Sociodrama
The Art and Science of Social Change

K. Galgóczi – D. Adderley – M. Belchior – Á. Blaskó – J. Damjanov –
M. Maciel – J. Teszáry – M. Werner – M. Westberg (eds)

L'Harmattan

PERFORMERS SOCIODRAMA BOOK SERIES
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SOCIODRAMA
The Art and Science of Social Change

Edited by

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Mariolina Werner, Monica Westberg

L'Harmattan

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Preface

Our book is the result of a unique international collaboration between sociodramatists and action methods practitioners from several different countries and organisations across Europe over a five-year period (PERFORMERS 1 from 2016-2017; PER-FORMERS 2 from 2018-2021).

This Preface is by way of a brief journey map through the book to orientate you, our reader, to the delights to come. It is followed by an account of the conception, birth and development of the whole PERFORMERS project in a discussion between the initiators, Judith Teszáry (FEPTO) and Kata Horváth (Hungarian Psychodrama Association), interviewed by Krisztina Galgóczi.

The overall aim of PERFORMERS has been to explore, to understand and to practice with each other and with external clients how sociodrama can be used in different fields, with a particular focus on working with vulnerable youth groups.

Part I: Our Stories, invites you in with brief accounts by the authors of moments of importance in their own experiences with sociodrama. These stories have stayed in the memory and may have been turning points in their appreciation of (and passion for disseminating) this creative action method in their own work.

Parts II, III and IV illustrate the reflections and practices of the authors in their own highly varied cultural, geographic and working contexts. Part II, Foundations of Sociodrama looks at some of the key principles and background theories. Part III, Sociodrama in Social Settings includes also organisational and corporate work, and Part IV explores Sociodrama in Educational Settings. We have also included a Glossary of Terms.

Just as the whole world has had to adapt to the pandemic, so our entire project had to move online in March 2020. Our adaptations, to sustain our creative collaboration, have meant both gains and losses for the participants, the book, the group and the project as a whole.

We hope your curiosity about sociodrama is engaged – how, where and why to use it – and that you will wish to explore more widely in the future, perhaps even engaging in training in the method yourself! Who knows …

The Editorial Board

Different roots, common goals:
Our journey to a living sociodrama network

Interview with Judith Teszáry and Kata Horváth about the PERFORMERS project

by **Krisztina Galgóczi**

This interview is a *Prelude* to this collection of distinctive papers by authors using sociodrama in so many different settings from refugee camps to universities in various parts of Europe. What connects these authors is that they have all been members of the PERFORMERS project for years. Here you can read about how this story started five years ago and has developed over the years.

KG: This book is one of the outcomes of the PERFORMERS international sociodrama project that started in 2016 and you two are the founders of this project. I would like to ask you about your backgrounds and how you arrived at this project. How do you know each other, since you, Judith, although born in Hungary, have lived in Sweden for a long time.

JUDITH: Yes, almost 50 years. I am a psychodrama and sociodrama trainer and supervisor, certified by the Moreno Institute in Beacon, New York. During my psychology studies at Stockholm University, my favorite subject was social psychology. Before I left Hungary I had been working with theatre. Psychodrama and sociodrama is a perfect combination of both of my interests. Zerka Moreno was my trainer and she wanted me to start a psychodrama training in Hungary. She introduced me to János Füredi at an IAGP congress and he invited me to give a week-long workshop for doctors in 1987. In that group three of Ferenc Mérei's students participated in the Morenian protagonist centered psychodrama and invited me to teach them. The first generation of Hungarian psychodramatists learned a group-centered psychodrama developed by the Hungarian genius of the method, Ferenc Mérei. Before we started the training, I asked them to demonstrate the group-centered psychodrama they had learned from their legendary teacher. I wanted to understand what they had already experienced. They organized a session to demonstrate the 'group-centered psychodrama' to me. The method reminded me of sociodrama. It was a combination of group analysis and psychodrama with free associations, elaboration of a common issue through dramatic improvisations, that was actualized by the group dynamics. The focus was on personality development.

KG: Would you call it a kind of sociodrama?

JUDITH: I wouldn't call it sociodrama, but a way to work in groups, which itself was revolutionary at that time in Hungary.

KG: Why 30 years later did you decide to initiate an international sociodrama project with the Hungarian Psychodrama Association?

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JUDITH: During these 30 years the Hungarian psychodrama became very strong. It became an officially accepted psychotherapy method and has been widely used in psychotherapy. I am very happy about it. Actually, my sociodrama activities started earlier. After the first free election in Hungary I was invited by Dóra Tomcsá-nyi, the president of the association to run a threeday long sociodrama workshop with the leaders of adult care in district 13 of Budapest. Another sociodramatic experiment was developed by Gábor Pintér, a special form of sociodrama, 'myto-drama' with Jorge Burmeister. But this is another interview! In FEPTO, where I was president for six years, I started to be engaged in a global sociodrama network, organizing the 2nd Sociodrama Conference in Stockholm and Finland. I saw how it's been growing internationally. At the same time I noticed that several members in my psychodrama training groups in Hungary were more interested in working with social issues than in clinical settings. Kata was one of them, and I think without meeting her I would never have started this project.

KG: How did you meet?

JUDITH: She was my student in psychodrama training at the advanced level, as were many from the Hungarian team, but originally she was a social scientist. As in every training I facilitated at least one session of sociodrama. When we held the sociodrama session, I think her interest awoke after that as it broadened the perspective of the group and brought in the social aspects of drama. Follow-ing this sociodrama she invited me to lead a sociodrama session in a 'second chance' gymnasium in a village called Sajókaza with young Roma students. We were studying in action what kind of life these young people could imagine for themselves in the future. Our second cooperation was a nine months long socio-psychodrama work with Roma women in the village of Szomolya. Kata was the driver of this project with her deep knowledge of the life of Roma people and her ability to keep all parts of a project together, impressed me. This was a part of a larger art-based participatory research and intervention project. Based on the sociodrama work a theatre performance was also created, *Long Live Regina,* with the participation of the Roma women as actors of their own stories. Through these experiences I realized that there is a huge potential in this method to work with marginalized communities. We've tried it, it is worth investing in it, and has real results. The story of PERFORMERS started here.

KG: Kata, what is your background? What is your way to sociodrama?

KATA: As Judith said I come from the social sciences, I am a cultural anthropolo-gist. For years I've participated in research projects in rural Roma communities. After my PhD studies I didn't go in the academic direction but started to work with a drama company as a researcher, actually with a theater-in-education (TIE) group. My task was to develop a research method to prove the effectiveness of the method on social competencies, but my main focus became the use of drama itself as a research method. I realized that for this purpose the method this company used was not satisfactory so I started to look around for different drama methods. This was when I went to a psychodrama group for my own personal purposes and saw that this was a perfect method but with too much individual focus. Alongside

this project, I worked with Roma groups and the question arose if it was possible to bring this method into these communities as psychodrama was a privilege of middle class people who can afford it.

KG: So how did sociodrama come into the picture?

KATA: I was looking for an adequate research method, and also I wanted to broaden the scope of psychodrama and give access to it. The next impulse happened at a psychodrama conference where Klára Ajkay (one of Mérei's students) and Vera Kökény held a large group sociodrama session. This was where I first met socio-drama and also Judith. The setting was a PRIDE demonstration, where I played a policeman and was stuck in the middle between the far right protesters and the participants of the demonstration. Judith played a journalist a bit outside the crowd and I really wanted to reverse roles with her especially when she gave feedback from her role saying that from her perspective the situation seemed to be very different to mine.

KG: Did you reverse roles?

KATA: No, there was no time for that unfortunately. But I decided to go to her training group. My expectation was to learn from somebody with a broader vision about drama, who can do it a bit differently and more openly. And, indeed, it happened. We had sociodrama sessions during the training and I realized this was the method I was looking for as an intervention and research tool in the settings where I am working and I am engaged.

JUDITH: I remember a sociodrama session in this group when we put on the stage the Hungarian political parties and their relationship with the EU. It was after this session that Kata asked me if we could build a European sociodrama project. I remember our first discussion about it at the corner of Rákóczi street in Budapest, a street that bears the name of a freedom fighter.

KG: When you jump back to this starting point where you started to think about this project, what was your wildest dream? Where did you want to arrive?

KATA: My vision was: a sociodrama presence widely used in Hungary. As strong as psychodrama is. In institutions, in communities.

JUDITH: My goal was to bring together many sociodramatists in Europe to work together, to see the similarities and the differences in how we use sociodrama. To show the world how we work with sociodrama in different cultures and build a network. It was also very important to link this work to social institutions and involve them as partners. So we've found the Swedish Huddinge Gymnasium, the Budapest Youth Detention Center, the ARSIS (Social Organization for Youth Support) in Greece, and the Portuguese NOS Association as partner institutes for this project.

KATA: We started to develop this idea and it took us two years until we made our first proposal for an EU grant. Judith, who has a worldwide network, started to make connections with other European sociodramatists.

JUDITH: Yes, I remember it took us a lot of time to convince people to join this project which was not easy at all.

KG: You mean other sociodramatists?

JUDITH: Yes, because a project like this needs a long-term commitment and a lot of effort to create teams in the countries. Meanwhile Kata was working hard finding the right foundation and building up our idea as a project. Neither of these were easy.

KG: And how did you see, what was appealing to experienced sociodramatists to cooperate with young Hungarian would-be sociodramatists?

JUDITH: Maybe the joy to share and transform the knowledge they have with others. But the main attraction was the meeting itself, the encounter with other sociodramatists, to see each other working. The love of the method was the glue, I suppose.

KATA: From Hungary it seemed rather easy. Judith passed me over the contacts and everybody was enthusiastic. My job was to find the right structure and explain the main framework as it is with all other projects at the beginning. On the other hand it was also important to build connections in the Hungarian Psychodrama Association. Béla Fedor was the president of the association at that time and he gave us his full trust, supported us and even joined the project for a while. And also, there was Petra Juhacsek officially the administrator but in reality a cornerstone of the association. Their help was enormous during the whole project in becoming accepted within the association. Without their support it would have been very difficult.

KG: I'm also very interested in the reactions of Hungarian psychodramatists because the method was not so well known at that time. How did you find them?

KATA: First with Judith and Béla we collected the names within the association of those who might be interested in a sociodrama project and we connected them. One of the first people I connected with was Ági Blaskó who at this time had already started to work with sociodrama at the university and searched for professional partners and supporters. I learned that a few years earlier there had been an initiative to implement sociodrama in the association which somehow failed. I tried to get in touch with the members of that previous team.

KG: How did the idea to cooperate with the youth detention center come about?

KATA: On the one hand, it was a general Erasmus+ grant requirement to involve a so-called "social partner". On the other hand, there could have been several other possibilities. Our idea was to start sociodrama implementation work in a big public sector institution in order to ensure sustainability. In the end, the youth detention centre was chosen because of two important personal connections. One was an indirect connection to the head of a department in the ministry, the other is my friendship with Eszter Pados, also a member of Judith's training group and psychopedagogue at the Budapest Youth Detention Centre.

JUDITH: I remember that you and Eszti already had a plan to work in the detention center with the psychodrama method and that you wrote your final papers about this work. It was very important, because this is how relationships, cooperation, and trust build up.

KG: How did you start building up these partnerships?

KATA: First we wrote a letter to the Hungarian ministry to ask permission for cooperation with the detention center because we were told this was the way to do it.

KG: Did this work, were you given the permission?

KATA: The head of department in the ministry wrote letters to the directors of each youth detention center in Hungary proposing that they participate in this project. At this point this letter was laying on the table of the director of the Budapest Youth Detention Center and Eszti visited his office every week and asked him if he had read it and if he wanted to participate in it. She also assured him that she was committed to this project and took the responsibility. We tried to reach him from the top and from the bottom and finally he signed the contract.

JUDITH: In each country it worked similarly. In Sweden it was Mariolina Werner who worked in the Gymnasium and became very committed and wanted to participate and she brought this school into this project, as well as in Portugal where Margarida Belchior had personal contacts in the NOS Association. In every institution there was somebody who was engaged and negotiated with the institution. Trust is very important and that's why we need at least one person who works in that institution, who is committed and trustworthy for the other colleagues, who don't know us or the method.

KG: So this is the story of the partner institutions. Let's see how the international co-operation between so many sociodramatists started working. This project was special because we not only worked with sociodrama in the field but we used sociodrama among ourselves. It was a sociodrama training and a sociodrama process at the same time. What was this process about?

KATA: The two projects – PERFORMERS 1 and PERFORMERS 2 are very different. In my mind, the first project was more like a group building process and the second was more about producing things together. Ofcourse we are always developing the group but there was a difference in the emphasis.

JUDITH: The first project was very well structured and demonstrated well how you build up a team. We had four topics that are worth mentioning. Trust, Belonging, Support/Protection and Vision. These were the topics of the meetings and we went through these phases in this order.

KG: You mentioned goals you had at the beginning. Have they changed between the two parts of the project?

JUDITH: I think the basics we built in phase I were very solid. In the second phase we were most ambitious, we involved FEPTO as the European umbrella organization and we started to work also on a European training standard of sociodrama.

KATA: As a result of the first project we had a shared vision on how sociodrama could be strengthened in European countries. A plan based on this vision was formulated at the closing meeting in Stockholm. It contained three main elements. First was to have sociodrama training in Hungary and to implement sociodrama in Hungarian institutions as the youth detention centers. This we called the local goal. The second was the international goal, to make the minimum training standard of sociodrama for FEPTO. And the third goal was to build up an international sociodrama team which is stronger than a network. In the second phase of our cooperation we wanted to realize these goals.

KG: These participants, they all went to the second project?

KATA: No, there were changes. We lost people from the teams and unfortunately the Greek partner didn't join again. It was a real loss. Sofia Symeonidou and her team had an enormous contribution, we still use specific forms we learned from them. But we had not only losses, the core starting team remained and the British and FEPTO teams joined the project at this point.

JUDITH: Our British colleagues wanted to come in the first phase but they couldn't join the first project because of administrative reasons. The Greeks didn't continue because the NGO, the psychodrama institute worked with, couldn't provide staff for three years for this project in the middle of the refugee crisis in the country.

KG: Why was FEPTO interested in this project?

JUDITH: All the partner organisations in phase I. were FEPTO member institutes and one of the goals of the second part was to create a minimal training standard for sociodrama. Fortunately Nikos Takis, the president, that time, was interested in it. Many member organisations wished for FEPTO to develop the sociodrama grain of Moreno's methods. It is a big result that now even the former skeptical members see that sociodramatists need special training, that psychodrama training is not enough to become a sociodramatist. A sociodrama process is more complex than that of a psychodrama.

KG: You mentioned these three goals. If you look back on this whole process, what would you call your biggest result?

JUDITH: First this international network that is much broader and stronger now than it was before and the work in these social institutions that has started goes on. For instance Monica Westberg and Mariolina Werner are working on a project in Sweden to spread this method in other schools. This is the synergy effect.

KATA: I agree with Judith, implementation of the method in the social care services and in education is our most important result, because it makes changes on an everyday basis on the field. And I would also mention the Hungarian curriculum which is almost ready, a sociodrama training program that will be launched from 2022.

KD: How do you see sociodrama's role in the world, does it make the world a better place?

JUDITH: I don't like to use such big words, but of course we want to understand the world better, and have a deeper understanding of what is happening around us in society. We cannot stay only on the level of the individual but we have to shift to the group and the social level. We have to involve society around us if we want to function properly. We need to change perspective sometimes and sociodrama can provide us with this.

KATA: I think that on each level of this project we created communities who can create communities, groups and better relationships in their environment. We have made a difference in the youth detention center which was a hard process but now there is a small team in the institution itself and there are decision makers who became together with us the agents of institutional changes. I think we also showed an example in the psychodrama world that this long-term teamwork has a real value which also challenges the mainstream role of the psychodrama

director and emphasizes collectivism versus individualism in our profession. In this respect I think it was a big loss that we couldn't meet in person during the final year because of the pandemic.

JUDITH: It is another result of this project to realise that alone you cannot do everything, but together you can co-create in order to fulfill your goals. This pandemic has changed a lot of things. We had to move online and it has broken up the hierarchy that worked in real presence. We are functioning on a more equal level, I suppose. All kinds of international meetings and conferences became a bit more democratic thanks to online work.

KG: Can you give an example when you realised the shift in values from a kind of individualism towards collectivism?

KATA: I can give you an example from our local work. In the youth detention center the sociodramatists are helping the educators to work with the boys in custody. Actually we pass on the leadership to them, we stay in the background and then we process what we all did together. This is also a way of how to move out of the traditional role of leadership. We are five sociodramatists, four teachers and eight boys together, a very strange group and we are trying to do it together and challenge the idea of one director leading a group. And we go through a process from Trust to Vision as we did with the whole group of PERFORMERS 1.

JUDITH: There is another aspect of this shift from stardom to doing something together. You, as a leader, are also a member of the group. You have an idea about the topic of the group and you lead the group towards one direction for a while and then it shifts to someone else or another subgroup. Everybody is contributing to the process of change. This is the very essence of co-creation for me. Ofcourse there is a facilitator who contains the group and does intervene when necessary.

KG: I'm also interested in how the roles developed in this very diverse international group. There were some experts of sociodrama who have been leaders for decades and there were newcomers who just started their relationship with sociodrama. How could they develop their roles and where did they arrive?

KATA: I think it is very important that on the one hand there was this difference of experiences in leading psychodrama and sociodrama and this was very much recognised. But at the same time there was a lot of other knowledge in this project and without them we wouldn't have been able to work and realise our goals. The field knowledge, project and working group leading competences were also valued and I think we could go through a development in all the different roles.

JUDITH: These working groups were the pillars of the project. This was the framework within which we could experiment quite wildly. Somehow you were safe because there was a structure. Those who were leading these working groups could also grow during the process. This was all about cooperation.

KG: How has this affected your roles?

JUDITH: It was a complicated situation. If you are not leading then who is leading if the group is not mature enough to lead together? It is a very tricky process. The role of the leader is more of a collector of ideas and the negotiator of consensus in my view.

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KG: I remember when we couldn't find a leader for one of the working groups and somebody suggested that we accept this and lead the group with rotating leadership. A lot of people didn't understand this at that time, but later on it worked very well and could be considered as a model for possible leadership. This was one of our challenges. What was the biggest challenge for you in this long process?

KATA: For me it was more in the first project where we had to build up the basis of this work. Also we went through a sociodrama process that was a test of the method at the same time. Do we stay together or do we fall apart? In the second part we already had these working groups that helped a lot. We have goals like the books, the curriculum, the implementation, the standard and it keeps the work on a track.

JUDITH: In the first part it was the concept not the pillars that worked as cohesive power. It was the glue that stuck the partners together. About obstacles and difficulties. I was supposed to be the scientific leader of this project. It started very well when I could be with the Hungarian group at the meetings. But then the Hungarian group started to work very intensively on their own and I was not needed in the same way. Most conflicts are role conflicts or unclearness of the commitment. If we don't handle those they can easily become personal conflicts.

KG: I understand this. However, the question arises, is it not a natural process when disciples rebel against the master to find their own way?

JUDITH: Yes, it is partly true but then it was a very strong break in the relationship. That was difficult and very intense. The lack of transparency in agreements with the partners was some of the reason for the tension at the beginning.

KG: As I see it now it was a crisis and the question is how could you come out of it?

JUDITH: There are crises in every process, there have to be. We need to analyse how we came into the crisis before we ask how to come out of it. The question for me now sounds like: what was the reason we survived?

KG: Can you answer this question?

JUDITH: I think because we all were so dedicated, the whole international group and the Hungarian group as well. It overcame these tensions. There was a deep engagement.

KATA: Individualism is a very strong "cultural conserve" which is very hard to challenge. Our shared and deep dedication for vulnerable groups and people we are working with could help to overcome personal interests. But this dedication is still not always enough. Fortunately we have the sociodrama method to work on our own issues as well. For example, our ways of processing: we always tried to process what we did in different ways – small group, large group, supervision, etc – and tried to understand what happened to us. We always wanted to find out what the conflicts were about, what we didn't take into consideration and how we should do it next time. Processing is not one occasion but you can do it several times, after the event, after weeks or after months.

JUDITH: You are right, Kata, and I was also processing with my colleagues. What we could build in a project like this is to stop once a conflict happens and look at ourselves and look at the group, how we were functioning, who was hurt. For

example, in Greece where we had a very difficult session with refugee youngsters and we understood differently what happened.

KG: This can be an important insight of this project. And we practiced it several times during this project.

KATA: The Greek moment Judith is mentioning came back two years later in Portugal. We work on our mistakes and this is happening in a very trustful community. I think this can give us confidence that we can go back, we can re-play them and it proves to be safe.

KG: And it can give us a new interpretation of what happened to us.

JUDITH: Yes, and it is very important to stop sometimes and see where my personal and where my professional insights were in a situation and give names to them.

KATA: Yes, and how the professional and personal roles interfere with each other. We didn't mention although it was a big challenge at the beginning of the project that the partners represented different sociodrama schools which was a huge richness for us as learners. But for those who brought their ideas and ways of doing sociodrama it must have been a challenge. During this project the emphasis moved towards understanding the differences related to local cultural and institutional contexts, learning from each other, exchanging ideas and experiences.

JUDITH: I don't know if we can come up with a conclusion because there are so many understandings of sociodrama.

KG: This diversity we can see in this book luckily. What is the result of a process in such a diverse group? Did you come up with a new concept of sociodrama?

JUDITH: I think the outcome of this project could be a kind of collection of different definitions and different practices of sociodrama in different cultures. It is a specificity of the method that it can be very different according to the culture it is being used and developed in. So we all can learn something from others. And we have learnt a lot from the other teams during this project and hope they have learnt a lot from us.

The interview took place online in June 2021.

PART I.

OUR STORIES

Our Stories – an Introduction

Diane Adderley

This chapter is, as a whole, a kind of aperitif to the main course, the many chapters in this book written by members of the PERFORMERS' sociodrama network. It consists of occasions, and moments within those occasions, that we, the book's authors and other sociodrama practitioners, recall out of our many powerful experiences of this method which we value so highly.

I started with the idea that we could each contribute a short story, telling something of a memorable moment that had stayed with us in some way, that might illustrate for the reader how we came to be, and to remain, so passionately involved in the dissemination of this method, which we see as 'a method for all mankind', as JL Moreno put it.

This is a 'dipping' chapter: imagine you are tasting your own favourite starter to a delicious meal, whetting your appetite for the more substantial later courses. Here you will find moments when we were ourselves participants in sociodramas, moments when we were directing sessions which resulted in powerful learning for ourselves or our groups, first attempts at getting a group into action. The topics cover a vast range of exploration of situations that we humans have to manage in our journeys: conflicts, epidemics, refugees, immigration, marginalised youth, historical events, wars, teacher training, primary school children, the creation of conferences, street art with youngsters, online sociodrama, the current pandemic, cross-cultural differences or the life of a young drug user and many more.

I invite you to 'dip' – just open the pages and allow yourself to browse.
Enjoy!

FOUR DAYS ON DAMJANICH STREET

Ágnes Blaskó, Móni Durst

In four days a group of eleven children transformed a busy downtown street in Budapest. They turned green rubbish bins into frogs; built places for secret messages-in-bottles in a wall; made a brick puzzle; planted flowers; turned an ugly old tree stump into a mini-world; painted the dirty, worn mailboxes. Everything that happened was the work of the children themselves, from finding the places to be transformed, through planning, purchasing materials and obtaining permits, to final implementation. An ecstatic experience; we all lived in this magic circle for months.

Where is the sociodrama here?

Well, that's just it: it's everywhere. It lives before and after each step, throughout the process, to know what we want and to understand what happened to us:

- in the (sociodramatic) question that comes up again and again, how can we, as children, make our voices heard? How can they hear us? How can we intervene noticeably in our environment?
- in the process, from the common issue to the action plan (and then on into implementation);
- in the exact construction of the common plan, i.e. in the visual design where we dream of what tools could be used to transform the untidy stump on the street. And as the stage appearance becomes a reference point for realisation;
- in the role-playing exercise in which we test how to talk authentically to the municipality about a permit issue, at the age of eight;
- in the play of the future, where we imagine on stage how, though our work becomes null and void in as little as a few days, we understand that the process we went through, the experience, and the knowledge we gained in those four days, remain ours forever. We learn that our voices can be heard, our creativity witnessed and we connect with our own potency, even as a small child.

Despite the fact that, here, the sociodrama was mixed with the creation of public art, this project convinced me of what I had strongly believed until then: even the making itself is part of the sociodramatic process.

All this happened in the summer of 2019, in the centre of Budapest, on Damjanich Street, led by Ági Blaskó and Móni Durst, with the support of the municipality.

Belonging

Andrea Kocsi

This story is of one of my first encounters with sociodrama, which took place in January 2017 in Portugal. It was the very first day of our first training in PERFORMERS 1. The training was meant to be focussed around a theme each day: belonging, trust, support and vision. My story is from the day entitled *Belonging*.

There was a very simple familiarisation exercise: a short introduction about our countries.

It is Portugal, the host country, who starts the presentation. They are standing on the shore of the ocean with their leader speaking out the words "I have a dream. To reach India". The boat is sailing off, leaving children and family behind. They stop in different places, get to know different people, celebrate marriages, learn new habits and songs. They listen to music and dance all the time. In the last scene, they are proudly waving a Portuguese football scarf.

Hungary is represented as an island surrounded by chairs, like barriers or fences, facing Europe. The island is chaotic: people pushing each other, noisy with remarks about their uniqueness, pointing proudly to their famous scientists, artists and musicians. The statue of Liberty originally situated on Gellért-hegy, Budapest, is standing in the middle, quite ironically. At the same time, warning announcements from 'Mr EU' are heard from another chair. A person (me) leaves for England crying. Irony is slowly being turned down, silenced, people are sitting dumb under the statue.

Greece is mourning. Their five people are standing in a line with scarves in front of their feet. Quietly, they start singing. The first lifts up a scarf, takes into the middle, stops for a while and leaves. On comes the second, the third and the two others. The song is getting stronger, we feel we are attending a funeral. One comes back with a candle, mourning for their country. They are standing, holding their candle and singing. Participants slowly stand up and join in.

The Swedish are in jackets and hats and scarves. They sit in a school where the students are from different countries. They try to behave and decide in a democratic way. They cite the first rule of the school: to create critical citizens. They emphasize the Swedish attitude to safety in a funny way marching as Swedish children in seven different types of helmet. They change the scene to summer and jump into the cold sea to swim, happy about the light and the luck of finding (or not) your man or woman.

We are so different! How do we belong to each other? This was my experience. But I also felt that we DO belong: humanity, community, compassion, gratitude, understanding, fulfilment, playfulness, deep emotions and thoughts, curiosity, honesty and openness, love of life, light, vividness, friendship and hope connect us with an invisible thread.

Epidemic in the countryside

Diane Adderley

There was a major outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease on farms in the UK and Eire in 2001, seriously affecting agriculture and tourism. Over six million cows and sheep were destroyed and horrible funeral pyres of the carcases could be seen and smelled for miles around the affected farms.

At the British Psychodrama Association Conference, Ron Wiener directed a large group sociodrama on the topic. For myself, a city dweller, I feel sure I was initially somewhat insensitive to and disconnected from the seriousness of the epidemic for the farming and wider rural communities.

Three aspects of this sociodrama have stayed powerfully with me:

1. On entering the space, participants were required to walk across mats which were soaking wet, symbolically disinfecting our shoes and taking us, in an embodied way, into the experience of affected communities – a simple but highly effective warm-up to the reality in the countryside, where this disinfecting was the only way in or out of farms, country lanes and some villages;
2. After further warm-ups, including reading and sharing newspaper articles, a whole group enactment explored the wider system of stakeholders. This included one participant creating the role of the virus itself, having a lot of fun dancing around the UK, infecting all and sundry, without a care in the world;
3. The sharing was done in action using a method I will call 'serial storytelling', which we had encountered in the UK through Moyses Aguiar who had visited us from Brazil. Sitting in a big circle, we were invited to share our own connections with the epidemic story. Simultaneously, as the moments were being told, others in the group would spontaneously take on roles, showing the stories 'live' in the centre of the circle. The stories and brief enactments started with much humour but quickly went deeper. The room became heavy with the seriousness of the topic and the pain and distress the epidemic had caused. The final story told of the suicide of a farmer in Eire whose livestock, the herd he had inherited and spent a lifetime developing, had all been destroyed.

I have never forgotten this event. My own journey through it took me from the role of *Technically-interested Sociodrama Student* to *Emotionally-connected Engager* with a rural population I had little previous knowledge of.

Wings Behind Bars

Eszter Pados

I have been working in a juvenile detention center since 2013. From the beginning, I was committed to using psychodrama in my daily practice. I imagined it could be a good tool to reframe individual difficulties and build a safer vision for the future. However, as I very quickly realised, the impact of closed, shared living space together with dense institutional dynamics and relationships made it clear that using psychodrama could make the young people even more vulnerable and exposed.

I also experienced early on how it is not only the young people who suffer from the intensity of such a closed living situation, but also the workers, including myself. The individual and institutional dilemma soon became clear: an institution whose mission is to fill as many gaps as possible and in which good professionals educate and develop the clients day by day, takes away autonomy and progression on so many levels. It creates powerlessness in both the helpers and the youngsters. In a place that aims to facilitate change, the opportunities for creativity, spontaneous expression and action, so needed to effect desired change, are greatly limited. I was stuck and I could not find a place for drama in the institution.

Then the PERFORMERS project came along, and I started to learn about sociodrama; new possibilities opened up. This international event had a great effect on me; it set me off in a new direction, leading to many years of work in the detention center.

What happened at this significant event?

We are in 2017, in Portugal, in the middle of a protagonist-centred sociodrama. An arrested youngster is on stage, in a detention center. He is more abandoned and vulnerable than he has ever been in his life. "Juvenile delinquent!" is the stigma on his forehead; perhaps the biggest victim is him. The scene gives us an insight into a conversation with his institutional helper. Many different feelings and thoughts meet on stage. Guilt, mistrust, pity, fear, curiosity, contempt and shame struggle with each other, but cannot be captured solely on an individual level. These two people look each other in the eye, trying to gauge what they can expect from the other, while wondering what could be done in this particular situation. What is left? What happens? What happens next? Each, in his own way, is faced with a similar question: How can I survive this closeness and how can I possibly give or gain anything useful or meaningful here? The rapprochement is difficult, as many emotions separate them, and shame looms large between them. There is no room for explanation, the shame of this 16-year-old child is undoubtedly neither solely his own nor independent of his society and circumstances; the young person is the embodiment of the shame of the whole world in one person. It soon becomes apparent that, in this situation, it is

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not only the boy who is locked up, but also his helper; her hands are cuffed for other reasons, but in the same confining way, just like the arrested youngster. How can she show the essence of the detention center, which she says will "give you new chances and opportunities", if it is she who holds the key that locks the youngster up. It is she who embodies the society that punishes, the institutional framework that takes away from this young man the only thing he had: his freedom.

What can a helper give in this situation to a boy who has nothing left? WINGS. Sounds from the stage, now in the space of surplus reality. Wings to fly, if not in reality, in his mind and spirit.

This protagonist-centred sociodrama, in Portugal, was directed by Monica Westberg, and the protagonist was me.

The flying scene was what first inspired me with the idea that we could use sociodrama to help young people fly outside their mental walls. With the Hungarian Sociodrama Team, we decided that the main purpose of our sociodrama project at the detention center could be to help the young people experience the freedom they had lost and forgotten. We started group processes where sociodrama could provide a framework for the participants to experience this freedom so that they could explore new connections, have the opportunity to make new relationships with themselves and others, and consider their history and their current life situations. Sociodrama has since become a tool to open up perspectives for the future.

I will be grateful forever for those wings.

Let go and trust

Irina Ștefănescu

November 19th, 2011, Manchester, UK, in the afternoon. I was having my final practicum examination for the diploma in sociodrama with the British Psychodrama Association.

I came to Manchester with a good friend from Romania, a very good English speaker, to have a supporter and to help me by repeating or clarifying what I might have misunderstood from participants with a strong accent.

Ron Wiener, one of my trainers, advised me to do a demonstration of supervision in action for trainers, as my long experience could help a lot. So I had warmed up to do this too.

Two events were crucial for my learning in that memorable sociodrama:

1. At the end of the warm-up, activated by his last message "I train and mentor postdocs. PhD means an original contribution to the world's knowledge", a participant throws himself on the carpet like a baby, starting to act and sound like one, shouting "I am a baby and I bring with my life an original contribution to the world's knowledge!". The group gets very energised and thus what could have been the supervision of a training issue in action turns to a totally different theme, starting with the birth of a child. This is the first letting go that I embrace with warm, childish joy and curiosity.

2. During the drama, some participants, playing the roles of kindergarten kids, are on all fours facing the carpet, talking like kids. For me it sounds like gibberish and for a moment I panic: "What if I miss or misunderstand an important message? And therefore, what if I make the wrong decision?" I look at my friend somewhat despairingly; she looks at me and shrugs, she didn't get their words either. The participants are so caught up in their play that I don't want to interrupt the flow by asking them to repeat their last messages. I lift myself up onto my toes, as if I want to be taller, to see better, take a deep breath, say to myself something like "Do your will, Lord!" and I surrender. I feel as though I am floating, I am carried on holding arms and I am very light. The next moment I find myself in another part of the room, quite far from the previous spot, some people are already up, things are flowing well, I am clear-headed. I don't have the slightest idea about what I said, how I moved, how long that unconscious moment took. Then, the whole sociodrama unfolds smoothly through to the end, celebrating the individuals' original contribution to the world's knowledge and we finish on time. At the self-supervision report to the committee, I tell

them I had a blackout, I am worrying about that lack of memory and ask them to tell me what happened. Everyone shrugs. One of the examiners smiles at me and says: "We don't remember that specific moment, but you did well and this is what matters; why are you so harsh with yourself? It is so good you dared to let go. Relax and enjoy!"

Since then, whenever I feel I have a difficult moment, I touch my stomach, lift myself on my toes, breath, smile at this dear memory, surrender and move. Long live letting go! No more blackouts, but inspiration, love and playfulness are invited.

And since then, whenever I see a baby I wonder, "What is your original contribution to the world? How can we help you, dear miracle, to fulfil your mission?

How personal and social are inseparable…

Jana Damjanov

When I think about what originally inspired me about sociodrama, I think mainly of the "red thread" of connections that I was following as a participant in different sociodramas, sometimes as a protagonist and sometimes as a director.

The first time I experienced sociodrama was in Cirencester, at a BPA conference. It was about the National Health Service in the UK and how psychodrama could find its way into the system. By chance, after that, at conferences and workshops that I visited or organised the majority of issues that came up were deep political or activist themes about education or the health system.

I was fascinated by how it is possible to put any social issue onto the stage, either on a micro level (problems related to local community building, for example) or on a macro level (issues of integration within societies such as migrants and refugees, Israel and Palestine, the ex-Yugoslavian conflict, etc.) and get all the participants actively involved. Not only that, but they can become activated into doing something themselves within their own frame, just by having this experience of changing perspective and seeing things on the micro and/or macro level.

I remember once I was invited to be a presenter at the Conference of the Serbian Union of Associations for Psychotherapy, on a round table called Psychotherapy and Society: Does Society Need Psychotherapy and Does Psychotherapy Need Society? As the only sociodramatist and psychodramatist there, I decided to do a sociodrama with the audience about this issue. The result of the discussion were three roles that communicated between themselves: two parts of Serbian society (conservative and liberal), and God. After they interacted between themselves from these roles, I asked them all to look at it from a distance, as though in a mirror, and from their real professional roles, as psychiatrists, psychotherapists and clinical psychologists. If society was an individual, a patient, what would be their diagnosis? They discovered that it was a borderline personality. I was happy and content because I knew that we could go further with this conclusion. After that, sharing and reflection made the whole discussion much richer and more open. We talked about collective trauma; how to work individually and in groups; how we cannot divide the person from the society; and how it is also part of the psychotherapist's ethical responsibility to work with society while working with groups and individuals. That is how sociodrama always inspires me.

A participant's reflection

Jennie Le Mare

The experience I would like to talk about involves an online sociodrama session entitled Escaping Quicksand: Stuckness and Self-determination, run by Di Adderley on behalf of SCAN (Sociodrama and Creative Action Network) as part of the Migration Matters Festival in the UK in June 2020.

The session was run via Zoom and saw participants from all round the UK and beyond meeting together to explore how they felt stuck or empowered by lockdown and its effects on free movement, social interaction and basic wellbeing and security – including financial security and feelings that "I matter".

After some small group work in breakout rooms, creating the roles we would each bring onto the sociodrama 'stage', we all came together, encountering each other in role and sharing what life was like for us in the situation of the coronavirus pandemic. I was speaking from the role of *Motivated Young Person* and gradually, through interactions with other social roles (such as *Embattled Politician, Social Activist*, *Single Mother, Freelance Artist, Nailbar Owner*, *Headteacher* and *Family Carer*)*,* I began to feel both enlivened and inspired. Although there was no face-to-face contact with the other sociodrama participants, this session represented the most wide-ranging social contact I had experienced since the beginning of lockdown, three months earlier.

Playing the role of the *Motivated Young Person* connected me with my own sense of confidence, optimism and faith in the world. I experienced energy and strength and a simple beauty in the role. Hearing from participants with other roles, such as *Family Carer*, moved me profoundly and connected with my own personal experience. I am, both at the time of the sociodrama and of writing this piece, in a caring role for my father who has a terminal lung condition and mixed dementia. Hearing from someone else playing the role of *Family Carer* helped me feel less invisible, allowing me to experience compassion from others through the interactions played out on the Zoom stage. This was a very powerful experience for me.

Sociodrama memory –
during the invasion of Iraq

Jos Razzell

I was chatting with a sociodrama colleague recently who reminded me of a scene we had both taken part in during our sociodrama training. As soon as she mentioned it, the memories came back – we were an energetic and lively group of trainees and anyone directing had a challenging task to contain the enthusiastic offers to extend scenes into new viewpoints and interactions. Any of us would jump up at a moment's notice.

On this day, I remember someone standing on a chair in role as a global force, and another person, I think, taking the role of a refugee from Iraq struggling to get through or under a fence (this was during the time of the Iraq war/invasion by the USA and UK). Soldiers and guards were also represented.

At the time, the scene was evocative for me, as I had worked for Amnesty International for a year in my early twenties, accompanying Saeed, a skilled artist and Iraqi refugee, on a speaking tour around Scotland. During his presentation, he told stories of his time as a prisoner in Iraqi jails during Sadaam Hussein's dictatorship, showing as he did so seventy graphically detailed paintings of the horrific conditions there and how impossible it was to emerge from the criminal 'justice' system once it had you trapped. Those paintings and the stories they showed will be seared in my memory forever, made only more real by the human connection I formed over the days and weeks with the man who had created them.

In the sociodrama scene, I took a role as someone who had been in that prison system, desperate for liberation from the oppression of the dictatorship. I didn't realise it at the time, but my portrayal of this viewpoint made a real impact on my colleague. The political consensus in the room among the liberal leaning trainees was strongly anti-war – sentiments which, of course, were subsequently borne out by evidence which showed how the much-touted risks of weapons of mass destruction were, in fact, a cynical ploy to go in after the economic riches of Iraqi oil. Seeing another perspective, fuelled by the desperation of extreme human suffering amidst grotesque human rights abuses, deepened her understand of the wider situation.

Sociodrama can in this way allow for complexity and encourage multiple truths to be expressed – although the anti-invasion perspective of the group was validated in subsequent government enquiries, the voice of those oppressed by the Iraqi dictatorship was also a largely invisible thread, and one which I was only aware of because of my previous work.

Sharing together in this way helped us all to become more aware, compassionate and to understand more clearly how over-simplistic judgements can act as self-limiting bias filters. It is clear looking back, with the benefit of hindsight, that the pros and cons of any dramatic geo-political action will be hard to predict, as there are always multiple unseen effects on the many communities and stakeholders involved. I don't know where Saeed is now, or if he was ever able or even wanted to go home. I only hope the prisons are not as terrible as they were when he was there, for the sake of those still in them as I write today.

A specially memorable sociodrama seminar with Zerka T. Moreno in Stockholm, 1985.

Judith Teszáry

The topic was chosen because this was the time of a memorial of the liberation of Auschwitz. The participants were all psychodramatists, except for a filmmaker shooting a documentary about this sociodrama event.

Towards the end of WWII, in 1944-45, most of the prisoners had been forced onto a death march out of the camps. The purpose of the marches was to allow the Germans to use the prisoners as slave-labour, to remove evidence of crimes against humanity. About 7,000 had been left behind in the camps in a miserable condition. Soviet soldiers attempted to help the survivors.

Half of the sociodrama group participants took the position of the prisoners of Birkenau camp, the other half took the position of the soldiers. I played a prisoner.

When the soldiers came, the prisoners were very suspicious. We had been cut off from the world for a long time and did not trust anyone. The soldiers' uniforms did not instil confidence in us. But the worst was that we were so sick, without physical or mental power, that we couldn't move when the soldiers wanted to lift us up and transport us. There was a tension in this situation and those playing soldiers, who were supposed to be the rescuers and expected gratefulness, became helpless, not knowing what to do.

When we role-reversed, with prisoners becoming soldiers, the soldiers' group had a meeting to find a better approach to the situation. Out of our experience in the prisoners' position, we created a more appropriate strategy for handling the situation. We brought food, water, and blankets. We did not move the people, but sat beside them and spoke to them, saying that it is over and we will help them. We even used translators to be better understood.

The impact this sociodrama had on me was the immediate learning that I got out of the experience, an action-insight that helped to change the process *in situ*. A long sharing was absolutely necessary, especially for the filmmaker, who turned out to have a history in her own family connected to this historical event.

It took quite a long time to come back from these roles and find faith in humanity. Even if most of us had a lot of knowledge of the holocaust through documentary films, books, personal narratives, one still remains a spectator. But to reverse roles with the people and experience the distrust and the suffering from within gives a much deeper knowledge of that collective trauma at all levels.

How it started...

Krisztina Galgóczi

I can't recall my very first encounter with sociodrama. I must have first heard the word at a workshop directed by Judith Teszáry, at one of the psychodrama conferences in Budapest. I can remember clearly, though, the moment I first felt the need for sociodrama.

Back in 2012, we planned to have a Holocaust documentary film festival at Szombathely University, where I was teaching at the time. I was asked to hold a preparatory course for media students who were involved in organising the festival. The aim of the course was to bring the topic nearer to the students and make them more aware of and sensitive towards it. I already had experience teaching the subject and I knew this would not be easy. On the contrary, it was the most difficult challenge for me as a teacher of literature and history. So I thought we would use psychodrama techniques in reading the most powerful literature written in the Hungarian language, the world famous novel *Sorstalanság* (Fatelessness) by Imre Kertész, who won the Nobel prize for literature for this book. Though he was praised all over the world and a Hungarian movie was made from his novel, he was always seen as a controversial author in the eyes of the Hungarian public. Kertész uses a very special perspective in depicting life in Auschwitz. He shows this world through the eyes of a fifteen-year-old boy, detailing for readers every aspect of how the boy starts to understand the special order of a concentration camp, which becomes the norm in his life, with its horror and beauty at the same time. I thought this special perspective could be easily understood by the young students of the university and would also offer the opportunity for a possible psychodrama staging, as the situations were everyday ones: conflicts, rituals, relationships, survival techniques, the notion of the trivial, etc., situations which are well known to media students.

We started to read the novel from chapter to chapter and chose analogous situations from the students' real lives to explore, and here we reached the limits the psychodrama method could offer. We realised how embarrassing it could be for students to share personal feelings with those fellow students they spend their days with, in totally different situations. They don't have and they don't want to have the intimate relationship we tend to build up in a psychodrama group. In a university setting, with any topic but especially with collective trauma, we needed a method that could address the more common, the more social aspects of a theme and put it into a wider, social, and global context.

So I started looking for a tool that would be more appropriate for communities dealing with social issues. I found the writings of Yaacov Naor and Peter Felix

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Kellermann, about how to use sociodrama with trauma and I joined a sociodrama working group in Hungary led by Vera Kökény.

My first official and organised meeting with international sociodrama was in Kos, Greece, at the 5th International Sociodrama Conference in 2015, the middle of the migration crisis, which turned my personal and professional interest towards sociodrama as the perfect tool to make the world a better place.

Finally, I'm a Kung Fu World Champion!

Luzia Lima-Rodrigues

In 1994, I won first place in a world Kung Fu championship in China, in an individual demonstration category. A 28-year-old Brazilian winning a competition against Chinese, Korean and Japanese girls between 18 and 20!

The victory was so unexpected for me that I didn't realise that it was my name being announced when the champion was called to receive the trophy. Result: I won the championship, but I didn't get to stand on the podium.

Back in Brazil, while participating in an International Conference, the attendees were invited to tell stories of pleasure and pain. Of course, I told my story: a world champion in Kung Fu (pleasure) on an empty podium (pain).

Before our eyes the actors performed the scene of a Brazilian athlete facing spectacular performances by Chinese, Japanese and Korean competitors. Suddenly, when the name of the victorious athlete was announced, the actors came to pick me up, put a gold medal on me, and made me climb up on a bench. Immediately, the people present in the room began to sing the Brazilian National Anthem, accompanied by the participants from other countries who were there.

This was one of the most moving moments of almost thirty years of sociodrama in my life: I was finally able to dive deeply into the role of Kung Fu World Champion.

The First International Sociodrama Conference, 2007

Manuela Maciel

In October 2007, we created the First International Sociodrama Conference, called Transparent Looks, in Portugal. It was co-created by a Shared Direction Sociodrama Supervision group, which I was leading at SPP Sociodrama Directors Training.

At the pre-conference, on the first day, we had Peter Felix Kellerman as our group facilitator, a Swedish sociodramatist who had written *Sociodrama and Collective Trauma*, just before he went to live in Israel.

After some sociometry, we did a sociodrama on the kidnapping of Madeleine McCann, a British girl who had recently disappeared in the Algarve, a current event that was creating some tension between the UK and Portugal. It became a collective topic. From a co-unconscious point of view we were also aware that 'our new-born child', the sociodrama conference, could also disappear…

In the afternoon, we moved to the topic of Portuguese fascism, which lasted for 50 years (until 1974), when a 70-year old woman shared a story about her father being in prison. He had been arrested and held in the political prison of Caxias for many years, since he was opposed to the fascistic regime, causing her to feel persecuted and oppressed for many years.

Figure 1. P. F. Kellermann at the First Sociodrama Conference

In a kind of psychosociodrama (Peter had been inspired by Monica Zuretti), we went from this personal psychodrama, to a collective sociodrama, to enact the repression of oral expression and submission to oppressive forces still present in Portuguese culture. Afterwards, we were encouraged to transform this collective traumatic legacy by some collective drama and expressive catharsis, using our voices and allowing our freedom of expression. We also released some of the guilty feelings from our colonial past, asking forgiveness from the ex-colonies, with the help from a participant from Angola.

At the closing of this Conference, we all set out our intentions, pretending we had a bow in our hands and sent out an arrow (of Centauro) towards our collective intentions.

Still, today, my aim is that our child, now a teenager, will not disappear and that We Shall Survive as a growing network and a non-institutional conference.

The program and some films about this first conference are still available at this links: http://congressosociodrama.blogspot.com/, https://youtu.be/ztcynjHDDU4

ROLE PLAY OF HUMAN BODY PARTS:
"AS IF WE WERE…"

Margarida Belchior

It became very clear to me how I had become so creative when I started my own training to become a sociodrama director. At that time I was a primary school teacher in a public school, working with a class of seven and eight-year-old boys and girls. There were 23 students in my class. We were studying the human body, one of the topics of the curriculum that awakens lots of curiosity in children of this age group.

While we were talking together about the pictures I was showing them of the respiratory and blood circulatory systems, it suddenly occurred to me that we could make a role play with these systems and their organs. The physical space of the classroom could become a human body with lungs, heart, mouth, nose, all the body parts. Each part was formed by two or three children placed in a specific space.

The classroom as an Human Body: "Role-play"
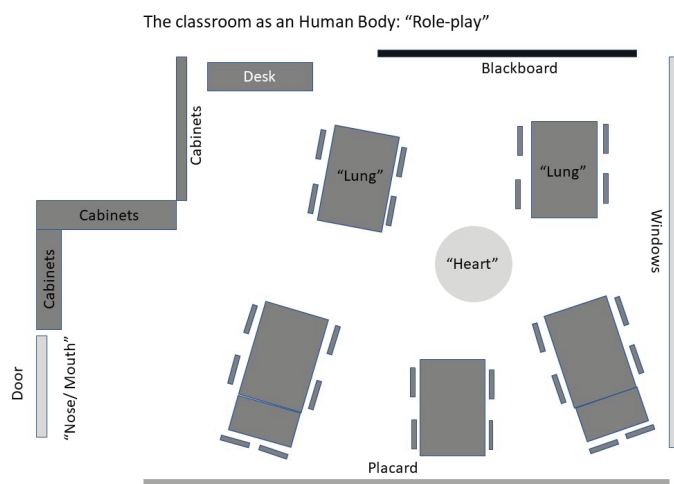
Figure 2: The classroom as a human body

A group of children became the *air*, with its *oxygen molecules* (some of them), entering the *nose* and *mouth* (the door of the room) and circulating until they reached the *lungs*, where the *oxygen molecules* entered the *blood*, and the rest of the *air* took out the *carbon dioxide molecules* (another group of children). This showed clearly, in action, the exchange that happens in the lungs. The *blood* (a different group) collected the *oxygen molecules* from the *lungs*, passed through the *heart* and delivered them to the whole body, to the *cells* (the different spaces of the classroom). Coming back

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from all the *cells* of the body the *blood* carried the *carbon dioxide molecules,* again passing through the *heart*, and was then pumped back to the *lungs* to start again all the respiratory and circulatory circuits.

Before we could begin the role play itself, we first had to define the roles, the spaces, what to do in each place – this was a very important phase of the play, with lots of discussion about the roles, and about the functions of each role. It took some time to put all the pieces together so that we could achieve a satisfactory result, but I think it was an essential part of the work for the children's understanding of what was happening and what we were doing. When we finished this preparation phase, we enacted our drama several times over, even changing roles to give everyone a chance to participate and to understand what was happening.

By this time in the school year the children were already accustomed to using action methods and to play dramas, but this was the first time that we made a role play that demonstrated externally what is inside the body. It was really a very spontaneous situation that came to my mind in the moment. We had great fun together in the classroom. The children never forgot it and asked to do it more and more.

Immigration in Sweden

Mariolina Werner

In 2015 I led a sociodrama with a group of twenty students aged 19-20. Most of them were second generation immigrants, some had moved from Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan some years earlier, and some were Swedish. The aim was to explore the theme of immigration.

The students were first divided into small groups, twos and threes, and were randomly given a role as either an immigrant (half the group) or a Swedish native (the other half), determined by picking a brown or a black stone from a purse. The small groups then decided more specifically exactly who they wanted to be, in terms of their relationships to each other, their work roles, etc. (friends, couples, families, employees, coastguards).

When the action began, they immediately set out a long border, represented by chairs. On one side there were escaping families, some friends, a father and his child, and one of the people smugglers, charging large amounts of money to provide the escape boats. (Surprisingly, the people smugglers were regarded by some immigrants as 'exploiters' and by others as 'helpers'.) On the Swedish side there were custom officials, friends, employers, journalists and neighbours.

Those playing adult newcomers, arriving at the border, were tired, scared but hopeful, while child newcomers were silent and shocked, even dissociative. Those playing Swedish natives were, initially, very suspicious, always answering 'no!' to the people's request to enter the country. This was actually very surprising, as the students in the role of the suspicious Swedish natives were all immigrants themselves. The employees refused to give the Immigrants work, the journalists were curious but not empathetic and the neighbours showed negative attitudes. These reactions were, of course, reflections of the students' personal and family experiences.

Many role reversals, dialogues, quarrels and a very long sharing brought light and awareness to the students' feelings of hope, fear, rage, confusion and finally the gratitude that they and their parents had experienced during their migration journeys.

A public sociodrama in Oslo

Melinda Ashley Meyer DeMott*

The first public sociodrama I ever participated in took place at one of Oslo´s theatres at the beginning of the 1990s. The play was about the life of a young drug abuser and how he survived. When the curtains closed, the audience members were invited backstage to meet the actors.

The main roles were police, teachers, mental health workers, drug abusers and politicians. Eva Røine** directed the sociodrama. Audience members were invited to choose one of the roles to explore. When they had all stepped into their chosen roles in their imaginations, the drama began. We were interviewing each other in role about what needed to happen in our local communities to prevent that young person from falling into crime and addiction.

One of the outcomes of this sociodrama was to write to the government criticising the shutting down of youth clubs. This started a public debate.

* In 1985 Melinda Ashley Meyer DeMott co-founded and was the first chair of the Norwegian Psychodrama Association

** In 1986 Eva Røine and Monica Westberg co-founded the first psychodrama training workshop in Norway (at Bauker kursgård).

Conflict transformation workshop in former Yugoslavia

Monica Westberg

Many years ago I read a book called *The Balkans in Focus: Cultural Boundaries in Europe,* co-edited by Sanimir Resic and Barbara Tornquist-Plewa (Nordic Academic Press, 2003). It taught me something about how it is possible for people of different ethnicities to coexist peacefully for a long time and then suddenly start to kill each other, a process which begins with one party insulting and denigrating the 'other' in newspapers and the media: a kind of war of words.

Professor Johan Galtung (Norwegian sociologist and principal founder of the discipline of peace and conflict studies in so many universities and institutes around the world) visited Stockholm to give a workshop which I had arranged for him. The basic assumption of his Peace Theory is that the core of all conflict is the same. You have to formulate your understanding of the conflict and search for a solution that gives both sides a win–win feeling in order to achieve peace.

I wanted to know if it was possible to combine his teaching with sociodrama. Jana Damjanov invited me to do a pre-conference workshop in a small town in Serbia, Sremski Karlovci in the province of Vojvodina, to explore Galtung's theory in a sociodramatic way. It was for a conference she and Lidija Vasiljevic organised for their psychodrama trainees, who came from right across the former Yugoslavian region (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Slovenia).

We had just one day to do the work, with 30-40 people coming. Jana warmed up the group, building trust between the group and the presenters so that the workshop got to know itself as an entity. Who is this group? Who am I in this group? Then I presented Galtung's Peace Theory.

One way to work is with something he called Ryddematta ('clean carpet'). We marked out four 'fields' on the floor:

1. Dreams
2. Wounds
3. The Good in the Bad
4. The Bad in the Good

To the left of the fields was "History" (or the past); in the middle was placed the "Here and Now" (the present); to the right was "The Future". The opposite intersecting line was "Positive–Negative".
Participants chose someone to work with and visited each of these areas.
The task was as follows:

- – In one field to describe the conflict;
- – In another, to explore what would happen if nothing was done about the conflict;
- – In the third, what had they learned from the conflict;
- – In the fourth the question of how we want the future to be, and what should emerge from this conflict.

The group was deeply engaged in the task.

Each pair then joined another pair to share what came up and to devise some short action scenes to show their discoveries. The scenes were highly affective and emotional. As director, I intervened occasionally to allow doubles from the whole group or new roles to emerge, or to call for role reversals.

In the afternoon I directed two pieces of protagonist-centred psychodrama, although many more people were warmed up. One protagonist was resistant to change, the other open to it – a very typical situation in conflict transformation work. The individual work both mirrored and complemented the morning's groupwork.

Sharing was very long and deep and at the end the whole group wanted to stay as long as possible in a big group hug.

A memorable sociodrama experience

Nikos Takis

One of the experiences of sociodrama I will never forget took place back in May 2016, at the opening of the 24th annual meeting of the Federation of European Psychodrama Associations (FEPTO), in Marathon, Greece. Back then I was head of the local organising committee and also a member of the FEPTO council. It was a session of a significantly large group, with 110 participants approximately, representatives of psychodrama training institutes from all over Europe. At the time, the European Union had recently started facing the complicated problem in the form of refugees from Syria and other Arab countries who wanted to enter Europe and primarily settle in northern European countries. Pictures of boats full of people arriving illegally on Greek islands and reports of numerous dead refugee children and women drowning in the Aegean appeared every day in the news.

In this group, there was, firstly, a warm up, in which group members were invited to relate their modern culture to Greece as the cradle of the European civilisation. The group divided into smaller subgroups, each representing a city state of Ancient Greece. Some were asked to interact in an imaginary national meeting of representatives from each city: Athens, Sparta, Korinthos, etc. At this point, other participants played the role of helpless people in need, arriving at the meeting, asking for help, shelter, food and water. Initially, representatives of the cities did not know how to react. How would each city respond to this request? Some said they empathised with these unfortunate people but were unsure whether they could give much help. Others said these people were strangers, they could be a threat to the Greek cities.

Through interaction and role reversals, the group of city representatives began to react in a softer way towards those asking for help. They became more empathic and supportive. Ultimately, the decision taken was that the help requested would be granted, but not to the desired extent.

In the sharing which followed a parallel was drawn with the present-day refugee situation. It was very interesting to see and hear how people were affected by the drama. Some colleagues pointed out that they were influenced by the way this problem was presented by the media in their countries of origin and that they had expanded their view after the enactment. This discussion brought to my mind J. L. Moreno's idea that his method could be very effective in the resolution of political problems and conflicts between different countries.

Moments in sociodrama – from the group to the research

Sara de Sousa

In 2010, I started my PhD. For its empirical component, we designed a study that aimed to understand whether sociodrama contributed to the reduction of self-stigma in people with schizophrenia. The study was delivered through a combination of face-to-face sociodrama sessions and a psycho-educative intervention made online, in other words a blended learning approach, with in-person and distance learning components.

The 17 participants were divided into two groups which each met twice a week for 20 weeks.

The most memorable moments? Many … One in which, when holding hands in a group statue, one of the participants was surprised by his colleague's cold hands, having had no physical contact with anyone for years. Or when, in a role reversal, the son tried to be the father himself. Or when a group hug was given on stage and no one took the initiative to undo it.

My first experience of Sociodrama

Valerie Monti Holland

In 2002, a few years after completing my MA in Applied Theatre, I was working at an adult male prison and feeling as if my practice had grown stagnant. While I was supported by a very small team within the prison, I had a sense that the work had only been commissioned to *appear* as if the prison governors were addressing the issue of inmates bullying each other, which was known to be greatly contributing to a high suicide rate.

I was also facilitating drama groups at the main theatre in our city and consulted the director of the youth theatre about pursuing some more training. I told him I was yearning for input, new ideas and a group of like-minded people with whom to share. He recommended MPV/SAM (multi-purpose vehicle/sociodrama and action methods), led by Ron Wiener and Francis Batten, who held monthly meetings on the same road as the theatre in which I was working. Serendipity!

I didn't know anything about sociodrama and I didn't know anyone on the course. The opening residential weekend was full of newness and strangeness.

At the moment Francis exclaimed "warm-up increases spontaneity!", I was hooked. What on earth did that mean? It took me a full year to get my head around that phrase and even begin to explore the meaning and magic of it.

That first year on the course helped me understand the prison system I had been working in for the previous two years and brought new insight, plus a whole host of techniques to add to my practice. And I had found my 'tribe'.

PART II.

FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIODRAMA

From Inner Source to Collective Solutions

Manuela Maciel

Summary

This chapter is about the key factors and some core principles of good practice in the different phases of a sociodrama session. We will also discuss the importance of evaluating needs and results, internal marketing and strategic planning even before we start any intervention with sociodrama, whether it is in education, organisations, health or the community.

Key Words: Sociodrama, Inner Source, Surplus Reality, First Universe, Strategic Planning, Social Entrepreneurship

Introduction

The following reflections are derived from my 30 years of experience as a practitioner, informed by what the method discusses nowadays, and by Moreno´s structural ideas on psychodrama, sociodrama, sociometry, and sociatry. It is important to clarify that these are complex and eternally evolving concepts that are discussed at the International Sociodrama Conference, in 2021 having its 7th meeting, which started with the support of the Portuguese Psychodrama Society (SPP) fourteen years ago (2007).

As the social psychologist Kurt Lewin used to say, "There is nothing more practical than a good theory." After twenty years of training sociodrama directors at the SPP (which began in 2000), and with this fertile soil of the European Sociodrama PERFORMERS Project, I realise more and more that there are many different approaches to sociodrama and that this diversity should be respected. However, it seems relevant to integrate some reflections from my own sociodrama practice, teaching and supervision.

I find it fundamental to reflect on the guidelines and core principles of any action method, as there are many shortcomings in mindless action, and not only at the other extreme, the so called "analysis paralysis". Professionals using action methods are very often attracted to impulsive action, neglecting reflection, philosophy, theory.

In this chapter I will mainly interweave concepts from Moreno and concepts from a contemporary author of social theory, Otto Scharmer (U Theory). As a source, I will also integrate concepts from some social psychologists (Kurt Lewin, Festinger, Tajfel).

What is the accepted definition of Sociodrama?

It helps to clarify the topics and problems of the group, not focusing on the individual psychological problems. The group is the protagonist: the true subject of Sociodrama is the group and its exploration. (J. L. Moreno, in Minkin, 2013)

Sociodrama can be applied to the contexts of education, clinical therapy (family or couple), health (chronic diseases or prevention), organisations or community work. Any sociodrama session has three phases: warm-up, drama/action and sharing. I will aim to cover the core principles of each phase.

1. Warm-Up: presence, flow and spontaneity

The warm-up has the goal of icebreaking, and increasing the spontaneity and cohesion of the group, before focusing on the common problems or the collective emergent.

Understanding how spontaneity and creativity are of the utmost importance in the co-creation of reflection on collective problems, the director should try to model this same attitude of being present, spontaneous, creative and connected to the here and now, what Moreno described as the "autonomous healing centre" and, more recently, Otto Scharmer calls the "Inner Source", listening and sensing, which relates to intuition, flow, trusting and following the process of the group.

It is important to have some kind of strategic plan, but it is also important to start creating a space for presence, with some silence, with some connection within, with this inner source. According to Scharmer, this defines and establishes the 'quality of the soil', as if we were doing organic farming. Otherwise, very impulsive and superficial enactments could be the result. This author says, "The quality of an intervention depends on the inner source of the leader." And I would add the ability to develop the inner source or the "autonomous healing centre" of the participants and foster the cohesion of the group.

> The greatest difficulty of our actual mastery of the social universe is not primarily in the lack of invention of instruments but in Man itself. He is inept and inert. His spontaneity is inadequate for the task. (J. L. Moreno, *The Future of Man`s World*, 1947).

Mindfulness practices, active or more passive, that encourage presence and alignment with what Moreno calls the first universe, or cosmic dimension, help us move from an egocentric point of view to a more ecocentric point of view (Otto Sharmer). The symbol of psychodrama and sociodrama depicts the encounter with oneself and with the other but also the ascension from the second universe to the first universe – the unified field, a more cosmic realm.

A sociodrama session should start slowly. Sue Daniels says in her workshops that "slower is faster", which is also present in the famous sentence by my teacher Anne Ancelin Schützenberger: "take your time".
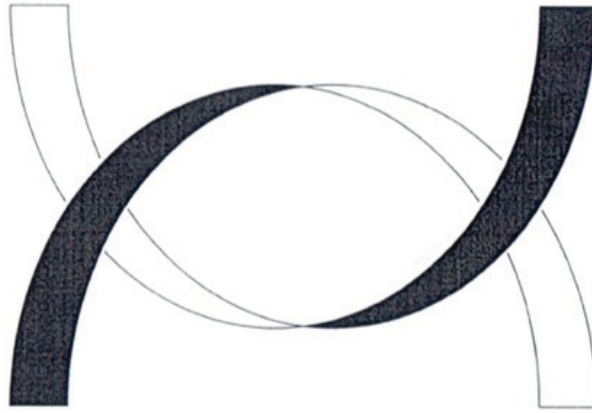
Figure 1. "The expansion of the self from the plane of the individual to the cosmic plane will be a realisation process of, by and through the self, a movement from the lower plane of existence to the superior plan, the time for each movement equalling that of a historical epoch." (J. L. Moreno, *The Future of Man`s World, 1947).*

I usually recommend some meditation in silence or some meditative walking in order to progressively encounter the other, establishing eye contact and using other forms of non-verbal contact, i.e. the first form of interaction/encounter in our ontogenetic development.

In a sociodrama session, it is a good practice to respect the human developmental and natural sequence. Drama re-enacts life and the possibility of active learning through experience, implying that our practice should be informed by the developmental stages of the individual and the group, as in life itself.

To promote safety and progressive cohesion, it is important to start the sociodramatic intervention with pair exercises, preferably related to the topic of the session, in order to increase the cognitive and emotional warming up and to cultivate the feeling of being in a safe space.

As Zerka Moreno used to teach: "The pair is the first group." It is in a dyad that we started our social interaction in life.

We can evolve from dyads to small groups of 4 or 6 people, with some superordinated goals (Tajfel), preferably using some physical enactment, to start the physical warm-up and to prepare for the action mode.

It is also a good practice, in my experience, to start with silly criteria for subgroup forming, instead of the formal and usual criteria of social identification for that particular culture, not to reinforce the stereotypes that very often create separation and conflict.

This form of encounter, related to unusual criteria of social identification (such as te colour of clothes or dates of birth), encourages an attitude of curiosity and diminishes judgement or the stereotyped thinking very often present when there are conflicts or rigid social roles.

It is important to look at another person, even if we think we know them very well, as if it is our first encounter. This allows us to get out of the cultural conserve

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of that group, increasing our spontaneity and enabling us to co-create new solutions at both co-unconscious and co-conscious levels, following the formula of the *Canon of Creativity* by J. L. Moreno (see Melinda Ashley's chapter p. %).

For warm-up games I like to have the group participants playing their heroes (their best selves), so they can have easier access to their values and higher consciousness and get warmed up to enter a collective 'hero's journey' (Joseph Campbell). Using again Moreno concepts, we would say that we are giving voice and access to the individual`s godhead or, as we say in the Hassidic tradition of the cabala, to the divine sparkle.

2. Sociometry as a sociatry tool

A truly therapeutic procedure cannot have less an objective than the whole of mankind**.** But no adequate therapy can be prescribed as long as mankind is not an unity in some fashion and as long as its organization remains unknown. (J. L. Moreno, *Who Shall Survive?*)

Moreno's ultimate vision was that humanity could be healed (sociatry) and, for that purpose, tools such as sociometry and role reversal were, for him, considered essential. The idea of working through what he called a "social microscope" is essential to that view, meaning that by working with smaller groups one can reflect on a larger scale and have a wider effect.

Sociometry is also a very effective warm-up and action research tool to know the truth of a group's underlying dynamic and organisation, in terms of informal power networks, subgroups, exclusion and sociodynamic effects. It allows the system to see itself and is action research, which is truly democratic in the making and sharing of results. However, there is a need to master the art of sociometry in order to know and to help a group, not forgetting how useful the developmental sequence is.

Sociometry is revolutionary; it is a microscope on those categories, a social microscope that can make visible within dyads and small groups the invisible forces affecting all humanity**.** It reveals the sociodynamic effect, the consolidation of choices to a small number of people at the expense of the whole, and the organic unity underlying humanity and the human experience. (J. L. Moreno)

As with any tool, sociometry can be used in a constructive or in a destructive way, so there is a need for some training in order to master the method and in order to diminish the sociodynamic effect, which relates to exclusion and social injustice, and the human tendency that results in only a few having all the power and resources.

It seems important to understand and share the new perspective that the excluded ones are gatekeepers who allow the awareness of the group to open to other realms of reality.

The Axiogram, which may evolve into an Axiodrama and measures the distribution of the group on any scale or dimension, can also be used as a way to

a very quick and deep understanding of the diversity of opinions, beliefs or values, and as a way to promote a rich dialogue and strong integration within different visions of the same reality. It is also an excellent warm-up to reflect upon any common topic.

3. Re-enactment: diagnosis, co-conscious, co-unconscious and catharsis

Very often in sociodrama it is advisable to start with a re-enactment of a traumatic situation as a way of understanding the present problems and the different views of the problem, and also as an emotional catharsis (abreaction) that can help healing.

However, it is also important to allow the system to see itself, following the double and mirror principles (catharsis of integration).

We can use different methods for the drama phase: sculptures with real people or objects, incognito auxiliaries (Manuela Maciel and Mark Wentworth), the Rosalie Minkin Method, empty chair, interweaving *(retramatização* from Arnaldo Lieberman), the wheel of memories from James Sacks, the living newspaper from J. L. Moreno, and many other sociodrama and expressive arts methodologies.

The re-enactment of the trauma by itself can be retraumatising if there is no way out or if the group becomes stuck in the trauma. We do need role playing, role reversal, role creating and mainly surplus reality to be able to bring transformation to any collective trauma.

As an example, I recall directing a sociodrama in 2015 at the Kos (Greek Island) Sociodrama International Conference, with a group of Greek volunteers who had been helping refugees from North Africa to enter Europe. We used Rosalie Minkin`s method of re-enactment with role playing and zooming, which depicted the tragic situation of the refugees being exploited by the boat gangsters and dying in the sea, and also of the volunteers' fear, burnout and exhaustion with this tragedy and with the lack of official support, both from official local organisations and from other European organisations. In order to avoid a retraumatising experience, but to create instead a healing and transformative one, we had to find a surplus reality situation. One in which a more positive common vision was co-created and enacted, calling for access to an inner source of experiencing a better self and collective vision that could develop and empower the hope and the solutions for the future, where mistakes were reversible and new ideas were rehearsed in a protected setting.

4. Surplus reality: experiencing the best future

The encounter between old Freud and young Moreno in Vienna is well known. Moreno said something like: "I start where you finish. You analyze people´s dreams: I help them to make their dreams come true." As Otto Scharmer says, sensing and presencing the highest future individual and collective potential is healing, since the psyche does not distinguish reality from imagination when we are actively engaged. That is, for me, where the main healing power of sociodrama resides.

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Playing in our generative Universe, we can have magic healing moments of change, where hope is rooted and the people are empowered, overcoming the usual obstacles to change, such as the voice of judgement (the mind), the voice of cynicism (the heart) and the voice of fear (the will). It is important to gradually evolve into an open mind, heart and will, developing our curiosity, compassion and courage (Otto Scharmer) in the fertile soil of play, flow and passion.

Surplus reality is a way of extending and focusing the capacity for the imagination and play. The development of the imagination transforms consciousness and contributes to the growth of hopefulness, originality, and the ability to entertain new ideas and enter into different realities than our own (Hosking, 1989). The psychodrama stage is viewed "as-if it is an imaginary arena in which anything, including the impossible, can happen" (Kellermann, 1992). Entering into the world of make believe produces the quality that Moreno (1972a) called dramatic spontaneity, that which gives newness and vitality to feelings, actions and words, and assists in energising and unifying the self. Moreno believed that humans are cosmic beings as well as social beings. In surplus reality the mythic dimension of life can be portrayed. "God is always within and among us, as he is for children. Instead of coming down from the skies, he comes in by way of the stage door. God is not dead, he is alive, in psychodrama!" (Moreno & Moreno, 1975, 22). Play is an essential human quality and the ability to play is fundamental to healing.

Winnicott (1971) argues that in play the child or adult is free to be creative and use the whole personality, and that, through creativity, the individual discovers the self. The emphasis on play, imagination, intuition and creativity in surplus reality gives sociodrama its magical quality.

5. Sharing and action plan

Here it is important to have space for cognitive reflection as well as emotional 'loveback'. Sharing comes from the heart not only from the mind, or rather from the integration of both. Sharing from role usually comes first, followed by personal sharing. As much as in the whole process, the sociodrama director and assistants need to contain and protect the private roles during the sharing, in order to protect the sociodramatic contract and context.

As I learned with Diane Adderley in the PERFORMERS project, we can also use objects for the sharing, to concretise not only what we learned in the sociodrama but also to develop an action plan that empowers and commits the participants to moving towards a shared vision and a common goal, as the first step that could be taken.

Strategic plan, entrepreneurship and systemic thinking

In 1993, I was working as a consultant for CIFAG in the area of entrepreneurship, to help entrepreneurs create new businesses. I led a training session at Durham University (UK) on their Entrepreneurship for Teachers Program. It was in that period

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that I started to realise that teaching and social intervention can be developed with as much effectiveness and professionalism as with any other business.

Sociodrama can be applied to education, organisational or community development purposes. For any of those social interventions to be effective, it is important to have not only the skills to lead what happens in front of the group (in terms of presence and sociodrama tools) but also to have made some kind of strategic plan in advance.

I like the analogy of sociodrama, the arts and music. Let's say that before the improvisation you need preparation, and in between the sounds there are the silences that make the melody. Strategic planning, in a nutshell, is related to answering those five classical questions of any intervention: why, who, when, where and how? So, as every consultant knows, it is important to dialogue with the actors who hold more formal power so that we can understand their request, offer support, be aware of their resistance to change and their willingness to accept our expertise. We must also communicate through the internal marketing system, engaging the significant actors who need to be involved throughout the system of organisation.

Sometimes we need a more proactive attitude to explain the sociodrama method and its benefits, using a simple and universal language that takes away any distortions sometimes wrongly associated with the name psychodrama or sociodrama.

So, in order to have a strategic plan, we need to understand the goal, the purpose (*why*) of the intervention in terms of expected results. We need to discuss and advise about *who* should be involved and the ideal size of the groups. We need to check and prepare the setting, the physical space *where* the session will occur, checking the lights, the air, the temperature, the breaks, the toilets the audio-visuals and other material we might need. And also the *when*, that is the schedule, the dates, the timing. We should also plan the evaluation before and after the intervention and a follow-up to assess the long-term effects, the dropouts, etc.

If we consider that sociodrama is a service, it is also important to consider the four Ps from the classical marketing and quality of service theory (Kotler) on how to measure the quality of this service: promotion, place, product (or service) and last but not least, price.

To become even more professional it could be profitable to social entrepreneurship, as to any other service, not to discourage volunteer work as well as not embarking on stereotypes.

6. Training and preparation of the sociodrama director

We find that, even before taking into account the long training, supervision and intervision of sociodrama in its different applications and related theoretical fields (communication, social psychology, group dynamics, leadership), there is a need to work on the self-awareness and the inner source of the sociodramatist her- or himself. We are the main instruments of our work.

Revolution and evolution start with each one of us and spread invisibly, like a bacterium or a virus during an epidemic. The relationships we create with others

throughout our lives in small groups are responsible; they may be both pathological and beyond our awareness. (Zerka Moreno in *To Dream Again*)

The sociodrama director needs to work on her/his emotional and social skills and ability to be present, listening and sensing the group and very often co-leading with a colleague. The director must be able to be like an empty vessel, a facilitator for the group, without judgement, prejudice or stereotypes; must be able to integrate and value diversity, know how to manage conflict and also how to be assertive and use voice and other non-verbal elements. Whether the personal preparation should include a period of psychotherapy or personal development is a controversial question, but it is advisable that psychodrama or sociodrama methods should be experienced by a future director. Even though it is not compulsory, in Portugal, ideally the socio-dramatist works in a team with a co-leader, supporting each other and co-creating together, therefore modelling the synergy that they are intending to develop and to sustain in the group itself.

More than ever, as the Erasmus PERFORMERS sociodrama project has shown, effective leadership depends more on the capacity for co-operation and the ability to inspire the group learning process, rather than a competition or exhibition of competences.

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How can WE … ?
The Australia/Aoteoroa New Zealand (AANZ) Sociodramatic Connection with UK Perspectives on Sociodrama

Diane Adderley

Summary

Sociodrama in the UK has had a particular connection and history with a number of AANZ Morenian practitioners. They have brought many things to the training, thinking and practice of sociodramatists from many places around the world who studied with Ron Wiener, Francis Batten and myself at the MPV/SAM (Multi-Purpose Vehicle/Sociodrama and Action Methods) training school in England. This chapter considers the importance of these influences, gives a brief history of the main connections, and details some of the important learnings and techniques we gained.

Keywords

AANZPA, Sociodramatic Question, Protagonist-Centred Sociodrama (PCS), Role Theory (Max Clayton), Organisational Work

LIGHT

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

G.M. Clayton (date unknown)

I love this poem. The relevance it bears to this chapter is that Max (G.M.) Clayton was a giant figure in the Australian development of Psychodrama.

I only saw him direct once, at my first British Psychodrama Association (BPA) Conference, in the early 1990s, where he scandalised the audience by simply taking someone by the hand from the front row and drawing them out to be his, initially, somewhat resistant protagonist. I say 'simply' because that's what it appeared to my relatively uninformed eyes to be – an impulse, an idea, spontaneous, creative, in the moment. I'm glad I didn't know enough to judge it at the time. Max spoke for a few moments at the beginning, so the assembled psychodramatists warmed up to him and

then he reached out – no long, protracted, on our feet, group warm-up or sociometric choice. I now see the moment as being full of courage, trust, skill, warmth and playfulness: a willingness to experiment in a new situation. I also see it as an example of letting go the Cultural Conserve of 'how-we-do-a-keynote-plenary-at-a-conference' and finding a new response to an old situation, as Moreno invited.

It was not, unfortunately, appreciated and he received some, I would say, rather unkind criticism. I think perhaps it was not well-received (though the protagonist, as far as I recall, did get something positive from the work) because he was presenting to a group from a much more traditional and 'conserved' psychodramatic national culture than that of AANZ. However, I am still drawn to the skilled, apparent simplicity of his approach, trusting himself, the method and the group. There was the sense that there's an ordinariness in agreeing to stand and explore something in dramatic, theatrical action, an everyday possibility for anyone, everyone, to step up. Just get up out of your chair … Let's not play it too 'safe'.[1]

As far as I'm aware, Max never returned to the UK, which I'm sad about, but his work returned to us through the Australians we connected with and who he had a hand in training.

Why is this important?

I think it's fair to say that sociodrama has not been as fully developed or used in either Europe or North America as psychodrama, except by a small percentage of practitioners and trainers. Indeed, in my own psychodrama training, in the UK of the 1990s, sociodrama formed a very small part indeed of the curriculum. Things have improved slightly – one thing we have been able to establish in the BPA is that psychodrama trainees must participate in 50 hours of specific sociodrama training delivered by a qualified sociodramatist, who may not necessarily be a psychodramatist.

