happened to him. With his body and voice trembling he relates the following.

Death in the water

One day he had left home together with his young son with the intention of jumping into a lake in order to kill themselves. He was desperately trying to find a way out. Astonished by what I hear, I ask him to tell us what had happened before the scene at the lake. Still at home, his wife and mother of his son is trying to stop them going out, but does not manage to do so. They go to the lake and

¹¹⁴ The editor's note: For details on the technique of the dramatic multiplication see Mascarenhas's chapter in Figusch (2005).

jump. Emotionally he tells us that if the firemen had not rescued them, they would have died.

The audience is listening to his story with dismay. I invite people to set up different scenes consisting of various Rodrigos, various sons of Rodrigos, and wives of Rodrigos. In their structure and movement these scenes are actually similar to that of Marcos's previous scene, by which Rodrigo was so moved. I suggest that some people form the lake that would 'swallow' father and son.

As there are many psychodramatists present at this moment, an idea comes to me: in order to complete the scene of the protagonist, I ask all those who are part of the audience to take on the role of the firemen. After all Rodrigo's scene has offered the great opportunity of psychodramatists, that is to achieve our great desire/misery of proving (and proving it publicly) the efficiency of the socioeconomic method. This desire will be accomplished by the public and the psychodramatists present, through their performance of the psychodramatic role of firemen, saving father and son from drowning. This scene can be viewed as a metaphor of the salvation of both the creator and his creation, the salvation of creation, or even the salvation of therapeutic theatre, so dear to psychodramatists. Everybody is involved in the scene. Theatre and psychodrama together in the service of life; allowing life to flow. The square is filled up with desperate mothers, with children taken by their desperate fathers to death. 'The water will save us' is what these fathers must think. These lakes are welcoming; but they are also killer lakes, making human beings disappear, or saving them. Saving them from despair. And firemen... many firemen. It is emotional! Standing next to me, Rodrigo watches the scenes and feels very touched by the one in which the firemen appear to save father and son from the lake. (The world is worth while!)

He says he wants to apologise to his son.

We ask people to form two lines, fathers on one side and sons on the other.

A new encounter of waters

Fathers and sons are facing each other as if they were the banks of a river. One talking to the other, each taking their turn, fathers and sons are having a dialogue. There are a lot of emotions around and Rodrigo is moved again. As if he was re-living that scene, but it is another scene, actual, where his cry for help and apology – not heard and not said on that fateful day – can now be heard by this whole group of fathers and sons. The beauty of what we (artists, psychodramatists, citizens) can transform life into, makes me emotional too. In that moment a scene of such horror becomes something beautiful. Nietzsche was right saying that 'only art is able to transform life worthy to live it.' And this beauty transforms us. Solidarity changes us. As if by magic, at this moment I notice a mother holding her child's hand, walking pass the place where the

psychodrama is happening. She must be taking her child somewhere, just as Rodrigo was taking his son on that fateful day. Only that this mother and her child present serenity. They are probably walking towards life, not death. In a mixture of what is real (reality) and psychodramatic, I invite them to walk through the 'shores' of fathers and sons. Without even asking why, they walk down this river that leads to Rodrigo. Then, they continue on their way.

There is something beautiful in how these two anonymous actors walk through our story...

Realities inter-penetrate. Rodrigo's scene from the past is re-enacted, constructing a new, actual reality.

Magic; this is the beauty of street theatre. The scene of the street is on the street. It shouldn't be imprisoned. Just as the water, it should flow. We only frame it for a minute in order to be able to see it.

Rodrigo moves on and everybody says goodbye to him.

'What kind of horizon do you see?' - I ask those who stay.

'I see and experience a wonderful thing.' - says Adauto.

We create scenes of wonderful lives, with hugs and tenderness. As a counter-point, I ask the group to also create horrible scenes; conflicts and arguments appear.

One gets mixed with the other.

New horizons start to emerge.

Jacqueline arrives telling us that she would like to participate, but doesn't know how to.

Cadu also appears saying that what he sees on his horizon (leitmotiv) is him going to a club to meet his friends.

We set up Jacqueline's scene, emphasizing both her desire to meet other people, and the great fear this brings her.

Standing at the side Cadu says that he will be singing with his friends at the club. With set up this scene. He is singing one of his own songs, inspired by and inspiring Jacqueline's scene. Communication between the two scenes.

In her own scene, Jacqueline initially shows hesitation to join the group, but eventually plucks her courage up and joins the encounter of people. Through this scene she synthesizes our practice of using public spaces. This is the creation of a new subjectivity. Strangers are meeting each other. And together they create a story.

We make a big circle and in tears, with affection and affectation the participants share:

'I won't go away, because I live in the park.' - says Marcos.

'The square belongs to the people.'

'Being able to talk with those who don't talk.'

'What matters is not the path, but how you walk the path.'

'I want to be with others.'

'Humanization is what matters.'

'I am an alcoholic who doesn't drink.' – says the guard.

'The carrot is hard and so it breaks. When you cook it, it softens. While the egg is soft; but it hardens in hot water. Good coffee is made with hot water. The secret is the hot water.'

Toucans fly freely over the park, looking for new horizons to nest, revealing their synchronicity with the humans.

*I have spent an hour thinking about a poem
Which my quill pen does not want to write. Yet it is here inside
Unsettled, alive.
It is here inside me
And does not want to get out
But the poem of this moment
Inundates my whole life. (Drummond)*

Sharing from Jacqueline through e-mail, some time later:

The experience I had was unique. It had a great repercussion on my life. It unchained a lot of feelings that until that very moment had been hidden. I had a great desire to see and feel, but my fear had paralyzed me in front of that situation. I very much wanted to participate in the life of those people who met there, regardless whether they had problems or not; I wanted to contribute somehow, but my fear was blinding me. My hands and my body were cold. I was very afraid to engage myself with the group who were there. But, at the same time, I had a desire to engage. I was looking at the *horizon* around me with a lot of green and water, but the fear paralyzed me.

It was then that I plucked up the courage to overcome this fear that was blinding me. I said something to the person standing on my left, Patricia Rossi. I said to her that I wanted to participate, to talk about the fear I was experiencing at that moment. What she did was taking me to another person, called Cida Davoli. It was then, that she got hold of my hands, as if she was saying '*Don't be afraid*'. And she kept holding my hand while setting up the scene of that situation. I think that guy called Cadu had appeared at the right time.

Then I started to experience the fear. A lot of other people appeared and it seemed they were inviting me to a party. Eventually... There was a party happening. I had a great time, got to know other people, talked and participated, took part in their lives. And the fear disappeared... It went away... it left me. While at the party, I noticed a man¹¹⁵. He also noticed the insecurity I felt at that moment. It was like I could have run to him. (A sense of protection.) Before I realized, I was there encountering people. I felt like a winner!! The fear had gone away.

¹¹⁵ Antonio Carlos Souza (Tom), one of the auxiliary egos.

Liquid psychodrama

This term was coined by Devanir Merengue during one of our conversations, referring to the title of the book written by the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2000), 'Liquid Modernity'.

