

VOLUME 53, NO. 1 SPRING 2000

The International
Journal of
Action Methods
Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing

Published in Cooperation With the American Society
of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama

EXECUTIVE EDITORS

George M. Gazda, EdD
Professor Emeritus
University of Georgia

David A. Kipper, PhD
Roosevelt University, Chicago

Thomas W. Treadwell, EdD
West Chester University

CONSULTING EDITORS

Alton Barbour, PhD
University of Denver

Adam Blatner, MD
Georgetown, Texas

Frances Bonds-White, EdD
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Timothy Evans, PhD
University of South Florida

Gong Shu, PhD
St. Louis, Missouri, Center for
Psychodrama and Sociometry
Taipei, Taiwan

A. Paul Hare
Ben Gurion University
Beer Sheva, Israel

Carl E. Hollander, EdD
Hollander Institute for Human
Development
Denver, Colorado

Arthur M. Horne, PhD
University of Georgia

M. Katherine Hudgins, PhD
Center for Experiential Learning
Charlottesville, Virginia

Andrew R. Hughey, PhD
San Jose State University

Peter Felix Kellermann, PhD
Jerusalem, Israel

V. Krishna Kumar, PhD
West Chester University

Grete A. Leutz, MD
Moreno Institut
Bodensee, Germany

Jonathan D. Moreno, PhD
University of Virginia

Zerka T. Moreno
Beacon, New York

James M. Sacks, PhD
Randolph, New Jersey

Rex Stockton, EdD
Indiana University

Israel Eli Sturm, PhD
New York, New York

Daniel Tomasulo, PhD
Holmdel, New Jersey

Susan A. Wheelan, PhD
Temple University

Daniel J. Wiener, PhD
Central Connecticut State University

Antony J. Williams, PhD
LaTrobe University
Bundora, Australia

Founded by J. L. Moreno

The International Journal of **Action Methods**

Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing

Formerly the **Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama and Sociometry**

Volume 53, No. 1

ISSN 1096-7680

Spring 2000

Contents

- 3 The "Magic Shop" Technique in Psychodrama:
 An Existential-Dialectical View
 Leni M. F. Verhofstadt-Denève
- 17 The Evolution of Sociometric Theory From a
 Chaos Perspective
 Rory Remer
- 33 Spontaneity: Does the Experience Match the
 Theory?
 David A. Kipper
- 48 Book Review: *Drama Workshops for Anger
 Management and Offending Behaviour*,
 by James Thompson. Reviewed by
 Jonathan M. Fox

The International Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing (ISSN 1096-7680) is published quarterly by Heldref Publications, 1319 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036-1802, (202) 296-6267; fax (202) 296-5149, in conjunction with the American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama. Heldref Publications is the educational publishing division of the Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, president. Heldref Publications is the operational division of the foundation, which seeks to fulfill an educational and charitable mission through the publication of educational journals and magazines. Any contributions to the foundation are tax deductible and will go to support the publications.

Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **The International Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing**, Heldref Publications, 1319 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-1802.

The annual subscription rate is \$87 for institutions and \$52 for individuals. Single-copy price is \$20.00. Add \$12.00 for subscriptions outside the U.S. Allow 6 weeks for shipment of first copy. Foreign subscriptions must be paid in U.S. currency with checks drawn on U.S. banks. Payment can be charged to VISA/MasterCard. Supply account number, expiration date, and signature. For subscription orders and customer service inquiries **only**, call 1-800-365-9753. Claims for missing issues made within 6 months will be serviced free of charge.

©2001 by the Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation. Copyright is retained by the author where noted. Contact Heldref Publications for copyright permission, or contact the authors if they retain copyright. For permission to photocopy Heldref copyrighted items for classroom use, contact the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), Academic Permissions Service (508) 750-8400. Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) registered users should contact the Transactional Reporting Service.

The International Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing is indexed, scanned, or abstracted in *Applied Social Science Index & Abstracts*, *Child Development Abstracts & Bibliography*, *Family Resources Database*, *Health & Psychosocial Instruments*, *Innovation & Research*, *Linguistic & Language Behavior Abstracts*, *Mental Health Abstracts*, *Psychological Abstracts*, *PsycINFO Database*, *Sociological Abstracts*, and *Social Planning/Policy & Development Abstracts*.

The International Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing does not accept responsibility for views expressed in articles, reviews, and other contributions that appear in its pages. It provides opportunities for the publication of materials that may represent divergent ideas, judgments, and opinions.

Reprints (orders of 50 copies or more) of articles in this issue are available through Heldref's Reprints Division. Microform editions of the journal are available from Bell & Howell Information and Learning, Serials Acquisition Department, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

HELDREF PUBLICATIONS

Director

Douglas J. Kirkpatrick

Deputy Director

Susan P. Dembeck

Managing Editor

Helen S. Kress

Editorial Production Director

Linda Dziobek

Editorial Secretary

Claudia Pitts

Creative Director

Karen Luzader Eskew

Graphic Artists

Margaret C. Quinn
Carmen Stewart Jessup

Circulation Director

Fred Huber

Fulfillment and Reprints Manager

Jean Kline

Fulfillment Staff

Cheryl Roach

Subscription Coordinator

Ronnie McMillian

Information Systems Manager

Shyam Nathan

Director—Advertising and New Media

Thomas A. Kelly

Multimedia Manager

Margaret Buckley

Production Manager

Richard Pepple

Marketing Art Director

Owen T. Davis

Office Manager

Patricia Haight

Permissions

Mary Jaine Winokur

Accounting Manager

Ronald F. Cranston



The “Magic Shop” Technique in Psychodrama: An Existential–Dialectical View

LENI M. F. VERHOFSTADT-DENÈVE

ABSTRACT. The “magic shop” technique has been applied to good effect by various psychodramatists, each with his or her specific emphasis. In this article, the author presents some refinements and revisions of the magic shop technique that are grounded in theory. The author introduces experienced moments of learning by means of a series of ordered scenes, with the whole process based on an existential–dialectical model of development. The first section of the article contains the theoretical framework. In a specific example, the author then illustrates the successive stages of the magic shop technique. In the final section, the author presents a theoretical interpretation.

Key words: developmental psychiatry, dialectical psychology, existential psychology, Magic Shop

MANY AUTHORS (see Barbour, 1992; Leveton, 1992; Moreno, 1964; Petzold, 1971; Rustin & Olsson, 1993) have discussed the “magic shop” psychodramatic technique and some of its variations. In the present article, I note some refinements in the organization of the technique—a series of ordered scenes—along with the rationale for structuring the method in this fashion.

The basic idea is that a magic shop, opened by the director or by a member of the group under the supervision of the director, provides the group members with an opportunity to buy psychological qualities or characteristics that they feel they lack. The negotiation of the kind of payment for the purchase is especially significant, because what is offered in payment may be revealing and a source of potential insight for the protagonist.

Although the actual implementation of the magic shop may differ considerably among authors, they all proceed on a common basis, notably a remarkable combination of playfulness and seriousness, of humor and pain, of dream and reality, which constitutes the distinctive healing power of this psy-

chodramatic technique. My own approach also relies on those features, yet I think it is worth noting that an additional dimension comes into play, that is, vividly experienced moments of learning that are attained during a structured number of stages, the process being based on an existential–dialectical theory of development. The primary emphasis is not on the element of negotiating, nor on the exchange of one quality for another, but rather on development-oriented learning through concrete and intense episodes of experiences. The process goes through several successive stages in which the director, acting as “Shopkeeper,” stimulates the protagonist and the entire group into action. In the present article, I illustrate this approach by means of a practical example of a session with students in clinical psychology.

Theoretical Framework: Developmental Psychotherapy From an Existential–Dialectical Viewpoint

In previous articles, I have outlined the basic principles of a developmental therapeutic framework, particularly of the Phenomenological–Dialectical Personality Model (Phe-Di PModel) that is at its core (see Verhofstadt-Denève, 1988, 1995, 2000, 2001). In the present article, I repeat only the salient points.

Self-Dimensions

Many psychological problems arise from distortions or unrealistic expectations in six areas and influence the answers to the following questions:

- Who am I? (Self-Image);
- Who would I like to be and become? (Ideal-Self);
- What are the others like? (Alter-Image);
- What should the others be like? (Ideal-Alter);
- How do the others perceive me? (Meta-Self);
- How should the others perceive me? (Ideal-Meta-Self).

Those six questions constitute the foundation stones of a therapeutically workable and “living” personality model. Accordingly, the model has six Self-Dimensions and assumes that every human being constructs his or her own and unique subjective (phenomenological) interpretation of himself or herself and the surrounding reality at different levels of consciousness and acting.

Present, Past, and Future

In addition, there may be changes in the conscious or subconscious answers given depending on whether the protagonist is thinking about himself or her-

self or about others who are important in one's life. Or the protagonist may be thinking about himself or herself in the past, as a child, as the person today, or as the person in the future, as anticipated or hoped for.

External versus Internal

For each Self-Dimension, a distinction can be made between an external aspect (the way we behave externally, what we say, etc.) and an internal aspect (what we think and feel). An adolescent might say to his father: "You are a despot, you destroy all creativity in me." But he might at the same time be thinking: "How can I say this to him; after all he means well" (the external Alter-Image versus the internal Alter-Image/Self-Image). In therapeutic sessions, there must be the possibility to express such hidden contents.

Phenomenological versus Alternative Constructions

The personality model also allows for the fact that these constructions about ourselves and about the others may very well show "mistakes and gaps." Alternative interpretations are certainly possible. A sprightly adolescent girl, for example, might think herself frightfully ugly because she has a slightly turned-up nose, and she does not realize that that is why most people call her lovely. Often when one is in love, one may have fallen for one's own subjective construction of a given person (the Alter-Image) and not for the real individual. Subsequent disillusionment hits hard indeed. From a clinical-therapeutic point of view, it is essential that one should proceed on the basis of the subjective, phenomenological constructions, however bizarre and unreal those may seem. The ultimate aim is that therapeutic action should enable the group members to discover alternatives and perhaps more realistic interpretations about themselves and about the others.

In earlier publications, I have argued that this phenomenological-dialectical personality model can be a workable frame of reference for the psychodramatist (see Verhofstadt-Denève, 1988, 1995, 2000, 2001).

Dialectical Processing

In this framework, the dialectical concept acquires a decisive significance as the motive force behind the process of development. I use the term *dialectic* to mean an aid in psychotherapy or personal growth, because the individual is helped to note the inherent tensions between two opposing ideas, desires, elements of the environment, or other factors that require some degree of creative synthesis in order to cope effectively. By bringing those opposites more into explicit consciousness, the client or protagonist is helped to address

the predicament constructively more consciously. My own follow-up research and theoretical interpretation of dialectical developmental psychology (see Verhofstadt-Denève, 1985, 1999b, 2000, 2001; Verhofstadt-Denève et al., 1993, 1996; Basseches, 1984; Bidell, 1988; Brown, Werner, & Altman, 1998; Conville, 1998; Riegel, 1979).

The assumption is that the six Self-Dimensions have to relate to each other in dialectical constructive oppositions. An important corollary is that too rigid, habitual constructions about oneself and the others should be loosened and partly integrated. Thus there might be exclusive interdimensional oppositions, for example, between the Self-Image and the Alter-Image: "She is so much stronger than I am." We need to take into account the possibility of intradimensional oppositions—for example, between external and internal contents and between phenomenological constructions and reality or possible alternative interpretations concerning self and others (see Verhofstadt-Denève, 1985, 1999a, 2000, 2001).

In other words, individuals can discover two extreme oppositions and rigid interpretations, thanks to self-reflection and empathy. When they have acquired that awareness (a process sometimes combined with the experience of a crisis), they can then move on to take a more qualified view and to construct more flexible, alternative images of themselves and important others.

Existential Issues

When a therapeutic group has reached a high degree of familiarity and security, the members of the group inevitably raise thoroughly human existential contents about origin, destiny, and finiteness of oneself and important others. Existential issues go beyond one's own success or failure in gaining love or self-worth and address the inevitable stresses associated with personal freedom, choice, responsibility, separation, loss, and aging. Those issues, apart from any personal predisposition, tend to precipitate feelings of depression, anxiety, guilt, and loneliness (Mijuskovic, 1977). It is important that an individual recognize that those feelings of anxiety and guilt can be interpreted and accepted as normal and ontological. By doing so, the person may be able to enjoy to the full every moment of life, vividly and consciously (May, 1969; Mullan, 1992; Verhofstadt-Denève, 2000, 2001; Yalom, 1980).

Positive Self-Appreciation

Related to the dimension of positive Self-Image, positive self-appreciation refers to an activity that serves as a buffer against existential anxieties and is an activity that people often neglect. Part of therapy involves raising the client's attention to this goal. If there is no self-appreciation (positive Self-

Image) and no appreciation by others (positive Meta-Self), the process of one's development can stagnate or even deteriorate, and one's anxiety increases (see the research of Greenberg et al., 1992). The dialectical force then becomes a negative one.