One of the goals of the PERFORMERS project has been to begin the process of redressing this imbalance in European training, partly by attempting to establish criteria within FEPTO (Federation of European Psychodrama Training Organisations) for standardising sociodrama training, separately to psychodrama training. I must admit to a concern that the immense and joyful diversity of 'how-we-do-sociodrama' in different places may be curtailed if an over-emphasis is placed on a curriculum based too heavily on a classical psychodrama model. This could so easily result in a consequent loss of some of the freedom, creativity and spontaneity which the flourishing development of sociodrama is currently enjoying. I am not saying that some criteria and 'standards' are not welcome, but I hope we will remain open to experimentation. Moreno wrote much less about sociodrama than about his other 'children'. This has perhaps left us more space to play than we have in psychodrama, which may be seen as being somewhat confined by clinical imperatives.

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[1] Years later, I saw Francis Batten attempt a fusion of sociodrama and playback theatre at an international playback conference in Freemantle, which equally received some tough feedback. Experiments sometimes succeed and sometimes don't, but without taking the risk we do not grow.

In this regard, I am particularly interested, from my own experience, in what I have learned from Australian practitioners who have developed a somewhat different training model from that on this side of the world. Of this, more later …

It was not until I encountered Ron Wiener, independently of my own psychodrama training, that I started to realise how sociodrama turns psychodrama on its head, by focusing mainly on the group-as-a-whole. This feels very important to me right now, when global group action is so vital to saving the planet for us all. In relation to the vaccine against Covid 19, for example, the message "No-one is safe until we are all safe" is the mantra so many of our scientists and political leaders, in June 2021, are currently repeating. The global distribution of the precious vaccines, which only the richer nations can afford to stockpile for their own populations, appears very inadequate right now. Helping individuals to heal therapeutically is, of course, still very important – I have continued my own one-to-one therapy practice for over 20 years and I value it greatly as, I hope, do my clients. But the time pressures on our world mean the western model of 'I'-thinking must turn into the broader vision of 'We'-thinking very quickly, if we are to turn global issues – the pandemic, climate crisis, racism – around in an effective way: if, in fact, we as a species are going to survive on our wondrous blue planet.

This is, to my mind, where sociodrama can become fully valued in its own right and where I have been particularly engaged, through iSCAN (International Sociodrama and Creative Action Network) as well as PERFORMERS II. in 2019-2021.[2]

But I digress …

In Australia/Aoteoroa New Zealand (AANZ), Morenian thought and practice have developed along slightly different lines, perhaps due in part to the continent's distance from the Western 'centres' of the work, perhaps also due to what I perceive as the well-developed 'rebel' role of people from that part of the world. Maybe this is rooted in the continent's history of western settlement by those sent there, as a means for the UK to rid itself of its 'undesirables', exporting those judged by society as 'criminals' to the most far-flung part of the empire to fend for themselves (and in the process – I don't airbrush out – doing terrible damage to the indigenous peoples to whom the land was home).

Far from focusing training purely on producing excellent clinicians (which AANZPA's institutes undoubtedly do), the focus has been on growing Morenian practitioners who operate across a much broader spectrum of society, truly exemplifying the 'method for all mankind' that Moreno advocated. I remember Sue Daniels, Director of the Psychodrama Institute of Melbourne, saying once, at a BPA Conference, that Moreno never confined his creation by calling his method a psychotherapy. I can't attest to the validity of that statement, not having all of Moreno's texts sufficiently in mind, but it certainly gave me pause for thought. I was trained in a model which appeared to have but one direction of travel – to become an ac-

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2   See my recently published article *A year (and more) of sociodrama online: the Covid era 2020/2021* in the German journal 'Zeitschrift für Psychodrama und Soziometrie' (Springer, 2021), pp.1-14: http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11620-021-00599-9

credited psychodrama psychotherapist registered with the UKCP (United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy). This is not a criticism – UK psychodrama trainers and institutes had to focus on accreditation by big brother UKCP in order for practitioners to be able to practise legally in our country – but it did lead to a narrow focus on what Morenian methods can do.

In AANZ, Psychodrama with a capital 'P' is the over-arching umbrella name for the whole field, which delineates the other branches of Moreno's thought as equally important approaches, of which psychodrama (with a small 'p') is only one. The Psychodrama Australia Trainee Handbook published by AANZPA, as the overview of training to be delivered by all Australian psychodrama institutes, is very clear that neither psychodrama, with that small 'p', nor psychotherapy, are the only direction of travel for the trainee:

> *"Psychodrama Australia is the training institute in Australia accredited by the Board of Examiners of the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association (AANZPA)* **to conduct training in role training, sociometry, sociodrama, psychodrama and group work**.*"* (my emphasis)

Psychodrama (small 'p') is well down the list! Behind even sociodrama!

> *"After a period of training, trainees begin to identify aspects of the method they see as most relevant to their work, reflect their own personal interests, or which call to the fore their individual abilities. On this basis they will be encouraged to* **make a more in-depth commitment to one of the four approaches - role training, sociometry, sociodrama or psychodrama.***"* (again, my emphasis)[3]

I understand from an Australian colleague, Tom Schwarz, that the training structure to qualification is currently three years of generic Psychodrama (during which a written social atom paper is required) followed by an unspecified period of time working on the approach one chooses, within which a dissertation and a practicum must be successfully completed.

This, of course, places a completely different emphasis on sociodrama in relation to psychodrama, no longer very unequal siblings, but methodologies of equal value, practiced in different spheres and with appropriately different focii. This has led to a much greater proportion of practitioners working in non-clinical fields than in our neck of the woods. Of the AANZPA practitioners I have come across, there are many who work in the fields of leadership, change consultancy, coaching, facilitation in organisations of all kinds, social as well as corporate, educational establishments, in addition to going into the clinical field. Indeed, one of the early pioneers, Warren Parry, wrote a bestselling book, *Big Change, Best Path* (Kogan Page, 2015), on his work leading organisational change.

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[3]   https://psychodramaaustralia.edu.au/psychodrama-australia-trainee-handbook accessed 3/7/21

"Warren was centrally involved in psychodrama from 1976 and pioneered the development of sociodrama, becoming a TEP in Sociodrama in 1986. Warren subsequently set up his own consulting business and developed ChangeTracking to assist leaders to implement change programs successfully. In 2013, ChangeTracking joined Accenture who have since used the proprietary method in large scale change initiatives."

Browne, R. (2016. p.21)

The UK connection – first there was …

– **Ken Sprague** (1927-2004), internationally-known visual artist, social activist and political cartoonist, who, with Marcia Karp, set up the Holwell International Centre for Psychodrama and Sociodrama in Devon, England.

"I knew Ken as a therapist and artist and he showed me how the use of art, be it drama, art, music or storytelling can have a profound effect upon the individual, but also if the conditions are right, the society in which that person finds themselves."

Carl Dutton (2006)

Ken was much more interested in using Morenian work outside of a specifically clinical setting. He wrote about his work with children with Downs Syndrome in a local school in *The Handbook of Psychodrama* (Karp, Holmes eds. Routledge, 2005). Ken had trained in sociodrama in Australia with Warren Parry, referenced above, and brought to Holwell students his passion for using Moreno's methods for social action. One of the most nerve-wracking moments of my life came in 2003, when I was directing my sociodrama practicum session in front of him as my external examiner. Ken used to sketch students as they were directing, making notes on the drawings. I later received his feedback on my work in a laminated binding with a drawing of me during the session on the front – a very precious possession indeed. Fortunately, I passed! (see Figure 1)

Years later, the sociodrama school MPV/SAM adopted one of Ken's drawings as its logo (see Figure 2).[4]

Ken found a kindred spirit in …

– **Dr. Ron Wiener** (born 1942), community psychologist, artist, poet, political activist, systems thinker, community theatre director, who had, amongst many other employments, been a community planner in Northern Ireland during the time of "the troubles" and managed a psychiatric day centre in the north of England that was run

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[4] The drawing was made to communicate the idea of solidarity to the Canary Islands banana workers union, the big black fish representing Spain's dictator General Franco, who was in power at the time. In 2011, New Internationalist magazine used it on their cover, unattributed! They later apologised! For more information about Ken Sprague's life, go to https://wwwcolinpenter.blogspot.com/search?q=Ken+Sprague - accessed 3/7/21.

on the lines of a therapeutic community. Originally from Germany, Ron had spent many years living in Australia before settling in the UK. Ken Sprague became his Primary Trainer, so here was the Australian influence in sociodrama's next generation.[5] After qualification, Ron spent a number of years running sociodrama workshops and trainings across the UK in settings such as social work, local government and probation services, as well as internationally.
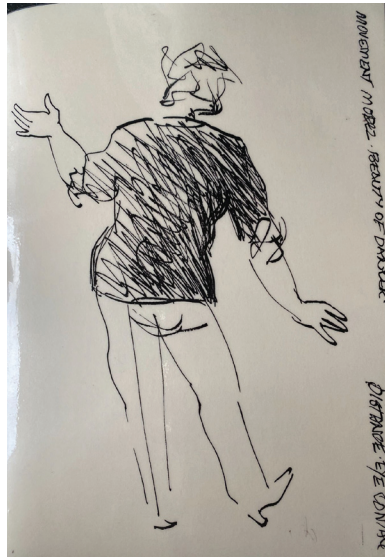
Figure 1: Ken Sprague (2003) – sketch of student doing sociodrama practicum
"Movement model - beauty of dancer – Distance - eye contact"
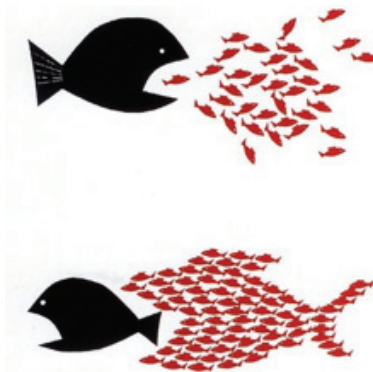
Figure 2: Ken Sprague: The parable of the fishes:
"Energy and Co-operation" from Green, J (2002) *Ken Sprague: People's Artist*

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5   Ron became the first Sociodrama Practitioner that the BPA accredited, in fact they created the qualification for him! He is still directing, experimenting with new forms and encouraging younger sociodramatists (many of whom he trained) through iSCAN (International Sociodrama and Creative Action Network).

At this time, there was no independent sociodrama training in the UK other than those stand-alone workshops which Ron set up, the BPA deeming that psychodramatists could 'do' sociodrama and would get enough of it in the course of their psychodrama training. Fortunately, the next connection returned to England and together they co-founded the sociodrama school MPV/SAM (Multi-Purpose Vehicle Sociodrama and Action Methods) in the late 1990s. That next connection was …

– **Francis Batten** (1940-2006) Francis was Shakespeare's character 'Puck' for me, the naughty sprite from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Actor, brilliant improviser and clown, originally trained at L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in France, Francis' psychodrama training had been at the Wasley Centre in Perth, under the aegis of Max Clayton. His dissertation "Magister Ludi" (Master of Play), written in 1992, is still one of my own go-to texts for 'how to be a creative and skilled psychodramatist'.[6] Francis worked internationally across the fields of performance, organisational and therapeutic work, and training. When he returned to England to live, he and Ron Wiener were a natural pairing. The two were 'dance partners', as Ron acknowledged at Francis' memorial: *"as co-trainers, if I started to 'tango' with the group, he would join me; if he started to 'salsa', I would be there"*. Together they built sociodrama as a separate discipline within the psychodrama establishment through their MPV/SAM training. Francis had access to many Australian student dissertations which he was able to bring to us, further widening our connection and understanding of Morenian work 'down under'.

Importantly, Ron and Francis co-edited the Special Sociodrama and Action Methods Edition of the BPA's Journal in January 2001. This contained a number of articles by Australian sociodramatists as well as other international figures and was, as far as I know, the first Special Edition of a professional psychodrama journal to highlight sociodrama as a discipline in its own right.

– **Diane Adderley**: I'm not Australian, though my very first connection with both the Morenian world and Playback Theatre came via Francis Batten in 1989, on one of his summer trips to England. He directed a psychodrama workshop in my home city, Manchester, which I found utterly inspiring. I was at that time a very disillusioned professional actor and musician searching for a new direction. Coincidentally, I was about to travel to Perth, Western Australia and, in the workshop, I became the first protagonist, working on my own ambivalence about visiting my father and stepmother for the first time since they had emigrated. The drama released me from my remaining angst and I visited the Wasley Centre and Perth Playback Theatre

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6   Originally from England, Francis left to explore the world in 1959, at the age of nineteen. He settled in Australia for many years, though international travel remained a lifelong passion. Co-creator of Sydney Action Centre, where theatre and performance skills were taught alongside the therapeutic uses of drama. He was also responsible for inviting Jonathan Fox and the original Playback Theatre company to Australia in 1980, which seeded the many playback companies now existing across the continent.

several times over subsequent years. Meanwhile, on this side of the world, I arranged summer workshops locally for Francis, either in psychodrama or playback theatre.

By the time he returned to England permanently, and joined Ron to create the sociodrama school, I was part-way towards qualifying in psychodrama, had co-created a playback theatre company and had also been attending sociodrama workshops with Ron for several years. I jumped at the chance to train in sociodrama with them both and ultimately became the first qualified and BPA registered Sociodrama Practitioner of the school.

Very, very sadly, Francis died of cancer in 2006, and, as the only other sociodrama practitioner at the time, I tried to step into Francis' "seven-league boots" and into the "trainee Trainer" position with Ron, to help keep the school going during this period of deep grief and insecurity. Ron and I have continued to work together ever since, though the school itself closed in 2012, travelling through my journey to become a Senior Trainer in Sociodrama and the publication in 2011, together with Dr. Kate Kirk, of our book *Sociodrama in a Changing World,* which included many contributors to this present book, published 10 years later. After 2012, Ron and I ran annual 4-day 'Advanced Directing' workshops which attracted many international participants, largely due to Ron's tireless travelling to run workshops in far-flung parts of the world. He also shared many international opportunities with me during this period, which meant I got to teach sociodrama in China, Greece, Romania, Germany and, currently, Ukraine. With the graduates and ex-students of MPV/SAM, including Valerie Monti Holland, Jos Razzell and Martha Lindsell (all authors in this book), we co-created SCAN (Sociodrama and Creative Action Network), to keep connection with those who had passed through the school. SCAN became iSCAN in 2020 when we moved our sociodrama practice online.

 Over many years, in the UK we have hosted Australian presenters at our conferences (Max Clayton and Sue Daniel spring immediately to mind) and I recall a weekend workshop with Anthony Williams, writer of *Forbidden Agendas: Strategic Action in Groups* (Routledge 1991) on using creative action in organisations. One exercise I particularly enjoyed used fridge magnets of all sorts of animals attached to a metal flipchart stand for the group to set out the system of an imaginary team, giving them some safe distance by speaking through the roles of *Angry Elephant, Sleeping Tiger* or *Chattering Monkey.* This kind of concretising 'action method' is, of course, no longer new to practitioners, but at the time it seemed very novel and exciting.

In more recent times, we have kept this lively connection going with …

– **Rollo Browne**, past President of AANZPA, sociodramatist, coach, facilitator and organisational consultant, who visited our shores to run workshops on several occasions. Rollo featured in our book *Sociodrama in a Changing World* (*op.cit.* 2011) and galvanised the BPA's thinking around sociodrama with his pre-conference 2008 workshop. Of that, more later …

Bringing us up to date, most recently we've been joined in our iSCAN core group by **Tom Schwarz**, trained by Rollo Browne, a Master Emeritus facilitator from Australia, who mainly works in the organisational field in China, but is currently

in lockdown in Sydney. This Spring, I co-directed an online protagonist-centred sociodrama (PCS) with Tom – he was in Beijing at the time! A real delight to be co-directing across the world!

I am in no way saying that there has been no cross-fertilisation in the PD/SD world between Australia/Aoteoroa and North America or Europe. Many trainers of all nationalities have travelled the globe in every direction, delivering workshops and trainings. However, I do think we have, in the UK, had a particular affinity through our historical heritage of trainers from the Australian scene and have gained immeasurably through these many encounters.

Specific gains

I'd like to mention three specific gains that have been thoroughly incorporated into our sociodrama outlook, which came to us originally via Australia.

1. THE SOCIODRAMATIC QUESTION

As mentioned, in 2008, Rollo Browne ran a 2-day pre-conference workshop at the BPA's annual get-together in Liverpool, entitled *Exploring Social Forces*. He introduced us to many things which held our attention, the Sociodramatic Question being one of them. This had originally been developed in the 1990s by Max Clayton *"to hold the focus of the group to its task"* (Browne 2011, p.11).

Essentially, this involves substituting 'we' for 'I' in the formulation of the agreed group contract. A contract with an individual in a group to do psychodrama (PD) might be formulated thus, according to that individual's issue: *"How can **I** (the individual protagonist) improve **MY** working relationship with **MY** boss?"*. This form of words is very much zoom-lens focused on the individual's difficulties and would probably involve, psychodramatically-speaking, an examination of that individual's work atom, the feelings invoked there and that wonderful PD question "Does this feeling remind you of anything?". This, of course, may take us off into delving deep into the individual's childhood social atom and the realisation that the present-day manager reminds the protagonist of a key figure from that younger period of life, with whom there were issues that triggered feelings. Working down through the psychodramatic spiral, reparative work may be done at the younger age, followed by bringing the protagonist back to the present and, hopefully, a new and more functional role-relationship with the 'boss' in their present day, adult life – "He's not my Dad!"

What is maybe less frequently tackled is the understanding that any human situation has both personal (psychodramatic) and social (sociodramatic) roots.

A contract with a group of workers for a sociodramatic exploration of relationships at work, for example, might be phrased *"How can **WE** improve relationships between workers and their managers in this organisation?"*. This form of language focuses on the importance and impact of the wider social system. The exploration

in a sociodrama will, therefore, focus on the stakeholders and their impact on the present-day dynamics, the here-and now.

Here are some examples of sociodramatic questions that Rollo Browne has used in his work:

"How can we have healthy power relations in a detention centre?
How can we intervene in schools to bring spontaneity into stuck situations?
How can we work more effectively together to build reconciliation between black and white Australians?"

Browne, (2011 p. 19)

2. Protagonist-centered Sociodrama – the Australian version[7]

"I have found that a parallel social and personal warm-up emerges easily when I select a presenting dilemma or scene from an individual group member, set it out with key elements (characters, relationships) and plot line, then explore the social system and social forces using the spontaneity of the group. For example, I might interview auxiliaries in their roles about what is driving their behaviour rather than consult the protagonist."

Browne, (2011 p. 20)

Some UK PD trainers were amazed in Browne's Liverpool workshop and greatly encouraged by his permission-giving attitude to using personal situations as starters for SD explorations. We had imbibed the orthodoxy of the time (still alive and kicking in many quarters) that all SD enactments must be based on hypothetical situations, that personal situations were taboo as, well, just TOO PERSONAL! My perception is that this permission, as we saw it enacted, released a lot of highly connected, warmed-up energy and enthusiasm in the UK PD community to begin to incorporate SD more into their experiential work.

Such an SD, in the model we use based on Australian training, would be termed a *protagonist-centred sociodrama (PCS)* as it begins with an individual's situation, widened out horizontally to look at the social panorama, rather than deep exploration of the individual's psyche.[8]

Personally, I find this form an inspiring concept for many reasons:

– It links the personal and the social from the very beginning. Group participants, as in PD, are connected to the theme via the individual story, their own empathic connection and how the social system(s) being explored are relevant to their own lives;

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[7] NB This is different to the model of psychosociodrama or sociopsychodrama presented by Jana Damjanov in her chapter, based on the work of Monica Zuretti.

[8] When a topic is chosen either by the director and advertised prior to the session or chosen by the group itself, it is then termed a *group-centered sociodrama*, which is outside the scope of this chapter.

– PCS invites and enables exploration, engagement and participation in the wider system enactment by the whole group, not just a few chosen auxiliaries;
– Role-players are creatively free to develop roles as they wish and to bring in new roles to expand the system, not dependent on 'approval' from the protagonist – I see this as role expansion and it can bring in echoes of many other personal situations that exist in the group without the necessity for disclosure (which may well be neither desired nor appropriate, particularly perhaps in work-based situations);
– The protagonist may be invited to experience the drama through the observer role, as in 'mirror'. The situation s/he has contributed is given over to a group systemic exploration and the protagonist generally receives insight into some aspect of the story they had not previously realised which stems from the exploration of the social, not the personal system. The protagonist also has the right to step into any role at any time and add their own perspective;

"We agreed that G (the protagonist) would initially stay out of the action but was free to engage with it whenever she wanted, from any role, either as a role participant or as a double. This is what happened and the experience proved both cathartic and insightful for her."

Wiener, (2011. p.30)

– PCS is an alternative and equally valid way of exploring an individual's situation without going into the overtly therapeutic delve into personal history;
– The purpose is no longer to find a way for the protagonist to 'resolve' her/his personal situation through personal change – the purpose is to understand the situation from a wider role and system perspective, to perceive choices and options for action at a more systemic level, which may not have been seen before;
– Taking the focus off the protagonist greatly lessens the sense of individual self blame ('It's my fault', 'I'm not good enough', 'I'm a failure' etc.). It can also change perception of the 'other' and moves the wide-angle lens onto an examination of the social, cultural, educational and/or political systems which interact, causing, at least in part, the individual's distress;
– The director brings the drama back to the protagonist, often at the end as part of the sharing, as it was her/his story which stimulated the exploration, to check-in with how they have experienced the event.

Here are a few examples of PCS enactments I have directed:

– In a PCS looking at formerly good neighbour relations in the face of differing views on immigration, it had emerged that one set of neighbours harboured racist attitudes towards visitors to the protagonist's house. At the end, the protagonist acknowledged a much calmer internal sense of being and the desire to have a real, not inflamed, conversation with their former friend, the neighbour;

– In a PCS looking at the disempowerment of a facilitator at a conference, the protagonist was able to get in touch with compassion and understanding for the rage-filled 'disruptive' participant at yet another 'talking shop' on climate change;
– In a PCS looking at the family dynamics involved when a family member takes up the anti-vaccine position and how this can impact on the sense of safety for others, the isolation and loneliness of the 'rebel' to the established orthodoxy was appreciated by the protagonist.

3. Role theory

Morenian role theory as adapted in Australia came originally from Max Clayton in his book *Living Pictures of the Self* (Clayton, 1993), sadly now, I believe, out of print. It is also described in his chapter 'Relationships and Roles' in Paul Holmes (ed.) book *Psychodrama since Moreno: Innovations in Theory and Practice* (Routledge 2005).

Clayton's way of categorising and organising roles is perhaps easier to teach and use in action for the layman than the more complex psychological and analytical Morenian role theory, fully explained elsewhere (see Jana Damjanov's chapter in this book). Many Australian practitioners work in the organisational consultancy field, particularly doing role training, and this way of explaining role theory, in its pragmatic, practical and fairly simple application, seems to go down well with such groups and those in charge of contracting with the consultant for the work.

At MPV/SAM, in addition to learning the Morenian psychosomatic, social and psychodramatic roles, we also learned this 'additional' (based on Moreno and not incompatible) way of thinking about roles, as developed by Clayton. Although this method is largely referred to by Clayton as for use in a psychodramatic or role training context, it can also be used as an intervention in social systems, as attested to by Francis Batten, in his article 'Applying a Role Analysis in an organisational setting' (BPA Journal, Vol. 16).

All roles have three component parts: thoughts (cognitive), feelings (emotions) and behaviours (actions, expressed through words, tone of voice and body language). Behaviour is, of course, greatly influenced by thoughts and feelings.

Roles are said to be:

Under-developed – if the individual (or social group, or organisation) needs to develop their ability to enact a particular role e.g. someone with low self-esteem might be said to have an underdeveloped *assertive communicator* role;

Adequately or well-developed – if the role is a useful part of the *role repertoire* which is functioning adequately i.e. is competently enacted by the individual (or social group, or organisation) e.g. someone who regularly communicates clearly, honestly, directly with respect for self and others could be said to have an *adequate* or *well-developed assertive communicator* role;

Over-developed – if the enactment of the role is detrimental to the functioning of an individual (or social group, or organisation) in a particular situation e.g. someone

who frequently communicates in a way which puts others down, might be said to have an *over-developed critical controller* role.

Roles can also be evaluated in terms of *role adequacy* for self, significant others and society.

Progressive Roles	– Well-developed – Developing
Coping Roles	– Moving Towards – Moving Away – Moving Against
Fragmenting Roles	– Diminishing – Unchanging

Table 1. Categories of Roles, as developed by Max Clayton

Progressive roles: these are the roles we are motivated to expand in our lives, which develop our abilities and creativity, our growing or learning edge – coming from a 'Growth Mindset', as the current organisational jargon would phrase it. They may be said to be:

– Well-developed (high degree of competence and of comfort in enacting them) or
– Developing (a role in which the individual is practising and learning how they may incorporate the role into their own role repertoire).

Coping Roles: these are our survival mechanisms, often habitual ways of dealing with the stressors of everyday living. These are sub-divided into three categories as in Table 1 where 'moving' is in relation to another person or group. These can be seen to correlate to the defence mechanisms of Pairing, Flight or Fight. For example, in a new group, people will cope with their anxieties by:

– Moving Towards someone they feel some degree of safety with (Pairing)
– Moving Away from others and staying separate and unconnected (Flight) or
– Moving Against others (often the leader) through challenge and inciting conflict (Fight), enabling them to defeat the (perceived) enemy.

Fragmenting Roles: these are reactive, often 'knee-jerk', role responses, frequently dating back to much earlier survival strategies (for example, from childhood) which have outgrown their usefulness in present day life: they do not serve the individual well and are 'fragmenting' the person's sense of inner integration and ability to manage the complexities of life. These are divided into two types:

– Diminishing – the person has a growing ability in the trigger situations to creatively find new more functional *role responses* so the fragmenting role

diminishes in power and importance (so it may, over time, become termed a progressive developing role);

– Unchanging – the individual perhaps has little insight into these roles and may be largely unaware of when and how they are enacted. He or she may need clear feedback from others before the role is sufficiently brought into consciousness so that new choices can be made.

Some beautiful examples of the usefulness of these categorisations can be seen in Martha Lindsell's chapter in this book, '*Working with Horses*', where she analyses the role relationships developed by the horses in her small herd with the young people she brings into contact with them, naming the roles in both person and animal as she sees them emerging.

It is often useful to ask the question, when a role-actor brings a character onto the stage "So what kind of (*role*) are you?", inviting some more specific descriptor. So, if someone brings onto the stage a role of, say, *Nurse* (a social role), the answer to our question might be "Overwhelmed". An *Overwhelmed Nurse* can express a much more specific perspective on the situation being explored than simply *Nurse* and gives access to a deeper, more clearly-defined connection for both the role-player and the audience. The *role-holding* may be further developed through the use of the *role interview*, either by the director or other members of the group.

This is a brief gallop through some of the basic principles of role theory Australian style, Clayton's extension of Moreno into perhaps more user-friendly terminology in today's world. Further examples may be seen in the chapters by Jos Razzell and Jennie Le Mare.

Summary

Every school of training will have its own heroic teachers who will bring their own style (the individual) and the way and the how of what they have learned themselves from their own heroic teachers (the social) to the development of the sociodrama culture in which they practise their art. One of the things the PERFORMERS group have attempted to make sense of throughout the project, is to listen to and value our differences. It has not been easy, nor is there, currently, a resolution. There is, however, a continuing conversation.

In this chapter, I have attempted to show something of the value and learning members of the UK's team in this project have gained from our longstanding historical connection with practitioners and trainers from the Australia/Aoteoroa New Zealand psychodrama and sociodrama world.

Finally, opinions as to "what is sociodrama" abound and this chapter is not the place to go into them all. I would like to end, however, with a few such thoughts from my own heroic teachers, both direct and indirect, through the lineage of those they trained:

"Warren (Parry): Sociodrama, for me, is essentially exploring the relationships between the individual and the social or group systems that they interface with. It's not that the individual isn't included in that at the deepest level. He or she is, but the focus is primarily on the individual's relationship with the core groups and the collective psyche.

Rollo (Browne): And the purpose?

Warren: The purpose is to gain a systemic view, multiple perceptions. That's also the purpose in psychodrama but the intention is different."

<div align="right">Browne, R. (2016), op. cit. p.32</div>

"Sociodrama is a learning method that creates deep understanding of the social systems and social forces that shape us individually and collectively."

Browne, R. 'Sociodrama with a Marketing Team' in *Sociodrama in a Changing World* (2011), p. 12

"What we are doing is simply assisting a group to tell a story. "

<div align="right">Ron Wiener – verbal communication</div>

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Sociopsychodrama: Living Sociometry, Sociodrama and Psychodrama

Jana Damjanov

Summary

In this text you will read about sociopsychodrama and how it is connected to the roots of Morenian role theory and living sociometry. You will also be able to learn about sociopsychodrama through practical examples of peace work with people from the former Yugoslavia, and with women with disabilities and Roma adolescents.

Keywords

Sociopsychodrama! What is it, what does it mean? Why do I use this term and see it as one method? What experiences led me to this idea and how I understand Moreno's theory? Can we do sociodrama without any ideas about psychodrama or can we do psychodrama without knowing about sociodrama?

My sociopsychodramatic road started in 2015, when I met Monica Zuretti at the FEPTO conference and annual meeting in Bonn, Germany. I had read beforehand about psychosociodrama and sociopscyhodrama mainly from authors from South America – Brazil and Argentina. Meeting Monica Zuretti made things clearer for me in an experiential way. It also gave me a new perspective of looking at Moreno's theory and philosophy, and at the methods of sociodrama and psychodrama that he created. I could understand, through my encounter with Monica Zuretti's work, how the processes of psychodrama and sociodrama need to work together in an integrated way, and that it is possible but not necessary to separate them. My ideas expanded when I went to the sociodrama conference on Kos, where I met Monica Westberg and many other colleagues: my experiences here reassured me that my thinking and understanding of sociopsychodrama was correct. My understanding now is that sociodrama and psychodrama need to be together when we work with Moreno's concepts, his theory and philosophy. Moreno himself made no division of sociometry, psychodrama and sociodrama as methods, only of their directions and procedures.

Moreno's Role Theory

To explain the method of sociopsychodrama, one needs to explain Moreno's role theory. Often in my practice, people asked me: "What is role?" There are many explanations of what roles are, but in our method of sociodrama and psychodrama roles are very important, they are one of the main tools "items" with which we operate. So, what is role? We can say that roles are some sort of mental maps that help human beings orientate themselves in the world around them. It is important to notice that not only human beings have roles. Animals also have roles, but the repertoire of their roles is much narrower than that of humans. This is also why animals have simpler lives and humans have much more complicated lives. Moreno used to say that humanity would not need psychotherapy if a mother could be a mother, a father be a father, a doctor be a doctor, etc. But that is a dream of a different society. The clearest way to compare humans to animals is to narrow down the comparison to mammals, since mammals learn from their parents, and humans are mammals. So, we see that roles belong to both the human and the natural world. They also appear in interaction with other subjects or with the surroundings in which we live. Roles are dynamic and developmental and are necessary for forming psychic structures in our brains. For humans, roles are multidimensional, they have different levels and different layers, and they develop in different matrices that form our self: identity matrix, social matrix and cosmic matrix.

The etymology of the word role explains itself. In old French it was a scroll of paper with text for actors, while in old Latin (rotula) the meaning was 'little wheel'. Perhaps the image of the wheel explains the rounded shape of a role and the fact that roles are flexible and developing all the time. For example, some roles are both individual and social (social roles), whereas some are connected to the body function (psychosomatic roles); and there are the roles that Moreno called psychodramatic roles, which are all our internalised roles, i.e. combinations of the psychosomatic, collective and individual roles. Perhaps we need to reflect more upon the psychodramatic role?

What would be the first role? Is it the idea that the baby is one with the mother? The baby after being born does not differentiate itself from the mother, from the breast, the nipple, the milk… There is a sense of all-identity and oneness. Or is the first role perhaps chaos itself, since the baby is disorganised in a cognitive way? It does appear to me that the first role is chaos – not differentiating oneself from anything (from the mother, the breast, etc). Then the second psychodramatic role that emerges, which brings safety to the baby, is the idea of oneness: being one with the mother or caregiver (for the children who do not have a mother). It is interesting to reflect on these roles, which Moreno called "psychodramatic roles", since they are the roles that we internalise throughout our lives.

The discussion about what role is belongs to the behavioural and social sciences, as well as to drama and theatre. Moreno's role theory covers behavioural, social and philosophical elements of human beings and humanity, but it also attempts to address our relations to everything around us, even the cosmos itself. From the perspective of

Morenian theory and philosophy, it is very important to say that each role also has its complementary role. Not counter role, as some theorists think, but complementary role. There is no teacher without a student, no mother without a child, etc. When we concede that roles are complementary, it means that they are equal and that, for example, it is not just the teacher who teaches, students also teach their teachers. Everything is relational and connected according to Moreno's theory and philosophy. With that in mind, we also have direction for how to do our methods of sociodrama, psychodrama, sociopsychodrama, psychosociodrama and sociometry.

Moreno's role theory is behavioural, relational and developmental and is connected to his theory of the spontaneity and development of a child. To understand his role theory, one must understand that we are developing, as well as our roles, in the different matrices of our identity. The matrix, as a term, explains the inter- and intra-connectedness of our experiences, which include elements of past, present and future. At the same time, the inter- and intra-connectedness of the matrices of human identity cover the network of connections in one human, but also in humans in groups: this network of connections exists between subject, environment, family, society, culture and all that surrounds a human being. To explain better how this theory is behavioural, relational and developmental, we have to understand that the behavioural manifestation of a role emerges in relation to another role and has the possibility to develop. I will try to give an example through the roles of baby and mother. Both roles emerge at the moment of the baby's birth. The role of a mother does not appear before there is a baby (we can apply this also to adopted parents); these two roles start developing through their relationship and continue to develop over time with both child and mother learning as they develop. In this way, the behavioural element of the role, i.e. how the role represents itself, also develops. This is also why every role has its complementary role, and how the two roles help each other to develop and evolve. It is also important to note that there can be more than two roles in a relationship (for instance, mother–child–father, or supervisor–trainer–client–therapist). Each of the roles in these relationships has its complementarity. In the complementarity, there is a potential for growth and healing. Moreno explains the development of a role through the different stages of a child's development.

> Every role is a fusion of private and collective elements. A role is composed of two parts – its collective denominator and its individual differential. It may be useful to differentiate between role taking – which is the taking of a finished, fully established role which does not permit the individual any variation, any degree of freedom. Role- playing permits the individual some degree of freedom, and role creating which permits the individual a high degree of freedom, as for instance, the spontaneity player. (Moreno, 1977)

To understand role theory better, I feel it is very important to explain the three concepts of the Philosophy of the Moment: locus nascendi, status nascendi and matrix. These three factors represent three views of the same process. "There is nothing without its locus, no locus without its status nascendi, and no status nascendi without

its matrix. The locus of a flower, for instance, is in the bed it's growing. Its status nascendi is that of a growing thing as it springs from the seed. Its matrix is the fertile seed, itself." (Moreno, 1977) So, to translate' Moreno's poetic explanation, the fertile seed would be the identity matrix in which the child grows. This identity matrix is created as an encounter between the people who created the child and the encounter of their matrices (identity, social and cosmic).

The first universe as Moreno called it, or the *all identity,* is the moment when the child is born. There is no real differentiation of any role from any other in this period of life. The very first role which is independent and we all have when we come out from the mother's womb, and it happens very quickly, is the role of a breather (Zuretti, 2017). It is the first independent role that appears in the living human. Its complementary role is the role of cosmos through the air that is inhaled and which connects everything around us (personal communication, Zuretti, 2020). Then, in the first few days, new roles begin to develop. They are all psychosomatic roles and they develop in relation to the others who are caregivers for the child. It is also necessary to understand that the role of mother and role of father are also just being born and are also undeveloped. The first matrix of emerging of roles is called the identity matrix (Zuretti, 2007). The roles appear before the self and so create the self of the child. The action (breathing) comes before consciousness. In the matrix of identity, co-being, co-action and co-experience amplify the importance of the child's relationship with others and things around them. This matrix of identity can be viewed as a place where the child's first process of emotional and cognitive learning happens, mainly through psychosomatic roles: eater, sleeper, eliminator of urine and faeces. In the matrix of identity, as well as in every matrix of identity, roles have complementary roles. The process of complementarity is best described through the roles of giver and receiver. The matrix of identity is the social placenta for the child's development.

According to Moreno, at a certain point in the child's development, with the beginning of the *second universe,* personality becomes more differentiated and divided.

> Two sets of warming up process form – the one towards reality acts and the other towards fantasy acts – and begin to organize themselves. Out of the breach between reality and fantasy, two new sets of roles emerge. As long as this breach did not exist, all real and fantasy components were merged into one set of roles, psychosomatic roles. Forms of role playing are now emerging which correlate the infant to persons, things, and goals in an actual setting outside of himself, and to persons, objects and goals in an actual setting outside of him (Moreno, 1977).

These are called social roles and psychodramatic roles. Social roles are all the roles that belong both to the individual and to the collective, all of which can be part of the cultural conserve of the country/place/region from which they emerged. I will give an example from a sociodrama training meeting that happened during the PERFORMERS project. We had a proposal to create a few sociodramatic scenes. I offered something from my experience working as the human resources manager at a factory in Serbia that produces cables. It was a scene where I needed to enter the office of

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the factory's general manager. In that scene, there are four important roles, general manager, big padded door, general manager's secretary, and me as human resources manager. It is important to note that this scene happens in an international group. So, as is normal in sociodrama, people from the group can take the roles they want or feel like trying. Different people from different European countries, with their different social matrices, took the role of the general manager. But my important learning and lesson from this was how important it is to take the cultural conserve into consideration when we work, especially in groups where we have different cultural conserves. Because the role taking of the general manager in Serbia, without previous knowledge and information about the specific cultural conserve and social context, brings into that specific role many other cultural conserves that belong to different countries. It is not the same as the role of general manager in Great Britain, Hungary, Portugal, Sweden, even though it is a social role, since social matrices of different countries are different. We can understand this through other social roles that belong to different social matrixes and have different cultural contexts and cultural conserves.

Cultural conserve is a theoretical concept based on Moreno's theory and philosophy. It is very much related to the concept of spontaneity. Moreno explains cultural conserve and spontaneity as polar concepts, i.e. they are two poles of the same dimension. One part, which represents the ideal exponent of spontaneity, would be the totally spontaneous creator, while the ideal exponent of the other is the total cultural conserve (Moreno, 1977). Every cultural conserve, in order to be created, needs spontaneity at its very beginning. To better understand the concept of cultural conserve, I give the examples of a book, folklore, music, language, religion, etc. The cultural conserve has something that is fixed, since something that belongs to the cultural conserve is something that also belongs to the past, not just to the present. Some cultural conserves are well taken care of by society so they tend to be saved for the future, not changed. Spontaneity is infinite and doesn't have anything fixed. We could say that we can also measure the health of the social matrix by understanding how many cultural conserves are preserved and how much spontaneity can take place. Spontaneity, on the other hand, belongs to the present among here-and-now concepts, i.e. to the philosophy of the moment. So, every cultural conserve starts with a spontaneous action. What will happen to the cultural conserve that was once created is a matter for the social matrix. Is it going to be open and will society be capable of changing it or is it fixed with the potential of becoming robopathy, opposing the principles of spontaneity and creativity? It is important to understand that society and the social matrix need cultural conserves, although there are some cultural conserves that need to be questioned because they tend to preserve the social matrix as it is, without the possibilities of change.

I will just give a few examples of different social roles: psychologist, doctor, patient, client, lawyer, cleaning lady, shopper, addict, etc. Social roles can also be something that is not related to human beings, i.e. the healthcare system, religion, a boat, a table, jail, the media, university, a country, the local community, especially when they have been put up in a sociodramatic scene. So, all the social roles emerge

from the social matrix, and have both individual and collective (social, historical, cultural) elements. In this way, we can understand that the social matrix of our identity, like the identity matrix, has different dimensions in terms of time – the past, the present, the future – but also the historical perspective of phenomena we are playing or acting out, such as cultural aspects, political aspects, etc.

Psychodramatic roles are the roles that are created within ourselves through the experiences we have in life, i.e. all the roles we internalise throughout life and which are played out in the psychodramatic or sociodramatic scene. They belong to the "truth" of a person (in terms of psychodrama) and to the "truth of group" (in terms of sociodrama) (Teszary, Damjanov, personal communication, 2020). They are a combination of the individual, collective and fantasy. A psychodramatic role can be the role of mother, but it can also be the role of God, death, a tree, a family table, a fairy, a star, etc. When they are played out, they need the scene and surplus reality to be role played and acted out.

As Moreno said, role playing comes before the emergence of self, action is before conscious being. Roles do not emerge from the self, although the self can emerge from roles (Moreno, 1977). His theory of the development of roles is explained through the development of a child, although it can also be applied to the development of groups and to observing and understanding group processes. For example, we can say that every group has an initial stage of genesis which is chaos (the first psychodramatic role), and then, after differentiation, the feeling of oneness and cohesion become very important, in order for a group to be formed (group and I are one, Mother and I are one). Later on, we have more differentiation in terms of the roles and phenomena that emerge from a group and that belong mainly to the social matrix. Of course, this also depends on the type of group with which we are working and the contract through which we are working. Is it a one-day ad-hoc workshop group, is it an ongoing therapy group, is it a series of workshops for the same group, etc.? But we can also apply this theory to the development of different groups.

The cosmic matrix of our identity is very nicely explained in Moreno's quote from *Who Shall Survive?*

> Human being is more than a psychological, biological, social and cultural entity – it has cosmic entity. Reducing the human's responsibility to purely psychological, social and biological life gets him being alienated. Because of this, it is equally responsible for the entire universe, all forms of being and all the values, or its responsibility does not mean absolutely nothing!

It is important to note how he describes "cosmic entity", which I understand is his way of explaining the perspective of the co-creation and co-responsibility of human beings, who are not just related to other human beings but to all that is around us which we see and do not see. The cosmos itself was for Moreno the place of infinite spontaneity and creation, not just for his ideas but also for basic principles of astronomy, physics and quantum physics. It is important to look at this part of human identity when we think of issues related to climate change as well as to the

situation of Covid pandemic. In terms of co-creation and co-responsibility, we can easily understand how individual, social and cosmic elements are interconnected.

After explaining role theory and identity matrices, perhaps I can respond to the question "what is sociopsychodrama?" It is a method that embraces both social and identity matrices; it is a method that takes into consideration the fact that there is no clear division between society and the individual, because many personal issues are connected with social hierarchy levels and their dimensions. In terms of a group, whether we will use sociopsychodrama, psychosociodrama, psychodrama or socio-drama depends on the contract. After the contract has been made with the group, for me, whether something will become psychosociodrama (starting with the individual matrix and protagonist centred work and then going to the social matrix where all group members can take part) or sociopsychodrama (starting from a social matrix where all group members take part in action and then going into individuals' identity matrices) is a matter of direction.

Living Sociometry

For many years, I conducted integrative TA and sociopsychodrama workshops, with a colleague of mine who is a psychiatrist and TA psychotherapist, supervisor and trainer. These workshops were very popular and covered many issues – love rela-tionships, partnership issues, attachment issues, conflicts and how to resolve them, communication and how to improve it, how we deal with finances and why do we do it that way, transgenerational approach, etc. This collaboration lasted for seven years. We would have six or seven workshops per year always with 20 to 30 participants. At one of the first conferences of the Serbian Association for Psychotherapy, we had the most highly attended workshop, with 80 participants. These were ad-hoc groups that lasted for one or two days or, in the case of the workshop at the conference, the group that met lasted for only two hours. No matter the workshop or context, at the beginning we would always do a sociometry experiment which looked like this: we would ask participants to choose someone with whom they would like to talk and be in a pair with without previously knowing the other person. Later on, they would pick another partner. This is how we would form groups. But before forming the groups, people would talk in pairs about why they picked each other and if they found anything similar between them. Both in pairs and in groups, their choices turned out to be impeccable. The pairs would have similar family issues and similar stories related to their love life and choices of partner, or a similar way of dealing with finances. As we would say within the framework of our method – it was a wonderful tele phenomenon. Sociometry is a scientific method that measures relations within a group, and tele is measured using a sociometric test. Tele represents the distance between people, but is not measured with usual measurements. It is the distance between two people in terms of recognising, encountering and experience each other. I once led a workshop in Sarajevo, Bosnia, in which there was a woman who worked on her role of mother during the war (she had been in a part of Sarajevo

from which she could not escape for four years so she could not see her children for all that time). She chose a very young woman who attended the workshop to play herself in the role of mother. There were other women of her age who were mothers but she picked this young woman. In sharing, we found out that it was tele that brought them together in the psychodrama scene, a young woman who had been in the same part of Sarajevo during the war and who was cut off from her father for four years, who was at the other end of town.

Sociometry in groups happens no matter if we who work with groups ask specific questions or not. Every group, no matter whether it is small, medium or large, has its own organic way of developing, leading to different sociometry at different stages. For both the sociodramatist and psychodramatist it is important to be able to note and follow up the living sociometry of the group. In this way they can understand and examine why some people connect in pairs, triads or small subgroups whereas some do not pick anyone and remain alone. Sociometry is not only focused on positive choices (with whom you would like to share a room), but also on negative choices (with whom you would not like to share a room) or neutral choices, which have the possibility of developing into positive or negative choices.

We can look at sociometry as a basic (fundamental) language, as Moreno said in *Who Shall Survive?* (Moreno, 1953). According to Monica Zuretti, it is a language that is changing all the time in the context of human relations, groups and their development. It is actually about how people make choices (Kristoffersen, 2017), so we need to look into it carefully. It is why there is a difference between living sociometry and something that is called "cold" sociometry. In the living sociometry, you see how, organically, by the nature of encounters, people make choices and you can explore this without taking away spontaneity and creativity but putting spontaneity in front. Living sociometry develops spontaneity and creativity. In cold sociometric procedures we "froze" spontaneity by doing sociometric procedures. I remember how this became very clear to me after participating in Monica Zuretti's workshop in Trondheim, Norway. The workshop was on the issue of living sociometry and Monica Zuretti asked a very simple question after one of our coffee breaks, "Who was with whom during the breaks and what did you talk about?" The group formed very organically into natural dyads, triads and small subgroups; someone was alone because they were talking on their phone. Out of this sociometric question, a psychodramatic work emerged. Actually, this was living sociometry because it was following the group process through a democratic way of facilitating the group. For me, after this experience, investigating sociometry in groups was never the same. I could understand how to look at sociometry from different roles and different perspectives, not just as a facilitator of a group, but also as a participant. We can see living sociometry at conferences, for example, even though we don't examine it. We easily see sociometry in with whom we take breakfast, with whom we spend time at workshops, with whom we eat dinner, with whom we spend our free time, who is alone most of the time, etc. We can apply sociometry to every meeting we have with another person or group of people. As with most of Moreno's theory and philosophy, it is a living situation and part of the existence of living beings. Even

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animals and plants have sociometry of their own. So, I prefer to think and write about "living sociometry", as Monica Zuretti and Jonathan Moreno call it, because it is not something that is static, but very dynamic (Kristoffersen, 2017). It is also important to look into other ways of doing sociometry and reflect upon them and what difference one approach makes to groups in comparison to other approaches.

I remember when I started my training in psychodrama, not much attention was given to sociometry, we learned about it mainly as a method that helps the leader of a group understand what the important qualities of that group are. We learned it by splitting the group into those who say yes to a question and those who say no (there was also the option to stay in the middle). But if we look into the movement alone that this way of doing sociometry creates, it is very static and fixed, without many possibilities. It also instigates splitting into groups because if you have one part of the room representing yes and the other part representing no you end up with the two groups standing opposite each other in different parts of room. Someone who facilitates a group process must be aware of these things, especially if the group has transgenerational traces of war trauma (for example with those from former Yugoslavia). On the other hand, if we work in a circle and ask participants to approach the centre of the circle as a response to a question (closer to the centre of circle is yes, and more to the edge of the circle is no) that makes a difference in terms of movement and what it creates for the atmosphere of the group. Let's try to imagine these two approaches by asking a very simple question: "Who has a sibling?" If we split people in two parts of a room, we will have two groups (maybe three) standing separate from each other. If we do it in a circle, we will see small subgroups of people forming around the question, and we all still stand as part of the circle, no matter our response.

Through this example, I want to point out how very important it is for facilitators of groups to be able to reflect with participants about sociometry, because it is the only way to develop and understand it better. It is very important to take into consideration movement, time and space when we explore and look into the sociometry of a person or group.

Sociometry is a part of all our identity matrices and that is why I mention time, space and movement. There is no fixed sociometry, it changes and moves all the time. That is why a sociogram is something that 'measures' a moment, it shows the relations in one group at a specific moment in time and point in space. We can make a sociogram one day and tomorrow it will change. But it is also a question of what we do with the sociogram. This is why I think it is better when a sociogram is not just done on paper but with action and movement. I remember once my mother, who worked as an English teacher in a primary school, called me to intervene in a class where she was the teacher. She had a problem because the school psychologist did a sociogram and just gave 'the results' to the class. It created more conflict and more destructive behaviour, because the dynamics of the group were just thrown back at the group using fixed roles. Roma children and poor children were alienated. There were also a few stars in the class, some of them because of their grades, although mainly because of their higher status in society. I could not intervene because I was

not a part of the education and school system, but I learned then that it is very important to find a way to teach sociometry to primary and secondary school teachers, as well as how to deal with peer bullying and harassment from the perspective of sociopsychodrama.

After that, journalists from a very famous teen magazine in Serbia asked me to come to their TeenTalk Conference where they wanted me to talk about bullying and harassment among young people. They told me they would like the talk to be interactive but that there would be more than 80 teenagers (aged from 12 to 18) and they were not sure that they would want to do anything. My first thought was to do sociometry. I started speaking and said that I did not like speaking from behind a desk, so I moved to the front. We were in an amphitheatre and they were all sitting around me. I told them that I was very curious about this issue, about peer bullying and harassment and that, if they are OK with it, I would like them to move in response to this question: Have you ever experienced bullying or harassment, either as a victim or a witness? If not, they can remain sitting. What happened is that all of them stood up and came to me, because there was no one unfamiliar with this kind of experience. Further sociometric questions were about deeper understanding of different aspects of bullying and harassment. With sociometry, we were all part of it and they were all very happy to share their experiences through action – living sociometry. I know that war and violence are part of their (and my) social matrix, in a transgenerational way, but also through recent history. We are all together in that experience from which we need to get out, to grow and develop.

That is why we worked through the next sociometric questions and stayed there for most of the time we had left until the end of the debate and panel. The questions were, who would like to try out the role of victim, the role of bully and the role of bystander? So, the group split into three groups, they exchanged important messages and role reversed from their positions to other positions that were present. By the end we had found that, as a group, most support and work needs to be done for bystanders, so that they can help bring more peace and integration both for victim and bully. We had a very long sharing afterwards.

Two years after this event I created a program with my colleague Lidija Vasiljevic for the Serbian Ministry of Education on this subject that was accepted. I could start teaching people who work in schools how to do sociometry more efficiently and how to try to make changes with role reversal and by empowering bystanders of peer bullying and harassment. Gently, with the action way of using sociometry, one can do many things to improve human relationships. I want to point out that tolerance, democracy and peace need to be taught from a very early age. When I say gently, I also mean that we need to create a spontaneous atmosphere in order to be able to explore and work on living sociometry. There are so many ways we can do this, but not if it freezes the spontaneity, which is the key factor for working with groups in sociopsychodrama. "Sociometry can well be considered the cornerstone of a still underdeveloped science of democracy". (Moreno, 1953).

Sociopsychodrama through examples

Work in the former Yugoslavia region

When I was nine years old, my parents got divorced and, at the same time, Yugoslavia fell apart and the civil war started. Later on I worked as a psychodrama (and sociodrama) trainer and teacher in Slovenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia. When I was 17 years old, NATO bombing started in my hometown, Novi Sad, and my country, Serbia. I was coming back from my extracurricular activities (drama classes where we acted in Serbian and French) with my colleagues and classmates. Until that evening, I did not believe that there was a chance that we could be bombed by the USA and other members of NATO. So, as someone who has lived in a country tormented by war and as someone who has been bombed, I understand the development of my complementary role in the last 15 years. For me, a complementary role to the role of a person who experienced war and bombing is the role of the pacifier and the one that sees peace by peaceful means. Here's an anecdote with peace theorist and future researcher Professor Jan Oberg, a student and collaborator of Johan Galtung, the founder of peace theory. I met him at his lecture about peace theory at the Faculty of Politics in Belgrade, Serbia in 2016. He talked about many things regarding society. One of the things he asked us was to think about why this society that we live in was built in such way that it has more monuments dedicated to war rather than peace. I found that a sociodramatic question that could be asked in different ways in different cultures. As the only psychologist and sociopsychodramatist among students and teachers of political sciences I was an alien at his lecture. After the lecture, he and I went to talk over a cup of coffee about sociopsychodrama and my interest in peace studies and non-violent conflict resolution. He asked me what I would do if I were among world politicians who are thinking of activation of the nuclear bomb. I told him I would ask them to reverse roles with the nuclear bomb. He was astonished that our method could have such a strong effect.

I would like to share here one specific work from a training group that I worked with. This work started from the group and ended with a group, so we could say it was socio-psycho-sociodrama. The group in which this specific work took place had members from former Yugoslavia.

It was almost the end of an intermediate training group, one of our last meetings. There was silence in the group and I suggested that we put a chair in the middle of the circle to see if there was anyone who wished to role reverse with the silence. Group members started moving to action. Then, one trainee from Bosnia and Herzegovina, from the city of Mostar, started crying from the role of the silence. I asked her how she connected her silence with herself personally or with something from her identity matrix. She responded that there was much silence in her own family and that she would like to work on it. We moved from the group to the scene. We started from the here-and-now and went back to her childhood and the silence that was present in her family. She was very sad and angry with her parents, who were silent and telling her and her brother that they should not confront the children who were bullying and

harassing them because they were Bosnians. To explain the context better, they live in the part of the town that belonged after the war to Croats, and they are Bosnians and Muslims. So they were been bullied a lot by their peers and would come home very upset by whatever happened when they were playing. My trainee especially felt very much excluded. But both of her parents would advise her and her brother not to confront the bullies, nor would they go and talk with the parents about the situation. The scene seemed very stuck at one point and it seemed as if we were confronting something much bigger, something that caused silence and fear and sadness in her parents, so I doubled. She said that war caused the silence and started speaking about how her mother would wash white clothes and put them on the balcony and how neighbours would throw things at the freshly clean clothes, saying horrible things. She also remembered how her mother never said anything but would just take the clothes down and wash them again. Her father too was silent. I suggested putting behind her parents the role of the war and asked her if she wished to address it. At that moment, I looked at all the members of the group and understood that they too might want to say something to the war, since all of us have been affected by it, recently and transgenerationally. All group members accepted this suggestion and stood in the scene with her expressing their feelings, experiences and thoughts about war. After that we did the sharing and processing.

Even now, the group sometimes reflects on this work because it was deeply meaningful and represented the macro level of our society in this micro cosmos of our training group. I thought very much after this work, and still do, that a lot more reconciliation work needs to be done here in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, and that people need to work through traumas that have never truly been worked through. Even in the war in the 1990s, part of the problem arose because no one from the different national entities had worked through their traumas from the Second World War and so much conflict had stayed in the social matrix unresolved. So, with strong media manipulation, these different nations could stir up old conflicts and start working against each other, even though they had been part of the same country for a long time. Of course, this former Yugoslavia war story is much more complex, I am giving just one perspective of the manifold layers. However, I believe that reconciliation and conflict resolution, and work on transgenerational trauma are much needed in this region.

Work with Roma adolescents

When I was a child, my grandfather would take me to a place in town that our government at that time had created. Nobody went there except for Roma people. Local people called the place Bangladesh, and it was on the outskirts of my hometown, Novi Sad. We would go there to pick up his friend Milan, who worked with my grandfather in our vineyard and fruit yard. At that time, my grandfather used to have a white Lada Riva, a Russian car, and many children would run after us. It was a completely new situation for me. We would always get many sweets and chocolates from my grandmother and clothes to take to Bangladesh when we went to

meet Milan. She would say, give this to Milan's children, they do not have as much as we do. So I would have this task to take sweets, clothes and chocolates and give them to children in Bangladesh and to Milan's children. He had three children, two daughters and a son who was mentally challenged. I remember how we would play and I was a little bit shy but they were so relaxed and so I could relax with them. We would jump into hay and lay down eating the sweets together. I also remember how their house was a little bit different from others in this settlement. Later I learned from my grandfather that he did not think that it was fair that the government made only one-room houses for each Roma family, so he helped Milan build another room where they could have a kitchen and dining table.

These stories came into my mind when I started thinking of the project I worked on, created by CARE International. It was a project supporting Roma girls to go to school and to continue their education. Roma people were part of my social matrix from a very early age and I never had the prejudices of others, thanks to my grandparents. I also very much liked Gypsy music because of my mother and grandmother, who used to listen to Russian Gypsy music. I realised how the role of Gypsy child is a part of my matrix of identity and how understanding a child from a difficult economic background is a part of my transgenerational perspective, and in that way also part of my identity matrix.

The CARE International project mainly focused on creating a performance about the discrimination against Roma girls in schools. It used Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed. My contract was to work with a large group of Roma adolescents from two different towns in Vojvodina, the northern region of Serbia. The other task I had was to have a support psychodrama group for the group of Roma adolescents from Novi Sad. My first condition was that if I work with these groups, they should not be homogenous, but have non-Roma adolescents so we can see the macro perspective in the microcosm of our groups. Project organisers agreed with my request.

In the large group, which aimed to be the primary goal of the project (to extract stories that would build the performance), we did a lot of sociometry and played drama games. I remember how group members spoke in many different languages, saying the same words, and how this was important to them as adolescents. We could hear the same words in Serbian, Hungarian and Roma. When it came to finding the stories, it was more difficult, but through games and strong support from my colleagues and me, the stories emerged. Very personal, very strong stories. My belief was that, since group members came to the main group through supporting groups, they could more easily share in main group.

The small psychodrama group that I led taught me things at different levels. I learned that I needed to change my perception of the role of psychodrama director and facilitator of group process in order to make true contact with group members. Specifically, I had to become much closer to this group of adolescents if I wanted them to stay and work. For example, I would share my cigarettes with them and we would smoke together at the school window where we were provided a workspace. That room was very dirty and so the school thought we should clean it before we started working. After a few sessions, I talked about this to the managers of the

project, explaining that in a certain way cleaning this room was a repetition from the group's social matrix. Most Roma people in Serbia work for the public cleaning service and take out garbage. I thought that if we were working to support them in continuing their education, supporting them to make and create new roles that would help them lead different lives, the school and the workshop organisers needed to treat them differently. No-one was interested in my opinion, so I proposed that we move to my psychotherapeutic office, even though it was not a part of the project. So we started working in a clean space where group members could come and be free of their usual roles and to do and share what they wanted.

Throughout our sessions the group was ambivalent about receiving education on one side while earning money on the other. When we started working, a lot of them talked about how pointless school is when you can earn money directly after primary school. I used techniques from art therapy and very simple warm-ups. One of the main activities was an empty chair that brought up a lot of work and many encounters in this group. During the course of the work, in both the large group (for preparing the performance) and in the smaller, support group, the students' attitude toward school and learning started to change, especially within the female part of the group. Non-Roma adolescents were also very cooperative and supportive.

Together, they also created a performance as the Theatre of the Oppressed that played in many schools and at many festivals all over the country. Our result was very good, most of the girls from our groups went on with their education and enrolled in either secondary school or pursued other forms of education.

I encountered some issues that were impossible to resolve without working through the whole system, although this project did not have such an aim or the resources necessary. One day, after our group session finished, a boy from the group approached me saying that his parents have found him a wife and that he has to get married, although he did not want to. He asked for my help to stop the wedding. I could not help him, so I talked to others from the project, but there was no solution. Arranged marriages are part of the Roma social matrix and if we wanted to do something about it we would have to work with everyone in order to understand it. Roma people have been excluded from this society for many years without the economic support available to others and their life span is much shorter, so if they did not marry at an early age and have children it might present a risk to them as a community. This small example is an illustration of the wider economic imbalance faced by the Roma.

During the period of Yugoslavia's existence many Roma people had jobs, although they became unemployed when the country fell apart. I remember at this point my grandfather's friend Milan, who got an apartment from the state during the Yugoslavia period. My grandfather told him that he would end up selling the apartment and going back to Bangladesh because there were no Roma in the part of town where the flat was. And what my grandfather said happened: Milan moved back to worse conditions in Bangladesh to be with his own people.

To work on integration with people who have different cultural conserves and different cultural contexts, one needs to role reverse with that cultural conserve in

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order to understand it. To be able to integrate two different communities, one needs to understand that it is an encounter between two different cultural contexts, where there are some things that are similar and some differences. Both need to be taken into consideration. With the work we do as sociodramatists and psychodramatists, we need to help create and then explore a space between these two worlds, which might struggle to communicate, we need to create a new space where a new cultural conserve can start to develop. That is integration in a democratic way. Other methods are closer to assimilation.

WORK WITH WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

In the project where I was hired to work as a psychodramatist with women with disabilities, the aim was to work through issues of sexuality and femininity. I also requested that we work with a group that consisted of women with and without disabilities, so that we could see this issue through the role of women in society. My request was accepted and we built the project. One part of the project was having a sociopsychodrama group that would work through issues of sexuality and femininity. Other elements were lectures about the history of sexuality and writing a play about this work. A member of this psychodrama group was a novelist who had the task of writing a play. Every member of the group signed a statement saying that they were happy that this novelist would use the work from the psychodrama group as inspiration for writing the play.

We started the group by taking the role of the part of the body that would best represent their sexuality and femininity. They also took a role of the part of the body that would be the worst for it from their perspective. This warm-up brought the social matrix very quickly into our work and, from that moment, we knew as a group that we would work hand in hand with both identity and social matrix.

One of the main warm-ups that we worked through for many sessions was something I learned from my art therapy training, called 'cultural mapping'. I always adapted this warm-up when working with different groups. In this particular project and group, we called it "the relationship between society and female sexuality". First, I started with guided imagery, so they could imagine their life as one big boulevard on which they were walking. Boulevard life has many side streets, one way streets, crossroads, billboards, and flashing adverts with different messages for women in general, and specifically women with disabilities, about femininity and female sexuality. I gave the women different newspapers and magazines so they could create a collage out of these messages, which would show how society was forming their sexuality and femininity. They also had to think not only about society, but also about their identity matrix, i.e. family and peer group messages that influenced their perception of themselves. Some of these messages were stimulating and supportive, some were difficult and limiting. This warm-up was so important for the group that in the next meetings we only worked with collages, using sociopsychodrama. These collages, created by group members, encouraged consisted of different elements and different stories that were intertwined between identity and social matrix.

There was a wonderful lesson that a blind woman gave when she joined our group and shared her experience. Until then there had only been women with motor disabilities or women without disabilities, but we did not have anyone who had a sensory disability. I helped this woman build her cultural map collage since she did not have a personal assistant. She shared with the whole group how she never thought about what is seen or shown, because she had been blind since birth. For her, the only way to understand her sexuality and femininity was to pick something that felt nice to her. For example, if she picked a dress, she would feel it and then she would ask someone how it looks on her. We discussed this lesson and how it is important for all women (and men, I would say, but men were not part of this project) and how society forms roles for us which we think we must follow, being women, or women with disabilities. From this lesson and throughout the work, we would break the cultural conserves of femininity and sexuality and create new roles for each and every member individually.

The group also wrote a play, although it was never played or printed, that was about a protest choir where women sing about different aspects of how society mistreats them. A year ago, a few members of this group, together with the novelist, did create a protest choir. They sang in the streets and in front of government institutions, about the problems that women and men have in society. Members of this protest choir are male and female and come from both marginalised and from majority groups.

My personal story and relation to this work goes back to my childhood. We had neighbours near our summer house at the seaside who were both blind. The woman had lost her eyes during the Second World War and the man his eyesight through botched medical treatment. She was a historian and he was a pianist. As we met each summer there would be a gap of a year between our encounters. So, every time I came, the woman told me to come closer so that she could see how I had grown. She would touch my face and say how every year I was more and more beautiful. I always wondered how she knew that I was getting bigger every year. When I went in the evenings to their house, she would tell me to turn on the lights. They truly fascinated me, so much that as a child I would go around the house with my eyes closed, trying to come closer to their role and to understand them better.

During my adolescence one of my best friends had a motor disability and my friends and I would go everywhere with her, even though at that time accessibility was very poor. We would even carry her, because she did not have a wheelchair back then. I remember how we would go to a very famous club and how I was happy that she was with me because I did not like to dance, so we could sit together.

Reflection about leadership roles and leadership styles

When we think and reflect on Moreno's theoretical concepts, role theory, sociometry, concepts of co-creativity, co-responsibility, creativity and spontaneity, there is a question that comes into my mind. What does the role of leader mean in the

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context of working with groups? Is the term 'leader' good for those of us who work with groups? There is another question on which I ponder: what kind of leaders and leadership styles do we need in order to have spontaneity and creativity and be able to let groups have their own organic and democratic ways of working and understanding their processes?

Every role is changing and expanding. They are not fixed, rather they develop through relations with the other, through encounters and processes that happen in different matrices of identity. Every role is "held" by these matrices and since they are not fixed, roles too change. Moreno used the term director for the leader; when we look into the context of theatre and cinema, this role has changed over time. Long ago, directors used to tell actors how to act, there was neither co-creativity nor co-responsibility. In ancient Greek theatre a prompter read the roles from a scroll of paper, only after that would the actor take the role. In the last century the process of creating roles in theatre and cinema has become more and more the process of co-creation and co-responsibility.

So, the roles of 'leader' or 'director' has been expanded and changed and is still changing in the context of working with groups. But we also need to keep in mind that the way we lead groups and how groups respond to that leadership often mirrors the macro plan of the social matrix that we are all part of, no matter what our roles are. As I write this, I start remembering how I did not like the term director when I started my training in psychodrama, because in Serbian the word *direktor* is equivalent to manager in English. There was always a lot of laughter surrounding this, but for me the language that was used to explain this role was part of the social matrix and a strong need for hierarchy and order.

In my development as a psychodramatist, and later as a sociopsychodramatist, I changed this idea and term to the term of facilitator or co-facilitator because I found it more suitable. This is a story of vertical versus horizontal leadership. To be able to work with groups and group processes and in order to be able to extract the group emergence, one needs to understand the concept of co-leading groups. Even if there are many people who are facilitators of the process, the whole time another co-facilitator or co-leader is the group itself.

On the other hand, different groups, in their co-creation and co-responsibility with those who facilitate processes, create different types of process and different leadership styles. What they create and make is a matter of the relations between the participants, the group and the facilitator. And every now and then groups need to reflect and think about these questions. Even in our PERFORMERS project, in one of the first meetings we had the question "What kind of leader do we need?". Together, as a group, we formulated an answer to this question, although there were facilitators and directors of the process. But this happens in every group, the question is how transparent is it? Questioning leadership roles and leadership styles also depends on the maturity of a group and the maturity of the social matrix the group belongs to. Since the PERFORMERS group is international, the learning that is happening is cross-cultural, transcultural, and intercultural. We have a very different social matrix from the groups that are homogenous in terms of their backgrounds. Co-creation and

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co-responsibility is more fruitful and quicker than in some other groups. We have developed a culture of clear horizontal leadership where we have different roles, although everything changes constantly in relation to the group itself. So, we could easily say that the whole group leads the process and much co-facilitation happens in parallel. There is learning between different generations, different cultural conserves, different histories, experiences creating new ways of functioning as a group and giving new information to process facilitators.

If we want to be able to run groups in which spontaneity comes first and creativity can take place, where nothing is fixed, we need to understand that the group facilitator has the role of catalyser of the process. It is not that this role gives directions, but the group gives directions and facilitators follow it. Even with directions or warm-ups that someone in the role of facilitator gives, the next activity arises from the group response. This is why the process emerges all the time from co-creativity and co-responsibility. Of course, when people start working with groups, they need to feel safer in these roles, often taking a role they feel is safe. With time and experience, they change the role and shift to another position, adding new roles and creating more and more freely. As I write this I am thinking of my students and myself when I was a student. I needed to rely on the images of roles of the people whose groupwork I liked in order to start doing it on my own, but over time things changed. Of course, both in sociodrama and psychodrama we also have ethical considerations, mainly in terms of not harming anyone and keeping in mind good intentions, without misusing methods of sociodrama, psychodrama and sociometry.

Having in mind different contracts with groups we facilitate, our roles of leaders and co-facilitators change. It is not the same when we work in an organisational setting, in a therapeutic community, in a factory or in a training group. The relations between the facilitator, contract and group also defines which roles we are going to take on. These are important issues to take into consideration and to reflect upon when we think of what kind of leadership roles and leadership styles we need.

Moreno said, "The most spontaneous person in a room is the director". Even if there is a clear role of a director or facilitator in the group, it is not that role that is the only one which serves that purpose. Anyone from the group, and the group itself, can do something for the group and in the group that changes this position. Facilitating the group process also means questioning different cultural conserves in this context and seeing if we are repeating something or creating something new.

In *Who Shall Survive?*, Moreno wrote "If God came to the Earth again, he'd come as a group." (Moreno, 1953.). My understanding of this quote is what I reflect on in this part of my paper. I believe Moreno meant that power is in the group, not the individual, or to be more precise, collectivity and being in groups is more powerful than being alone. We can easily see how this is important today, when we have the Covid pandemic throughout the world. We can also see that the role of leader and facilitator of group processes empowers the individuals to be in groups and to help groups organise on their own to the best of their abilities.

Recently, when I started writing this article, I had a dream. In my dream, a very famous therapist from Serbia came to me and asked: "Am I a heart?" My response

to her was: "No, you are not, but the group is the heart and you live in the group". It is important for a human being to understand their individuality, but it is more important to understand that every human being is part of a group, something bigger than themselves. In this way, the role of leader and the role of the group that he or she leads, consists of many roles: teacher, student, historian, anthropologist, group, facilitator, co-creator, agent of change, producer, mother, father, etc. All the roles that are part of different matrices of identity (social and cosmic) are a part of this process. Being a leader and having a style of facilitating a group is a process that lasts forever. It is a very open cultural conserve within the ethical context of sociodrama, psychodrama and sociometry.

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Group Phenomena, Processes and Dynamics in Sociodrama*

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Summary

Knowledge of fundamental theories on group processes as well as the ability to investigate, detect and work through the dynamics of a group constitute two indispensable sets of skills for all group leaders and facilitators. Sociodrama groups constitute a social microcosm, reflecting the values, contradictions, and conflicts of the society in which they take place. They become a 'matrix' in which social constructs are re-enacted and which, reciprocally, they might also be able to influence and reshape. The present chapter aims to describe some basic theories about group processes in regard to sociodrama and discuss in depth the basic phenomena that usually take place in these settings as a result of the encounter between personalities, desires, conscious and unconscious minds of group members. Important aspects of group life will be examined, such as the characteristics of an effective leader, development of group dynamics, scapegoating, subgrouping, and various forms of transference that are developed towards the group leader(s) and other group members. Different approaches on working through these phenomena will be discussed, deriving from psychodrama, sociometry, existential and psychodynamic group psychotherapy.

On April 1st 1921, April Fool's Day, Jacob Levy Moreno rented a well-known theatre in Vienna, the Komodien Haus, and invited the citizens in for a debate on the future of Austria. He had placed a throne, a crown and a purple mantle in the centre of the stage. Dressed as the king's jester, he introduced himself and told the audience he was looking for a king. He then invited audience members to come up onto the stage, share their ideas about the political conditions of the time and sit on the throne, if they wanted. Unfortunately, the response of the audience was not what he expected and he was very disappointed. However, that public event was the first demonstration of a new method that he had invented, which he termed sociodrama, now defined as a "deep action method dealing with intragroup relations and collective ideologies" (Marineau, 1989).

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1. The main points of sociodrama

P. F. Kellermann (1998) defines sociodrama as "an experiential group-as-a-whole procedure for social exploration and inter-group conflict transformation". It was developed by J. L. Moreno as a tool that could facilitate and pacify relationships between different nations after the calamity of World War II. According to Wiener (1995), sociodrama has three aims: "an improved understanding of a social situation, an increase in participants' knowledge about their own and other people's roles in relation to that situation, and an emotional release or catharsis as people express their feelings about the subject."

Sociodrama utilises action methods in order to explore, work through and transform stereotypes, cultural beliefs and interactions between groups. It also aims to help members of a group deepen their understanding with regard to interpersonal conflict, address and resolve miscommunications as they arise in the context of social interaction, and psycho-educate participants on social issues and phenomena. The unique feature of sociodrama is that situations are re-enacted rather than merely described, and that the members of the group take on roles to portray the social situations that are under examination. Taking the role of another in order to "develop an empathic understanding of that person's point of view" (Baile and Walters, 2013), in other words putting oneself in the shoes of others, has been found most useful in sociodrama.

Apart from its practical usefulness and applications, sociodrama is based on a rich theoretical background. It derives primarily from the pioneering work and theory of J. L. Moreno, but we can also detect intersections with other accredited and effective approaches to group work, such as group analysis and existential group psychotherapy. As Moreno (1943) points out:

> The true subject of a 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 of as many as belong to the same culture. Sociodrama is based upon the tacit assumption that the group formed by the audience is already organized by the social and cultural roles which in some degree all the carriers of the culture share. It is therefore incidental who the individuals are, or of whom the group is composed, or how large their number is.

In this chapter we will attempt to present some key theoretical issues pertinent to sociodrama and group process. However, the size limitations of the present chapter do not allow for an exhaustive exploration of this huge topic.

Moreno's primary goal, as observed by those reviewing his work, was to combine psychiatry with sociology in order to heal society through psychiatry: sociatry. Sociodrama then became part of his group psychotherapy method, which included psychodrama, sociodrama and sociometry. Even though Moreno was the first to use the term group psychotherapy (1931), he never really equated it to psychodrama or sociodrama. He considered group psychotherapy an effective intervention that

was limited to clinical settings. On the contrary, he envisioned psychodrama and sociodrama as new methods of perception of the self, relatedness and coexistence in contemporary social, cultural and transnational collectivities. Nevertheless, he believed that there was a close affinity between group psychotherapy and psycho-drama/sociodrama as they function under the principle of sociometry, one of his major discoveries. Moreno's belief about the closeness but not sameness of the two methods is reflected in the establishment of the Association of Psychodrama and Group Psychotherapy back in 1942.

Because sociodrama focuses on social and cultural roles, the group is viewed as a unity, an all-inclusive pool of individuals invited to address and resolve their conflicts for the wellbeing of the group. The group must be high-functioning in order to provide the best environment for individuals to flourish. It is important to note that, in the sociodrama technique, great emphasis is placed on diagnosing a problem. Through this diagnostic procedure one can assess the possible therapeutic effect of the process.

Social diagnosis and treatment of group dysfunction merge into one another as they involve the process of diagnosing group ills, clarifying the cases being explored, suggesting new approaches or solutions as well as offering interpretations along the way. Ultimately, the members will learn through the experience of being present in the group and being active in the role play (Moreno, 1987).

In defining a social group as a unity, several things must be taken into consideration. Apart from characteristics such as loyalty, common goals, common background and experience, a very important factor is for members to mutually encourage and motivate each other towards that common goal. A group with these characteristics could be a business group, an athletic team, a school class, a team of hospital nurses and doctors, or even a national group with thousands or millions of members. Practically, the applications of sociodrama might include interventions in mental health institutions, such as training psychiatric ward personnel, drug and alcohol support groups, marriage and family counselling groups, educational settings such as schools and universities, corporate business training, as well as in prisons, military, and law enforcement settings.

Another feature of sociodrama is the group's function as a container in which participants have the opportunity to reflect on how they experience being part of a group. Uncovering and expressing difficult issues, exploring feelings or some other form of disclosure, all require that a person feels safe enough to be contained by the group and face the challenges before them. Essentially, this will facilitate further expression of unspoken elements with the ultimate goal being that of some form of learning for both the individual and the collective to take place, whether it be learning how to deal with difficult emotions after an event or how to prepare oneself to deal with difficult life situations, past or present.

Role playing in sociodrama has a dual purpose. The first lies in the process of developing new creative roles for the individuals and more healthy and productive interactions for the group as a whole. It appears people tend to adopt certain roles in life, leaving too little room to be creative. Such roles may be that of provider,

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caregiver, partner, boss, leader or follower (either assertive or retiring), challenger or non-competitor, risk-taker or hesitant person, victim, and so on. These roles are considered social roles, according to Moreno. In sociodrama, when working on role playing, members can explore roles in their lives anew. These may be roles that have already been established and are being revisited from a different angle, or the participant could be trying out new roles and exploring further possibilities. Thus, the second purpose of role playing is to give the opportunity to practice an alternative role and, through this, learn new ways of relating and interacting. Furthermore, a secondary gain in role plays comes when one is asked to play a different character, as the person tends to feel less exposed and therefore may abandon some of their defences. Since less mature people, or less psychologically minded individuals, are more reluctant to self-disclose, role playing serves as a less intimidating way to explore and resolve issues. This process is also beneficial for the group. By having its members adopt more creative roles, the group can become more spontaneous and productive, when functioning collectively.

Among the different types of group work, sociodrama is the one that invites spontaneity the most. Moreno's Theatre of Spontaneity was how he envisioned what drama would be like, both for the actors and the audience; a chance for both to be involved in the process and be authentic. Although drawn to theatre, poetry and literature, Moreno's inspiration came from improvisation, which invited participants to be more creative and spontaneous as opposed to the "sterility of traditional theatre" which he had experienced previously.