Bauman considers the idea of modernity as something liquid and fluid, light of contemporaneity, as opposed to solid modernity that is supplant. Although in his book Bauman approaches the fluidity of modernity critically, I use his definition of liquid (as described in the foreword of his book) in order to relate this to psychodrama:

...unlike solid things, liquids cannot maintain their form easily. Fluids, so to speak, do not capture the space or time; solid things on the other hand, have clear spatial dimensions but neutralize the impact of time and therefore diminish its significance (they effectively resist its flow or make it irrelevant). Fluids do not hold on long to any shape and are constantly prone to change it; thus for them time is more important than the space they take up; space that -after all - they only fill in 'for a moment'. Liquids can be described as instant photographs that need dating. (Bauman, 2000 p.8)

I think that this way of directing psychodrama, porous, inter-penetrating, fluid, liquid, is trying to give account of this new subjectivity, of our contemporaneity.

Troubled waters

Interruption, incoherence and surprise are common conditions of our lives. They have even become real necessities for many people, whose minds only feel nourished by sudden or unexpected changes, or constantly renewed stimuli. We cannot tolerate any longer things that last, as we become bored of them.

Therefore the question can be reduced to this: is the human mind able to master what the human mind has created? (Valery, in Bauman 2000, p.7)

According to Paul Valery, as modernity is very accelerated and fragmented, all the 'photograms' of daily life happen at such speed, that at times it is impossible to see or understand them. Street psychodrama is an attempt to frame these passing everyday events that take place in public spaces. In Deleuze's words, we circumscribe territories. In Moreno's words, we create a stage at the feet of urban actors. Detached from the scenery and aesthetically framed, these events can affect the passers-by as art work - street-art.

This type of psychodrama aims to make evident the social contradictions protagonized by the city. It is a fast and therefore intense psychodrama, in which the presented scenes last only as long as necessary in order to create feelings in those who see it. It is stepping out of indifference by looking at an uninterrupted, fluid, liquid and incessant flow.

According to Richard Sennett's (in Bauman 2000, p.11) classic definition, a city is a 'human settlement where strangers have the chance to meet'. What street psychodrama wants is to propitiate these encounters, through new ways of perceiving and inserting oneself into the urban scenario. In this respect, it is a socio-political action.

Street psychodrama therefore redefines the street and the city as a place where passer-by strangers with their own stories and vulnerabilities can encounter each other for an instant. In Knobel's (2005) words street psychodrama:

creates shared dreams, promotes innocence and it brings down the status quo as a kind of micro-politics that is interested in the affectations, that leads to unknown places, that crosses over standards, that allows to transverse territories and to create worlds, without needing to worry about the *why?*, about what is right or wrong. Nothing grandiose, pure beauty and sensibility.

Is humanity's new revolution a sociometric one, as Moreno wrote? When doing psychodrama on the street, my priority is to create new urban scenery, to create unusual encounters, to create a new aesthetics of the public space, and through this to pretentiously create a new citizen ethics. The ethics of looking for the other; the ethics of recognizing life in people and on the street; re-establishing dialogue; dreaming a collective dream. Moreno (in Greeb 1997) wrote: 'When you see yourself as yourself, a stage is built under your feet and you recover the laughter.'

The encounter of waters

The encountering waters in this case are psychodrama and theatre, both also a result of numerous other encounters of waters.

When writing a paper I am never quite sure which is the language (water) that the readers and I have got in common. At times I may be talking about something that is very familiar to some readers, but it does not make sense for others; this may lead to different or mistaken understanding in the best case, or even to misunderstanding. Therefore I apologise for defining here some concepts that we may all be familiar with. It is a careful measure I take at this encounter of waters in order for it to be understood.

When talking about psychodrama, we can do this from a theoretical perspective made up of a range of concepts that enable us to understand the individual and/or group. Here however, I would like to talk from the perspective of the psychodrama practice; to talk about the importance of dramatization as a method in the psychodramatic act. (I use the term dramatization as it is more established among us, psychodramatists, but actually mean theatricalization.)

Doing psychodrama means capturing a group's emotive, relational and ideative production, and translating it into a scenic, dramatic language. In order for the enactment to happen, the actors engender the creativity of the group, new sociometries, new socio-dynamics, new roles and new ways of performance. We look at and recreate ourselves through the enacted drama. We overcome old sociatries. Dramatization facilitates the liberation from apprehensions that impede healthy relationships, as they are more adequate for the moment; they are not conserves, but desired ethical citizen actions. It removes words and intentions from clandestinity.¹¹⁶

When talking about theatre, I refer to the scenic language, the art of constructing and communicating an idea through theatricality. What is theatricality? Theatralization differs from dramatization. Dramatization means putting a written text or script into the scenic language. Theatralization is theatre without a text or script; it is density of signs and sensations built up within the scene based on the written theme. (Pavis 1996, p.372)

In this respect theatre and psychodrama, the way I use them here, have some aspects in common in terms of the scenic action. Theatralization, the raw material of the theatre done by the actor, is the method of psychodrama. Nevertheless, they both have their technical particularities and different purpose. But here they meet in order to create an expressive, artistic and therapeutic modality.

The movement of waters

The direction does not obey any pre-established guideline, such as warm-up, dramatization and sharing; it only obeys the flow of happenings, similarly to a river running against a rock, or a branch broken off a tree and now belonging to the river, but which following its flow could be part of another eco-system. Liquid psychodrama does not interrupt the flow of stories, it frames them.

The same happens to this group of people at the park. They are people who came to the conference from different parts of the country, together with the team representing different psychodrama 'tribes', with other users of the park who are not there for the conference, forming a gathering in terms of this

¹¹⁶ Sharing through e-mail by Cecilia Zylbetajn (psychodramatist): 'One of the things I would like to share is regarding the issue of intimacy in street psychodramas. I often notice that in such a short period of time complete strangers can become very intimate with each other, sharing their secrets, emotions and life stories. On the other hand though, during the psychodrama in the park I noticed how difficult it was for people to touch someone unknown. As a participant myself, during the dramatizations I noticed a certain reservation both in me and my colleagues towards touching other colleagues and even more so touching the homeless people. Noticing this, I am asking myself: is emotional proximity prior to corporal proximity?'

psychodrama, which then breaks up in order to form yet another gathering in another moment. It is the fluidity of water, of creativity, of life.

In the park everything needs to be big and visible. People walking pass should look and recognise the scene and be attracted by it, even if not having an understanding of it. It is a proximity that nurtures and transforms those approaching, that propitiates the desire to affect each other, to tune people in to each other, to undo old identities, to mobilise discomfort, creating moments of individual and group potential. At this condensation of affections new subjectivities, new stories and new events will appear.

The group is a place of conflict and in this respect it is a place where people can take up positions, discuss, create new solutions, create support networks and therefore, practice their citizenship, assuming responsibility for what they are collectively producing.

In the open public street psychodrama the group in action will reveal their script, their conflicts, and their networks.

In his book entitled 'Back and forth - A guide for reading theatre plays', Ball (2001) proposes reading plays from back to front in order to understand the piece and its characters; knowing where the playwright will arrive we better understand the intermediary scenes and the different actions of the characters throughout the play.

The script of a psychodrama is 'produced while it is being enacted'; should we also read this starting from the end? What would this mean?

