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Margarita Pileckaitė-Markovienė

# **Understanding Dreams: The Psychodramatic Approach**

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Recenzavo: VDU Psichologijos katedros docentė socialinių mokslų daktarė A.KEPALAITĖ, psichodramos terapeutė, Europos psichodramos instituto dėstytoja ir supervisorė F.GEISLER

Reviewers: A.KEPALAITĖ, PhD, Associated Professor of VDU Department of Psychology, F.GEISLER, Psychodrama Therapist, Trainer and Supervisor of Psychodrama Institute for Europe.

Anglų kalba taisė: Dr. D. Broon (UK), Gitana Stonienė  
English language checked by: D.Broon, PhD (UK), Gitana Stonienė

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## PREFACE

This book was written as the final work for psychodrama training, which began in 1996 and lasted for eight years. First group of psychodrama therapists (nine persons) finished their training in 2004, with the help of the Lithuanian Psychodrama Society in co-operation with Psychodrama Institute fur Europe. The final work was evaluated by Friedel Geisler, Julia Hardi and Hilde Gott - three psychodrama trainers from Psychodrama Institute for Europe.

The Psychodrama Society of Lithuania was founded in 1999. The main aim of this society is to spread information about psychodrama and to instil psychodrama into practice. In 2001 PSL joined PIfE (Psychodrama Institut fur Europe, Germany) as an institutional member. The main reason for this was the expansion of international relationships and seeking for a higher level of professional knowledge.

The psychodrama training gave its members a theoretical and practical understanding of Psychodrama, Sociometry and Group Psychotherapy. It was both didactic and experiential. The techniques learnt during psychodrama workshops and trainings can be used for action interventions with groups, families, couples, as well as for individual therapy.

The author would like to thank Goran Hodberg, who initiated psychodrama training in Lithuania and helped in finding financing and trainers. Furthermore, the author would like to thank trainer and supervisor Friedel Geisler, co-trainer Hildegard de Byl, supervisor Kurt Jurgen Schmidt and other psychodrama therapists, who visited Lithuania in order to give some special seminars for the psychodrama training group: Dorothy M Langley (Great Britain), Laila Kjellstrom (UK), Sonja and Helmut Beloch (Germany), Antony T Horwood (UK), Yaacov Naor (Israel), Ulrike Behrmann-von Zerboni (Germany).

In this small book the author tries to present the psychodrama method, it's rules, phases and techniques. Special attention is paid to the use of dreams and fantasies in psychodramatic work. Lots of examples help readers to better understand theoretical issues. Hopefully, this book will be useful for students of psychology, practical psychologists and other specialists, who use drama techniques in their work.

Author

## What is psychodrama?

Psychodrama is the name given by J.L. Moreno to the method he developed for helping people become more creative in day to day living. It has applications in many different areas in which people are learning, changing and relating to others, in training, education, healing, spiritual life, business, performing arts and in organisations. Practitioners of this powerful method integrate all levels of a human being: their thinking, their intellect, their imagination, their feelings and their actions in their social context. In this way, learning can be applied directly in actual living situations at work, outside the home, in other organisations and in close relationships.

Under the guidance of a trained practitioner known as the director, the method involves improvisational dramatic action. The script for this drama is “written”, moment by moment, out of the purposes and concerns of an individual, or the group to which the method is being applied. Group members take active part in one another’s dramas so that they bring them as close to life as possible. In this way group members may generate and practice new behaviours and ways of thinking and test them out for their impact on those around them before they do this in the actual work or life situation. The consequences can be examined and new decisions made as to how to apply the learning.

The method can move very fully into people’s subjective world without judgement. Thus, long frustrated desires or fears can be enacted and greater freedom experienced. Old agendas can be completed, including grieving, trauma or celebration. Imagination and intuition are developed. Fresh understanding of significant relationships can be gained.

From time to time, each individual in a group can be a star. In experiencing and expressing themselves dramatically, a greater sense of self worth and ability to rise to life’s challenges are developed. Usually, participants have fun. Many aspects of being human, which find no other outlet in our contemporary world, can be expressed by ordinary people. Dreams, myths and wishes become concrete for a time and lend power and depth to everyday living.

The connections between the individuals participating are deepened and strengthened through walking together into one another’s reality. New and lasting friendships are often formed and better communication and interpersonal skills developed. Reversing into the role of another creates fresh experience of the wider world.

Conceived and developed by Jacob L. Moreno, MD, psychodrama employs guided dramatic action to examine problems or issues raised by an individual (psychodrama) or a group (sociodrama). Using experiential methods, sociometry, role theory, and group dynamics, psychodrama facilitates insight, personal growth, and integration on cognitive, affective, and behavioural levels. It clarifies issues, increases physical and emotional well-being, enhances learning and develops new skills. ***The basic elements (operational components) of psychodrama are:***

- The **protagonist**: person(s) selected to “represent theme” of group in the drama.
- The **auxiliary egos**: group members who assume the roles of significant others in the drama.
- The **audience**: group members who witness the drama and represent the world at large.
- The **stage**: the physical space in which the drama is conducted.
- The **director**: the trained psychodramatist who guides participants through each phase of the session.

### **Questions and tasks**

1. What is psychodrama?
2. Who founded psychodrama as method of group psychotherapy?
3. What are the differences between psychodrama and drama therapy?
4. What are the main elements of psychodrama? If all of them are necessary?
5. What is the role of the protagonist? Who can be the protagonist in psychodrama?

### **The phases of psychodramatic method**

In a classically structured psychodrama session, there are **three distinct phases** (structural components) of group interaction: warm-up, action (or enactment) and sharing. The order of these phases is fixed, forming a process that is therapeutically unique.

#### **Warm-up**

J. L. Moreno believed we all warm up to every event in life whether it is going to work or getting up in the morning. Warm-ups involve cognitive, sensory, verbal, behavioural and physical components and each person’s

warm-up will be unique. They prepare us mentally and physically for action and daily life experiences (Goldman, Morrison 1984.) A warm-up may involve material from past experiences that occurred ten years ago, or only yesterday at work. It may include fantasies, ambitions, dreams for the future or simply mentally preparing tomorrow's dinner - all brought into the moment, the 'here and now'. The director must be aware when bringing together a number of people who will be working in depth on personal issues, regardless of whether they are an established group or not. Warm-ups involve simple group games or exercises of a verbal or non-verbal kind. They may or may not be pre-planned. Many psychodramatists use a verbal check-in to see what is happening for people at that moment. For instance, some may report nervousness in the group, others, being tired or angry about an argument prior to attending. Sometimes check-ins may be focused on a theme, e.g. intimate relationships. A warm-up is essential for the following reasons:

1. To establish safety, trust, rapport and group cohesion.
2. For the director to encounter individuals and help create connections between himself and the group members.
3. It gives the director the opportunity to pick up on main themes and concerns within the group and helps to facilitate the emergence of a protagonist.
4. It enables people's self-consciousness to decrease and aids the move into action.
5. It encourages the development of spontaneity and creativity - the feeling that all is possible! Spontaneity is essential for creating change.
6. It provides the opportunity for the director to observe group dynamics that emerge.

The director must also warm up. The importance of the warm-up phase must not be underestimated and should neither be rushed nor left incomplete.

### **Action (Enactment) Phase**

Once the protagonist has been selected, the director needs to help him and the group move into action. Protagonists are not chosen at random. Group processes are operating. The individual who has been chosen to work will be holding the group's central concern. The protagonist's issue will enable the group to explore this central concern. An example of this



might be where the protagonist presents his negative relationship with his mother. The underlying concern for him and the group might be that of abandonment. It is likely that the director will be unconsciously representing the role of mother for both the protagonist and the group. It is vital for the director to be aware of this happening and to attend to it within the group. Throughout the session she will be careful not to repeat the primary experience of abandonment of the protagonist.