A major question in this context is what the characteristics of positive development are. When can dialectical processes be considered beneficial to personality development? The developmental view claims that the goal is to be defined as the fullest possible realization of the individual's own potential or self-actualization in a harmonious relationship with significant others.

As I have described elsewhere, the psychodrama method fits this developmental therapeutic framework (see Verhofstadt-Denève, 2000, 2001). Here I show that self-actualization also applies to the psychodramatic approach in the psychodramatic magic shop by means of the following basic psychic movements:

1. the activation of self-reflection on the six Self-Dimensions;
2. a growing awareness and integration of interdimensional and intradimensional oppositions, and discovery of alternative interpretations of oneself and one's environment;
3. the recognition and acceptance of existential conditions;
4. a strengthening of self-confidence through self-appreciation and positive evaluation by significant others.

After the presentation of the successive magic shop stages, I will return to these points.

Magic Shop: An Illustrative Session

The session described here was part of an experiential learning course in developmental psychotherapy that is part of the curriculum for students in clinical psychology at the University of Ghent, Belgium. Before starting this course, the students know that it involves psychodrama (Verhofstadt-Denève, 1999b).

The aim is not to become psychodramatists but to acquire the personal experience of what psychodrama really is. The group averages 15 students. There are 7 sessions from 4 to 10 pm, on Fridays, in principle for 7 successive weeks.

The following section describes a magic shop session with a group of 15 students, the fifth workshop in the series. The cohesion within the group is strong, and the atmosphere is not competitive but secure and relaxed. The students, having been told "group members cannot make mistakes," know that they will not be evaluated on the basis of their behavior during the sessions.

The refined magic shop technique takes the following general sequence:

1. Warming-up (*Beginning the Session*)

- a. Description of the shop
- b. Reflection in silence

2. Action (*The Shop Opens*)

- c. Customer enters shop and looks for the appropriate quality.
- d. Search for situation(s) in which the quality was missed.
- e. First mini-drama without the quality
- f. Back to shop to try on the quality
- g. Second mini-drama with the quality
- h. Back to shop for negotiation
- i. Exchange of qualities
- j. Exit from the shop and return to the group.

3. Sharing (*After the Shop Closes*)*Beginning the Session*

(a) *The director (Dir.) opens the session:* Last week I announced that today you could visit the magic shop. I am the magic shopkeeper. This is the shop where I receive my customers, this is the counter. Here you can see all the attractive merchandise I have on offer, and over here, mind you, there is the door. When a customer enters the shop or leaves, you will hear the ding-dong from a bell—don't forget that!

The shopkeeper makes a fuss about everything, walking around eagerly and pointing everything out. The director continues: There's something very special about my shop. You can't buy anything tangible here, but I do sell any quality or characteristic that you can think of. If you believe that you lack a given quality that you need in order to be happier, you can buy it from me—say, audacity, empathy, or anything else. It may not be easy to find the right words for what you seem to need, but the other customers may be able to help you, because we are all members of a tightly knit club, called "The Magic Shop Friends." One effective way of helping a customer is by *doubling*, which means that you enter the shop (you simply walk through the wall), stand behind the customer, put a hand on his or her shoulder, and suggest something, using the I-form. Any member of the club can do this but needs the Shopkeeper's consent, which one gains by glancing in his direction. The customer then decides if he or she accepts your doubling. Remember that the customer does not acquire the quality for nothing, he or she must pay for it, not with money but with the exchange of a positive quality. I do not accept negative qualities because I cannot sell those to anyone else. Don't worry about the exchange because some positive qualities can ham-

per your development, if you have too much of them. Moreover, so-called negative qualities can also be thought of as positive and therefore can also be used as a means of payment. For example, excessive emotionality can be viewed as a form of sensitivity. Do not worry about that as yet. Later, together with the help of the other Magic Shop Friends, we can determine what is acceptable.

(b) The director then announces: Now you can start thinking about what you would like to buy in my shop; take your time, and remember: anything goes! If you want to, you can close your eyes, though you need not.

The Shop Opens

After five minutes, the director walks to the door and turns an imaginary card to the side marked OPEN.

Dir.: The shop is now open. I hope I will have many customers today; I can see a few members of our club who seem to be itching to come in. Meanwhile I am displaying my merchandise, I can offer a few attractive bargains today at very modest prices.

(c) "Ding-Dong." *Helen enters the shop.*

Dir.: Hello, Helen, nice of you to come. What can I do for you?

The director and Helen walk around in the shop together or sit at the counter.

Helen: I would like to buy "to dare to state my opinion" (= Subjective Phenomenological Construction).

Dir.: That's a very important quality all right, but are you absolutely certain that it is what you need? Consider that you might buy something to find out later on that it's not the quality you wanted. That's what we can prevent in this shop thanks to our customer club.

Helen: Quite! When I buy shoes, I tend to make the wrong choice. How can I avoid that?

(d) *Dir.*: So we will try to prevent such mistakes. Helen, are there any specific occasions when you have found that you missed that particular quality?

Helen: Oh yes, quite a few. . . . The most striking one occurred recently, when I spoke with my mother about my boyfriend. She finds him unsuitable, but my friend and I had just decided to live together. I didn't dare tell her.

(e) *Dir.*: OK Helen, you'll now meet your mother. Where do you want to see her and when? Are you alone with her?

Helen: There are just the two of us, in my room. It's 8 in the evening.

Dir.: Now choose somebody who'll be your mother.

Helen: Anne.

Anne joins them; Helen shows her how and where to be her mother sitting on the couch.

Dir.: Helen, come and stand behind your mother and put your hand on her shoulder; you will become your mother (role-taking). What do you say? What are you thinking?

Dir. (to Anne): Anne, listen carefully to what Helen says; try to become Helen's mother.

Helen (as her mother): I am Helen's mother. When I was young, I wasn't lucky with boys (= Alter-Image). I hope Helen is no longer with Kevin; she deserves somebody better (= Meta-Self). I'll ask her if she still sees Kevin?

Dir.: Now become yourself again, Helen. Where are you sitting now?

Helen is in front of Anne in an armchair. Helen moves to a chair facing her mother.

Anne (as Helen's mother): Do you still see Kevin?

Helen: Occasionally (= external Self-Image).

Helen (addressing the Dir.): I can't tell her what I intend to do, I don't want to hurt her, I feel guilty toward her; after all, she means well (= internal Self-Image/internal Alter-Image, and negative self-evaluation).

Dir.: How does this scene end?

Helen: My mother leaves. I feel miserable. I was not honest with her. I was afraid to tell the truth.

Dir.: Come, Helen, let's go back to the shop.

(f) *Dir.*: Now what happened during this meeting?

Helen: I felt pain and guilt. I don't know why I didn't dare to be open about it.

Dir.: What is it you want to buy? Perhaps the club members can help? (*Several members come up and double Helen*).

John (doubles): Perhaps I need to be more confident about the choices I make, so that I might dare to be honest about my views.

Dir.: Is that right?

Helen: Yes, that's it! That's what I want to buy, "more self-confidence" (= Alternative Interpretation).

Dir.: OK Helen. To be sure that this is the right quality, you can try it, as you would try on shoes or a dress. Now we are going to have a replay of the scene we just acted out but with "more self-confidence" this time. After that, you decide if you need to come back to the shop. Let's go to the secret store behind the counter. Yes, I've got some left. Look at it. You can put it on. Take your time, feel your self-confidence growing. Look at yourself in this (imaginary) mirror. See? Your bearing has changed already; you now stand upright. As soon as you feel confident enough, you can begin with the scene. There's no hurry.

(g) *Helen (after a while)*: I'm ready!

Anne again takes the role of Helen's mother and asks her: Do you still see Kevin?

Dir.: Helen, don't forget, you have more self-confidence now!

Helen: Mummy, I know you don't really like Kevin, but I do feel we get along very well. We've talked this over quite carefully, and Kevin and I have decided to live together. I feel very happy about this decision. I know it may hurt you, but I'd like you to stand by us (= Ideal-Self/Ideal-Alter).

Dir.: Now how does this feel?

Helen: Unbelievable! That's the way I must do things in the future (= positive self-evaluation).

Dir.: Helen, you will now become your mother. What do you say to her; what do you feel? And Anne, you will become Helen (= Role-reversal).

Helen (as her mother): I always thought you were doubtful about it, and that made me uncertain too. . . . But if you really believe it's going to work, I will support you (= Ideal-Alter/Ideal-Meta-Self).

Dir.: Right Helen, you may now become yourself again. Let's go back to the shop.

Dir. (to Anne): Anne, you will be Helen's mother again. Now you can join the other members of the club. Later on, during the sharing, you can tell what you felt as mother.

(h) *Helen (back in the shop, she speaks in a very convinced tone):* I definitely want to buy more self-confidence!

Dir.: OK Helen, how much do you want?

Helen: At least two big kilos! (*Everyone in the group finds this response very funny.*)

Next, there is a brief episode of negotiation, when Helen and the other members of the "customer club" look for some positive qualities, of which Helen has plenty and which, in spite of being positive, hamper her development. Her excessive concern for others makes her neglect her own needs. The stage of negotiation is usually a very relaxed moment, particularly after the tense mood prevailing during the acting out of the two mini-dramas. The participants laugh a lot, and when the group is playfully asked if Helen has given enough in exchange for the new quality, they accept the exchange arrangements.

(i) *Dir.:* Helen, we agree with your proposal. So here comes the great moment: This is your heavy packet of self-confidence. Helen crosses her arms in front of her breast and fully takes in her the new-found self-confidence.

Dir.: Now Helen, listen carefully: you have to practice your self-confidence, and do so every day, not only in the situation which we've had here, but also in many other situations. Remember this well . . . and when you leave the shop, don't forget to ring the bell!

Helen: I promise, Shopkeeper! I feel I have made a bargain. I would like to thank the customer club for their great support. (The group rejoices and cheers.)

(j) Helen leaves the shop, ringing the bell, and returns to the group. There

is a moment of silence. The shopkeeper walks to the shop-door and turns the imaginary card to the CLOSED side.

After the Shop Closes

As in a classic psychodrama, the next stage is sharing. The group members put their chairs closer together, forming a closed circle.

We begin with the sharing of the played roles.

Dir.: Mother, how did you feel as Helen's mother?

Anne: I felt the concern for my daughter very strongly, but as soon as I heard that she had no doubts any longer, I felt a lot better.

Dir.: OK, It is good for Helen to hear this. But now it is time to become yourself again. You're no longer Helen's mother, you are now Anne again.

Anne gets up and says quite deliberately: I am no longer Helen's mother, I am Anne (= deroling).

Dir. (to the group members): Did Helen's psychodrama remind you of anything in yourself? You can share in the I-form.

Their responses become a rich supportive sharing for Helen, with many group members having had similar experiences and recognizing them vividly.

Discussion and Theoretical Interpretation

As I have stressed earlier, the overall atmosphere in which the session takes place is of the utmost importance. The group members need to feel secure enough so that the magic shop is more than mere fun. What they need is a situation in which the group members are at the same time far away from, and close to, the protagonist. Their role is that of giving support and of accepting the protagonist but not of imposing themselves. The protagonist has every right to analyze his or her subjective, phenomenological production, even in its deep and unconscious causal connections.

This sequencing of the magic shop technique stimulates self-actualization in the following ways. By working in the special playful-serious context of the psychodrama, the group members experience a greater stimulus for self-reflection, which is the dialectic between the six Self-Dimensions and the connected questions mentioned earlier. The protagonist focuses on the Self-Image, the Alter-Image and the Meta-Self from the second step in the session to the end of the first mini-drama, when the lack of a given quality begins to be felt, sometimes very acutely. With the help and support of the group, the protagonist can begin to experiment with the respective ideal images as soon as the second mini-drama begins, when she practiced using the new quality.

It seems fair to state that that was a genuine learning process, one which could have a lasting effect on the protagonist's future behavior, thanks to the

situational and affective involvement of the protagonist, the positive influence of the group, and the special magic shop atmosphere.

The successive scenes in the psychodrama intensify the experience of various oppositions and their integration. For example, when Helen begins to notice the discrepancy between what she thinks and feels and actually tells her mother, there is that initial painful opposition between external and internal aspects within the Self-Image. The next stages soften those oppositions considerably. Helen now dares to voice her thoughts and feelings to her mother. At the same time, the action stages in which the protagonist participates, through role-taking and role-reversal techniques, and the help from the other group members acting as doubles enable her to discover alternative, more flexible interpretations of a complex reality. Those will complement the protagonist's subjective phenomenological constructions.

It is also very instructive for the protagonist to experience the differences and similarities between the two mini-dramas. The reality of the situation is not as dire as it was in the first drama and not as delightfully harmonious as in the restructured one. Real life is somewhere in between and can be considered as the integration of the two extreme mini-dramas.

Considered from that angle, the magic shop technique is a dialectical method in its own right, one in which the protagonist moves between two opposite poles that can be integrated into her actual behavior. I have elsewhere described the dialectical nature of role-reversal and role-taking, and underlined their significance as strong incentives for personality development (Verhofstadt-Denève, 1997, 1999a, 2000, 2001).

