

**INDIVIDUAL NARRATIVES OF CHANGE
IN THERAPEUTIC ENACTMENT**

by

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Abstract

This study investigated the subjectively constructed narratives of individual change for lead persons in a Therapeutic Enactment (Westwood, Keats & Wilensky, in press). Narrative investigation of Therapeutic Enactment to date has not been conducted and, as such, the study is important to the field of counselling psychology and the further development of Therapeutic Enactment. In terms of both theory and practice the study expands our understanding of the complexities of the change process in Therapeutic Enactment. It also provides the unique personal contexts related to change and it provides concrete examples of what actually changes in the lives of lead persons in Therapeutic Enactment. In this study, the co-researchers consisted of 4 female lead persons and 2 male lead persons, who had taken part in their own Therapeutic Enactment at a residential retreat on the outskirts of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The co-researchers were interviewed in-depth using person-centred narrative interviewing techniques, combined with semi-structured interview questions.

Five narratives were written in the first person focusing on the subjective experience of individual change in Therapeutic Enactment. Each narrative was returned to the respective co-researcher for editing and validation at which point co-researchers removed portions of the narratives they did not want included in the study and then added or amended content that they did want to be included in the study. The principal researcher made the requested changes and then returned final copies of the narratives to each of the co-researchers. The final narratives are presented herein.

The co-constructed narratives indicate that lead persons in Therapeutic Enactment experienced change on six general levels including body sensations, emotions,

behaviours, thoughts, relationships and spiritual connection. This study provides an in-depth examination of the subjective narratives of individual change in Therapeutic Enactment.

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 The way is attained through practice, not contemplation!
 ~ Shinjinbukan Dojo Kun, Okinawan Shorin-ryu Karate-Do

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November 1998 – Saturday Night

“Why don’t you begin by telling the group why we are here tonight...” I don’t know if those are the actual words that David, the Director, said, but that’s how it usually goes.

Why am I here? I thought. The blue curtains enveloped the group as the helpers prepared the space. “It was night time when it happened, so the curtains should be drawn,” I spoke out loud to no one in particular. I don’t even know who was in the room there were just these big windows and the old blue curtains hanging lifeless on the wall. I had on my white T-shirt, because that was what I had been wearing that night. Same brand and everything. I didn’t have the pants I was wearing. The paramedics had cut them off my legs and given them to the RCMP. I didn’t see them again until the trial. I saw a knife at the trial too, but not the same one...I was sure of that.

“Well,” I said, “I’m here because of something that happened to me about three years ago.” And then we began to walk...

December 1997

The light in David’s office was bright and warm. It was a place where I had begun to tell things about myself. It was safe and David had heard it all anyway. I was looking out the big window behind David’s head, following a seagull flying out towards the water when he snapped me back into my chair,

“So you’re telling me that this guy tried to kill you?”

WHAM.

“Is that what happened? This guy tried to murder you?”

WHAM..

“Thomas”, he was almost whispering, “Someone tried to murder you.”

Someone tried to murder me?

If I had to put a beginning point on when my enactment began, that would have to have been it. It was because of one conversation on that bright, warm day in David’s office that I decided to go back in time and relive what had happened to me in my own apartment. Well, technically it happened in the hallway of my apartment building, but I ended up bleeding all over the floor of my apartment.

Blood doesn’t come out of the grouting in marble tile floors. I know that much. It comes off of the tiles themselves and it comes off of the painted walls but it doesn’t come out of the grout. I’d be willing to bet that my blood is still there. I’d be willing to bet that there are people living in my old apartment and they may have even tried to get the blood out of the grout, but I know it won’t come out. Carrie, my girlfriend at the time, tried to get it out. She went home, while I was in the emergency room, and cleaned up the blood so that I wouldn’t see it when I got home. She and our Mafioso landlord got almost all of it but not the blood in the cracks. *Our landlord had a cappuccino machine and a fridge at the back of his store. He made the best cappuccino and then he’d offer me a prosciutto pannini.* I’d bet money that the blood is still there underfoot.

I didn’t think that it affected me anymore. I thought that I was over it. Looking back on it I feel sad for how I used to live. I thought I was over it.

But, it came back.

I was working in a group with David and we were listening to people tell stories of bad things that had happened to them in their lives. And then, I was gone...

In the hotel room later on that night David asked me where it was I went during the group. "I dunno," was all I could muster, "I just tuned out I guess."

I know now that I was "triggered" by the story of one of the group members because it was similar to what I had experienced. "Triggered" is a word that I use now when I explain to my clients what happens to them when they "dissociate". That's another word I use to explain what happens to them after they get "triggered". These are the words of what happened to me...I'm learning.

