

The far side of the volcano:
Sesame and the bereaved self

Andrew Royle

MA Drama and Movement Therapy (Sesame)

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Dedication

For Dad

and

Amélie & Scarlett

*The Cherry Blossom tree
planted when I was as tall as his knee,
breathes on, after his death,
so untimely.*

Acknowledgements

Thank you,

Richard, Mo, Ben, Mary, Aleka, Rachel & Priscilla for your guidance through such an important year.

Jenny, for gentle wisdom.

Shelley, for your belief and trust.

Amelie and Scarlett for showing what love means.

Mum & John and all my family for your understanding and space.

All the Sesame class of 2006/7 - always the circle.

I understand the school definition of plagiarism and declare that all sources drawn on have been primarily acknowledged

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Overview

Client group: Psychiatric group with older people:

In this placement, I worked with two other facilitators providing weekly session (over 9 week period) in a mixed gendered open group, for older clients with enduring mental health conditions:

Learning Points:

- 1 The sense of smell can be used, particularly with immobile clients (bringing in spices, fruits, fragrances).
- 1 Synchronicity may occur in and around sessions and can greatly contribute to post-session discussion and co-facilitator dynamics (introducing depth).
- 2 Holding the boundaries of the space (particularly addressing late entrances/early exits) may not be to each client's preference, but holds the therapeutic vessel for the group.
- 3 If I focus on the self that I think others are seeing – I may miss the self that I am.

Client group: Adults with learning difficulties

A mixed gendered closed group, in a community day-care centre, over a 9 week period, co-facilitated with 2 colleagues:

Learning Points:

- 4 Self-containment, particularly before sessions, is important.
- 5 Bringing expectations to session-work can get in the way, of meeting clients and meeting colleagues.
- 6 Introducing opposites into a session, as an intervention, can be done initially with movements and by reference to Laban's terms (i.e. lightness/weight)
- 7 Practicalities of the session need to be talked through and co-facilitators allocated jobs to avoid confusion in sessions.

Client group: Autistic children (group)

The group comprised four young boys, all on the autistic spectrum. Weekly sessions occurred over 13 weeks, co-facilitated with a colleague

- 8 I can be drawn into the children's excitable and creative energy. Providing structure within a session, provides boundaries for 'contained' spontaneity.
- 9 Children respond to consistency, having demarcated periods in the session: 'listening time'; 'fun/playtime' 'relaxation time' can become internalized
- 10 'Good' and 'naughty' behaviour are approached differently in sessions compared to classrooms.
- 11 I am not trained as a teacher, controlling the group and seeking good behaviour is not necessarily a core aim.

Client Group: Autistic children (1:1)

Weekly sessions were held over twelve weeks at a special school for autistic children. Four boys were seen individually in one-to-one sessions:

Learning points

- 12 Holding a plan for a session in mind, allows client & facilitator to depart from it
– as a secure base
- 13 The energy from repeated exercises can be transferred into new exercises, which helps to develop the image in play.
- 14 Using physical touch with children can be effective. The facilitator can gain much support and guidance in supervision.
- 15 Some contact with parents of children can be useful, though they will not necessarily see the same priorities for the child.
- 16 Observing the children in class can provide information regarding the degree of cognitive understanding of the client.

Client group: Bereaved children

Weekly sessions were held over a five week period. The mix-gendered closed group comprised of children aged between eight and seventeen, each of which had experienced bereavement, co-facilitated with a colleague.

Learning points

- 17 Children can be overwhelmed by too much verbal instruction
- 18 It's good to involve partners in all communication with the institution
- 19 Letting go of the session plan can release energy within the group and within the facilitators
- 20 Give plenty of time to ending rituals – also consider bringing them to the group in the penultimate session.

Client group: Adult Psychiatric: Forensic Unit

Weekly sessions held in an adult psychiatric secure unit for male patients, mostly diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. Open session, co-facilitated:

- 21 Important to be aware of how much I personal information I disclosure to clients about myself.
- 22 Making sudden and direct movements can frighten clients.
- 23 Giving consistent and clear boundaries regarding personal space and touch is important, not only for clients and myself, but in upholding the team policy.
- 24 Being part of a wider team entails accepting policies and approaches in the work-place, which are not ones that I may agree with.
- 25 Therapeutic work maybe carried out in a community setting – which increases

the interaction between 'client' and 'therapist' outside of the therapy space.

(Wordcount 640)

Introduction

In 1983 my father died during a heart-valve replacement operation. I was thirteen years-old. He had endured similar operations throughout his life, but this time his heart said *enough*. He was thirty-eight. My last sight of him was as a corpse; his pale almost plastic-looking face and puffy lips left an indelible image that I have never forgotten.

I left school at sixteen and began working in a travel-agency, so beginning a career in which I determined success in terms of salary and status. I took on board a 'high-flying'

managerial job, before the age of thirty, together with the binge drinking which the position partly entailed. Yet, throughout all this, something was vying for my awareness. It made my hands shake at corporate dinners, and occasionally paralysed me in meetings, particularly if caught by the expectant gaze of others. It was something I had left behind.

My father's death marked an event that failed to die with him, though I had tried to run and run from it. I became acquainted with this something in psychotherapy, which I started in my early thirties. At the same time I began to study. I was torn between studying the Arts and Social Sciences, but chose the Arts; graduating from the Open University with a Humanities degree in 2006. I had continued to work part-time, but it was evident that I needed to change my work. Just before the end of my degree I applied for the Sesame MA in Drama and Movement Therapy, to my amazement, I was accepted.

Training in Sesame dramatherapy reawakened my childhood bereavement and enabled me to explore a still widely pervasive sense of loss in my life. Throughout many training sessions I felt this loss manifest, bringing potent feelings of anger and even vengeance; mercifully, also at times a gentle acceptance and release. Sesame provides a safe space to explore such antithetical feelings, not necessarily in discussion, but obliquely (or indirectly) using bodily movement, symbols and voice. Indirectness was something that worried me, I had come to therapy with certain expectations of what I needed, which I felt involved cathartic expulsion rather than oblique subtlety.

However, I found natural images, such as the spring blossom and the dark soil brought an evocation of childhood and loss which were not just deeply buried memories, but rather could be experienced and embodied in the present moment, in the room with others. I recalled a blossom tree in my childhood garden and felt anger towards it; how dare it continue to blossom, like a flashing beacon of spiteful beauty, whilst he was dead! Through staying with the image of the blossom, in drama and movement, I revisited still potent and angry feelings of loss, giving them a form beyond anger. Deep

in the maddening anger of loss is the feel of a soft belly. In the sorrow and pain of accepting loss, arms unfold, witnessed and held in ritual silence.