I believe that the creative flow of the group should be imposed. We shouldn't fall into the temptation of unnecessary stops. 'Understanding' a character right at the beginning is like attempting to discuss the character's full genesis and psychology only after their third line of dialogue. Or even, like to understand the whole story that is yet to be told. The dramaturge writes all of his play in order to make us understand his characters. Our group/author/actor however, will write their 'play' in order for us to understand - only at the end - its significance.

In this sense it is the director's job to support, or even engender and facilitate the creative flow of the group. And only at the end to try and make sense of what happened that day to that group.

The story we witnessed on the day described above in Belo Horizonte was a story of exclusions: exclusion for sleeping and peeing in the wrong place, exclusion in the search of death and not life. At the same time as they were being enacted and made visible, these scenes of exclusion were included into the script of the group. Marcos peeing, wanting to be on the outside and only watch, and Rodrigo's suicide scene are transformed into Jacqueline's scene of celebration (she is on the outside wanting to participate, and with certain hesitation and help from that group, slowly is included), and Cadu's party, with the certainty that his friends would be there, waiting for him.

Through their participation the audience included themselves because what was happening had resonated in them. Through the flow of stories the audience is protagonized. New networks are created. New forms of role performance appear. The drama turns into psychodrama, or sociodrama, for those who prefer this expression. Or even better, it becomes art in the sense of a new form of expressing and understanding reality. It is revealing and transforming. Soon after it loses its form, just like liquids looking for a place to move on.

Psychodrama and theatre are only separated at this moment by a very fine line. The theatrical/psychodramatic scene contains both individual and collective elements, as well as artistic and expressive ones.

The community enacts their scene of despair, the scene of not being able to see a way out or a horizon, in a city called 'beautiful horizon'. They encounter this horizon by jumping into a lake, into the water, disappearing with their tormented lives. This leads to another scene, the scene of rescuing the bodies from the water by the firemen/citizens. A beautiful horizon emerges. A river bordered by fathers and sons (parents and their children) open for dialogue. Other lives, other waters swell up and create a new flow. At the square, in the city, the no-place is also found, where surprised strangers, psychodramatists, citizens of Belo Horizonte, Brazilians look at each other and are moved. Together they write and act out a story.

Yes, this was a place to recognise others and have a dialogue with them, the other being ourselves in a mirror without Narcissus. It was the *agora* - used for public meetings in ancient Greece; a place to understand the real meaning of the greeting used by the Mayas: '*Il a keche*' - 'I am the other you'; of the Hindus: '*Namaste*' - 'The divinity living in me greets the divinity living in you'; of the kaxinauá Indians: '*Txai*' - 'Half of me is in you and half of you is in me'; or of the Morenian 'I look at you with your eyes and you look at me with mine'.

The psychodramatic community enacted their desire to do psychodrama in different places, to use the socionomic method in non-conventional places, just as the toucans that had appeared towards the end of our work. They were migrating in search of nourishment. Some find fruit; others find psychodrama; in a liquid form. Dissolving, cleansing, fluent.

Rivers running towards the sea

Sharing from participants, some time after the event:

As a psychodramatist-participant I can say that the psychodrama in the park touched me profoundly, both personally and professionally. The fluidity of Cida's directing had a poetic beauty and lightness. I had the sensation of experiencing a live poem, with colours and in three dimensions. It made me think of psychodrama as a form of art, in the sense of being a unique and ineffable expression that cannot be translated without losing its qualities and which evokes emotion in the other

(person), each one person having a unique experience, a personal interpretation of the work. In my view, this form of understanding psychodrama amplifies its potential and it goes beyond its therapeutic objective. Psychodrama as art is also a tool for social transformation, as those who participate in it are transformed. (Cecilia Zylbetajn – psychodramatist)

Reading this paper made me re-experience that day. I arrived at the opening with the questions regarding the beautiful horizons. For a good time I was closely connected with Marcos, his diplomas, his bag, his wish to be heard, his apparent lack of ethylic boundaries. In that role, outside of the main focus under which the scene was unfolding, I had experienced a human being, whom I certainly would have never experienced, considering his smell, his filthiness, his nearly invisible condition of existence. Following the work, just as we were getting ready to leave, I am taken by surprise, receiving the hug, the tears and the acknowledgement of Jacqueline, for long and profound minutes. 'With the discomfort of the unprepared head, and the discomfort of the misunderstood soul.' (quote from Fernando Pessoa, Brazilian writer). You were directing with your eyes open for the people and the scenes. I would like to encourage you to maintain the same attitude of co-construction in differentiated roles. (Antonio Carlos Souza [Tom] – auxiliary ego)

Before I realized, I was there encountering people. I felt like a winner!! The fear had gone away. It went when I got close to this young man and said 'Thank you very much.' I thanked for his look, which even from a distance gave me comfort. It was then that we hugged and stayed hugged for ten minutes. And I cried a lot for having had won over this fear that was blinding me. After that hug I went away without even saying good-bye. Nevertheless, it was a very powerful moment. The following day I felt like the most confident woman in the world. I went to the closing of the psychodrama conference and there I met the people who on the previous day had directed in the park. An activity had just started in the room where I was. The professionals who were there engaged in a dialogue about their experiences of the previous day in the park. Again, they started to tell my story. And again, I felt I was among strangers. But the feeling was somehow different. I wasn't afraid. And I got involved with this activity that was related to my life. We started to enact what had happened. And the activity was happening... With me there, without being afraid of being happy. It was an experience and that's all. Now I am a different person. (Jacqueline Rosa)

Thus, by processing the results obtained through protocols, through sharing, through the group work with the directing team and the representants of the participating population, we can revive the fundamental principles of the Morenian project. That is, to organize the work for and with the community, to facilitate the flow of the citizen, which will give meaning to his actions, allowing him to step out of a passive relationship with life, transforming himself into an actor and author of his own path and embezzlement. What is the meaning of spontaneity-creativity if not to be responsible for the fluency of healthier life?

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The psychodrama of São Paulo City¹¹⁷

*Marisa Nogueira Greeb*¹¹⁸

The psychodrama of São Paulo City was a disruptive and liberating act, as it broke away from conservative ways of dealing with the city.

It was a revolutionary act, because a desire of the citizens for more direct and effective actions had been sown simultaneously in 158 different locations of São Paulo City.

It was a happy act, because it generated joy and desire to live and it increased the creative potential.

It was a therapeutic act, because it aimed to overcome the resented forces of being a victim and to revive active and creative potential.

And it was also an act releasing new currents of energy into the social environment, and thus starting a new movement of group politics.

We live in a time when geo-political frontiers are being re-drawn, and as a resonance and consequence to this, ruptures between the private and the public, between the humane and the technological, between the conscious and the social also occur. This geo-political configuration has also generated a certain mental geography that is in the process of being de-territorialized. In this sense, our relationships often tend to follow models that are no longer appropriate and no longer fulfil the needs and speed of modern contemporary life.

