

THE GROUP AND ITS PROTAGONIST

The Relationship Between the Individual and the Group.

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This thesis has been completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements toward certification as a practitioner by the Board of Examiners of the Australian and New Zealand Psychodrama Association, Incorporated. It represents a considerable body of work undertaken with extensive supervision. This knowledge and insight has been gained through hundreds of hours of experience, study and reflection.

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To see the world
in a grain of sand
and infinity
in an hour.

William Blake.

I set forth a humble and inglorious life, that does not matter. You can tie up all moral philosophy with a common and private life, just as well as with a life of richer stuff. Each man bears the entire form of man's estate.

Michel de Montaigne "Of Repentance"

Creatively dreaming Nature dreamed here and there the same dream.

Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus*.

Between the sensory and the intellectual world, sages have always experienced an intermediate realm, one akin to what we call the imaginings of poets. If you are a religious believer, whether normative or heterodox, this middle world is perceived as the presence of the divine in our every day world. If you are more skeptical, such presence is primarily aesthetic or perhaps a kind of perspectivism.

Harold Bloom, *Omens of the Millennium* 1996.

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the relationship between the individual and the group. The writer focuses on psychodramatic theory relating to an individual's personality, theories about the group as system and the way individuals link to form groups. It is suggested that the ability to perceive the underlying structure of these links assists the group leader in identifying one person as the protagonist for the group, thus honouring both the individual and the group life. The context for the exploration is a psychodrama personal development group. It is noted that the conceptions and methods discussed can be applied to all small groups. The author aims to invoke a mode of perception that will assist group leaders to work with the group as a whole, while at the same time attending to individual concerns.

PREFACE

This paper has its origins in 1986 when I was relaxing in the bath on a Sunday night after conducting an intensive weekend psychodrama workshop. In one glimpse I saw the whole event, and the interconnections between the participants, as one living whole. Each group member, while conscious of and focussed on their own concerns, contributed to the group developing a life of its own. I had a sense that, while true to themselves, the individuals were expressing a depth of purpose and direction that had its source at a deep level in the group, a level they were not fully conscious of at the time. I saw an underlying drive at work in the group toward new and deeper levels of consciousness. The notion that the whole is more than the sum of the parts was confirmed through my experience. I wanted to grasp hold of this fleeting moment of insight. I wrote for many hours that night and the next.

That was more than 10 years ago. Since then I have looked closely at what connects individuals to a group's life. I have thought about the joy of that spiritual unity, and felt the dread of the "group think" phenomena.

From these broad conceptions I have endeavoured to write a paper which draws out principles that assist in running groups and directing psychodrama. I share here my conception of the link between the individual and the group, and suggest ways of *seeing* group process that may assist group leaders in identifying the protagonist.

I wish to thank people for their part in the creation of this thesis. The earlier drafts of this paper were read by Max Clayton, my then primary trainer, who offered valuable inspiration and comment. I have been assisted and encouraged by many friends and colleagues over the years, both in the development of the ideas in the paper as well as in the task of writing the paper itself. Bona Anna edited, commented and involved herself with numerous drafts. Profound thanks go to Don Reekie, my supervisor while I wrote the final drafts of the thesis. His meticulous care and wisdom in our many email exchanges have made it a pleasure to complete this work.

INTRODUCTION

As you read this paper, recall your own experiences of groups that you have led or participated in. I invite you to enter into the group from which I draw the examples. Imagine particularly the task of the group leader when faced with diverse individuals and how this might conflict with the desire to have coherent group life.

Join me as a systems thinker, becoming aware of the inter-relationships in the group, to be able to use the imagination to see the life of the group and the inner life of individuals. These abilities form part of the repertoire of the director of a psychodrama, and are relevant to the adequate leadership of any therapeutic or teaching group.

Writing this paper has been a process that has taught me a lot about the group process. I have a sense of sharing these personal insights in the hope that they stimulate your own. I also hope, that as well as insight, the answers to practical questions will present themselves to you. For example, when is the focus of the group *usefully* on one individual, and when is it not the case. My intention is that the paper assists the group leader (and through the leader, the whole group) to maintain autonomy, and not be swayed by one individual's distress or ability to attract attention.

The writings of J. L. Moreno who developed the psychodrama method, as well as others who have contributed to the school of thought, will be referred to in some detail. I will draw on the concepts used in the psychodrama method developed by Moreno, especially role theory and sociometry. My intention is to enable the reader to put this paper into the context of the psychodrama tradition, which has been built on continuously since Moreno's time and continues to be extended. I will also draw on writing in the field of group psychotherapy, especially the focal conflict model of Whitaker and Lieberman. I will present the literature review in such a way as to create a

common language so that we can enter into the consideration of the dynamics of a specific group.

The psychodramatic approach identifies three phases in the group: the warm-up, the psychodramatic enactment phase and the sharing. The enactment phase is usually with one member as the chief actor or protagonist. Through this individual member, as Moreno put it “The audience sees itself, that is, one of its collective syndromes portrayed on the stage.” (1953, p. 84.) Becoming aware of how the individual’s story links to “collective syndrome” is the focus of this paper.

The paper looks at one psychodrama group in some detail and from this investigation I share my insights and conclusions. Observations shared here fit with my overall experience of group process. I aim to assist readers to warm-up to their own insights, based on their own experience of groups, rather than to expect generalisations from one group to be persuasive. Theoretical ideas and observations are discussed in the hope of assisting the reader to see their own groups and the individuals in them with enhanced awareness. I hope that the paper promotes a willingness to trust the flow of events, including the group leader’s trust of his or her own process.

The conclusion will highlight the main themes of the paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature is considered in three broad overlapping categories, they are: material related to the personality of the individual, material related to the group and material that focuses on how parts of a system relate to the whole.

The first category describes role theory and is important background to this paper. The second category describes the central concern model and the focal conflict model, and other theories of group dynamics. The third category returns to the roots of group work in Moreno's sociometry, and other theories which give us a sense of the inter-relationship between the individual and the group. The aim is to assist the reader to reflect imaginatively on the patterns that relate the part to the whole.

PERSONALITY

Role Theory

Each psychotherapeutic modality has a theory of personality and human development that assists the therapist in their work. Role theory informs the psychodramatist in the area of personality and human development.

The concept of "role" is central to the methods developed by Moreno. His definition is that "Role is the functioning form the individual takes in the specific moment he reacts to a specific situation in which other persons or objects are involved." (Moreno, 1977, p. IV) His next sentence is very important, and makes it clear that a role is not simply an event in the world but an act of symbol making on the part of the perceiver. "The symbolic representation of this functioning form, perceived by the individual and others is called the role." (Moreno, 1977, p. IV) To name a role well is an integration of art and science. A simple noun for the actor (e.g. fighter or lover) plus an adjective (such as cruel or brave) may be enough, but the true test of a good role description is if the naming does the job! To quote Moreno again: "The function of the role is to enter the unconscious from the social world and bring shape and order to it." (Moreno, 1977, p. IV) Psychodrama is a way of concretising the otherwise elusive unconscious. Thus we use the social or cultural to manifest the unconscious. "A role is a unit of culture", says Moreno (1977, p. IV) A good description is "objective" in the sense that when named there is some agreement that it describes accurately the essence of the functioning. The naming can be enlivening, entertaining and therapeutic. A

good name for a role does all this at once because it evokes the drama and the whole system. To call someone **Dr. Jeckyll**, for example, has dramatic and therapeutic implications, we can see the **Mr. Hyde** lurking in the background, and thus maximised, it provides a vivid glimpse of an aspect of the personality structure.

All of Moreno's work will amplify our understanding of roles, as the concept is so central to his thinking. Lynette Clayton's paper, "The Personality Theory of J. L. Moreno" (1975), is a concise précis that emphasises the significance of role theory and places it in its historical context. Anne E. Hale (1981) has used Moreno's work to present a more schematic conception of role theory and her diagrams highlight the systems of roles, which is of course part of their nature as "reaction" to a specific situation. Roles do not exist in isolation from the world or a person's other roles. Max Clayton's *Living Pictures of the Self* (1993), especially the chapter on "The Concept of the Role", and his chapter "Role Theory and its Application in Clinical Practice" in *Psychodrama Since Moreno* (Holmes, Karp, & Watson, 1994), are comprehensive, concise and provide concrete examples of how the concept of role is used in communication about people's experience of one another, and how it can be used in clinical work. Antony Williams has contributed to the literature on role theory in *The Passionate Technique* (1989) especially the Chapter 4, "Interviewing for a Role" and Chapter 7, "The Systemic Nature of Roles". In *Forbidden Agendas* (1991) in Chapter 3 "Social Atom and Self" he is particularly clear in showing the radical nature of role theory in defining personal identity as interactive in the section called "The Self" page 47.

GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Central Concern

Relevant to this paper is the work that has been done on identifying group themes. Significant to psychodrama is the now classic work of Dale Richard Buchanan (1981) who described the central concern model used at St. Elizabeth's Hospital where psychodrama was practiced in its early stages of

development through to its maturity. This paper is the result of many years of work by people who were inspired by the work of Moreno. It is essential background for this paper, and the work here is an amplification of it.

Buchanan's paper outlines factors that influence the central concern in a group. They consist of the following: The director's warm-up, the contractual basis for the group, the individual's concerns influenced by his original family system (matrix of identity), and the manifest content. As well as outlining the factors that lead to the central concern, the paper explains Moreno's notion that a psychodrama group, even when focussing on the protagonist, is a group centred method. "He stated that the protagonist must serve as the vehicle for the group. He further stated that when the psychodrama is group centred that the theme be a truly experienced problem of the participants." (Buchanan, 1981. p.47.)

The paper advocated the formulation of a central concern statement "The statement of the central concern can be used for the criteria for an action sociogram. Once the statement has been articulated the group can then focus on the individual who most accurately mirrors that concern for the group." (Buchanan, 1981 p.59) In this paper the principle is upheld. The aim here is to explore Buchanan's approach with reference to a particular group and to develop an appreciation for the intricacies of how the group and its protagonist are related.

Focal Conflict Model

Work that has been influential in describing the group's current state as well as its development is the model originally proposed by Thomas French (1952) for individual therapy and adapted to psychoanalytically oriented groups by Dorothy Stock Whitaker and Morton Lieberman (1970). The model has been extensively used by psychodramatists and I hope that this paper will vitalise the reader's use of this means of analysis by linking it with the role theory of personality, the protagonist centred approach described by Buchanan, and Moreno's sociometric theory.

Fundamental to the model is Proposition 1 which Whitaker and Lieberman mention in Chapter 2 of their book. It reads as follows:

“Successive individual behaviours are linked associatively and refer to a common underlying concern about the here and now situation.”

(Whitaker and Lieberman, 1970, p. 22.)

Group process is seen as a series of conflicts made up of a disturbing motive and a reactive fear. A focal conflict is an accurate reflection of the group if all the events of the group can be seen as either an expression of the disturbing motive or the reactive fear, or as an attempt at a solution to the conflict. The group works towards a resolution of the conflict. Resolutions take several forms. It is worth quoting two passages from Whitaker and Lieberman:

“Solutions may be restrictive or enabling in character. A restrictive solution is directed primarily at alleviating fears and does so at the expense of satisfying or expressing the disturbing motive. An enabling solution is directed towards alleviating fears and, at the same time, allows for some satisfaction of the disturbing motive.”

(Whitaker and Lieberman, 1970, p. 23.)

“Solutions may be successful or unsuccessful; in order to be successful, a solution must be unanimously accepted... but unanimous acceptance does not imply that everyone must indicate overt willingness to abide by the solution. Most typically, acceptance is implicit ... through silent acquiescence that they will not interfere.

(Whitaker and Lieberman, 1970, p. 22.)

Disturbing Motive X Reactive Fear

Solutions:

Enabling or Restrictive.

Successful or Unsuccessful

Figure 1 Diagrammatic representation of the Focal Conflict Model

(The symbol “x” is used, following Whitaker and Lieberman, to denote “opposed by” or “in conflict with”.)

A focal conflict continues in the group until it is resolved, then a new focal conflict emerges. In this sense the group is part of a developmental process which has counterparts in individual psychology and in sociology. I will mention some works that place Whitaker and Lieberman’s theory into a larger context of thinking.

Erik Erikson (1971) conceptualised the growth of an individual as involving the completion of a series of developmental crises. He also proposed the notion of each crisis being capable of having a resolution as an outcome or of not being resolved at all. This view of development was termed *dialectical* by the metaphysical philosopher Hegel. Marx was influenced by Hegel and used the dialectical view of development in his theory. It is summed up in this passage by Mao Zedong:

“Contradiction is universal and absolute, it is present in the process of development of all things and permeates every process from beginning to end. What is meant by the emergence of a new process? The old unity with its constituent opposites yields to a new unity with its constituent opposites.”

(Mao Zedong, 1968)

The work of Whitaker and Lieberman is an excellent model for making sense of the mysterious flow of themes in the group, a flow that has a rhythm and a sense of interconnectedness. Familiarity with the model will enhance the group leader's ability to make (or not make) interventions. The model provides a window into the group-as-a-whole and also directly assists with the approach advocated by Moreno, whereby a protagonist carries the group forward through each focal conflict (to use Whitaker and Lieberman's terminology).

Group-as-a-whole

Wilfred Bion's classic book, *Experiences in Groups and Other Papers* (1961) is influential in many group therapy approaches which conceptualise the work as therapy *of the group* rather than individual therapy *in the group*. Whitaker and Lieberman were influenced by Bion and the Tavistock Clinic in taking Thomas French's work developing group analysis. In their paper “Methodological Issues in the Assessment of Total Group Phenomena in Group Therapy” (1963) they reference Bion's “Group Dynamics: a Review” (1952) in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. Bion's work like that of Whitaker and Lieberman advocates that there are forces which underlie the group's life. He called them *basic assumptions* which individuals have a *valency* to contribute to. In a *work* group basic assumptions are satisfied and not to the fore. The assumptions about leadership, enemies, and the creation of a utopian solution or leader, lead to concepts describing behaviours that are well used in group psychotherapy: fight / flight, dependency, and pairing. He

postulates that tendencies to make these assumptions have their origin in “proto-mental” events, which he also calls the matrix:

“... at the level of proto-mental events we may say that the group develops until its emotions become expressible in psychological terms. It is at this point that I say that the group behaves ‘as if’ it were acting on a basic assumption.

“In the proto-mental system there exist prototypes of the three basic assumptions...”

W.B. Bion (1961, p. 101)

Bion’s naming of a variety of basic assumptions enables us to communicate about aspects of the group that would otherwise be difficult to grasp at anything but a vague level. He enables group workers to “see” what would otherwise be the hidden life of a group. His notion of valency proposes a way of linking the individual with the group life.

“Acceptance of the idea that a human being is a group animal would solve the difficulties that are felt to exist in the seeming paradox that a group is more than the sum of its parts. The explanation of certain phenomena must be sought in the matrix of the group and not in the individuals that go to make up the group.”

W.B. Bion (1961, p. 132-3)

Valency, was his way of thinking of the individual’s readiness to enter through his or her preconscious into the group life at a “basic assumption” level in ways that are instantaneous, instinctive and not consciously thoughtful.

Psychodramatists might be interested in comparing Bion’s concepts to Moreno’s contribution of the sociometric matrix (described on page 12), which is also, at least initially, a hidden level of reality in the group.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTS AND WHOLE IN SYSTEMS

The literature mentioned so far gives voice to the way we can view an individual personality as a system of roles. It provides models whereby we can view the life of a group and its processes and dynamics. In this part of the literature review I reflect on the relationship between the whole and its parts. The aim is to enhance appreciation of the wisdom of the group centred approach and show how, through its use, we are tuning into the individual's dynamics at the same time. The individual's relation to the whole is at the core of religious or spiritual experience, and people often comment that a group has given them a sense of the numinous in some way. The exploration of the relationship between the group and the individual may give us a sense of the spiritual or aesthetics dimensions in groups. In this section of the review I return to Moreno's sociometry, which underpins the work with protagonists in group therapy. I mention the work of Kumar and Treadwell (1985) who provide a summary of techniques used to identify the protagonist in a group, and then return to Moreno.

Sociometry

Moreno's major theoretical contributions are in the area of spontaneity, role theory, and sociometry. His ideas are interconnected. Psychodrama rests on the theoretical and methodological framework of sociometry.

"Sociometry, a relatively new science developed gradually since the World War of 1914 -18, aims to determine objectively the basic structures of human societies." wrote Moreno in 1937. (1951, p. 16). Contemporary writers (Carlson-Sabelli, Sabelli and Hale, 1994) emphasise another aspect of sociometry, one that is certainly present in Moreno's conception:

Sociometry is a therapeutic intervention (not only an objective measurement), to promote personal choice, and to foster insight into the physical, biological, social and psychological processes that predetermine them, and which may be largely outside the realm of free choice.

(Carlson-Sabelli, Sabelli and Hale, 1994, p. 147.)