In this work, I review bereavement literature from the early twentieth century to the present, paying particular attention to the bereaved child. I write of the shift from Freud's 'letting go' approach to one which focuses on the 'continuing bonds' between bereaved and deceased. I explore the use of *ritual* and *symbol* in working with the bereaved, referring to particular occurrences of ritual in Sesame work, but also I refer to the ritualised *rite of passage* that is inherent in the Sesame structure. Also I consider how images and symbols may be used in working with the bereaved and how the symbols we form can both represent and transcend loss. I also explore the different roles of the Sesame practitioner in working this way and consider how my own bereavement may impact working with the bereaved.

Feelings around bereavement and loss can be despairing; sending us reeling into the abyss, even bringing a compulsion to rejoin lost loved ones. My experience on the Sesame course has not been an easy one and I am most grateful for the space to explore this difficult area. It has been a time of finding and exploring the images which have enabled connections from out of the void.

Literature Review

Early twentieth century writings on bereavement: Freud and Klein

In Sigmund Freud's seminal work *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917) Freud stated that after bereavement a process of *decathexis* needs to occur, that is a withdrawal of emotional and psychological bonds (or 'psychical energy' (Freud 1991:380) to use Freud's terminology) from the deceased. (Freud 1917). Freud argued that detachment from the deceased was necessary to enable new bonds to be formed. Psychoanalyst,

Melanie Klein departs from Freud's approach. In *Mourning and its relation to manic-depressive states* (1940), Klein locates an initial or fundamental experience of loss during the weaning stage of infancy. The infant experiences the loss of the breast, as a threat to its sense of *self*, and, fearing further loss *internalizes* the mother (or more specifically the mother's breast), as an 'inner object' (Klein 1975:345). This internalization bolsters the self, whilst establishing a capacity to respond to future loss. For Klein, this process involves deep connections with, and formation of, the self which can be an enriching process and may result in the bereaved uncovering new artistic or creative gifts (ibid:359)

The bereaved child

Klein's writings typify a general shift away from Freud's 'letting go' approach to bereavement, particularly in the case of bereaved children; for example, Anderson (1974), found that children actively sought a continuing relationship with the deceased (In Stroebe et al 1993: 315). This was further investigated in J.W. Worden's formidable *Harvard Children's Bereavement Study*; Worden found that far from 'letting go' children often talked, dreamed and thought of the deceased. Worden found also, particularly with pre-adolescent children, a difficulty in expressing feelings in words; he therefore identified a somaticized (or bodily) response to bereavement in children (ibid: 314). This suggests that a therapeutic approach to working with bereaved children should focus, at least partly, on bodily responses. Sesame dramatherapist and founder of *Willow* (a child bereavement service) Alyson Coleman, has written of *story* and *ritual* as providing suitable 'containers' for children's anger in bereavement. (Sesame journal, 2006:32).

Ritual and the continuing bonds of bereavement

Klein's internalization of the lost 'object' or person, anticipated an approach to bereavement which seems to have come full circle from Freud's 'letting go' theory, in that it focuses on 'continuing bonds' with the deceased. In *Continuing Bonds: new*

understandings of grief (Klass, Silverman, Nickman, 1996), Klass et al proposed that after a bereavement, we do not fully detach, instead we renegotiate and reconstruct an on-going relationship or 'continuing bond' with the deceased (ibid.) A continuing bond does not seek to deny irrevocable loss but rather, and perhaps paradoxically, may bring an acceptance of the finality of loss:

'It's easier to accept the finality of the loss if the bereaved have an appropriate way to maintain a sense of the deceased in their current lives'

(In Stroebe et al 1993:308)

Though not common in Western countries, Klass et al refer to the widespread practice of continuing bonds in non-western countries and the rituals and practices which are used to maintain such bonds. For example, the Japanese practice of 'Ancestor worship' (Klass et al, 1996:60); wherein, altars are installed at the homes of the families of the deceased. Photos are placed on the altars and represent the availability of the deceased ancestors for the bereaved to seek favours, comfort or advice.

Similarly, Marian Lindkvist (founder of Sesame Dramatherapy) refers to a traditional ritual of the Xhosa people of South Africa. The ritual involves costume, body-painting and a procession to the river, in which objects are thrown to the 'River People' (the deceased ancestors) for their views to be gauged on social matters. Lindkvist, upon witnessing the ritual, tells of the power and sanctity of the occasion; she also records the response of a young bereaved boy, who shouted: 'My father is Maku. He is dead not dead' (Lindkvist 1998:225). Lindkvist goes on to distinguish how 'dead' in the western sense differs from 'dead' for the Xhosa.

It seems that ritual provides a structure (and an occasion) for the continuing bond with the deceased to be experienced. A bond which perhaps could otherwise feel frightening is dignified and held by the structure of the ritual.

Reverie in bereavement

There are other ways that a continuing bond may manifest. In *Bereavement Dreaming and the Individuating Soul* (2004) Jungian analyst and author Geri Grubbs notes of a tendency of the bereaved, to dream of the deceased. Not only in dreaming of the person that died, but also in sensing the deceased's presence in the images of the dream (Grubbs 2004:15). Grubbs also notes that such images are often 'archetypal'. Carl Jung used the term 'archetype' to refer to inherited 'primordial images' (Jung 1964:67) which stem from the the 'collective unconscious' (p.420 MDR), that is the deepest recesses of the mind (or psyche). Archetypes are characterized by their generic or universal quality, such as images of animals and plants (Grubbs 2004;24) or the elements of fire or water.

Such images do not only occur in dreams, post-Jungian phenomenologist and author Robert Romanyshyn describes falling into a daydreaming *reverie* (Romanyshyn 1999:31) or 'greening process' (ibid:60) following the death of his wife. Detached from the world, he wandered for a time outdoors, connecting with natural images and processes, whilst simultaneously connecting within himself. He writes: 'the force which drives the flower...runs deeply and silently in our own veins' (ibid:60). Romanyshyn's regards his 'reveries' as a detachment from self, which then evokes Klein's loss of self after bereavement. In much the same way Grubbs writes of the bereaved occupying a 'state of limbo' (ibid:19) or liminal space between levels of consciousness, but also between 'selves', that is the self that one was before bereavement and the self that one is becoming.

Transformation in bereavement

Psychoanalyst, Anna Argano in her paper *Transforming Mourning* regards healing in bereavement as a process of *symbolization* (in Willock 2007:34) 'Symbolization' for Argano, is a process of creating mental images, which serve as reparative and regenerative for a self, crippled by the loss of a close loved one, a loved

one that now dwells in a 'sacred union within' (ibid:36). In this respect Argano's symbolization process is a form of continuing bond. However it is also developmental of the self. In much the same way as Romanyshyn, Argano looks towards nature and calls for a 'greening paradigm' (ibid:38) (rather than scientific or biological concepts) to explain what happens after bereavement; for example, in referring to 'shoots swiftly sprouting from the charred forest' (ibid.).