Existential themes, such as anxiety and guilt, are preeminent in the initial stages of the magic shop. In the second mini-drama and in the subsequent stages, feelings of guilt may not have been solved entirely, but they do seem to be less acute. Anxiety and guilt are classic themes, tinged with existential characteristics, and they can now be recognized and accepted by the protagonist as normal. In the sharing stage, in particular, Helen could feel that she was not alone in suffering from feelings of guilt, anxiety and loneliness. Indeed, many members of the group recognized similar problems that they too had faced, and their reactions during and after Helen's magic-shop work showed their concern.

From this psychodrama session, we see the protagonist's development toward positive self-evaluation. With help from the group as a whole, Helen had grown stronger; she became more self-confident and ready to take a determined stance in the relationship with her mother. What is significant is her firm intention to use her new-found quality in real-life situations. A number of ideal images have become concrete and more attainable.

Even though she has dared to reveal less outstanding aspects of her personality, the knowledge that she is accepted as a person and appreciated as

such by the group members strengthened Helen's self-confidence and self-appreciation. In the next session, Helen is to report on her experiences with her newly purchased quality. If need be, she can again practice using her new quality, with the support of the customer club.

By using imagination and a combination of seriousness and a gently secure playful context, therapists can find the magic shop technique a useful tool for enhancing self-reflection. By following the sequence of suggested refinements, they can intensify the learning experience and strengthen its foundations in a theoretically coherent rational. The technique has implications for therapy and for fostering personal development.

REFERENCES

- Barbour, A. (1992). Purpose and strategy behind the Magic Shop. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama and Sociometry*, 45, 91–101.
- Basseches, M. (1984). *Dialectical thinking and adult development*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Bidell, T. (1988). Vygotsky, Piaget and the dialectic of development. *Human Development*, 31, 329–348.
- Brown, B., Werner, C. M., & Altman, I. (1998). A dialectical-transactional perspective on close relationships. In B. M. Montgomery & L. A. Baxter (Eds.), *Dialectical approaches to studying personal relationships* (pp. 137–183). Mahwah, NJ, London: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Conville, R. (1998). Telling stories: Dialectics of relational transition. In B. M. Montgomery & L. A. Baxter (Eds.), *Dialectical approaches to studying personal relationships* (pp. 17–40). Mahwah, NJ, London: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Greenberg, J., Solomons, S., Pyszczynski, T., Rosenblatt, A., Burling, J., Lyon, D., Simon, L., & Pinel, E. (1992). Why do people need self-esteem? Converging evidence that self-esteem serves an anxiety-buffering function. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 6, 913–922.
- Leveton, E. (1992). *A clinician's guide to psychodrama*. New York: Springer Publishing.
- May, R. (1969). *Existential psychology*. New York: Random House.
- Mijuskovic, B. L. (1977). Loneliness: An interdisciplinary approach. *Psychiatry*, 40, 113–132.
- Moreno, J. L. (1964). *Psychodrama*. (vol. 1). Beacon, NY: Beacon House.
- Mullan, H. (1992). "Existential" therapists and their group therapy practices. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 42, 453–468.
- Petzold, H. (1971). The therapeutic possibilities of the psychodramatic "magic-shop-technique." *Zeitschrift für Klinische Psychologie und Psychotherapie*, 19, 354–369.
- Riegel, K. F. (1979). *Foundations of dialectical psychology*. New York: Academic Press.
- Rustin, T. A., & Olsson, P. A. (1993). Sobriety Shop: A variation on Magic Shop for addiction treatment patients. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy Psychodrama and Sociometry*, 46, 12–23.
- Verhofstadt-Denève, L. (1985). Crises in adolescence and psycho-social development in young adulthood. A seven-year follow-up study from a dialectical viewpoint. In C. J. Brainerd & V. F. Reyna (Eds.), *Developmental psychology* (pp. 509–522). Amsterdam, New York, Oxford: North Holland (other versions in Dutch, French,

- German, Polish).
- Verhofstadt-Denève, L. (1988). The phenomenal-dialectic personality model: A frame of reference for the psychodramatist. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry*, 41, 320.
- Verhofstadt-Denève, L. (1995). How to work with dreams in psychodrama: Developmental therapy from an existential-dialectical viewpoint. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 45(3), 405–435.
- Verhofstadt-Denève, L. (1997). Using conflict in a developmental therapeutic model. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 9(2), 151–164.
- Verhofstadt-Denève, L. (1999a). Action and drama techniques with adolescent victims of violence. A developmental therapeutic model. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 11, 351–367.
- Verhofstadt-Denève, L. (1999b). Psychodrama with university students in clinical psychology: Theory, action and evaluation. In P. Fontaine (Ed.), *Psychodrama Training*. Leuven: Federation of European Psychodrama Training Organizations (FEPTO).
- Verhofstadt-Denève, L. (2000). *Theory and practice of action and drama techniques. Developmental psychotherapy from an existential-dialectical viewpoint*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Verhofstadt-Denève, L. (2001). Zelfreflectie en persoonsontwikkeling. Een handboek voor ontwikkelingsgerichte psychotherapie. [Self-reflection and personality development. A guide to developmental therapy.] Leuven, Amersfoort: Acco.
- Verhofstadt-Denève, L., Schittekatte, M., & Braet, C. (1993). From adolescence to young adulthood. A follow-up survey over eight years on psychosocial development. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 6, 37–58.
- Verhofstadt-Denève, L., & Schittekatte, M. (1996). Adolescents have become adults. A 15-year follow-up. In Verhofstadt-Denève, L., Kienhorst, I., & Braet, C. (Eds.), *Conflict and development in adolescence*. Leiden: DSWO Press, Leiden University, pp. 47–60.
- Yalom, I. D. (1980). *Existential psychotherapy*. New York: Basic Books, Harper Collins.

LENI M. F. VERHOFSTADT-DENÈVE is a professor in the Department of Developmental and Personality Psychology at the University of Ghent in Belgium. Her e-mail address is leni.deneve@rug.ac.be, and her mailing address is University of Ghent, Henri Dunantlaan 2, B-9000 Ghent, Belgium.



Springer Publishing Company

A Clinician's Guide to Psychodrama, 3rd Ed.



Eva Leveton, MA

In this new edition of a popular text, Leveton draws from the works of Moreno, Erickson, Satir and Perls to fashion a psychodramatic approach that will help therapists practice more effective group work. New to this edition is material on drama therapy and supervision in institutional settings.

2001 224pp (est.) soft 0-8261-2263-9 \$31.95 (outside US \$35.80)

Foundations of Psychodrama, 4th Ed. History, Theory, and Practice

Adam Blatner, MD

"...enhance your working knowledge of the powerful and effective therapeutic method called psychodrama. Dr. Blatner's clear and comprehensive style is valued by students, practitioners, and clinicians worldwide. This valuable book offers a comprehensive overview of the history, philosophy, theory, and practice of this seminal action method."

—Dorothy Baldwin Satten, PhD, and Mort Satten, PhD

2000 304pp. hard 0-8261-6041-7 \$42.95 (outside US \$45.80)

Acting~In, 3rd Ed. Practical Applications of Psychodramatic Methods

Adam Blatner, MD, Foreword: J.L. Moreno, MD

"...an excellent work on the subject...for those who are interested in learning about psychodrama, it can be an introduction; for those who are practitioners, these materials can comprise a useful handbook; and for the serious student, Acting~In is an extensive resource for reference and background materials."

—J.L. Moreno, MD

1996 252pp. soft 0-8261-1402-4 \$32.95 (outside US \$36.80)

536 Broadway, NY, NY 10012 • (212) 431-4370 • Fax: (212) 941-7842
Order Toll-Free: (877) 687-7476 • Order on-line: www.springerpub.com

The Evolution of Sociometric Theory From a Chaos Perspective

RORY REMER

ABSTRACT. Some psychodramatists have suggested the need for a more functional exposition of Moreno's conceptualization(s) or a reconceptualization. Others have argued for stricter adherence to Moreno's original explication(s). The author addresses the debate by focusing on the nature of change from the Chaos Theory (ChT) perspective, applying that view to change in meaning in general and change in theory specifically. The author introduces the noninitiated to ChT, leading to its application to the evolution of theory. The Social Atom Theory, a component of "Morenean Thought," is an instance expressly applicable to sociometric theory. The author suggests ways for continuing the process of evolving Moreno's ideas and encourages participation by more practitioners of psychodrama in theory development, research, and application. He aims to generate interest in ChT and to promote ChT and psychodrama as a synergistic union.

Key words: Chaos Theory perspective, Social Atom Theory, Sociometric Theory

CHANGE, ALONG WITH ITS OPPOSITE STABILITY, has provoked interest and conjecture dating back to Heraclitus—and even before him. Is it inevitable? Is it good or bad? The answers to both questions are yes. In this article, I consider change, specifically change in a theory, and question whether we need a major revision and reconceptualization of the theoretical underpinnings that Moreno offered.

Currently, two views concerning the further development of sociometric theory seem to prevail. On the one hand, some psychodramatists (e.g., Blatner, 2000a; Kipper, 2000a) believe that Moreno's ideas, although seminal, lack the clarity required to produce adequate theoretical underpinnings to support further development in research and praxis. They have proposed interpretations, extensions, and amendments (Blatner, 2000b) and syntheses

and distillations (Kipper, 2000a, 2000b) aimed at advancing psychodrama as an acceptable and accepted therapeutic modality.

On the other hand, some psychodramatists (e.g., Remer, 1995) fear the loss of some of Moreno's insights and impacts if too much of the original and traditional formulations and conceptualizations are changed or neglected. It is not that they believe clarification and expansion are unnecessary (e.g., Hollander, 2000; Remer, 1996, 1998, 2000) but that they find much of Moreno's explication suitable for adequate understanding and practice.

Many members of the psychodrama community may be lost in this milieu. Some may find such a discussion daunting; others may find it pedantic. Still others may view it as superfluous to their needs.

In presenting this discourse, I have three goals. The first goal is to demystify the whole process of theory development by showing that the process is similar to, if not exactly the same as, what takes place in any attempt to reach understandings. The second goal is to engage more members of the psychodrama community in the process of theory development by making that process interesting and relevant. The third goal is to expose psychodramatists to Chaos Theory as a unifying paradigm for characterizing and addressing human interpersonal (and intrapsychic) mechanisms of thought and interaction, with Morenean theory as a prime example. My hope is that, if more of those interested in developing their facilities in psychodrama are better informed, they can be encouraged to become more central members of the psychodrama community—and even commit to the certification process.

Because the perspective on change offered here—Chaos Theory (ChT)—may not be familiar to many, I offer a brief overview of that perspective. I then apply that view to one component of Moreno's theoretical framework, his Social Atom Theory, to illustrate the points I have made and to support the contentions mentioned earlier.

Chaos Theory (ChT): A Warm-up

Traffic congestion, cross-cultural interactions, the flow of water down a river, learning, reaction to trauma, human communication, eating dinner with the family, getting an article published, the evolution of Christian religion, and many more phenomena can be viewed as chaotic processes and patterns. On the surface, some phenomena may not seem chaotic until that aspect of their patterns becomes evident or obvious or until one has the awareness of ChT to be able to ascertain the characteristics of chaotic patterns attendant. For example, let us look briefly at the history of Christianity: the splits and branchings (bifurcations) leading to the establishment of different denominations and sects (strange attractors) around Jesus's original teachings (strange attractor) that are all identifiable as the Christian faith (within the basin of attraction);

despite the commonalities (self-affinity) in doctrine and ritual, the differences (fractal-ness) that contribute to frictions, misunderstandings, and disagreements (fractal-ness); the unpredictability of drastic attempts by the church to "keep the faith" that have had little effect or that have even back-fired (e.g., the Inquisitions); the little concessions (e.g., allowing the different interpretations introduced by Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, or Francis Bacon) that have led to major influences on and changes in the church doctrine even the major split (bifurcation) of epistemology into science or empiricism and religion or belief; the major upheavals leading to reorganization from time to time (self-organization). Chaos is everywhere in our lives, from the mundane to the extraordinary, from the obvious to the obscure, if only we look. Chaos Theory helps us recognize chaos, understand it, and deal with it.

Like all theory, Chaos Theory is a construction to allow us to communicate observations and interpretations about our world(s) to others and to describe and possibly influence patterns. Neither the time nor space is available here to convey a comprehensive exposition of the theory, particularly its mathematical aspect. Instead, I also strive, however briefly, to give a sense of the unique contribution of the theory and introduce some of the basic terms (constructs) to provide a basis for common communication and understanding. (Frankly, this juncture presents a dilemma. Without familiarity with the terminology of ChT the arguments and explanations offered are cumbersome to present and difficult to follow. Presenting a new vocabulary is also demanding and perhaps even counterproductive to the goal of encouraging more inclusive participation. Nonetheless, I can see no way around attempting to familiarize the reader with the basics of ChT and trusting that the struggle to become accustomed with ChT will prove worthwhile. For other introductions, see Briggs and Peat, 1989, and Remer, 1996, 1998.) Also note that I present only that part of the theory considered most pertinent to the present discussion of change in dynamic systems, specifically human systems of understanding (e.g., the cases in which Chaos Theory reduces to point or cyclical attractors are not presented).

