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Culture in Action: Diversity Training With a Cultural Double

DANIEL J. TOMASULO

ABSTRACT. The author introduces a cultural double technique as a vehicle for cultivating the appreciation of different cultures. He compares the various types of doubling, discusses the use of the technique in an international business setting, and considers the implications for diversity training in other environments.

Key words: action methods, diversity training, role playing, sensitivity training

It is not the same to talk of bulls as to be in the bullring.
—Spanish proverb

IN THIS ARTICLE, I DESCRIBE a cultural double that can be used to provide a practical understanding and awareness of culturally diverse material. I draw from such varied disciplines as cross-cultural psychology, international business, and sociodrama and suggest this technique as training method for understanding ethnic, social, racial, religious, and cultural differences.

For a variety of reasons, our need for understanding culturally sensitive values has mushroomed in the last several years. The advent of the World Wide Web and of instant language translations has simultaneously shrunk our world and made the understanding of other cultures a necessity. From an American perspective, we appear to be on the brink of experiencing what Harvard sociologist Daniel Bell (1976) identified more 25 years ago as a weakening of America's infrastructure through consumer-driven individualism. Because of that, programs that have worked in the past appear to need change. Americans' earlier success with a clear division of labor and staunch individualism needs to evolve to a type of voluntary integration. If we do not learn what is important to others, we cannot attain what is important to us. Indeed, the individualist approach to any culture seems to be in need of such

an evolution. The arrival of the Information Age has forced a communal process to emerge in the wake of individualism. The rapid dissemination of information makes people instantly aware of things that happen on the other side of the globe. The problem appears to be not in the translation of the information but rather in the functional interpretation and understanding of it. To quote Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998):

The extension of the division of labor would cause the individual to share fewer and fewer characteristics with other individuals . . . and would call for a new form of . . . biological-type integration as found in developing organisms, which are both differentiated and integrated . . . [a] necessary synthesis of individualism and communitarianism in increasingly complex, differentiated, and interdependent societies. (pp. 58–59)

Let us consider the 1998 economic turbulence in Asia resulting in the U.S. stock market's negative reaction, the so-called "Asian flu" response by Wall Street. The domino effect of worldwide markets was halted once the problem was reinterpreted as a domestic issue for the nations of the Pacific Rim, rather than as an international issue. Alternately, the U.S. stock market not only recovered but soared with that reinterpretation and our reorientation to our own domestic issues. Approximately 2 months after the Asian flu struck, the U.S. markets posted record gains in the technology stocks, and the Asian market swelled. That prompted Nikkei officials to say thank you to Wall Street. Although the jury is still out on the Asian economic crisis, my point is that that mutuality of responses can be seen as an example of the type of synthesis to which Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner refer.

A glance at today's *New York Times* will show that multicultural issues are woven into the fabric of our daily existence. Although that has probably always been true, it appears that the investigation and understanding of different cultures are currently center stage for social, developmental, and organizational psychologists. That statement may be particularly true for American psychologists. The 25th anniversary of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP, which is considered central to the development of cross-cultural psychology) was held, for the first time, in the United States in August 1997. The October 1998 issue of the *American Psychologist's* lead article was titled "Cross-Cultural Psychology as a Scholarly Discipline" (Segall, Lonner, & Berry, 1998). In 1999 at the Solomon Asch Center of the University of Pennsylvania, a new program began for the study of ethnopolitical conflict.

In business and politics, the understanding of culturally sensitive issues has become a necessary means for survival. The merger of Chrysler and Daimler-Benz, multinational space programs, human rights violations in China and Yugoslavia, and culturally sensitive issues before the U.S. Supreme Court are but a fraction of the issues requiring consideration on a daily basis. Business,

the arts, religious freedom, politics, and world peace are affected by our understanding of other cultures, or our lack of it.

Ample business and educational materials are available on diversity as well as on the aforementioned issue of individualism–communitarianism (Kagitcibasi, 1997; Smith & Schwartz, 1997; Triandis, 1995). Yet, the vast majority of references are curriculum based, and only a handful of those address the topic of training methods (Bhagat & Landis, 1996; Hui & Luk, 1997). It seems the issue of *how* diversity could be taught is a concern secondary to content.

The introduction of action methods through role playing has traditionally been a primary vehicle for presenting curriculum in an experiential learning process. My current proposal not only advocates for the use of role playing in developing cultural diversity awareness but also further suggests that trainees encounter the impact of their interactions through feedback from a *cultural double*. Cultural doubles reflect the reaction of a culture to an interchange and may be independent from the response of other auxiliaries in the role play. To illustrate how a cultural double can be used, I sought curricula from a highly results-oriented field to highlight both the necessity and consequences of understanding different cultures. I found such literature in the practice of international business.

Some Principles in Understanding Cultural Diversity

I reviewed training materials from a number of diversity training managers for large businesses. Most were proprietary materials that specified the curricula to be learned. I found that one reference appeared on most lists of managers working in global business. Because of its popularity, the text *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business* (2nd edition) by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner (1998) was used as the basis for my understanding issues central to diversity training. The use of a business application is particularly successful because it moves the need for cultural awareness from the abstract to the concrete. My goal here is to augment the principles outlined by these authors through the specific use of selected action methods. The purpose for doing that is to make the learning process more experiential by extracting greater understanding and to increase competence in settling culturally sensitive dilemmas. This example places the cultural issues in such a way that they need not only to be understood but also to be reconciled. The pragmatic basics of business and politics serve as a vehicle to demonstrate the methods. Readers should extrapolate from the examples ways in which the method can be used in their particular discipline.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner draw on five relational orientations that were originally proposed by Talcott Parson (1951):

Universalism vs. Particularism	(Rules vs. Relationships)
Communitarianism vs. Individualism	(Group vs. Individual)
Neural vs. Emotional	(Range of feelings expressed)
Diffuse vs. Specific	(Range of involvement)
Achievement vs. Ascription	(How status is accorded)

Although these authors do not mention the use of role play or other action methods as part of their training, the emphasis on using experiential techniques seems consistent with the goals Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner have set out:

Transcultural effectiveness is not measured only by the degree to which you are able to grasp the opposite value. It is measured by your competence in reconciling the dilemmas, i.e., the degree to which you are able to make both values work together. (p. 46)

J. L. Moreno, the founder of group psychotherapy and psychodrama, identified the use of action methods to study racial, spiritual, or cultural issues as *axiodramas* (Blatner, 1987). Although that term is useful to describe the arc of the present topic, I wish to introduce a more specific term relevant to an action method used for cross-cultural investigations. That term is *cultural double*. I use it throughout this article to highlight the specific function of the method and to distinguish it from other types of doubling often used in the clinical aspects of psychodrama and sociodrama. A second shift in terminology is the use of the phrase *split double*, rather than *paired double*. Although paired doubling is often used to highlight and identify conflicting perspectives or ideas, I use the term *split double* to define more accurately the chasm in an internal dialogue between an individual and his or her culture. Finally, I believe it will be helpful to use descriptors such as “primary protagonist” and “secondary protagonist” to determine more easily the subject being discussed.

Application of Sociodrama and Psychodrama Concepts

The use of a double is an action method that is employed for three main purposes (Tomasulo, 1998): providing emotional support, giving emotional expression, and reorganizing perceptions. Although all three purposes are important, the “cultural double” is the vehicle devoted to the reorganization of culturally sensitive perceptions. Standard doubling and aspects of the split double (represented by the term *other double* when graphed alongside the cultural double) encompass the support and expression elements. The position of the double is directly behind the protagonist. For my purpose, the protagonists are those immersed in the negotiation directly. This may be a dual protagonist situation, as in a simple distributive bargaining, or something more complex

with multiple protagonists in an integrative bargaining situation. In those instances, it may be helpful to identify a "primary" and a "secondary" protagonist (referring to those people that way for naming purposes only, not status). In a mediation or arbitration exercise, it may be valuable to label the mediator or arbitrator as the protagonist and the positions represented by others as auxiliaries. Such differentiation allows for greater clarity when assigning doubles.

It is best to think of the standard double as a person who understands the protagonist's thoughts and feelings. The most reliable conditions for standard doubling (not necessarily for the cultural double) occur when the facilitator allows the protagonist to select his or her own double. The protagonist knows best whom to pick because of *tele*, the natural connections and understandings between people. Here the facilitator asks the protagonist, "Who in the training do you think best understands your thoughts and feelings about your position?" A trainee may volunteer to be the double, or the facilitator may choose the double. The choice of a cultural double may be assigned to a trained auxiliary, who knows the culture being encountered, or to another trainee who the facilitator suspects has knowledge of the culture. It is also possible for the protagonist to double himself or herself.

In each case, the double, standing or sitting directly behind the protagonist, tries to identify the feeling of the protagonist. The facilitator may then ask the double how he or she thinks the protagonist feels. It may be necessary for the facilitator to prompt the double to speak in the first person in order to reflect the protagonist's feelings by cueing the double to say, "I feel . . ." and then asking the double how he or she thinks the protagonist feels. In the beginning, the facilitator may have to do that several times to orient the people who are doubling. The facilitator may need to demonstrate how the doubling is done in an effort to show the chosen double more accurately what to do. Once the doubling routine becomes part of the regular procedure within the group, the members usually spontaneously offer "I" statements from the double role.

To enhance the depth of support in the group or the range of potential reactions, the facilitator may want to use more than one double with a protagonist, a procedure called a "multiple double." When the facilitator invites several people to come into the double role, that allows the protagonist to feel the support and range of reactions in a direct way. Again employing multiple double technique, the facilitator has the protagonist sit or stand across from the other protagonist(s), auxiliary(s), or empty chair(s) to reflect the adversarial nature of the role play. People from the training group then stand behind the protagonist to speak his or her thoughts and feelings about the negotiation about to take place. Once the first trainee has spoken, he or she returns to a seat, and the next group member speaks, and so on.

Each of the statements may be a portion of what the protagonist is feeling. Some may be more accurate than others; some may be wrong (see the section that follows on correcting the double). In any case, the array of feelings explored usually gives the protagonist both a feeling of being understood and food for thought. One of the multiple doubles may have said something the protagonist had not thought of previously (such as, "I wish I had more time to negotiate this contract. I didn't realize how long each phase would take"). The protagonist can select from those doubles the one (or two if a paired double) who can be used to further his or her understanding in the situation. Once the doubles have been chosen, the facilitator asks them to continue with their line of thinking. In that way, the protagonist can more readily experience the depth and breath of the situation.