Sesame practice with the bereaved

In terms of working with the bereaved, let us now consider:

- 1 How can Sesame dramatherapy support the 'liminal space' of the bereaved?
- 2 What approaches in Sesame dramatherapy are best suited to assist the regenerative and transformative aspects of the self after bereavement?
- 3 How might these approaches differ when working with bereaved children, rather than bereaved adults?
- 4 What impact, if any, does my own bereavement bring to working with bereaved clients?

Orange shift: an experience of ritual and image in Sesame.

Whilst in training, myself and two colleagues participated in a series of three Sesame sessions, facilitated by a further colleague. In the first session a circle was formed and placed in front of each person was a large sheet of paper, with paints and brushes at the centre. We were asked to create and remember a movement - one with a clear starting position and a still pose to finish. After the movement, we were then invited to use the art materials to create an image - any image. We then repeated the process,

starting from the same position, but this time extending the movement and coming to a different final position. We continued three times, alternating between movement and image, each time extending the movement and adding to the image.

In the first movement, I felt safe, held by the facilitator and the ritual, as if both enabled a freeing up, to do and feel whatever was needed. I became aware of my father, his death and the unspeakable sadness which it brought. I stayed with this feeling, going nowhere, just allowing. My arms and hands rose in a simple unemphasized movement, and fell again, twisting slightly. I stayed with the feelings of loss, feeling detached and like a witness to the movement. The feelings *were* the movement, arriving into the room and the ritual, from somewhere old and heavy. I squirted black paint forming thin lines onto the paper and then added a blood-red colour, intersecting the black, in the same sparse pattern, stark and clear. I returned to the movement, the same wordless routine as before. Starting from the same position, I became aware of accepting the terms of the ritual, a ritual with others - that included me - nothing to do, nothing to run or hide from, no castles of abstraction or long howls. The repetition of the movement brought a simplicity and clarity that felt overwhelmingly natural. Where I was, was where I needed to be. There was an 'I' separate to familiar feelings of death and loss. An 'I' accepted within this ritual which could in turn accept the enormity and eternity of my father's death. As I extended the movement, something diverged, the absolute loss of my father's death drifted on, away, to some perfect eternity. I added a blob of orange to the black and red pattern; it changed the image, now not so perfect. I smudged the orange blob with a finger and felt the texture of the paint. There was a shift. Awareness slowly rippled up, like even waves on a calm pond, it extended out into the room, towards the others involved in the ritual.

Ritual and liminality

On reflection, I found the above session important in two respects; firstly, in the dawning of a realization of how it feels to really accept my loss; and, secondly in experiencing a

detachment from a sense of 'self'. A self seemed to move away from my usual feelings concerning my father's death. I regard this as a shift into the 'liminal space' - the space between my usual self and a new self. I felt supported in this peculiar state through the facilitator's tone of voice, the minimal movements, eye-contact and occasional silences – which all worked to create a facilitator *presence*. The facilitator's presence had the effect of creating a sense of place in the room, a base and security, a place from which I could depart into the peculiar liminal space between my 'selves', and also a place to return to. The facilitator, opting not to join the ritual, took on the role of 'witness'. David Read Johnson regards the witness role in facilitation as involving an empathetic and 'deep emotional involvement in the client's journey' (in Jennings 1992:114). Johnson closely allies witnessing with 'mirroring', which seems an apt term to use, as the client catches a glimpse of his possible new self through the facilitator's witnessing. It is as if the following exchange occurs:

Client: (moves) This is me

Facilitator: (witnessing) I see you

Client (sensing the facilitator as mirror) I can feel you seeing me – I see me too.

The bereaved client can be supported in his liminal explorations by the facilitator's presence, but also the ritual itself provides support. The O.E.D defines 'ritual' as '....a series of actions performed to a prescribed order' (Pearsall 2002:1235). Providing the client can trust and to a degree accept the order within a ritual, it can work to free the client into his internal liminality – to wander (as Romanyshyn says) in 'reverie', detached from the self one has always been, finding new and deeper aspects of self – and eventually returning back from reverie, back into the familiar and consistent ritual.

Let us play devil's advocate for a moment, is there not a danger of projecting a 'liminal experience' onto the client? Just because a client is bereaved, does not entail that he will necessarily have such an experience. The facilitator sets up the ritual and creates a presence, but he cannot expect to *know* the client's experience, to do this would be not to grant the client any space at all. The facilitator then has to be able to work from a

place of 'not knowing'. Often in Sesame session, some time is given to reflect or to share feelings (often in the bridge-out, after the main-event), Reflection do not have to be verbal ones, art materials (pastels, coloured pencils, paints) may in fact serve as better tools for the client to communicate the image of their experience. The facilitator then receives the client's images and lets them inform his future session planning.

Also, if a facilitator is working from a place of 'not knowing' then it shouldn't be taken for granted that the order and structure of rituals are also necessarily good things for bereaved clients. As Coleman has noted there is often anger around bereavement, which could materialize in challenges to the ritual. To this extent, it feels important that rituals are not carried out as rote or dogma ('because this is what we always do') but rather, as James Roose Evans (author on ritual) has noted: 'New rituals, if they are to be efficacious, must well up from within the psyche of the individual or group' (In *Sesame Journal*, 2006), In other words, they must mean something to a particular group.

In letting rituals 'well up' from the group, it is importance for the facilitator to work from a place of openness, attuned and ready to adapt to the group's need. To this extent, Jerzy Grotowski's method of '*Via Negativa*' (Grotowski 1968:17) provides a useful dramatic analogy. Grotowski's method requires the actor to 'remove blockages' (ibid) enabling a state of 'passive readiness' (ibid). In a similar way, such an approach suggests that the facilitator does not come to the group with a handy collection of bereavement rituals; rather, the facilitator responds to the group, perhaps sensing the need for shouting, screaming or singing or for slow individual body-sculpts in silence. Grotowski's method is useful for the facilitator prepared to work in the moment, which could be useful in working with bereaved clients as it allows for anger to be channeled and held in rituals which are felt to be meaningful.

There is another way to approach liminality in Sesame, rather than seeing it as a state which a client may or may not be in. Sesame practitioner Morag Deane regards a Sesame session as a *rite of passage* and in particular sees the 'main-event' as the

'liminal phase' (ibid:114) of the passage. The characteristic betwixt and between' (ibid:115) (or limbo) state of liminality can be seen, for example, in a wedding service. It occurs as the couple go through the process of being married; they are effectively separated from society and from their own identities, neither married nor single – they are in the process of becoming – transiting through *the rite of passage* from which they will emerge changed. It is also a time when symbols and images are used, for example, the ring, which symbolizes their new state. In similar ways, the main-event of a Sesame session is also a limbo state of becoming, the client departs from his usual self, exploring and to some degree becoming the waterfall or the first bluebell to open on a spring morning, or a captain on a storm-tossed ship. The facilitator, as the gatekeeper through the passage, calls the client on, to complete the journey, to return back to self. The client returns with the image, the client has something. Sesame's *main-event* then provides a liminal space, a sort of no-man's land, a place where one does not need to be or do anything in particular, just pass through - this is much like the state of bereavement which we have seen, cut adrift, experiencing a loss of self; except in a Sesame session at times an image may float by, it may be the sound of the wind or the dance of an evening fire – then something happens.