We have to pay attention to the situation of the world, with globalization demanding a wide broadening of our view. However, we shouldn't forget either, that things only happen in a *locus*, in the *relationships*, in the *actions*; the existing culture will always develop from the plots woven within groups, needing to re-create itself, given that its existing tools seem to lapse in front of this new vertiginous millennium. Therefore, *the moment demands a change of this mental geography*. As Moreno (1992) himself said, 'a truly therapeutic process cannot have less as its objective than the whole of humankind.'

¹¹⁷ This chapter is based on Greeb's paper entitled 'Psicodrama da Cidade de São Paulo' (published in *Revista Global* [2005], *Zeitschrift für Psychodrama und Soziometrie* [2006], *Revista de Psicologia CRPSP* [2007], and www.psicodramadacidade.com.br), and an interview given by the author to the Portuguese journalist Pedro Alves.

¹¹⁸ Marisa Nogueira Greeb is associate director of the Socio-Psychodrama Role Playing School; founder of the Institute of Relational Politics (São Paulo, Brazil); coordinator of the Psychodrama of São Paulo City.

It was with these thoughts that in December 2000 I accepted the proposal of the then newly elected Mayor Marta Suplicy¹¹⁹ to organise the Psychodrama of São Paulo City. The idea emerged during a dinner organised by Marta Suplicy to which a small group of people had been invited to discuss issues of ethics and the conditions of governability. During this encounter the mayor presented her idea of organising a big event and challenged me to invite 500 psychodramatists to carry out the psychodrama of the city, with the intent of listening more closely and carefully to what the people of São Paulo and the municipal public employees think and value.

When hearing this unprecedented proposal it took me only a few seconds to think and take up the challenge. And what a challenge! I couldn't have turned this challenge down, because after all this was the greatest dream of Moreno: to do a psychodrama with an entire city. This dream was suddenly within my reach and I couldn't wait to share it with my colleagues. Due to its importance and magnitude, this project could have not been carried out exclusively by a single group, and therefore I decided to involve everybody regardless of their affiliations within the psychodrama movement. With the support of my own permanent working team (Daniela Greeb, Vanessa Labigalini and Bel Dantas), I immediately started to contact and invite psychodramatists who readily got involved with the project on a voluntary basis.

This unprecedented and pioneering event took place on the 21st of March 2001, at 158 different locations spreading over 91 neighbourhoods of São Paulo City. In all 158 locations a socio-psychodrama was conducted at the same time, involving altogether around 10,000 citizens. The common theme for all the groups was 'Ethics and citizenship', and therefore the event was denominated the 'Psychodrama of ethics' and had as its motto the question: '*What could you do for a happy city?*' In all locations banners had been put up with this question. Using their teams of auxiliaries each group coordinator then developed the work in their own and unique way, but the focus was the same for everyone. Each group brought their own issues and themes related to their own experiences of the city or the district they lived in¹²⁰.

In the group I directed in a public square, the issue that emerged was related to the impossibility of using this public space as it was always occupied by noisy motorbikes and drug-users. This was the starting point of our psychodrama, or rather socio-psychodrama. Various scenes were enacted, from an old lady demanding the public forces to take action in relation to the above problems, to a range of proposals for exploring the different ways the square

¹¹⁹ The editor's note: Marta Suplicy is a Brazilian politician and psychologist. She was Mayor of São Paulo City between 2001 and 2004, as a member of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT). She is currently the Brazilian Minister of Tourism.

¹²⁰ All events throughout the city were also made available for politicians, this including their own working space: the city council. This was however, the only session that had been cancelled, due to the total absence of ... politicians or citizenship?

may be used. As the group consisted of middle class women, homeless people living in the square, a drunk, a gardener and many other representatives of the public, we concluded the work by organising an association of the square, everybody contributing to it what they could. It was citizenship presenting itself in an organised way by a collective, in order to take care of something public. Following this socio-psychodrama the square has been re-arranged, its gardens re-organised and motorbikes have been banned, allowing people to enjoy this public space again. We even managed to create a community TV (TV da Freguesia do Ó), named after the district. I returned to do another public socio-psychodrama in the same square on the 12th of October 2002 as part of the Socio-psychodrama of Latin America.

This is just one example of what happened during this event that mobilised 700 professionals, voluntary psychodramatists with a lot of zest and emotion, knowing that they were to realize the dream of the father of psychodrama. What made this possible was our mayor's understanding of this method, the availability of psychodramatists, and the experimental language itself used within this method that fosters participation. All psychodramatists submitted reports of the event they were involved in, and later on an analysis of these reports was carried out and suggestions for further action were made based on the questions that were guiding the work of the different groups: *In what kind of society do I want to live?; What can each one of us do to make this happen?; What are the best ways to carry out these actions together, involving the community we live in?*

The existence of a capitalistic 'subjective city' has been noted, where people do not choose their way of life; their life in the city is determined by the urbanite architecture of activities and is subordinated to a hegemonic form of production. We realized that there was an urgent need to renew this 'subjective city' (expression used by Felix Guattari 1989, p.170) by engaging people both on a more individual as well as more collective level. The fact is that there is no peace or ethics, because citizenship as a form of collective involvement in the organization of the city does not manifest itself. There seem to be only tensions and dreams produced and generated by the capitalistic publicity and by the media. People don't manage to get in touch with their more genuine and individual desires and needs. The renewal of this subjective city requires new forms of life, new forms of creating new subjectivities.

The 'frantic São Paulo way of living', as Mario Andrade (1922) described it, is characterised by the pursuit of survival and not by the pursuit of the right for Life. São Paulo is protagonist of a system that puts economy before life, work being used in its original sense of *tripalium*¹²¹, an instrument of torture and not a form of creating life. This leads to corruption, indisposition, violence, etc., and illnesses that appear as secondary symptoms of this indisposition.

¹²¹ The editor's note: The Portuguese word for work (*trabalho*) has its origins in the Latin *tripalium*, a three-staked instrument of torture. The subject of torture would be tied to the tripalium and burnt with fire.

This imposes an ethics of survival, where it is always the other who should think, do and meet our needs, that is, the other is always responsible or to blame. Despondent and spiritless, with no sense of citizenship, every person excludes themselves from the effective participation in their area of intervention, delegating the function of creating a happy city to the State.

The present moment however, demands a different kind of ethics, the *ethics of inclusion*, with every citizen needing to act towards its construction, finding a different way of facing the city we live in, a different way of facing our life, our world.

What we intended was to - jointly with the people living in the city - discover the active and creative forces that exist in São Paulo and the virtues present there, in order to re-distinguish the subjectivity of this city. Being aware of this potential could promote a different way of living and new social arrangements that would value life more. This can be achieved by every person jointly with their community, by getting in touch with the genuine desire and the political will of taking on such transformations, creating a network of people and free channels of unique, spontaneous and creative fluxes.

If we think about the protagonist in socio-psychodramatic terms, the protagonic individual unveils the issue of the whole group, and therefore he is never just an individual detached from his context. We always think about individual-group as a single word. Therefore the experience of one person's citizenship is only possible if it is enabled by their group. The individual experience, as long as it is contextualized, can contribute to the unveiling of the values that form the foundations of the city's culture and its citizens' actions.

