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Role Reversal—A Concept Analysis and Reinterpretation of the Research Literature

LINNEA CARLSON-SABELLI

ABSTRACT. Although many claims have been made for the psychodramatic role of role reversal, research studies put the theoretical construct into operation in a variety of ways, rendering results difficult to interpret and apply. This conceptual analysis and reinterpretation of the research literature indicates that 91% of the research is not about role reversal as it is implemented in practice. It involves the role playing of generalized or fantasy characters rather than real people. Both the misunderstandings that have evolved through unwarranted generalizations and the information that data support are highlighted. Implications for future research are discussed.

ALTHOUGH MANY CLAIMS ARE MADE for the psychodramatic intervention of role reversal, a review of the literature indicates that findings cited in carefully executed research studies have been obscured because the term role reversal has evolved to encompass a variety of meanings. Further, it is not unusual for researchers to define role reversal in one way and to apply it in another. Still others study role reversal but call it something different, such as role playing (Bohart, 1977) or role taking and self-presentation (Kipper, 1986). Because of these problems, many outcome studies concerning role reversal now need reexamination. The study reported on in this article—a conceptual analysis of role reversal—was undertaken as a first step in solving the definitional problem. The methodologies used by researchers of role reversal were examined to identify and name the different forms of role reversal actually used. The studies were then interpreted (taking into account the actual phenomena studied), and comparisons were made and new conclusions delineated.

Conceptual Analysis

The earliest referral to role reversal is described, but not named, in a philosophical poem by J. L. Moreno.

A meeting of two: eye to eye, face to face
And 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.

Translated by Moreno (Moreno, 1914, p. 3)

George Herbert Mead, a social psychologist and contemporary of Moreno, is credited with describing a similar, yet different, process. Mead's concept of role taking is described by Coutu (1951, p. 180) as strictly a mental activity of momentarily pretending to be another person so "that he may get an insight into the other person's probable behavior in a given situation." Moreno took Mead's cognitive "role taking" into action, creating the role reversal. In doing so, he also highlighted the bidirectional nature of the role-taking process; originally, Moreno defined "role reversal" as two real persons, both present, reversing with each other. Later, he defined role reversal more loosely (1978/1934, p. 87) as "taking the role of another person and experiencing that person as fully as one may experience oneself." In still a later definition, he clearly states that role reversal can involve the real other or can be represented by a stand-in.

The patient, in an interpersonal situation, for instance with his mother, "steps into his mother's shoes" while mother steps into those of her son. The mother may be the real mother as is done in psychodrama in situ, or may be represented by an auxiliary ego. . . . (Moreno & Moreno, 1975/1959, p. 241)

As the concept of role reversal evolved, new names were coined for its various forms. The original form was called proper role reversal (Moreno & Moreno, 1975/1959, p. 149). For purposes of clarity during discussion of the literature, the term classical role reversal, rather than proper role reversal, will be used to identify role reversal used in its original form. The type of role reversal that takes place when only one person is present has been named incomplete role reversal (Carlson-Sabelli & Sabelli, 1984) or role playing solo and self-presentation (Kipper, 1986). When one reads the methodology of research studies, however, and considers what one actually does when using role reversal for therapy or education, a number of further, unnamed distinctions become evident. Identifying and naming these distinctions was the focus of the conceptual analysis.

The Method

Eighty-one articles related to role reversal were identified. Of these, 24 research studies related directly to role reversal. Twenty of these were ob-

tained and reviewed. Two unpublished studies (Johnson, 1966; Johnson & Barron, 1971) and two in Hebrew (Kipper, Gay, & Schwartz, 1980; Kipper & Har-Even, 1980) were analyzed from information detailed in review pieces by the same authors (Johnson, 1971b; Kipper, 1986).

As the review unfolded, it became clear that there were often discrepancies between the stated definition of role reversal and the actual construct implemented in the studies, making it both difficult to compare and contrast findings and to understand how the findings could be generalized. For example, a study with the following definition:

Role reversal may be defined as a procedure where one or both of two people in a discussion present the viewpoint of the other. That is, given that A and B are in a discussion, A presents B's point of view and/or B presents A's point of view. (Johnson, 1967, p. 135)

used a methodology in which a particular point of view about a hypothetical court case was assigned to a subject, who then argued the point of view during a role-play situation where the subjects negotiated with each other to reach agreement. Half of the negotiations involved arguing only the assigned viewpoint, while the other half involved presenting the assigned viewpoint, reversing roles, and negotiating. Instead of discussion between two people with different viewpoints, the discussion was a contrived one in which individuals were arguing assigned viewpoints that may or may not have been their own. This was not an isolated incident. It was at this point that the need for a concept analysis distinguishing the various phenomena under the name role reversal became clear. A coding process was initiated. Characteristics of the role-reversal process were identified through examination of the literature. These included whether or not the "person" being portrayed was real or an imagined, fantasy person; whether the portrayed "person" was present or absent; whether one or both roles reversed; what type of activity or mode of enactment was involved—improvisation in one's own role and/or in the role of the other; whether it was a solo production or interactive; whether it was mimicking a modeled behavior or listening to something in one's own role or the role of another, or a combination. The final characteristic involved whether or not the information produced in a role reversal was verified by the other. These characteristics were then used to provide the elements of a 16-digit code that delineated the various forms of role reversal found in the research literature. The code for each form of role reversal in each study, and accompanying research findings, were loaded into a computerized data base (RBASE 5000), customized by the author to manipulate the data. The results associated with each situation were delineated, sorted, and examined for patterns and then analyzed to see if new information about the phenomena of role reversal could be gleaned

from previous research. Further details concerning the coding process may be obtained from the author.

Role Reversal Typologies

Three forms of role reversal emerged and are delineated below. Each definition represents a different construct for the more general concept of role reversal.

Classical Role Reversal. Two real individuals, both present, interact with each other, then “step into the shoes” of each other, accurately portraying the other’s perspective and expanding upon it, interacting as if one is the other, and if necessary, returning to oneself to correct, validate, and expound further on the other’s portrayal.

For example, two playmates in a dispute are asked to switch places and have the argument again, each arguing and perhaps negotiating as if he were the other. When back in their own roles again, they also have the opportunity to correct or add to the other’s portrayal.

Incomplete Role Reversal: Person A plays the role of person B, but person B is not present at the time of the role play. For example, a mother who wishes to understand her daughter better might play the role of her daughter while another person plays the mother. The daughter is not present at the session.

Sociodramatic Role Reversal: The subject plays the role of a fantasy character, an archetype, or a generalized other, such as Snow White, the Wizard of Oz, God, a wicked witch, an ideal mother, or an experienced teacher. Obviously, the other is not present at the role-playing session to correct or validate the drama.

Analysis of Research Findings

A reanalysis of the role-reversal literature in which the actual constructs used, rather than the given definitions, was undertaken. This revealed that the majority of the claims made for the role reversal have not yet been substantiated. Two striking features emerged: there is almost no research concerning the role reversal that involves real individuals and there are pertinent and interesting findings arising from the sociological/psychological research using fantasy characters, especially in the area of attitude change.

Before we highlight what can be learned from the existing body of research, we should identify some of the misconceptions that have been perpetrated and how they came about. Cohen (1951) hypothesized that if

two people having a dispute role reversed (classical role reversal), reconciliation would be promoted. Rogers (1952, 1965), the Morenos (1975/1959), Bronfenbrenner (1961), and Deutsch (1962) suggested that role reversal eliminated misunderstanding and distortions of perception blocking resolution of competition. An examination of each of the controlled research studies purporting to explore this hypothesis indicated that all but two (Sylvester, 1979; Bohart, 1977) used sociodramatic role-play situations and not real people with real conflicts. Sylvester (1970, pp. 151–156) showed that subjects who engaged in classical role reversal to explore and possibly to reconcile differences in philosophical beliefs (within the context of a 5-month discussion group) had significantly more change in their orientation to life and to attitudes related to their metaphysical beliefs than had subjects in discussion groups where role reversal was not used. Sylvester's study, involving three control groups and one experimental group, provided evidence that beliefs and attitudes were changed by the classical role-reversal technique. This study has not been replicated. Other controlled studies using actual individuals with real beliefs and attitudes according to the method indicated earlier could not be found.

In addition to this controlled study, there are two reports, both informal case studies (Speroff, 1957, pp. 3–8; Moreno, 1975/1959, p. 148), about the classical role reversal. Speroff detailed the use of group psychotherapy in an industrial setting to solve intragroup conflict. Although Speroff's claims—that psychodrama (involving role reversals among the real people involved) was effective in restoring “cooperation and mutuality of purpose”—may be an accurate assessment, no formal methods of evaluation were used. The second report was also an informal case presentation cited by Moreno and Moreno (1975/1959, p. 148) involving conflict of their son, Jonathan, and another child. Role reversal promoted reconciliation in a dispute over a bike, when discussion without role reversal did not. Again, no formal measurements of reconciliation were used.

Bohart (1977, pp. 15–24) provided evidence that the incomplete bidirectional role reversal decreases anger and aggressive attitudes toward specific others with whom one has an unresolved conflict. Subjects visualized two recent unresolved anger-arousing situations and then focused on one. One group of subjects pretended that the person with whom they were in conflict was in an empty chair. They verbally discharged their anger and then role reversed, switching between their own role and that of the absent provocateur, and improvising dialogue for 5 minutes. This group had significantly fewer angry feelings (as measured by Thayer's Activation-Deactivation Adjective Check List) and aggressive attitudes

toward the other (as measured by a 7-point attitude measure devised by the experimenter, consisting of 29 positive or negative statements about the provocateur) and significantly less aggressive behavior (as measured by a variant of the Buss Aggression Machine) than did either the control group or the subjects who had discharged their anger but did not engage in the role reversal.