If attention to this process is not given then the original experiences of childhood will be played out in the relationship between the director and protagonist, blocking the therapeutic work.

In this phase, the director and protagonist form a working alliance. A contract to explore a specific aspect of the protagonist's life is made. Enough information about the issue is gleaned in order for the initial scene to be set. Simple props such as cushions, tables, chairs and objects are used to make the situation as real as possible and to bring the issue into the present moment. Auxiliaries are chosen to represent people who are important to the issue or scene. The presenting problem is experienced through enactment in the here and now.

The director gathers clues and information from the initial assessment and enactment of the first scene to create future enactments, taking the protagonist deeper into explorations. Scenes are negotiated between the protagonist and director. P.Holmes and M.Karp (1991) report: "There is no script, the drama is spontaneous, created in the moment by the protagonist, auxiliary egos and the director" (p. 9).

They explain further: "Each scene is linked to the next by a logic specific to the protagonist's psychology and difficulties" (p. 10).

Psychodramatists are concerned with the process and not the content of the session. The psychodramatic process involves moving the client from the periphery of the problem to the core - and back out again. E.E.Goldman and D.S.Morrison (1984) explain: "As we move from the outer edges of the protagonist's problem, the story, to the core underneath, we are dealing with process rather than content. From the outer surface of armour of the individual, we are progressing to his/her core of sensibility" (p. 27).

Psychodramatic work involves explorations at cognitive, behavioural, emotional, sensory, linguistic/paralinguistic, spiritual and interpersonal levels. The work is carried out within the dimension of 'surplus reality'. This allows for the exploration of hidden thoughts and feelings. There is an opportunity for re-living important moments in our lives to get unmet

childhood or adult needs met and to re-write old scripts. Future roles, situations and experiences can be rehearsed, conversations with significant others that never occurred in real life can be brought to life and experienced within the here and now.

### **Sharing**

The sharing phase of the session allows group members the opportunity to share aspects of their own life experiences in relation to the work they have just witnessed. This open sharing allows all group members to be heard and to gain insights into their own difficulties, often bringing about emotional release.

Group members who held a role during the psychodrama are encouraged to share from the role taken as well as from their own personal experiences. Sharing from the role allows auxiliaries to de-role and ground themselves in the present again, whilst also bringing further insights for the protagonist and continuing his integration and learning process.

At this point in the session the protagonist is 'raw' from engaging in self-disclosure and expressing intense emotions. Therefore, it is vital that the director prevents any analytical or judgmental statements. The protagonist needs to be re-integrated into the group again and the sharing helps the protagonist feel that he is not alone, and that others share similar problems and experiences. P.Holmes and M.Karp (1991) state that the open sharing of these issues within the group encourages and facilitates support, caring and understanding between group members.

### **Questions and tasks**

1. What are the phases of psychodrama?
2. Offer several variants of warming-up. What does the choice of warming-up depend on in one or another group?
3. What is the meaning of sharing?

### **Main psychodrama rules and techniques**

Psychodrama is a highly creative, powerful and extremely versatile method that can be successfully applied within our profession. Many fields could benefit from it, including stammering and voice therapy, and it could benefit those suffering a terminal illness. Psychodramatic methods can also be used to provide invaluable learning experiences for professionals and trainees.

**Some psychodramatic techniques are** (Artzi, 1991; Blatner, 1988):

1) – The double: played by an “auxiliary ego”, he is the one asked by the protagonist to play the role of himself, not as a duplicated “self”, but in the role of a larger and more complicated “self”, which assists to reach the depth of the individual’s unconscious.

2) – The mirror: an auxiliary ego who presents the behaviour of the protagonist, while he steps out of the scene to observe. In this way the protagonist is able to see how he appears to others, reflected in the mirror of the perceptions of the group members.

3) – Role reversal (De-role): by this basic technique the participant represents something or somebody not himself. The protagonist represents the characters or objects related to his subject, and the auxiliary egos represent the same characters, or the protagonist.

4) – Soliloquy (monologue): this technique is performed by the protagonist, and it is usually used when the protagonist becomes very anxious and falls into a compulsive defensive action.

5) – Empty chair: this is one of the most famous and popular of the psychodramatic techniques. It is related with our natural need for role reversal.

6) – Role playing: this technique relates to non-apparent aspects of behaviour or social mechanisms, and has been adopted by many other therapeutic schools.

7) – Behind the back: a technique in which the protagonist goes to the corner of the room and turns away from the group. The group then discusses him as if he was not present. There are variations to this technique; the group discusses the issues of the drama rather than the person, or the group turns away from the protagonist and makes no response while the protagonist is allowed to talk about his feelings toward each of them.

8) – Chorus: a group is instructed to repeat certain phrases like a Greek chorus. This technique can deepen the protagonist’s experience or help move him towards a healthier integration.

9) – Sociodrama: a form of psychodramatic enactment that aims at clarifying group themes rather than focusing on an individual’s.

10) – Sociometry: a method of measuring the interpersonal relationships in a group which is used as a warm-up for group interactions.

11) – Spectrogram: the group demonstrates how they feel about an issue in the group by placing themselves on an invisible line in the room. It helps in objectifying and clarifying the problems.

12) – Concretisation: the process of transforming general issues into a

specific scene or converting metaphors into actualities, i.e. concretising a “pain in the neck”. Psychodrama helps to convert abstract statements into something more concrete because vagueness is a major way of avoiding dealing with issues.

13) – Monodrama: the person plays all the parts of the enactment. The benefits are a) access to the protagonist’s viewpoint and b) broadening the protagonist’s perspective through role reversal. It can also be used in individual therapy.

14) – Ego building: the group carries on an honest discussion about the protagonist, positive qualities only, while the protagonist faces the group and listens.

15) – Enactment: the portrayal of life situations in dramatic form and the physical enactment of encounters that have existed only in their memories or fantasies. Enactments can be past, the present, or the future.

16) – Replay: scenes are re-enacted with changes in order to experience more ventilation, a happier ending, a more effective strategy, a desensitised response, etc.

17) – Surplus reality: the enactment of scenes that represent hopes, fears, and unfinished psychological business that may be experienced as being almost more real than the events of everyday life.

18) – Non-verbal techniques: may be used in psychodrama for group warm-up, or as part of the activity of the protagonist. They may also be used as a part of the work-up of physical problems.

Since it is estimated that the number of psychodramatic techniques range between 200 and 300, including closure techniques that allow protagonists and group members to enter the sharing phase of the psychodramatic process, it is recommended to refer to T. W. Treadwell, S. Stein and V. K. Kumar (1990) for more details on some of the techniques.

**The main psychodramatic rules are** (Goldman, Morrison, 1984):

1. The protagonist acts out his conflicts instead of talking about them.
2. The subject acts here and now, regardless of when the actual incident may have taken place, past, present or future, or when the imagined incident was fantasised, or when the crucial situation out of which this present enactment arose, occurred.
3. The protagonist is encouraged to maximize all expression, action, and verbal communication, rather than to reduce it.
4. The warming up process proceeds from the periphery to the centre.
5. Whenever possible the protagonist will pick the time, the place, the

scene, the auxiliary ego he requires in the production of his psychodrama.

