FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Traveling from Guarulhos Airport, through the city of Sao Paulo, Cascading through the highways of one of the worlds most densely populated cities, surrounded by a dense rectangular landscape of concrete, is to witness a city built without a plan or any thought for the welfare of it's inhabitants. Decorated with colourful urban graffiti, Greater Sao Paulo City, with its inhabitants fast approaching 20 million in number, is one of the world’s biggest and busiest Alpha cities. Here, over six million cars are recklessly driven throughout Brazil's number one city of commerce. Casualties of the road include the motorbike couriers, who take immeasurable risks, defying common sense, even when it is a known fact that at least one of them dies everyday of the year. Favelas, Brazils ghettos, are lined parallel to the main arteries that feed the city, enveloping lush green fields and blocking up rivers with their debris. And it is not only on ground level that this city is choking, the skies play host to the helicopter capital of the world. The first impression created by this city is one of bewilderment, movement and energy assaulting the senses from all directions, like entering a vorticists dream. However, my reason for optimism is justified, as the sun is shining, it is already warm and it's still only 6am. This is Brazil, where there is even competition to sell products in the ever-growing traffic jams and where street children sell chewing gum for the smallest denominations. Here, everyone is an entrepreneur. Crime has been a blight in the
cities and corruption endemic in Brazilian society and government, engendering feelings of powerlessness. And yet, on the back of the indomitable Brazilian spirit and the location of highly sought after resources, it has become one of the most competitive global economies of recent years. This is also the Brazil where Samba is exalted and football is the nations greatest passion. I have chosen to learn about psychodrama, and any other models for social inclusion that might be discovered during my two-month stay. One of my reasons for doing so are the extraordinary demographic differences between the rich and poor, where 10% of the population owns over half of the wealth. Purportedly, Psychodrama sessions have been held for hundreds people, and I was eager to discover the techniques that would enable this work to be beneficial for both the group and the individuals concerned. Psychodrama, founded by the Hungarian Jacob L. Moreno, has had to survive a great deal of turmoil in Brazil, including the dictatorship of the 1960s and 1970s, but has been guided by such luminaries as Dr Antonio Carlos Cesarino, who was one of the people responsible for introducing psychodrama into Brazil. I was fortunate enough to speak with Dr Cesarino.

DR CESARINO

Before psychodrama started in Brazil Dr Cesarino underwent psychiatric studies at Hospital das Clinicas at the University of Sao Paulo. From there he went to Heidelberg, Germany, for a three-year course PhD in Social Psychiatry, which included work in existential analysis. Then during a year spent in Sorbonne, France, he work firstly at a traditional hospital and then at a modern hospital, discovering new procedures and methods including the idea of comunidade terapeutica which was not in operation in brazil at the time.

Returning to Sao Paulo, Brazil, he worked at the Hospital das Clinicas for many years, and it was during this time, in 1968, that a Latin American congress on group psychotherapy took place. A Bolivian residing in Argentina, named Jaime Rojas-Bermudez demonstrated psychodrama. Bermudez then gave a psychodrama session at the theatre venue Tuca and the response was extraordinary. It was attended by a vast number of people and as a consequence of this, he was invited to give an extended course in Brazil. He and his team initially stayed for one week and then ten days from every 2 months, thereafter.

The Psychodrama course grew so rapidly, the group had to be divided into smaller groups, six in all. The organisation also experienced a division during the dictatorship due to political disagreements but Dr Cesarino's left wing group continued to proliferate until it became known as the Sociedade de Psicodrama de Sao Paulo.
In 1970 with the help of Italian born Architect Lina Bo Bardi, an International Conference was held at MASP, and as a director, Cesarino took the decision to open the doors to everyone. Over 3000 people attended. As programme of the activities Dr Cesarino was obliged to accept non-paying members at the congress, which included army officials, who forbade the participation of The Living Theatre Group. Lapasade an anarchist and political agitator in Europe, influenced by the work of The Living Theatre, wanted to make an institutional analysis of the congress, which would include a discussion on dictatorship but was forbidden to talk. It was because of Psychodramas links to medicine and the therapeutic communities, that international guests from psychiatric communities the world over, were able to enter Brazil. They arrived from Japan, USA, Argentina, Spain and S.H.Foulkes came England. The authorities were unaware of just how important Psychodrama would become. The upward trend continued and Psychodrama societies multiplied and today there are currently twelve groups operating from Sao Paulo alone, with as many as thirty groups practicing throughout Brazil. They have a common Federation and magazine (more articles have been published on psychodrama in Brazil than anywhere else in the world) but are of varying quality and as they receive little funding, are often reliant on the monthly subscriptions paid by it's members. As the dictatorship continued, Psychodrama as a political and public force was pushed back into the consulting rooms. Although new techniques evolved, the ever-growing middle class cliental were demanding more individual sessions and the group work fell into decline.

