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Pre-Warm-Up in Russian Psychodrama Groups: A Cultural Approach

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ABSTRACT. This article, based on practical psychodrama experience with “frozen” Russian groups, deals with the problem of warm-up, using “no” and “avoidance” reactions on the microdramatic level. In the broad cultural context of modern reality in what was formerly the Soviet Union, the following phenomena are especially significant: (a) prevailing “no” and “avoidance” reactions that reflect defensive and masking behavior, (b) speaker/passive audience relations that supplant an actor/involved audience, (c) a large store of unexpressed reactions that cause new stimuli to be experienced as if within a tightly pressured mass with indistinct layers and structure. The authors offer a concept of structured pre-warm-up processes designed to activate rigidly stagnated emotions and to build on them for the further phases of classic psychodrama.

RUSSIA HAS ALWAYS BEEN FAMOUS for its frost, and, although nowadays the political climate is changed, the problem of social and psychological “defrosting” remains. People have gained some freedom of physical and verbal expression, but they continue to be emotionally frozen. The natural interaction between body and mind has become disrupted. Zerka Moreno (1984, p. 13) has said, “Warming up to psychodrama may proceed differently from culture to culture and appropriate changes in the application of the method should be made.” Based on our experience with Russian psychodrama audiences, we have worked out certain procedures that we have designated *pre-warm-up*, or *defrosting techniques*, which can be organically combined with traditional psychodramatic methods. These techniques may also be applicable in work with especially cold or stagnated individuals or groups in other cultures. We do not present these pre-warm-ups here as a new form of warm-up but rather as a useful bank of “yes” reactions to support already existing warm-ups (Blatner, 1988; Sacks, 1967). Our goal is to prevent a preponderance of what we

have called “no” reactions from rendering whole sessions with these resistant groups totally impotent. We have described the closely connected and mutually dependent “no” reactions and “avoidance” reactions elsewhere (Kroll, Mikhailova, & Serdiouk, in press).

In our practice, we have noticed that even when a person is individually warmed up, energy transmission does not necessarily carry over to the group. The transmission of energy from individual to individual presupposes certain assumptions about the possibility of an exchange of positive reactions. Normally, in some other countries, these assumptions would be taken for granted. For citizens of the former Soviet Union, such energy transmission is especially difficult. We have found it easier to overcome this problem on the subsocial level, that is, without requiring interaction among the members. Instead, we present a chain of simple, step-by-step exercises to the group.

Some Cultural Factors in Contemporary Russia

We base our principles of pre-warm-up on an analysis of traditional Russian behavior. For the present study, the following stereotypes were especially important:

- Prevailing “no” and “avoidance” reactions expressing defensive and masking mechanisms
- Speaker/passive audience relations as opposed to actor/active audience relations
- A large store of unexpressed internal reactions that cause stimuli to be experienced as if from within a tightly compressed mass of indistinct layers

These aspects of Russian behavioral tradition are closely interwoven. Our purpose here is to understand them enough to be able to work within their constraints, rather than to undertake a full analysis of their nature. A Russian person tends not to accept any offered information and expresses this tendency implicitly or explicitly in “avoidance” reactions and “no” reactions. The chain of “no” reactions comes easier than the “yes” chain.

The Russian social environment and the anti-aesthetic spatial surroundings of everyday life help create an ethic of absence and of non-communication. In his Noble lecture, Josef Brodsky wisely noted that “aesthetics is the mother of ethics.” The aesthetics of Russian everyday life is one source of the characteristic blocking of psychic energy and unexpressiveness in the mysterious “Russian mentality.” This may be less true of the aesthetic environment in villages, but the total psychological

result is similar to that in cities and towns. It also helps account for the special passivity of the individual in a psychodramatic group.

A beloved image in Russian art and literature has always been that of wide-open spaces. The theme continually recurs in folk songs, poetry, and the works of classical Russian writers. As in its later version associated with the American West, open spaces have symbolized a feeling of and a longing for freedom. One of the paradoxes with which we are confronted here is that Russians no longer like these open spaces. Our modern historical experience has made them an image less of freedom than of homelessness, endless effort, and danger. In our present culture, only a safely enclosed, intimate space can be experienced positively. In Soviet architecture, huge perspectives and open plazas belong exclusively to the realm of official buildings. The very word *horizon*, for example, has been totally compromised by official demagoguery. Open space makes one feel less cozy, more uncomfortable, and lost. It calls up associations of coldness and hopelessness. At best, one becomes detached from the city surroundings; at worst, one is traumatized by the nonhumanistic style of city planning and design and its monotony of forms and colors. The ugly background of everyday life gives rise to evasive eye movements, with people looking down, aside, or nowhere. Aesthetically sensitive people have worked out a whole strategy of looking-without-seeing. There are almost no eye-traps that might be expected from advertising or in shop windows. An old Russian expression refers to something dull and ugly as "nothing to stop one's eyes on." The typical man, sitting at an official meeting, gazes with an unseeing eye. He does not look at, but through, whatever is before him. Instead of normal focusing, there is a frozen stare. Neither is there the normal defocusing resulting in a continuous, panoramic, perceptual field. Just as the visual channel remains insulated from new information, the auditory channel is choked with senseless, useless noise. Everyday surroundings are polluted by sound. In offices, factories, trains, and even in the streets, people are forced to listen to the radio continuously. They can neither switch it off nor choose the program. This compulsory auditory background creates a general skepticism about verbal information, especially when it is given by one person.

The paucity of choices in everyday life is reflected in a general decrease of selective activity. The very act of choosing is simply not reinforced by behavioral experience. These people feel themselves to be objects of transportation in a public vehicle rather than the subjects of movement. In the communal space of a bus or subway, where people are pressed into a crowd, the passengers cannot articulate their own movements distinctly or distinguish their body sensations. They show low kinesthetic sensitivity. If they are driving, they have difficulty making spatial decisions. It is

no wonder that members of Russian psychodrama groups show diminished sensibility with respect to distance, direction, vision, audition, and kinesthetic experience.

A cold heaviness and permanent tiredness keep the body always on the verge of breakdown. When a person's emergency stock of energy is consumed at one time, he or she compensates later by exhibiting lassitude in an attempt to replenish that strength. The cramming together of the population, the narrowness of private areas in apartments in the former Soviet Union, and the general lack of privacy break down the natural borders of personal space.

The repulsive and alienating nature of these facets of Russian Confederation reality pushes one's feelings away, turning them back inside the personality where they are stored like multileveled psychological fossils. Like bricks of peat, these feelings are not easy to ignite, but once lit, they burn for a long time and generate great heat. This personality structure has both advantages and disadvantages for the individual, but it is most certainly a rich mine of material for the psychologist.

This mass of repressed and compressed feelings is protected by layer upon layer of "no" reactions that were gradually accumulated over time. By carefully removing taboos, we gradually gain access, not to a single suppressed feeling waiting to be acted out, but to a tangled "peat brick" of feelings. They are compressed, and they diffuse into each other so that distinct strata of feelings cannot be easily defined and classified. In psychodrama, one comes to expect not a bright, theatrically effective explosion of a main suppressed feeling but the rolling out of a long chain of feelings, each link of which is significant.

In comparison with this complicated process, Western psychodrama sometimes looks to us shockingly like a conveyer belt of highly standardized and predictable feelings, where one person is crying, another ready to cry about a sudden insight of his/her love or hatred of his/her step-mother or bride/bridegroom, while the third one holds tissues for them both. Rather than the standard packing of the dramas of more open cultures, we deal with feelings in complex entanglements and need to use a different method for apportioning and separating them.

A person who has not sufficiently experienced the role of spectator toward his or her own feelings and who has not perceived them fully cannot suddenly become a protagonist and express these feelings. In addition to that, the role of the sociometric star in Russian tradition requires superdistinctness, completely incompatible with the complex tangle of non-acted-out human reactions accumulated during a long period of stagnation. To envy a star is a helpless and hopeless feeling because the Russian social "spectator" is frozen in his position for years, if not for-

ever. Role reversal with a star is hardly possible. Envy of the star is buried internally and is only partly conscious. The attitude toward those who are actively involved is ambivalent. They may be seen as show-offs. The reversibility of the star and spectator positions in the therapeutic space must be carefully shown to the group members, with special attention given to the nonverbal, behavioral aspects. The process of self-identification with a star must first be corrected by transforming the image of the star from "a speaker in a presidium" to "an actor freely expressing himself on a stage." The social dichotomy of speaker/passive audience must give way to the theatrical dichotomy of actor/involved audience.