The actual construct for the role reversal cited here is the incomplete role reversal. It is the only study that could be found concerning role reversal with a real other who is not present. It is of clinical interest because it is the most widely used form of role reversal within a psychodrama where the members of the protagonist's life, played in the drama, are portrayed by other members of the psychodrama group.

Other theorists and researchers have also made claims that role reversal promotes attitude change. Here, although role reversal is not strictly limited to the classical definition, the results are clearly generalized to real people in real situations. Let us examine this further. Conflict theorists suggested that role reversal primarily influences the listener, not the actor. In other words, by hearing someone accurately role reverse, one feels understood. This, in turn, reduces the threat to the listener, reducing his defensive adherence to a challenged viewpoint. Further, the listener increases his perception of similarity with the opponent. All of this induces receptivity in the listener and consequently changes his attitudes about the issue being negotiated (Deutsch, 1962; Rogers, 1952). Johnson (1971c), however, claimed to have confirmed an alternative hypothesis. A change in attitude is effected more readily by having the opponent engage in role reversal rather than by listening to the other role reverse with him and present his view. The actor, by engaging in role reversal, persuades himself to adopt a different attitude toward the issue being negotiated. All of Johnson's research, however, involved a contrived situation in which Subject A was given a role that had an attitude assigned to it. He did not play himself and did not bring his own opinion to the situation. Further, the other was not present; only a tape recording of his view and the view presented by the subject was available. Clearly, the tape, which was made before the subject's actual presentation, presented what the researcher expected the subject to say, which may not be a reflection of what he actually would produce. Role-reversal research, done in a simulated situation where the subject and/or confederate are asked to act as if they have a certain attitude or done when the other is actually a tape recording, is, by its very nature, not about the classical or incomplete role reversal and not necessarily generalizable to real people. To test the hypothesis adequately, the researcher, at the very least, would have to work with real attitudes and views, rather than with fantasy ones.

The studies that chose subjects for extreme attitudes on neutral (Janis & King, 1954) or emotionally charged topics (Culbertson, 1957; Elms, 1966; Janis & Mann, 1965; King & Janis, 1956; Kipper & Har-Even, 1980) had findings different from the studies that assigned pretend opinions (Johnson, 1967, 1971a; Johnson & Dustin, 1970). In the studies that selected subjects for their strong attitudes on the topics involved, researchers found that the pure sociodramatic role reversal, which translates to the self-presentation condition in Johnson's studies, provided significantly more attitude change than did the "sociodramatic bidirectional condition" (Johnson's role reversal condition). In other words, the sociodramatic role-reversal condition in Johnson's studies did not indicate a significant attitude shift, whereas this same condition did engender significant attitude change in the studies that involved real attitudes.

Reinterpretation of the Role-Reversal Research Literature

Now that some difficulties in previous interpretations of the role-reversal research have been highlighted, it is time to focus on what can be learned from these studies.

Of 24 research articles relevant to claims associated with the technique of role reversal, 21 involved the sociodramatic role reversal-individuals playing roles of fantasy characters, not real people. Within these studies, 31 sociodramatic role-reversal conditions were studied. All but 1 of these involved spontaneous productions on the part of the subject while in the sociodramatic role. Sixty-five percent (20/31) involved pure sociodramatic role play between two or more individuals, without any role reversals between or among them. Nineteen percent (6/31) were unidirectional (half of these involved the subject doing the reversing with the other, while the second half involved the other reversing with the subject). Thirteen percent (4/31) were bidirectional, meaning that sociodramatic role players also role reversed during the role play. The remaining 3% (1/31) involved passive role playing, where the subject listened as if he were someone else but did not actively interact. From this breakdown, it is evident that "sociodramatic role play" with spontaneous improvisation is the actual construct that has been most widely studied. It is now possible to review the findings the data provide about this particular construct.

The most common findings were that all role-playing situations involved attitude and opinion shifts when compared with no-treatment controls; the pure sociodramatic role-playing condition engendered significantly more attitude and opinion shifts and agreement, when conflict was introduced, than any of the other sociodramatic conditions studied; changes in attitude may be associated with improvising in the sociodramatic role;

and finally, the sociodramatic role reversal engendered disinhibition and self-disclosure (Kipper & Har-Even, 1984; Kipper & Uspiz, 1987). Pure sociodramatic role reversal, taking the role of a generalized or fantasy other and producing in that role, engendered significantly more shift in attitude and opinion than any of the other conditions studied, such as listening to someone role play, repeating a performance of another, or presenting a prepared speech of the opposite view (Culbertson, 1957; Elms, 1966; Janis & Mann, 1965; King & Janis, 1956; Kipper & Har-Even, 1980; Muney & Deutsch, 1968; Sarbin & Allen, 1964). Janis and King (1954) found strong evidence that this was associated with improvisation. They held the view that spontaneous production in a role other than one's own is the single most important factor in attitude and opinion change. This viewpoint has been indirectly supported in a number of later studies that indicated that the mimetic pretend condition—improvisation in the role of a sociodramatic other—engendered more attitude change than did imitating a model or being one's self in the role (Kipper & Ben-Eli, 1979; Kipper, Gay, & Schwartz, 1980; Kipper & Har-Even, 1984; Kipper & Uspiz, 1987). In contrast, Greenbaum (1966) found no relationship between improvisation and attitude change, suggesting instead that dissonance induced by active participation and the absence of situational demands for change are the significant mediating factors contributing to the attitude change.

A relatively large amount of research evidence supports the contention that playing a role engenders one to become more like the character played, that "saying is believing" (Janis & King, 1954, p. 218). Sarbin and Jones (1955, p. 240) demonstrated that a shift in self-conception following a role enactment is, in part, a function of the specific role enacted. Janis and Mann (1965) demonstrated that heavy smokers playing a victim with lung cancer have marked changes in their attitudes against smoking and significantly decrease their cigarette smoking. Elms (1966) showed that a cigarette smoker playing the role of a nonsmoker attempting to persuade smokers to quit had significantly more attitude change than did someone who listened to the role player's persuasive arguments. These studies might lead one to hypothesize that simply playing a role causes a shift in the direction of the role being played. A reanalysis of the findings of one study, however, revealed a challenge to this contention. Muney and Deutsch (1968) demonstrated that pure sociodramatic role reversal leads to a significant attitude shift toward the opposite view, whether the attitude played by the subject is congruent or incongruent with his own real attitude. In other words, role players shifted toward the role being played if it was opposite to their own, and away from it if it was similar to their own.

In this study, pairs of sociodramatic role players, chosen for their extreme opposite opinions on emotionally charged subjects, were cast as consultants who, holding a similar attitude to their own (self-presentation condition), negotiated with each other. When these were compared with pairs who were cast as consultants having an attitude opposite to theirs (role-reversal condition), both conditions were equally potent in causing a shift to the opposite attitude and the "self-presentation" condition led to significantly more agreement between pairs than did the role-reversal condition. Although these findings led Muney and Deutsch to report that role reversal was not significantly better than self-presentation in engendering attitude shift and that the self-presentation condition was significantly more likely to produce agreement between pairs than did the role-reversal condition, their conclusions are erroneous because both conditions actually involve role reversal. The difference between the two pairs is that the self-presenting pairs played attitude-congruent roles, while the reversal pairs played noncongruent roles. Their calling the role-congruent role reversal (sociodramatic pure) the self-presentation condition, although understandable, confuses the issue. Once this is noted, an alternative explanation for the findings can be postulated; the pairs playing role-congruent attitudes were exposed to arguments that the other was familiar with and believed in. In the role-reversal condition, the arguments were probably not as effective because the subjects playing the roles were less familiar with them. Two mechanisms may be operating in causing the shift: improvisation in the role of another and the imparting of information. Both sets of pairs were improvising in the role of another because they were all cast in the sociodramatic role of consultants. The self-presentation pairs, however, could impart more information with greater effect because they believed in the attitude portrayed, while the role-reversal pairs were hampered by their unfamiliarity with the roles they played. Further, the ability of the self-presentation pairs to be convincing may have been enhanced by the disinhibiting effect that role reversal has also been demonstrated to have. The attitudes were similar to their own, but the pairs did not have to own them. They did not have to stifle their enthusiasm for their own opinion for fear of what another might think. Thus, they could argue with even more enthusiasm than they might be capable of in real-life circumstances. The results might have been different if the group that role played attitude-incongruent views had played attitude-congruent roles first.