Moreno was critical of applying scientific methods used in physics and biology to human beings. He devised approaches that were radically opposed to these methods. He pioneered methods that go beyond “participant observation” because in sociometric work there is the added dimension of the subject participating in observation of his or her own life. (Moreno, 1951, p.17). This shift has still not been recognised in the “social sciences”. In fact Moreno refused to call the other methods scientific when they applied to humans. Using the methodology of physical science when it comes to people does not work. In Moreno’s words:

“Because of the value which the experimental method has shown in these areas [physical and biological sciences] the conclusion has been drawn by many writers that it can be applied to the social sciences. But their optimism is unjustified. Mill’s skepticism was correct in principle; but he did not realise that it was the experimental method which was at fault, and not the inaccessibility and fleeting inconsistency of the social phenomena.

“The chief methodological task of sociometry has been the revision of the experimental method so that it can be applied effectively to social phenomena.”

(Moreno, 1951, p.31)

Moreno called his method sociometry, and devised criteria for its application. He devised various methods to assist people to spontaneously enter into collaborative sociometric research. Psychodrama is the best known of these and has become a method of group psychotherapy in its own right. However,

it is only one method of sociometric experimentation in Moreno's larger vision.

"In many forms of psychodramatic production, also, the artificiality of the contrived experiment is overcome, the experiment in situ and the life setting are one and the same thing. Early types of psychodramatic procedure were experiments in situ. The transfer of the psychodrama to a "theatre", a laboratory, or a treatment room was a secondary and later development."

(Moreno, 1951, p.34)

Moreno encourages a situation where there is both a cohesive group and where individuals are fully in tune with their own concerns.

Sociometric Matrix

Predating Bion's use of the term "matrix", and referring to something similar, in *Who Shall Survive?* (1953, p.79 ff.) Moreno speaks of the sociometric matrix. Moreno usually describes the matrix with reference to two other abstract terms: *tele* and *atoms*. Moreno describes the social fabric, as a network of *atoms*, roles associated with each other, as electrons are in a physical atom. It is interesting to note that Bion also used a term from physics, *valency* to denote a psychological pull towards making basic assumptions (Bion, 1961, p.153). What organises and binds the network is *tele*. Moreno describes it as a process "that attracts individuals to each other or which repels them, that flow of feeling of which the social atom and the networks are apparently composed." According to Moreno *tele* and feeling are not exclusively an individual phenomena, they are part of a "collectivistic unity", which can exist in social structures:

"...we found that social atoms and networks have a persistent structure and that they develop in a certain order, we had extra individual structures – and probably there are many more to be discovered -- in

which this flow can reside... we conceive this flowing feeling, the tele, as an interpersonal ... as a sociometric structure.”

(Moreno, 1937 in Fox, 1987 p. 27)

Underlying structure of tele relationships becomes visible upon analysis of the attractions, repulsions and neutral connections between the roles. Moreno speaks of the sociometric matrix as being “underneath” and that through sociometric tests and analysis we can “unearth” it. Here is his description of this hidden complexity:

“The sociometric matrix consists of various constellations, tele, the atom ... clusters of atoms linked together with other clusters of atoms via interpersonal chains or networks.”

(Moreno, 1953, p. 80)

In Psychodrama Vol. 1, Moreno notes that the group even at its first meeting is “not just a collection of individuals”. He describes how individuals unite into a cohesive whole.

“...there is tele already operating between the members of a group from the first meeting. This weak “primary” cohesiveness can be utilised by the therapist towards the development and sharing of common therapeutic aims. All the interactions ... in the course of therapy will be influenced by this original structure and will in turn modify it.

(Moreno, 1977, p. XX, his italics)

He goes on to describe how the psychodramatist can through observation of the group, experience this cohesion:

“He does not have to give a formal test in order to obtain this knowledge. He takes notice of this “embryonic matrix”. It is coming to him through his immediate observation. It becomes his empathic guide for the therapeutic process in becoming. The group has, from the first

session on ... a specific structure of interpersonal relations which, however, does not reveal itself at once, on the surface, an underlying sociometric or group matrix.”

(Moreno, 1977, p. XX)

Moreno has a strong intuitive insight into structures that underlie the overt appearance of a group. He uses many different phrases which all point to such a phenomena: he calls it the interpsyche and the co-unconscious present in a family and group (Moreno, 1977, p. VI). He was able to go beyond intuition and articulate the interconnections in terms of roles and role structures and flows that can be conceived as separate from the individual. His methods are ways of making explicit how these underlying forces operate. The same idea is present in his description of the audience in a psychodrama:

“According to historians of the Greek drama the audience was there first, the chorus, musing about a common syndrome.”

(Moreno, 1977, p. “e”)

In Psychodrama Volume I, Moreno describes the matrix of identity of an individual. I quote the passage here as it sheds light on what he means by “matrix”, and thus on the sociometric matrix as well:

“The matrix of identity is the infant’s social placenta, the locus in which he roots. It gives the human infant safety, orientation and guidance. The world around it is called the first universe ... The first universe ends when the infantile experience of the world in which everything is real begins to break up into fantasy and reality.”

(Moreno, 1977, p. 64)

It is at the level of the sociometric matrix that there is a linking of the individual and the group.

Warm-up

The term warm-up is widely used in psychodramatic circles, sometimes to refer to individuals, and often to a quality of the group as a whole. The latter use may be in reference to the sociometry in the group as well as the roles of the members. I think of warm-up as being the extent to which a person or group is "ready, willing and able" to do a specific task. Moreno defined it as "the operational expression of spontaneity." (Moreno, 1953, p. 42) Warm-up is relevant to the selection of a protagonist, perhaps more so than an application of any specific sociometric techniques. Moreno is speaking to the audience about the warm-up:

"Another significant aspect is the warm-up. In this session the participants were entirely unprepared, while in other cases they may be warmed-up in advance as to the problem to be worked out... Then there is the warm-up which takes place in the first few minutes of the session... The form which the warm-up takes may come from the director or the group itself."

(Moreno, 1951a in Fox, 1987, p. 177)

Warm-up is also a quality of the group as a collective. The degree to which the group operates with spontaneity is influenced by such things as the purpose and planning that has gone into the event, such factors as the communication prior to the meeting is influential. The warm-up is not simply a given, warm-up can be created by the director. The aim of the current study is to focus on the ways the director may assist in the revelation of the warm-up and name it. An accurate assessment of the current warm-up will assist the ability to influence it.

Techniques

The emergence of the protagonist has been seen as occurring as the result of the application of a technique. In addition to appreciation of the warm-up and a grasp of the sociometric matrix, a psychodrama director requires skill in

using sociometric techniques to identify a protagonist. In “Identifying the Protagonist”, V. Krishna Kumar and Thomas W. Treadwell (1985) provide a useful summary of methods. Here are the five methods proposed:

- a. volunteering
- b. action sociometry
- c. social atom
- d. pencil and paper sociometry
- e. information revealed during sharing of previous psychodrama.

The paper usefully links the techniques to the settings in which they are most appropriate. It also provides practical background material for the more general exploration between the individual and the group.

A GROUP AND ITS PROTAGONIST.

Excerpts from a group psychodrama session are presented to explore the relationship between individuals and the life of the group as a whole, and to show how the protagonist emerges and expresses the group's concern. I will describe the warm-up phase, presenting interactions which give an impression of the event. It is in the warm-up that the individual concerns are first evident. A discussion follows. Then the psychodramatic enactment and the sharing phase is described followed by a discussion about the relationship of the drama to the individuals and the way in which the protagonist emerged.

PSYCHODRAMA GROUP.

A weekly psychodrama group with a focus on personal development has been meeting regularly for several months. The group has three men, two women and the director. Present on this occasion were Allan, Sam, Carl and Wendy, the other member, a woman, was absent.

EXPRESSION OF INDIVIDUAL CONCERNS IN THE WARM-UP

Early in the session Allan states how frustrated he is with a friend, Alice (not a member of the group). She is usually warm towards him. He likes her and notices how unhappy she is. He wishes to assist her, but Alice rejects his attempts. Allan finds it difficult when he tries to be empathic with Alice and there seems to be a denial on her part. He gives an example: he had, in an attempt to get closer, commented that Alice was nervous. Her answer was, "in your opinion". This left Allan thwarted.

The next to speak is Carl. He knows Allan and Sam socially, and is aware of a conflict they had.

CARL: I'm aware of the tension between Allan and Sam. I would like you two to look at that again, and sort it out.

Sam states his side of the conflict about their interaction in the school where they both work. Allan listens patiently but shows in his expression he has a different perspective.