A person used to sitting passively listening to a speaker and voting only "for" is certainly not ready to become a protagonist. In this situation, there is no potential space for his or her personal story. Such a person knows by experience that the faintest hope for something positive or interesting can easily be replaced by disappointment. The spectator has been used and made a fool of too many times and is always ready to feel deceived once more. To preserve himself from these continual disappointments, "the man in a meeting" is quick to use the mechanism of noninvolvement. It is a habit, a rule, and even an element of an ethical code. ("We" [in the hall] don't care for "them" [on the presidium] and their tricks.) Practically all that goes on in public is discredited in the individual's mind, but the resistance to the official version does not mean that a person has a ready alternative opinion. "The man in a meeting" shows formal loyalty and imitates involvement while slightly parodying it, but internally he says "no" or "I don't want to listen to this." For this reason, different parts of his body express noncongruent and often contradictory attitudes toward reality. Eyes and eyebrows appear to be alert and attentive; the mouth meanwhile is the mouth of a sleeping person. A straight back shows active presence, whereas the hands look dead, and so on. The bodily expression as a whole is static. "The man in a meeting" is inclined to express minimal communicative reactions and is untrained in the art of dialogue and polylogue. At best, he is able to pronounce a long domineering monologue, shifting to the presidium in his imagination while the rest of the group goes out of communication. The warm-up of an individual does not generalize in such a group automatically. It requires permanent infusions of heat, especially in the pre-warm-up stage.

Modifications in Technique

Our strategy evolved out of practical experience with Russian groups under these circumstances and is based on close attention being given to

microdramatic phenomena. The contradictions, minor resistances, or energy blocks within the individual's behavior correspond to the social patterns mentioned above. Metaphorically speaking, within the individual, "inner" protagonists, auxiliaries, and audiences can be found; they often are mute, untrained, and separated: their communication is to be restored. Our attempt is to facilitate the mechanisms of microexpression and microresponse. The localization and the decrease of scale increase the feeling of safety and confidence. Minor communicative and self-communicative actions also tend to intensify the "capillary system" of psychological phenomena where "no" and "avoidance" reactions are not so thoroughly standardized and automatic.

To release the means of bodily expression at the smallest atomic level, we prefer to work with subsocial psychodramatic patterns and to activate the substructures of primarily nonverbal resonance within the individual as well as within the group. Nonverbal warm-ups are, of course, familiar in psychodrama as well as in the training of actors, and here Galper's (1970) nonverbal communication exercises were especially helpful, whereas Fine's (1959) typical nonverbal warm-ups, consisting of only one or two steps, were insufficient for our frozen Russian groups. To obtain tele on this level, we needed to create a special psychological space for an echo first within each individual, then within small subgroups, and finally within the whole group.

We learned that it was absolutely essential to have the participants act out different microdramatic "no" reactions before these reactions could begin to resonate and make cold loops in the atmosphere of the group. The director had to make use of the necessary techniques to forestall the spread of the "no" and "avoidance" reactions before these reached the critical quantity. The negative reactions appeared in the form of noninvolvement, alienation, tension, watchfulness, or nonverbal behavior marking the attitude of a skeptical onlooker. We did not ignore, deny, or suppress these reactions. On the contrary, we tried to use them all, emphasizing our permission to experience negative feelings and to express and share them. By acknowledging the "no" reactions and by allowing a response to them, we thus inspired the first positive reaction. Coordinating the negative microdramatic actions became a "yes" response for all group members to each other and to the director.

By suggesting a great variety of different forms of such reactions, we facilitate flexibility and make experiencing, expressing, and sharing them less automatic. Group members are taught to train the muscles of their emotional body and articulate the transformation of microdramatic feelings. They practice shifting these feelings in time (connecting the present sensation with the preceding one and with the sensation that might

follow), in space, and in different scales. In this way, we attempt to help the group members master certain easily changeable physical and psychological distances between parts of the body and between the protagonist and the double (auxiliary, chorus, director, and audience). We draw their attention to small body-mind connections. In this mental limbering up, multiple identification complexes are released. This controlled non-verbal acting out helps tease out some of the many tangled threads of the personality. This method contains two systems or chains of practical techniques.

The Body Mirror Technique

The first chain is based on physical identification that we call the *body mirror*. Although the principle of mirroring is widely used in psychotherapeutic culture, the meaning of the term differs from school to school. Our mirror has features that make it useful not only as a system of techniques but also as a short "tuning" procedure (Kroll & Mikhailova, 1985). Our body mirror is a group technique. The participants stand or sit in a circle and simultaneously "reflect" the behavior of a designated member. After serving as the model, the reflected member then rejoins the group in mirroring the next member. Thus, everyone participates in a perpetual process of movement that only rarely requires intervention by the leader. (This format has similar applicability in other techniques, such as role reversal, doubling, and protagonist/chorus interactions). The exercise takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes, by which time everyone has had the opportunity to play the main character at least once and often several times.

In a short statement, the director introduces the body mirror and then gives a series of simple directions. It is suggested that each individual part of the body has acquired the full capability of expressing any emotion. One's forefinger (shoulder, neck, ankle, etc.) may become the "competent representative" of the whole body, expressing everything the body has to say. Because there is no opportunity for one's usual gestures to be used, the movements necessarily become more spontaneous (assuming that the atmosphere in the mirroring group is sufficiently stimulating). Embedded in this seemingly simple instruction is a set of important preconditions for later psychodramas. There is the idea of mutual tuning through mirroring and the implicit permission to do new and strange things. There are no standard patterns because nobody knows, for example, what a "hungry finger" or a "fussy shoulder" looks like and what movements are right for them. The variety of roles for different parts of the body reminds one that there is a whole team inside each of us and

that the inner relations of that team may be complicated. Through our body mirror, we also introduce the “as if” principle, essential for psychodrama, with an instruction like this: “Please, move your elbow as if it were (lazy, crazy, businesslike, playful, or whatever seems appropriate to the director) and we will try to do the same, as if we were your mirror.” The technique also offers great opportunity to reveal and even to explore the range of “no” reactions and “no” attitudes typical of any particular group, Russian or otherwise.

The strategy of joining the resistance can also be employed within this process of group mirroring. The body mirror can be used as a magnifying lens, highlighting the picture of various minor resistances, ambivalent behavior, unconscious nonverbal responses, or of whatever it is focused on. Normally, all these inner voices are mixed, overlapped, suppressed, or masked. We try to give living space to small, nonconventional units of expressive behavior, so they can be perceived separately and accepted.

A pre-warm-up using this technique occurred during a 3-hour psychodramatic session with a group of professionals. After greeting the group, the first director began: “Here is a simple tool to help us get more in tune with each other. [To a young lady in the circle]: Please, make any movement you like with your hand, one that is not too difficult to follow. We’ll try to copy it as if we were a mirror. We needn’t change sides, because this mirror reflects your right hand with our right hands. Please, everybody, try to be as precise as possible. [The group starts mirroring.] Try to feel the movements as if your whole personality were there inside this hand. If you [the young lady] get tired or bored or don’t know what to do, just pass the movement to your neighbor and join the mirror.” After five people have been mirrored and the mirror has become technically correct, the director continued, “Now let your hand get scornful or arrogant; now move your hand as if it were watchful, timid. After four ‘timid’ hands, move as a self-assured hand that knows how it should be.”

The “self-assured hand” in this group caused a series of nonsympathetic theatrical movements, showing a deep negative attitude. A person, who by his behavior had influenced the director to give this instruction, later produced associations and feelings about it. All the examples given above had to do with reactions of different people in the group. We usually give a new instruction to two or three persons before the main subject, toward whom the exercise is aimed, is to act. Thus, we start pacing for his possible defensive behavior in advance.

Meanwhile, the series went on: “Well . . . now let us shift attention to our fingers and choose one of them that could move as if it were mali-

cious and evil. [Seven evil fingers were shown with a lot of variations, visible enjoyment, and physical involvement of the whole arm.] Go back now to our hands; let them move as if they don't care at all . . . pardon the expression, indecent hands . . . [Both hands are involved and the whole arm is active.] . . . hands that show off . . . don't forget about precise mirroring. . . ." The emotional involvement now was high, although after some extended laughter, there was again a danger of losing concentration. The scope of the movements enlarged, and some of the participants felt like standing up. "Let's move our feet as if they were irritated. That's not the same as the feet of a person who is irritated (after mirroring five people). Now, move our feet as if they were menacing, stern, mad feet. Let's move our shoulders as if they were capricious or stubborn shoulders or tricky shoulders. Let us move two hands as if they were seeking contact." The positive response showed that the pre-warm-up had succeeded and could be finished. The group later confirmed that the procedure had mobilized a great deal of energy. All the participants gave strong positive feedback.

Subgrouping to Build Group Cohesion

Another set of pre-warm-up techniques requires a series of exercises for two, three, or more partners, working simultaneously in subgroups. The goals of these techniques are as follows:

- To promote the maximum emotional involvement of the whole group and to prevent reproducing the "speaker/passive audience" pattern with its cold and hostile periphery
- To create a dramatic partnership within a small, comfortable, imaginary psychodramatic "chamber," similar to the closed, intimate space in which a Russian is most comfortable
- To develop new channels of communication by the use of mutual alienation tendencies
- To facilitate a maximum number of nonverbal modes of contact on a subsocial level
- To conduct an indirect analysis of latent "no" reactions and to encourage their expression and partial acting out

Small subgroups enhance the feeling of safety. Positive individual experiences grow into a general atmosphere of the group. The atmosphere of safety is vital. Without it, any psychodrama evaporates quickly in Russian groups because of their previous negative social learning. Maintenance of this atmosphere requires constant surveillance.

