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Dramatic Resonances: A technique of intervention in drama therapy, supervision, and training

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Abstract

Dramatic Resonances is an advanced drama therapy technique that can be applied as an intervention in therapy, supervision, and training. Mostly used in group settings, the method is based on the creative responses that participants offer from within dramatic reality to an input posed from outside dramatic reality. The input may be a member's personal experience (memory, dream, etc.) or a non-personal narrative (tale, text, etc.). The approach has a strong ritualistic style and integrates elements from various sources—including the shamanic tradition and the Playback mode. This article describes the technique of Dramatic Resonances, its rationale and therapeutic value, while setting it in theoretical context.

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Dramatic reality is a unique feature linking all drama-based approaches to therapy. Any therapist working within a dramatic framework draws on the notion of the *as if*—a core concept in drama that involves the concretization of the imaginary realm, the actual manifestation of subjective reality in the here and now. Thus, dramatic reality is seen as a major locus of therapeutic interventions in drama therapy (Pendzik, 2006). Its use as an instrument for effecting therapeutic change is widely supported in drama therapy and related fields' literature (Blatner & Blatner, 1988; Duggan & Grainger, 1997; Emunah, 1994; Jenkyns, 1996; Jennings, 1998; Johnson, 1991, 2000; Jones, 1996; Kippner, 2001; Landy, 1992, 2001; Moreno, 1987; Pendzik, 2003, 2006).

Depending on the circumstances and their particular working style, drama therapists choose to make therapeutic interventions either from within, or from outside dramatic reality (Landy, 1992). A drama therapist that takes on the role of director or audience to a performance is operating from outside dramatic reality. Interventions from within occur when the drama therapist enters dramatic reality, either as fellow performer in an ongoing scene, or as a guide who helps individuals to maintain, enrich, and navigate through the *as if* from inside (Johnson, 1992, 2000). Although these approaches differ significantly in the position that each one ascribes to the drama therapist in relation to the dramatic milieu, their common feature is that they locate the clients invariably within dramatic reality: The assumption underlying this form of intervention is that the therapeutic effect is achieved through the client's personal visit to the dramatic realm.

Yet drama therapy also provides options for intervention in which the client is the one standing outside dramatic reality. This arrangement brings to the fore the theatrical dimension of the field (theatre, from Greek, "to view") rather than its dramatic ("to do") aspect. An intervention of this sort can be found in Playback Theatre, where tellers are invited to tell their story and witness its presentation by others—either group members or trained Playback performers. Playback conductors are not positioned within dramatic reality: they stand at its threshold, linking between performers, tellers, and audiences (Fox, 1994; Salas, 1993, 2000). Yet the intervention in this mode is based on the premise that tellers *witness* an occurrence in dramatic reality, rather than make a journey to the *as if* themselves.

Analogous forms of intervention – which could be called "the client as witness" – may be found in therapeutic story-telling, ritual, or any instance in which the drama therapist (on his own or assisted by others) performs for a client or group. According to Johnson (1992), drama therapists working in this mode act as shamans, as they take "the imaginative journey" on their own, on behalf of their clients (p. 116).

This article presents a technique for making interventions of this kind, which I call *Dramatic Resonances.* Integrating ele-

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ments from various sources and traditions, such as the shamanic and the Playback modes, the method takes full advantage of the therapeutic potential inherent in both functions: the act of witnessing dramatic reality and the act of performing on behalf of someone else. The method can be used in therapeutic settings, as well as in training and supervision.

I have been developing Dramatic Resonances for more than 15 years now. The exploration initially set out as an attempt to find a contemporary correspondence to the shamanic paradigm, as well as to expand and deepen the therapeutic effects of Playback Theatre. I felt that there is a remarkable therapeutic value in the witnessing process, not only in the sense put forth in Authentic Movement – where the witness acts mainly as a living presence, providing containment and safety to the performer (Adler, 1999); but also in the act of beholding the transformation of one's subjective contents – the unfolding of an experience that is carefully held, developed, and transformed by others.