May 1998

David and I were having lunch on campus one day when he turned to me with a mouth full of cheese and bread and mumbled, "Have you been back there since it happened?"

"Nope."

"Have you ever thought you might like to go back there?"

"I've thought about it."

"I'd like to see where it happened. If you ever wanted to go back there, I'd come with you and you could show me where it happened."

"Maybe," I said quietly.

June 1998

I told David that if we were going to go back there I wanted him to ride the bus with me. All the way from downtown, through Main and Hastings, all the way up to the bus loop and then we'd walk up the hill. He said he would. So we did.

We parked the car downtown and waited on Granville Street for the bus to arrive. I felt myself stiffening as we took the two steps up and slotted our change. "Can I get a transfer? David, make sure you get a transfer for the way back." I was starting to talk in short, tight sentences.

Control.

Control.

As David talked away on the bus ride up the hill, I began to get annoyed with him. Didn't he know people were listening to him? I wish he would shut the fuck up. David would tell me later that I looked like I had gotten bigger in my seat. I got quiet, too. And so did David.

Control.

By the time we reached the loop I was a new person. *Control.* Taller, bigger, meaner, and more scared than I had been in a long time. *Control.* "I feel like I am going to rip someone's fucking head off if they give me a reason to. I want a reason to. Just give me the fucking reason I need to do it." *Control. Control. Control.*

We walked up to my old building and past it all the way down to the community centre, *Control*, where I used to go to escape the exhaust fumes and the fucking dampness in my apartment.

Escape.

The wall behind the bed in our apartment was covered in black mould and the dry wall had turned to putty from the moisture rising up through the spaces in the walls. The hydroponics store below us needed lots of moisture to grow their demonstration vegetables. How the hell did I ever live that way? Like an animal in a cage.

At the community centre a few blocks away we sat outside in the park and talked a little before we made our way back towards the bus loop. We walked back towards my old building one block behind it and came to the back door to the apartment. "That's where the guy took off," I pointed, "The back door."

David asked me questions and we talked for a while before we made our way back to the bus loop, where I began my journey back into my body. By the time we reached Granville Street, my transformation was complete. I was a graduate student again. I no longer felt the urge to kill someone. I was tired and a little shaky. David and I walked some more and sat on the beach, looking at the water meet the mountains,

"David?"

"Yes?"

"I think I need to do an enactment about what happened."

“We can do that.”

“Yeah, I think I need to.”

November 1998 – Friday

The weekend retreat where the enactments take place is out in the boonies somewhere. Loon Lake. Can you believe it? Looooon Lake. This is the first residential enactment weekend David and Julia have run. Before this residential weekend, people used to have to go home each night following the enactments and then come back the next morning. I wonder how it will be without having to worry about getting home at night and back on time in the morning.

As for me, I am the driver of the Directors. I have been asked to drive Julia’s van so that the four Directors, David, Julia, Matthew, and Heather, can discuss the enactments that are being planned for the weekend. I’m looking forward to driving because it means I get to be a part of the leading team. I feel useful and special having been chosen to do this for the team. Julia arrives to pick me up first so that I can drive the car to David’s house and pick up the others,

“Hello, darling!!”

“Hi, Julia.”

“Here, you drive over to David’s.” Julia hands me the keys. She trusts me to drive.

On the way to David’s we catch up with each other. I always feel so uninformed when I am alone with Julia. She is so well read and so insightful. I usually stammer and halt at first because

I want to appear informed and insightful. Julia is so insightful. She's a psychologist. She always says the right thing and always knows what is going on. I feel safe around her. She's smart but she doesn't make me feel stupid. I love driving the van. I love having Julia all to myself on the ride over to David's. I feel important.

Pulling the van up alongside the house the sun beams onto the grass and makes it warm. It smells good. Pungent. Thick.

Matthew has already arrived and is unloading his rucksack from his car when we pull up, "Hey, how's it going with you?"

"Good. Beautiful day, eh?" He's one of my favourite people. Solid. Strong. Masculine. I feel strong when he gives me one of his big guy hugs,

"It's good to see you my friend," he says with his arms still half around me.

Heather is the last one to arrive and the team is complete. We pack the van to the hilt and pile in for the hour-long journey to Looooon Lake. We chat amongst ourselves and catch up on what everyone has been doing. I drive and pay attention to the road so that everyone else can pay attention to one another. David interjects and says to Julia that he'd like to discuss the enactments that they have planned before we get up to the retreat.

"Okay, let's do that," Julia replies.

This is one of my favourite times, when I get to sit and listen to these people talk shop. I listen and learn, and ask smart questions or make intelligent and insightful comments sometimes. But, not too frequently. I'm a guest here. I feel lucky and I feel useful here.