After a short relaxation, we begin by working in dyads. Everyone

chooses a partner and, contrary to expectation, is instructed not to rush into direct contact. They are asked only to be together for some moments while thinking about some minor personal matter. They may muse about the weather, an annoying sound, a meal, or a family tradition and then to share some recollected experiences. They are asked only to try to be sincere as speakers and attentive as listeners.

The suggestion for role reversal is accepted quite naturally after this and can be accompanied by an instruction to exchange seats (the first place reversal). This exercise takes no more than 3 or 4 minutes but is enough to introduce the principles of dialogue, of free choice of a minor feeling, and of the experience of free expression in a safe, interpersonal space. Everyone contacts two or three different partners, each time discussing a new topic. They may also be instructed to alternate positive and negative feelings.

The group task is then expanded by the suggestion to work in triads. While one person, for example, tells about something boring or slightly disturbing, another one is to react to the content or to the very fact of communication in a variety of negative ways. Most of these negative reactions are to be nonverbal, with no more than two being verbal (such as interruption or sarcastic questioning). Everyone goes through all the positions (2 minutes each), and then all of them share their impressions about the others' ways of expressing "no" and "avoidance."

The next exercise in triads consists of a chain of descriptions of a small situation from everyday life with two accompanying feelings. After two or three sentences, the floor is given to the next participant, who repeats the situation and goes on by describing the feeling altered appropriately for himself or herself. The third person then takes a turn until six versions have been described, or two cycles around the triad. Then another member of the triad introduces a totally new situation-feeling combination for the next two circles of the relay until each person has had the chance to begin such a cycle. This helps the members become aware of the gradual alteration of their feelings according to the development of a situation or even independently of a situation. The initiator of the situation may disagree inwardly with its further treatment by the others, experiencing the impulse to object, reconstructing his or her own "true" logic of these minor feelings. The members of the triad may also "try on" the roles of protagonist or double for the first time, in a sliding, nonfixed, and therefore, easy way.

Larger Subgroup Techniques

We next reconfigure the group into subgroups of five. Participants then present to the other four as many of their own personal avoidance

signs as they can. They may include postural messages, spacial orientation, evasive eye movements, and so on, and may flow into each other without pause. Thus, everyone gets an opportunity to act out a major part of his or her stock of reactions of this kind. The "quintad" stands in a circle with closed eyes and joins hands in the center to sense the differences in manual communication. These last two exercises embody the contrasting tendencies of alienation and closeness. They also concretize and act out the "no" reactions that appeared in the process of the reconstruction of the larger subgroups.

The participants are next asked to show each other their nonverbal signs of detachment, using changes of distance, bodily movements, eye activity, and so on. This fosters the awareness that each person provokes different detachment reactions.

The last instruction for the groups of five is for everyone to ask three short questions about himself or herself without answering them. The response elicited in this exercise is primarily verbal and complements the nonverbal channels of contact used in the earlier exercises. At the same time, leaving the questions unanswered brings additional emotional safety. For many people, this situation feels strange, and the blocked impulse to reply makes the experience seem incomplete and unbalanced. This discomfort, of course, actually facilitates further action.

In the next stage, the group is reconfigured into circles of eight members. They are all asked to introduce themselves, each to each, pronouncing their names with a different intonation every time. Everyone gives a nonverbal sign of acceptance. The members then play with an imaginary balloon. This introduces an "as if" character to their play and facilitates the aiming of communication.

By contrast, the following exercise starts from a more meditative process. To maximize the opportunity for complete "yes" reactions, the director asks everyone to recall or imagine himself or herself in some pleasant landscape and to share this experience with the others. They are, in some way, to show the tempo or rhythm that is natural for them, describing a space that later may be placed on stage.

Two short exercises conclude the pre-warm-up session: With closed eyes, everyone is asked to envision "snapshots" of the others unwittingly taken during the pre-warm-up. Last, they are asked, without moving, to imagine in detail, the process of standing up, similar to not answering when questioned, in the exercise described above.

With a stock of "yes" reactions and sensory experiences having been evoked and expressed via usual and unusual communicative routes, new channels of perception are opened. All this prepares the group for the next stage of classical psychodrama.

These two series are, naturally, only examples of possible ways of working with microscale “no” reactions, using material available with “cold” Russian psychodramatic groups. No matter how special these groups are, we suspect that any director, by choosing and combining the necessary elements according to the requirements of the situation and the moment, may find something helpful in them. The techniques also seem promising for sociodramatic practice. The part of the session that we call pre-warm-up serves as a powerful lever for microdramatic reactions. The extent to which it helps mobilize stagnated feelings makes it certainly worth the time investment. It reliably facilitates the shift from potential to kinetic psychic energy. Stanislavsky advised that a gun on the wall in the first act of a good play must shoot in the last act.

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Processing in Psychodrama

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ABSTRACT. This article describes the phase of processing in psychodrama and discusses some of its problematic issues. As a training aid, processing may focus upon personal, professional, or group-related issues. If the difficulties in management are resolved, processing may become a powerful learning experience that gives participants an opportunity to make sense of the complex processes activated in psychodrama. A processing checklist is presented as a systematic aid in evaluating the professional skills of psychodrama directors.

PSYCHODRAMA TRAINING SESSIONS are usually followed by a didactic conference in which the performance of the psychodrama director is evaluated and the therapeutic process of the session is analyzed. Such a didactic conference is called process-analysis, or simply "processing," connoting the systematic investigation of the developing process in psychodrama. The main purpose of processing is to improve the professional skills of students in training.

The procedure of processing in psychodrama is unique among psychotherapy training and supervision methods for several reasons. First, it is based on direct, in vivo, observation by the trainer of the trainee and not on second-hand reports or audio/video recordings. Second, clients are invited to participate in the supervision session and listen to the feedback given to the student director. Third, new skills may be taught and practiced with experiential action-methods in addition to verbal descriptions.

In spite of these original features of training, psychodramatic processing has not received sufficient attention in the literature. The purpose of this article is to describe the basic procedure of processing in psychodrama and to discuss some of its problematic issues. A processing checklist can be a systematic aid in evaluating the professional skills of psychodrama directors.

The Procedure of Processing

The processing phase should be clearly separated from the sharing phase. Although both phases constitute a kind of "echo" from the group

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members of what they experienced during the session, they have different objectives and focus on different participants. Sharing, with its focus on universality and existential validation, encourages identification with the protagonist in a personal, emotionally involved manner. Processing, on the other hand, focuses on learning and understanding, encouraging analysis and evaluation of the student director in a more detached and intellectual manner. Whereas sharing continues the personal growth process of the session, processing introduces a normative dimension that is often in striking contrast to the earlier accepting climate.

For this reason, processing should be conducted not immediately after the sharing phase but following a short or a long pause. The duration of this intermission varies according to the time it takes for the participants to detach themselves emotionally from the session. Moreover, enough time must have elapsed after the session for the trainee to reconstruct the psychodrama and to prepare a comprehensive self-evaluation. However, if too much time has elapsed between the session and the processing, significant material may be forgotten, and the subsequent discussion may lack energy.

Processing typically includes the person who was the protagonist in the session, the trainee (or student director) who directed the psychodrama, the auxiliary egos, the group members (or fellow students) and the trainer (or teaching director) who was a participant observer in the session. They all take turns in giving their comments during the processing phase.

First, the protagonist, the leading person in the drama, gives his or her view of the session and of the director. The protagonist is not expected to evaluate the psychodrama from the point of view of its therapeutic effect. Rather, he or she is encouraged to comment on the central issues presented, on crucial scenes and encounters with significant people, and on the kind of interpersonal relationships that evolved during the action. This is an excellent opportunity for the protagonist to integrate material from the session and to achieve more closure.

Second, the student director, the "second protagonist," evaluates his or her own work. This can be done, for example, by exploring the basic theme, the sequence of scenes, the techniques employed, the choice points and perceived clues, and/or by discussing the rationale for the direction. Also, suggestions about what could have been done differently may be verbalized. Goldman and Morrison (1984) found that the degree to which students are able to evaluate their own skills reflects their ability to understand the psychodramatic process: "When the neophyte director is aware of the missed cue or mistake before being told, he/she is less likely to repeat that error" (p. 95).

Third, participants who were auxiliary egos in the session give their

feedback, not only from the point of view of the roles they played (role-feedback) but also as assistant therapists who were actively involved in the work and who may contribute valuable "inside information" about the session.

Fourth, group members in training are invited to evaluate the session. They may mention what they liked and disliked, what they would have done differently had they been directing, or ask specific questions about the direction. In an attempt to improve the efficiency of processing, Goldman and Morrison (1984) suggested that no one repeat a comment already made, that comments be specific to a scene and/or a particular dynamic aspect, and that students ask and attempt to answer their questions themselves in a Socratic fashion.