Cesarino was then hired by the municipality to work in the hospitals. He and a number of colleagues used their Psychodrama skills in the psychiatric treatments and managed to implement change in the northern communities of Sao Paulo. However, during the next election most of them were fired and much of their good work was lost. Organisations were dismantled and relocated, making them largely ineffectual. Psychodrama was affectively reintroduced by Marisa Grec, who organised an event of 120 centres across Sao Paulo city, galvanising many of it's teachers, including Cesarino, to work in the schools, churches, squares and community halls. Dr Cesarino recalls directing 500 people at one Psychodrama session in Sao Paulo, including the students of police who would later become municipal police. Open public sessions have now been running every Saturday for the last seven years.

One man who never missed a session in 3 years said he attended because it took him out of social invisibility. Although he is mentally ill he now openly discusses and proposes scenes. There are also groups who go to the meetings, then eat together and discuss the developments of the session. Significantly, some of these already want to direct sessions.

In fact it is the work with mentally ill that has continued to evolve, firstly in public hospitals, working with intern patients and psychotic patients with non-psychotics working as the auxiliary egos, and where the techniques adapted often required role inversion. Visiting students and psychologists would also participate in the sessions. Dr Cesarino's own working practice normally starts by having private talks with a patient before allowing them to join a group, but he is constantly surprised how a patient, who could gave been with him for more then a year, can change in a group dynamic, a behaviour he excepts as common in most people. Dr Cesarino explained that Jacob Moreno was an ardent advocate of 'going after the patient' or adapting to the individual rather than trying to make them fit a common or generic prototype, where the individual is required to adjust to the already excepted prognosis of the therapist.
Talking about the differences in culture, Dr Cesarino believes Brazilians are easier to work with than most, particularly when compared with the more reserved nature of Northern Europeans. When asked about how the benefits of Psychodrama could be measured, Cesarino cites the possibility of working with those who have been in attendance over the last seven years, creating scenes about how they feel they have changed during that time. He also spoke how pleased he was that psychodrama was regularly practiced in schools, but eschews its use within business companies, where an overriding management agenda tended to reduce the work to ‘a one size fits all’ format.

PSYCHODRAMA

My first Psychodrama session takes place on Saturday 25th September at Centro Cultural, Sao Paulo, in one of Sao Paulo's more inviting modern buildings. People sit in the tranquil interior writing, playing chess, drinking coffee or eating pão de queijo, a cheese bread that has become a national pastime. The 10am starting time comes and goes and people gradually congregate together in conversation. Allowing myself to relax helps to dissolve any feelings of apprehension. I study the faces and body language of the people who were to become familiar to me and without whom I would not have had such positive interaction. We start around 10.30am, everyone friendly, enthusiastic and engaged from the beginning of the session. There is quite a cross section of the mid to lower classes of Brazilian society present, but no apparent sign of the affluent. There are two homeless men, one of who speaks a number of languages and is reputed to have a beautiful singing voice. There are many immigrant workers and those that would be termed in the UK as blue-collar workers. There are
also students, and of course the curious, who have come to experience this unique work for the first time.

I am soon speaking with a Brazilian woman named Flavia, assistant to the director on this day, who in excellent English explains that this session will be sociodrama rather than psychodrama and as a result, will be led by the subject matter of the participants themselves rather than those imposed by the session leader. After warm greetings amongst both the participants and those who choose to observe the proceedings, the group leader sets the morning in motion by dividing the participants into four groups. They are asked to express themselves through the medium of their choice, such as the spoken word, poetry, song, or through the movement of their bodies; mime, dance, or even a movement of apparent abstraction that, with the participation of others, would take on a group purpose and meaning.