As the Directors talk about the horrible things that people are dealing with in their lives and plan the focus for each enactment, I'm snapped to attention by Matthew's question from the back of the van, "Are you going to do a piece of work this weekend Thom?"

He's jumping the gun. I'm not really ready to talk about me yet. I'm the driver. What about the other enactments? Don't we have to talk a little bit more about them?

"Possibly," I say in my calm, *CONTROL*, my calm voice.

David interjects, "We have a space set aside for Thom. It's up to him if he wants to do it this weekend. If not he can do it another time."

My heart beats in my chest. I'm just the driver right now. Paying attention to the road so that the directors can talk. I'm just the driver.

Coffee. The warm aroma of fresh coffee permeates the air of the Starbucks. "What does everybody want?" Heather treats us all to hot coffee before we actually head into the mountains. It's the last stop in civilization before we climb the hill to God knows what awaits us. The espresso machine hisses and gurgles while we choose some pastries to soak up the caffeine. Here it is civilized, neat, clean and predictable. I can go into any Starbucks anywhere in the world and order the same thing and expect it to look the same, taste the same, and smell the same. An oasis of predictability on the outskirts of the city, an oasis before we reach the badlands.

Too soon, we're back in the van. More talking, more planning, more enactments.

The four-lane highway falls away to two narrow bands of asphalt, which lead us to the gates of the property. Across the barrier of the long metal arm the asphalt is finally eaten by gravel and dust. The gate. It is rougher. The edges of the road are blurred. The trees are so close to the van. We begin to climb. Slowly. Carefully. Avoiding the pits in the road left by the rain. Winding. Up. Higher. The air gets cooler and the conversation turns away from family violence and violations of body and soul,

"It's so beautiful,"

"Are these logging roads?"

"You've been here before haven't you Julia?"

"A long time ago dear, back when we did our training with Jean Houston, but I don't remember it that well."

I drive slower now, more carefully. I avoid the pits so that the team is not jostled too badly. I don't go too fast. The curves in the road are unknown. Nobody notices anything about my driving. I must be doing a good job.

The big house, where I'm staying, is a log box on top of a hill. It's dusty. It's summer camp. It's dead wood in the middle of the writhing forest. A fireplace sits in the heart of this big log box. It sits very still. Another helper tends to the fire in the main room. People call him BEAR. He's

not the driver, there's only one driver, but he is very helpful and very useful. He is very important.

People seep into the building, and take warmth by the fire, meeting, greeting, and sitting alone. The group is assembling now.

Rain begins to tap on the tin roof of the big house, joining the growing number of conversations by the hearth. Here is where people come to fight demons. Here is where people come to die.

"Okay guys, let's go!!" Julia calls us to together, "Thomas can you shut that door so we can get started?"

The wooden door into the main room of the big house doesn't actually close like regular doors close. There's no latch, no key and it barely fits the frame so you have to give it a good shove to get it to close tightly. BAM!! Someone jumps.

"Are you locking us in?" another voice jokes. Nervous laughter softly bounces through the room.

Julia calls us back, "Okay, thanks for getting here everyone. Are we missing anyone?" The late-comers and absentees are accounted for by voices in the room, "Good, let's get going."

Twenty-five people. A tight circle forms, filling the room. The light falls outside and I look around at warm, fuzzy socks, slippers, and shoes dipped in the middle of the circle. I don't remember the faces at all, just the feet. Green and blue yarn slippers. Grey flannel socks. Grandpa slippers. Toes curled under. Ankles crossed. Legs folded. David's black shoes are compass-like, pointing to the middle of the circle. True North...

The murmur of voices disappears.

David looks around the room, smiling, serious. "Okay, I'd like to begin now. Thanks to BEAR for getting the fire going for us." The chorus concurs, "Yes, thank you BEAR."

BEAR nods and smiles. He doesn't say much most times.

I met BEAR at the first enactment weekend I went to. The one where we didn't stay overnight. I'm glad I know him now, but when I first met him I thought he was intimidating as hell. He suits his name. Believe me. But, I know he's safe because he's a friend of Julia's. And anyone who is a friend of Julia's is automatically safe. She has good instincts about stuff like that.

I wonder to myself, sometimes, why she has those good instincts about stuff like that.

November 1998 – Saturday Night

The first night of the enactment weekend is always an intense night but this time it was a double-coil spring for me. I'd be doing my enactment on Saturday night. That was the time that David and Julia had set aside for me to do my piece of work...if I wanted to.

It wasn't really a matter of "want to" – "not want to" anymore though. I knew that I would do it but I was terrified. Terrified of what? I dunno. Terrified of... Terrified of... I don't really know. But it was in my guts. Coiled. Writhing. In my guts. **CONTROL.**

The rest of the enactments on Saturday went by in a whirl of tears and snot and yelling. I tried to eat some dinner before we reassembled the group that evening but it was no use. The writhing

kept my appetite at bay. David and Julia wanted to talk to me in their cabin before we went back to the evening group.