Finally, the trainer gives a general appraisal of the session in a straightforward yet sensitive manner, offering additional general comments to the points of view already mentioned. Basing these comments on careful observation and recording of the director's performance, the trainer attempts to exemplify each general point with specific material from the session.

I have preferred not to call psychodrama trainers supervisors because, as far as I can see, they do not oversee or inspect the work of students. Neither are they watching the action "from above" with "super-vision." Trainers should rather be viewed as facilitators, educators, and participating colleagues who share an experience with the group. Their main task is to help students in training to develop a professional identity by teaching empathic/analytic, therapeutic, staging, and group-leadership skills (Kellermann, 1991).

Some trainers feel that their task is accomplished when they have given a verbal summary of their findings and identified problematic points and issues. Others attempt to translate their findings into training recommendations and use some of the processing time for systematic teaching. Such teaching may include specially adapted training exercises and training tips (Warner, 1975), co-directing methods (Goldman, Morrison, & Schramski, 1982), or experiential re-enactments and roleplaying demonstrations suitable for the students in this phase of their professional development (Emunah, 1989; Shalit, 1990). In addition, trainers may encourage students to conceptualize the psychodramatic process in terms of various theoretical models, such as those presented by Goldman and Morrison (1984), Hale (1974), Hollander (1974), and Schramski (1979).

Psychodramatic processing is similar to the Open Live Supervision used for training family therapists (Olson & Pegg, 1979). In this kind of supervision, supervisor and trainees are present together with the therapist and the family, creating a complex system of relations that influence the entire process.

Problematic Issues in Processing

Psychodramatic processing creates a complex situation that may be difficult to manage. Four specific problematic issues are considered here.

1. Focus. One basic problem is caused by the variety of contradictory goals and feelings that participants seem to experience when processing. For example, protagonists want to be unconditionally accepted and are often curious about what people think about them after their psychodrama. They are also sensitive to the critique given to their director and tend to defend his or her work. Correspondingly, student directors frequently feel protective of their protagonists and somewhat defensive about their own work. Auxiliary egos search for recognition and appreciation. Some group members are impatient with the group for being engaged in "head trips" for too long. Others identify with the student director and emphasize only positive aspects of the direction. Frequently, trainers feel frustrated for not being able to teach.

These contradictory goals and feelings make it difficult for the training group to decide upon a common focus. Some would prefer to focus on the student director, others on the protagonist or on the group as a whole. This leaves us with three variations of processing that may function separately or in combination with one another: (a) director-centered processing that focuses on the student director, (b) protagonist-centered processing that focuses on the protagonist, and (c) group-centered processing that focuses on the group as a whole.

If the purpose of processing is to teach psychodrama and not to do psychotherapy or group dynamics, it is my position that processing should focus on the student director. This will include the director's analysis of protagonist and group but exclude working through what was verbalized for the protagonist and for the group. Although every protagonist may benefit from additional re-examination and re-integration of the issues raised in a previous psychodrama, this should not be done during processing but during later sessions. By the same token, the parallel group conflicts that tend to inhibit the development of groups may be explored during specially scheduled group exploration sessions but not during processing. Because of the complex system of interpersonal relations that frequently evolve in training groups, such group exploration sessions often become a necessity.

2. Professional skills or personality. A second difficulty in processing concerns the amount of personal versus technical feedback to be given to the trainee.

It has been my experience that processing becomes a more constructive learning experience if feedback is restricted mainly to professional skills

and methodological issues that tend to be easier to assimilate nondefensively and may be shared by the whole group. Individual difficulties of a personal nature, such as character traits, blind spots, unresolved counter-transference issues, etc., which surely affect the work of any director, can be mentioned in processing but should be worked through later in a psychodrama session or in individual psychotherapy/supervision.

3. **Protagonist presence.** A third difficulty is the presence of the protagonist during the processing. When student directors explain a rationale for their direction, they cannot refrain from analyzing the personality of the protagonist (normally an inappropriate activity in psychodrama groups). When listening to this analysis, the protagonist either agrees or disagrees with the director. If he or she agrees, it may be a valuable opportunity for integrative insight. If the protagonist disagrees, it might evoke defensive processes and erase some of the therapeutic impact gained in the psychodrama. To talk about the protagonist in the third person, as if he or she were not present, would be highly inappropriate within a Morenean framework of open encounter.

An extensive discussion of protagonist personality serves the single purpose of teaching personality theory. It may have nothing to do with the protagonist and should therefore be restricted to a minimum if the protagonist is present. Various contributions from other group members to such a discussion should also be discouraged to avoid transforming the processing session into an analysis by the group of one individual, or, if matters got more personal, into a sociometric exploration of interpersonal relations.

If there is a didactic need to discuss the personality characteristics of the protagonist, this should be done in the absence of the protagonist and with the pronounced aim of improving the analytical knowledge of the students.

4. **Trainer type.** A fourth general difficulty with processing concerns the educating style of the trainer. The two extreme types of trainers are the supportive and the critical.

Supportive trainers give mostly positive feedback, emphasizing the strong sides of the student's work, providing a climate of unconditional acceptance. They formulate their comments carefully. For example, when suggesting other possible ways of directing, they are careful not to hurt the self of the student and create a need for defensiveness. Such trainers develop confidence and safety, but their views might become less important with time because their requirements seem relatively easy to satisfy.

Critical trainers are more difficult to satisfy. They give mostly negative feedback, confronting students with mistakes and weaknesses in an inconsiderate manner. They argue that external evaluation is essential for

any learning process and believe that a straightforward and honest critique is the best way to learn the required skills. Depending on the response of students, these trainers tend to become authority figures who are either rebelled against or admired.

In order to make processing a truly educational event, trainers are advised either to take on a double role or work together with someone who can take on the complementary role. Students need both the protection and "mothering" of the supportive trainer and the confrontation and "fathering" of the critical one. Alone, neither is complete. Students will benefit from exposure to both support and confrontation, to praise and criticism, all of which pushes or pulls them a step further in their professional development.

Systematic Methods of Processing

Various methods of observing and recording of psychodrama sessions have been employed as the basis for processing. Typically, participants observe the session in an arbitrary and unsystematic fashion, taking notes about what they feel is important and raising questions and making comments during the process. Some training programs, however, have introduced more systematic methods of observation and recording, such as evaluation sheets that focus on specific elements, role diagrams of the psychodramatist (Frick, 1985), dramaturgical analysis (Hare, 1976) or processing checklists that describe observed phenomena in terms of specific categories.

As psychodrama develops into a more structured method of psychotherapy, the need for such systematic evaluation tools is increasing. If such tools are not used as mechanical devices and if they do not impair the creativity of the director, it is my experience that they are valuable as didactic aids in psychodrama training programs. Moreover, they may help us develop the common framework needed to build standardized criteria for certification.

A simple tool for evaluating the professional performance of psychodrama directors may be found in the "Psychodrama Director's Processing Checklist," which is presented in the appendix. This 100-item checklist can be used as a questionnaire for appropriate psychodramatist performance, as a guideline of observation for group members, as a self-evaluation instrument for the director, as a list of topics to be discussed in processing, or as standardized criteria for the examination of candidates.

Most of the questions originated in actual processing sessions with my teachers Zerka Moreno and Merlyn Pitzele. The rest arose from the teaching of other psychodramatists, from the literature (Blatner, 1968; Kelly, 1977), from various training and standard manuals (American

Board of Examiners, 1989; Australian and New Zealand Psychodrama Association, 1989), and from my own students in training.

When tried out in a number of training groups and in the examination of psychodramatists in Scandinavia and in Israel, the processing checklist was a useful and stimulating aid in the evaluation process. Although long and time-consuming and in spite of the lack of experimental data on validity, the checklist was largely appreciated by students and teachers. It helped improve the didactic effectiveness of processing.

Systematic methods for the processing aspect of psychodrama, such as the checklist presented here, may help us clarify what we want to know but forget to ask.

Conclusion

Psychodramatic processing is based on an alternative educational concept that reflects a considerable extension to that of classical psychotherapy supervision. The fact that feedback is given in a setting that includes all participants—client, student, trainer, and group—creates both potential benefits and shortcomings. If the difficulties in management are resolved, processing may provide an opportunity for a profound learning experience, helping to make sense of the complex processes activated in psychodrama.