Members are invited to collaborate in a shared vision under the canon of creativity. Moreno states that spontaneity is the constant companion of creativity (1987). When working in groups, spontaneous participation is key to the working-through process. It is considered a valuable tool, revealing both the most authentic parts of the social self and the group's internal exchanges, as expressed in relation to one another. Spontaneity is also the means through which new responses are elicited, responses that are not pre-calculated and do not come from the person's or group's common response reservoir. The higher the level of spontaneity in a group, the better are the chances of uncovering material and problematic group interactions that need to be revised, re-shaped, re-configured and ultimately re-learned.

Improvisation is extensively utilised, forming an integral part of the process, both in terms of encouraging free expression of self as well as bringing forward the group's spontaneity, for the purpose of enabling participants to question and challenge values and beliefs imposed by cultural norms. In sociodrama, these fixed beliefs are addressed and examined as a way of bringing into awareness how effective or intrusive they are, as well as how these beliefs facilitate or hinder social life and cultural processes.

2. Differences and similarities between psychodrama and sociodrama

Psychodrama and sociodrama have some common features in terms of the process of warm-up, action, and sharing. They are also both action methods by concept, with spontaneity and creativity as their driving force. Apart from role playing, body movements, non-verbal communication and spontaneous actions and expressions are unforced and unprescribed. The warm-up phase is designed to help participants feel more at ease with the group, build trust and acquaint themselves with others, thus reducing the anxiety levels experienced when entering unfamiliar territory. Following the warm-up process, the leader explores emerging themes that will lead on to the main theme of the session. In psychodrama, the main theme will be about the protagonist's issue, whereas in sociodrama the theme will be a group issue.

In terms of action, both techniques utilise similar methods of working, i.e. doubling, role reversal, soliloquy, empty chair, and mirror, etc. These role explorations are the medium through which learning and change take place, through the concretisation and active representation of ideas. Through the dramatisation of conflict, all members will be involved, either actively or not, in this learning and change process.

Finally, the sharing phase is the closure phase, where the group will reflect on and draw conclusions out of the enactments that took place by sharing their experience of participating. It will also be the opportunity to share ideas about alternative solutions for the conflict or issue.

Apart from these shared features, psychodrama and sociodrama have one primary difference with respect to application: as sociodrama deals with group ills, it is therefore applied more effectively in social group structures with either an educational or sociocultural intent. Another difference is in terms of leadership. In psychodrama the leader directs the group with a focus on individual work, while the role of the sociodrama leader is more that of a facilitator of solutions to group issues. However, what is unique to the method of a sociodrama group is that participants will enact roles taken from the social environment of the scene being enacted, in contrast to a psychodrama session, where there is a protagonist and other participants take on roles of auxiliary egos that are defined by the protagonist. Finally, in a sociodrama group, the action is frequently paused for the group to give feedback on the process, make suggestions, give alternative perspectives, then the action is continued. This is an important element of this type of work, as the focus of the session is the group and all voices and perspectives should be heard. This is what it is all about.

3. Sociometry

Before any group is ready to work together in a meaningful and effective way, the most valuable tool to establish a good working scenario is to explore group cohesion. Moreno developed sociometry as a scientific attempt to illustrate, describe and potentially measure the forces of attraction and repulsion that are being developed

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within a collectivity. This overarching concept in Moreno's theory was his conviction that the essential nature of man is social, a point of view shared by the founder of group analysis C. H. Foulkes. He writes in 1964: "the social aspect is an irreducible social fact".

Sociometry studies interpersonal relationships between members of a social group in order to explore and determine the degree of coherence or contradiction within the group. A sociometric study will also indicate how close or how distant the members of the group are in relation to a number of different categories such as social status. Information extracted from sociometric tests is highly valuable to work with in a group setting, regarding the relationships between group members and how those relationships could influence the dynamic of the group process. It will reveal the basis under which alliances are formed in terms of common ideologies, common beliefs, status, etc.

As described above, spontaneity is of great importance as it is also considered a pre-condition of authenticity. Being authentic and true to oneself is liberating and enables one's release from social or psychological shackles. As sociometry is based on the presupposition that people are constantly making choices, exploring these choices will give information about the relationships they make in their immediate environment, be it their family, their work, their friendships or their partnerships. Effectively, this is also applied within a sociodrama group and a sociometric test will explore the choices made within it, i.e. where a person chooses to sit, who is perceived as friendly, which member is isolated by others, as a means through which group work effectiveness is achieved.

4. Unconscious communication in groups

The psychoanalytic perspective on group function offers some significant inferences. It attempts to shed light on the interaction between the different levels of psychic activity: the experienced, the imaginary, and the transferential. Being part of a group, especially a non-directive one, can be remarkably stressful. It provokes regression to prior stages of development and often reactivates primitive anxieties and depression. This regression leads to the manifestation of specific defence mechanisms such as splitting or projection and denial. The groups, apart from other goals and purposes, often act as a collective attempt to overcome these anxieties. Navrides (1994) claims that group formations constitute "emotional consortia against primitive anxieties".

Freud (1921) was highly pessimistic about the possibility of psychotherapy in group settings. He believed that "the narcissism of small differences" between group members would not allow effective therapeutic intervention. W. Bion (1961), in opposition to Freud, conducted psychotherapy in small groups with impressive results. He believed that the group always functions at two levels: the first is what he called the work group, which is the level of consciousness in which members agree to collaborate in order to attain a specific goal. Underneath the work group there is always another reality of the group, unconscious and irrational in opposition to the work

group. Bion calls this the basic assumption or basic group. This group is in constant interaction with the work group and often wants to destroy it. Group phenomena cannot be clearly understood if one does not consider and explore these two different realities. To put it more simply, whatever the conscious goal of the work group is, there will always be forces opposing or impeding the attainment of this goal. Bion's perspective on this point is in accordance with Freud's view. Morris Nitsun (1966), in accordance with Bion's observations, claimed that in every group there is also an anti-group, referring to the destructive forces that are aimed at impeding and dismantling group process, negatively impacting its effectiveness.

Furthermore, according to Bion there are three major group defences involved that are activated in response to the real or imaginary threats faced by the group: dependence, fight-or-flight and pairing. Bion calls these defences basic assumptions (Hopper, 2003). Regarding the assumption of dependence, the group expresses its dependency on the group leader, who is imagined to be omnipotent and omniscient. Regarding the assumption of fight-or-flight, persecutory anxieties and paranoid fantasies prevail in the group. The leader, or an external intruder, might be viewed as a threat to the cohesion of the group, leading members either to collude against the leader or abandon the process altogether. Finally, according to the assumption of pairing, two group members develop an intimate relationship, and the group focuses on this couple, as if this pairing is the most significant phenomenon that happens.

Earl Hopper (2003) adds a fourth assumption, incohesion, and the aggregation/ massification hypothesis. According to this assumption, the group's function is based on annihilation anxiety stemming from severe traumatisation.

Another key figure who contributed immensely to understanding group processes is S. H. Foulkes. He introduced the concept of group matrix, which has been difficult to define. It refers to a process of being, ranging from the uterus to the network of relations and connections in the universe. The matrix for Foulkes is a hypothetical web of interaction that is formed in a specific group and defines the meaning and quality of everything that takes place in the group and within which the interpretation and the understanding of group processes is constructed. He borrowed the term from his teacher, the neurobiologist K. Goldstein. Foulkes postulated that "the network of all individual mental processes, the psychological medium in which they meet, communicate and interact. When group members meet, even if they are total strangers, being of the same species and, more narrowly, of the same culture, they share a fundamental mental matrix (foundation matrix)." Add to this the fact that their closer acquaintances and their intimate exchanges are constantly interacting and we can thus see that they form a current, ever moving, ever developing, dynamic matrix. (1975)

Moreno used the term the 'sociodynamic effect' of the group's function to describe the same processes. In practice, this means that group members already share common aspects of their identity upon meeting. More importantly, together they co-construct a deep core of identity that Foulkes called the dynamic matrix. The individual constitutes a junction point in the network of society and cannot be perceived as being isolated from this network.

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This being said, Foulkes claims that the group member is a carrier of all social, political and cultural processes that are being unfolded in his environment. The group is influenced by the larger environment and at the same time reshapes it. He believed that social relations are not something external to individuals, they constitute integral parts of the representation of the self.

A similar notion in the concept of matrix had already been suggested by Moreno in 1946. He defined the matrix of identity as the "infant's social placenta, the locus in which he roots". He then developed the concept of the sociometric matrix, in reference to two other concepts: tele and social atoms. He perceived social interaction as an orchestra of atoms playing roles in relation to each other. There are forces of attraction and repulsion organised by tele, which refers to the flow of emotions between group members, a form of energy that attracts or repels the members of a collective. This process results in the constellation of the role matrix, the repertoire of roles, that each one of us possesses.

Back in 1948, Foulkes introduced another very important concept for the understanding of group process, the 'group-as-a-whole'. He believed that there is more to a group than solely the sum of its members. He went further, postulating that the group also develops its own unconscious, which comprises of unconscious parts of the individuals projected to the collectivity that interact with each other, ending up creating a new autonomous entity, shared by group members. In the same way, the collective unconscious of a culture, a society and a nation is always present and endlessly affecting our behaviour. As stated above, Foulkes viewed group members as knots in a larger social network, interdependent of each other and the broader collective.

R. Kaes (1985) used the term "group mental apparatus" (*appareil psychique groupale*, in French), to describe this phenomenon. He claimed that the group is an object, a construct of its members, attributed the qualities of a subject, as if it is another person. That is the idea of the "group illusion" (*illusion groupale*, in French), introduced by Didier Anzieu in 1975, based on the need of the group members to imagine the group as an ideal entity that contains them. The fact that group members use plural (we, us) when they refer to a group is indicative of this illusion. Anzieu believed that the primary unconscious fantasy of the group is of an omnipotent mother, always defending her children and sharing her power with them. The group leaders should be constantly aware of this tendency among group members.

Another phenomenon of major importance that takes place in the group process is transference. According to the dictionary of the American Psychological Association (2007), transference refers to "a patient's displacement or projection onto the therapist of those unconscious feelings and wishes originally directed toward important individuals, such as parents, in the patient's childhood. It is posited that this process brings repressed material to the surface where it can be reexperienced, studied, and worked through to discover the sources of a patient's current difficulties and to alleviate their harmful effects."

The regression that takes place in groups facilitates this re-enactment of feelings and desires, originally directed to other people from the environment, or the

members' pasts. Some of the emotions or behaviours of group members might not be provoked by what is being unfolded in the group session, but, to some extent, it is probable that something that happened or is said in the group triggers an internal process or conflict that is then attributed to the group, the leader or (an)other member(s). Transference is often related to group members' reactions when they seem unintelligible and/or arbitrary at a first glance.

Bejarano (1972) detected four different types of transference in the group process:

1. Central transference directed to the group leader.
2. Group transference, concerning the group-as-a-whole.
3. Horizontal transference directed towards other group members.
4. Transference to the external world and reality, as an area of projection of the members' destructivity or hope.

Lastly, the group can be considered a transitional space, according to Winnicott's terminology, between internal and external reality, a safe environment where the individual can develop, rehearse new roles and behaviours and finally construct a new identity and sense of self (1971).

5. Group phenomena in sociodrama

One of the goals in sociodrama is to promote equality and peace in society, and this can be achieved through education, training and by working on increasing the levels of tolerance of different opinions or different belief systems among different cultures. Sociodrama focuses on the relationship between a group of people to either their immediate social environment or society as a whole, "to strengthen resilience and to find more effective ways to manage conflicts between people and societies". (Kellerman, 2007).

A unique characteristic of groups that is both organic and pivotal is what Jung (1959) first described as the "collective unconscious" and which has later been referred by other scholars as the "social unconscious" (Fromm 1962), "co-unconscious" (Moreno, 1987), and "group matrix" (Foulkes, 1964), all of which allude to a latent dynamic as part of which a group unconsciously creates its own set of approved behaviours and processes as well as the structures of how it will function.

The concept of encounter is of primary importance in Moreno's view. According to Bradshaw-Tauvon (1998), "it requires authenticity and the maximum of involvement in meeting oneself and others in the here-and-now. This leads to a greater awareness of tele, the flow of feeling between people, which in turn enables us to adequately respond to others." An awareness of the concepts of the co-conscious and co- unconscious provides us with the means to define problems in terms of interpersonal issues rather than as those of isolated individuals.

One of the obstacles found in working with this technique is the emotional distancing of the participants. As members are encouraged to view themselves as part

of a group and work towards a common goal, it is less personal to them and they tend not to get too emotionally involved. It also requires them to leave a part of their identity behind in service to the group, adding a sense of collectiveness through abandonment of the selfish parts.

However, each member will at the same time create and live in their own circle of interaction, their own microcosm. The concept of the parallel processes of microcosm refers to initially ignoring and disregarding the broader collective and social perspective. This phenomenon also pertains to the Foulksean concept of matrix, in the sense that there are always changes, developments, impediments and regressions in society that permeate and pervade the sociodramatic process.

Another group phenomenon in sociodrama is the existence of hidden agendas (Valcarce, 2011). Having a hidden agenda does not mean that one is not being sincere or honest and wants instead to deceive. In certain situations, it can mean that one is unsure or shameful of certain thoughts and beliefs or even past behaviours. It may also mean that one is struggling to share anything other than their achievements or what they are generally good at, instead of what they perceive themselves as not being good at or sharing their vulnerabilities. The issue with hidden agendas is that they impede intimacy and one's ability to connect with others, and, in this case, the group. In corporate groups, hidden agendas can have to do with status and higher levels of authority and power. It is therefore of a significant functional value to the group to bring hidden agendas to the stage and work with them, so as to promote resolution and change. Hidden agendas in a sociodramatic group can be revealed through sociometry. For example, the sociodramatist might ask openly what the wishes of a group are, on which issues should the work be focused, transparently, and then invite the members to choose.

Other group phenomena are polarisation and globalisation (Isenberg, 1986). In large groups such as those formed in sociodrama, many views are expressed. As in society, people tend to take sides according to their own belief systems and cultural background. In sociodrama, asymmetry is welcomed as it increases the chances that diversity and pluralism will be represented. Dealing with this asymmetry and going beyond the cultural conserve is where innovation lies.

Another phenomenon observed in sociodrama, especially in the initial stages of the session, is globalisation, as part of which the group assumes a stance of universality, of all being one, without considering cultural differences or different social norms. Globalisation, although it is a concept that implies bringing the world together, might have the opposite effect in sociodrama, as the group does not seem to allow an individual's social or cultural beliefs to be expressed in the contexts under exploration. It implies order leads to uniformity, a forced homogeneity, where individual differences are disregarded.

Excessive polarisation and asymmetry might often lead to the adoption of beliefs and attitudes that interfere with social relationships and participation on group issues. People with such polarised attitudes have the tendency to either force change into the group using coercive methods or to resist change altogether. In both cases, they seem to be less likely to modify their views and tactics. Moreover, they tend

to form subgroups with members who not only share similar views with them, but in the absence of such an option, they bind to those who also resist change for other reasons.

6. Group dynamics

Group phenomena, as described above, have more to do with the sociometric procedure utilised, whereas group dynamics are involved in those distinct individual and group processes that take place after the warm-up phase. Members of sociodrama groups tend to preoccupy themselves with their microcosm.

More often than not, sociodrama work involves dealing with inter- and intra-group conflict. This and working on resolutions is the means through which groups can learn how to coexist in society in a peaceful way. Conflicts of ideas are the result of different cultural backgrounds, different belief systems and different socio-political views. Differences in general create a dynamic of opposition and resistance in any group. People tend to hold on to what they have known as true and familiar until they are challenged either to adapt, to reconfigure or even to abandon these positions by learning the usefulness and the success of a new system of thinking and acting, one that comes from within and is a choice made through reflection, spontaneity and creativity.

Group dynamics can be positive or negative. Positive dynamics are those that facilitate the process, where the group has trust and is working well together. Members will share their points of view, take responsibility for their actions and be more creative in finding ways to aid the development of the group.

Groups who have a negative dynamic have a lower participation rate and express less desire to contribute to the process. The group's work is disrupted or blocked and the level of creativity is low. These groups lack basic characteristics such as the sense of belonging and working together, the principle of conformity for the sake of the group, the principle of commitment to change and giving room for readjustment. Unless these obstacles are addressed and overcome, the group becomes stuck, gets aggressive and cannot reach the desired goal.

An example of poor group dynamics is when the formation of deep roles goes beyond the scope of togetherness and cohesion for the benefit of the group. Scapegoating is one example of tension and conflict created in the group. Although highly stressful as a phenomenon, when dealt with effectively it can contribute to group development and working through. In sociodrama, scapegoating is present when anxieties are projected upon an individual because of the danger they represent to people's psychic conflicts or to the interpersonal relationships of the group as a whole. Scapegoats in sociodrama often express diverse opinions that are neither tolerated nor recognised in the group. Soon after, the person, who is also viewed as an outlier, will become defensive, defend a view they may not feel passionate about but continue to play a role attributed by others. Scapegoaters seem to share some common characteristics one of the most relevant of which to sociodramatic work is

that they express, early on in the process, a difference of interest in the group's goals and a different set of values than the rest of the group. Some other common characteristics, such as those described by Garland and Kolodny in 1966 (Whitaker, 1970), are higher levels of anxiety, inability to deal with aggression from others, the production of attention-seeking behaviour and the need to seek rejection and punishment. It is no surprise that these characteristics, combined with negative attitudes toward group processes, goals and beliefs, result in being the outlet of group anxieties.

In sociodrama, the social atom is observed in action, and for spontaneous action to develop there needs to be a frame of non-judgmental and non-pathologising modes of conduct that place great emphasis on reflecting on challenging beliefs and behaviours in a way that makes sense of them and explores how they affect the social environment. Therefore, positive group dynamics enhance connection and sharing, leading to catharsis and learning. As there is another chapter in the present book about the social atom, we will not expand more here.

7. Addressing defence mechanisms in sociodrama

According to Ashbach and Schermer (1987), the first defence mechanism members use is denial. Its purpose is to deny oneself for the greater good of group purposes. In group work, and in sociodrama in particular, denial can be observed in several stages. In the warm-up stage denial is apparent when one member tries to downplay certain beliefs and attitudes in order to fit into the group or sub-group of their preference. It is thus considered to be utilised as an attempt of the group to be able to achieve cohesion, i.e. denial of distinct feelings and attitudes eliminates the threat of a split group. Through that inhibition of thought and affect each individual member can become part of the group, become a unit, and the whole group can be one. Denial is a defence mechanism that has many functions. Most often it refers to the situation whereby a person will not acknowledge that he or she is in a difficult situation, even though it is obvious to other people. In later stages and during the role plays, denial can take the form of not acknowledging certain events that somewhat explain the reasons behind the issues the characters are facing, possibly as an attempt to make a situation less threatening for themselves. For example, when someone is feeling isolated within a team but is unaware of or denies the circumstances that have affected the working relationship, even though co-workers can list a number of situations that created the divide. At the same time, when co-workers deny the divide or minimise the effect of their behaviour on a colleague who feels isolated, this is also a form of denial.

When working with sociodramatic roles, relationships are addressed and emotions around those relationships come into play. In cases where the group is familiar with each other, those relationships are worked on the basis of improvement and to achieve certain goals. Expected outcomes range from dissolving conflicts and overcoming anxieties or trauma, to handling and understanding resistances to change. Sociodrama will then focus on analysing the relationships within the group, observe

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perceptions of members' roles and the emotional distances between members. It is not uncommon to see that strained relationships are forms of self-sabotaging patterns stemming from unconscious re-enactments of past experiences. Acting out and projections are indicative of repressed anxieties that have not been dealt with and have become a present-day issue for the family, social, or work group that the person belongs to. In fact, sociodramatic work involves bringing these issues into consciousness and working through them in order to understand their function to the person but also their dysfunction to the quality of their lives and their relationships.

According to Dayton (2005), it is within the safety zone of the group that is able to contain the projections that resolution can take place. Going back to the early experiences that have shaped the social atom in a certain way, understanding them and then revisiting them with that understanding and resolve, will create the basis of change for present life.

Defence mechanisms provide an artificial sense of safety protecting the person from anxiety and/or depressive states of thinking and acting. Blatner (2007) describes them as mental manoeuvres "designed to reduce feelings of emotional discomfort", utilised both outside and within a group. These manoeuvres can be either avoidant or adjustive. Denial, depersonalisation, detachment are avoidant mental tactics whereas other defence mechanisms have more of an adjustive role.

Projective identification is an interactive process; therefore it is of the utmost importance to monitor its latent presence when examining group processes. Projective identification is when intolerable feelings are projected onto the other or the group, and the person then identifies those feelings within him- or herself as if they were caused by the group. According to object relations theory, in the therapeutic process mental contents are constantly being moved back and forth, that is between the analyst and the patient. Similarly, projections and projective identification are also presumptive of group processes. Unwanted mental content is externalised into the group matrix, and, on the one hand the group's role is to contain it, while on the other hand the leader's role is to interpret it in order that group development occurs. This is why Langs (1976) identifies this mechanism as similar to Blatner's idea of projective identification having both an adaptive function together with a defensive role. Such transference distortions within sociodramatic groups block spontaneity and creativity as the lack of understanding of the resistances cause regressions.

What most defence mechanisms have in common is "an emotional subtext too unbearable to face directly" (Ashback & Schermer, 1987). Sometimes these mechanisms are revealed with simple questions about an individual's feelings or about past experiences and how they relate to present behaviours. In time and with proper facilitation and leadership, defensive attitudes are replaced by recognition of anxieties and self-accountability. After self-accountability comes group support and understanding, which in turns leads to improvement and growth.

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8. Leadership

In sociodramatic group work the aim of the director is, from the warm-up through the staging process, the role plays and the closing phase, to have reached every individual who has participated, either actively or as an audience member. The director's main role is to keep the group focused and actively involved as well as to facilitate positive group work so that the common goals and desirable outcomes can be achieved as initially agreed.

The sociodramatist's main task is to facilitate and enable the unobstructed flow of energy and unfolding of the creative forces of the group, rather than explaining and interpreting the group process and individuals' behaviours. The group will cure itself, if the impediments in communications are alleviated. The director has to give to the group the necessary time and space to reflect upon its function, and then integrate the conclusions into existing knowledge. He/she also has to warm up the group adequately so as to deliberate on its spontaneity. The sociodrama leader's task is to ask questions instead of 'pushing' towards specific solutions (Teszary & Westberg, personal communication, 2020).

A sociodramatist is a leader, at times a facilitator of the process, a director of the group and at times also the analyst of the group's dynamics. With regard to his/her qualities as a leader, he/she must practice and model leadership throughout a sociodramatic session as this is also a main quality and personal characteristic needed to be instilled upon participants; to be leaders of their social relationships and leaders of their lives. According to Sternberg and Garcia (1989), it is impossible for the leader to be without opinions, personal values and biases. However, it is through their leadership skills that they can model acceptance of diversity, of different views and opinions, allowing them to be unapologetically expressed and encouraging all voices to speak and be heard while, at the same time, modelling tolerance, acceptance, and an egalitarian form of relating to others.

The leader of the group is initially identified as the person with the power and knowledge that enables him or her to lead everyone to a deeper understanding of their beliefs and how they affect social decisions and to the resolution of issues. What such an expectation signifies is the level of dependent relationships that the group has formed possibly in the past that is projected one more time onto a person of high status and prestige. However, in terms of projecting such feelings onto the leader, there also seems to be a latent envy in that the leader is also experienced by the group as the one who takes power away from them and hinders their ability to be leaders of the process themselves. At this point and early on in the sociodramatic group, the leader needs to empower the individuals and direct them towards finding the power within themselves to work in the group, free from power struggles, either between them and the leader or between group members. This will also be achieved by a leader who creates a space where as many individuals as possible will be able to offer their input to the group. According to Kellermann (2007), this will not only offer more material for exploration, it will also create the sense that every opinion is valued. This, in turn, will establish a status of equality among members of the

group so that the procedure can be experienced by everyone as more democratic. "Once power and control are no longer issues in the group process, work continues in earnest" (Sternberg & Garcia,1989).

Another benefit of working against the formation of power issues is shown in working against the phenomenon of 'groupthink', as described by social psychologist Irving L. Janis (Paul't Hart, 1991). In his several writings, Janis stressed the danger of people conforming to the general effect of a group in an attempt at a pseudo-cohesion to be retained and controlled. An experienced sociodramatist will work early on against the formation of such a phenomenon, mainly by creating a safe environment for every view to be expressed without a latent fear of criticism or ridicule.

Once the group is at the stage of role playing, the sociodramatist becomes a facilitator. He or she facilitates this stage firstly in the stages of the development of intimacy between the roles re-enacted and also facilitates the process by encouraging participants to expand on their role repertoire so that they try out novel stances and take on new roles as new forms of expression and dealing with situations.

Finally, the sociodramatist must become an analyst at several stages in a sociodrama. This would generally be to work with defence mechanisms and to analyse the group processes, either during staging and re-enactment or during the closing part. The analyst will be able to sense rising tension and will be able to contain and diffuse it. It is also the sociodramatist's role to catch the defence mechanisms that come into play by keeping an eye out for emotional escalations and acting out. He or she will also work with transference issues expressed either through subgrouping or scapegoating and will be able to distinguish between transference issues between group members and the leader or the group-as-a-whole.

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Instead of a Compass: How Can a Sociodrama Leader Make Decisions?

Ágnes Blaskó

An example: a sociodrama session with employees in a highly hierarchical institution. The boss (who is also the contractor) shows up, sits down, and stays in the room with the group during the break. The sociodrama leader does not object to the authoritarian boss, he is not sent out. In this situation, we could say that the leader surrenders to the boss in the hope that s/he can protect the group in the long run. Is this compatible with the values of sociodrama?

I. The tricky space of sociodrama (designation of the topic)

The following text is not a compass to help the sociodrama leader make decisions, as compass assumes a space where one can get lost and thus need a tool for orientation. The space provided by sociodrama is much more helpful than the physical space: it gives itself to the leader with its essence, structure and methods, if the leader gets lost for some reason. Of course, this does not mean that it would not be salutary for the leader to be able to navigate for her- or himself, i.e. be aware of certain principles that can help in decision-making situations.

The good news is that these principles are most likely as present in the leader as in the sociodrama itself. This would not be surprising, since the drama itself essentially demonstrates certain values, just as the leader presumably dramatises them, because s/he sees in the sociodrama the possibility of formulating and giving space to basic values and attitudes towards the world that are important to her/him.

Their relationship is more complicated: as the leader assists the drama in helping group members reflect and perhaps change, so does the drama change the leader. Sociodrama is nothing but constant change, being in a discourse, which is also the practice of forming the leader. The leader becomes a curious, tireless investigator, repeatedly looking for answers that can be articulated.

Precisely because the leader is changing while leading a drama, s/he may become insecure and face dilemmas. This text attempts to capture values by grasping the ethos of sociodrama and how it can help the leader if s/he is unsure where to go when leading the process.

However, before we get scared of the list of principles engraved in stone that leaders, as good upholders of their 12 points, must stick to, there is reassuring news. Although the following are really principles that can be taken as fixed points, reflecting a set of values, so, paradoxically, they provide change and constant dialogue.

In this sense, a way of thinking emerges that focuses on change, on the process of searching, instead of formulating and adhering to truths that are supposed to be universal. That is, this way of thinking moves the emphasis from content to process.

II. When might it be necessary to ponder values during a drama session? (A case study and analysis)

My thinking about the problem outlined was motivated by experiencing (and later collecting) cases where, as a leader, I experienced the value trap of the leadership's here-and-now. Therefore, I consciously began to collect such cases from my own experiences and from those of my colleagues. In this chapter, to make the purpose of my text more understandable, I will describe a specific case in its original form, as spontaneously narrated by the sociodrama leader. The presentation of the case study is followed by its analysis and interpretation.

II.1. Case study: roaring difference

"I had a group of adult participants who work with multiple disadvantaged, vulnerable children in their workplace and who, from this position, often yell at the kids. During the drama session, it seemed that the kids indeed need it and yes, the adults have to yell at them because it provides the frames and keeps them safe and they have to be taught this, because otherwise they fall apart as no one has ever told them how to behave. And the role reversal did not alter anything either – the employees didn't even flip out in the children's role when they were yelled at. Yet a stupid and humiliating situation took the stage. Well, they felt a little that it was humiliating. My question is how should we sociodrama leaders give a sign of our disagreement verbally: should we just signal it as a question, or should I evaluate, can I evaluate in some other way? Can I evaluate at all? Meanwhile, participants of the session are beginning to convince me that they are talking about a reinterpretation of the word 'education', that today education is already considered abuse, that restriction is harm. And I actually agree with that. And I can also accept that kids need frames. And on top of that, one of the employees is present with her gypsy identity, and she also says that she is there differently as a gypsy woman and there is a cultural difference between us and I can accept that too, but then there is a confusion about from what position she yelled at the child. I feel like a bad person, a caterpillar that I start to slide towards what they say. How could this be indicated?"

II.2. Interpretation of the situation

The leader's frustration in the above case stems from the fact that her values did not prevail enough in the group. In this case, the leader wants the group to embrace the values she represents. She expects the group to represent her values, she prioritises her own judgments, she does not allow for the birth of a common interpretation, that

is, she violates the values of equality and the birth of a common narrative. (However, the content is important here: it seems – at least for the leader – that the issue revolves around the legitimacy /rejection of verbal abuse, so in this case it is a culturally unquestionable principle that the leader would force on the group.)

The leader's question is how to signal disagreement, since his/her presence is only authentic if it allows her/his own, situation-relevant, feelings to appear in the group. Although there are many ways to express the leader's viewpoint in sociodrama, according to the principle of equality, leadership values can only be one of the values expressed by group members. The leader has specific knowledge (of how to make sociodrama work), which contributes to the achievement of the group's goals, but the leader's opinions and feelings are not worth more than those of other group members.

Fortunately, however, by keeping to its rules, sociodrama comes into play: it is clear from the report that, through the experience of the situation and thanks to the role reversals, the attitude and opinions of the participants shifted somewhat, just as the standpoint of the leader did. The tension in the leader may have been due to the fact that s/he was expecting an even stronger and clearer shift.

Consequently, it is also clear that, although there was a slight re-evaluation ("they are starting to convince me"), the leader does not want to give up his/her presuppositions. S/he lacked openness, inclusiveness and confirmation, that is, acceptance of the other and an understanding of their point of view, meaning that no real common understanding was born. The leader did not examine what "roaring" means, what it can represent for different actors in institutional culture and in society. So, if the leader recognises the internal tension resulting from assumptions, s/he may be able to react to the situation. The report does not cover the longer-term effect of the drama and the feedback that the participants received for their next meeting as to what had changed in them.

III. Values, attitudes

The above line of thought could not, of course, come to the leader's mind automatically in the here-and-now of the sociodrama session. However, I assume (due to my own experiences) that if the leader has a clear picture of the core values and what attitudes could help to manifest those values, this can support her/him in situ in decision-making. The values and attitudes I collected below are – I must repeat – only soft guidelines in the sense that they encourage and enhance change and rethinking. Thus, they do not designate a fixed position but, on the contrary, a disposition.

The following figure, which is my work, hopefully sums up the values supporting the ethical decisions of sociodrama leaders. These values represent my approach to sociodrama, my practical experiences and my understanding of others' statements and approaches to sociodrama. In addition, these values correspond with my understanding and interpretation of Moreno's philosophy and the reception of his works.

The values and principles listed in the inner circle conform to Moreno's worldview, as his anthropological concept stresses the social aspect of humans and their

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agency, and highlights the possibility of changing our cultural conserves. The attitudes listed in the outer circle were articulated based on the reception history of Moreno's term 'encounter'. These attitudes (if they are really the sociodrama leader's own) could lead to the manifestation of inner values.

In the following I will show in a more detailed way how this is in accordance with Moreno's philosophy and its interpretations (see 3.2), and with the values represented by sociodrama method (see 3.3), as well as with the values represented by ourselves and other sociodrama leaders (see 3.1).
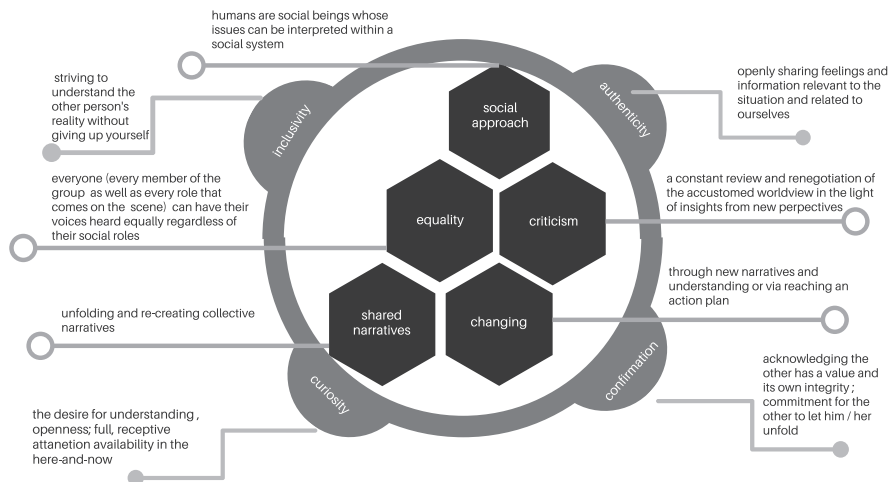
Figure 1. Values and attitudes supporting the sociodrama leader in situ

III.1. Leaders and the values of sociodrama

As can be seen from the "roaring" example (Section 2.1, Case study), dilemma situations are strongly influenced by known or unknown leadership commitments.

Obviously, the leader has some kind of commitment or basic attitude towards the world, of which, however – also obviously – s/he is not aware in the vast majority of situations. The standards behind our actions and decisions are generally unreflected, while we enact our particular decisions in relation to, or based on, them. If we did not have such standards and frameworks, we would become disoriented in the world. But we do have these standards and they work within us.

Thus, a lot of values are deeply embedded in our culture. Such as efficiency (the sooner we bring the problem to the surface, the better), acceptance of power relations (whoever thematises events more firmly, is right), individualism. These are core values that were socialised into us over many years. Thus, due to their internalised nature, they are often not seen or recognised as the driving force of a particular situation.

These values, in turn, may conflict with the values of the sociodrama. Thus, in a critical situation, the leader more easily turns to the well-tried patterns and

'cultural conserves' in the here-and-now of the situation, than to her/his openness and willingness to change, which is (also) necessary for sociodrama leadership. This is not surprising, as one of the important aspects of the decisions a sociodrama leader has to make is that we are in a specific, individual case, and there is no time to resolve the differences between our commitments and our cultural conserves with a sure hand. In the above case, the leader identified the situation as a violation (verbal abuse) of a fundamental value (human dignity) and was not open to consider the meaning of the phenomenon (roar). So here, a value made the leader prejudiced.

It can be seen, therefore, that although sociodrama aims to open up cultural conserves, other 'conserves' (which are also the drama leader's own) could be able to inhibit it.

From the point of view of what sociodrama leaders think of the values of sociodrama in less spontaneous situations, I examined fourteen texts in the form of flyers formulated by Hungarian drama leaders as introductions to their sociodrama events. I was curious as to what the leaders promised the result of the sociodrama would be; that is, what kind of goal – which is also considered a value for the participants – the drama was supposed to achieve.

In the fourteen (Hungarian) flyers I was able to distinguish three types of promise, two of which are very close to each other: a) exploration, understanding, b) finding a common meaning, c) the promise of the possibility of change in unmoving and stagnant institutional power structures. These promises could be interpreted as different places on a continuum: exploration in the sociodrama group can mean a common, new interpretation, which can lead to finding new answers resulting from new understanding.

In addition to analysing the flyers, I asked seven sociodrama leaders from five countries why they started using sociodrama and what opportunity they saw in it. Of the seven respondents (to open-ended questions), three responded to the understanding and five to the results (i.e. change/impact/solution). Four highlighted the importance of thinking in a social context.

Thus, reflecting on sociodrama, the common understanding, the change in the power/institutional structures, the thinking in the society appeared as the basics for the examined leaders (see Figure 6).

III.2. The Morenian ethos

I see the values collected in the table as correlating with Moreno's theory and its interpretation. Below is a brief summary of my arguments.

Key concepts
If we want to understand Moreno's work, we have to bear in mind that we are not analysing scientific texts but are exploring a very coherent oeuvre that includes method (drama, sociometry) with an independent ethos. Moreno's thoughts are often not very accurately explained. However, the experience of a drama leader, the reading

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of texts and the understanding of the tradition of interpretation help to understand and decipher these thoughts.

In the following, I will highlight just the aspects of Moreno's key concepts that I believe are the keys to his worldview. Thus, I will not mention his key concepts of catharsis, sociometry or matrix. I consider it more important in this context to emphasize Moreno's philosophy of humankind, drawn from a social aspect, his relationship to social norms (cultural conserves), and his concept of encounter.

Moreno explains in *The Concept of Sociodrama* (Moreno, 1943) that human beings are both social and individual beings, and social and personal roles cannot be clearly separated. Accordingly, human problems are also largely community-based and should be worked out in the community. He likens the roles of the individual to the layers of an onion. His analogy – in opposition to the individualist approach – says that inside the onion are collective role patterns, while the outer layers are the roles acquired during socialisation. Sociodrama works with these community-generated roles and role types (cultural conserves), which may be uncomfortable, changeable, and perhaps not immediately understood by other communities. Sociodrama's purpose is to reinterpret, understand and transform our cultural conserves.

Role reversal helps us to recognise different perspectives and allows for experimental verification. Importantly, the emphasis here is not merely on cognitive understanding but on experience. In his introduction to sociometry, *Who Shall Survive?* (Moreno, 1953), which focuses on direct human relationships, he focuses on groups and the differentiation of groups. The book examines what kind of group or institutional dynamics, what societies, cause discomfort to certain groups or parts of groups; what is viable, what is worth changing, what the path to survival is (*Who Shall Survive?*).

Change, understanding, overwriting and rearranging our cultural conserves, the treatment of these attitudes and actions as a common, social issue and challenge, and sociatry (restoration) are important goals in Moreno's oeuvre. These values, read together with experiences and descriptions from our leadership practice, have been depicted as specifics of the drama — translated into other terminology — in the centre of Figure 6 above.

Attitudes

In the outer circle of the diagram, I have listed attitudes that support the values and principles in the middle. I have collected these attitudes based on Moreno's concept of encounter and its interpretation history.

The history of Moreno's 'encounter' can be traced back to Martin Buber, Rogers' humanistic psychology, and Gilligan's feminist care ethic (Johannesen, 2000; Johannesen, 2008).

Moreno uses this concept in a less differentiated way. 'Encounter' simultaneously includes the possibility of spontaneity, co-creation and understanding. Moreno's much-quoted 1914 poem condenses the experience of encounter into a poetic image that can easily evoke the technique of role reversal for dramatists, but also has a poetic and spiritual meaning: "The meeting of two: eye to eye, face to face / And

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when you are near, I will tear your eyes out / And place them instead of mine / and you will tear my eyes out / and place them instead of yours / then I will look at you with your eyes / and you will look at me with mine." (Moreno, 2012, 26) Elsewhere, Buber writes about the significance of the concept of encounter and the spiritual context of its birth, but still does not explain the content of the concept with full accuracy (Moreno, 1949).

There is a certain tradition (which is flattering to dramatists) that calls upon Martin Buber's work in order to produce a more precise elaboration of the concept of encounter. According to this tradition (or interpretation), Moreno's influence is present in Buber's powerful theological/ontological/ethical work *I and Thou* (Kristoffersen, 2014; Moreno 2012, 23-26; Waldl, 2005). Although Moreno's and Buber's effect on each other is a complex question, there is no doubt that the concept of encounter, which is central to the work of both, bears many similarities.

In Buber's philosophy, encounter appears as a peculiar quality of existence (Buber, 1970). Buber distinguishes two attitudes of connection: the I-It and I-You connection modes. The former is a relationship that objectifies the other, that is, it only takes into account certain dimensions of the other, while the I-You relationship is the key to an authentic human existence in which the parties are open to the other's whole being, open and responsible for the possibility of personal encounter and unfolding. In Buber's philosophy of dialogue, the self–you connection is saturated with values. The attitudes of the participants in the connection show how well the quality of the encounter is realised. This notion of encounter is further elaborated by the humanistic psychological approach, which also describes support group relations in a broad sense (teacher–student, doctor–patient) (Cohen, 2020; Cissna & Anderson, 1998; Johannesen, 2008; Rogers, 2000). In this process of thinking, attitudes that describe an equal, unconditional, open connection and which unconditionally accept the other as a human being, are taken to be an indication of a 'successful' encounter and can be expanded and disentangled. The attitudes displayed in the outer circle of the figure above were thus collected on the basis of this tradition of thought, with the help of Johannesen's analysis of Buber's (and Roger's) works (Johannesen, 2008, 54-56).

III.3. Values expressed by sociodrama

As mentioned above, as part of Morenian methods the dramatic techniques also carry the worldview that I have just tried to capture with my conceptual analysis. Perhaps it was also seen in the introductory example that, despite the leader's uncertainty, making the method work itself made it possible to move positions and start thinking.

In the following, I will outline how sociodrama, with its own frameworks and methods, helps to bring certain values to the fore in each session. So, in this line of thought I assign meanings to techniques and methods. They naturally contain interpretations that I developed during my own sociodrama leadership experience as well as methodological development work within the PERFORMERS 2 international sociodrama project.

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Session proceedings

A sociodrama session has identifiable parts from the opening round, to warming up, finding a common theme or issue to be worked on (sociodramatic question), working it out in the enactment, and finally the integration phase.

The framework of a sociodramatic event provides some basic values, some only in the presence of a suitable leader. In the opening round, for example, the roundabout supports participants being present on an equal footing. The opening gives everyone a chance to make their voices heard (equality). The contract - if done carefully enough – helps participants stand up and commit to joint responsibility for the event. Finding a sociodramatic question or topic, again with proper leadership, ensures that each participant's own feelings, experiences, associations and opinions are given, so that everyone's voice is heard. In addition, the integration phase provides an opportunity for a common verbal interpretation, as the group seeks answers to a common question previously formulated based on its experience in the session (equality, shared narratives).

Techniques

Among the techniques, perhaps role reversal is one of the most important in sociodrama. By its very nature, role reversal helps to create understanding and insight through experience (inclusivity). Insight into both our own point of view and that of the other, allows the other to be perceived as having value in her/his wholeness and coherence, independent of evaluation (I like – I don't like), which in itself has some truth (regardless of the correctness of its specific action) (confirmation). In the encounter/understanding that takes place in the role/position exchange, the participants are equal, regardless of their social position (equality), open to the understanding of the other (authenticity). No one's understanding, insight, or opinion is more important than that of anyone else. (I'll talk about how this applies to leadership roles later.)

Many forms of sociodramatic session are possible. Regardless of its implementation, the task of sociodrama is to bring the views/actors relevant to the currently formulated issue to the stage, so the aim is to explore the group–institutional–social context of a phenomenon (inclusivity, social contextualisation) from as many perspectives as possible. This, in turn, means that all roles involved in the problem are present (or should be) and that role reversal not only 'gets the word out' but is also understood from multiple perspectives (equality, inclusivity). As a result, roles that are neither visible nor audible in reality are also mentioned. And – remember – the essence of the session is to take action, start a dialogue and, if possible or necessary, try to solve the existing problem (changing).

In addition to techniques and process, of course, the leader can also ensure a stronger expression of certain values in the situation. Thus, if the voice of some group members or roles is weaker and that of others is stronger, the leader can actively make sure that the voices are balanced by changing roles, and by displaying and exposing missing roles (equality). In the same way, if understanding is hindered by, for example, cultural conserves, prejudices or rationalisation, the formation of an

authentic relationship that can truly see the other can be developed, for example by using role reversal or even the mirror technique (inclusion, authenticity).

The leader

In sociodrama, the leader has a special role in the sense that s/he strives not to have a specific role in relation to the possibilities. The basic values of sociodrama – as they go beyond the framework of drama – apply in the same way as to group members. As a result, the leader's opinion and values are not placed ahead of those of the group members. The leader's questioning and point of view are included in the topic of the group, and her/his understanding in the here-and-now of the session is as valid as that of all group members, as the leader becomes a social investigator as much as the group members. The leader's presence is equally authentic if it is present in the group without prejudice and the leader remains open to the other.

The leader's role is thus at least twofold. On the one hand, s/he is responsible for giving space to the ethos of sociodrama and bringing the group closer to the desired solution through the tools of sociodrama, i.e. close to making the sociodrama work. The leader can achieve this, for example, by holding a frame and sometimes using a technique that reinforces one value at a time. On the other hand, the leader is only one of the group members with his/her opinion, as his/her perspective is not ahead of the others. An open separation of the two roles (authenticity) can make the leader's job easier. A good technique for this could be to mark the leader's roles with different chairs, or to emphasize personality when expressing a personal opinion. In the Eastern and Central European cultural environment, it is a serious challenge for the leader to avoid having the role of 'tastemaker' or influencer forced onto her/him by group members.

IV. It happened (descriptions with analysis)

Finally, here are a few examples from my case collection, all of which I think can be used to resolve the value dilemmas behind them, based on the principles above.

Case no. 1

There was a case where we worked in an institution where signs showed that abuse or physical aggression could occur. But this wasn't stated, so it was already a question for us how much we should ask about it. We felt that it is present, but if we ask, what can we achieve? Should we wait for its direct and open exposure? In fact, it manifested itself in a spontaneous session within an institutional context where everyone played a role, no one played themselves. In the heat of the controversy, one of the characters slammed into a window, breaking it. Both the group member and the group wanted to keep the case a secret. This in itself is something to deal with, as something that we have only been playing with so far suddenly becoming real. It's a technical question for a team leader, what we should do in a situation like this. The ethical question was what obligation we have in this situation. To whom do we owe responsibility? Should we report to the management of the institution

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that such a thing had happened and that we perceive it to be possible that this is not an individual case within the institution.

Analysis

The leader's dilemma here is twofold: on the one hand, there seems to be a choice between loyalty to the group and the commissioning institution, and on the other hand, making the transition between the levels of surplus reality secure. The issue of loyalty is delicate because the topic is aggression: and not just the aggression of the group member playing the role, but that of the group. Not only was aggression inherent in the group member, but also in the position he held in the institution, shown by the fact that the group and the group member did not want to take the case further. That is, breaking the window disguised the aggression which was kept secret within the walls of the institution. In terms of the authenticity of leadership, the dilemma can be made open (and worthwhile) (otherwise the leader becomes complicit). The question here could be, "what happened, why do we want it to become a secret?". In this case, of course, we can be afraid that the group does not want to hear the question about that group member, so resorts to "he accidentally broke a window". However, the principle of equality cannot be violated, the leader cannot be forced, but due to her/his position can apply the techniques of sociodrama. For example, you can propose a role reversal with yourself or reflect on what you see (by calling some group members outside and replaying the conversation where the group members are asking for confidentiality). The problem seen in this way can then be made a topic and worked on. Until there is a common interpretation of what happened in the group, in my opinion it is not worth reporting it to the management because, in a good scenario, the drama process can lead to an action plan and the leader can formulate something moving forward.

The problem here mirrors the window being broken: when the window is broken, the surplus reality on the stage becomes a reality. Similarly, in the above-mentioned solution, the leader turns the reality of the group into a play, and in doing so puts group reality into another surplus reality. This is a technical problem that can easily become moral. The under-reflected movement between different realities entails kicking boundaries and blurring reference points: "it was just a game".

Case no. 2.

The case took place in a group that mixed participants from both the top and bottom of the social hierarchy. There were middle-class people, people living in deep poverty and participants from helping professions. Reacting to the instruction "tell a personal story about what you experienced in a helping situation", someone told a very, very personal story. However, as a response, the helpers began to disassemble the story from a professional point of view, discussing why it was not correct and how it used to happen in reality in this way, and so on. So, they analysed the story professionally. Hearing these comments, I started to think that the instruction had not been to respond professionally, we were told to tell a personal story, and s/he indeed revealed a very sensitive topic. I felt that this wasn't OK, and at that point a third group member

also intervened, saying that this was a personal story, please don't start analysing it this way because it's not OK. However, the debating participants were offended. And then, as a sociodrama leader, I warned the group not to share personal issues. So, I didn't evaluate anything, I just drew attention to the instruction.

At the same time, I also thought it was great that this situation came up, since we were discussing the core problem of the group. For them the question of how they would react when someone else in the system they work in presented them with a personal issue was an important topic. If they start saying that you have to do so and so, wouldn't they just objectifying the client? So, this is an important topic. And although I understood the inner dynamics of the group, I don't think it's ethical to start a thread of group dynamics through someone's personal story, i.e. to say, at the expense of a participant, that it's a group topic. To sacrifice a person for it, especially as it was the first time that we were told to bring personal stories to the group.

Analysis

The leader asks for a personal experience. One of the group members tells a personal story, but part of the group begins to analyse it from a professional perspective. The group member who told the personal story is pushed into the background and those who analyse him take the stage. This catches the eye of other group members.

Group dynamics, by their nature, do not necessarily harmonise with the principles of equality, inclusiveness and confirmation. In the above case, the group member who recalled the personal story could not offer his voice in the emerging debate. And some group members did not turn to him without prejudice, did not try to understand him or his point of view in its entirety. What is more, they objectified him.

Violation of these principles (equality, inclusiveness, confirmation) can be remedied by the leader by reinforcing the principles of sociodrama. When I say 'reinforcing', I mean using certain sociodrama techniques to draw attention to the instruction and the framework of the exercise, or expressing the leader's own opinion (as an equal group member).

As for the techniques of sociodrama, it would be possible to use mirror or role reversal in this type of situation, which could result in the understanding and compassion of group members.

However, the leader opted for an even more neutral solution: s/he drew attention to the framework of the sociodrama. That is, the leader warned the group what the focus of the instruction was. Pointing to the framework can support and help resolve the situation, without the leader expressing her/his own values. Fortunately, the leader is always present in the group in two roles: s/he is responsible for making the drama work and also for the framework. At the same time, her/his opinions and feelings are equal to those of group members in a situation-relevant way (as a co-explorer). Presenting the framework (or maintaining the framework) allows the leader to express an opinion as an equal group member (co-explorer of the topic).

However, this situation is not just about the violation of the described principles. After all, the leader also notices that the ongoing discussion nicely outlines the actual

topic of the group, which is a common situation. Group dynamics often reveal the topic we want to elaborate. That is why leaving the dynamics to their own flow for a while can serve as a live example of the here-and-now for sociodramatic work. Thus, the group leader's dilemma was that the group interest (shared and common narrative, the opportunity to understand and learn from the here-and-now) and the personal interest (security) are not in harmony. The leader voted for the importance of personal interest, prioritising the unconditional acceptance of a person (confirmation) and the unfolding of that group member's potential. Acting in this way, the leader left aside the possibility of common understanding. To conclude, preferring a common understanding over ensuring the safety of a group member can result in a conflict with the ethos of sociodrama.

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Her aim is to enhance the application of sociodrama and dramatic methods in different fields of education, and in social and cultural institutions.

From Sociodrama to Cinedrama in Psychosis

Sara de Sousa

Summary

This article aims to describe my journey as a sociodramatist in the psychiatric service of a general hospital in Portugal. Sociodrama and cinedrama, developed with psychotic patients, are presented with their particularities and potentials.

Keywords

Sociodrama, Cinedrama, Psychosis

1. The beginning of my journey in sociodrama

It was in April 2000 that I started to work at the psychiatry service of Centro Hospitalar Universitário São João (CHUSJ) in Porto, Portugal. With 22 years of life and not a full year of professional experience as an occupational therapist, I brought curiosity, joy in my heart and the will to do the job. I dedicated myself to mental illness and all that it implies, with a great desire to learn in the hospital where I always wanted to work and with the population that destiny wanted to connect me to. And yes, learning was my watchword, since I had a strong belief that, at that time, my role as an occupational therapist could be extended and developed through practical learning on the ground, in addition to classes, books, appointments and an internship. Days, months and moments passed and the certainty that my intervention needed other models besides those that I learned in college increased.

And so it was that in 2002, at the end of one of the service corridors, a room that was always locked, the psychodrama room, gained meaning. This room only opens to those who have the key, an invitation, a group and/or the necessary training to use it. It was here that my journey in the world of sociodrama began through action, training, practice and Jacob Levy Moreno's psychodramatic model. The person who opened this door for me and introduced me to the Portuguese Psychodrama Society (SPP) was the psychodramatist Luciano Moura, a psychiatrist and notable specialist in working with psychotic patients.

For the first two years I did my group therapy with Lionida Miranda, a psychiatrist and founding partner of the SPP. In the rest of the training, with other notable SPP members, I discovered, absorbed and learned this active method,

moment by moment, year by year. This active method is very challenging and at the same time so effective. It was with my fellow students that, over approximately five years, I realised that sociodrama was increasingly within my reach and that I could finally use it in my practice, in the hospital and outside it. I would like to list them here because without them I would not have become the therapist I am today: António Roma Torres, Gabriela Moita, José Teixeira de Sousa, José Luís Pio Abreu, Luciano Moura, Manuela Maciel, Cristina Villares Oliveira, Fernando Vieira. Thank you!

Figure 1. Psychodrama and sociodrama room at the CHUSJ psychiatry service, Porto

The steersman for this trip was Jacob Levy Moreno who developed a fabulous method based on a set of innovative theories of his own. He proposed using them "to establish a bridge between psychiatry and the social sciences that could transcend the limitations of Psychoanalysis, Behaviorism and Sociology" (Moreno, 1946, 24). Moreno created pioneering methods of intervention and understanding of the human being through the strength of the group, action on the stage and the exploration of roles, among which I highlight sociodrama. It was with Moreno and his disciples that I started to develop my perceptions of the functioning of groups in order to understand how the collective and individual aspects of roles can bring people together and observe feelings of closeness, rejection and neutrality. It is fabulous to see how group members interact, what themes people choose to explore and how, more or less healthily, they choose to do it.

2. Sociodrama Director

In the meantime, my journey continued and sociodrama went from theory to practice. I had several opportunities to direct sociodramas with groups of at-social-risk

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children from 6 to 9 years old and from 10 to 12 years old; with caregivers of Alzheimer's patients; with people with chronic mental illness at different levels of treatment (day hospital, outpatient, residential); with higher education students and with women prisoners. Many of these experiences I shared with sociodramatist and friend Celso Teixeira, in a therapeutic team that we built and adapted to meet various challenges. There were and are several experiences in which the method works, captivates, and in which the spontaneity of the moment is a creator and integrator of new behaviours. And it was with these groups that my role as a sociodramatist developed. Spontaneously, I looked at the groups in which the need to intervene arose and sociodrama was the right answer.

I have always considered sociodrama as a group learning process that brings participants closer to the common characteristics of human experience. On stage, the participants' thoughts, feelings and hopes are dramatised, giving them the opportunity to learn more about themselves and their groups, about their role in them by being invited to experience their relationship with the world in an unthreatening way. This sense of protection of the participants is especially useful for people with severe mental illness, as I was able to verify in my first sociodrama group at the hospital. By 2007 I had completed my SPP training as a director of sociodrama. For the following three years I worked in that room at the end of the corridor in my hospital, running a sociodrama group heterogeneous from the point of view of psychiatric diagnosis. This was my first group in which themes were worked out, such as 'how to live with my mental illness', 'how to overcome my daily difficulties' and 'how to ask for help'. It was also in this group that I started using some excerpts from Charlie Chaplin films, and in which cinedrama began to take its first steps under the supervision of psychodramatist António Roma Torres, who guided and encouraged me to try the method without hesitation (Roma Torres, 2018, 233).

In 2010, a new challenge arose. As part of my doctoral thesis I designed an experimental study in which I created a 4-month anti-stigma program entitled Education and Training Course for Active Life - CEFVA (Sousa, 2012; Sousa et al., 2014, 255-259). The participants were 17 people with a diagnosis of schizophrenia who embarked with me on a psycho-educative intervention, using a methodological tool centred on the group using action and learning methods such as sociodrama, alongside a technological tool that enabled interactive, flexible and personalised distance learning similar to e-learning. For what purpose? To decrease the self-stigma of mental illness, prevent relapses and promote healthy relational bonds.

In the weekly sociodrama sessions, the dramatisations focused on the following common themes:

1. self-stigma, which fosters in the psychotic patient doubt, hesitation and failure to reach goals, sometimes initially set, which later, with the progress of the disease, end up being forgotten;
2. the search for help, which is also compromised, exacerbating avoidance and progressive social isolation, which in turn increasingly complicates the relationship with the other and with oneself;

3. the loss of bonds and self-efficacy, which is reflected in the decrease in em-powerment and the loss of healthy social roles that contribute to increasingly deficient community integration, which in turn generates reinforced stereotypes and prejudices;

4. social representations of mental illness that are erroneous and generate more stigma, and which are stubbornly present in our society.

As a sociodramatist what most challenged me in this intervention was the communication deficit present in the group members, as well as their marked isolation, which can be both a cause and a consequence of psychotic processes. In fact, each person-to-person interaction can become toxic, disrupting the performance of roles in the one-to-one relationship and especially in a group (Sousa, 2012; Roma Torres et al., 2014).

3. Cinedrama

And so it was that in September 2010, after the end of this intervention, that the need arose to integrate some of CEFVA's participants into a new sociodrama group that would continue to work on these and other topics. The group we created made my journey take on a new meaning, since the central methodology of it was cinedrama. This group remains active today, and once again I have taken the helm. As auxiliary egos (co-therapists) I had the valuable collaboration of Mariana Fontoura and João Rebelo, who for 10 years were part of the therapeutic team.

This cinedrama group gathers psychotic patients on a weekly outpatient basis at the CHUSJ psychiatry service. Participants have common difficulties in interaction, communication and function, previously known to their psychiatrists, who refer them to the group. Cinedrama aims to support group members by training them in psycho-social recovery in order to prevent relapse, with the sociodrama stage and the cinema screen as a background. It also contributes to very important objectives for people with this condition, such as the reduction of isolation, the improvement of communication, the development of social relationships and a positive intervention in the negative symptoms of the disease (apathy, abulia, anhedonia) (Teixeira de Sousa & Moura, 2011).

The therapeutic team for this type of sociodramatic intervention must be familiar with the films that can be used, taking into account the group in question. Undoubtedly, the success of the filmmaking session is highly dependent on the selection of scenes and themes that will be easily related to by everyone: loneliness, poverty, resilience, adaptation to unforeseen situations, work, relationships, war and peace, etc.

As we can see in Table 2, films by Charlie Chaplin, Jacques Tati, Norman McLaren and John Schlesinger are used, in which roles and characters with marked characteristics and with more or less comic styles evoke universal feelings and situations. Due to the scarcity of words, black and white image and simplicity, or even the absence

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of effects resulting from the films being produced more than 50 years ago, they are more useful in supporting the group's creative process (Roma-Torres et al., 2014).

Director	Role
Charlie Chaplin (Charlot)	
The Pawnshop (1916)	Pawnbroker's assistant
Easy Street (1917)	Vagabond recruited to police force
The Cure (1917)	Alcoholic gentleman at pa
The Kid (1921)	Tramp
The Immigrant (1917)	Immigrant
A Woman of Paris (1923)	Porter
The Gold Rush (1925)	Lone prospector
The Circus (1928)	Tramp
City Lights (1931)	Tramp
Modern Times (1936)	A factory worker
The Great Dictator (1940)	Adenoid Hynkel / the barber
Limelight (1952)	Calvero: once a famous stage clown, but now a washed-up drunk
Jacques Tati	
The Big Day (1949)	Rural village postman
Monsieur Hulot's Holiday (1953)	Mr Hulot
My Uncle (1958)	Mr Hulot
Norman McLaren	
Neighbours (1952)	Two neighbours
Two bagatelles (1953)	A male dancer
A Chairy Tale (1957)	A chair and a man
Opening Speech (1960)	Norman McLaren and a microphone
John Schlesinger	
Terminus (1961)	Staff and passengers around one train station

Table 1. Films most used in cinedrama sessions

Cinedrama makes it is possible to train healthy social roles in a secure environment, allowing participants to relate to the world of people and objects both inside and outside the screen and the stage. In this way, they reduce their isolation, improve communication and achieve the necessary spontaneity to understand themselves and the other, in order to engage, through new responses, in an interaction that is intended to be built through spontaneous and creative bonds.

Throughout the sessions, the action phase may include reproductions of paused scenes, dramatisation of the previous or a continuation scene, choices of characters, roles, director, camera operator, objects present in the scenes and themes that emerge.

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All of these choices promote striking dramatisations, which, after many years, the patients and I remember in detail.

In fact, playing a role always implies the presence of an 'other', since for each role there is a complementary role. The bond between two people emerges. Fonseca (1980, 78) mentions that in the situation of the psychotic patient, the performance of roles and the creation of bonds are conditioned, with evident difficulties in reversing roles that can be threatening and invasive. He observed in his clinical practice that chronic psychotic patients, when presenting with great deterioration, can have serious difficulties being able to perform role reversal, while those in which there is a conservation of personality between psychotic episodes may already do so: "in the remissions of schizophrenic outbreaks, the more intense the "defects", the greater the difficulties (…) the more the personality is affected by the disease, the greater the difficulty in playing and reversing roles, in Psychodrama and in Life ". According to Moreno (1946), the human being suffers and anguishes mainly when unable to perform all of her/his roles because they pressure the person when they are not performed in full, demanding their realisation. According to Fonseca (1980), in the case of the psychotic patient, this anguish and pressure appear more prominently.

In the performance of roles there are two factors of great importance in psychodramatic theory that can increase your mastery: spontaneity and tele. Without spontaneity, the individual's relationship with objects and people can be compromised, reflecting their difficulties in adapting, flexibility and adjustment to new situations. These relational difficulties, so present in psychosis, can seriously condition social interaction and promote the search for isolation. It then becomes pertinent to analyse the Morenian understanding of isolation with regard to the identity matrix.

In its most primitive and undifferentiated phase, Moreno says that when a baby is born it still does not have a sense of proximity or distance, but as it develops the child begins to feel attracted to or repelled by objects and people until it acquires the ability to relate at a distance to the non-self. Moreno attributes to this event the "first social reflex" that indicates the appearance of the tele factor, referring to this as the "nucleus of the social forces of the individual" (Moreno, 1946, 119). For Soeiro and Saad (1995), tele is the individual's ability to perceive the other objectively and without distortions during a relationship. Zuretti (1995) describes the concept as the energy of attraction existing between two or more human beings who establish a bond through a spiritual, physical, psychic, historical or intellectual relationship. In turn, for Kellermann (1998, 102), tele not only includes aspects of attraction, but also the repulsive aspects of interpersonal relationships, translating the authentic encounter as a kind of "interpersonal chemistry". Marineau (1989) highlights the vital importance of tele for the effectiveness of group work. Therefore, the concept of tele, from a sociometric point of view, is seen as the initiator of interpersonal relationships, interrupting the baby's isolation, present from its embryonic phase until some time after birth. But Moreno (1946, 122) recalls that some children perpetuate the pattern of organic isolation while maintaining a tendency towards social isolation throughout their growth: "a considerable percentage of individuals manifest the tendency to be postponed or isolated in groups during their lifetime entire". Fonseca

(1980, 81, 102) associates the alteration of tele with psychotic patients, saying that "the psychotic does not adequately capture his surrounding world (…) he cannot act in order to leave himself and go to the another (…) in the desperation of his loneliness 'Euístic' can create a delusional-hallucinatory 'You' to accompany him". Thus, isolation appears as one of the most frequent and most difficult behaviours to reverse. Psychotic experience disrupts role performance and makes each person-to-person interaction a toxic event, even in psychotic patients stabilised with medication (Roma Torres et al., 2014).

Jaime Rojas-Bermúdez, the greatest disseminator of Psychodrama in Latin America, created a prominent work with fundamental theoretical concepts regarding work with psychotic people, which in turn has inspired our work in cinedrama. His innovative approach through "intermediate objects" (puppets, masks) created new paths in the treatment of chronic psychotic patients and in the establishment of harmless communication with their own world (Rojas-Bermudez, 1970; Cruz et al., 2018). For Rojas-Bermudéz (1997), communication with a psychotic patient is, to a greater or lesser extent, disturbed, not only at the verbal level but also at the non-verbal level through paraverbal expression and interpersonal physical distance. In this way, the physical approach can be understood as an invasion. For the author, the use of intermediate objects, such as puppets, is based on their innocuousness, simplicity and firmness which allow the psychotic individual to focus their attention on them, requiring less elaboration to capture and decode the verbal messages apparently from the object. Masks or tunics, to cover the face or body, are also mentioned by him as good sources of stimuli and facilitators of the relationship. Rojas-Bermudez (1970) adds that the performance of healthy roles is an important factor in the rehabilitation of chronic psychotic patients, since it is through roles that the link with the environment is established in an appropriate way and without alarm reactions. When this achievement is accomplished, the ideal moment for the inclusion of patients in socialisation groups arises, at which point the stimulation of their recovered roles is continuously maintained, either through interaction or through sociodramatic work of the kind we do in cinedrama. Roma Torres (2018) goes further and mentions that cinedrama can be considered an extension of the intermediate object, giving the example of the previously written monologue, which, strictly speaking, is not an object but can be considered a unit of interaction if it manages to establish a connection with a complementary role in which there is a previously organised dialogue.

In cinedrama, it is up to the director to use techniques to minimise the experience of the psychotic patient and protect her/him, diminishing challenging or disturbing roles which usually demand their full attention and introducing others far removed from those that the patients play in their daily lives. Thus, the techniques we use most frequently are: sociometric techniques (active spectograms, social barometers, active locograms); group sculptures; role training; role play; role reversal; double; soliloquy; games and intermediate object (Cruz et al., 2018; Cossa, 2008; Sternberg & Garcia, 2000; Sousa et al., 2014).

Three examples of action in cinedrama sessions:

1) After the group saw the Charlie Chaplin short film *The Pawnshop* I asked for a volunteer to go on stage to represent the pawnbroker's assistant. Building the scene, M stands behind the counter of the makeshift store and waits for a customer. The other participants are invited to enter the store and ask for a repair to a watch they are carrying. They had to choose spontaneously the type of customer they wanted to be: demanding, friendly, conflicted, etc. Techniques such as soliloquy and role reversal were used. Everyone went through both the role of the pawnbroker's assistant and the role of customer.

2) The group viewed an excerpt from the feature film *The Gold Rush* by Charlie Chaplin, which ended when Charlot, played by Chaplin, a lone prospector without any food, was cooking a delicious meal made of his own boots. The theme that emerged from the group was the ability to adapt to the difficulties that arise in life. Each member was invited to make two sculptures involving colleagues from the group, moulded as if they were clay: the first to represent a moment of difficulty that the person had already gone through, the second to represent the way the person handled it. The remaining participants would have to guess what moment was represented and, as a group, find alternative solutions for its resolution. The techniques used were sculpture, soliloquy, role reversal and double.

3) After viewing the Jacques Tati film *The Big Day* the group was invited to take the stage be part of the party in that village. What character would you like to play? The postman? The owner of the cafe? The village inhabitants who set up the party stalls? The sellers? The village girls? The old lady? After the first take, the party started in a real theatre of spontaneity. The songs used in the film were used during the dramatisation.

4) After viewing the short film *Opening Speech*, by Norman Maclaren, the group was invited to perform some sociometric exercises regarding the "degree of difficulty they have in communicating", "if it is more difficult to be the sender or the receiver", and "who you can communicate most easily with". Then, in pairs and after choosing a card with a message to transmit, members were challenged to communicate a) just in words, with their arms and hands immobile, b) blindfolded, c) without using words and their mouths covered, and d) without limitations, being able to choose the most comfortable way to communicate. After the exercise in pairs, they did the same but with the whole group together. Role training and soliloquy were widely used.

Now in 2021 and in the pandemic that we are going through, cinedrama and myself face a new challenge. Covid has entered the scene and caused our group to be suspended, as well as many other group activities at the psychiatric service in order to prevent contagion. It is difficult to keep social distance on a stage. It even becomes ironic. Distance, which we have been avoiding for so many years so that group participants were less isolated and gained more social contact, is now seen as protective

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behaviour that should be adopted. Staying at home, maintaining distance, avoiding spontaneous social contact are the instructions from World Health Organization. Online intervention is not available to our participants as they do not have access to the necessary technology. So it has become necessary to increase the stage, turn on the lights, put on the mask, train eye contact, pass sociodrama films and techniques to the stage, to protect and help this very particular group to overcome this historic and threatening period. Fortunately, the numerous variants of sociodramatic methods create the possibility to address different group structures and dynamics (von Ameln & Becker-Ebel, 2020).

4. Conclusion

Thus ends this assessment of my journey, which will certainly continue with more stories and discoveries. For now, I want to continue using cinedrama with severe mental illness in order to avoid urgent visits and undesirable hospitalisations. I want to promote mental health, secure interaction with or without Covid and create full moments of life satisfaction!

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PART III.

SOCIODRAMA IN SOCIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL SETTINGS

DIVERSE APPLICATIONS OF SOCIODRAMA

Judith Teszáry

Summary

In this chapter, I share some of my sociodramatic work in both clinical and non-clinical settings and contexts with different purposes, which illustrates the broad applicability of the sociodrama method in education, conflict transformation, team cooperation, collective trauma processing, structural and social problems. By simulating real-life situations, problems and socio-cultural conflicts through dramatic improvisations, we involve the whole group and the capacity of each of its members to create new and functioning solutions to issues and questions.

KEYWORDS

My background: learning by doing

How did I become a sociodramatist? The short answer is practice. The long answer is a lot of practice.

The early influences of my professional development as a sociodramatist and psychodramatist were particularly family therapy, group analysis, Gestalt, psychodrama and sociodrama. These different studies became my practice, in which I integrated the knowledge from all of these areas.

In Sweden, until the 1970s the development of psychotherapy methods was primarily based on psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychoanalysis with individual focus. Radical changes came when systemic theory by Gregory Bateson and systemic thinking spread, and therapists started to see people in their relations in the family and societal context. Family therapy and group psychotherapy became frequently used in all kinds of treatment. Family therapy had already gained a strong foothold in child and adolescent psychiatry in the mid-seventies. Concerning group psychotherapy, the power of the group and the role of the group members as therapeutic agents changed the view of the role of the therapist. The source for potential change was the group itself, upholding the non-oppressive and non-authoritarian values of leadership.

Network therapy, today a well-known therapeutic method, became an overall training for all social workers in Sweden[11].

Network therapy, with either an individual or a family focus, attempts to involve the whole system, the whole social network (family, relatives, friends, co-workers) in the changing process of individuals, families and groups, as a co-creation. Sociodrama is a practical application of network therapy.

Another theoretical base of my sociodrama practice is systems thinking.

Systems thinking is understanding how different parts of a system can influence one another within a whole. Systemic thinking, unlike analytical thinking, requires multiple skill sets to establish a holistic view of a system and explain its behaviour.

Systemic thinking involves making descriptions about the roles, relationships, rules, norms, behaviours, patterns and social forces operating in the social system.

In the following I will present four examples of my work within the public social sector.

1. Experimental education for social workers

SOCIODRAMATIC METHODS USED IN THE INVESTIGATION OF PRESUMPTIVE FOSTER FAMILIES

For 17 years, I have worked as a psychologist in the Stockholm City Social Administration, Child Care section, which serves all of Stockholm's social districts. My work has been doing assessments of presumptive foster and adoptive families and teaching social workers methods to explore the capability of foster families, partly through structured interviews, partly by using sociodrama and genosociogram.

I had the privilege of constructing the courses freely, which became a model for the training of social workers. It is now called The Stockholm Model. Methods such as role play, scenario play, role training, future projections, social atom and surplus reality are still used by the colleagues I trained.

ASSESSMENT, EXPLORATION AND SELECTION OF FOSTER FAMILIES USING DRAMATIC METHODS

The frame of the program: Stockholm City Social Administration organised courses for social workers from Stockholm social districts to gain specialisation in foster care. The class I describe here is about teaching a method of interviewing foster families. The training lasts six days, with 14 participants at a time.

Part of the investigation is a 3-hour questionnaire with the foster parents, husband and wife separately. I used a questionnaire as a family diagnostic instrument developed by social researchers in the 1950s. The latest version is revised by me and some colleagues. We modernised the language and added questions about gender, refugees and abuse.

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[1]   https://psychologydictionary.org/network-therapy/.

The questionnaire has a transgenerational perspective, covering the childhood experiences of the foster parent (FP) within their own family, the attachment styles, the affect regulation, the relationship between parents, the value system, the intimacy between the parents, parenting, the socioeconomic status of the family, the supportive network and many other aspects.

The purpose of the training is to enquire into and make a well-founded decision on whether a family is suitable to take care of a vulnerable, often traumatised, child and meet their physical, emotional, developmental and social needs. The decision is based on the processing or interpretation of the results of the investigation. Here, I highlight moments where I use sociodrama to put the social workers into the position of the FP rather than only talking about them from an outside perspective.

All action methods have three main sections: warm-up, working through and feedback. The warm-up to action and spontaneous creativity is crucial. The purpose is to make people comfortable, trustful and ready for action. To warm the participants up, I ask them to present themselves to each other as couples. Then back in the large group the participants present each other in the role of the other. By being in the position of the other, they also experience the other's perspective. Listening carefully to what others are presenting about themselves, without judging or interpreting, is the first step to identifying with the other and seeing them as they see themselves.

The next task is to do the interview based on the questionnaire, as if the other was the foster parent. This means that the social worker, as the interviewee, opens up their private life and gets a profound experience of the enquiry from within, developing a better understanding of the effect of the interview. Through feedback to the interviewer, the participant gets an insight into her/his style, rhythm, listening capacity, ability to create contact, and create a safe place. Hence, the interviewee feels confident and relaxed. Between sections 1 and 2 of the course, the participants interview the presumptive families in real life and, back in the course, present the interview by reading the answers. When hearing the narratives read out, I process them, partly using the method of genosociogram, by drawing a representation on a big whiteboard in front of the group and discovering the family's resources and possible problems. Seeing the parents' family systems side by side gives us tremendous amounts of information. The social workers who did the interviews also put up the social atom of the family on the stage, involving both parent's social atoms. The other participants put themselves in the roles of the family members and, with the knowledge of the information from the interview, explore the conflicting relationship, the atmosphere, and the family members' opinions about taking in a foster child. We also view the good relationships within the network.

After processing the material, the result is presented to the family. The social workers are training, even at this moment, with each other in action, so they can present a comprehensive picture to the prospective foster parents.

Foster parent training using sociodramatic role play

In Stockholm, we use the PRIDE method, Parent Resources for Information for Development and Education. PRIDE is a competency-based curriculum that trains and supports families in five categories: protecting and nurturing children, meeting children's developmental needs and addressing developmental delays, supporting children's relationships with their birth families, creating a safe place for the child, promoting relationships intended to last a lifetime, and working as a member of a professional team. This model of training of foster families was created with the involvement of American psychodramatists. The training includes role playing exercises of possible life situations that the FP might meet[22]. Training and supervising foster families were also included in my work at Stockholm City Child Care.

Before the PRIDE training, the families participate in introductory training about the legal status and responsibilities of their new role. They are newly selected foster parents, approved by a special council, referred from the social districts. The child is not yet placed in the family. The ideal number of participants is 5-6 couples. The biological children of the FPs are not present, except those older than 18 years.

We begin sitting in a circle and I encourage the families to get acquainted with each other. They talk about their motivation and excitement about their new task.

Sociodramatic role playing about future scenarios

Most families cannot foresee the huge change that is coming and think that they can more or less live their lives as before. Focusing on the change and trying out how the constellation changes in a sociodramatic future scenario is helpful preparation for the new role. The family's reaction to the entrance of a new child into the family system is critical.

One at a time, each family adds their family social atom to the scene, with the help of the other parents in the group who are playing the family roles of the biological children, the grandmother and grandfather. The placed child enters a whole new, unfamiliar network. The foster family knows little about the child. They visited the emergency home a couple of times, got acquainted with the child and built up trust in order to make the replacement as smooth as possible.

First we play the family system before the child's arrival. The biological children, played by other group members, have thousands of questions about the new family member: they hope to get a friend to play with, or they may be afraid that they have to share their toys and dolls, or they even wonder if they are not good enough and that's why the parents wished to have new children. It is not easy to answer these questions and to motivate the children to be open to a new brother or sister. It is important not to say too much about the difficulties the new child may have and at the same time be realistic and appeal to their tolerance and understanding. Or the foster

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2   https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/adoptive/before-adoption/preadoption/pride/.

parents can change roles with their parents and express their opinions about the new situation the family is facing. Are they supportive or sceptical?

The next scene is when the child arrives and takes her or his place in the family. Many children have difficulty relating to the whole family at the beginning. They need to have one of the parents to be close to them. Sometimes it is the mother, but it can also be the father. When a child comes to a family the whole constellation changes in the system. Playing the scenes in different situations and solving difficulties prepares the parents to be more competent and confident in real life. The parents can better prepare their biological children to adapt to the new situation. They are dealing with their envy or anger, or even disappointment since things will not be the same as they imagined them.

Living sociometry in an extensive system

From time to time, it is necessary to bring the professional teams together. There are occasional meetings in case of a complicated placement situation. The purpose is to strengthen the cooperation of the network of professionals and semi-professionals around the child. This course serves to further develop the social workers, child health care personnel and school counsellors who are cooperating in the child placement process.

Sociometry is a way to measure the relationships within a system or network or between the parts of a system. Sometimes, it is difficult to have an overall picture of a whole system and its subsystems. To improve the communication and the co-operation between the different parts, we need to include all aspects that influence decision-making. Sociometry and sociodrama are useful instruments to study the whole system and the communication between the different parts. For example, the foster parents, or the social workers, or the school counsellors reversing roles with the child's biological parents will help them understand that biological parents are not monstrous but love their children. However, they cannot take care of them. It helps foster families and other professionals have a positive attitude towards the parents. Concerning the child's identity building and self-esteem, a positive attitude is crucial. To shift the positions between other parts of the system, let's say the psychiatric team role reverses with the social workers, giving the perspective of the different responsibilities and a mutual understanding of those responsibilities and tasks.