Each group finds a space in which to make their choices. The first thing that strikes me about the session is how the people engage and communicate with each other, so open and expressive. They love to talk and interact with each other, often becoming tactile in a way that would probably surprise most British people outside of the arts. I envy how Brazilians communicate, without any sense of being self-conscious and without reserve. It is a most endearing trait, but in the context of this work also marks a significant cultural difference in a method reliant upon self-expression. However, in the course of the proceedings it is noted that even a few open individuals within a group, can act as a catalyst for group expression, where the more introverted personalities are able to interact to a greater degree, even when depicting vulnerable situations. To highlight this point, I am made aware of a number of psychiatric patients, and their carers, who for the most part are outgoing and enthusiastic in their participation. During this first session I am approached by L, a Brazilian who spoke English, having travelled the world as a businessman. He was to always encourage me in my participation, aid me in translating the language and educate me on the historic significance and practical implications of Psychodrama. L had attended these sessions every Saturday for the last seven years.

I make the decision to observe the first session, acting as a translator of sorts, as much can be learnt through body language and by the way people communicate with each other.

Shortly before the first group presents its work, a microphone is made ready, a crucial tool that literally gives everyone a voice.

The First group take to the floor, each individual in turn, choosing to physicalise their feelings without words, miming their task. Expressed are subjects that would be chosen anywhere in the world; family situations, work problems, their place in society, the corruption of officials and politicians, violence and religion. The expression though is surprisingly immediate, being raw, spontaneous and sometimes unnervingly honest. I feel both privileged and trusted to be an observer of the emotional events played out by the people who originally experienced them. This is the reason I came to Brazil, a social maelstrom of diversity and experiences. To observe how these techniques can provide a structure for people, a channel in which they can express themselves as individuals and engage with each other in a collective healing process, and of course to witness the intrinsic value of sociodrama and psychodrama.

The audience of observers, for their part, initially participate empathetically but gradually become a greater part of the proceedings as the session progresses, some even deciding to step in and experience it more directly.
The observers are encouraged to describe vocally what they have seen, expressing themselves in a succinct manner, often using one word only; money, consumerism, corruption, society, god, dreams, relationships and also human rights and live in peace. We then view it once again, this time informed by the observations we have heard, now shedding new light on each enactment.

The second group are all holding onto one person, making an abstract group shape that evolved person by person, due to the subconscious impulse of each individual to interpret the scene unfolding before them. When repeated, the audience participate with sounds, words, tapping and stamping, giving a voice or sound track to what they see, and also enhancing it with greater richness and meaning, as well as becoming an integral part of the proceedings.

The third group embark upon a common theme in these sessions. They walk in the space carelessly bumping into each other causing confrontation. One of the group leaves the space and then attempts to reintegrate but is ignored by the others. This act of exclusion is echoed throughout the sessions, that of the outsider, the isolated individual.

When this group repeats the scene, they add the ending they most want. They hold hands, embrace, kiss and as people from the other groups spontaneously join them, they form a large circle and all start to sing. This coming together reoccurs in other sessions, where, in this setting, a happy outcome can be experienced, perhaps directly opposed to the more difficult realities taking shape in other places, the places where their lives are played out.

The fourth group present their scenes individually, going about their daily activities in isolation, unaware of each other. The second time through the audience are again encouraged to comment on each individual’s activity, using the one word they associate with it. All four groups are then asked to come together and talk about the impressions made upon them by each scene and are asked by the session leader to choose a sentence that best describes their presentation.

Each of the four groups are handed a piece of paper and a pen and then engage in discussion for about ten minutes.

The spokes person for the first group calls out the words and short phrases they have created and if any of these resonate personally for an individual, they respond by raising their hand.

The second group build a phrase from their arrangement of words and sentences. This becomes the preferred method when all the groups join together to combine the four sentences or phrases into one singular coherent sentence.

This is what they create:

-Alone, I persist trying to break the distance between myth and reality, and I accept and I encounter.
PARTICIPATION

The following week Flavia took her first session as a psychodrama director. Just as the session is under way, a woman, seemingly disenchanted, starts to shout out, thrusting the point of her umbrella into the ground and moving towards the stairs as if to leave, but comes back once again to gesticulate exaggeratedly. This is pure theatre, a scene of premeditated grandeur. However, she decides to stay, but then vanishes anonymously sometime before the end.