APPENDIX

Psychodrama Director's Processing Checklist

For each item, circle *one* of the following:

(Y) = Yes, correct performance

(N) = No, incorrect performance

(?) = Don't know, inadequate information or questionable performance

A. Warm-up

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Was the director able to stimulate individual group members sufficiently and warm them up to action? | Y | N | ? |
| 2. Was the director able to build sufficient cohesion and a constructive working group climate in the group? | Y | N | ? |
| 3. Was the type of warm-up exercise/s adequately chosen? | Y | N | ? |
| 4. Were the instructions to warm-up exercise/s sufficiently clear? | Y | N | ? |
| 5. Was the warm-up exercise/s adequately followed up? | Y | N | ? |
| 6. Was the director able to help the group develop a specific theme upon which to focus? | Y | N | ? |
| 7. Did the director consider group dynamic aspects and sociometry sufficiently at the beginning of the session? | Y | N | ? |
| 8. Was the director sufficiently warmed up to directing? | Y | N | ? |

B. Selecting the Protagonist

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9. Was the protagonist selected in a suitable manner? | Y | N | ? |
| 10. Were other protagonists considered and taken care of? | Y | N | ? |

C. Treatment Contract (action-preparation)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11. Were overall time boundaries of the session taken into consideration sufficiently before the session? | Y | N | ? |
| 12. Was the stage, or action-space, prepared sufficiently? | Y | N | ? |
| 13. Was a therapeutic alliance (tele) established? | Y | N | ? |
| 14. Was a treatment contract sufficiently negotiated? | Y | N | ? |
| 15. Was the protagonist assisted in the transition from audience to drama in a manner that developed the warm-up process? | Y | N | ? |

D. Interviewing (focusing)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 16. Was the protagonist interviewed adequately with respect to time—not too long or too short? | Y | N | ? |
| 17. Was a basic theme or a focal issue identified correctly? | Y | N | ? |
| 18. Was the protagonist given sufficient freedom to select the focus of exploration? | Y | N | ? |
| 19. Were other concerns adequately identified? | Y | N | ? |
| 20. Were nonverbal messages of the protagonist identified? | Y | N | ? |
| 21. Was anamnestic, symptomatic, and/or other essential clinical information sufficiently gathered? | Y | N | ? |

Action Phase*E. Scene-setting*

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 22. Was the first scene chosen properly in terms of protagonist warm-up and relevancy to the focal issue? | Y | N | ? |
| 23. Were subsequent scenes chosen properly? | Y | N | ? |
| 24. Were the scenes sufficiently "anchored" in time (when)? | Y | N | ? |
| 25. Were the scenes sufficiently "anchored" in place? (where)? | Y | N | ? |
| 26. Were symbolic scenes, representing the imaginary world of symbols and dreams, properly staged? | Y | N | ? |
| 27. Was the director able to capture the overall atmosphere of location properly, so as to arouse the group's imagination? | Y | N | ? |
| 28. Were light and sound used properly to enhance atmosphere? | Y | N | ? |
| 29. Were relevant (and/or significant) objects used correctly? | Y | N | ? |
| 30. Were transitions between scenes correctly handled? | Y | N | ? |
| 31. Could the group hear and see the action sufficiently? | Y | N | ? |
| 32. Was the stage properly "set" for action (taking into consideration the positioning of, e.g., walls and furniture)? | Y | N | ? |
| 33. Was the stage adequately "cleared" between scenes? | Y | N | ? |
| 34. Were relevant clues adequately picked up? | Y | N | ? |

F. Putting Auxiliary Egos Into Role

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 35. Were the auxiliary egos chosen properly? | Y | N | ? |
| 36. Were the auxiliary egos put into role properly, receiving sufficient instructions on their role performance? | Y | N | ? |
| 37. Were the auxiliary egos optimally mobilized to function as extensions of the director and protagonist? | Y | N | ? |
| 38. Were dysfunctional auxiliary egos tactfully dismissed? | Y | N | ? |
| 39. Were auxiliary egos sufficiently protected against physical harm? | Y | N | ? |

G. Enactment (Beginning)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 40. Was the director able to perceive important clues, identify the central issues, and translate them into action? | Y | N | ? |
| 41. Was the protagonist instructed to act in the here-and-now? | Y | N | ? |
| 42. Was the protagonist instructed to "show" the group what happened rather than talk about it? | Y | N | ? |
| 43. Were resistances properly identified, concretized, and worked through before and during the action? | Y | N | ? |
| 44. Was reality enacted before surplus reality (affirmation before correction)? | Y | N | ? |
| 45. Were the various time dimensions—past, present, and future—properly differentiated? | Y | N | ? |
| 46. Were the various reality dimensions—subjective, objective, and surplus reality—properly differentiated? | Y | N | ? |
| 47. Was the protagonist helped to make a transition from the world of experience to the world of representation? | Y | N | ? |

(Middle)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 48. Did the sequence of events and scenes move logically? | Y | N | ? |
| 49. Was the technique of role reversal used correctly? | Y | N | ? |
| 50. Was the technique of doubling used correctly? | Y | N | ? |
| 51. Was the technique of mirroring used correctly? | Y | N | ? |
| 52. Was the technique of soliloquy used correctly? | Y | N | ? |
| 53. Were other techniques and adjunctive methods, such as dream work, axiodrama, bibliodrama, playback theatre, living newspaper, magic shop, hypnodrama, and role training, used correctly? | Y | N | ? |
| 54. Did the session move from the periphery to the center? | Y | N | ? |
| 55. Was the physical contact between director and protagonist adequate? | Y | N | ? |
| 56. Was the tempo of the director the same as, or in tune with, that of the protagonist? | Y | N | ? |
| 57. Were abstractions concretized correctly? | Y | N | ? |
| 58. Were expressions maximized correctly in accordance with the need of the protagonist? | Y | N | ? |
| 59. Was catharsis allowed to emerge spontaneously in its own time? | Y | N | ? |
| 60. Was catharsis allowed to be fully expressed? | Y | N | ? |
| 61. Was the protagonist encouraged to complete his or her actions and given the opportunity to "un-do" and to "do again"? | Y | N | ? |
| 62. Were insights correctly induced? | Y | N | ? |
| 63. Were new behaviors suggested and trained correctly? | Y | N | ? |
| 64. Was the involvement of the group taken into consideration, and did the director maintain contact with the group, during the session? | Y | N | ? |
| 65. Was the protagonist sufficiently protected against physical harm? | Y | N | ? |

(End)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 66. Was the psychodrama allowed to evolve "by itself" without a pre-fixed strategy or a "manuscript"? | Y | N | ? |
|---|---|---|---|

67. Did action end in reality?	Y	N	?
68. Did action end in here-and-now?	Y	N	?
69. Was the protagonist in his/her own role at the end of action?	Y	N	?
70. Were adequate suggestions from the group encouraged?	Y	N	?
<i>H. Closure</i>			
71. Was sufficient closure provided at the end of the session?	Y	N	?
72. Did the director assist the protagonist in integrating material from the session?	Y	N	?
73. Were hints for further exploration proposed?	Y	N	?
74. Did the director encourage constructive feedback and/or alternative solutions from the group?	Y	N	?
75. Was the protagonist sufficiently helped to re-enter the group after the session?	Y	N	?
<i>I. Sharing</i>			
76. Was the protagonist's need for "recovery time" satisfied?	Y	N	?
77. Was the audience allowed its catharsis of integration in the sharing portion of the drama?	Y	N	?
78. Was de-rolling of the auxiliary egos encouraged?	Y	N	?
79. Was role-feedback encouraged?	Y	N	?
80. Was the group allowed to respond honestly?	Y	N	?
81. Was the director able to protect the protagonist from well-meaning advice and interpretations?	Y	N	?
82. Did the director share with the group?	Y	N	?
<i>J. Processing</i>			
82. Was the director willing to ask for help when stuck or in need of assistance?	Y	N	?
83. Was there a clear rationale, a theoretical assumption, or a working hypothesis behind the direction?	Y	N	?
84. Was the director able to provide a sound evaluation of his or her own work?	Y	N	?
<i>K. General</i>			
85. Were instructions and interventions verbalized clearly?	Y	N	?
86. Were transference issues properly handled?	Y	N	?
87. Were countertransference issues properly handled?	Y	N	?
88. Did the director practice according to the code of ethics: (responsibility, moral standards, confidentiality, etc.)?	Y	N	?
89. Did the director seem to "understand" the protagonist (empathic ability)?	Y	N	?
90. Was the director able to hear correctly what was said?	Y	N	?
91. Was the director able to identify emotionally with the protagonist?	Y	N	?
92. Was the director able to comprehend the underlying messages that were communicated by the protagonist?	Y	N	?
93. Was the director able to report back to the protagonist, in the right moment, what was understood (timing)?	Y	N	?
94. Was the director able to verify his or her understanding and correct it if mistaken?	Y	N	?
95. Did the director find the proper balance between support and confrontation?	Y	N	?