One study that measured behavior shifts both inside and outside the role-playing session (Kelly, Blake, & Stromberg, 1957) indicated that although attitudes and opinions might shift in the opposite direction of those playing the reverse role, this hypothesis cannot be generalized for

behaviors. They reported that submissive subjects cast in ascendent roles were unable to be ascendent within the session but did behave more ascendently in subsequent group interactions. In contrast, ascendent subjects cast in submissive roles were significantly more submissive within the role but did not behave with significant submissiveness afterwards. Initially, these findings seem puzzling. Submissives, if could be assumed, would be more likely to submit to the wishes of others. If the instruction is to play a submissive role, one would surmise that submissives would be more likely to comply than ascendents. Why is it the other way around? Perhaps ascendent behavior requires some skill that submissive behavior does not. Hence, ascendents can perform both roles, whereas submissives, who certainly would be ascendent if the situation required it, do not because they cannot. They are missing a skill. An unpublished study (Kipper, Gay, & Schwartz, 1980), which indicated that nonassertive subjects who mimicked an assertive model had significantly more change on two assertiveness scales than did nonassertive subjects who were simply asked to take on the role of an assertive person, supported the hypothesis that ascendancy may require a particular skill. Ascendents may not submit outside a role-reversal situation because submissiveness is not valued. Perhaps ascendents become submissive within the role play because of lack of inhibition, which allows them to act in a role they do not value. On the other hand, submissives may acquire some of that skill while they are role playing; if ascendancy is valued, then submissives, after the session, would be expected to use this newfound skill, increasing their ascendancy in real life, despite the fact that they were not significantly ascendent in the session.

This situation is interesting from another viewpoint. Although many studies of sociodramatic role reversal have reported that playing the role engendered a shift in behavior or attitude or opinion toward the behavior, attitude, or opinion of the character being played, the Kelly, Blake, and Stromberg (1957) and Kipper, Gay, and Schwartz (1980) studies advertently tested this hypothesis and disconfirmed it. Kelly, Blake, and Stromberg (1957) indicated that assertives do not shift to submissive behavior; only submissives shift toward assertive behavior after playing an assertive role. Kipper, Gay, and Schwartz (1980) demonstrated that the role-playing experience is not responsible for the change, but rather the ability to mimic others who have modeled the assertive behavior. More study is needed in this area as Borgatta (1961) showed just the opposite from Kelly, Blake, and Stromberg (1957). Borgatta's work would have been more dynamic if it had cited and addressed the Kelly, Blake, and Stromberg study. Nevertheless, it showed that although both assertive and nonassertive subjects disliked playing submissive roles,

nonassertive subjects role played assertive roles better than highly assertive subjects played submissive roles. Borgatta's study did not address outcomes of the role-reversal process. However, the important point that both studies raise is that the ability to perform in a sociodramatic role reversal may be mediated by the personality characteristics of the subject and whether or not these characteristics are similar or different from the characteristics of the role. Further, this mediation process may be different for behavioral and attitudinal characteristics. It is an area that deserves further study.

Implications

To date, there is one controlled research study concerning claims made for the classical role reversal and one concerning the incomplete bidirectional role reversal, the two most common forms used in psychodramatic practice. In other words, there is no research that supports any claims about role reversal with real individuals. On the other hand, there are a number of studies about sociodramatic role reversal when one is playing a fantasy or a generalized other. What clearly is needed are studies that compare and contrast what we know about role reversing with pretend characters to what might happen when role reversing with real persons.

Further research is also needed to answer the questions we thought we had already answered—to make clear what was muddled by calling all forms of role reversal one name. Is it, in fact, true, as Johnson and Dustin (1970) asked, that the classical role reversal will cause individuals who hold opposing attitudes to come closer together if their initial positions are compatible but will force them farther apart if their initial attitudes are incompatible? Does listening to another person who accurately cites one's position in role reversal force one away from the position of the other, rather than toward it (Johnson, 1967)? Is reversing roles with a generalized other a more effective way than the classical role reversal to bring about insight, reconciliation, or change in a family?

Role-reversal research not only is valuable in understanding the protagonist, the subject of the psychodrama, but also will provide information about what happens to the auxiliary egos, the other subjects of the psychodrama who are called upon to play the people needed in producing the drama. These individuals are role reversing; how are they affected by this process? If, for example, evidence that attitude, opinion, and/or behavior shifts can occur as a function of playing a fantasy role also holds true for playing real characters, is it possible that group members chosen to play unsavory roles are in danger of shifting privately held attitudes, opinions, or behavior in a negative direction? How does playing an unsavory character affect the subject who is chosen to play him?

It is always wise to base new research on what has already been done; perhaps a place to start is with the preliminary findings that the sociodramatic role reversal promotes loss of inhibition and hence self-disclosure. How might this be different in a role reversal with someone real? One could speculate that role reversal with a real person might either increase or decrease the amount of information provided. The amount of information available is dependent in part on what the chosen person knows and the barriers that might stand in the way of communicating it. Providing the subject with a role that combines elements of a real person and a fantasy other, such as could happen with an instruction to "play your mother, but play her as if she knows everything that you know about yourself," might increase self-disclosure beyond that of playing "the mother you would like to have."

Factors demonstrated to influence the role-reversal processes that need to be considered in such research design include degree of involvement and of improvisation. When playing the role of a real other, one might speculate that involvement in that role is, in part, a function of whose role is being taken. Taking the role of one about whom one is enraged may be far more difficult than taking the role of one known to be supportive. Who the person is and what the nature of their relationship with the subject is like are probably of paramount importance. It will also be important to develop research constructs that reflect the hypothesis under scrutiny, ensuring that one studies what one sets out to study and reports about what one has set out to report.

Research on the psychodramatic role reversal has hardly begun. Very little is known about its effects on real individuals, and because of this, it is likely that role-reversal typologies that are of the greatest interest are yet to emerge. Instead of classical, incomplete, and sociodramatic role reversal, it might be more meaningful to think of real individuals; characters generalized from social roles, fantasy characters, and combinations of these three.

Now is the time to go beyond the theoretical claims, the gut feelings, and even the simulations and consider in some depth both the potential harm and the value of using role reversal with real people.

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The Tryst of Psyche and Dionysus— Classical Psychodrama in an Archetypal Perspective

PETER PITZELE

BY BORROWING SOME of the assumptions and perspectives of archetypal psychology (Hillman, 1981), this brief essay seeks to answer the question: What happens in classical psychodrama?

I favor the word *classical* here not only to connote psychodrama in its classical period, when it was brought to flower at the Moreno Institute (1950–1983)—a microcosm in time comparable to the classical period of any culture or art form—but also classical in its belle letteristic sense, referring to the classics and to the culture of Greece and Rome. It is in terms of that classicism that we would descry Psyche and Dionysus in psychodrama.

In classical terms, psychodrama is the union of these two numinous figures from the antique pantheon, Psyche and Dionysus. To Psyche belongs the realm of what we once called soul; and Dionysus presides over the realm of the theater. Psychodrama is soul theater and is as far from the scripted theater on the one hand as it is from the counseling chambers of psychology on the other.

Most of us who practice psychodrama are pulled more strongly toward one god or the other. Many of us who are involved in a clinical setting look at psychodrama in terms of psychotherapy, and when we do, we are likely to miss the almost antitherapeutic force of Dionysus. Others, who bring out the various “theaters of spontaneity,” miss the powers and mysteries of Psyche. The balance of Psyche and Dionysus, rightly struck, is Morenean or “classical psychodrama.”

I alluded earlier to the Moreno Institute as the cradle of classical psychodrama. A classical period in the development of any art requires particular circumstances—economic, social, spiritual. Genius is not enough; there must be means and soil. This is no place to describe, in any detail, the house that Jacob built. We are only beginning to appreciate the privilege, in terms of freedom, artistic and psychological concentration, nurture and opportunity for experiment that the institute years presented to us. It was a time we shall not likely see again. Moreno’s stage was the crucible upon which Psyche and Dionysus were brought

together as they have only been, in my opinion, in shamanic theater and in archaic Greece. Though classical psychodrama has its practitioners, trained at Beacon more by the example than the dicta of Zerka Moreno, it remains now a form met, if at all, in a training context, where time does not restrict the complex mingling of Psyche and Dionysus, and where the demands either of the clinic (therapy) or of the stage (theater) do not force psychodrama in one direction or another.

Consider Psyche and Dionysus: What can these old gods mean to us? To help me in undertaking an answer, I call James Hillman to my assistance. Hillman (1981) is a contemporary psychologist whose writing forms the central nervous system of *archetypal psychology*, which he describes as follows (p. 54). "Archetypal psychology is not a theoretical system emanating from the thought of one person from whom it is named . . . rather [it] presents the polytheistic structure of a post-modern consciousness. It is a style of thinking, a fashion of mind, a revisionist engagement on many fronts, therapy, education, literary criticism . . . it assembles and lends its view points to a variety of intellectual concerns." (For a complete bibliography of Hillman's writing and that of the other figures in the cluster of archetypal psychology, readers should consult the bibliography of *Archetypal Psychology*.)

Hillman is in the lineage of modern mythographers like Freud, Jung, and Ernst Cassirer but linked directly to the mythology-minded writers of the Romantic tradition, back through the Renaissance Platonists, like Giambattista Vico and Ficino, to Plato and "primitive" mythopoetic thought. In what follows, I will quote from Hillman but warn the reader that he is not to be held responsible for my associations.

We shall begin by asking: Who is Psyche?

We know Psyche from the tales about her, but as she has come down through time to us, we may think of Psyche as that which confers meaning. Hillman (1981, p. 14) tells us that "We are not able to use the word in an unambiguous way, even though we take it to refer to that unknown human factor which makes meaning possible, which turns events into experiences, and which is communicated in love."

To be in Psyche's realm, the realm of soul, is to be conscious of meanings, of significances, of inwardness, or depth. All responses to objects or events are Psyche's. The means by which we feel or know about things or events belong to Psyche. Each of us appears to have a psyche, by which we conceive, dream, fancy, design, delve, and there are times when the objective world seems animated by soul (*anima mundi*). Psyche—in Latin, *anima*—is the life in things, the life in the living. There is breath and the mechanism of life; and there is psyche, that which gives life its sense of aliveness, of animation.