SAM: I feel put down when you correct me, as you did in the playground and later in the staff room, I don't feel I can hold onto my self-esteem.

ALLAN: I could see you were caught up in the process, and so rather than let it get out of hand I stopped it. I was trying to help you and later I suggested you needed to do some work on it in the group.

Sam agrees.

Wendy thinks Sam agrees too readily.

WENDY: Come on, don't give up on your feelings. Keep going.

Sam appreciates this.

SAM: Ah, that is what I need, more encouragement. I felt criticised by you Allan.

ALLAN: I thought I was supporting you.

The director suggests role training for Allan to find ways that will enable him to form a more effective relationship with Sam. It appears that he wants to be more supportive but finds his efforts thwarted. Allan, however, does not see it as his problem and wants no support or role training from the group.

Approaching the group from a new angle the director asks the participants to name the emerging group theme. He invites the group to use cushions to make a sculpture. Carl chooses a small red cushion to be the genuine desire to help, to be the heart. He then places a large cushion on top, to concretise the fear of intimacy.

There is consensus that this portrays the theme of the group. Wendy speaks with energy about the sculpture and concludes by saying, “You get crucified for helping people.” With some forward movement in her body, she continues to say how scared she gets when ... The director takes this as the action cue to invite Wendy to be the protagonist in a drama.

COMMENT ON THE WARM-UP PHASE

This is a group centred warm-up; members talked and no specific instructions were provided by the director. The very first words in the group were indicative of the unfolding themes, the first expression of the “focal conflict” and the beginnings of a “collective syndrome”. What can we see in Allan’s words that sheds light on his exchange with Alice? Allan was tied in knots as he tried to get through to her. He tried to help and did not understand why Alice responded with indignation and rejection towards his overture. It was as if they were in different movies, or belonged to different species. Allan had a blindness, like the USA in Vietnam helping the Vietnamese who do not wish to be helped, and who turn on the “helper” and treat him as an invader.

The pattern evident in Allan's opening words repeated rapidly within the group. A pattern echoed through the discussion. Allan is frustrated in his attempts to help Sam at work and again here in the group's warm-up phase. I identified with the role Allan had experienced in response to Alice and Sam. I wished to help Allan, and became judgmental and annoyed when he could not see that he, as much as Sam, was the problem in their conflicted relationship. My overtures were rejected. Allan became defensive and indignant, somewhat like Alice as he had described her.

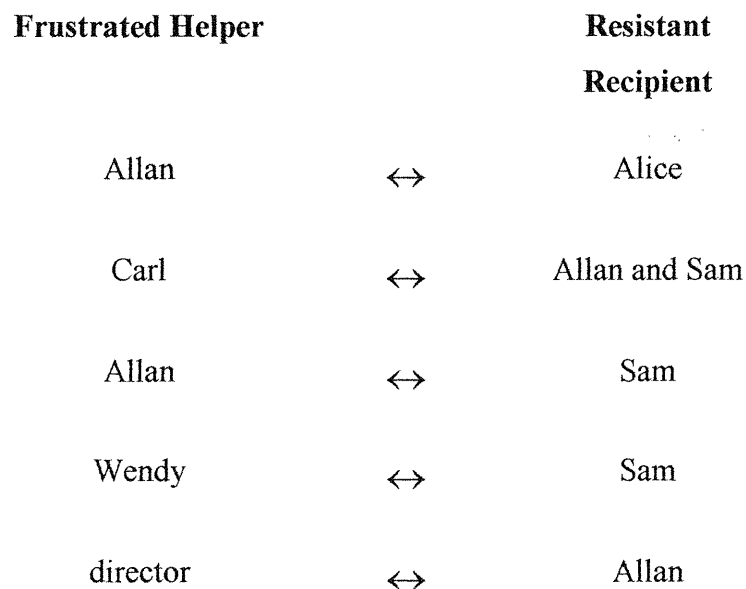


Figure 2 A pattern is repeated in the group

Double headed arrows are used here as in most cases each role cluster elicits the other.

Naming the roles in this pattern assists us to trace how the pattern unfolds and is attended to in the group. Allan is a "helper" but this does not capture the nuances of his overture to Alice. Something more is triggering Alice's distrust

and indignation. “Recipient” does not describe the various roles; it merely positions each person in a social relation to the “helper”. In looking at specific moments between each of these people more dramatic role descriptions come to mind:

Interfering Olympian God	Conflict Avoider
Well-Intentioned Helper	Courageous Protector
Sad Loner	Shrewd Gatekeeper
Intimacy Seeker	Freedom Fighter
Anxious Controller	Frightened Mouse.
Peace Keeper	

None of these *by themselves* describe the roles in a way that is satisfying. For example, Carl, when he encourages Sam and Allan to sort out their differences could be described as a **Peace Keeper**. Yet there is more to him in that moment; many of the roles are partially present: **Well-Intentioned Helper, Sad Loner, Intimacy Seeker, Anxious Controller, Conflict Avoider**. Many of the interactions display this quality. The reason the more specific role names do not easily apply is revealed in Carl’s sculpture.

In setting out the sculpture Carl identified deeper themes that were the mainspring influencing the group. Carl gave a fuller expression of the group’s focal conflict, to use Whitaker and Lieberman’s terminology, which has been present in the group all along. All of us in the group were influenced by this deeper conflict in some way. People were not just enacting one role, they were expressing conflicted roles or whole role clusters containing something of the focal conflict as sculpted by Carl. Carl summed up the conflict as: “genuine desire to help” and “heart” on the one hand, and “fear of intimacy” on the other. I see in the glowing desire for connection and love, a **Generous Heart** obscured by dark and dampening fear, forming a structure of protection

as well as having the means of sparking the occasional attack and defence. In Carl's sculpture I see the focal conflict as:

Fortified Castle

X

Generous Heart

How does this help to identify the patterns that have been emerging? We can group the roles in two clusters, one that contains roles that arise from the disturbing motive, the other expressing and responding to the reactive fear. The correlation between roles and the focal conflict is not always tidy because some of the roles encapsulate responses to the disturbing motive and the reactive motive, as illustrated in Figure 3.

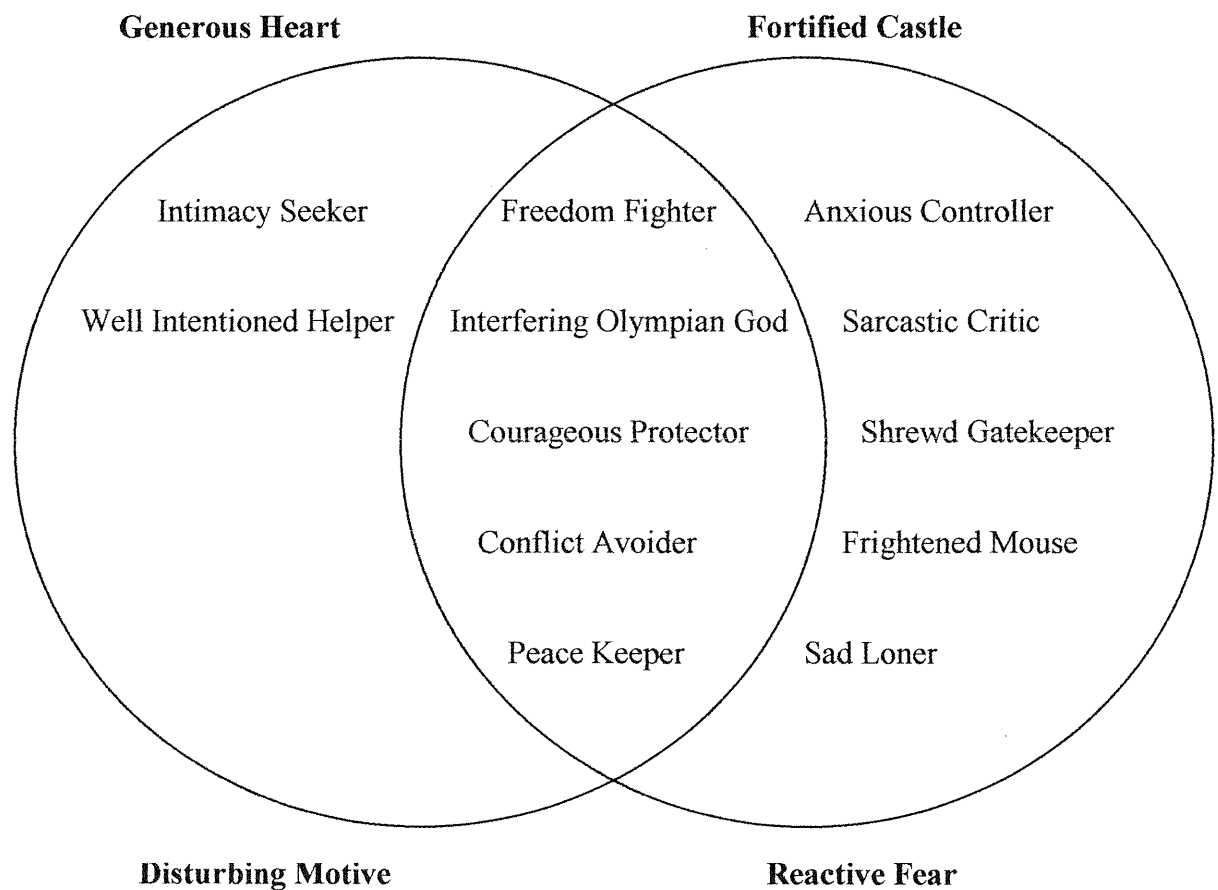


Figure 3 **Role clusters and the focal conflict.**

These roles, in the terminology of Whitaker and Lieberman express the solution that is emerging. At this stage the roles are mostly coping roles and the solution remains restrictive.