In his beautiful book 'The invisible cities', Ítalo Calvino (1990, p.150) wrote:

The hell of the living - if this really exists - is not something that will be; it is what is already here, the hell we live in every day that we create being together. There are two ways of avoiding suffering. The first is the easier option for the majority of people: it is to accept this hell and become part of it to such an extent that you stop seeing it. The second option is more risky and it demands continuous care and learning: try to recognize within this hell who or what is not part of the hell, and try to preserve this, opening up space.

By doing this, we are not excluding actions related to areas such as public health care, revenue distribution, the cleaning of rivers, public safety, road maintenance, and so many other things that should be done and managed by public power in the reconstruction of the objective city.

It is not one *or* the other; it is one *and* the other. Because it is within the *and* that creativity resides.

The production of this project was based on micro-political practices, on the questioning of ethical positions and on the expression of aesthetic contents, that is, an ethical-political-aesthetical interlinking of the three ecological registers: the

environment, social inter-relations and human subjectivity (Guattari 1991), through the use of the method and techniques of socio-psychodrama.

The press followed and covered the whole event from the beginning. We had 130 articles in the written press, both nationally and internationally. A discussion was also organized about the behaviour of the media in front of this unprecedented event.

We have organised the records, created photo montages on CD's, video editions of the sessions, as well as a documentary and a website¹²². Information regarding the event's contents has been divulged through the internet, both for those who participated in the different groups, and for those psychodramatists who, by exercising their citizenship, made possible this virtuosity to convert therapy into a service for and of citizenship.

What we wanted to achieve is the continuity of the therapeutic process of the city and to empower citizenship. The event had various consequences within the field of action of the São Paulo City Council itself, mainly within the departments of Social Assistance, Administration, Health and Transport, with the realization of further psychodramas¹²³ organised for different groups, involving municipal public employees, homeless people, and van owners working as illegal taxi drivers, who were consequently incorporated into the city council's transport system. Further to this, open public psychodramas have continued to take place on a weekly basis at the São Paulo Cultural Centre. Although a quantitative collation of the results has not been carried out, analysis done by different professionals resulted in supplementary information for new actions and generated pathways to the empowerment of the public. A process has started and the matter now depends both on us psychodramatists, and the population already involved.

The psychodrama of São Paulo City was a disruptive and liberating act, as it broke away from conservative ways of dealing with the city. It was a revolutionary act, because a desire of the citizens for more direct and effective actions had been sown simultaneously in 158 different locations of São Paulo City. It was a happy act, because it generated joy and desire to live and it increased the creative potential. It was a therapeutic act, because it aimed to overcome the resented forces of being a victim and to revive active and creative potential. And it was also an act releasing new currents of energy into the social environment, and thus starting a new movement of group politics.

¹²² www.psicodramadacidade.com.br

¹²³ The editor's note: For more details regarding some of these events see chapter 16.

'Escenas de los pueblos' (Scenes of the people) - 12th of October 2002¹²⁴

After the fall of so many people due to persecution, torture or famine, we finally live in a democratic regime; however, we still haven't conquered a democracy in which every citizen can have the means to become responsible for the collective production and creation of their nation's aims and objectives. In my view, this is due to the mass politics and the system of delegating power that we chose.

I recall a thought I had years ago when reading Freud's (1921) 'Psychology of the masses'. In this text Freud explores the transference issues that occur in the mass in relation to their leader. The ego ideal or the ideal ego are being projected onto the leader. And beyond this, the mass will also delegate to their leader the realization of their needs and desires and consequently, the responsibility of carrying out the actions that will create the conditions of their living. The mass is One. There is no room within the mass for conflict, for different positions or points of view and for creation. The delegation of responsibility happens in such a way that people give up their own citizenship to those elected to power. This can be clearly perceived when we encounter alienated and des-animated people, people without *anima*, without a sense of citizenship. They often feel betrayed and resentful.

How did the 'Scenes of the people' come about and what purpose did it serve? The people didn't come to us; it was us who went looking for them...

Having available a method that enables us to understand the dramas we live, the constructive forces that exist in the life of the city, and that makes it possible to give these dramas new meaning in order to gain a full citizenship, makes us responsible and obliged to use and multiply it for this purpose.

It is for this reason that the Psychodrama of São Paulo City was created, and then re-created in its Latin-American version on the 12th of October 2002¹²⁵, as the 'Scenes of the people' - because this is what it all is about. What are the scenes that people live?; What are the existing objective articulations in the life of the

¹²⁴ Socio-psychodramas with the theme 'What country do we want? - Another America is possible', were organized simultaneously in ten Latin-American and four European countries (Italy, Spain, England and Belgium), as well as the United States.

¹²⁵ I visited Argentina when their crisis got more aggravated. Our friends were very interested in the experience we had in São Paulo and so I asked them: 'Why don't we do the same thing in Argentina? Not just in the capital city, but involving the whole country? What country do we want?' Following this, with the crisis also deepening in Uruguay, a website was created on the internet ('armandoumpsicodrama' - 'preparing a psychodrama'). I phoned to Argentina and suggested to also involve Uruguay. With this a chain reaction had started and the date of the 12th of October (the date of discovery of the Americas) was chosen to discover the America inside us.

cities, and which ones are the subjective articulations that generate these conceptions denying people a dignified and just life in their exercise of freedom?

The concept of protagonization and the historical understanding that every drama is contextualized, offers us the possibility to perceive that every action is replete with the contents of the group or collective it belongs to, and to understand which of these contents are in the process of unfolding at any specific moment. This understanding, when unveiled by the sociologist, helps us realize how much we are produced by the collective, and at the same time how much we also produce the collective. There is no detachment between the individual and society, but there is a dialectic construction of the dynamics of this individual-collective, singularity-plurality complex in the production of life.

Within a psychodramatic scene the 'therapeutic insight' is the result of the patient's own perspective. According to Moreno, when you are able to see yourself, a stage appears at your feet and you recover laughter. This is mirroring: if you can see yourself in a scene, then another bit of you will exist outside of this scene, and it is this part of you that can take you out of the non-desired scene. This perception leads to alleviation knowing that one is not imprisoned in their totality, but it is a way of being (researched and analysed by the sociologist) that generates the suffering within the dynamics of social relationships, within the context one lives in. This is an understanding of man as a multiple being who lives in conflict, between different fields of forces, between the mythical and the reflective thinking. This is the drama.

What is important for the sociologist is to expose the society of the protagonist, and/or the protagonic group, and/or the protagonic theme, in order for them to be able to reconstruct their relationships aiming for the desired connections. Our function and role is to facilitate and enable the breaking free from the traps that impede healthy relationships, desired, ethical and citizen actions, to create the conditions to overcome the clandestinity of words, expressions and healthy relations. Would the new revolution be a sociometric one, as Moreno predicted?

At the time of the Psychodrama of São Paulo City, to my surprise I received a telephone call from a Belgian journalist, who was very interested in the event. She asked me the following questions:

Q: Is this a new way of doing politics?

I quickly responded that 'Yes, it was.' Although I had not thought more thoroughly about this before, at that moment this seemed to be obvious to me. She then continued:

Q: Is this a way a woman does politics? (I guess the reason she asked this question was that the proposal came from a woman, Marta Suplicy, the mayor of São Paulo).