6. Psychodrama is just as much a method of restraint as it is a method of expression.
7. The protagonist is permitted to be as unspontaneous or inexpressive as he is at the time.
8. The protagonist must learn to take the role of all of those with whom he is meaningfully related, to experience those persons in his social atom, their relationship to him and to one another.
9. The director must trust the psychodrama method as the final arbiter and guide in the therapeutic process.
10. Warming up to psychodrama may proceed differently from culture to culture and appropriate changes in the application of the method should be made.
11. The protagonist should never be left with the impression that he is alone with this type of problem in this group.

### **Questions and tasks**

1. What are the main psychodrama rules? Give examples of practical applications of them (for example, maximisation).
2. What psychodrama techniques do you know? Try them in your group and share your experience.
3. Give examples of psychodrama techniques applied in practice.
4. What techniques can be used in order to make the protagonist more spontaneous and expressive?

## **Main principles of dreams and fantasies use in psychodramatic work**

When a person learns to think symbolically and actionally (psychodramatically) in tandem then psychodrama becomes a natural method to use with dreams, hallucinations, fantasies and unconscious material. The psychodramatist enters the dream, fantasy or hallucinatory material and *sees what the protagonist sees*. In this way, psychodramatists can help the individual deal with this material and make sense of what seems to be “senseless” (Goldman, Morrison, 1984).

What if I lost my job? What if I didn't take care of the children? What if I made a mistake? What if I just dropped out and went to a desert island?

Fantasies – catastrophic, fanciful, paradoxical, romantic – play a role in everyone’s life. The dream of the perfect marriage, with two children, a boy and a girl, a house with a lawn and a white picket fence, for example, is still responsible for many a life decision made by the young. The fantasy of poverty looms behind the commitment to hard work; the fantasy of losing control causes many a fragile, vulnerable person to adopt a stoic, implacable exterior. Fantasies help some individuals to escape to a better existence. They often are used to punish others. “If I’d only married Joe instead.” “I should have been an actress.” “I should have had children.” “If we only lived back home where we came from.” Everyday routines often are based on fantasies and dreams long forgotten.

According to E. Leveton (1984), troublesome, repetitive behaviour, daydreams, fears, future plans, and hopes can be explored with the active fantasy technique. The counsellor, recognising that his client is driven by something other than material or interpersonal circumstances, begins by asking, “What if?” “What if the client stopped working so hard?” “What if his dreams came true and he became a millionaire?” “What if his fears were realised and he found himself without a penny?” Once the theme of the fantasy or catastrophic expectation is established, the counsellor helps his client explore it with further questions. “What would life be like as a millionaire?” “How would the day go?” “Where would he live?” “What about friends? relatives?” “What would be the biggest change?” “What would change for the worse?” As the fantasy existence is explored in detail, the client frequently experiences confusion, surprise, and a new freedom that results from his confronting a fantasy that he had imbued with magic powers; his options are increased.

**Example** (Leveton, 1984):

Gloria’s mother, Jewel, was constantly preoccupied with housekeeping. When she was asked to explore the catastrophic expectation underlying her ceaseless efforts to keep her home neat and clean, she was reluctant to begin. Looking up at the ceiling, then looking at psychodramatists as though they had asked her to perform a walk on the high wire, she said, helplessly, “Oh, I wouldn’t even know where to begin. Oh no!”

Having begun, however, she was equally reluctant to stop. What if she didn’t do all that housework? The mess in the house lent itself to long lists of problems, which Jewel rattled off enthusiastically as her husband and daughter smiled self-consciously. Dirty dishes, filthy laundry, radios and television sets blaring, dust everywhere, bits of old food in the kitchen—

Jewel relished the description of the chaos that would be produced by her absence. What if she walked into the house in the state she'd just described? Her answer came without hesitation: "I'd check into a motel." She smiled broadly. It was a possibility she had not considered before. For the family and for psychodrama therapists, her hard work became more understandable. Her martyrdom had a purpose beyond that of accomplishing her mother's high standards. Jewel, like her daughter, Gloria, wanted to run away from home. With her hard work she was bonding herself to a family that depended on her, and whom she needed.

For clarity in the involvement of fantasy, the director should make the transition from *fantasy to symbolism of reality*. There are many fantasy techniques for use both in warm-ups and within the session. However, if they remain in the realm of fantasy and do not go to reality they lose their therapeutic potency for the protagonist. The Magic Shop and the Mask Shop are fantasy techniques usually employed as warm-ups to secure the protagonist. Magic Shop fantasy is usually begun by the question: "What value or virtue would you most like to purchase?" Psychodramatists progress to the symbolism of what that request represents to that individual. Finally, once the protagonist is found and session begun, psychodrama directors anchor themselves in time, space and reality. Similarly, the director may turn the protagonist into a fantasised childhood hero during the session. However, psychodramatists must then be able to relate the symbolism of that "hero" to the protagonist and finally to whatever qualities the protagonist possesses in reality for use in his present life (Goldman, Morrison, 1984).

Hallucinatory material can move in that same pattern. In the material that is brought to the surface are the individual's personal symbols. These can be brought to his/her individual reality. For example, psychodramatists deal with a young college girl who had been brought to the hospital after a suicidal and homicidal episode. She was hallucinating that a horrible green devil was in control of her. E.E.Goldman and D.S.Morrison (1984) entered into the hallucination seeing the devil along with her. They used the auxiliary, the lights and sound to produce her "devil". At the appropriate time they helped her to move from the fantasised green devil to the symbol of being controlled. Finally, when she had the act of gratification of the director and team seeing what she saw, psychodramatists asked a reality based question. When psychodramatists asked who the devil really was they discovered *he* was her father, who had sexually molested the girl from childhood. As the girl arrived at reality she no longer needed the hallucination.

One use of the dream presentation is to re-train the dream or the recurring nightmare. In this instance, the individual enacts the nightmare as it is dreamed and then re-enacts it in a new and more positive way (Goldman, Morrison, 1984).

U.Peters (1999) emphasises that it is not the reproduction of the dream, but its creation and production on the stage that is important. For example, the protagonist might tell his dream from the view of the dream figure, thus initiating the adventure of a new encounter. With the methods of psychodrama the surrealistic world of a dream shall be discovered and experienced.

E.E. Goldman and D.S. Morrison (1984) had success in re-training recurring nightmares of Vietnam veterans who previously were unable to divest themselves of the horrors of their wartime experiences.

W.Scategny's research area involves dreams in psychodrama groups in relation to the participants' daily lives and to the social significance of the dreams. These include dreams about groups, dreams brought into groups, dreams enacted in groups, or simply dreams related in groups. Her book treats the theme of the dream in psychodrama in relation to everyday life. According to W.Scategny (1995), through the figures of dream, the feelings, the emotions, the instincts and the complexes which act on our psyche take on human or animal form. The psychodramatic play gives them the possibility of appearing in "flesh and blood", thanks to their being depicted by the auxiliary ego. In this manner, not only deep and significant aspects of our inner life are communicated to us; through the role exchange you have, additionally, the opportunity to see yourself with other eyes and from other angles. There is the possibility of confronting the "there and then" of the dream – dream being understood here metaphorically as the inner stage of the psyche – with the stage of psychodramatic happening, on which the encounter with the other takes on concrete reality as a mirror of oneself and simultaneously as the independent individual.

There are various ways of working with dreams in psychodrama. Some of them are more classical while others are less.

'Dream at the scene' gives the protagonist the possibility of organising a dream as he/she remembers it now and choosing an auxiliary Ego to dream (Moreno, 1959; Weiner, Sacks, 1969; Greenberg, 1974).