Allan's comment to Alice, that she looked nervous, has a generous aspect, as well as a fearful, protective one. He is expressing both sides of the focal conflict in his simple comment to Alice. In that he is going towards her at all, a solution is emerging, though it remains restricted. Although Alice is not present in the group we can speculate that she may have a similar internal conflict. Perhaps the "nervousness" that Allan noticed expressed her fear and the warmth he usually experiences with her indicates her "generous heart".

Figure 4. is a simplified and schematic diagram which shows how the interaction became difficult.

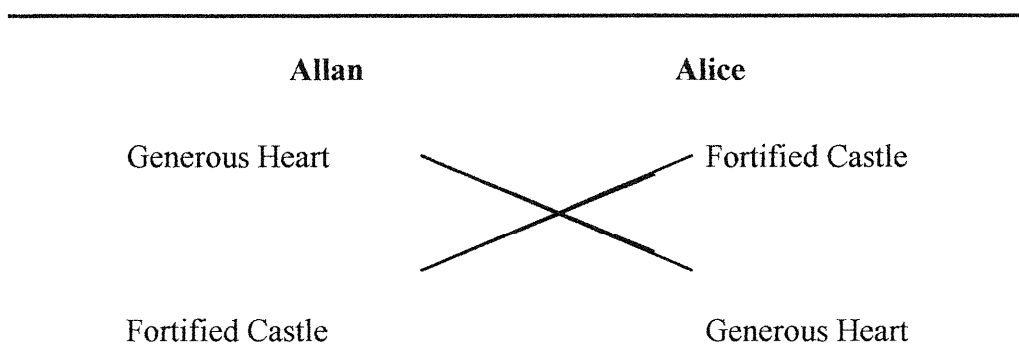


Figure 4 Interaction involving two conflicted role clusters.

The interactions are difficult because of the conflicted role clusters. The situation is further complicated by the dual nature of some of the roles (Figure 3.) Each of the individuals is only partially aware of the roles in the other, and possibly only partially aware of their own inner conflicts. Allan and Alice do not manage to match the roles that are complementary. Instead they are both more in tune with the reactive fear and symmetrically reject each other. This is the pattern we have seen repeated in the interactions in the group. As the warm-up deepens and the roles are "unpacked" from the cluster they become more differentiated. We will see them in various forms in the psychodramatic

enactment that follows, but we can recall how the roles were there all along, “boxed in” as it were.

Members also responded to the focal conflict by generating solutions. Wendy encouraged Sam. This was a fuller expression of the **Generous Heart**, a form of help that was not conflicted and which was accepted. Carl made an expressive sculpture, and he was also willing to accept my intervention. Then Wendy, responds with fullness and in an unedited spontaneous manner and brings out the fear in a evocative expression: “you get crucified if...”. Here was the emerging creativity in the group. This was the beginning of a solution. The spontaneity levels were increasing to the point where there was an ability to step out of the symmetrical role system inherent in the focal conflict, and instead, to find more enabling complementary roles.

The action now moved fast. The focus shifted to Wendy and the other members became interested in her. Compared to Wendy they were stuck and unspontaneous and were drawn to her lighter, less conflicted warm-up. I felt a jolt at the point where Wendy asserted that “you get crucified for helping people”. She immediately followed this with a strong expression of feeling in response to the sculpture Carl had put on the stage. I perceived this as an “action cue” which led us to the first scene in the drama.

Thus we had a protagonist. Was she the person for the job at that point? How exactly did the transition from group member to protagonist happen? Fuller discussion of the emergence of the protagonist follows after the description and analysis of the drama (see page 39).

PSYCHODRAMATIC ENACTMENT PHASE OF THE GROUP

Wendy responds to the director’s invitation. In the initial discussion Wendy clarifies that she feels confused about helping her husband be more responsive

to her. She knows she has personal motives for helping him, and that discussions with him on this lead to her feeling bad. The director continues:

DIRECTOR: Can you imagine how you'd be if this drama goes well for you?

WENDY: Laughs, I would not feel as if I wanted to die after a fight with James (her husband).

Wanting to die is not new feeling for Wendy. A drama ensues where Wendy relives a time in her late adolescence when she attempts suicide.

I will take a moment from each of four scenes in the drama and then follow that with a discussion.

From Scene 1.

Wendy was often bullied at school. Fighting to avoid school had some merit as a coping strategy. However it was not useful in the longer term, and led to deep despair. A doctor (Allan is chosen for the role) is attempting to give advice to Wendy as an adolescent. The interaction is maximised until it reached this point:

DOCTOR: You should go back to school ...

WENDY: No! Fuck off! Stick your patronising bullshit up your arse.

From Scene 2.

The director invites Wendy to go to the moment when she first felt that she wanted to die. She immediately warms up to a scene from her childhood when she is 8 years old. It is in a garage of a suburban home where her father is punishing her younger sister, violently and with rage.

Wendy courageously engages with the father but gets pushed aside and told to go away or he will “beat the living daylights out of her”.

She feels like dying.

Wendy accepts an invitation to view the scene where she was violently rejected by her father. It is re-enacted by the auxiliaries and Wendy sees it with her adult eyes. This enables her to encourage her younger self to move around and see her mother's part in the family dynamics.

From Scene 3

Carl is chosen to be Wendy's mother who is unable to be of use to her daughter while she is in conflict with others and herself. She is in the kitchen on the edge of the action in the previous scene.

WENDY: Get out of your shell!

MOTHER: I am busy with these flowers dear.

In role reversal Wendy is able to experience the fearful withdrawal in the role of her mother. She is afraid of rejection. With a stronger confrontation from Wendy the mother is forced to make a more authentic response.

MOTHER: I have to put up with so much and I do that for you. If he leaves me then you will all be sorry.

WENDY: (With anger) Don't sacrifice your self for me ...

In the heat of the enactment through role reversal this becomes:

WENDY: Don't sacrifice me for your own cosy secure pathetic
life style!

While enacting her mother, Wendy takes courageous and effective direct action and removes her husband (Wendy's father) from the scene. Wendy in that moment is the creator of an enabling solution through the creation of a new progressive role, she is a passionate **Fire Goddess** combining the roles of **Interfering Olympian God, Courageous Protector and Shrewd Gatekeeper**.

The scene is re-enacted so Wendy can, with tears of relief, experience the new role from her adult perspective. With some coaching Carl re-enacts the scenes accurately. It is evident he is warmed up to times in his own life. He warms up to his parents in conflict, and is able to drag his father off his long suffering mother. Of course dramatically this is seen as a scene in Wendy's drama. The full impact of the significance for Carl will be revealed later in the sharing phase.

From Scene 4

In the conclusion of the drama, Sam is chosen to be a wiser and older Wendy who had survived the trauma in the family and several suicide attempts. This Wendy is giving herself comfort, caring, wisdom and love. Wendy again watches this as Carl plays the role of the young Wendy.

SHARING PHASE

Allan shares that he felt angry with Alice, and also that he is more attracted to her than he had previously revealed to her. Carl talks about the fear he had of his parents' fights, and how he was motivated to stop them fighting by his desire for their attention. Sam shares his loneliness and his desire for love in his life. He was moved by the moment where Wendy spontaneously went to assist her sister and goes on to say how he is determined to be himself even when it feels bad. He shares how, while in the role of the abandoned Wendy, death felt like a friend who could remove her from the pain.