My answer was 'No'; however, without doubt this was a *feminine way of doing politics*, because it was a warm and welcoming way of working with groups, providing the opportunity of relating directly to people and basically to

listen to them. But this can be done both by men and women. This is simply a different political attitude, but as it becomes a movement, it also becomes a different way of doing politics. The group is a place for conflict, and in this sense it is the place where people can take up positions, have discussions, create new solutions, create supportive networks, and therefore exercise their citizenship by taking responsibility for the collective they are creating. The group is the place where transference is worked with and given new meaning to, this enabling people to take responsibility for the production of their relationships and actions.

This would be *group politics*.

This is one of the possibilities that the socio-psychodramatic method can offer to life in and of the cities.

Why not in the countryside? – one may ask. I believe that this method can be used in the countryside too. In the past I had the opportunity to do psychodrama with members of Brazil's Landless Workers Movement (MST)¹²⁶ and it was amazing to see how this method is also adequate to understand people who are remote from the 'psychology' culture. It is an experiential language of action. In this paper I am focusing on the city, because it is the place of encounter of differences, and because the city represents all the riches created by the civilization which all human beings have the right to enjoy. The intensity of social contradictions is protagonised in the city.

Another novelty that favoured the amplitude of the network of psychodramatists involved with social issues was the *simultaneity* of events. This was also something unprecedented and unbelievably up to date in terms of our desires for an open world without frontiers.

This simultaneity also evoked in us the joy of feeling accompanied and being part of an action network that at the same time and in various locations and countries unveiled the power of collective action, vitalizing this very network itself. (Bello 2004) And beyond this it also led to the discovery of an already existing desire, which often stays hidden in the very choice of this method in one's professional life. This does not mean that there are no market interests involved, or that it would be less professional to choose an 'easier' method, or that something experiential would not require diligence in the studies and reflections. This happens to all methods and professions, and we cannot delude ourselves thinking that we are immune to the capitalist system that tries to transform everything and everybody into merchandise.

¹²⁶ The editor's note: MST - Brazil's Landless Workers Movement (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* in Portuguese) is the largest social movement in Latin America with an estimated 1.5 million landless members organised in 23 out of 27 states. The MST carries out long-overdue land reform in a country mired by unjust land distribution. Since 1985, the MST has peacefully occupied unused land where they have established cooperative farms, constructed houses, schools for children and adults, clinics, promoted indigenous cultures and a healthy and sustainable environment and gender equality.

I believe that in order to fundamentally transform the present international regime of competition into a global system of co-operation, many simultaneous politics would need to happen. I also believe that all psychodramatists involved with social issues, all socionomists, are tuned into the movement of multitudes (Hardt and Negri 2005) demanding the liberation of the life of the citizens of the world.

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E-links:

- www.psicodramacidade.com.br
www.roleplaying.com.br
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Spontaneous theatre: A political act¹²⁷

*Regina Fournaut Monteiro*¹²⁸

Chronicles

It was in 1984 that it all started, a few days before the House of Representatives in Brasilia were supposed to approve free elections again. Everyone was hopeful that with this amendment our country would move away from a twenty years long military dictatorship towards a democratic regime. A strong 'call' for participation was in the air. Through their available channels of communication everybody pronounced their position: journalists, economists, lawyers, intellectuals, politicians, etc. I also wanted to contribute to what was happening, but didn't know how! I started to feel very distressed.

In what way could I contribute? As a student, I was always actively involved in political movements, through the National Student Union (UNE), the State Student Union (UEE), the Academic Centre (CA) and the University (PUC-SP); while after having qualified, through my engagement with other political groups, until the military regime established itself and forced us to stop. But what now? In what way could I express myself? I only knew how to do psychodrama! The more I thought about this, the more powerless I felt.

Suddenly a realisation: Hold on! Wasn't psychodrama born out of a political act on the 1st of April 1921, when in the midst of a political crisis Moreno had directed a large group in a Viennese theatre? Why couldn't I use this working modality and thus make my own contribution to that important moment that captured the whole of the Brazilian society? Why couldn't the psychodrama method be my starting point? I went out looking for colleagues who could help me achieve this task. I met up with Ronaldo Pamplona and Carlos Borba and explained to them what I had thought of doing: the 'Psychodrama of free elections'.

It wasn't just by chance that I chose them. Similarly to me, they were also dreamers, and I was certain that I could convince them. And I wasn't wrong! They responded with enthusiasm to my proposal and within a short while we

¹²⁷ The original title: 'Teatro espontâneo: um ato político' In: *Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama* 12, 1, pp.33-44, 2004.

¹²⁸ Psychologist; psychodramatist qualified at the Argentine Association of Psychodrama and Group Psychotherapy; trainer, supervisor and therapist at the FEBRAP

were looking for a place to do this work. After a few phone calls we had a place. We talked to Irede Cardoso a member of the City Council, who at the time was responsible for the cultural events organised by the São Paulo City Council. She generously offered us the 'Noble' Room on the first floor, which had a capacity of around one thousand people. She had arranged for microphones and other equipment, and so we were jumping up and down with joy; it seemed that we had pulled it off! Following a series of further meetings, on the 17th of April 1984, at the São Paulo City Hall the 'Psychodrama of free elections' took place with the participation of about six hundred people.

Spontaneous theatre leads to collective reflection

Making this first psychodrama work happen was particularly important for me. Now I felt that I had put into practice my dream: bringing together what I knew how to do (psychodrama) and my ideas of citizenship and thus make my message clear; bringing people together and reflect with them on issues of their interest. Bit by bit I realized that the best way of doing so was through spontaneous theatre. Issues, such as violence, AIDS, citizenship, drugs, etc. could be addressed and with this a collective reflection and a questioning of reality achieved. Moreno has already told us this when stating: life offers numerous stories, why don't we use them instead of representing already written plays?

Following the above event, and continuing to work with large groups, we performed various other pieces of spontaneous theatre. During a spontaneous theatre event focused on AIDS we had about one thousand people participating. On other occasions the number of participants varied: sixty, one hundred, two hundred people in the case of the spontaneous theatre events carried out on streets and public spaces, where we were working with a 'circulating' public; passers-by who stop, look and then stay or carry on their journeys.

The first spontaneous theatre that we did in a public space was at the Praça da Sé (a central square in São Paulo) on the 18th of May 1990. I believe this was the first ever experience in the whole of Brazil carried out by psychodramatists in the open street. We organised the event together with Ronaldo Pamplona, Carlos Borba, Irene Stephan and Vânia Crelier. Ronaldo and I were co-directing; Carlos Borba was the video-director¹²⁹; while Irene and Vânia acted as spontaneous actresses. We were invited by the Municipal Health Secretary in commemoration of the day of the fight against lunatic asylums. It was an emotional and very rewarding experience. I remember it as if it had been yesterday: it was around 6 p.m., people were sharing with us – at that moment – their feelings that emerged

¹²⁹ The editor's note: for the technique of video-psychodrama and the role of the video-director developed by Ronaldo Pamplona and Carlos Borba see chapter 15 in Figusch (2005).

following the work we had done together, when we were interrupted by the vigorous tolling of the Cathedral's bells, announcing the Ave Maria.