D.Feasey offers to use for analysis these dreams, which group members dreamed during psychodramatic group work, or dreams which seem very important or which are recurrent.



Another way of working with dreams is offered by H.B.Weiner and J.M.Sacks (1969). Friends from the past, present and wished future are walking around the protagonist listening how he or she is talking the dream until the dream will be discussed.

So, fantasies and dreams are often puzzling myths carrying important information from the entire history of our life. By E.Roine (1997b) dramatisation of dreams can be a fantastic adventure into the unknown, into both the appealing and the repugnant. J.L.Moreno (2001) describes the integrated personality as a person who can bring the child in himself and, with the help of fantasy, overcome the unknown (flexibility in unfamiliar situation) and thus feel more secure within his own social domain.

Dreams presentations also fit into the concept of transition from the dream, to the symbolism, to the reality. One may begin a session with dream presentation. As the symbols within the dream become apparent to the protagonist and director, the dream then moves into a psychodrama session. Since dreams are often representative of our unconscious thoughts they give us excellent material to carry into the conscious work of the psychodrama (Goldman, Morrison, 1984).

### **Questions and tasks**

1. What are the main principles of psychodramatic work with dreams?
2. Name several possible ways of working with dreams in psychodrama.
3. What way of psychodrama work with dreams seem to you mostly suitable? Why?
4. Share some dream or fantasy with a group and try to make some scene with it.

### **Dream analysis in adults' psychodrama**

The wisdom of the night can enrich our lives by giving messages from our inner world that governs our personalities. The method of psychodrama endeavours to build bridges between dreams and the outward reality and helps to interpret a language that is mostly forgotten and lost to the consciousness of the day (Roine, 1997b).

Without access to the fantastic possibilities of the night, life becomes poorer. Every night is a source of magic where we experience new information on many levels: body, mind and psyche. So the exploration of dreams played a significant part in Moreno's treatment approach.

J.L. Moreno presents a case of dream analysis in one of his works (Moreno, 2001).

Psychodrama is the enactment, dramatisation and role-play of imagined events. This cathartic therapy involves the group as participants in the drama. The director negotiates the development of the drama with the subject of the drama, the protagonist. The protagonist describes the interpersonal situation they want to work on and gives information about the participants of that situation. The protagonist chooses from the group people he wants to represent the identified people in the situation. If it is a family situation he may choose his parents, a grandparent, siblings and his own children, partner etc. After the actors have received sufficient information to dramatise the story, the psychodrama or enactment takes place with the director checking its authenticity with the protagonist who usually plays himself to begin with. Thereafter the drama can be developed in any imaginative form. The protagonist can take over being a parent or a sibling, for instance, and speak and act from that position. If a new character is referred to, perhaps an aunt, the play can shift to enacting an imaginary scene between the protagonist, the aunt and whoever. The 'dead' can come back to life and the living can speak to the 'dead'.

This is a powerful form of working and small-scale dramatisations were quite often done in the dream work groups. For instance there was the re-enactment of the situation of the dreamer asserting herself towards the harassing young boys. Only on one occasion was a larger dramatisation implemented. This was based on a drama of the female dreamer holding a baby in an apartment in New York where two rats were attacking the baby. The dreamer, who later throws away the baby, kills the rat. This is a brief report of the dream and its enactment principally involved the attack by the rats on the baby and the later dialoguing between the mother and the baby. However, whilst the drama was vivid and engaging there is little evidence on tape that insight was generated or at least made explicit to the group (Edgar, 1994).

Psychodrama gives individuals the chance to express emotions that life hasn't given them the opportunity to express. There are many ways to use psychodrama. Much depends on the skill of the facilitator. One technique, which is helpful, follows.

**Ask each Dream Image in Psychodrama:**

Who are you?

What is your personality like?

What do you represent inside me?

Why are you in my dream?

What do you want from me?

Let the dialogue be an exchange of ideas and feelings. Be aware of and express your own position, your own attitudes and feelings. Look at where you agree or disagree and stop and think, how this affects you, and what you can do about it. Acknowledge that each image represents a part of all of us. Develop sensitivity to and acceptance of the point of view of the images even if they differ from your own conscious attitudes. If you disagree, acknowledge that the conflict is there. Make choices and decisions based on the learning you gained.

The psychodrama not only opens up the inner world of the individual with its stages of development and consciousness, but it is also a therapy of the act, with all its motivations, intentions, frames of reference, and meanings. The encounter, or interaction, of man with parts of his environment comes about with the support of the pattern of meaning that man attaches to his environment and through which, to that extent, he brings it to life. This process of bringing to life, for example, the material environment, is used in psychodrama as a technique or vehicle.

Let's take an **example** (Frýba, 1991). The protagonist is called upon to arrange his living room furniture artistically on the psychodrama stage and to describe it. In a next step he himself takes the role of one of his pieces of furniture and speaks out what it says to him.

Through this and similar techniques, long forgotten situations, in which perhaps important experiences were splintered off and left unprocessed, are often recalled with astonishing precision. Perhaps wishes and dreams are brought to life that had found their expression in the choice and arrangement of the furniture and since that time were perhaps forgotten or remained unfulfilled.

In the psychodrama, the piece of furniture, in association with the technique of role reversal, becomes a vehicle that transports the protagonist into worlds, which, though they are accessible and more or less meaningful for him, no longer correspond to his everyday world, as, for example the world of his childhood or the world of his dreams. Moreover, the worlds and their themes differ depending on whether the piece of furniture in question from the protagonist's living room is a valuable family heirloom or an inexpensively acquired piece from the junk shop.

In every case, a role reversal with a closely related person, for example, or a piece of furniture reveals a part of the protagonist's inner world. By this means, abstract meanings of different semantic fields are activated.

The acted-out interaction of the protagonist with parts of his material environment, for example, with his living room furniture, causes him to experience their meaning in a concrete and immediate fashion.

This example from the psychodrama stage clearly illustrates how the placement of a human being in his domain of action, whose meanings he had perhaps only vaguely sensed, can be concretised and brought to life. The interaction with the material environment is acted out on the psychodrama stage for the purposes of healing. That actual interaction with conditions, whatever they may be (for example, his material environment) removes that dichotomy in the experiential process of the protagonist. That is, do we shape our environment or are we shaped by it? J.L. Moreno emphasises that the human being experiences himself at once as a part and a partial creator of the cosmos. As an acting and action-capable human being, he becomes on the psychodrama stage the creator of himself. He is not a victim of circumstances, but rather learns to act creatively in his living environment.

V. Bender and I. Gneist (1998) describe such an example of using the dream in psychodramatic work. A special game form of protagonist is a game in the “dream”. The matter of the game is a dream or a separate scene of the dream.

### **Example**

Hans is recounting that he saw a dream that excited him very much. Especially he was touched by a short episode of the dream, which he remembers from time to time. After the description of the dream, the therapist suggests that he lies down on the rug and recalls out loud what he had on his mind that evening before going to bed. Hans began to recall that in the evening he had received a postcard with congratulations from his parents. Later, as Hans relaxed and the dream clearly appeared before his eyes, this scene was carried out on the stage.