COMMENT ON THE PSYCHODRAMATIC ENACTMENT & SHARING PHASES

The excerpts from this group highlight how the psychodrama did exactly what Moreno claimed for it. The drama brought to full expression, through the protagonist, the sociometric matrix of the group. It is through the interconnectedness which evolved that the individuals were mirrored in the psychodramatic enactment leading to moments of spontaneity where roles emerged, such as the **Fire Goddess**, that had not been present in the group or in Wendy's family. I will go on to discuss how the group presented as a unified whole, expressing the sociometric matrix. The unity became more visible in the group as it is revealed in the following levels:

1. The relationships within the group.
2. The inner conflicts of the individuals.
3. Current relationships outside the group.
4. Scenes re-enacted from the past.

There is also another sphere, perhaps less obvious:

5. Roles that cluster around the theme of the Crucifixion.

1. Relationships within the group.

It is as if the drama unpacked the roles which had been only partially visible in the warm-up. Each of the people in the drama enacted roles which reflected what they had shared or enacted in the group's warm-up phase. Roles that were embryonic or conflicted emerged in the drama in a way that they could be more easily perceived and named. We see into the mechanics of the "S-factor", to use Moreno's characterisation of spontaneity. Spontaneity comes through as the old roles are faced in their differentiated and maximised enactment. This is true not only for the protagonist but for the group members.

A good example of how the initial relationship patterns return in the drama is Carl's discomfort during the warm-up phase with the conflict Sam and Allan had. He wanted them to sort it out, partly because he had the conflicted role clusters present in his own internal processes, which he later concretised in the sculpture. (See Figure 3, above.) In the drama he becomes scared of the conflict between Wendy's mother and father. Prior to the coaching to enact the role he was the **Frightened Mouse**, a role which was present in embryonic form in the warm-up. In the face of seeing the fully maximised conflict his own more differentiated roles were able to come to the fore. He became the **Freedom Fighter** and with the accompanying rage was able to create the place where nurturing and peace could come forth and where he could receive and express some of the generous loving.

Many roles, of course, while more visible in the drama than in the warm-up, remain conflicted and embryonic. We see the conflicted roles produce a **Patronising Interfering God** in the Doctor. Another aspect of a role which embodies conflict is **The Martyr**, evident in Wendy's mother, attempting to help through passivity but being of no use to anyone.

The drama facilitated many roles already present in the warm-up to emerge more fully and in an unconflicted form. The moment when Wendy goes to help her sister reveals a role that is well described by the words **Freedom Fighter**. It is still a coping role but it contains a purity of heart. In the sharing,

through Sam's appreciation of this role, she may have learned to see just how loving she was.

The role of the **Well Intentioned Helper** is maximised in the enactment as **Compassionate Nurturer**. When Wendy rushes with selfless love to defend her sister there is purity of spirit evident in her role and not a touch of martyring. Such fullness of heart is present at the end of the drama when Wendy holds the child who has been unable to comprehend her own brave struggles.

The drama sharpens the roles. They become more alive and particular. Through the drama the unconscious state in the warm-up is revealed. We now see the complexity of the role of **Frustrated Helper**. We see how this name hid more than it revealed. The **Frustrated Helper** involves two conflicting role clusters, the **Generous Heart** conflicting with the fear and protection that build the **Fortified Castle**. In the drama unconflicted roles are present, such as the **Frightened Mouse**, and the **Compassionate Nurturer**. The **Reluctant Recipient** returns from the warm-up mainly in an active form. In the moment when Wendy is enraged with the Doctor she is a **Defiant Freedom Fighter**. She is again functioning in this form as she fights her mother and father. The active resistance is fully enacted by Wendy in response to the doctor. Allan, in the role reversal with Wendy, was able to enact his own "resistance" and anger, touches of which had been evident in the warm-up when he was unwilling to do the role training I offered.

Another side of the reluctance is revealed when the sister is beaten by her father and is utterly unable to respond to help that Wendy tries to provide. We see in the sister a **Helpless Victim** in the true sense. Through the drama it was possible for Carl to discover his own sensitivity to conflict, which had been evident in the warm-up. He is a **Frightened Mouse** when he sees two parents fighting.

As the conflicted roles were maximised new roles emerged in response. Carl learnt to take sides, and express his repressed feelings. Wendy, and also Carl

when he enacted the role at the end of the drama, were very “willing recipients”, soaking up the warmth and affection as a **Suckling Baby**.

2. The inner conflicts of the individuals.

In enactment of the protagonist’s story, individual group members were chosen to portray roles, and all the members of the group were in some way able to expand on the roles they had in embryonic form earlier on. A good example is Allan’s realisation in the sharing that he has both love and anger towards Alice.

How is it that this can be revealed so vividly through Wendy’s drama? One explanation is that Allan set the scene for this right at the start of the group, and the warm-up followed on in a linear way from his discussion about his relationship with Alice. Another is that right at the start of the group there was a “sociometric matrix” or co-unconscious of the group and that this worked in him in some way so that from all the stories he *might* have told this particular one was triggered. It is this notion that there is a “matrix” in the group that fits with my perception, my intuitive knowing. The notion that there are underlying forces at work is of course one that Whitaker and Lieberman bring to our attention with the focal conflict model. In their case they assume the sociometric matrix has a particular form, one of conflicting forces. Perhaps Moreno had a broader sense of the underlying forces he called the sociometric matrix.

3. Current relationships outside the group.

In addition to drawing on here and now events in the group there was reference to situations current in the world: Allan’s relationship with Alice and Wendy’s with her husband. Sam and Allan also had difficulty outside the group, and Carl was party to their conflict.

Was it the desire to have the difficulties in life resolved which led to the drama? It would seem that it assisted in the motivation for the work. It can also be seen the other way around; these real life moments were triggered by

the matrix, much in a way that a dream will seize events of the day to make a point in the night.

Worth noting from a practical point of view is that the here and now concerns inside and outside the group can be addressed via the psychodramatic enactment, even when there is no conscious planning to do so. In that sense the drama does not belong exclusively to the protagonist. It is the drama of the group, a drama of the group's psyche.

4. Scenes re-enacted from the past.

Both Wendy and Carl warmed-up to scenes from the past to the point where they enacted them. We can see here the value of Buchanan's paper on the central concern. You will recall that he postulates four factors which contribute to the central concern: the director's warm-up, the contractual basis for the group, the individual's concerns influenced by his original family system (matrix of identity), and the manifest content.

Carl, in making the sculpture, concretised a graphic expression of the central concern. Clearly it represented something from his own "matrix of identity", and at the same time something universal enough to enable Wendy to continue the warm-up to the point where she mirrored Carl's hitherto unconscious dynamics back to him. There is a dramatic unity as when Wendy removes her father from the top of her sister. This is at the same time, Carl's moment of dealing with conflict, present in the here and now relationships in the warm-up and in his original family. As he removes "his father" from the top of "his mother" it is as if he removes the whole of the reactive fear off the disturbing motive, the **Fortified Castle**, off the **Generous Heart**.

Bion, and also Whitaker and Lieberman insisted that it is possible to relate all expressions in the group to the here and now concerns of the group. That we look at "the past" is not a contradiction, the scenes capture the dynamics, present in the "here and now" of the group. The scenes from early childhood are important because, in Moreno's terms they are expression of the matrix of identity, i.e. the life giving origins of the person. The origins of individuals as Buchanan pointed out (1981, p. 55) contributes to the collective central

concern of the group. There is a link between the matrix of identity and the sociometric matrix. Wendy at the height of the drama, in a moment of spontaneity while in the role of her mother, is healing her own social atom. This is true, and at another level, the whole of the sociometric matrix of the group is being reconfigured, repaired, healed as she lives with potency to protect her sister and herself as a child. There is a fluidity and power in the roles which is new in Wendy, her family, and in the group. These moments in the group's life transform the conflicted roles states that were present in the warm-up phase of the group. Using the language of Moreno, both the warm-up and the drama were expressions of the same underlying sociometric matrix.

Metaphysical speculation aside, it is clear that the individual drama, even in the moments that relate deeply to the personal biography of the protagonist, is highly relevant to the roles other group members have enacted.

There are many examples of this in the group. One that comes to mind as being somewhat unexpected and powerful, is Sam's feeling of inadequacy and his desire for encouragement. This was responded to as he was chosen to be in the role of Wendy, being held and nurtured at the end of the drama.