ChT pertains to processes by which dynamic systems produce patterns, the characteristics of those patterns, and the attributes of those processes. Because most, if not all, human interactions and actions can be viewed as producing those types of patterns, ChT offers many insights into various phenomena. As an example, I offer family interaction patterns around a formal meal as a way to introduce the theory's terms/constructs. ChT does not specify to a high degree how those patterns that permeate our existence are produced. In fact, according to the theory, that type of prediction or control is impossible to attain. However, that so many aspects of our lives can be likened to chaotic patterns, regardless of how generated, demonstrates part of the usefulness of the theory, if only because we know better the uncertainty with which we deal and can learn to accept it and cope with it.

Colloquial use of the term *chaos* indicates a completely disorganized, unpredictable, disjoint situation. A scientific, more disciplined view suggests that characterization is inaccurate. Chaos not only has patterns and a type of predictability, but it also evidences the property of self-organization. This distinction is essential to making meaning from experience. ChT is a perspective that promotes an understanding of patterns and how they change.

Because human systems tend to be dynamic, the patterns of interaction they produce even under the best of circumstances are chaotic in nature (Butz, 1997; Butz, Chamberlain, & McCown, 1997). Most people, however, only rarely appreciate the true chaotic nature of their lives (e.g., look closely at the fluctuations in the seemingly constant day-to-day, hour-to-hour, and minute-to-minute patterns of life; evidence of chaotic influences is rife). Few understand the implications of this characterization in the scientific, noncolloquial sense, but this perspective can be invaluable for understanding and coping with the vagaries of life in general, and change in theory as a particular instance.

ChT: A Brief Overview

ChT offers a perspective on human dynamic systems that has its origins in the mathematical and physical study of nonlinear/nonindependent, dynamic systems (e.g., Briggs & Peat, 1989; Gleick, 1987) and fractal geometry (e.g., Falconer, 1990), which provides avenues to application and insight unlike less similarly grounded theories. As already noted, a detailed exposition of ChT is impossible and, for the present purpose, unnecessary. Covering the more relevant aspects, such as the constructs and their application, should suffice.

The pertinent ChT concepts or constructs are (a) strange attractors and their basins, (b) self-affinity, (c) fractal-ness, (d) unpredictability, (e) bifurcation and cascade, and (f) self-organization. The concepts are useful because, when one is considering the human patterns of behavior, thought, emotion, and interpersonal interaction, they convey the ebb and flow of life.

Patterns are developed and maintained around focal points (strange attractors), such as family interactions (patterns) around the evening meal (strange attractor). Those patterns are unpredictable in two ways because although patterns can be identified, small changes in initial position can lead to huge differences in later positions. If the family member responsible for cooking the meal lacks an egg necessary for the planned meal, dinner may be delayed enough so that all members of the family cannot be present to eat it or, if present to interact, will not likely do so as they originally might have, which might eventuate in an argument between the parents that turns violent and leads to divorce or worse. Because of nonlinearity and multiple influences, exact prediction (control) is an impossibility. Even with the needed egg in place, the dinner might be overcooked, or something else might go wrong.

Because of nonlinearity and nonindependence, changes in patterns are irreversible. The cook could produce the meal tomorrow or later, when an egg can be obtained, but someone will still be disappointed that the meal has not been served tonight as promised. The patterns, however, are contained within boundaries (their basins of attraction). The exact dinner may be different, but the same people are generally present interacting similarly from time to time. As the perspective on the patterns shifts from level to level (e.g., individual to familial to support network to societal), both the patterns themselves and processes that produce them are similar (self-affine). Interactions at dinners will share commonalities whether the meal is eaten at home or out, with just the nuclear family or at a family reunion, and they will eventuate similarly because the family will approach meals with some consistency. When the pattern is disrupted by focal points (strange attractors) proliferating, perhaps many times through bifurcation (splitting in two) and particularly to the point of becoming chaotic (bifurcation cascade), a new pattern will be established incorporating the new influences, yet also resembling the previous pattern (the system evidences self-organization). For example, when children marry, have offspring of their own, and come to have a holiday meal with the parents, they may then be organized into tables for the adults and children or all seated at a larger table grouped by nuclear family membership. Still, no matter what is done, the new pattern will never replicate the old exactly and where patterns meet, as one nuclear family seating ends and another begins, their boundaries are rarely, if ever, smoothly meshed (fractal-ness).

ChT and Making Meaning: The Potency (and Impotency) of “the Word”

So how do all those strange new concepts or constructs apply here? To make a transition from the ChT exposition to talking about theory development, seeing how those ChT constructs apply to communication and understanding may be helpful, germane, and provide the needed segue.

Let us consider “simple” language as another example of ChT. For the most part, we convey our meaning and thoughts through words that are modified by context, tone of voice, gestures, and so forth. When language is examined closely, it is more complex than simple. Written language is influenced by many variables, such as the size and style of font. A sentence can be structured in different ways and convey the same meaning, and, at the same time, people may hear the same sentence and interpret it differently, depending on their own associations with the words and the style of the presentation. The process of establishing meaning, both within oneself and between people, is chaotic. Some may see similarities between that process and a dialectic one—thesis, antithesis, synthesis—but the chaotic process is neither as linear nor as necessarily consciously

organized. Thus, patterns of communication and understanding words and more complex phrases, sentences, and paragraphs are both self-affine (similar across situations, people, and constructed through parallel processes) and fractal (never quite the same from instance to instance). Fortunately, the denotation of words is relatively similar for all of us; otherwise we could not understand each other. The connotations of words can vary greatly, as can their impact when subjected to the dynamic process of communication. Even in rewording a statement or interpreting one written by oneself, the patterns, and consequently their meanings, change ever so slightly. Words can be viewed as strange attractors and the patterns of their meanings are contained within their basins of attraction that allow us to transfer the gist of the meaning from one instance to another. We can and should attempt to influence this process to promote better communication. We cannot, however, control the communication process with its myriad interactions of variables. Attempts at illumination—use of metaphors, similes, analogies, and concretizations—may be as likely to lead to misinterpretation or obfuscation as to rectification. Thus, new meaning is being made all the time.

The phenomenon of “making meaning” is directly applicable to the question at hand. Because theories are attempts to create and convey common, agreed-upon understandings, change in theory is only one instance of the process. Moreno himself recognized this process and its inevitability with his Canon of Creativity (Remer, 1998) and chose to welcome and encourage the self-organizing aspects through the application of the spontaneity construct.

The concept of bifurcation can be illustrated by considering the way a modifier creates two possible meanings (e.g., a *bad* joke implies at least one alternative, a *good* joke). Examples of bifurcation in sociometric theory include the concepts of pathological spontaneity and object tele. Both terms are seen as bifurcations because the modification by an adjective creates two concepts where only one previously existed. The terms generate the possibility of at least two types of those entities, spontaneity and tele. They were probably coined as attempts to clarify the primary constructs, to extend them, or to convey some perceived nuance. From the basic definitions, however, the former modification seems oxymoronic, and the latter an impossibility. What ChT recognizes is that those phrases are now, for better or worse, part of the Morenean lexicon. For some people, they have explanatory power; for others, they only lead to confusion. In either case, their influences cannot be removed or reversed. The point is that any change stays and becomes part of the pattern of communication, whether or not we like the change.

ChT and the Changing Social Atom Theory

The discourse can now move to applying the ChT ideas to the question of changes Morenean theory. I apply ChT specifically to the Social Atom Theo-

ry, which is representative of the holographic property of Moreno's conceptualization and examine one component through a type of hermeneutic analysis.

Moreno's conceptualization of Social Atom Theory (SAT) and how this formulation has been elaborated upon by others will serve the purpose of illustrating how our understanding of theory can evolve. Why choose SAT? First, because less attention has been paid that theory and, consequently less has been written to examine and illuminate the points about dynamic change. Second, SAT is rather less complicated than other components of Morenean theory. Finally, SAT is linked to the other components in a somewhat simple and clear manner.

Social Atom Theory deals with the relatively longer lasting patterns of interpersonal relationships. It aims to explain how and why others become important to us, what are the nature of those relationships, and how and why they change.

From all the people with whom we might possibly form bonds, we form relationships with those with whom we are familiar (acquaintanceship volume). The relationships can fall into three categories—collective, individual, and psychological—according to their strength, which is similar to the structure of an atom. Qualitative and quantitative differences are in evidence between levels, which is similar to the quantum levels in an atom. Those differences can be characterized by various factors: strength of telic bonds; number of mutual, reciprocal, and complementary roles involved; number and strength of mutual warm-ups (including negative ones); strength and mutuality of sociometric choices (including rejections); and time and energy available for and applied to interpersonal interaction. The factors are neither independently defined nor orthogonally operationalized. Those people who are at the psychological level in our social atoms evidence more and stronger bonds with us than those who are at the individual level; a similar association holds for those in our social atoms between the individual and collective levels and the collective and acquaintanceship levels. A minimum number of others are necessary at each level for social-psychological well-being (socio-stasis). Because all factors vary over time and situations, SAT attempts to explain the flux in social atom patterns in ways that enable people to influence their social atom structures to the optimal benefit.

To see how the theory has been evolving, I review and compare how the theory has been presented at different periods and by different theorists. I examine how SAT has been viewed by J. L. Moreno, by Zerka Moreno, by Carl and Sharon Hollander, by Anne Hale, and by me (Remer).

Although I could have included others' views, the sampling provides adequate data. Of necessity, the presentations are my choices of excerpts and my interpretations of the theorists' writings, which result in readers' seeing the expositions through my lens and their own. The situation, however, is no different from

any other time a theory has been read and examined, even if those conducting the examination include the original theorist. At the best of times, explaining and making meaning are interactive processes that are co-creative and never-ending. At the worst of times, they are best guesses, without the opportunity for correction by the original writer/message conceiver and sender, made by only one individual, the interpreter/message receiver. I own that “paradox of interpretation” up front, and that difficulty is one of the primary bases of my argument.

The Source: J. L. Moreno

Moreno coined the terms and constructs for SAT and provided explications. On more than one occasion, he attempted to clarify his ideas by “restating,” adding to, and amending them. I include two such instances so that readers can see the changes to the theory by the prime theorist.

Earlier Moreno. In 1951, Moreno wrote,

The social atom is involving an individual and the people (near and distant) to whom he is emotionally related at the time . . . to whom he has a feeling relationship . . . an aura of attractions and rejections, radiating from him and towards him. (Moreno, 1951, p. 65)

Often the boundary between the outer mass (acquaintanceship volume) and the nucleus of acquaintances may not be absolute. . . . But the general demarcation line between the nucleus of emotionally related individuals which I termed the “social atom” and the rest of the acquaintanceship volume will be very clear. . . . The emotional currents which, so to speak, pervade a social atom are of varying intensity . . . several levels of preference but often several individuals (are) at the same level of preference. (pp. 58–60)

Later Moreno. In *Who Shall Survive?* Moreno wrote,

This nucleus of relations is the small social structure in a community, a social atom. . . . [P]arts of these social atoms seem to be buried between the individuals participating, certain parts link themselves with parts of other social atoms and these with parts of other social atoms again forming complex chains of inter-relations . . . sociometric networks. . . . [T]o describe the process which attracts individuals to one another or which repels them, that flow of feeling of which the social atom and networks are apparently composed . . . may be conceived of as *tele*. (Moreno, 1953/1993, pp. 24–25)

Every individual, just as he is the focus of numerous attractions and repulsions, also appears as the focus of numerous roles which are related to the roles of other individuals. . . . The focal pattern of role-relations around an individual is called his cultural atom. (p. 42)

The Summarizer: Zerka Moreno

Continuing the definition of relationships among individuals, Zerka Moreno wrote,

The structures around and between individuals, which tied them together, Moreno termed the social atom and their role relationships he termed the cultural atom, which complements the social atom on the role level. (Z. Moreno, 1989, p. 185)

The Neo-Moreneans: The Hollanders

When considering the SAT in the 1970s, the Hollanders wrote,

Spontaneity, identity, self-esteem, and creativity are directly affected by where a person fits in the environment. The way one integrates into the environment is predicated on the construction of the Social Atom and Sociometric linkages. The Social Atom is based on the notion that individuals must have a specific number of people to whom they meaningfully relate in order to experience their creativity and power. (C. Hollander & S. Hollander, 1978, p. 14)

[T]hose telic relationships that are most vital to us as human beings [are] the psychological social atom, the collective social atom, and the individual social atom. (S. Hollander, 1974, p. 7)

The psychological social atom is the smallest number of people required by an individual which when supplied and complete, offers a sense of wholeness, i.e., sociostasis or social equilibrium. (S. Hollander, 1974, p. 7)

The collective social atom is the smallest number of groups or affiliates of which an individual must be a member in order to feel complete. These collectives give the individual a link to the community. . . . (p. 10)

The individual social atom is the smallest number of people required to maintain membership in a collective. (p. 11)

The Integrator: Ann E. Hale

In her manual, Hale (1981) wrote,

The social atom is that nucleus of persons to whom one is connected. The connections between persons have "a nearness to distant" factor; some persons being more significant than others; some more peripheral. When people explore their social atom they identify who is included and who is excluded, what is the basis of choice, and where do these persons fit in relation to each other. (p. 17)

The complexity of sociometric structures had become apparent . . . the clear distinction between kinds of groups made it necessary to reexamine the organization of the concept of the social atom . . . Moreno's last writings about the social atom maintain that there is one social atom which is viewed from many perspectives. The individual-centered social atom, the collective-centered social atom are two such perspectives. (p. 17)

The New Generation: Remer

For a chapter in a book about trauma survivors, I wrote,

Social atom theory can explain and guide the metamorphoses of long term relationships and the increases and decreases of the importance of others in our lives

from mere acquaintances to central figures. Applying knowledge of collective, individual, and psychological social atoms and the theoretical implications of their connections particularly with other sociometric constructs, techniques from sociology, and other modalities, can be used to influence social atom patterns. (Remer, 2000, pp. 329–330)

Some Points of Comparison

When applying the ChT perspective, one strives for a balance in the comparison between likening (self-affinity) and contrasting (fractal-ness). In the definitions of SAT given here, both aspects are in evidence. For my comments in this article, I rely on the passages quoted here, even though other passages from these theorists and passages from others, whom I do not intend to deprive of recognition, may contain the same or similar ideas. A point to note is that distinguishing differences in meaning is at best interpretive, even if the author can be asked to elaborate and clarify his or her meaning and intent.