In the dream Hans is dressed as a worker, who has to carry out a repair job in an old factory. He is alone in an empty dusty workshop of the factory and his gaze rests on a putrid wooden joiner's bench on which there are many rusty iron chains. Hans hesitates, he is unsure what has to be repaired and how, he wants to leave. At this point the psychodrama director offers Hans to switch the roles with the putrid wooden joiner's bench (meanwhile Hans's role is performed by a double). The role of the chains is performed by other members of the group, who overhang Hans so hard that he stoops down, but resists for a surprisingly long time and

keeps stable despite the provocations. While Hans was telling what was in his head as he was the bench, his relation to the worker (himself) changed so notably that the director asked if the relation reminded him of anything. All of a sudden (catharsis) Hans realised that he is in the role of his father. He could recount different problems (chains) of his father, including the disappointment that his son chose his way differently from what his father had expected. The continuation of the play was determined by the guess of one of the group members that the conflict between the father and the son is old and has been continuing for a long time. Hans confirmed the guess. It became clear that the father's model was the mixture of the real father and father's model, which was internalised by Hans (his super-Ego). Besides, strong dependence on the father became obvious, which, beside disappointment, denial and feelings of competition, also meant a strong necessity in mutual understanding, recognition and love (Hans' Ego). The end of the game was when Hans showed that he was waking up and lying in bed. He had to think aloud about the emotional experience of the dream once again.

Among other things, this game in dream shows that there is sense to give role to objects or ideas, such as sorrow, grief, emptiness, if they are relevant. This looks like dreams work in gestalt therapy where a client is identified with individual objects or images of dreams and where he/she has to express aloud the thoughts of the objects and images in the form of I (An example from a dream about a lake: "I am a lake. I am very deep and dangerous for swimmers, but on the surface you can see only little and friendly waves"). The difference of work with dreams in psychodrama and gestalt therapy is that in gestalt therapy other members of the group do not participate in the game of a dream, which results in absence of role exchange.

E. Roine (1997a) emphasizes that the dream must always be reproduced as carefully as possible. No matter how unimportant they may seem, each and every detail should be included. The procedure is to remember one's state of mind just before going to sleep, where one slept, the room, the most recent meal - every detail that might have influenced the content of the dream or activated the recollection of the dream. Reproducing a dream is, in reality, staging a dream. The phantoms of our dreams are figures that are brought to life by role reversal with the protagonist. They represent aspects of his own reality.

E. Roine (1997a) offers some dreams and their psychodramatic

explanation. A man saw three women in his dream. One was rocking back and forth, holding her hands over her stomach. When he reversed roles with her, he thought that she might be pregnant, but he eventually discovered that she was holding a beggar's bowl. His opening dialogue with the dream woman was: Woman: 'Don't leave me!' Man: 'Let me get away from your eternal subservience!'

The next woman stood with outstretched arms. By reversing roles the man experienced this woman as his mother who was trying to keep him at her side. The third woman was the 'unknown'. She had no face. Working with this figure revealed that the man longed to find a woman who was strong and independent, but that he thought no such woman existed. His basic belief was that women were made for the convenience of men. There was a striking similarity between his wife and mother, both in his dream and in reality, in terms of how he described them. Towards the end of the drama he was asked to choose a woman from the group to represent the third woman in his dream. He chose a woman he did not know very well. One of his comments came to be important in the drama: 'I am actually afraid of you.'

In another dream enactment, a woman whose husband had committed suicide appeared tense and restless. Nevertheless, the recollection of one of her dreams made her smile and nearly laugh.

She was in a room filled with sad people who were dressed in mourning. She was particularly interested in her sisters. They were all wearing white capes and resembled 'great restless, flapping birds'. A funeral march was playing and the large room was decorated in red and gold, 'almost like a gala performance'. Suddenly, she saw her deceased husband in a coffin beneath a huge canopy. As if it were a fairy tale, a golden crown glittered beside the coffin. But as she was walking past the coffin to take her place on a wooden stool, she noticed that the crown was made of cardboard.

In the following example, imagine the dream as dramatised through auxiliary egos, doubling, role reversals and other necessary techniques. Sisters and relatives were brought from the group. A man took the place of her 'husband' in the 'coffin'. Since the woman had been seeing a new man after her husband's death and her family knew nothing about this, an auxiliary ego was asked to take a chair on the outskirts of the dream scene.

In a soliloquy the woman reflected over the situation: 'It is strange that I don't feel sad. After all, it's my husband's funeral and I was paralysed by grief. I don't feel anything now'. At this point she turned to her 'sisters',

who were instructed to flap around in their white robes the way she saw them in the dream. This time she reacted. 'I can see that you want me to cry. You look like angels of doom, but this is a charade. Look at how *he* is enjoying this', she said, pointing at the 'corpse'. She was asked to reverse roles with her dead husband.

WOMAN [in the role of her husband]: I am truly pleased to see all of you here. This is just the way I thought it would be. Beautiful grief. A perfect performance.

WOMAN [as herself]: How strange that I didn't realize what a sham you were until you had died. Day and night I struggled to understand you, and you were wearing that ridiculous cardboard crown. What a pity that I didn't see it before now. You're a damned royal fool if you think you can still dominate me. But I'm not going to grieve. Don't think you can do this to me again!

A woman in the group starts doubling: I have already found a new man.

WOMAN: Yes, a new man. Well, only a lover. What would my virtuous sisters think?

DOUBLE: The problem is, I don't think this relationship will last.

WOMAN [talking to the corpse]: You are still a horrible nightmare.

DOUBLE: I'm transferring a whole bunch of irrational reactions onto my lover...

WOMAN: No, it's not that. I think he has the same traits. Not that he's a fake, but he gets depressions too and it scares me so much. I'm afraid it's all going to happen again.

DOUBLE: I can't cope with a repeat of the same situation.

WOMAN: I can't do it again.

After a long psychodrama that included memories from childhood and marriage (throwing light on why she was a patient), the drama concluded in a scene where the woman turned her back on the new man and asked him to come back later when she had more control of herself. In the final phase of the psychodrama, the sharing phase, the woman showed that she had gained a good understanding of her previous experiences but that she had never seen her husband as a fake or a fool until she had her dream.

Reconstructing dreams can also provide important clues about a person's physical condition, a fact that a protagonist should bear in mind.

A woman had mistakenly entered the balcony of the Beacon Theatre. As she looked down on the stage, she suddenly remembered a dream. In the dream she is on a high plateau holding onto a railing. She can see a garden or hospital grounds. All of the patients are very ill and they are sitting in bathtubs with missing front panels.

All in all, the dream was absurd and involved a large cast. The director thought that the most interesting aspect was the missing panel of the bathtub. The woman reversed roles with the bathtub, leaning forward and stretching out her arms as if they were the edges of the tub. The space between her hands represented the missing front piece. As soon as she 'became' the bathtub, she felt that all of her vitality left her. She said it felt as if all of her bodily fluid drained out of her, water, blood and strength. The director advised her not to work for a while and to take a vacation. A while later, the woman reported that she should have followed this advice. Instead, she had suffered a total mental and physical collapse that had caused a long period of illness. The body has its own voice, and it is an important voice to heed, even when relayed through a dream.

Dreams, and the different phases of dreams, have the same dramatic composition as a play, moving from the initial exposition of the theme to the problem itself and, finally, to the conclusion. This process is similar to a psychodrama, which moves from a warming-up phase to the enactment and to the final sharing phase.

Another woman dreamed that she walked into a hospital carrying a plastic bag of blood. Tossing her bag into a rubbish container, she said to a doctor: 'I think something's wrong with me'. The doctor confirmed this. When the woman woke up the next day, she called her doctor for an appointment and her doctor later confirmed that she had a blood problem.

The woman then had a dream in three phases. In the first one there were three cats and she was to give them a bowl of milk but a voice said: 'Do not give milk to pedigree cats. At least dilute it with water'. In the next phase she saw a cat clinging to something in the midst of a river's rapids. In the final phase she was at a circus. A man invited her into a magical Chinese tent. The woman's spontaneous answer was: 'No, I certainly don't want to go in there'.