Similarly, there is an outstanding therapeutic potential in the act of resonating, for to perform a resonance is not merely to create an image on behalf of someone else: a person can only resonate with that which already exists in her or him; thus the resonators are also identifying, exploring, and working with images which are meaningful to them as well.

In Dramatic Resonances there is a fluid combination of performing and witnessing: participants play in turn as witnesses to the imagery that their offerings evoke on others, and as performers who respond to other people's offerings, or to collectively evolved imagery.

Dramatic Resonances is primarily a group technique—although it can be adapted for individual work as well. As an intervention method, it is extremely useful not only in the therapeutic milieu, but also in the context of supervision and drama therapy training, where it proved to be a powerful teaching tool.

Description of the technique

Dramatic Resonances are creative responses offered from within dramatic reality to a personal experience, a dream, a question, a text, a therapeutic session, or any stimuli conveyed in a drama therapy setting—mostly in a group session. These responses take inspiration from the initial account and remain attuned to its spirit, with which they resonate. Thus the technique has two main components: An *initial input,* and the *resonances* themselves—a *series of performed responses to it from within dramatic reality.*

An image can further illustrate the idea: the original communication can be likened to a stone thrown into a calm lake; the Dramatic Resonances resemble the expanding ripples that this act creates. They echo the initial movement, encircling it in successive rings, creating a chain of aesthetic pulses. Dramatic Resonances expand the sphere of influence of the original account in a poetic movement that is attuned to the initiating impulse.

The technique bears a strong ritualistic style. The original input is seen as an offering presented within a sacred space. The communication may be a personal account (an issue, question, dilemma, etc.) referred by a group member; or a non-personal input—such as a fictional story, myth, poem, etc. The initiator is placed in a specially designated area of the space; other participants are instructed to use active listening skills—stay open and alert to the input, as well as to the feelings, images, moods, and stories that resonate with them. The account is conveyed as a monologue or a solo (if it is nonverbal); its beginning and conclusion are marked by a musical instrument or another ritual device.

Until the group becomes familiar with the format, the drama therapist guides participants into developing resonances, by helping to deconstruct the input, suggest possibilities, and assist members to form creative teams in order to work on them. When the group is trained in the technique, members can move into what I call "spontaneous resonances"—a round of improvised resonances that begins as the original communication ends, with no further planning or break except for a few silent moments for concentration and attunement. (As any improvisational technique, *spontaneous resonances* have particular conventions, which I cannot detail in this article.) In another variation of the technique, the resonances accompany the initial input as it unfolds.

A sequence of resonances may include, for example, a stylized sound and movement version of the input, soliloquies by secondary characters involved in it, a popular song that deals with similar issues, a missing scene that could have happened, a universal story or myth that the input evoked. The resonances are performed in a ritual fashion, keeping the atmosphere of a sacred time and space, and with an eye to the aesthetics. Whether they are spontaneous or planned, the resonances are not presented as individual associations, but are seen as part of a collective effort to unfold the input. By the time the group agrees to "close the stage," the feeling is that the original account has been explored, carefully unfolded, and somehow transformed by the resonant sequence.

Although the resonances always keep a connection to the original input, they are not meant to be a mere reflection of it: they aim at expanding and deepening its scope, while keeping in sync with it. They resemble an aesthetic, living feedback performed from within dramatic reality, more than a mirror image. If they would be some kind of mirror, they would be rather like a lake. I shall give an example to illustrate a sequence of resonances:

> A single woman in her 30s describes her experience of going to a couple of weddings, meeting a few of her pregnant friends, and coming back late from work, to her dark and lonely apartment—all in one week. The piece was named "too many weddings and one big loneliness." The process began with a playback enactment, followed by several scenes that explored her experience (what I call the "closer ring"), such as a sound and movement rendering of it, a monologue she could have said when returning home, her pregnant friends talking among themselves about her singleness, etc. As the unfolding proceeded, the resonances extended the story past the personal sphere of the teller: someone sang a song about loneliness; a group member enacted a phone conversation

> with his own parents, in which he needed to excuse himself for being single. One of the closing resonances presented the story of Noah's Ark, played by two children who discussed whether animals that are not in pairs should be allowed into the Ark.