The fertile volcano: the formation of a symbol.

During a Movement with Touch session, early in my training, the group was asked to create a world, using just body and movement. An image of the earth's fiery core came to me, its inhospitable raw power and energy. I sat on the floor, cross-legged, arms slightly raised, with palms open and facing outwards, as if radiating the heat and energy of the image. I used my feet to rotate on the spot in an even, slow pace. My fingers made tiny movements, like at the edges of a colossal but contained blaze; Its raw charge filtering up through layers of rock and earth through to the planet's surface.

The fiery core image connected with later sessions in which images of subterranean scenes featured strongly; sometimes I found myself burrowing through the dark earth; or, following underground rivers into cavernous chambers; sometimes, I imagined large

wooden foundations driven into the earth and sensed I was near the surface. I was never sure whether these underground excursions were a journey *into* the earth or an attempt to find a way out. Towards the end of my training I found a vent, a volcanic magma chamber, from where, in a seismic eruption, I got out; high up into the air and light above the surface. The symbol that has remained is a volcano. It's a symbol I associate with my father and his death, but it's more than him. It *connects* me to my father, but also represents a move away from him. It represents anger and power, sexuality and even helplessness. Its lava still moves - a shifting form of liquidity and stone, an elemental mix of fire, water and air. Though it has the capacity for destruction, with it comes a potential for reformed and possibly fertile land. The volcano has formed through my Sesame training, but it's older, much older than me.

Sesame practice: imaging and symbolizing in bereavement

As Argano states, symbolization for the bereaved is often formed by 'a sacred union within' (in Willock 2006:36), in this way I regard my volcano image to be symbolic for a *continuing bond* with my father, particularly his death and the after-shocks. As an archetypal symbol it represents a depth of feeling, it connects me to a depth within myself. It is then strangely both symbolic for a part of me and for a bond with my father. In this way I see the symbol as growth, but a strange kind of double growth. Also, if I chose I can mentally step to the side of my volcano. It contains a lot of feelings I have towards my father's death, but in stepping to the side of it, I find, not so familiar aspects of my father, outside of his death, aspects outside of his dying - such as his tenderness and his humor. Since forming the volcano, I have remembered lots of detail about his life, which in some ways had been eclipsed by the magnitude of his death. Also, in moving to the side, allows space for other aspects of myself outside of being a bereaved son. There's a far-side to the volcano, a side that receives the sun, which isn't shadowed by the ridge at the top of the crater.

The Sesame facilitator may introduce images into a session using a story; many 'creation myths' have archetypal imagery which may be useful in working with the bereaved. For example the aboriginal creation myth *In the Dreamtime* (as told in Gersie 1991:273), uses light & darkness, fire, sun and moon. It also refers to the 'great spirits' (Ibid.) that have a paternal relationship towards the 'animal-people', but live in a different dimension. This story may then provide a useful oblique (or indirect) reference to deceased parents of bereaved children. Also the unusual 'animal-people' roles may allow for creative and original bodily movements. This chimes with Worden's somaticized (or bodily) response to bereavement, in children.

In using story, the facilitator may choose to take the role of storyteller, inviting the group to enact, thus taking a *witnessing* position in the session. In stepping back from the actual enactment the facilitator can be said to have an *Apollonian* quality, used in the Nietzschean sense, as being the 'thin line which the dream image may not cross' (in *The Nietzsche Channel*, 2007). This seems an important quality in working with the bereaved, the seduction and exhilaration of finding a bond or connection with a loved and sorely missed parent, child, partner or friend may feel like the lost person has resurrected, has returned to life. This is the boundary which the facilitator must solemnly keep, like Apollo (the deity of light), consciousness must return to the session.

It is possible though for the facilitator to manage the 'thin line' from within the play of a session too. David Read Johnson refers to facilitator roles: *leader, guide or shaman* (in Jennings 1992:114 -116). Unlike the *witness* role, the therapist meets the client in the play (or travels there alone in role as *shaman*), responding to the client as a character, often engaging with and even suggesting new images in the play. David Read Johnson's approach to dramatherapy: *Developmental Transformations*, calls for such an in-play role for the facilitator.

The focus becomes the *encounter* between therapist and client(s) in an improvisatory play or 'reverie' of characters, images and situations.

For example, in response to a client's 'gorilla' movements, the therapist-in-play might

echo back similar movements, adopting facial expressions, and making monkey-like noises. An improvisation may emerge; perhaps one comes to pick fleas off the other, share a mango or just hang-out together. This may stimulate animal responses within other clients, perhaps as excitable chimps, leaping from one branch to the next. Such a scenario is useful when working with the bereaved as it produces a panoply of (often archetypal) imagery, as seen in the above example: monkeys, trees, food/fruit and parent/child figures. Such play allows a client's unconscious impulses to be realized, which may be storing lots of feelings around loss and bereavement. Giving impulses a form in the play, is like playing with the symbols and images of our dreams. Such images, as Grubbs says, often carry links and associations with the deceased, in realizing them in play they are the buds of our future symbolic bonds with our lost loved ones, they are the seeds of the future self.

The facilitator's meeting of the clients in the 'playspace' and developing images through play, can be thought of as having a *Dionysian* quality, again in the sense that Nietzsche wrote of Dionysus as being like a 'powerful coming on of spring' (in Johnson 2007:1). This feels particularly appropriate in working with the bereaved, as it chimes well with Romanyshyn's *greening process* of bereavement. It falls upon the facilitator to meet the client's archetypal images and validate them in play. Nurturing and encouraging growth, like spring's promise of summer.

Such an encounter and interplay between facilitator and client, evokes Antonin Artaud's approach to theatre. Artaud in his *Theatre of Cruelty* manifesto (Artaud 1958) called for the abolishment of both stage and auditorium, to heighten the encounter between actor and spectator. Artaud's aim, which seems uncannily similar to our own, was to reach the 'archetypal latent myths and symbols' (ibid:51) often hidden in 'pseudocivilized' (ibid) man, enabling growth and transcendence.

It seems reasonable that meeting the client in the play of a session can contribute to an increase in *transference*- that is, feelings, thoughts and images being transferred from client to facilitator; but also an increase in *countertransference*, that is transferences

from facilitator to client. Let us consider the impact on both client and facilitator, particularly in terms of the impact that the 'bereaved facilitator' might have on the bereaved client.

David Sedgwick, in his book *The Wounded Healer*, takes a Jungian approach to countertransference, by regarding it as:

'The engagement of analyst [or facilitator] and patient [client] in an archetypal, mutually transformative process.'