5. Roles that cluster around the theme of the Crucifixion.

The theme that Wendy brings into the group, and which no doubt elicits the interest of all members, is death. First she mentions the crucifixion. Then she recalls that she wanted to die, a familiar feeling for her, in her early life and in the present day. She wants to die after failing to make a connection with her husband, and as a child when failing to help her sister and being rejected violently by her father. Death is wanted as an end to pain, as a form of protection from the world. It is yearned for and contemplated as suicide.

Through the role reversals, Sam was able to experience, in a maximised way, the lack of self esteem he had mentioned in the warm-up. When he enacts the abandoned Wendy who wants to die, he is able to experience extremes of withdrawal. In the sharing phase he said this was significant for him and he

told us how suicide at this point felt like an ultimate protection motivated by fear.

Wendy's drama also elicits themes of punishment, abandonment and sacrifice. The crucifixion is mentioned as a punishment.

While writing this paper I have become conscious of the significance of these themes in the group. The drama and group remained primarily at the level of social roles, rather than psychodramatic ones. As I look back over the role analysis I see that some roles are still not fully differentiated. For example Wendy's sister was not enacted fully. A cushion was used as a prop for her part in the drama. Her role is that of a **Forsaken Child**, unjustly punished.

If there was enactment of crucifixion in the drama there was also resurrection. Crucifixion was only touched on in the group, and resurrection was not named. These themes point tantalisingly to the depths of the "sociometric matrix" which I think was influential in the group.

It is interesting to reflect on the sharing phase in terms of our theme here and the way Moreno defined that part of the psychodrama in 1934 in *Who Shall Survive?* He describes how people:

"...rise to and relate their feelings as to what they have learned from the production, he {the protagonist} gains a new sense of catharsis, a group catharsis; *he has given love and now they are giving love back to him*. Whatever his psyche is now, it was moulded originally by the group; by means of the psychodrama it returns to the group and now the members of the audience are sharing their experiences with him as he has shared his with them."

(Moreno 1934, p86. his italics)

THE EMERGENCE OF THE PROTAGONIST

How is it that Wendy was the protagonist? While difficult to name, the interconnections in the group are present around us and impact on us. Perhaps to the reader, as it was to myself as director, it is already known in a heartfelt way that Wendy emerged as the protagonist through *unconscious* but purposeful processes in the group. While we may reveal some of these through naming the roles and making sense of the group, we will still be able to ask: Was there more to it? Perhaps there always is.

Here is a quote from Moreno, speaking to a group about the choosing of a protagonist:

“Why do I pick certain people to come up on the stage? I started once to systematise it... Of course a good director has the responsibility of choosing a protagonist which will on the whole represent the group.”

A moment later he says:

“From the point of view of microsociology, George [the protagonist’s friend] set the stage. He wanted to treat her. I was merely a victim. (Audience laughter).”

(Moreno, 1952 in Fox, 1987, p.152.)

This humorous moment contains a truth spoken in jest. The notion that the protagonist is consciously chosen might be attractive to the systematisation of the process but it belies the complex dialectic between the social and cultural factors (microsociology included!) and the unconscious dynamics, which combine as if to use the director and the group as their tools. We become “victims” of deeper forces. Before continuing to look at the underlying elements, there are some immediate factors to be noted.

Wendy is well warmed up. The group is warmed up to her and has a positive connection with her. She carries the concern of the group. She carries both the motivation and the fear of the focal conflict. Her emotional tone and behaviour is congruent with the group’s energy and conflict. In hindsight we

can see that Wendy, of the four members, has significant roles, such as encourager, well developed. When she hears the word “fear” mentioned she is reminded that she knows about that too. As she enacts the drama she quite unconsciously chooses group members to fill roles they have already displayed in embryo. So it could be that I “chose” the protagonist for these reasons. However it is not that simple. I had already chosen Allan, and he refused. Nor had Wendy portrayed all these roles before I invited her to be the protagonist. My choosing of her was part of the whole process. My part in that was to remain in tune with the process and to encourage others to identify and name the process. The words “choosing the protagonist” do not adequately describe my actions as the director, rather my part was to facilitate the group to a point where the protagonist was evident and I knew to invite her to be protagonist.

The drama portrayed a moment from my role system. In the warm-up, when Allan refused to do the role training I suggested, I was in the same role of “frustrated helper” that showed up repeatedly in different forms. The many aspects of that role were mirrored back to me in the drama. I suspect that Wendy’s words “you get crucified for helping people” harmonised with my feelings about my attempt to “help” Allan. I was not aware of it at the time, but the connection feels right in hindsight.

Buchanan mentions that the director’s warm-up is one of the contributing factors in forming the central concern of the group. It may well be that on an unconscious level it influences the choice of protagonist. I recall a dream that I had early on in the writing of this paper, before I conducted this group. Had I remembered at the time it may have been good to share it in the group. In the dream I was famous for writing a best selling self help book. It was top of the New York best seller list and people clamoured for me to sign the paperbacks, which had the title in neon coloured letters: “JESUS, Avoid His Mistakes, Be Yourself Without Getting Nailed.”

The drama does not explicitly explore religious images. However, death, sacrifice and the generous heart are roles we can find readily in religious events. Wendy feels like dying after she helps her sister, and also currently in

her life in the relationship with her husband. These are themes that connect the drama to the Christian story. I am reminded of Moreno's words, quoted earlier: "The function of the role is to enter the unconscious from the social world and bring shape and order to it." (1977, p. IV). It is as if the unconscious of the group is closer to the surface with the expression of the word "crucifixion". Wendy indicates to us all that she has an affinity with the depths of the group when she used a word that is so numinously charged.

It looked to me as if Wendy was jolted by her own utterance of the word "crucifixion", leading her to make a direct action cue, and almost moving onto the stage as she did so. In a sense Wendy chose herself. My sense of her is that she was choosing to listen to something larger than her own volition and that it felt right to do so.

In the warm-up phase we see the unfolding of individual concerns and the expression of aspects of each member's unique personality. In the psychodramatic enactment these concerns are revisited and amplified and new roles are enacted that resolve the conflicts in the warm-up. The psychodramatic enactment, even though focussed on one individual as the protagonist, is the group's way, in the words of Moreno "of presenting one of its collective syndromes on the stage" (Moreno, 1953, p. 84.). In terms of the focal conflict model I am of the opinion that this group reached an enabling solution. There was spontaneity in the group and adequate new roles were formed where they were needed.

There is a phrase I have heard frequently in psychodrama circles: "It is all in the warm-up!" This group is a good example of the idea expressed in that maxim. There was not just one factor which led to the emergence of the protagonist, there were many, and they were interconnected. Moreno's conception of an underlying matrix captures this idea of interconnection and takes it further. The term matrix has the same root as the word *mother*. In psychodrama it is as if we see glimpses of just such a mother, or as Moreno put it:

“God is always within and among us, as he is for children. Instead of coming down from the skies, he comes in by way of the stage door. God is not dead, he is alive in psychodrama!”

(Moreno, 1975, P22.)

It is important not to dismiss this as “going over the top” into mysticism and religion. The term psyche, underlying forces, focal conflict, central concern, unconscious processes and Bion’s notion of basic assumption have all been used in this paper. Moreno’s concept of sociometric matrix brings in a new understanding of the unconscious of the group, and covers all of these ways of seeing the interconnections. It is satisfying to have found the concept of sociometric matrix in Moreno’s writing. That it is a “matrix” is a profound idea, which links it to a source, the womb, or more accurately the placenta, which nurtures all of life. That is “sociometric” means that it can be empirically and experientially explored. Moreno’s work emphasises that sociometry is a science which can name and measure the living links between people and thus give us a secular grasp of what otherwise might remain exclusively intuitive and spiritual.

It is for the reader to assess if we have been observing roles and enactment that gives voice to an underlying sociometric matrix. There is evidence presented here for this view. The mechanism for connecting the protagonist and the other group members is that they all have roots which draw on the same sociometric matrix. Describing this underlying and interconnecting matrix as gods and goddesses is one way of using our social and cultural heritage to name the depths of the unconscious. Psychodrama is a process that takes us from unconsciousness to greater consciousness; we enter into the edge of the unknown and gradually go deeper but never quite get there. That depth can go by many names.

Through the perception of that depth a protagonist can be selected for the group. It is equally possible that the director (or another group member or potential protagonist) is clear about this long before the rest of the group, and can include the group in his or her insight.

IMPLICATIONS

The ability to see signs of universal meaning in the way the light falls and casts shadows on the wall, or the way the clouds open up at just one particular moment, can be interpreted as delusional or as spiritual epiphany. This paper highlights the director's ability to see the connections between the great and the small, between the overall group and the individuals in it. Seeing such connections is not delusional or magical. Rather, it involves the interplay of perception, imagination, awareness of cultural traditions, and aesthetic expression. It is the ability to allow a particular constellation of roles to demand our attention. Role constellations in a group will reflect other situations, in our lives, in our history, our culture and mythology, where these patterns were strong and fully developed. It is art, akin to the poetic, to see these connections and to name them.