A multiple double has the advantage of helping the other trainees understand the protagonist's issues. The technique offers a wide perspective on the issues confronting the person from that culture in that role. Adding action to the training program captures the trainees' attention and interest. Once the parameters of the negotiation have been identified, the stage is set for the protagonist to experiment with potential resolutions.

If there are opposing thoughts or ideas, the double function may be served best by a pair who take opposite perspectives or by a single double who alternates between those perspectives. In this article, I refer to that as a split double in which one-half of the double is devoted exclusively to cultural issues. Although it may seem contraindicated to have doubles verbalize internal conflict, it is both supportive and insightful for the protagonist to experience the struggle as it is understood by peers.

If a pair is playing the double, it is best to have one person behind the protagonist to the left and the other behind to the right. Often a member of the group plays one half of the pair, and the facilitator or trained auxiliary plays the other half. Two group members can also do that quite effectively. In portraying the inner struggle of the protagonist, one voice of the split double expresses culturally relevant information while the other voice presents conflicting cultural information or emotive reactions.

The Use of the Cultural Double

Let us suppose that you are the primary protagonist and that you are planning your first negotiation with a Japanese firm. You decide to begin the negotiation session with a joke. That is a time-tested, classic opening back in the States, and you assume that a joke helps to start the session off with the right atmosphere. You tell it and receive almost no response, other than a polite smile from one or two members of their negotiating team. Two people representing the split double might react in the following role play, in which the

two people serving as split doubles stand behind the primary protagonist as they voice their response to the situation.

The *cultural* double: “These people are so uptight! I can’t believe they didn’t laugh at that joke. They seem so repressed with their feelings. I can’t read them like I can others.”

The *other* double: “Now what am I going to do? If they didn’t like that maybe they won’t like the rest of what I have prepared. I was more sure of that joke than I was about our initial offer. What am I going to do now? Maybe I should change my strategy.”

A facilitator can have the protagonist play his or her own double as a way of showing trainees how he or she feels or what he or she is thinking. That is particularly helpful if the protagonist does not seem able to choose a double and there are no volunteers. If the protagonist is acting as his or her own double, the facilitator can ask him or her to reverse roles with the space behind his or her chair. In the role of his or her own double, the protagonist may make statements about personal thoughts and feelings for which the facilitator can then have amplified, restated, or altered in some way to enhance clarity. That procedure does not preclude other forms of doubling. A facilitator may still wish to use a single, multiple, or split double after the protagonist has acted as his or her own double. The value of such procedures comes from the clarification, awareness, and acknowledgment that often result from playing this role. As an added benefit, it provides a prescriptive role for others in the group to understand the protagonist more deeply when they double for him or her. As evident in this example, the cultural double for the primary protagonist is not sensitive to the dynamics of the situation. That then becomes the primary focus of the training.

A double can be corrected in two ways. First, the person playing the double can adjust previous statements once it is realized that the statements do not match the internal state of the protagonist. The protagonist can also reverse roles with the double to clarify the statements. When a double says something to the protagonist, the facilitator must check it out, saying something to the protagonist, such as, “Does that sound right to you?” That gives the protagonist a chance to clarify what was said. If the double has made an error, he or she may correct it by trying again with a modified statement. Returning to the joke teller, let us suppose that the other double had said something like this:

This really makes me angry. I can’t believe they don’t even laugh out of respect for me coming all the way out here to meet them. If they want to play hardball, I’ll play hardball!

Suppose now that this misses the mark completely, that the protagonist cannot relate to it or that it is too strong. The protagonist would then have the chance to reverse roles with the other double and say,

I'm disappointed. Maybe I need to rethink how I approach these people. I'm not on my usual playing field, and maybe I need to spend more time learning the rules.

The correction by the protagonist gives the person playing the other double a chance to clarify his or her statements to align them with the protagonist's thinking. The correction also serves to alert others in the group (multiple double) to the more accurate thought process of the protagonist. However, what is equally important in this process is the fact that the protagonist may have clarified his or her own thinking in doing the correction. Thus, this process works on different levels:

1. It corrects the person playing the double.
2. It serves to inform other trainees about the more accurate scope of the doubling.
3. It clarifies the protagonist's own thinking.

If the protagonist is in agreement, then we can move on. If not, and a modification was not forthcoming, the facilitator asks the protagonist to reverse roles with the person playing the double and correct the statement. That then serves as a role prescription for the person playing the double. The facilitator next asks them to reverse roles (back to original positions), and the double repeats what the protagonist said. That will ensure that the thoughts and feelings are on target because the protagonist has identified them during the role reversal. In that way, the protagonist is alerting others in the group to what he or she is feeling, and group members (doubles) will then be more able to indicate accurately the thoughts of the protagonist. Sometimes it is necessary for the protagonist to repeat the process. Doing the role reversal with the double significantly enhances the clarity of the protagonist's thinking. It is important to remember that the people who are playing the double position use projection to try to place themselves into that role. In doing that, they run the risk of not accurately understanding the protagonist's feelings and unwittingly revealing their own. Correction through the role reversal is the way to identify more precisely with the protagonist's intentions.

The process and techniques used in doubling include the following:

- speaking the unspoken (what the person needs to say but is not saying)
- exaggerating
- minimizing
- introducing alternatives
- restarting
- amplifying (highlighting the key part of the statement)
- verbalizing the resistance (why the person does not want to say something)
- introducing paradoxes (as would be done with a split double)
- clarifying (Tomasulo, 1998)

Strengths and Differences of the Cultural Double Technique

The cultural double differs from other doubles in three important ways. First, the cultural double incorporates the more generic purposes of doubling but is limited in scope to the cultural perspective. The cultural double may be supportive, expressive, or reorganizing of perceptions. These perspectives emanate from the culture being portrayed (from an auxiliary or secondary protagonist) or from the reaction to the culturally bound behavior of others (as would be the case with the primary protagonist).

Second, the reaction of the cultural double can be either collective or individual. The cultural double in this regard provides a value-laden perspective that may be challenged by the range of individual motivation. The collective is the enculturated reaction expressed by the individual. The individual reaction is more personal. The cultural double reacts as the collective voice of the culture's sense of indignation being expressed through the individual, whereas the individual reaction is personalized. There is no difference in the impact either of these expressions makes. It is merely a difference in how the cultural double can be expressed.

To illustrate the difference, let me repeat a situation offered by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998, p. 200). They tell of an American CEO who arranged business cards on the conference table, aware of the Japanese custom of laying business cards in the same pattern as the seating pattern for a delegation as an easy reminder of names. Alas, when he grew bored and impatient with the evasive answers he was receiving, he absentmindedly picked up one of the business cards, rolled it up, and started cleaning his nails with it. When he looked up, he saw that the Japanese team members were horrified. The card he was using was that of the Japanese president. The president stood and left the room, and the interpreter called an intermission.

What would the cultural double of the Japanese president say? The double may have a collective reaction, an individual reaction, or both. Some possible choices follow:

Cultural double's collective reaction: I am offended by the way you Americans are so arrogant! You aren't interested in listening to our ideas, you only want to express your own. You are preoccupied when we speak. You are not interested in building a relationship with us.

Cultural double's individual reaction: I am offended personally by your behavior. I am insulted because of the way you have shown disrespect for me. Doing that with my card was a deliberate attack. I won't stand for it.

The third way a cultural double differs from the traditional double is that the person being doubled does not have to but may repeat what is being said by the cultural double. Traditionally, the double speaks, and the protagonist repeats what the double says if it is true to his or her thoughts and feelings.

The cultural double may be being used for instructive purposes, and the comments may not need to be repeated. It is only when a cultural double expresses thoughts, and there is certain disagreement with the protagonist that the protagonist should feel compelled to speak and correct what was said.

The Cultural Encounter

Let us now return to the seven domains identified earlier by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) and use the first dimension—Universalism vs. Particularism (Rules vs. Relationships) as an example.

The universalist presents rational arguments and wants to get down to business. The position is usually legalistic and bound by the terms of the deal. The particularist sees the relationship at the core of the deal and does business with the intention of having the relationship evolve. For particularists, there is no right or wrong, but rather many different ways of looking at the problem. They see themselves as being flexible on the terms of a deal. Table 1 contains a synopsis of the two styles and has been adapted from the text of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998).

A dilemma that falls in the universalist/particularist domain is as follows: Mr. Teok is a second-generation American Chinese employee of a New Jersey pharmaceutical firm based in Tokyo. His goal was to get a joint venture with the largest pharmaceutical firm in Japan. He had negotiated for four years, and the contracts were ready to be signed. He was sent the contract from New Jersey and was extremely distraught when he saw it. It was several inches thick. Because of the complexity of the deal, the legal department said the contracts were necessary. A "letter of intent" was not sufficient. Teok's career was in

TABLE 1
Contrasting the Views of a Universalist and a Particularist

Universalist	Particularist
1. Focus on rules not relationships	1. Focus on relationships rather than rules
2. Legal contracts readily drawn up	2. Legal contracts readily modified
3. You are trustworthy if you honor your word or contract.	3. A trustworthy person is one who honors mutual need for changes.
4. There is only one truth, the one agreed to.	4. There are multiple possibilities, each relevant to the different participants.
5. A deal is a deal.	5. Relationships evolve.

jeopardy. If he insisted that the Japanese sign the contract, they would see it as proof that little trust had been developed over the four years. It could cost him the deal. If he tried to go with a letter of intent, the legal department would be up in arms and not satisfied.

There are different ways of setting this scenario as a role play, using a cultural double. The following is one way it might be done:

1. Use an empty chair to represent Mr. Teok as the primary protagonist.
2. Across from that chair, set another empty chair for the Japanese CEO.
3. Begin with multiple doubling for Mr. Teok. Different training members can take turns. Some possible responses follow. (Cultural and other doubling might be mixed when a facilitator begins with a multiple double. That does not matter. From the content, it will be easy to discern which is which.)

When the multiple doubles respond, each statement is spoken by a different trainee, who stands behind the empty chair for Mr. Teok.

This is terrible. I've been working for four years with one purpose. Now this. I don't know what to do.

They just don't understand back in New Jersey. If I do this, if I present this contract, it's like a slap in the face. It has taken me all this time to get to this point and the Japanese CEO will just think that I never really trusted him.

I have to make this deal work or I'm through. Back in New Jersey they don't care about anything other than the bottom line. If I don't get him to sign the contract, they won't give me any responsibility.

I don't even want to show the contract to the CEO.

I feel betrayed by Headquarters. They sent me here to do the job because of my background and experience. Then, when it comes time to close the deal, they dump this on me.