The cabin was quiet. Away from the constant chatter of the group at dinner, it was quiet.

The year and a half that I had lived in my apartment after that fucker had tried to kill me it was never quiet. Four lanes of traffic ran incessantly below my apartment window and because we were at the top of a hill the Hell's Angels would crank their Harley's right under our window so that they could get burst of speed down the hill in to East Van. The worst nights though were the nights when the fire engines would let rip with a blast of their horn before the crest of the hill, warning any early morning stragglers to get the hell out of the way. It was probably fun barreling down the hill in that huge fire engine with the diesel engine bellowing all the way down.

It was on those nights that I would be jolted out of my already light sleep and peel myself off the ceiling of our bedroom.

It was on those nights that Carrie's pajamas would be soaked with night sweat from my body.

It was on those nights that I would cry in my sleep from the pain in my arm. At least that's what Carrie told me I would do on those nights. I never remembered.

Julia's cabin, on this night, was quiet....

David's voice was soft as he spoke, "Thomas, Julia has some ideas of what we might be able to do with your enactment but we want to ask you what you feel you need to do?"

Julia gently interrupted, "Before we go to that, what's your biggest fear dear?"

"I'm afraid I might kill someone tonight." I said flatly.

"Right, well we've got Robert who's agreed to help us with that part of it. He's a cop."

David interjects, "If you are comfortable using Robert, he's agreed to shadow you very closely just in case something happens."

"Okay, that makes me feel a little better." I sat back on the bunk bed in the cabin.

"Julia, what do you think we might need to do with Thomas' enactment?" David has a way of managing a conversation so that it doesn't go off track. That's a good thing to be able to do.

"Well, you see, I think that your enactment is really about shame," Julia blurted out.

"I don't get it," I reply.

"No of course not dear but we'll talk about that later. It doesn't really matter what *I* think at the present moment. What do you want to do?"

"All I know is that I need to go back there. I need to go back to the night it happened."

David's hand enters the conversation, "Okay, then I want you to stop right there. You're feeling it right now aren't you?"

“Yes.”

“Okay, then if you feel you need to do that we’ll do that. And, if it’s okay with you we’ll take it from here, Okay?”

“But I don’t know what I’m going to do when I go back there.”

“That’s alright, Julia and I will talk a bit more about that. What I’d like you to do is to start thinking about who might be able to play the guy that tried to kill you.”

“I already have. I’m going to ask Steven.”

“Good, then would you go and talk to Steven and let him know that you are going to ask him to take a heavy role and see if he will do that?”

“Right now?”

“Yes.”

“Okay.”

Julia’s words follow me out into the cool, moist air, “Yeah, you go on ahead, we’ll be up there in a minute.”

Julia lovingly pierces the after supper lull up in the main room, "Okay guys let's get going!

BEAR, will you tell the people outside we're starting and then close the door on your way back in?"

BEAR nods and goes out to round up the stragglers.

David asks me to come into the hall and talk with him before we begin, "You're ready to do this, aren't you."

I was shaking with adrenaline, "Um hm."

"Good, now we're going to go inside and then you know how we'll begin right?"

"Yup."

"Okay, let's go inside."

The group has assembled, but I don't notice them. The faces are beginning to fade-out. I'm getting very calm. David and I stand together in the center of the circle,

"Why don't you begin by telling the group why we are here tonight."

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"While it is the secret hope of the nervous ego to fix the world and render it more predictable and secure, all is in flux; what worked yesterday has become today's obstruction."

- James Hollis (2001), *Jungian Analyst*

Background to the Study

The preceding narrative represents one individual's experience of taking part in a Therapeutic Enactment (Westwood & Wilensky, 2001, and Brooks, 1998). Therapeutic Enactment (TE) is a group-based therapeutic intervention that uses action-based techniques to help individuals resolve personal issues. Closely related to psychodrama (Moreno, 1946), TE helps people resolve personal issues by recreating disturbing scenes from their lives in a safe and therapeutic group environment, and by working through those disturbing scenes to a more adaptable and satisfying end.