(Sedgwick: 1994:10)

The important terms here are 'mutually transformative'; this suggests that the facilitator is engaged in a process of transformation with the client. Later, Sedgwick goes on to write of an unconscious fusion which occurs in countertransference, in which the facilitator effectively becomes *infected* by the client; rather than this being a lamentable part of practice, it becomes the route to healing. The facilitator 'reconstellates' (that is re-patterns) 'parallel wounds' (ibid: 115) in himself which are then counter-transferred back to the client. Exactly what happens at this unconscious level is impossible to say, but it seems that the Sesame oblique or metaphorical approach may support this process. For example, let us consider a facilitator and client sailing across a river in a wooden oared boat knowing full well that they are 'just' acting or pretending, yet whilst in the process, something more is suggested, something personal, just for a fleeting moment a bereaved client makes a connection and feels what is actually happening is a profound sailing away from her deceased child. The facilitator feels something, a deep sadness, there is a change in the importance of what they are involved in, the facilitator feels and responds, extending a hand, patting a shoulder – they continue sailing.

This informs the approach of the facilitator (or therapist) wounded by bereavement, rather than hoping to acquire a state of being 'healed' – and perhaps ultimately closed; the facilitator stays open to the depth of his own loss and in so doing remains open for the client; it is in creatively meeting the client in such a place that journeys can continue.

Conclusion

In conclusion of this section of the work, I have considered how the shift from Freud's 'letting go' approach to bereavement towards a 'continuing bonds' approach can be realized in Sesame Dramatherapy work. I have focused primarily on the use of *ritual* and *image* in sessions. In my personal account of working with ritual, I have identified how ritual may 'hold' clients in the liminality which often accompanies bereavement; whilst recognizing the need for humility and openness towards the client's experience. Ritual was also considered as a possible focus of client's anger and I have mentioned Grotowski's 'via negativa' may help to provide facilitator responsiveness to clients, rather than pre-determined assumptions. I have found that the liminality inherent in the Sesame structure can allow for an engagement with image, which can lead to developments of images that are both symbolic of a continuing bond and of self-growth. I feel this is an important point, as some clients perhaps may be ambiguous towards the notion of continuing a bond with the deceased. I considered both *story* and Read Johnson's *Developmental Transformations* as suitable approaches in working with image with the bereaved, Each was presented as calling for slightly different roles in facilitation style (Apollonian and Dionysian) it is possible to take a Dionysian approach to using story in sessions too. The encounter work *Development Transformations* was likened to Artaud's theatrical aim to engage its audience at the archetypal level. Finally, the impact of the 'bereaved facilitator' was considered against Sedgwick's approach to countertransference and pointed to a creativity and openness towards the facilitator's own bereavement.

(Wordcount 5145)

Report of Clinical Activity

Introduction

This report relates to two separate Sesame dramatherapy placements, providing one case study from each placement. Each of the studies focuses on a bereaved child, for whom I use fictitious names. This report takes a phenomenological approach; in so doing, I do not seek to statistically quantify my findings, but rather to communicate the phenomena of the work: such as, content and occurrences within sessions; client's words and movements; and, my own feelings and thoughts. In this way I consider myself a co-developer of the work. Therefore, I include my reflections on incidents within sessions and share particular images which came to mind both during and on reflection of the work.

Case Study (1)

Preparation: Institution details and aims

This case-study relates to a placement with a bereavement charity. The charity works to raise awareness and improve services for bereaved children; and provides therapeutic support for children and their families/carers. A colleague and I facilitated four dramatherapy sessions (each with for the duration of one and a half hours). The group was of mixed gender, comprising eight children, between the ages of eight and seventeen. The children were already known to the charity.

Dramatherapy sessions were provided once a week, over a five week period (with a break after the first session). A series of meetings took place between the facilitators and the charity director to discuss aims of the placement, methodological approaches and details of the clients:

The following aims were agreed:

- 1 To provide space for clients to connect with feelings around loss
- 2 To consider using *story* and *ritual* with a view to containing potentially difficult emotions.
- 3 Allow for spontaneity and playfulness to emerge in the session.

It was also agreed that two members of staff (from the charity) would provide additional support: one to participate within the session, whilst the other would remain outside, managing the arrival and departure of clients and their families.

The information we received before the sessions began included:

- 3 names and gender of children: six girls (three of which were siblings) and two boys
- 4 ages: between eight and seventeen.
- 5 relationship of deceased to bereaved: parent, sibling and grandparent.
- 6 details of when bereavement occurred: between one to three years ago
- 7 nature of bereavement: accident, illness and murder.

As dramatherapy was new to the charity the director and a member of staff attended a dramatherapy awareness day before the work began.

The children were invited, by the charity, to attend the dramatherapy sessions. It was to be a *closed group*, so only those invited were permitted to attend. There was an understanding that some of the children may not come to all the sessions.

Ethics

The children had been (mostly) referred to the charity from their schools (though occasionally families self-refer). After referral, an initial assessment is carried out by the charity team, including a home visit. The charity maintains communication with families between the therapeutic work.

The charity states that all children, under the age of 16, are required to have a consent form, signed by their parent or guardian, before the sessions began.

BADth's (The British Association of Dramatherapists) *code of practice* states:

'In order to provide informed consent the client must understand the nature of dramatherapy interventions and the relevance of the art form to therapy.'

(Badth website Nov. 2007)

The first session began with a group discussion around the question: what is dramatherapy? Initially this was discussed in pairs and then as a group. Responses from the group included: working with the body, having fun and characterization. The discussion led onto issues such as: looking after oneself in the session; doing as much or as little as you need to; respecting and giving space to others; confidentiality; timekeeping; and, sharing feelings. The discussion and the issues generated formed the basis for the 'working agreement'.

The working agreement is an agreement which states how the group would like to be together. In addition to the points already mentioned, an agreement was made which included: privacy; freedom to do or not to do the activities (in your own way); advising the charity if unable to attend; a place for fun; toilet breaks; being non-judgmental; and, not interrupting others. The agreement then granted both a freedom, but also a responsibility towards self and others. Exactly how this was going to work was left open (and arguably becomes the task of the group). Rather than being the "final word", the agreement creates a *spirit of being together*, as shaped by the group. The agreement was written down and each person either signed their name or drew a doodle or picture to show agreement. The agreement belonged to the group and it was mentioned that each week there would be time to discuss the agreement further, clarifying or changing if necessary. In terms of confidentiality, it was explained that the facilitators would sometimes talk to supervisors (or teachers) about the sessions.