Staying composed Flavia takes the microphone in hand, explaining that the session will begin with a group image. I make the decision to participate throughout this session so I can have a more direct experience.

Some psychiatric patients with their carers are welcomed to the sessions and a particularly charming and expressive man, prone to hugging beautiful women whether he knows them or not, an often surprising experience for the recipient, is the first to get up and start the group image. Others follow without any sense of haste, as it is important to listen not only to your own creative impulse but also to the unfolding expression of the group.

My reason for joining the group, is a hand. It appears to be isolated from the body it is attached to, so I hold it as if comforting a friend, and in so doing become absorbed into the group.

Somehow this abstract shape will give up it's meaning in the detail of it's parts or act as a catalyst for the subjects already occupying the minds of the participants.

This happens in every theatre throughout the world every time a show is performed, indeed, we as individuals could be likened to an amalgamation of stories, those we have gathered through our experiences, as well as those we have collected aurally or read. Importantly, as observers, we give the interpretations that affect us most directly and that have the most meaning for us. Quite simply, we see what we want to see and give it meaning. I would add that I would have no compunction in replacing the word 'want', with the word 'need'. These are words regularly used in the intention and practical application of theatre and drama.

After many of the people present have discussed the impressions the images have made upon them, we are asked to explain why we had ventured to this particular
session through the torrential rain. L joins the group I am in so that he can kindly act as an interpreter for me. I would join L and a few of the other participants after the session where he would tell me about his work with a company in Scandinavia in the 1960s.

This was where L first encountered Psychodrama, being exercised alongside some role reversal sessions, once a week in the work place. He said that it had not been called Psychodrama but that he had witnessed the positive effect it had on both the employers and employees and how it fostered a more caring environment. He expounded on his thoughts about the role of Psychodrama in his life and in the world where 'many stories were being told with great regularity.' Through his insight and actions he elevated psychodrama to a living philosophy.

Of all the scenes that are played during that session, there is perhaps none more poignant than the one expressed by a man who lives on the street. He explained that he gained a great sense of self-empowerment during the sessions. When he stepped off of the streets, where he was ignored, and into the psychodrama meetings, he knew he would be treated as an equal. People greeted him, listened to him and empathised with him in the same way as they did with the other participants. He felt valued and trusted and he said this was good for his self-esteem.

It was during the time he spoke that the viewing gallery above the performing area, (giving an access for the further participation of the general public), became particularly animated. The strong sense of solidarity filtered down to the group below where even the more introverted individuals became empowered, present and engaged. Common themes were reoccurring amongst the participants and observers alike including the sense of powerlessness, isolation and the betrayal of the people by corrupt politicians. The psychodrama sessions give the people a voice, so they can express the injustices they encounter and perhaps start to change the perception of what society is and how it should function for the common good. These sessions seem to bring all kinds of people together, helping them redress the social and personal imbalances they experience in their lives. Even those on the fringes of society, with the guidance of an expert exponent of this technique, can be liberated from feelings of being alone or insignificant.

I find myself thinking how this group therapy might translate into the context of UK life.
LUANA

The subject of the self-empowerment was an important part of my discussion with Luana Vilutis, formerly of the Paulo Freire Institute in Sao Paulo and a frequent traveller around Brazil as both an educator and researcher. Luana spoke at length about the philosophy that drives the Paulo Freire Institute. The Institute implements projects throughout Brazil, focusing on transformative education. This requires that the individual is not subjugated by the "banking" education technique, where the individual is seen as a blank page or vault, to be filled with pre selected knowledge, (often facts transmitted by governing bodies), but learns to read and write to promote awareness, particularly of oppression, as well as become an active part of a developing political and economic process. People are encouraged to be critical and formulate solutions through their imagination and creative thought. This directly opposes 'the culture of silence' where the school curriculum is systematically controlled and vetted.