Commonalties

The most obvious commonalty is that all six descriptions employ the same label—social atom—as the construct of focus. Although this observation seems obvious and inconsequential, it is more than can be said of Moreno's "recorded thoughts" in general (a topic to be discussed in more detail later). Beyond this incontrovertible truth, the best that can be said about what the descriptions absolutely share is that they deal with interpersonal relationships. Moreno, in his early writing, defined the social atom as: "[the] individual and the people (near and distant) to whom he is emotionally related at the time . . . to whom he has a feeling relationship. . . ." Later he described it as "[a] nucleus of relations [that] is the small social structure in a community . . ." and "complex chains of interrelations." Zerka Moreno related the notion as "structures around and between individuals, which tied them together. . . ." The Hollanders defined the concept as "people to whom they [individuals] meaningfully relate. . . ." Hale wrote that it is "that nucleus of persons to whom one is connected." To me (Remer), "[the] social atom. . . is to explain and guide the metamorphoses of long term relationships—the increases and decreases of the importance of others in our lives." (Remer, 2000, p. 329)

The primary commonalty in these quotations is implicit. In each case, we can agree on the perception that the same "aspect of life" is addressed. Still, despite the sense that each description involves the same element, capturing the idea exactly is not easy, if not impossible. We are in the basin of attraction—the patterns of meaning are similar but they are not exactly the same. Chaos—fractal-ness—has entered the process.

Differences

As each writer attempted to express the idea more clearly and enlarge upon the base already established, the process and product expanded. In the case of defining the social atom, part of the attempt to clarify manifests itself as differentiating characteristics or aspects of the social atom construct. Initially Moreno included such qualifying terms as “near and distant,” “attractions and rejections,” “outer mass” and “the nucleus.” In his later writing, he introduced both a variation, “attractions and repulsions,” and other distinctions, “tele” and “roles.” That latter differentiation carries over to Zerka Moreno’s primary distinction—the one on which she did not elaborate further but left as an implicit clarification by its contrast—“social” vs. “cultural.” The Hollanders’ description, which Hale (1981) noted as a unique contribution to SAT, explicitly discriminated among the interpersonal attractions by adding and describing the specific levels: “the psychological social atom, the collective social atom, and the individual social atom.” Hale, who quoted directly and thus tried to maintain the original writers’ meanings and the actual words of the previous theorists, added her own distinctions by her choice of inclusion and emphasis: “nearness to distance,” “significant” vs. “peripheral,” and “individual-centered” vs. “collective-centered” (the latter paraphrasing the concept of perceptual differences and perspectives that Moreno added in his later musings). I (Remer) included the Hollanders’ levels of distinction and a variation on both Hale and Moreno, but also introduced “the increases and decreases of the importance of others in our lives.” With that, I intended to suggest more individual fluctuation, at least more than I had seen in the specific quotes I examined.

Synopsis

The process of generating the meaning of a concept is evidence of the characteristics of chaotic patterns, which increase in complexity, particularly through bifurcation, and self-organization. The process starts with a single concept, the social atom, and the shared sense of a phenomenon centered on interpersonal relationship. Then the theorists struggle to explain understandings of that sense—to specify the patterns of thought and communicate accurate meanings. They break the construct down into components and modify those components through such qualifications as “nearness” and “distance.” They consider types of “nearness,” such as attraction and significance, and “distance,” such as repulsion, rejection, and peripheralness. They label the shared sense “tele” or reciprocal “roles.” The expansion continues through further refinement and the introduction of more complexity and the reinterpretation of terms. Those refinements, redefinitions, integrations, and augmentations both alter and retain the initial theoretical conceptualizations,

which are influenced by many sources indigenous to and external to the process itself and the conceptualization.

Influences on Change

One lesson that ChT conveys is that change in dynamic systems is rarely simple. Chaos and complexity are introduced through increases in the components of the system as they propagate and interact, through the interplay of the process and its components. In the case of the concept of the social atom, listing some influences may help us grasp some of the contributions that contributed to the complexity with which we are dealing.

Numerous factors influence the process leading to the development, augmentation, and revision of theoretical conceptualizations. Some of the factors affecting the development of our understanding of the social atom concept include: lack of clarity and specification in the original definition of the concept (e.g., Moreno, 1951), interpretations of the concept by others (e.g., Barbour, 1994; Hollander, 1978; Hollander & Hollander, 1974) and even one's own interpretations of one's previous writings (e.g., Kipper, 1991, 1996, 1998a, 1998b; Moreno, 1953/1993), research findings (e.g., Carlson-Sabelli, 1989; Moreno, 1953/1993), practical applications (e.g., Carlson-Sabelli, Sabelli, Patel, & Holm, 1992; Hale, 1981; Remer, 2000), other theories (e.g., Aronson, 1990; Holmes, 1993), other disciplines (e.g., Carlson-Sabelli, Sabelli, Patel, & Holm, 1992; Hale, 1981; Holmes, 1993; Remer, 1996, 2000; Williams, 1998), technology (e.g., Treadwell, Kumar, Stein, & Prosnick, 1998), measurement (e.g., Hale, 1981; Treadwell, Kumar, Stein, & Prosnick, 1998), culture (e.g., Gazda, Guldner, & Hollander, 1988), complexity, sub-theories, and interfaces (e.g., Blatner, 1991; Z. Moreno, 1989; Remer, 2000), personal experiences (e.g., Remer, 2000), and paradigm shifts (e.g., Kellermann, 1991; Remer, 1996, 2000). Those influences and more will affect future patterns of understanding the social atom concept.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Where do these examples and arguments lead us, and what does ChT contribute that is not already present? For those who struggle to understand Moreno's meanings and to add to or clarify them, ChT gives us permission to accept ambiguity and ambivalence. The most important point to keep in mind, as demonstrated by ChT, is that everything is in flux, meaning that whatever descriptions, predictions, or "answers" we have now better attend to that fluidity or they will not be applicable for long. To be specific, or even to try to be, is self-defeating. Certain definitions or understandings are "good enough"; the possibility of making them "better" may only be an illusion. ChT also tells

us that we can never know with certainty and that "message" pertains to theory development.

Where is the evolution of Moreno's theoretical conceptualizations taking us? Is a revolution or drastic reconceptualization needed at this time? Will it ever be needed?

For at least two reasons, ChT suggests that those questions are essentially moot. First, changes in Moreno's conceptualization will occur as a natural product and by-product of its use, its comparison with other theories, and our discussion and scrutiny of it. Second, the impact of whatever attempts are made to modify the conceptualization is unpredictable, so a suggested major revision (revolution) may amount to very little, whereas a seemingly minor alteration could result in a significant reorganization. In any case, all influences will be incorporated to some degree in the patterns of meaning associated with Moreno's ideas, more perhaps because of his own penchant for vagueness, lack of specificity, and self-revision. (Moreno's writings could be described as an un-conserved conserve.)

The implications of this situation are rather paradoxical, somewhat similar to the implications of the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle. Because attempts at perfecting specification and/or agreement on meaning are aimed at increasing self-affinity of descriptions, yet may instead increase fractalness, the best understanding we can achieve is to remain within the basin of attraction. In other words, we can agree to share a general sense of the meaning of ideas, terms, constructs, and their relationships, while at the same time recognizing that we may never totally agreed on the details. In other words, we agree not only to disagree but also to agree and disagree.

Although a constant tension exists between the manifest need for structure, specificity, clarity, and agreement that allow an accurate communication of Moreno's message and the manifest need for fluidity, flexibility, and adaptation to situational demands and new insights that permit a conceptualization to continue to exist and thrive, the process need not be viewed as disruptive and antagonistic. Granted the interplay can be experienced as confusing and unsettling, discomfort and excitement are attendant on change and self-organization. Those reactions are the signs of chaos, part of chaos, and even chaos itself. Such reactions should not necessarily be interpreted as weaknesses or indications of deficits in understanding. Because communication of meaning is never noninteractive and only occasionally linear, we should embrace the interplay of ideas. The situation is not an either/or proposition, but rather a both/and one, a truly co-creative spontaneous process. Moreover, anyone, no matter how new to the process, who has something to add should be encouraged to do so.

Attempts to extend or to improve our understanding of Sociometric Theory are not futile. Abandoning our attempts at further understanding can result in the loss of prospective salutary impacts of the numerous, rich influences,

particularly because no way exists to predict the continued or long term reverberations of any contribution. We need to continue the pattern of expanding the meaning of the social atom concept. Those who believe the theory must be revamped should continue their pursuits; those who wish to retain what they consider the essence of Moreno's contributions should make their cases; those who find themselves either purposely or unknowingly in one camp at one time and the other camp at another moment should take heart that they are not being inconsistent but are only manifesting the self-affine feature of the pattern of making meaning at a different level. Only by allowing and encouraging self-organization and redefinition will the successful combination of respect for Moreno's original ideas and their historical context, adaptation, and application to new circumstances be attained. Our "trust in the process" is essential. Whether we characterize that process as spontaneous (by the Canon of Creativity) or whether we characterize that process as self-organizing (by the Chaos Theory), it will be both—and either portrayal may hint at a positive, encouraging result.

REFERENCES

- Aronson, M. L. (1990). Integrating Moreno's psychodrama and psychoanalytic group therapy. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry*, 42, 199–203.
- Barbour, A. (1994). A reexamination of the tele effect. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry*, 47, 114–125.
- Blatner, A. (1991). Role dynamics: A comprehensive theory of psychology. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry*, 44, 33–40.
- Blatner, A. (2000a, September 26). Grouptalk: Studying Moreno. *Weekly Grouptalk Digest*, 1, 238, 10–12.
- Blatner, A. (2000b). *Foundations of psychodrama: History, theory, and practice* (4th ed.). New York: Springer.
- Briggs, J., & Peat, F. D. (1989). *Turbulent mirror*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Butz, M. R. (1997). *Chaos and complexity: Implications for psychological theory and practice*. Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Butz, M. R., Chamberlain, L. L., & McCown, W. G. (1997). *Strange attractors: Chaos, complexity, and the art of family therapy*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Carlson-Sabelli, L. (1989). Role reversal: A concept analysis and reinterpretation of the research literature. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry*, 41, 139–152.
- Carlson-Sabelli, L., Sabelli, H., Patel, M., & Holm, K. (1992). The union of opposites in sociometry. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry*, 44, 147–171.
- Falconer, K. (1990). *Fractal geometry: Mathematical foundations and applications*. New York: John Wiley.
- Gazda, G. M., Guldner, C., & Hollander, C. E. (Eds.) (1988). Theme issue: The International Psychodrama Community. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry*, 41.

