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The Alien Invasion Exercise: Creating an Experience of Diversity

PAM REMER
RORY REMER

ABSTRACT. The authors developed the Alien Invasion Exercise in which they use action methods to help people experience the role messages and the stereotyping to which diverse groups are subjected. The authors describe the exercise and offer instructions and suggestions for its use.

Key Words: action methods technique, diverse groups, diversity issues, gender studies, stereotyping

WE PRESENT AN ACTION METHOD TECHNIQUE, called Alien Invasion Exercise, for allowing people to experience the role messages and the stereotyping to which diverse groups are subjected. Like other sociodramatically oriented interventions, the exercise is designed to explore group differences and diversity issues. In particular, we have found the exercise effective in raising awareness of and changing attitudes and behaviors toward stereotyped individuals. It combines aspects of diversity training (e.g., Singelis, 1998), values clarification exercises (e.g., Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1978), and psychodramatic warm-ups (e.g., Hollander, 1986).

The Alien Invasion Exercise (AIE), created and developed by the first author to explore gender role messages, can be used as a warm-up to socio-dramatic explorations of any group rules, themes, or myths. It can also be used alone as a type of sociodrama.

In form, the AIE resembles many other in-group/out-group exercises. The point is to allow each group to experience being in the other's position. An additional dimension of the AIE is that it also functions as a kind of mirroring, "fish bowl" activity, in which vicarious learning occurs through observation.

Feminist Therapy Connections

The Alien Invasion Exercise incorporates an integration of Empowerment Feminist Therapy (EFT) (Worell & Remer, 1992) and psychodrama theory. Thus, an understanding of the basic underpinnings of EFT is essential for anyone who uses the AIE. EFT is based on the principle that the "Personal Is Political." According to this principle, individuals' personal issues are usually rooted in or caused by dysfunctional political or social contexts (e.g., sexism, racism, ethnocentrism), especially in social systems that prescribe one set of roles for women and another set for men. The gender-based conserves result from gender-role socialization and institutionalized sexism and restrict the potential development and spontaneity of women, men, and society. Gender-role socialization and institutionalized sexism are seen as on-going social processes that occur across the entire lifespan. The Alien Invasion Exercise was developed as a psychodramatic concretization of these dysfunctional cultural conserves so that those often invisible realities could be identified, explored, and challenged.

Executing the AIE

To be implemented effectively, the exercise requires a sufficient number of participants of both genders. Although the exercise can be staged with as few as three or four persons of each gender in the group, a minimum of five of each gender provides the most effective interaction, both within and across genders. The ensuing steps are intended to be guidelines, but following the general structure is recommended. Spontaneity can be promoted by the therapist's adapting the specific instructions, to the openings and opportunities provided by the in-the-moment group interaction. We suggest budgeting time so that no one is cut off and that sufficient time in particular is allotted to the sharing and processing. If need be, allot time to each step to ensure that all are included and stick to the time limits.

Step 1

The therapist briefly describes the exercise and its purpose to the participants as follows:

The object of this exercise is to allow you to experience what being a person of the other gender (or group) is like. We are to imagine that we are all aliens from another planet trying to learn about life on Earth so that you can pose as an earthling. To optimize the ability to observe and understand the nuances of being an earthling, you are going to take part in training designed to prepare you to pass as an earthling as unobtrusively as possible. Your success as an earthling is dependent on your learning the rules for living as a man or woman on earth.

The therapist then makes every effort to move into action immediately. Questions, either about the exercise itself or about what is to be expected, need to be deferred until the sharing and processing after the interaction.

Step 2

To initiate the action aspect of the AIE, the therapist directs the participating individuals to form two distinct groups by gender (or any other stereotypic group dichotomy being explored). One group becomes the inner circle (the alien trainees); the other group becomes the outer circle (the trainers). The circle configuration is important so that those in the inner circle get the sense of being bombarded from all sides by the instructions and messages being sent.

The choice of which group should be inner and which group should be outer first is usually fairly arbitrary. A good way to determine an arrangement is to have those who have experienced the AIE before act as trainers first. The therapist may select any option that encourages group spontaneity (e.g., using people who are more comfortable with action methods to reduce the anxiety of others), and the exercise, which was designed to promote spontaneity, usually stimulates that reaction.

The group leaders participate as members of their respective groups. Not only does that device decrease psychological distance and reduce the chance that the leaders are perceived as evaluating the participants, but it also allows the leaders to model what is being asked of the participants. A coleadership arrangement, with one leader from each gender/group, is optimal. If that arrangement is not available, the therapist's use of the sociometric leader of the group opposite of the leader's designation may encourage group participation.

Step 3

Once organized appropriately, each group receives their instructions, which are complementary. Each group hears the instructions given the other. Eventually the roles are to be reversed, so one group's hearing the instructions given to the other group speeds up the later phases and the completion of the exercise.

Trainer Instructions

The outer group trainers are charged first. Told that they are the experts, having already been trained and having more or less effectively experienced living with earthlings, they are to direct the trainees in how to pass as an earthling of the gender (group membership) of the trainer (e.g., female outer circle trainers teach male inner circle aliens how to be female). "Think about all the messages you received in your family and in your ethnic community about

how to be a woman or a man and direct those messages to the alien trainees.” Because the trainers are of the designated gender, the gender role messages should be part of their experiences, although all the trainers may not be aware of or have been subjected to all the messages equally. Thus, the group “brainstorming” promotes a fuller exposure at various levels of individual consciousness to such imprecations. The exposure to the messages experienced by others of the same group can promote more active awareness within the group.

The trainers accomplish this task by exposing the trainees to the gender role messages prevalent on Earth and by helping them learn the actual behaviors by seeing that they adhere to the rules announced by the trainers. For example, when told how to sit acceptably, the trainees need to adopt the indicated posture immediately and sit as directed through the remainder of the phase.

The physical implementation of the role is essential for the participants to feel the full impact of the role. Any role aspect that trainees can adopt—tone of voice, looks, words and slang—should be encouraged as much as possible. If conflicting messages occur, then the trainees try to implement them simultaneously. In doing so, the trainees experience the frustration and confusion that such “double binding” produces (e.g., those being trained as women need to attempt to be alluring and virginal simultaneously). Trainers provide the experience of coping with conflicting messages by sending mixed messages, nonverbal communication belying the verbal instructions, or one trainer gives instructions contradicting those of another while both trainers demand adherence to instructions issued.

After the trainers receive their directions, they pause only briefly for the minimal instructions being delivered to the trainees. By starting their roles almost immediately, they preserve the momentum for action. Further clarification for both groups can be accomplished most effectively through modeling and using actual messages.

Trainee Instructions

Instructions to the trainees—inner group—are simple and brief: Listen to the trainers’ directions and implement them as we go along. The therapist reminds the trainees that their adherence to the messages is crucial to their passing successfully as earthlings. They are also told that they can freely ask for clarifications, if they feel the need to do so.

Step 4

The therapist allows the interaction between the groups to continue as long as it seems productive and feels free, as the leader, to interject his or her own messages when a member of the outer group or react spontaneously when a

member of the inner group. The therapist watches the participants for signs of frustration and other reactions that are considered later in Step 7. The leader avoids having too much processing occur before both groups have been in both positions. The therapist directs the participants to hold their comments and to remember their reactions for the last phase, assuring them of time to speak and *to be heard*. If participants tend to step out of role, the therapist encourages them to continue in role by responding to them as if they still were in role.

Sample Enactments

The following examples help illustrate a typical AIE training enactment. In Sample 1, the dialogue represents an AIE enactment in which the male trainers are teaching the female aliens how to be male earthlings.

Trainer 1: You should always be the boss in relationships with women. You should initiate and pay for dates.

Trainer 2: You must be good at sports and be able to talk about sports with other men.

Trainer 3: You must never be afraid or sad.

Alien 1 to Trainer 3: But what do I do if I feel afraid or sad?

Trainer 3: If you feel afraid or sad, take a deep breath, numb out your feelings, act angry, or distract yourself by getting busy with some activity.

Alien 1 to Trainer 3: But that sounds so hard.

Trainer 3: It is at first, but if you practice what I have said, eventually you won't ever feel sad or afraid.

In the Sample 2 scenario, the female trainers are teaching the male aliens how to be women on earth.

Trainer 1: Always be polite and never get angry.

Trainer 2: Always let the male earthling take the lead. You should never appear smarter or more competent than he is.

Trainer 3: When you sit, you must keep your knees together and fold your hands in your lap.

Trainer 3 to Alien 1: You have your legs apart. Put them together so that your knees are touching and so that you are taking up as little space as possible. (Alien 1 complies) Yes, that's better.

Alien 1 to Trainer 3: But that position is uncomfortable.

Trainer 3: Ladies have to sacrifice comfort to be feminine. You will get used to it.

Steps 5 and 6

The participants reverse roles with the outer group moving in to become the trainees, the inner group moving out to become the trainers. The therapist

reminds everyone that the instructions given in step 3 are now reversed and briefly repeats the instructions. The interaction proceeds again to completion.

Step 7

The processing is of two varieties: (a) sharing personal reactions to having participated in the exercise, and (b) sharing personal history/life experiences triggered by the exercise. Participants' questions about the structure of the exercise are not to be a part of the processing and sharing phase. Those questions, which can be a defense against the personal sharing aspect, are answered only after the exercise has been completed.