Around a foster child, there are many people, professionals, and non- professionals who influence the life of the child. It can be challenging to coordinate the work since all professionals or teams involved in the child care system – such as biological family, foster family, child care psychologist, social worker, psychiatrist, school teacher and the legal representative of the child – have their rules, regulations and working plans. The purpose is to create a team around the child who can work together and not make contradictory decisions or send double messages. To have all parts of the system simultaneously undertaking action research about the intentions, plans, ways of communication, tasks and responsibilities of each is a tremendous help to creating transparency and clarity about how a system functions.

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SUPERVISION SESSION FOR CHILD CARE PERSONNEL

A possible scenario play (or future projection, as it is called in sociodrama) is a method that lets you try out the potential outcome and the consequences of a decision.

In Sweden, there is a law that says that, if it is necessary to place a child, the social worker has to investigate the child's biological network. Siblings and grandmothers can become foster parents, but they also need to go through scrutiny to gain approval. It makes no sense to place the child in a similarly dysfunctional family. In many instances there is a healthy branch in the family tree, although not always.

CASE OF FAMILY DYNAMIC BASED ON ROLE THEORY

The case I am going to present now illustrates the benefit of first trying out decisions made by the social authorities and gauging the effects of these decisions in an imagined reality.

In this example, the question was whether the grandmother could be a suitable foster parent. The social workers take the roles of the grandmother, the grandmother's new partner, and the mother of the child. In this sociodramatic play, it turned out that the mother (grandmother) and the daughter were very close to each other (known from the collected information). The role play showed that the mother couldn't put boundaries on the child, and the grandmother couldn't put limits on her daughter. The situation could be even more chaotic for the child living in that tension between mother and grandmother. The mother of the child was a drug addict. Even if the grandmother had acceptable home conditions, this action experience or action insight helped the social worker decide. The previous individual interviews with the grandmother did not show the dynamic between mother and daughter. Moreover, the grandmother's new partner was pushed to the background and didn't have much to say.

When the social worker informed the grandmother and her partner in real life about their decision not to engage them as foster parents, the grandmother's new partner pulled his chair to a side by side position with the grandmother. Balance was regained. The grandmother could keep her role as a grandmother. The partner could be supportive. Even if the daughter wished to have her mother as a foster parent to her child, she would have lost her close support since the grandmother's priority would be to care for the grandchild. Everybody was satisfied with the decision. Roles overwrite personal relations, and if the grandmother had become a foster mother of the child, it would have changed the role-relation to the daughter and even to the grandchild.

The placement procedure can be time-consuming and requires special skills and useful instruments, but it is worth the effort since we deal with the establishment of life-long relationships between the foster parents and the child.

FAMILY THERAPY SESSION WITH A FOSTER FAMILY WITH BOTH BIOLOGICAL AND FOSTER CHILDREN

In this short vignette, I wish to illustrate how systemic thinking and sociodramatic methods can help a family deal with their problems. The core of the method is to consider the whole system as an organic entity where all members influence what is happening in the family. There is no 'identified patient', who is pointed out as a problem. Each family member relates how they perceive the problem. We get very different descriptions of the problem. There is no objective truth, only each member's subjective truth. We can call this method applied family democracy.

In order to improve the empathic understanding of each other, I ask the family members to change roles, and we make a circular role reversal. Each member reverses role with the other members of the family and repeats what was said in the other's role. Using this method, people can identify themselves with the perception of the other and in this way the family creates a common story. The experience of how well you are understood by others gives satisfaction, which itself makes a change in the family. The family community is re-established, and dialogue can start when no one needs to defend themselves, and they can focus on agreements.

Another sociodramatic method I use is a family sculpture. Each member of the family puts up a sculpture of the family, which shows how they perceive the constellation and relationships in the family. The closeness, the distance between the family members, is monitored. Each member can reshape the sculpture as they would like it to be. By this reorganisation of the system, the family can find a balance, which functions for all its members.

2. Soft skill training for union trustees through sociodrama

My second example is from working with trade unionists. For ten years, I ran this course for trustees in the Swedish Union of Industry Workers, the largest trade union in Sweden. Trade unions are strong in Sweden, regulating working conditions, safety measures, the rights of the employees, etc. Sociopsychological care is one of their tasks. These soft skills, which are not regulated by law or regulations, are more challenging to acquire. The trustees are skilled in negotiating with the employers following what is regulated by law. A former psychodrama student of mine, who was responsible for the professional development of the trustees, invited me to lead these courses. She thought that sociodrama, learning by doing, would be beneficial to the union workers.

The training courses were aimed at promoting learning how to handle the complaints and difficulties of the employees. The classes were organised by the central Industry Union education section and occurred once a year for three days. The trustees came from different parts of Sweden. When I started to lead these courses, almost all the trustees were male. Along with the development of consciousness

about the importance of male and female representation in official positions, the number of women rose gradually on these courses.

Role development and role training through protagonist centred sociodrama

In this part of my chapter, I describe the case of a female union worker who brought up a complicated sexual harassment experience. She brought her case, her personal experience. It was a delicate issue to deal with because usually people talked about situations from which they were personally detached.

The topic needed a special warm-up beyond the usual trust-building and spontaneity-raising exercises. I made a spectrogram, asking people to stand along a line depending on how much experience they had in dealing with sexual harassment. Most of them had none. It turned out that those who had some cases tried to approach the issue in an informal personal discussion with the perpetrator.

After a discussion, we strengthened the confidentiality and decided to work on her issue. This monitoring of the case started as a personal drama, which we expanded into a sociodrama, and lifted the phenomenon from the private to the general. Psychosociodrama is a method through which you can expand the individual experience to the general and social level.

The boss, who approached this woman trustee with sexual invitations, was a friend of her father. She was afraid that she might cause problems for her father in his relationship with this man. In the first scene, she tells the father about the harassment, the man played by one of the group members. In a role reversal with the father, he convinced her that he would support her in any way he could. "That son of a bitch", she exclaimed in the role of the father.

In the second scene, I asked the trustees to stand behind her and express her anger as supporting doubles. The massive support of the trustees gave her the courage to deal with the situation. "We stand behind you, and we wish to learn how to deal with similar cases. We also hope that the employees dare to bring these kinds of issue to us."

In the third scene, the confrontation with the boss, the woman plays a trustee who represented her. Doing the confrontation in the role of a trustee, while someone else was playing her, she felt more assertive, more spontaneous and courageous. She could defend herself better in that role than if she stayed in her private position. Her private role was played by an auxiliary ego standing beside her. I deliberately let her play the social role of her defender. By creating a triangulation between her private role, her professional role, and the offending boss, we could analyse the motives, feelings, arguments, values, norms of the professional and the private role.

In the role of the boss, played by a voluntarily assigned group member, he defended himself: "It was just a joke, nothing to take seriously. I just wanted to cheer her up and boost her femininity. She takes her role as a trustee too seriously and I don't like that she brings up many questions about working conditions." I invited the group to double the boss, where new hidden intentions came to expression. The

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role of the double is to give words to the unexpressed and hidden messages: "I wanted to bring you out of your role." This kind of manner is also a typical power game, used to belittle or silence people.

A third argument from the boss to twist the story to his own advantage, was that he helped her get this job because he was a friend of her father. So she should be grateful instead of complaining about unimportant things. He became more and more threatening, and the protagonist felt more and more entangled. I asked her to reverse roles with the boss, and she repeated what the boss said. With the group's help repeating these sentences of the boss, the group pressed her alter ego into feelings of guilt. Maximising is a technique we use in sociodrama to enlarge the absurdity of an encounter.

More threatening voices were maximised, such as, "You make a big fuss out of nothing and jeopardise your work, my friendship with your father and your position as trustee. People will not believe you. Better not to say anything; you're just making yourself look ridiculous."

The stronger these voices became, the more anger she felt back in her personal role. Methodologically speaking, by playing the role of a powerful person, one regains one's own power. We tend to project more power to powerful people than they actually have.

But before she could gain her real power, we even doubled the inner voices of the victim, the doubts and the willingness to give up and stay neutral in the situation.

A third voice came into the scene. The voice of other victims she intends to help and protect. "Do you mean that we cannot count on you concerning these kinds of issues?" These voices strengthened her, and she rose and finished the drama in the role of the trustee confronting this man with all the manipulations he tried to use to silence the witness. This sociodrama happened long before the #metoo movement. Back at work, she wrote an article about sexual harassment and what she learned on the course in her local newspaper.

3. Sociodramatic problem-solving

In this section, I describe the use of sociometric choice of topic and the way I worked out chosen topics with staff. My example comes from my experience using action methods in a psychiatric clinic for girls.

In the 1980s, I supervised hospital staff at different clinics. The staff was a multi-disciplinary team made up of psychiatrists, psychologists, teachers (since school attendance is mandatory, the clinic has to provide classes for the young people), psychiatric nurses, and day-care aids. The patients were teenage girls with psychiatric diagnoses.

The team's aims covered a wide range of issues, from a relationship with the patients to organisational questions. One example: since all the staff had supervision once a month, it was essential to find a question most members were engaged with and in which they were interested.

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I usually started with a follow-up of the previous session to check both if the supervision was helpful and if the supervision gave the foreseen result. In the second round, I explored what topics and questions the staff members wished to work on.

There are many ways to make a common choice. Sociometric choice measures the level of interest in a problem among team members. One way to make a choice is to write up all the topics on paper and put them on chairs. People then go to the chairs and stand behind the one they are most warmed up to and which motivates them.

This time the choice fell on the measure of medication. The sociodramatic question was: How does medication influence the work with patients? The different categories of the treatment team had different demands for medication. The psychologist couldn't have a desirable session with the patients if they were too heavily medicated. The day-care personnel and the psychiatric nurses had great difficulty taking care of the turbulence that could easily emerge in the ward section if the girls were not calmed down by medication. The teachers too did not prefer heavy medication since it could reduce the girls' activity level and made them reluctant to do school work.

After the different professions told of their difficulties, the group played different scenes in different situations, where some took the roles of the girls, some took the role of the psychologist or teachers, or of day-care aids in cases of medication. All the staff members spent time in all of the roles interchangeably and experienced situations through improvised role play, which helped identify with the other staff members' difficulties and intentions. The psychiatrist, in the role of the psychologist/psychotherapist, could understand the difficulties in carrying out a session with a drugged youth. Since supervision is not a decision-making forum, medication routines have to be changed in their staff meetings.

Sociodrama should be kept short, and the discussion, reflection, and sharing from the roles after the play should be given a longer time in order to integrate the experience with cognitive insights. Action, emotion, and cognition are always important ingredients for the integration of a session.

In the 1980s, psychopharmaceutical drugs were not as sophisticated as they are today and had a lot of side effects. Overmedication could do more harm than good, and can still do so today. Under-medication could still elevate anxiety and the risk of suicide attempts. The psychiatrists have the main responsibility for these eventualities, while the psychologists and nurses had other treatment methods that involved the psychosocial complexity of the patients.

This team's issue was also around the focus of public discourse at that time, discussing the effects and the side effects of the drugs. We played the voices for and against the prescription of psychotropic drugs. In sociodrama, we can move from micro to macro-level and explore questions in larger social contexts.

The model described above can be applied in several other areas. The practice is based on "creative and transformational thinking to yield many different views of the same thing and the same view of many different things. It is in the nature of systemic thinking to do so. The aim is to challenge assumptions, to provoke new

thoughts and to generate unexpected insights that have a high intrinsic value to the participants." (Flood, 1999).

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT COURSE FOR HOSPITAL STAFF

One consequence of the reshaping of psychiatry in Sweden, including respect for the patients' free will and consent to treatment, was that compulsory medication was reduced and psychiatry began to rely more on psychological knowledge of conflict transformation, human resources and the social competences of the treatment staff.

The Swedish Healthcare Committee for Citizens' Health and Well-being organised courses for hospital staff to satisfy their needs. The study was mandatory for all health care workers including receptionists and chief doctors. I led the psychological part of the conflict transformation courses. Human self-defence techniques, used to defend oneself in case of attack by patients, were taught by an aikido team. The method, inspired by Eastern philosophy, says 'go *with* the power and not against it'. If you go against the power, you start a fight and no health care worker should go into these kinds of situation, regardless of if you have a chance to win or not. They taught techniques on how to come out of strangulation, retention and other physical attacks without hurting the other: useful learning also for women in danger.

In my part of the program, I taught conflict transformation using conflict theories and sociodramatic action methods. The group would work in small groups to recall situations in which they felt threatened or extremely uneasy. We played out some of the situations in the large group, as authentically as possible. We used plays and scenes to try out different solutions and train the participants to apply best practice, referring both to theoretical knowledge and practical references.

Example: A patient is not satisfied with a decision the doctor in charge has made. He was not permitted to leave the hospital for the weekend. He was furious, throwing the furniture around in his room. The question is how to stop this without hurting him or the staff being hurt and then to establish dialogue with him. The group tries out different approaches in action. The staff member who plays the role of the patient gives feedback on the effect of their interventions, and we choose the most efficient one and do role training, so the staff learns to apply it in practice. The solution should be applicable to other similar situations.

The primary purpose was to deflect the attack and calm the overheated situation down. Many conflicts emanate from perceived disrespect when we intrude upon the personal space of another. In this case, the best solution to calm the situation was the whole staff from the ward, six people, coming to the door of the patient's room. This signals that the staff have supremacy, so there is no question of starting a fight. This is the opposite of when one person tries to resolve the situation alone. The patient cannot win, and no one in the staff has to be a hero. The staff assures the patient that they will not be harmed. They will respect the patient's personal space.

Purpose number two was to get on speaking terms with the patient. Here, they gave the possibility of a choice: Are you going to throw things, or can we talk? Are

you going to stand, or shall we sit down? So when the adrenalin level decreases, the staff asks if they can come in and talk or stay outside the door.

Implementations of the newly learned techniques and solution models require changes at the organisational level. To make the insights the participants gained and make the course beneficial in their everyday work, we played imagined negotiation scenarios (future projections) to prepare for the meeting with the responsible leaders at their workplaces. Change is a process that needs rehearsal and warm-up. The participants tried out their arguments (role training) to convince the ward leader of the necessity of reorganising the work, for example, in the case of mobilising 4-6 people when there is an alarm situation. Some participants played the staff, and others played the leaders, the decision-makers on the ward. Those who played the leaders of the ward expressed the arguments against this change while the others expressed their counterargument, including solutions to the consequences of the change. The systemic thinking, to see an organisation as a whole and deal with it, created a new perspective and new possibilities for the participants.

4. Sociodrama in a post-revolution trauma

My last example is from Kyiv in the aftermath of the revolution.

Helping the helpers

FEPTO has a particular working group, the Task Force for Peace Building and Conflict Transformation. The Kyiv Psychodrama Association invited four of us to run a weekend session in Kyiv, Ukraine, to help the helpers elaborate on their experiences in the Maidan revolution. It was in April 2014, not long after the revolution.

As a warm-up to our task, we took a walk in the rubble of Independence Square (Maidan). It was a long and shocking walk far down the extensive pathway. The burned and broken paving stones, the tents, the temporary memorials with flowers and the lights with pictures of the those killed that edged the road. The Euromaidan protest began as a small peaceful protest when president Yanukovych ceased cooperation with the European Union. The protest turned into a violent, devastating event when security forces attacked the people. There were snipers, a specially trained Russian Alpha Unit living in Ukraine. On big screens, films showing interviews with frontline figures of the revolution, activists and citizens, ran endlessly. Many of those in the films were no longer alive. It was a spooky and choking feeling to go through this open wound in the heart of the city.

This walk was our warm-up to meet the group of 50 psychodramatists who had helped the revolution participants in their roles as psychologists, nurses, doctors, trauma team coordinators, journalists. Some participants came from Crimea, recently annexed by Russia. We divided the group into two. I and my Turkish colleague Nevzat Uctum worked with 25 people. It was the first time the whole association

had met together after the revolution. Mobile telephones were allowed during the session to keep in contact with families in Crimea.

The atmosphere was tense and frozen. People were still in shock. We chose to do a verbal go-around, which was a long and emotionally intense witnessing of experiences. Participants told us what help they were giving: visiting the wounded in hospital, supporting the families and friends of those killed, supplying food, helping emergency personnel as volunteers or as psychiatric aid, transporting people, documenting the revolution. Some felt guilty that they did not do enough, but they decided to leave the protest when it became violent. The threatening glows of war awakened the fear of the fathers and mothers in the group. Their sons and husbands could be drafted into the army at any moment.

The political situation was very chaotic. No one knew what would follow in the wake of this event. Important topics unfolded. The split between people, the split within families, the fragmentation of society, how to dissolve the wounded Maidan and make it liveable again. Homeless people moved into tents and the whole area was like a burned-out ruined cemetery. Where to start? We started to set up scenes about broken family ties. Being pro-Russia, patriotic Ukrainian or just freedom seekers without nationalism, divided the families. We played out scenes in which brothers and sisters broke the relationship and mothers did not speak with their sons and daughters. The revolution and the political split cut through people's private lives. The injunction to keep contact was to give up on the revolutionary ideas, which aimed to change the social order. But people couldn't go back to the old order and affirm it. They were fighting for change. They had lost their companions. The authoritarian regime also marked family life, and the younger generation wanted to liberate themselves. It is almost unbearable to remember these scenes. I can still feel the pain while writing.

These individual problems were also socio-cultural. The two societies, the Russians and the Ukrainians, were 'married' in a forced political marriage. Nevertheless, mixed marriages were quite common, and people lived together, no matter where they initially belonged. Many Russians lived in the country even before the Soviet occupation.

Most situations have both personal and collective aspects. Depending on the contract with the group, we can shift from psychodrama to sociodrama and study the issues in a broader context. Or from sociodrama to a more personal elaboration of a connecting problem.

We established three groups on the scene: one group played the pro-Russians, one group played Nationalists, and the third group played those who just wanted to live in peace and wanted to be a part of the European Union. We explored the dynamics between these groups, which took different role positions representing norms and values. We could have a view of the complexity of society. The three groups were changing positions with each other and argued from different points of view. In the long sharing, which is also an essential integrating phase of a sociodrama, people said they could identify with all the positions. The first round of the sharing was from the parts they took in the play. The Nationalists were also fighting for freedom

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from Russia and were ready to fight with arms. The EU supporters believed that joining the European Union was a step towards independence and democracy. For the Nationalists, the European Union reminded them too much of the Soviet Union. The goal was the same, but the methods were different from these groups. The pro-Russia group had deep roots in family bonds to Russia and couldn't imagine going against their motherland and fighting against them. All groups could understand the human motivation behind their loyalty. But the extremism fuelled by the politics made people split off from the many other aspects that bind them together with the people in Ukraine.

The essence of such a work is that the participants understand the different perspectives people have of the same society. This way of working broadens the empathic ability and minimises rigidity of thinking. The freedom to express values, ideas, opinions and feelings, no matter the differences, and being in dialogue with others, is essential. Role reversal can even clean out the projections and prejudices we have towards the other. Sociodrama is a practice in functional democracy.

The sociodramatic question was: Who can rule the country, and what will happen now that former president Yanukovych has fled the country? Which groups or networks will influence the future development of the country? These are similar questions to those asked by Moreno when, in 1921, he put out an empty chair in a theatre in Vienna asking for new leadership after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

In sociodrama, the group puts the questions and gives answers: Will you be able to trust the new leaders?

We lined up the new government, the oligarchs, the people, and the military.

The most dominant group was the oligarchs, who governed the country according to their own economic interests. The dialogue went like this:

THE OLIGARCHS: "We support whoever will be president as long as we can do our business. Poroshenko is one of us, so we support him in the election."

PEOPLE: "He is an experienced politician who wants to democratise parliament. He is West-oriented and is pro-Europe."

OTHER VOICES OF PEOPLE: "But he is also an oligarch!"

PEOPLE: "He is better than an old communist. The parliament is full of those. We hope he cleans them out."

THE MILITARY: "We are prepared to defend the country."

PEOPLE: "We do not want war."

THE MILITARY: "Do you want the Russians to take over our country as they did in Crimea?"

PEOPLE: "We don't want to send our boys and husbands to war. They want to go to school; they want to meet girls. They don't want to be heroes! We don't want to lose them."

After the play, everyone de-roled and came back to the circle. A long sharing followed these scenes. A post-revolution state was a new situation in the country, and

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people did not have an overview. In the different roles, they could try out the various opinions in the country and gain an image of the whole of society. The views and arguments could have been their own as well as imaginary. Paradoxically enough, to take a role or a position and identify yourself with an opposite part also gives a certain distance to the situation. Although the country was marked by uncertainty, a sense of control appeared.

The next scenes were the last in our two days of work. On the third day, we met the other group to make a closure.

Cleaning up the Maidan and Freedom Square and cleaning the sea

Some protest groups were still active in Maidan, without much energy left. The place looked more like the remains of a crushed revolution. It was time to mourn and bury the dead. Who had the mandate to dissolve the rest of the remains of the revolution? At the same time, we had to pay respects to the people who gave their lives and wished to have a better social order. It must be someone who was part of the revolution and built the barricades, I suggested. The group answered Klitschko, the presumptive Mayor of Kyiv. We created a sociodramatic scene using props for the burned bricks, the tents, the provisional graves, the banners and posters, and car tyres, flowers, lights.

In the next scene, the group cleaned up Maidan and built a memorial sculpture with flowers to honour those who had died. I received an old Ukrainian song (Plyve Kacha maidan) from one of the participants, a song usually played at funerals. I put the music on my computer, and we were just crying and mourning and crying. The living sculpture embraced a child as the symbol of the future of Ukraine.

We did one more scene as a closure. Since the Russians annexed Crimea, people did not go to the sea, did not step into the water. Not even in Kyiv. They felt that it was no longer their sea, as if it was contaminated. We did a short symbolic ceremony of purifying the sea, followed by the group making a waving motion, undulating like a dance, singing a song.

Months later, I read in the newspapers that what we did in the sociodrama happened in reality. Klitschko was elected Mayor of Kyiv, organised a funeral ceremony in Maidan and raised a memorial wall to the heroes. The wall is named the Heavenly Hundred.

If we listen to the co-unconscious and the co-conscious of the group and let it unfold in action, the inherent soul of the group can emerge as a unifying power. That's what happened in this group. Working through collective trauma is essential in order to regain social order and be open to the future.

Final words

My experience has taught me over and over again that socio-cultural issues are best solved in groups. Therefore I wish to close this chapter by honouring the creator of action methods. The dynamic elements of J. L. Moreno's methods, the meeting, the

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relationship, the spontaneity and the creative moment, were the driving forces in the practice I have shared glimpses of.

Sociodrama as an action method can have a different focus depending on the purpose of the work. J. L. Moreno, who created the methods of psychodrama, sociodrama, sociometry and group psychotherapy, defines sociodrama thus:

The true subject of sociodrama is the group. Sociodrama was developed as a deep action method for dealing with intergroup relations and collective ideologies (1943/1972). Sociodrama deals with problems in which the collective aspect of the problem is put in the foreground and the private relationships are put in the background. The two cannot be totally separated. (Moreno, 1953, 88)

J. L. Moreno developed a social method that can be called the analytical-actor method, in contrast to the analytical observer method. "I turned myself into an actor in order to learn more about my thoughts (choices and decisions). In these courses I aim to turn my fellow man into actors in order for them to learn more about their thoughts (choices and decisions), reversing their roles in order that they can learn more about each other. In a broad sense here is the methodological seed of what later became known as interpersonal systems, sociometry and psychodrama." (J. L. Moreno, Sociometry and Social Psychology, 350)

Moreno was more interested in the "evolution of the creator" than the creation itself, the so-called cultural conserve. His methods serve as well as the evolution of the co-creation, in the sense that only if we liberate ourselves from cultural conserves, through spontaneous acts, can we reach a shared vision and realise that vision.

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Young Immigrants Meeting Sweden

Monica Westberg

Summary

A story about how Moreno's philosophy and methods, such as sociodrama, role training and sharing, have been used in the 2005-2020 period with young people who arrived in Sweden from a foreign country.

Background for the work

Every summer, the Psychodrama Academy has had an open socio-psychodrama week with different target groups invited. The week I will talk about here dealt with conflict management, with psychologist Christina Sougurides participating in the workshop. Christina was commissioned by the government to influence the country's municipalities to receive unaccompanied young people from different parts of the world. Christina was employed by SWERA, an organisation that was formed when the Refugee Council was abolished.

SWERA's task was to develop methods for the reception of asylum seekers. Christina was inspired by our methods and wanted me to work out a plan to work with the unaccompanied young people who had begun to flow into Sweden. This article describes the experiences I had over the 15 years that I worked with refugees. There was great resistance in most Swedish municipalities to accept young people who were unaccompanied refugees. My task was to help with conflict management and other difficulties for both staff and the young people in the places where it was agreed to arrange housing and education for them.

This article will deal with:

– The socio-cultural context of Sweden as a country receiving refugees
– Meeting youth refugee groups
– 'Play leader' training
– What can happen in Asylum processes, with examples
– My own change: I also learned to move.

Problem description

As we look back to the early 2000s, all new arrivals who came to Sweden wanted to go to municipalities where they could find their compatriots. For example, in the municipality of Södertälje, which is south of Stockholm, the influx meant that the population grew at record pace. This caused problems with housing and places in childcare and at school. Healthcare became severely strained when the number of patients doubled without having time to hire new staff. Many of those who came were in need of medical care and psychiatric treatment for the trauma they had been subjected to in their home country and on the escape routes to Sweden. Therefore, it became necessary to persuade more municipalities to receive the new arrivals. Later came legislation that forced all municipalities to accept asylum seekers.

Socio-cultural context: Sweden changes from a country with a history of large emigration to a country with large immigration

From the middle of 1850 to 1910, close to one million people emigrated from Sweden, mainly to the USA. It was poverty that drove them, and in the same years, Sweden withdrew its army from ongoing conflicts, which is why the population increased in number. For a few years there was a change in the climate called the new ice age. This meant that the crops did not have time to mature and many people starved to death. In the museum in Växjö, you can read many stories and experiences of the mass emigration to the new country of the USA, which was described as the kingdom of heaven.

Then the Swedish climate improved and industrialisation and commerce accelerated growth in the country. Now the labour force was needed at home. Better conditions were created and emigration ceased. Instead, immigration began. We were not involved in either the First or Second World Wars and subsequently the need for labour was great.

Sweden campaigned to attract workers, and for political reasons some groups sought asylum here. These groups came with different cultures and sought to find their place in our society. Most people agree that it has made our country more colourful and creative in terms of both culture and food, and immigration has largely contributed to the successful development of our country.

In recent years, the war in Syria has led to large numbers of refugees arriving in a short time. It has now become problematic to maintain a good reception for refugees and some political parties have made the immigrants the problem, which has changed Swedish attitudes towards them.

Cultural clashes when refugees from countries outside Europe arrive

Surveys of attitudes and values around the world have been conducted for the last 30 years The Figure below is a representation of some of what was found. In the top right corner you will find Sweden, meaning that we value independence and our own development. We are the most secularised population in the world, valuing science and proven experience very highly. We have the highest trust in the state and expect that we will receive support if we get into trouble. Young people who want to study get a loan so their choice can be made independently. There is high acceptance of paying high taxes because it gives us a society with services at all levels. If you become ill, there is free access to healthcare, which in many other countries ruins a family financially.

Figure 1. WVS Cultural map time-series: 1996–2015.[1]

We have developed an extreme individualism which comes with the price of isolation and loneliness for many people. To live in a new social system or society requires that you join an association. There are many different associations that are run in a democratic way and often receive financial support for their activities from the municipality or state. These associations form a strong network that in many ways balances the strong state.

In the lower left corner, you will find communities built around clans. They are strongly influenced by religion, with cohesion in the family often high. If you con-

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[1]   Source: World Values Survey.

form to the norms, you get the support of the family. Unfortunately, it is common in these communities to find strong oppression of women, who lack equal rights and are completely subordinate to men.

When people from these parts of the world arrive in Sweden, many cultural clashes occur. Difficulties in learning the language and major shortcomings in reception have created the problems we have today.

From a warm welcome to Sweden, to closed borders

There is now research that shows how different cultural groups adapt in Swedish society, illustrating how immigration has contributed to growth and development. Many languages are spoken, which facilitates global trade. The cityscape itself has changed: for example, those who came from Lebanon created market trade. They generally refrain from applying for grants when they first arrive in Sweden, preferring to take care of themselves completely and not ask for grants, although at the same time they prefer not to pay taxes either. This market trade is very popular and has created life in various centres that were previously generally empty. This is all well and good, but since the services you can get in Sweden cost money, there are conflicts.

Our country has often followed the same development as the United States. Today, the form of crime has changed, which can be read in criminal networks that deal with weapons and drugs, in which many young people are involved. There have been shootings with about 20-30 killed a year, something we have rarely or never had before in our country.

We also have a party called the Sweden Democrats, which received close to 20% of the votes in the last general election. They focus on immigrants as a problem, so even if an immigrant is a model citizen that person will also suffer badly. By creating scapegoat thinking, a gap arises in which everything that does not work can be blamed on immigration. Which, of course, is completely wrong. The large number of refugees who arrived in the autumn of 2015 created major problems, but also provided the opportunity for a good reception. On TV, one could follow the progress of IS and see how large numbers of refugees fled for their lives. Over the period of a few months, 160,000 people came to Sweden who needed housing and medical care. Civil society mobilised and many people made sacrifices for these strangers. A movement was created which called itself Refugee Welcome, an organising network that aimed to help those who could not cope with the reception of refugees.

Then suddenly political opinion swung. Sweden closed its borders. Only quota refugees would be admitted. At EU level, the issue arose of a fairer distribution of refugees from Syria within the EU. Syrian refugees had fled IS and the civil war because they had been subjected to horrific treatment in Syria. On the internet, you could follow the progress of IS supporters. There was a heated debate about how we should deal with these vulnerable people. There were quarrels at EU level because

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some countries received more than they could handle and others did not receive any at all. For those who care about their fellow human beings, it came as a severe blow that the EU lacks the ability to relate in a humane way to these refugees.

The intense debate has continued for several years with immigration the focus of the political conversation. Fear of the Swedish Democrats, a party with roots in Nazism, has created an polarised debate.

Now that debate has fallen silent in our society as well as the rest of the world and we are completely preoccupied with the Covid pandemic. This has shown that things that are said to be impossible, in fact can be done in a very short time. For example, air traffic was shut down. People had to start working from home and the cultural life was extinguished. Many of the shortcomings of the global economy and our own societies have become apparent. For example, the lack of protective equipment for people working in healthcare has exposed these staff to significant risk of being infected themselves. We have donated to our field hospitals and given medical equipment as there were no respirators. This is how the problems of elderly care have been exposed and where the infection has taken many lives. After all, Swedish society has managed to handle the crisis situation relatively well. We asked how to behave, and these restrictions are followed, to a large extent, without the police and military having to monitor us. This is explained by the trust that the government has in its citizens and the citizens have in their government. As of this writing, a life filled with restrictions and recommendations continues every day.

Meeting youth refugee groups

On SWERA's request, delivered by Christina Sougurides, I wrote a proposal for the Psychodrama Academy on how we could use socio-psychodramatic knowledge in meeting with unaccompanied young people seeking asylum in Sweden. Our proposal included conflict management, role training and training in collaborating in groups. The mental map is based on the thoughts J. L. Moreno created, where meeting and equality are strongly emphasized.

The assignment was carried out in two stages. In the first we carried out a six-day course in both Alvesta and Karlskrona. Another six-day course followed in both places. This part was expanded to two municipalities, Lessebo and later also Vårberg in Stockholm. In Vårberg, an extra 'playleader' training session was also conducted for two weeks.

Because the work was going on in four different places with a varied group size from 12 to 46, we learned a lot about how different it can be. The composition of the group and the different conditions in each group affected what became possible to implement. At least a dozen different languages were spoken within the groups. The translation was done by the young people who could speak English or Swedish. In this situation, it becomes obvious how much of the communication takes place on a non-verbal level. In Vårberg, we had access to three interpreters at the end of the work, which made a big difference in having real dialogues.

The submitted bid for funding received only half of the required amount of money for the project. As it was a new group in every municipality, and we were unknown to the participants, it was hard work to decide how to do it. Will the young people understand what we are asking them to do? Will they have enough trust in us? Will they learn something that will help them in this situation they live in? How could we understand each other with the language difficulties that prevailed?

Each municipality had a leisure leader who worked with the young people. They worked so differently because the groups and the receiving municipalities functioned differently. It became clear how one's own professional and life experience plays a role in the choice of form of work. We would in various ways contribute to the group development and support the leisure leaders' work. Christina was in contact with the person in charge of the municipality, with whom we had a dialogue during the work.

Alvesta group

The first group was in Alvesta. A small town in Småland, where Sweden's first refugee camp was located. Today the Asylhome is in a high-rise building with apartments where families can live together, while young people who came alone were allowed to share an apartment.

They had just been given a room for their meeting activities and the leisure leader Kerstin Lindblom worked with the group's help to make the room usable. The fact that they had to start from scratch and with absolutely nothing was both an advantage and a burden. The room became their own in a completely different way when they were involved in retrieving used furniture and other equipment that was needed. Signs and decorations were painted, musical instruments were borrowed and working together they created a functional room for activities.

Some young people had been in Sweden for over two years and were waiting for the opportunity to go to another place to complete their studies and find a place to live. They had good language skills in both English or Swedish and translated for those who lacked these languages. This meant that each part of the conversation would be translated into 4-5 other languages, so everything went very slowly.

We started with games that made us learn everyone's names, then a story about Moreno and his work with refugees during the First World War. How women, children and the elderly who lived in Mitteldorf managed to regain their zest for life by realising that they all had something important to contribute. We talked about the importance of acting as mentors for each other and that those who had education could take on the role of teacher for those who could not read and write.

The first vignette we did in the group was about how to manage the meeting with the administrator at the Migration Board. Everyone took a turn role reversing with the administrator and was helped to formulate some of what they needed to express. At the first meeting, we had a rather vague picture of which directives applied to the Swedish Migration Board. This also applied to the Swedish Migration Agency,

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which was drafting the guidelines that would apply. With joint efforts we tried to piece together a picture of what guided the administrator's work.

When the vignette was over and everyone had struggled with their questions, we sat down again in a circle to reflect on what we had learned. It turned out then that an administrator was someone who was not easy to get in contact with, and the asylum seekers thought the exercise was very good and helpful.

In the meeting with the Swedish Migration Agency, the asylum seeker must state the reasons that may entitle her or him to a residence permit. Telling the Agency about their experiences and knowing that what you say in the interview can be taken as a reason to be rejected creates a very difficult situation. If you are sufficiently traumatised, you do not want to remember what could be a legitimate reason for obtaining a residence permit. If you have gone to Sweden with the help of smugglers, you will have received strict orders with an implicit threat about what you are not allowed to say.

We finished the first session by setting a time for the next meeting and asked the group to make an effort to be on time, as our train times governed how long we could stay. We had a good discussion about how difficult timekeeping is when every day is the same and there is no schedule that you can stick to. We also talked about different cultures' attitudes to time and how extremely time-controlled Sweden is.

Through the role reversal with the administrator, several reported at the next meeting that they were not as afraid before the meeting and therefore the conversation had been easier and they felt more understood and less suspicious.

What would Gandhi have done?

During the last two visits in Alvesta the group changed. A large group of young men had come from an isolated village in Iraq. Actually, they were too old to participate in SWERA's activities, but their need to meet others was so great that they were invited to the final full days. The group became so large that Kerstin Lindblom had rented the Jazz Association's premises, which were significantly larger. I had just read the latest biography of Gandhi. Could I use this new knowledge in any way? We decided to give the group members the task of searching for what they could find on Google about Gandhi. Was there anything written in the different languages they represented?

The obligatory name round with playful elements taught us that we had five people named Mohammed in the group. We sat in a large circle, which is why we talked about the importance of the circle and how ancient the tradition of council in a circle is in all cultures. In the old times, one could treat various difficulties and administer justice according to the ethics of that time.

Then they had to talk in pairs about their first impressions of Sweden and then to voluntarily recount these in larger groups. It was an overwhelming experience, where the group of Yazidis, in particular, expressed great gratitude for the treatment they received. They had been treated as human beings, not as lesser criminals, and they

thought they had come to paradise. This made a deep impression on the younger participants who had been here for a while and now had critical views on various things.

We alternated conversations in groups with physical exercises and it was obvious that they appreciated being in a group that did something together. We trained on conflict management in small groups, then changed roles with an antagonist and tried to find an acceptable solution.

Lively conversations arose and a group raised the issue of Mohammed, who had said that every man should have the right to three or a thousand wives. Things then became a little heated with the only female participant. The group member who most strongly claimed the right to polygamy had to make a role reversal with an intended wife and the situation became really humourus with serious undertones. We pointed out that polygamy is forbidden in Sweden and a young man who had been here for quite some time replied that the men had solved it in a non-binding way here in Sweden. No one protested if anyone had a love affair with several women at the same time as far as he had seen. The day ended with me telling them about Gandhi's life and his struggle to use and promote non-violent methods. We once again asked them to look online in their own language and see what was written about him on the internet. When we returned to our last full day, two young men made a presentation of what they had found online. One of them, who was a Buddhist with international credentials in judo, spoke with great empathy about Gandhi's life. The group listened intently and when he finished, one of the Yazidis asked, "What would Gandhi have done if he had been in Iraq now?" We did a pair exercise in which they got to answer this question. One common answer was, "The most important thing now would be not to lose your life."

The questions led to an in-depth discussion in which it became possible for the group to express their grief over what was going on in the world. The feeling was that we had reached a level of conversation that had healing effects. Talks with the leisure leader a week later confirmed that something important had happened. A common language had been created that superceded the differences that existed in the group, making it easier to find peace and quietness when something difficult happened.

Karlskrona group

Our next target group was in Karlskrona. There we would work with a group that had already received their residence permits, or at least come a long way in their asylum process. The leisure leader, Alexis Jönsson, had to borrow space in the premises where the language teaching took place. There was a close collaboration with the municipality's administrators and the group met regularly. One of the young people had come into conflict with staff at that asylum home where they live now. Alexis had arranged that after meeting the youth group in the evening we would have a meeting with the asylum home the next afternoon.

We did different exercises with the young people so that we could get to know each other as a group. There was a lot of laughter and many linguistic misunderstand-

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ings that we humorously found solutions to. During the break, the municipality staff informed them about the conditions that would apply to receive a grant during the summer. Everyone must find a job. I was so surprised that Karlskrona had an open labour market where even immigrants with poor language skills got jobs.

I asked how they had made this happen. A somewhat embarrassed official informed me that this was not the case. The labour market was in difficulties in Karlskrona as well. To my question about why they had threatened the young people with withdrawn contributions, I received no answer. I asked a number of different questions about what opportunities there were and what could be done. A brainstorming session about opportunities and dreams started and the break ended in the best mood.

When we returned to our group room, the young people were happy that I had formulated all the questions they had but couldn't find words for so easily. They had understood that we were there to support their attempt to find their way into Swedish society, the bureaucracy of which they simply did not understand. The bureaucracy itself became another language they didn't know.

In that situation, manipulative methods are easily developed that are not completely honest, where the right of the stronger prevails. Since many of the new arrivals are not used to the state being there to help, there is a fear when meeting with police and officials from the state departments.

Already on our next visit one could notice that the group had created a hierarchy within itself with clan-like rules. They had then started football training and their ability to play team games was very limited. Everyone was a virtuoso with the ball but they did not pass on the field and wanted to score goals themselves, even if they played at the back.

We then worked a lot on how to make a team work. We pointed out that they were great at managing themselves, but now something else was going on. How do you behave in a team when you find someone can run as fast as you can? Who can you fit in with? Can you please put a scarf over your eyes and move without bumping in to someone else! Group members had to move around blindfolded until we shouted stop. Now, without looking, they would say who was closest to them. It was a wild guess but after a few tries they managed this well. They had so much fun, it was magical. In the meeting with the asyl home staff, we had two hours at our disposal. There was a tense atmosphere when we arrived and the staff was in a defensive position. When we explained the necessity of conflict for human growth and that humour and warmth are the only ways forward, the situation became somewhat happier. With great zeal, the staff went into the exercise of role playing with the teenagers. The staff saw new ways of interaction, with one staff member in the final round expressing how they all got to see new opportunities from the meeting with the teenagers.

Lessebo group

In Lessebo, the leisure leader preferred not to have any outside involvement in his work. He had a three-room apartment that unfortunately could not accommodate

everyone in one room. His ability to integrated the young people in the associations and contexts that existed in the town was impressive. Some of the locals were willing to help and it looked as though most things were going well.

We conducted a two-day course in conflict management according to which the emphasis was on everyone involved should express their point of view and feel respected. As the leisure leader was not interested we changed our previous four-day contract to only two days and instead worked for several days in Alvesta where the need was greater.

Vårberg group

When I worked for a while with the refugees, I read a report in the local newspaper that the young people had started fighting with each other at nearby refugee accommodation. Since I had just retired, I took the newspaper under my arm and went there and asked if they wanted help.

The director described his assignment at FB. The place was intended as short-term accommodation where young people would stay for a maximum of 3 weeks. But since no municipalities wanted to receive the refugees, many had now lived there for nine months. No schooling had been arranged and tension between different groups increased more and more as time went on.

Since the previous year, I had worked and travelled around, working with conflict management in different groups of newly arrived young people, so I felt well equipped for a new challenge. The manager accepted my suggestion and let me work with both staff and young people in two different groups.

I contacted two different men who participated in our training and practice at the Psychodrama Academy, which I had run together with colleagues for more than 20 years. A drama teacher with great energy wanted to be part of the youth group. A man who worked in the management team for Ericsson wanted to participate in the staff group. What happiness to have them with me. The worst thing I know is to stand alone in a group when working with conflict management. We made a schedule and four days later we were up and running.

First we met the staff, who said that from the beginning they had been told that they should not connect with the young people. They would soon move on and it would only be difficult. As time went on and no new directives came, they continued with that attitude and the job became increasingly difficult.

We agreed to dramatise the problems, so we created a scene with all the different groups represented in the room. A variety of chairs represented, for example, the municipality, director, staff, and a person who on his own initiative had started teaching Swedish to people from Syria, Iran, Afghanistan and Eritrea.

The staff group was multicultural. We concentrated on crisis management at the first meetings and then helped the staff carry out large group meetings in such a way that they ended with constructive proposals for solutions to various problems. Many in the youth group lacked the good accommodation to which everyone is entitled.

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Because the intention was a transitional home that had since become permanent, the care had become really substandard. There was no organised schooling with schedules when we started, although it only took a week or so to get this arranged. Now the staff knew the type of work we were doing, which felt safe if something were to happen in the youth group that we met the same afternoon.

Vårberg already had a SWERA leisure leader, Jacoov, who worked with the young people. He had managed to organise a place to play football. He was very popular with the young people but also burdened with the prevailing accommodation situation. When we performed the exercise all the chairs got someone who was willing to take on a role as, for example, a youth from Syria, etc. Dialogues arose and questions were formulated. Everyone in the workforce changed roles at least once with an unaccompanied youth. The whole complex situation was exposed. This all went on for a while, and the group ended with a round in which we collected the issues that had been made visible. We agreed we would meet a week later.

What could we now contribute to the youth group? We had many different games that were carried out with great enthusiasm. The young people were sometimes very hesitant about our suggestions, but once we got the game started, time disappeared. We did very simple things like throw a ball to someone while saying his name. It is important to make eye contact with the person you throw the ball to make it easier for them to catch the ball. Then we did rounds repeating people's names so that everyone would learn, as they had lived together for a long time but still did not know each other's names. So we suggested that everyone bring their chair and sit next to the long wall. The task now was to use the chair to get over to the other side of the wall without touching the floor.

Everyone had barely had time to sit down before a small, slender boy miraculously jumped over to the other side. Several tried to follow his example but it became very difficult. Half fell off the chairs and someone else managed to get over, while the rest remained at the starting point. We finished the game and asked how it felt? What happens in the different positions. Talk in pairs, then form a group of four and find a solution. Then form a group of eight and see which solution you should try first. How do you help get to the other side? It did not take long before they had made a chain where the last chair was sent forward and the person followed and slowly but surely they made their way across the floor. In this exercise, body contact became natural and helpful hands were welcome so that no one would fall off. The mood became very high as they solved a task that had seemed impossible.

The informal leader of the young people, who spoke good English, came up to me afterwards and asked "How do you think I felt when we did this exersise? I used to be part of a group that threw stones on the militar."

 "So glad that you told me that", I replied, "I guess it makes a big difference when you say the name of the person you throw the ball to?" Yes, it felt strange, he admitted, because it is clear that if the other is anonymous, it is easier to throw stones. The staff reported that miracles happened to some of the participants. They talked and laughed again after previously lying in bed and staring at the wall for a long

time. When the spring sun came with warmth, some preferred to play football and the group we worked with became more manageable in size.

At one point, we carried out regular sociodrama sessions that were about how a day at the accommodation could turn out. One of the group participants showed today's festive moment, specifically a children's program on TV. There he learned Swedish in a much easier way. The conflict was that the other guys laughed at it all. They would rather watch violent movies that they could get on satellite TV. The praise he received for his wise choice and what happened to him in the reflection of the scene was significant.

By showing the situation and then being able to look at it from the outside with a technique that Moreno called 'mirroring', we gave him a good insight and a healing process was initiated. This was very important for this particular boy. He looked like a man around 25 years old but was in reality only 16. We told him that a person's real age can be determined by X-ray. When he had this examination done and told the truth about his age, he received a residence permit. A really good process was underway.

The Psychodrama Academy organised a summer seminar to which peace researcher Johan Galtung was invited. The leisure leaders from Karlskrona and Alvesta participated and the report afterwards showed that they had found new ways of working that made their jobs less burdensome.

Learning to be a leader, inspired by a United Nations concept

To help someone who is severely traumatised one needs an opportunity to train in a completely new role that feels meaningful. To achieve this, I suggested when the work we had done was finished that we would return during the summer and have a play leader training workshop for the young people. This was accepted and we worked out a work plan.

Together with Börge Kristoffersen, senior lecturer in drama, and his son Audun Mollan Kristoffersen, a special educator from Trondheim, we developed a two-week play leader training workshop for the young people in Vårberg. Audun had participated in a summer camp under the auspices of the UN where children from different parts of the world met and learned a set of games that aimed to teach cooperation and provide insights into democracy. Through my previous work, I knew the participants and now wanted to have the opportunity to do something that required more of them.

They undertook to attend each time by signing a contract, so that we would have a more complete process. Those who participated every time would receive a certificate that they had completed the course. To help us, we got an interpreter for each language group and met for three hours a day for two weeks.

The underlying philosophy of this work is democracy development and training in cooperation. To create a common foundation from which to build, we started the days with a story about Swedish society. It was a rewarding task, with many ques-

tions asked about Sweden. Then, we played games that required the cooperation of everyone, including the interpreters, who were men over the age of 50, and the mood of the group was high. Each game was first presented on a flipchart in the form of pictures that made it easier to understand the rules. We kept on until we were sure that everyone understood the task. The group then had to evaluate how they thought the game worked and who it could be good for.

There were 14 boys who signed up for the course, 11 of whom finished it. When the certificates were handed out, the interpreters also wanted certificates and all the material so they could take it to their respective associations to teach the children there.

The idea behind the play leader course was to give each individual an opportunity to train in a new role that included constructive thoughts and actions. For those who are traumatised, as almost everyone was, being able to take on a new role is one of the most important experiences to start the healing process. What we did was new but not unknown. The group had all been involved in our previous work. The workshop was two educational weeks during which the availability of an interpreter made it possible to work more calmly than in previous work. It was so obvious that the participation gave something positive; the desire to be needed and be able to contribute something was present in all these boys.

The implementation

When the group understood that each member's voice would be heard and listened to, the young people showed each other great respect. Once they understood that everyone would be allowed to speak, they had no difficulty in abandoning the tumult that had been the norm previously at the residents' large group meetings, where everyone talked over each other. We see this process-oriented method of teaching in a group, whose members have lost their previous identity, as, in many ways, essential. The purpose of the games was to practice understanding and following rules. To creatively find new solutions to harmless problems and to bring about a joyful collaboration. Because our interpreters were willing to participate in the games on equal terms, the feeling that the games were childish disappeared. When the young people later had to formulate the rules of the game themselves and show how to understand them, then knowledge took a back seat.

When we look at the group as a whole, we see that it is the small language groups that have been present and participated every time. The largest language group had eight participants, several of whom came and went as their desire was to play football, preferably every day. In the subsequent conversations, it was difficult to find out why they did not prioritise their participation. Perhaps the difference between having an interpreter for three people and being eight with the same interpreter makes a difference. It becomes more difficult to stay focused when you are far away from the translator.

The course itself seems to have had a great value. A development of the course would be to have a fixed group of participants from the staff, who could then keep the game and the conversations going. This is especially important around conflict management. If there is a clear readiness for action, some unnecessary conflicts can be avoided and the necessary ones can be handled within the framework of the conflict triangle, the form of which then facilitates clear rules of the game. With the help of the games, the group, which is constantly changing, can include the newcomers.

Examples of what can happen in the asylum process

The order from the Swedish Migration Agency is ready and municipalities must comply with the new law. In reality, a few municipalities have responded to the request to receive refugees. The municipalities are afraid that conflict will arise: Sweden Democrats and other groups want us to preserve Sweden for the Swedish, i.e. for those who are blond and blue-eyed.

The harsh labour market in recent years has contributed to xenophobia. Few people are aware that these young people can become a great resource in our society: they have such a strong will to survive and have dared to go on this risky journey because it means escape from their country. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Sweden has signed, we have an obligation to provide children with dignified protection. My opinion is that they should get at least a two-year break after they turn eighteen so that they have time to train for a profession and in democratic processes and learn something about how the road to peace can be built. If it turns out that their reasons for asylum are not accepted, then the repatriation process needs to be a complex one.

In order to be able to return to their home country, young people need to bring something back that can enrich that country. They can become ambassadors for Swedish society and business if we give them a dignified reception an education and a profession. By making contact with Swedes, refugees can return and create networks for the new global society, to which we must all contribute. By not treating them offensively but seeing them as a resource worth investing in, a lot of power can be created. In working life, we are well aware of how important the introduction to the workplace is. This must apply even more to young people who come to a new country where they do not know the language.

Due to the unwillingness of the municipalities to receive young people, the work at the accommodation in Vårberg has been based on the wrong conditions. The staff has done a very good job in trying to keep the young people from becoming idle for too long.

We therefore designed the above course in which the teaching received a very good evaluation from the young people. The much more difficult part was support in asylum matters and in contact with the social services. The administrator of the latter had, in past year, to investigate over 100 young people. The case description

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below can illustrate how the purely human factor suffers when officials become too overloaded.

At Vårberg, great fear has arisen against being sent to Norrland. Åsele in particular has become viewed as equal to Siberia. Some of the young people who were sent there have kept in touch with friends and called and complained. For one youth, panic developed about being sent there and he mobilised everything to escape.

At the meeting with the social services, he gave various reasons not to be sent to Norrland, but received no response from the officials. If he did not submit to the rules, the LVU law could be used to escort him there with the help of the police. He became very sad and called an acquaintance who managed to arrange a room with an employer, so that he was able to get a job, pricing goods at CityGross in Kista and living right next door. He was very relieved to avoid travelling to Åsele, but at the same time he was worried about not being allowed to continue studying until the autumn as he wants to become a teacher and understands that without an education he will not be able to plan for his future career. Part of his life story was that his family had been driven from their home several times, and driven away from Stockholm, where he had found new comrades and was happy and content. I was present at the meeting, in which he clearly expressed his reasons for staying in Stockholm, which had become a "good situation" for him, but he had received no response to his requests. Eventually he ran out of the room and the officials' comment was that someone who was so stubborn and did not understand that he had to comply with the rules, had no reason to get a residence permit. The self-confidence we trained him to show became a burden rather than a help based on the assessments made by the social services. I am very puzzled by this procedure but I have no power that can help the children.

This is one of many stories I have heard or witnessed. I am well aware of the different views that exist, for example with so-called anchor children. These children are said to be sent by their families to pave the way so that the family as a whole can apply for asylum and invoke affiliation in Sweden. Another reason for sending their child may be that she or he might return money and supplies to those remaining in the home country. This is happening to a large extent. When you look at the developing countries, this money far exceeds what the world gives in contributions. These goods and money also end up directly in vulnerable families' pockets and are not taken by corrupt governments.

In my opinion, the young people who have now taken root in Vårberg should be prepared for a place there until the asylum case is completed. It is important that they come to study or work every day, but they should avoid living with the threat of being relocated to another place.

In subsequent conversations, the various difficulties that the young people face have emerged. There is a deep sense of powerlessness and I think our course has generally served as a distraction from the current situation. Those who have best absorbed the content are those who are already very ambitious and study hard in school. Some of these speak English and this means that they do well in society because almost every Swede can speak English.

My own change: I also learned to move

When the work in Vårberg was completed, I decided to move back to Lidköping, the city where I was born. It was a big adjustment as I was suddenly without my social network and my daily routine. I had become transformed after living for many years in Stockholm. I could barely recognise the people I knew when I was young and they likewise couldn´t recognise me. I was extremely surprised by the rich cultural life and fine libraries that existed in this small town. The local newspaper wrote about everything big and small. All associations could account for their activities, everything was clear and easily accessible. Then it was announced that Refugee Welcome would have a meeting so I attended. It was exciting to see and hear how volunteer organistions reasoned about what needed to be done. Working groups were formed but I did not join any group because I had already met a family who needed my help.

We met for coffee in the library building – a man who spoke broken English got in touch. He came from Albania and had been in Lidköping for a year. He fled from people seeking revenge in his homeland. It was the first time I heard anyone talk about these devastating rituals, which have been going on for generations. His story was dark and frightening. So far, his father and two brothers had been killed. The wife and three children were worried. They enjoyed themselves in the small village two miles outside our town. They had been given a terraced house to live in by the Swedish Migration Board. The husband wanted me to help them, the wife had severe anxiety and difficulty sleeping and she needed to see a doctor.

Meeting these refugees as a private person is something other than performing teaching sessions. It is getting much closer. After a while I had managed to get a psychiatrist to treat the husband's wife, she was given medicine to help her sleep and regularly spoke with people and everything got better for her.

The children knew they could come to me and ask for help if something happened, my apartment was very close to their school. I became more and more involved in the family. I went with them to meetings at the Swedish Migration Agency and helped the man get some odd jobs so they could buy new shoes for the children. I went with them to Gothenburg for a meeting with a lawyer to appeal against their deportation. As time went on, I gained more knowledge about what blood revenge is in Albania and how it continues to live on even after half the family is wiped out.

After two years, the verdict came: their reason for asylum was not accepted. At three o'clock one morning, the police came and picked them up and put them on a flight to Tirana, the capital of Albania. For me, it was a big blow. They had become like an additional family who gave me great joy. It took me several years to get over the grief. It's good we can keep in touch on Facebook, so I know they are fine. Belgium has accepted their application for asylum and they now live there. I learn a lot from this. Especially how difficult it is to maintain separation from such problems when you meet them outside your professional role.

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She has been an active participant in international psycho- and sociodrama training in for many years while also working as a trainer, counsellor and senior supervisor in social care, mental health care, education and business using psychodrama and sociodrama to support change.

She has over ten years of experience of working with refugee children and women in different social programs in Sweden and at different places in Norway, and actively networks with professional colleagues in Scandinavia, Europe and Argentina.

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Can Sociodramatic Methods Enhance Empowerment and Collective Resilience during a Time of 'War'?

Melinda Ashley Meyer

The time we are living in calls for mental health interventions that involve and enhance the health of the whole community. Enhancing communities' mental health is a form of peacebuilding. People are called on to take responsibility and take actions that empower and increase collective resilience generally.

Sociodramatic methods can break the silence and help us share and connect instead of being alienated. The despair and rage that grows in silence is a concern not only for the present but for the future as well.

Keywords

EXIT, Collective Trauma, Collective Resilience, Range of Play, Spontaneity Training, Liminal, Habitual Worlding, Mirroring

One can argue that today we all live in collective trauma. Collective trauma is defined here as a traumatic psychological effect shared by a group of people of any size, up to and including an entire society. The Covid matrix forces us all to play roles. In sociodrama, we work with the concerns of the collective. The pandemic can be called an invisible war. We do not know where it is going to strike or who it is going to kill. Many people have lost family members and friends. Health workers on the front line are hit hard. Universities are shut down and the curriculum is taught on digital platforms. People are creating new ways of communicating every day because of the enforced social distancing.

In his book *The Body Keeps the Score* Bessel Van Der Kolk highlights how interlinked our bodies and our psyches are. After trauma, the world experiences a different nervous system. The survivors' energies are now focused on suppressing inner chaos, at the expense of spontaneous involvement in their lives. These attempts to maintain control over unbearable physiological reactions can result in a whole range of physical symptoms, including fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue and other autoimmune diseases. This explains why it is critical for trauma treatments to engage the entire organism, body, mind and brain (Van der Kolk, 2014).

Traumatic events witnessed by an entire society can stir up collective sentiment, often resulting in a shift in that society's culture and mass actions. Covid has thrown us all more or less into a liminal space.

Liminality

The transition from one way of communicating in a given context to another, from a life with social contact, travel, hugging and physical contact to a life in which social contact is forbidden and everyone can be suspected of being an enemy creates a gap between the past and the future. This vacuum, where we are neither part of the old culture nor the new, is similar to the 'liminal phase' and calls for a rite of passage (Meyer DeMott, 2014).

Arnold van Gennep identifies three phases in a rite of passage: separation, liminality and incorporation (van Gennep, 1977). In the first phase, people withdraw from their current status and prepare to move from one place or status to another. The transition (liminal) phase is the period between states, during which one has left one place or state but has not yet entered or joined the next. In the third phase, the rite is complete and a new status or identity is achieved.

Victor Turner extends this theory and highlights the importance of the liminal phase. In indigenous societies where rites of passage are practiced, the liminal phase obliges very specific rituals and rules. In this in-between state, the individual is exposed to an often frightening uncertainty. He or she is cut off from the past, but a new identity is not yet defined. Therefore, people are extremely vulnerable in this phase.

Living in collective trauma exacerbates insecurity and distrust. The danger is that people in the community disconnect and withdraw from each other, becoming fragmented. Living in the unknown can create anxiety. Social distancing, lockdown, isolation and being vulnerable can over time threaten a community's mental and physical health. The longer people live in a state of the unknown the more the community needs to create a new normal in the liminal space. Everyday rituals that enhance spontaneity and creativity and expand the individual's role repertoire are crucial.

Asylum seekers live in a liminal space. In Norway, it can take 1 to 3 years to get a final answer to your application for asylum.

During the first phase, there is motivation and hope. Refugees who come to a refugee camp are not in a post-traumatic situation. After the tension, activity and anxiety during the often lengthy escape period, they suddenly end up in a situation that is shaped by alienation, monotony and passivity. From having had all their focus and attention directed towards outer threats and dangers, the survivors suddenly have time to turn their attention inwards, to body and mind. When their attention is directed inwards, gruesome images and memories often appear from the events they have witnessed.

Therefore, efforts must be made immediately to prevent psychological problems. It is crucial to get back to a 'normal' life before symptoms such as sleeplessness, lack of concentration, restlessness and pain become permanent: refugees need to get out of the past and into the present. They are still in a traumatic situation. Our objective is to strengthen hope, safety and identity before suspicion, withdrawal and inactivity start to take root. In the time of Covid refugees find themselves in a new country that is also struggling with its own 'new normal'. Asylum seekers find themselves in a situation of double liminality. They are trying to prepare to enter a new society,

but the society and its infrastructure are changing. This calls for spontaneity training and help in expanding their range of play and role repertoire in this very challenging situation.

One consequence of being scared and on guard over a long period of time is that one gets out of touch with resources and one's role repertoire is reduced. The body is in a constant state of fight, flight or freeze. Steven Porges' polyvagal theory says that healing cannot take place before the body has calmed down and is back in a place of safety and presence where social engagement can take place. It is vital to create communities in which refugees can expand their role repertoire and get in touch with roles that are related to times of peace and safety, as well as developing new roles that are culturally required, such as social distancing, greeting, eating, hygiene and how to relate socially.

Spontaneity

Jacob Levy Moreno looked at the level of spontaneity and the individual's role repertoire to decide the level of health in a group. A healthy community is a community in which there is social contact, engagement, safety and efficacy.

Spontaneity is creating something new out of something old and having a new and adequate response to a previously unencountered situation. This means doing something different from the normal routine and communicating with the world in a new way. In times of crisis and living in liminality, spontaneity training is required. Several of our daily routines and rituals before the pandemic, in other words, our 'social conserves', no longer function. A social conserve can be understood as the way we exist in the world out of habit. What we do habitually are routines or rituals we do every day consciously or unconsciously, such as going to the bathroom, eating, sleeping, going to school, all events that we are not necessarily conscious of. Habitual worlding is a person's narrative out of habit; the way he or she normally communicates themselves to the world (Knill, 2005). If life only consisted of social conserves, it would be a passive way of living in which imagination and the act of creating were missing. The range of play would be small and the inner role repertoire would decrease.

Our challenge is to make new rituals that are adequate to the new situation: working from home, social distancing, wearing masks and not visiting people who are sick. Spontaneity is called for to make new rituals out of the old.

Sociodrama

Sociodrama is an intermodal approach involving all the senses, touching all places from which we express human communication. The process of creating and being in dialogue is emphasized. The arts communicate from the senses to the senses. Sociodrama can involve painting, creating a poem to go with the image, creating music to

go with the poem, movement togo with the music and creating the community story on stage. The community will learn to reverse roles with new and unknown roles and through this practice enhance their creativity and spontaneity. Daily rituals must be practiced to enhance safety, creativity, beauty and contact.

Moreno said in his book *Who Shall Survive?* "A truly therapeutic method cannot have less a goal than the totality of mankind." This implies that the group is the fundamental unit of society rather than the individual; and that any social change taking place in small groups affects the wider society. Enhancing the mental and physical health of groups in the community enhances the health of the whole community. Promoting engagement, connection, spontaneity and creativity in health and peace work.

The EXIT program

The EXIT program – Expressive Arts in Transition – began developement in Norway with refugees from the Bosnian war (M. A. Meyer DeMott, 2007). Based on the therapeutic methods of expressive arts and sociodrama EXIT aims to stabilise the participants on a mental, physical and emotional level. EXIT is a short-term, component-based group intervention requiring active participation, integrating interpersonal, cognitive and behaviour-oriented interventions. The program is psycho-educational, educating the participants about their stress symptoms and giving them knowledge of how to cope when symptoms emerge.

The target sample were boys aged between 15 and 18 newly arrived at the Hvalstad Arrival Centre for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) in Oslo, Norway. Over a period of two and a half years, the EXIT group showed a decrease in post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depression. In addition, their quality of life increased and they became more optimistic about the future in comparison with the control group (Meyer DeMott et al., 2017). The study showed some differences in the trajectories of mental health complaints, life satisfaction and expectations during a 25-month follow-up, with more positive outcomes for the EXIT group. The differences were most modest for mental health and most evident for life satisfaction and hope for the future. At the end of the follow-up, the boys in the EXIT group had higher life satisfaction and hopes for the future than boys in the control group.

These findings support previous studies that have shown that group interventions with arts therapy can have positive effects on young people living under challenging conditions (Bauregard, 2014). There could be several beneficial outcomes of such interventions, from reduction of emotional problems (Quinlan, Schweitzer, Khawaja & Griffin, 2015) to creation of hope (Yohani, 2008, 2009) (Meyer DeMott et al., 2017).

Today the EXIT program is carried out with people who need to learn how to cope and survive the stress of living in collective trauma: mental health workers, nurses, school teachers and children, the elderly, refugees, immigrants, the mentally ill and youths. Because of Covid the EXIT program is now also being carried out on digital platforms.

The EXIT workshop consists of 10 twice-weekly sessions, each lasting 1.5 hours. The workshop gives the participants skills for coping with normal symptoms of stress: such as sleeplessness, headaches, lack of concentration, muscular pain, irritability and withdrawal. The first five sessions take the following structure:

Every session starts with a welcome dance, the group members leading and mirroring each other's movements and saying welcome to each other in new ways in the circle or the Zoom 'gallery'.
    After the welcome dance, every session continues with stress releasing and breathing exercises for 20 to 30 minutes.

– We start with the feet and circulate all of the joints. Stress tends to lock the joints and block circulation
– Relaxation exercises: tense up different parts of the body and then relax and exhale. This is done several times
– Breathing exercises, focusing on inhalation and the importance of exhalation.

The welcome round and the physical exercises are part of the warm-up phase before moving into the theme of the session. We call it the four-point warm-up:

– the group is warmed up to the facilitators
– the facilitators are warmed up to the group
– the group is warmed up to each other
– all are warmed up to the theme of the day
    After the warm-up of all the participants, the focus is on their individual bodies. They measure the level of energy they feel in their body on a barometer made on the floor on a scale from one to ten.

The rest of the program is structured in five components, each with a different theme:
1. Doing an activity and having the group mirror the movement of the activity.
    All the participants make new body movements and all take on the role of leading the group. If my activity is playing tennis, I will show the movement of hitting the ball and make the breathing sound, then the whole group mirrors my movement and sound. The next person riding a bike shows the movement and then we all ride bikes. The purpose is two-fold: we are playing with our role repertoire and doing spontaneity training. The participants are learning from each other. Group interventions after severe stress and trauma have five major goals: create safety, contact, engagement, mastering and hope (Hobfoll et al. 2007).

2. Imagining and creating a safe place.
    Focus on calming. Imagining a personal safe place. Every participant imagines a landscape she or he likes and shares what is seen, heard, smelt and felt with the whole group. They then paint the colours of the landscape on a separate piece of paper. An envelope is created in which to store all art and information. How does

the landscape move you? Every participant leads the movement in the circle and the group mirrors them.

Kamal, a 17-year-old asylum seeker from Ethiopia, participated in the EXIT group two weeks after arriving at the refugee centre for unaccompanied minor refugees. Two and a half years later he was invited to participate when a film was made about the EXIT program. The facilitator asked him:

"Where are you?"
"I am in the forest."
"What do you see?"
"I see the blue sky and the river down below."
"Can you smell anything?"
"Yes, I smell very good and the forest smells good."
"What do you hear?"
"I hear the river and birds flying up above the trees."
"How does it feel to be here?"
"I feel safe and I want to stay here the rest of my life."

Kamal had found an image that he could visit in the future in his imagination no matter where he lived.

Stress and trauma can 'kill' the imagination. Working through the senses in the here and now reawakens positive memories and images. Imagining a better future gives hope.

3. Future projection: what will you be doing five years from today?
Move from one end of the room (here and now) to the other (five years ahead in time). The group pretends they are having a reunion and share pick-up again, such as playing the guitar, walking in nature, swimming.

When working with Kamal and his group we focused on a future vision five years away. His vision was to become a car mechanic. He knew that his first step in the present was to learn how to drive. Five years later EXIT facilitators were showing the EXIT film to a new group of unaccompanied asylum-seeking boys. At the beginning of the film when they saw Kamal they shouted out, "He is our bus driver to school."

Another narrative is from a refugee centre in northern Norway in the middle of the second wave of the pandemic. The refugee centre is being shut down. None of the participants have been granted asylum. They are being moved to other asylum centres. Seven women choose to participate in the EXIT group during the last ten weeks at the centre before it is shut down. During the eighth session, the component was future projection. The women were sad and several were crying. The two facilitators were also upset. They took the group five years ahead and focused on a hobby they loved and which had become their career. All the women were engaged in the journey. The year is now 2025. The mood changed, they are excited. They begin to interview each other: I am a restaurant owner and make

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food from my private cookbook. I am a hairdresser, I make dresses, I run a spa and I have written a book for women about how to survive applying for asylum. The atmosphere changed from despair to hope. The group took part in each other's future scenarios, visiting the restaurant and the spa, discussing the cookbook and so on. They were engaged and connected.

When we moved back to the here and now, they were asked what they could do today to keep their vision alive: I will continue to write and collect recipes, I will continue to write my journal, I will continue to make dresses, I will continue to practice hairstyling with my community and I will continue my yoga.

In the middle of all the loss, they were able to reconnect with hope and imagine a better future.

4. The resource animal, movements and sound.
   Focus on self-efficacy. Finding your inner resource animal, find its movements and sounds. Dance the animal's dance and have the rest of the group mirror the movements and sounds. The animal movements can release tension and energise. Mirroring all participants´ animal movements enforces connection, engagement and focus. How can these attributes give you strength in your everyday life?

5. Hello and goodbye ritual. Five new participants begin and five leave.
   The same structure is repeated in sessions six to ten. We call it the train model: at session five, five new participants come on board and five participants leave. This helps to prepare the participants for the many closures they will experience.

   All sessions end with the participants measuring their stress symptoms on the barometer to see if any change has occurred. For example, energy levels moved from two to eight or headache pain moved from eight to two.

   The group ends the same way it began with a goodbye round with name and movement in the circle.

The vulnerability of living in collective trauma requires that society provide the community with knowledge and tools to help individuals cope (Meyer DeMott, 2007, 2017). EXIT is meant to serve this purpose, establishing rituals, enhancing spontaneity, playing with identity and expanding role repertoires.

Interventions that can help in a liminal phase are group and community work, helping people to connect to themselves and each other. In addition to safety, calming, engaging, efficacy, and hope, the focus is on movement, playing, bodywork, and testimony through movement. The leaders use a psycho-educative approach, teaching community participants to help themselves, to reconnect with their identities and focus on their resources for survival. It is essential that participants feel respected and accepted, not once, not twice, but all the time. EXIT is a form of community art that is designed with a repetitious beginning and end creating predictability within an unpredictable situation. Spontaneity cannot be stored. EXIT is a group for spontaneity training, a place where the participants can recharge their batteries while living in a stressful situation.

EXIT and Liminality

The EXIT method is a rite of passage.

Cannon of Creativity
Spontaneity – Creativity -Conserve
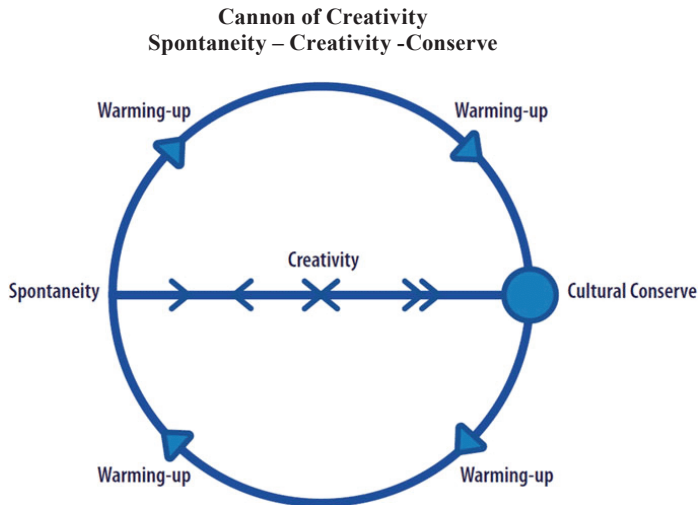
Figure 1. Canon of Creativity, depicting the warming up process and the relationship between spontaneity, creativity and the cultural conserve

S-Spontaneity, C-Creativity, CC-Cultural (or any) Conserve (for instance, a biological conserve, i.e. an animal organism, or a cultural conserve, i.e., a book, a robot, i.e. a calculating machine); W-Warming up is the 'operational' expression of spontaneity. The circle represents the field of operations between S, C and CC.

Operation I: Spontaneity arouses Creativity, C. S >>> C.

Operation II: Creativity is receptive to Spontaneity. S <<< C.

Operation III: From their interaction Cultural Conserves, CC, result, S>>> C>>> CC.

Operation IV: Conserves (CC) would accumulate indefinitely and remain 'in cold storage'. They need to be reborn, the catalyser Spontaneity revitalises them. CC > > > S > > > CC.

S does not operate in a vacuum, it moves either towards Creativity or towards Conserves.[2]

Moreno says in *Psychodrama, First Volume*, 1980: "The infant is moving, at birth, into a totally strange set of relationships. He has no model after which he can shape his acts. He is facing, more than at any time during his subsequent life, a novel situation. We have called this response of an individual to a new situation and the new response to an old situation – *spontaneity*. If the infant is to live, this response must be positive and unfaltering. It must be ready on the spur of the moment. This response may be *more* or *less* adequate. There must be a certain amount of this s

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2   From Moreno, J. L., *Who Shall Survive?* 2nd Edition, 1953, 46.

(spontaneity) factor available at least in crucial moments. A minimum of spontaneity is already required in his first day of life".

Moreno´s concern about the human race was the decrease in the s factor. People would become more like robots and soul, heart and emotion would be lost.

EXIT helps the group to create new solutions to a new situation. Every day there are new challenges. Nobody living today has experienced a pandemic like the Covid pandemic. There are no role models to tell us how to cope or solve the problems we are facing. Experiencing one's own creativity allows hope to grow and gives new perspectives along with a dynamic move towards change and growth. Spontaneity is the opposite of fear. Spontaneity is possible where there is trust and can open the floodgates of creativity and playfulness.

In one of the EXIT groups, a participant reversed roles with the Covid virus and gave the virus a movement and a message. All the participants mirrored the movement and repeated the message. This created both playfulness and seriousness, creating messages such as: take care of nature, who is going to clean up the mess, power is not about size, etc. Through role reversal and mirroring, the energy and the engagement in the room changed. The s factor increased and the initial resistance to creating new movements and messages turned into curiosity and creativity.

Spontaneity training is part of the warm-up phase before all actions. During the course of a day many warm-ups are called for: getting up in the morning, writing a paper, giving a lecture, caring for a child, making dinner and going to bed. Every action is like a small wave during the day and requires each of four phases: warm-up, action, closure, reflection. We then prepare ourselves for a new cycle of warm-up, action, closure, reflection. If one or more of these phases are lost it will be difficult to move out of the social conserves of the existing routines.

Many people have been working from home on digital platforms during the pandemic. When working at home one must be aware of the lack of transition from one activity to another. There is no commute between home and work. Instead of taking a shower in the morning and eating breakfast, it is easy to start working from bed. Losing the everyday rituals that function as warm-ups and closures can kill spontaneity and reduce one's role repertoire. The loss of energy can result in passivity and no action. The warm-up phase during a collective trauma aims to keep us calm and grounded so we can make spontaneous decisions to solve problems as opposed to the acting out caused by a state of fear. We are all in new and unknown roles, which calls for reflection.

Mirroring and role reversal

When young infants do a lot of mirroring together with the parents. This creates contact and affirmation. If artistic expressions can communicate that the participants have something in common, they will build solidarity, break the feeling of isolation and enhance the feeling of belonging. Artistic expressions can become an important document for each of the participants to own, something that they can visit. Scarry writes: "We make material artifacts in order to interiorize them: we make things so

that they will, in turn, remake us, revising the interior of embodied consciousness" (1985: 97). Restoring dignity in the face of collective trauma is an important aspect of the healing process. Longitudinal research projects that include narratives and video documentation can also function as a psychosocial intervention. Further research should examine testimony through art and group activity, and consider whether this is something that should be integrated as a psychosocial component where people are trying to shape their identities in a new context.

Expressive arts are based on the assumption that people can heal through the use of imagination, physical and mental movement, connection, play, being present and the various forms of creative expression.

Paolo Knill is the founder of Intermodal Expressive Arts Therapy. He created a theory of art expressions supported by psychological theories. The theory was shaped and documented in *Principles and Practice of Expressive Arts Therapy* (Knill, Levine and Levine, 2005).

Knill's 'crystallisation theory' (1995, 1999) is an important element in Expressive Arts Therapy, an integrated, independent arts-based psychotherapy based on a phenomenological philosophy and attitude towards life. "The theory attempts to formulate how the helping relationship can provide optimal conditions for emerging images to come to their potential through the use of different art disciplines" (Knill, 2005, 123).

We communicate with the image using all our senses, trying to make sense of our experiences with the help of our imagination. Each art expression is unique, all people are unique and can therefore offer new perspectives on the challenges faced in the community.

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Nurturing Flower 125 – and Me! – through Sociodrama and Action Methods

Valerie Monti Holland

Summary

In this chapter I share the twenty years plus story of the Flower 125 Health Programme, an intervention and health promotion programme that fosters improved mental health in children and young people as well as the practitioners who deliver it. Largely school-based, Flower 125 became an important part of the Healthy Schools initiative in Sheffield, a city in the north of England where health inequalities are pronounced.

Keywords

Sociodrama, Action Methods, Healthy Schools, Games, Play, Creativity, Holistic Approach, Political Systems, Social and Emotional Learning

This is a story about time – past, present and future. It is also a story about community and how we build and grow even in the darkest places when no one believes we can thrive. And it is the story of my 20-year plus involvement in the Flower 125 Health Programme, which has been such a rich learning experience.

Having the time and space to reflect on the evolution of this programme, I realise that I have witnessed so many shifts in health and education and the confluence of the two. It made sense to share my thinking in the form of a journal, a kind of timeline, as the social and political forces of the time were great influences in the unfolding of this story.

March 2020: The Flower adapts

At the point when our lives changed irrevocably because of the Covid pandemic, the Flower 125 Health Programme was forming a steering committee to guide the vision and harness support for its sustainability. The first meeting was postponed until we could get together in person. And then it was held on Zoom as we began, along with the rest of the world, to understand that in person gatherings were not going to happen for some time.

Figure 1. Frozen Picture Fun

My colleague, Julie, and I also initiated an online forum for any of the 1000+ professionals who had been trained to use the programme over the course of the last 15 years. From that encounter we heard that there was insecurity around how to address the range of needs of pupils returning to school. The professionals were poised to encounter even greater anxiety, depression and other mental health issues as a result of the complete disruption due to Covid.

Flower 125 is an active training that uses games and sociodrama techniques to model a more dynamic approach to engagement with children and young people. Our online forum experimented with some of the games we adapted to the new format leading to valuable interaction and a way forward for Flower 125.