Freire, perhaps more than any other, looked at the potential for improving society through the thought processes of the people. He does not deal with curing ailments temporarily, a medical practice that has perhaps become the number one contagion in nearly all the thought processes of the western world including governance, economic growth and corporate policy. He instead thinks progressively within a constantly evolving process. This is a model for complete social inclusion that mindfully exceeds all others. This concerns the exclusion of negative social and governing practices designed to prevent creative thought and any critical voices that may prove to be insightful. Freire envisages a world in which the input of the many, promotes the
evolution of culture and society, where all can be liberated from oppression and where current systematic failures are demystified and not treated as an aberration of the individual or of a particular strand of society. He describes education as a liberatory experience, that changes the world through each individual, and that the transformation of the world is ultimately a humanising event.

Tellingly, Freire’s work on transformative education was not formed within Brazil alone, but evolved from his thoughts and experiences whilst living in Chile and the USA (during the 1960s) implying that they are political rather than geographical in content.

I conversed with Luana on the work in which she is now engaged and what these projects aimed to accomplish. I was particularly interested to hear that each project was adapted according to the specifics of a local reality, a context that changes, as do the people and their environment from one region to another. This was not an homogenised approach, but about encountering the other with respect. She emphasised that sustainability was key to their thought, but in a broader sense, so that it incorporated, in the context of education, self-sustainability. Individuals developed their own viewpoint and in time became the educators of the next group of educators. This way of thinking would move away from dogma and orthodoxy, and allow for a richer diversity of thought to develop for the betterment of all. This would also present the opportunity to reduce oppression stemming from dogmatic thoughts and beliefs. Shortly before the end of our conversation she said something most profound. She explained that the focal point of the work was not social inclusion but transformation. I was to contemplate the true implications of Freire’s work.
SAO PAULO

Perhaps the most engaging and affecting of the psychodrama sessions took place at The Centro Cultural on 9/10/10. The impact of the stories played out with both the participants and a team of auxiliaries was classic psychodrama. The skill used to swiftly guide the proceedings to a positive outcome was highly impressive. Many of the large group that morning cried openly during the proceedings and I suspect the experience was cathartic for many of the other people who were present. The session started with two people facing each other. The question they had to ask themselves was, "what does that person have that I don't have?" They were challenged to identify the differences physically and without the use of words. This was then repeated in two groups with such subjects as height, weight and gender becoming common themes. Once this has been done and the themes discussed, with the information at hand and using much of the same physical language, they had created the basis for a number of improvised scenes.

One such scene contained a discussion that took place, eye to eye, between a very tall man on his knees and a very short woman. There is a real sense of provocation in the work, where differences are identified through envy or the pain of exclusion, when even the curiosity of a condition can lead to empathy or confrontation. They are then asked to rethink the scene. It is due to this that a mutual understanding often occurs through something akin to role reversal. They are then told to create a scene, which can be from a film, a book or from their own lives. It is during this stage of the process that the auxiliaries become more involved. These are actors and dancers who have great experience in improvising roles or stepping in if a person is showing signs of becoming overwhelmed by the experience. Whether acting the roles or not, we are all participants, being drawn in by the intensity of emotion in the stories or by an unexpected turn of events. One of the factual stories is about a flamenco dancer who had lost both of her feet in an accident. Despite the traumatic experience, she was able to transform her life, becoming a crafts woman, working with her hands. We were evidently moving away from subjects of status, work conditions and paying the bills, to greater themes such as transformation. A democratic vote is taken on which scene will be worked on in detail and a scene about a woman working in a centre for abused children is chosen. The human richness of this scene, coloured with despair and love, challenged the observer through it's density and array of emotion. We were all in the scene, watching the interdependent relationships unfold, drawn in by the parallels being revealed within the lives of the characters. The director set about resolving negative and stagnant issues.

By enabling the characters to live and speak once again, with all the misunderstandings and confrontations that ensued, ultimately led the main protagonist out of emotional paralysis, resolving issues that had been present for many years. Strangely, all the people who left that room looked genuinely lighter in mood, perhaps the cathartic experience had released them from an experience of their own, one that in some way paralleled the one they had just seen.

Through the important act of sharing, everyone could realise that you were not alone, and that the lives people had more in common than they realised. In fact, sharing seemed to be key to the process whether you were in the scene or watching it. The discussions between the scenes were also very revealing, reactions becoming particularly strong when someone identified with a character, sometimes vociferously
defending them. When this happened, I would always wonder about the perceived relationship between the defendant and the character.