Resonances are not reactions, but owned responses to an input. A resonance belongs primarily to the person who performs it—the resonator. They are not meant to criticize, judge, or provide counsel or interpretations. To use Grotowski's (1968) terminology, a resonance is the place where an encounter is produced between performers and witnesses, or between performers and text—a place where the resonator and the initiator of an input meet. Thus, the input starter may witness the resonances offered by other participants without feeling bound to accept them. In this sense, the method reminds the spirit of the psychodramatic *sharing*, where the group is invited to respond to a psychodrama from a place of subjectivity, expressing how the enactment has touched them (Blatner, 1973). Yet, the sharing in psychodrama follows the action and is primarily verbal, whereas Dramatic Resonances follow the initial input (which can be verbal), but are invariably performed. This point provides a further angle for distinction: The fact that Dramatic Resonances are performed calls for an aesthetic compromise which is missing from the psychodramatic sharing. Here is another illustration:

> A Mexican woman who had accompanied her mother on her last months of life tells of her visit to her mother's grave on her memorial day with her sister. After the mother's death, the remaining brothers and sisters had broken ties with each other. Following the cemetery, the two sisters go for a beer and talk about their mother's sense of humor and joy of life, realizing how much she would have liked to see them celebrating it. The process began with a playback enactment of the main scenes: the sisters buying flowers, cleaning the grave, and so on. A monolog from the point of view of "the flowers on the grave" initiated the next ripple, followed by a scene of the two sisters playing together as children; this led to a family picture recalling a time when they were all together. The next resonance brought the Mother's Ghost freeing the teller from her role as a family conciliator. This was followed by a silent piece in movement about autumn trees loosing their leaves, and then by a monolog on the cycle of life and death, spoken by Mother Earth. The resonances ended with the song "*Gracias a la Vida"*—in Mercedes Sosa's version to Violeta Parra.

The resonances are placed at various degrees of aesthetic distance from the original input. They may range from a close rendering of it (like a playback), through symbolic representations that use movement and sound, props or puppets; they may turn to a universal story or myth that embrace the input, and end with a personal experience that it evokes in other group members. Apart from these, further examples of Dramatic Resonances include:

(a) Revelation of marginal aspects or alternative discourses (secondary characters, subtext exposure).
(b) Unusual perspectives of time or space (past or future transportation, zooming or panoramic view: a character telling the account to her grandchildren, the inside of a character's body).
(c) Special angles (the point of view of non-characters: the "guardian angels" watching the scene, Cinderella's shoes speaking, etc.)
(d) Framing of the input in a bigger picture: the input is part of a movie being filmed or an entry in someone's personal diary.
(e) Inter-textual evocations or quotations: parallel narratives that deal with similar themes or recall analogous moods (a song, a poem, a monolog from a play).
(f) Translation of the theme into a metaphor from the world of nature (a river flowing, a rainbow after the storm, etc.)

This list is not exhaustive: All these options aim at deconstructing, exploring, expanding, and deepening the scope and meaning of the initial input, while keeping in touch with it.

Usually there is a verbal processing following a sequence of resonances—although silence is also welcome. The processing is mainly concerned with the experience of the resonances: Things that came up for participants in the process of unfolding the input are expressed; group issues that were elicited by the exercise are addressed; the aesthetic choices made by the group are discussed, and reflections about the overall structure of the resonances are shared. The processing thus integrates personal, inter-personal, aesthetic and transpersonal levels.