Practitioners identified the transition from primary school (Year 6, usually 11 years old) to Year 7 in high school as a particular challenge. Pupils would have left school in March believing they would return, but never did. With this in mind we decided to focus on this critical time in a young person's education. As that was where the programme started, we realised we were travelling back in time…

January 2000: The seed is planted

It's a dark and stormy night for an interview in a darkened medical centre on the other side of the city that is unfamiliar to me. I meet with a nurse from the centre and a worker from the health authority. They tell me about their health project and ask if I'm able to ignore bad behaviour. I've been working in an adult male prison as well as a rehabilitation centre for drug users so I'm confused by the question at

first. They go on to explain how important they feel using drama is but the person who had been filling that role was a 'finger wagger' (someone who was constantly reprimanding the young people) and did not understand the concept or the importance of ignoring some things. I assured them that if I did not ignore most behaviour in my work settings, I'd not have lasted a day.

Drama was a principal part in the 20-week project that was proposed, with one week focused on a health topic, and the next week using drama as a method of exploration. We would be using a room at the high school closest to the medical centre on a housing estate beset with the health problems typical of deprived communities. That was the rationale for the 'club' as it was then called: work with the young people *before* they reach crisis point and are addicted, pregnant, or suffering from STIs and malnourishment. Mental health was not on the agenda explicitly then. We were really just trying to talk to kids. As a team, we didn't know exactly what we were expecting, or even hoping for. It genuinely was driven by the deep needs that we all saw.

It was our teamwork with discrete roles and responsibilities holding the structure of the group together that proved to be key to the eventual success. The project was fuelled by the driving forces of the practice nurse and the health development worker in addition to the youth worker who had recently moved into a newly created job at the school as a learning mentor. This was the beginning of a more formal pastoral care role in schools. The learning mentor supported those young people, who had ended up in the exclusion centre because they were causing all sorts of trouble. It was from this group of young people that we recruited the health club participants.

My background at that time involved a good deal of drama work with young people, yet I still had to find my feet and my voice week by week in this team of powerful women. I was still thinking of this as a project with a clearly defined end, just a weekly project among a portfolio of other work. Little did I know how central to my development as an applied theatre practitioner this work would become.

I had just completed a Masters in Applied Theatre at the University of Manchester and my training had been focused on work with offenders. At this point, I was working in an adult male jail the remainder of the week and the learning from one setting tended to be applied to the other.

The health club might have remained a short-term project for all of us had the health development worker not been in the middle of a Masters in Public Health. Her research required us to evaluate the sessions in a variety of ways (Big Brother had just started on TV) and we asked the young people to use some type of video diary to record their thoughts and feelings, to debrief on a weekly basis, to run focus groups for parents and carers, to solicit feedback from the teachers and staff at school. We were even visited by Lady Winifred Tumim, who reported her findings on a number of youth projects to the House of Commons as part of her role as chair of the Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy.

(Temporarily travelling into the future of 2018, the reduction-of-teenage-pregnancy collaborative initiatives resulted in the lowest teenage pregnancy rates in a century, a metric that attests to the effect of good public health. Our project was one of these initiatives.)

From 2002 to 2005: The seed flowers

The Flower 125 Health Project received awards from funders such as Barnardo's, the Mallabar nursing award and Sheffield Health and Social Care, all of which offered financial resources to not only continue the project with the young people but to establish training for others who work with them. This was focused mainly on those in schools and as part of the wider Healthy Schools programme (a national initiative bringing together children and young people's teams from education and health).

The training was initially one day. However, after a year, the team of facilitators agreed that a second day would benefit everyone and this was delivered using drama and action based methods. All of the evaluations from attendees were enthusiastically filled with how lively the games were, how the drama methods offered exactly the kind of new techniques that practitioners were hoping to learn on CPD (continuing professional development) training. They talked about how energised they felt after leaving a whole day of training that was so unlike others they had attended. We found that it was best not to use the D word – drama – as there was a strong aversion to it among the participants and thus Day in Action became the official title. And we needed to remind people at the end of day one that they would be better off wearing comfortable clothes and flat shoes for day two.

This was a commonality across the breadth of my portfolio in that I am careful to warm people up to openness and steer them away from the anxiety of whatever the word 'drama' had come to mean for them. The general statement was that drama was 'traumatic' for them as it implied one person being vulnerable in front of a group of uncompassionate judges. This was an insight that I took to other contexts with different groups of people: a strong warm-up in relation to the level of engagement.

I was so delighted that the drama work could have such an impact. My sociodrama training with Ron Wiener, Francis Batten and Di Adderley at the MPV/SAM (Multi-Purpose Vehicle/Sociodrama and Action Methods) school had just started in 2002 and this was to be most significant to both my professional evolution as well as that of Flower 125. The course content, accompanying supervision with Francis (later Ron and Di too) and action learning sets with my fellow trainees established the perfect foundation to cultivate the thinking, the tools and the systemic perspective that continues to shape the programme.

When Flower 125 attendees were effectively introduced and encouraged to use alternative methods, it resulted in comments on the evaluation forms such as "I've never enjoyed drama or role play before!!!" In helping them have fun with techniques

such as tableaux, sculptures and games, they understood how important an embodied approach was and how it helped form the group in a way that sitting around and talking did not. This was such a difference to the prison work, where such effusiveness was in short supply.

The participants (the young people and the facilitators in training) also developed a sense of agency in themselves when they learned that they could genuinely say no. Their first opportunity arises at the start of Day One with a game called The Sun Shines On. It involves one person standing in the middle of everyone else who is seated in a circle and finishing the sentence "The sun shines on anyone who _____." If the end of that sentence applies to a seated person they need to get up and find another chair. One person ends up standing in the middle, who then chooses a new criterion for moving the chairs. No one knows which criterion applies to whom (unless the category is about something visible). Thus, it is up to each person to decide if s/he wants to move or not. We call this a 'trawling' game because so much more information about your group and the people in it is gained by observing how people play the game, not only the information they divulge while playing. Best of all, the games have been easily the most popular part of the training and most people feel confident enough to play and lead them straight away.

The power of saying no and finding a way to do so respectfully is one of the most useful outcomes of playing games in general. It is one that can be transferred into facilitation of the energy of a group, using it to welcome resistance within the groups as a way of hearing young people and demonstrating genuine respect for their choices. This is deepened as practitioners encourage young people to articulate how they're feeling and so to expand their emotional literacy.

Through my work in prisons, I had witnessed men who had never played games or perhaps had not done so in a long time. The gift of games to them was liberating on the same scale as I saw in these young people.

Games bring out the child in us all, the child we often forget when adult living consumes us. While I was working in both settings this became my central lesson as a developing practitioner: create a space for play and we create a space for creativity to blossom.

From 2005 to 2015: The flower pollinates

After a heartfelt plea to the directors of public health at a celebration event for the project, the Flower 125 Health Programme was born. It became part of the mainstream delivery of public health for Sheffield and along with the commitment to its role in delivering excellent health promotion sessions for children and young people. Funding was granted for a programme manager, Julie, to manage the broader Healthy Schools programme for the city. We didn't know then how crucial Julie's appointment would be to the future of Flower.

The reach was expanded to anyone working with children and young people and we welcomed workers from the Youth Offending Team, the secure children's

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centre, various charities including Young Carers, an LGBTQ+ charity and teams from residential homes, among many others. The expectations list almost always included a wish for 'new tools to work more effectively with young people'. And the evaluations then and now show 'games' as the most loved part of each training session.

We transitioned from delivering the programme ourselves to young people, to training anyone who worked with young people. As we continued to train people across Sheffield and into the neighbouring towns of Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster, it became increasingly apparent that the deployment of the model of delivery emerged as the foundation of the success of the programme. Through the review sessions we held, whole programme evaluations that we requested and anecdotal communication we had with practitioners through other Healthy School work, the importance of the model became clear: it is the model that draws boundaries for group members and holds them both safe enough and accountable.

The team at this point was made up of public health specialists, Julie, as the Flower 125 programme manager, and myself as a trainer and facilitator. We were initially more focused on creating the resource pack, which we made as user-friendly as possible. This involved listing the materials needed for each activity, approximate duration of activities, step-by-step instructions and any additional worksheets to accompany each activity, all of which are included on a CD and a massive 'Weapon of Mass Instruction' manual that is given to each person who attends the training.

The model is simple and was first forged in the aftermath of the earliest sessions when things became rather violent:

> We brought all of the equipment to the resource house – pens in different colours, quizzes that were pre-printed, stickers to reward the young people and of course some biscuits and squash. When we arrived, there were already a few young people waiting outside the house, which we couldn't believe. We all entered the house,125 Honeysuckle Road, together and as we set up the young people were curious and excited.
>
> Our first activity, a quiz to find out what the young people knew already, went belly up within 5 minutes. They threw the pens around the room, refused to sit down and finally started rampaging throughout the house. One of us was locked in a room unable to get out and the other threatened with a gate over her head. We managed to call the police who came to a house with all of the windows put through, no young people in sight and two broken would-be facilitators…
>
> (The Flower 125 Health Programme Resource Pack,
> 3rd edition, Section 1a, page 2. Unpublished)

Before the founders could even hope to find out about the young people and their needs, they realised that they needed to create an environment that would nurture learning. The five basic pillars that support this learning became the model and very backbone of the Flower 125 Health Programme:

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–   Praise and positive recognition
–   Reward cards (called Icons) and tangible rewards
–   Modelling positive behaviour
–   Ignoring annoying behaviour (that doesn't compromise the health and safety of any person)
–   Appropriate Interventions, such as time outs, time off and reassignment to another group

We found through our evaluations and facilitator feedback that the model is most effective when using all elements instead of cherry picking the parts that facilitators find easiest to deploy. Many facilitators found giving the reward cards difficult because they didn't believe they would work. And of course, they didn't.

The feedback helped us to realise that each facilitator would need to believe in the value of every aspect of the model for it to be effective. The training shifted to emphasise the varied roles and responsibilities. We paid more attention to roles such as icon giver, praise giver, positive seeker among others as integral to the environment we were asking people to create. Some people found that ignoring things was contradictory to what they were taught: 'nip it in the bud' was the received wisdom at that time. We urged them to practice this new role, for example the role of careful ignorer was particularly successful in EBD (Emotional and Behaviour Disorder) schools. In fact, mapping many of the possible roles of both the group and the team of facilitators was sown into the experiential training.

The model is central to the programme, but it is not the entire system of course. Mapping out the variety of elements that contribute to the success of Flower 125 makes it clear that while the ultimate beneficiary of the work is the young person, the programme also builds the capacity of the practitioners allowing us as a training team to have the greatest effect. Using sociometry (the means by which we measure social relationships through various connections between people in a group*)* and action methods we link training facilitators and foster a blossoming Flower 125 community.

We also use sociometry during the training. The power of role naming, role taking, role reversal and doubling become apparent to all participants of the two-day experiential training. The methods offer a perspective on both the roles of the young people as well as the roles chosen and played by facilitators.

I had gained increased confidence in finding new ways to use the methods, and in 2011 earned my diploma as a sociodramatist from the British Psychodrama Association. Valuing the systemic view of the programme, we illustrated it in the resource pack using the following logic model:

**The Whole Flower 125
Health Programme Model**
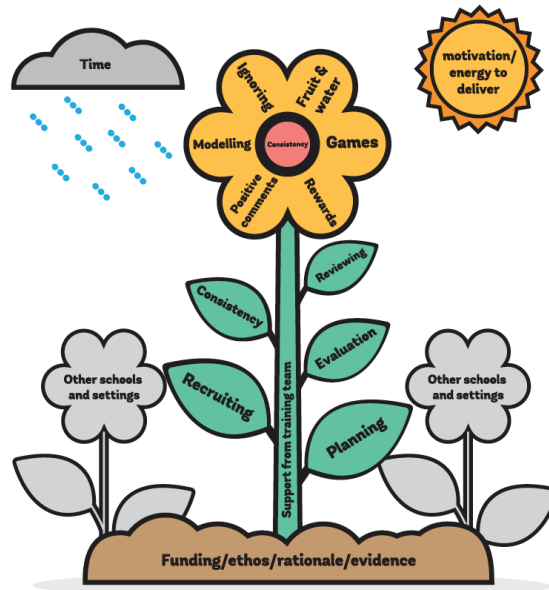
Figure 2. The Flower 125 Health Programme Logic Model

From 2015 to 2017:
The Flower Survives in Harsh Conditions

By 2017 we had updated the resource pack to its current third edition, the structure of it reflecting the principles with active words such as being, making, negotiating. The sections are no longer grouped according to health topic. The holistic approach is more explicit, as indicated by the Table of Contents:

1. Beginnings
2. Being a Healthier Me:
   a. Healthy Eating
   b. Physical Activity
   c. Sleep and Relaxation
3. Making Healthier Choices:
   a. First Aid
   b. Smoking
   c. Alcohol
   d. Drugs

 4. Negotiating Healthier Relationships:
  a. For Ages 7 – 10
  b. For Ages 10 – 13
  c. For Ages 13 – 16
 5. Endings

While emotional health and wellbeing was a topic in the first two packs, it is now the underpinning aim of the entire programme, a point which is articulated specifically throughout the training, the resource pack and the new website www.flower125. co.uk.

By this point, public health in the UK had altered greatly from pre-2010. Austerity measures and shift of public health responsibilities from the NHS (National Health Service) to local authorities took a toll on what had been the Healthy Schools programme. It now exists only as a 'traded service' (meaning schools have to pay for the service) in the more business-minded local councils, who managed to make that transition. There is no overall national standard, especially as schools are now primarily parts of large academy and trust organisations. The local authority's influence over education institutions is now such that it can only make suggestions. Ofsted (the Office of Standards in Education) holds schools accountable through its inspections and produce a league table based on the scores from these inspections.

However, in 2015, the mental health of children and young people began to be measured as part of these inspections. There was to be a national framework for assessing the whole school approach that sounded remarkably like the old Healthy Schools programme, which had been dissolved after the coalition government moved into power.

Beyond that is the mental health crisis that is talked about even less, that of the professionals who care for, teach and work with these young people. We know that a disproportionate percentage of teachers are leaving the profession.

> More than 80% of respondents to a question circulated by the National Education Union (NEU) said that they were thinking about other careers because of the long hours now required of classroom teachers. About 40% of those polled said they spent more than 21 hours a week working at home during evenings and weekends, to keep pace with the demands of their schools. The NEU survey's findings tallied with those of a similar poll by the country's other major teaching union, the NASUWT. It found 65% of respondents said they had seriously considered leaving the profession in the past 12 months. Teachers said the heavy workload was putting a strain on their health as well as on their marriage or families.
> (https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/apr/01/vast-majority-of-teachers-considered-quitting-in-past-year-poll)

How much of this is due to the lack of attention focused on this growing need?

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In Great Britain, Health and Safety Executive figures collated since 2003 consistently show teaching professionals have a higher prevalence of self-reported stress, anxiety and distress caused or made worse by work: the most recent prevalence – averaged over 2009–2012 was 2.3% compared to 1.2% for all occupations (Health and Safety Executive, 2014). Attending to the mental health of teachers is therefore important, to avoid longer term detrimental mental health outcomes among this population (Melchior et al., 2007).

The Flower 125 Health programme advocates modelling as one of the five main pillars of a successful emotional health programme. The school staff we were hearing from during the training sessions were riddled with anxiety, fear and concern about the young people, often at the expense of their own mental health. How could the staff possibly *model* good mental health for their pupils?

Poor teacher wellbeing may be problematic not only for teachers' longer term mental health but also for that of their students. Teacher wellbeing and student wellbeing could be linked though complex and interrelated factors. Indeed, poor wellbeing and depressive symptoms are associated with teachers' self-rated presenteeism as found in Kidger (et al., 2016) which is defined as "an employee underperforming at work as a result of a health problem". Presenteeism may have an impact on student mental health through teachers not being able to develop a positive and supportive school environment and finding it more difficult to manage classrooms effectively (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). Additionally, teachers experiencing poor mental health and wellbeing may find it difficult to develop and model good quality relationships with students and there is a host of evidence to support this (Kidger et al., 2010; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009).

Unfortunately, the people we were training were often not in a position to run the programme after being so warmed up after the second day. They returned to settings where they had even less autonomy regarding what they could do and how they could work. They were playing some games, they even gave out icons as reward cards in some instances, they were praising more often, more specifically and as soon as they possibly could. They even found they could ignore behaviour that previously would have been addressed and distracted from the learning of the majority of the group. Yet few people were delivering a whole programme, particularly in secondary schools. Was it even possible for Flower 125 to exist in this climate?

June 2018: The Flower is revitalised

Realising that we needed to connect with the senior or executive leaders in schools, we presented Flower 125 at a meeting of primary school headteachers with one asking if we could train her whole school? She was happy to release four members of staff for the detailed two-day facilitator training but she felt that the effectiveness of the programme needed to be supported by every member of staff understanding the principles and implementing them. It appeared our message about the model had been heard.

This was a 100% BAMER (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee) inner-city school. The head revealed in a planning meeting that she believed in the positive seeker role that we champion as part of the programme. She told us the story of a little boy who was sent to her office nearly every day. When she listened to the reasons why this was, she believed that he was being cast as a 'bad boy' and therefore was receiving only negative attention. He was spirited, certainly, and he came from a complex home life. She asked us to help reframe people's thinking so that 'catch 'em being good' became the norm. We agreed that this is precisely what we aim to do with Flower 125.

With access to the whole staff on an inset day (no pupils, only staff present) – this included teachers, pastoral staff, the SLT (senior leadership team), the administrative team and the lunchtime supervisors who were mainly parents of school children – Julie and I spent a day playing games and learning about the various roles and responsibilities of each person. We discovered that one of the staff members had a lifelong connection with the school as she had been a pupil there too and that the longest serving member of staff had been there for 27 years. She stood proudly on one end of the continuum that we asked them to make during introductions. Her experience even exceeded that of the passionate head. The newest members of staff had been there for 3 months and they were young teachers, keen to contribute. There was a robust exchange between the longest serving and the newly arrived that felt important. What messages did they have for each other? What questions? We asked them to role reverse and imagine what it was like to be on the other end.

Mapping the roles and responsibilities using the metaphor of the body helped everyone to understand what everyone else does. In the often frantic environment of a school, acknowledgement of the value that each person brings can easily go missing. Putting the young people at the heart of this 'body' helped reiterate the mission and meaning of the work of the staff.

The day also involved role naming and sculpting, which enabled participants to embody the issues they wished to share. We used a structure called 'the three picture scene', which helps to map out the build-up to an incident and its consequences. Doubling and role reversal helped us hear more voices and discuss the meaning of the vignettes for the wider school system rather than the problem in isolation. And they loved playing the roles of disruptive young people and giving each other a hard time in those roles.

Four months later we were invited to an after-school staff meeting to review the progress. One programme had been run with the young people but it was the feedback from the staff that was remarkable. The head's mischievous boy was now never in her office and when he sees her in the corridor he jubilantly asks, "guess what I did good today?"

Others talked about how they found many more things to praise in terms of behaviour and how the classes were generally easier to teach because there were fewer interruptions. Introducing the model across the school improved relationships: between the young people and the staff as well as between the young people themselves. The lunchtime supervisors were especially happy to have been included

in the training day, the recognition they received of their role as an intrinsic part of the team helped to develop stronger connections between them and everyone else at the school.

April 2019: The Flower's newest shoot

Now that Julie and I had found a way to work with the school staff, we felt there was a significant part of the system that still remained untouched in order for the programme to be as effective as it could be: the parents and carers. We knew this was critical for the messages about health and wellbeing to be truly integrated into the young people's networks.

It is one thing running sessions for young people in various settings; it's another thing entirely to enter into the world of parenting. Here we are going back in time to the original inspiration for the programme, Carolyn Webster-Stratton's 1992 book *The Incredible Years: A Trouble Shooting Guide for Parents of Children 2 – 8*. It is Webster-Stratton's theories that fuelled mainstream television programmes from the nightmarish family scenarios in *Supernanny* to far more respectable adaptations such as *Little Angels* by Professor Tanya Byron.

As one of our team is a parent who is also a facilitator of Flower 125 in a primary school, we had easier access to a parents and carers group. Our team member had been fielding the occasional question about the programme and with the approval of that head teacher, we held an evening taster session. We warmed up with a few of the drama-based games, displayed some of the work produced within the sessions and introduced the exercise that we use to contract with the group and created a group agreement.

Some of the parents were intrigued that this was happening as they knew nothing about it. Some worried about why their child had been selected for the programme: did it indicate that s/he had a problem? Was it a sign that they were not such good parents? The possibility of another session for those who did not come was suggested. Someone offered to help engage parents as she was sure she could encourage others to come. They were curious but shy, she explained. One person who was also a parent–governor was so impressed she attended the next training workshops. It had been a tentative step towards a whole systems approach and the riskiest one yet.

We've managed to reach the most significant parts of a young person's social atom in a general sense. But the system is wider still, of course. We have made very good local relationships with individual practitioners, schools, even a whole school trust. Beyond that, though, is the shifting landscape of the Department of Education, swept by the political wind and other programmes (often created in Canada or Australia) advocated by them and which undergo RCT (randomised control testing) in order to be rolled out across the country. Flower 125 has not faced the rigour of such scrutiny and while we have sought funding to do so, it is incredibly difficult to attract. It is a task for the immediate to medium future.

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June 2020 to June 2021: The Flower blooms again

Never mind the lack of commission from the city council, one of the greatest challenges to Flower 125's survival was the onset of the coronavirus in early 2020. When we might have been tendering for city council funding under the aegis of the newly established Flower 125 Health CIC (Community Interest Company, a form of social enterprise), we were paralysed by the pandemic. In those first days we simply didn't know how a programme dependent on an action-based approach could survive a lack of touch, a lack of presence.

This did not daunt our colleague (she who is also an F125 facilitator). She instantly set to work looking at the programme and how the activities might be adapted to a Covid influenced environment and found it much easier than she had imagined. We reached out to the F125 community to share this resource as we knew that the emotional health of essential workers' children who were attending school was hanging in the balance. We encouraged them to think about other ways they could still deliver the programme and asked them to keep in touch with us so we could disseminate it on our website and through regular email updates.

We also felt the need to gather those who had been trained and create a more sustainable community; thus the Flower 125 Zoom Forum was born. It became the engine for ideas where we heard that people needed a refresher as some people had not yet run the programme and some wanted to use the Covid adapted pack to deliver it. Their confidence, however, needed a boost. A two-hour online refresher session was designed and delivered for free as a pilot in June 2020.

It is an excellent way to bring people back to programme delivery and remind them about the special nature of F125. The model is still the star, of course. Focusing almost solely on how it is deployed and the effect on everyone, including and especially the facilitation team, allows us to spotlight and integrate the message. We are keeping this online refresher on offer for the future.

Covid has offered Julie and me the opportunity to think differently about the cultural conserves we have constructed over the past 20+ years. For years we have been under pressure to deliver online content, and until now we resisted, believing that this was a move to shorten, contract or dissipate the power of the two-day training workshops. But Covid has necessitated shifts we would not have entertained previously. People receiving online, interactive training is now the norm and there are so many taking classes and training courses, doing quizzes, having virtual tours through other countries, finding new connections and revisiting old ones, including deepening of family relationships with those who live far away. We have learned and we are continuing to learn at a much faster rate than we would have without this situation.

Currently, we have completed four trainings, having been granted funding from three surrounding local authorities. It took place online and in smaller chunks and has enabled the facilitators to start the programme and receive support and ongoing training throughout their first phase of delivery. Follow-up and online check-ins are already scheduled as a sustainable method of review even post-pandemic.

These trainings have focused on re-entry into schools after months of home schooling with online teaching. While we can guess what problems might arise, preparing professionals for whatever these young people might be bringing with them into school is something the Flower 125 Health programme with its suite of action methods and sociodrama techniques is perfectly designed to accomplish.

A blossom of my own…

Introducing the concept of roles, the system surrounding the young people and the practitioners, doubling and role reversal as techniques alongside more standard role play ensures that Morenian theory and practice are the foundation of this programme and have been present in the training of thousands of professionals and young people.

While Flower 125 does not explicitly declare itself a sociodramatic approach, the development of the training has mirrored mine as a sociodramatist. When my sociodrama training started in 2002, we were just designing the training of school staff. As I have been part of the facilitation team for every session, I can assert this is a programme truly grown in the soil of Morenian methods.

Casting my mind back to those early days, as a new sociodramatist in training, I can see that I was not always confident about implementing the methods. I often hesitated to use them because I viewed myself as isolated from the team.

With the growth of my experience alongside the excellent support and challenges from the sociodrama community, I was able to harness my courage and move with the energy of the groups more freely, trusting my instinct, the process and the people.

I realise now that while I viewed the Flower 125 team and the participants as professional I didn't always view myself that way. My fear was based in the worry that I might be seen as 'the drama person' or 'lightweight maverick', or worse, a 'crazy creative' whom others didn't take seriously.

Sociodrama nurtured me. I see it as the most important contribution to my development as a human. The Flower 125 Health Programme is intricately linked to this lifelong journey as a consistent framework in which I could bring my new learning and share it with others in an immediate and practical way. And like a bumblebee that pollinates flowers, I was able to bring that learning to other spaces across my portfolio of work.

This is a connection I did not make when I started writing this paper. The wonderful editorial readers, Margarida Belchior and Jana Damjanov, pointed this out, proving that you really cannot see the wood for the trees. Thank you both!

Today, I describe myself as a social entrepreneur and founder of the Flower 125 Health Programme, and, most importantly, a courageous sociodramatist.

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Connecting with Horses

Martha Lindsell

Summary

This chapter touches on the richness of social and emotional intelligence of horses and how they are innately gifted and generous as co-facilitators when working with young people. For those unacquainted with the complex social structure of domesticated horses, there is a description with examples of how horses demonstrate complex role dynamics applying a particular style of role theory taught on the UK Sociodrama course.

I grew up moving around the globe and there were few constants in my life that have stayed with me and still do today: my family, music, horses and drama. These are what have kept me grounded, creative and ultimately fascinated by how we connect as human beings. I never thought I'd end up combining horses and drama to work with young people. After a brief year before university, training to be a British Horse Society Assistant Instructor, I knew that I needed a much more creative and imaginative way to work with people and finished my university career with an MA in Applied Theatre in Prisons and Probation (Manchester 1999). I knew I'd found my calling at the time and worked across the North of England in prisons, youth theatres, youth centres, and Young Offender Institutes for 9 years. Loving it, yet eager to discover further methods of using drama with young people, I was inspired by my friend and colleague Valerie Monti Holland, to sign up to the sociodrama certificate course run by Ron Wiener and Francis Batten.

While I was doing my drama work, I was also developing my horsemanship training and became an Australian Natural Horsemanship Instructor. As I progressed into my own form of coaching, I began to see the stark differences in group facilitation between the equine world and groupwork, especially in what was expected of the participants. As I began coaching horsemanship, I couldn't grasp and certainly didn't enjoy, the expectation by students for me to just tell them what to do and when. I have always been deeply fascinated by how we connect, respond and react towards different people and facilitating groups had always been an opportunity to encourage growth and self-perception for myself and the participants, not just me imparting

a set of practical skills. In my mind, learning horsemanship did need some physical techniques but the greatest success still boils down to a student's own self-awareness and the relationship they have developed with their horse. There are of course many modalities for studying this and, though I do study different perspectives, I am drawn most to using roles.

Why role theory?

Early in my drama work career, I had done several training days with Geese Theatre in the UK, created by Clark Baim. I was familiar with a basic concept of roles from their mask work and keen to learn more. During the sociodrama training, I was first introduced to a far more detailed and creative form of role theory, deriving from the work of Moreno. As well as looking at roles from the traditional Morenian threesome of Psychosomatic Roles, Social Roles and Psychodramatic Roles (see Jana Damjanov's chapter in this book), I now learned another trio system from my sociodrama trainers, which refers to Fragmenting (or dysfunctional) Roles, Coping Roles (the ways we cope with stressful situations) and Progressive Roles (Adderley, 2007, Student Training Handout).

As I finished my sociodrama course, I began to own enough horses to caretake my own little herd and found a place I could keep them together. Being part of their herd and watching how they connect and interact, almost purely with no sound, became a lifetime's opportunity to understand how a domesticated herd communicates and becomes a functioning society. Using the much richer form of 'role naming' I'd learnt from sociodrama (social role + descriptive adjective, in a nutshell), I began developing a feel for the complexity of herd dynamics. To me this felt revolutionary and incredible, after years of training and reading that described horse herds as hierarchical, linear and dominant/submissive based. This assumption has now been challenged and proved wrong by equine ethologists. However, they do tend to focus on the study of 'wild' 'natural' herds.

What I found more helpful was to examine the roles in my domesticated herd, to understand better how domesticated horses adapt. I listened to other people's experiences of different domestic herds, and I observed and felt first-hand from other horses, who had had less rewarding experiences. These include being part of dysfunctional herds, isolation or continual change of herds. Just like the young people I had been working with, who had a history of foster homes, care homes and incarceration, who often also had less opportunity to develop a healthy complex 'role repertoire', I recognised that resilience increases in a domesticated horse the more roles the individual is able to play. This, in turn, drew me back several years later to sociodrama.

Little did I know how far I had come as a spontaneous facilitator through coaching horses, using so much of the skills, methods, theories and simply ways of being I'd learnt through my sociodrama training. A national sociodrama network, SCAN (Sociodrama and Creative Action Network), was just being set up in the UK, which

I joined as I rediscovered my deep and more often subconscious connection to this form of working. The timing felt right as I was encouraged to join, learning and practicing sociodrama in Action Learning Sets with the privilege of participants including Ron Wiener, Diane Adderley and Valerie Monti Holland, all trainers in sociodrama. They helped me expand this exploration further, so I am now fascinated by the cross-species use of roles and role theory to facilitate the empowerment and growth of both domesticated horses and humans.

Why horses?

Across the world, horses have been an integral part of human existence. There are volumes of artistic interpretations of the deep connection felt globally between our species, from traditional folklore, poems, cultural histories, artwork, superstitions and novels to hundreds of more theoretical explanations of how and why. The existence of this connection is real enough that scientists from all different backgrounds are now attempting to explain this phenomenon, from heartmath, neuroscience, psychology, behavioural science and trauma-informed therapy to name but a few. As an avid explorer of concepts, I love to find new perspectives on the relationships and revelations people can have with horses.

There is also a simpler reality. No matter what I learn, what clever complex theories and explanations I enjoy uncovering, the clarity comes for me, not through words, but by merely spending time with horses to feel how they affect myself and others. And that is the simplest reason for me …

Why horses? Because, in their presence, something stirs within us.

Applying role theory to understand social structure in a complex domesticated herd of horses

It is my belief that horses have naturally high social and emotional intelligence. Just like humans, there are those that function more effectively than others. I have spent the last twenty years observing my small domestic herd with its changing, albeit small, population. I've noticed that their ability to function and their resilience are, like us, also related to their role repertoire and ease with which they move from one role to another and develop progressive roles. They can also learn and explore roles with each other and visiting horses. These ideas are best demonstrated through examples.

My highest functioning horse is called Cabalito. He is a gifted, particularly empathic horse who has an ability to move easily from role to role from an ever-increasing role repertoire. When he first arrived, he quickly became a calming influence on my more erratic horse Couscous, five years his senior. At the time, I wasn't really using role theory so I just thought that was his personality type. It was a couple of years after this that I decided to revisit my sociodrama training. This reawakened

my intrigue with role theory and I began to contemplate horse interaction through that lens, finding great delight in what emerged.

I had a huge realisation that horses don't just have personality types, they also have the ability to not only practice a variety of roles, but also develop further roles when necessary. I began to watch all the horses in earnest with this in mind. I initially noticed that everyday there were occurrences when my herd would easily switch from easy, general horse roles like *Grazing Companion* to *Rough-and-tumble Playmate*, from *Deep Dozer* to *Watch Keeper*, *Trough Sharer* to *Water Guarder*. What intrigued me most and what I felt most drawn to witness, were the unusual roles that would arise out of an unexpected circumstance. The huge variety of roles that emerged are what got me hooked into unravelling how potentially emotionally and socially intelligent domesticated horses are and how resilient and adaptable they can be, regardless of the circumstances humans place them in.

Exploring the concept of dominance in horses using role theory

At this point, I wanted to delve deeper into role complexity so I took the popular concept (since ethologically debunked) that horses are hierarchical through dominant behaviour. The following are a tiny portion of examples I have observed so far. I noticed that although horses can be dominant, they, like humans, can enact dominance as a progressive, coping or fragmented role.

Progressive roles in horses

"Progressive roles … are the roles we are motivated to expand in our lives, which develop our abilities and creativity, our growing or learning edge. They may be *Well-developed* or *Developing*." (Adderley, 2007)

For example, when we had an overexuberant youngster, Amigo, come home, he charged into the field snorting and showing off to the mare, Galiene. Cabalito, in true form, sensed this behaviour as not appropriate for the herd and made a role shift into *Aggressive Herd Dynamics Protector*. He would charge at Amigo, with ears flat back and teeth bared, each time Amigo attempted to get to the mare and would send him to the far end of the field. The other geldings, Couscous, Enigma and Casimiro, would offer supportive roles to Cabalito but I got the sense that Cabalito definitely held the keys. This behaviour might continue for up to three hours with gaps of quiet grazing in between. Finally, Amigo would respond with a newer role of *Compliant Herd Member*. Cabalito would then allow him back into the herd, swiftly changing role to *Accepting Leader*. The rest of the geldings immediately responded with new roles and would accept Amigo back into the herd. Cabalito has a large range of such progressive roles and this is definitely one that he uses sparingly but when necessary.

I have also felt Cabalito use what could be classed as 'dominant' behaviour in an even more sophisticated way. Couscous, my older horse, has attachment issues, due

to poor weaning (yes, I believe this does happen in horses too). He has responded to this by developing an over-attachment to me. He shows jealousy when I work with other horses, especially if I work with them before him. He will also sulk when I then try to work with him.

On one particular occasion, Couscous felt the need to explore a new role. This arose after I'd taken Cabalito out for a walk on foot. Couscous called for us as we left and as we came back. As we returned, I brought Cabalito back into the arena where Couscous had chosen to be. Couscous was incredibly fired up and angry in a way I'd not seen him before. Cabalito intuitively knew how to respond and what transpired was an incredible piece of theatre. Both horses' energy rose and they began to fight with teeth and feet clashing, up on their back legs boxing, charging at each other with electrifying energy, demonstrating what would be classed as incredibly dominant behaviour. I was in the middle of the duel, as if Couscous was fighting to make claim on me, blocking Cabalito from coming near. Having seen many play fights, I knew that Cabalito is far nimbler than Couscous and I stood in awe as I watched him allow Couscous to release the pent-up aggression and frustration, keeping himself safe but offering enough 'fight' for Couscous to retaliate: a powerful *Frustration Reliever*? There was no malice or intent to 'own' me from Cabalito. He simply knew that Couscous needed the confrontation. He needed to win. I witnessed this, captivated, as the more peaceful, athletic, sharper horse not only fought but also 'lost' to allow one of his herd members to feel good again. This enabled Couscous to feel a different role of, perhaps, *Proud Winner* and he glowed for several days afterwards!

Coping roles in horses

"Coping Roles … are our defense mechanisms, habitual ways of dealing with stress. They are sub-divided into roles which are Moving Towards, Moving Away or Moving Against where 'moving' is in relation to another. These correlate to the defense mechanisms of Pairing, Flight or Fight. For example, in a new group, people will cope with their anxieties by Moving Towards someone they feel some degree of safety with (Pairing), Moving Away from others and staying separate and unconnected (Flight) or Moving Against others (often the leader) through challenge and inciting conflict (Fight) enabling them to 'defeat the (perceived) enemy'." (Adderley, 2007)

As you may have guessed, Couscous often reverts to dominant behaviour as a coping role. It is more of a defence mechanism and has become a bit of habit when he feels stressed. I'd probably describe his most prevalent one as *Grumpy Space Protector*. The reason why I perceive it as a coping role is by watching when it appears, how the others respond and whether he feels good about the outcome. In the example above with Cabalito, Couscous' role *Grumpy Space Protector* had included me and he'd felt the need to defend his person and space because he had lost some connection with me. I had not been riding him for five months due to an injury and he was struggling with the loss. Between the release of energy the role gave him

in the preceeding fight, the quiet connection I was offering him and the physical presence of Cabalito to 'fight' out his stress, Couscous was able to recentre himself.

The *Grumpy Protector* is also a role he often employs around food and the hay trough. What I have noticed over the years is that, as each horse lives with him longer, they start to ignore this role around the hay trough and just dip and dive to avoid it – most horses begin by jumping, panicking or rushing away which initially works until they start to recognise that it's a role that he uses mainly as a threat. My horses have had access to ad lib forage since I've had my own land and been able to be in full control of their food. However, past history will have included times where forage was restricted and therefore at a premium, at which point I think this role will have emerged in Couscous. I think this is a role far more commonly found in domesticated horses where resources are often restricted. Interestingly, Casimiro ignored him from the start with ears forward and Couscous happily shares all food with him. He is the only horse we've had so far that Couscous will happily share bucket food with. He responds to Casimiro's role of *No-nonsense Resource Sharer* by letting go of that coping role.

I've also observed that Couscous' role of *Grumpy Space Protector* pops up when he's grooming another horse. This is the only time horses use touch rather than energy to connect with each other. Couscous particularly loves to pair up and be groomed because he has an allergy to midges which makes him itchy. I've noticed that the role pops up often enough that the rest of the horses stay wary, groom him and then run swiftly away. From a functioning coping role, it begins to become a fragmented role. He can be grooming another horse, or eating, and instead of a polite flick of an ear, he usually puts both ears flat back and even threatens or attempts to bite. Couscous is often left mid-groom, disappointed because of this and he then has to try someone else. It's clear it's not a healthy role at this point and the longer other members of the herd respond in a fear-free manner, the more this role diminishes during grooming.

Fragmenting roles in horses

"Fragmenting Roles … are reactive, often 'knee-jerk', role responses, frequently dating back to much earlier survival strategies which have outgrown their usefulness in present day life … They are divided into two types: those which are Diminishing (the person has a growing ability in the trigger situations to creatively find new role responses … and those which are Unchanging (the individual perhaps has little insight into these roles and may be largely unaware of when and how they are enacted. He or she may need clear feedback from others before the role is sufficiently brought into consciousness that new choices can be made)." (Adderley, 2007)

Sadly, Fragmenting Roles are all too commonly found in the domestic horse world today. In the area of horse-to-horse interaction, I believe this is mainly due to lack of complex socialisation, very poor herd structure, dysfunctional horses herded together and lack of awareness by humans of the complexity of social interaction which is both possible and needed by horses. This obviously then impacts horse-

human relationships, which can in turn lead to further fragmented roles appearing in both horse and human.

Thankfully, I rarely see a fragmenting dominant role in my herd and, if it arises in a new member, the herd and I transform it pretty quickly. It's not only dangerous for humans to be around, it is also destructive for the herd. A high functioning herd will challenge fragmenting roles and encourage and support healthier ones. For example, we were given a horse, Enigma, with very poor social skills because his nervous system had reduced his behaviour to permanent freeze mode. He was extremely low functioning and had been kept on his own to protect him. I knew that the most effective way to unravel such unhealthy behaviour was to turn him out in our little herd. And so he was. Enigma spent the first three years with us relearning how to be a horse. I watched how the horses consistently warned him, then bit and kicked him when he'd get stuck in freeze mode. They never judged him or got frustrated as they had to repeat the same thing time after time. They would just keep offering the subtlest cues, like a flick of an ear, then follow through gradually each time he locked up. They all intuitively knew the value of returning him into a flight animal. This was balanced with allowing him to hang out closely whilst grazing, grooming him and, by the fourth year, enjoy being part of the play-fighting. It has been an incredible gift, watching the herd support him from a single negative coping mechanism (freeze) to develop into a horse with a rich and varied role repertoire. However, just as young people repeat the behaviour shown to them, whether it's appropriate or not, so did Enigma. My mum's horse, Liam, came to stay for six months and, when he arrived, I began to see some very strange behaviour from Enigma. Liam is a reliable herd member and swiftly gained a healthy relationship with Couscous, Casimiro and Cabilito. Enigma on the other hand began to randomly repeat the charging, biting and kicking he had received, unable to recognise that this was unnecessary, definitely practising a fragmenting dominant role. Liam generally looked a bit surprised by it all and would dodge him, whilst there was a sense the others were ignoring Enigma's outbursts too. Although normally I would leave them to sort it out, as Liam wasn't my horse, I did end up standing nearby and when Enigma went to attack Liam, I swatted him on the butt and sent him off. There was an immediate sense of relief from Enigma. He never went for Liam again. He didn't understand the role he'd been attempting, and obviously didn't enjoy it. Once someone else had clarified it was unnecessary, he soon became great companions with Liam, grazing together, grooming each other and having some fantastic play fighting. The beauty of having several high functioning horses really supports those that need to increase their role capacity. In turn, I also think this offers them entertainment and opportunity to exercise their role repertoire which always makes life more interesting and varied!

The lot of a domesticated horse

It is my belief that an ability to increase their role repertoire and move easily from role to role, discarding fragmenting roles, hugely improves the lot of a domesticated

horse. It allows them a greater ability to socialise with horses and other species and offers more choice for their nervous system to regulate without the ability to flee. Horses by nature are flight animals and, through domestication in the UK, they may be lucky enough to be in a 20 acre field. Less luckily, perhaps, they may more often be reduced to 2-3 acre paddocks or they may be kept on a barned track system which affords movement 24 hours. Most often, however, horses are incarcerated in stables for between 2-24 hours a day. We also effectively take away their absolute freedom to flee when we train them: I believe this includes all forms of training, whether it's to ride or handle on the ground.

They also mostly have no choice of companions and, as safety relies on numbers and social security, most horses that have not been too damaged by human intervention will do their best to get on with whomever they have been put with. Again, this can vary from solitude, gender-based groups and larger herds. These are rarely for life or even long term. Buying and selling horses is the obvious reason for herds changing, but also field rotation, changing livery yards and, generally, the whims of horse owners. There are many common practices which mean that it is rare for horses to stay long term (more than a year) with a familiar herd. Moreover, in the UK it has become more common in the last twenty years for usually one, possibly two, horses to be kept in separate paddocks, even on large yards. Having observed our herd which has also been fluid, I would suggest it takes a minimum of two years and an average of about four years for a horse to feel really secure.

Domesticated horses are often part of a mixed species environment too, including humans, dogs, chickens, donkeys, cows, sheep, cats, goats etc. It's worth noting that changes in these also impact the horse's social environment.

The temptation which I've seen in so many studies is to focus on how we, as humans, get it wrong; how we take away the horse's ability to be a horse and how we should make it right. And yet…. and yet …. I am far more drawn to the incredible ability of most horses to adapt, despite some of the strangest restrictions we might put on them. I do believe there is much we can do to help and support a horse to feel safe and part of a herd (even if it is a mixed species herd). However, the greatest power we can give the horse, is to encourage them to have role versatility and freedom to explore roles.

For example, Enigma arrived in freeze mode with no progressive roles and perhaps a couple of coping roles which had just stopped him being euthanised instead of rehomed. He did not know how to communicate with other horses. Over the past five years, I have been fascinated to note how he has blossomed mainly through guidance of our herd, with the odd support from us so he can manage human interaction well too. Cabalito is my guide. He offers a different energy and feel towards a horse that is truly ready to learn and be handled by humans. The non-judgemental consistency, containment and encouragement all the herd have offered Enigma, including well-functioning visiting horses, have helped him turn into a sophisticated social being. Enigma has explored many different roles over time, some of which he has since moved on from as they weren't helpful and others which have helped him blossom. It is only recently that he has become more adept at transferring this skill to relating

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to humans because he has had some very unhealthy roles from humans to discard. In this respect, he is a very useful herd member for sessions with young people as he will respond more obviously to unhealthy roles in humans. This, in turn, inspires anyone handling him to change their role to support his need. I find it striking, the deep effect it creates in a young person when asked to support such a big animal in need, especially as it usually takes as little as a deep breath in and out, sometimes a stroke or asking him to lower his head. The effect is almost always a new role, certainly a progressive one in the young person, with direct positive consequences.

Just like horses, resilience in young people increases the more roles they are able to play.

Why horses and young people?

Understanding the management of domesticated herds also links more closely than you might think to young people in different settings.

Firstly, when working with a group of young people, they will rarely choose the other attendees – it is the same for a domestic herd. In the wild, they can choose the herd they are a part of and if it doesn't suit them, or they don't suit the herd, they leave. In a domesticated herd, they have little or no choice or, worse, are kept isolated. How often does a group of young people choose? Horses are also often kept in stables, in close proximity to other horses they don't choose to share space with. This is not unlike kids sitting at unchosen desks in a classroom, in boarding school or young people in foster/care homes or incarcerated in cells in a secure unit where they haven't chosen their room neighbours or housemates.

Secondly, they are not in their natural environment – groups are rarely held where young people hang out and wild horses roam an average of over fifty miles a day – they are lucky if they have three acres to roam about in, in the UK. Young people are often worked with in spaces chosen by adults, whether that is a classroom, a community centre or in a detention centre. Horses are 'trained' most often in 20x40m arenas.

Thirdly, wild horses will all grow up in a rich herd comprised of extended family, whereas domesticated horses rarely even stay six months with their mother and then are moved and kept, like most domesticated horses, stabled, field-confined or barn-kept with no companion choice. This draws strong parallels with young people in blended families, foster homes, boarding schools, care homes and incarceration and I've recognised familiar unhealthy roles in both species.

Fourthly, their movement is restricted throughout their upbringing, despite their natural need to move. For horses, again, that is due to stabling and restricted turn out. For young people this is the epitome of our school system; sitting at desks, using devices and gaming.

Fifthly, if horses suffer trauma, they are discouraged from naturally pandiculating (stretching and yawning, particularly on waking) and releasing, which prevents the nervous system from being reset. This, in turn, has a huge effect on mental, emotional and physical states. Horses are restricted by equipment and training and

children, from a very early age, are discouraged for bursting out into tears, scream-ing and moving, if they hurt themselves. This is exacerbated in young people with traumatic backgrounds.

Finally, expressive demonstrations of emotions are discouraged and 'contained'. For horses, the extremes can include training using restrictive equipment to 'contain movement' to very physically strong forms of riding and handling. And for young people in the UK, the huge reduction of the Arts in schools reflects the lack of value placed on expression. Yet again the similarities arise. You can imagine that an over-excited child, on the night before Christmas, who is told to go to bed, holds a very similar role to a horse that has been kept in a stable for a week and is being told to behave as he is being led to the field.

Once you look for parallels between domesticated horses and young people the similarities go beyond the practical aspects. One of my observations over the last twenty years is that children and young people tend to be far more natural at reading and responding to non-verbal communication. Horses barely vocalise and are still incredible communicators, through vibration, energy, intention and body language. We are animals first and speech users second. Sadly, as we grow and develop into adults, much of this natural intuitive behaviour which has evolved to deeply connect us and also keep us safe, is discouraged either by cultural constraints or by trauma. The beauty of children and horses resounds in their greater reliance on non-verbal communication. Both use words less and movement and energy more, have fewer verbal masks to hide behind and are more honest with their bodies and their outbursts.

We are in an era where a neck-up existence is extensive and difficult to avoid at times. One of the greatest powers that connecting with horses allows us, is a recon-nection with our whole. They remind us of our somatic existence, which includes intuition, heart-led thoughts and becoming fully present. As an adult working with young people, this offers us access to roles we may have forgotten, a reminder of how they exist in the world and an opportunity to embody different roles, to truly feel how to 'wear' them before putting language to it,

What healthy roles can we begin to imagine that go beyond words?

How horses help young people be more aware of the roles they offer

One of the delights of this form of role theory is its symbiotic nature. Social inter-action highlights the roles we tend to play and the different roles that others bring can have such an impact on the role or roles offered in response. There are at least two things that I feel are a little magical about horses that differ to working solely with people. When someone interacts with a horse, the horse responds to the person within, not to the masks they wear, and the other, so simple yet so powerful, is that I've yet to meet a horse that makes someone feel judged.

JANE

For example, I won't forget one of my first mentoring-with-horses sessions with a 12-year old girl, Jane. She had arrived with her mother and had wandered off a little distance to watch the horses. Jane seemed a bit lost and shy, low in confidence. Cabalito felt this and slowly approached her. He gently placed his muzzle on her shoulder and breathed deeply as if to help her ground and relax. After several minutes he stood a little away, waiting to see if she would be drawn in to his presence and she quickly was. I suggested we put a head collar on him and she could lead him around a little, to build a bit of a relationship with him. For the next twenty minutes, Jane led him and I watched from a distance as he worked his magic. As the session went on, I could see her confidence growing, her posture changing. What struck me at the time was the roles that Cabalito chose to offer her. He began as an *Unsure Follower* questioning each obstacle she approached, asking for her to give him confidence. These were over objects he lives around and has seen a thousand times, with and without being led/ridden over them. He just knew. I supported him verbally fairly early on by suggesting she needed to give him a bit more confidence and, as the session progressed, he began to offer a *Trusting Follower* role instead. As the time came to an end, I asked her what roles she had explored and she explained that, at first, she had been a *Nervous Companion*. She even commented that she felt he knew that, so she wanted to help him more. This led to her exploring being a *Proud Confidence-giver*. The beauty of Cabalito's sophisticated role play was that Jane truly believed she had given him the confidence, offering a role she had not experienced before and had great joy in practicing.

CHRIS

The lack of judgement people feel from horses also affects their concept of roles. Once I was working with a 16-year-old youth called 'Chris', who was struggling with how he felt people perceived him because of his colour. Chris began the session fairly pent-up and angry. A situation had occurred that morning where again he'd felt persecuted because of his skin. He knew enough not to take it out on the horses and picked Casimiro to work with. Casimiro could feel the tension and wasn't in his usual relaxed compliant role. He responded to Chris' emotions by offering *Defensive Resistor*. Chris groomed him, which soothed both of them a little, and then he went to pick up Casimiro's feet, something he'd not had issues with before. The more Chris tried to make him pick it up, the more Casimiro planted his foot. Chris then paused and stood back. I asked him what was going on. He just looked at me and said simply, 'Casimiro doesn't know what colour I am ..'. We stood, all three of us, and let this sink in. The anger and frustration seemed to melt away and Chris began to groom again and then easily picked up all four of Casimiro's feet. We didn't put any more words into the session as Chris had done the work himself, recognised the role Casimiro had responded to his initial emotions with, and countered this with a new role of *Grounded Self-calmer*, which he then embodied.

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JENNA

Jenna, 15, came for the first time with her teacher, Jane, from the local specialist Autism Residential School she attended. At her first session, she was fairly excited to see the horses. She helped muck out a little, to distract from the excitement, and then we went to catch Casimiro. As she spent time grooming him, we could feel Jenna settle, so I showed her how to lead and stop him. Totally immersed in her new role of *Focussed Horse-leader,* she wandered in and out the obstacles and around the fields, gradually moving further and further from Jane and I.

After about twenty minutes, I looked over to see tears rolling down Jane's face. I asked her what was wrong and she just turned to me and quietly whispered that this was the furthest Jenna had ever ventured away from a staff member in the three years she had been attending the school. The staff team had been working really hard to encourage more independence so that Jenna would be able to go on a bus, buy something from a shop etc. on her own. They had been really struggling to find ways to enable her. Yet here she was, first time with our herd, moving freely and confidently around a whole 4-acre paddock on her own. Over the next few weeks of Jenna's visits, Jane let me know that the simple role of being a *Focussed Leader* had made a real impact on Jenna's own independence. Jane used the connection Jenna had with the horses by stopping on the way to the yard at an equine shop to buy something for them.

LESLIE

Leslie was a 17-year-old girl with confidence issues. After working with her for several months, I asked her to go and catch Enigma from the field. She'd not chosen to handle him much, I suspect because his emotions can be a little all over the place, and she knows she can quickly lose confidence. On this particular day, it feels right, so I wait out of sight with Casimiro and Cabalito. Every now and then I steal a peek and all looks fine, even if she seems to be taking far longer than necessary. When she arrives back with him, she is a bit fired up, exclaiming that they were ganging up against her! I asked her if she felt this was a role that horses would take and she thought for a moment responding with a 'no… but it felt like it'.

What interested me was that, just half an hour before, she had been describing her relationship with her dad and stepfamily, and her feelings about the horse interaction were sounding very familiar. Her father had recently moved into a bigger house to accommodate his new family. This included a room for her brother, stepbrother and sister and no room of her own (with the offer that they will redo the inside of the garage for her at some point – not yet done nine months later). There are new family rules that she doesn't really know because she doesn't visit that often, and she dis-likes being made to follow them as she doesn't really feel part of the family anyway. She thinks that they are all perfect and happy when she is not there - thankfully her stepsister has corrected this false assumption recently. She regularly tells me her stepmother is moody and can sometimes make a real effort to include her and other

times pick on her and put her down (I do think of Enigma with his less predictable emotions at this point…. and also, a sense of being ganged up on!). Catching Enigma is a bit like getting along with her stepmother!

As I ask her what happened with the horses, she said Enigma didn't want to be caught and walked off in a mood, and that Couscous kept putting his ears back and moving Enigma away. At this point, there are plenty of connections and relationship parallels to potentially draw on, but I'm more interested in the roles Leslie has not only played herself but also assumed of the horses. We firstly explore the roles she used. She comes up with *Confident Helper*, followed by an *Outraged Outsider*, to a *Failing Helper*, to a *Determined Horse-catcher* (with some of the *Outraged Outsider* still going on once she came back to me). She is really pleased with herself with assuming the fairly new progressive roles of *Confident Helper* and *Determined Horse-catcher* and being more aware of them. This boosts her belief in herself.

We then move on to the roles she feels the horses took and her response to those and how it might have been different. I begin by asking her why Couscous was chasing Enigma away and she quickly says 'to make it difficult for me', and then she pretty quickly remembered that Couscous is often very jealous and the penny dropped as she exclaimed, 'ooh he wanted me to catch him and do something with him!' I referred back to her initial statement about them ganging up on her and she swiftly notes that of course he wasn't, he was just feeling left out. I leave this particular avenue at this point, although again the parallels are always fascinating. We move on to Enigma and she says, a little plaintively, that he just doesn't like her. I ask if she's felt like that before with him and she realises that this is an unusual way for him to be. I do offer a very simple suggestion that the horses had all been hiding in the shed from flies and they'd only just gone out to eat. We discussed other reasons, that were unrelated to her wanting to catch him, about why he can appear moody. He is a horse with a complex and traumatic emotional past. As the session ended, Leslie was fascinated and really understood that she is only guessing the reasons people/horses are behaving around her as they do, and what she guesses affects how she feels. By exploring more options or even in her own words, 'it's not always personal,' she can feel better about the situation and then maybe respond differently. In effect, the roles she assumes others offer her, affect the roles she responds with. I also enjoy how this example ends in an embodied sense of agency, as she was still able to put on the halter, lead Enigma across the field and carry on the session with him listening to her. So, on reflection, when she changed to the progressive role of *Determined Horse-catcher*, the horses responded to this immediately: Couscous moved away and Enigma let her catch him.

The beauty of horses is that they don't hold grudges, respond so quickly to the vibrations of role change in others and don't complicate it by using words that are not in alignment with the role they offer.

Playing with the boundary-setter role

A great example of this happened at the British Psychodrama Conference in 2016, where I ran a workshop about how horses can help us to explore the role of *Boundary Setter*. One of the participants, who had little experience of horses, was attempting to lead Couscous around the space. On the surface, it looked as if he was totally ignoring her and busily doing his own thing, eating grass, whilst she tried various things to get his attention. I know Couscous' favourite roles with new handlers and I noticed that she was laughing, as were several of the other participants, who had recently seen him being perfectly led by another. I explain that Couscous has a real sense of humour and they quickly name his role as *Playful Joker* and the leader's role as *Amused Audience*. I suggest she change her role and she chooses *Clear Boundary Setter*. Couscous swiftly lifts his head and walks with her. Of course, everyone enjoys this immensely and another participant wants to try. As the lady passes over the leadrope, the man discloses that he is going to be a *Firm Boundary Setter*. With a determined look to match the role, he takes the rope and Couscous immediately responds with a very similar look and plants his feet and digs in. At this point, I do have a quiet smile as there really is an art to getting it just right with Couscous. He is very particular about the energy and vibration someone offers by the role they choose. Until this participant, a 6ft tall, strongly built gentleman, changed the description of the role *Firm Boundary Setter*, Couscous wasn't going anywhere and yet I've seen 5-year-olds lead him easily around a collection of obstacles!

Beyond roles

Time and time again, I see horses induce a more relaxed state in young people. I work with two teenagers with special needs and both sets of parents often comment on how much calmer they are whilst they are with the horses. I do understand there are scientific theories to explain physiological effect. My preferred choices at the moment are from HeartMath (www.heartmath.org), grounding, and the Polyvagal theory from Somatic Experiencing (https://traumahealing.org/).

HeartMath have measured the electromagnetic current of the heart and recognise it has an effect on those around us. In short, a horse has a huge heart and a small brain. We have a small heart and a big brain and, simply by being in the presence of the bigger-hearted animal, our heartbeat slows as it synchs up with the bigger heart's electromagnetic current and regulates our breathing.

Grounding is simple. It is based on the fact that our nervous system is also electrical and therefore will be influenced whilst being earthed. Most of the time, we are in synthetic shoes, on manmade surfaces so when you touch a horse which is earthed, it directly affects the system – in a good way! Commonly known effects of grounding are: slowing down our heart rate, rebalancing the cortisol levels (stress hormone), improving sleep, pain and inflammation reduction, boosting the immune system etc.

A piece from Polyvagal theory (used in trauma-informed therapy) that fits here is that the horse has huge vagal nerves. So, in the presence of horses, they can override our human nervous system if it is disregulated, as long as the horse's own nervous system is regulated. I think some of these processes were very much occurring during Jenna's session above, which allowed her to find a new role.

With these in mind, I feel that young people are not only getting support from the horses' emotional and social role taking and responding, they are also experiencing added physiological effects that help embed the essence of the new roles, whether that is the confidence that Jane found, or the calmness that the teenagers with special needs show.

Being part of their herd and watching how horses connect and interact, almost purely with no sound, has truly become a lifetime's opportunity to discover how a domesticated herd can communicate and maintain a functioning cross-species society.

How horses can offer a visual reflection of roles: supporting adults who work with young people

Often professionals can get so focused on the task, what is needed by their clients and the protocol they must follow, that they can drift from looking after themselves and staying embodied. I'm finding that connecting with horses can be a really powerful way to support those working with young people and help them to remember the role of self-care within the workspace.

I recently ran a team-away for a charity working with parents and guardians of exploited children. The chosen subject by the group was exploring self-care. We had been made aware that the staff worked independently across the country and not everyone knew each other. There was no explicit use of role training in the group work. I still keenly observed the horses expressing roles and how this enhanced the experience for the group.

Early in the day the group of 15 people were given the task to connect with the horses, to meet each of them, in their own time, as the horses grazed around the paddock. Then they were asked to move towards the horse they felt most drawn to. No one moved towards Enigma, who at the time was an unsettled member of the herd. It struck me that, intuitively, these women, who work with people in similar emotional turmoil, could sense it, despite knowing nothing about horses. What role might he be representing to the participants at this point? Immediately, several participants verbalised that no one should be left out and headed over towards him. Immediately I brought it to their attention that we were looking at their own self-care and insisted they return to their first choice unless they were genuinely drawn to Enigma. To me this was a very visual display of what often happens with people who are in a caring profession. Instead of doing what feels right for them, they immediately reach out to the one in need. Added to this, Enigma could also possibly have represented the staff member who had chosen not to attend!

The next part of the horse session involved bringing the chosen horses down to the arena to connect further and relax through grooming and leading. Couscous, Cabalito and Casimiro responded with calmness and relaxation which filtered through the group. Enigma, determined not to be left out, came down into the arena and some of the participants at this point did choose to halter him and brush him. The mood felt different as there was a sense that they had looked after themselves first with their chosen horse and then had space and energy to engage with a horse who was obviously less relaxed than the others. So, in this instance, it was as if Enigma was portraying the role of client/young person who needed help but would get better support once their own needs were met. The day moved on as, in groups, they worked with different horses, exploring the sensations, emotions and feelings that came up. As the horse part of the day came to a close, we were all stood in a semi-circle sharing these experiences, whilst the horses mooched around us. Quietly, Enigma was drawn to the deep change that had occurred in the group and he came to the edge of the semi-circle and lay down to sleep. I allowed this to sink in subconsciously without drawing attention to it at the time, because I knew how powerful this was to Enigma.

As we rounded up the day in the log cabin, I asked each participant to say one word about what they got from the day. From a list of over 25 words they had made of hopes at the beginning of the day, nearly all of them chose 'relaxation'. I drew them back to Enigma lying down, the embodiment of their group feel. Again, the beauty of this is the symbiotic nature of horses and humans working together. I finally shared with them, that this was the first time Enigma had laid down and snoozed whilst there was a human in the arena, a huge breakthrough for his relationship with humans … and there had been plenty of us. Practicing the role of self-care in such a big group had offered Enigma the peacefulness he needed to try the role of *Human-trusting Sleeper*. Had we had a second day, this could have been unpacked further. What role might this have represented to each participant present? Was he simply the visual display of the group feeling? Might he have been the inner voice of some of the group? Might he have represented one of the clients that has responded to a worker who has been practicing self-care? Again, the possibilities are there to be discovered.

Conclusion

What draws me so deeply to use role theory whilst connecting with horses is simply the synergy that happens. There is always opportunity for self-discovery, self-belief and play, all of which promotes agency and resilience in all the animals and humans involved.

Sometimes I utilise role training explicitly when working with clients and horses from all ages and backgrounds. Much of the time, I just quietly pay attention to all the interactions that occur and take huge delight in expanding my own awareness of the power of this form of role theory, sharing it where it feels productive and enjoying how much it truly offers the possibility for any social being to be their best selves… and to not feel too stuck in the process. There is no specific system of betterment,

no ABC process, just a continual discovery of more rich and varied roles. Adversity then becomes a shared opportunity to invent and practice new roles with others and I feel very privileged to have such an emotionally and socially intelligent group of domesticated horses to create the journey with.

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See The HeartMath Institute (www.heartmath.org) for information about heart regulation.

See Somatic Experiencing (https://traumahealing.org/) and many other sources for information about Polyvagal Theory.

Martha Lindsell is an unusual equine coach who uses sociodrama and action methods techniques in her work. She co-facilitates with horses, whether owned by clients or her own herd. As a team, they explore the mental, emotional and physiological choices people make and how they impact on ourselves and the interactions with the horse. This can be both implicit and explicit, especially when encouraging new roles to try. Clients range from 5-83 at present and the focus of the sessions is always client-led with guidance from the horses and herself where needed.

http://www.artoffeel.co.uk. http://www.psychotherapywithhorses.co.uk

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CREATIVE ACTION METHODS – GETTING IT USED, GETTING IT OUT THERE

Josephine Razzell

Summary

Telling the story of a mission to make Creative Action Methods accessible and more widely used in the UK

Dear Reader – *in which I introduce this chapter and the journey we will go on together*

Sociodrama is about groups creating stories together. My sociodrama group has been my peers – co-trainees, professional colleagues, friends – who have gathered together over time, putting energy and creative thinking into building one collective story – the story of how we've worked together to get more people using Moreno's methods to help others grow. Read on, dear reader, and you will journey with me on the highs and lows of discovery, endeavour and effort, learning about the twists and turns of life, as together we meet new opportunities and some wonderful people, trying to keep focussed on the bigger picture while getting absorbed in the challenge of the moment, and negotiating the constant dance between the journey of the heart and the work of the head. So, the door opens to My Past… step through with me if you will…

Design Thinking – *in which we copied Google*

I first learned about Design Thinking when I worked with my brother Luke, running workshops for start-ups in London's business community, helping them evolve content for websites and digital platforms. The idea, championed by Google in their creative labs, was that you work through iterative stages, creating feedback loops through carefully calibrated user testing cycles, until you are fully confident that what you have produced actually works in practice and is in the best shape it can be for its intended audience.

Here and now: this concept got an early grip on me and my Action Methods colleagues – looking back I see that we've become a bit addicted to it – in our quest to determine what approaches give the best possible chance of quick, easy and scaleable uses of Creative Action Methods in the wider world.

Joining SAM – *where I do a chicken dance*

I fell in love with Morenian sociodrama and its associated approaches when I was a trainee – I was lit up by action methods workshops, and the kind of people

transformation enabled by Australian-style role training (as developed by Rollo Browne). When I first hunted around on-line and discovered SAM, the UK Socio-drama training school, I did a 'chicken dance' of excitement around the room. This was the professional development I'd been looking for! It profoundly shaped and transformed me, and the others I trained with. My co-trainee, Valerie Monti Holland, recalled to me recently, "It was the first space I'd been in where I was encouraged to be emotionally present, and was supported not just to think creatively but to honestly express how I was doing in myself, in a professional working sphere rather than a group with a therapeutic contract". And she was right – as I learned techniques to help groups explore and grow together, I grew and transformed myself.

Here and now: this double gain – learning skills to help others as you help your-self – is something I see and celebrate now with the people we train to use these methods.

The Promise – *where I commit myself to the cause*
During my final pre-graduation tutorial, and only months before his untimely death, I made a promise to Francis Batten - one of a pair of our two gifted tutors, along with Ron Wiener, still my mentor – that I would do what I could to make sure sociodrama in the UK didn't die out as Francis prepared to leave us and Ron approached retire-ment. Clearly, others have been very active on that score since then, but for my part I held that promise in my heart for many years, and when the time came that I had time, I decided to act on it in my own way. I wanted to see how ambitious we could be to get Action Methods known about and used widely across a range of sectors here in the UK, alongside other approaches such as Solutions Focussed practice and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).

Here and now: we are still a long way off that ambition, but we are taking what we hope could be early steps towards it by building a practical, usable set of tools to make it possible for people to access.

Two Pens – *where students get to choose*
My colleague Jennie Le Mare and I have worked together over many years now, exploring how to meet this challenge of making Action Methods more accessible and widely used. Since 2000, we had been working together with disadvantaged/learning disabled young people in a vocational college. Our experiments had been diverse – we ran a year-long programme where we had students painting murals, creating gardens, processing experiences and developing new role responses to their lives. I had become a manager, and my use of action methods had become concentrated to the very simplest form: two pens.

The only student contact I had at this point was during disciplinary meetings, towards the end of the process, when the student was at risk of losing their place at college because of their behaviour or attendance. The set up was formal, but our intention was always to try to turn the situation around and help the young person change. I started habitually cutting through the usual question / answer / informa-tion- giving exchange by picking up two pens, laying them in a V shape on the table.

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I would explain: this pen represents you continuing as you are now. This pen is you if you respond differently. I'd then ask – what will happen if you choose the pen for 'carry on as you are'? I'd usually get a mumbled, "get chucked out of college." A few coaching questions later and the scenario would be slightly extended. Then I'd gesture to the second pen. "And if you choose this one?" This was a very simple form of future story- telling, where the student spoke about their own potential, what they might be able to achieve if they stayed, helped again with a few coaching questions, led us to the moment of choice: 'Which pen do you want to choose?' Invariably they picked up the second pen.

There's a lot of pressure in a formal disciplinary meeting – it would take a very defiant stance to pick up the first pen, of course. But the act of physically choos- ing, holding, moving the object, shifted something. Students' stance lightened, they looked more confident and relaxed. They were, in a small way, choosing to invest in a more positive future. They were being offered agency, control, a collaborative pathway where we could work together to make a difference.

Here and now: two pens is an activity I still cherish and pass on to others at every opportunity I get! Simple, but so effective…

Our First Group – *where we coax them off the tables*
We could see then how very simple action methods were impacting very positively on the young people we were supporting. Still working at the college and wishing to build on this kind of interaction in a group setting, we decided to run an experi- mental workshop with a group of eight young people. These were students who, for a wide range of reasons (unsupported learning disabilities, bullying, mental health issues), had left school with no qualifications and very poor self-esteem. During the two sessions, we set up a timeline in the crowded classroom, weaving around tables and chairs, and invited the young people to walk along it to explore their futures. We also did some simple role development work, inviting them to choose objects to represent a part of themselves which could help them move forwards, and another part which held them back.

The group had a wide range of responses to the sessions. About three of the eight didn't fully engage, remaining in a bystander role. One girl (who suffered from ex- tremely low self-belief) was transformed by the experience, deciding as a result to train as a childcare worker. Another student, academically able, who had experienced significant bullying at school, was able to use the combination of role development and future projection to re-take her school exams (GCSEs) and re-engage with that learning pathway. Perhaps most interesting was the young man who presented as being on the autistic spectrum. He kept his head and face covered, sat on tables, and refused to speak or acknowledge others for most of the time, becoming hostile when approached. He spent his free time playing video games – these were his special interest. As he observed others, the premise of the session interested him enough that he courageously moved outside his comfort zone to identify a role for himself which could help him move forward – a character he strongly identified with from a game he frequently played. This engagement with his own wisdom, noticing, choice and

self- expression was a big step forward for him to take charge of his own state and future choices.

Here and now: this workshop was our first experience of identifying and then using two simple activities – future projection and role identification - which still sit at the heart of our offer today.

Freed from My Chains – *in which I take a leap into the unknown*
So, back to my story…. Bored and frustrated with a manager's role, replying to endless streams of emails and sitting in perpetual planning meetings with little or no student contact, I eventually left the college. Freed by this to become whatever I wanted, I remembered my promise to Francis. Now seemed to be a good time to try to make good on it.

I had been clear for a long time that growing awareness of a method would require more than just a training process: it needed an ecology, including modelling and demonstration of the usability and success of Action Methods in settings where you'd expect to meet with poor response and uptake. My thinking, our thinking, has always been ambitious. Way back in the day, as a SAM school trainee, we would have endless, repetitive, boring conversations about 'the name, what we call it'. We all knew that the word sociodrama was a massive turn off in the wider world of work. Anything with the word drama in it sent a polite shudder through most of the UK population, who don't naturally take kindly to the idea of demonstrative performative activities, even though they love them once they take part. Bigger than that was the challenge faced by Ron and Francis to recruit enough people to the school to keep it energised and financially viable.

My view was that it's hard trying to offer training in a social vacuum without context. People invest a lot of time and money when they sign up to a lengthy training process. Some will do it because, like me, they love and value the content – but most will want to know, how can I use this? Earn a living from it? See it being successfully applied in practice? Like most other approaches, it needs to be shown to work, have a strong, successful brand presence, a network of advocates and champions in order to thrive. The training process draws on all that bedrock energy to recruit and prepare people.

So, logically, working backwards, first we collectively needed to demonstrate you could earn money from Action Methods in a non-action methods world. Valerie Monti Holland has done very well with this so, inspired by her, I got going myself to try.

Getting Passionate with Passion-Inc – *in which Action Methods arrive in the corporate world*
It was a happy accident when I met and teamed up with highly successful people engagement expert Kirsty Dean and ended up joining her small business, Passion Inc. Together we devised and delivered many workshops to leadership teams in multi- national blue chip corporate businesses. I was paid very well. The work was high stakes – we were expected to deliver – and deliver we did. Competitive,

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aggressive, action-focussed corporate leaders were gently charmed into creative action spaces where they used our methods to map systems, take and develop roles, experience human connection, gain clarity and insight and prepare to take decisive action. Workshop feedback consistently scored in the high 10s with even the most sceptical fully engaged, as again the leaders used activities like future projection, systems mapping using objects, role identification and 'speak as' (role taking), 'hidden voice' (doubling) and other activities familiar to sociodrama and action methods practitioners. The results were teams who became bonded through the creativity and humanity of the sessions, clearer about the challenges they faced systemically, their own personal role responses and with action plans which were rooted in pragmatic, experiential learning.

Here and now: Kirsty is still using these methods regularly to run workshops with leaders. She is doing ground-breaking work, combining action methods, storytelling and coaching to bring insight to the spaces she works in.

Is it Me, or is it the Method? - *In which my living room becomes the sandbox*
While being deeply grateful for the opportunity to learn and grow my way into organisational development and leadership work, I hadn't forgotten that while creating proof points about value, saleability and sector context were key pillars of the 'grow action methods' mission, other aspects also needed to be nurtured simultaneously. My question was – OK, this has worked well for me, but can anyone be trained to do this anywhere? After all, my training had taken three years, a lot of practice and writing and very skilled 1:1 tuition and reflection, building on years of group work experience as a teacher and trainer. That just was never going to be practical in the world of targeted CPD and time-poor institutions. In order to thrive and become a widely used practice, training would have to be boiled down and simplified to become really accessible, applicable, approachable.

We started in my living room – where else?! I had invited friends to come and try some very simple training. I wanted to work with friends because being alongside people you love and trust is a really nice experience and, as people with no previous experience of action methods, I felt I could learn a lot about what was possible regarding quicker training models. This early approach bore fruit – people were interested in the learning and enjoyed the time they spent together. It quickly became clear that the gain was two-fold – learning to run activities for others in a 1:1 setting was good, but trying the activities offered a powerful self-development benefit.

Here and now: friends who have a professional application for the skills are still using them. Those who were interested in personal development continue to use role naming, mapping and development as a way of charting and supporting their own growth and life path – awareness is the first step to change.

Our tag-team – *in which we huddle together to create and dream*
This early experimentation with training approaches led in these early stages to the building of a loose 'tag team' over time of Action Methods practitioners and trainers, as well as colleagues with natural aptitude and no training but who learned

fast once they'd experienced the work in action. Action Methods is intrinsically collaborative – we all understood that we can learn and do so much more when we join together – a key theme of the PERFORMERS project. The energy of discovery becomes the energy of the group. We thought, wrote, re-wrote, and thought again. The practitioner team coalesced into a core team of four of us, and we spent many hours and days together, sharing our stories, planning sessions, reviewing activities and sharing expertise. We created a community organisation, Capella, to support the work. It was a very precious, magical time. We ran series of training pilots, in church halls, school buildings, conference rooms, engaging people from our networks who had curiosity to learn and apply this creative and oddly challenging approach.

Here and now: we still have the same approach – a kind of relay race where different people step forward, complete an aspect of the work, get busy and head off, then someone else can pick up and run with the next step, using their specific skills or interests. Somehow it seems to move forward like this, with a kind of collective endeavour. I love that people care enough to do this, step forward and get involved.

It's All About the Contract? – *in which we try to stay safe*

In our turn, we learned (again!) about the importance of our contract and how to maintain safety when giving people minimal training about tools which easily lead to deeper psychological change work. We re-enforced these principles: 'invite them to step back into the noticing space'; 'mark a role which is likely to be distressing, but don't invite them to speak from that role'; 'be clear about your contract – your focus is on the situation, not the therapeutic history – you can reference it and invite new role responses, but don't unpack distress you're not contracted to explore'. We ran through again and again our simplest ground-rules:

1) Be kind and supportive.
2) Maintain confidentiality around personal material.
3) You don't have to do it if you don't want to.

Here and now: this last – the insistence on personal choice regarding participation – has been a feature of softening initial resistance in so many of the workshops I've run with people who've never met action methods before – and is a principle I apply today across the board.

The Fabled Handbook – *in which we write, and re-write, and re-write… etc etc*

In terms of the contents of our training programmes, the maxim 'less is more' has been our guiding principle throughout. How can you boil down and explain/demonstrate the fundamental building blocks of Creative Action Methods in a way that makes them truly easy to learn and apply, in any context, any sector where people and/or project development takes place? We found that Action Learning Sets, a key aspect of the SAM school sociodrama training, were great learning grounds for people to explore both how to contextualise the work they were doing and also to cement their personal relationships.

Back to the design thinking. I think we're on iteration number 10 of our training handbook – and I suspect it won't be the last edition. Just what are the core principles/

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pillars? How do we make them memorable? What are the key activities that, once you know them, you can combine, adapt, evolve in your own context? What are the basic steps for each one that you can write on a prompt card and hold in your hand when you run the activity for the first few times? What are the warm-ups that make it really safe and easy to approach Creative Action methods anywhere, any time? How do you simply and easily introduce and explain the 'why we're doing this' (purpose) question so it makes sense to a group of teenage students? Or business leaders? Or support workers? Or anyone, really?

Here and now: these are the very fascinating (to us at least) questions we've been experimenting around for the last seven years now. Sometimes I'd love to arrive at a finished answer – but I suspect those questions will continue to run and run.

Process shapes Product – *in which we get serious and start a business, remembering my brother*
So where had we got to? I had proved to my own and others' satisfaction that Action Methods were a saleable product, which could be used to augment existing interventions such as organisational development/engagement programmes or classes for students with low achievement and many other things in between. Working with friends and colleagues, we had teamed up to take the proof points one step further, developing a short but highly impactful training approach which assumed that these methods could be easily and naturally learned, adopted and adapted, if this work was done as part of a positive learning community.

Organisational structures matter – they shape and form what's possible within and around them. A training school offering a programme in a vacuum, without a supportive professional ecology, will struggle to recruit. A community organisation such as ours had beautifully fulfilled its purpose of building a training model and approach collaboratively, building an informal team of passionate action methods advocates. To move the work to the next level, piloting organisationally-based development and training programmes, we needed a new organisational structure – we needed to be a business who could sell services and make profit, which could then be ploughed back into funding the ongoing development work and build the training offer.

I mentioned at the beginning of this story the work I'd done with my brother. Days before I ran my first corporate action methods workshop with senior leaders from Vodafone, he had died in a very tragic way. I still don't know how I ran that high-stakes session. I hadn't slept at all the night before – my career development had bumped into my personal life at a moment of real crisis. Somehow my relationship with my brother was connected intrinsically to the work of bringing action methods to the world. He shared my passion for innovation and had been the first person to see the potential and value of my sociodrama experience in a commercial setting. Pretty much the only tangible asset I inherited from him was by accident – in an effort to untangle his business and financial affairs for his wife, I became the sole director of his company, Weaver, which of course had got me started running Action Methods workshops when I left my manager's job years before. Once those affairs

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were settled, the company remained – complete with bank accounts now in my name, a trading history, tax accounts etc.