Her blood tests had shown a high level of hydrocortisone and her blood pressure had risen dangerously. After interpreting her dream as a message to stop taking large doses of red ginseng from China without drinking extra water, her hydrocortisone level decreased. When she reversed roles with the cat in the rapids, she associated the image with her high blood



pressure. The final scene with the Chinese tent had given her the insight into her ginseng consumption and she understood why, in the first scene, she had been told not to give undiluted milk to pure-bred cats.

The experience of the author of this paper shows that dream analysis using psychodrama is very useful working with students groups. Students who are studying an introduction to psychodrama feel safer to present their dreams rather than real problems, and they more easily present their real situations after psychodramatic dream work.

There follow some examples of psychodramatic work with dreams with students of psychology.

### **Agne's case**

21 year-old Agne presented a dream in which she attended a party with some known and unknown people. During the party she was dancing with them and she felt that this situation and people were not very important for her. After she remembered that somehow she found herself near the river with a small bridge. Role exchange with the bridge, the river and the wind were used. Agne recognised that it was something that required a decision from her – either to go further or to stay at the place she currently was. During psychodrama, Agne remembered that she met one person near the river. It was her boyfriend relationship with her boyfriend, which was very unclear and complicated.

After this scene was finished Agne was asked what she would like to do further. She answered that she would like to meet her boyfriend and speak with him about their relationship. A new scene was created. During this scene Agne met her boyfriend accidentally near his workplace. This scene wasn't real, it was super-plus reality. When Agne met her boyfriend, she just passed him without saying a word. After that she said she'd like to finish the psychodrama because now she knew that she wanted to pass the river.

After the psychodrama was finished sharing was provided. During the sharing students spoke mostly about their relationship problems.

### **Olga's case**

During the psychodrama workshop a 27 year-old student of psychology, Olga, presented a dream during which she found herself at a small place with a lot of stairs going up. Three small children were in nearby water. Olga felt she must be concerned for these children, and especially for one of them. She rescued the children from the water but they didn't show

her any gratitude. Olga felt hurt and lonely. During the psychodrama Olga made a role exchange with all three children, with both ends of the rope that the children held to and realised that one of the children was her brother, who was much younger than her, another one was her nephew and third one her three year-old daughter. Olga shared her feelings about her daughter, and her wish to be an ideal mother in order to deserve her daughter's love. At this point, Olga stopped the psychodrama, so the symbol of stairs going up left unclear.

A lot of useful information was obtained during the psychodrama workshops with students of psychology and their fantasies. The author of this paper invited members of the group to close their eyes and imagine some room. After the room appeared in their imaginations, group members had to look around to see if there was some furniture in the room or some people. When the group members had the view of their rooms, psychodramatic work on the stage was offered. Several members wanted to analyse their own fantasy. I now present some of them in this paper.

### **Inga's case**

22 year-old Inga presented a room in her parents home where she visits in winter and summer time during vacation. Her presented situation was during Christmas time, when she was visiting her parents. Inga said that this situation was a real situation from her life. She put a lot of people in the room and made a role exchange with everybody. During the role reverse, Inga was asked to express the relation to herself by several words and gestures. There were a lot of people in the room – Inga's parents, uncles, aunts, grandparents, brother and sister, cousins – and almost all of them were longing to see her and wanted her help and attention. The maximisation technique was used in order to strengthen the feeling of being torn to pieces. All the people spoke simultaneously asking Inga for something and Inga tried to please everybody who wanted to speak with her but felt more and more tired. At this point she stopped the action and said that she could never understand why every time she came to visit her parents, she wanted to return to her university very soon after arrival.

After that, Inga created the next scene in which she tried to change her earlier behaviour by choosing what was most important for her to do at each point in time. She decided to help her mother first and promised the other people that she would speak with them later.

During sharing, the group's members expressed their feelings connected with their own parents and other family members.

### **Karina's case**

21 year-old Karina presented on the stage a room which she had never been in. It was an almost empty room with some furniture and with no people. Karina described the door and made a role exchange with it, after she entered the room, she described all the things there and made a role exchange with them. During the role exchange she was asked to say something from the role of the door, the soft carpet, the arm-chair and old vase to the person who was in the role of her double. When she returned to her own role, she was asked if all these objects and their remarks reminded her of some people from her life. Karina answered that she recognised her father in the role of carpet, mother in the role of arm-chair and grandmother in the role of old vase. In this moment she started to cry and said that her grandmother was very ill and she visited her only very rarely and even then, she just helped with some housework and never spoke. The scene in the room was finished at this point and Karina decided to make a new scene where she visited her grandmother and spoke with her.

In next scene Karina met her grandmother and spoke with her, expressing her love and caring and fear about her grandmother's disease and future death.

J. Fox (1987) emphasises that the objective of psychodramatic techniques is to stir up the dreamer to produce the dream instead of analysing it for him. Even if one could be sure that the analysis is objective and reliable it is preferable if analysis is turned into production by the dreamer.

The first stage of production was the dream which the protagonist actually had at the reality level on a specific date; when the protagonist is unconsciously his own producer. The stage of production was in the mind of the sleeper; the dreamer hallucinated all his auxiliary egos and auxiliary objects. There was no-one to share the dream with him; he was the sole agent of his warning up process, and the end which the dream had, pleasant or unpleasant, had only him as a witness or observer.

The second stage of production takes place in a theatre of psychodrama; it is here that therapy begins. As the dreamer begins to re-enact his own dream with the aid of director and auxiliary egos, the manifest as well as the latent configurations of the dream come forth naturally. Whatever a verbal analysis could reveal to the dreamer brought out in direct, actional terms. The dreamer does not have to "agree" with the analyst. His own

actions tell him and the audience what processes take place in his mind. One might say that instead of being analysed through analysis he is analysed through production. Analysis becomes submerged into the production. It is of advantage that learning does not have the form of analysis but the form of living out in action, a form of self-realization through the dream. Beyond this the dreamer brings forth experiences which are in analysis as well as in all verbal communication frequently guesswork and as such often unreliable or at least limited.

The third stage of dream production is stirring the patient up to extend the dream beyond the end which nature has set for the sleeper, or at least the end which he remembers. He is encouraged to re-dream the dream, to continue the dream on the stage, and to end it in a fashion which appears more adequate to him, or which brings him better control of the latent dynamics upsetting him. Such a procedure becomes a veritable “dream test” and leads to an intensive form of catharsis which may be called “dream catharsis”. This kind of “dream learning” leads up to the next stage.

The fourth stage finds the patient again back in his own bed, sleeping as he was in the first phase, in reality. He is again his own director, hallucinating his own dream characters and objects. But what he had learned in the course of active dream production he is apt to apply now – to the same dream if it is a recurrent one, or to a similar dream emerging in him. One could speak here of “post-traumatic suggestion” as one talks about post-hypnotic suggestion. In both cases an operation reaches into the patient’s unconscious activities long after he has been exposed to it and it reaches him on a deep level, for instance here during sleep; he becomes his own dream therapist.

### **Questions and tasks**

1. What kind of information can dreams and fantasies give?
2. What is the sense of role exchange with various elements of dream or fantasy?
3. What can dramatisation of imagined room be used for?
4. Close your eyes and imagine some room. What do you see? If it is a known or unknown room, empty or full of furniture and people, dark or light and so on? Bring this room at the scene for psychodramatic analysis.
5. Remember some dream which is important for you. Make a scene with it and ask every image what it means for you.