RIO DE JANEIRO

Before attending further psychodrama sessions I travelled to Rio de Janeiro to attend a course at The Centre for the Theatre of the Oppressed. The CTO, founded by Augusto Boal, run many courses throughout the year and included courses on Mental Health. However, the course that I attended was about the tools that exist or can be created for political activism in the media. Boal developed these creative techniques as a way to gain the right of protest and to promote inclusion in the dialogue of governing, particularly during the dictatorship. He used theatre as a form of liberation for the marginalised peoples of Brazilian society, empowering them by creating the foundations for political, social and personal transformation. In the context of Boal’s work, all theatre is political and his ideas, as implemented by the CTO, are spreading rapidly throughout the world. The course was held over three days and ended in an election march that would eventually see Dilma Rousseff ushered into power.

As well as getting to know more about the work of the CTO and its members, it was a chance to witness the enormous social inconsistencies that form the fibre of Carioca society. In Rio the tempo of life seems to be dictated by the rhythmic breath of the ocean that acts hypnotically on its occupants. The Cariocas saunter in the majestic beauty of the Copacabana and Ipanema, both situated in 'zona sul', but travelling through the rest of Rio provides a fuller picture of life, one of the decayed inner city. Even in popular and affluent areas, it is possible to witness the fading light in the eyes of children addicted to crack cocaine. These vulnerable children live on the verges of non-being, ignored and marginalised, eking out a precarious existence that barely registers on the social conscience of this city. But since visiting Rio, I am glad to say that Dilma Rousseff has vowed, as part of her political policy, to eradicate this merciless addiction from the streets of Brazil.

On 22/10/10, I visited Nos do Morro who work from a favela in Rio, teaching children from the surrounding community of Vigidal. As soon as we enter, the streets
narrow, condensing the vibrant energy. The roads are swarmed with motorbike taxis, pumping their horns, on all straights and corners, evading collisions by a hairs breadth while travelling at full throttle. The intense colourful motion continually shifts and I suddenly feel like I have entered the real Brazil. There are many stories about drug Barons and the gun battles that spill out from the streets of the favelas, but times are changing. The 'pacificifying police' live in the favelas, driving-out the unwanted influences that have dominated the lives of the residents. And as these people move out, and untapped financial potential is realised, the banks are moving in.

Our taxi driver, curious about this work, accompanies my wife and I as we approach the door of the complex. We are all kindly welcomed in by Guti Fraga who founded Nos do Morro in 1986, when they operated from a community centre run by an Austro-German priest as well as by Regina Mello and Zezé Silva.

The first class we attend is a capoeira class for children of primary school age, who listen to folkloric stories from North East Brazil, before improvising dialogue based upon the themes. Their ideas are to be developed into a performance about the St John's Day celebrations. Then forming a roda, they start singing and dancing the capoeira, with Professor Messias striking out the melody on Berimbau accompanied by one of the boys, beating out the rhythm on the Pandero. They dance on the grey slate floor, laughing and commenting on each other's performance until the professor concludes the proceedings.

From here we are taken to a drama class before joining the children at a birthday party, where they happily consume cake before ending their day. The children are courteous, and curious, and I engage with them in some enjoyably improvised conversation, as they wait for their parents to arrive.

Nos do Morro have been active for over 25 years, creating opportunities for the disadvantaged. The members becoming actors, theatre technicians, screen writers and directors, and establishing a company of great renown and reputation that has travelled worldwide. Nos de Morro continues to work from Vidigal with significant corporate sponsorship, extending its philosophy to other towns and cities across Brazil, always being welcomed by the growing number of people they serve.

Without doubt, the most affecting part of my stay in Rio came when I went see the work of Os Nomades.