Behind the smile

In the first session the group was asked to put on an imaginary pair of shoes and take a walk. The ensuing movements formed the base of a character. One of the group, Katy (who had suffered the loss of both parents), developed an aggressive 'hoodie' character

that smoked cigarettes, stared at other characters, and occasionally made confrontational gestures. This seemed much at odds with Katy's real-life persona (she was usually the first to arrive at the session, giving generously warm and engaging smiles to all.) In the *main-event*, characters were invited into a beach-side setting. The leading facilitator (not in character) indicated trampolines, donkey-rides and beach-side cafes and then tended to a small fire (denoted by two red pieces of material) by the sea. The other facilitator (in character) joined the improvisation with the other characters. One of the group, whilst visiting a café, asked the facilitator-in-character whether she would like to see a recent photo of her parents. Shortly, the group sat around the fire and shared food including sushi and marshmallows.

The archetypal images of fire and sea in the scene balanced the more playful and contemporary beach-side images (donkey rides & trampolines). The setting was purposely sparse to promote the use of clients' images. It felt significant that the strongly archetypal image of parents was introduced, by way of the photograph, into the session. On reflection, perhaps this could have been explored further, such as the character being asked: 'what are your parents wearing in the picture?' or 'where was the picture taken?'. However, as it was the first session, such questions could have been penetrative. Interestingly, the food shared around the fire also had adult qualities (sushi) and child-like qualities (marshmallows). This informed the next session, in which we introduced a story which featured parent/child characters and relationships. The image of fire, which physically drew the group around it, was also an image which was reintroduced in the second session.

As facilitators, we took different roles in the improvisation; the facilitator joining the imaginative play, in character, could be said to take the Dionysian role; whereas, the facilitator not in character and holding back from the play – the Apollonian role. This felt appropriate for a first session, then if any of the children needed to breakaway from the play, the Apollonian facilitator could be with them (outside the play) whilst the others continued. However, in tending to the fire, the Apollonian facilitator was, at least to some degree, in the play and was duly offered a marshmallow. On reflection, it may

have been less confusing for the clients for this facilitator to physically sit away from the play and not engage. However, occupying a space which is partly in and partly out of the play does provide a good position from which to 'bridge-out' the clients; such as by putting out the fire or starting to pack up and inviting the client to come away from the beach. This works to bring a gradual transition back from the imaginary play-space.

In later sessions improvisation was led more by the clients, who at times spontaneously went into the imaginative play-space, followed by both facilitators. In the third session such improvisatory play evolved through clients and facilitators becoming animals. Katy became a lion, proudly prowling around the room. I adopted a similar position and we approached each other, lion-like, on all fours. Our heads came close together in animal curiosity and with steady eye-contact. I met Katy's disgruntled demeanor with a playful growl. Katy responded, not giving an inch, with a louder and seemingly territorial growl. The sound resonated around the room and in my ears. I responded again, raising the volume and keeping my position. Katy, wasn't going to budge, this time dropping her voice she let out a thunderous roar, I instinctively retreated a paw.

The territoriality of Katy's lion and her aggressive 'hoodie' character were both strikingly at odds with Katy's disarmingly benign and cheery persona. For Jung, in giving our fantasies free reign, behaviour will often emerge that is 'guided by unconscious motives' (Jung 1990:18) As Katy's roles were so contrary to Katy's persona, they can be regarded as revealing 'shadow' qualities, in that they function 'compensatorily to consciousness' (Jung 1973:417). One approach would be to suggest that Katy's unconscious may be compensating for her good natured and well behaved persona. I feel unsure as to how this relates (if it does at all) to her bereavement. It is possible that such aggressive roles may be expressing unconsciously held anger for Katy, but I feel more sessions would be needed to ascertain this. Future work with Katy should then allow for an exploration of such aggressive roles, but also aim to introduce opposite roles (more in keeping with her persona). This may then allow for symbols to emerge that function as a synthesis between the two.

The closing process of the work focused on the image of a tree - an image which had been drawn by one of the group in the previous session. Wooden chairs, pieces of material, instruments and artworks were provided for the group to construct a 'tree', around which we enacted the *Story of the Tree*. The group was then invited to write and place messages on or around the tree.

Using this image felt appropriate as a tree had been drawn by one of the group in the previous session. Therefore, as Roose Evans suggests the ritual 'welled up' from the group. Both the tree and the story pointed towards natural regenerative images and processes, akin to Romanyshyn's 'greening process' in bereavement. This felt appropriate to introduce at the end of our work as the tree in being a symbol of cyclical regeneration provided an oblique reference to continuing bonds in bereavement, in that though the group was coming to an end, we remain connected within similar cycles and processes in the environment. After placing messages in and around the tree, individuals were offered the choice of either leaving messages behind or taking them away. This worked to symbolize either a 'leave-taking' (that is to connect with the finality of loss) of the deceased, or in taking the message home, as a symbol of a 'continuing bond' with the deceased. As the charity continues its links with the children a third option was offered, that was for the messages to be kept by the charity with the children's other art materials. On reflection, I feel bringing the ritual into the penultimate rather than the final, session, would have given the children some time to reconsider and reflect (perhaps returning to the final session to talk about feelings that their decision generated); plus, as there was some sadness in the ritual, a final session would have allowed for feelings, stemming from the ritual, to be shared.

Case study (2)

Preparation: Institution details, aims and ethics.

This second case study relates to a placement at an independent special school for children aged between three and nineteen years old. All pupils are diagnosed with either of the following: *Asperger's Syndrome (AS)* *Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)* or *Pathological Demand Avoidance Syndrome (PDA)*. The school provides a therapeutic environment, focusing on each child's ability rather than disability. Drama and movement therapy is offered as one of a range of arts therapies. Pupils are referred for dramatherapy by the 'head of therapies' and the in-house dramatherapist. Four boys were referred for fifty minute, one-to-one weekly sessions, over a twelve week period. This case study relates to Daniel, a bereaved child, diagnosed with ASD, Daniel's father had recently died, following an illness. A 'parental consent form' was signed by Daniel's mother whom I also spoke with on the telephone regarding working with Daniel. Before the sessions began I consulted Daniel's school file, which gave details of his condition, medication, school progress and his bereavement. I also observed Daniel in his class before the sessions began. One of the main aims of the therapy was to connect with Daniel's feelings in relation to his loss.

'Prepare to die'

Upon beginning the first session, Daniel immediately started pacing around the room, making little eye-contact and (seemingly) without acknowledging my presence. I had observed Daniel in class, so felt that he was able to understand a working agreement, in particular, I wanted to communicate the need for safety in the session. Persevering, I followed him around the room talking about a working agreement. I received a modicum of eye-contact and an occasional 'ok'. The working agreement comprised: duration of session; collecting and returning Daniel from/to class; listening; staying in the room; and, doing as much or little as needed. I wrote these points on a sheet of paper and brought it to start of the each session.