Imagine that at one point in your own life something happened which still affects you to this day. Perhaps a bully beat you up at school. Maybe a parent sexually abused you as a child. Imagine that you did something so terrible that you could never tell anyone. In Therapeutic Enactment you would meet with a trained TE therapist to discuss the possibility of doing your own enactment in a group. The therapist would discuss with you what your options might be for re-creating the scene from your past until you both agreed on the scene that you wanted enact. Now imagine yourself, with the therapist, standing in the middle of a group of relative strangers all sitting in a circle. As you begin to walk around the inside of the circle you begin to tell the story of what happened to you, of what you witnessed, or of what you did. Eventually the therapist asks you to stop talking about the scene and you begin to recreate it in the circle. Imagine choosing someone from the group to play the parent, who abused you, to play the bully that beat

you up, or to play the person that you hurt in the past. Imagine recreating the most disturbing scene, from your memory of that event, in the present, and imagine that you are able to say or do what you have always needed to say or do to, or with, that person. Perhaps you repudiate the parent that abused you. Perhaps you find compassion for the bully who beat you up in school and find forgiveness. Perhaps you find redemption in acknowledging the damage you have done to another and are set free by telling the truth. Finally, you feel that you have completed what you needed to complete and you step out of the middle of the circle and return to the group, where the group members tell you their reactions to your enactment. This is an example of what a Therapeutic Enactment entails.

Each individual who comes to enact his or her own TE has a unique story that reveals something about TE as a therapeutic intervention. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a story is worth ten thousand. The purpose of this study is to understand the individual stories of change through the co-researchers' subjective experiences. This study is the first narrative study done on Therapeutic Enactment and, thus, it fills an important gap in the literature.

Untangling Psychodrama and Therapeutic Enactment (TE)

The reader familiar with Moreno's (1946) psychodrama will recognize many of the aspects of TE and may ask the question, what is the difference? A metaphor may serve to illuminate the distinction. A river naturally flows downstream toward lower ground. Unimpeded, this river will flow in a straight line from its source to its destination and most rivers will flow directly over small rocks and trees. Bigger boulders may cause the river to flow around them but the river will still flow as one body

of water. However, if the river encounters an obstacle that is large enough, for example a dam, the natural course of the river may be altered. The river may split into two smaller streams that flow in diverging directions. The question then becomes, how does one get the river flowing as one body of water again?

Imagine psychodrama as one option. The psychodrama option would be to shore up the outer edges of the two small streams and try to direct them back towards each other until they met somewhere in the middle and became one flow again. One could try using trees, stones, sand bags, bricks or anything else that might help push the water back towards the center. Eventually, the two streams may meet and flow together as one. However, what if one of the sandbags or bricks at the edge of one of the smaller streams gives way? The streams will separate again until the hole can be patched or until the stream can be diverted again. This option may eventually work as long as the two diverging streams do not break through the makeshift riverbanks at their edges.

Imagine the second option is TE. The second option would be to travel back upstream until one reaches the dam itself and to carefully remove one section of the dam at a time, until the river naturally flows as one channel again. Both options are potentially viable but TE is more pointed and more structured in its approach and TE attempts to go directly to the source of the blockage and remove it. The structure and detailed nature of TE is important because removing the sections of the dam could be potentially hazardous to all involved. If too big a section is removed from the dam too early, the dam could come crashing down and sweep everyone away. If the wrong sections of the dam are removed the river may continue flowing in two streams and nothing will change. The removal of the dam sections requires more planning, more

attention to detail, and more assessment skills than the option of shoring up the sides of the smaller streams. Chapter 2 will review in detail more of the technical and theoretical differences and similarities between psychodrama and TE.

Why Narrative?

The present study fills an important gap in the literature on Therapeutic Enactment, which, until this time, has been studied using primarily phenomenological methods. This study, in contrast, employs a narrative method. Narrative methods have been considered “real-world measures” that are appropriate when “real-life problems” are investigated (Bickman & Rog, 1998). While previous studies (e.g., Baum, 1994, Brooks, 1998) have helped to illuminate the core essence of TE experiences across participants, they have often obscured the individual participants’ unique subjective stories in favor of “discovering” the essential structures of the experience. As such, these studies have contributed a great deal to our understanding of TE but what is missed is the uniqueness and complexity of the individual’s experience. Phenomenological methods tend to sacrifice a coherent and *integrated* understanding of the subjective experience of the individual taking part in such an intervention, in favour of categories and core structures. Brooks (1998), for example, “discovered” 59 themes from eight participants’ experiences. While comprehensive in its scope, Brooks’ (1998) study leaves the consumer of the research wondering how it all fits together in terms of the client’s experience of TE. Narrative methods focus on and attempt to convey the coherent and integrated experience through narrative presentation. This study will add to the literature on Therapeutic Enactment by using a narrative method of investigation and data presentation that allows the reader to learn from the uniqueness of each of the stories in

their entirety, without losing the individual behind the themes and “essential structures” that are the desired end result of more phenomenological studies.