Psyche is never seen directly; no god is. Psyche reveals herself in images, where image means all kinds of showing forth—verbal, actional, envisioned, hallucinated. Hillman (1964, p. 83) speaks of Psyche as “the imaginative possibility in our natures, the experiencing through reflective speculation, dream, image and fantasy—that mode which recognizes all realities as primarily symbolic or metaphorical.” We are most with Psyche when we realize our truths have a fictive, imaginative quality.

Because all our ways of knowing belong to Psyche, we always “see as through a glass darkly” and never face to face. All convictions about the *real* are beguilements, for all we ever have are images, skeins of images, webs of images, prisons of images. Psyche is not substance, but that which confers upon substance a dimension other than substantial. Psyche is not an event, but that which confers upon events the possibility of story.

In that hall of dark glass where Psyche has her numinous seat, we are repeatedly to be reminded that “the soul can be an object of study only when it is also recognized as the subject studying itself by means of the fictions and metaphors of objectivity” (Hillman, 1975, p. 184). This is only another way of stating one of the tenets of classical psychodrama articulated in J. L. Moreno’s concept of the dual nature of consciousness, its participant observer status. Moreno coined his own uncertainty principle, knowing that soul theater was a place where Psyche’s drama was indissolubly connected to those who created it. Moreno, like Hillman, offered us a poetics, not a philosophy.

Finally, Psyche opposes ego, opposes not as in combat, but as an alternative. Where ego seeks to make things real, graspable, and subject to a dominating will, Psyche dissolves, returns the literal to its figurative source, and insists that all category is fabulous. In its undoing of positivistic structures, Psyche is allied with death.

Dionysus has his links with death as well.

Dionysus is not principally a healer or mender, and certainly not an internalizer. In fact, he is the very opposite. He is an externalizer. He brings out what is inside and turns that into a kind of dramatic show. He is associated with madness, frenzy, and certain terrors. He is a liberator, and his mode of liberation is participation, where participation means both taking part and being made into parts. Dionysus directs us to be free—through action. When Moreno declared his credo: “In the beginning was the Act,” he announced his allegiance to Dionysus.

Dionysus is supremely the god of groups and action. He is a god who breaks down boundaries, blurs, blends, fuses. He appears traditionally in the midst of bands of followers who are caught up in his worship. In Euripides’ *The Bacchae*, the straightlaced and puritanical Pentheus is no

match for his collective energies. Dionysus forces Pentheus to costume himself and become a player in a drama that will be the king's undoing. Pentheus refuses to submit to the Dionysiac conception that "all the world's a stage" and that we are "merely players." Like the ego, he insists on control, direction, absolutes, and objectivity; though like the ego, Pentheus is irresistibly drawn to his undoing.

Yet, all the world is more than a stage. Dionysus would show us that we are actors composed of actors, being in ourselves whole theaters. We carry within us an enormous troupe of roles or characters—Dionysus and Moreno would say an infinite number. Some of these perform; others hide. Some appear only in our dreams. Surely, it is upon this premise that Moreno's psycho-Dionysian theater is built. "The roles," he says, "precede the self."

Dionysus insists on immediate experience, on the vivid now. Ecstasy, with which he is associated, means only to break the stasis, not necessarily to go into frenzy. Where, however, stasis is the status quo, where the conserved literalisms have turned the dance of living into the robot's rigid walk of life, then breaking this rigidity may appear (and actually be) full of fright. *Ecstasis* may appear as a kind of death. Moreover, for the boundaried ego, it is a dying to fuse, to spill out, to merge. Something must die for spontaneity to be born.

Here are some of the things that Hillman (1983. pp. 38ff) says about Dionysus:

[Dionysus moves us] into the role of the enacted one, actor. Healing begins when we move out of the audience and onto the stage . . . become characters in a fiction, even the God-like voice of truth a fiction, and as the drama intensifies, the catharsis occurs. We are purged from attachments, to literal destinies, find freedom in playing parts, partial, dismembered, Dionysian, never being whole, but participating in the whole that is a play, remembered by it as an actor. . . . The particular embodiment of Dionysian logic is the actor. Dionysian logos as the enactment of fiction, oneself an as-if being whose reality comes wholly from imagination and the belief it imposes. The actor is and is not a person and persona, divided and undivided, as Dionysus was called. The self-divided is precisely where the self is authentically located, contrary to Laing. Authenticity is the perpetual dismemberment of being and not being itself, a being that is always in many parts like a dream with a full cast. We all have identity crises because a single identity is a delusion of the monotheistic mind. It would defeat Dionysus at all costs.

"The essence of theatre," Hillman also reminds us, "is knowing that it is theatre. One is playing, enacting, miming in a reality that is completely a fiction." (There is so much relevant and exciting material in this chapter, it is tempting to simply quote at length. This essay of mine grew out of a conversational hour delivered at the 1988 ASGPP convention, a paper devoted more particularly to Hillman's books *Healing Fic-*

tion [1983]. For readers interested in Hillman, I think it an excellent place to begin.) In psychodrama, the field of this Dionysian action is opened. Whether as protagonist or auxilliary, the actor is drawn to the stage and the actors' truths—the truths of Dionysus—predominate. The material for this action does not come from the creative imagination of an author or a theatrical tradition as it does in scripted theater; it comes from Psyche herself, resident in the director *and* in the group. Psyche's drama can never be the same twice, for it is the unique expression of the moment and its participants. At this point, we might even wish to ask where the psychodrama comes from and to whom it belongs.

One striking result of the fusion of Psyche and Dionysus is the confounding of the illusion of individual soul. Customarily, we think of soul as a belonging, as "ours," and we think of ourselves as "one." It may be that soul has an individual aspect such that each of us develops soul in our passage through life. Keats, as Hillman is fond of quoting, says "Life is a vale of soul-making," but Dionysus reminds us that the notion of individual soul, of soul as our possession—like the notion of individuality itself—is a fiction. What we see of soul or Psyche in psychodrama is something more than individual. Psychodrama manifests group soul—that faceted, pluralistic nature of soul—and thus the capacity of self to know itself as many, not as one. That is, the experience not merely of the protagonist, but of the group as well.

In psychodrama, three principal elements combine. There is a group, there is a director, and there is a stage. These are the three essential ingredients for psychodramatic production. What comes to pass when the three essential elements are mixed is something that belongs to no one and is formed by many conscious and unconscious forces. Let this analogy serve: Psyche is light, a light that cannot be perceived directly because it is too bright, too ambient. Drama or Dionysus is a prism. In passing through the prism—of director, stage, and group—Psyche is made visible, multiple. She is shaped by the prism and in that sense distorted, but she is also revealed. These revealing distortions alone establish for us a sense of "the biographical fallacy" in psychodrama.

Merely to come on the stage requires that Psyche submit to a complex set of theatrical conventions. She allows herself to come onto a time-bound and space-bound medium that partakes inevitably of certain conserves and conventions. No matter how iconoclastic the theatrical style of the director—Brechtian, surrealist, or Balinese—certain formal steps are imposed upon Psyche. These impositions are the laticework of innumerable moments within theatrical tradition available to the group at its place and time. In other words, the tools are old and belong to no one. Psyche's stage presence is there already with make-up and make-believe.

Then there is the shaping spirit of the director's imagination. More than anyone else in the group, he or she has studied dramatic production, has chosen it to be his or her artistic medium, and has decided to blend into it living players in an unscripted play. The director's aesthetic sense, which is educated, intuitive, imitative, original, gives Psyche her means and bounds. Minimally, the psychodrama is the cocreation of the director's aesthetic sense and the protagonist's material. In that sense, the psychodrama is the duet of two individual Psyches creating a play together. This duet makes even more fallacious or illusory the drama's claim to historical or journalistic "truth." Psychodrama draws upon the fictions of autobiography but underscores the fictive nature of this material, its essentially imaginative nature, and its susceptibility to reformation, to retelling, to revision.

Now add to all this the group. The group asserts itself in many ways. It asserts itself in the first place by enunciating the themes from which dramatic action may be created. Through these various voices, Psyche speaks out, brainstorms her ideas for playing. The group has stories it wants to hear or tell; it has norms, tolerances, and desires that it will express. In the group, there are sets and subsets of sociometric concern that give shape to the possible stories, landscaping them, if you like, into prominences and values. The group spreads out or clusters, occupies its positions on this landscape, fortifies its positions, gives or gains ground, establishes the best turf for the play.

In classical psychodrama, a protagonist comes out of this field as an apparent "one" who will enact the concerns of the many. This one, however, has already been pollinated by the group, is already pregnant with all of them, and thus pregnant with selves. In this protagonist, the several "ones" of the group will find a mirror or a double; for this "one," they will act as auxiliary; from this "one," they will derive knowledge and affirmation, whereas the protagonist, through them, will be dismembered and remembered.

Even greater in its shattering effect upon the fiction of a single Psyche with its story to tell is the work of auxiliary egos. Ostensibly functionaries whose task is accurate representation, they bring into the drama the substream, the unconscious and conscious power, of their own realities. They discover facts of their own story while lending themselves to further the protagonist's story. Their presence makes "story" multidimensional, many-storied, makes it something new—or rather like a dream—by virtue of their participation in it. Through them is channeled the psychic reserve in the group.