How can I make this work? I've invested four years of my life in this project, and I know what everybody needs. What can I do to bring this together?

4. Following this episode, I might assign a cultural double for the Japanese CEO. That double would be a trainee, or a trained auxiliary with knowledge of the Japanese culture. This would give the primary protagonist, Mr. Teok, an opportunity to experiment with new ways to interact with the CEO.

5. To broaden the range of possible solutions, I might then ask members of the training team to take the role of Mr. Teok's double and experiment with different solutions. If two trainees play a split double, the set up is as follows: The primary protagonist in the role of Mr. Teok faces the empty chair of the Japanese CEO. The two trainees playing a split double stand side by side behind the primary protagonist. A cultural double also stands behind the empty chair of the CEO.

6. The primary protagonist in Mr. Teok's role begins by trying out different ideas. To begin, he might say, "I'm sorry about the size of the contract. You know how lawyers are. Please take all the time you need to review it."

Next, those acting as the split double speak. The cultural double says, "I know he isn't going to like this. But I am stuck. He doesn't understand what I'm up against in the USA. We have dozens of lawyers putting these types of contracts together. This is how we do business." The other double comments, "I'm nervous about presenting this way. I hope he understands. I don't have any options."

7. Then the cultural double for the Japanese CEO speaks in reaction to Mr. Teok's remarks:

What is this! For four years, we have worked together, and I thought I could trust you! This is insulting to me. I thought we had the principles of this deal worked out. How can you do this? I have invited you into my home. We have spent much time together. You know my family, and I know yours. Why is this being put in front of me at this time? I'll have to think about this. I am certainly not ready to sign it. I have second thoughts about the contract altogether.

8. As director, I now reverse the roles of Mr. Teok and the cultural double for the Japanese CEO. That allows the primary protagonist in Mr. Teok's role to experience the cultural double of the Japanese CEO. I might then have him start with the last statement the cultural double said. The trainee as Mr. Teok, now in the role of the cultural double of the Japanese CEO, stands behind the empty chair and says,

I am certainly not ready to sign it, and I have second thoughts about the contract altogether. I really feel put off by this. I wish you didn't dump this on me like this. This doesn't feel right. It is too much of a surprise.

9. The trainee formerly playing the cultural double for the Japanese CEO is now sitting in Mr. Teok's chair. Because the function of this role is to help the primary protagonist (the trainee originally playing Mr. Teok), the person might ask a spontaneous question. The trainee formerly playing the cultural double for the Japanese CEO is now sitting in Mr. Teok's chair and says, "What would I have to do to somehow make this more presentable? I certainly don't want to offend you, but I have a problem and don't know what to do about it."

10. Next, the primary protagonist has a chance to think this through in the CEO's double position. The primary protagonist as Mr. Teok is in the role of the cultural double standing behind the empty chair of the Japanese CEO and states,

I think I would have appreciated it if you had told me what the problem was. Because we have mutual respect for one another, I would have seen your dilem-

ma as one that we could work on together. I would have appreciated it if you had acknowledged our relationship first by doing this. That would have let me know that you value what we have developed with each other more than you do some contract.

11. At this point in the process, I, as director, have them reverse roles and return to their original positions. The primary protagonist, back in the chair as Mr. Teok, now tries again:

Our American headquarters have sent me a rather extensive contract concerning our mutual interests. In America, this is standard practice, but I don't want to insult you by bringing it to you. I would like to hear your thoughts on how we might proceed.

Next those in the role of the split double respond. The cultural double says, "My company has sent me here to make this work. I do know both sides of the coin and don't want to force the situation. I would rather it take a longer time and the relationship is preserved than to try and push it and blow the whole thing." The other double comments, "This feels better. I am sharing the dilemma. Instead of Me vs. Him, we have joined forces to mutually deal with the problem. This feels more constructive."

12. Depending on the nature of the exercise, this might be a place to stop and return to the training to discuss and analyze what was done. This pause is similar to the sharing phase following a typical enactment. However, the facilitator/director should use this time to highlight principles and practices that should be observed. The facilitator of the previous example might come up with the following guidelines for trainees:

**UNIVERSALISTS
(for particularists)**

Be prepared for logical rational arguments designed to persuade you to their way of thinking.

They are not being rude when they want to "get down to business," it is just their way.

Consult with a lawyer concerning the legal implications of your contract.

**PARTICULARISTS
(for universalists)**

Be prepared for personal stories unrelated to the topic.

Small talk is their way of getting to know you. To know you better is the link in doing business with you.

Consider the personal impact of your contract (as in the previous example).

Summary

The sample dialogue demonstrates the use of action methods to enhance the understanding of different approaches when there are practical dilemmas. The methods allow for involvement, experimentation, observation, insight, confrontation of stereotypes, conflict resolution, empathy, reconsideration, self-reflection, and spontaneity. The role of the facilitator/director of the action methods is to shift the presentation of the material to an experiential level for the trainees. I believe that it is in this fashion that diversity is appreciated, and the greater goal of making both values work together is achieved.

The primary protagonist in this training technique is exposed to a cultural double who spontaneously responds to his or her efforts. It is through immediate feedback that experiential learning is maximized.

Although these examples are drawn from the world of business, the idea is for trainers to use these experiential action methods within their own disciplines with the goal of increasing awareness of different ethnic, social, racial, religious, and other cultural factors.

I close now with a quote from Segall, Lonner, and Berry (1998) that I found to be inspirational.

... cross-cultural psychology will be shown to have been successful when it disappears. For when the whole field of psychology becomes truly international and genuinely intercultural—in other words, when it becomes truly a science of human behavior—cross-cultural psychology will have achieved its aims and become redundant. (p. 1108)

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When Is a Sandplay Psychotherapy Process Completed?

KIM MARIE VAZ

ABSTRACT. Many therapists find sandplay psychotherapy a useful adjunct to their play or talk therapies, but learning how to interpret even a single tray can be a daunting task. In this article, the author addresses the features of a completed sandplay process that unfolds over time and produces many separate sandtrays. From a survey of experienced sandplay therapists, the author found that most therapists characterize the sandplay healing process as a psychic journey into unknown inner realms, in which clients confront and contain their own chaos and conflict and touch a deep and numinous transpersonal aspect called the Self. The therapists consider the journey completed only when the images in the tray reflect a return to the collective or evidence of a more effective approach to life.

Key words: play therapy, psychotherapy, sandplay therapy

There are no final answers to the question of what constitutes a completed process. There are probably as many kinds of completed processes as there are sandplayers.

—Kay Bradway, *Sandplay: Silent Workshop of the Psyche*

SANDPLAY IS A THERAPEUTIC TECHNIQUE that involves a tray of standard dimensions (19.5 by 28.5 and 3 inches deep) with a blue interior, 3–5 inch miniatures of every aspect of human and nonhuman existence, sand, and water. Clients are allowed to work with the sand, add water if desired, and select any number of miniatures to arrange as scenes in the sand. The therapist offers few interpretations of the process and acts as an empathic witness to the client's healing and growth as processed through the sandplay. Sandplay is an action method that provides an opportunity for the client to symbolically act out that which is often inaccessible through conscious, verbal expression.

Sandplay offers relief to the disturbed personality by allowing the inner reality to become concertized (Cunningham, 1998). The process also allows for the interiorizing of an inner sanctum or *temenos* that Kalff (1980), the originator of Jungian-based sandplay therapy, called "the free and protected space." Friedman (1997) describes the space as "a place inside that is not affected by what happened this morning or yesterday." At first, this protection is provided externally by the therapist and the limits of the tray. Though the trays are not interpreted with the sandplayer as such, over time the therapist's remarks to the sandplayer about the meaning, positioning, or feelings evoked by the player's use of various images offers the ego's established attitude the opportunity to experiment with changing its own position. This is key because Jung believed that individuals experienced a neurosis when the existing ego attitude was held too one-sidedly. A further advantage of the sandplay process is as Chambers (1998) concluded that sandplay allows people to be who they are so that there is no need to "up the ante" in their physical world of relationships. In the sand, they are free to show what is really going on within them. When therapists acknowledge the sandplayers' conflict and chaos, they demonstrate to the clients the possibility that they can do this for themselves; hence their belief in themselves increases.

Drawing on the teachings of Kalff, Friedman (1997) determined that under certain conditions there is an organic disposition within the psyche to heal. The goal of sandplay is to activate the layer of the psyche that brings out the healing. The healing takes place not through the intellectual or cognitive, hence conscious, will but through the internal wisdom of the unconscious that makes itself known through the symbols. Amatruda (1998) wrote that healing occurs through sandplay because of the unconscious content originating from a transpersonal element called the Self. In a useful emphasis, she noted that the Self heals, not the sandplay.

Many therapists find sandplay psychotherapy a useful adjunct to their play or talk therapies, but learning how to interpret even a single tray that a client produces can be a daunting task. Rogers-Mitchell and Friedman (1997) conceded that a thorough understanding of an individual tray does not stem from an approach that analyzes the tray from a specific perspective. Their idea paves the way toward an appreciation of the multiplicity of ways a tray can be interpreted, and hence it seems logical to apply that to a full process as well. Amatruda (1998) offered a unique perspective on the journey through the sandplay process. Drawing on the psychology of fairy tales as developed by Marie Louise von Franz, Amatruda has suggested that a narrative of the sandplay process can be constructed around a tale's stages.

For von Franz (1990), individual dreams work on the personal conscious disposition either to confirm, heal, compensate, counterbalance, criticize, or complete it. Fairy tales act on the dominant collective attitude to achieve the

same ends. Like the king in the fairy tale whose kingdom is imperiled because the old ways have become unproductive, the client presents himself or herself in therapy when his or her old ways of behaving have become ineffective. The fairy tales begin with a loss, illness, death, bareness, or some other specific problem such as greed and are comparable to the psychic states of individuals who are beginning therapy. The depression, compulsion, addiction, or violation at the problem's core connect to an individual's sense of loss, illness, emotional barrenness, and so forth. Something must be done to ease the pain. The individual responds from the more developed (or more habitual) parts of the personality. She or he performs this way, then that, and still the problem persists.

In the fairy tale of the stingy uncle, as told and analyzed by von Franz (1974), a rich brother demands the labor of his poor brother's sons. The rich brother tries to outsmart the sons so as not to pay them wages. The rich brother has certain problems because he and his wife are too stingy to have children of their own. Read from a depth perspective, the couple's stinginess stands for their limited possibility of psychological development. The couple tries to enrich themselves through trickery and wit, rather than through the engagement of their own physical efforts. The poor man has three sons, two of whom are quite capable of making their way in the world but not able to outsmart the uncle. Like the uncle, the two rely on their conscious habits or intellect. The third brother, who is considered "a dummling" or "a simpleton" in a genuinely naive way, is able to put an end to the uncle's trickery.