The Research Problem

Therapeutic Enactment (TE) is a dynamic, and potentially powerful, group-based therapeutic intervention that has been studied at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada over a period of several years (Baum 1994, Brooks, 1998, Buell, 1995, DeVries, 1998, Keats, 2000 and Morley, 2000). These studies have formed the basis for a growing body of literature on TE and, with the exception of Keats (2000) who conducted a study using autoethnography/narrative methodology, most of the studies have not focused on the unique stories of the individual but, instead, attempted to establish commonalities between the stories of the participants and generate core concepts and themes related to TE.

Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998) state that, along with psychology's interest in the behaviour of human beings and its goal to control and predict, the mission of psychology is also to explore and understand the inner world of individuals. As such, one of the most direct channels for learning about the inner world is through verbal accounts of individual stories or personal narratives (p. 7). While certain types of qualitative research methods, such as phenomenology, seek to explore the inner world of the participants often the results of the studies are treated as facts to be known. Although qualitative in nature, such studies are epistemologically closer to classical empiricism, whose philosophical underpinnings state that there is a “true reality out there” that can be discovered. Narrative research, conversely, treats each narrative as a momentary “snapshot” of an individual's subjective interpretation of historical events in their lives,

which are linked in some temporal fashion. The narrative is a co-constructed, subjective “reality” that may or may not match “historical facts” exactly. The word “historical” is put in quotations here because any re-telling of an event is a representation of that event and does not reflect an objective truth in and of itself (Denzin, 1994).

McLeod (1998) states that a story [narrative] is contextualized in a world known to the teller and the audience. Context is of paramount importance to narrative research, much the same as the context of a “controlled environment” is important to the experimental method in more positivist terms. McLeod states that stories convey intention and feeling and can influence the reader or the listener to suspend their capacity for reflexivity, or monitoring experience and reflecting on it, while the story is being told. The story is received in a different manner than facts and figures, and, therefore, a story impacts the reader in a unique way. McLeod goes on to say that essentially, storytelling is a psychodynamic activity in itself which can join the teller and the listener as they “[participate] in a much wider sense of meanings and shared understandings than any observer could appreciate.” As Arvay (2001) states, narrative functions as a means to self-construction in that storytelling or story construction is a way of coming to know oneself and one’s world.

The task of the narrative researcher is two fold. First, the narrative researcher must be able to join with the co-researcher in constructing their story in a way that, as McLeod (1998) states, enables both the listener and the teller to participate in a wider sense of meanings and shared understandings. The researcher is affected by the co-researcher’s story and the co-researcher is also affected by the responses and reactions of the researcher, as they both *experience* the story rather than merely observe it’s being

told. Second, the researcher must “re-present” this co-constructed narrative in a text. The “re-presentation” in this study takes the form of a first-person narrative constructed by the researcher, conveyed to the reader of the text. As such, the narrative that appears in the final text is no longer the story told by the individual participant. It becomes the story told by the researcher and shared with the reader of the text. If the narrative construction is successful, the reader will be drawn into and affected by the story at a level that is not mere observance but is instead participation. The text that appears in the final draft is only half of the product, which then becomes whole with each reader at each moment in time. Therefore, there is no final reading or analysis of the narrative product. The narrative remains a living, ever-changing body of research that will affect every reader at every period of history in a different way. More will be said regarding narrative methods in Chapter 3.

The Research Question

Therapeutic Enactment (TE) was developed out of classical psychodrama. Psychodrama has an underlying theory of change, a structured stage approach, several core concepts, and a myriad of therapeutic techniques used therein. TE uses many of the same techniques and underlying principles of psychodrama but TE is a distinct intervention, fundamentally unique in its application to the treatment of psychological distress.

The question being asked in this study is as follows:

“What are the subjectively constructed narratives, or stories, of individual change told by those who have taken part in their own Therapeutic Enactment, as a lead person, during a residential retreat?”

Therapeutic Enactment (TE) involves a single individual, known as the lead person, acting out a “critical scene” from one’s own life, in a group-therapy setting. The subjectively experienced narrative of this one individual forms the body of knowledge produced by this document, through a co-construction, with the researcher, of a narrative of their shared experience.

In the following section, I will present the theoretical underpinnings of how I view individual psychology. Presenting the theoretical underpinnings is not an attempt to “bracket” out my biases under some pretense of objectivity. The purpose is, rather, to reveal and embed myself in the document as a co-constructor of the narratives and not as a benign, objectively removed observer. The learning that comes out of this document will be determined by the reader and not by a statement of empirical, objective “truth” revealed by the document. Rather, this document will, hopefully, serve to increase academic and professional understanding of the uniqueness and complexity of the individual change process in Therapeutic Enactment.