Meanwhile, that part of the group that remains as audience sends its several influences streaming into the drama. The silences, sighs,

movements of the group as audience impinge on the shape, lighting, duration, and tempo of the drama, for this drama is produced one time only, by and for the group and thus uniquely stands as a kind of objective metaphor, or image, for the group organism. It may even be said that it is through the psychodramatizing that the group knows itself to be an organism. This kind of organism is very different from a group *organized*, as it usually is, by teams, tasks, scripts, or other impositions.

The innumerable ways these various energies interact during a session have the effect of irradiating Psyche through the group until it is not possible to say whose drama this is. It is, finally, *Psyche's drama*. We all give ourselves over to something that comes from us and is beyond us, upon which we have some influence, but which influences us too. We find ourselves shattered and reflected, in parts and not alone. We are in the field of force generated by the interplay of Psyche and Dionysus. We are knowing ourselves and one another in a new way.

Psychodrama may, like therapy, ease some burden, heal some wound in one or another of its participants, but I am suggesting here that its power is not its bearing upon a part of an individual's story, but rather in its participatory effects, in what it proves to us about our *selves*. It is this, I think, that may account for our sense of its essential quality, its intrinsicness to human life. It is this experience of being present at the tryst of two gods, the fusing of two forces, that liberates us from the shackles of our small biographies and reminds us of a vast, mysterious, and creative world. And in that world, we are not alone.

Those of us who participate in the union of Psyche and Dionysus are vouchsafed a precious revelation: We are given a glimpse of community. It is unlike any other form of community, yet fully deserving of the name. It is, if I have not already overused the word, a kind of archetypal community that, albeit transient and concocted in an arena set apart from daily life, partakes of something timeless and creates in that arena a depth of field for the deepest revelations. What happens in psychodrama is like a glimpse of heaven or a taste of some nectar too sweet for earth. Psyche's drama—or drama's Psyche—is not a place where any of us can live, raise children, or work; but it is community.

Psyche and Dionysus have freed us from the conserved routine; the inner life has been expressed, enacted, shared. We know again we are born actors and that all our actions are jest and gesture, real and played. The narrow island ego finds that it is, indeed, piece of an archipelago, if not a part of the main. It has known a dissolution that feels like a return to source. In that immersion, a primal power comes to us again, known in the Hindu traditions as a kind of enlightenment that sees Indra's vast many-noded net as reality's sociometric skein. Psychodrama's epiphany

shows us that this substantial world is, as Shakespeare said, an “in-substantial pageant,” and that Psyche’s world, with all her fictions, is more real, the ground where all our figures are truly figurative. At their tryst, Dionysus and Psyche dance; and Maya, the delusional literal world of suffering determinisms, is revealed as Lila, play. Once we know that, nothing is the same.

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Drama in the Curriculum for Troubled Young People

Is It Worth the Fight?

SUSAN PEARSON-DAVIS

FIGHTING FOR TIME in the school curriculum for arts instruction is a difficult battle. Indeed, a certain portion of art educators' time will regularly be devoted to strapping on our armor and doing battle with those very familiar and persistent dragons—Lack of Time, Lack of Money, Lack of Trained Teachers, and in truly benighted regions of the realm, the dragon named Back to Basics. When it comes to justifying time in the curriculum to provide arts instruction for troubled young people, the same dragons rear their heads, but they do so in a slightly different landscape and take on a different appearance. And they bring some of their cousins.

In this article I will examine some of these dragons in the territory of special education for troubled students and look at some of the resources that are available to help those who undertake this quest. I will do so from my perspective as a theatre educator who, while primarily teaching acting and creative drama in college, has also worked with severely emotionally disturbed adolescents in a residential school and with “normal” (but still disturbed enough to be challenging) junior high school students as a public school drama teacher. The examples used and the recommendations made will be drawn from and applied primarily to the use of drama. This emphasis should not be construed as diminishing the value of the other arts. Indeed, drama is often a synthesis of many arts, and I am aware of the importance of finding time in the curriculum for instruction in all the arts.

Drama activities can range from the formal presentation of a play for an audience, with memorized lines, sets, props, costumes, and lights, to the most informal, improvisational or spontaneous enactments by students for no audience but their classmates. Activities at the informal end of the continuum may be called creative drama (the term I will use henceforth), role playing, sociodramatic play, or improvisation. These informal drama activities are the ones most likely to be used in education and

therapy for troubled young people, although more formal theatre presentations will also benefit these students.

"Troubled young people" is a very general term, so I turn to the field of special education for more specificity. Special educators still disagree on terminology to describe this population. Most seem to prefer "behaviorally disordered," leaving the term emotionally disturbed for the psychotherapists and those working in clinical settings. Reinert suggests the following four categories of behaviors displayed by troubled young people:

- (1) acting out behaviors (hitting, aggressive, and disruptive behavior); (2) withdrawn behaviors (absence of speech, thumbsucking, and restricted behaviors); (3) defensive behaviors (lying, cheating, and avoiding tasks); and (4) disorganized behaviors (autistic behaviors and being out of touch with reality).¹

In addition, Reinert suggests three broad classifications to describe the severity of these behaviors: (1) mild, referring to young people who can be helped by the regular classroom teacher and other school resource personnel through short-term counseling or individual attention; (2) moderate, referring to those who can remain at their assigned school but require intensive help from specialists in resource centers like mental health clinics or diagnostic centers; and (3) severe, referring to those who require assignment to a special class or special school.²

Many Causes

Other descriptive terms and labels vary, depending upon the theoretical background of the person using them. Behavioral disorders and emotional disturbances have many causes, ranging from learning disabilities to physical or psychological disabilities. These causes are important when it comes to therapeutic treatments for the individual child, but they are beyond the scope of this discussion. It is important to bear in mind, however, that many behavioral disturbances, especially in the case of those students categorized as mildly disturbed, may not be chronic disorders but may be caused by the stresses of the student's life situation. If these stresses are reduced, the child's inner conflicts and "deviant" behavior diminish. These students often just need help through the rough times rather than long-term psychiatric treatment. Indeed, the less negative labeling done, the better.

Regardless of the causes of the troubled student's problems, many of the same behaviors may appear in differing degrees of severity. The troubled young person may exhibit some combination of the following. They may show withdrawn blank inattention or hostile acting out or may alternate between the two. The young acting-out child may be prone to outbursts of temper that include crying and screaming. These students

are usually easily distractible, have a very short attention span, are difficult to interest, and have very little motivation to complete tasks. They are usually experiencing little or no success academically and their social relationships may be characterized by hostility, anxiety, or the inability to function in relationships with others. Most have low self-esteem. In adolescents, the acting-out behavior may include hostile and aggressive acts toward authority figures and peers, delinquency, and drug abuse. Those who are acting out often have difficulty in making a causal connection between their actions and the results of those actions. They tend to blame other people or forces outside themselves for what happens to them rather than seeing themselves as in some way having the power to influence events. If they have been displaying these behaviors for a long time, their most stable and familiar role may be that of the “bad child” and they may be locked into a vicious cycle between what people expect of them and fulfillment of those expectations.

Facing the Dragons

Let us return to the image of the drama educator—our hero, if you will—in not-so-shiny armor, trying to bring drama experiences to these troubled students and coming face to face with at least one new dragon. The new dragon, named Professional Responsibility, asks, in a booming voice indicating the importance of the question, “Will drama really benefit these kinds of students?” For help in answering this question, our drama educator turns for support to psychologists and psychotherapists who have used elements of play—especially spontaneous dramatic play, puppet play, psychodrama, and role playing—in the treatment of emotionally disturbed children and adolescents for many years. A large body of literature suggests that these drama-related treatments have been very successful when combined with other treatments for moderately and severely disturbed young people in clinical settings. Our hero could assume from this that drama should also be successful with troubled students at all levels in the schools.

This use of play in child psychotherapy began when psychoanalytically oriented therapists had to confront the difficulty of using verbal therapies with children. They experimented extensively with the use of toys and play to find ways to help children’s ideas and feelings emerge in a free and uncensored way analogous to free association in adults.³ Melanie Klein regarded the child’s play as a kind of symbolic representation of unconscious fantasy that would help the therapist understand the child’s inner conflicts.⁴ Erik Erikson introduced the concept of children playing to achieve “mastery,” or working through in play traumatic or

difficult experiences to help the child understand and cope with complex life situations.⁵ Play, including dramatic play, role playing, and psychodrama, continues to be a major method of working with children in therapy today.⁶ Drama is usually used in combination with other therapeutic treatments.⁷ Drama therapy has been used with positive results with nearly every kind of emotional, behavioral, and psychological disturbance, including schizophrenia, autism, and brain damage.⁸

Producing a Play

In addition to informal drama activities, some therapists view involvement of troubled young people in the creation of more formal play productions as potentially beneficial in the healing process, as long as the process of rehearsing and performing the play is organized to meet the needs of these students. The production of even a simple play provides an arena in which the young person can feel normal and move out of the world of special treatment and isolation to interact with others. In psychoanalytic terms, being part of a play or other performance can provide opportunities for emotional release (catharsis), for deep involvement in the characters being played (cathexis), for trying out other roles in a safe environment (experimenting with different personae), and for "regression in the service of the ego" so the student can deal with feelings of hostility, aggression, and sexuality in a positive way. Putting on a play provides immediate relationships with others, structured by a task on which all can focus. It offers the immediate gratification of an ongoing reason for social interaction and self-expression during the rehearsal process, as well as delayed gratification and the long-term payoff of the play's performance. In addition, important themes that are relevant to individual students or to the group can be introduced without the didactic approach of the classroom that so many of these students reject or resist. For students unable to put on a live performance of a play, the same benefits can be had through such means as creating and acting in videotaped dramas.¹⁰