An important theme of this paper is that such perception is important in facilitating the emergence of the protagonist, perhaps more important than a series of techniques. The paper also emphasises the value of theory, and using role theory, sociometry, and the focal conflict model to assist in the structuring of our perceptions. This perspective has implications for practitioners. I will look into the implications for theory, clinical practice, training, and the application beyond psychodrama and therapy groups.

1. Implications for theory.

In writing this paper I have gained a fuller appreciation of the concept of sociometric matrix. Moreno also uses the word co-unconscious to refer to underlying complexities that are present but not visible without further exploration. Roles are a fundamental unit of the matrix. Roles cluster into atoms and molecules via forces of tele. Moreno makes it clear that roles mediate symbolically between the social and the psychological, the ego and the self. The purpose of embodiment on the stage is to give expression to universal and cosmic themes which would otherwise remain abstractions. He said that action on the stage was the royal road into the psyche, a reference to Freud's famous dictum that dreams have this honour.

This aspect of Moreno's theoretical perspective was supported by the analysis of the group in this paper. Role enactment and the naming of roles are interrelated. As the roles emerge, our ability to perceive them and name them becomes sharper. This leads to fuller enactment. The role is not simply an event enacted in life. It includes the naming of that event, and adds an abstract and symbolic aspect. Moreno says: "Role perception is cognitive and anticipates forthcoming responses." (Fox, 1987, p.61) Thus one might see an element of precognition in the naming of roles.

Fuller theoretical amplification of the ontological status of the sociometric matrix and roles and what Moreno meant by it is an area for further research. How Moreno's ideas relate to the unconscious and to other traditions would also be useful. I have found Leon Petchkovsky's "The Role And The Archetype, An Examination Of Psychodramatic Role Theory From A Jungian Perspective" (1983), useful in this regard. In addition to the conceptual clarification more research into how practitioners use these concepts in their work would assist in developing the knowledge of the varieties of ways group leaders name the forces that underlie the group dynamics.

2. Implications for clinical practice.

The analysis in this paper highlights the importance of the director's consciousness of the underlying structures of the group, the sociometric matrix. This does not demand that any specific techniques be used, but rather that the director combines poetic and intuitive perception with adequate theoretical structures so that the complexities of the dynamics can be articulated. The paper implies two main areas where clinical practice may be enhanced; attention to the experience of the director as part of the process and the revelation of cultural depths in ordinary discussion and interaction.

In grasping and naming the interplay of roles, attention to the director's experience may provide assistance. This is implied in the paper as it highlights the isomorphy, or similarity between the parts and the whole, and that the analysis of groups is possible via any one part of it, including the

director's experience. If the director has a strong inner experience, it is worth asking: how does this relate to the group?

Role patterns can be named creatively and potently when linked to social and cultural themes. In the group studied in this paper notions of sacrifice and helping were linked to the crucifixion theme. Moreno's notion that roles are a unit of culture would indicate that fruitful clinical analysis centres on potent cultural, social or religious themes. Warming-up to the role of "seer" and poet assists the director to be alert to the expression of words and actions related to potent mythical religious or political structures. Even if these are not directly enacted, they make it easier to see the over all dynamics.

The natural flow of the group is to be encouraged rather than impeded by intervention. In the case of the group under scrutiny here, it was fruitful to treat an intervention that was not productive (choosing Allan to be a protagonist) as part of the group process, and the directors warm-up at that point as part of the group dynamics.

No matter how deliberate the techniques used are, the choosing of the protagonist has an unconscious aspect. No one can know what the drama holds until after the enactment, thus intuition and unconscious knowing by director and group members will assist the process.

3. Implications for training.

There is an emphasis on intuition and aesthetic perception in this paper. These are aspects of a person that may have a reputation for being difficult to train. It is one of Moreno's contributions that spontaneity is a quality that can be trained. The challenge of training the deeper modes of perception and aesthetic naming of roles is not new to psychodrama, and this paper implies that training continues to focus on the roles of the producer and artist.

The thesis highlights the importance of the sociometric matrix as a source of the pattern that connects the group and the individuals in the group. The importance of combining knowledge of tele, roles and sociometry to reveal the sociometric matrix could be included in the training programme. Trainees

will benefit from this awareness and from training in identifying and naming the patterns that are influential. Such identifying and conceptualisation is likely to be enhanced by the self awareness of the trainee, and thus a continued emphasis on the personal awareness work of the trainee, even in educational and organisational settings is well justified. The naming of the patterns inherent in the sociometric matrix can be named using the language of the myths and religions and popular motifs of the culture, trainees with broad life experience and who have a grounding in drama and literature will benefit in using what is a dramatic approach.

Further amplification of the importance of the sociometric matrix in the conducting of groups could be undertaken in future studies to generate more explicit refinement of curriculum and training programmes.

4. Implications for educational and organisational groups.

Even though a small psychodrama group focussed on personal development was the subject of this study, the use of role theory and identification of a protagonist apply, with some adaptation, to group work in many settings. The ability to see the whole as a role cluster or dynamic requires a particular mode of perception. Gareth Morgan in the book: *Images of Organization: New Edition* (1997) makes moves towards the kind of perception of organisations that would appeal to psychodramatists. In educational settings too, the subject matter and slant of presentation of material will relate best to the group if the overall perception of the group system is well understood.

In settings where there is no psychodramatic enactment it may well be that the protagonist, who carries a role structure that is parallel to the group's, is able to work for the group in other ways. In organisations, they may have aptitude for a leadership task. In educational settings they may be able to research and present material to the class.

The principles in this paper could thus be fruitfully explored in variety of occupational and professional settings.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this paper is to articulate the experience, described in the preface, of having a sense that there is an underlying unifying force connecting individuals to a group's life. This paper has discussed how the particularity of the enactment of the protagonist's story reflects significant aspects of each member's current concerns, of the dynamics of the group itself, the warm-up of the group leader and universal themes.

The concept of the sociometry matrix unifies the various approaches to group dynamics mentioned in this paper. Bion's notion of basic assumptions governing the group life, and Whitaker and Lieberman's thesis that every expression in the group can be seen as part of a dialectical focal conflict come close to capturing the influential unity that is often intuitively sensed underlying the group's process. Buchanan has drawn on his experiences of Moreno's work to define the factors contributing to a central concern. These writers can be interpreted as shedding more light on the sociometric matrix. Bion's work can be seen as one model of the forces that shape the sociometric matrix. Whitaker and Lieberman's focal conflict model invokes the dialectics that Hegel and his more materialist followers saw in nature, a striving for the resolution of opposites, thus providing us with a window through which to understand more of the underlying dynamics. Moreno names this implicitly by thinking of the whole process as a "psychodrama".

The relationship between the group and the protagonist is that in their functioning form they express the underlying sociometric matrix. Group members and the protagonist bring to the group moments from life, past and present, which grasp something of the underlying matrix. It makes sense that the director contributes significantly to the forces underlying the group's life.

How a protagonist for the group emerges, is identified or chosen is the key clinical question addressed in this paper. The director's ability to identify the protagonist is enhanced through awareness that initially in a group the roles may be more difficult to identify and articulate as they may be part of conflicted role clusters. The intuitive and aesthetic faculties of the director

and the group can be usefully evoked at this stage, and smaller enactments can also prove useful.

Two of Moreno's concepts about role have been particularly valued and highlighted in this paper. One is that the function of a role is to bring shape and order to the unconscious; the second, that the role is a cultural unit. These ideas emphasise that the director's skill in role perception will be enhanced by a rich comprehension of cultural and social structures and stories. The role is a fundamental building block of the sociometric matrix and thus each role analysis is a window into the underlying structures of the group's life.

The enactment and naming of roles is an interrelated process. As roles differentiate the similarity of structure or isomorphy between the individual and group can be seen.

The sociometric matrix has as part of its constitution the matrix of identity of the group members. It is possible that as the roles are enacted and the group deepens that a protagonist emerges without specific intervention by the director in a group. The formal sociometric techniques for choosing a protagonist, such as those outlined by Kumar and Treadwell (1985), can also be used. The exact method used is not important, note however that the process will also be an expression of the sociometric matrix! It is important that the director understands the relationship between the group and the protagonist and that it is shared with the group, so that the members can work cooperatively when individuals work "for" the group as protagonist.

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