Dramatic Resonances in theoretical context

Although there is a clear associative link between the resonances and the initiating input, *Dramatic Resonances are not to be confused with free associations*. Perhaps this difference is better explained by analogizing the concept to Jung's *(direct association)* and Freud's (*free associations)* methods for working with dreams. According to Fontana (1997) the free association technique encourages people to get the inspiration from the *first association* that comes to mind and then to follow their train of thoughts. Indeed, free associations proceed in a train-like fashion. In Jung's method, by contrast, the associations encircle the original word or symbol, keeping always a relation with it. Dramatic Resonances are more akin to Jung's idea, because they stay around the original impulse—as the ripples do in the lake, even as they grow farther away from it.

In many ways, the technique of Dramatic Resonances is concurrent with the premises espoused by Playback Theatre. Among others, the assertions that witnessing one's own as well as other people's stories fosters empathy and understanding, and that human experience finds meaning when communicated in aesthetic forms, (Fox, 1994; Salas, 2000). Likewise, the ritual elements present in Playback constitute a core structural aspect in Dramatic Resonances. Yet Playback Theatre deals mostly with what I call the "closer ring" of a personal input. Once the performers "act out the story as accurately and creatively as they can" (Salas, 2000, p. 289), the story is handed back to the teller and conductor. Although there is some space for corrections and transformations (such as suggesting other endings, etc.), after the Playback, the teller is quite ready to return to the audience, following a brief processing with the conductor. In Dramatic Resonances, this would be just the preamble: it is only here that Dramatic Resonances begin.

In Dramatic Resonances the closer ring may serve the purpose of verifying that group members have a grip on the narrative that they are prepared to resonate with it. At this point, the story is turned over to the collective – the group – for further deconstruction and unfolding. As in the Jungian association method, the story begins to spiral into other spheres, as the group endeavors to deconstruct it into its main themes, symbols, patterns, etc., in aesthetic pulsations that keep resonating with it. Thus, the technique is certainly compatible with Playback Theatre; yet, it takes a step further in terms of the therapeutic intervention. A further distinction is that Dramatic Resonances do not necessarily use personal stories as a point of departure: Other sources – such as poems, tales, or other texts – are also considered as possible inputs.

Dramatic Resonances bear some resemblance to the technique of *Dramatic Multiplication* put forth by Argentinean psychodramatists, Kesselman and Pavlovsky (2006). This technique involves three steps: (1) an initial scene posed by a protagonist, or a written text; (2) resonant multiplications; and (3) verbal sharing. Developed in the 1970s from psychoanalytical psychodrama – and as a reaction to it – Dramatic Multiplication aimed at providing an alternative to the monolithic reductionism of interpretation that dominated this approach. According to these authors, the amount of versions that a group can give to a situation through Dramatic Multiplication reveals the multiplicity factor that is always present in a group, and that furthermore, defines the very essence of group work. Thus, Dramatic Multiplication is conceived as a "machine of production of subjectivity" (p. 8, my translation), based on improvisations that set free the creative imagination of the group.

Some coincidences can be found between Dramatic Resonances and Multiplication; among them, the idea of deconstructing an original input through dramatic means, and of providing alternative narratives. Yet the theoretical context and the metaphorical language employed by each approach differ greatly. Dramatic Multiplication follows the track of free associations. As the authors point out, Multiplication is chaotic; it messes up and defies capture:

> It imposes incomputable velocity. It breaks the common sense of comprehension. It does not serve hermeneutics. It is pure flow of stuttering ... of stammering ... It's the fall of language; the demonstration of opacity. It is the unveiling of the group's multiplicity (Kesselman & Pavlovsky, 2006, p. 126, my translation).

From this description it is clear that the approach is conceived as a gateway into the unconscious and its processes; it looks for the revelation of the "semiotic gap"— the pre-oedipal, preverbal ordering that Julia Kristeva (1986) contrasts with the Symbolic Order of the word and language. Dramatic Resonances do not seek to reveal the chaos of experience, but to develop the group's ability to make sense of chaos by shaping it through aesthetic devices. The imagery of "chaos," or of the "machine of production of subjectivity," are alien to Dramatic Resonances—an approach that is better grasped through images of nature in its unfolding processes: the ripples in the lake, the opening of a flower, the rising of the sun, etc.