So, has our knight in dramatic armor mollified this particular beast and satisfactorily answered its important question about the appropriateness of drama for these students? Unfortunately, not quite. Educators, educational psychologists, and experimental psychologists do not share psychotherapists' agreement about the meaning and value of play or dramatic play. The reasons for their skepticism are elucidated by Greta Fein in an extensive review of experimental research on pretend play (which she defines as synonymous with dramatic and sociodramatic play).¹¹ In the review, Fein examines the historical background of the concept of

pretend play from its appearance in child-rearing manuals in the 1920s to efforts by behaviorally oriented personality theorists like Sears to operationalize the theories of psychoanalysis and play therapy into empirical terms in the 1950s, through the seminal works on play of Piaget, Sutton-Smith, and Singer in the 1960s and 1970s. She then reviews the results of experimental research conducted until the early 1980s that was stimulated by these works. She makes it clear that research on pretend and dramatic play has shown highly mixed results. As many other authors and researchers have noted, Fein points out that much of the research is influenced by the fuzziness of the concept of play and the difficulty of giving it precise behavioral definitions that can be quantified and examined in a scientific way. Because of this, well-controlled studies of social pretend play and role enactment (the categories into which most drama activities fit) are relatively infrequent. The best of these studies do call into question some long-cherished assumptions about the nature and benefits of play. For example, ideas that play may serve a cathartic function and that pretend play can serve as a projective test to expose the inner person have not fared well under systematic research scrutiny. Because most of the research covers relatively short-term effects, the assumption that pretend play contributes to children's development or functioning beyond its value to clinicians as an assessment tool has not been strongly upheld. Studies of language development and cognitive development have been unable to prove convincingly that pretend play is a prerequisite for language and cognitive abilities, nor have they shown whether pretend play is concurrent with or a consequence of having acquired language and cognitive abilities. Little proof has been found of any relationship between pretend play and creativity. Studies of the lack of sociodramatic play in disadvantaged children and the benefits of training them in sociodramatic play in order to improve their social interaction and cognitive abilities have been marred by confusion on the part of researchers about the effects of social class, culture, and school settings. And although it has been established that students can be easily trained in sociodramatic play skills, little information is available about the durability of the training effects under various conditions.¹³

On the positive side, Fein points out that observational data suggest that sociodramatic play is accompanied by expressions of positive emotions, persistence, and concentration, and that involvement in sociodramatic play increases the likelihood that children will talk to, share with, and receive positive reinforcement from their peers. Studies of children's behavior in free-play settings report positive correlations between dramatic play and performance on role-taking tasks, measures of general orientation to people, cooperation with adults and peers, and friendli-

ness. However, since these studies are correlational, they do not establish whether the positive social and expressive behaviors are enhanced by pretend play, the characteristics of children who engage in pretend play, or whether they are necessary in order to play in a pretend mode. And unfortunately for our hero, research shows that training emotionally disturbed children in sociodramatic play may not work or may be more difficult than training “normal” children. Fein feels, however, that in spite of methodological weaknesses in many of the studies, pretend play seems to reflect a pattern of positive social behavior rather than just the absence of negative behavior. One of the most consistent findings from play interventions in research is that play or story-enactment training is associated with a reduction in egocentricity and with improvements in perspective taking and cooperative social problem solving.¹⁴

Mixed Research Results

So while struggling forward on the quest, our drama educator must realize that positive theoretical literature and clinical reports will have to be balanced against mixed research results that show only the beginnings of positive indications that the quest may be fruitful. School administrators must pay attention to experimental research because they simply do not have the time that private psychotherapists have. Therapy has never been considered a quick fix. Delving deeply into the psyche takes time and results are not guaranteed. So most schools, quite logically, have chosen to deal more with observable behavior rather than with the deep inner conflicts of their troubled students, and they look to hard research and statistics based on large groups of research subjects to help them decide how to allocate their limited resources. Our hero is going to have to continue the journey while the dragon asks, “Are you in the right territory or should you be working in the clinic where drama is accepted and effective?” In addition, our drama advocate must realize that hard research with emotionally disturbed young people involved in drama will continue to be plagued by methodological limitations that are due, if to nothing else, to the fact that emotionally disturbed young people must always be worked with in small groups. Unfortunately, experimental studies undertaken with small numbers of students seldom have the statistical power necessary to impress policy makers. Just as our beleaguered hero is taking some comfort in the fact that many clinicians and researchers find that drama is an enjoyable way to work with emotionally disturbed young people, another dragon begins breathing fire.

Most special educators agree that most troubled young people fall into the mild or moderate categories and must be dealt with by the regular

classroom teacher for all or part of the school day. So in bringing drama to troubled young people, one deals with both the regular classroom and the special class and with both the problems that present themselves when trying to justify arts instruction for so-called normal students and those specific to the behaviorally disordered. In a territory that includes both the special class and the regular classroom, our hero should not be surprised to hear the Back to Basics dragon demanding, “Even if there is some chance of success with drama, how do you justify taking time away from reading?”

In New Mexico, the state first mandates attention to certain “basics”—which include sensory-motor training, speech and language use, adapted physical education, and psychotherapy—and, once a student has been officially diagnosed as behavior disordered, the state is bound by law to provide and will fund only these basics. The most likely avenue through which behaviorally disturbed students will get drama experience is through their psychotherapy, even though creative drama specialists have long been using drama to teach language arts and could easily incorporate drama into sensory-motor training as well.

In addition to the school, the mental health and medical communities are usually involved in serving the severely disordered student, and it can be challenging to maintain effective communication among these agencies and professionals and the schools. Special education administrators tend to be concerned about keeping the division of responsibility clear and avoiding duplication of services. For this reason, many of them believe that the deep inner psychological problems of the child are the responsibility of the mental health professionals in the psychotherapeutic part of their educational program. Therefore, when these administrators view drama and the other arts as therapies, they think that the arts should be left to psychotherapists. A corollary of this perception of a division of responsibilities among agencies is the view that the proper goal of the school is to help these students succeed in only the academic parts of their program.

When it appears in the special education landscape, this Back to Basics dragon has another interesting aspect—as professional training becomes increasingly specialized, neither special education administrators nor teachers may be familiar with the position that the arts should be part of the basics. They may not be as much opposed to including drama in the curriculum for their students as they may be uninformed and neutral. Without identification of the arts as part of the basics, without definitive research supporting the benefits of drama, and without any pressure from parents to have drama for their behaviorally disordered children, many administrators see no need to provide drama or arts instruction. So

what should our hero do? Tackle the curriculum that trains the professionals? Enlist the aid of parents? Educate the administration? Before our battered warrior can catch a breath, another old familiar antagonist thrusts its head out from behind a hill.

Training for Teachers

“Don’t let these drama techniques be used by the untrained!” hisses the dragon called Lack of Trained Teachers. Here in the land of behaviorally disordered students, this dragon is much larger and more commanding than usual, and it is firmly defended by those eternal inhabitants of the realm of education, Lack of Time and Lack of Money, who have just lumbered in from harassing educators in other areas of the curriculum. Facing this powerful dragon triumvirate, our hero realizes in a blinding flash that those troubled students who are in the regular elementary school classroom are likely to get drama experiences and instruction only if the regular classroom teacher already uses creative drama in some form. In the secondary school, the troubled student may become involved in drama if the school offers it as an elective. Unfortunately, many classroom teachers who are unfamiliar with drama and untrained in its use (and that still includes most classroom teachers) fear informal drama; they fear that it will lead to their students getting noisy and out of control. If a teacher with this fear also has in the classroom one or more troubled students who are displaying disruptive behaviors, the teacher may be even less likely to use drama. Without having had training in how to teach creative drama, teachers are not aware that creative drama lessons need not disintegrate into noisy chaos.

In the special class for the behaviorally disordered, the first and most important goal is to help students learn to control their behavior. The disruptive nature of much of their behavior is a primary concern, since returning them to the regular classroom is a top priority in most public school special education programs. Consequently, a large part of the training of special education teachers who work with this population focuses on behavior management techniques. Courses in the arts are not required in most special education teacher training programs, just as they are not required in most regular teacher training programs. At this point our hero notices that dragons called Lack of Time and Lack of Money are nodding knowingly and whispering, “These teachers are already overworked. When are they going to have time to take an extra course in creative drama?” and “What school district has funds to provide special drama workshops to train teachers?” Just as our hero staggers back in dismay, a gentle whisper in the wind gives cause for hope.

The best special education teachers know that if the social and emotional needs of these students are not addressed throughout the school day, very little learning will take place in the other content areas. They realize that knowledge of behavior management techniques is not enough and that they need many different approaches, resources, and techniques that take advantage of different learning modalities to really motivate and help the severely disordered student.