The therapist starts the processing by asking all the participants a general, open-ended question, such as "What part of the exercise affected you the most?" or "Where did you have your strongest personal reaction?" or "What messages or rules did you find surprising? Familiar?" or "How did you experience being a female alien or a male alien?" More pointed or closed questions—"Did you like having to sit in that position for 10 minutes?"—come when the group needs some prodding or when a certain perspective has not been mentioned. One always hopes that directed explorations come out in the natural flow of the group as trust and openness build. The therapist can suggest that participants, especially those whose strong reactions the therapist had noted earlier, share their reactions. As the members of the group respond, add, and question, the leader maintains a rule of respecting others by encouraging those who share to own their reactions and perhaps share with the group the experiences on which they are based. The positive and negative impact of the roles need to be included in the processing. The leader also answers questions about why and how the instructions were given, relating the intent of the structuring to the outcomes generated by the group interaction.

Step 9

When the processing and sharing are finished, the leader encourages everyone, and particularly those who have had strong responses, to "de-role," encouraging even reticent participants to say something about their experiences of and reactions to the exercise. The leader reminds the participants that they are exploring together the negative and positive aspects of the roles and thanks them for their trust, openness, and willingness to take risks. Then the leader asks if anyone has anything more with which to deal in the group setting. As a final reminder, the therapist notes that the participants may experience latent reactions because of the intense nature of the topic addressed and that, if they do have something troublesome occur, they need to seek someone with whom to work it through.

Final Comments

The AIE can be modified to include other dimensions of diversity. African American participants can contribute messages about gender roles that are influenced by or unique to their culture. Participants from foreign cultures can contribute messages about gender-roles that are consistent with their cultural indoctrinations. As an assignment, a specific trainee can be designated to live in a culture that differs from that of the main group, and a trainer from that culture can modify the training program to make it more applicable to that trainee's placement. The cultural differences in expectations and rules for men and women can then be processed at Step 8. Such a cultural focus results in participants' awareness of how sexism, racism, and ethnocentrism interact.

The main benefit of the AIE is that it includes everyone in the group at once, while not requiring that any participant go beyond the minimal level of experiencing the training. Personal comfort and participation boundaries are respected. As a result, participants tend to warm up to the interaction more quickly and thoroughly. They often surprise themselves in both their reactions and their willingness to contribute to the group learning process. For the most part, that outcome is both productive and acceptable to all involved. As with any action techniques designed to lower the personal defenses of participants, the leader establishes and maintains a safe environment. What seems to be a "fun game" is far more than participants realize, either at the beginning or while involved in the process. Hence the need for step 9.

The AIE has proved effective with a variety of participants (e.g., Remer et al., 1999; R. Remer & P. Remer, 1999a, 1999b). We have used the AIE in classes, in workshops with psychologists and psychodramatists, and at professional meetings. Each time it has been a spontaneous experience—effective and novel, even for us. Not only have the participants gained awareness, knowledge, and the experience of other groups but they have also enjoyed doing so. An additional benefit is that the participants have been introduced to action methods in a way that has been comfortable for them. We continue to employ the AIE and encourage other therapists to try this successful exercise.

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New Approaches to Psychodrama

ROY DAVID HAMMER

ABSTRACT. This paper provides a short philosophical overview on the need for creating psychodramatic approaches to integrate the concepts of soul psychology, quantum psychological processes, and emotional intelligence. These approaches can be transformative and liberating for the practice and teaching of psychodrama. Interestingly, historical precedents exist for an integration of these concepts in Japan.

Japanese Shingon Buddhism

THE FOUNDER OF THE “TRUE WORD” (Shingon) Buddhist sect in Japan was Kukai (744–835), later called Kobo Daishi. This esoteric and shamanistic Buddhist sect founded by Kukai on Mt. Koya approximately 1200 years ago demonstrated how to combine soul psychology, quantum psychological processes, and emotional intelligence. Kukai integrated Shinto and Buddhist beliefs into one spiritual discipline. All of these concepts are visible in the art and symbols of the medieval temples of the ancient capitol city of Nara, for those who have the eyes to see. The Shingon sect teaches that salvation or Buddhahood is attainable in this lifetime. Basically the sect taught experiential techniques that are similar to theoretical models used by psychodramatists today and that represent a type of psychospiritual technology that involves intuitive understanding as well as cognitive awareness. Such things as imaginative play, drama, ritual, music, breathing, dance, athletics, and meditation were all practiced with an emphasis on psychospiritual (quantum) energy. This quantum energy is multivalent. Multivalency is a combination of these synergistic determinants that creates a quantum shift or an expansion in consciousness. This results in the whole being greater than the sum of the parts.

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After a recent trip to Japan by the American author of this paper, his ideas about soul and psychodrama were translated from English into Japanese as “open-the-heart theater.” This re-translated phrase captured the author’s personal soul-oriented approach to psychodrama and to healing in general. Kukai would have understood “open-the-heart theater” because the Shingon sect used and developed these psychospiritual techniques in a way that accessed essence. In the West, the heart is often used as a metaphor for soul essence. Kukai would have easily talked and resonated with the teachings of the modern quantum physicists such as Gary Zukov, Paul Davies, Fred Alan Wolf, and Danah Zohar. Also, Kukai would have been a kindred spirit to J. L. Moreno and passionately embraced Moreno’s “Theatre of Spontaneity.”

Soul Psychology

In the U.S.A., works on the nature of soul by Thomas Moore, Ph.D., and James Hillman, Ph.D., both highly read Jungian-based thinkers and writers, have captured the popular interest of mental health professionals. Often “soul” is defined in terms of processes that involve personal and professional growth, [that is,] definitions that express an individual’s passion for living. This passion is reflected in cultural myths, stories, dreams, spiritual or metaphysical experiences, and common everyday activities. Psychodrama and Playback Theatre provide not only the basic philosophical background but also the techniques to empower people to “open their hearts” and begin this multivalent process of “living the soul.”

Quantum Psychological Processes

Mental health professionals, teachers, and educators with a spiritual or metaphysical approach to psychodrama have received much theoretical support in recent years from the field of quantum physics. The principles of quantum physics have manifested in quantum psychological processes in many areas: non-linear thinking; non-cognitive learning; thought-form technology (how thoughts and emotions manifest in terms of energy fields); use of movement, breath, and sound to create vibrational resonance for healing body memories; expanded techniques involving imagination, surplus reality, and inspiration; and the creation of passionate, playful, and sacred rituals.

As psychodrama trainers and directors develop more intuitive skills, they are beginning to experience a “quantum” truth: intense emotions create energy fields that can affect other people’s moods and their perceptions of reality. This means that projection, transference, and counter-transference are not just psychological principles but also exist as quantum energy realities. In the quantum world, thoughts accompanied by feelings actually take on very real

and tangible energy forms that can oppress or inspire the protagonist, depending on the negative or positive polarity of the energy created. This energy can influence the protagonist, and members of the protagonist's sociometry can be hypnotized and hijacked by these energy forms into a psychological reality where the truth reflects the belief system of the protagonist. Perhaps this gives a new and more complex meaning to the mechanics of psychodrama like soliloquy, doubling, role-playing, role-reversal, the psychodramatic mirror, future projection, and dream presentation. It also gives some scientific basis to J. L. Moreno's concepts of "tele" and surplus reality.

Emotional Intelligence

Daniel Goleman, Ph.D., recently wrote a book about the neurobiology of emotions and popularized a new concept of "emotional intelligence." Basically, Dr. Goleman postulates that every person has an EQ (emotion quotient) in addition to an IQ, which reflects intelligence levels. This emotional quotient reflects the capacity of an individual for understanding and managing the energy of the emotions reflected in social skills. Psychodramatists have long understood that the effective and creative working of emotions creates a gateway to a type of self-knowledge that transcends and adds to the left brain's storehouse of information. Simply put, the very process of affirming one's emotional truth neutralizes the potential tyranny of toxic messages learned in childhood. This creates a balance that reflects a definition of truth. Truth is the freedom to be authentically oneself in any given moment.

With regards to emotional intelligence, psychodramatists need to understand an important principle: working what a protagonist states is "his issue" is not nearly as important as understanding how to work the psychological and emotional "meta" areas behind the protagonist's stated issue. The Greek prefix *meta* means beyond. So meta areas represent different psychological and emotional levels that are beyond, behind, or tangential to the stated issue. The "gold" is not just found in catharsis and insight. The real "gold" is found by mining these metal levels intuitively and creatively. This means finding a way to facilitate the expression of how the protagonist feels about having his issue. This would represent one meta level of understanding. What the protagonist thinks about how he feels about the issue would represent a second meta level. What the protagonist feels about what he thinks about how he feels about the issue would be a third meta level. An example of this might be a protagonist who states that he wants to work on his anger at his father. The director could tell the protagonist to pick up a bataka and hit a chair in order to express his anger. A meta-conscious director first will explore further by asking the protagonist how he feels about having his anger towards his dad. The protagonist's answer may reflect shame or guilt. Then the meta-conscious director will

ask, "What do you think or feel about having the shame or guilt?" So the director becomes a good navigator of these meta spaces. For the psychodramatist, understanding techniques that can metaphorically express these meta spaces of the mind creates for the protagonist the ultimate emotional intelligence.