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 96. Did the director function well in the role of group leader (establish group norms, build cohesion, encourage active participation by all members, and facilitate interaction)? | Y | N | ? |
| 97. Did the director find the proper balance between leading and following (working together)? | Y | N | ? |
| 98. Did the director function well in the role of therapist (influencing, healing, changing)? | Y | N | ? |
| 99. Did the director seem to thrust the potential power of the psychodramatic method? | Y | N | ? |
| 100. Did the director utilize the creative powers of psychodramatic surplus reality? | Y | N | ? |

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The Psychodramatist

PETER FELIX KELLERMANN

ABSTRACT. This article describes the professional roles assumed and skills required of a psychodramatist. As an analyst, he or she is required to convey empathic understanding; as a director of drama, the psychodramatist creates an aesthetic theater production; as a therapist, attempts to release mental suffering; and as a group leader, manages the group process. Furthermore, as a human being and through the impact of his or her own personality, the psychodramatist is expected to have a constructive influence on the psychodramatic process. These requirements constitute a formidable task, demanding not only extensive training and professional experience but also personality characteristics not well developed in everyone.

IN MANY WAYS, practicing psychodrama is a taxing job. It demands complex skills and personal qualities. For one thing, mastering the cast of characters involved in the psychodrama is, in itself, a monumental task. Furthermore, the practitioner has to shift focus several times; from empathizing to staging, to problem solving, and to leading the group, while maintaining a clear sense of personal presence. Weiner (1967) emphasized the need to present the psychodramatist as a qualified and skilled professional within such diverse fields as psychiatry, sociology, medicine, biology, anthropology, education, society, and group process. Practicing psychodrama combines several of the more difficult accomplishments of the individual psychotherapist, psychoanalyst, group therapist, behavior therapist, and the theater artist. Although the simultaneous occurrence of a high standard of proficiency in these skills in the same person is uncommon, a dedicated psychodramatist will strive to achieve excellence in them all.

I contend that the role of psychodramatist has been insufficiently discussed in the previous literature. Consequently, the purpose of this article is to give a basic description of the professional skills that are required of a psychodramatist. Such a description is important for several rea-

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sons. It is indispensable as a basis for planning, executing, and evaluating psychodrama training programs, as a guideline for processing the work of students, and especially as an aid for establishing standards of certification. It is also important to take into account various therapist-related variables when conducting empirical research (Lieberman, Yalom, & Miles, 1973; Orlinsky and Howard, 1978), measuring the type and skillfulness of the therapist's behavior when evaluating outcome (Schaffer, 1983). Finally, a role description may offer dedicated practitioners new ideas on how to improve their professional expertise in any given area of directing.

The person in charge of a psychodrama session is variably called "director of psychodrama," "psychodrama therapist," "psychodrama leader," or simply "practitioner of psychodrama." In the following discussion, the uniform and neutral title "psychodramatist" will be used.

The Professional Roles of the Psychodramatist

All psychodramatists enact separate and sometimes overlapping roles. Moreno (1946, 1953) described these as the role of producer, of therapist/counselor, and of analyst. I have revised the meaning of these roles and have added a fourth role that I feel is intrinsic to psychodrama, namely, that of the group leader. Table 1 contains an overview of these roles and the functions, skills, and ideals that constitute the professional demands of the psychodramatist.

Psychodramatists fulfill four interrelated and highly complex tasks. First, as analysts they are responsible for making themselves fully and accurately aware of the protagonist's condition. This includes an understanding of both personal and interpersonal phenomena in order to attribute meaning to experience and increase awareness of self. Second, as producers, they are theater directors translating the material presented into action that is emotionally stimulating and aesthetic. Third, as therapists, they are agents of change who influence their protagonists in ways that facilitate healing. Fourth, as group leaders, they foster a constructive work-group climate that helps the development of a supportive social network. The overlapping and interlacing of these various roles form the basis of psychodramatists' professional identity.

Drawing on my own experience and on frequent observations of several other psychodramatists, I will discuss the modes of activity and professional skills that characterize these four roles, mention some of the controversies involved in their enactment, and thus present a mode of practice that practitioners may strive to achieve.

TABLE 1
The Professional Roles of a Psychodramatist

Role	Function	Skill	Ideal
Analyst	Empathizer	Understanding	Hermeneutic
Producer	Theater-director	Staging	Aesthetic
Therapist	Agent of change	Influencing	Healing
Group leader	Manager	Leadership	Social

Analyst

As analysts, psychodramatists are empathic listeners, attempting to understand both personal and interpersonal phenomena. Their primary task in this role is to gain a detailed understanding of the participant's feelings, thoughts, behavior, and attitudes from a genetic, topographic, dynamic, economic, structural, adaptive, and/or psychosocial point of view (Rapaport, 1960). According to Moreno (1972, p. 247), "The director is the research leader—behind his new mask of the director the old masks of the observer, of the analyst, of the participant group member and of the actor are hidden, but still functioning."

A proper term for analytic activity in psychodrama would be *action-analysis*, rather than psycho-analysis or socio-analysis (Haskell, 1975), because analysis covers not only inner psychic phenomena, or outer social phenomena, but also the full range of communicative action of the whole person. As action-analysts, psychodramatists attempt to give meaning to present behavior either in terms of past experiences (repetitive action) or in terms of counter-action, abreaction, and communicative action (Kellermann, 1984a).

The possession of empathic skills is a necessary precondition for functioning in the psychodramatic role of analyst. According to Rogers (1957), empathic skills are the necessary and sufficient conditions for bringing about personality change. Such skills include the ability to accurately perceive the complexities of the emotional fabric in people and can be developed by a combination of theoretical knowledge and experience from life, by exposure to psychodrama as a protagonist and to psycho-analysis as analysand. Moreover, professional supervision may help to enlighten the therapist's possible blind spots and counter-transference issues that contaminate or impair empathy.

The Five Stages of Action-Analysis

I believe five stages of action-analysis can be distinguished in the process of gaining knowledge of the protagonist.

1. First, psychodramatists perceive what protagonists communicate either verbally or nonverbally (object perception). This implies the capacity to be receptive to the immediate sensory (e.g., visual and auditory) material that is presented. The criteria of good object perception are clarity and precision; the result, an objective awareness of the protagonist. Although this sounds simple, experience shows that our attention is very selective and that we frequently perceive only what we want to perceive.

2. Psychodramatists identify emotionally with the protagonist while maintaining a separate identity (empathic induction). This involves an intuitive feeling of the psychodramatist and implies a capacity to be close and detached simultaneously. The criteria of good empathic induction are responsiveness and sensitivity; the result, a subjective awareness of the protagonist.

3. Psychodramatists comprehend the underlying messages and latent meanings of what was manifestly communicated by the protagonist. This does not involve extraordinary powers of perception but rather an ability to listen with "evenly suspended attention" to the "hidden melody" of the unconscious. As Palmer (1969) wrote:

It takes a great listener to hear what is actually said, a greater one to hear what was not said but what comes to light in the speaking. To focus purely on the positivity of what a text explicitly says is to do an injustice to the hermeneutic task. It is necessary to go behind the text to find what the text did not, and perhaps could not, say.

4. Psychodramatists communicate back to the protagonist, in a meaningful way, what was understood. This implies the capacity to know when the right moment has come to verbalize one's understanding or to suggest an intervention as a consequence of that understanding. Considerable sensitivity and appropriate timing are required in order not to force a premature interpretation on the protagonist.

5. Psychodramatists seek verification from the protagonist of their understanding and, if mistaken, are able to correct it. Although theoretical preconceptions provide psychodramatists with concepts and models that guide their understanding, such previous knowledge is oppressive if used as a universal truth that protagonists are persuaded to adopt. Singer (1970, p. 390) wrote, "While clients seem remarkably willing to understand that at best we know little, they seem rightfully unwilling to forgive

us our intentions of having them prove us right in our theoretical preconceptions.”

To avoid such a happening, wise psychodramatists approach the protagonist with “Socratic ignorance,” a philosophical attitude based on doubtful inquiry and critical questioning that minimizes predetermined responses and shatters accepted presuppositions and pretensions of knowledge. When entering into the personal world of a protagonist with this attitude, the psychodramatist is like a stranger visiting for the first time and must therefore inquire about everything he or she perceives.

Producer

As producers, or stage managers, psychodramatists create dramatic art in order for the session to be an aesthetic experience. According to Moreno (1972), psychodramatists are engineers of coordination and production and have to be on the alert to turn every clue that the protagonist offers into dramatic action.

In their capacity as stage managers, psychodramatists must create a stimulating work of dramatic art. Accomplishing this work requires that psychodramatists have specific directing skills; help the protagonist set the scene; control the placing of the actors on stage; correct the personification of auxiliary egos; handle the warm up, rhythm, and timing of the action; give the stage the right atmosphere through lighting and physical set-up; and be able to suggest possible ways of concretization that translate a situation into symbolic presentation. Furthermore, psychodramatists are expected to encourage spontaneity in the session through their own enthusiasm, imagination, and willingness to approach each session as a new adventure. According to Karp (1988, p. 49), “The director must have true sense of play, fun, and freshness and embody the humour in life as well as the pathos.” Riebel (1990, p. 129) wrote, “Like a playwright, the therapist guides dialogues, opens and resolves conflict. Like a sculptor, he or she shapes space. Like the conductor of an orchestra, he or she blends the contribution of many sources.” Competence in these skills can be acquired from creative dramatics, drama therapy, roleplaying, improvisation, and other forms of action methods based on drama.