For this reason, many special education teachers who work with behaviorally disordered students are open to the idea of using creative drama in the classroom. Many of these teachers may already be familiar with the use of role playing as a method of teaching social skills or of helping individual students explore alternate and more effective ways of dealing with difficult situations in which they usually lose their temper or otherwise relinquish control of their behavior. In most cases, these teachers will have learned role-playing techniques from a psychologist rather than from a drama specialist, but this familiarity may make it easier for them than it is for the regular classroom teacher to move into other drama activities in which the emphasis is on pleasure and/or on the aesthetic, creative, and expressive values of the art form. However, most special education teachers of the behaviorally disordered feel that they need more training in order to use creative drama and theatre to the best advantage.¹⁵

Drama Specialists

But the dragon called Lack of Trained Teachers raises a warning claw and reminds our hero that the issue of insufficient training also affects drama specialists. Although no extra training would probably be necessary for drama specialists working with mildly troubled young people integrated into regular classrooms, training in drama therapy or psychology is an absolute requirement for those who want to work with severely or even moderately disturbed students in the special classroom. With these students, the drama teacher must be prepared to make major adaptations in activities. When working with the severely disturbed, there must usually be a much higher ratio of adults to students—usually one adult to each three or four students. Sessions may need to be much shorter, and potential distractions must be well controlled or completely eliminated. Drama teachers must be aware of the degree of elaboration they can realistically expect from each group. They also need to consider how the group handles space. Emotionally disturbed children are prone to intense anxiety, and too much space and freedom can feel very threatening to them. These children are also vulnerable to overstimulation, so it may be necessary to introduce drama activities very gradually.

Recommendations

If, given all these dragons, our drama advocate in battered armor is still standing and still wants to fight for drama in the curriculum for these students, some approaches and sources of information can help, and some steps should be taken to make the quest easier for others who follow. First, many special educators need to be made aware of what drama and the other arts can do in the education of these troubled young people. Since showing is generally more effective than telling, drama specialists must reach out to the special education programs that serve these students and find ways to do well-planned demonstration projects. The process and results of the projects must be shared with other special education teachers, resource personnel, administrators, and those involved with university special education programs. Drama specialists should work with special education teachers to make sure that the goals for the drama project coordinate with the educational plans for each individual student in the project and the overall goals of the special education program within the particular school or district. It should be noted in the planning of any project that creative drama has often been used to teach other subjects like language arts. Although drama is of value in and of itself, links to other curricular goals may help win over skeptics. Since funding will undoubtedly be hard to find, those drama specialists affiliated with universities who can apply for research or creative project grants are probably in the best position to make such projects happen.

Since lobbying to require drama (and the other arts) in special education teacher training is a long-term effort, as is training in therapy for the drama specialist, those who are interested in working with severely disturbed young people through drama should consider team-teaching projects as a starting point. Special education teachers usually work in teams with this population and they are used to careful advance planning and follow-up discussions with their colleagues and other professionals. There are probably a number of teachers in every community who would relish the opportunity to learn from having a drama specialist in the classroom, and drama specialists can learn an equal amount from special education teachers. Because special education teachers of behaviorally disordered students are used to observing, recording students' behaviors, and monitoring their progress very carefully, they may also be good potential partners in experimental research—research that should continue in spite of the difficulties mentioned above.

Those on the quest should also contact their state's Very Special Arts Program. Very Special Arts is a private, nonprofit arts education organization that is an educational affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for

the Performing Arts. Very Special Arts has a program in all fifty states (and forty other countries) and its purpose is to make the arts accessible to all people—whether disabled or not. Although the programs vary from state to state, Very Special Arts staff members can serve as a resource for information about bringing interested teachers and school districts together with interested artists for arts education projects. In New Mexico, Very Special Arts runs, among other projects such as an annual festival, a week-long summer arts camp called Artsfare that brings together equal numbers of interested handicapped and nonhandicapped students and teachers who want more background in the arts. These teachers act as interns with artists who have done residencies in the schools. The artists lead arts activities as they would lead them in a school setting. In this way teachers who are hesitant about trying out the arts in their own classroom can see the activities used with groups of children in a nonthreatening, noncompetitive atmosphere, while remaining free of the responsibility of getting immediate results with their own students. About 10 percent of the teachers who have participated in this program in its four years of existence are teachers of the behaviorally disordered.

Other potentially fruitful resources to investigate when considering a project with emotionally disturbed children are those state and private children's psychiatric hospitals that include schools. Especially helpful are those hospitals that try to create a total therapeutic milieu for their patients, with as much coordination and communication as possible between psychotherapeutic staff in the hospital, clinical staff in the residences, and educational staff in the school. Because of the already strong links between therapy and education in these hospital/schools, the arts as therapy and education are more likely to be accepted.

The Children's Hospital/Mimbres School, housed at the University of New Mexico Children's Psychiatric Hospital, has for the last eight years had a model program in the arts that has received state and regional awards and has also been included in the U.S. Department of Education's *Effective Compensatory Education Sourcebook Project Profiles*.¹⁶ Because so many of the Mimbres School students, all of whom have a primary diagnosis of emotional disturbance, also have language proficiency deficits, they all participate in the Language Enrichment Through the Arts Program (LEAP). LEAP is an integrated curriculum with instructional modules in areas such as drama, slide making, puppetry, cardboard carpentry, creative writing, photography, and video. The LEAP coordinator and the classroom teachers' team teach and collaborate in the selection of appropriate modules for their classes. Extensive use is made of artists in residence to supplement areas in which the teach-

ers and the LEAP coordinator may not have expertise. The LEAP coordinator stays in continuous communication with the clinical staff and childcare workers to make sure the LEAP goals work in conjunction with the overall school operation and link with the hospital's goals of providing an environment that fosters positive self-esteem, appropriate interpersonal relationships with peers and adults, and moral development. The theoretical orientation of the school is based on the cognitive learning theories of Piaget and Bruner and the behavioral learning theories of Skinner (this last is a confirmation of the behaviorists' openness to the arts).

Model Programs

Those advocating that drama and the arts be given time in the curriculum for troubled students in public schools should both support and advertise successful model programs. We should recognize that the close coordination of therapy and education in schools such as the Mimbres school offers a supportive milieu that allows a depth of treatment and individual attention hard to duplicate in public school. Drama and the other arts, when used with severely emotionally disturbed young people, always have the potential to bring up deep inner conflicts that require special handling by trained professionals in a supportive atmosphere. If that kind of support is not present in a particular school setting, then drama activities with severely disturbed students may be inappropriate.

As always, those who want to increase the time available for drama instruction with this group of troubled students must support the efforts of those who are working with members of the state legislature and state department of education to have the arts recognized as part of basic education, to have time required for the arts in the curriculum, to make arts courses a graduation requirement for high school students, and to get even minimal arts requirements included in teacher training and certification programs. It is very important to inform and involve parents in the process. Legislators and state departments of education tend to listen more readily to requests or demands from parents than to those from arts educators.

Benefits of Drama

The benefits of drama for troubled young people and especially the benefits to the many mildly troubled students still in the regular classroom can constitute a valuable argument in support of the above efforts. Most educators and policy makers understand how exponentially the in-

direct cost to society and to the individual rises when troubled young people do not find positive roles or productive ways to exist in the world. We must help these policy makers to understand that drama and all the arts provide valuable modes of learning, viable ways of knowing the world and its cultures, and important areas of potential success experiences for students who are "turned off" because they cannot seem to succeed in the more traditionally academic areas of school.

Notes

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14. *Ibid.*
15. Karolyn Goldenberg, Principal, Side-by-Side Program, Montezuma Elementary School, Albuquerque, N.M., interview with author, 26 May 1988.
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Book Reviews

TITLE: *The Modes and Morals of Psychotherapy*, 2nd edition

AUTHOR: Perry London

PUBLICATION DATE: 1986

PUBLISHER: Hemisphere Publishing, New York

PRICE: \$34.50 hard cover, \$18.95 soft cover

The author states in his preface to this new edition, “[W]hat’s new, these 20 years, does not affect fundamental themes I wrote about in 1964.” That is the major problem with this revision; it reflects the failure to note *the* difference that makes the difference. The author states that the main arguments of the first edition are still in place: psychotherapy is a moralistic as well as a scientific enterprise, and its many variations require cataloguing, with technique the best foundation for doing this.

I can partially agree with the first statement and disagree with the second. The difficulty with the first statement has to do with what I experience as the major shortcoming of this work, that is, that the author appears to have been totally sheltered from the impact of systems theory upon the field of psychotherapy. Systems theory is a revolutionary jump from the psychoanalytic or the behavioral theory, which are the two theories the author uses to categorize his techniques. Because systems theory requires that the therapist recognize his/her place in the treatment system, the therapist is both a change agent and one changed for having participated in this particular system. This perspective places an ethical responsibility upon the therapist to respect the system when present and to note its ability to function when not present. Taking positions within the system of one up or one down presents the therapist with the ethical dilemma. Although positions of one-up (expert) may produce certain changes, they tend not to empower individuals within the system to recognize their own resources and thus their inherent ability to produce change. It is this empowerment that is what makes psychotherapy moral, and I do not hear the author reflecting this position.

As to his second proposition, I do not believe that techniques are what one uses to categorize but are rather the perspective of reality that informs the theory within which one practices *using* techniques. A linear perspective of causality and change will mean that one will use tech-

niques accordingly, whereas a circular (systemic) view of causality and process will mean one will use the same techniques quite differently.

If a reader could apply some of the author's themes within a systemic perspective, there is a good deal that one could reflect upon in this book. I, however, kept having a *deja vu* of my university reading of psychotherapy, which occurred nearly 30 years ago. Frankly, this book should have been allowed to go the way of many first editions: to the dusty shelves of the past.

CLAUDE GULDNER

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TITLE: *The Creative Imperative: A Four-Dimensional Theory of Human Growth and Planetary Evolution*

AUTHOR: Charles M. Johnston, M.D.