Identity-Based vs. Value-Based Social Structures

Today the world is in chaos. Humanity is moving from a developmental stage that reflects adolescence into a developmental stage that reflects adulthood. In every country, children and students are rebelling. People are not happy in the corporate workplace. People are feeling an intra-psychic void and an individual calling for a higher level of beingness. This call is from the soul and mirrors an open heart. Authenticity of being is now the hot topic for talk shows on television in America.

Simply put, most cultures have two paradigms of being. One is an identity-based social structure. In this paradigm, political, religious, cultural, corporate, and educational institutions have made the rules that an adolescent humanity must follow in order to succeed. But as the human species moves from adolescence into adulthood, these institutional and societal rules become increasingly rigid and restrictive. A mature individual also needs the freedom to be spontaneous, to be creative, and to have individual expression that reflects the soul. This second paradigm of being is a value-based social structure, meaning that it is based on the values deemed worthy by the soul. The imbalance and conflict between these two paradigms is manifesting in our world as rebellion, violence, depression, anger, and stagnation. As an adult species, humans now need more than loyalty to a system of institutions that demand absolute conformity. Sometimes this conformity can result in the murder of the individual's soul and the soul's calling.

Psychodrama that deals with spiritual or religious issues or issues around God is called "axiodrama." It is relevant that the Greek prefix "axio" means "values deemed worthy." In understanding how axiodrama is done, psychodramatists everywhere have the edge in promoting a value-based or ethically-based social structure and in helping to create balance between the identity-based social structure and the value-based (soul-based) social structure. These two systems of thought become a mirror to psychodrama teachers everywhere. Why? Because there are also two styles of leadership. The first style is more left-brained. This style of leadership leads by simply telling people what to do and how to do it based on the competency of the leader. Some corporate executives and educational administrators might be a good example of this. The second style of leadership is more right-brained. These leaders lead through inspiration, and facilitate people to be who they really are in a way that promotes authenticity over conformity. Of course, most leaders actu-

ally have a mix of the two styles. Meta-conscious psychodramatists know their strengths and weaknesses in leadership style, especially if they are concerned with facilitating the development of soul energy in their protagonists.

Issues of Power for Psychodramatists and Teachers

In addition, in integrating soul psychology, quantum psychological processes, and emotional intelligence, there are issues of power for the psychodramatist. This author believes that psychodramatists must shift who they are as teachers and directors in order to promote this integration creatively and effectively. Wendy Palmer, a California-based Aikido master, taught that there are two forms of power and that everyone has a choice with regards to these forms of power. The first form of power is potentially abusive and involves the dynamic of domination, submission, and control. It operates out of a frequency of fear and can be re-traumatizing. It is sad that the identity-based social structures of institutions so often involve this dynamic. The second form of power is healing and involves the dynamic of precision, timing, and gentleness. It operates out of a frequency of humor, which can neutralize fear. Now more than ever, psychodramatists everywhere should be operating out of this second form of power. This second form of power can often appear to be weakness to those who do not have the eyes to see the power of gentleness, but this so-called weakness is the ultimate power of divine love and compassion. Its effects are transformative and liberating for the director, the protagonist, and the group.

The real secret is not so much in what psychodramatists teach while directing but how it is taught. Despite the beauty and logic of words, phrases, and ideas, the true paradigm shift that heals and creates soul energy for the group flows not so much from what the director knows but from how he conveys it. Soul energy is present when passion is present. Passion generates a quantum energy field that makes all things possible and creates nobility of spirit. For psychodramatists, it means moving out of ego and fear into learning how to hold the quantum energy for creating a safe and sacred space for healing. At the same time, this sacred space helps to re-create the director. So, the director becomes responsible for creating the environment in which quantum shifts of energy are possible.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the effective psychodramatist operates on many meta levels that create a style that facilitates the integration of soul, quantum psychological processes, and emotional intelligence. The psychodramatist must shift consciousness in order to develop a new style of directing that involves more

depth that is accessed by non-cognitive and intuitive ways of knowing. This knowing is quantum in the sense that it is multivalent and non-linear. In this style, the director uses the meta concepts of guiding without judgment, avoiding expectations, listening rather than telling, and abiding in a nurturing way. This approach incorporates psychodynamics implemented with precision, effective timing, and gentleness. This creates a healing, generative paradigm that is not re-traumatizing. Along with facilitating movement through psychological blocks and a non-judgmental acceptance of feelings, it also places emphasis on what is inspirational and uplifting. This consistently leads to impressive insights, creative solutions, development of social and personal skills for moving through crisis and managing life situations, and the creation of new ways of being.

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The Psychospiritual in Psychodrama: A Fourth Role Category

NATALIE L. WINTERS

ABSTRACT. In the past 25 years, spirituality has become a significant element in the healing arts. In this article, the author develops a fourth role category in psychodrama, the psychospiritual role category, to facilitate that emergence. The author describes and explains a model that is an expansion of the Canon of Creativity that she developed during 20 years of clinical psychodramatic practice with patients of varied backgrounds and diagnoses. She addresses specific roles within the category and suggests practical applications. The author incorporates the psychospiritual role category into the therapeutic and training processes and explains a structure for guiding clients and students in their growth process.

Key words: creativity, fourth role category, psychospiritual, spirituality

In the ambient atmosphere surrounding us and pervading the structure of each one of our body's cells is a spiritual force. This force is omnipresent and infinite. . . . It is this force which is life itself. (Regardie, 1932, p. 5)

THE CORE OF EACH LIVING BEING has an essence that is larger than ego and divine in quality. It pervades all that we are. It presumes a conviction that the universe is not negative or neutral but tilts toward goodness and love. It further presumes a deep trust that there is enough for all and that every human being deserves to share equally in the planet's abundance and is equally responsible for shaping our future. When we are willing to realize that essence, in ourselves and in another, all pretenses fall away. The light of life shines through. What exists then is compassion, understanding, acceptance, and an open heart. It is at those moments of illumination that *tele* vibrates and we can say, "I hear your pain. I resound to your joy." For decades, this spiritual truth has taken a back seat in all realms of life, and there is no time like the present to bring it to the forefront.

In the last quarter century and continuing into the year 2000, spirituality has re-emerged as an important element in psychology and in the healing arts. Before that time, with the exception of a few heroic voices, science and religion had been engaged in a subtle or implicit cold war, with spirituality as the victim.

Spirituality, that is, developing one's relationship with the greater wholeness of being and acknowledging an infinite universal intelligence, is very much a psychological phenomenon, even if it is not reducible to ordinary empirical scientific methods. We are at a juncture in history when spirituality, as distinguished from religion, is emerging from the background of experience to the foreground of awareness. That is especially important among professionals, artists, and many intellectuals.

Spirituality is a realm beyond words that cradles us within and surrounds us from without. It is that which infuses us with spontaneity and compels us to create. It is the source of all that is—what Moreno (1971) first addressed in the preface to *Words of the Father* as the scheme of existence that “comes from the highest authority—from God, . . . the quintessence of the spark of creativity is God” (pp. xii, xiii).

Although Moreno lived in a time when new thought was blossoming, it was not in vogue to base a healing treatment, be it physical or mental, on the concept of God. Yet herein, lie the roots of sociometry, group psychotherapy, and psychodrama. We could say that psychodrama is cradled in the God-head because the God-head is expressed in and through everything, an infinite experience of co-creation and co-responsibility.

As Moreno developed his ideas about creativity, he discovered that spontaneity, a kind of unconservable energy, can lead to creativity and eventually leads to an outcome or cultural conserve. From that outcome, we have the potential to grow and warm up to new levels of spontaneity. Moreno (1978, p.46) described his model as follows: “[S]pontaneity arouses creativity, $C \rightarrow S$. Creativity is receptive to spontaneity, $S \leftarrow C$. From their interactions Cultural Conserves, CC, result. $S \rightarrow C \rightarrow CC$. Conserves would accumulate indefinitely and remain in *cold storage*. They need to be re-born.” Moreno called this model of the creative process the Canon of Creativity, the field of rotating operations between spontaneity—creativity and the cultural conserve.

Moreno was a deeply spiritual man. In *Who Shall Survive*, he stated “that all measures and tests of humanity should be constructed after the model of God involved in the creation of the universe” (Moreno, 1978, p. 21). It seems paradoxical, therefore, that Moreno did not include God (spirit) in his canon. As a result of that omission, the spiritual realm or formative force, as it was called in a visual and experiential presentation titled *Formative Forces in Nature* by Barbara Kazanis in Spring Hill, Florida, on March 7, 1998, has not been considered central to psychodrama. Practitioners from Moreno to this

day have not fully valued or respected this dimension of the clients and students with whom they work. The inclusion of the spiritual realm shifts the focus of the beginning of a human being's creative process, and a dimension is incorporated into the model that gives us a more powerful approach to growth and healing.