Orientation of the Individual in the Study

Differing theoretical constructs, technical terminology, and the waging of territorial battles have produced a body of literature in psychodrama that lacks consensus as well as clarity for the interested researcher. Psychodrama and its various incarnations have been practiced for almost a hundred years and yet, there has been no consensus as to what constitutes a comprehensive definition of psychodrama, or what comprises the effects or impacts on the individual psychodrama participant. Therefore, prior to wading into the confusion and mass of psychodrama literature, I will begin with a discussion of the individual participant as a means of establishing a beacon from which to explore the

wider body of psychodrama literature and narrative methods. The main areas that inform my theoretical view of the individual and which support the appropriateness of narrative methods for studying the individual in TE include Kohler (1947), Shapiro (1995), van der Kolk & McFarlane (1996) and van der Kolk (1996).

From the earliest days of experimental psychology to the most recent developments in treatments for psychological trauma, one theoretical construct has stood the test of time. Human beings have a natural and innate system for organizing experience that enables meaning making in individual lives. This innate system organizes perceptual experience into formative wholes which Kohler (1947) called “gestalts” which then become imbued with meaning through the process of storytelling and the creation of narratives. In his discussion on human sensory organization, Kohler (1947) states, Gestalt psychology holds, sensory units have acquired names, have become richly symbolic, and are now known to have certain practical uses, while nevertheless they have existed as units before any of these further facts were added. Gestalt psychology demonstrates that it is precisely the original segregation of circumscribed wholes which makes it possible for the sensory world to appear so utterly imbued with meaning to the adult; for, in its gradual entrance into the sensory field, meaning follows the lines drawn by natural organization; it usually enters into segregated wholes (p. 82).

van der Kolk & McFarlane (1996) state that, ordinarily, memories of events are remembered as stories [gestalts] that change over time and do not evoke a particularly strong emotion or sensation, but that the traumatic memory can be re-experienced with immediate sensory and emotional intensity (p. 8). van der Kolk (1996) hypothesized that traumatic memories have a tendency to remain “stuck” in one area of the brain.

Although sensory imprints of experience are stored in memory, because the hippocampus is prevented from fulfilling its integrative function, these various imprints are not organized into a unified *whole* [italics added]. The individual's experience is laid down, and later retrieved, as isolated images, bodily sensations, smells, and sounds that feel alien and separate from other life experiences (p. 295).

Shapiro, with her (1995) theory of Accelerated Information Processing (AIP), regards most pathology as derived from earlier life experiences that set in motion a continued pattern of affect, behavior, cognitions, and consequent identity structures. She further states that the pathological structure is inherent within the static, insufficiently processed information stored at the time of the disturbing event. Shapiro proposes that human beings possess an information-processing system that is both inherent and adaptive (p. 15), echoing the words of Kohler (1947) some fifty years prior.

Thus, human beings are seen to have an innate, organizing mechanism, or information-processing system that allows us to experience the overwhelming amount of sensory information we receive, through simply living in the world, as a series of experiential wholes. Further, if this information-processing or sensory organization process is blocked or prevented from working, the individual will suffer psychological and physical distress to varying degrees. When experience can be organized into a perceptual whole, humans use narratives to derive and create meaning from that experience in the broader context of their lives. TE draws on several theories of both the individual and the group that are connected to the likes of Kohler and van der Kolk. The underlying theory of TE will be examined in more detail in Chapter 2, the Literature Review.

The work of Kohler (1947), van der Kolk & McFarlane (1996), and van der Kolk inform this study regarding the ubiquity of the narrative function in people from a decidedly modernist, empirically scientific view. Volumes have been written (Bruner, 1986, Crossley, 2000, 1988, Josselson, Lieblich, 1993, Mishler, 1986, Polkinghorne, 1998 and Sarbin, 1986,) about narrative psychology from the postmodern standpoint, which concur with the statements made by the likes of Kohler, van der Kolk & McFarlane, and van der Kolk. These postmodern authors will be examined in more detail in Chapter 2 – Literature Review.

Integrating the Individual into Psychodrama and Therapeutic Enactment

“Gestalts” and “information-processing” are theoretical constructs used to help increase our understanding of how individuals come to experience distress and what may be required to relieve that distress. Using the above theories, distress is relieved when a gestalt is closed, or completed, and/or the experience has been adequately processed into a more adaptive whole. TE can be seen as a unique, group-based, therapeutic intervention designed to assist individuals as they attempt to complete or close Gestalts, to process information, and subsequently relieve the distress associated with those experiences.

In summary, individuals experience distress when events in their lives cannot be adequately integrated as closed gestalts in declarative memory. In extreme cases of trauma and PTSD (APA, DSM-IV/TR, 2000), these experiences can have serious and debilitating effects on individual functioning and on quality of life. TE attempts to create an environment in which individuals can recreate these “dis-integrated” experiences at an optimal sensorial level of experience, so that the individual can re-experience and then

process the event to completion, thereby relieving the individual's distress. Instead of merely talking about the distressing event, which may internally activate memories and experiences through cognitive processes, the TE environment re-creates the distressing event in as much detail as possible, and allows for an embodied somatic reprocessing and re-storying of the trauma narrative.