PUBLICATION DATE: 1987

PUBLISHER: Celestial Arts, Box 7327-IMP, Berkeley, CA 94707

PRICE: \$14.95 softbound

This is not a book about psychodrama, not even one about psychotherapy. It is a book about change—change in all realms from the intrapsychic to the global. Moreover, I consider it perhaps the most profound book I have read in a decade.

The author, Charles Johnston, who is a Seattle psychiatrist, artist, and futurist, directs the Institute for Creative Development, a think tank and training center. In *The Creative Imperative*, he presents a major new paradigm for thinking about both who we are and how we change. He opens the door to a fourth dimension, moving beyond three-dimensional Newtonian/Cartesian thinking and beyond the easy panacea of unity in “New Age” thinking. He successfully steps beyond simplistic polemics and the either/ors to which we so often succumb and presents a well-substantiated, dynamic perspective from which to approach the critical issues of our world, from love to politics, from education to economics.

Dr. Johnston’s treatise is based on a theory of creative causality. In *The Creative Imperative*, Dr. Johnston poses and responds to a critical question for our time: How must we learn to think and act if we are to have a vital future? He replaces the Age of Reason’s central concept of the universe as a great machine with a new organizing principle: reality as interplaying dynamics of formative, creative process.

In the book, Dr. Johnston articulates his theory in depth, grounds it thoroughly in history, and explores its application and relevance in numerous realms. His application of the model to psychotherapy is especially rich. His “purpose-centered psychotherapy” proposes several major changes in perspective that, at first glance, may seem subtle:

1. a fundamental shift in the perceived purpose of psychotherapy from a focus on symptoms to a focus on a person’s capacity for “aliveness” (a notion not unlike Moreno’s concept of spontaneity);
2. a shift beyond the either/or of health and disease to a larger, more dynamic perspective that views symptoms as *both* good and bad and with specific creative functions;
3. a fundamental shift in therapeutic posture from “one who knows” to a “third space” posture of one who is a catalyst to creative involvement in self and life;

4. the inclusion and elucidation of approaches for accessing the more creatively germinal parts of our natures—feelings, dreams, the bodily experience, the imaginal;

5. a way to step beyond and bridge all of the polarities that have traditionally cleaved our understanding—health vs. illness, healer vs. healed, mind vs. body, right vs. wrong, personal vs. social, etc.;

6. a new, more dynamic, and inclusive approach to psychodiagnostics. The author presents a framework for understanding human diversity and “psychopathology,” which provides a way to conceptualize in great detail while avoiding the categorical and condemning posture of traditional psychodiagnostics. Diversity becomes understood as elements within a coherent patterning.

While I am excited by the implications of Dr. Johnston’s model in the realm of psychotherapeutics, I am even more impressed by its potential in the realm of social change. The author does not attempt to articulate tools or a methodology for applying the model to larger realms. That remains our challenge, our imperative—and a stimulating one, at that!

Whether addressing the personal, interpersonal, social, cultural, or global level, the model relates nicely to Morenean theory and methodology. Three very fundamental principles, which they share, are the identification of a primary referent for change and functioning that is energetic, i.e., aliveness/spontaneity; sensitivity to and inclusion of all ways of knowing, not just the rational; and a recognition of the inseparability of the personal/individual and the societal/cultural/global into mutually exclusive poles.

The methodologies of psychodrama, sociometry, and sociodrama all readily lend themselves to application within the model. Your practice of them will undoubtedly be changed upon reading *The Creative Imperative*. The book is clearly yet poetically written, well illustrated, and substantively grounded. Every sentence is laden with import and food for thought; you will return to this book again and again. In the words of Virginia Satir, this book is “required reading for all people who wish to move forward in their thinking.”

SANDRA N. WOOD

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BRIEF REPORT

Murder! (She Said!)

ARI BADAINES

Occasionally using psychodramatic methods, I had been counseling Sue, a 32-year-old single woman, in individual therapy for about 45 sessions over an eighteen-month period. She had been complaining in recent sessions about her boyfriend Ted who, she discovered, had a regular girlfriend. Ted, however, had led Sue to believe that she was his “one and only.” In this session, Sue informed me in a calm voice that she felt so angry and hurt that she intended to kill Ted. During the entire treatment period, Sue had shown neither severe psychopathology nor any homicidal tendencies, so I initially did not take her seriously. My attitude changed dramatically when she described in detail a precise, well-thought-out plan for accomplishing her wish.

Accepting the seriousness of her intent left me feeling initially anxious and helpless. Then I chose psychodramatic methods to enact her plan with the hope of sufficiently alleviating her anger so that the act would be unnecessary. Sue informed me that she had carefully observed Ted’s movements and planned to run him over as he crossed a street near his home. I warmed her up to sitting in her car (using a chair) and invited her to describe what she saw as she sat parked on the street near where he would cross. In an aside, Sue also spoke of her deep feelings of betrayal and hurt. Her tears soon turned to anger, and she indicated to me that she wanted to “get him!” I took the role of Ted, and, using the chair as a vehicle, she proceeded to run over me (Ted).

Both in the role of director/therapist and in Ted’s role, I was shocked at her wrath and her delight. I realized I had violated a warning from my training days—admonishing us not to increase the protagonist’s warm-up to suicidal or homicidal tendencies by his or her enactment. Feeling quite desperate, I—still as Ted—began writhing in agony and hoped that Sue would feel some compassion. This action, however, only deepened her sense of satisfaction, and she began to half-cry, half-shout, “Suffer, you bastard, suffer!”

Lying on the floor, dying, I realized that basically I had not succeeded in my intent of reducing her warm-up to homicide but, on the contrary, had deepened it. I was seriously concerned about what to do, when I had a moment of spontaneous inspiration. From somewhere deep in my brain

came additional "training-days" advice: Let the protagonist experience the consequences of his or her actions.

I asked Sue what would happen next, and she replied, "I leave him there in the road, get in my car, and go home, and that's it." "Fine, let's see that," I replied. She began driving home, and I mimicked a police siren, as a police car approached rapidly from a distance. When I as a police officer pulled her over, explaining that a witness had noted her license plate, Sue registered genuine shock. Continuing as the police officer, I interviewed her and then escorted her to jail.

Sue experienced a brief trial, dominated by my taking the role of an aggressive and unpleasant prosecuting attorney, which culminated in a sentence of twenty-five years in prison. Using the future projection technique, Sue sat in a small corner of the therapy room and was allowed to walk only four steps in any direction. I reminded her that she would experience no real freedom or privacy again until she was fifty-seven. When projected ahead to fifty-seven, she was released. As she left the prison, she was asked by me in the role of a prison officer, "Was he worth twenty-five years of your life?" Looking at me squarely in the eyes, she replied "No!"

In the sharing phase, I first talked with Sue about any residual feeling she might have toward me from the various roles. (Stein & Callahan, 1982 discuss several important considerations for processing with the client in individual psychotherapy.) Sue then spoke about the psychodrama and its impact on her. She was much calmer, and it was clear to both of us that there was no longer any risk of her harming Ted. Sue emphasized that when she had planned to kill Ted, she had never considered any consequences to the killing; and her psychodramatic arrest truly shocked her because it made her realize the personal cost to herself for her revengeful wish and, even more significant, that she had never even thought beyond the act of killing him.

Future sessions using action methods helped her release her anger and hurt and repair her damaged self-image.

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Echoes of Moreno

On the Use of Auxiliaries

It was the summer of 1972. A number of students were gathered in Moreno's living room for an informal discussion session, which consisted mostly of students asking questions and Moreno answering them. It was a quick way to explore a number of topics and to satisfy student curiosity about personal matters as well. Whatever they asked, he responded to.

Following a question about how many times he had been a protagonist (he hadn't), one student asked how he knew when to use an auxiliary and when not to. Moreno reflected on this question and then answered slowly and metaphorically.

He said, "Well . . . the decision about whether to use or not use an auxiliary is very much like decisions we make when we are raising our children. If we have a child and he can't tie his shoe, we tie it for him. And again, if he can't tie his shoe, we tie it for him. But eventually, perhaps haltingly, perhaps poorly, he will begin to tie his own shoes. And when he begins to do that, we stop tying them for him. The decision about auxiliaries is like that. We provide an auxiliary to do the things the protagonist can't do for himself. They are shoe tiers. When the protagonist can do more for himself, we no longer provide those auxiliaries. If we continue to provide help when it is no longer needed, that satisfies our need for being helpful but creates dependency on the part of the child and the protagonist. What we are attempting to create are independent, self-sufficient children and strong, resourceful protagonists who can do things for themselves. In this way, the psychodrama director is like a parent, and the parent is like a psychodrama director. Next question. . . ."

Alton Barbour

Echoes of Moreno

Sociodrama, Known as Role playing, in the *New York Times*

It is almost 50 years since J. L. Moreno suggested to Robert Bartlett Haas that Beacon House publish a book specifically geared to the use of role playing in education. The year 1949 saw that book come into being; it was entitled *Psychodrama and Sociodrama in American Education* and was edited by Haas.

It is, therefore, very gratifying to have read a report in a recent issue of the *New York Times*, which described the efforts by Sanford Endick and Joseph Gelfond to teach ninth graders at Millburn Junior High School about the Holocaust by using role play to immerse students into the very experience of the Holocaust. After being assigned their roles, students play out their parts, facing moral dilemmas as they make their decisions. Students are forced to consider the implications of their decisions for themselves, their families, and their community.

This report is but another reminder of how sociodrama and psychodrama have been in the vanguard for more than half a century. Undoubtedly, there will be more and more evidence of that in years to come.

Zerka T. Moreno

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