The role as producer makes it possible for psychodramatists to creatively employ a large inventory of psychodramatic techniques, not only to use them in the classical way but also to simplify and invent new uses for them. Like painters, sculptors, musicians, writers, dancers, actors, poets, and other artists who use techniques as vehicles of expression and then expand them beyond their ordinary range, creative psychodramatists try to discover original ways of using their instruments. Directing in-

tuitively rather than according to preordained rules, they are often unconscious of how and why they do what they do, using what some artists call "secret sources of inspiration," a kind of creative activity that is beyond the reach of words.

The specific skills of the producer presupposes knowledge in classical theater production (both as director and as actor). According to terminology used in the theater, psychodramatists should be able to blend the Stanislavsky approach of emotional involvement and identification with the Brechtian approach of distancing and objectification. These two positions reflect the experiential and the observational tasks of the psychodramatist as producer. Although each practitioner is inclined more toward one or the other of these extremes, both positions are important, and it is essential for psychodramatists to find a proper balance between them.

The famous Swedish theater director Ingmar Bergman can serve as a suitable role model for the psychodramatic producer. Bergman's universe is ruled by the twin forces of fertile curiosity and creative energy. His art is bound up with an ability to establish a close and creative personal contact with his actors. This ability emanates from his conviction that, in the last analysis, it will be the actor, and the actor alone, who must bring the text to life in the hearts of the audience. Observing Bergman at work, one cannot stay unimpressed by the intensity with which he follows every word and every move with an alert, almost childish, excitement. It seems that he completely forgets himself when he directs and becomes one with the other person. His great talent is that he hears notes that others do not hear, not even the actors themselves, and can give cues to bring out those notes. Without many instructions, he is able to create an atmosphere that empowers the actors and brings out the best in them (Marker & Marker, 1982).

Another person exemplifying the psychodramatic role of producer is Federico Fellini, that master director of illusion who is expert in capturing the vibrations of a dream, a fantasy, or something that exists in another dimension. Similarly, skillful stage managers are able to turn the psychodramatic stage into a place where anything, including the "impossible," can happen. They are passionately romantic and almost allergic to realism because realism ignores the spirit of the person and does not provide access to the sacred, ritualistic, transcendental, and cosmic dimensions of experience. Meshing fact and fiction, they produce a kind of esthetic truth in which the universals of time and space are dissolved. Tricks that cheat death, instruments that foretell the future, devices that help remember the past, and magic shops are some of the techniques psychodramatists use to produce dramatic art. Everybody knows that sculptures do not talk, that God makes no bargains, that empty chairs do not

speak back, and that walls between people are invisible. Nonetheless, skillful psychodramatists are able to lead protagonists past the border that separates the real outer world from the fantasy world of imagination. Before their natural suspicion is aroused, protagonists find themselves in a boundless place where the experience of reality is expanded, and, for a short while, protagonists become more than mortal. When emphasizing the living spirit of inanimate objects in this way, psychodramatists produce unpredictable moments of change that conventional theories cannot sufficiently explain. During these moments, they look like magicians, with extraordinary and amazing powers at their disposal.

Therapist

As therapists, psychodramatists are agents of change who influence their protagonists in ways that facilitate healing. According to Moreno (1972), the ultimate responsibility for the therapeutic value of the total production rests upon their shoulders.

In their capacity as therapists, psychodramatists perform numerous healing interventions in order to alleviate suffering and bring protagonists one step further on their therapeutic journeys. This work requires psychodramatists to have extensive knowledge of normal and abnormal psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy, to be able to apply psychodrama to a variety of protagonists who may need symptom reduction, crisis intervention, conflict resolution, and/or personality change, and to be able to put in operation various therapeutic factors, such as emotional release, cognitive understanding, interpersonal feedback, and/or behavioral learning with these protagonists. Furthermore, they are required to employ psychodramatic techniques competently, put in action psychodramatic processes, facilitate the revival of past scenes and their associated affects, handle the many resistances that constantly evolve during psychodramatic explorations (Kellermann, 1983), and be able to choose between various therapeutic interventions according to the demands of specific situations. Finally, they are expected to justify their practice with the help of a consistent theory, which can provide a rationale for why they choose to follow up on certain clues while they left other clues unexplored.

Next, I shall describe some of the nonverbal and verbal therapeutic interventions that are available to psychodramatists in their therapeutic capacity. A therapeutic intervention is an intentional act of influence calculated to produce a therapeutic (preventive, stabilizing, reparative, developing, or supportive) impact and constitutes possible response to what a protagonist says or does. As such, a therapeutic intervention suggests a framework for a help-intended communication in psychodrama.

Nonverbal interventions include, for example, the therapeutic use of physical distance, vocalization, eye-contact, body posture, and the intentional use of silence as a means to stimulate imaginary processes. Whatever meaning one gives to nonverbal interventions, they are powerful influences and therefore should be used with great care and sensitivity. One of the most forceful nonverbal interventions in psychodrama is physical touch. It has various meanings for different protagonists. For some, touch may be experienced as an invitation to regress to a childlike state in which one receives parental caring and nourishment. Occasionally, such contact may provide a mysterious kind of healing energy that, in itself, helps the protagonist regain emotional balance. For others, physical touch may be felt as an intrusion of privacy or as a sexual seduction. One of the major challenges facing psychodramatists is finding the optimal physical distance for the protagonist to make progress.

These verbal interventions are often used in psychodrama: confrontation, clarification, interpretation, catharsis, acceptance, suggestion, advice, teaching, and self-disclosure (Bibring, 1954; Goodman & Dolley, 1976; Greenson, 1967). A description of these interventions follows.

Confrontation refers to those statements that focus on the obvious, central, or significant issue to be explored. For example, when confronting a protagonist with a particular feeling, the psychodramatist puts the focus on the feeling and thus paves the way to the continuing exploration of it. A confrontation may also be seen as an intervention that puts a protagonist on the spot, not letting him or her avoid a difficult issue. According to Moreno (1972), attacking and shocking the subject are, at times, just as permissible as laughing and joking with him. But confrontations should be used only within a safe and supportive relationship, in which the sense of security may enhance the protagonist's ability to experience painful emotions. The ideal blend of support and confrontation may be illustrated by the psychodramatist who with one arm embraces the protagonist and with the other holds a big mirror in front of him or her.

Clarification refers to those questions that aim to clarify what was just communicated in order to receive a more detailed description of a situation.

Interpretations are those verbal explanations that demonstrate the source, the history, or the cause of an experience in order to provide a cognitive framework for that experience. It should be emphasized, however, that "interpretation" and insight-giving in psychodrama are of a "different nature from the verbal types of psychotherapy" (Z. Moreno, 1965, p. 82). In contrast to some classical psychoanalysts who give verbal interpretations, psychodramatists convey new insights through the per-

son of the double, in role reversal, or with other action techniques, thus emphasizing the gradual process of self-awareness evolving within the protagonist during the action (action-insight).

Facilitating catharsis refers to the efforts by the psychodramatist to encourage the outlet of pent-up feelings. Its specific function in psychodrama is not only to facilitate emotional abreaction but also to integrate the expressed feelings (Kellermann, 1984b).

Acceptance refers to the unconditionally positive attitudes that the psychodramatist shows toward the protagonist during the session. It provides the necessary nonjudgmental framework within which protagonists can present themselves without fear of critique and disapproval.

Suggestion refers to the infusion of an altered state of mind in the protagonist and may evoke a kind of trance similar to that which occurs in hypnosis. Suggestions may be used in order to evoke memories, fantasies, and dreams or as an invitation to regress to an earlier state of functioning. Suggestions may evoke imaginations so vivid that all sorts of wild ideas emerge; the protagonist knows what is going on without realizing fully what is happening.

Advice and teaching comprise didactic instructions that provide the protagonist with information, guidance, or teaching. Although most protagonists dislike being told what to do, some find concrete advice very helpful. When attempting to reinforce desired behavior or minimize undesired behavior, psychodramatists use praise and encouragement, rather than negative critique or disapproval.

Self-disclosure refers to the sharing, by psychodramatists, of their own immediate and past experiences, feelings, and thoughts. The decidedly transparent posture taken by many psychodramatists emphasizes the real as well as the transference aspects of the relationship.

One of the difficulties regarding the therapeutic function of psychodramatists concerns their use and misuse of manipulation. The word manipulation has two meanings; on the one hand, it means to treat something with skill. For example, the skillful channeling of the protagonist's own emotional, intellectual, and adaptive assets into reasonably gratifying directions. As such, manipulation is certainly a necessary intervention in psychodrama. On the other hand, if, by manipulation, one understands the authoritarian enforcement that occurs when the protagonist is maneuvered into doing something in the absence of genuine mutuality, then it is an improper intervention and detrimental to any sound therapy. Moreover, it may have a damaging long-term effect on the protagonist's autonomy and independence.