Daniel would pace the room, quite self-absorbed, repeating certain patterned and stereotypical movements. I recorded the following in my post-session notes:

'D holds one hand close to his eyes and the other at the side of his head. He flicks an index finger down using a dabbing/ pressing movement (as if pressing the button of a camera) and lets out a high pitched 'ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh'

(client notes, second session, October 07)

In observing this movement, an image of Daniel using a camera came to me. I used Laban terminology (pressing/dabbing) to approach the movement with some degree of objectivity

Most of Daniel's movements were accompanied with snippets of what I termed "movie-speak" such as: 'It's a trap', 'ok, here we go' and 'let's go'. After several sessions, another image formed, this time it was of Daniel and I at different end of a crackly radio receiver. I could hear occasional snippets of speech, as if I was zoning in and out of signal range, but it felt that we were far apart. I found myself trying to tune in, so I could locate him. I did this by responding to occasional words and phrases, sometimes mirroring words and actions, other times responding by going into a role and improvising. One aim of the sessions then was to tune into the 'broadcasts' and try and reach Daniel.

In the fifth session, Daniel had taken off his socks (not something he usually did) and was lying down on the sofa, with his head and shoulders leaning over the side. I shuffled over to him on my knees, Daniel burrowed his head into my shoulder, locking us in a scrum-like embrace. Daniel climbed onto my back, his hands reached down and lay on the back of my hands. Together we raised each hand in turn and began to move with a slow, deliberate plod, Daniel clinging onto my back and shoulders, his head lolling at the side. Whenever I dropped to the floor, he would repeatedly jab me in the sides with his hands or heels and say 'on your feet.....on your feet' (interestingly earlier in the session, he had been standing on feet, whilst holding my hands). These were the most words that Daniel had addressed to me in several weeks of working together; they were also related to the play in the room at that moment (rather than his usual self-referential "movie-speak".) He occasionally made eye-contact saying

'smile.....smile....' which seemed like it could be a continuation and development of Daniel's picture-taking movements. As we continued our journey Daniel said 'ok Dad....ok Dad'. I felt this was important and I repeated these words back to him, to which he responded saying, 'prepare to die', it was said very clearly, though in his customary "movie-speak" type way.

On reflection, I regard this fifth session with Daniel to be significant in the *connecting up* which occurred: the physical contact; the language being directed *in the play* (rather than internally); and also his mentioning of both 'dad' and 'die'. Such connections seem meaningful, though possibly coincidental. This is not to dismiss the significance of the session, far from it. Jung regarded 'meaningful coincidence' (Jung 1973:418) as being the hallmark of *synchronicity*; a concept which for Jung was connected with activating 'archetypal processes in the unconscious' (ibid.). If this is so, then Daniel may be 'connecting up' within himself too, or at in the sense of connecting to a deep archetypal level within himself - something which as Romanyshyn and Grubbs both explain can occur after bereavement and often lead to developments in the self. This should certainly be explored in later sessions.

However, there are other explanations too. When Daniel climbed on my back, I couldn't help thinking that I'd *found* him in some way, that I may be rescuing him from the wreckage. Also, I thought of the story of *Iron Hans* and the paternal associations from carrying him on my back. I cannot ignore that perhaps I may be giving to Daniel, what it is that I am searching for, that is a father-figure. This may have been communicated to Daniel unconsciously, hence his words. David Sedgwick's writes of countertransference which occurs through the 'conjoined unconscious' (Sedgwick 1994:116) of therapist/client and goes on to explain that synchronicity could actually be communications in this conjoined state happening so fast that they 'appear imperceptible' (ibid.).

Whilst I do not feel Sedgwick's view totally discounts a synchronistic explanation, it does indicate that there are other explanations too. In order to be available to Daniel, I need

to continue to work on accepting the irrevocable loss of my father, which is something I continue to do and develop in personal therapy.

To balance a synchronistic approach, which focuses on the unseen operations of the unconscious, I feel it is pertinent to approach the session from a physical or movement based perspective too. A Laban approach to Daniel's movements reveals that many of his stereotypical movements were *sudden* and *direct* (Newlove 2001:74) that is, they occurred quickly and were of short duration. As they were habitually repeated, again in Laban terms, they are *inflexible* or *bound* (ibid.) Also, Daniel's constant pacing around the room took up quite a lot of space. In comparison, the fifth session saw a definite change; our plodding movements were *sustained* (rather than *sudden*) (ibid.) and they took up much less *space* than usual. Also in not being part of Daniel's usual movements, they seemed to be open to more flexibility, or *free* (ibid.). The movements together with Daniel's language, the focus in the play, the physical contact and the possible synchronicity point to a significant change occurring in this session with Daniel.

As we approach the end of our work together, the last sessions will focus on bringing conscious attention to the end of our work. Daniel has used art materials in previous sessions, so I plan to give Daniel some time to create a picture and revisit some of the images and occurrence from previous sessions. The changes that I have mentioned, together with - increasing amount of interaction with the facilitator; the expression of his needs in play; and stating his name more firmly in the grounding, I feel all points towards Daniel responding to Dramatherapy (and perhaps to his bereavement) by developing an increasing sense of self.

Conclusion

This report concerned two case studies, both providing Sesame Dramatherapy sessions to bereaved children. The first study occurred at a placement with a bereavement charity for which Sesame was new; therefore, several meetings took place and aims

were established before the sessions began. Also, it was felt of ethical importance to check understandings of dramatherapy with the children in the group. The case study focused on Katy, who had suffered a bereavement of both parents. The second study related to a placement at a special school for autistic children, where dramatherapy was regularly provided and focused on Daniel, a bereaved child with ASD. Parental consent was sought for both children and a telephone conversation occurred between the facilitator and one of the child's parents.

Parental/child relationships were a strong theme in both case studies and improvisation formed the main dramatic model. The work with Katy seemed to produce roles and actions which were felt to be 'shadow' material (in a Jungian sense), though it was felt that more sessions were needed to ascertain this. The work used much archetypal imagery, often introduced by the children. A closing ritual focused on the symbol of a tree, which worked to hold some strong emotions. Working with the charity, provided the option for art material produced in the session to be stored for them, which felt an appropriate third option.

The second case study saw a development in Daniel from his usual presentation of stereotypical movements and self-absorbed monologues towards more sharing in play, increased physical contact and more awareness shown of the facilitator and self. The mention of 'dad' and 'death' in one session was reflectively approached from several theoretical bases. Firstly from the Jungian concept of synchronicity; secondly, from a countertransference perspective; and thirdly from Laban movement based analysis. The session was felt to be significant as change had occurred and reflected a trend in the client towards an increasing sense of self. Parallels were drawn with the development of self after bereavement.

Plan for Ongoing Professional Development

After leaving the course

I plan to take some time to rest, and reflect upon the course

- 1 Looking back over journals from the start of the course and relating them to current reflections
- 2 Writing on current thoughts – using imagery and poetry.
- 3 Unconsciously reflecting, in recording my dreams

First year of work

I plan to maintain links with the bereavement charities and hospital trusts I have developed through placements and explore avenues of employment.