Dramatic Resonances is not a catharsis-oriented technique: it is more attuned to the form. The approach involves an aesthetic effort that requires from participants to keep an eye on the patterns they create as their resonances evolve. Hence, a sequence of resonances has an inner rhythm or logic that is uncovered as each resonance takes its place on stage. Dramatic Resonances are consonant with Peter Brook's (1968) notion of encouraging the actors to find vital forms, "to see themselves not only as improvisers, lending themselves blindly to their inner impulses, but as artists responsible for searching and selecting amongst form (p. 52)."

Therapeutic and aesthetic considerations – such as aesthetic distance – are contemplated when looking at the implications that every resonance has upon the others: For example, a given resonance may open or close a ripple, so to speak. If a wider ring has been opened by a resonance, which brought the initial input into a more universal sphere, it may be more appropriate to pursue this level rather than to bring the movement back to the personal realm of the original account; or if several resonances have dealt with the same issue, it may not be suitable to perform another one that offers "more of the same." Using the measure of guidance that a group needs from the drama therapist, these aesthetic and therapeutic choices can be made intuitively and collectively by group members: Attunement to the whole, and timing, are essential. So when the last resonance ends, and the group looks back at the sequence, a pattern would have emerged—not necessarily one that can be clearly verbalized, but usually one that can be perceived, as in a work of art, the opening of a flower, or the recalling of a dream.

By *aesthetic choices* I do not imply here a matter of personal taste. As Susanne Langer (1953) claims, the quality shared by all works of art, regardless of what culture or civilization they belong to, is that they draw out our aesthetic emotions by conveying a Significant Form (p. 32). When a group of people is as present and attuned as the technique requires, a sequence of Dramatic Resonances produces a Significant Form; and this form, in turn, makes the whole group resonate.

Finally, one of the theoretical tenets of Dramatic Resonances is the shamanic conception of *healing through performance*. Clearly, the shamanic paradigm can be viewed as an ancestral model of those psychotherapeutic approaches that rest upon the notion of "journeying into other worlds" (Pendzik, 1988, 2004; Snow, 2000). As Masters of Spirits, shamans transit the path into the invisible in order to fight against the forces of disease, perform the cure, restore lost souls, gather information, etc. (Eliade, 1964). In this transit, the boundaries between everyday and invisible realities are crossed, and the invisible is made visible through performance. The shaman is the advocate of the diseased person in the World of Spirits: he or she takes upon himself or herself the task of representing his or her "client" in the World Beyond, while the diseased person and the community watch them perform. This notion is implicit in Dramatic Resonances: as the input is handed over to the participants, each group member becomes a shaman that takes the issue at hand into dramatic reality, in order to transform it.

Therapeutic aspects of Dramatic Resonances

In her novel *Swift as Desire*, Mexican writer Laura Esquivel describes the Mayan idea of the universe as a resonant box:

> To imagine the Galaxy as a resonant box was very interesting. To resonate means to sound again. And to sound means to vibrate. The entire universe is pulsing, vibrating, resonating. Where? In the objects prepared to receive the energetic waves (2001, p. 46, my translation).

According to her, for the Mayas the universe was not atomized, but was conceived as an integrated *resonant matrix*, with subtle, invisible threads, connecting between beings, and linking them to the cosmos. All cosmic knowledge was available to anyone who was sensitive enough to perceive the resonance of things; and this not only filled the person with joy, but also created a sense of harmony and heightened their communication skills.