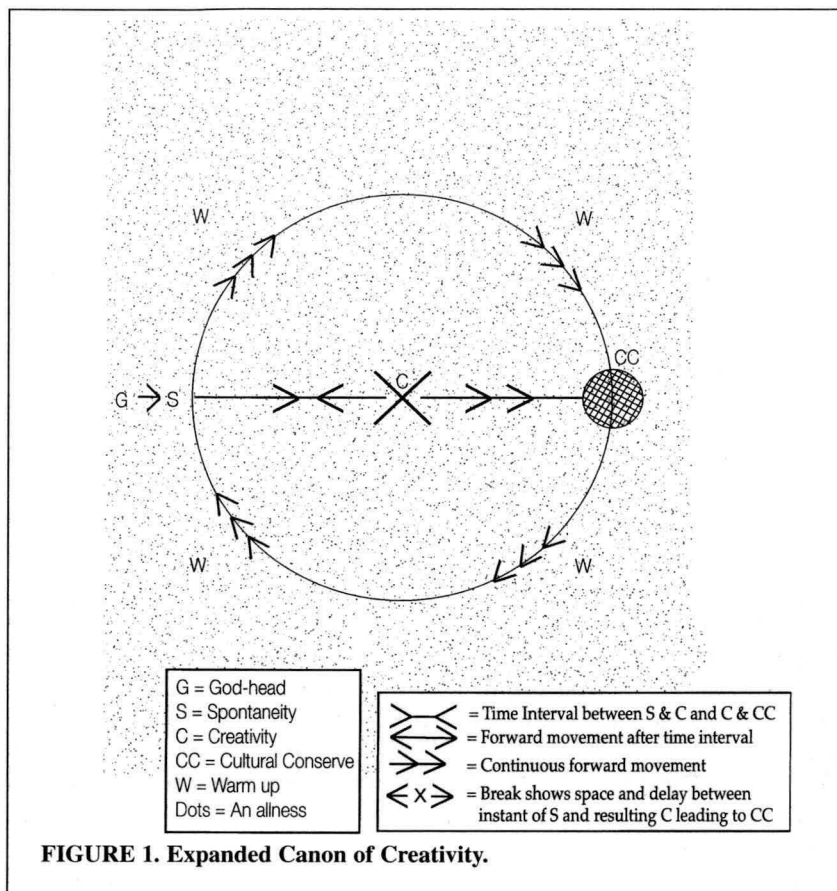
Role Theory and the Psychospiritual

Along with his philosophy of spontaneity and creativity in the Moment, Moreno also enunciated a theory of personality development called role theory. He (Moreno, 1972) established three role categories as the headings under which to list all the roles people take from birth on: psychosomatic, psychodramatic, and sociocultural (p. 77). I believe the psychospiritual category is missing.

Spiritual issues have been relegated to axiodramas, confining them to a cell reserved for special treatment rather than considering them to be an integral aspect of psychodrama and all of human existence. I believe the psychospiritual is an essential role category. If we modify the original Morenian model with the addition of G as the Source, then we see that this Source is actually encompassing, within, interpenetrating, and creating a total, all-inclusive awareness or allness. *Allness* is a broader view of the cosmos, which Moreno saw as synonymous with the universe (Moreno, 1969, p. 21). Allness is beyond the realm of full human conception. At any moment, we are our own godselves co-creating with the God-head. Our creativity is expressed through our choices. Each moment, then, is the moment for all that we are ready to experience. "The continuing evolutionary process of within—and—beyond brings new within . . . and new beyonds" (Wilber, 1995, p. 279).

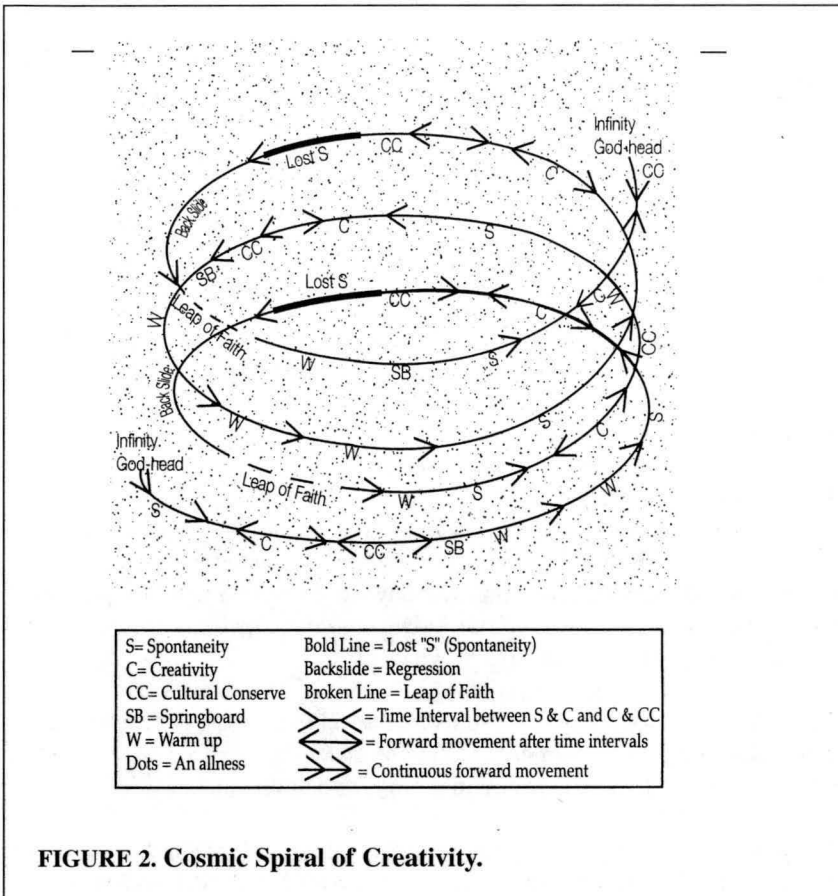
Figure 1 contains my expanded version of the canon of creativity. Outside the circle and before the S, I included G. The tiny dots both in and outside the circle represent the ever-present God-head, which is always in and around us (an "allness").

In Figure 2, I expanded the circle to a spiral, infused or ignited by spirit. The model expresses the ascending nature of life as it evolves: the infinite creator (or God-head) >< Spontaneity >< Creativity >< Cultural Conserve. The tiny dots in both figures represent the God-head in and around an allness. It should be recognized that there may be long intervals between accepting spontaneity as our divine nature and engaging in it. Another interval may elapse before spontaneity spurs creativity. The creative process may likewise take time to lead to a cultural conserve. The cultural conserve continues to be a Springboard to Warm up to new spontaneity when we feel connected to our concept of God and are motivated toward growth. It becomes a place to slide back into the old static ways of being when we disconnect from faith and



allow fear to infiltrate and paralyze our process. In this model, the broken lines indicate the leaps of faith that one takes to move to higher levels of personal evolution. The process begins with infinite spirit that moves through us, and we continue as co-creators, evolving endlessly to include in our awareness more than the physical plane. I call this the Cosmic Spiral of Creativity.

To move forward and grow, we must address our spiritual selves as expressed in the subheadings under the fourth role category, the psychospiritual. I have identified several roles and their characteristics in this fourth category and have developed them in a dialogue with Adam Blatner (personal interview, March 1999). What is unique about the roles is the limited involvement of ego and negative judgment. Our spirituality is in the foreground; ego takes a back seat.



Psychospiritual Role Designations and Their Functions

A list of the roles people play within the psychospiritual role category and several descriptions of their functions follow:

The imaginer. This role is key to creativity, forming mental, sensory, and intuitive images of something not present in an ordinary way and not previously experienced. Imagining involves active merging of intention and focus and in its deeper nature has a life of its own. It expresses soul and does not simply follow the direction of the ego.

The meditator. The meditator transcends the physical plane and becomes open to receiving cosmic information unlikely to be available in other states of con-

sciousness. The meditator relinquishes outward attachments and affirms divine freedom within. It is the most direct channel to the allness. It requires attention and evolves—from role taking to role playing, to role creating—over time through consistent practice.

The rememberer. This role grows out of natural trance states, meditation, and imagination. Natural trance states occur in the individual in varying cycles and refer to the natural rhythms of the organism. We must remember what we have experienced through the aforementioned roles so we can apply the psychospiritual elements to the practice of psychodrama. As we remember, so we experience the memory in the moment, which is an essential element of psychodrama.

We are at the most rudimentary stages of understanding both memory and imagination. It is as if we were children who are looking at a great piece of art and pointing out the colors whose names we have just learned.

The receiver. The receiver surrenders judgment yet maintains the ability to discern. The role involves trust, faith, healing of mind, body, and spirit. It involves a willingness to give up control and access what we are given from sources that are obvious to us in everyday life as well as sources we do not understand. When we let go of our reliance on our five senses alone, we are able to receive what the universe provides for us.

The giver. In its truest sense, the role of the giver is that part of us which gives to the universe for the joy of giving, thereby encouraging a flow of abundance. It is our capacity to take pleasure in giving for its own sake.

The artist. The artist aligns with aesthetic values and produces that which evokes sensuality, insight, foresight, and pleasure for all to share. He or she works from an intuitive nature with connection to a higher self.

The channeler. The role of the channeler presumes opening the self to pure consciousness and infinite intelligence, allowing spontaneity to move through us without projections and transferences. It requires a subtle skill of emptying rather than filling “the self,” thereby allowing us to experience what comes in.

The believer. The role of the believer is to accept our spiritual nature as true and real and to have confidence, trust, and faith in that nature.

The prayer. The role of the prayer is to awaken devotion in the heart and soul. In this role, one loves spirit in whatever form one holds especially dear and enters into communication with the divine, believing in the eternal and giving quality of the infinite.