Enquire into funding available for therapeutic work in schools, working specifically around bereavement and loss (but other fields too)

Contact hospices regarding voluntary or employed dramatherapy work.

I also plan to gauge local interest in dramatherapy, in placing notices and hopefully starting a local group.

Continuing Development

In reference to the HPC's *Standards of Proficiency* I plan to continue my professional development in the following ways:

1a: Professional autonomy and accountability: *'understand the role of the art, music or drama therapist in different settings'*

To complement my placement experiences, I plan to contact arts therapists within, prisons, therapeutic communities (i.e. Camphill communities) and theatres (i.e. Finchley Youth Theatre), to arrange visits and increase my understanding of the variety of roles of the dramatherapist.

1a.3 *'...concepts of confidentiality and informed consent extend to illustrative records such as video and audio recordings, painting, digital images and other art work.'*

I will need a large locked filing cabinet in which to store such works. Also I will need to produce appropriate 'consent forms' should I want to include works in portfolios...etc. I will seek advice (from Sesame/Badth) regarding details to go onto the forms.

1a.6 *'understand the value of therapy in developing insight and self-awareness through own personal experience'*.

I intend to continue my 1:1 weekly psychotherapy sessions, as I feel this greatly contributes to personal insights and relationships with others. My psychotherapist is also an Arts therapist.

1a.7 '*...obligation to maintain fitness for practice includes engagement in their own arts-based process*'

As well as continuing psychotherapy sessions, I am currently (and intend to continue) a five-rhythms movement class, which has allowed me to discover aspects of self in movement and body and increase empathy and appreciation in the movements of others. I also plan to continue my training in Bujinkan Budo Tai Jutsu, a martial art, which develops an awareness and application of the body as a whole.

1a.8 '*...understand the need for career-long self-directed learning*'

I plan to attend the weekly Grass Roots lectures, in London, covering aspects of Carl Jung's Analytical Psychology from January 08.

Also to stay a member of both Sesame and BADth – attending workshops and seminars where possible.

(plus see below)

In relation to the Dramatherapist's standards of proficiency:

'Play' has featured quite strongly in my training, in Read Johnson's 'Developmental Transformations' and in improvised drama. I would like to complement this knowledge by increasing my understanding of 'play therapy', by reading:

Contemporary Play Therapy: theory, research and practice

(ed.) Charles E Schaefer & Heidi Gereard Kadusan

'understand....the symbolic value and intent inherent in drama as an art-form'

Also I would like to develop my therapeutic work with image and symbols, through gaining a wider understanding and appreciation of the use of semiotics in theatre and drama, by reading:

The field of drama : how the signs of drama create meaning on stage and screen

Martin Esslin.

'know a range of theatrical representation techniques and to be able to engage clients in a variety of performance-derived roles'

I would like to enhance and develop my current knowledge, by further exploring:

- 3 Absurd theatre of Esslin and Eugene Ionesco: I feel this will provide an insight into artfully employing and structuring, the stream-of-consciousness and sounds that can emerge in a Sesame session
- 4 Improvisation techniques: To develop ways of containing pieces which come 'from the moment' – looking particularly at beginnings and endings (and apply to bridge-in/out techniques)
- 5 Mime: To study the body and develop an appreciation and application of subtle body movements, primarily looking into:
 - Chaplin, Jacques Tati and Jean-Louis Barrault
- 6 Commedia Dell'Arte : To increase my understanding of the relationships between archetypes and stock Commedia characters in theatre & performance, and how masks are used.
 - Ophaboom Theatre Company, London (performances)

(wordcount 605)

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Appendix 1

In the Dreamtime

In the dreamtime darkness covered the earth. In this darkness, the great spirits Baiame and Punjel made mountains and rivers, animals, birds and the people of the early time. They all lived by the light of the stars and the moon.

Then Emu and Eagle-Hawk, two of the animal people, quarrelled. It was a real quarrel, with much squawking, and feather pulling, snapping and screeching. At last Emu rushed away with some of the food over which they had been fighting and Eagle-Hawk wandered back home. She stumbled upon a nest, Emu's nest. Eagle-Hawk seized one of Emu's huge eggs, and hurled it up to the sky. There it smashed into the great wood-pile of the sky, which Punjel had been building, and the entire woodpile burst into flame. Then the brilliant white and gold flames of Emu's egg lit the world.

Baiame and Punjel, the great spirits, looked on in wonder. Their creation was this beautiful? They decided that every day they would make such a fire of light.

When they were ready, they asked Morningstar to tell the creatures of the earth that day was near. But only the animals who were already wide awake, saw her. So Baiame and Punjel knew that they had to find another way of awakening the animals and, above all, the people of the early time. They pondered and wondered. Then they knew that they needed a sound to announce the new day, to call the sleepers to awaken.

They thought and thought. Then, one evening, they heard the sound of crackling laughter. Goo-goor-gaga, the kookaburra, was floating through the air. He made the sound they needed.

Baiame and Punjel asked Goo-goor-gaga, if from now on he could watch for a star in the eastern sky. A little later he would see the great sky-fire was being lit. And please, would he then awaken the world with his laughter?

This happened. This is happening. Baiame and Punjel were well pleased.

From this time onwards the animals and the people hear a voice when they are called to awaken, and the voice is filled with laughter.

Source: Reed, A, W (1984) *Aboriginal Myths, Tales of the Dreamtime*, Reed Books:
In Gersie, A (2004) *Storymaking in Bereavement: Dragons Fight in the Meadow*, London, Jessica Kingsley.

Appendix 2

The Story of the Tree

There was once a seed that lived in a beautiful village by the sea. One day a strong gust of wind carried this little seed from its comfortable home to a land far far away...and it landed in a barren muddy field. The little seed missed its old home and began to feel very sad. Soon mother earth took pity on the seed and said 'little seed' come and make your home inside me. So, mother earth covered the little seed in a warm dark place deep in the centre of her belly and gave it plenty of warmth and water. And so the little seed began to grow. It sent its roots deep into the ground and grew into a little plant at first ...time slowly passed, as did the seasons- summer, autumn, winter and spring each season changed the little plant. It grew flowers in spring and summer, the bees and butterflies buzzed around them ...the wind carried the seeds from its fruits far and wide, it shed its leaves in autumn and covered the ground in carpets of orange and gold. It withstood the cold winter....and then with time it grew into a big strong tree. Slowly, the seeds from its flowers began to grow in the earth around it...many little plants were born that also grew into big trees. And so before you knew it, this little seed had given birth to an orchard of trees...the barren piece of land had been transformed! Butterflies came to sit on the flowers, children played amongst the trees calling out merrily to each other, and the birds built their homes in the branches...the wind whistled through the leaves, made them dance and smiled softly to himself...to think it had all begun with a little seed!

Written by
Sharda Kapadia
(with kinds thanks)