- Gleick, J. (1987). *Chaos: Making a new science*. New York: Viking Penguin.
- Hale, A. E. (1981). *Conducting clinical sociometric explorations: A manual for psychodramatists and sociometrists*. Roanoke, VA: Royal.
- Hollander, C. E. (2000, August). Spontaneity and sociometry. Paper presented at the meeting of the International Association of Group Psychotherapy, Jerusalem, Israel.
- Hollander, C. E., & Hollander, S. L. (1974). *Action relationships in learning*. Denver, CO: Snow Lion Press.
- Hollander, S. L. (1978). *Social atom: An alternative to imprisonment*. Denver, CO: Snow Lion Press.
- Holmes, P. (1993). The roots of enactment—The process in psychodrama, family therapy, and psychoanalysis. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry*, 45, 149–162.
- Kellermann, P. F. (1991). An essay on the metascience of psychodrama. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry*, 44, 19–32.
- Kipper, D. A. (1991). The dynamics of role satisfaction: A theoretical model. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry*, 44, 71–86.
- Kipper, D. A. (1996). The emergence of role playing as a form of psychotherapy. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry*, 49, 99–119.
- Kipper, D. A. (1998a). Classical and contemporary psychodrama: A multifaceted, action-oriented psychotherapy. *The International Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing*, 50, 99–107.
- Kipper, D. A. (1998b). Psychodrama and trauma: Implications for future interventions of psychodramatic role-playing modalities. *The International Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing*, 51, 113–121.
- Kipper, D. A. (2000a, August). Facing the changing character of psychodrama: Beyond 2000. Paper presented at the meeting of the International Association of Group Psychotherapy, Jerusalem, Israel.
- Kipper, D. A. (2000b). The concept of the psychological simulation and the therapeutic simulation paradigm (TSP). Unpublished manuscript, Executive Psychological Consulting, Chicago.
- Moreno, J. L. (1951). *Sociometry, experimental method and the science of society: An approach to a new political orientation*. Beacon, NY: Beacon House.
- Moreno, J. L. (1953/1993). *Who shall survive? Foundations of sociometry, group psychotherapy and sociodrama* (Student edition). Roanoke, VA: Royal.
- Moreno, Z. T. (1989). Psychodrama, role theory, and the concept of the social atom. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry*, 42, 178–187.
- Remer, R. (1995). Strong sociometry: A definition. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry* 48, 69–74.
- Remer, R. (1996). Chaos Theory and the canon of creativity. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry*, 48, 145–155.
- Remer, R. (1998). Chaos Theory and the Hollander psychodrama curve: Trusting the process. *The International Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama, Skill Training and Role Playing*, 50, 51–70.
- Remer, R. (2000). Secondary victims of trauma: Producing secondary survivors. In P. F. Kellermann & M. K. Hudgins (Eds.), *Psychodrama with trauma survivors* (pp. 317–341). London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Treadwell, T. W., Kumar, V. K., Stein, S. A., & Prosnick, K. (1998). Sociometry: Tools for research and practice. *The International Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing*, 51, 23–38.

Williams, A. (1998). Psychodrama and family therapy—What's in a name? *The International Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing*, 50, 139–165.

RORY REMER is a professor of counseling psychology at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. His mailing address is University of Kentucky, Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology, College of Education, 245 Dickey Hall, Lexington, KY 40506-0017. His e-mail address is RREMER@POP.UKY.EDU.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The editors of *The International Journal of Action Methods* are issuing another 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.

Spontaneity: Does the Experience Match the Theory?

DAVID A. KIPPER

ABSTRACT. Past writings on spontaneity contain unanswered questions about its definition, function, and meaning. To examine the open issues surrounding spontaneity, the author studied the congruency between actual experiences of trained psychodramatists and theoretical claims. Sixty-two psychodramatists responded to a survey that included questions about their experience with spontaneity and their feeling of being in a nonspontaneous state. From the results, the author determined that there was a good fit with some characteristics of spontaneity described in the theory but found theoretical confusion reflected in the respondents' reports of their actual experiences. The author concluded that the concept of spontaneity needs further clarification.

Key words: nonspontaneous state, spontaneity

SPONTANEITY IS A UNIQUE PSYCHODRAMATIC CONCEPT, a quintessential Morenean idea (Moreno 1923, 1953; Murphy, 1937). It occupied a central place in Moreno's thinking and contributed to the development of his philosophy of human functioning and his theory of child development. Indeed, it became the cornerstone for the creation of psychodrama, a method of clinical intervention and group therapy (Moreno, 1941, 1953, 1964). Interestingly, however, other than Moreno's own explorations, further investigations of spontaneity have been scarce (e.g., Collins, Kumar, Treadwell, & Leach, 1997; Del Nuovo, Spielberg, & Gillis, 1978; Horwitz, 1945).

The discovery of the therapeutic potency of spontaneity and its effect on enhancing human interactions has been one of the most intriguing revelations in modern psychiatry. It was the early sign of the new interest in studying the healthy dimension of both normal and abnormal psychology (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Gordon, 1985; Maslow, 1965, 1968). Despite the interest that spontaneity generated among social scientists and clinical practitioners, they found that the concept proved to be complex and not easily amenable to empirical research. Moreno's own various statements about spontaneity and

definitions of it contained inner contradictions that for years were left unattended. The confusion and lack of clarity about the meaning, form, and function of spontaneity notwithstanding, Moreno's articulations went unchallenged and were accepted. Consequently, they have been taught as originally formulated, are repeated unaltered in many publications, and are treated as incontrovertible truth (e.g., Blatner, 2000; Blatner & Blatner, 1988; Holmes, Karp, & Watson, 1994; Kipper, 1986; Roine, 1997).

It is somewhat of a mystery why the confusion concerning spontaneity has persisted unchallenged for so long. It is also unclear why there has been no attempt at empirical validation. Possibly, that is because spontaneity, an intuitively familiar experience, was thought to be existentially valid, a psychological phenomenon that did not require further scrutiny. That explanation is congruent with the view held by Moreno, who wrote: "But it is accurate to say that the validity of psychodrama does not require proof beyond its face value." (Moreno, 1968, p. 3). The reliance on face validity, however, cannot serve as a basis for a theory as complex as psychodrama. It cannot be used as an excuse for ignoring the problems associated with such a central concept as spontaneity.

With the present study, I planned to examine the congruency between the theoretical characteristics attributed to spontaneity and the way they were experienced by a group of people trained to be highly spontaneous. I expected that by providing empirical feedback, further light might be shed on the nature and function of spontaneity and on the inconsistencies that exist in the theory concerning spontaneity (Aulicino, 1954; Kipper, 1967).

According to the classical theory, spontaneity has the following central characteristics: energy that could not be conserved (nonaccumulated) but rather is spent on the spur of the moment in an all-or-nothing fashion. At the same time, according to the theory, spontaneity can be observed and developed through training (Kipper, 1967) and is associated with healthy living (Blatner & Blatner, 1988) and inner discipline (Moreno, Bloomkvist, & Rutzel, 2000). The opposite of spontaneity is said to be anxiety and a repetitive, dull form of living. These attributions require further elucidation and clarification.

The Form of Spontaneity: Energy vs. Response

One of the most perplexing aspects of spontaneity is the definition of its form. At first glance that appears to be a minor theoretical issue of little importance. In fact, it has profound implications on our understanding of the function of spontaneity, its measurement, and the manner in which it might be developed through psychotherapy. The form of spontaneity is still an unsettled issue. Is it a psychic energy that cannot be seen by the naked eye or an observ-

able response to a situation? At different times and in different articles, Moreno described spontaneity as both of the above qualities.

In his classic book *Who Shall Survive?* Moreno (1953, p. 42) first wrote that spontaneity “*propels* the individual towards an adequate response to a new situation or a new response to an old situation” and then again, “Spontaneity *propels* to variable degrees to a satisfactory response which an individual manifests in a situation of variable degrees of novelty” [emphasis added]. The emphasis on spontaneity being a state of readiness is repeated in Moreno’s writings. “Spontaneity,” he wrote (Fox, 1987, p. 42) “is a readiness of the subject to respond as required. It is a condition . . . a preparation of the subject for free action.” Hare and Hare (1996) also understood spontaneity to be a motivating energy of which the warm-up is its operational definition. “Spontaneity is related to the readiness to act and creativity is related to the act” (Hare & Hare, 1996, p. 36). However, later in *Who Shall Survive?* Moreno changed the definition of spontaneity and referred to it as the response itself, writing that “Spontaneity can be defined as an adequate response to a new situation, or the novel response to an old situation” (p. 336).

For unknown reasons, the last version, in which the word “propels” was omitted, became the consensual definition of spontaneity in subsequent writings by Moreno and by others. Therefore, spontaneity is nowadays known as “an appropriate *response* to a new situation or a new *response* to an old situation” [emphasis added]. As energy, spontaneity refers to a psychological state of readiness to act and thus precedes the emergence of the act itself. As a response, however, it refers to the act proper. I predicted that this confusion would manifest itself in the actual experiences of spontaneity reported by the participants of the present survey.

The Prevalence of Spontaneity

Spontaneity has long been considered a psychological factor associated with mental health (Blatner & Blatner, 1988; Moreno, 1964). The person who can be spontaneous is well positioned to become better oriented toward life, to be more inspired and more real, to have less anxiety, and to be wiser (Moreno, 1964). Others followed the same reasoning and expressed views that supported the considerable impact of spontaneity on human behavior pertaining to a wide range of psychological phenomena (e.g., Flesman, 1967; Shearon & Shearon, 1981; Wyatt, 1988).

Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that regular and frequent episodes of spontaneity are psychologically beneficial and mentally meritorious. The question is what would be a daily (good) average of episodes of spontaneity. How many episodes of spontaneity are needed for maintaining a good mental health? Bearing in mind that spontaneity is energy that cannot be accumulat-

ed and must be completely spent when activated, one would assume that its daily expressions need to be described in quantitative terms, such as frequency of spurts of spontaneity and their length, rather than in qualitative terms such as how much spontaneity is produced. With the survey, I hoped to provide initial data about those questions.

Spontaneity vs. Nonspontaneity

It is quite clear from the classical theory of spontaneity that it is a highly desired psychological state. It is still unclear, however, what being nonspontaneous means. According to the theory, there were different kinds of spontaneity: high-grade (creative), stereotyped, and pathological (Moreno, 1964).

There are two ways of understanding that position on spontaneity. One is that the different kinds of spontaneity stand for different points on a single continuum on which high-grade and pathological spontaneity represent the two extreme ends and stereotyped spontaneity is located in the middle. That suggests that the opposite or the absence of spontaneity is pathology. Such a position is consistent with the assertion that spontaneity is negatively correlated to anxiety: "Remember, that spontaneity and anxiety are functions of one another; when spontaneity increases, anxiety goes down, and vice versa." (Moreno et al., 2000, p. 12). It is also congruent with Schauer (1951), who maintained that spontaneity could be pathological in severe cases when it turned out to be a mere histrionic abreaction and a cause of pathology.

The other way of understanding that position is that spontaneity is a separate dimension and can only be understood as a positive quality. With that view, the absence of spontaneity does not signify the presence of psychopathology. Rather, it is a generic category containing a variety of psychological states in which all that the states may have in common is that they are not considered spontaneity. With the present study, I attempt to shed further light on whether being nonspontaneous is a pathological state.

Spontaneity at Rest and Alone

Can spontaneity be expressed during rest and while one is alone? According to the classical theory, the answer to that question is affirmative. Moreno (1964) wrote:

Spontaneity is often erroneously thought of as being more closely allied to emotion and action than to thought and rest. . . . There seems to be a similar misconception that a person in action needs a continuous spontaneity in order to keep going, but that no spontaneity is required by a person at rest. As we know now these are fallacies. Spontaneity can be present in a person when he is thinking just as well as when he is feeling, when he is at rest just as well as when he is in action. (pp. 111–112)

In the present study, I explored the veridicality of that proposition. Also, because psychodrama is a form of group psychotherapy, I was interested in finding out whether or not the presence of people facilitates the emergence of spontaneity.

Method

The Participants

The participants were 62 certified psychodramatists who responded to a mail survey that had been sent to 250 members of the American Board of Examiners in Psychodrama, Sociometry, and Group Psychotherapy. The 250 names included 125 Certified Practitioners (CP), the first level of board certification, and 125 Trainers, Educators, and Practitioners (TEP), the second supervisory level of board certification, randomly selected from the membership directory. Sixty-two participants (24.8%) responded to the questionnaire, a rate of return generally considered good for this kind of survey. Of the respondents, 43 (69.4%) were women, 18 (29.0%) were men, and one participant did not specify his or her gender. In terms of the participants' psychodramatic proficiency, 42 (67.7%) were TEPs, 19 (30.6%) were CPs, with one participant not specifying expertise. The participants' educational backgrounds showed that 38 (61.3%) held Master's degrees or the equivalent and 24 (38.7%) held doctoral degrees. All the participants were seasoned therapists and virtually all (98.4%) had at least 8 years' experience as psychodramatists.

The Material

The survey packet mailed to the 250 psychodramatists contained three separate questionnaires—a demographic information questionnaire, questions about spontaneity titled "About Spontaneity: AS," and a questionnaire about a rating task of a topic unrelated to spontaneity and not reported in the present study.

The "AS" questionnaire included five questions, each offering a range of choices from which the respondent could choose only one. The questions were as follows:

1. Is the feeling of spontaneity something you experience, just before you act, while you act, after the act, or all the time?
2. How often do you feel spontaneous? (There were eight response options, ranging from *5–10 daily* to *rarely*.)
3. How long during a typical day do you feel spontaneous? (There were five response options, ranging from *a few seconds* to *a few hours*.)

4. How long during a typical day do you feel not spontaneous? (The five response options were the same as those in the previous question.)

5. Do you feel that as you grow older, you are spontaneous? (The possible responses were *more often, less often, the same*.)