Two practitioners worked with a group of people of all adult ages, who were suffering from ill mental health. Creativity through music and movement, sometimes with the use of props, were the instruments being used to help the people reconnect with their spontaneous selves. The advantage of this work is the lack of analysis involved. You are required to respond to the impulses in the moment, freeing the participant from the stressful thought patterns or situations. Liberating the mind from negative mundane patterns, can allow the spontaneous imagination to flow unhindered. Creativity can enable people to reconnect with their selves and become more self-reflective. We need to consider and act upon the reasons for the global increase in the deterioration of mental health. There are fundamental issues to be addressed when an increasing number of the populations of the developed and developing nations are suffering ill mental health through the stresses of modern life. It is interesting that many successful and progressive businesses owe an improved productivity to allowing their workers to have time to create their own projects. The practitioners of Os Nomades have set up performing companies for both theatre and music, allowing the people within the companies to develop as creative beings.
FINAL SESSION
I returned to Sao Paulo for the final Psychodrama sessions. It was about the roles played by gender in our society. I participated, aided by more English speakers within the groups and this session was most interesting for a variety of reasons. There were many positive and enjoyable aspects of this session but I will focus on the failures. There were approximately ten helpers in the group, which was a significant percentage of the people present. Music was played designed to promote certain emotions within the participants, but which only succeeded in acerbating tensions within the room. Discussing the role of the male in society with other males from a variety of backgrounds was absorbing and thought provoking. Unfortunately some fundamental errors were made. A few of the regular participants became angry when they were denied access to a microphone, thereby being stripped of their voice. This had been a right to self-empowerment in all the other sessions. The anger then divided the group and the reaction of some individuals against the people who had felt undermined, lacked sensitivity and understanding. The two disenfranchised people, who had played vital roles with obvious confidence in previous sessions, now drifted from the proceedings, looking agitated and displaced. The session had been both over controlled and insensitive. The subject matter and the manner of its delivery had become more important than the process that liberated people, and a veneer of self-importance pervaded the meeting. The dour attitude of a number of the session leaders certainly reflected in the delivery of the session. However this session was a positive experience for me, as it clearly highlighted why Psychodrama sessions succeed or fail. These factors did not emphasise cultural differences as being important to any significant degree. It was however, of vital importance, that a few points were adhered to, simply because they would enable the sessions to become fruitful for the participants. And although it cannot be denied that a great deal of skill and experience is required to guide the proceedings, a sensitive approach that focuses on inclusion and self-empowerment, seem to be prerequisites for a successful Psychodrama session.
CONCLUSION -UK

In the UK there are already many practitioners and organisations working on behalf of people suffering ill mental health. With the economic downturn the plight of these groups and charities will become increasingly difficult. With cutbacks affecting schools, educational establishments and community centres, all viable places for the dissemination of Psychodrama practices, it would be a good time to for the proliferation of Psychodrama into the fabric of the British educational system. And with the increase in persons suffering ill mental health in UK society, it might even
prove to be at least one viable and cost effective solution in the improvement of the nation's health. It is estimated that stresses cause in the region of one hundred billion pounds a year in losses the work place and with a lack of skilled knowledge to help depressed people cope, PD as a group therapy, also makes sound financial sense. It must be acknowledged that Psychodrama became popular in Brazil during the dictatorship, when a need arose among the people to counteract the anxiety and fear they experienced under the oppressive regime, (perhaps drawing some parallels to the work place, particularly in the case of French Telecom) but I do not think that those particular circumstances, or in fact, any cultural differences, would be a barrier to the benefits Psychodrama could provide for the UK. The drama classes I have taken in primary schools, based upon related role-play techniques have been most revealing of a child's environment and state of mind. Also in the context of a children's behaviour, much can be learnt through playing out situations, from various viewpoints, building an understanding of others. These techniques can be useful social tools within both schools and community centres. Psychodrama can be cost effective, does not require a specialised environment or facility, and is a flexible technique capable of serving many members of society.

Although this work has many benefits, my personal engagement with it is in how it might further integrate with theatre and movement as a liberating experience. I think there is enormous scope for this type of work to develop within the UK. I will be talking with a London based head teacher on how this work might be introduced into schools, as well as maintaining a dialogue with mental health institutions in the London area. I am also in discussions to have articles published in both the UK and Brazil to engender an interest in this work.

Whilst studying Psychodrama in Brazil I discovered other practices for social inclusion but the meeting with Luana Vilutis proved pivotal in my understanding of the visionary educational work of Paulo Freire. Social inclusion is not an isolated issue but part of a greater work, that of becoming engaged in the transformation of society itself, with the empowerment of all individuals as central to it's philosophy. I would surmise that such a system of education would be better than producing people that become passive participants in society, incapable of an independent viewpoint or who have not developed the sense of social responsibility to voice it.
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