I invite readers to expand and develop additional role designations and functions.

The Role of the Director in the Psychospiritual Category

The role of the director in the fourth role category is to be open to universal intelligence, to inspire and guide group members to drink the sweet nectar of the moment, and to live in the present, seeing beauty in everything. This is a tall order. With so much pain in an ever-changing world, *how* do we see the beauty? By inviting the expression of the group members' spiritual beliefs, the director opens an area of diversity and acceptance, of support and comfort not usually found in therapeutic and training experiences. Spirituality lends continuity to on-going change. Change and transitions are the most difficult challenges in life. To paraphrase Zerka Moreno, learning to live in limbo is learning to live. Times of transition are the journey, but we tend rather to focus on the destination. Transitional periods usually mean letting go of a dream, the familiar, the hoped for that did not happen. Transitions mean leaving one phase of life to embark on a new mission, following a new dream, daring to try, or even leaving life itself on this physical plane to enter the seemingly unknown.

Yet, the nature of living is transition and transformation. Directors need to be fully present and conscious of their own spirituality to help group members feel the depth of their sadness, cry their tears, shout their anger, dance their dance of good-byes, and experience that last hug, that last hold on what was and what can no longer be. The essential experience of a full catharsis is cleansing, and that allows for release of the old and making ready for the new. That is the journey.

As a consciously evolving spiritual being, the director brings an attitude of freshness, energy, and hope to the group. Such an attitude is pervasive and contagious. The director encourages members to look with anticipation at new experiences as exciting, adventurous, and scary in a positive way. They are filled with possibilities rather than with resentment and anger, and members need not feel vengeful, bitter, self-righteous, and negative. By holding the belief that we are all expressions of the God-head and supported by this dynamic life force, we recognize that we are, in fact, never alone or alienated. We are free to make decisions that are in our highest good, believing that life is continually evolving. "All improvement is dependent upon your seeing yourself as greater than you are. Then your potential stirs within you and your creative capacities unfold." (Barker, 1968, p. 9)

In a holistic atmosphere, it is easier to make choices about one's attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors concerning transition and loss—choices that can lead to healthy separation. Although it is difficult to see the bigger picture

in moments of distress, one's leap of faith soothes wounds and gives direction where there was none before. The director is pivotal in co-creating an environment in which faith abounds and hope prevails.

Practical Applications in the Spiritual Realm

Group leaders and those who work with individuals are faced with dual challenges. First, they must be clear about their own spiritual values. Second, they must be unafraid to introduce spirituality, along with the other role categories, to the individual and the group in psychodrama.

I suggest the following approaches as a framework for incorporating the psychospiritual role category into the therapeutic process.

1. When setting the scene, provide an atmosphere of safety and acceptance, a climate based on the concept that the cosmos is our home. The use of the preface to *Words of the Father* (Moreno, 1971, pp. xviii–xx) can assist in this endeavor.

2. Present the psychospiritual role category by drawing the Cosmic Spiral of Creativity (Figure 2) on a chart and teach it to the group. Keep the model in view at all times during each session.

3. Present the roles under the psychospiritual category, and discuss and enact each role. Have participants brainstorm additional roles to support an understanding of the magnitude of the category.

4. Encourage free expression of individual spiritual beliefs by inviting open dialogue, acceptance, and appreciation of various precepts. A major goal of the dialogue is to understand each individual's orientation so that his or her beliefs can be incorporated effectively during the work.

5. Help clients create a conscious awareness of the presence of the God-head at all times whether one is focusing on this presence or not. (Use whatever terminology fits for each client.)

6. After a protagonist has been chosen and before the enactment, help the protagonist to concretize a place of reference for the spirit to be.

7. Should the protagonist lose spontaneity during the enactment (get stuck), bring in an auxiliary to play the God-head, the higher self, or whatever terminology applies. The auxiliary deepens and enhances the scenario beyond the scope of existing doubles and auxiliaries.

8. During the sharing portion, as they react to the protagonist, encourage participants to express fully their experience of the drama's having included spirituality as a cornerstone of the process.

9. Provide time for closure that allows participants to bring their experience to completion for the session. For example, form a circle, leave one thing in the circle you no longer want, take with you one thing you do want; or go

within, experience your spiritual source, take a deep breath, find your center, and exhale.

The psychospiritual role category provides a fundamental *raison d'être* without which it may be difficult to connect with our place in the cosmos. As Emerson (1851, p. 190) wrote, "[W]ithin us is the soul of the whole; the wise silence, the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE."

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The Technique of Souldrama® and Its Applications

CONNIE MILLER

ABSTRACT. Souldrama®, a new psychospiritual technique that fits into the fourth psychospiritual role category in psychodrama, is an action-oriented method that involves both psychodramatic and narrative techniques. The purpose of Souldrama is to have the ego and soul work in alignment to discover the soul's vision. A therapeutic tool designed to be an adjunct to psychodrama for the treatment of codependency, Souldrama incorporates spirituality into the psychotherapeutic process, allowing the therapist to move clients who are "stuck" by helping them to discover the divine within and to act as cocreators in their own lives to discover their unique personal gifts for their soul's vision or life's purpose.

Key Words: angels and therapy, finding life's purpose, souldrama, spirituality in psychotherapy, treating codependency

For a long time it had seemed to me that life was about to begin—real life. But there was always some obstacle in the way, something to be got through first, some unfinished business, time still to be served, and a debt to be paid. Then life would begin. At last it dawned on me that these obstacles were my life. (Kneelds, 1992, p. 213)

RECENT PUBLICATIONS CONTAIN articles about a spiritual movement in the field of psychology that cannot be ignored. More schools are modifying their curriculum to include spiritual matters in therapy, and more research is being done on integrating spiritual aspects into treatment (Miller, 1999). Awareness of mystical experiences is becoming more common, and as various holistic healing practices become more accepted, the trend is to integrate psychology more with spirituality (Dossey, 1989, 1999).

Souldrama, which I developed as an adjunct to psychodrama in the treatment of codependency, is an action-oriented method that includes both psychodramatic and narrative techniques. The premise of Souldrama is that the ego, developed early in childhood, can obstruct or distort one's relationship

to the divine. If brought into alignment with the soul, the ego can manifest a far richer consciousness in everyday life than thought possible.

In twelve-step programs, people heal partly through the telling and sharing of their own stories. It is through the sharing of the trauma and pain and the subsequent healing that people form common bonds that unite them. Then, to get beyond that connection of pain, they need to go further by sharing their soulful moments, such as when they felt most connected to God, as well as their hopes and their dreams. That requires reestablishing a relationship with their creativity and, through their higher awareness, connecting with others on a spiritual level. After a certain point in therapy, vision seems to be more powerful in the recovery process than the clearing away of baggage from past scars. A client without a vision cannot move forward toward complete recovery.

To support clients in identifying their vision and moving forward in achieving their life's purpose, we need new and creative psychodramatic tools. Moreno (1971) stated that the major challenge for humanity is to live creatively and that the spark of creativity is God. He contended that spontaneity refers to the spirit of opening to the creative possibilities in a situation. Much of Moreno's work may be understood as methods and ideas for promoting spontaneity in the service of creativity (Blatner, 1988, 1995). The goal of psychodrama is not intellectual insight but increased spontaneity (Yablonsky & Enneis, 1966). Spontaneity is the springboard for new and creative action, and creativity connects the energy of spontaneity with the creative result. When one sees God as being inside and not outside of oneself, one has a greater sense of co-creative responsibility.

Clients from dysfunctional families view their higher power as residing outside, not inside, themselves, and they develop distorted internalized object relationships with the spiritual beings in their lives. They often transfer their childhood emotions onto present-day relationships. Many of their relationships become contaminated with residuals from childhood trauma and misunderstandings. When one learns to look outside oneself for love and validation, one becomes distant from one's spiritual nature, and that creates an emptiness within. As clients mature, their childish attitudes toward their higher power persist, and their relationship with God is one that remains outside of themselves—one that is superficial and inconsistent. When clients continue to see God as a parent, they tend to evoke passive and helpless roles. According to many of my clients, they feel closeness to God only when a problem exists and they need to ask for help or forgiveness. Many clients feel they must "do" something to get God's love, which they see as being primarily outside of themselves. Consequently, if clients are not "rescued" by God, they either assume a helpless victim or an aggressive/passive-aggressive stance that later results in feelings of shame, guilt, abandonment, and further betrayal. Instead of moving forward, they engage in self-sabotaging behavior that compounds

their problems. Their energy comes from problems, not from joys in life. Spirituality is a state of "being," not "getting," and it is important for clients to develop a relationship with their higher self. Spiritual work has to do with reconnecting with the spirit, the divine within.

Blatner (1998) defines "spirituality" as the activity of deepening our connectedness with the "Greater Wholeness of Being," by which he means God or an infinite universal Intelligence. He urges the use of creativity and imagery within the therapy process so that human beings can see themselves as cocreators, not victims of omnipotent strength. When one perceives God as being inside and not outside one's self, one has a greater sense of co-creative responsibility, which enables a person to become the author of his or her own life.

