

# BOOK REVIEW

*Handbook of Psychodrama*, edited by Marcia Karp, Paul Holmes, and Kate Bradshaw-Tauvon. London: Routledge, 1998.

In 1973, Marcia Karp moved from America to England, where she and her husband, Ken Sprague, established the first ongoing training institute there. By 1980, her first students were being graduated, and they formed the core of what became the British Psychodrama Association. Since then, seven other training programs have been formed. In the early 1990s, Karp began a fruitful collaboration with Paul Holmes, a London psychiatrist, editing anthologies of papers on psychodrama.

In the 1998 volume, the authors of the various chapters are all her former students, who show considerable expertise in writing about a wide range of issues. In addition to covering practical aspects, the fifteen chapters communicate something of the vitality of psychodrama in the United Kingdom.

After an introduction by the editors and a general overview of the method by Karp, Peter Haworth discusses the historical background of psychodrama, and that is followed by Bradshaw-Tauvon's review of the method's basic principles.

Susie Taylor's discussion of the process of the warm-up is rich in practical suggestions. John Casson's discussion of the stage and of aspects of staging is especially notable, and I appreciated his mentioning those considerations that contraindicate the use of a formal stage.

In Chapter 6, Kate Bradshaw-Tauvon addresses aspects of working with the protagonist and offers several clinical examples. The device of presenting brief vignettes in shaded boxes is employed throughout this book, and is most helpful.

I was pleased to read the way Anne Bannister considers a number of facets of group dynamics, because that dimension is insufficiently emphasized. Many aspects of group function and the processing of events are not generally addressed by Moreno's own writings. Professionals need to be informed of the wider field of which psychodramatic group work is only a part.

As part of his chapter on the auxiliary ego, Paul Holmes discusses his integration of psychodrama with the object-relations school of psychoanalysis, which he wrote about in an earlier book, *The Inner World Outside* (Routledge,

1992). He then goes on to address a number of practical aspects regarding the use of this basic element in the process.

To her discussion of the director's role, Marcia Karp adds some comments on Moreno's theological ideas, linking them with the themes of creativity and responsibility and, in turn, joins those with the challenges of facilitating a protagonist's own self-creation while at the same time staging the production. The end of that chapter contains a transcription of a discussion between Marcia and Anne Ancelin Schützenberger, one of the earliest pioneers of psychodrama in Europe. The magic of the process comes through in that dialogue.

In her chapter on sharing, Gillie Ruscombe-King shows the ways that that phase of psychodrama then extends to a more effective use of the work for everyone in the group. Issues of de-roleing, vignettes of reactions to the group-as-a-whole, and other aspects are thoroughly treated.

Jinnie Jefferies's chapter on processing follows. She goes beyond sharing to address two other issues not sufficiently dealt with in the general psychodrama literature. She notes that we should not assume that the optimal degree of insight may be gained in the classical psychodramatic process. Although some protagonists, following an intense enactment, need time away from further intellectual reflection, others are warmed up to a further working through, and for them, an extended discussion helps to consolidate their gains. Even those who would be overloaded by an immediate processing after their enactment often enjoy an opportunity for further integration in a subsequent session.

Jefferies also addresses the reality that many psychodramas are conducted by directors in training, and they and the group (some or all of whom may be in training also) need some analysis of the proceedings because cognitive integration is part of their overall goal. She even notes the trainer's need to deal with unfinished business.

In Chapter 12, Olivia Lousada discusses the use of doubling, role reversal, and mirroring as key psychodramatic techniques. She presents a variety of observations about actual practice in the "mid-game" phase, a guide for that point when the choice of options can seem overwhelming.

Following that, Chris Farmer describes psychodrama's use in the treatment of depression. In several vignettes, the family dynamics are noted. Her restatement of the value of psychodrama in that aspect is important because, however well the new antidepressant medicines work, there is also a need to address the underlying attitudes and circumstances that tend to provoke a relapse.

Sociodrama is an unfolding field with a goodly number of variations, from working on problems in businesses to attitudes toward current social or ethical problems to facilitating groups considering problems of international relations. Ken Sprague's chapter on that facet of psychodrama offers several

vignettes of different uses of sociodrama, including ways of dealing with hidden issues in an ongoing group.

Another related approach is dramatherapy—written as one word in the U.K.—and its relationship to psychodrama. Areas of similarity and difference are discussed next by Dorothy Langley. This is important because of the significant potential for mutual influence, and I was delighted to have this chapter included.

In the penultimate chapter, and also in the spirit of building bridges to related methods, Kate Bradshaw-Tauvon discusses ways in which psychodrama might have certain areas of overlap with group-analytic psychotherapy. Bradshaw-Tauvon effectively expands on the ideas raised previously by Bannister about group dynamics and by Jefferies on processing. Psychodynamic issues do need to be kept in mind so that issues that too often are overlooked in ordinary discourse may be addressed openly.

As an epilogue, Anne Ancelin-Schützenberger sums up her views on the essence of psychodrama in a provocatively succinct mini-chapter.

The scholarship in an anthology often varies, and that is true here, with some digressions and some essential references having been overlooked. Nevertheless, as a whole, the *Handbook of Psychodrama* is an outstanding contribution to the field. Amid the wealth of clinical illustrations interspersed throughout the text, readers will find a fair amount of theory and specific suggestions related to method, all of which add to the book's practical applicability. In summary, I consider this anthology to be one of a relatively small number of books that can deliver near-authoritative information about our field.

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