Tentatively I explored the options with my good friend and colleague from college days, Jennie. What would the emotional and practical outcomes be of adapting the business to become our new commercial partnership offer? Was it all just too deeply personal to me, preventing her from having real ownership or traction with the new business? Would the history haunt us in some way, emotionally, energetically, through story? What was the impact of our decision to create a business partnership on Jeannie and Pip, our co-core team members from Capella, the community organisation we'd grown together? Where did the intellectual property ethically lie between us all? These kinds of enquiries are intrinsically sociodramatic, exploring the connection points and mirroring between our personal and systemic stories. Doing the process, asking the questions quietly together between both the two and the four of us, seemed to release any stuck energy around the proposition, and it was clear that the values of trust, goodwill and mutual generosity that we had built Capella around could bear fruit in allowing us to transition cleanly and kindly to our next stage. Jennie and I set off together as co-share holders and directors of Weaver Insight, a business dedicated to promoting the use of Creative Action Methods.

Here and now: we're still trading, despite the pandemic. It turns out running a company isn't as scary as I thought it would be, as with so many things in life.

You Couldn't Give it Away… or Could You? *In which we find our allies and champions*
Once we were officially a business, we could get going selling our services. Interestingly, the community building ethos of Capella very naturally generated paid work projects. One of the strategic principles we have used to great effect has been to open source the learning, making it easy, cheap or even free. Great people get involved and quickly become passionate about the methods. They are inspired to try programmes back in their home organisations, and open doors in this way to commissioned work where new approaches can be piloted using a co-creative process.

Friends who had also become trainees were morphing into 'early adopter' action methods practitioners and innovators, setting up facilitated programmes within their home organisations or as part of their professional offers. This validated my theory that giving away the training in the first instance in order to build accessible community would build an ecosystem which brought work to the more experienced members of that community. Trainers would be needed. There are several stories to tell about what Capella members did with their new-found skills – but that would be a whole chapter in itself. Jennie has described the Study Well programme in next Chapter – this is an excellent example of the kind of work generated through Capella which allowed us within Weaver to continue to experiment, pilot and co-create sector- specific action methods approaches.

But this story is about what we have done to try to fulfil that promise, made way back at the end of my training. Coming back to the concept of growing an ecology around the method to allow it to root and flourish, we had several key aspects in place

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– a proven training approach, a set of well described and user tested activities and most importantly a community with passionate and skilled advocates, all wanting to return the goodwill we'd initially shared. This community grew with every free pilot project we ran, as participants appreciated our time and support, sharing skills without charge, gaining valuable user testing and feedback in return.

Here and now: networks rise and fall like waves, without care, nurture and attention. This one has been absorbed into others and remains as a wonderful memory for everyone involved – but the relationships we grew still thrive.

But where do we belong? *In which we discover the Solutions Focussed Community*
One of our community, Brett, was very committed to sharing the methods more widely. He made the connective leap which helped us to further strengthen our ecology – where was our natural home in the wider system of developmental and learning interventions? Applying again the principle, we are stronger together, we were curious to see how we would fit in different worlds. Was there interest and room for us in the international coaching community? Trainers' networks? Organisational development practitioners? Psychologists, clinicians, educators? Each had their own identities, but what we needed was a horizontal alliance, to something which could also touch each of those worlds. Brett found it for us, with the Solutions Focussed Practitioners conference.

Without much fuss, I found myself on their programme, offering a workshop – an introduction to Creative Action Methods. Clearly, it had to be almost completely experiential. I had an hour with the group – accounting for getting people in and out of the space, make that only 45 minutes. What could realistically be done in that time?

The work we'd done to simplify, consolidate and clarify really paid off at this point. I planned a workshop where I would demonstrate mapping with objects and speaking from role, then support participants to try this for themselves. The mapping would reference situational aspects and also internal role responses. I wanted something which showcased the heart of what we did. I would demonstrate but not lead some empty chair work to show what the next step could look like. We would start with some simple continuum lines and connection warm- up exercises.

Participants were from a wide range of sectors. The word 'creative' had attracted them. The process felt surprisingly effortless – because the activities had become easy to show, to explain, the principles simple enough to grasp. We had concept cards with icons, which I shared to make the thinking behind the activities more accessible and memorable.

The room was buzzing as people began in pairs to choose objects, place them, ask the simple questions I'd suggested. This was my first experience of offering paired activities to people to coach each other through with no prior training, although all of course were experienced at people support work. People gave feedback as they left that they found it hard to believe how useful the activity had been, and how easy to do. I took 10 copies of our Handbook with me, and all of them sold on the spot – this was something people wanted to take away and try again.

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Here and now: the insight from this experience remains the same – that the profes-sional role – teacher, social worker, coach, trainer, medic – is how we are assured as trainers that trainees have a clear client contract for any work they do, as well as the skills to support people to make change, each within their own remit. Action Methods are the added component, the extra bit which turbo charges engagement, imagination and psychological shifts.

Back up North – *in which we get kitted up*
At the end of the workshop, I was approached by a manager whose 200-strong team from Sheffield in the north of England (the MAST team) supported young people, their families and other professionals when they were struggling with life and internal challenges. Could I train her team? The frontline staff could use these methods, she was sure. Workforce development sessions could be transformed. Training offers to schools could have much greater impact.

Which parts of you do you want to dial up/dial down/rename?
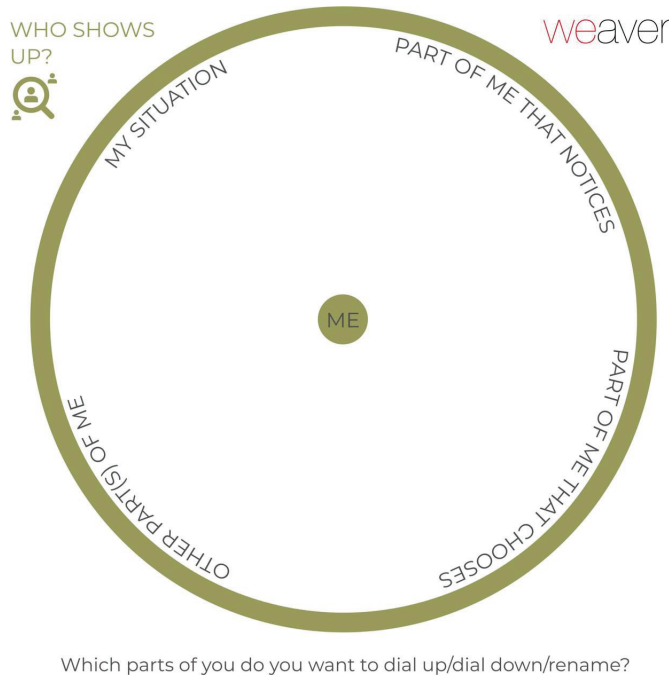
Figure 1.

Working to the tightest of budgets, we planned together two sets of training, for their frontline staff, and for their trainers. This was significant for us as it was the first time we'd had a chance to work with teams within an organisation who wanted to learn and then integrate action methods as part of their core processes. It was an excellent opportunity to further refine our training approaches. In preparation, we considered what an 'action methods goody bag' might have inside. We designed and printed

fabric mapping cloths – large napkins with graphics printed on as prompts for mapping with objects (see graphic for an example) - as well as laminated activity cards, small sets of concept cards, and a brightly designed bag to hold it all. Yes, they did want the cards. No, they could find their own objects and sharpies. The practicality of this kind of 'what's needed' feedback was so helpful. The training was enlightening – for them and for us. They took our activities, trying them with young people and families in seemingly intransigently stuck situations. Things moved, people they worked with looked up with new expressions, new insights, new hope. The team were in great shape, imbued as they were with Solutions Focussed practices, and these were seamlessly woven into the activities – it was all about building hope, imagining possibility, making this tangible and accessible.

In our turn, we learned the importance of practicing how you offer or introduce an activity to someone you're supporting. We'd run round the circle, asking in turn, "What would you say? How would you introduce this?" the language and concepts we'd thought were simple and accessible were translated to the next level of human, straightforward, easy to grasp and relate to, by people who worked every day on the ground with others who were suffering and finding it hard to communicate about their suffering effectively. We were awed and respectful of their expertise and compassionate humanity.

Here and now: MAST have had huge challenges continuing to do their work without access to face-to-face time with those they support. Plans for doing more with their action methods skills, like much else, have had to go on hold for now. But we'll be back!

Covid Takes Us Digital – *in which our team grows again*
After delivering these projects, we were positioned very happily. The University of Leicester had accepted proposals to scale up the Study Well programme, and commission new work supporting BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) students to achieve their full potential, also offering personal tutors to support students more effectively. We were exploring CPD (Continuing Professional Development) training for coaches. Covid put a stop to all of this. Like so many others, we went quietly to ground. We went back to basics – design thinking – asking, as our sociodrama colleagues have done, what can be done on-line? Our team grew as geographical boundaries no longer stopped us, with one colleague in Wales, another in the States. We have built a website and started exploring what you can do with interactive videos. Still refining, simplifying, codifying – as I said at the start of this story, we hold our hands up to a mild addiction to design thinking and iterative testing.

Here and now: we still haven't launched our definitive training product. A team of five of us are quietly using this time of Covid to create interactive on-line learning – demonstration videos cunningly punctuated by stop points where you can follow your curiosity to deeper-dive into the thinking behind the doing:

– *Mapping cloths to help the uninitiated and less confident to get started with mapping with objects.*

- *A layered handbook which makes a distinction between 'need to know' and 'nice to know'.*
- *Safety protocols to ensure that people don't come unstuck using powerful methods with minimal training and can safely contain any emotional spilling.*

Thank-you – *in which I appreciate a pinch of salt, in the here and now*

I'm deeply grateful to my colleagues for their passion and commitment to the work. Sometimes we pay ourselves, often we don't. When we take our approach out into the world, we usually experience a lot of success, and sometimes we come unstuck – it's an experimental process. But we keep on learning, getting feedback, partnering with organisations as diverse as the University of Leicester (see my colleague Jennie's chapter 'Weaving it all together'), family early help teams, homelessness support organisations. Co-creating with these organisations, offering free time and care to them in exchange for their active collaboration in piloting training, helping us craft what will work well on the ground, this has all been such a great process to be part of. I've loved it.

I'm excited by the future, by the possibilities of augmentation. What I mean by this is, that Creative Action Methods for me aren't the main thing. They're a wonderful thing that, when added like a pinch of salt to food, make it taste so much better. That was always the point of the SAM training school. Ron and Francis gave it the acronym MPV. That baffled several people not in the know – but in fact, it stood for Multi- Purpose Vehicle. Creative Action Methods are exactly that, an approach which once learned can be useful all over the place – I'd argue, in any sector, with any demographic, performing any role.

People out there are doing so many creative, wonderful things to help others grow, thrive, build. If what we offer is simple enough to see and learn, it can be used to augment so many of these activities, whether in business, education, health, recovery, design – the list goes on. By building our training process and website, we hope to have a way to show and pass on the small part that we know – the Morenean approach – in a way that will be really useful to the wider world as they stay creative and focussed on helping people and organisations make positive change. Just as I was lucky enough to have had teaching from Francis and Ron, so in my turn I hope to play my part, with many others, to build a community of practice which shines bright and inspires engagement, insight and deeply personal learning and growth.

Jos Razzell is a UK based sociodramatist, Creative Action Practitioner and storyteller. She works with Jennie Le Mare running Weaver, a small agency offering face to face and online training in Creative Action Methods to use in organisations which help people grow and change. www.weaverinsight.com

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Enable Your Team to Thrive: An Exploration of the Cultural Atom in Group-Focused Interventions

Irina Ștefănescu

Summary

Two examples of group-focused explorations of the cultural atom: a short-term group builds the future professional role repertoire of its members; a functional team starts to strengthen its internal identity and produces striking results. As a present or future sociodrama and action methods practitioner, you can get answers to what sociodrama is, why we do it, with whom, in what contexts and what the options are for how to explore the cultural atom of groups and teams.

A group of future coaches builds the professional role repertoire of a corporate coach

June 11th, 2020, Bucharest, Romania. A bit of respite after the advent of the Covid. Ten people maximum may meet in a room with masks, keeping their distance. It is the end of the Be a Coach course at Coachingdipity school, which is ACSTH accredited by the ICF (International Coach Federation), one of the best coaching schools in Romania, just before the national accreditation exam. For the second day of the last workshop dedicated to team coaching modalities and techniques with sociodrama and action methods, we have the courage to meet again in the local puppet theatre, enjoying the large space and considering the rules. So, here we are: six students, a co-facilitator and me in the room, plus a student attending from abroad via Zoom.

In the afternoon, it's time for the cultural atom to explore and process. We perform a morning warm-up[1] to self, to the others, to the space, to the method using games, body work and also group sociometry[2], then the work with group sculptures[3], using

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[1] Warm-up in psychodrama and sociodrama is the process of getting a person or a group ready for action and possessing a certain degree of spontaneity. See also the Glossary.

[2] From 'socium' = companion and 'metrum' = measure. Sociometry – the study of human connected-ness – was created by J. L. Moreno as "a method for describing, discovering and evaluating social status, structure and development through measuring the extent of acceptance or rejection between individuals in groups" (Moreno 1953). See also the Glossary.

[3] Sculpture - the actors shape and place their bodies alone or in relation to other actors to help visualise a specific situation. See also the Glossary.

double[4], role reversal[5] and mirrors[6], all of which a good and consistent warm-up process for this piece of work. Just before starting, we do some mindful neuro-agility training exercises using hands[7], then come back to our own bodies to be present after the refreshing lunch break.

After listening to two short stories highlighting the context and the benefits of exploring the cultural atom in the organisational world, the group decides the theme and we have a contract to develop the role repertoire of an executive coach together. The timing is perfect: at the end of the training period as coaches and near the beginning of this certified profession. After that, the individual ACC (Associate Certified Coach) certification by ICF would follow naturally.

I pull a chair into the middle of the room, ask everybody to make as much space as possible around this central chair and say: "This is our stage now. I invite someone here, in the middle, to be the COACH and to represent us all as coaches."

Alina comes and takes the role (all the names are changed for confidentiality reasons).

Let's see now: who is on the professional stage of the coach? The middle. here, where we have the coach, is the nucleus of the atom. Around there will be the other actors, the stakeholders or satellites, as the electrons in the atom, around the nucleus. There are two questions that qualify their presence on the stage:
1. who affects the coach? and/or
2. whom does the coach affect?
When you name a stakeholder or satellite, you become that role and come on the stage with a chair to represent it. You position yourself where the coach indicates or where you feel strongly that you belong. The final positions around the nucleus are to be decided by the whole group. When we run out of actors, we use empty chairs and objects.

Ilinca grabs a chair and comes on the stage as the sponsor. She places her chair to the left of the coach. Veronica comes as the client and sits in front of the coach. Dorina comes as the client's team, next to the client facing the coach. Sorin comes as the HR (Human Resources) manager/business partner, putting his chair to the right of the coach, and slightly behind. Andrei comes as the close peer of the coach,

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4   Double in sociodrama happens when a person comes on stage behind an actor and gives voice to thoughts and emotions that were not expressed by the actor in that context; the function of doubling in sociodrama is of a role expansion. See also the Glossary.

5   Role reversal or reverse roles means swapping the roles between two actors or two groups of actors, to experience the relationship from the other's perspective, to feel how it is to be the other. The technique was created by J. L. Moreno and is of critical importance in psychodrama and sociodrama. See also the Glossary.

6   Mirroring is when a person verbalises what s/he sees or mimics an actor in that situation. See also the Glossary.

7   For similar examples see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCpiteBel8E&list=LL&index=1&t=3 32s, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sB4lXUhRfMU&list=LL&index=2&t=427s, https://www. youtube.com/watch?v=DJt6ORwxKmE&list=LL&index=3.

sitting behind the coach, then the coach invites his peer to sit on his right, shoulder to shoulder. And now we are out of actors, so say "you can propose other stakehold-ers or satellites too and place their chairs on the stage, then you can go back to your initial role or you can take the new role".

A chair for family is put on the stage to the left of the coach, then a chair for the mentor/supervisor, also on the front-left. So now we have the first map (Figure 1) representing the professional universe of a corporate coach. The little triangles in Figure 1 indicate their 'noses'.
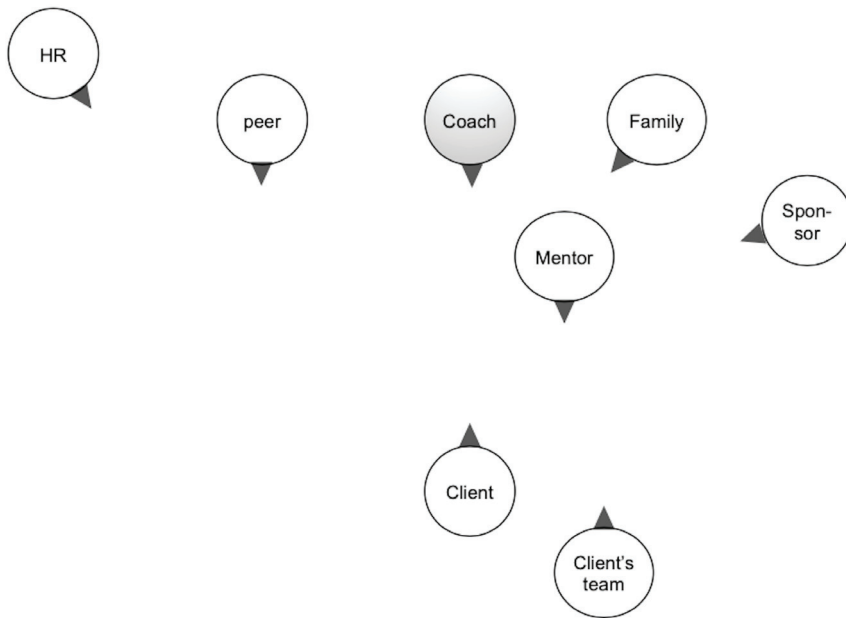
Figure 1. The spontaneous initial social atom[8] map of the coach.

At this time, I can announce that we are very close to completing the first phase of the exploration of the group-created cultural atom of the coach: mapping the system of the coach as a collective role. Yet, we need to negotiate a commonly agreed map, as the map belongs to the group, not to a single person. I take Alina off of the stage and ask every member of the group, one by one, to leave temporarily the role on the stage and take a tour around the stage, sit in the central chair, feel the system around, arranging and rearranging the satellite chairs, while giving the motives for their movements. At some point, a new satellite appears, a chair for the 'possible future client'. When every member has had their own tour, they all stand up, go to the margins of the stage and become observers for a final collective helicopter view,

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8   A short definition of the social atom: a network of significant others around a person. See also the Glossary.

consultation and possible final re-arrangement of the satellites around the centre. Shortly, we arrive at the final map of the system (Figure 2).
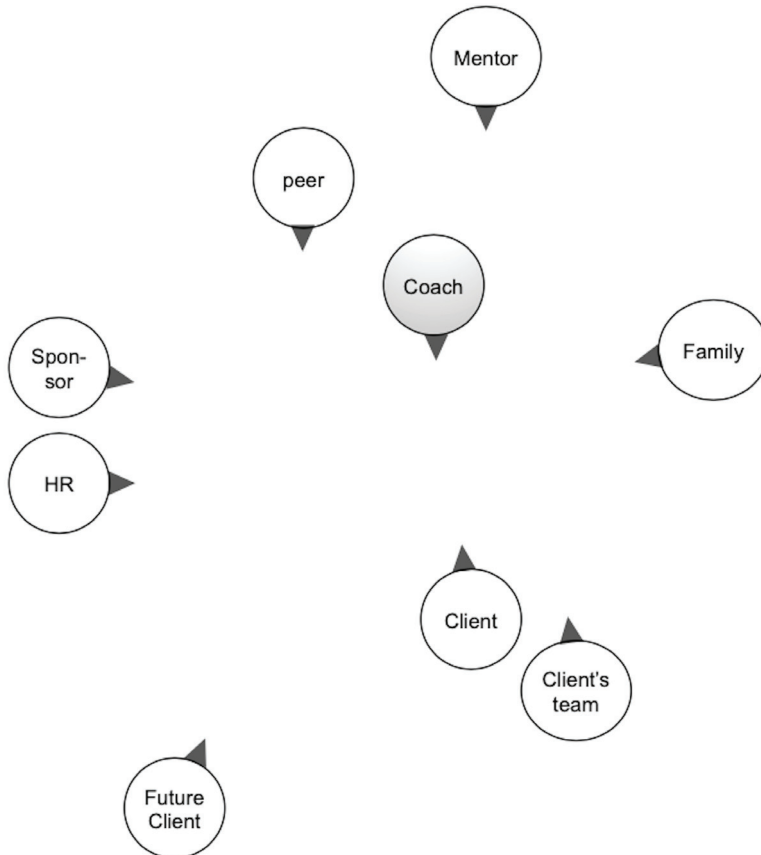
Figure 2. The negotiated social atom map of the coach.

Once we have a commonly agreed map, the satellites need a good definition, so "each of you will take turns and, from the role you have on the stage, you'll say to the COACH in the centre:

1. I am… – identify yourself in the role
2. I see our relationship as… – define the relationship from the satellite's perspective
3. What I need from you as a coach is…"

Now it is time for me to add: "As the COACH in the middle stands for us all and other coaches, being a collective character whose roles we build together, most of the satellites that you've brought here to the stage are also collective characters. We build them together, so feel free to contribute in any acting role you feel warmed

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up to. The more voices, the richer the collective roles. All you need to do is to stand up and speak, so I can make sure your voice is heard." And I demonstrate how to double[9] or tag[10] a satellite role.

Wow! How much energy, how warmed up is (almost) everyone to contribute. They double a lot, enriching and diversifying the satellite roles. Even Alina, who plays the COACH, stands up several times and doubles other roles. People take turns to speak from the empty chairs too, the latest three satellites. As the actors keep practicing this, the messages change from superficial and cliché-like to a deeper level, the voices change, some emotions appear, even some tears when the 'family' voices speak.

"Well done, you have defined the satellites and their relationships with the centre so richly. Now, Alina, you stay as COACH and just listen carefully. You'll receive some messages for us all. They are very important." Alina listens carefully and her face is changing. "How is it now for you?" "A bit overwhelmed, I need to be careful with the sponsor and the HR manager, I feel highly supported by my family, mentor and peers. I feel grateful to myself for having the courage and determination to finish this training and get certified."

"Well, here we have a complete social atom in which the centre's satellites are identified, mapped, defined and their relationships with the centre are defined too. We could have made a diagram and could have talked about it, but it's far more relevant when built on the stage, with the energy of the entire group. You can step out of your role for a while, shake it off, breathe, move, do some stretching and have something to drink. Come back to your chair and share from any of the roles you've played and a bit from yourself, if you want." The sharing is very rich.

"To continue the exploration and discover the cultural atom, we need to create and define the roles of the COACH (the centre) in relation to the satellites so that we can cluster (group) them according to the criteria we consider important. Role naming means you think of the function of the COACH in relationship to a satellite to give the noun of the role, for example partner, friend, apprentice, companion, colleague, etc.; then think of the attitude of the relationship, of the main value that the COACH conveys in this relationship, and this gives an attribute, an adjective of the function, for example trustful (partner), caring (friend), curious (apprentice), cheerful (companion), supportive (colleague), etc. Although this sounds like a very intellectual exercise compared to what we have so far experienced, you'll find it easy as you remember all the rich messages from the satellites to the COACH. Should we have more time in this session, we would enact some dialogues and we would reverse roles to find the intentions, thoughts, attitudes, emotions and messages of the COACH that would enable functional and harmonious roles and relationships with the satellites. As we now build a functional role repertoire for a new professional identity (the COACH), this means a series of conscious decisions for this group. Once we make conscious decisions as individuals or as groups to be the best versions of ourselves

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[9]   Offering a double.

[10] Tagging means the replacement of the initial actor in a role with another actor, warmed up to take that role and play it further. The sign is a tap on the replaced actor's shoulder. The technique was created by Ron Wiener and is inspired by wrestling. See also the Glossary.

and, therefore, maintain or develop progressive (highly functional) roles towards the important actors in our lives, we have the chance to develop the intentions, thoughts, attitudes, and to manifest the actions, that are congruent with these roles and invite others into harmonious and productive relationships.

"So, grab a colleague, pick three roles, get paper and markers and negotiate these names, writing each on a piece of paper. Remember, these are the roles that we all, as coaches, have towards each stakeholder on the stage. Once you finish, you can move to another group to help or learn until you've learned about all and you've contributed as much as possible."

They come up with a long list of roles, wanting to include everybody's opinion and every nuance in that relationship. They are happy with the result, as they now have a very rich role repertoire to choose from, according to their own personality and specific contexts. This group will dissolve the next day, so I leave the list as it is and we discuss the importance of a shorter list for a functional team, as those roles influence the related interventions and messages and shape the identity of the group.

The final sharing reveals that they feel gratefully at peace, richer, calmer and more confident regarding the relationships in their future profession. They also like the exploration of the cultural atom as a team coaching process. Some of them are eager to start small with a familiar person in an individual coaching session and then try it with familiar groups, slowly. They are all aware that it takes more training, practice and supervision to get to explore fully the cultural atom of a group and many of them are willing to continue their training in this direction. The processing session is rich and a great learning experience for us all.

My reflection

The seventh person, who was online from Switzerland, had to go to a meeting, so for part of this session we lost her. For the rest she was an observer, taking notes. If we were to work with her as well, I could have asked the co-facilitator – who intervened briefly and mainly covered some of the missing actors – to hold the laptop so she could feel included and see from many perspectives what was happening. I realise that hybrid working raises many logistical issues that need to be managed and solved.

I could have asked for other satellites to come up on stage, non-human but also important: learning (books, conferences, podcasts), business (in order to activate roles such as healthy finance cultivator, etc.), health (to stimulate the self-carer), relaxation (music, travel, yoga, hobbies, etc.) and so on. I made a conscious decision not to so that I could give the group enough time to act, observe and process, using as less is more approach. In addition to this, there were only six actors for nine roles.

What is a cultural atom? Why do it? With whom? When?

What is it?

> The pattern of role relations around an individual as their focus is called his cultural atom. Every individual, just as he has a set of friends and a set of enemies, – a social atom – also has a range of roles facing a range of counter-roles.
>
> <div align="right">J. L. Moreno (1946) Psychodrama, vol. 1, 84</div>

Moreno (1953) coined this term, thinking of the smallest functional unit within a cultural pattern. Why cultural? Because he thought we could consider roles and relationships between roles as the most significant development within any specific culture.

When I became curious to explore the role repertoire of a group, I was wondering if Moreno's definition could be transferred from an individual to a group. I am not very sure that "cultural ATOM" is the appropriate expression when focusing on a group, when the structure of the role relations becomes much more complex. As a chemist, I would play with the expression "cultural polynuclear compound". But, until we find a term to agree upon, using the same name seems reasonable enough.

The explorations of the cultural atoms are opportunities for role relationships repair and role analysis. Thanks to Lynette & Max Clayton and to Sue Daniel for defining the categories of roles as:

1. Progressive – well developed, developing
2. Coping – moving towards, moving away, moving against, freezing
3. Retrogressive – diminishing, over-developed, fixed

Why do it?

The cultural atom, also known as the role atom, has been widely explored in individual or group psychodrama to evaluate a person's role relationships at important moments in therapy, counselling or coaching. With groups, exploration of the cultural atom is a great evaluation resource, which is why we start with it as a diagnostic instrument (the present state), then as a goal-setting prompt (the desired state) and, in time, as a monitoring device to check the pulse and measure progress.

Despite other diagnostic methods, the group is highly involved and the members are able to live and witness the action, their internal actor and their internal observer equally stimulated, so that they have a chance to perceive the reality of the group and ask themselves about the next interventions.

The way that Moreno shaped the concepts of social and cultural atoms offers us a visual and verbal language to depict the relationships in a group and the roles that influence patterns of behaviour in individuals and groups. When exploring the cultural atom, we talk about roles and relationships, and in doing so we talk about identity and values. By ensuring this baseline in teams coaching practice enables group members to look at the present and be fully aware of who they are in the moment, then look at the future and decide who they want to be and have more

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confidence in building that future, have more hope, and to start dreaming again. The pandemic curtailed our vision so much that we don't even know what is under our noses anymore. Therefore, exploration of the present and future-projected cultural atom is an effective way to engage teams in order that they reshape and trust themselves more and do better.

With whom and when to do it?

With a short-term group – during a training programme, or a group coaching session, or a mastermind group – the cultural atom can build either a role repertoire for a specific role that they have in common (for example future professionals, parents, partners, activists, etc.), or effectively position group members in a system for a short-term project. My clients in this area were mainly students at various schools (adult learning, university, high schools), members in a patients' association, parents, etc. The best moment to lead this intervention was immediately after the group was formed and warmed up to work and to each other for the groups who had already an established common identity; for the groups who were learning or transitioning to a new identity, the appropriate moment was towards the end of their common journey, when they already had a good understanding of what they were supposed to do when ending the time together.

With a functional team, for example during a sociodrama session, a team coaching programme, a team development centre, a team strategy session, a training or team building programme:

1. when the members in the team have the same position, mainly to enable them to strengthen their professional identity as soon as possible, in the first or second session together; if we assist them in transition to a new professional identity (the nature of work changes consistently), then we need to explore a second cultural atom, that of the new position in order to be able to design the transition pathway;

2. when the team is a management board or a whole department (with different hierarchies), mainly to enable them to position themselves better in their larger system and improve relationships they have with other entities (individuals or other groups) as soon as possible, after a good warm-up; if the intervention is within a change management programme (turnaround, merger, etc.), a second cultural atom of the desired state is necessary in order to assist the team in role transitions, which is usually a deep cultural transition.

During a sociodrama training session, the trainer can freeze the drama to record the cultural atom as it is perceived at that moment (Di Lollo, 1987), especially for teaching reasons so that students learn to 'read' a cultural atom in its dynamics in real time. I found it important at any moment, both onstage and off stage, to be able to notice the dynamic occurring in the cultural atom of the group while interacting with its stakeholders in the larger system. Thus, I can spot the roles from which the group is more likely to change its perspective, then its behaviour, if needed.

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How to explore a group-focused cultural atom

The contract: what, why, with whom, how long, where, possible results.
A clear contract with a sponsor and with the group is very important. Having clarity allows us to direct this intervention in the most useful way for that specific group. If some of the things are still unclear, exploring the cultural atom in the diagnosis phase can bring more clarity and the contract can be renegotiated. We need to establish the group's needs and goals and make sure they are really willing to work and to support the work. Finding their why is the first stage, entailing a 'what' – the answer being the strategy and structure.

In terms of how long, a cultural atom exploration with a group of 12 people may take 3 to 4 hours, including warm-up, enactment, sharing, ending and break(s).

The space should be generous enough and have a furniture-free area for the stage. Plenty of chairs, ideally light enough to move them several times, or with wheels. I usually ask for a well-lit and ventilated room, with a comfortable temperature. Other logistics are strips of paper and markers for the role names, plastic cones or scarves to replace the missing actors and rope or string to mark the role clusters.

First, we need to get a social atom for the group: a centre, a map and identified satellites and relationships.

Here is a structured recap of the social atom depicted earlier:

1. We place a chair in the middle of the stage and invite a volunteer to represent the whole group.
2. We ask the group:
   a. who affects your activity?
   b. whom do you affect?
   c. who else?… who else?… who else?…
3. For every answer to (a) and (b), the group places the satellite on the stage, arranged sociometrically according to the quality and intensity of the relationship with the group (centre).
4. The map is negotiated and renegotiated by the group until they can agree upon it.
5. Once the map is ready, every satellite, through the voice of its actor, says to the centre:
   a. I am…
   b. I see our relationship as… /My relationship with you is…
   c. I need from you…
6. The person in the centre, representing the group, listens to all the messages from the satellites, then shares.

From the group's social to cultural atomgroup: The repertoire of role relationships

As we have the map of satellitesand their relationships with the centre, we can look at the roles relationships by developing vignettes in which the centre can try various types of behaviour, give messages and initiate actions until the group feels they have reached a good level of functionality for the entire system. In group work, we invite as many members as possible to speak from the centre, using doubling or tagging as well as encouraging them to take turns playing the satellites or doubling them. Role reversal is very useful, especially in moments of conflict.

Then we name the roles of the centre towards the satellites by recognising the pattern of behaviour in these relationships. If, thus far, we have used short scenes, double, tagging and role reversal, this is a moment of mirroring and reflection. Following the pattern of those roles, they can be clustered, especially if there are quite a few, for possible future interventions.

"Role-naming is a form of spontaneity training", says Sue Daniel (2007, p. 104). It is never too early to engage in a role-naming game, to warm-up participants to this work, which sharpens the attention, enables reflection and boosts creativity. The result is a pair consisting of a function and its descriptor; the function shows who I am and what I do in relationship to you; the descriptor shows how I behave in this function, in relationship to you.

"The roles are dynamic, so it's the cultural atom" (Di Lollo, 1987)

For example, when a woman gives birth to or adopts a boy, she becomes his mother; this is her function in relation to her son. As she loves him very much and shows this very often, we could use a related descriptor, her role is a 'loving mother', which most of the time invites him into the role of a 'loved son'. During the weekend she starts as a 'cheerful wake-up singer', making him a 'cuddling and smiling wake-up-er', then she becomes a 'creative nourisher' when she serves some smiling sandwiches next to an omelette and he gets to be a 'grateful, smiling eater'; a bit later they decide to play together for a while, becoming 'playful playmates'; when he teaches her a new game, she gets to be the 'curious apprentice' of a 'patient mentor', and soon, as she doesn't get all the tricks, she is a 'clumsy player', so he gets the chance to be a 'glorious winner'. At lunch time, before again being a 'careful nourisher', she sometimes has to stop and take on the role of 'firm limit setter' when he wants to continue as 'playful playmate' and continue playing with her; when she insists, he often becomes a 'stubborn rebel'. Soon 'careful nourisher' and 'firm limit setter' becomes 'playful nourisher' so that he can smoothly slide into 'playful eater'. And the story goes on and their roles dance together the whole day. The relationship elements of their individual cultural atoms are dynamic. When the husband and father

is at home, the mother's relationships with her husband and the child's relationships with his father increase the dynamic of their individual cultural atoms.

This situation is the same with a team that interacts with other teams and other people. When we lead group exploration of the cultural atom, we try to have names for the main roles (such as 'loving mother') while remaining aware that under each such hat, there are lots of wigs of various shades and styles.

A BIT MORE ABOUT WORKING WITH TEAMS

With teams there is much more complexity in this dynamic, depending how strong the culture of that team is and how homogenous it is. The big advantage with socio-drama and action methods is that during the warm-up phase (plus the preliminary discussions and personal research), the facilitator can start to spot those elements and can lead a cultural atom diagnosis that reveals areas to work on. As skilled facilitators with enough time, we can plant into the structure of the cultural atom exploration of various other vignettes and group-work, or conduct an exploration of a cultural atom to help reveal in which collateral areas to intervene or where the team's present cultural atom needs repair. Our decisions and interventions are mainly based on the roles we perceive in the cultural atom of the group and the roles we perceive in the individual cultural atoms. This is why it is useful to work with individuals as well so as to constantly train our capacities to spot cultural atoms in their dynamic.

OPTIONAL ROLE CLUSTERING

When there are many satellites on stage – human and non-human – there will be many roles to play. A closer look reveals that some of these many roles belong to the same family (for example trustful partner, reliable partner, etc.). I usually cluster stakeholders or roles according to a criterion or a set of criteria that is important to them, for example function, descriptor, internal vs external, etc. Then I ask the group to name the clusters, so we get to work with a reasonable number of roles, agreed by everyone in the group.

Working with a department in a financial organisation, the team identified 15 stakeholders (satellites). Before starting to name the 15 related roles, I asked them to decide how they would group the roles in order that the role they had makes sense and can be fully functional with regard to that group of stakeholders. They came up with 4 clusters for each of which we named 4 roles.

Running an online group-focused cultural atom exploration

October 2020: for me exploring the cultural atom on Zoom meant the next level. I was running the programme with three teams of financial analysts who needed to work on some critical relationships within their close professional environment as well as develop a better connection with each other during the pandemic.

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Working on Zoom with very busy young analysts and suffering from Zoom fatigue was quite challenging. Let's look at the adaptations I needed to make when working on Zoom:

1. dynamic warm-up based on games and fun activities,
2. I asked the participants in advance to buy plasticine and have it to hand,
3. everybody made their own social atom in plasticine and shared in pairs, in breakout rooms; (fun fact: when back in the plenary, nobody wanted to share only about their findings, they all wanted to share their social atom with plasticine). Later on, I collected the photos of these individual social atoms and posted them in a private gallery so group members could look at each-other's photos as much as they wanted,
4. back in the plenary, I drew a stage, centre and satellites on the whiteboard, guided by the group to making visible the social atom map of their team,
5. the group enacted the social atom and I arranged their video tiles on the screen following the social atom map so they could see the same order, thanks to "follow host's video order". This new feature on Zoom came just in time,
6. after defining the relationships of the stakeholders and what they needed from the centre (the analysts), I sent them into breakout rooms to share,
7. I explained the role naming in plenary and sent them again to breakout rooms to work on role naming,
8. we wrote the roles on the whiteboard for a role analysis to be performed later.

We need to get visible and important:
A functional team's story

A new department in an international bank, consisting of a department manager, a product manager, an administrator and seven regional coordinators, had to lead at least one hundred specialised sales counsellors and their managers across the country so that they could develop the market and sell their services successfully. After six months they called for consultancy, as they were experiencing difficulties and the expected results were still very far away.

They accepted a four-hour diagnostic session so that we could discuss and evaluate the goals, resources, difficulties and way of working, and make a plan for interventions. As the reported difficulties mainly concerned the regional coordinators, we met them and the department manager.

In the preliminary discussions, they mentioned that the regional coordinators (I'll call them RCs), while being successful with their top external clients, had many problems interacting with the agency managers and their direct subordinates, the specialised sales counsellors. They also had issues with other stakeholders in the bank with whom they were competing for the time and attention of these agency managers. In addition, the manager thought that the RCs were perceiving their professional

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environment quite differently, according to their various preceding positions and, therefore, were acting differently towards the common stakeholders.

So, part of my plan was to see how they positioned themselves in the competing internal system of the bank, mainly towards their internal clients. I chose to start with an exploration of the RCs' cultural atom as a team with the intention of using a volunteer to set the RCs social professional atom, then leading a team negotiation for the stakeholders' positioning, and after this role naming. Thus, I could have not only a diagnosis but also start the first intervention.

Well, as we know from working with groups, a well warmed up group may offer far better approaches than an experienced consultant. After the first volunteer placed her colleagues as stakeholders and finished mapping her social atom as an RC, and just before I wanted to start the team negotiation process, another RC jumped from his chair and said: "My map looks so much different. May I show it?". As we had time and they were moving fast, I invited the new volunteer to set his map. And then the third wanted to show his map and so on. They were working quickly and smoothly, respecting each other's perspectives, staying curious and making astute, funny comments. My job became as easy as possible: I was simply observing and asking a question from time to time. By the end of the seventh map, the positioning negotiation was redundant as they had optimised the map with every version.

It was time for a short break, but before that I asked for a quick sharing about the process. Apart from the two first volunteers, the other five said that their map was massively influenced by the ones before and they loved how the process was very dynamic and left space and time for everyone to express their own vision.

During the break, the manager – whom I asked to refrain from comments or non-verbal cues and remain neutral – told me that she was bewildered to witness her team's first conflict-free negotiation. Well, thank you, action with structure.

The next steps – naming the relationships, needs and perceived roles, then naming the roles – revealed and specified the problems in some relationships that were important to the RCs. So we had a clear and unanimously accepted present situation.

As in coaching and consultancy we also need the aimed-for situation, they also named the desired roles in their critical relationships. For example, in relation to the agency managers, the RCs found themselves very often in the role of 'unwanted woodpeckers' (present state), while aiming to become 'helping and reliable partners' (desired state) to the managers. Naming present and then the desired roles helps the group align its efforts in order to adopt those wanted roles that would allow them to build healthier relationships with their significant others in their professional environment, to give the same messages, to display a specific, unique professional identity.

So we focused our work in the remaining hours on better understanding some of their very important internal partners, then finding the appropriate attitude, behaviour and messages to build those desired roles and invite their internal partners into

functional counter-roles. For this we used short scenes to enact difficult encounters in which role reversals, doubles (or, as Diane Adderley says, role expanding voices in sociodrama as opposed to doubles in psychodrama), soliloquies[11], mirrors, concreti-sation and sculptures helped the group to accelerate the understanding not only of the others, but also of the underlying forces that could help or hinder their relationships and, therefore, their work. Although one of the themes they chose to work on was the difficult transition from the diminishing role of 'inferior and despised competitor' to the progressive role of 'trustful partner and gracious door opener', the role training session for the desired roles was like champagne: full of ideas, options, enthusiasm, sparkles of humour, will and grace. We ended with a short session to reflect upon our work by sharing from roles and from ourselves and sharing the learning, then the group members wrote down the findings, created an action plan and agreed upon the team's new messages in the internal environment.

Fun fact: we came in for a diagnostic session and ended with a diagnostic, a good intervention and a medium-term action plan in just four hours. How could you not be grateful to sociodrama and action methods and to such a willing group of people? After this session and other short interventions, we built an internal development centre for their specialised sales counsellors, with a certification system that was then exported to every country in Europe that the bank had subsidiaries.

Eight months after this diagnostic session, the service that the group members promoted became a market leader in Romania, remaining in this position for a long time. The department became visible and important not only internally, but also externally, strengthening the image of the bank.

This is a story from the end of March 2010. My most precious lesson was that even the most structured and somehow prescriptive process of sociodrama – a team's exploration of it cultural atom – can be approached in multiple ways, for example our exploration of seven social atoms in a row in order to get a good map of the entire team and only then proceed to make the cultural atom visible. This was another proof that sociodrama is a 'work in progress', it evolves continuously as a co-creation of the facilitators and the participants. Since then I have remained even more open to the new possibilities of practice that emerge during the sessions. The condition for me to do this has been to be attuned to the group's energy. Isn't that a fundamental condition for a sociodramatist?

P.S. Practising and developing the exploration of the cultural atom: Important work to continue

It was 2009 when I saw Ron Wiener facilitating a cultural atom exploration in my first year of sociodrama training and I fell in love with this possibility. I started to practice it immediately and intensely, then, after graduating with a diploma in sociodrama and action methods, I started to teach the exploration of the cultural atom, mainly

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[11]   Soliloquy - means that an actor in a play talks by himself/herself, voicing own thoughts and emotions.

to team coaches but also to some European psychodrama schools. This method soon became one of my favourites. While continued to practice, teach and develop it, I started to wonder if the concept didn't deserve a better definition, possibly a re-conceptualisation. When researching this article, I came across Peter Howie's (2018) article in the AANZPA Journal on his work about the meaning of warm-up in psychodrama. Howie inspired me to take the eight criteria he developed[12] (Howie & Bagnall 2018) and use them to evaluate the concept of warm-up. Because "these rich and vibrant terms deserve to emerge from the semi-obscurity of oral and experiential traditions so that they can be available to the wider world of social investigation and research." (Howie 2018). So this is part of my future work around the cultural atom.

In the meantime, I will continue to talk explicitly about the importance of the cultural atom and how we use it. The cultural atom is there, it belongs to the person or to the group we work with. It's not our job as facilitators or coaches to do or run or lead a cultural atom, it is the work of our clients. Ours is to enable its discovery, exploration, investigation in the present state and/or future needs. This is working together at our clients' identity level and we need to stay humble about it.

The practice and development of the cultural atom / role atom / role repertoire explorations with individuals and groups has been offered me one of the most graceful, delicate, effective, rewarding and fascinating professional experiences. It's a continuous learning journey for me and I am excited to carry it on and discover more.

I welcome your feedback on this chapter and on the ways you explore and experience the cultural atom exploration in your group leading practice – feel free to write to me at irina.stefanescu@sociodrama.ro. Enjoy the learning, enjoy the practice!

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[12] For the eight criteria – clarity, comprehensiveness, parsimony, resonance, differentiation, connectedness, epistemic utility and practical utility – please see Howie, P. C., & Bagnall, R. G. (2018) *Sociological Methods & Research*, 1- 23, DOI: 10.1177/0049124118769104.

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PART IV.

SOCIODRAMA IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Sociodrama in a Swedish Secondary School: Focus on Warm-Ups

Mariolina Werner Guarino

Summary

I wish to present briefly my 20 years of sociodramatic work with youth in an upper secondary school in a suburb of Stockholm, and, in this context, to reflect on the role and the importance of adequate warm-ups. My starting point is the assumption that the sociodramatic process gets deeper and wider if the spontaneity, the group dynamic, and the tele between participants are adequately prepared with a suitable warm-up. The results of phenomenographic observations of the work and the students' own reflections show that warm-ups and the following sociodrama work can have a strong positive effect on students' wellbeing, self-image and mental health.

Keywords

Sociodrama, Sociodramatist, Newcomers, Sociometry, Wellbeing, Group Dynamic, Warm-up, Improvisation, Enactment, Social Atom, Role, Role Reversal, Sharing

Different kinds of group

In parallel with my work as a psychology teacher, I have sociodrama courses with different kinds of student aged 17–20: refugees learning Swedish, students born in Sweden with different cultural backgrounds and Swedish students. These youngsters, attending the same school, have very different cultural issues and very different needs. They may avoid each other and, at the same time, they long to meet in a friendly and constructive way. Within this context, my aim is to present how I started working with these diverse groups in a secondary school setting and to examine the meaning and the importance of the work that Moreno called warm-up. I will focus on its effect on the sociodramatic work and the dynamics of different groups of students. As I present my experience in this field, I will report students' own stories and reactions, pointing out feelings and reflections about the warm-ups we used. I hope that my students' experiences will inspire colleagues and be useful for all such youngsters and teenagers in their search for a new identity and better relations with the older generation or with other students like themselves.

The social context I work in and the structure of the courses

The school I work in is in a suburb of Stockholm where a large part of the population has roots in other cultures. Out of the total population of the municipality, in 2020, 28% (30% in 2018) were born in another country.[1] The corresponding numbers for the adjacent municipality, Botkyrka, are around 47%, while the numbers for the whole country are 14%–19%. To these numbers, we have to add their Swedish-born children as second-generation immigrants – Swedish citizens but strongly anchored in other cultures (parents and children together are around 60% of the population of these parts of the suburbs).[2]

As students in Sweden can choose their schools, even those located in other municipalities, admission is done according to their marks from the previous year of compulsory school. The general tendency is to choose schools in the centre of town, known by repute as better schools. This means that high performing students (often with a Swedish background) are admitted to schools in town, while the other schools, such as our school, have a much broader variety of students. I could see all the needs students had, of being more aware of who they are, their relations, their needs, their wishes, their problems, their difficulty in finding their path in life, the conflicts and the contradictions of being second-generation immigrants, often with a very strong culture still marking their opinions and choices. The school had no answers and no place to handle all this.

So in 1999 I proposed a course in psychodrama/sociodrama that I called To Grow: Identity and Relations; I still run these courses, without interruption, since the very beginning. I deliberately avoided the terms 'sociodrama' and 'psychodrama' in the name of the course as I thought they could sound strange and a little frightening for the students, rather I focused on social skills and personal growth.

Since 2015 this course has been a compulsory part of the curriculum for the students of Social and Psychological Orientation. Students of other orientations can choose To Grow courses, forming their own groups. This means that I have different kinds of group in different contexts, so I'll point out the differences between them. How does this different kind of choice (the matrix of the group) affect the work, and the warm-ups, of the group and group dynamics? It is perhaps interesting to know that the students have a lot of time for this course, five hours every week during the term (totalling circa 90 hours) and that the groups consist of 15–20 students. I divide a larger class (around 33 students) into two groups of 16–17 students, while the students coming from different classes have groups of 20 participants maximum.

I will just briefly mention, as this is not the aim of this chapter, that I have to face the need to have very exact and specific criteria for the grades and the results the students obtain. The fact that the courses are regular and recognised and can substitute for other courses in the curriculum is certainly one of the reasons for its longevity.

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[1]   https://www.huddinge.se/globalassets/huddinge.se/organisation-och-styrning/statistik-och-fakta/statistikrapporter/befolkningsstatistik-huddinge-kommun.pdf.

[2]   https://www.botkyrka.se/kommun--politik/om-botkyrka/kommunfakta/botkyrka-i-siffror.html.

It is not an easy task to work both on deep subjects and personal involvement *and* on the analysis of the personal work and the group dynamics in a continuous written report. The reflection work that the students have to do is nevertheless of capital importance in establishing a link between the emotional and the cognitive parts of their experience anchoring and deepening the practical learning process.

Health conditions of Swedish youngsters

The physical health of young Swedes is in general very good. However, the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study[3] (HBSC updated 22 May 2018) shows that mental health among children and adolescents in Sweden, measured by using self-reported mental and somatic symptoms such as headaches, feeling low and difficulties in getting to sleep, has increased among 13- and 15-year-olds. Among 15-year-old girls the proportion of those who report that they have at least two forms of problem more than once a week has increased from 29 percent in 1985–1986 to 57 percent in 2013–2014. Among 15-year-old boys, the proportion increased from 15 to 31 percent. […] In this age group, between 2013 and 2014, approximately 30 percent of girls and approximately 20 percent of boys reported that they have at least two health complaints more than once a week. The increase among 13- and 15-year-olds has also been greater in Sweden than in other European countries. In the age group 16–29 years [i.e. my students, aged 16-20] the proportion with this type of problem was 54 percent among women and 33 percent among men in 2016.

If you consider that a student aged 14-19 is in school for the majority of the day, and that one in every two young people (see above) has problems with anxiety, sleeping, or somatic problems, the need should be obvious: at least some hours per week should be dedicated to their psychological health, something that unfortunately does not happen. I succeeded in having these courses exclusively because I shaped a normal course with points and grades, and because the students willingly chose this course year after year. It is easy to understand that the need for a space to reflect upon the life, choices, values, health, habits, etc., is both huge and urgent in the first place for Swedish students, as they will be asked to behave like adults within months after the end of school (for example moving away from parents, financing their studies or finding work). The students with cultural backgrounds other than Swedish will often stay at home and do as their parents say much longer, at least while at university or until they are married, which of course also causes trouble.

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[3]   https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/the-public-health-agency-of-sweden/living-conditions-and-lifestyle/child-and-adolescent-health/.

The effect of Sociodrama

In order to see if sociodrama work has an effect on the students' health, I asked them to complete wellbeing scales several times, including at the beginning and end of term. The first time the course ran the score of many students was worse than at the end of term than at the beginning. I was astonished and disappointed, until my students said: "Oh, but this second time we gave honest answers. The first time we wrote what we thought we should write to give you a good impression!" So from that moment on, I have engaged them in their personal research. They now write an honest enquiry and put it in an envelope that they seal up until they do a new enquiry. The results clearly show that the students have better scores in several categories: they increased their stress tolerance, they felt more trust in others, were more hopeful and less anxious. They credit the changes to being in a warm and open environment, being listened to and working with themes that make them more aware of themselves. Some students say they can focus better on schoolwork. The positive results have been visible in other school courses too, as the students developed better focus and felt more comfortable speaking and presenting their schoolwork to teachers and classmates.

The importance of warm-ups

Moreno defines warm-ups as "an aspect of the canon Spontaneity-Creativity"[4] and as physical and psychological starters for group members, possible protagonists of a sociodrama or psychodrama and the director. In *Who Shall Survive?* Moreno talks a lot about the relationship between Spontaneity and Creativity, both essential to achieve results. He defines warm-ups as "the operational expression of spontaneity", which means that warm-ups are an essential and viable, and possibly the most applicable, tool to make the process of spontaneity–creativity possible. Even if I do not work therapeutically, there is a common need to warm the students up to the room, to each other, to bring the body into action and to change the mood from the previous school activity. The same process applies to sociodrama as well as psychodrama, of course. Everybody agrees upon the fact that warm-ups are much more than just going around the room smiling, meeting each other's eyes and greeting each other. Much more, but… what?

We have to keep in mind that the students come to this group from other lessons, and go to other lessons afterwards, lessons where the focus is to learn, think, and produce. They are often asked to reproduce a theory, a model, or a technique: 'good students' are often those with good memories. Individualism, competition and panic about the grades are general phenomena of their everyday school lives, together with a general assumption that success is the first goal to attend to in life. I really needed

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[4]   J. L. Moreno, *Who Shall Survive?,* 2nd edition, 1953, page 46.

to find warm-ups that changed the mood and attitude they had when they came to this new experience.

Most of the students who choose this course used to say that they had no idea what the course is about, they just chose it because it sounded interesting. They expected a "normal course" sitting in a line in class staring at someone's back and a teacher who – in the best case – really teaches them something useful and interesting. Others have heard of the course through older students and expect an "unusual course where people make friends", even if they admit they do not understand how. To come to a very wide room with no desks but chairs in a circle is a minor shock. "Do I come to a therapy group?" "Is this an AA meeting?" "At last a new class setting, nice!" are among the first reactions.

In this situation, it should be totally impossible to have any kind of sociodrama without lots of work aimed at creating the group and an atmosphere of mutual trust, generating what Moreno called the canon of spontaneity-creativity. That is, create a space and a mood that helps students get up from their chairs without the fear of being judged or laughed at. It is not unusual at all for students of the same class not to talk to each other for three years!

I will reflect here on the possibility to find what kind of warm-ups lead quickly and more easily to a deeper feeling of safety and trust, and more active group dynamics, as these qualities are absolutely essential for the work of the group. Without a relaxed and playful atmosphere of safety and trust in other participants and in the leader, students get blocked, refuse to talk and any spontaneity or creativity is impossible. In my experience and in the experience of my students, when they express their feelings on this subject, some of the warm-ups work better than others to bring up central and social issues to work through with sociodrama. In this context, warm-ups are essential to any kind of work. I should like to divide them into different specific categories, before finding common aspects and comparable issues:

– warm-ups for groups of students who chose the course, do not know each other, and after the lesson go to different classes (what I will call 'new groups' from now on);
– warm-ups for groups that took the course as "Psychology 3", after normal courses in Psychology 1 and 2 (also with me) and are students in a single class who are together most of the time and already have a previous group dynamic (what I will call 'classes' from now on);
– groups of newcomers (what I will call 'newcomers' from now on).

Warm-ups for new groups

New groups more than others need warm-ups to get to know each other and explore the relations between members. We have to create a secure space and a feeling of confidence as they do not know each other and come to the group with pre-conceptions and stereotypes. I often hear such comments about others: "Swedish girls are all…",

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"people from Iraq are always…", "I do not speak to Kurds", "girls with veils are so difficult to understand…". Pre-conceptions about themselves are also common: "I'm too shy", "I cannot speak in groups", "I am the one who…", "I'm always joking and people do not take me seriously", "as a boy, my opinion is more important than…".

Even a simple round, such as the possibility for students to just say how they feel today, to make their voices heard, is a big step for many who find it challenging to speak in front of groups. It was amazing to realise that there are many students who never say a word to classmates or speak to just one other person, even for years.

Here is an example of a warm-up that helps in this direction:

I begin by letting them play and create different scenes, asking them first to transform this circle into a 'normal class' with the help of the chairs. A quick, easy game to break the ice. (Someone thinks: OK, this *is* a normal lesson, after all.) In a quick sequence, I ask them to transform the class into an exotic setting, a Tivoli (perhaps it's not a normal lesson, but it's funny!), then into a market in Marrakesh, then somewhere else: they propose an airport, the tube on Saturday night, etc. After that, I ask them to reflect briefly on the roles they took and write down common traits. How active am I, do I decide or do I follow? Did I choose an active or a more observational role? This simple warm-up gives many possibilities.

The most important foundation of our course

As our course is different from what the students are accustomed to, I normally use this kind of exercise the first time we meet, to make clear the most important foundation upon which our course is built:

– You have not only had fun, and this is how we are going to work. Play is very serious.
– Nothing here is right or wrong, there is no pattern you must follow. Being an observer is as important as being active.
– I am not, as a teacher, the one who knows something that you have to learn, we learn by doing, and do it together. We do first and reflect afterwards.
– We respect and do not judge each other, everybody has the right to express feelings and thoughts, as long as they do not hurting others.
– We do not spread information, facts or opinions from group participants to people outside the group. What people say remains here.
– This group has its own specific dynamic and everybody contributes to that.
– We are going to work with roles, these kinds of role are improvised. Later, we will try other roles, change roles, etc.
– We have a 'NO rule' that says everybody can say no to a proposed role, to a question (s)he does not want to answer, etc.
– The whole course is going to switch between action and reflection. At home you are going to write a further reflection and an analysis of the group and the personal work.

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Ways to get into action

Another eye-opening exercise I usually do is to have a chat with a member of the group, first listening with attention, but then (always with a different group member) pretending to be totally uninterested, then extremely interested, stressing this through body language, coming too near the speaker, etc. Laughter is guaranteed, relieving stress, but so too are comments like: "I really felt blocked about not being listened to", or "when you came too near, I lost my confidence and got suspicious". I often do not need more than this one exercise to make students understand that there is a huge difference between talking about something and acting it, getting into a role that you can feel in your body. They know that the classmate is pretending, but the related feelings are real. After that, I seldom need to convince them that we get much further in our work and get insights and inspiration by getting into roles and acting sociodramatically than when just talking about a subject, as they suggested at the very beginning. The warm-up in this case is a way to gain courage to get into action, because the result is immediate.

Other kinds of improvisations can work as warm-ups as well. With the group divided and facing each other in two lines, one person begins, coming forward and saying "I am a tree" and the others complete the picture as quickly as possible by taking roles related to the picture given (I am a dog peeing on the tree, I am the owner of the dog, I am the owner of the tree getting furious, etc.). The other group gives a title to the scene and creates a new scene, beginning with the last role proposed in the previous group. As the groups are free to propose different roles, on and on again, this is for me a way to see which themes are recurrent in a group, themes like security, anger, love or sex.

It can be interesting to note here that these simple warm-ups reflect the cohesion of the group. Groups with a good dynamic, such as groups of friends in the same class, choose each other (small groups consisting in half a class) and choose roles as in the example above, while at the beginning students in the 'new groups' often choose parallel roles (a tree, grass, the sun, flowers, another tree) in the same way that very young children play in parallel to each other and not 'with' each other.

We can say that the aim of the warm-ups is to create a setting and a context that transforms several individuals into a group where people are playing with and not beside each other, getting a sense of 'we' and coming to another level of work and comprehension that goes beyond the single participant. Furthermore, I believe, and I see in the experience of my groups, that there is a deeper intelligence in groups where things become easier to understand, where it is possible to reach broader perspectives and find unexpected solutions. In other words, get in touch with an underlying co-unconscious which provides not only better cognitive comprehension but even the (otherwise often missing) feeling of being a part of something bigger, escaping the common feelings of loneliness and meaninglessness that pervade our young generation.

What I mean is that warm-ups are *the* way of getting results in the subsequent sociodrama about the theme that the group wishes to work upon. In sociodrama, the

protagonist is the group as a whole and not a single person, even if some themes can be more touching for some of the students. But the whole group is engaged. For 15- 20 years, it was possible for me to have single protagonist psychodramas. Apart from the protagonist, some of the other students would take on roles, and the others -– the public and containing setting – gave interesting and deep sharing at the end. Since mobile phones have become inseparable from their student owners, I notice a very strong change in their capacity to concentrate upon something they are not totally involved in. To be separated from their mobiles is almost unbearable and schools must have extremely strict rules. A strong engagement is needed for them to cope with the compulsive need to check their mobiles. Sociodrama works much better than Psychodrama in this sense: no matter the theme of the work, all the students can find a suitable place in the scene. Moreover, warm-ups engaging the whole group at a time facilitate the transition to Sociodrama, as the students are already on the floor and already in action. The change of positions and the continuous dialogues improve the engagement and get them into the 'here and now', which is essential to creative work.

Using sociometry in a new group

In a new group, of course, everyone is curious to know who the others are. Students sometimes choose the course together with a friend, but they come even alone or just happen to be with classmates that they know but have never actually met. Sociometry is in this case a very powerful tool. Many students who feeling different notice that they are not the only one. Let's take an example that I sometimes use, making a map of the world according to where the students were born, in which we imagine a map on the floor with the students taking their places in the different countries on this map. When building a map of the world according to where students were you born you can still see a group choosing Sweden, but if you go only one generation back in time, we almost fill the whole world map, from Gambia to Iceland, from Chile to Taiwan, with a group of 15 students speaking 20 different languages. The different students in this case are the very few Swedish students. But look, the blond girl is half Finnish, the blond boy is half German. A handicap becomes a quality. And they know this, but the difference here is that they *see* it and they *feel* it, experimenting again and again with the huge difference between talking about something and acting it out on the stage.

Even standard classes need to do this kind of warm-up, as they do not know each other, as one would presume. Getting into alphabetical order to remember the names, on the birthday scale, etc., are all ways to mix the group and create as many versions of 'we' as possible away from pre-conceptions. When Kurds and Turkish people, or Serbs and Croatians, with some astonishment and a big laugh, suddenly recognise each other as the only boys in a group, and feel an unexpected sympathy and complicity, facing loyalties and questioning all that they heard about each other from their families, I think we move one step nearer to a better world.

It is not a waste of time to find many different variables: young people are quick in moving and they can hardly believe that they do not need to sit for hours. In both standard classes and new groups, "silly warm-ups" can really challenge many serious students: in a circle, playing the game we call trough and fetch (make a strange sound or movement and pass it on to someone else) students can feel very stupid, but I need to get them away from the right-or-wrong mentality that rules the school system. Feeling like an elephant, a snake or a flamingo can be difficult for a shy girl, greeting colleagues as a ballet dancer can be challenging for a tough boy, but all these small actions result in laughter, lighten the atmosphere and create connections. The bravest help the most shy, and they can write in their logbooks that they never could have imagined they were capable of relaxing and acting in this way, or that they really like these silly warm-ups because they forget that they are tired when they do something funny. Moreover, they learn a lot about the group and communicate better with each other.

Warm up and sociodrama in standard classes

Standard classes of students on the psychosocial path have 30 to 33 students, meaning that I have to make two different parallel groups. Sometimes, as the students choose each other during the first lesson of the course (first in pairs, then two pairs, etc.) the groups get quite coherent. Sometimes all the second generation immigrants choose each other immediately, and I divide the class in two parts in a few minutes. I usually let them choose and do not interfere, as in my experience this gives the best results.

Even standard classes might need such warm-ups in order to see classmates with different eyes, or to "simply see them", as the students admit sometimes. I can read reflections such as 'I had never talked to a girl wearing a veil' or 'it took time, but I understand that I do not always have to act as a tough boy, it is a very relaxing feeling'.

After some weeks, the work of the new groups and the standard classes can be quite similar. For a change, I ask classes to write the social atom of the whole class on the floor, writing all the names on paper, putting them on the floor and linking them with coloured tape. This often leads to unexpected results, for example students who thought themselves quite insignificant could be the link between different groups, while very visible and loud students might actually be alone with very few friends.

In my opinion, quite simple enactments with a short role reversal or mirroring – such as 'I show you my safe place', or 'write and put on the floor your social atom' – have to be seen as a kind of warm-up, as they open the students to a creative mood. If a task looks too challenging or too personal, the students do not dare to be too visible. But this level of openness is still ok, because we have a strict NO rule: they know they can say no to any role, any task, any question at any moment in the process.

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Two examples: the first regarding a girls' safe place "in the kitchen, eating with parents", which became a sociodrama after a small question of mine (coming from a quick intuition, I recognise that I hardly know how these questions pop up in me). We had seen several 'safe places' and practiced role reversal through them. I asked this girl sitting in this apparently happy family: "This is a normal scene in your family, isn't it?" At that point, the girl burst into tears and told the group that this happens very seldom as her parents were divorced. The reactions of the group were so strong and empathetic that a sociodramatic work on possible families in Sweden today followed as a normal continuation of the warm-up. Note that this could lead to a psychodrama as well, with this specific girl as protagonist of her own story. But in my experience, a broader sociodrama on the subject with the group as protagonist can easily engage the interest and activity of the whole group. Moreover, I strongly felt that the girl in question would feel more comfortable if she didn't receive too much attention or shared the problem with others. Her 'problem' became an issue for the whole group, actually for a whole generation. So, my proposal of seeing several possible examples of families in Sweden today actually turned the work into a sociodrama.

It is really difficult to define a family here today: while Turkish students do not see an alternative to Mum + Dad + several children, in a Swedish mind it can be a mother with children (the majority), sometimes a father with children, as well as two mothers or two fathers with children, and so on. The possibilities that Sociodrama offers to see a situation as a whole with the many in a broad social context, or to reverse the positions and feel what the other feels, are very powerful, leading to both comprehension and empathy and sweeping away old prejudices. Even heavy feelings of guilt as cultural conserve in immigrant students living in divorced families can be viewed with new eyes. "In Sweden everything is OK, I am OK." What a relief to feel that in your body, suddenly seeing yourself from a different perspective. If, let's say, this person needs to anchor the experience and explain this to her or his grandmother in Turkey, this will be a personal psychodramatic scene in a socio-psychodrama. Often a short vignette with a few replies is enough to get the needed results. Such works often lead to new sociodramas during the following weeks, with new themes like 'faithful–unfaithful, where is the limit go?', or 'can I marry who I want?', as many of my students still think that if they fall in love with a person their parents do not like, they must just leave this person, something that is totally unbelievable for the Swedish students. An eye-opening lesson in empathy for everyone.

The second example is about the consequences of the enactment of a social atom.

J, a somewhat shy and unconventional guy, presents a previously written social atom with many people standing around him: an only child with very protective parents and a theatre group where he found friends, motivation, and meaning. Somewhere else on the paper, far from him, is another little group of people. We enact them too, even if (or because) he thinks they are no longer important. They are all schoolmates from his period of compulsory school between the ages of seven and 15 who bullied him over many years. Beginning in upper secondary school, and continuing with him finding the theatre group, a new life began. We enacted a dialogue with

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the bullies (nobody is in that role, just a chair), so that he can tell them what he felt in that situation and could give back to them all the suffering he experienced. Then he threw the chair representing them around the room with an anger and a relief that he considered historical. He defined this moment as a total turning point in his life. "My life is no longer the same now", as he stated some weeks later, with the group's enthusiastic approval. This work was the beginning of a whole process in the group with sociodramas on the theme of bullying. Another boy in the group revealed that at the age of 11 he together with many other boys in his class had bullyied a girl who sometime later committed suicide. He had never talked about this since then, it had been lying like a stone on his heart. For him the sociodrama about bullying was a turning point in his life too. Imagine his tears when a girl in the last sharing said, "Now that you have understood all this, think what a good father you are going to be." Zerka Moreno used to say, "You know how you begin, but you never know how you finish. THIS is creativity, if you trust the process." So, warm-ups are in summary what you do, together with the group, to wake up the group's spontaneity and creativity. It results in many genuine, real and honest encounters, in fact exactly the thing the students are seeking and longing for.

Warm-ups and sociodrama with newcomers

Our school also teaches newcomers who have just arrived in Sweden from all over the world, in groups starting from the very beginning to their introduction to the normal Swedish school system. They are often around 16-17 years old. I worked for some months with the Swedish teacher of first and second level students (who have been in Sweden for some weeks and are beginning to understand and speak a little Swedish).

Sociodrama in this field has two aims:

1. To help them understand Swedish society in view of possible integration (most are still waiting for official permission to stay).
2. To work on common issues around their feelings, needs, troubles and experiences in a new country.

The conditions are not really the same as for the other groups: the lack of linguistic competence leads us to more physical and gestural warm-ups (even examining different body languages). Moreover, they are all less afraid of showing strong feelings and are extremely good at jumping into new experiences. In these groups, we had different kinds of work: we began training very simple things, like how you behave when you meet people, even in public offices, how you shake hands, looking at the person and not looking down to show respect, which they very often do with catastrophic consequences of total misunderstanding. We switch roles with employees and officers, so that the students can see themselves from another point of view. Performing newspaper articles such as the living newspaper (for instance about Alfred Nobel,

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whom they already knew) led us to a sociodramatic enactment about the Swedish bureaucratic system and its employees – an amazing tool for simultaneously training language, culture and behaviour.

I usually begin the same warm-up by creating different situations that we propose they create on the spot, to show what it looks like, from a school to a funfair, to a garden, a zoo or what you want, leading to a last scene (the city at night), which becomes so complex that it is a real sociodrama with them acting different kinds of immigrant on their first meetings with a new society: some tried to integrate quickly while one person gave up totally. To work in action in possible different ways to ask and find solutions (with the help of the police, the municipality, the school) was not only a sociodrama but a really precious role training.

In these groups with youngsters from very different countries and with very different experiences, we found common issues in classic fairy tales that everybody already knew (it is easier to understand and train the language if you already know the content): "Little Red Riding Hood" for instance, first enacted on the stage in its classical version, raised in participants reflections that led us to work on the theme of free choice, something that is especially constructive for girls and women. In my opinion, performing fairy tales is an excellent warm-up in any case, and I often use it in my groups. Here too, more than ever, you know where you begin, and if you follow the energy of the group, you almost always end up in an unexpected powerful sociodrama on a deep subject.

Following the path of reading articles, we worked during three sessions with an interview with Zlatan Ibrahimović (certainly the most well-known Swedish person today), an interview that we worked action into with two central themes: the power of making active choices even if you have a poor childhood, and the relationship between fathers and sons in our different cultures. When the students performed different human rights, a group showed the concept of having the right to live where you wish to live. Imagine everybody's surprise and joy at knowing that the boy presenting that scene found, coming home, in his mailbox a permanent residence permit, which he had applied for one year earlier.

Warm-ups: Summary

I often think about the relationship between warm-ups and sociodrama in these terms: does the sociodramatist have to present several warm-ups and work with the theme that comes up, or must the sociodramatist deliberately choose a warm-up specific to the theme that will be explored?

In my courses in school, I feel the need to follow a plan going from the personal (my identity, my culture, my relations) to the general (society and its values). It is more engaging for the students to begin with themselves, as they are linguistically (and more deeply than that) very poor in recognising, naming and expressing feelings and qualities. I wish to know myself better is a very common goal for the course and the description of the student's own personality seldom goes beyond "I'm kind".

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Social atoms and spectrograms show a safe place in action; safe ways to begin might be a projection of a future perfect job, or seeing in action all the obligations they have in life. In a second session, considering and enriching students' personal lives, seeing them in a broader social context, is one of the fruits of sociodrama. The sharing at the end of the common work witnesses the worth of their efforts and offers good feedback. This is the moment in which the students dare to give sincere compliments to each other, the moment that consolidates the experience of being seen, the maximal cohesion of the group, an experience that the warm-ups enabled.

Student feedback about the warm-ups

I made an enquiry about warm-ups in my classes in May 2020 using Google Forms. Forty out of 48 students answered eight questions and gave a summary comment.

1. The first question was "Do you think warm-ups are: Useful or Unnecessary. 44 of the 45 students answered they were useful.
2. The second question was: "Explain what you mean with your previous answer." The most common answers were:
   "I get more alert", "I get more energy, I feel less tired", "I feel more relaxed", "It's a way to see all the participants and relate to all of them at the same time, even those who do not speak so much", "We understand things about each other", "I wake up both physically and mentally", "I feel more comfortable in the group", "I feel like part of the group", "It is a way to understand the theme of the lesson", "It is nice to begin with something so undemanding, we do not need to be performing as we normally do in school". "I realise that I get more brave, I dare to do things I did not believe I could do", "I realise that warm-ups have the effect of keeping the group together during the whole lesson". (Note: this is a frequent reflection. The students do not know the term tele as unspoken communication and connection between people, but I believe this is what they actually mean.)
3. The third question was a choice between a) "Warm-ups must be easy and undemanding so that everybody can take part fully", or b) "Warm-ups must be challenging so that we are energised". The three groups answered in this way (in %):

	easy	challenging
Group 1	a) 70.6	b) 29.4 (new group, 18 students who don't know each other)
Group 2	a) 64.3	b) 35.7 (Same class, group 1, 18 students)
Group 3	a) 40	b) 60 (Same class, group 2, 12 students)

4. The fourth question was the same as question 2: "What do you mean with your previous answer?" The most common answers were:

"I think warm ups must be easy, so that everybody understands what to do and can do it without effort", "The most important thing is that everybody can participate", "We do not need to stress at the beginning", "It is better to take it step by step", "Some warm ups are easy but they make us creative as well", "If the warm up is challenging, it is easier to be energetic", "For some of us it is a challenge to move around, but I think it is good to do so, we all need to move around". (Note: the students in group 3, the smallest group in which the students knew and chose each other from the beginning, were significantly more ready to work in a more challenging way (60%) than a group who did not know each other (29.4%).)

5. The fifth question was again a choice: "Warm-ups must encourage… : a) feelings, b) thoughts, c) both feelings and thoughts (%).

Group 1	a) 11.8	b) 17.6	c) 70.6
Group 2	a) 7.1	b) 21.4	c) 71.4
Group 3	a) 0	b) 20.0	c) 80

6. The sixth question was again: "What do you mean with your previous answer?" The most common answers were:

"I think it is important to think about what we do so that we make right choices", "Thoughts and feelings go together, you cannot divide them", "For me it is important to begin with thoughts, many feelings come later anyway", "Warm-ups make me active and I get warm and positive feelings because I feel in contact with others. To get and share positive feelings is more important than thinking because good feelings are visible and contagious", "Feelings from the very beginning can be too much", "We need both, we have to wake up both sides of our brain", "Thoughts give feelings, and feelings give thoughts", "I am often thinking more than feeling and I feel more comfortable if I do not have to challenge myself too much", "I think it is better to do and feel first and think after I have the most important insights."

7. The seventh question was: "The best warm up we had, according to you, helped you to a) get to know the group members better, or b) get to know yourself better. The groups answered (%):

Group 1	a) 70.6	b) 29.4
Group 2	a) 78.6	b) 21.4
Group 3	a) 40	b) 60

8. The eighth question was again: "What do you mean with your previous answer?" Here are parts of the most significant of the 45 answers:

"I liked most of all, all the spectrograms we did, it was a good and quick way to understand a lot about my group mates". "I liked very much the warm up about trust, when we had to lead others who were shutting their eyes. It was a funny but deep way to come quickly in touch with my own level of trust and I learned that I can trust others more than I did before". (Note again that

the group of friends (group 3), who felt safe in the group, preferred work that aimed at knowing themselves better (60%), while the members of the new group (29.4%) preferred to know other group members.

9. The ninth question asked: "If you had to summarise, what was your most important experience, insight, etc., regarding warm-ups and our course? Can you give us examples?"

Some of the answers were:

"I am a quite shy girl… moving around or improvising very easy roles during warm-ups gave me the mood to take a position in a sociodrama. It was easier for me to try out different positions together with others than give *my* opinion in front of the class. It was easier to understand who I actually am." "I had many unresolved feelings that I did not want to deal with, but our lessons and the sociodramas we did helped me to dare to face these feelings. I can say I'm on a good path now."

"The most important thing about our work for me is that everyone feels involved and comfortable, and that the work is even a bit challenging. I think the purpose is to wake up and see reality from a different perspective, sometimes I think it's easy to end up in your own bubble and sometimes you need to wake up from it."

"I remember an exercise we did when the theme was self-image. We did this exercise taking the roles of a turtle, a camel, a lion and an owl, which all had different conflict models. That exercise helped me to understand why I am who I am, and why I act the way I do in different situations."

"…for example, when we did improvised scenes and we were a tree, the Coronavirus or an animal. What a person chooses to be says quite a lot about them. For example, I chose spontaneously to be a cactus because I was in a bad mood that day (tags out) and it was really important to me to realise that sometimes it is a good thing to be a cactus protecting myself."

"The meditation was one of the best warm-ups we did. We closed our eyes and did what our teacher told us to do, the whole group joined in and we sat in a circle. It did not help me to understand my feelings exactly, but what I felt was very nice to experience."

"The most important exercise we did was when we shaped a baby's social atom with chairs and everyone took the role of something important in the child's life from birth onwards. You got different perspectives on what others thought is important. As an adopted child, this experience was very strong for me. It changed my perspective in a good way."

"An example may be when we took improvised roles in a market, a zoo, or on the underground. I think people automatically choose roles that match how they really are, show what they normally hide under a facade. This made it easy to get to know the group."

"I liked when we had to bring up our positive and negative qualities, and then we found the positive aspects in our bad qualities. I got a wider perspective on myself and why I am who I am."

"When we had a sociodrama about conflict styles, I understood better why I act as I do, and even what I have to work on to act in a more adequate way. Sometimes it is OK to take it easy and take care of me."

As you see, Sociodrama is really the kind of experience that all our youngsters should be offered.

Conclusion

Sociodrama is undeniably a powerful tool to use in schools to investigate social situations, cultural issues, relational and group dynamics and help students to personal growth in their search for a place in society. If I conclude with the help of the students of 2020, I can observe that the warm-ups contributed in a large way to the success of the course. They enabled the students to relax and change perspective from their usual courses, create connections between themselves, and give them self-confidence, self-esteem and a feeling of belonging. Warm-ups created a joyful and warm atmosphere that gave the students the courage to face deep and crucial themes in the subsequent sociodrama enactments. They could face existential themes and give words to unclear or contradictory feelings. I'm glad to realise that this kind of course gives us time and space to focus on actual social issues, see situations from different angles, improve empathy and find more adequate ways to relate to family, friends and society.

A girl said: "The strongest moment for me [and for the group, may I add] was when, in a social atom, I met my mother, who died two years ago, and I could speak to her and admit clearly how much I miss her. Then I switched roles with her. I could see myself with her eyes and I felt how much she still loves and protects me. I got a little embarrassed when I and the others got tears in our eyes, but we all had a very unexpected strong feeling of closeness with each other. They could share and understand my experience and it is easier now for me to cope with it."