In addition, the questionnaire included the three questions, requiring yes-and-no answers, that follow:

1. Do you feel more spontaneous in the presence of someone else?
2. Do you feel spontaneous when you are alone?
3. Do you feel spontaneous when you rest, think, or read?

The material was mailed to the participants with stamped return envelopes. All participants took part in the survey voluntarily and anonymously.

Results

The participants were asked to relay their own experience concerning the question about what point in the sequence of “preparing to act—acting—and postaction feeling” they typically felt spontaneous. Was it typically prior to the response, throughout the response, after completing the response, or all the time? That question is related to the theoretical confusion about whether spontaneity is a drive to act, a prereponse surge of energy, or the characteristic of the act itself. If spontaneity *propels* the response, it should be felt or be evident only *before* emitting the response. If it is a feature of *the response*, it should be felt only while acting. If, however, it is both, it should be felt throughout the entire enactment of the sequence.

Table 1 contains the data from the survey answers. When answering the first question, only 13.3% of the participants indicated that they experienced spontaneity before acting. Evidently, spontaneity is not experienced primarily as a drive that propels one to act. Furthermore, 23.3% of the participants experienced spontaneity only while they were acting. Again, it appears that spontaneity is not experienced as an exclusive feeling associated with the act (response) itself. The majority (58.3%) of the participants said that they felt spontaneous continuously, before, during, and after their acting. Very few (5.0%) said that they felt spontaneous only after responding.

Looking at the greater picture, I concluded from the data that for 81.6% (58.3% + 23.3%) of the participants, spontaneity is felt *at least* while they were busy responding (sometimes longer than that). Of the participants, 28.3% (23.3% + 5.0%) suggested that they did not experience spontaneity at all before the commencement of the act. I consider those findings to be at odds with the theory. The concept of spontaneity as an energy that propels the individual to act and an energy that is consumed and spent only prior to the enactment was not supported by the participants' experiences.

TABLE 1
Frequency and Percentage of the Responses
to the Questions on Spontaneity

Topic/Issue	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
The time of the onset of Spontaneity			
Just before acting	8	13.3	13.3
While acting	14	23.3	36.7
Following the act	3	5	41.7
All the time	35	58.3	100
<i>n</i> = 60		100	
The frequency of the feeling of Spontaneity			
Once a day	7	12.1	12.1
2-5 times a day	27	46.6	58.6
5-10 times a day	15	25.9	84.5
Once a week	1	1.7	86.2
2-3 times a week	5	8.6	94.8
Once a month	2	3.4	98.3
2-3 times a month	1	1.7	100
Rarely	0		
<i>n</i> = 58		100	
Duration of feeling spontaneous per day			
A few seconds	4	7.1	7.1
A few minutes	18	32.1	39.3
Ten minutes or more	12	21.4	60.7
One hour	3	5.4	66.1
A few hours	19	33.9	100
<i>n</i> = 56		100	
Duration of not feeling spontaneous per day			
A few seconds	0		
A few minutes	3	5.6	5.6
Ten minutes or more	4	7.4	13
One hour	6	11.1	24.1
A few hours	41	75.9	100
<i>n</i> = 54		100	
Amount of Spontaneity felt with age			
More often	47	83.9	
Less often	6	10.7	
Same	3	5.4	
<i>n</i> = 56		100	

Another issue under investigation was the question concerning the role of spontaneity as an indicator of mental health. The second and third questions addressed that issue by asking how often the participants experienced spontaneity during a typical day and how long those experience episodes lasted. If spontaneity is to be regarded as an indicator of good mental health, it should be felt frequently. On the other hand, if it turned out that spontaneity was evident only a few times during a day and altogether those instances did not amount to much time, that would signify that only a little spontaneity was needed to lead a well-functioning life. Such an outcome would challenge the veridicality of the traditional notion that the more spontaneity the better the quality of one's life.

Specifically, the participants were asked two questions concerning the prevalence of spontaneity during an average day. The first question concerned the daily frequency of spontaneity episodes. With the second question, I asked the participants to estimate the accumulated length of time they experienced spontaneity in a typical day. The second heading in Table 1 contains the results from the first question. The majority of the participants (84.5%) said they experience spontaneity from 2 to 10 times a day. That includes the 58.6% who experience spontaneity 5 or fewer times a day and the 46.6% who experience it between 5 and 10 times a day. From the second question, I learned that two thirds of the participants (66.1%) experienced spontaneity for an aggregated period that amounted to a total of 1 hr or less per day. Therefore, I concluded that spontaneity appears to be evident only a few times a day for an aggregate length of 1 hr or less.

On the one hand, the outcomes lend support to the part of the classical theory (Kipper, 1967; Moreno, 1964) that holds that spontaneity appears in the form of relatively short bursts of energy, lasting minutes, and consumed immediately. On the other hand, experiencing an aggregate of 1 hr of spontaneity each day means that during the rest of the time (12-to-14 hr) people do not feel spontaneous. That leaves the relationship between spontaneity and the feeling of being not spontaneous to one's proper adjustment (mental health) unclear.

Because mine is the first study in this area, it is difficult to interpret the outcomes because of the absence of normative data concerning the prevalence of spontaneity among adults in the United States. At present, there is no information that can assist us in determining whether 2 to 10 daily episodes of spontaneity represent a high rate. Nevertheless, it is probably safe to assume that the participants represent, at the least, the average of the spontaneous individuals. As experienced psychodramatists trained in spontaneity, the participants must be among the top groups who are highly sensitive to feeling spontaneity.

Viewing spontaneity as a factor contributing to one's mental health (or functioning well) raises the question of the place of the feeling of nonspon-

taneity, which must be differentiated from pathological spontaneity. From their responses, I concluded that most of the participants did not feel spontaneous and therefore were in a state of nonspontaneity during most of their waking time. The results presented in Table 1 under the fourth heading confirmed my observation. When asked directly, 75.9% of the respondents said they feel nonspontaneous a few hours a day.

The survey results raised the possibility that nonspontaneous experiences could include positive experiences. The fact that the participants felt nonspontaneous several hours of the day cannot be interpreted as a sign of pathology. Quite the contrary, because there is no reason to assume that the psychodramatists who took part in the study were maladapted individuals, the only alternative is to consider the state of being nonspontaneous as a positive indicator. That consideration may require an adjustment in the theory of spontaneity.

According to the classical theory, spontaneity is a trainable quality. Until now, that assumption has never been put to a test. The participants in this survey overwhelmingly (83.9%) indicated, as shown under the heading at the bottom of Table 1, that they became more spontaneous with age and experience. Evidently, spontaneity can be learned and achieved through training.

The relation between the formal education of the participants (i.e., Master's, Ph.D., and M.D.) and spontaneity showed a statistically significant negative Spearman rank correlation coefficient between academic degree and feeling nonspontaneous ($r = -.44$; $p < .001$). The higher the formal level of education, the less nonspontaneous time spent during a typical day. It stands to reason, therefore, to expect that the higher the formal level of education, the longer the time the participants felt spontaneous.

Surprisingly, the outcome did not show such a result (under the fourth heading on Table 1). No statistically significant positive correlation was obtained for the relation between one's academic degree and the instances of one's spontaneity ($r = -.09$; $p = .49$). Obviously, spontaneity and nonspontaneity are not opposite qualities that may be viewed as two ends of one continuum. The possible meaning of that finding will be discussed later.

The remaining outcomes concern the answers to the last three questions on the questionnaire. Those questions addressed claims that were made about the additional characteristics of spontaneity but that were never tested empirically. The data for those are not presented in Table 1 but are discussed the following paragraph.

The classical theory held that spontaneity might emerge while the person is alone. Data from the survey confirmed that assumption. Almost all the participants (91.4%) indicated that they could feel spontaneous alone but that the presence of someone else might be helpful (76.3%). The results confirmed the classical theory claim that spontaneity could emerge while the person is at rest

or thinking. The vast majority of the participants (85.4%) reported agreement with this hypothesis, and only 14.6% said they could not be spontaneous while at rest, reading, and thinking.

Discussion

One of the most confusing statements made about spontaneity concerns its form. Is it energy that propels the individual to act or the act (the response) proper? Judging from the responses given to the first question, I concluded that the confusion detected in the theory was also reflected on the experiential level. The majority of the participants could not discern at which point in the three-part sequence of the act—the period immediately preceding the act, the act proper, or the aftermath of the act—they felt spontaneous. For them, spontaneity was evident all the time, including the period after the completion of the act, which is a point in the sequence never considered in the theory associated with spontaneity.

In the classical theory, Moreno (1953, 1964) always maintained that spontaneity was psychological energy and required a carrier to be seen. I believe that herein lies the confusion. Its root may be traced to the lack of a systematic designation of the specific behavior subsumed under the words “the response.” What does the specific carrier of spontaneity look like? The answer to that question may require further elucidation.

In Moreno’s “Cannon of Creativity” (e.g., Fox, 1987, p. 45), otherwise known as his “spontaneity-creativity” theory, there are three steps in the sequence that commences with the emergence of spontaneity and ends with creativity. Briefly, those are (a) the *attraction* (spontaneity) to the challenge (or the warming-up process), (b) the creative state—an internal, often chaotic, process in which the ideas are formed (creativity in *status nascendi*), (Moreno, 1964), and (c) *creativity*, the actual creative product that represents the outcome or the “cultural conserve”. Each of the first two steps is an internal process and thus requires an external carrier in the form of overt responses to be seen. The third and last step consists of an external process and therefore is clearly visible and easily identified. The phrase in the old definition of spontaneity that described it as “an adequate response to a situation” failed to identify which of the responses expresses the attraction, the creative state, and creativity that represents spontaneity.

According to Moreno, the carrier of spontaneity is the warming-up process (the first step). He wrote: “The warming-up process is the ‘operational’ manifestation of spontaneity” (Moreno, 1953, p. 337). “The first basic manifestation of spontaneity is the warm-up of the infant to a new situation.” (Moreno, 1964, p. 52). “To act means to warm-up to a state of feelings, to the spontaneity of an actor.” (Moreno, 1953, p. 337).

The commonly held definition of spontaneity as "an adequate response to a new situation or a new response to an old situation" does not specifically point to the warming-up as both the trigger and the expression of spontaneity (the first step). The way it is phrased, it could characterize the responses that are the expression of the creative state (the second step) or creativity (the third step) as well. The participants' answers to the survey question about the point in the enactment where they felt spontaneous reflected this confusion.

A future definition of spontaneity must include statements that answer the following questions: What is spontaneity? What is its function? And under what circumstances does it emerge? At present, there is no clear description for the first question pertaining to what spontaneity looks like. The question regarding the function of spontaneity has been answered. It propels the individual to move to the next step, namely, the creative state. The circumstances that produce spontaneity have been specified in the old definition as the "novelty" of both the response and the situation. To those, one should add such situations as facing a surprise and responding swiftly in an unpremeditated fashion to an unpredictable situation (Moreno, 1964). The notion of novelty alone does not necessarily include all those facets. Empirical research, such as the study by Collins et al. (1997), might be the way to get us out of this quagmire.

A somewhat different way of understanding the role of spontaneity and its function was proposed by Wellman (1963, p. 283). He proposed that "Spontaneity is the factor which allows the individual to meet adequately challenging situations when neither memory nor logic is of much value." The same idea was reiterated later by Hare and Hare (1996, pp. 39–40), who described spontaneity as "the factor that makes it possible for the individual to meet challenging situations adequately when neither memory nor logic is much help." By addressing spontaneity as one of three primary modes of problem solving, Wellman (1963) placed it in a larger context than that described in the classical psychodrama theory. His position acknowledged that human beings resort to more than a single way of coping. Most notably those were memory (or skills, behaviors that are used repeatedly) and logic (or problem solving through analytical thinking). The classical theory maintained that not only was spontaneity a third basic mode of coping but also was conducive for attaining productive living. Whether intended or not, it appeared that that theory considered coping based on memory (repeating past coping modes) a necessary class of behavior but one of a lesser grade referring to it as "stereotyped spontaneity." Pressing that notion further, Yablonsky (1972, 1976) labeled that style "robopathy," a dull, uninspiring way of living. Did the exclusive focus on spontaneity and either the ignoring or the diminishing of the value of the other two coping modes inadvertently contribute to the existing confusion?

The majority of the participants reported that they experienced spontaneity between 5 to 10 times a day for a total, accumulated period of one hour.

That implies that for the rest of the day those so-called nonspontaneous experiences lasted much longer than the experience of being spontaneous, spreading over a few hours. The concept of nonspontaneous feeling does not refer to a specific or a particular experience, but rather it stands for the great variety of feelings and attitudes that have in common only that they cannot be considered spontaneity. They included daily activities that use memory and logic as their primary modes of responding. The responses given by our participants are congruent with that supposition. Evidently, they considered spontaneity only part of a wider context of problem solving approaches. At the same time, the reports of the predominance of nonspontaneous periods in the participants' daily lives are incongruous with the theoretical allusion to the fact that spontaneity is the only preferred route to healthy living. Because it is unreasonable to suspect that our participants were maladjusted persons, it is also unreasonable to consider the protracted period they felt nonspontaneous as pathology.