Amatruda contends that the dummling part of the individual facilitates psychological development. She observes that individuals come to therapy only when the "dumb child" inside them throws up his or her hands and wails "I don't know what to do." As interpreted by von Franz (1990), the simple-minded son is the key to the story. Unlike his more worldly brothers, he does not decide from an intellectual vantage point the best course of action to take to resolve his dilemma but is assisted by the natural course of events. In other words, he opens himself to the autonomous power of the psyche, the Self, to guide him in the direction that is right for him. Bradway discovered that while working on a particular sand tray, sandplayers make statements such as: "I don't know what I'm doing" as they become more deeply immersed in the sandplay process. Other statements include: "I don't know what I am making" or "I don't know why I am putting this in" (Bradway, 1997, pp. 7–8). Bradway noted that earlier trays are more determined by external reality; whereas as the process goes on, scenes are more influenced by inner realities.

The Problem of the One-Sided Ego

Jung designated the Self as the central organizing principle of the personality. Individuals come to know the Self through the symbols emerging from

nondirected thinking. Jung (1956) labeled those thoughts that do not follow a definite course *nondirected*. Unlike directed thinking, which assists with one's adaptation to reality, nondirected thinking is learned through education and is constituted through language and words. Nondirected thinking offers a world picture different from conscious thought. In his essay, "The Transcendent Function," Jung (1960) wrote that directed thinking, with its reality orientation, bases its judgments on what is known and that a conscious thought designates one possibility at the exclusion of others. The conscious thought always selects what seems rational to its own logic and believes itself to be nonprejudicial. Any idea or attitude that appears unreasonable to the conscious personality is excluded and deemed irrational.

Jung (1960, p. 89) wrote "present day shows with appalling clarity how little able people are to let the other person's argument count." The outer reality results from the inner one because individuals are reluctant to consider the contents of the nondirected thought. He continued, "for, to the degree that he does not admit the validity of the other person, he denies the 'other' within himself the right to exist and vice versa. The capacity for inner dialogue is a touchstone for outer objectivity." The opposing or unconsidered and dismissed ideas, Jung claimed, could indeed be irrational or could make a great deal of sense when viewed from an alternative perspective. The symbols offered up by the unconscious, when incorporated into consciousness, hold the possibility of enriching the directed thought (Jung, 1960) by illuminating the mystery of ordinary life, by providing a preview of the future, or by highlighting what is good about a seemingly negative situation (Edinger, 1992). The unfamiliar and new perspectives that arise from the psyche are perceived initially as emotions and moods. During sandplay, those feelings can become concrete in a process Bradway (1997) called *coagulation*. The new ideas that are growing within can be realized externally through the selection, placement, and burying of objects, the pouring of water, the molding of the sand, or in the scenes of creativity or destruction the sandplayers act out in the tray.

The function of the Self is to synthesize the opposites within, affecting a balance or compensation of the unbalanced or one-sided attitude. Jung believed that our emotional pain comes from the deep splits between the opposing elements of what our conscious mind has allowed us to consider and what we have actually lived, with what remains unconsidered and unlived (Samuels, 1985). Out of the opposing elements, the Self gives rise to our possibilities. That is why the stingy, childless uncle, who has a poor brother with three sons, is able to find a way out of the ensnaring family saga through the "dummling" son. Jung's (1960) essay, "On the Nature of the Psyche," conveys the sense of shock suffered by the ego when discovering how the Self has enriched the personality, creating that which dwarfs the ego in breadth and potency. Once the ego recovers from its paralysis, the ego becomes convinced

“that in spite of all difficulties it is better to be taken down a peg than to get involved in a hopeless struggle” (p. 224). Thus, the “dummling” who is open to forces greater than himself brings the other side of his intellect to the problem and helps his family out of its problem stemming from ego-based desires.

Developing a Contrapsychological Position

Amatruda (1998) wrote that after encountering the incident that sends the heroine or hero on her or his way and after performing the required tasks, there is a period of time during which the heroine or hero is lost and journeys into an unknown territory, encountering crones, talking fish, and other unusual figures. She interpreted those meetings as confrontations with the *contrasexual* aspect of the personality. I prefer to use Samuels’s (1985) more precise term of *contrapsychological*, because that term extricates the Jungian tradition from its baggage of mistaking sexual metaphor for emotional and physical reality. The contrapsychological refers to the alternatives to the conscious attitude arising out of the unconscious. Acting as “soul-guide” or “psychoprompt,” the contrapsychological position is a bridge between the ego and the Self, between who a person is and what she or he may become. As Amatruda observed, that part of the process is a development of the “inferior function.” The ascent from the under regions of the psyche or the return to the village is a resurrection from the archetypal level. The story and process come to a close as the individual returns to the marketplace and the work-a-day world.

Example of Dorothy’s Journey to Oz

No better example of the return to the everyday world with a transformed personality can be found than in Morena’s (1998) analysis of *The Wizard of Oz*, which she presented in her workshop “Traveling Through Oz: The Journey Home.” In the book, Dorothy’s seemingly placid life is disrupted by a twister. Psychologically, the twister represents the consequence of trying to hold to an established ego perspective—one gets ripped apart. When releasing one’s grip, as Dorothy did, one has the possibility of falling asleep or going into the unconscious. The twister, Morena noted, possesses a rhythm and pace of its own. Once inside the imaginal world, a feature of the psyche keeps one there. An astute observer in the audience of that workshop theorized that Toto, Dorothy’s dog, keeps running away from Dorothy, forcing her to stay on her journey. Morena elaborated on that point, observing that Toto has not only initiated the journey but is responsible for Dorothy’s missing the ride home, uncovering the facade of the Wizard, and verifying the witch’s death. Morena’s perspective on Dorothy illustrates that one does not gain awareness by staying at home (that is, relying solely on what one already knows, which is one’s conscious position).

Von Franz (1974) suggested that neuroses are often a function of an inability to confront the moral and ethical dilemmas of our lives. Morena suggested that Dorothy must make a decision about whether or not to grow up and confront the dangers of adulthood, effect a transformation, and return home as a stranger who must re-integrate herself into the daily life of her community. The journey consists first of a visit to the Emerald City, which for Morena represents a "persona puffing up place." The Emerald City, according to Morena, is a glitzy place where all the good is thought to exist on the outside and all the answers lay some place other than in one's self. During the sandplay process, one must go to the inner city of disillusionment, suffer the disappointment of the seeing the persona's limitations, and gain the ability to withstand the betrayals one has experienced. In Oz, this is symbolized by the false power of the Wizard. Dorothy stands up to the Wizard and challenges him. Rather than finding "a bad man," she discovers, as Morena asserted, an ineffectual nice guy trying to survive. That is the part of the process I see as the ego being unmasked by the Self, at which point the persona falls away. The sandplayer then discovers that the habits for coping or the established ego's attitudes were the means of survival in unsatisfactory physical and emotional environments.

In the story, Dorothy faces another ethical dilemma. Should she go into the poppy fields and go to sleep (that is, will she become unconscious to this new world of knowledge, hence stopping psychological growth) or with the assistance of the instincts, should she wake up and keep going? Finally, Dorothy gets angry enough with the witch to destroy her. Morena contended that Dorothy is confronting what is imprisoning her. From a psychological perspective, Dorothy spends this phase of the story developing her fragmented and nonfunctioning aspects. Using the depth approach in which all the characters represent elements of one's psyche, Morena interpreted the Scarecrow as Dorothy's projection of confusion. The Scarecrow does not know how to figure things out and avoids getting involved with life. The Tin Man represents the disconnection of the intellect and the emotion. The Tin Man, cut off from his feeling, chops off pieces of himself and others. Dorothy administers a lubricant to his joints, enabling his motion. That segment stands for the rigid ego's attitude being softened by the *solutio* and becoming movable. The Cowardly Lion demonstrates the consequences of being overwhelmed by neurotic fear. Morena believes the lion points to "a woundedness in confidence and competence."

Morena's analysis encapsulates the goal of the sandplay process: to create an inner *temenos* in the individual. "Home" is invested with meaning as cocoon, refuge, scrapbook of memories, a place where one is both free and protected. The developmental goal is twofold: (1) how to live at home, not in the original unity of the conscious and the unconscious in the participation

mystique of the family, but as a person who is capable of separation and communion, (2) how to live relatively unencumbered by the vicissitudes of family life.

Other Models of the Sandplay Process

Alchemical Model

Using an alchemical model of the transformation of the base metal called the *prima materia* to the valued gold, Cunningham (1998) followed the sandplayer's psychological journey during which the devalued aspects of the personality—mood, depression, compulsion, and so forth—get washed, dissected, and brought together in a novel form, more viable for confronting the realities of one's existence (see also Henderson, 1993). The *olutio* phase of the process effects a softening of the solid ego attitude. Cunningham notes that the *olutio* phase solves emotional problems by shifting the problem from the conscious attitude to the realm of feeling. The evidence of the *olutio* phase includes trays flooded with water, images of people in the bath, in pools, washing clothes, swimming, drowning, and so forth.

The *calcinatio* phase burns off "the emotional intensity of the complex." Like the *albedo* or whitening phase of the alchemical procedure, therapy provides the heat that results in the lightening of the problem in terms of illumination and symptom relief.

In the *coagulatio* phase, the liquefied metal yielded by the burning becomes solid. The archetypal images that the sandplayer has selected in previous trays get incarnated in concrete forms. That may be seen in projections coming down to earth: dreams of falling down to earth or plane crashes. The deep emotional splits are felt in the body. Coming down to earth is also about taking an action, which in turn strengthens the ego and solidifies the personality.

During the *sublimatio* phase, the sandplayer is able to stand above the material reality of the problem. The sandplayer gains a spiritual or universal perspective and generalizes, rather than particularizes, the problem. The images pointing to that phase include ladders, birds, airplanes, angels, stars, and so forth. All are airy figures that invoke the idea of spirit or being above the earth. Cunningham (1998) warned that at that stage the sandplayer may suffer an inflation. One may feel above it all and no longer be in touch with the personal nature of the problem and its discomfort.