Dramatic Resonances work on a similar chord; of course, on a much humbler and less esoteric scale. But in fact, a group is a microcosm, and the capacity to create resonances involves first and foremost *developing keen listening and communication skills*. In order to produce a resonance people have to be responsively open and connected at once, to their inner process, and to the environment. I will contrast this again with free associations. When associating, I might say, “this is what your issue brings up for me,” so that the focus may shift from the original input to my own patterns or imagery. Associations usually throw people into their own inner world, which may or may not have resonance with that of others. Resonances require an extra effort of communication and empathy, for it aims to make at least two entities vibrate. A resonance carries meaning for others as well as for oneself: it is always a response to an “other,” yet one can only resonate with something that is also pulsing inside us. Therefore, while using Dramatic Resonances, individuals practice and develop personal and interpersonal skills that constitute the fundamentals of psychotherapeutic work.

Sharp communication skills

Through their involvement with Dramatic Resonances, people develop a sensitive form of listening, which is empathic, present, and honors others. They expand their understanding of timing in communication, and sort out considerations regarding the appropriateness of contents in a given situation: As Fox (1994) claims, appropriateness is one of the aspects involved in spontaneity—which includes not only to say what one wants to say, but also a consideration of the context.

Interpersonal skills

Human relationships require us to perform four functions, which are the basis of interpersonal exchange: giving, taking, receiving, and asking. Giving refers to what we want to offer of our own free will; receiving relates to our capacity to accept what others want to offer us; taking means claiming what is ours by right; asking involves the recognition of a need, and the acceptance that it may or may not be given to us (Pendzik, 1999). All these functions come into play in Dramatic Resonances: A round of resonances is initiated by the offering of the person who *gives* an input. In the witnessing role, this person stands as a *receiver* of the resonances. A resonance is also concerned with *giving,* in the sense of offering a creative response. Finally, as the sequence of resonances unfolds, group members practice and negotiate the functions of *asking* and *taking,* for instance, via their use of stage space.

Learning about intimacy and boundaries

Dramatic Resonances require us to discern between “our stuff” and that of others. In contrast to free associations, where any response that a group member may bring is valid, here participants are requested to reflect on what does or does not belong to the piece, what is or is not attuned to the input. Likewise, as the initiators of an input witness a round of resonances, they are encouraged to sort out which offering are significant or relevant, and which ones did not hit the mark for them. In this way, good and flexible boundaries are developed.

Collective work

Like most improvisational techniques, Dramatic Resonances place a strong emphasis on collaboration. A person who initiates a resonance may ask others to take part in it; yet, he or she are the piece’s leaders, while the others exercise trust and collaborate to make it work. There is no request for everyone to initiate a resonance; the focus is not on the individual’s originality and brilliance, but on how to unfold the input together. Thus collective efforts also occur at the level of the interplay between the *part* and the *whole*. For instance, it frequently happens that while someone is thinking of an idea for a resonance, the same idea is unexpectedly taken up and performed by another member. Since the approach conceives the group as what Laura Esquivel calls a *resonant box*, this is quite a common occurrence: ideas tend to flow among people who are connected. Emphasis is not placed on *who* initiated the resonance (the part, the individual), but on the acknowledgement of the invisible threads that link between resonating people (the whole, the group).

Developing the Inner Artist

Another therapeutic component encouraged by Dramatic Resonances is the development of the *Inner Artist.* In her model of the Dramatic Structure of the Mind, Jennings (1998) states that this aspect is crucial for therapeutic work, in that it can energize the person or trigger change since it stimulates other areas of the personality. Dramatic Resonances is a highly evocative technique that helps to enlist a person’s inner artist, and to create a safe environment that furthers its development.

Dramatic Resonances in supervision and training

Dramatic Resonances can be extremely helpful in the supervision or training settings. As Altfeld (1999) points out, one of the problems with traditional group supervision is that the structure requires the case presenter to "undress emotionally" while the other colleagues stay in a rather cognitive, critical position. According to him, "this kind of 'hot seat' supervisory work often seems ill-advised, in the context of institute training programs or a clinic staff milieu" (p. 238). As an alternative, he proposes an experiential group model based on group members' emotional responses, associations, and interactions. Speaking from a psychoanalytic, object relations perspective, his model encourages participants to reach for subjective responses and feelings usually associated with the primary process, and then proceeds to elaborate the material in cognitive terms.