A corollary issue is the relationship between spontaneity and psychopathology. The classical theory pointed out that people who suffered from psychological disorders were unable to be spontaneous. Often that position was also read in the reverse, that is, that the absence of spontaneity itself indicates some degree of psychological dysfunction. It is this reverse-reading position that raises the controversy. Is it always so? According to Wellman (1963) and Hare and Hare (1996), the answer might be negative. It is possible that the inability to produce spontaneity frequently is related to pathology, but it is not clear whether or not it can be considered the sole criteria for it. The present results support this negative answer.

In the classical theory, the problem is compounded when the theory regarded the lack or the absence of spontaneity an undesirable psychological state by labeling it stereotyped spontaneity or pathological spontaneity. Because neither stereotype nor pathological behavior fits the definition of spontaneity, assigning that word to either further obfuscates the issue. It leaves us facing the unenviable situation, an impossible challenge to provide a single definition for both the presence and absence of spontaneity, when the absence may indicate either a positive state (e.g., problem solving by means of memory and logic) or a negative one (psychopathology).

A possible theoretical solution to this predicament is to reconsider spontaneity and conceptualize it as a psychological quality that has only a positive meaning. Thus, spontaneity has neither positive nor negative opposites. Stereotype and pathological spontaneity do not exist under the heading of "spontaneity." Instead, they would be described in other psychological terms, for example, repetitiveness, compulsive behavior, paranoia, and so forth. There are other concepts in psychology that convey only positive connotations. Examples of these are flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, 1990),

self-actualization (Maslow, 1968), or peak experience (Gordon, 1985). So, the lack or the absence of flow is not a pathological flow. Rather, it is described in terms such as anxiety, apathy, depression, or even boredom.

The classical theory proposed that spontaneity could emerge when a person is at rest, alone, or in the presence of others. The effect of the presence of others is important in the context of group psychotherapy. "Spontaneity state is not only an expression of a process within a person, but also a relation to the outside through the spontaneity state of another person." (Moreno, 1953, p. 334). The results confirmed these theoretical propositions. The majority of the respondents affirmed that they can be spontaneous at rest or when alone, and that the presence of others is not an inhibitor for feeling spontaneous.

The findings from the present survey must be viewed with caution and be considered only as suggestive. The study has some obvious weaknesses, particularly with regard to the sampling and the scope of the survey employed. The sample chosen was deliberately homogeneous. For a first study of its kind, I thought that strategy was appropriate. However, any attempt to generalize the findings will have to employ a heterogeneous and a larger sample. The respondents were a self-selecting group out of all those who received the mailed survey. It is not clear whether that fact has any bearing on the outcomes. The survey itself needs expansion. On hindsight, additional questions that could have illuminated other aspects related to spontaneity should have been included. That conclusion, however, became clear to me only after I conducted the present study. These comments notwithstanding, it was surprising to discover how much was gleaned from the present investigation, a fact that should only encourage further studies of spontaneity, its meaning, function, and effects.

Note: The author wishes to thank Ms. Mia Matsumoto for her assistance in collecting and analyzing the data.

REFERENCES

- Aulicino, J. (1954). A critique of Moreno's spontaneity theory. *Group Psychotherapy*, 7, 148–158.
- Blatner, A., & Blatner, A. (1988). *Foundation of psychodrama: History, theory, and practice (3rd ed.)*. New York: Springer.
- Blatner, A. (2000). *Foundation of psychodrama: History, theory, and practice (4th ed.)*. New York: Springer.
- Collins, L. A., Kumar, V. K., Treadwell, T. W., & Leach, E. (1997). The Personal Attitude Scale: A scale to measure spontaneity. *The International Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama, Skill Training and Role Playing*, 49, 147–156.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1988). The flow experience and its significance for human psychology. In M. Csikszentmihalyi & I. S. Csikszentmihalyi (Eds.), *Optimal experi-*

- ence: *Psychological studies of flow in consciousness* (pp. 15–35). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Del Nuovo, F. A., Spielberg, G., & Gillis, H. (1978). A preliminary investigation of the psychodramatic experience of spontaneity. *Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama, and Sociometry*, 31, 86–95.
- Flesman, R. E. (1967). Stanislavski's method of improvisation and Moreno's system of spontaneous psychodrama. *Group Psychotherapy*, 20, 95–96.
- Fox, J. (ed.). (1987). *The essential Moreno*. New York: Springer.
- Gordon, R. D. (1985). Dimension of peak communication experiences. *Psychological Reports*, 57, 824–826.
- Hare, P. A., & Hare, J. R. (1996). *J. L. Moreno*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Holmes, P., Karp, M., & Watson, M. (1994). *Psychodrama since Moreno*. London: Routledge.
- Horwitz, H. (1945). Spontaneous drama as a technique in group therapy. *Nervous Child*, 4, 252–273.
- Kipper, D. A. (1967). Spontaneity and the warming-up process in a new light. *Group Psychotherapy*, 20, 62–73.
- Kipper, D. A. (1986). *Psychotherapy through clinical role playing*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Maslow, A. (1965). Humanistic science and the transcendent experience. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 5, 219–227.
- Maslow, A. (1968). *Toward a psychology of being*. New York: Van Nostrand.
- Moreno, J. L. (1923). *Das stegreiftheater*. (The Theatre of Spontaneity) Potsdam: G. Kiepenheuer Verlag.
- Moreno, J. L. (1941). The philosophy of the moment and the spontaneity theater. *Sociometry*, 4, 205–226.
- Moreno, J. L. (1953). *Who shall survive? Foundation of Sociometry, group psychotherapy, and sociodrama*. Beacon, NY: Beacon House.
- Moreno, J. L. (1964). *Psychodrama Vol. 1*. (3rd ed.), Beacon, NY: Beacon House.
- Moreno, J. L. (1968). The validity of psychodrama. *Group Psychotherapy*, 21, 3.
- Moreno, T. Z., Bloomkvist, L. D., & Rutzel, T. (2000). *Psychodrama, surplus reality and the art of healing*. London: Routledge.
- Murphy, G. (1937). The mind is a stage: Adjusting mental problems in a spontaneous theater. *Forum*, 97, 277–280.
- Roine, E. (1997). *Psychodrama: Group psychotherapy as experimental theater*. London: Jessica Kingsley Press.
- Schauer, G. (1951). Repetition compulsion and spontaneity. *Group Psychotherapy*, 3, 339–343.
- Shearon, E. M., & Shearon, W. (1981). Comparison between Roger's self theory and Moreno's spontaneity theory. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama and Sociometry*, 34, 112–133.
- Wellman, M. (1963). Basic principles of Moreno's contribution to psychology. *Group Psychotherapy*, 16, 260–284.
- Wyatt, T. A. (1988). Spontaneity and naturalness. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 28, 97–107.

Yablonsky, L. (1972). *Robopaths*. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill.

Yablonsky, L. (1976). *Psychodrama: Resolving emotional problems through role playing*. New York: Basic Books.

DAVID A. KIPPER is research professor of psychology in the School of Psychology at Roosevelt University in Chicago, Illinois. His e-mail address is Kipperda@aol.com.

SUBSCRIBE

The International Journal of Action Methods

Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing

ORDER FORM

☐ **YES!** I would like to order a one-year subscription to **The International Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing**, published quarterly. I understand payment can be made to Heldref Publications or charged to my VISA/MasterCard (circle one).

☐ \$52.00 Individuals

☐ \$87.00 Institutions

ACCOUNT # _____ EXPIRATION DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

NAME/INSTITUTION _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

COUNTRY _____

ADD \$12.00 FOR POSTAGE OUTSIDE THE U.S. ALLOW 6 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY OF FIRST ISSUE.

SEND ORDER FORM AND PAYMENT TO:

HELDREF PUBLICATIONS

**The International Journal of Action Methods:
Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing**

1319 EIGHTEENTH STREET, NW

WASHINGTON, DC 20036-1802

PHONE (202)296-6267 FAX (202)293-6130

www.heldref.org

BOOK REVIEW

Drama Workshops for Anger Management and Offending Behaviour, by James Thompson. London: Jessica Kingsley. 1999. 143 pp.

Picking up this short volume on action methods for working with groups of angry clients, I was prepared for another superficial treatment that was heavy on clever recipes but short on quality ingredients. But I was wrong. Author James Thompson has published his manual for working with offenders, based on almost a decade of experience in Manchester, England. The volume includes a step-by-step description of two programs, “The Blagg! Offending Behaviour Workshop” and the “Pump! Anger Management Programme,” which the author calls both applied theater and therapeutic group work. The manuals are set out clearly and with intelligence. Thompson fully expects readers to try putting the techniques in the book into practice.

A Morenean-trained reviewer always looks for appropriate emphasis on warm-up and closure. Thompson shows that he recognizes their importance, although the warm-up sections seem abbreviated to me. His reliance on Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) for warm-up activities is also unsettling, because my experience with TO has been that the approach does not give adequate concern to the individual’s need for emotional integration.

A positive feature of this book is the full introduction, in which the author gives an overview of applied theater for offender rehabilitation, focusing mainly on research and practice in the United Kingdom. Included are interesting sections on “cognitive dexterity” and “ecstasy and rationality.”

JONATHAN M. FOX
New Paltz, New York

The International Journal of Action Methods

Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing

INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

The International Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing contains manuscripts on the theory and application of action methods in the fields of psychotherapy, counseling, social and personal skill development, education, management, and organizational development. The journal welcomes manuscripts bridging research and practice appropriate to educational and clinical simulations, behavior rehearsal, skill training, and role playing within group settings. The focus is on action interventions, psychodrama, and sociometry. The journal publishes theme issues, main articles, and brief reports on small research studies, case studies, and empirically tested new action techniques.

Manuscripts should be submitted to the Managing Editor, *The International Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing*, Heldref Publications, 1319 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-1802.

All manuscripts should be prepared in conformity with the style and format described in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 4th edition (1994). Manuscripts must include an abstract of no more than 120 words, be double-spaced throughout, and ordinarily not exceed 25 pages. Special attention should be directed to references. Only articles and books cited in the text of the manuscript are to be listed in the references. Authors should avoid using abbreviations, symbols, and footnotes. It is the responsibility of the author to ascertain that the activities described in the manuscripts are consistent with the generally accepted standards of ethical practice. Manuscripts that do not conform to the *Publication Manual's* standard (margin, sexist language, references,

format, etc.) will be returned unreviewed to authors.

Authors should submit 4 copies of the manuscript to expedite the reviewing process. Each copy must include all tables and reproductions of all figures, graphs, and charts. Glossies of the original figures must *not* accompany the manuscript. Those need to be supplied only after the manuscript is accepted for publication. Manuscripts are accepted for review with the understanding that the same work has not been and will not be published—nor is presently submitted—elsewhere, and that all persons listed as authors have given their approval for the submission of the paper. It is also understood that any person cited as a source of personal communication has approved such citation. Articles and any other material published in *The International Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama, Skill Training, and Role Playing* represent the opinion of the author(s) and should not be construed to reflect the opinion of the editors or the publisher.

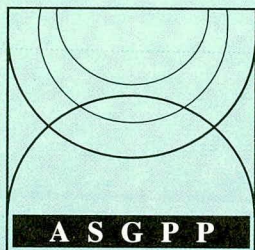
Authors submitting a manuscript do so with the understanding that if accepted for publication, copyright for the article, including the right to reproduce the article in all forms and media, shall be assigned exclusively to the publisher. The publisher shall not refuse any reasonable request by the author for permission to reproduce his or her contribution to the journal.

Accepted manuscripts may be edited for style and readability. Ordinarily, proofs are **not** sent to authors. Each author receives two complimentary copies of the issue in which the article is published.

For further information, please call (202) 296-6267, ext. 213, or fax: (202) 296-5149.

The International Journal of **Action Methods**

**Psychodrama,
Skill Training,
and Role Playing**



FOUNDED IN 1942

*For more information,
call or write:*

ASGPP

301 N. Harrison, #508

Princeton, NJ 08540

(609) 452-1339

Fax: (609) 936-1659

E-mail: asgpp@ASGPP.org

Website: www.ASGPP.org

The American
Society of Group
Psychotherapy &
Psychodrama is

dedicated to the development of the fields
of group psychotherapy, psychodrama,
sociodrama, and sociometry, their spread
and fruitful application.

Aims: to establish standards for specialists
in group psychotherapy, psychodrama,
sociometry, and allied methods; to increase
knowledge about them; and to aid and support
the exploration of new areas of endeavor in
research, practice, teaching, and training.

The pioneering membership organization in
group psychotherapy, the American Society of
Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama,
founded by J. L. Moreno, MD, in April 1942,
has been the source and inspiration of the later
developments in this field. It sponsored and
made possible the organization of the Interna-
tional Association on Group Psychotherapy. It
also made possible a number of international
congresses of group psychotherapy. Member-
ship includes subscription to *The International
Journal of Action Methods: Psychodrama,
Skill Training, and Role Playing*, founded in
1947 by J. L. Moreno as the first journal
devoted to group psychotherapy in all its
forms.