The killing or *mortificatio* stage marks the darkest period of the sandplay process, when the death of the old aspects of the personality pave the way for the new. Sandplay scenes of that stage include dismemberment, rotting corpses, experiences of death, bones, eclipses, darkness, defeat, and so on.

In the *separatio* phase, the new attitude is created by cutting it out of the

emotional chaos of previous stages and bringing the new ego position out of the unconscious. It is a time of differentiation, of carving out consciousness so as not to remain in a participation mystique. The images of this stage that appear in the tray are knives, swords, words (to name), clocks, weights, scales, and so forth.

Another step in the process is the *coniunctio* stage, in which the gold of the personality manifests itself. The trays are filled with images bearing fruit, mandalas, precious stones, and such miraculous symbols as a lion and a lamb lying together. It is in this last phase that the opposite elements within the psyche unify. At a personal level, the coniunctio is the relationship of the ego with the Self. At a communal level, the coniunctio announces one's unity with all human beings. Cunningham (1998) noted that the whole process is nonlinear and need not be conceptualized as a stage theory.

Image Interruption Model

Ryce-Menuhin (1992) adopted a classical Jungian view of the four stages of psychotherapy for some sandplayers. Through image interpretation, sandplayers gain an awareness that sacrificing the old attitude frees them to discover what their new attitudes might be. By exploring the metaphors suggested by the images, the sandplayer is introduced to the possibilities of the situation never here-to-for considered and that consideration bolsters the ego and promotes differentiation from the unconscious. The four stages creating the conditions for the transcendent function are the confession (out pouring), elucidation (sorting out of issues), education (development of the ego), and transformation (release of the libido trapped in the unconscious). In a full process, the sandplayer traverses the regions of archaic collective symbols and returns to the "here-and-now consciousness" relating the symbols to conscious life. The ego develops when the potentialities that have been inert can be seen to stir and what has been repressed and diminished enters the symbolic play through the "least valued function of conscious life." The sandplay process comes to an end when the personality is renewed through the dialectic between image and metaphor. The dialectic offers an elucidation of the possible new attitude with a resulting release of the energy trapped in the unconscious.

Nonsequential Models

Dunn-Fierstein (1996) and Chambers (1998) have each developed nonsequential models for notching the sandplay process. Dunn-Fierstein suggested that the trays be surveyed over time for six markers. The first few trays are considered the initial ones and present the problem of the sandplayer. Fried-

man (1997) viewed the initial trays to be like topic sentences or announcements of the theme of the unfolding inner drama. Dunn-Fierstein captured that nicely in the following statements:

"Here is what I struggle with."

"This is where I am, and this is what I may become."

"This is what is easy for me, and this is what is hard."

"This is the problem, and this is the possible solution."

Zappacosta (1994) advised that the therapist must always look for the hopeful signs of potential in the initial trays that may be manifest again in later trays. Weinrib, a noted sandplay therapist, taught that initial trays may be persona trays and as such may point to specific events that the sandplayer would like the therapist to notice (Friedman, 1997). Dunn-Fierstein also advised that therapists pay attention to which piece is selected to represent the client because it may serve as a clue to how the sandplayer moves about in the world.

The second aspect of the process is the descent into the unconscious in which the shadow is confronted in both its positive and ominous aspects. The trays contain digging and pathways that indicate a going deeper. The third phase may be the constellation of the Self that can only be brought about by encountering the shadow material. Dunn-Fierstein has discovered that in Self trays, candles may be lit, a child may be born, jewels and treasures may be used. In the therapy room, a palpable feeling of the spiritual exists. Dunn-Fierstein believes that the ego begins to develop once the Self has been encountered. The growing ego is represented by animals. Those trays may be followed by trays with more shadow confrontations. As the process nears an end, there is an ascent, a coming out of the unconscious. Images indicating the ascent include ladders, bridges, stairs, or pathways of stones going to a new place. Next, there is a relativization of the ego in which images represent the sandplayer's growing awareness of the new sense of who he or she is becoming. The ego finally consents that there are elements such as the Self that transcend it. Finally, there is the return to the world and images depicting daily preoccupations.

For Chambers (1998), sandplayers can come into the process at any point of the cycle of moving from the persona to the constellation of the ego to the restructuring of the personality. As with Dunn-Fierstein's model, the initial trays can show the persona and the problem and its resolution. She believes sandplay allows for the shadow content to be directly expressed. Unacknowledged unconscious content can return to the psyche and become destructive. Sandplay allows this unknown and unacknowledged content to be transformed constructively. The persona is crucial to daily living, but when a persona becomes identified with the persona, he or she sees only one side of himself or herself. The backside is the unconscious or shadow, and confronting it brings consciousness. In the sandplay process, if the ego is strong enough, it

can begin the descent into the unconscious where an acting out of the unconscious conflicts occurs. Depending on the ego strength, subsequent trays will reflect less of the persona and more traverses into the archetypal realm. Images become less and less anthropomorphic and increasingly vegetative and then progress to the geological (e.g., to rocks and jewels). The metaphor of the jewels act as evidence of the constellation of the Self. When the Self tray is made, Chambers has found that within the therapy room there is a sense of the beauty of the moment. The beauty of the Self tray is the outer reflection of the beauty within the client. Self trays are sometimes characterized by underground streams, mandalas, and crystals, and the player may request music. The Self tray also acts as evidence of the psyche's ability to hold the tension of the opposites—those elements that oppose the conscious attitude. The ego participates in this holding, effecting an enlargement of consciousness. That process is what Jung called individuation, meaning the development of the personality in the way that is just right for the individual. After the Self has been constellated, there follows a contrapsychological differentiation. Archetypal figures that symbolize aspects of the sandplayers' psyche that have been underdeveloped appear in the tray. For example, the trays of clients who have difficulties connecting with others may begin to contain images that are associated with caring, nurturing, and companionship. These personifications demonstrate how these clients relate to the feeling and relatedness principles within themselves. If their personal experiences with the primary people in their lives have been such that they have been held back and exploited, they project the notion that they are devouring onto people who try to get close. Such people act out their inner feelings with others. The selected images and scenes created around them offer the therapist the information about how those clients treat their own inner attributes of feeling and relatedness, being suspicious and nontrusting of them. After touching the clients' psychological otherness or contrapsychological position, Chambers has seen that sandplayers engage in a new struggle to achieve a new relationship to their life circumstances. The growing ego has to overcome the old structures that shackled them to their problems. Ideally, as the work in the sand trays continues, what emerges is a personality that can handle life situations.

Both Dunn-Fierstein's and Chambers's models are reminiscent of Kalff's (1980) three stages of ego-development: the animal-vegetative stage in which trays are made up of animals and plant life, the fighting stage or the phase of struggle, and the stage of adapting to the group or collective.

Bradway Model

Although Bradway (1997) offered no definitive criteria for determining a completed sandplay process, she did advance a few touchstones that routine-

ly chart the sandplay journey. The initial tray is followed by a descent into the collective unconscious, symbolized by the use of water and all that is associated with the aquatic realm. Noticeably absent are land animals and humans. Subsequent trays are a return to the marketplace with a copious use of objects standing for life in the collective—buildings, people, vehicles, and so on. The descent and return may happen several times, peppered throughout with signs of mother-child unity, first archetypally, then in human terms; the classic cuniunctio that bridges the differentiation; the splitting of opposites; and the Self tray. The Self tray is distinguished by its numinosity, felt experientially as momentous for both therapist and sandplayer. The Self tray need not be centered or contain mandalas but must contain objects that give a sense of the sacred or spiritual. Sometimes, final trays are obvious, such as a horse galloping out of the tray, but many are not so, although the therapist and client often recognize when this phase of the maturation is over.

Case Presentation

A brief case presentation of the sandplay process of six-year-old Peter illustrates several themes central to the sandplay process—the creation of the *temenos*, the descent into the deeper layers of the psyche, and the constellation of the self.

Peter's parents brought him to therapy because of their concern with his encopresis, which is the elimination of fecal matter into inappropriate places. According to the DSM-IV, encopresis may develop for psychological reasons as part of a pattern of anxious and oppositional behavior in children who had previously been continent. Psychosocial stressors are predisposing factors leading to the development of encopresis. Peter had just recently recovered from cancer. His frequent hospitalizations interrupted his schooling, and the stress of coping with the illness further fractured the parents' pre-existing distressed and volatile marriage. The parents also reported that Peter routinely exhibited oppositional behavior such as temper tantrums.

Peter did not speak to me directly, nor did he agree to be seen alone without a parent present for the first eight sessions of his 12-session therapy. He did quickly become accustomed to the sandplay and on entering my office, went directly to the miniatures to play for the duration of the session. In his first tray, the school bus and Luke Skywalker were placed in the tray by Peter's mother because he was reluctant to engage with this process initially (see Figure 1). She selected the schoolbus to represent his life at school and Luke Skywalker to stand for Peter. After her selections, he placed the remainder of the images into the tray himself and spoke to his mother about what he was doing. It appeared that even though he was not going to verbalize anything to me directly, he was not going to allow anyone to be in charge of his

story, even his mother. Peter's first tray was filled with conflict-laden and powerful images (e.g., Zeus) and figures associated with death and decay. Peter said of the bones, "the man must discover them." I thought, "What does he want me to discover?" Was Peter saying "the battle that I fight is one of life and death because the gods have seemed to turn their backs to me?" While looking at his work with the bones, I was gripped with a sad feeling. I asked aloud if Peter ever felt sad. He told his mother that only his brother felt sad, not he himself.

Although Peter was not willing to own any sad feelings, he readily admitted his angry ones. Peter's second sandplay featured his inner chaotic state and his angry feelings that were targeted toward his mother (see Figure 2). In his first tray, Peter's way of interacting with the environment seemed to be primitive—he was either bulldozing over people and things or riding roughshod like the Flintstone character Bambam. The presence of the buses indicated that there was evidence of inner movement of these chaotic and angry energies.

Peter denied feeling any anger toward his father and used some of the miniatures as weapons and acted out shooting his mother. To account for his behavior, Peter's mother explained that she was the disciplinarian in the family and that the father served as a playmate to the children. The ironing board was prominently placed in the center of the tray. Peter said his mother was always ironing. The ironing and the engagement with straightening things out were apt metaphors for this troubled family.



Figure 1. Peter's initial tray

In the third tray, the chaotic state is maintained, with numerous images filling up every inch of the tray (see Figure 3). This time he placed four buses in the tray; other transportation devices included cartoon figures normally associated with violent activity and space rockets. The rockets may represent the opposite of the more primitive way of getting around, which is avoiding people altogether and going to a place described on earth as having little capacity to sustain human life. During that session, his mother is relieved that he does not use the weapons to shoot her. I found the gun and the bat buried when I removed the figures from the tray (see Figure 4).