At that moment the film of my early childhood flashed through my mind's eyes. Up until the age of seven I grew up and lived in that central neighbourhood of São Paulo. I lived in an apartment just a few blocks away, and used to play at the cathedral's, our Cathedral's, building site. Now I was there, on a stage with a microphone in my hand, doing in what I believe in most. I managed to bring together my psychodrama practice and my social ideals. Psychodrama had given me again this opportunity: to go out into the community instead of waiting for the community to come to where I was.

I maintained my initial partnership with Ronaldo and Carlos for a while, and we had done some further work, involving other psychodramatist colleagues as well. In 1995 I founded the '*Extramuros*' (outside of the walls) spontaneous theatre group, with the objective of using spontaneous theatre in public community events, outside of the walls of therapy rooms, away from the more formal and traditional forms of therapy, and consequently with the objective of reaching out to a greater public on streets, public squares and large auditoriums.

Something interesting started to happen: after some of the events we organised, people, groups and institutions who in some way participated or knew about our spontaneous theatre acts, started to contact us and request our participation in working with themes chosen by them. A lot of our work emerged this way.

Below is a list of the events we carried out:

1. The psychodrama of free elections¹³⁰ - 17th of April 1984; São Paulo City Hall, São Paulo City
2. Without words - August 1984; 2nd Photographical Festival, The Museum of Image and Sound, São Paulo City
3. Spontaneous Theatre - 22-27 October 1984, Santo André Sports Gymnasium, The 1st Psychology Study Week, Santo André, S.P.¹³¹
4. Communication - 1984, Promotion of the Managerial Communication Study Group, São Paulo City
5. The issue of women today! - 20th of April 1985, The directory of the Labour Party, Osasco, S.P.
6. Violence - 1st of June 1985, São Paulo City Hall, São Paulo City
7. AIDS - 28th of August 1985, São Paulo City Hall, São Paulo City
8. AIDS - 26th of October 1985, State Foundation for the Wellbeing of Minors (FEBEM), São Paulo City

¹³⁰ The editor's note: In Portuguese '*Diretas já!*'. This was the name of the civil movement involving politicians, artists, journalists, etc, which, in 1984 demanded direct presidential elections.

¹³¹ The editor's note: S.P. stands for São Paulo State.

9. I don't want to be the next one! - 4th of November 1985, by the invitation of the State Secretary of Culture and the F4, São Paulo Cultural Centre, São Paulo City
10. The psychodrama of man - 28th of December 1985, the 'Male, Masculine, Man' Symposium, Rebouças Convention Centre, São Paulo City
11. Women, work and guilt - 1985, at the 'Sexuality and Health' Feminist Group, São Paulo City
12. Elections '86 - 18th of October 1986, São Paulo City Hall, São Paulo City
13. The constituent (in preparation for the voting of the 1988 Constitution) - 1988, São Paulo Hospital de Servidor Público, São Paulo City
14. Spontaneous Theatre - 11th of May 1989, Psychology Week of the Senador Flaquer University, Santo André, S.P.
15. Work, sweat and salary - 6th of August 1989, by the invitation of the Psychodrama Society of Parana State and with the support of the Municipal Secretary of Culture, Curitiba, Parana
16. Being a woman in São Paulo - 5th of March 1990, Pacaembu Gymnasium, by the invitation of the co-ordinator of services for women of the Municipal Secretary of Health, São Paulo City
17. The fight against lunatic asylums - 18th of May 1990, Praça da Sé (Sé Square), São Paulo City
18. The assassination of Chico Mendes - 12th of December 1990, Praça da Sé (Sé Square), São Paulo City
19. The fight against lunatic asylums - 18th of May 1991, São João Boulevard, São Paulo City
20. Brazil, where are you? - 24th of November 1991, Ibirapuera Park, São Paulo City
21. Integration - 13th of March 1992, 1st Encounter of Mental Health, Itaquera, São Paulo City
22. Integration - 26th of March 1992, The Symposium of Mental Health Workers, Cefer-Itaim, São Paulo City
23. The fight against lunatic asylums - 18th of May 1992, Praça da Sé (Sé Square), São Paulo City
24. Old age and environmentalism - 1992, 5th Art Fair at Vila Pompéia, São Paulo City
25. Fighting AIDS (reference to the international day of fighting AIDS) - 17th December 1992, the Open Space of Caixa Econômica Federal, Paulista Avenue 1842, São Paulo City
26. Say yes to peace - 1995, Ramos Square, São Paulo City
27. Street psychodrama, Urban Violence - 26th of April 1997, with the participation of trainees of the São Paulo Psychodrama Society and Pão Paulo Catholic University at the Campus of the São Paulo Catholic University, São Paulo City

28. São Paulo, a city going more and more crazy! – 30th of October 1997, Tucarena, São Paulo Catholic University, São Paulo City
29. Urban violence – 1998, Educational Week at the São Paulo Catholic University, Tucarena, São Paulo City
30. The fight against lunatic asylums – 18th of May 1999, Ramos Square, São Paulo City
31. Violence against women – 18th of March 1999, Ramos Square, São Paulo City
32. Spontaneous theatre for the Training Course of Mental Health Community Workers – 1999, The Health Institute of the São Paulo University, São Paulo City
33. Spontaneous theatre at the closing of the Municipal Forum of Human Rights Institutions – 1999, São Paulo City Hall, São Paulo City
34. The fight against lunatic asylums – 18th of May 2000, Ramos Square, São Paulo City
35. Spontaneous theatre – The Women’s Union, São Paulo City Hall, São Paulo City
- 36-40. Participation at the 1st to the 5th Festivals of the Spontaneous Theatre Network – September 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, São Paulo City
41. Everyday scenes – 6th of October 2000, 1st International Exhibition of Psychology Practices, Anhembi, São Paulo City
42. The psychodrama of ethics – 21st of March 2001, Ramos Square, by invitation of the São Paulo City Hall, São Paulo City
43. Everyday scenes of the City of São Paulo – 27th of September 2003, São Paulo Cultural Centre, São Paulo City

From the above mentioned events I chose to present in a bit more detail the last one.

Everyday scenes of the City of São Paulo

I was invited to direct a psychodrama at the São Paulo Cultural Centre¹³². This psychodrama was part of a series of other events directed by other psychodramatist colleagues. Evidently I chose spontaneous theatre as my form of presentation. We were offered a theatre room named after Adoniran Barbosa, a famous composer from São Paulo, whom in his songs explored and glorified the City of São Paulo, the day-to-day life of its inhabitants, their happiness and their sadness.

I invited five professional colleagues to this event in order to act as my auxiliary egos, in this case referred to as spontaneous actors: Mariana de Oliveira Costa

¹³² These public psychodrama events were organised and promoted by Leopoldo Nosek and Antonio Carlos Cesarino at the São Paulo Cultural Centre.

(psychodramatist and artist), Miguel Banduk (psychologist, psychodramatist, composer and singer), Miriám Leirias (psychologist and psychodramatist), Simone Araújo Nicastro (psychologist and psychodramatist) and Vânia Crelier (psychiatrist and psychodramatist).