In his presentation, Blatner (1998) stated that one of the most important functions of process thought is that it offers core conceptual tools to aid in the "conscious transformation of consciousness itself" and promotes a mature state of mind and a sense of cocreative responsibility toward one's higher power. The process view of God as a caring organism can lure, but not force, healthy relationships that reframe the relationship of the individual to the Greater Wholeness of Being. The relationship is one that involves responsibility and active alignment, participation, and response to inspiration. It is not one of passive reliance. Blatner further stated:

If the cosmos is in part mind, and our relationship to the cosmos is like cells to an organism, then we are situated metaphorically within that creative process, or, stated poetically, in the very heart of God. Let's add to this the theme of the cosmos being a creative advance, and then, amplifying this creative process, further add the elements of invention, awakening, harmonization, integration, discovery, learning, adventure, and other positive qualities. With this interpretation, people can easily identify their own life struggles with the movement of God. Positive movement on their part is thus framed as being helpful to the whole. The result is that belonging applies not only in the re-location of the individual as being within God, and, indeed, part of God's very being, but also God is seen not just as a fixed entity, but as becoming. The individuals own process of struggle and suffering, learning and healing is then also part of this greater creative process. . . . An implication of this is that therapy should, as well as aiming at solving problems, also help people to develop their capacity for interiority. I think psychotherapists should help people learn the art of cultivating their souls by attending to and deepening their intuitive sense of connectedness with the rich flow of imagery that rises unendingly and spontaneously from the depths of the subconscious mind. (Blatner, 1998, p. 3)

In his keynote address at the 1999 annual meeting of the American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama, Blatner (1999a) urged participants to rediscover the story lines in their lives and to elaborate on the storytelling to enrich and develop their soul-ego connection. That is an important element in spiritual development and psychological healing and resiliency. Helping people to retell their stories so that they reconstruct them in a more

positive fashion can lead them to think more hopefully about their self and life. Storytelling is one of the ways to develop a relationship with the soul. It also is socially bonding and cathartic and acts in the group process with a dynamic “universalization.” As Blatner stated, “Soul does not think in terms of prose and facts but rather in images and stories” (p. 4). Blatner suggested that the challenge of healing is to align the two roles of ego and soul so that people can rebuild their relationships with spontaneity. He suggested promoting story telling and extending it to soul making to develop a relationship with the inner or higher self.

Technique of Souldrama

I believe that a very powerful way to have one’s ego connect with the message of one’s soul is the mental construct of connecting to one’s higher power. To achieve that, I developed a technique that I call *Souldrama*. Souldrama is introduced in *Ariel’s Fable* (Thayer, 1997), a short story about a soul as a higher power and an ego on a raft paddling across a river. The fable depicts the human journey and describes the purpose of Souldrama.

Ariel’s Fable

Once upon a time there were two passengers on a raft attempting to cross a river—one of the passengers was called ego. The other passenger was called soul. Now ego knew best and ego took position at the front of the raft. Ego was the one who grabbed the paddle when they were boarding the raft. Now, soul very calmly and quietly took the other position at the back of the raft with the rudder. Soul doesn’t have a paddle—soul simply steers. There’s a dilemma in this that ego doesn’t have a map of the river—doesn’t know where it is going; it’s also near-sighted so it can’t see very far, it also has memory loss so it doesn’t remember much and it also cannot hear very well. So kind of blind, dumb and happy, ego has the paddle and operates in crossing the river with a very, very simple criterion; paddle with all of your might toward anything that in the present moment of time that looks good and paddle furiously away from anything in the present moment of time that looks bad. Ignore the current in the river and paddle with equal ferocity upstream as well as downstream and don’t listen to the other passenger on board the raft, don’t listen to what soul is saying. (Thayer, 1997)

In the fable, the other passenger, soul, has the map of the river and knows exactly where the raft is headed. Soul, with incredible vision, can see every obstacle and detail of the river. Because soul also knows that the river has a current that will direct the raft where it wants it to go, soul constantly steers the raft away from obstacles and tries to connect with the flow of the river. Soul is trying to simplify and quicken the journey and guide the raft to the experiences that it needs. Soul guides the raft with perfect accuracy.

According to the fable, soul, unlike ego, is very willing to communicate and

is constantly trying to work in harmony with ego, who is getting exhausted from paddling. Unfortunately, the two speak different languages. Soul speaks the language of feelings, and having read the map, realizes that ego is paddling upstream toward an obstacle. Recognizing that ego is wasting effort and getting nowhere, soul tries to communicate with ego through such feelings as fatigue, jealousy, anger, rage, bitterness, and resentment. Soul also tries to communicate through words, intuitions, and insights to reveal the information. The problem is that the only way that ego is ever going to hear soul's guidance and perhaps work as a team with soul is to slow down, to stop paddling so hard, and to listen. Although this may seem unpalatable, ego must let go of control and just surrender, letting events happen.¹

The current in the river can represent a flow of energy that could have many names—God's will, divine will, or fate. The soul is the spiritual aspect of one's self that was never born and will never die and is enjoying the journey through our lifetime. The ego is one's personality, that facet of oneself that has all the qualities that the fable presents. If one's ego is in alignment with one's soul and in tune with its direction and divine guidance, the person rests when the current is raising him or her up, paddling a little to the right or to the left in accordance to where the soul is directing. The person avoids paddling upstream and paddles with the current to move forward in life.

A powerful way to have our ego start to connect with our soul's message is the development of a mental construct to connect to our higher power. One way to do that is to connect with the "angelic realm," using the angels that deliver divine guidance, divine inspiration, and divine messages to us. The word *angel* is literally defined as a messenger, one who delivers divine guidance and inspiration. If we could hear our soul directly and if we could hear God speaking to that incredible divinity within us, we would not need a messenger.

The other characters on the raft are angels who listen to the soul's guidance about what the map indicates about where and in what direction the ego should move. The angel hears precisely what the soul wishes the ego to understand. Acting as an intermediary, the angel gently and lovingly tries to get the ego to listen.

As the fable suggests, if we could hear our soul directly and if we could hear God speaking to the incredible divinity within us, we would not need a messenger. Thus, the fable includes angels who act as intermediaries to deliver the soul's message to the ego so that the ego and the soul work together toward the soul's higher purpose.

What Is Souldrama?

Souldrama is a process that takes a person on a journey through mental barriers to the angelic realm. Each time we move through one of the angelic veils,

we have a shift of consciousness that opens us up to a higher state of awareness that will allow us actively to reach out to ask the angel messengers what is the soul's message to us. The veils are the mental barriers, represented symbolically by gauze-like material, that must be overcome to reach the different stages of healing within the journey.

The techniques of Souldrama include storytelling and enacted dialogue and traditional psychodrama, using angels as auxiliary egos to deliver messages between the ego and the soul. By the client's connecting to the positive loving energy of the soul, the healing of the past occurs without the client re-experiencing the intense feelings of pain and negativity to which he or she had often become addicted.

During a Souldrama, the process of prayer follows the reading and portrayal of *Ariel's Fable*. The act of spiritual communion with God in a contemplative-meditative form serves as a warm up and invites participants to open their hearts with gratitude to form a heart connection with their "guardian angel." The term *gratitude* refers to awareness or recognition of God's grace. Prayer connects the client to that life force energy—the Godhead as the source of all. When one prays, one's ego admits that there is something or someone more powerful than oneself. I believe the process of prayer leads to spiritual surrender, during which the search for control becomes transformed into a search for the sacred. During prayer in a Souldrama, the group and the director become more open to spontaneity and change, and the process of prayer is used not to *get* something but to *be* something. The director affirms prayer as a viable option and shows a willingness to explore the appropriateness of spiritual surrender within the clients' life. The gift of prayer in the warm up is the action of prayer.

Souldrama continues as an experiential process in which the client journeys through the veils of the angelic realm. A quasi-mythic or fantasy realm becomes a surplus reality setting for using imagination symbolically to address more personal issues. The protagonists are led through six stages or "veils," in a process of guided meditation, into the "realm of angels." Each stage represents a different aspect of development. Auxiliaries in the roles of the guardian angel and the beloved soul help the protagonist to interact. As the protagonist enacts each of the stages or veils, a shift of consciousness opens him or her to a higher state of awareness. Each meditative state opens one's heart to a higher level of vibration so that the ego can hear the soul's messages about what the soul wishes for the ego in this lifetime.

Stages to Spiritual Consciousness

The six sequential predetermined stages (veils) of the journey represent different levels of trust and healing within the journey. Raising the veils gives

one access to spiritual states of consciousness. The sequence of the veils is as follows:

- First veil: *Meeting your guardian angel*. Within the first veil, the protagonist enters into the first realm of angels and meets the auxiliary ego of his or her guardian angel who will accompany him or her throughout this journey.
- Second veil: *Discovering your soul's mission*. The protagonist meets the second auxiliary ego, a deceased beloved soul, who accompanies him or her on the journey further into the realm of angels to discover the soul's mission.
- Third veil: *Forgiveness*. The auxiliary egos bring the protagonist into the third realm of angels, where blocks to forgiveness are worked through by using various psychodramatic techniques. In a role reversal, the ego and soul are separated.
- Fourth veil: *The heart of God*. The auxiliary egos, including the person previously forgiven within the third veil, accompany the protagonist into the heart of God, which is open communion and connection.
- Fifth veil: *Confronting evil*. In this stage, the protagonist confronts evil, be it fear or supernatural beings that prevent the protagonist from moving forward.
- Sixth veil: *Eden*. The protagonist sees himself or herself living with purpose and performing his or her soul's mission.