When this kind of thing happens in a group, you can be sure that the level of the sociodramatic work in that group will never be superficial or worthless or disrespectful. Sociodrama enables those real and genuine encounters, which the youngsters are so desperately longing for, in the superficial world of fake images that surround and tease them. As a sociodramatist you just feel incredibly grateful for the possibility to meet groups and find a tool like sociodrama to help create a truly meaningful learning experience.

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Becoming a Sociodramatist: Sociodrama in Education

Margarida Belchior

A truly therapeutic procedure cannot have less an objective than the whole of humankind. But no adequate therapy can be prescribed as long as humankind is not a unity in some fashion and as long as its organization is unknown. It helped in the beginning to think, although we had no definite proof, that humankind was a social and organic unity.

J.L. Moreno (1934). Who Shall Survive?

Summary

This chapter tells the story of my professional trajectory in my journey towards becoming a sociodramatist in the years after finishing my initial training. I mention my background and the authors who most influenced the way I think. I also refer to how I became creative as a primary school teacher with my students in the classroom, describing some of the situations I created with them. I also write about a 25-hour course that I developed for teachers as continuous professional development. This course was about sociodrama and action methods in education. The meaningful testimonies of the participants that I quote in this chapter illustrate how sociodrama can be fruitful in education. It can enhance spontaneity and creativity both in teachers and students, transform conflict in useful learning situations, explore how we can live together in a better way, and can go much further than well-known pencil-and-paper learning tools, contributing to a more integrated development in all dimensions of each and every human being.

"The making-of"

This is an article I started to write some years ago. He was waiting for my availability to give him birth and to emerge into the sunlight. The first plan was to make a set of Portuguese chapters about the training sessions led by the Portuguese Sociodrama

Society in the context of the Project PERFORMERS 2 – SCENE. As I was very engaged in the work and writings in the field, the development of action methods in an NGO, NÓS Association - which supports disabled youth and adults, and partner in this project too - I was not supposed to write for this book. But 2020 was the year of the worldwide COVID 19 pandemic. The year of uncertainty. The year of adaptations and changes to all plans. It happened to us all, we all been challenged in the last year. Sometimes we were able to adapt, sometimes we were not. As COVID 19 appeared and we started to do most of our planned events online, the last PERFORMERS 2 training didn't happen in person both because it was safer not to travel and because some of us didn't have much to write about in the way we were supposed to. This, jointly with all the changes that happened in our personal lives and not being so available to write, created the opportunity for this paper to come into the light. So I went to the bottom of my suitcase (in reality my external memory disk), where some early ideas were waiting, picked them up and started to improve and update them.

This year of the pandemic appealed to both our spontaneity and our creativity and also to our resilience and our capacity to adapt to very unknown and unexpected situations.

So this is a paper finished in pandemic times, about work that I did in person, face-to-face in a classroom and in a training room four years ago, before the "lock-down". In these times of COVID 19, we started to explore the potentialities of online sociodrama and even participated in the organization of an online International Sociodrama Conference. I could never have known people from across the world, en-counter them, without participating in all the online events that happened during this last year. This was an amazing experience which we can feel like a gift from the virus.

Introduction

"What is the relevance of Sociodrama in Education?"
This was the question that led me to the decision to write this chapter in which I try to justify how this approach can make a very significant contribution in education contexts, and how it can affect the children and adult participants. I start by describing how I arrived here, via my professional trajectory, then I mention some of the contributions from sociodrama authors that have helped to deepen and sustain my practice, as Lewin (1952) taught us: "There is nothing more practical than a good theory."

When I first encountered sociodrama, coming from the pedagogical field (primary school teacher and teacher educator) after almost 50 years of a full life, I arrived already accompanied by Paulo Freire, Celestin Freinet and my friends from the Portuguese Movimento da Escola Moderna, as well as Education for Peace and Galtung, including the French sociologist, anthropologist and philosopher Edgar Morin. But when I met Jacob L. Moreno and Zerka Moreno, I started to see everything with new eyes, I could find new meanings and also integrate my intuitions, knowledge and arts sensitivity in a new way.

It was by Paulo Freire's hand, after Portugal's pacific Carnation Revolution, that I arrived in Portuguese education in 1974. The dictatorship in my country had left behind a rate of illiteracy among the Portuguese population, which was then around 40%. Education presented itself as a fundamental field of action for the construction of democracy in a peripheral country of Europe, such as Portugal. Paulo Freire came from Brazil, bringing with him his experiences of the emancipation and empowerment of the poorest and most deprived populations through literacy. These experiences, gained in the northeast of Brazil, were developed in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2003). Today we refer to the relevance of knowledge and science co-construction and the importance they have for human development. I acknowledge here knowledge and science in a very broad sense including daily life knowledge and knowledge built by those who didn't go to school. Another contribution that he brought us, fundamental to this permanent co-construction, was his emphasis on a new attitude, a dialogical attitude, and how it is relevant to listening and acknowledging the other, the different: only in this way can the co-construction of knowledge and human development occur. Later on, in my pedagogical studies to become a primary school teacher, I came across the Portuguese Movimento da Escola Moderna, one of the few professional teachers' associations in Portugal in the 1970s, influenced by the French teacher Celestin Freinet (a democratic educator). There I found an extraordinary articulation between the different areas of the curriculum and the arts, and the importance given to children's voices. Children and youngsters were really the authors of each school production, alongside their daily participation in the democratic institutions of the school, in which communication between all and the many different opinions are all valued. Class groups are transformed into cultural learning communities, the instruments of organisation of daily life in the classroom become learning tools. Learning productions, like small learning projects done in small groups, are recognised as having social validity, to be presented and shared with others both in the classroom and outside of it. All this was accompanied through the cooperative work of teachers' in-service training, the aim of which is to contribute to the co-construction of a "School for All". In such classrooms, everyone can have their place in the group and all contributions are significant for both the learning and development of the group and of the individuals. There is no individual development without group development and vice versa in such an inclusive school. The influences of this pedagogical movement were those of Freinet that, more recently, were reinforced by the post-vygostkyan approaches that showed us the relevance of learning through both cultural and social practices and interactions.

It was in this context that I arrived at the social theory of learning. This theory entails learning while participating in social practices (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). This theory, fitting in with the social theories of learning and the post-vygostkyans, allows us to say that learning occurs while participating in communities of practice, in social groups, with their stories, their own tools and practices. Identities are thus formed through trajectories of social participation in the different learning communities in which we participate throughout our lives.

While researching Education for Peace, when the subprime crisis started in 2008, dialoguing with Galtung (2005) in my PhD thesis, I realised how the tensions and conflicts we face in life, in the family context or in professional settings can be promoters of human development when they are overcome in a non-violent and creative way.

In his book written for UNESCO at the turn of the millennium, *Seven Complex Lessons in Education for the Future* (2001) French sociologist and philosopher Edgar Morin taught us to perceive of the complexity of human beings and knowledge, recognising the importance of being aware of the precariousness of scientific knowledge, which is in constant evolution. Knowledge needs both to be pertinent, to address issues that humanity is currently facing, and to reorganise itself, dispersed throughout current disciplines ranging from the natural sciences to humanities, literature, arts and philosophy. We cannot ignore our earthly identity, in which solidarity and interdependence with all living beings on the planet become increasingly evident in this common home on which we live. We live in a sea of uncertainties in which strategic and ethical principles become indispensable ways to anchor our decisions and actions. Knowledge based on human understanding is also indispensable and there is a need to search for the roots, modalities and effects of misunderstandings that support racism, xenophobia, discrimination, homophobia, sexism; all this, without neglecting the ethical dimension of the trilogy of individual, species and society, the interdependent relations between them and our common home, our planet the Earth. This is how we come to the need to promote global citizenship (Morin, 2001).

Sociodrama allowed me to make an expressive and integrative synthesis of all these contributions through my bodily experience. With sociodrama, I could relate my body, my cognitive and rational knowledge and my feelings, emotions and intuition. We, as human beings, are bodies in action, using all of these dimensions to communicate. We are human beings who express ourselves bio-physiologically. It is through the expression of our bodies that we materialise the human being we are and what we become, through our trajectory of social participation, integrating mind and knowledge, feelings and emotions, intuitions and beliefs.

Arrival in Sociodrama

I arrived at sociodrama by the hand of Manuela Maciel and the training of the Portuguese Psychodrama Society through my participation in some international conferences, which were very inspiring and important. I felt as if I was with my larger family from around the world, my psychodramatic family.

With sociodrama, I started doing a flashback of my life trajectory, remembering the summer camps during my youth when, on warm summer evenings around the fire, we dramatised traditional and biblical stories, poetry and music improvising in groups with great pleasure, always accompanied by a very acute accurate aesthetic sense. I was also travelling through time to the much appreciated movement and drama classes from my initial teacher training. I also visited the dance classes of my

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youth, which were so pleasant that I continued them for many years, later introducing them to my two daughters when they were still little girls.

It was in my readings and writings, by the end of my PhD, when I sat for so many hours, that I started to question: "What am I doing to my body? I have been dancing and doing gymnastics all my life, and now I'm sitting here for so many hours? In which society are we living that values a doctorate so highly, but requires us to sit for so many hours in front of a computer surrounded by books? What am I doing to my body, the body through which I am?" Here, sociodrama gained its relevance through bodily expression, dance, action in space and time. My body was asking me to dance, to express myself using it.

And I went on asking myself: what do I do at school with my pupils and my students of all ages? Why do I force them to sit for so many hours as if their bodies are an entity separated from the whole that they are as human beings? Are they just minds, heads? Do hands gain an advantage over the body as they perform pencil and paper tasks? And the ears, should they only be used to hear what we have to say to them? And what awareness do we, as teachers, have of the importance of non-verbal communication?

This is how I started to think and feel that I needed to take sociodrama into the classroom, that I should mobilise my students' bodies to engage them more in the learning process.

Sociodrama is related to psychodrama, although its focal point is the group, organisation or even community processes. In sociodrama, the entire group goes on stage, developing a role play about a concern, a problem, an issue. Sociodrama has been used in education, training, professional development, community settings, but also in a very wide range of professions, as well as in psychotherapeutic contexts (Schreiber, 2017).

Sociodrama, like psychodrama, was created by Jacob Levy Moreno (1889-1974), a Romanian psychiatrist of Sephardic Jewish descent, a contemporary of Freud, who settled in the United States of America in 1925 (Gonçalves, Wolff, Almeida, 1988; Marineau, 2013). Moreno grew up in Vienna, where he created the 'Living Newspaper' and the Theatre of Spontaneity during his studies in medicine. It was during these experiences that he realised the transformative and psychotherapeutic power of dramatisation, both at the individual and group levels. This therapeutic potential of psychodrama and sociodrama was developed throughout his life. He was also the creator of sociometry (the study and measurement of group phenomena of attraction and repulsion, which gave rise to sociometric tests), group therapy and sociatry (the healing and positive transformation of societies and humanity) (Gonçalves, et al., 1988; Marineau, 2013; Schreiber, 2017).

Moreno had a positive view of humanity and wanted to help people solve their problems, which is why he focused his attention on the exploration of human conflicts, both in its social and political forms. He also aimed to help persons on their expressions both at the personal and family level (Haworth, 2005).

In the theoretical-reflective deepening that he did, spontaneity and creativity became central concepts in his thinking as engines of transformation of the "cultural conserve", as well as the encounter between people.

Sprague (2005), referring to Wiener (1995), mentions that sociodrama has three purposes: "an improved understanding of a social situation, an increase in participants' knowledge about their own and other people's roles in relation to that situation, and an emotional release or catharsis as people express their feelings about the subject" (p.249).

Maciel (2011), reflecting on sociodrama after the First International Sociodrama Conference in Carcavelos (Portugal, 2007), states that the ways of using sociodrama in the world are highly variable. In Portugal, sociodrama focuses on the group and on its collective roles. From her point of view sociodrama aims to:

– find a joint resolution of common problems;
– develop commitments regarding shared group goals;
– study and understand the group in its various dynamics, by all members who are part of it, in a perspective of joint action-research.

Thus, sociodrama can contribute to:

– promoting spontaneity and creativity, based on improvisation;
– developing awareness of non-verbal communication;
– developing assertiveness, learning different ways to establish bonds and hold the attention of others in a modulated way;
– training in empathy, using role reversal to better understand the other;
– analysing roles, being able to explore several unknown social roles;
– training roles – role play – in order to learn how to behave, for example, for a job interview or in new social situations;
– resolving conflicts: learning how to obtain support, or to clarify problems, or to negotiate satisfactory solutions for both parties;
– promoting self-knowledge, using sociodramatic techniques.

As an open methodology, sociodrama is extremely flexible and easily adaptable to any domain of activity, content, theme or situation.

Schreiber (2017) states that "Sociodrama has been used to address global warming; and with exchanges between people of differing cultures and religions; with survivors of the Holocaust on both sides; in working with issues and differences between the generations; between police and gangs, etc."

A sociodrama session is usually structured in three sections: warm-up, action or 'drama' and shared reflection, or 'love-back'. The elements of a sociodrama session are: the director, the participants, the stage or scenic space, the audience and the group, as protagonist. The techniques used in sociodrama are generally the same as those used in psychodrama, although with very different and well defined objectives. They include sociometrics, spectrograms, axiograms, axiodramas, sub-groups, soliloquy, role reversal, role play, the double, the mirror, the wheel of memories, the statues, the warm-up games, music, diverse objects used as intermediate and symbolic objects, the construction of surplus reality (Maciel, 2011).

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As education is obviously an area of social activity, we believe that sociodrama can make very significant contributions, both in the initial, and in teachers' continuing education and in the work of pupil or student learning, both in curricular areas and artistic areas, and also in areas of a transdisciplinary nature, such as citizenship education.

Sternberg & Garcia (2000) consider that sociodrama is the only and most effective methodology that provides both experiential and cognitive learning, easily adaptable to different educational contexts and to different populations.

Referring to Moreno (1953), Sousa, Queirós and Marques (2014) mention that sociodrama was thought to be educational and clarifying, and that it could stimulate spontaneity and creativity in all members of the group, as well as love and empathy.

Instead of listening to a speech, when using sociodrama participants can find the answers and solutions to their problems or questions themselves, according to their own stage of development (Sousa et al., 2014).

Lima-Rodrigues (2011), a Brazilian and Portuguese teacher educator, uses sociodrama in the education of teachers, particularly in topics related to inclusion in education. This researcher states that the use of sociodramatic techniques reinforces the importance of interactions, action and expression in the learning processes, as well as improving personal experiences and their analysis. These aspects can become crucial in the construction of the professional identity of future teachers.

In Latin America, namely in Argentina and Brazil, sociodrama has been developed in education since the 1970s, especially through the contributions of Maria Alicia Romaña (Garcia, 1995). What in Brazil is called pedagogical psychodrama corresponds to what we call sociodrama in education. Thus, in Brazil they clearly distinguish between Psychodrama (an individual therapeutic process) and Sociodrama (a group process, therefore a social one) (Garcia, 1995). The expression sociodrama in education, which I adopt in this paper, is related to the domain of use, i.e. that of education.

Sociodrama in education, as the use of dramatisation in different education contexts, according to Diniz (1995), "should occupy a very important place in schools [and we also add in a great diversity of pedagogical and training contexts] because it contains very rich elements for all kinds of educational work." (p. 37)

Since the end of the 1920s, the pedagogical New School movement has introduced into education a greater concern with the "processes" of learning than with the final results. These concerns are part of the attention given to the child, theyouth or even the adult in training, as a central element of the whole process. The child, the youngster or the adult should be the agent of their own learning, facing this as a process of development in context, in the group, and simultaneously of emancipation. The child, the youngster or the adult are no longer objects of the educational process but become participatory subjects, agents engaged in their own learning process. These participants in the education and training process thus become co-builders of their own learning, their own knowledge (Diniz, 1995; Freire, 2003; Lesne, 1984; Belchior, 2013).

Also in sociodrama, the word is given to the group through the action (using different techniques) of its elements, so that together participants can build their own narrative (discovery or resolution) of a certain conflict or issue.

As mentioned above, when using sociodrama in education there are two possible approaches, one more related to artistic expression (expressive dimension, personal and social development), the other more linked to the curricular development of subjects through which it seeks to articulate, in a transdisciplinary way, expressive, personal, social, cognitive and emotional development. The second approach becomes more challenging and more complex. Both approaches use improvisation (dramatic or theatrical play), as well as respecting, stimulating and developing spontaneity and creativity (Diniz, 1995).

Some explorations using sociodrama in education

In this part of my chapter, I will give some examples of how I used sociodrama in my classroom as a primary school teacher. These examples will be followed by the comments of some teachers who participated in a 25-hour continuous professional development course that I organised and directed about using sociodrama and action methods in education.

The previously mentioned authors reinforced what I have been learning and experimenting with, in small essays either with my students in the 1st Cycle of Basic Education (primary school in Portugal), or in the continuous professional development course mentioned above. While attending the theoretical–practical training course for director of sociodrama, promoted by the Portuguese Psychodrama Society, I began to explore the use of the body in my classroom. Creativity was calling me.

As a primary school teacher

The following brief descriptions are some explorations carried out with students in the 1st Cycle of Basic Education (primary school), aged between five and ten. The first five of them are related to curricular subjects, the next two to 'learning to live together' (citizenship), and social and emotional issues (in Portugal, they are part of both the national curriculum and the National Profile of the Students by the end of Compulsory Education (2017). The last two are related to artistic expression.

Numbers and the children's bodies. An activity that was very well received by children (first grade, i.e. five and six-year-olds) was the composition and decomposition of the number of the day, part of the date made with the fingers. For example, we were on the 14th of the month and the challenge was to discover how many different ways could you make the number 14 with your fingers. One of the students directed the activity and called his colleagues to show the number of fingers he wanted the others to show in front of the class. He started with just two girls: one showed the five fingers of both hands and the other showed only four fingers of one hand.

I always asked if there were other possibilities. Another student wanted to try out a possibility with four boys: one showed five fingers of one hand, another showed five fingers of another hand, another showed two fingers of one hand and the other showed two more fingers. Of course, they discovered very quickly that they could also do it another way: one showed three fingers, two showed five fingers and one showed only one finger.

This was an exercise that we did almost every day at the beginning of the school year and it had several purposes: learning to count, the notion of time passing, the composition and decomposition of numbers, familiarisation with the fingers as an important support tool for calculation, the different expression of each student, the exposure of each one in front of the group.[1]

Role play and the addition algorithm. We did another action experiment to understand the addition algorithm by using a role play at the end of the first school year (five and six-year-olds). We wrote, for example, 24 + 13 = … and asked some students to play tens and others to play units. At one side of the room was the 24 and at the other side was the 13. Then we put the units of one number together with the units of the other and we saw that we had seven units. Then we added the tens of the two numbers together and got three tens:

Figure 1. D = tens, U = units (using Portuguese letters)

The group followed up the role play with these records on the blackboard. Subsequently, more complex hypotheses were introduced, such as transforming ten single units into a ten. And this was what they recorded:

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[1]   Here you can see photos of what happened: https://guardioesdoambiente1d.blogspot.com/2016/11/diferentes-maneiras-de-ter-14-dedos.html
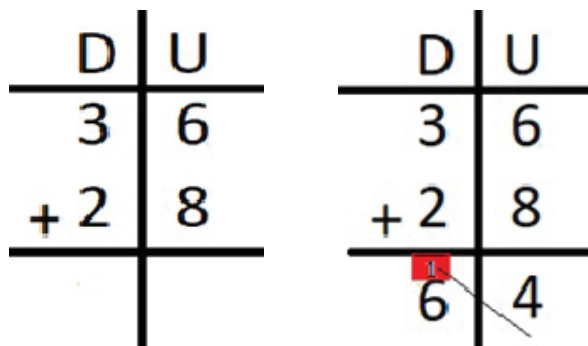
Figure 2. D = tens, U = units

This complex abstraction for six-year-old children was accompanied by other exercises of concretisation with the manipulation of other materials.[2]

The letters in their names and sociometry. When we need to start systematising and learning the names of the letters (in the first grade), I usually use familiar and well-known material, in this case the students' names. So, taking advantage of the idea of sociometry, I started to ask them to search for names with the letter 'A / a', for instance, and in a corner of the room we formed a group of students whose names contained that letter. Each of them had a strip with her/his name on the front. We could all easily see if anyone was wrong. It was really like a game. I wrote the groups of names on the black board. Then we moved on to another letter, for example, 'I / i' and we did it again: on one side of the classroom were those who had an 'I / i' in the name, on the other those who did not. Each student's name tag allowed us to confirm it. Letter systematisations were almost always done in this way. The students never let me forget to do the sociometry of their names. They learned very well to direct the activity themselves and to check whether or not there was a mistake. The letters of their names took on another meaning, they were no longer abstract entities. The letters were part of their names and we could play with them.[3]

Dancing with letters. A major concern that exists in the first grade is with the design of the letters, with calligraphy. When doing this training with the children in the classroom we realised we could 'dance the letters', that is, everybody could stand up and we could all draw the letters together in the air, especially the capital letters in cursive style, but with different parts of the body and in different sizes: with the finger, with the hand, the left elbow, the right elbow, the tip of the nose, the forehead, with the belly, with the feet, the knees. it was really a time of dance and fun in which we were also talking about the letters. For example, for the B in Bernardo: "The B in Bernardo starts with a chopstick from top to bottom, then we go back to the top and draw a tiny belly in front, make a bow and draw another plumper belly to the

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[2]   Here you find the video we did with some photos:
     http://anossaviagem20122016.blogspot.pt/2013/05/o-algoritmo-da-adicao-contas-de-mais.html.
[3]   Here is the link for this activity. A student recorded on a sheet of paper, at home, what we had done in the
     classroom: https://guardioesdoambiente1d.blogspot.com/2016/10/as-vogais-e-os-nossos-nomes.html.

floor". Whenever we danced with a lyric, we got a spiel. These were moments of movement and relaxation that would help to increase concentration. A funny game, but also useful for learning.

Role play: respiratory and circulatory systems. With this group we did a dramatisation of the respiratory and circulatory systems, a role play. We reconstructed these two systems as described in *Our Stories* at the beginning of this book.

Conflict transformation: role reversal. It was necessary, with the 3rd grade students (seven and eight-year-olds) to resolve a conflict surrounding a magazine, whose owner (Rita), did not want to lend it to a colleague who really wanted to see it (Lua). We did a role reversal and Lua, who really wanted to see the magazine, immediately gave it to Rita, the owner. It was necessary to ask for another colleague to come and turn her back to Rita not wanting to lend her the magazine, so that she could have the feeling that she would not be able to borrow the magazine as she wanted, while she was playing in the role of Lua – her colleague, who wanted to see the magazine. The whole class watched the reactions of both in astonishment. At the end, there was another pupil who wrote about this episode, voluntarily:

Matilde learns to lend
Once upon a time there was a girl named Matilde. Rita borrowed a magazine from Matilde. Matilde did not want to lend Rita the magazine and Rita was sad. Then the teacher said:
    – Rita, come here [be Matilde] and you, Matilde, go there [do Rita]. You give Rita the magazine, and now, Rita, do something.
    And Rita immediately checked Matilde. Then the teacher said:
    – Who wants to do Matilde and do what she did?
    Lua went to play Matilde and did not lend the magazine to Rita [to Matilde who was playing Rita]. Then the teacher said:
    – Do you see, Matilde, how Rita was sad? You also don't like being done the same, do you? Now Lua will play Rita and you Matilde will play Matilde. Do what you think you should do.
    And Matilde went to give the magazine to Lua and the teacher said to Matilde:
    – That was what Rita did at the beginning, we started changing roles, without any difficulty. And now, do you think you can already lend the magazine to Rita, also without difficulties?

Conclusion: lending is a beautiful thing and we start to see flowers or things that we really like.

<div align="right">

Leonor (8 years)
(21/1/2015)

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The little report on what happened, shows well how this kind of techniques affects not only those who are directly playing them, but also the ones that are in the audience. This is why Moreno included audience as an element of sociodrama practice, besides the group, the stage, the director and the auxiliary ego.

<div align="center">

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We were very impressed with how the role reversal worked so well and how the situation had such an impact on these young students. It was this result that led a colleague to write this short text.[4]

This episode continued with dramatisations about what each student would like the others to do for them, to help them feel well. Each student went to the front of the class and asked, through gestures, mimicry, for two colleagues to do what they liked: give them a hug, shake hands, play football together, massage, comb their hair, etc.

This was a way of diminishing the tension in the group and to calm down, knowing that everybody deserves to have from others what they need to feel happy.

Conflict transformation: How to enter others' play? Another point of conflict that was enacted in the third grade was how to enter others' play. One student complained that a colleague didn't let him enter the play. I asked them to put the situation into action, to show us what happened, so that we could understand the situation better. We realised that the student was trying to enter the play by jumping, literally, into the middle. It was necessary to explore other ways to enter a play in which one would like to participate. I asked if there were other ways of manifesting the desire to participate in play that a group was doing. Other forms were enacted: taking a calm approach and asking to be allowed to play, for instance. Then it was necessary to train this role, to show the group how it could be done and some of the children tried to do it. For some adults this can seem a not important issue, but for the children it was extremely important.

It was amazing to see how the students understood what was happening and how these enactments helped them to change their behaviour, not only the student making the 'complaint', but the group as a whole.

These were some of the enactments that came to me, in a very spontaneous and creative way, in the moment, in the classroom, where I tried to use action methods with my pupils with very narrow goals, but with the whole being involved, including the body of the pupils. Their adhesion to this type of proposal was great, the level of joy and happiness in the classroom increased; we also broadened the types of activity that could be done in the school. I was completely astonished with the rapidity that even the youngest children were able to lead such kind of activity. Teachers are really models for them. They could learn school issues, not only from being seated, with pencil and paper activities, but also by putting themselves into action, as a whole, with their bodies.

A collective co-creation: "The Body of Light". School and learning need also to be associated with fun and pleasure, so that everybody, teachers and pupils, can deal with more creative activities and not only with those of exercising and routines. Or, if you want, spontaneity and creativity, can also be introduced in exercise and routine activities.

Carnival masks were every year an opportunity to play together, as was Halloween or the end of the school year.

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4   Link to the report: http://aviagemcomaluz.blogspot.com/2015/02/a-matilde-aprende-emprestar.html.

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This story got the title of "The Body of Light". It was a collective co-creation using carnival masks, the description of which can be found on the class blog (third grade).

In those days of carnival celebrations, everything becomes freer and someone raised a proposal to make a theatre piece with the masks that each student had. And so this story was born, with suggestions, improvisations, repetitions, ideas that came up. Marta, one of the youngest girls in the group, was director. I was almost an observer. She assumed leadership in a very spontaneous way. Marta listened to all the suggestions, thought about how they could be integrated, who the bad guys were, who fought them and how they could be defeated. There was a happy ending as this was desirable and safe. It took almost two hours of intense creative work, but everyone ended up very happy with the result. I was impressed with the leadership skills of this eight-year-old girl, who managed the process in such a natural way, and also with how the others accepted her during these two hours of repetitions and co-creation that led to the final story.[5]

One more elaborated performance for the families: "An Adventure in Europe". There was another larger co-creation, "An Adventure in Europe", which was born out of a sequence of improvisation games in small groups and of pieces of writing, and which ended up being performed to parents and families (fourth grade, nine and ten-year-olds). This was done with the help of a friend who is an actress and came to our classroom over three weeks, one afternoon per week. This was during the post-troika government period in Portugal, a period of huge crisis for families. The story that emerged in the group was that of a war over a currency, which could be the euro. This was a story of how it was necessary to care for the wounded, who had been greatly affected by this 'war'. I imagine that behind it there could have been the fear of war between European countries. Ultimately peace was restored and the king and queen were recognised and placed in charge without giving importance to the coin that could have caused lots of destruction. The group ended with a big hug between all participants. This was also their farewell from this first cycle of education, the four years of primary school.

I was touched by the theme, the content of the story and how it was necessary to have an link between all countries to overcome the damage done by the war caused by money. We entered fully into a very symbolic story and healing for the group. Europe is an official curriculum topic at grade four, in a very simple, introductory way.[6]

These are just a few examples of how sociodrama and action methods were used in a school setting with children. It is about putting the body into action and learning from everything we are and have, trying different roles and situations in a completer and more involved way. This kind of experiments certainly helped put students more

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[5] Link to this process: http://aviagemcomaluz.blogspot.com/2015/02/carnaval-depois-do-desfile.html.

[6] Link to a description of the process and how it finished: http://umaaventuranaeuropa.blogspot.com/2016/06/dia-aberto-um-teatro-sobre-uma-aventura.html.

at the centre of the learning process. Students were also learning to become owners of their learning process, a process that mainly concerns them.

Working with teachers:
A continuous professional development course

I started by organizing open, exploratory and informal meetings which I called "Meetings of Teachers and Educators: What Future Do We Build Today?"[7] These meetings targeted a heterogeneous audience of educators, teachers (of all grades), parents or others interested in education-related issues. Six meetings were held one per month between June 2014 and February 2015. The themes addressed were always emerging topics based on issues brought up by participants; the techniques used were very diverse.

After this initial exploration I realised the wealth of possibilities that could be explored using sociodrama in education. I asked the Pedagogical Scientific Council for the Continuing Education of Teachers (the national council for accreditation of in-service education for teachers of up to higher education level) for official accreditation of a 25-hour course. I did this in a partnership with the Educational Association for the Development of Creativity. The course was titled Sociodrama: Stories and Conflict Resolution. The accreditation of this course was achieved without difficulty and we had six sessions of four hours each, every two weeks.

In this course there was an introduction to sociodrama and action methods and the techniques involved in both; worked on conflict resolution and peace education; and included the importance of traditional fairy tales (inspired by a workshop by Irene Henche). Four editions of this course occurred between 2017 and 2018. The participants were mainly teachers of all school grades, from kindergarten to secondary school. The feedback I received, either through the trainees' final reports or through completed questionnaires, was extremely positive.

To let you know how these sociodrama and action methods courses took place and what their effect was, there is nothing better than to give the floor to participants (bearing anonymity in mind).

A trainee reflected on her body awareness and how this course was an excellent form of self-awareness. Starting with a warm-up, to bring them into the session, each time I invited them to experience a walking meditation: "Feel your body. How do you breathe? Breathe deeply. Feel the air coming in and out of your body. Feel how you put your feet on the floor. How are your legs? Your knees? Feel your thighs, your hips, your abdomen, your chest, your shoulders, your arms, your hands and fingers, your neck and the trapezoids, the back of your neck, your head, your face. Feel the here and now. How are you today?" The main goal is to become present, for participants to acknowledge themselves in the moment:

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7   Link to the announcement: http://sociodrama-intervencao-educacao.blogspot.com/2014/05/profes-sores- e-educadores-que-futuro.html.

The work done over the six sessions of the course revealed to me the importance of various activities, such as simply walking calmly and slowly among colleagues. This act alone, repeated throughout the six sessions, made me stop many times in the classroom, in my school, to become aware of my posture, attitudes and speeches and to understand the extent and consequences of being systematically stressed and tense. Several times I stopped to take a deep breath, try to calm down and think better, react better. The impression I had was of becoming aware of how bad reactions and stress rob us of precious resources. Only the act of correcting the breath allows us to feel the sore throat, the reduced lungs - for some reason, it is proven that stress kills. I understood how the impulsive gestures, words and reactions stick to the skin and are difficult to assume, accept or correct. As for the activities learned and practiced, I think they are an excellent way to get to know/recognise ourselves, not to be ashamed by the force of shyness and/or awareness, and to learn.

This activity was followed by establishing contact with the space and the other members of the group. Another trainee underlines the importance of paying attention to our bodily resources and listening to and welcoming the Other, and also how our attitudes determine the results in which we believe, mainly in conflict resolution situations. In the training we would choose a current friction point and play a fish bowl with different roles related to the situation. For instance, on one of these courses the situation that emerged was the role of parents in the school and their relationship with teachers. So they took on the role of the Parents Association, the teachers, the ministry of education, the local authority, the students, the media. They argued about their roles and participation in daily school life from different points of view. I then asked them to change roles and assume the position of the other side. This trainee's feedback comes from such a situation:

The contents presented, both theoretical and practical, were very important as they reminded me that, whether on a personal or professional level, our attitude and availability are essential for our success in the most diverse tasks. The body and the voice are very powerful communication tools! Contact between people is sometimes not easy, as we are not always available to receive the Other in his/her most varied dimensions: emotional, psychological and physical. But it is essential that we can do it! I became aware that in our professional activity, as in life, no one is alone, we have to touch other people, listen to them, observe them, deal with their bodies, with their voices, with their feelings, ideas and beliefs. The exercise of analysis, criticism and reflection is essential when looking for assertive solutions for the resolution of the 'conflicts' we create and face daily.

In a conflict situation, success is the result of an attitude that begins when we believe we will succeed [...] Although life is composed of many experiences, advances and retreats, indecision and some insecurity, "our greatest weakness is in giving up. To try again is to win".

This trainee considers that she became a happier person, expanded her roles and began to have more appropriate reactions. As I pointed out before, conflict transformation related to peace education was a topic of the course. I used two perspectives, Galtung (2005, 2008) and Pierre Weil (2001), both of which I had studied as part of my PhD research. My goal was to share with the group my underlying theoretical foundations related to peace education. Galtung (2005) taught us that conflict and tension between groups or people, when overcomed and transformed in creative and nonviolent ways, can be opportunities for human development. Weil (2001), who developed the art of living in peace, considered three domains, three levels: the individual, i.e. the relationship with oneself, the goal of which is to achieve inner peace; the social, i.e. the relationship with others, the social world; and the environmental, i.e. the relationship with nature (Belchior, 2013). From my own perspective these two theoretical approaches are connected to Morenian philosophy through his mention of the philosophy of the encounter, role reversal, and how the social world influences the individual, and vice versa.

Here is how this trainee writes about her experience on this course:

> Above all, I am convinced that this course has made me a happier person, perhaps because the training in dressing in multiple 'skins' and defending them has helped me to grow, interact and relativise better what happens to me and what happens to others. I lack training in terms of reacting calmly, thinking better, being more adequate. I believe that the possibility of the course, pointing to the paths of peace and peace education, undid, with considerable relief, the anxiety I felt before the most aggressive, the strongest, the most successful, because it gave me strength to react and act with my own forces, and from there to grow with them instead of simply being ashamed of what I am and giving up. I felt I was changing day after day.

Another trainee refers to how it was important for him to play different possibilities and roles, which was also related to the expansion of his role repertoire:

> Right from the first session, when the trainer asked us to assume the role of an outstanding person in our life, as my academic area of training is related with arts, I selected the Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh. He was an extraordinary artist and I like him very much for his post-impressionist painting, manifested in the combination of colours he used in his paintings, which transmit impressive luminosity and a timeless movement, a sign of life […] There was another exercise that I liked very much, which was the possibility of cooperating in the accommodation of refugees, who are in camps spread across several areas of Europe, without decent living conditions. As an architect, I came up with the idea of replacing tents with simple, but decent, houses, in order to provide more comfort and security to those who are deprived of the essential goods for the running of their own lives. Regarding the magic forest game, I initially appreciated the role of the protective tree, which was always attentive and protected the traveller, who moved with his eyes blindfolded. In turn, the role of traveller brought me a concern about the possibility that, on my

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trip, I might injure a tree. This concern disappeared in the following times, due to the increase in my confidence in the group.

The magic forest exercise aims to strengthen the trust between group participants and teach them that each member can play both the roles of the vulnerable, the traveller, who is blind, and the protective, the trees of the forest. The metaphor of this game is the journey of the blind traveller in a protective forest.

Regarding the expansion of their range of roles, another trainee said:

At the beginning, after the warm-up, our trainer asked us to think of a remarkable character in our life, and immediately the name Luís de Camões, whom I consider a unique poet in Portuguese literature, appeared to me. I studied him deeply for several years, first when I prepared my Master's dissertation, and later my PhD thesis. It was, therefore, an honour for me to be able to embody such a figure, positioning myself in his place and recalling some situations resulting from the research I did. I also appreciated the contribution of my colleagues, who, according to their experience, remembered the most varied characters, even some familiar figures who, in some way, marked them. In fact, there were many enriching experiences that took place during the six sessions, which I fully followed and in which I worked hard, starting with the role of collaborator of the current Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres, as a volunteer for refugee integration. In the role of servant in a palace, referring to the fairy tale The Princess and the Pea, I felt in love with the Coachman, and married him. For the marriage play, I even had the right to the wedding march, sung by the group, who witnessed our fictitious/true love, since the coachman is my husband in real life.

Fairy tales, mainly those of the Brothers Grimm and Perrault, are worked into the course to stress the contribution they make to the development of the children. This is a work of imagination, going back to their childhood and remembering what they learned from the fairy tales they heard. I added to this the drawing of a simple mask, with one sheet of paper that they can have in their hands, during the play. To play the role the characters they chose, they could also disguise themselves using scarves. Finally I would propose that they create a new story with the different characters that they brought to the session.

The same trainee also refers to how this training helped her solve a personal issue. This was a situation chosen by the group for the session on conflict transformation:

On the one hand, I have always tried to share personal and professional situations with my group, as in a case that recently emerged with one of my neighbours. It was due to a flood that occurred in our apartment. The origin had not yet been detected, even though I had already provided the expertise needed to solve the problem. Thus, cumulatively, I contributed to the sessions with this conflict and, at the same time, I was able to collect many different perspectives, with a view to the best peaceful resolution of this problem.

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A trainee who worked with students from the 10th and 11th grades (16-18-year-old students) on a professional course, wrote the following very interesting report about a controversy. This was based in the fish bowl conflict resolution technique:

> Throughout the training, I was able to apply some of the techniques in working with my students, as a teacher in the 10th and 11th grades (16 – 18 years old) of the Professional Communication Technician Course - Marketing, Public Relations and Advertising. In the Public Relations subject, the topic of "Public Opinion" and the different types of public was addressed and I proposed a practical case (installation of a paper mill in an area close to the housing area) for resolution in class. The stakeholders of this business were identified: the businessman, the environmentalist, the residents' association, the company's workers, the municipality's representatives. The students played these roles using the arguments involved. Each student chose the role he wanted to play.
>
> The other students would be the observers / audience, who at the end of the panel would recognize the connections that exist in this group of individuals and formulate their opinion on the case that was proposed. In a 2nd phase, students were able to change roles and reinforce the arguments they considered less developed in the 1st phase. It was a spontaneous, creative approach that facilitated students' learning and actively involved them.

Two different trainees addressed the atmosphere and the conducting of the sessions:

> The sessions privileged the knowledge and interaction between the elements of the group, either through the warm-ups, of which I highlight the Magic Forest, which provided us with bodily, emotional and cognitive well-being, or through sharing problems or situations that had been experienced or observed. […]
>
> I really liked the way each session was conducted, from the warm-up to the transmission of theoretical knowledge, through the dynamics used (games and dramatisations, among others) and the dialogue and interaction with the trainers and between the trainees. More than being passive trainees absorbing theoretical knowledge, we were active subjects and direct players in the learning process, which proved to be very positive. In each session, we built and internalised knowledge in a playful, fun and very practical way, always establishing a bridge between theory and practice. This course ended up being realised through several experiences (real or based on fiction) always in a relaxed way, yet profound and enriching.

From this last report, there was really something to learn for the classroom, for the participants' daily practice as teachers.

The testimony that I share below highlights the importance of the director's role, valuing positive reinforcement and the creation of a secure environment:

> My initial expectations regarding this course have been greatly exceeded. The dynamics implemented by the Director throughout the sessions and the empathy

she managed to create with and among the trainees, the clarity of her explanations, the level of knowledge demonstrated and the ability to foster the exchange of experiences, promoted a dynamic of sharing and reflection, so that throughout the workshop we infer and understand the importance of trust and initiative in the group. It was very gratifying to always receive a sympathetic response to my 'past' insecurities. Positive reinforcement was very important, as was the attitude of encouragement and appreciation of the work done. All sessions of this action training were, in my view, delivered fully and in an organised manner.

Conclusion

This is how I started to become a sociodramatist. Writing this chapter was a very relevant contribution to reflections on my own trajectory, and a contribution to my improvement as a sociodramatist. Participating in this international context of the PERFORMERS 1 and 2 projects is also a very important part of my trajectory in sociodrama, but in this paper there is no more time or space to go on describing and reflecting on this path. Regarding the work presented here, there is a huge difference between what I did with the students in my classroom at the primary school, with whom I interacted every day of the week for five years, and the work with the teachers.

Children maintain a great spontaneity and a natural creativity, away from the cultural conserve of what a classroom should be. The knowledge and trust that existed between the group and me made all the dramatisation proposals very natural, without needing any specific warm-up. The proposals could be made by me or could also be made by the children. Playing 'what if …?', dramatising a story or reproducing a situation was seen naturally and everyone wanted to participate with great spontaneity.

Regarding teachers, in the Sociodrama and Action Methods course, proposals needed to be well thought out, especially the warm-ups and the structure of the sessions. The testimonies shared above reveal how these courses contributed to gaining an increased awareness of non-verbal communication, the importance of listening and welcoming the Other, the importance of personal well-being, the expansion of roles and their multiple possibilities. The course also revealed how the role of the director is highly relevant to the creation of a safe environment and atmosphere. Many trainees expressed how this workshop contributed to a greater awareness of their social roles and opened up new possibilities for response, and consequently for action, in their professional roles.

This sharing of my work with the children in the classroom, the reports and reflections of the Sociodrama and Action Methods course show how sociodrama can make a very significant contribution to education, both in working with students and in teacher education, promoting spontaneity, creative and non-violent conflict resolution, favouring the development of a greater expressive capacity in groups and their members, and increasing spontaneity and creativity.

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They were learning with the whole being, putting the body, mind, feelings and emotions into action.

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Sociodrama and Action-Based Learning in Teacher Training
Some challenges to "provoke" inclusion

Luzia Mara Lima-Rodrigues

Summary

This chapter brings together four examples of how to use sociodrama and action-based learning in teacher education. The sessions presented in this paper emerge from my experience as a sociodramatist in Brazil, where I was born, and in Portugal, where I've been living for 18 years. To conclude, I discuss the added value of co-directed sessions, shared direction and self-directed groups, as an important strategy to promote inclusive values and practices in everyday professional life. The goal is to lead professionals to reflect about concepts like diversity, disadvantage, equity, social justice and exclusion. Also, to help them develop an inclusive method of teaching.

Keywords

1. Sociodrama, Education and Inclusion

In 2015, the United Nations defined the "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (UN, 2015). This Agenda aims to stimulate action in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet: People (eradication of poverty and hunger, promotion of dignity and equality); Planet (sustainable consumption and production, combating climate change and management of natural resources); Prosperity (personal achievement, economic and social progress); Peace (peaceful, just and inclusive societies, free from fear and violence) and Partnerships (cross-cutting integration, interconnection and joint mobilization for the most vulnerable). Among its 17 goals is the overarching goal 4: "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". This general objective, in line with several other international documents on Inclusion and Equity, has targeted educational policies, cultures, and practices around the world (ISEC, 2015; UN, 2015; UNESCO, 2015; UNESCO, 2017).

Within this landscape – and in teacher training – sociodrama, action-based learning, expressive pedagogies and other action explorations are valuable methodologies of teaching and of group intervention (Lima-Rodrigues & Rodrigues, 2020). Un-

like the expository methodologies, where the teacher speaks and the students listen, sociodrama places students and learning at the centre of the educational process. It privileges action, interaction, creativity, spontaneity, aesthetic sense, and several other factors decisive for educational success. When a future teacher simulates a classroom situation, he or she takes and trains the role he/she will play. Instead of receiving a list of "what a teacher should do" (a kind of "code of practice"), the teacher will experience complex forms of interaction with the students, with peers, families, managers or other actors in the educational community.

Not least, is the technical development of "being a teacher", in the initial training of teachers. Here, I refer to the same techniques used in the training of those actors that are, for example, staff members of psychodrama, sociodrama or Playback Theatre groups (Rodrigues, 2016, Garavelli, 2006, Puttini & Lima, 1997, Lima- Rodrigues, 2016, 2017). Emerging from my experience, I learned ways to apply these theatre techniques to teacher training: the imposition and intonation of the voice, the bodily gestures, the expressions of the face, hands and body, the look, proximity and physical distancing between people (proxemic), or even the use of an appropriate vocabulary for each audience or interlocutor. Dramatizing the same scene, but with different teaching strategies, allows the trainees to explore and find their best way to teach content, to approach a subject or to evaluate a student or a learning process (Lima, 2004, Lima-Rodrigues, 2016, 2017, 2020).

Taking a step forward, sociodrama can also "provoke" attitudes changing and shifting to educational actions based on social justice, equity and inclusion. Its values are deeply connected to the Sustainable Development Goal for Education. Moreno always wanted to understand the sociometry of groups. He was always concerned with the "isolated members" (the excluded ones) and encouraged aggressors to reverse roles with the attacked. He sought to highlight the multiple faces of conflicts and argued that their understanding and/or solution should emerge from the dramatic action that occurred within the group itself. All these characteristics and values are (almost) a perfect combination to generate less aggressive, nonviolent, encouraging behaviours of positive relationships between members of a group, such as active listening, effective conflict management, encouragement of the development of potentialities, among others. All these behaviours, stimulated or developed through sociodramatic action and other action methodologies, end up being predictors of pro- inclusive attitudes. Teachers formed by these approaches are more likely to advocate inclusion, equity and social justice, will be more critical of inequalities, will be more attentive to prejudices and probably (I stress: "probably") will opt for tailored practices that consider the disadvantages of the most vulnerable students. This is what the evidence showed me, in these almost 30 years in which I have used sociodrama as a method for training teachers and other professionals. It has been an enchanting experience that started in 1991, when I began to direct "bodily experiences" in the sociodramatists' training in Brazil (where I was born) and in Argentina. At that time, I was the coordinator of a postgraduate course in Pedagogical Psychodrama and leader of a research line in Psychodrama and Education, in a number of Brazilian universities. In Portugal, where I have lived since 2003, and a little around

the world, I teach or use sociodrama in initial and post-graduate teacher education, in universities, schools and other institutions. This chapter results from thousands of "sociodramatic scenes" that dwell in me.

2. Ways to "provoke" inclusion in Education

The term "provoke" emphasizes that sociodrama, in most cases, is a method that "pushes" or "advances" the ongoing processes. In fact, since a session of sociodrama summons both the body side and the intellectual and emotional side of people, it ends up generating significant awareness of these same processes – in this case, about inclusion in education. Awareness is the first step in making a concept clearer and, therefore, to develop or change practices.

On the following pages, I will share excerpts from my experiences in teacher education, as director of sociodrama and other action-based learning, to stimulate people to develop values, concepts, and practices. Some of this experience happened via Zoom, because of the confinement caused by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic.

2.1 Example 1: The 1Euro-coin

This session took place in October 2020, in the inaugural class of a master's degree in Special Education, in Portugal, on the Zoom platform. The course trains Special Education Teachers – experienced teachers who, at the end of this course, will support the learning (inclusion) of students from regular schools, from preschool to the 12th year of schooling.

Presentation
The session began with the presentation of what is sociodrama. Then we approached in a few words "what we're talking about when we talk about Inclusion." Finally, we defined sociodrama as an action method, appropriate to address themes related to inclusion. The following dialogue involved the group of participants, concluding that "Inclusion" is not synonymous with "intervention for students with disabilities", but it is the work of eliminating all kinds of barriers to learning in educational contexts. Next, we move on to the session itself.

Warm-up
I invited participants to close their eyes and relax. "Now you will no longer be you. You will be a 1Euro-coin."

I made a warm-up to get them into the role of a coin. To do so, I read aloud the name of a half of the participants. "Now, you, the people I've read the name of, are no longer yourselves, but are 1Euro-coins. You are 1Euro-coins from a fifth-year student at a public school, who had a privileged socio-economic background. Your family has access to Culture, Leisure, Sport. You never had to help your family with expenses, and you never worried about what the next food would be…"

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Then I read aloud the name of the other half of participants. "Now, you, the people I just said the name of, are no longer yourselves, but are 1Euro-coins. You are 1Euro-coins from a fifth-year student at a public school who had a disadvantaged socio-economic background. Your family only has access to Culture, Leisure, and Sport when it is free. You know your family has a hard time paying the expenses and you never know whether you'll have plenty of food at the next meal." And I kept on saying: "The owners of the two coins are in the same class. Both in a fifth year of the same public school." The coins will then meet and go to talk:

– How's the pocket or the bag or the place where your owner keeps you?
– How much are you worth to your owner, Mrs. Coin?
– Does your owner care? Why is that?
– What does the school mean to its owner? Why does he go to school?(…)

Now, I send the "coins", in pairs, to the breakout rooms that, meanwhile, I created in Zoom: one coin of a privileged student and one coin from a disadvantaged student.

Action
In the breakout rooms, coin pairs chat. They present themselves and discuss the value that each one has to its owner.

I close the breakout rooms and the entire group, still in the role of coins, talk a little about what they heard from the other coins.

Next, I say to the group: "you will return to the breakout rooms, but 15 years have passed. It's the year 2035 and the same coins, from the same owners, will meet again and tell each other: "what has happened to your owner after all this time? Remember 2020, when our owners were in lockdown because of the Pandemic? So much has happened since then!"

The pairs go to the breakout rooms and talk. I close the breakout rooms and the people, still in the role of "coins in 2035", share what happened in the lives of their owners. So, I ask everyone to give up the role of 'coin' and go back to who they are. Next, I invite the same pairs to return to the breakout rooms, but this last time, both are in the role of Teachers, in the year 2035. They taught in the class of those two students who, in 2020, had a 1Euro-coin in their pocket. I ask, "What has happened during these years, Professor? Remember, there was a pandemic in 2020? Remember, there were students from such different backgrounds? What happened to you, Professor? What has changed in your professional life and your action as an educator?"

For the last time, the pairs go to the breakout rooms, talk, and return to the main room.

Sharing
In the main room, people share the experiences lived, still in the role of Teachers in 2035. They talk as if they are these teachers and as if we're in the future. Then, I invited them to abandon this role, returning to their own identities. Each person comments on how the session resonated. I encourage people to think about the concept

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of "value". They argue about the "variable value" that was given to coins by their owners. They also discuss the "value of inclusion" that does not vary but solidifies as one realizes the inequalities, exclusions, and impact that Education must have on the construction of a more just and equitable society. I encourage them to think about how much values influence practices, for example, when two students of the same socio-economic origin take care of their currencies differently.

As a synthesis, I ask people how much today's session made them think, reflect and understand the value of Inclusion differently. They will have to assign values to the session, from 1 (little) to 5 (very). At my signal, each participant shows, on the computer or mobile camera, from 1 to 5 fingers of one hand. With this overview/ evaluation, the session is closed.

2.2 Example 2:
Online public sociodrama – "Classroom: what space is this?"

This online public sociodrama occurred as part of a project of public sessions of psychodrama and sociodrama that took place weekly, face-to-face, in a cultural space of Brazil. Each week, a director or group of psycho/sociodramatists was invited to direct a two-hour session. With the containment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the sessions took place on the Zoom platform. This was one of them. The announcement, spread in the social media of the project and its leaders, informed the title of the session ("Classroom: what space is this?") as well as the invited director (Luzia Lima-Rodrigues/Portugal), the day, the time and the link of the Zoom meeting.

Notes on an online public session
As in the face-to-face public sessions, this online public session had some factors to consider:

– There were no previous registrations: the admission of the participants happened on a first-come, first-served basis and could reach up to the total capacity of the room (1000 participants – paid version of the Zoom app). The theme had to be comprehensive enough to be redirected in the moment, depending on the profile of the audience that appeared. We didn't know if it would be a completely heterogeneous audience or with more teachers, or more psychologists, or more doctors… only in the warm-up would we realize.
– Participation would fluctuate, just as it would if we were in a street or in a square, where the person passes, looks and decides whether to stay longer or leave. So, on Zoom, the number of participants would vary during the session. Participants would be entering and leaving the room at various times. To avoid interruptions, we leave a warning in the waiting room with some basic rules of participation, for example, "enter and exit with audio and video turned off".
– Participation was anonymous: participants had the right not to identify themselves, that is, to be in the Zoom environment just to see (just as in the face-to-face session). They could keep the audios and videos off and were not

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asked to rename themselves with their actual names in the Zoom options. The session was not recorded nor was any participant allowed to film, photograph, or record any part of the session, ensuring what the General Data Protection Regulations of several countries, including Portugal and Brazil, provide for.

– Active participation was voluntary: I invited only those participants who felt comfortable to play a role, to connect their sound and video, and to dramatize. Thus, the session had to be planned for three scenarios. One, if we only have between 1 to 3 active participants. Here, we would do a "monodrama" or "bi-personal" sociodrama (Fonseca & Sacks, 2004). I, as director, would do role reversal with the participant. The second scenario would be for a truly large group. We could use resources such as, for example, a chorus of simultaneous voices (where everyone speaks aloud and at the same time), multiple doubles, or a living newspaper, always resorting to the use of simultaneous rooms. The third scenario is the most common, with an audience of 10 to 50 people.

We opened the Zoom room 15 minutes before the start of the session. We were greeting people as they were being admitted into the room as an icebreaker. I asked where they came from, where they were, or introduced the people I knew to the group.

The session started with instructions on Zoom: turn audio and video on and off, rename, hide non-video participants, and how breakout rooms work. We asked everyone to select the option "hide non-video participants" and, for those who wanted to take part more actively, to rename themselves with the first and last name and the city/state where they were or just the country. We shared these instructions via the Chat every time someone showed up late into the session.

Warm-up
The first step of this public sociodrama was to characterize the group, performing a sociometry. We did a question-and-answer game, being "yes = video on" and "no = video off". I asked the first questions and encouraged the group to ask other questions: "Who was born in Brazil? Who's ever been to a sociodrama session? Who's a teacher? Who is a student?" So on, participants kept calling by turning off the video, as their answers were "yes" or "no."

Next, I showed the group a picture of a classroom and asked them to complete the phrase: "I see…". Quickly appeared answers such as a room, a table, a chair, a failure, a courtship, a pencil, bullying, discoveries, loves… This more specific warm-up allowed participants to talk about "classroom: what space is this?" From this emerged several categories: space of learning, space of violence, space of love, space of dreams, space of exclusion, space of social "elevator".

Action
I informed the group that, from this moment on, we would make some dramatizations. I asked those who felt warm and comfortable to dramatize, to leave their videos on. These people were divided into four breakout rooms, named by categories that came from the warm-up: room 1) space of love, room 2) space of learning, room 3)

space of violence, and room 4) space of exclusion. After that, the people who kept the video off were divided into four and were sent to the rooms, to help to build the scene (even if they would not take part as actors).

I noticed that people with video on (able to dramatize) remained in the session until the end. The people who left the session were with the video off. In a face-to-face public session, it would be equivalent to those who pass, observe an excerpt of the session, and leave.

Once in the breakout rooms, the group task was to build a scene that took place in the space of a classroom, under their theme. When they returned to the main room, only the people who had been part of group 1 left the video on. As we had selected the option "hide non-video participants", we saw only the "squares" of the actors who were dramatizing, creating an illusion of "stage" theatre.

– Group 1: "Classroom: space of love" brought the scene of two 5th grade class-mates who fall in love. The boy confides to his fellow boys that he is in love, the girl confides in the girls but does not reveal to each other this passion. Only years later, already divorced and with children, they meet again and get together at last.
– Group 2: "Classroom: learning space" brought a girl who learns to write her name and, in wonder, writes her name in every place: in her notebook, on her hand, on the chair, on the bathroom door, on a tree… everywhere.
– Group 3: "Classroom: space of violence" presented a boy who is imprisoned by two colleagues in a closet in the room. The colleagues leave the room, leaving him in the closet. The boy tries to escape several times before he manages it, feels wronged but does not seek help because he fears going through even greater violence or losing the friendship of his aggressors.
– Group 4: "Classroom: exclusion space" showed a competition in a kindergar-ten, where the person who raised more money for charitable purposes would be crowned as the "king or queen of the class". Maria's mother – from a poor family – worked all year and raised enough funds to give her daughter the longed-for dream of winning first place. On the day the contestants were going to hand over the figures, Ana's mother asked the teacher who had raised the highest amount. So, she added €10.00 (Euros) to this amount and thus secured her daughter first place.

I asked each participant to choose one scene for us to work with. Scene 4 (the most chosen) was again presented, but this time I invited people to suggest modifications to the story or to enter the scene with some other roles and thus change the story. Several amendments followed, such as:

– Maria grew up, "won in life" and became Ana's boss…
– The school also gave a prize to second place.
– The families of the other children helped Maria's mother financially, so she could win first place.

- The teacher corrected the rules of the game so that the first place would be given to those who promoted the largest number of auctions to raise money, not to those who actually raised more money.
- The principal of the school heard about it and fired the teacher…

Sharing

I invited the characters to stay in their roles and to share how they were feeling:

- Maria's mother felt defeated once again.
- Ana's mother thought the victory was fair because she followed the rules.
- Maria would never forget the humiliation her mother went through and would fight her entire life for equality between people.
- The teacher felt important because she "pleased" Ana's mother, but then realized the unfair rule she had created.
- The principal was sad because she solved the issue in the easiest way—she should have "trained" the teacher at work.

People then returned to being themselves, coming out of the characters they represented. All participants shared their impressions of the scene they attended. The group talked about, among many other reflections, the importance of teacher training for diversity and inclusion; on changing school cultures to give students equal opportunities; on the personal training of pupils not to reproduce the family or school models they exclude or submit; on the disguised ways in which exclusion can happen, a practice which is often "normalized".

2.3 Example 3: The birthday dinner

This three-hour session took place in one of the Ph.D. classes in Educational Sciences, on the Zoom platform. The students were at the end of the 1st year of the course, all already knew each other, were on computers (not mobile phones), with the possibility of connecting audio and video when necessary.

Warm-up

"Get off the wall" is a good warm-up for sessions that will work on two-sided topics, dichotomic or antagonistic. Participants hold a white paper with their left hand and a coloured paper with their right hand. I say two opposite words; whoever chooses the first, shows the white paper, who chooses the second, shows the coloured paper. The words are: Green or mature? Near or far? Now or later? Fast or slow? Question or answer? Up or down? Beginning or ending?

To proceed directly to dramatization, I divided students into subgroups of six people –three couples:

- Couple no. 1 is Portuguese or lives in Portugal. You have a son or daughter in the 5th year of a public school, and it is the best school in Portugal, of course!

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You were the ones who chose the school for your child! It's a traditional school, and the main goal of the school is to prepare students for a promising future.

– Couple no. 2 is Portuguese or lives in Portugal. You have a son or daughter in the 5th year of a public school, and it is the best school in Portugal, of course! You were the ones who chose the school for your son! It is an inclusive school, and the main goal of the school is to prepare students to be citizens in a world with more equal opportunities.

– Couple no. 3 is not Portuguese. They moved to Portugal this week, have a son or daughter who goes to 5th grade, and are choosing a good school for their son.

The three couples are at a birthday party, coincidentally, they sit at the same table and:

– Couple no. 3 doesn't know where to enrol their son. This couple will ask a thousand questions to the other two couples, but will never "get off the wall", so they will never decide on one school or another.

– Couples no. 1 and 2 try to convince Couple no. 3 that the school where their child studies is the best school in Portugal.

Action

I place the groups in breakout rooms. There, in the breakout rooms, they dramatize the conversation between the three couples, as if they were at the same table. I go through each of the rooms to see how the conversations are going, to take away some technical questions that may exist, and to "set fire" to the debate.

After a few minutes, I rearrange the division of the breakout rooms. In room 1 are only the number 1 couples; in room 2, only the number 2 couples, and in room 3, undecided couples.

A few minutes later, everyone is brought back to the main room to chat, still as characters from that birthday party. I ask undecided couples to share what they have heard, what school they would like their child to study in, and why. Then I'll give the floor to the other couples. Finally, I ask everyone to abandon the roles they have played and to be Ph.D. students again.

Sharing

Considering that this is a group of doctoral students, the sharing must focus on the quality of the arguments. What arguments are used by parents of the traditional school? What about the inclusive school? What arguments are most easily found? And what arguments are the most consistent with the ideal school (equitable, inclusive, fair…) that we want to build? What are the fallacious arguments of the traditional school? What about the inclusive school?

Finally, each student produced a brief text with the personal reflections that emerged from this session.

2.4 Example 4: The giving tree.

This two-hour face-to-face session took place as part of a teacher in-service training course, lasting 25 hours. About 20 teachers from all levels and teaching areas (from pre-school to secondary) were present and it took place in a public school in Portugal.

The objectives of this session were:

– To show sociodrama as a teaching method, in this case, approaching the content of a story or a book critically.
– To reflect on dilemmas, limits, and contradictions of the teacher's role.

Warm-up

I began the session with presenting several curiosities about Moreno, emphasizing, above all, that he was a superb storyteller. So, I warm the group up by showing them the book "The giving tree" by Shel Silverstein (1964). I present the book on a big screen and read, page by page, the history of the tree.

Action

The first part comprised the theatricalization of the story. One volunteer takes the role of the boy and another the tree. With the help of the group, I put each scene in the story on stage. It is the story of a Tree that accompanies the life of a Boy, from his childhood (when they both played), to his youth (when he needs money and the Tree offers him his apples), young adult (when he needs a house and the Tree offers him his branches), mature adult (when he needs a boat to leave and the Tree offers him his trunk), until the Boy is old and no longer needs anything but rest, and the tree no longer has anything to offer him except the stump where the Boy can sit. In each situation, the Tree calls the boy "Boy", he needs something, she gives him something and follows the phrase: "and the Tree was happy".

In the second part, two other volunteers represent the scenes as they appear along the story. When the Boy comes to the Tree, saying that he needs a house:

– I freeze the scene and ask the Tree not to call him Boy anymore (after all, he was already a man), and not to offer him his branches (because she has to produce apples),
– I do not give any instruction to the Boy, and

I ask those who are warm, to enter the dramatic space and take the place of the Tree, the Boy, or include in the scene any other character they want.

From that point on, the story has several developments. Then, I encourage the group to propose scenes in which the Tree helps the Boy to be an independent and autonomous adult.

Finally, I divide the group into pairs: an entire Tree and an elderly and autonomous Boy, seated face-to-face, talking about the memories of that friendship, where the

Boy is grateful to the Tree because… I ask everyone to leave the roles they've played and come back to themselves.

Sharing

I begin by asking the group to share what they observed in the many scenes that were dramatized. Then, I direct sharing to the role of the teacher in the development of students' autonomy. We talk about times when "give or deny" becomes a dilemma because there is no "right" or "wrong" answer. The teachers also spoke of the act of educating as presenting students with challenges at a medium to medium-high level, so they, as they try to overcome, learn and develop. With students with disabilities or severe learning difficulties, the reflection on "the teacher with a feeling of pity" arose. The penalty, the group concluded, of the teacher who "gives unconditionally", is that such "giving" causes the student to remain in a child role or to lessen their learning objectives.

The dramatic work in this book also helped the group reflect on sociodrama as a teaching method. Several teachers shared ideas they had from this experience, such as using dramatic techniques to approach philosophical texts more deeply; theatricalize moments in the history of Portugal and ask students to change the course of this story; dramatize current news and give them different consequences, in the discipline of "Citizenship and Development", and so on.

Being a training group, where one aim was to show sociodrama as a teaching method, I finished the session with a "didactic processing". Here, I shared with the trainees what my goals were, how the session was planned, what were the changes to the planning I did spontaneously, "in the moment", what I could have done otherwise, what went less well and what I could have done better. In this part, the students show their perceptions about what, how and why I conduct the class in this or that way. They explain how they are planning to apply sociodrama in their own teaching practices. In classes like this, after the didactic processing, I usually divide students by scientific area of teaching (literature, mathematics, biology, arts and so on), and I ask each group to design a lesson, using this present session as methodological inspiration.

3. Notes on co-direction, shared direction, and self-directed groups, in training contexts.

In the previous items, I presented examples of sessions related to the theme of Teacher Training, Inclusion, Diversity… fundamental themes to achieve the objectives of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Education. I believe sociodrama is a powerful way of transforming attitudes towards these goals. But I also believe that this transforming is even greater when two or more persons direct a session together in training contexts. This evidence comes from my experience coordinating a post-graduation course and leading a group of research-interventions on sociodrama in teacher education, in Brazil. Here, I will present three situations:

3.1. Co-direction: when sociodramatists direct together a training session.

In what I call "planned co-direction", directors predetermine which one will direct which part of the session. There is a clear alternation between the directors throughout the session, for example, when one director handles the warm-up of the session, another the dramatization, and another for sharing. In other cases, the part that each one directs, can incorporate the warm-up, the dramatization and the sharing, as if there were several "small sessions" within a larger session. On the other hand, I call it "spontaneous co-direction" when directors don't predetermine which one will direct which part of the session. Sometimes, with such a subtle alternation between the directors, it becomes almost imperceptible in the eyes of the participants. This co- direction is more demanding since there needs to be a very mature interaction between the directors. Here, the session starts with the director who feels warmer to lead at that moment. The other director functions as a "complement" to the first, completing phrases or ideas that were not clear, and/or positioning themselves in strategic places in the space so that the participants can better understand or capture the instructions.

In co-directed classes, trainees see different ways to direct the group along the same path. They receive guidance from different sociodramatists and respond to each one according to the instructions they give. Students witness the interaction between the directors throughout the session: from their verbal communication (the words they choose to say) to the non-verbal communication (the exchanges of looks, the facial expressions, the expressions of the hands and body, the distances between directors, closer or more distant). By bringing these observations into conscious awareness, directors can highlight the themes, like diversity or singularity. Directors can reveal some of their "stories of co-direction", telling where they met first, when they started to co-direct, what are their major differences, their uniqueness, or what makes them complementary. When the purpose of the session is to teach sociodrama or Action- Based Learning techniques, participants can better understand concepts such as "Moment", "Spontaneity", or "Tele". It can likewise be useful to unveil a) what was the plan of the session before it happened, b) what actually happened during the session and c) explain why and how directors decided, on the spot, to change the course of the session. In a few words, how they agreed with each other on what they would do, or how they "perceived" each other and changed what they had planned.

Co-directed sessions increase the raising of more complex points of view. Sessions are more likely to achieve their goals and to be more transformative for the participants. Of course, besides that, co-direction also refines the very act of directing.

3.2. Shared direction: when an expert sociodramatist runs a session together with a trainee.

Shared direction has similar effects to co-direction but, in this case, it has a much more precise formative function for the trainee. Here, the trainee takes part in all the

planning and preparation of the session, including: the design of the scenario, the organization of the material that they eventually will need (depending on whether the session is face-to-face or online), the reception of the participants, the direction of parts of the session, an active participation in commenting on the sharing and synthesizing of the session. As important as planning and execution, is the evaluation that takes place after the session, in a meeting only between the trainee and the director. In this evaluation meeting, both discuss the details of the session in depth. The complicity between the director and the trainee is essential to create autonomy in the trainee, as a future sociodramatist.

3.3. Self-directed group: when one trainee directs a session for the colleagues.

"Self-Directed Groups" was one of the Curricular Units (CU) of the postgraduate course which I had the honour to coordinate. In the training calendar, this CU took place every 15 days during the academic year of the course. In each class, one student ran a sociodrama session, having their colleagues as the audience. No teacher was present in this class. However, each student had a tutor-teacher who guided the planning of the session and then analysed the report that the student had prepared for the session, with the help of the entire group of students. Then, this teacher-tutor meets the group to give feedback and discuss the appreciation of the session.

The purpose of self-directed groups is to allow students to gain autonomy in the role of director, in a safe environment, with the supervision of an experienced sociodramatist and the co-vision of their training colleagues.

Once again, here we can see how sociodrama contributes to achieving the goals of sustainable development for education, if the sociodramatist's training explores respect for the other, for human diversity, promoting inclusion, equity and quality in education and in society.

4. Coming to a close

In this chapter, I have presented sociodrama as a method that makes it possible to achieve UNESCO's objectives for education, as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We have seen that sociodrama, because of its own characteristics, has values related to social justice, equity, tolerance and respect, among others. I sought to show, through some sociodrama sessions, how we can train teachers and other professionals, in a way to "provoke" inclusion, not only in school settings, but in other non-formal and informal educational contexts. With some notes on co-direction, shared direction and self-directed groups, we saw that the sociodramatist's training can (and should) happen in a collective, creative and participatory way.

I hope these pages bring some inspiration to those working in education, in its broadest sense.

At this very moment - one year and two months after the start of the SARS- CoV-2 pandemic - my greatest dream is that these words can infect you, completely, with hope, delicacy and tenderness.

Lisbon, spring of 2021.

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"As if we were not talking about what we are talking about…" Sociodrama in a University Setting

Krisztina Galgóczi

Summary

In this paper, I will discuss the experiences of a few years of implementing sociodrama in a university in Budapest, Hungary, and look at ways of adapting the method to university expectations and frameworks. I will follow the process of looking for solutions to the specific challenges of the field and trying out different approaches. The classes were held together with colleagues, and sometimes alone, which is why I use plural in some cases and singular in others, but the preparation and processing was done together. At the end of the paper, the reader can also learn how to write a sociodrama.

Keywords

Introduction

On the last day of our very first PERFORMERS 2 training session three years ago, the well-known British sociodramatist Diane Adderley (see her chapter in Part II), demonstrated a timeline with me as the protagonist. We started from how I came across sociodrama and got to what I wanted to achieve with this work. One of the goals I set was to get sociodrama into education and especially into universities as at least a special course. This goal has since been achieved, at least at the university where I teach as a guest lecturer[1], and I hope it will reach more and more universities in the near future in Hungary.

Context

Are you familiar with the feeling that, wherever you go, it would be so good to apply sociodrama, like the hammer that wants to drive a nail into every object. It comes in waves. Sometimes we are not so sure because we see that the way the world operates

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[1]   Special thanks to Ági Blaskó (see her article in Part II) for inviting me into this work and for the methodological development we are working on together. It has inspired me a great deal.

is a little different, that the world does not work entirely according to the principles of Morenian drama. So, anyone who teaches, in any school, is looking for ways to introduce this method to the students, to bring this knowledge into teaching. But why do we want this? What is it about sociodrama that we are so keen to share? How can sociodrama enrich university education and complement traditional forms of higher education?

Every field has its own specialities, including universities and the different types of universities within them. We focus sociodrama differently in an art university, in a medical school or in a police college, even if the similarity is obvious; we implement the same method in institutions of higher education, but each institution has its own culture and organisational climate. There is no fundamental difference, though, in the fact that sociodrama, by its very nature, teaches democratic thinking, increases empathy, stimulates cooperation and awakens creativity. If it works well, it will have this effect in all areas, with different emphasis. However, there can be big differences in the application of the method depending on this, even if they seem small from a distance.

In the following, I will report on my experiences at the Department of Sociology and Communication at the BME (Budapest University for Technology and Economics) in the last few years (2018-2021), where I and my colleague taught joint or parallel sociodrama courses every semester, which provided an exceptional opportunity to make methodological comparisons. In our parallel courses we sometimes tried to follow the same structure or to look for alternative solutions together. We jointly ran a pilot course for students who had experiences with sociodrama, with the specific aim of acquiring some techniques that they can apply in their future work. This collaborative work, which has been going on for years, has been both a methodological development and a continuous refinement of implementing sociodrama at the university, a process we are not yet at the end of, but which is enriched with new aspects every semester.

Possible paths

There are many ways to use sociodrama at any level of education, including university, depending on what you want to do and what you have the potential to do.

The most common case is when drama is used in a traditionally led course on any subject and is used as a pedagogical tool to make what is being taught more experiential, more visual and more tangible. This is how dramatists most often begin to introduce drama into their own teaching practice; they introduce it little by little and then use it more and more because they find that it produces highly effective and complex knowledge. It could also be called active knowledge: what we experience through drama is not ephemeral knowledge, but is built into our thinking.

The next stage is when a subject is taught through the use of sociodrama, so sociodrama becomes the pedagogical methodology of the course. The subject of the sociodrama to be studied is then the subject of the course: it can be a historical

event as well as the study of group dynamics or the functioning of direct human communication. In other words, courses that aim to familiarise students with and/or master intra- and inter-group behaviours, modes of operation and patterns of action through sociodrama.

The third and most daring option is to offer a sociodrama course – usually in the form of special colleges – with the explicit aim of introducing students to the method and developing their social self-awareness. For students of psychology, sociology, social work, it is almost indispensable, but I think of all those who are directly working with people as newly qualified teachers, nurses, doctors, police officers or tax lecturers. In this case, the course also aims to enable students to carry the theory and ethos of the method forward into their future work, and to apply some of the simpler drama techniques themselves. The main aim is therefore to learn and, where appropriate, change the way students work as a group or in a group, so there is no external curriculum on which the group works.

In the following, I will present some questions and examples of the last two forms of sociodrama application, drawing on the teaching experience of special colleges of group dynamics and sociodrama courses.

Our goals

As we were teaching students majoring in communication and media, the development of social self-awareness and communication skills, understanding and applying the dynamics and laws of a group were in most cases the primary objectives of the courses. In sociodrama courses the emphasis was more on the former, in group dynamics courses more on the latter. Nevertheless, the truly unique pedagogical potential of sociodrama stemmed from its social laboratory character, the fact that any social and/or human phenomenon can be represented, tested and modelled on the sociodrama stage. We can test and examine what happens when just a single component of a system moves out of its usual place. Through these experiments, as a co-benefit, students will develop empathy, tolerance, curiosity, hope and a sense of social and individual responsibility. Students learn a way of looking at things, learn a way of thinking, try out and experiment what it is like to be in the other person's shoes, and take this knowledge with them to their future workplace, family, NGO, etc.

So, when we promote a sociodrama course, we do so with the hope that the students who graduate will not only have a better understanding of group and social processes, but will also be better team players, more conscious decision makers and more responsible citizens.

Framework questions

Drama, role play and acting do not have a strong tradition in the Hungarian education system. Drama is not part of the national curriculum and in most schools it is only

a special course, extra curricula, or a genre reserved for festive occasions. Students are not really used to the language of drama.

Thus the use of drama methods in a curriculum based essentially on a knowledge-centred approach creates a new situation for students. Since the introduction of the Bologna system, interactive and skill-building approaches to teaching have been gaining ground in higher education, but their use is far from widespread. On the one hand, the context of a university course is very different from that of sociodrama, where performance is to be achieved, then measured and evaluated. On the other hand, there is a common intersection between university education and sociodrama. Both aim to stimulate thinking, analysis, and discussion as well as the search for common answers and questions and a willingness to learn something about the world from a new perspective. This curiosity is the driving force behind both. At the same time, sociodrama within a university framework challenges the usual mode of operation for both the university and sociodrama. Changing the framework not only has a strong effect on group dynamics, but also has methodological consequences. Below I gather a number of aspects that are likely to occur in this field and raise methodological issues.

Voluntary participation

While volunteering is not fully realised in many other fields in a sociodrama occasion or process, such as organisational development or conflict resolution, we still strive for it. In the case of a university course, volunteering is questionable in several ways, since even if students are completely free to choose their courses and know what they are freely undertaking, they are doing so within a hierarchical system in which they are vulnerable to the instructor. In this sense, students' voluntariness is illusionary. It could be said, of course, that in institutional sociodrama, voluntarism is always questionable, and is never fully realised. In a teaching situation, when we encourage students to formulate first-person experiences through role playing, it is important to take this into account.

It should also be remembered that an action-based class like this is different from the hierarchical, less personalised, theoretical classes at university, hence may make some students comfortable, but others uncomfortable. It is therefore important to be as specific as possible in the syllabus about what we will be doing, what students can expect, what will be expected and what will be assessed during the course. However, this is not enough, as many students do not read the syllabus or read it only superficially. This is why it is of paramount importance to clarify the framework, the requirements and expectations, how we will assess results and what our promise and purpose is at the very first lesson.

A person's reasons for choosing the course also makes a difference. Was it the only one at a good time, do the students need these credits for their final exams, are they interested in the method or the subject? These questions may not seem significant in another learning process but clarifying them with a drama course can help in building

healthy group dynamics and trust. One of the consequences of the laboratory situation is that every day phenomena, to which we are not used to attributing meaning or significance, are put under the microscope in a class when using the sociodrama method. This phenomenon could be, at a given moment, why someone chose this course, or what being late means to whom, or how someone relates to a task. For example, in the first session, we always display sociodramatically why students have taken this course. Were they more attracted by the subject or the method? The purpose of this mapping is to know who is motivated to attend the course, what kind of warm-up we need, where we need to start off.

And finally, there is the possibility that someone takes up the course because they really liked the announcement, but after the first lesson they realise that it is not for them after all. Others might take the course because it is compulsory, but then they get really uncomfortable with the method. In this case, the sociodramatist should be prepared to offer an alternative way to participate and complete the course. They can be participating as a critical friend or a journalist who writes a diary of the sessions.

Assessment

Moreno's action methods, including sociodrama, are based on spontaneity, so the group does not act out pre-written scenes or stories, but builds on the action of the moment and encourages free connections in action. The moment we start to evaluate the presence of the students, we kill spontaneity and turn active participation into compliance. It is therefore optimal to be able to separate the creative activity in the class from the assessment. Again, this is highly unusual in education, since assessment is a way of giving feedback on how much a student has developed in the skill, mindset, knowledge, or approach that is being taught. We do this, but in a slightly different way than in traditional courses. We try to base the assessment on several pillars, and obviously class attendance plays a very important role as students get continuous feedback not only from the leaders but also from the other group members. The active participation, the creative contribution to the unfolding of the topic and the energy invested in action will pay off immediately, as it will influence and inspire the other group members, making them more active, and therefore having a direct impact on the students' contribution. But in addition, we always provide literature and writing exercises to help integration and processing. Students can be called on to write process analyses, tracing the evolution of a topic during the process, to give technical observations, or to do some other creative tasks.

Contract with the group

Although we start every sociodrama occasion or process with a contract, in a university setting it will be all the more important because full volunteering is rarely provided.

The first phase of the contract is the syllabus, which students see and read before taking the course. As with all other pre-contracts, such as advertisements or written proposals, it is true that these can only orient students, arouse their interest or, to the contrary, discourage them from wanting to participate.