## Psychodramatic dream work with trauma

Psychodramatic work with dreams and metaphors can be used effectively in working with people who have experienced trauma (Hudgins, 1998). The therapeutic aspects of psychodrama with posttraumatic stress disorder are very similar to those of psychodrama in general, as described by P.F.Kellermann (1992). First, repressed experiences of the traumatic event are re-enacted within a safe environment. Second, there is a cognitive re-processing of the event to provide a new understanding of what happened and a working through of unconscious conflicts that may be connected to the event. Third, emotional catharsis is allowed to emerge to drain the emotional residue from the trauma. Fourth, an imaginary element of “surplus reality” is introduced to expand the protagonists’ worldview. Fifth, there is a focus on how trauma affects interpersonal relations and means to prevent isolation. Sixth, therapeutic rituals are performed to transform the event into a meaningful experience of life. Finally, if the trauma was a collective group experience, there is a communal act of crisis sociodrama to help readjust to a new state of social balance. These aspects represent universal elements of traumatic experiences as well as therapeutic factors of psychodrama in general. However, it is important to point out that they should be regarded more as overall therapeutic ingredients than stages of a complete therapeutic process. They rarely occur in the described order, nor are they necessarily put into motion all together during one and the same session.

So in the case of working with traumatic experiences the psychodramatic session goal is to explore unconscious symbols of past trauma that are projected into dreams, metaphors, or myths as the vehicle for increased awareness and change in meaning structures.

The behavioural acting out of past events provides a means to return to the origin of fixed positions and to search for ways to open up new paths of development. More than desensitisation, such a re-experiencing provides a framework in which a person can *be* where he or she *is*. This includes remaining in the hurricane experience of trauma despite the fact that it is just spinning around without direction. J.L.Moreno’s dictum that a true second time is a healing from the first sometimes involves also a third, fourth and twentieth reproduction that strives towards act-completion of an unfinished event. In between such sessions, protagonists continue to rehash the event in their imagination, in their dreams and in various symbolic forms, until they have found some inner resolution. However, as apparent in the example above, re-enactment in itself is often insufficient to provide

such resolution and often needs to be accompanied by other elements, such as the working through of unconscious conflicts and some cognitive re-processing of the event (Kellerman, 1992).

When the protagonist contracts for a drama to enact a dream or metaphor, the director keeps the enactment at the level of symbolic projections. Relying on this contract for structure maintains a level of safety for the protagonist (Hudgins, 1998).

Many trauma survivors report becoming consciously aware of childhood trauma for the first time through recurring dream images that contain elements of trauma. Dissociated thoughts, feelings, defenses, and behaviours will, no doubt, intrude upon the symbolic projections concretised in dreams and metaphors, but the director must not be tempted to follow the strands of unconscious awareness to deeper levels of experiencing. A metaphor may also yield unconscious fragments of dissociated material in a safe and abstract manner (Hudgins, 1998). Most importantly, dreams provide a way for the unconscious to communicate its secrets and their enactment often uncovers the deeper spirals of awareness of trauma. Using the energy of the unconscious, the protagonist can experience the meanings of the symbolic projections and later integrate those meanings into day to day experience.

Keeping the enactment at the level of symbolic projections maintains a certain distance and safety for the patient. Abstraction is a method of containment. However, it would be cavalier and foolish to treat a dream and other metaphoric material as frivolous, superficial, make-believe, or “just stories.” Their enactments are potent and powerful movers of both the unconscious and conscious, collective and personal. This dream work is handled with respect and appreciation while maintaining a sense of equanimity and humour.

In addition to the integration of strength provided by other psychodrama techniques, the use of dreams, metaphors, archetypes, myths and stories can also help group members explore things which may be too frightening to allow into conscious awareness. In cultural work the dramas of “totem” animals or mythological stories are ways to anchor strengths and create cross-cultural awareness.

### **Questions and tasks**

1. What are the main principles of psychodramatic work with trauma?
2. What kind of techniques can help in psychodramatic work with trauma?

3. Give an example of psychodramatic stress disorder.
4. Have you experienced any trauma in your own life? If so, how did you cope with it?

## **Oneirodrama**

J. R. Wolff considers that these four categories - raving , dramatise, dream and delirium - belong to a same process, but differ with the degree of the conscience of Me and of the level of connection with the external reality. So the dramatise constitutes an instrument of prime importance for the work as much as the raving, the dream and the delirium, because the four categories use the same language for the images and have a common origin.

J. R. Wolff emphasises that even the raving can be used in the psychodrama, because we can dramatise in open scene drives which were placed deeply inside in our unconsciousness. In that type of work, the dramatise happens with the internal images and it is called internal psychodrama.

In his psychotherapeutic work with the psychotic person, J. R. Wolff observed that such a person had great difficulty in treating his conflicting contents and entered in a 'psychosis produce' because of fear to contact the objective reality. The present author also noticed that, in those cases, a viable road to approach the unconscious contents was the dream. J. R. Wolff passed to use dream work frequently and he obtained extremely exciting results, because through it he could reach the internal conflicts more easily and more deeply understand the essence of delirious psychotic existence. Subsequently he extended the application of the oneirodrama to other cases of psychotherapy with non-psychotic people, also obtaining great results.

J. R. Wolff chose to exemplify the application of the oneirodrama cases of his clinical experience, with different diagnoses (including cases of psychosis), for which he could use several techniques, that is to say: individual psychodrama, with or without auxiliary ego, and group psychodrama. One of examples of individual psychodrama work with dreams is presented in Appendix.

I. K. Tsegos and M. Tseberlidou (2003) working in the Open Psychotherapy Centre of Institute of Psychodrama and Socioterapy (Athens, Greece) emphasise the Oneirodrama Group's function within the context of the Fortnightly and the Daily Psychotherapeutic Communities

of the OPC. This group is a specific application of the Group Analytic Psychodrama, with the same context, structure and boundaries but with a content coming mainly from the world of dreams.

The group procedure consists of a short general discussion, the narration of the member's dreams, followed with an agreement regarding those(s), which are going to be acted in, and finally the enactment itself. The "dreamer" temporarily becomes the "stage manager", decides his/her role in the enactment, makes the casting among the members of the group, and can propose changes in the plot of his/her dream. After the acting-in is complete, the group discusses the emotions and fantasies activated during stage action.

By I. K. Tsegos and M. Tseberlidou (2003) the Oneirodrama's approach is characterised by a playful attitude towards dreams and the avoidance of interpretations, since it considers dreams as an originally relational material, in order to promote further, through the recreational process, the faculty of relating.

### **Questions and tasks**

1. What is oneirodrama?
2. Make an analysis of psychodramatic work with Vera (see Appendix).
3. What are the characteristics of the oneirodrama approach?
4. Name the similarities and differences between the oneirodrama approach and psychodramatic work with dreams.

## **Dream and fantasies analysis in children and adolescents' psychodrama**

E. Leveton (1984) emphasises that active fantasy technique is very useful in psychodramatic work with adolescents. In the use of the active fantasy, the counsellor suggests a theme to the client, choosing material that could be helpful to him in accomplishing the next step in his growth or in facing a difficult problem. A counsellor working with an adolescent facing his graduation from high school without future plans, for example, could suggest that they might explore a story together, in which a young man is travelling along a stretch of road and finally arrives at a crossroads. What lies ahead if he takes one direction? What if he takes the next? Carefully exploring each road will help explore the boy's real-life choices.

J. Klimova emphasises that dream and fantasy analysis can be useful in psychodramatic work even with very young children, say 3-5 years old.



as such children understand symbols very well and can present them on the stage.

