

BOOK REVIEWS

The Living Spirit of the Psychodramatic Method, by Max Clayton and Philip Carter. 2004. St. Heliers, Auckland, New Zealand; Resource Books.

This book is about connection in its broadest sense, linking the reader's inquiring spirit to the authors' and their group's experiences at a three-day training event. The book is about the psychodramatic method as lived by a master director and trainer of psychodramatists. The authors report the moment-to-moment interactions among the director and the group, the camera videographers, and the interviewer or coproducer. The book is an illustration of the maxim that psychodrama directors-in-training fall asleep each night and wake to each morning to the refrain, "Show me, don't tell me." One hundred and thirty-four color photographs, taken from the videotaped sessions, help connect the reader to the dramatic action through verbatim reflections that tell the stories of the group members, their trainer, and their parallel, and not so parallel, lives.

In 1980, Max Clayton returned to his native Australia after receiving his Director of Psychodrama certification from the Moreno Institute in Beacon, New York. He established a number of training institutes in Australia and New Zealand and founded the Australia and New Zealand Psychodrama Association. Interviewer and coauthor Philip Carter, himself a psychodramatist, is the director of the Computer Usability Research Lab at the Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand. Carter is a skillful interrogator, and Clayton ably interacts with him.

Evident in the action and the choices for action recorded in the book are classical elements of the psychodramatic method, which Clayton has enhanced during his years of working with the method. Clayton's reflections carry the reader into the microcosm of roles taken, played, and created in the here and now, which can be rambling or cogent or intricate. Clayton embraces the complex so that it becomes light-invested and understandable. He shows that one can be buoyant over, rather than swamped by, the myriad of interconnecting elements that make up a moment, a choice point, or an intervention.

Clayton's authority is revealed in his leader-based interactions with others,

which he offers with a light touch, often with humor and directness, but without apology. He refers to his own training experiences at the Moreno Institute to connect readers to their own training experiences.

Psychodramatists from every approach or viewpoint will find this book a way to reconnect to the sessions in which they learned deeply, connected truly, and struggled in the company of like-minded others. The book can be picked up and read at any time that one wants to be reminded of the essence of one's training experiences and wishes to reconnect to those essential elements. What is an archive of one group's experiences expands through the exploration of universal themes to include the reader in the experiences.

A most valuable aspect of this book is the way that the author interacts with trainee directors while they are in the director role. Chapters 18–20 specifically focus on the trainee while in role, including reflections on the trainer–trainee relationship, the raising and lowering of spontaneity levels, and the pure necessity for here-and-now intervention. Few texts provide that type of clarity about the complex process of learning psychodramatically while in action as a producer of a drama. The book is a “must read” for trainers, especially those still in training.

The relationship between Clayton and Carter, the interviewer and co-author, also models an aspect of trainer–trainee relationship: the expansion of the roles to include “colleague.” Their genuine high regard for each other keeps the reader engaged during the reflection phases of the book, in which the action is more subtle.

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Creative Therapies With Traumatized Children, by Anne Bannister. 2003.
London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

The reader will savor every word that Anne Bannister has written as she describes her Regenerative Model for treating sexually abused children and adolescents, many of whom are diagnosed with complex posttraumatic stress disorder. She adapted the model for treating the children described in this text. Readers seeking help in working with children and adolescents in their practices, whether public service or private, will approve her attention to theoret-