The idea of resorting to the experiential level as a tool in supervision and training is no news in drama therapy: it has long been recognized that the journey into dramatic reality that benefits clients is advantageous in the supervision setting as well. In this, Dramatic Resonances joins a variety of creative methods currently in use by other practitioners in the field (Jennings, 1999; Lahad, 2000; Tselikar-Portmann, 1999). The following example describes a sequence of Dramatic Resonances used in supervision.

> The therapist presented the case of an eleven-year-old girl who had integration problems at school, where she was being scapegoated, particularly by the other girls in her class. She spent most of the breaks alone (or playing with the boys), and sat alone in class, in spite of the fact that sitting arrangements were officially changed by the teacher every two weeks. Every time the arrangements were about to be altered, the girl displayed signs of anxiety. The therapist had tried to talk to the teacher about this, but still nothing had changed. Moreover, the teacher had recently punished another kid in the class by having them sit on their own, thus making a clear link between sitting alone and being punished. The therapist was asked to give a title to the input. He called it "the ritual."
>
> The first circle of resonances included a scene depicting a break at school in which the girl was being rejected by other girls, a gossip scene where they discussed her clothes and behavior, and an inner monolog in which the girl expresses her feelings as a scapegoat. The next ripple opened up with a sound and movement piece that showed a symbolical view of the situation. This was followed by fluid monologs by secondary characters: the teacher, the girls' parents, and the therapist. An unusual angle was presented through a monolog by the girl's lonely chair. Then, a few lines were recalled from the song by Simon and Garfunkel: "Like a bridge over troubled waters . . ." This opened a farther ripple, which included an exploration of the Teacher as an archetypal figure, a movement and sound piece with ritual overtones about finding one's own rhythm and meaning, a personal story heard by one member about a cruel ritual for newcomers performed at schools; and lastly, the Ugly Duckling story, retold in retrospect by its main character.

The technique of Dramatic Resonances not only affirms the value of the experiential level in supervision and training, it also teaches participants to rehearse and carry out functions that are vital in drama therapy practice: Responding to an input from within dramatic reality, developing a double-glance that incorporates aesthetic as well as therapeutic factors (considering process and product), measuring interventions in terms of aesthetic distance, deconstructing an input into its main issues, conflicts, themes, archetypes, etc. The collaborative aspect of the technique provides also a good training ground for group work, and reduces the "hot seat" effect present in the traditional group supervision and training systems.

Conclusion

Dramatic Resonances is a form of advanced therapeutic intervention that utilizes the strength of the collective in order to assist the individual. The technique provides a safe arena where participants can develop and practice good communication and interpersonal skills, while fostering a connection with their inner artist and their creativity. By offering a rainbow of aesthetic possibilities, Dramatic Resonances help to deconstruct an original narrative into its main symbols, conflicts, themes, etc., and to anchor the personal in the realm of the collective.

Most of a person's ego-functions are mobilized by the practice of this technique, and therein also lays one of its limitations. When performed – as described in this article – in its full-scale format, Dramatic Resonances require emotional maturity, cognitive skills, and social adjustment. Like most techniques of improvisational group work, Dramatic Resonances would not be an appropriate means for working with people whose ego-functions are too weak or severely impaired. One does need a lake that is calm enough in order for a stone to produce a meaningful resonance. Yet the basics of the technique can be taught, usually with the drama therapist taking a stronger lead in the deconstruction of the original communication—at least in the initial phases. On the other hand, Dramatic Resonances is a remarkable tool for students or practicing therapists, as it incorporates many of the elements that are essential in any therapeutic relationship, and makes an excellent tool for supervision.

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