In tray four (see Figure 5), Peter placed four buses, the cartoon character vehicles, and the space rockets throughout the tray. He also placed cars in the tray, and I took those to represent a more direct and appropriate form of interaction with people. Perhaps that was a concretization of a more involved approach to life. At the end of the last session, Peter did give me eye contact and addressed me directly, although very curtly. The new vehicles added differentiation to his potential for coping with daily life and could be a signal that a more sophisticated way of getting around in the world of people is available to Peter, even though he was not yet using it. Interestingly, an emergency vehicle was moving away from the death region of the bones and toward the wrestler. Was Peter saying that he was being rescued from the land of the dead—that death would have a challenger? Buried beneath that vast network of figures was the face of a decomposed dinosaur (see Figure 6). Did Peter



Figure 2. Ironing things out



Figure 3. Flooding the tray with signs of the problem

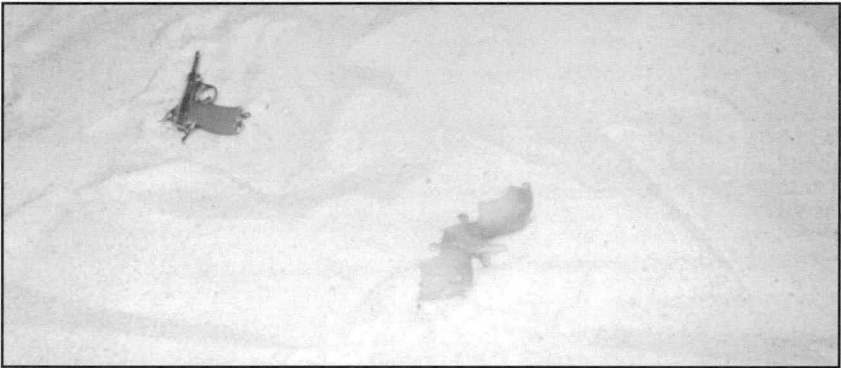


Figure 4. The buried aggression

still believe he had cancer, and were his bowel movements a way of getting rid of the disease?

In his next session, Peter added water to the sand for the first time; it was his fifth sandtray (see Figure 7). He pressed his hand deep into the wet sand, as if to announce: "I am." That was the first time Peter came to therapy accompanied by his father. In that tray, he covertly addressed the encopresis. Peter said that the wet sand was mud, and it could kill. The dry sand was good. He announced that one of the action figures in his tray was stinky and he died. His father commented that the figure was not totally buried, which probably highlighted his



Figure 5. Rescue from the land of the dead

father's impatience with the tenacity of this problem. The adding of water to the sand and the inclusion of the boat pointed to that tray being the beginning of the descent aspect of Peter's sandplay process. Over the next three sessions, Peter delved into the descent process. The images Peter selected continued to be the archetypal warriors, soldiers, aliens, and monsters. His parents and I talked openly during sessions about his experiences in the hospital. Because he was attached to so many machines, Peter called himself, "Mr. Gadget." The arm of a toy Mr. Gadget was part of his third tray. Because he lost his hair three times during the illness, the use of the alien images might have symbolized his feelings of difference and alienation from the children his age. In his seventh tray, Peter added three large sturdy candles, which I allowed him to light. In the next session, Peter was preoccupied with the fear of his own mortality. In the tradition of fairy tales, Peter represented the terrors of his journey by using monsters and menacing figures in the trays. I interpreted the lighting of the candles as Peter's readiness to bring light to his frightening interior journey.

During his seventh visit, I asked Peter if I might see him alone, without his father. That created an uproar, with Peter wailing, clinging to his father, and pleading to be taken home. After some time, I wondered aloud whether he worried if his father would not be there, if he needed him. I wondered if Peter had gotten angry and felt left out, when his father left the hospital to care for the couple's other child. His father and I talked about our feelings of being without our parents in the hospital when we were children. As we talked, Peter began to play with three tortured male miniatures (see Figure 8). I told Peter



Figure 6. Death and decay

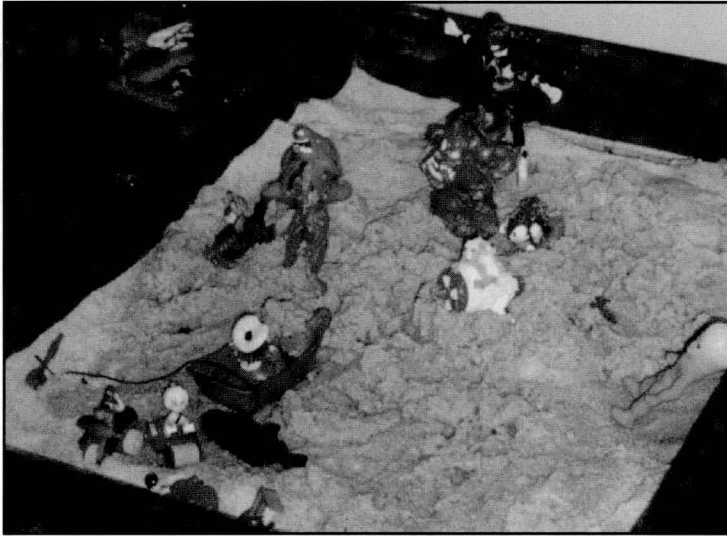


Figure 7. The descent

that I believed being in a hospital could feel as if one were being tortured, even if the doctors were trying bring about a cure. I told Peter that one of those tortured men had died. He shot me a piercing look. Peter buried the men in the tray and said it was a cemetery; then he placed dragons, monsters, and centaurs to guard them so they could not leave. I apologized to Peter for my request to see him alone. I conveyed to him that my request was unreasonable, given his experiences in the hospital and reassured him that he would never have to be in my office without his parents.

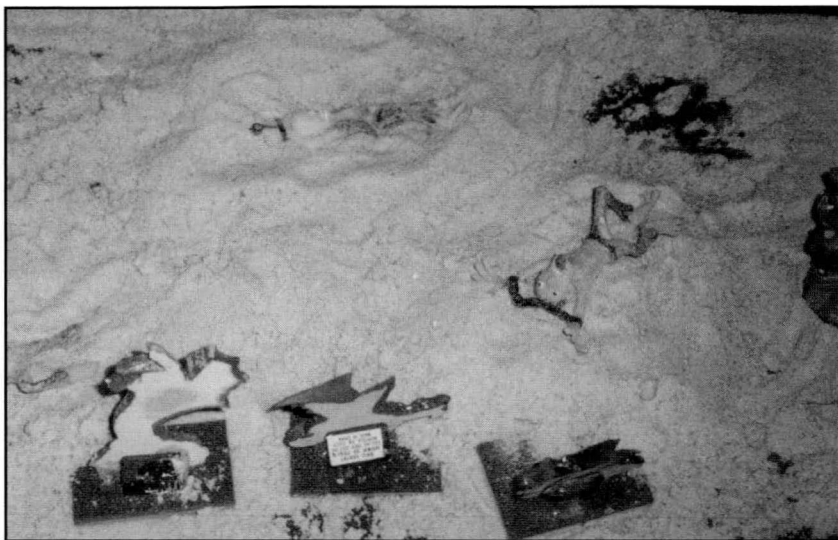


Figure 8. The torture of the cure

It seemed to me that Peter was carrying not only the problems of not being sure whether he would live or die, the stigma of being different, and the anger of the cosmic unfairness of his illness but also the problem of the projections his parents placed on each other. The husband accused his wife of being angry and hostile, and Peter picked that up and saw his mother as a powerful person who needed to be "shot." The wife accused her husband of abandoning her, and Peter acted that out through his clinging to his father.

At the following session, Peter's father said that Peter had agreed to see me alone, with the office door closed for two minutes. It turned out that Peter spent the entire session alone with me in the office and produced two sandtrays. In both trays, he added animals, snakes, dinosaurs, turtles, and people, all of whom had died and were then "alive again." In the final tray of the session, nine prehistoric creatures of varying ages, from newly hatched to fully grown, approach the fire (see Figure 9). In the sandplay process, a Self tray can be identified by the use of light and symbols reflecting birth. Perhaps we were celebrating Peter's newly birthed awareness that he is well and free of cancer. At the end of the session, Peter buried bones and said, "The men are looking for the bones, and then they dig them out." Have I discovered the buried bones, a transference test he gave me at his first session? We played a light-hearted game of putting out the fire, and I said to Peter, "I think you are going to survive." He replied, "No, I won't" and pretended to be dead, then he laughed.

In future sessions, Peter continued to work in the sand and to be seen in therapy without his parents, actively forbidding them to come into the room.

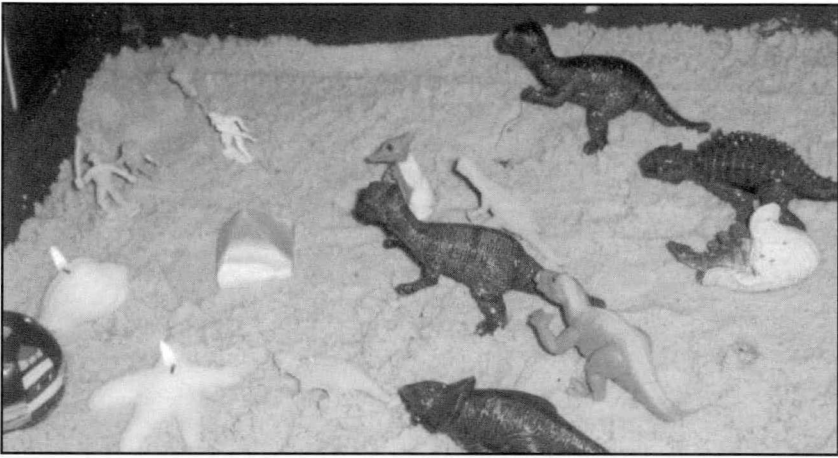


Figure 9. Constellation of the Self



Figure 10. The temenos

In the tray, he continued to work out some of the last vestiges of his personal death and rebirth conflict. He moved on to tackle other problems, such as his parent's impending separation. He reported, "I went to the hospital, and they forgot to fix the 'poop' problem." He was continuing with his tantrums and said he felt sad all the time because his parents were fighting and his dad was sad. Peter is still not well because his family is "sick" and the hospital cannot fix that. The death of the marriage is looming.