Group Leader

As group leaders, psychodramatists are the managers of group process who attempt to foster a constructive work-group climate and a supportive social network. According to Moreno (1972, p. 247), "The director is himself a symbol of balanced action, orchestrating, integrating, synthesizing, melting all the participants into a group."

In their capacity as group leaders, psychodramatists are concerned with interpersonal relations and believe that problems are best solved in a social context rather than in a private setting. They are required to be able to (a) organize the group structure—time, composition, meeting place, and remuneration procedures; (b) establish group norms regarding, for example, confidentiality, decision making, physical contact, social interaction outside the group, and interpersonal responsibilities; (c) build cohesion in the group, regulate the group's tension level, and foster interest in the goals of the group; (d) encourage active participation by all group members, facilitate interaction and communication among them, and clarify the evolving relations through the use of action methods or verbal interpretations; and (e) be able to remove the obstacles for the development of a social atmosphere that is built on cooperation and deals with competition in a way that will be a corrective learning experience for the group.

When assuming the role of group leader, psychodramatists are aided by their knowledge of social psychology, group dynamics, group composition, group processes, stages in the development of groups, therapeutic factors in group psychotherapy, and various methods of group psychotherapy, including the psychoanalytic, humanistic-existential, and task-oriented groups. The ability to use various methods of total group observation and interpretation such as sociometry (Moreno, 1953), focal conflict theory (Whitaker & Lieberman, 1964), FIRO: a three-dimensional theory of interpersonal behavior (Schutz, 1966), and SYMLOG: a system for multiple-level observation of groups (Bales & Cohen, 1979) will further enhance the professional skills of the psychodramatist as group leader.

Which type of group leader is the ideal in psychodrama? Lieberman et al. (1973) describes four leadership functions: emotional stimulation, caring, meaning attribution, and executive function.

These four types correspond to the four professional roles of the psychodramatist described in this article. The emotional stimulation type (challenging, confronting, activity; intrusive modeling by personal risk taking and high self-disclosure) corresponds to the producer. The caring (offering support, affection, praise, protection, warmth, acceptance,

genuineness, concern) type is like the therapist. The meaning attribution (explaining, clarifying, interpreting, providing a cognitive framework for change; translating feelings and experiences into ideas) type is related to the analyst. Executive function (setting limits, rules, norms, goals; managing time; pacing, stopping, interceding, suggesting procedures) type is similar to the group leader in this article.

Several types of leadership styles emerged from these four dimensions, such as the energizer, the provider, the social engineer, the impersonal, the *laissez-faire*, and the manager. One type of psychodramatist was described as an aggressive energizer, meaning one who was highly zealous, eccentric, charismatic, emotionally stimulating, supportive, and attacking. Another investigation of the personality of psychodramatists was conducted by Buchanan and Taylor (1986), who found that most psychodramatists were extraverted, intuitive, feeling perceivers. In spite of these preliminary results, it is my impression that leadership style in psychodrama varies according to the personal orientation and idiosyncrasy of the practitioner. The ideal type of group leader in psychodrama would be the one who has found the optimal balance between the four psychodramatist roles and his or her own personality and who is able to shift leadership styles according to the demands of each situation.

Psychodramatists do not agree on how much to control their protagonists and groups. Some leaders direct with merciless authority, taking a sometimes despotic control of the action, while others are so considerate that they scarcely make their leadership known. Like dancers, psychodramatists can either lead or follow the protagonist. When leading, the psychodramatist is initiating action with authority, directing with purpose and determination. When following, the psychodramatist is attentive and responsive to the protagonist who makes the decisions and leads the way. However, there is a third, ideal leadership position in psychodrama in which the psychodramatist and protagonist work together with equal status as a genuine team, sharing decision making and joining in a mutual relationship of give-and-take. In this ideal position, psychodramatic group leaders are required to be sensitive to the protagonist's feelings while, on occasion, taking a firm and positive stand on crucial issues. In the words of Leutz (1974, p. 86), "The psychodrama is really therapeutic only when the director 'swings with' the protagonist."

Conclusion

I have described the four professional roles and the patterns of behavior that make up the psychodramatist's professional identity.

A minimum level of skillfulness in each role is a precondition for practicing psychodrama and is, I believe, a reasonable requirement for certification. However, although dedicated practitioners strive to obtain a high standard of excellence in all roles, they are probably more talented in one than in the others. For example, someone may be more gifted as a stage manager than as an analyst. If this is the case, psychodramatists would benefit from working together with other practitioners of diverse talents so that they might complement and enrich one another at different times in the group process.

Although little systematic investigation of psychodramatists' actual role performances has been reported, I assume that practitioners occasionally struggle with various difficulties in their efforts to perform the required tasks. From the point of view of role theory, these difficulties may be characterized as (a) intrarole conflicts, (b) interrole conflicts, (c) intrapersonal role conflicts, or (d) interpersonal role conflicts.

Intrarole conflict is a discrepancy between the role and the person, between the requirements of the role and the inner value system of the person. For example, a nonassertive person may have difficulties assuming the role of group leader.

Interrole conflict is an opposition between two or more different roles in the same person. Every presented psychodramatic role may be in conflict with the other roles. The altruistic therapist role may be difficult to combine with the more egotistic producer role that requires a certain amount of dramatic (and perhaps exhibitionistic) skills.

Intrapersonal role conflict is a contradiction between one's own definition of a role and the expectations of others. A behavioral psychodramatist may perform the role of analyst in a way that is unacceptable to colleagues trained in the psychoanalytic tradition.

Interpersonal role conflict is a discrepancy between practitioners who play different roles. Psychodramatists who feel more comfortable with the rational analyst role may have difficulties working with psychodramatists who are more irrational and impulsive, emphasizing the creative role of producer.

During the course of their training and during their professional careers, psychodramatists attempt to come to terms with these conflicts. Psychodramatists cannot, however, be characterized merely in terms of their role performance and skillfulness. What matters is not only what they do professionally, but also who they are personally as human beings. Professional skills are decisively involved in their personality and, as Moreno (1959, p. 39) pointed out, "[I]t is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to separate the skill from the personality of the therapist. Here skill and personality are, at least in the act of performance, insepa-

rably one. It may be said bluntly: the personality of the therapist is the skill." Hence, it is not enough only to perform the professional tasks—to empathize, influence, dramatize, and lead the group. The psychodramatist must be a significant other person who encounters the protagonist as a human being. As such, and through the impact of their own personalities, psychodramatists are expected to have a constructive influence on the psychodramatic process.

A processing checklist (Kellermann, 1991), constructed to aid in evaluating the professional skills of psychodrama directors, may be complemented with the rating scale measuring important personality characteristics of group psychotherapists in training that was developed by Bowers, Gaurone, and Mines (1984). A training exercise used by the Norwegian School of Psychodrama to evaluate role performance is presented in the Appendix.

I contend that psychodramatists not only need to find the optimal blend between the roles of analyst, producer, therapist, and group leader but also need to perform these tasks in a way that is in harmony with their own personalities. If psychodramatists approach their tasks with respect for other human beings, if they can listen to and understand the underlying messages of the protagonist, if they can inspire emotional involvement and spontaneity, if they can assist the protagonist to remove some of the obstacles for personality change, if they can facilitate the development of constructive relationships in the group, and if they can combine the foregoing requirements with their own personal shortcomings, then they will have done an admirable job, which is as much as can be expected.

APPENDIX

A Training Exercise Evaluating Role Performance

This exercise has been used successfully at the Norwegian School of Psychodrama under directors of training Eva Roine and Monica Westberg. It is a constructive aid in teaching and a promising evaluation tool of director performance. The four roles demonstrate high content and construct validity, with surprising agreement between protagonists on task performance in each role and between students and trainers on the students' self-evaluation.

Four empty chairs are put on the stage. Each chair is described as representing one of the above-mentioned roles, and the participants are invited, while sitting on the chairs, to give a short soliloquy of their experiences with each role. This gives an opportunity to investigate how psychodramatists in training (and certified practitioners and trainers) relate to the different roles, which roles they are more and less comfortable with, their strengths and weaknesses in task performance, their specific needs for more training or personal growth, and any potential conflicts among the roles.

At one evaluating session, a student director described his performances in the following manner. As an analyst, he felt as if he were on the top of a mountain, wanting to have a better overview, or as if he were an owl, needing more knowledge but having difficulties integrating head and body. As a producer, he felt like a tap that could be opened or closed, or like a bubbling stream, sometimes turning on blocks that stopped his creativity. As a therapist, he felt as if he were walking on a path, not knowing where it ended, or as if he were a parent, speculating on how much to give without expecting anything in return from his children. As a group leader, he was disturbed that he was not able to see the individual trees because of the great forest. He also felt as if he were the captain on a boat in which his sailors threatened to begin a mutiny.

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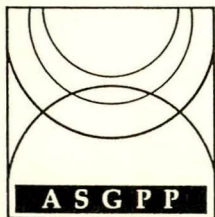
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