Psychodramatic work with dreams in a group of children is done in the following way. Basing on the picture of the dream, a child invites other children from the group, and using the surrounding space and suitable objects of different colours, materials and shapes, also constructors and masks, the child reproduces the dream on the “stage”, moving from one role to another by giving some voice, sound and movement to each “participant” of the dream; hereafter a discussion (dialogue) and role exchange among the characters go. The child - the main hero – shares his/her feelings he/she had in relation with the meaningful roles and Director. In the representation of dreams children often need additional figures, which assure safety to them. The figures may be real or imaginative characters.

A boy was making his way through the Fire River with luminous jumping Sparks - creatures “if you touch them you will die”, Abyss which you can't look in “you will release forces and fall down forever”, Bog - “if you don't remember something good it will drown you”, an insuperable Mountain at the top of which a Shadow was fighting in a cage. The Shadow which tempted the boy with a sweet voice trying to persuade him open the cage and release it - “ I know it is forbidden to open. It is a fatal lie. I don't trust it, but I feel my hands reaching towards the lock, reaching as if I trust...” To make this difficult way - “ I don't know where exactly. I only know for sure I have to come through everything, although I am scared to death.” Sasha (the boy) attracted additional forces, Determination, Firmness, Recollection of warmth and Kindness.

The whole group of children was participating in this vignette. They “were living” self-denying in “additional Ego” of the main hero. They actively duplicated and maintained him, It means their proximity and importance of the boy's stated topic.

### **Questions and tasks**

1. What are the peculiarities of psychodramatic dream work with children?
2. At what age are children suitable for psychodramatic work? Why?
3. Do you remember any fantasies and dreams of your childhood? Bring them to the scene for psychodrama work.

## Using of dreams and fantasies in education

The reason R.Landy says that drama therapy is very powerful is because, as the actor in the play, a person is able to participate in two realms at the same time. He emphasises that if a person can live in those two realms, that person can also move out of them. He says: “I can take off my costume and I am Robert Landy, and, as such, I can reflect upon Hamlet’s dilemma. I can say, “Okay, Hamlet’s in a tough situation. His father has recently died and something’s rotten in the state of Denmark.” And then I can say, “Now, there’s something in my real life as Robert Landy that’s similar to that,” and by reflecting on the imaginative role of Hamlet, I have a way to make greater sense of what’s going on in my real life. Maybe my father recently died. Maybe there are situations in my school that are horrible, and I can’t really deal with them. Maybe I’m confused about my mother. The point is that, for me, imagination is a realm, an actual place.” It sounds ironic because it seems to be the antithesis of reality. But it’s not the antithesis of reality—it’s another reality. It’s the reality of metaphor and art. It’s an expressive reality. It’s a place where we can go in our dreams and fantasies at any time. R.Landy thinks that in an English literature (and of course Lithuanian as well – *author’s remark*) classroom, or a writing classroom, teachers and pupils can reflect upon that other reality and look at the way that writers and artists have expanded our understanding of everyday life through their flights of fantasy, and of imagination. And, like them, they can practice our journeys into the imagination. So that’s how R.Landy conceives of the imagination. It’s the place where images reside. It’s the home of images, the home of fiction. And that reality of fiction and images and metaphors is not of any lesser value than the reality of our daily lives. Indeed, it might be of greater value. It’s a very special place where all human beings can and do go at least every night of their lives and, when they’re not immediately directed on a task of everyday life, in most of their waking life too.

### Questions and tasks

1. How can fantasies and dreams be used in education?
2. Choose some tale or short essay and try to make a dramatisation of it. What did you feel in the role of one or another hero?
3. What is your favourite book/hero? Take a role of him and make some dramatization on the scene.

## **Summary**

All given examples show that psychodrama is a useful tool in understanding dreams and fantasies, which, in turn, bring a lot of clues to understanding inner processes. Every person has his own fantasies and dreams which give messages from his inner world. The method of psychodrama endeavours to build bridges between dreams and the outward reality and helps to interpret a language that is mostly forgotten and lost to the consciousness of the day. Dreams presentations also fit into the concept of transition from the dream to the symbolism, to the reality. One may begin a session with dream presentation. As the symbols within the dream become apparent to the protagonist and director, the dream then moves into a psychodrama session. Since dreams are often representative of our unconscious thoughts, they give us excellent material to carry into the conscious work of the psychodrama.

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## **Appendix**

### **Example of oneirodrama by J.R.Wolff**

#### **Vera**

Vera had two psychotic crises and because of them she underwent individual psychodramatic psychotherapy for one and a half years. On the occasion of the described session she was in therapy for about six months. During Vera's psychodramatic therapy she had one assistant, who helped her by taking various roles.

On arrival, Vera begins immediately to recall the dream she had on the previous night that had made an impression on her. She is proposed to dramatize the dream, asking initially that the protagonist replays her day through solilóquy. Vera speaks about her day in an automatic way, arriving quickly at the moment of falling asleep. She is asked to set up her room, her bed, but she tells very little, being limited to placing the room elements, without many details and without other information. Then she lies down and begins to remember clearly the images of the dream. She is proposed by therapist to enter the "world of her dreams" and show what place on scene have all the elements of the dream. The dream passes in a dark place and the focus is a man standing with his back on her, whom she judges to be her father. She wants to approach the man, walking in his direction but, when she tries, he turns abruptly and, instead of the father's face, she sees the devil's face. Vera is scared, even desperate; she begins to say that she is God and all the men are devils, mainly her father, and that she possessed powers against all them. Here, she's reviving an aspect of her last psychotic episode, in which she felt exactly that. After a few minutes she calms down and then the therapist asks her to assume the role of the father's paper. In this paper, it recounts that he had maintained sexual relationships with Vera since she was thirteen years old. She says although a lot of times she was forced to do it against her will, but her mother died giving birth to Vera and she felt in the obligation to substitute for her. Vera is asked to take her mother's role. In the mother's role, she explains that her death was not her daughter's fault, but that she suffered from a heart disorder. At the same time it exempts Vera of any commitment in relation to the father. The ego-assistant is placed in the mother's role and Vera returns to her own and the scene of great emotion finishes with Vera and her mother taking hands. Continuing, therapist proposes that Vera returns to the initial scene of the dream. She now can approach the father, seeing him like he really is, no longer with the "devil's face" and she says to the father, with great peacefulness, looking into his face: "Now in the future I will only maintain sexual relationships with you when I want..."



Šiame leidinyje yra nagrinėjami psichodramos metodo taikymo sapnų ir fantazijų analizei ypatumai. Jame yra išdėstyti pagrindiniai psichodramos principai ir sąvokos, apžvelgiamos psichodramos fazės ir technikos, pateikiama nemažai praktinio darbo su fantazijomis ir sapnais pavyzdžių. Psichodramatinis darbas su sapnais ir fantazijomis yra nagrinėjamas įvairiais aspektais, analizuojami šio darbo su suaugusiais ir vaikais ypatumai. Leidinys skirtas psichologijos, pedagogikos bei meno specialybių studentams.

Margarita Pileckaitė-Markovienė

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Maketavo Laura Barisienė

Viršelio dailininkė Eglė Varankaitė

SL 605. 2,5 Sp. I. Tir. 200 egz. Užsak. Nr. 05-059

Išleido Vilniaus pedagoginis universitetas, Studentų g. 39, LT-08106 Vilnius

Spausdino VPU leidykla, T. Ševčenkos g. 31, LT-03111 Vilnius

Kaina sutartinė