At his twelfth and final session, Peter brought in a red porcelain egg, say-

ing he needed it for the tray. He made a nest that would sit on top of fragrant flower petals and called it "comfy." Peter told me that I was to keep the egg. In Peter's sandplay process, the creation of the outer temenos, in which he could feel safe in the therapy, was being transferred within. Only time will tell if Peter can use his brief experience of creating an inner temenos to cope with the daily vicissitudes of his childhood.

Summary

In a survey of experienced sandplay therapists, I found that most therapists characterize the sandplay healing process as a psychic journey into unknown inner realms in which clients confront and contain their own chaos and conflict and encounter a deep and numinous transpersonal aspect called the Self. The journey is considered completed only when the images in the tray reflect a return to the collective or give evidence of a more effective approach to life. The therapists interviewed recommend that a therapist, when working with a client over a period of time when several sandtrays are made, look for the following evidence:

1. Clues to the problem and their possible solutions in the initial tray involve a descent into the deeper layers of the problem in which certain inner dramas are acted out. Examples include digging trenches, clearing spaces at the bottom of the tray, use of water, use of rock and vegetative miniatures, sea creatures, other items, and arrangements suggestive of the realm below.
2. During at least one session, there needs to be some numinous or special moment in which both client and therapist feel deeply moved by the creative elements used in the tray.
3. Both the therapist and the client are able to identify when the client emerges from that deep inward journey with more emotional resilience than the client had before beginning therapy. Final trays contain images and scenes that reflect a preoccupation with life in the collective.

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A New Role for Psychodramatists: Master of Ceremonies

ADAM BLATNER

ABSTRACT. There is new interest in creating or revitalizing rituals and ceremonies in life as well as in therapy or group processes. Because of their training and knowledge, psychodramatists are well prepared for using their skills in the emerging social role of master of ceremonies. Morenean principles can be adapted to the challenge of structuring memorable ceremonies.

Key words: ceremonies, drama therapy, psychodrama rituals

A TREND TOWARD REVITALIZING CEREMONIES AND RITUALS, and even creating new ones, is emerging. In *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*, Moore (1996) alluded to the value of attending to ways of deepening life experiences. Drama therapists know that creating rituals is a way to close or express certain transformational processes (Blatner, 1994). Some drama therapists already function as consultants and officiants to those who want to construct or conduct a meaningful ritual. In addition, in a number of books, authors describe this endeavor (Beck & Metrick, 1990; Biziou, 1999; Cahill & Halpern, 1992; Imber-Black & Roberts, 1992; Metrick, 1994; Roberts, 1999; Wall & Ferguson, 1998; Williamson & Williamson, 1994).

Traditionally, facilitators of celebrations and rituals are generally drawn from the clergy or those recognized as toastmasters. Some contemporary ceremonies now use the disc jockey in the role. Because many people do not believe in the doctrines of a particular denomination, the role of the clergy for many major life transitions is correspondingly limited. Moreover, most clergy lack some of the required skills for facilitating ceremonies.

The challenge of making contemporary ceremonies more relevant and effective involves the weaving together of a number of elements of psychology and

drama and some knowledge of philosophy, symbolism, and spirituality. The aim is to help the participants to feel optimally included and to experience more fully the meaning of the occasion. Psychodramatists are prepared to move toward the master of ceremonies role (henceforth referred to as MC) because they have training in the areas of group dynamics, psychology, and also a measure of dramaturgy. They also know the value of spontaneity and style.

Creating more meaningful rituals is quite compatible with Moreno's ideal of sociatry in which psychodramatic methods serve to develop group cohesion and deeper insights in nonclinical contexts, including everyday life (Blatner, 1985b). Furthermore, there is a need to help people sense more meaning and inclusion when at weddings, funerals, and other rites of passage. Too often people who attend such events complain later that the ritual was dry and that they felt unconnected. To ensure more positive response from those attending the ceremony, I believe that Morenean principles might be adapted to the challenge of enlivening ceremonies (Blatner, 1985a).

The role of MC, as I envision it, is more than that of a toastmaster or an experienced public speaker. Part of the role involves helping to design the ritual, keeping in mind the need for involvement of as many key people as possible and the hunger to feel deeper meaning. Those issues require the MC to interview the key participants, almost like a psychotherapist, and draw out the significance of various themes and symbols. If the event is a wedding, for example, the MC ideally meets in advance with the key participants and helps them in the planning, bringing together a sense of drama, knowledge of the potentials of surplus reality, a sensitivity to sociometry, and awareness of group dynamics to formulate a ceremony that is most meaningful to the key players and optimally inclusive of the feelings of most of those attending.

In this period of cultural transition, when many of the older generation still cling to traditional forms, creativity is required to balance respect for the need for structure and the need for feelings of relevance and maximal inclusiveness. One way to achieve cohesion is to conduct a preliminary sociodrama—an experimental group process—with a number of the key players, in which they talk about the issues involved. As they improvise, they decide to keep certain elements and let go of those that are less successful, distracting, or easily misunderstood. The sociodrama is similar to an early run-through of the rehearsal process in traditional theater, when staging and characterization are worked out and the playwright is actively rewriting the script.

Creating Celebrations

Celebrations mark the role transitions in our lives that generally evoke the validation of our social networks: birthdays, weddings, confirmations, anniversaries, graduations, and so forth. Serious issues may be included,

because the goal is not so much frivolity as it is the more meaningful experiencing of the transition. Thus, welcoming a newborn infant at a christening or saying goodbye to a deceased relative at a funeral are types of celebrations in the larger sense of the word.

Principles from the field of drama can be applied to helping make the special events of our lives more involving and meaningful. Techniques that dramatize an event render it more vivid. When the drama techniques are applied to a collective activity, the occasion attains a degree of social communion because the participants share unconscious as well as conscious mythic images and aspirations.

In considering the art of making the various celebrations of life more meaningful and enjoyable, MCs can view themselves in the combined role elements of producer, choreographer, and set-designer. For success at producing the celebration, the MC needs to recapture the imaginativeness of childhood play, in which children naturally add to their role performance background music, sound effects, voice over (or asides), and other dramatic devices (Blatner, 2000).

Making Occasions More Vivid

One way of developing the MC role is to remember past ceremonies and note what was most effective or counterproductive. It is prudent to keep a notebook to record successful plans. Some principles that may be helpful in planning events follow:

Shifting the Pacing. The MC suggests that parts of the ritual allow for more exciting activities, perhaps involving more vigorous physical movement, and that other parts of the ritual allow the participants to slow down, perhaps to close their eyes, so that they figuratively soak up the atmosphere. The MC may weave in periods of quiet that allow for contemplation, meditation, or fantasy, and counter tendencies for people feeling rushed.

Musical Accompaniment. The MC considers the impact of melody, rhythm, and pace of songs or instrumental pieces that are to be played at various points in the ceremony. The selections can be dramatic and full of meaning. For example, at the funerals of the Black community in New Orleans, hired bands once played dirges on the way to the cemetery and lively jazz spirituals on the way back. The choice of music marked the sadness of missing the one who had died and the vigorous affirmation of faith that life hereafter is worthy of celebration.

Formal and Informal Activities. The MC plans the event so that there are informal interactions as well as more formal activities. A certain amount of structure makes people more comfortable, but if there is too much, the event seems artificial. During the informal periods of an event, it is easy for partic-

ipants to move about freely and make contact with others. It helps to shift between a focus on activities that are collective in nature and activities that involve only one or a few individuals with the rest of the group becoming the audience. The collective activities increase the sense of camaraderie and group cohesion, and the individual activities allow for personal modifications of the experience.

Validating the Participants. Because in many of today's traditional events key people often feel overlooked, the MC strives to have the primary participants to feel recognized. Audience members may be asked to stand and speak briefly or be recognized for some contribution, such as for coming a long distance or bringing a weak or sickly relative. Those who helped with preparations or made a special gift may be similarly acknowledged.

Contributions. For some celebrations, the theme of participation is highlighted. The MC may suggest that the invitations include a request to bring something to share—a poem, song, dance, story, a symbolic item to add to the decorations, a relevant thought, a toast, or some food. Those contributions help the attendees to warm-up to the event as they plan their own contribution to the ceremony.

Gifts. The MC seeks to bridge traditional expectations with ways of making the process easier and more meaningful for guest and key participants. Depending on the ceremony, the opening and the celebration of the meaning of the gifts may be a dramatic element in helping those who have prepared them to feel recognized and appreciated. For some ceremonies, opening gifts can highlight a core element.

Economic Issues. It is wise to consider the economic realities of those putting on the program and those invited. That includes the economics of time, distance, and energy expenditure. In these days of busy lives, the MC recognizes that the efforts that involve costumes or other physical arrangements can be formidable. For example, a location, although romantic or inspirational, may also be unaffordable or physically inaccessible for some significant attendees and is therefore ruled out of the plans.

Cultivating Receptivity. The MC helps the participants in a celebration savor the experience by orchestrating the variables of time, space, and ambiance. The pacing of the event may be leisurely, and the lighting or setting allows the sensations time to register in consciousness as deeply as possible. Whether the experience be an ideal picnic or a romantic or elegant dinner party, the warming-up phases of vigorous, excited, cooperative preparation results in later quiet moments with a sense of contrast.

In a way, all engrossing activities and celebrations involve a certain amount of mild group hypnosis. An MC considers that in planning the elements of the occasion so that the participants begin to focus their attention on the deeper meanings for themselves and for the others. For example, having the group

stand in a circle holding hands helps to promote an awareness that everyone is together in that present moment and that they are especially focused on whatever is at the center of the circle—the set table, the couple getting married, or the new baby. Music, singing, dancing, and simple movement enhance the unification of attention.

Using Invocations. The wording used for parts of a ceremony may be structured in advance and designed to stimulate everyone's being alert and receptive to the emotional significance of the event. An invocation mixes the principles of hypnosis and drama. The pacing of speech, tone of voice, and choice of words are such that they effectively evoke the images, memories, and ideas that are most appropriate for the experience. People's inner lives tend to create elaborations and connections under such conditions, and that increases their sense of being personally involved.

The master of ceremonies or participants may be called on to make a speech at certain points in the course of events. Using principles of invocation, what they say can be planned so that it creates a frame of reference for appreciating the symbolism of the ensuing activities. For example, a couple with a special fondness for candlelight and wine can include those in their wedding ceremony. They can light some candles and announce, "Thus do we kindle the light in our hearts, and may the light illuminate our minds so that our mutual understanding grows." Later, continuing in the ritual form of speech, they can toast each other, saying, "May this champagne remind us of the intoxication of love, hope, and good fellowship."