Within each veil are multiple dramas during which ego and soul become separated and then reconnect. At each stage, various psychodramatic techniques, such as enacted dialogue and separating the ego and soul within each veil, leave much to the creative process of the director. What differentiates Soul-drama from axiodrama and makes it unique is that it is not linear but circular and progressive in its healing stages. The client's progressing through each veil leads into the next level of healing, and every time a Souldrama is enacted, the client must repeat each veil in the same sequence before entering a new veil. Thus, positive levels of healing are repeatedly reinforced.

Implications of Souldrama

When a client reaches the point of recovery in therapy in which he or she can adequately express feelings, the use of a double seems to be a negative interference that stops the client from moving forward. The double reflects the client's former beliefs and puts the client back into the negativity that keeps him or her from advancing forward. Yablonsky (1981) also found that when the protagonist is able to express his or her feelings adequately, the double may interfere negatively with the protagonist's action. Although doubling has the advantage in the therapeutic process of actively demonstrating support for members, a disadvantage of doubling is that the double may also deepen the

emotional level of the group, enhancing negative feedback and further strengthening the ties of negativity and abuse (Tomasulo, 1998).

During a Souldrama, doubling is always positive, and multiple doubles are employed to capitalize on the positive energy. The multiple doubles are always the client's guardian angel and a deceased beloved soul. Often clients harbor great and persistent emotions toward loved ones who have died. Using spiritual energy to access the positive emotions associated with that soul, clients are helped to get past that negativity. The guardian angel, as a double, establishes empathetic bonding and personal support, which is further reinforced by the support of the soul of the dead person who promotes a sense of safety and unconditional love. The role of the guardian angel is to repeat consistently the loving message given in the beginning of the drama. The role of the loving soul of the deceased person reconnects the client to the feelings of unconditional love and serves to reinforce those feelings throughout the drama.

In the following dialogue, a facilitator and a protagonist select the positive double during a Souldrama.

Facilitator: (to protagonist after protagonist has met the soul of her grandmother) "Show me now, what her love looked like." (Protagonist shows herself embracing and looking face to face at her grandmother.)

Facilitator: "Now reverse roles and give your grandmother words."

Protagonist as Grandmother: "I love you unconditionally."

Facilitator: Roles are reversed back, and grandmother repeats the words, "I love you unconditionally" to the protagonist. Facilitator asks protagonist, "What would you like to say to her now?"

Protagonist: "I love you."

Facilitator: "What did you have to do to get this love?"

Protagonist: "Nothing." (Begins to cry)

The soul of the beloved grandmother accompanies the protagonist throughout the drama and serves as a positive double reinforcing the message of love.

Within a Souldrama, a client's problems can easily be reframed as challenges of creativity, rather than problems the client should have been able to solve. The client learns first to own and then to cherish the gifts received from parents. After that he or she is able to give the gifts away because of having learned to love and cherish them as opposed to rejecting them.

Curiously, the things that we lacked in childhood can become the gifts that we are able to give others, skills that prepare us for our life's work. Gifts that we can compassionately give to others often come from what we lacked as children, from the wounds that have become our strengths. Interestingly enough, what we choose to be our higher purpose is often connected to the time when we felt the most loved.

Case Study A

J, the Artist

J, an artist, aged 45 and newly divorced, left a business that he had created with his wife 20 years ago. Recently he started his own home design business and, although doing well and happy, was still struggling financially in his work. He felt free to express himself in his design work, but he was having trouble establishing a relationship. He was fearful about dating and felt “stuck” when he reached a certain level of intimacy with a women. His last date had been so painful to him that J was angry and expressed to the group his desire to sculpt something from that anger.

J had gone through the first two veils and was in the veil “Discovering Your Soul’s Mission” in which he met his mother’s soul. He had sculpted what his relationship looked like when his mother had shown him love. The mother’s soul was offering J a lit candle, and J had his back to the candle and was looking over his shoulder at his mother.

Protagonist: (to his mother’s soul) “You made love so painful.”

Mother’s soul: “I did not know how to love you.”

Protagonist: “I had to listen to your pain. I took in your pain. I hated to hear it. Yet part of me wanted to hear it because I needed to know what was going on in the family. It was my way to stay in control. (That was a realization for J.) We needed to move because we went bankrupt, and it was painful to leave our home. I did not want to leave home at age 17. I wanted to fix your pain.”

Mother’s soul: “I am so sorry.”

J’s guardian angel approaches with the book “My Soul’s Mission,” and J reads from the book. “My purpose in life is to create spaces and beautiful homes for people—to design those spaces so that they feel lived in and comfortable.” (Angel reads this back.)

(J looks at his mother.)

Facilitator: (to J) “Tell her how you wanted to fix her pain.”

Protagonist: “I wanted to fix your pain by creating a home for you and a home where I could stay. That’s what I am doing now—creating beautiful safe places. Thank you for helping me. I never saw this as a gift. I thought I had to listen to someone’s pain before I could feel connected by love. I thought I had to do something to love you back. I used to take that pain and sculpt something and try to create something for you. (Tears follow.) I could not create something unless I was in pain. I could never feel your love unless I felt your pain. Thank you for giving me all my gifts that I use everyday in my work.”

Discussion

The technique of enacted dialogue is useful in psychotherapy, and it helps people during their spiritual journeys. The process is one that draws on an unending fountain of imagery and is experienced through the magic of spontaneity. It offers a powerful vehicle for helping clients access their own deeper wisdom to construct answers to their existential problems (Blatner, 1998). Once people warm up to the role of the Higher Power as a source of guidance and wisdom, what they say spontaneously in that role is often more to the point, more insightful, and more effectively targeted to the patient's own understanding. Moreno's (1965) psychodrama complements the process, giving it a concrete form to render the interaction in a vivid and psychologically powerful manner (Blatner, 1999b).

Enacted dialogue synthesizes the functions of the ego ideal and the creative unconscious. When the spiritual other is embodied as either the person's own subconscious "higher power" or as the "still, small voice" that is the link to an externally spiritual authority, the creative unconscious is identified as a source of wisdom, warning, comfort, and guidance (Blatner, 1999b). The process intensifies the idea that at some deeper level, clients often know what they need and believe, and it is healing to put their superficial identities in touch with deeper knowing. Through the interactive role playing, patients often find themselves saying things they ordinarily would not think or say from the perspective of their ordinary or familiar egocentric positions. As a result, the client develops a relationship with that aspect of his or her creative unconscious that is one's "higher power," "soul," or "higher self."

In enacting the role of the "higher self" or some other benevolent spirit or entity, clients find themselves embodying their own ego ideal, and as a result, the statements made in the course of role playing then become affirmations that consciously become associated with the emerging sense of self. When the ego ideal is wise rather than clever, loving rather than selfish, and giving rather than getting, patients are helped to move toward healthier goals. In Souldrama energy comes from the connection to positive divine factors rather than from the energy of fear or problems. If we introduce more spirituality into the healing process, I believe the attachment to self becomes easier. The client attaches himself or herself to the divine or higher self and thus to his or her life's purpose.

Case Study B

D, a Seeker of Forgiveness

In the veil of forgiveness, D wants to forgive herself because she feels that she has betrayed herself on many occasions. D is accompanied by her

guardian angel and the beloved soul she chose in veils one and two. D has chosen two auxiliaries to represent her ego and also her soul.

Protagonist: (to her ego) "You keep betraying me."

Facilitator: (to D) "Reverse roles now with your ego."

Protagonist: (as her ego) "You've had more than enough love; you've had your share, stop complaining." (At this point, D realized what she said and began to cry as she saw how she was relating to herself.)

The roles are reversed again, and D is instructed to become her higher divine self or soul and not her ego.

Facilitator: "Now reverse roles with your soul or higher self."

D: (as her soul) "You deserve to have some love." Roles are again reversed.

Facilitator: Now have your soul become 10 times more loving than before.

Protagonist: (looks puzzled and says) "I'm not sure I know *how* to be more loving. I don't know if I can be more loving than I just was. I'll try."

Protagonist: "There is more love for you than you can possible imagine, and it is your birthright. I love you unconditionally." Roles are reversed again, and the betrayed self is handed over to God in the fourth veil.

Discussion

Psychotherapy helps people to see where they may be blocked in achieving greater intimacy with others and within themselves. The technique of Soul-drama was designed to help remove the blocks in which a person's ego defenses obstruct or distort his or her relationship to the divine. One can see how the nature of the defenses, attachments, and identifications that developed as responses to childhood conditions becomes integrated into the self. To mature into the authentic self, one integrates those parts of the self that had previously been split off. After a synthesis of the spiritual and worldly, a person is able to operate not from conditioned patterns of behavior but from such qualities as compassion, integrity, and harmony.

In Souldrama, conflictual situations are not investigated. Understanding an experience, be that positive or negative, is the thrust. The client tries to understand an experience and takes it further to see the spiritual component of that situation. Because a person's psychological problems are often the negative reflection of a more positive quality, a deeper exploration of a problem can result in the client's seeing the spiritual gap. When one is disconnected from one's own true nature, one has a spiritual gap. For example, a person who is afraid of intimacy is at some deeper level resisting a positive spiritual quality.