Following a few preparatory meetings, we decided to warm the audience up with songs, played and sang by Miguel, while three spontaneous actresses would dramatize the lyrics. I guess that the room's name had influenced us in choosing this form of warm-up. We chose songs that resonated with the scenes of the day-to-day life of our city. After a long discussion we agreed on the following songs:

- 'Valsinha' (A little waltz) - written by Chico Buarque de Holanda
- 'Cotidiano' (Day-to-day) - written by Chico Buarque de Holanda
- 'Ronda' (Rondo)- written by Paulo Vanzolini

Each of the songs was related to a scene.

Scene 1

Maria was the one responsible for this presentation. A woman who doesn't feel loved any longer by her partner is surprised as one day he comes to her, proposing to revive their great love. In an explosion of happiness and passion, she dancingly expresses her enormous joy she feels in relation to their re-encounter.

[...] so she makes herself pretty, something she hasn't done in a while,
Puts on her décolleté, smelling old from so much waiting,
Then they hold hands, something they haven't done in a while,
And full of tenderness and grace they go to the park and start hugging [...]

The scene set: a red women's party dress hanging from the roof on a nylon string, a chair and a beautiful arrangement of red flowers.

Scene 2

This scene was arranged by Vânia. The day-to-day routine of a woman who always does the same thing: she gets up, prepares breakfast, says good-bye to her husband, and then waits for him to return home.

Every day she does exactly the same,
She wakes me up at 6 in the morning,
Smiles at me with a punctual smile,
And kisses me with her mint-tasting lips.

The scene set: a table covered with a red chequered tablecloth, a coffee-pot, two cups and two chairs.

Scene 3

Simone is the woman looking for her husband all over the town, but she can't find him. Eventually, despairingly after a long time, she finds him in a bar, where then a 'bloody scene' takes place.

however, with perfect patience
after a long search I will find you
drinking with other women
rolling the dice or playing pool [...]

The scene set: a bench, a white sheet on the floor representing the bed, a black woolly coat and a red piece of fabric representing blood.

Miriám took on the role of the audience's ego, a position from where she could pass on messages picked up from the public to the director.

Following the warm-up, I invited three members of the audience to take on the roles of the three spontaneous actresses. Three women emerged. I invited each one of them to do a soliloquy. These were as follows:

Scene 1: 'I am a very fortunate and happily married woman. I live a splendid life. I am much loved!'

Scene 2: 'I am a woman who is always at home, I live a monotonous life. I do the same thing every day and wait for my partner to arrive.'

Scene 3: 'I am a woman waiting for my boyfriend. I don't know where he is. He went out and did not return. I have been waiting for him for a long time.'

Next I asked all those who were present to choose and stand behind the scene that caught their attention most, that moved them most. I was surprised to see that the group (around 150 people) divided themselves in three, virtually equal subgroups! I couldn't just choose one of the scenes. We had to work with all three stories simultaneously, developing each one bit by bit in an alternative way, and while presenting one, freezing the other two. I decided doing so there and then.

With regards to all three scenes I asked that only those more closely involved with these scenes remain on the stage, while the others to return to their seats in the audience. Following this each group had to have a few minutes long discussion and then give continuity to the dramatization.

The following three stories emerged.

Story 1

The woman, who was previously happy and content with her life and marriage, finds out that she is pregnant, that her husband has a lover, and that

her family – mainly her mother – was right saying that her husband was worthless and that she shouldn't have married him.

Story 2

Here, a change of the protagonist happened. The first person who emerged from the audience to represent the woman waiting at home for her partner, now said that she had to step out and go away. She could not stay and take part in the spontaneous theatre. She was replaced by a young man of about twenty years of age and the following story emerged: he is at home with a couple of friends, waiting for his girlfriend – whom he likes a lot – to arrive.

Story 3

The woman who was waiting for her boyfriend is now at the altar, in her wedding dress (the white sheet has been used as a veil), with all the guests, waiting for her groom who isn't coming!

Developing the stories

Story 1

A conversation takes place between the wife and her husband's mistress and they discuss their situation. The wife becomes extremely nervous finding out that her husband cheats on her. She decides to find a therapist in order to do a psychological treatment. While all this is happening, her mother gives her support in facing this difficult moment. Her husband feels guilty and uneasy. He apologises and regrets what he had done. They end up separating. She decides to keep the baby and that her husband will be allowed to come and see it, but she needs to leave the house to be able to think through better what she wants to do with her life. There are no arguments and no definite decisions are made. They may get back together one day.

Story2

The young man insists on waiting for his girlfriend and nobody can make him change his mind. The persistence of Oriental patience proves to be stronger. An encounter takes place between the two of them, and she says that she is not sure about his love, that it is very bad to be at home all the time, that she hasn't enjoyed herself for a long time and therefore decided to change her life and get out from home. He continues alone and remembers how he had met her: it was a while ago at some traffic lights, with their cars waiting next to each other; their conversation through at the traffic lights is dramatized. Returning to the scene of his flat his friends are there again, who – after insisting for along time –

eventually convince him to go out and have some fun. They go to a bar. There he bumps into his girlfriend again and they have another conversation. The possibility of resuming their relationship is in the air.

A greater number of audience members got involved with the plot of this story. It developed at a much lower pace than the other two stories and it was also much more difficult to arrive to a conclusion. It was permeated by long silences. There was a round of applause for the actors at the end of the presentation.

Story 3

The bride waits at the altar until the groom eventually arrives and tells her that he doesn't want to get married anymore. He wants to live freely. He is too young to make such a serious commitment; and his friends also agree with this. They all go out together for a drink. The bride is left un-resigned and is consoled by her friends. Only some time later does she manage to 'let go' and going on a walk with her friends.

These were the stories that emerged from our three initial scenes. However, at the event, they developed simultaneously, bit by bit. The techniques applied were: freezing of the scene, interview of the characters, soliloquy, re-visiting the past and future projection. Throughout the work, Miguel - responsible for the musical direction - introduced songs befitting the dramatizations.

Sharing

The participants were invited to say out loud a phrase or a word, thus expressing their feelings in relation to what they had witnessed. Some of the comments made were: 'It is wise to learn to wait', 'We are always on the run, not allowing ourselves to stop', 'We often overlook our feelings', 'Delicateness', 'Respect is good, everybody deserves it', 'At times we loose loved ones, because we don't understand them, and so they pass through our lives', 'Hastiness doesn't get you anywhere', 'Life is a rat-race, there is no time to stop and see what is happening', 'There is no time to stop', 'Encounters and missed encounters.'

My own soliloquy was: 'What we notice here and now is that São Paulo doesn't stop, but those who live in São Paulo at times need to stop.'

Conclusions

After having directed numerous spontaneous theatre events, I believe that this method presents a mirror to the world. In miniature a small group of people possesses all the phenomena characteristic of greater human society. People present at these events interpret the public opinion, the world. The director is the leader of the investigation. During these events we can observe a review, a re-thinking, a questioning of reality. My main objective is always the spectacle: through the spectacle people become mobilized and engaged, this leading to changes in the small group or the individual.

Working with themes and issues belonging to a great number of people, we can arrive to the awareness that each one of us - together with the others - can find ways out or solutions to issues for which we often can't find the answers if we keep ourselves isolated.