The wording of invocations highlights the uniqueness of the event. At family reunions, it is good to acknowledge the honored guests. By speaking explicitly and naming special guests, the MC helps the children present to experience the event more vividly. Most occasions have some features that can be emphasized in that fashion. Be certain that all speakers can be heard.

Making Affirmations. An extension of the principle of making invocations is the idea of having participants say things directly. Explicit verbal expressions tend to anchor feelings in memory for those speaking and those listening. Specific themes include the following:

- Expressing appreciation and thanksgiving to God, the group, certain individuals
- Calling attention to the beauty of the natural surroundings, the radiant faces of the participants, the works of art, and so forth
- Noting the significance of any symbolic items, art, or actions, such as a piece of clothing or a special object that might have belonged to an ancestor. If the music chosen was or is a favorite piece of a person present or one present only in spirit, the MC's mention of that connection deepens the imaginative involvement for the participants.

- Acknowledging individual contributions, as mentioned before
- Singing songs with a message or reciting poems or brief literary passages
- Affirming positive expectations and intentions. Phrasing the words in almost prayer form helps to emphasize the emotional and spiritual significance of the event. Near the closing of a celebration, the officiant might say, "May we remember the caring and warmth we share now in future times when we feel separate. May we remember that we can participate again and be welcomed again, just as we are together now."
- Adding dramatic actions to the words, such as in lifting high the ritual objects, or having someone dance or portray something being described.
- Acknowledging hardships, grief, and other negative feelings can make an event more authentic.
- Including phrases, wherever possible, that refer to the process of opening oneself to love, faith, and responsibility. Those values draw out the best from the consciousness of a group.

Including Playfulness. Many ceremonies also benefit from including opportunities for a measure of lightness and spontaneity. Events become too heavy if people are led to take themselves too seriously (Blatner & Blatner, 1997). Many cultures recognize and deal with that phenomenon by including some roles for people who are permitted to be silly, provocative, or irreverent. Those special roles keep a counter theme of humor happening even during important rites of passage or religious rituals. In some cultures, it is the master of ceremonies who has the right to joke with the participants; in other cultures, it is the musicians who have that privilege and responsibility. Such activities need not be disruptive to the seriousness or purposes of most celebrations.

Applying Celebration in the Psychodramatist's Own Life

Psychodramatists can take this role into the more casual activities of helping to promote the rituals of their own lives, remembering to weave in elements of improvisation and elements of drama. The rituals may be informal experiences in a family setting or theme-oriented events for larger groups. Recognizing that families naturally generate traditions over time, the psychodramatist in the MC role can give family members' suggestions dramatic emphasis to ensure that their ideas remain part of the emerging ceremony. A design for celebrations may incorporate or figuratively underline something that one of the participants spontaneously initiates.

The MC role accentuates the enterprise of creating more meaningful rituals. The endeavor becomes a topic of conversation in families, as they communicate by e-mail or by phone. Instead of just letting holidays happen, a measure of forethought can be woven in, which becomes a model and lesson

for the younger generation. Traditions that have become tiresome or lifeless can be challenged, re-vitalized, or changed.

New Types of Celebrations

The seasons, at least in the temperate zones, can be occasions for community celebrations (Henes, 1996). Weaving in the psychological meaning of seasons can possibly stimulate some of the following associations:

Spring ceremonies reflect the new beginnings that are occurring in people's lives.

- Summer events honor the fullness of everyone's talents, their forms of productivity, and the excitement of their interests. Participants may prepare and bring something to a show-and-tell program.

- Autumn celebrations are an opportunity for friends and families to review their harvest of the year. It may be a time for thanksgiving, and the group members may define for themselves what they want to acknowledge. It is a time for mellowness and thoughtfulness, in the sense of musing and reflection.

- Mid-winter is a good time to share fellowship. On the coldest days, there is a kind of mercy in a group's sharing with each other in a spirit of friendship and festivity.

Summary

The principles mentioned here may be applied to the process of creating more exciting celebrations and ceremonies. Many of the rites of passage in our culture can thus become more vital and meaningful. Psychodramatists can employ the range of their skills to apply Morenean principles in this untapped and unformed field.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Psychodrama, Surplus Reality, and the Art of Healing, by Zerka T. Moreno, Leif Dag Blomkvist, and Thomas Rutzel. New York: Routledge. 2000.

My serious reading of the literature of psychodrama started in 1981 in Marrakech. It was there, under the Moroccan sun and under the influence of the atmosphere and the local culture, that I first read J. L. Moreno's *Psychodrama, Volume 1*. It was a heady experience. I decided that the book contained something very important and was very different from the literature I had read in my then recently completed psychiatric and psychoanalytic therapy training. At times, however, it was very difficult for me to grasp Moreno's ideas, although I did think he was trying to say something of great interest and importance. Indeed, I decided to train as a psychodramatist.

In the years that followed, I lost some of my links with the core importance of Moreno's creative philosophy. During the 1980s, I began to write about psychodrama. I now see that I was, albeit for the best of reasons, becoming part of a process that risked losing psychodrama's major contribution to the world and its therapeutic needs. Moreover, I believe that other authors followed the same trend, moving psychodrama toward a superficially more logical, cognitive, systemic, and prosaic school of psychotherapy, perhaps one that might be seen as more acceptable to other schools of psychotherapy.

This new and rather magical book, *Psychodrama, Surplus Reality, and the Art of Healing*, has haunted me for many months, initially because I served as the publisher's reviewer and more recently because I was asked to review it for this journal. By a strange quirk of fate, I write this review once more under the Moroccan sun.

In her epilogue to the book, Zerka Moreno calls the work "a blueprint which we owe to Moreno." The book consists of a series of conversations between Zerka Moreno and Leif Dag Blomkvist; their conversations roam over Moreno's central ideas in chapters with such titles as "Time and Death," "Ecstasy and Role Reversal," and "The Surreal Experience." Blomkvist has added commentaries to the dialogues, and Moreno contributes additional chapters on the early history of psychodrama, its clinical application, the use of humor and magic objects, and an epilogue.

The authors are able to bring to life the essentials of Moreno's philosophy and therapeutic creation, psychodrama, in a compact and accessible manner that loses nothing of the original magic of J. L.'s creativity. Unlike the three volumes of *Psychodrama*, this book has an index. I should add that the book

also acts as a clear and definitive statement about Zerka Moreno's significant contribution to psychodrama over the last five decades.

That said, the book is not without faults. For example, I believe that in the chapter on sociometry, the authors show a limited understanding of the complex process that occurs in analytic group therapy. Furthermore, I consider that same chapter to be a somewhat confused discussion of the subject. On page 94, Zerka Moreno defines sociometry as the "measurement of human relations," a definition that applies to the use of sociometric techniques to explore and measure the relationships in a pre-existing group at the New York State Training School for Girls at Hudson. On page 109, she states that a family is not a sociometric group because the children in a family do not choose (using sociometric choices) to become members of the group.

I am optimistic that psychodramatists at all levels of the craft will find much to debate and argue about in the contents of this rich and challenging book. It put me in touch again with some of the original reasons for my being so moved by psychodrama. I recommend that psychodramatists read the book and form their own opinions.

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Theatre for Community, Conflict and Dialogue—The Hope Is Vital Training Manual, by Michael Rohd. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998.

At a clinic in Washington, DC, in 1992, theater teacher Michael Rohd led a series of drama workshops with teenagers from a private high school and homeless people with HIV. Together, they explored how to use theater to delve into the impact of HIV and AIDS on all of their lives. Something new and exciting began to take shape: theater based on dialogue and action, theater without answers or resolution, theater committed to the depth and breadth of engagement that becomes possible only when the body and the imagination are involved.

In *Theatre for Community, Conflict and Dialogue*, Rohd reports the subsequent development of that work into a practice that has proved itself with youth groups around the country, in which not only issues related to HIV and AIDS but also concerns about violence, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy are addressed. Rohd's purpose with his compact book is to empower the reader to adopt the precepts and techniques that he developed for the Hope Is Vital project. Subtitled *The Hope Is Vital Training Manual*, the book contains a succinct presentation of Rohd's method, which is broken down into clearly described activities designed to meet specific goals at each stage of the process.

The substance of the work is the improvisational development and enactment of scenes that embody pressing social or personal issues but do not convey a message or a solution. The scenes are designed to raise questions with such tension and urgency that when the facilitator freezes the action, the audience members are ready to take the place of the protagonist on stage and try out different decisions. In that way, a dialogue ensues—emotionally invested dialogue in action. By the end of a session, many points of view have been heard, many behavioral choices explored, many personal experiences represented. The point, as Rohd has emphasized, is the dialogue itself, the experiential learning that everyone does have options, choices, and rights, even in the face of the worst pressures that young people must deal with.

Rohd acknowledges the basis of his work in Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, a political theater that draws the audience—"spect-actors"—into the enactment and transformation of oppression. Rohd's attention to group process, however, distinguishes his work from Boal's and from some other theater-based approaches. Rohd's description of warm-up exercises, for example, is impressively different from the usual compendium of "icebreakers" that are often used by those ignorant of the true complexity of warm-up. Each exercise is firmly placed in the larger context of the development of the group and the leader's goals at any particular moment.

Rohd also makes it clear that this group work is not therapy. The sessions take place not in clinical settings but in community and educational contexts, and the goals are social rather than individual improvement. "You are not trying to use a group to work through one person's problems. You are using a group to explore a social problem compressed into a specific, fictional interaction that is culled from the collective consciousness of the participants you are working with" (p. 71). Rohd does not mention Playback Theatre, a form that shares *Hope Is Vital's* focus on the group and the commitment to improvisation, interaction, and social change; but he does describe Playback's "fluid sculptures," apparently unaware of their origin. He comments on, but tantalizingly briefly, the connection to Brechtian theater that seeks to challenge and disturb its audience rather than lead them to catharsis. Audiences leave the traditional theater, having journeyed through discomfort to resolution. Rohd, like Brecht, wants to provoke audiences into action. For Rohd, it begins on the stage itself.

Written as a practical guide with a brief scan of background and theory, *Theatre for Community, Conflict and Dialogue* contains a proven technique that will be of interest and value for practitioners of action methods.

JO SALAS
New Paltz, New York

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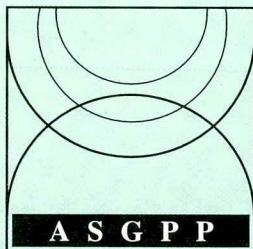
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