Advantages of Souldrama

Souldrama has incredible versatility. The techniques can be used in individual or large group sessions. In whatever form it is used, it eliminates much of negativity to which clients have been addicted and helps them form healthier relationships with their higher power, moving them forward onto their life's purpose. The theoretical base underlying psychodrama is that our egos develop from the roles we play in life. As we increase our role repertoire, we increase our capacity to lead more fulfilling lives. The idea of Souldrama is to provide a way for the self to connect to the divine within, the Higher Self, which was forgotten when our creativity as children was shut down.

Because Souldrama eliminates much of the negative feedback to the client and the group, little analysis is needed afterward. The sharing, encouraged after the drama, is usually on a positive level. That is important because with codependents, the trauma and negative voice are often so deep that the group sharing can reinforce or reflect the reality and the negativity of the protagonist's situation. It is the negative feedback that makes it difficult for clients, who may leave the sessions further internalizing the negative, to move on in therapy.

Conclusion

Although research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of Souldrama, a greater need is to create techniques that are incompatible with such forces as feelings of fear, rage, anger, pain, and sadness that maintain dysfunctional roles. Although Souldrama techniques were originally designed for use with codependent clients and with those from addictive and dysfunctional family systems, the techniques have far-reaching implications for healing other types of clients. Today people are living longer and often begin to seek therapy in the latter part of their lives, which becomes a time to discover the soul's purpose and to live a life full of joy, transformation, and fulfillment.

Now is the time to pursue soul work and to take our energy from internal divine joy. Each person needs to begin to experience his or her own creativity and assume responsibility for his or her own life. We have an ability to influence creation in this universe by becoming cocreators with God. When we do so, I believe the shift enhances one's life purpose, intimacy, and joy. We move from competition to intimacy, from ambition to creativity. We contemplate the question Mark asked in the Bible: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Barker, Burdick, Stek, Wessel, & Youngblood, 1995, p. 1508).

¹The fable was written by Thayer (1997). I psychodramatically illustrated the fable in Sedona in 1997 at the workshop *Healing With the Energy of Angels*. The narratives

that are used in the Souldrama come from a taped workshop at which I demonstrated Souldrama techniques.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Moreno, Joseph. *Acting Your Inner Music: Music Therapy and Psychodrama*. St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1999.

Although no one can bathe an elephant in a raindrop, one can capture its reflection in one. That is just what Joseph Moreno has accomplished in his latest work, *Acting Your Inner Music*. In a few chapters, he has captured the essence of an enormous body of work.

His style is engaging and easy to read. It is filled with research, history, case studies, anecdotal stories, and valuable “how to” sections. He speaks to the marriage of music therapy and psychodrama. He rightfully acknowledges that his work is not meant to take the place of training for either discipline, but his work certainly makes it irresistible for some therapists to take a complementary workshop somewhere down the road.

This book would be more beneficial to the psychodramatist who seeks to become more musical than it would be to the music therapist who wants to polish psychodramatic techniques because most music therapy educational programs do not include training in the basic principles of action methods. Most psychodramatists, however, have had experience with music basics. Joseph Moreno explains his techniques for using music in therapy and emphasizes the essential respect required for the protagonist’s personal history with music. The description of his musical dialogue in chapter 8 is an example of the power that music has to override the overly intellectualized interaction of many protagonists. The option to stop talking allows the protagonist to problem solve from the nonverbal side of the brain. The speech center and the music center are evidently processed in opposite hemispheres. Interjecting music allows for a “whole-brain” response. That option can be liberating.

In the use of music as warm-up imaging, I offer a word of caution in the choice of musical material. When one is working with substance-abuse

patients, veterans, those who have a history of psychotic decompensation, or anyone who might experience pathological flashbacks, one needs to determine if guided imagery is a safe technique for each client.

One of Joseph Moreno's most important points concerns the use of unfamiliar music. In chapter 7, Moreno states, "[T]he point to keep in mind is how familiar music may sometimes bring about unexpected personal memories for some, associations that may not be useful for a whole group process." That is a great tip. To have a nonthreatening experience with music, one must leave one's memories and biases at the door. The therapist, however, must guard against putting a roomful of people to sleep with bland music. Finding a good balance takes work. Moreno sees music as a powerful tool to be used in a thoughtful and full-hearted fashion.

The contents in chapter 10 are the most practical and delightful of the book. It would seem that any therapist could find a place in his or her sessions for those scenarios, especially with an ongoing group in which it is easier for auxiliaries to follow an initial director with a musical vantage point. The therapist must expect some nervousness in the group when introducing some of Moreno's scenarios, such as the one he calls "Dance to the Spirit of Wisdom" and "A Musical Rebirth." After those, depending on the spontaneity of the group, more challenging scenarios can be approached with confidence.

The next chapter would have fit better at the beginning with the historical framework; nonetheless, I am pleased to report that this chapter adds to the growing body of work reflecting interdisciplinary cooperation. I endorse Moreno's plea for creative arts educators to include a basic grounding in complementary arts disciplines. That is essential to the future of fully actualized creative arts therapists.

While pondering Moreno's work, I was aware of the silent music within myself, waiting to be brought to life. I could see the whole elephant.

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Yablonsky, Lewis. *Gangsters: Fifty Years of Madness, Drugs, and Death on the Streets of America*. New York: New York University Press, 1997.

When Lewis Yablonsky, in his introduction to his book on gangsters and death on American streets, describes his experiences as a youth growing up near a Black ghetto in Newark, New Jersey, we can see that he learned role reversal long before he even heard of J. L. Moreno. He relates that in the ghetto as a minority "ofay" (White boy), he was subjected to shake downs and beatings while at the same time he developed considerable empathy for his

aggressors and their families in their struggle for survival and to move out of their basement hovels. Subsequently, Yablonsky went on as a sociologist with a love of psychodrama and his mentor, J. L. Moreno, to become one of our foremost criminologists.

His book *The Violent Gang* written in 1962, a classic sociological exposition, established the use of action-oriented psychodrama methods to invoke his strong belief in Kurt Lewin's dictum, "If you want to truly understand something, try to change it." It is now more than five decades since Yablonsky began studying and participating in endeavors to "change it."

I first met Dr. Yablonsky in 1965 at a hospital for drug addicts in New York City, when he was on his way to visit prisoners at Rikers Island. He was already making breakthroughs in interviewing criminals, gaining their trust by engaging them in therapeutic settings in which many meaningful changes were brought about in powerful psychodramatic sessions. I regarded him even then as a "social engineer" (a concept set forth by Lester Ward, an eminent sociologist) and as an expert psychodramatist who could break through the facade of resistance and defiance of the gangsters with whom he worked. When I spent some time with him in Los Angeles in the 1960s and in the Synanon program in which he was intimately involved, I was impressed by his courage and risk-taking with drug addicts, many of whom were, to my mind, hardened criminals who I thought could never be resocialized.

In his introduction to this book, Yablonsky writes that the most important part of his book focuses on his treatment approaches. He is searching for a solution that is "not only generated by my intellect but by my heartfelt and sympathetic emotions about the human waste and destruction that violent gangs produce. On a personal and professional level . . . my work with prisoners is the most deeply affecting emotional situation in my life."

Yablonsky takes us back to many of his and other workers' earlier efforts, such as those with the Chicago Schools Gangs, Street Corner Society, the 1950s gangsters, and the New York City Youth Board. He introduces us to many notable criminologists and other workers who have strived to understand and change the rising tide of "madness, drugs, and death on the streets of America." He makes us abundantly aware that the face of crime has dramatically changed with the proliferation of lethal weapons and the vast dangerous drug culture.

Yablonsky's plan for treating gangsters largely revolves around the creation of therapeutic communities to resocialize the offenders. He describes psychodrama sessions and his work with family groups and with educational and job planning groups, in which ex-gangsters are often working as role models and positive change agents.

As valuable as the strategies he depicts will be to the reader, it is Dr. Yablonsky's own creativity and spontaneity—his devotion, loyalty, and good

will toward the individuals “who have passed through the fires of gang life”—that make his book so remarkable. In a dream shortly after reading the book, I saw Kurt Lewin on the stage pointing to Yablonsky and saying “Lew, you have heard me, and you have changed it. I am so proud of you.” After 50 years of being associated with Lew, I share that sentiment and highly recommend that you read this book.

EUGENE ELIASOPH
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CORRECTION

In the Spring 1999 issue of this journal, the authors of *The Functions of Groups: A Psychometric Analysis of the Group Resources Inventory (IJAM, 52,1–14)* were not listed correctly on the table of contents. The authors, as shown on the title page of the article, were Donelson R. Forsyth, Timothy R. Elliott, and Josephine A. Welsh.

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The editors of *The International Journal of Action Methods* are issuing a call for papers on group therapy and violence. They seek papers in which the authors report efforts to address violence through the use of role playing and/or psychodrama. The editors will review submissions on a first-come, first-served basis. Authors are to follow the journal's guidelines and send articles to the managing editor, *IJAM*, Heldref Publications, 1319 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-1802.

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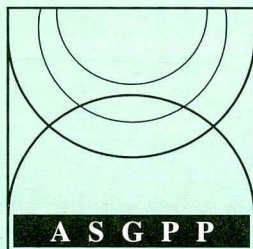
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