A real contract can be created in the first lesson between the group and the leader. Then we explain what we will assess (mainly active class participation and a written assignment) and also include the needs of the students. We listen to their expectations and, if necessary, we can use sociometry and make a sculpture or a vignette to give them a taste of the method. In the meantime, of course, we also explain what the course has to offer and then summarise and write down on paper or on a whiteboard what our objectives are and what tools we plan to use to achieve them. This is our contract and it is up to us, the leaders, from now on to emphasise it and to make clear to students that a contract has been made and that they are active participants in it. If there is any change in the circumstances or the subject, we re-contract – see my example below. The NO rule – everyone can say 'no' to any invitation – which is stated at the beginning of every course, allows the students some leeway, although they rarely use it.

Despite all these difficulties, our experience is that students enjoy the interactive class. They like to play, they enjoy experimenting and they can learn at least three important things: what it is like to be in another person's shoes, what it is like to experience personal responsibility in a process, and what it is like to create something together. Sociodrama works very well in a university environment precisely because it not only allows but also requires explicit and frequent reflection, that is, one has to constantly look at it and see what one is doing from a different angle.

Specificities of leadership in a university context

As sociodramatists, we are used to leading a group in pairs, but in a university setting this is not common practice and it is unexpected for most students. In one of our first groups, my co-leader was an auxiliary ego and note-taker at the same time. She often took on a role in the classes and then in the discussions that was closest to the students, so she often voiced content that the students did not dare or could not yet articulate. For me as a leader, it helped to see the group process in a more realistic way. Unfortunately, this is not always possible. The lack of dual leadership therefore creates a more difficult situation for the leader because they can only rely on themselves for preparation, processing crisis situations, process analysis and also for directing the drama. It was an enormous help with the parallel courses that we could at least discuss any difficulties, questions, find solutions together and see which group was where in the process. The other strategy we used – where students agreed – was to record the lesson so that, in preparing a session, we could not only rely on our own notes and memory but also look back at what had happened. This worked best for online groups.

However, the leadership role in this field also has much greater challenges, as the leader is present in the group space together with the teaching role, even if we try to

separate it as clearly as possible at the beginning. It is worth clarifying and separating the two roles on at least two levels. One is the level of expectations and assessment, as students attend a class primarily because they need to complete the course for their degree. The other level is the way the group is led, and the most important task in this role is to create an atmosphere in which the students' spontaneity and creativity can be awoken, i.e. the leader does not activate the role of the *student meeting the expectations*, but the *open, curious student* who is willing to reflect on their own behaviour in the group and draw conclusions from the knowledge thus gained. But this is not the desire of all students at first. Even if they had read the syllabus and were happy with an interactive course, they still didn't know for sure, or if they did know, they couldn't truly assess what it might involve since they hadn't had such an experience before.

When we work in person, we do this by putting two chairs on the stage. One of them represents our role as the teacher. From here we tell them the requirements we have set to complete the course, for example at how many classes they need to be present. The other chair is for the sociodramatist, from which we will lead the sessions, which differs essentially from the role of the teacher that includes, for example, performance assessment. This role is not interested in what the student knows or does not know in general but in what she or he is currently bringing to the common space. Often a third chair is added because we are not only present in these two roles, but also as a private person who is affected by what is happening in the group in the same way as all the other group members. This exercise is also a good way of introducing the concept of roles at the beginning of the course and of encouraging students to put their own roles on the stage if they feel like it. From there, we can demonstrate in a subsequent step how each role interacts with the different roles of the other members of the group, and how fundamental misunderstandings can arise in communication if the relevant roles are not linked. For example, if a student initiates something from the role of a group member and the leader reacts from the role of the teacher.

Separation of roles during the process

When everything goes well, the roles of teacher and sociodramatist can be well separated, but there are situations where it can be a real headache, for example when students do not fulfil the conditions that we agreed to, i.e. the pre-contract is not respected or taken seriously. For example, they do not come to class. With one group, which was a mixed group of freshmen to graduate MA students, I arranged a weekend block class with a parallel group. It was two small groups, and I thought a joint occasion with the other group would give both of them a boost. One group didn't turn up on the Saturday in question, the group that had been less engaged in social issues.

What does the teacher do and what does the sociodramatist do in a situation like this?

In the next class, an online session through ZOOM, I drew three circles on the whiteboard marking my roles as teacher, sociodramatist, private person, and I said a relevant sentence from each. I asked the students to name roles they were in at the moment and to say one sentence from each of those roles. Even in this first round, it was noticeable that they were surprised by the richness of roles with which these few people were present in a common, everyday situation. We learned a lot about each other. For example, some people doubted the seriousness of online classes, while others found it safer. The next request was to finish the sentence "I would be satisfied at the end of the course if…". I asked this question the very first time, but then the roles could not yet be differentiated enough and the students did not know what they could expect from this course. The feedback at the end of the lesson showed that this exercise had significantly increased the motivation of all group members by making them aware of the expectations of their colleagues. There was a significant increase in empathy and solidarity towards each other, and they began to better understand the stakes and why they were here and what they could use this opportunity for. Thirdly, I asked all the actors on stage what they could do to make these goals a reality. This proved to be the most difficult question. They couldn't speak from all roles, and the difference between the attitudes of the first-year and graduating students was quite apparent. One first-year student was annoyed that we were stalling: for him, taking responsibility was just at the level of how he did the assigned task. The MA students, on the other hand, appreciated that they had a say in what was considered an assignment. The results of this somewhat lengthy, meticulous work are reflected in the responses to the question of with what they think the group is currently engaged. Topics such as 'how can we make the most of freedom?', 'does freedom make us happy?', 'how can we find common ground despite our differences?', 'how can responsible planning for the future be reconciled with individual needs?', and 'where is our responsibility?' Finally, we addressed the latter two with a sociometric choice in a protagonist-centred sociodrama proposed by a first-year student who, since starting university, has not yet taken a class in person, only online[2].

This episode happened around the middle of the semester and was followed by very intense work. This time, the students were given the task of coming up with an assignment for themselves during the semester, which they would carry out together. I was excited to see what they would come up with. A month and a half later, it turned out that the group had chosen responsibility as their topic for the semester. First, they created a problem cloud, very similar to the way we drew a problem map for a concept together, and then they co-created a collective paper in which they put together individual essays on different aspects of responsibility.

This example, in fact, brings us to the other major issue that can arise in a university course. What's going to be the group's main topic and how will it be formed, bearing in mind that a sociodrama course is not announced as a thematic course but as a course on social self-awareness, group dynamics or methodology.

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[2]   This course took place during Covid lockdown in 2020.

Choosing a topic

There are courses that use sociodrama to deal with a predefined topic on which the group will find a specific question or aspect of the topic that interests them most. In the case of courses that promise to explore a general social psychology phenomenon using sociodrama, such as group dynamics, communication development, or sociodrama itself, there is a big question as to what material the group will work on. In a non-educational situation, there is usually a goal, a task or a question that the group wants to solve together. Students who take a sociodrama or group dynamics course do not want to solve anything, they do not even think about the possibility of doing so, they hope to learn something practical in an interactive course that they can use in their future work.

External field vs the issue of the group

In the first semester, we used two contrasting strategies with two parallel groups. One group visited an external field, a youth detention centre, for which they had to prepare and then process what they had experienced there. The other group had no external help at all, they had to work on a topic of their own choice. Neither group had an easy job, as both had members who felt they had not chosen what they wanted to do, or who would have preferred to do something else. Out of the six groups I have held over the three years, the strongest resistance I have felt in a group arose when we did not specify any topic beforehand, but said openly that we would deal with what the group brought up, i.e. we would go directly to the topic that concerned the group. At the beginning of the course, the students are much more exposed than later when they already have some experience of how much to show about themselves. This is why the biggest danger with this version is that the students are likely to bring personal issues and it is easy to slip into psychodrama. However, the alternative, where the group visited a detention centre and participated in a joint session with young people in pre-trial detention, worked very well. Such a visit to an institution raises so many issues and offers so many shared experiences that it provided enough material for the whole semester and triggered a lot of processes in the group of inmates and students.

When the teacher brings the topic

The birth of the third version was actually inspired by the process of this last group, which had to find its own topic. As we tried to put the social context around the emerging personal stories, we were led to the question 'what kind of society would you like to live in?' Let your imagination run wild, we added. This group gave us the idea to announce a thematic course for the next semester, in which we invited students to explore this topic sociodramatically. The choice of topic was also motivated by the intention to enable students to look at their own choices and plans, in the

context of their being on the threshold of adulthood. In the two parallel groups, this topic worked in different ways but essentially students were not really engaged by the word *social* per se. It was as if it covered some boring, obligatory, uninteresting phenomenon, or it was not entirely clear to what it referred. Whether this ignorance stems from the devaluation of the word social, a reaction to the era of socialism, or from disillusionment at recent political change is hard to say, perhaps a little of both. We have therefore concluded that it would be better if we did not formulate this question ourselves, but let the students find it for themselves, in the hope that it would be more exciting for them. Let us talk about society as if we were not talking about it. As if we were zooming in from a drone, sometimes zooming in on something that grabs our interest, other times looking at the world we live in from a wider perspective. But to do so, we need to kick ourselves away from the ground and take wings. That's why, in the following semester, I focused on story weaving. I returned to the organic way of finding a group issue, this time through a fictional story in an attempt to protect the privacy of the students.

Storytelling[3]

Recognising the importance of storytelling is the main outcome of this three-year long PERFORMERS project for me, which also gave the framework in which this book could be published. Being a literary person, it's strange for me to write this sentence because as a teacher, parent and author, stories have always played a central role in my life. As a sociodramatist, however, I paid less attention to them and was more captivated by the action that emerged out of the moment. It has become clear to me over the years that sociodrama alternates between the ebb and flow of storytelling and the vibrant staging of situations, giving the process its unique rhythm. Last semester I organised my sociodrama courses around storytelling. Two parallel courses started simultaneously during the 3rd wave of the Covid pandemic, and students were very disappointed to see that the classes were going online again after the lockdown of the previous semester, whereas last year in the first wave of the pandemic our experience with the pilot course was that it was an oasis in the social desert. This semester I had to struggle much more with the complaints of the students that we still could not meet in person. The students were in a very different mental state than in the spring.

So we worked online, using mixed media. We used a whiteboard to find the topic and reflections, but for the action we mainly used a zoom stage. I started the same way in both groups: I picked up a little green puppet and asked, who is this? The group collectively created the persona of the green manikin, created his social and then cultural atom, and from there we started to play, zooming in on the part of the cultural atom that most interested the group members or looking at a particular theme

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[3]   Special thanks to Ron Wiener, whose creative drama group gave me lots of ideas of how to play with story weaving.

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from the perspective of different actors, who were gaining more and more defined characters. Starting from a fictitious cultural atom, we built a micro-society on the whiteboard and enlivened it each time. The students became creators, developing roles, constellations, conflicts. They could try out how they would be affected from a given position, what the outcome of a situation might be from different roles. Many times we also looked at what it is like to take the story in one direction and what happens if it goes in another. The two groups were of course very different. One was initially more interested in public spaces and social problems, while the other was more interested in residential spaces, small communities, and private spaces. Accordingly, one group spent more time on the topic of changing the university model, which was a hot political topic in Hungary at that time and was concerned with how different student roles could be used to defend themselves against authoritarian decision-makers. For the other group, a pub was the first community space to be put at risk because it had been hijacked by an influential person, and then the inhabitants of an old block house in Budapest were involved in exciting situations. Thus, current social issues were put on the agenda and the students seemed to be very interested. The indirect method – not labelling the course with social issues but drawing out the issues that the group was concerned with through a fictional story – seemed to work.

The power of a story

The spring of 2021 will probably enter the history books not only because of the Covid pandemic, but also because of the forced change of the university model in Hungary. One group, as mentioned above, was particularly affected by these political upheavals, and on one occasion arrived in a really bad mood. They started talking about their fears of a post-Covid social opening. After a long period of isolation and separation, although they longed to be back socialising, go to concerts, party, stay up late at night, they were scared. They felt out of practice. It is also strange to get used to the idea that being around people is not dangerous. The confinement caused by the pandemic has intensified agoraphobia because it has reinforced the fear that the danger is greater among many people. Re-opening anxiety was the theme of the occasion, and I asked the students to find an analogous situation, one in which they had experienced both a desire for something but also anxiety about the possibility that it could happen at any time.

There were several options, but in the end the students chose the very situation they are in, or are approaching, the quarter-life crisis when the world opens up after university and they suddenly start working full-time and have to start living an adult life. They asked me to continue the story of Sam, the green man, with whom we started the course, who was then a graduating student being ground between his parents' expectations and his own desires. He has now passed that battle, of being a sociology student, and the students wanted to look at more options for the story. What if he chose what he wanted (sociology) and what if he chose what his parents

wanted (medicine). We sketched out two paths and went down one. They found out what kind of thesis he's writing, what interests him most, how his teachers support him. I then asked the student in the role of Sam to imagine that if anything could happen, what would be his dream job? Sam said, almost without thinking, that he would like to work in an EU research institute. It was quite unexpected to hear such a bold and ambitious plan, as so far there had been no indication that they were satisfied with their knowledge, the quality of the university or that they thought the training they were receiving would prepare them for a European challenge.

I was very surprised by the perspective that suddenly opened up compared to the limited life situations that the students had brought to the stage until then. I asked everyone to write on the whiteboard what Sam needs to achieve this goal. They wrote perseverance, courage, language skills, diligence, and as external factors only emotional and professional support. They also put professional networks on the board, which can be acquired through colleges for advanced studies, research groups and professional events, but there were no personal or political contacts, nor anything that is unrealistic or immoral. They sent messages to Sam from all these roles telling him what he needs to do to achieve his goal. And it begins to get closer and closer to a reality that initially seemed unreachable. Finally, the head of the EU institution was being interviewed. It turned out, that he would be very happy to welcome a newcomer from Eastern Europe, even if he was not a big party person (because we learn this, too, about Sam). In return, he can be counted on and can appreciate the conditions that Westerners take almost for granted. But what really came out of his words was that it doesn't really matter where he comes from, as long as he is decent and professionally competent. And from that point of view, there was no reason why Sam should not be a top candidate.

Sam's story started with a big dilemma at the beginning of the semester: he seemed to have a hard time standing up for himself, for his own ambitions. Two months later, in a story shaped by the group, he assumes that he could find a place for himself in a European research institute. The group has empowered its fictional character to believe in himself and formulate and achieve his own goals.

How to write a sociodrama

I thought this drama would be the climax of the semester, if climax is something that cannot be surpassed. We then worked on difficult topics, and then came the final session, exam day when the group presented the task they had chosen for themselves. I was prepared for a lot of options, but what they did was beyond my expectations, but not beyond my imagination. In truth, I had been secretly waiting for a long time for these two creative methods to come together, for the pre-fabricated story and free improvisation to flow smoothly into each other and inspire each other. What I didn't expect was that this would emerge just now, after a semester of online courses, after 14 months of extreme circumstances and social isolation.

They simply wrote a sociodrama.

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It was pretty surprising for me too, because I thought that writing a sociodrama is not possible. According to Rollo Browne, you can plan a sociodrama perhaps up to the warm-up, and according to Moreno not even that, as his main ambition was to achieve 100% spontaneity. These students created a combination in which there was a strong dramaturgical plan, the pillars and scenes of the storyline were set, but within that they didn't figure out what was going to happen.

Here's how they did it. We worked on Sam's story further for another session and looked at the above story in the variation where Sam goes to medical school, has a girlfriend and gets into a serious crisis. The group zoomed in on this thread in their final task and wondered what this story would look like from the girlfriend's point of view (at this point I should mention that the group was made up of all female students, the only boy having not returned after the first lesson). They had an extra meeting where they prepared the sociodrama. They did the social atom and the role atom of the girl, Lily, on a whiteboard as we did together for Sam and collected arguments for and against about a certain decision she had to make. They then sketched six scenes that would take place between Lily and the different characters in her social atom. As there were five students, it was agreed that in each scene the role of Lily, the protagonist, would be taken by somebody else, thus role reversals were built into the planning. The sixth scene was designed as a future projection, when they all meet again at a party two years from now and reflect on their current dilemmas. All we knew in advance was that Lily wanted to break up with Sam and was planning a trip to Asia.

That was the plan, that's what was shown on the whiteboard, and then the drama started. My only job was to watch, as if it was their exam. So they didn't write the play, they acted it out spontaneously based on the order of the scenes. This was a bit like I imagine Moreno's Stegreiftheater, with the important difference that there was a director and there were trained actors. These students in turn directed themselves, although this went virtually unnoticed as the scenes moved fluidly into each other. It was the most exciting theatre performance I've ever seen. What made it such a special experience? What made it different from what happened in every class over the course of a semester?

The paradigm had fundamentally changed. The drama that we used to do for research purposes, because we were curious about something, has now taken on a completely different function. It has become a performance presented by the students, and I had become a spectator. It became a performance, and the actors played with the awareness that someone was watching them from the outside (even if not completely outside) and needed to understand what she saw. The mere fact of this change, of preparing a dramaturgical framework and filling it up with content through improvisation, can be of enormous significance for the application of sociodrama in theatre. However, in a university setting, another aspect comes to the fore, the creation of a unique and unrepeatable mirror situation in which students played back to the teacher precisely what they had learned during the semester. It was as if they were reciting a biology chapter or listing the causes of the Thirty Years' War. They went through a complete sociodrama process: building a character through

drawing her social atom and role atom, brainstorming the theme, assigning roles so that everyone would be in the role of the Protagonist, Lily, and assigning the order of scenes by mutual agreement, thus distributing among themselves an important task of the director. One of them took the role of the director a little more explicitly than the others by asking questions from different roles that resembled an interview, so pushing the plot a little in the direction of finding out as much as possible about what was happening in the head of each character. For example, in the last scene, she asked Lily, returning from her trip, what message she would give to her former self, which is obviously not something that would be heard in a real dialogue, only on the psychodrama or sociodrama stage. I see this more as a way of rounding off the story and drawing a conclusion.

Actually the group showed me how they could use what they had learned to find answers to an important question: is it worth experimenting, trying out new things, dreaming boldly, choosing unusual solutions? They answered the question themselves at the end of the sociodrama process: yes, it is, despite all difficulties, because it makes one grow. So the teacher who used the method received precise feedback on what could be done with what s/he had taught.

When we start to teach sociodrama or just implement it in university education, our most fervent hope is that the ethos of sociodrama will infect students, and that after such a course they will at least participate differently in group situations, start a project in a new way, relate differently to people or groups with various views, be less prejudiced, to name just a few important things. We also hope, and this depends on the nature of the course, that they will be able to apply some techniques in their work. Much more than that has happened here. These students can from now on not only think about what happens to Lily if she breaks up with Sam, but also what happens if they change something in a system, for example their workplace, or they can map out how to get people to be more environmentally friendly.

If they can retain a touch of the spontaneity with which they have built and intertwined these scenes, they will make great teachers, communicators, journalists, creative writers or academics, even in an EU research institute.

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Weaving it all together: The Study Well Programme in Ten Action Methods

Jennie Le Mare

Summary

Join a journey with Action Methods. Follow a group of staff and student volunteers from the University of Leicester, as they become 'Study Well' facilitators. The Study Well programme is a four-session student wellbeing programme that uses applied Action Methods to help young people connect and build supportive relationships during their first year of Higher Education.

Keywords

Action Methods, Young People, Undergraduates, Support, Wellbeing, Transitions, Making Connections, Volunteers, Role dialoguing, Concretisation, Imagination, Future Projection, Surplus Reality

Number 1: Warm up

We are in the Physics and Astronomy Building at the University of Leicester. There is a circle of about twenty chairs in the middle of the room. All the tables and the remaining chairs have been pushed to the side or neatly stacked against the wall. People are milling about, greeting each other, putting bags and coats on or under the tables, finding seats in the circle. There is a buzz of anticipation in the room. Lecturers and members of faculty from Biological Sciences and Psychology; leads from Continuing Professional Development, from the University's Coaching Academy and Support Services; postgraduate and PhD students, all begin to settle.

This is the first facilitator training session of the Study Well programme and people are keen to get started. They are here as volunteers and have carved out time from busy schedules in order to help. They are specifically concerned for the new first-years, who are starting next week. They want their new students, who start their course next week, to experience connection with their peers, build strong and supportive relationships and feel confident to ask for help when they need it. They don't want them to feel isolated or alone, unable to cope with the increasing stress and pressures of University life.

The group is curious to learn, kind and purposeful; but there is some nervousness in the room too. There have been rumours of role-play and mindfulness meditation, which might

"Be *embarrassing!"*

The group is made up of successful people, many of whom have established professional identities and status in their fields. There is natural caution about stepping outside of these 'known zones'. There is also concern for the students.

"This has got to be right for them, it can't be too 'WooWoo.'" "I don't want to patronise them with childish games…waste the students time (or my own)."

Jos and I get up and introduce ourselves.

"*We are 'Weaver' and we work using Creative Action Methods, an approach developed by J L Moreno that helps people to learn and experience group relationships in a different way.* Creative *Action Methods create a more embodied style of learning that takes people out of their heads and "into action".*
"Activities *become more participative, people are better able to connect with their own inner solutions, and more creative parts of their brains are activated"*
"Creative Action Methods are experimental and intuitive. There are no mistakes, no experts. We follow natural curiosity, imagine other viewpoints, trust each other, don't over think things, work with a growth mindset and have fun!

The group responds.

"Fun sounds good!"
"I like the idea of doing something not too serious…I think this will really appeal to the students".
"I'm curious– but I'll need to know a lot more if I am supposed to use 'action methods' to deliver sessions".
"I'm not quite sure, but I guess the only way to do this, is by doing this!"

The journey begins.

Context

The Study Well Programme was piloted in the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Leicester over the 2019-2020 academic year, ending just prior to the first UK COVID 19 lockdown. It was conceptualised by Dr. Nina Storey, then jointly developed with Weaver (the company created by Jos Razzell and I in 2019).

The programme's key aim were to develop human connections, support student wellbeing, build resilience and foster important study skills. Staff volunteers and student volunteer 'demonstrators' experienced, and then learnt to facilitate specific action methods based activities. These activities in turn formed the basis of four undergraduate participatory sessions. The sessions were mandatory for the 300+ first year undergraduates in the School of Biological Sciences.

As Weaver, Jos and I seek to make Creative Action Methods as accessible and user friendly as possible for professionals in education, care and wellbeing sectors. 'Action Methods heighten intensity of experience through visual, aural, and kinaesthetic senses, and through working in the here and now. They spark spontaneity and creativity to explore new possibilities' (Ochs, P. 2020).

Commentary

'Warm up' is a crucial part of working with a group for the first time. For Jos and I this meant attending to the staff and student facilitator group on many levels. We wanted them to feel relaxed and comfortable enough to easily engage with the subject material, whilst also building their personal confidence as facilitators for their undergraduate groups. An important part of the 'warm up' for this group was helping group members feel connected to each other. Although, many individuals in the group knew each other, time pressures meant that they didn't often get a chance to work closely together. Establishing a sense of spaciousness, with time to be together, was very important to the group's dynamics and the quality of interactions in the space. Good warm up 'in addition to a brief cognitive orientation…fosters a sense of safety and trust and builds group cohesion' (Blatner, 2006).

A group's warm up, however, doesn't just begin 'in the room'; pre-planning and the ability to think about the group before meeting them support the process enormously. Jos and I often seek to gain insight into a group by taking the role of the group. Moreno and Zeleny note that this kind of role taking allows a person to 'broaden his insights and/or deal with representatives….more intelligently…learning cultural understandings in depth including appropriate actions.' (Roucek ed. 1958).

To further support our group understanding and warm up to the project, Jos and I also met with a Study Well core-planning group. Together we considered factors that might be important for both the facilitator-training group and the student participant groups.

Themes for the facilitator group centred on time pressure and workload of volunteers, as well as a lack of familiarity with Creative Action Methods. Thinking about the undergraduate groups focussed on the first years' potential feelings of dislocation and newness – including worries about independent living and the demands of higher-level learning.

We also spent time reflecting on the possible impact of cultural and systematic factors. For example, we considered the influence of the performative culture of Higher Education and how this would affect the groups. We decided that it would be important to consciously establish sessions as somewhere everyone could relax and have permission to 'get it wrong', without feeling embarrassed or 'less than'. We also emphasised that having fun and experiencing warmth and belonging was fundamental to the whole process.

Jos and I were also aware of tentativeness and possible distrust around anything considered 'alternative', or lacking in validity. This meant that we were mindful of explaining very clearly and concisely everything that we wanted facilitators to do in sessions, linking the action methods activities to concepts from neuroscience and positive psychology that have a well-documented evidence base.

We also wanted to respond to concerns in the core group about facilitator and participant shyness, and how more introverted or neurodiverse individuals might receive Creative Action Methods. Jos and I planned to use our three simple ground-rules to help people feel as comfortable and safe as possible in their groups

1. Do what is right for you – you know your own comfort levels
2. Be kind to others
3. Don't share experiences outside the group

We planned to set a group culture where 'everything is welcome', so if someone chooses not to actively participate there will be other ways to be involved. Overwhelmingly, however, we wanted to honour the warm heartedness that staff and student volunteers demonstrated in their keenness to be involved. This was something we focussed on a lot in our own personal warm-ups to facilitation. Jos and I wanted to be as openhearted and generous vas the group, matching and fostering the goodwill that was present from the ery first session.

Number 2: Making Connections – Mix and Mingle

The group are on their feet. People are standing in the space as if on an imaginary map. They have decided where North, South, East and West are and have positioned themselves relative to each other, according to where they live. Most people are clumped in the middle of the room, but there are some outliers. There has been a lot of interaction, everyone checking with everyone else that they are in the right place 'on the map'.

"I definitely need to be further over if you are there" "Oh you mean the other west"…(smiles and laughter).

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Jos gives the instruction to get into a pair with someone near you, to

"*introduce yourself and find out a bit more about your partner*".

The outliers partner up with each other. The room is vibrating with the hum of a dozen conversations. Occasional bursts of laughter rise above the animated background murmur.

The group are on their feet. People are looking to partner with someone they haven't talked to yet, or someone whom they know the least well. They ask,

"How are you right now?"

There is time to talk, time to share, then a new pairing. They ask,

"What went well for you last time? What was your growing edge?

The group are interested in each other. They are taking individual threads and weaving them into collective stories. They want to learn more and develop together.

The group are on their feet. They are used to talking, eager to catch up with each other.

"*How did your session go? What worked for you and want didn't?"*
"*My students loved the objects*" "*The time just went so fast, I couldn't fit everything in, but it didn't matter*"
"The students were all saying they loved having time to just talk to each other".
"I really felt I could sit back a bit more and watch them run with the activities".

All around, there is laughter and the camaraderie of a confident group of facilitators sharing together, developing their knowledge and use of Creative Action Methods. Colleagues are deepening and strengthening bonds that go far beyond learning new techniques; that go far beyond this project.

Number 3: Making Connections – Continuum Lines

"I love change. If something is new it's great. There are so many opportunities in life and I can't stand to be trapped by the same old, same old. If you can't change you die. That's evolution!"
"I hate change… I can't stand all the upheaval. I like what I do, I like my routines and the people I know. If things are working why change? A lot of change is just change for change's sake and you're no better off than when you started."

*"I'm kind of in the middle, I can handle newness and change, but I don't…like…
actively go out and seek it. I know things change all the time and I think I can roll
with it…Its even quite exciting, but I'm not…like…I gotta have new all the time
or I'm bored"*

The group are testing out a variety of responses to newness and change, ranged
along a "Continuum line" between "love it" and "my worst nightmare". They talk
to people next to them in the line and hear from people who are more removed. All
perspectives are welcome. People lean in, interested in each other's reactions asking
questions. Some individuals feel they would like to move.

"I've never thought about change in that way before!" *"I want to engage with
newness differently!"*

New, new, new. The group are also building empathy with their students. They want
to know how the students are feeling about starting a new course, living in a new
home, being in a new city away from family and friends. Everyone is curious, they
want to builds continuums to explore other issues. They want to discover as much
as they can about student responses to feedback, asking,

"How do we help students work with feedback more effectively?"

They are concerned about what students might be feeling on the heels of assessments
and after exams.

"I feel I aced it!"/"Think I did alright"/"Well I really messed that up!"

Each investigation builds a sense of confidence in the group. The group notice how
students are able to communicate their experiences without it being emotionally load-
ed or overly intense. They can share without words. Even the individual who has po-
sitioned him/herself by the door (they are so far on the messed up my exam end) can
tell his/her story and receive messages of encouragement from others. As he/she ab-
sorbs the words, self-assessment of success and failure changes a little -for everyone.

Number 4. Making Connections – Mapping

Creativity effervesces in every part of the room. People are talking, thinking, writ-
ing, throwing down pieces of paper that record their ideas. The untidy exuberance of
quickly penned inspiration flutters in the draft from swiftly moving bodies, darting
in and out of the central space. What behaviours are helpful and unhelpful for study?
One idea per sheet of paper boldly written in colourful ink.
    I give an invitation for everyone to collectively review the ideas, sorting similar
thoughts into clusters. Arranging different clusters in different parts of the room. The

group are bees, humming with activity, busily working to a common purpose. Their end product is a map, revealing two profiles, two polarities of what a student could be. How would each respond…to getting feedback, to learning, to negotiating the demands of study and work, to exam preparation, to experiencing a setback?

People identify with different behaviours.

> *"The episode carry on feature on Netflix is my nemesis! Before I know it I have watched half a series and it is 3 in the morning and the work still isn't done!"*
> *"I love a good system, index cards and colour coding are my favourites!"*
> *"I never stressed about work and deadlines. I couldn't really focus unless there was time pressure…and then I would always pull it out of the bag!"*

Being a student feels remote to some. They think back to when they were at University. It was a different world. People talk and reflect on now and then. They begin to move away from stereotypes and engage more with complexities.

> *"How can we approach students in a human friendly way, helping them to develop positive learning behaviours that enable success - but without seeming too critical?"*

Everyone wants to encourage the first year students and help them to build the perseverance needed to achieve high grades at degree level. The facilitators want to have real, compassionate conversations.

Context

Nina envisioned that, together, the four Study Well sessions would act as a safety net, providing touch points between staff and students throughout the academic year and creating opportunities for students to interact as peers. To this end, two sessions were scheduled in semester one and two in semester two, the timing of each session mapping onto particularly vulnerable times for new undergraduates, such as: the start of their courses (Stanley et. al. 2009); after feedback from their first pieces of assessed work - a key factor in how they establish their academic identities - (Whannell and Whanell, 2015); returning from Christmas break in January (Gunnell et. al., 2020); and around end of year exams (Thieman et. al.2020).

The literature discusses the need for such external support structures or 'remooring' (Ethier and Deaux, 1994) to help students establish fresh social support systems. New undergraduates are particularly susceptible to loneliness and isolation (Vasileiou 2019, Scanlon et al., 2010, Rokach 2000, Rokach 1989,), which unchecked can lead to negative coping strategies and poor self care (Cunningham and Duffy, 2019).

Commentary

In order to create the strong connections that would best serve the facilitator and student groups, Jos and I ensured that all four Study Well sessions incorporated creative action methods that foster experiences of togetherness. "Mix and mingle', 'mapping' and 'continuum line' activities gave the group time to talk and interact in low key and creative ways, simultaneously promoting constant fluid movement around the room and creating energy, momentum and multiple individual connection points. This ensured that the group developed strong bonds between as many of its individual members as possible.

Jos and I modelled each activity, showing how creative action methods would help student participants to become more visible and active and staff freer to interact - no longer trapped in the zone of the board. The facilitator group directly experienced the impact of a high participation approach, feeling the greater connectedness and openness to collaborative learning that this can bring.

'Mix and mingle' activities specifically helped the group get to know each other and build confidence, talking first in pairs, then in fours and then as small groups. Mapping allowed them to focus on shared endeavours working together as a whole group, investigating and building their group identity. 'Continuum lines' then gave space for diversity, opening up opportunities to learn from each other's differences. Mapping and continuum lines are examples of what Moreno calls 'logograms and spectrograms (Howie, 2010), where the space is actively used to help the group learn about itself.

The methodology of 'experience then do', 'learn then teach on' helped to build the facilitator group's confidence and awareness of how students might respond to activities in their groups. Jos and I incorporated lots of repetition in and across sessions so that there were multiple opportunities to practice in the safety of the facilitator group. Jos also enhanced the learning by pausing activities with her "imaginary remote control", offering suggestions or inviting questions so that the group could really get inside the purpose of each activity. Blatner (2006) notes the importance of this technique, which deepens understanding of both action and roles.

Number 5. Becoming a story teller – activating the imagination

"*It was getting up in the chilly autumn mornings that was the hardest thing at first. You see my mum would always get me up before. She would come into my room, bringing the smell of toast with her, putting a cup of tea next to my bed. Instead of wrapping my hands round a warm cup and gradually surfacing, when I first started Uni I was bolting out of bed at the last minute to make a 9 o'clock lecture…scrabbling around with my freezing bike lock…peddling madly and just making it in time….*"

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Jos has invited the student volunteer demonstrators in the group to practice their story telling skills. Can they use their bodies, use gestures to "show not tell"? Can they vary the pace of their narratives, build in pauses, draw mental images that open up the imaginations of the listeners, and engage their senses? Our imaginations are like muscles that need exercise, stories stretch and limber up our imaginations.

The 'demonstrators", practice their stories of starting University as undergraduates. They don't want this new cohort to feel alone, or worried or scared. They have top tips for settling into University life and want to pass these on. Some appear like stand up comedians bantering with an audience; some are artists painting pictures with their words; others are magicians casting spells. The staff facilitators who hear the stories are inspired. They want to hand over their roles as lead facilitators to the young volunteers. They feel the immediacy and value of what is being shared. Human beings are primed for stories!

Number 6. Role Taking

The stories told by the student demonstrators and the mappings of study behaviours have really helped everyone get inside the 'role' of a new undergraduate. People are exploring all its nuances. Some speak from the "party animal", "the feedback ostrich – head in the sand", "the motivated achiever", "the perfectionist – its all or nothing".

Staff counter roles appear, "a curious listener", "a frustrated communicator –*I can help if you tell me*", "a practical improver,

   "*I want feedback to be useful to you.*"

People swap roles and put on different personas. It is effortless and unforced. Fears about 'role-play' do not resurface. People take turns to occupy a role, offering a different perspective on it. The group just wants to gain insight.

They apply this to their undergraduate group facilitation, their own professional or study roles and work.

Number 7 Empty chair – role dialoguing with my inner coach

The group are working in pairs. They are exploring what can help them work more effectively in their job or studies. Each individual is working with three roles: 'me'; 'my inner coach' and 'my noticer'. There are two chairs and a designated noticing place. One person in the partnership is feeding in questions; the other is being guided between the three roles.

   "*What does working effectively look and feel like?*"

'Me' answers as fully as possible. Attention turns to 'my inner coach'

"Thank you for being here. What questions would you like to ask "me"?"

Partners move away from the chairs and into the 'noticing space'.

"What does "my noticer" see? "*I can see that "me" really values what "my inner coach is asking". It is helping her to really get how she keeps repeating the same behaviours again and again - just in case things work out differently this time! And from here it's just so obvious that it's time for her to put that pattern down and start to develop some new responses."*

All around the room people are moving in and out of chairs, stepping back into space, talking about what they perceive. As they dialogue between roles and gain perspective from an external noticing position, they answer their own questions, access their own inner wisdom to solve blocks and move towards their goals.

Context

Nina was keen that the Study Well programme not only addressed areas of vulnerability for the new undergraduates, but also promoted skills that support students' academic identities and success. She emphasised this both as a protective proactive factor, promoting increased levels of 'self-efficacy' (Denovan & Macaskill, 2013), and to ensure active and sustained engagement with the programme itself. Nina felt it was important that Study Well was perceived as something that could give students 'an edge' and make a difference to their potential achievements in the highly competitive field of the Biological Sciences.

Commentary

In our use of roles, Jos and I gave the group opportunities to build 'meta learning skills', including 'self-awareness', 'self-regulation of learning' and 'self- identity as a learner' (Colthorpe et. al., 2019, p527). These competencies are all closely correlated with the kind of gains Nina was keen for students to experience. For example, in exploring different facets of the 'new first-year undergraduate', participants could understand the helpful and not so helpful roles that drive study behaviours. Actively reflecting in this way builds two key roles of 'the noticer' and 'the choice maker'. 'The noticer' is in essence an invitation into the 'meta' space, whilst 'the choice maker' opens conscious awareness and considered decision-making. Blatner (2020) calls this the development of 'meta-role identity and skilfulness', something that promotes personal and professional growth.

   Using principles of "role taking", the volunteer students' 'demonstrator' stories deepened and personalised the group's reflection. The story of '*me* as a new

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first-year undergraduate' not only offers top tips to student participants but is also an embodied and more potent form of the role. It is unique and subjective, going beyond the generic to give a powerful vessel for projective identification. The whole group can use the presented example of the role to process their own version – perhaps dealing with the aspects they find trickiest in the safe container of an external story, knowing they are not alone.

Jos and I introduced role dialoguing/'speak as', and concretisation/ 'empty chair', to present the idea of 'recruiting' supportive roles as personal resources. We specified the role of 'my inner coach', as a way of encouraging self-efficacy, resilience and the development of good study management. Hearing from aspects of self by speaking as that part can often be more powerful than receiving outside advice, as it is rooted in a person's own wisdom and inner knowing. The use of inner roles draws on almost psychodramatic techniques, however, Hollander and Jaffer (2017) argue that these can be used 'instructively' and 'appropriately' in educational settings without becoming emotionally overwhelming.

Number 8. Choose an object say why

The group work in twos. Each pair takes its time to peruse a huge range of objects laid out on tables round the room. Some of the objects are stones and shells, pocketed mementos from the natural world. Some are normal everyday objects; detritus picked out of old drawers and swept up from forgotten and dusty shelves. Some are children's' toys, grown out of and discarded, but now bringing light to people's eyes again.

I invite the group to choose three objects, one to represent "my wellbeing", another to represent "what helps my wellbeing" and a final one that symbolises "a block to my wellbeing".

> *"I really chose this little dog because of its t-shirt. It has an "S" on it, which is like a superhero. Really it is small, but mighty…like there is all this energy just packed in there waiting to transform if it is needed. Like having a super suit under normal clothes. That's what helps me with my wellbeing. I know I have all this "super" energy inside. And I can just access it if things get tough"*
> *"I was instantly attracted to this shell. It is really smooth, almost polished on the inside and kind of rough and ridged on the outside. Why is this my wellbeing? Well sometimes I feel that external things, pressures in life or whatever can wear the outside down…and you have to be a bit tough on the outside sometimes to protect yourself. But on the inside things are different…hidden perhaps…under the craggy exterior. Other people may not see, but I know there is this beautiful smooth interior. It feels so silky and smooth to the touch. Comforting. That's always there. And that's my wellbeing".*

"I just had to have the Dalek! Its just so iconic… exterminate… exterminate… and that's what blocks me when it comes to looking after myself, really. Not literally a Dalek, obviously, but that kind of relentlessness. Feeling like there is no let up, no time for me, there is always something more important that has to be done. I know I would probably feel better and get more done if I took a walk or something…but its that damn Dalek in my head that just says you can't do that you're too busy!!! Exterminate!!!

As the pairs talk about their choices, they are surprised about the insight that is generated.

"I know so well on a cognitive level that I need to drink more water to improve my wellbeing, but I always thought that I just lacked the will power to actually commit and do it. Turns out its not will power at all, its my "googly eyes" [lifts up the small child's toy, some green plastic cartoonish eyes that's black centres wiggle all around]. This 'daydreamy' bit of myself just gets in the way…stops me hearing what my body needs. I like it, but I might just move it to the side a bit more, so I can actually connect with my body and realise when I need to drink"

Number 9. Sharing Circle

There is a large circle. There has been a lot of learning today and this is a chance to reflect together. There have been small 'pause points' throughout the session, chances to step out of the action and notice choices that are being made and why. But this is a chance for each person to speak, for every voice to be heard. Some share personal reflections about what they have gained from working with creative action methods, whilst others want to clarify technical issues with instruction giving in their sessions. Some want to penetrate down into the psychology of the methods themselves and why they seem to work so effectively.

"I know that choosing an object helps – I have experienced it. But why does it help? Why does it feel so powerful?

Perhaps, it is because the brain has a bias towards novelty and so stores experiences and learning associated with unusual events differently.

"*And lets face it, it is pretty unusual to be holding a toy plastic bath and talking about personal wellbeing*!"

People nod and laugh, empathising with the absurdity and truth of this experience. The reflection moves to the conception of 'roles'. One group member shares serious misgivings about the idea of a multiple, rather than a single self. Having different

parts of self that can speak to each other, feels too close to representations of mental illness.

"Talking to inner voices, letting them talk to each other! Is this splitting advisable?"

The group discusses the influence of culture. Someone feels it is the difference between polytheism and monotheism.

"In aboriginal cultures around the world, the environment, the mind and the spirit often live in many characters, speak in many voices".
"As a Hindu its in my DNA".

The group see themselves contextually. What's different, what's the same? Respect builds between individual members. There is a sense of being seen and valued for 'what we are'; group connectedness and wellbeing grows.

Context

Maintaining a balance between academic skills development, peer networking and learning around positive self-care strategies was a key consideration for Study Well. Nina was determined that the programme should not lose its focus on wellbeing just because students might find this problematic, or because the term wellbeing might be over used, ill-defined or perceived as something that is 'not for me'. Session three of the programme, scheduled for the 'January dip' and entitled "Build your own Brain for Success", focussed on student wellbeing and the development of positive self-care strategies.

Commentary

Session three was the most overtly personal of the four, demanding a greater element of sharing about the self and potentially generating more therapeutic interactions between group members. Even though conversations were solely focused to the development of wellbeing strategies for exam stress, Jos and I decided to use concretisation through objects to provide the emotional distance that some participants might need (Blatner 1997). Concretisation also has the benefits of reducing ambiguity, externalising thought processes (Kushnir and Orkibi, 2021) and helping people access unique insights.

   Using objects takes conversations away from the 'I', allowing individuals to talk more fluently and objectively. It is easier to deal with the objectified 'part of me' that is a "relentless Dalek", rather than some amorphous quality that hijacks or subsumes 'the whole of me'. Object choices can help people gain greater

clarity, untangling thought processes by bringing them out of their heads and 'onto the table'. Representative objects engage a symbolic layer of cognitive processing that is deeply memorable and helps anchor learning in a richer and more lasting way, utilising the power of emotional drivers in learning (Tyng et.al. 2017).

To give space for deeper reflection Jos and I not only gave opportunities for sharing in pairs, but also encouraged whole group sharing in a 'sharing circle'. This was more formal than in other sessions, giving the group a chance to be together in a calm and reflective way. In their student groups, facilitators offered participants the same opportunities to share, learning to accept each person's contribution without paraphrasing or re-explaining. Moreno describes this as encountering the other, 'eye to eye, face to face', having your voice heard in a group, seeing yourself in the context of others around you. (Kristofferson, 2014).

Number 10. Looking Ahead

There are pairs scattered around the room. Each partnership has a chair and a range of objects in front of them. One of the objects represents a positive future that they imagine for themselves. A further three, signify the most important actions that have made this future possible. Timelines are unfolding throughout the room. The future is next month, in three months time…six months down the line…a year. Some pairings are in deep conversation, picking up each object in turn and explaining its significance. Some have started to position a shell, a miniature padlock and key, a paintbrush, a pinecone, a pair of children's binoculars, a small woven woollen doll; stepping-stones to the future.

On the chair rests the future object itself. Once a person has this in their hands they sit on the chair and speak.

"Well it feels great to be here! I never thought I would make it through exam season! Talk about high stress! But I held my nerve and put the work in. And now I feel like I have really got my head round things. I can start next year just knowing I can do this. And I've got these brilliant results to prove it! I've generally done well in exams before, but it was interesting this time because I really prioritised my sleep, and that made a huge difference. I could think more clearly and everything just flowed… because I wasn't tired, I guess. When I've done exams before, I haven't really worried about things around work and revision, but being involved in Study Well has really brought home how everything is connected. Our bodies and how we feel does matter. I don't' have to load up on caffeine and just push through! This feels good…not like I'm on the edge of burn out. It's a good change a good place to be."

As they stand, their partner takes their place. The person steps back into the present. They hear their own voice from the future, giving them the advice they need, describing the actions they have already taken to realise their goals.

"*You are capable of getting brilliant exam results. Hold your nerve and prioritise your sleep. Everything is connected. You don't have to push to the edge of burn out. Your body and how you feel are important! You can start next year knowing you can do this!*"

People experience the power of their own wisdom.

Context

The programme's final session considered common "pinch points' for first-year stress – deadlines for work submission, exam times and transition to the second year. Nina wanted to maximise the positive impact that Study Well could have on exam preparation, not only in the sharing of experience and useful exam strategies, but also in terms of shaping how the processes of assessment are viewed by the students – reflecting on exams not as an endpoint, but as a stepping stone into second year studies, aiding transition. (Macaskill 2018).

Commentary

Jos and I wanted to end the sessions with future projection as it gives people the opportunity to speak from a desired future that already exists. In the context of higher education where future progression is contingent on performance in the now, we felt it could be especially liberating to give participants an embodied sense of their successful future. By utilising the world of the imagination and 'surplus reality' it is possible to speak from the future where the desired goal has *already* been achieved. The act of physically moving to a designated future space in the room helps people identify actions that have built a positive future from a perspective of success. As Kipper (2001) notes, the concept of Surplus Reality can alter the dimensions of time, space, and reality.

With an embodied and positive vision to work towards it becomes easier to construct a timeline from the present. Individual actions are framed as the 'steps I took' that created the future position, rather than speculative enquiry about what I could do to attain the goal. In this way the use of 'Surplus Reality' acts as a kind of mental 'guide wire' to help navigation at key transition points.

Study Well Moving Forward

The Study Well Programme received an award from the University of Leicester recognising its innovative approach to supporting Biological Sciences students, who

themselves gave overwhelmingly positive feedback about the sessions. Just before lockdown came into force, the department of Psychology at the University of Leicester had also arranged to run the programme and there were plans to extend to other departments, as well as second and third year Biological Sciences students. This was in response to feedback from student 'demonstrators' involved in the project, who felt that the challenges of University study continue throughout students' academic careers. Staff facilitators also fed back unexpected personal gains such as greater feelings of connection and belonging in their staff teams, some having also gained useful personal insights through the different activities. The staff also felt that the programme helped students see them as more approachable and more empathetic.

Despite the temporary suspension of the programme due to Covid-19 restrictions, Jos and I have continued to meet the Study Well core-planning group via zoom. They have been keen to highlight the even more pressing need for student support measures in light of the additional burden that Covid-19 places on students' mental health. We are due to pilot online 'keeping connected groups' for MSc students who are experiencing issues of isolation created by having to work remotely because of Covid-19.

Endnote to the reader

As I came into this project the UK national papers were full of alarming statistics that suggested in worst affected HE institutions 'one in five students drop out before the end of their first year' (Shamira, 2019). It was very important for Jos and I, for Nina and all the student and staff volunteers that the Study Well Programme represented a meaningful intervention for new undergraduate students, providing human connections and practical support. After all, Study Well was first and foremost a heartfelt response to the human stories that live behind statistics.

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GLOSSARY OF MORENIAN TERMS

Introduction to the Glossary

This glossary of sociodrama terms was worked out by members of the PERFORM-ERS 2 project as a collaborative learning process between the following members: Ági Blaskó, Margarida Belchior, Jana Damjanov, Krisztina Galgóczi, Valerie Monti Holland, Jennie Lloyd, Irina Stefanescu, Judith Teszáry, Mariolina Werner, Monica Westberg.

It was reviewed by Marcia Karp, to whom we would like to express our deep gratitude.

We were a collaborative international team who, together, were able to produce this result through a process of co-construction and co-creation. The Glossary was not planned when we started to work on the book, but we thought it might be useful, mainly for those who are newcomers to sociodrama.

This process of co-creating the Glossary had different phases and presented us with different tasks. We started by defining a list of the terms that should make up the Glossary. We then moved on to the more specific tasks, such as writing (done individually), reviewing, which included making suggestions for clarification and to move our terminology closer to that of Morenian theory (done in pairs), discussion and agreement on what was written (done by the group as a whole).

Each of us played all the roles, so the Glossary is the result of hours of collaborative work accomplished both through group discussion on ZOOM (synchronously) at a distance, using collaborative organisation and writing tools (asynchronously), and through individual work.

We know the result is not the 'truth'. However, it is what we can express now for each of these terms. And it still raises lots of questions for each one of us.

As we all are very interested to deepen what we know about, and how we practice sociodrama, please feel free to raise questions or make comments on this work or propose challenges to it. We can always make improvements in further editions. In fact, the process of co-creation continues, as we see this as a work in progress.

We look forward to hearing from you,
the Glossary team.

Glossary

ACTION or ENACTMENT is the phase of a sociodramatic process in which the group moves to action, using the body in the space, playing roles in order to find answers to a question or topic. This is a drama(tised) phase (drama, from the Greek, means action) in which participants are able to try different roles and positions, and therefore understand the issue better. On the stage, the group is given the opportunity to set out, understand, and modify a situation in which a social issue is acutely felt. The consequences and learning outcomes arising from the dramatic work can be further discussed and connected to reality in the sharing, reflection and processing phase.

ACTION METHODS, conceived by Jacob Levy Moreno, are a set of techniques designed to stimulate creativity and spontaneity. They have their roots in Morenian philosophy and use dramatic forms of co-construction to help foster relationships in teams and support individuals to improve their self-knowledge. These methods expand creativity, agility and the development of collective intelligence (Hanquet & Crespel, 2019). Both psychodrama and sociodrama use action methods, including: sociometry, spectrograms, doubling, role reversal, soliloquy, sculpting and role taking (Wiener, 2019).

The British Psychodrama Association website describes action methods as the term used to describe visual and role-based approaches to individual and group work. Action methods have been applied in many contexts, for example organisation, education, community. They can be used for personal and professional work such as job and relationship choices, conflict management, strategic planning, team building, review meetings, training and development events and community consultation. Enactments take place only after an appropriate warm-up and are followed by post-action reflection or sharing.

ACTION RESEARCH: Officially Kurt Lewin is accepted as the founder of action research. However, although Lewin can be given much credit for the achievements of action research, its origin has many roots. In spite of Jacob L. Moreno's contribution to the development of action research, this fact was ignored by the scientific community. Kurt Lewin was Moreno's friend and they often met in the 1930s. In social sciences action research is considered a research methodology that deals with the integration and participation of people in a process of social change. So, action research is about the study of a process of social change in

which a group of people, together with researchers, try to find a solution for an identified community problem, usually related to social justice. In such processes the group members, social actors, become the subject of the on-going change, as the researchers become group participants. There is a sharing of these roles during the process. In this way Moreno saw himself as the director of a socio-drama and started to call himself a social investigator. He considered that the members of a group, as auxiliary-egos, were social investigators and that he was also a participant member of the group. Moreno, by using sociodrama as a social research tool, reinforced the idea of action research and changed the status of the researched subjects turning them into research partners and social investigators. He also changed the status of the social investigator turned this person into a re-searched subject and participant actor. Some authors say that Moreno's writings about research are very close to participatory action research (PAR), an inclusive approach to research that stresses both community engagement in the research process and empowers participants as co-researchers and agents of social change. Other authors remarked on the influence Moreno had upon Lewin through his sociometry research in *Who Shall Survive?*, apart from their friendship, mentioned above (Giacomucci, 2021; Ius, 2020).

AUXILIARY EGO is a person who participates in a group, playing an active role in the scene. This can either be a co-director, student or participant. In most so-ciodrama sessions, if all participants are engaged in the play, in the action, we can say that they are also playing the role of auxiliary ego for each other. Group members all contribute to the group enactment. Moreno writes that the auxiliary ego has three functions: 1) as an actor, 2) as a therapeutic agent, and 3) as an ac-tive social investigator, rather than a passive audience member (1972). Choosing a role, or being chosen to play a role, is often a tele phenomenon and may have special meaning for a specific participant. The auxiliary ego is considered one of the five elements of both psychodrama and sociodrama, apart from the director, the stage, the audience and the protagonist – and, in the case of sociodrama, the group. (Marineau, 2013; Giacomucci, 2021).

CATHARSIS: The Morenian use of catharsis stems from the Ancient Greek term meaning purge or purification explained in Aristotle's *Poetics*. In the Morenian interpretation of the Aristotelian concept of catharsis, the process of catharsis is localised only in the spectator who, by living through dramatic events and iden-tifying him- or herself with the characters, finds temporary relief from deeper unconscious conflicts (Moreno, 1947). Moreno called this "the catharsis of the spectator", or passive catharsis. In his *The Theatre of Spontaneity* he went further, introducing a concept of catharsis that was localised in the actor – a process he named active catharsis. These two types of catharsis were integrated by the psychodramatic concept of catharsis (catharsis of integration). In the Morenian theatre the spectator him- or herself becomes an actor.

Psychodrama mainly focuses on personal catharsis. However, in the sociodramatic process the subject is the group and not the individual. This means that sociodrama's primary focus is collective catharsis. Catharsis in sociodrama occurs not only during enactment, but also in sharing where insights and recognitions break the surface.

CO-CONSCIOUS and CO-UNCONSCIOUS, as a part of the consciousness common to all human beings, binds and unites the members of a group and increases the empathy, the knowledge and the tele between them. According to Moreno, in a group prepared with an adequate warm up, a synergy arises between the members that allows an understanding and an awareness that are greater than the sum of the individuals. As for Jung, Moreno's theories and practice recognise the presence in every person of a co-unconscious as a part of the deepest unconscious that is common to all human beings, inherited from a very long chain of previous generations. The co-unconscious is the ground of common beliefs, archetypes, behaviour and instincts. Moreno's concept of tele (according to Monica Zuretti) includes BOTH the co-conscious and the co-unconscious, taking the sociodramatic and psychodramatic effect of the group's members working together into a deeper, wider, more adequate and more qualitative level. Co-conscious and co-unconscious is a mental process of reciprocal comprehension and interpersonal memory tied together through encounters.

CONTRACT: In sociodrama, the contract means on the one hand a contract with the wider social-institutional environment, and, on the other hand, a contract or agreement made directly between the director or facilitator and the group and group members. The function of the former is to embed the sociodramatic event into the broader social environment that is (or which may be) affected by the changes in the sociodramatic event. The contract is made with a group at the group's first meeting. It includes a definition of the frameworks of the group, a clarification of the method, and the topic. Regarding the frameworks of the group, the contract clarifies the specific circumstances, as well as the issues of confidentiality. The agreement of confidentiality has some specificity in sociodrama. It applies to personal content which might come to the fore during the sociodramatic session. Meanwhile, confidentiality is limited in the emerging themes, group outcomes and shared insights, as their spreading and dissemination within the institutional and social setting are one of the goals of sociodrama. It is good if the group also has a separate contract regarding making these results public. The contract about the method means that the participants will examine their common issues through action, and that group members will take responsibility for this work of common interest. The contract about the topic becomes more and more specific during the process of sociodrama, which means that it becomes more precise during the sociodramatic event, so the group renegotiates this point of the contract on the fly.

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CREATIVITY and SPONTANEITY are intertwined concepts in Morenian theory. Both concepts are linked to Moreno's mystical philosophy, which considers all human beings to be geniuses with the capacity to create. For him the ability to create something new – art, music, an idea, a new response, a child – was inherently godlike (Moreno, 1921, 2019). The Godhead, as described by Moreno, has 'the creator' – its creativity – as its most defining quality. He believed both spontaneity and creativity to be foremost spiritual qualities and emphasized the 'godlikeness' of all human beings. He writes that "spontaneity is the constant companion of creativity." For Moreno, the twin principles of spontaneity and creativity are the ultimate force underpinning all human progress and all human activity. He defined spontaneity as the ability to "respond with some degree of adequacy to a new situation or with some degree of novelty to an old situation" (Moreno, 1964, xi., Giacomucci, 2021).

CONCRETISATION is an action technique used in sociodrama and psychodrama, meaning "to change an abstract statement into something more concrete, which can be perceived by looking at a particular situation or by a physical experience of the emotion associated with that situation" (Blatner, 1991, 406).
We can use objects or our bodies to create a sculpture of our inner state. Or put a physical wall between ourselves and the other, if it is difficult to reach the other. We can be that wall and explore the psychological nature of the hindrance. Or, for example: my depression is like a black forest. And we can put a black forest on the scene and make an encounter with it.

CULTURAL ATOM or ROLE ATOM is a sociometric map showing the "pattern of role relations around an individual (or a group) as their focus" (Moreno, 1943) in a specific context: life, family, profession, society, passions, spirituality. 'Atom' because the person or the group is at the centre like a nucleus, and the roles are around, like the electrons. 'Cultural' because "a role is a unit of culture" (Moreno, 1977, iv). The cultural atom is a collection of roles of an individual or of a group towards the entities in their own social atom. The relationship between the roles can be the focus of exploration. Those can be congruent, contradictory, underdeveloped, well developed or overdeveloped. The cultural atom provides a structure for looking at units of behaviour and the operational links between them (Clayton, 1975). Cultural atoms are dynamic, they tend to change over time. They are useful for diagnostic, branding, creating communication strategies, job profiles, role training, team coaching, mergers and acquisitions, etc.

CULTURAL CONSERVE is a theoretical concept based on Moreno's theory and philosophy. It is very much related to the concepts of warm-up, spontaneity and creativity, but also to robopathy. It is everything that belongs to the social matrix which is already made and created as a product (a book, a painting, democracy, capitalism, patriarchy, religion, etc.). It is also a part of the accepted and dominant culture in a specific society. It can hold a strong part of the cultural identity,

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but it can also be an obstacle in the process of transformation for a society. In sociodrama we challenge the existing cultural conserve in order to renew and/ or create a new cultural conserve, which in its turn can also be challenged and transformed.

DIRECTOR/LEADER: The sociodrama leader has several different titles. Moreno himself, for example, often called the leader a director, referring to the theatrical root of sociodrama. At other times he talks about the leader as a social investigator, hinting at the social significance of sociodrama. The different names refer to the different, but generally simultaneous functions and roles. Director highlights the creative aspect of the role of leadership, social investigator emphasizes a role that is open to social issues, researches it and takes responsibility for it. According to his/her role in the group, the leader is one among other group members whose responsibility is to operate the sociodrama method. In this way, the group members are present as good acquaintances of their situation, and the leader is the operator or facilitator of the method. In the process of co-creating the director/leader is therefore responsible for sharing professional knowledge in order to unfold the basic frameworks provided by the ethos of sociodrama, to provide the method, and to create a space in which the group is able to explore and resolve its own issues together, in a safe and secure way.

DOUBLE is a key technique in Morenian drama in which a person (a group member, a trained dramatist, or auxiliary ego) steps into the role of somebody else. S/he physically doubles the person in the role temporarily. For this time they are both in the same role and the double expresses the experiences of the other (thoughts, emotions, connections to other people) in that role. In sociodrama the double tends to expand the social aspect of the role and, despite psychodrama, doesn't need validation.

THE EMPTY CHAIR is a Morenian technique and the inspiration for Fritz Perls use of this tool in Gestalt therapy. The empty chair technique externalises the inner images that we have of groups, social dilemmas, problems, a city, a country, a person, etc. For example, the sociodrama group can externalise the bombed city of Aleppo and the group can express their feelings of loss of their home, their friends and family, their hope.
The fundamental difference between Gestalt therapy and the Morenian use of this technique is role reversal. In sociodrama as well as in psychodrama the group or individual performs a role reversal with the chair (perhaps representing a city) and expresses its pain and wishes for the future. You can even bring the city to the scene and create a dialogical relationship and action, such as the rebuilding of the city.

ENCOUNTER is a core concept of Morenian philosophy and theory. Moreno is the founder of the group encounter movement, which started in Vienna as forerunner

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of the web-based social media revolution. Moreno influenced Martin Buber in his ideas of the encounter. Moreno started his publications in 1914 under the series title *Einladung zu einer Begegnung*, or 'Invitations to an Encounter', predating Buber's *Ich und Du*, or 'I and Thou' by nine years. Encounter is a face-to-face meeting and is the interrelatedness of human beings in the I-Thou relationship. Rather than simply experiencing another, we encounter them. A subject encounters a fellow subject's whole being, and that being is not filtered through our mediated consciousness, with its litter of preconceptions and projections. The I-Thou stance has a purity and an intimacy and is inherently reciprocal. In relation to others, we can step into an intersubjective space where two people coexist in (and co-contribute to) what Buber called the Between. In this Between lurks the vital, nourishing experience of human life, the real sacred stuff of existence. As Buber puts it: "All real living is meeting." https://iep.utm.edu/buber/#SH2b. The Morenian technique of role reversal facilitates and deepens encounters. In sociodrama we strive for a genuine meeting and a mutual understanding between different social groups.

FREEZING is a technique in which the director/leader stops a sociodrama action. It is usually used if the sociodramatic action needs to be looked at more closely and reflected upon; it can also be used if the group is stuck. The director/leader stops the action and asks everyone to speak from their roles. The director/leader can also ask the audience (the rest of the group) to reflect upon what is frozen. This can reactivate the group into moving forward in accordance with the contract.

FUTURE PROJECTION is a specific technique that has a number of applications. This is a technique with which we can investigate, test and research possible options or solutions, as well as dreams about the future. The group can create a new scene in the future, the time as designated by the point at which they expect, hope or need the issue to be resolved, or at least addressed. A stimulating question to start this can be: Formulate the common desired outcome you as a group want to try out and then act it out.

Future projections can also be used to investigate how different choices could affect an on-going situation (for example, shall we use coal, wind or nuclear energy?) or to investigate new fields (what can schools do for depressed youngsters?). This is a good technique to unblock a person or a group in their creative process and inspire creative responses.

GROUP DYNAMICS: The processes – psychological and behavioural – that occur in the interaction between the members of a group or between groups. These include the formation, development and structure of the group. In sociodrama, the director(s) and participants need to be aware of power plays, alliances, conflicts, hidden agendas and projections in the group, as well as between the roles and between the role clusters in the play. When expanding the system on stage, very

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often the processes that can be easily observed between the group of roles and the entities of its universe naturally mirror the underlying processes within that group of roles and/or within the group of participants. The quality of the group dynamics has a direct influence over the effect of the sociodramatic experience.

IMPROVISATION is a central term in sociodrama that refers to spontaneous acting in the 'here and now' of a scene. Improvisation is a spontaneous and creative act that has no script and encourages innovation. It is a building block of the methods as indicated by *The Theatre of Spontaneity,* founded by Moreno in Vienna around 1921. Today sociodramatists use improvisation as a way of promoting and expressing creativity. As a technique, improvisation pushes the group to imagine possible or impossible situations, find new solutions to old problems or search for ways to avoid the status quo.

LEVELS in SOCIODRAMA: In a sociodrama session, different levels of reality interact. There is the personal level of each participant in the session with their own background (identity matrix and history) and social roles (played in the present, the moment) and their own dreams and visions (for their future and for humanity), which can also be considered the micro level. These dimensions interact with how each participant relates with the group (the group of participants in the session, related with moment, the 'here and now'). This can be considered the mezzo level. The social level is the group and the broader social level with all cultural, social and political issues in which the group member lives, can be considered the macro level. There is still a broader level related to the cosmic matrix, another level of belonging related to nature, the universe, the cosmos, which is related to the personal and the group level.

LIVING NEWSPAPER is a technique created by Moreno early in the establishment of sociodrama, bringing together sociodrama and improvisational theatre. Moreno first used the term as we use it now, but later thought that 'dramatised newspaper' was a more accurate term (Moreno, 1977). The technique epitomises the sociodramatic approach. Moreno defined sociodrama as having two roots, 'socius' meaning the associate or fellow, and 'drama' meaning action. For him, sociodrama meant to play action on behalf of another, fellow, human being. The living newspaper is an improvisational enactment of issues, stories or current affairs that are represented in newspaper articles. The group that is playing them on the stage chooses the articles, or sometimes the audience can choose. The choice emerges from the group, not the leader of the group. The living newspaper technique invites deep reflection and sharing following the enactment, it is not purely the role playing of the newspaper articles.

MATRIX is a multidimensional network that envelops and holds a human individual and where it is being developed. Every encounter between individuals has in itself an encounter of genetic, identity, psychological, family, social, and cosmic

matrix. Usually, authors consider the matrix of identity that includes the most narrow setting where the individual develops, mainly the first caregivers and family; the social matrix, when enlarging the social setting with the school, the friends, the social groups and the society in a broader sense. The cosmic matrix is related to the spiritual dimension that considers nature, the universe, the cosmos. The matrix contains past, present, and future. It also means that the concept of I comes from We.

MIRRORING, or mirror, is a technique that enables the protagonist (or group) to see him or herself and way of behaving in a specific situation from the outside, as in a mirror. Immediately after having played his scene, the protagonist or group that is playing a specific role is placed outside the stage, beside the sociodrama facilitator so as to observe the same scene from a new perspective, interpreted by other members of the group (auxiliary egos). This 'eye opening' technique enables a more objective self-observation or group observation and can lead as a result to deep insights, or at least to a more realistic, broader or richer perception of the enacted situation. This awareness eventually allows a new interpretation of the scene and can lead to new and more adequate behaviour.

PROCESSING is when the sociodrama is analysed systematically. It can be carried out by the whole group or by the director. A sociodramatic event might be considered in the last phase of a session, or after the session.
There can be various aims, focuses, and methods with which to process a sociodramatic event. It can focus on different aspects of the sociodrama, and it can be based on numerous theoretical backgrounds.
When processing, we contextualise events that happened with the group during the session by comparing and connecting these events to:
– the session plan
– the methods and techniques used
– the attitude, actions and decisions of the director
– the different contextual factors affecting the session
– the original aim or contract of the session
– the dynamics of the group
– the results achieved
– the expected consequences of the session
– the social, existential, and moral issues present
This reflection can provide a rich source of learning for everyone involved and is critical to their development.

ROLE CLUSTER: A group of roles that have something in common, be it context, traits, interrelations, manifestation, the resources needed for the roles, etc. The term is used when grouping actors on stage playing similar roles in a story in clusters (groups). In a cultural or role atom it is used to group the similar roles that the nucleus has towards the different actors on stage. When we have many roles

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on stage, clustering helps contain these roles, initiate collective role reversals or rotations between the clusters, and address their issues or needs in due time, etc.

ROLE CREATION: Roles are created in response to situations and encounters for which no current state exists to effectively meet the challenge at that time. This is fluid and dynamic and roles may shift easily and quickly in relationship to the context and the people present.
Spontaneity is a key to this creative action and the role becomes 'a personal expression'. The evolving nature of role creation is intimately related to role development.

ROLE MAPPING is detaching from and examining roles in a system. It can be accomplished using people, chairs, objects, pieces of paper – any way of concretising the roles to identify them and the role relationships present. Role mapping can show the matrix of roles of an individual, which then offers space to take on a variety of roles, speak and/or hear from them, role reverse with them, double them, basically have an embodied experience of emotional connection with them in order to gain insight and move on from a stuck position.

ROLE NAMING: In sociodrama we identify social roles using nouns to describe roles that can be played by anyone, those roles that we step in and out of in society frequently or even daily: mother, father, police officer, teacher, etc., with each role having both public and personal aspects. One way of bringing more vitality and depth to naming roles is to add active, descriptive words such as loving mother, caring father, authoritative police officer, caring teacher (M & L Clayton). While the noun of the role (for example mother) shows the function in the relationship, the attribute (for example loving) shows the quality of the relationship and suggests the value which is most active in that particular relationship. It is important that the naming process should involve a mutual interchange. (Blatner)

ROLE PLAY is the collective name for acting out the part of a character, person or scene. It is a technique and a procedure according to which the participants act out different social roles and manifest their opinions, values, feelings, thoughts, conflicts in relation to another group or other individuals in dramatic form. Role play has a variety of purposes, for example it can be used for pedagogy, to transform conflict, to play out contradictions in society, to monitor a multidimensional social system, to try out future scenarios, etc. There is a difference between pedagogic role play and sociodramatic role play. In pedagogic role play the participants play general characters or made up scenes. In sociodramatic role play they play specific characters and authentic scenes.

ROLE RELATIONSHIP: The quality of each relationship can be explored during the role mapping session, the nature of which can benefit from the interactive play between two roles, possibly using role reversal, doubling and mirroring. We

look at the power balance, at the functions of the role and of the counter-role and at the values played out.

ROLE REVERSAL is a basic technique – the *differentia specifica*, or we could say central defining technique – of all Morenian action methods compared to other drama methods. Its main aim is to offer the players a perspective other than their own. In classical psychodrama, two players physically swap roles in order to step into the other's position and thus deepen their understanding of the other. A takes B's role and B takes A's role. They usually return to their original roles. In sociodrama, role reversal can be different and more variations are possible. A and B don't necessarily go back to their previous roles, but stay in their new role and develop it further. The same can happen among more roles, i.e. A, B and C change positions; or this can happen between role groups (clusters), for instance teachers can reverse roles with students.

ROLE TAKING involves assuming a role that has been named and created by another person. The technique gives the potential to expand this role through further improvisation, however the starting point will be the role that was previously established. The sociodrama director needs to make sure that the actor warms up for the given role, beyond stereotype.

ROLE THEORY is the basic theory of Morenian action methods and is related to the Morenian concept of self. Each role has a private and collective aspect.
Role is a general term in the social sciences that seeks to identify characteristics of behaviour in an effort to achieve a greater understanding of human intra- and interpersonal interactions. Moreno's definition of role, fundamental to Morenian action methods, is "the actual and tangible forms which the self takes. We thus define the role as the functioning form the individual assumes in the specific moment he reacts to a specific situation in which other persons or objects are involved."
According to Moreno, the "self emerges from roles" and not the other way around. These are not masks but authentic parts of an individual and the techniques used in the methods he proposes are the means by which role development occurs.

ROLE TRAINING in psychodrama and sociodrama is a fundamental application upon which the methods are based and it is easily the most recognisable confluence between the two forms. Roles in sociodrama are based on social and collective aspects and in psychodrama on the private or individual state. Role theories were sociological in nature and Moreno believed that psychodrama formed the bridge between sociology and psychology, deepening into a practice that promoted growth and led to change in an individual and in groups when applied sociodramatically.

ROLE VARIETY: The variety of roles a person is able or is required to play across their life span and in different contexts: Role variety determines how spontaneous and creative a person would be in meeting new challenges adequately or responding more effectively to old situations. Role variety can also mean the range of sub-roles that a person or group plays in a certain context (for example a professional role repertoire).

SCULPTURE is a technique used to create a live image with one or more people or objects representing a feeling, a state of mind, a concept, a situation or the relations in a group. An actor can choose an auxiliary ego to represent him- or herself and then build a shape, like an artistic sculpture, that visibly realises the theme. Sculpture can also be described as a still image, a freeze frame, a frozen picture when working with a group of young people or those new to the methods.

SHARING is the final phase, and essential part, of every sociodrama session, coming after action. It can be part of integration. It elicits reflections on various experiences that emerged during the sociodrama process. Sociodrama sharing has three layers, sharing from roles that were played, sharing from related personal experience, and sharing from the social learning perspective (what have we learned about the wider systems we live in). In this way it is different from psychodrama sharing where people generally share from personal experience, and sometimes from roles. Sharing is a learning process that differs from feedback, in which there is no equal position, whereas in sharing everyone is equal, something that is of the greatest importance.

SOCIAL ATOM is a map on stage or on paper showing the 'universe' of a person or group. It is a fact of descriptive sociometry and it is composed of numerous tele structures, forming a "pattern of attractions, repulsions and indifferences" (Moreno, 1953). A person or group is at the centre with all the entities with whom this person or group interacts displayed in concentric circles around that centre. On stage, each actor playing the entities around the centre can show, by their position, the relationship they have with the centre, for example an indifferent boss can show back to the employees who are in the centre. On paper we differentiate the relationships with various lines and symbols. It has a powerful diagnostic function and can warm the participants up to action. Blatner prefers the term 'social network analysis'.

SOCIATRY, a theoretical concept created by Moreno, is a core part of his theory and philosophy. The etymology of the word explains itself. It is derived from two Greek words, *socius*, which means 'the other person' or 'the other', and *iatria*, which means 'healing'. The idea behind this concept is the healing of society by healing individuals. Moreno's idea was that a healthy society can be achieved only by healing the inner life of various kinds of groups. Sociatry literally means

'the healing of society', meaning that it also deals with the pathology of society, whereas psychiatry is focused on the pathology and healing of the individual.

SOCIODRAMATIC QUESTION is peculiar to the methods of sociodrama. It is a specific question formulated by the whole group which the group feels most relevant both on personal and group levels. It becomes part of the contract with the group. The question gives focus to the main issue raised by the group and provides both the leader and the group with a reference point. During the enactment, the group tries to find answers to their sociodramatic question. The question works best when it is future and change oriented. Rather than putting the emphasis on causes and effects (why?), the sociodramatic question is used to specify the difficulties of the issue being examined and to find possibilities to create change. The sociodramatic question therefore works better if it starts, "How can we…?"

SOCIOMETRY is a quantitative and qualitative method for measuring and exploring social relationships, interpersonal choices of attraction and repulsion or indifference. Sociometry is defined as the study of group dynamics, the evolution of groups, and the network of relationships within groups (Moreno, 1953). Moreno's sociometric system offers a theory of society and interpersonal relations, proposes a research method for studying the nature of groups and relationships, and outlines experiential practices for assessing and promoting change within and between individuals and groups (Hale, 2009; Nolte, 2014). Sociometry is a method that systematically explores the patterns of preferences in group dynamics.

STAGE provides a space within which the action can be played and contained. It can be the space in the middle of a group, or a place that is decided by the group (part of a room). Moreno (1953, 81) states that "the stage space is an extension of life beyond the reality test of life itself."
Reality and fantasy can be present on the stage simultaneously without being in conflict. On the sociodrama stage, anything is possible, there is no right or wrong or constraints on reality. The stage is a space of freedom where intolerable tension and experiences can be expressed. It can be a multidimensional living space, with huge flexibility. In both sociodrama and in psychodrama it is important to have the stage separate from the audience in some way, or to decide where it is, because the stage is where surplus reality happens, whereas the audience 'holds' reality.

SURPLUS REALITY is an integral part of psychodrama and sociodrama, since we are trying out realities that are created on the stage, something that helps out in more spontaneous reactions outside the sociodrama and psychodrama world. As a technique, surplus (expanded) reality is used to play out how things could or should have happened. It has a healing dimension that replaces the traumatic experience with a new corrective emotional experience, either on the personal level (psychodrama) or on the group level (sociodrama).

Moreno writes: "When God created the world in six days he had stopped a day too early. He had given Man a place to live but in order to make it safe for him he also chained him to that place. On the seventh day he should have created for Man a second world, another one, free of the first world which would not chain anyone because it was not real. It is here in the surplus reality where the theatre of spontaneity continues God's creation of the world by opening for Man a new dimension of existence." (Moreno, Theatre of Spontaneity, Beacon House, 1973.)

TAGGING is a technique that we use when we want to keep the energy high on stage and to hear as many voices as possible. When a participant is warmed up to take a role that is being played, s/he comes on the stage, taps the shoulder of the actor who is playing that role and replaces the actor, playing the role further. The replaced actor becomes a participant and can tag another actor, or tag back after a while, or stay in the audience. The technique was created by Ron Wiener, a senior sociodrama trainer, and is inspired by wrestling. It can be used simultaneously with doubling.

TELE is reciprocated interpersonal attraction and repulsion. The word tele comes from the Ancient Greek meaning 'at a distance'. Tele represents the distance between people. It is not measured by usual measures but is a concept related to the methods of sociometry. It is the recognised distance in terms of encounter. "Just as we use the words telephone, television, etc., to express action at a distance, so to express the simplest unit of feelings transmitted from one individual to another we use the term tele…" (Moreno 1934, 159, 1953, 314).
Tele between individuals is based on feelings, desires and intuitions rather than rational thought. Moreno developed the tele concept as an integral part of his more general development of sociometry.

VIGNETTE is a short enactment that does not imply a full sociodrama or psychodrama but goes quickly to the core of a limited and well defined theme. In a vignette, the protagonist enacts only one or two scenes with some role reversal and/or other techniques. Vignette can be used on its own, or within a broader sociodramatic work as a parenthesis with a special focus, for example to address a specific person's needs. Even if it is a concise intervention, when used at the right moment the vignette can be very incisive and efficient and deeply enlighten a specific feeling, inducing self-reflection, promoting creativity and showing possible solutions. In a sociodrama, the director may decide to do a psychodrama vignette, or vice-versa, a psychodrama director may decide to do a sociodrama vignette.

WARM-UP: Moreno defines warm-ups as "an aspect of the canon Spontaneity-Creativity", as physical and psychical starters for the group members and the director himself (*Who Shall Survive?*, 1953). Spontaneity and creativity are essential parts of a sociodramatic process. For Moreno, warm-ups are "the operational expression of spontaneity"; the first viable and applicable tool to make the process of

spontaneity–creativity possible. Common warm-ups include more informal activities such as moving around in the room, meeting the group, getting in touch with the space and with other group members, as well as sociometry improvisations and many more active and engaged activities. Warm-ups help prepare the group, creating better group dynamics, the wish to act (act hunger) and a relaxed and playful atmosphere of safety and trust, essential to all sociodramatic work. The levels of warm-up are: to self, to others, to the space, to method, to one's own spontaneity, to the theme and to roles.

Participants in the PERFORMERS projects

Over this five-year period, many people from many countries and organisations have been involved to a greater or lesser extent in the PERFORMERS project. The editorial board of this book (which represents just one of the project outcomes) wishes to acknowledge and appreciate publicly all of these contributions. This list aims to be comprehensive and we hope we have remembered everyone. This has been a magnificent period of international collaboration and exploration and the energy and connection of each person is in some way reflected in what we have collectively produced.

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