This study seeks to understand the experience of those individuals who have enacted critical scenes in their lives using TE and the changes that they may have experienced that they feel are connected in a meaningful way to their experience of TE.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In the preceding section my theory of the individual was presented in order to provide a context for understanding TE. In order to understand the context from which the narratives are constructed the reader will also benefit from an orientation to four main areas of the literature. The first section of the literature review addresses the concept of change itself, including how it is defined and how it can be examined in an integrated fashion. The second section focuses on the information regarding group-based psychology and therapy. TE is a group-based therapeutic intervention and, as such, any discussion of TE must be grounded in group psychology and group counseling theory. The third section focuses on the description of psychodrama and its theoretical basis. There is a tremendous amount of therapeutic jargon that accompanies a discussion of any intervention or psychological theory and psychodrama is no exception. The reader will be oriented to the main concepts and terms used in the psychodrama literature. The fourth section focuses on the difference between Therapeutic Enactment (TE) and classical psychodrama.

The narratives that will be presented in the results section will reflect the experiences of individuals doing TE and not classical psychodrama. The section containing definitions of the theoretical jargon and terminology will allow the reader to more fully comprehend the subtle but important differences between these two interventions. These sections will form a portion of the theoretical and psychological context upon which the narratives are founded, followed by a review of the literature on Therapeutic Enactment as a distinct intervention.

Change

Webster's dictionary defines change in the following manner: to alter; to make different; to cause to pass from one state to another; as, to change the position, character, or appearance of a thing; to change the countenance. In psychotherapy we are often concerned with the idea of change as growth in the direction of health and away from disease or "dis-ease". Hubble, Duncan & Miller's (1999) comprehensive book entitled, "The heart and soul of change: What works in therapy" addresses the notion of change and provides a structure for understanding the findings of this study. The book addresses the different types of change, how change happens in people, and the processes that contribute to the occurrence of change. Citing a seminal study by Lambert (1992) Hubble et al. (1999) examine what they call the "Big Four" common factors that underlie all change in psychotherapy.

The "Big Four" as outlined by Hubble et al. (1999) are: 1) client/extratherapeutic factors; 2) relationship factors; 3) placebo, hope and expectancy; and, 4) model/technique factors. First, client/extratherapeutic factors are what the clients bring to the therapy room and what influences their lives outside it. Second, relationship factors are characteristics of the client/therapist relationship such as caring, warmth, acceptance, mutual affirmation and encouragement of risk taking and mastery. Third, placebo, hope, and expectancy refer to the client's knowledge of being treated and assessment of the credibility of the therapy's rationale and related techniques. They come from the positive and hopeful expectations that accompany the use and implementation of the method. Fourth, model/technique factors are considered as beliefs and procedures unique to specific treatments.

Cummings, Hallberg, and Slemon (1994) examined change processes in psychotherapy and identified three different types of change. The first type is “consistent change” when clients report evidence of a stable pattern of cognitive, affective, or behavioural improvement. The second type is “interrupted change” which occurs at the beginning of therapy where improvement is followed by setbacks and a return of symptoms. The third type is “minimal change” in which there is an initial plateau of no change followed by one session of minor change, and then a long plateau of change occurring with a final acknowledgement of minor change at the end of counselling. The three concepts of change are more challenging to address in a study examining change related to a brief therapeutic encounter such as Therapeutic Enactment. The authors seem to define change as a kind of linear process that follows a trajectory to higher levels of growth or that can stall in the beginning of therapy. Narratives of change in Therapeutic Enactment may not fit neatly into any of the three categories offered by the authors.

James Prochaska (1999) examined not simply how people change in therapy but how people change, period. He identified six stages to the process of change that unfold over time: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, and termination. Prochaska also outlines six principles determining how an individual progresses from one stage to the next: *Principle one* - the pros of changing must increase for people to progress from precontemplation; *Principle two* - the cons of changing must decrease for people to progress from contemplation to action; *Principle three* - the pros and cons must “cross over” for people to be prepared to take action; *Principle four* - the “strong principle” of progress holds that to progress from precontemplation to effective action, the pros of changing must increase one standard deviation; *Principle five* - the

“weak principle” of progress holds that to progress from contemplation to effective action, the cons of changing must decrease one half standard deviation; and, *Principal six* - particular processes of change need to be matched to specific stages of change.

Prochaska (1999) then goes on to provide nine processes that one could apply with individuals in specific stages of change: 1) consciousness raising; 2) dramatic relief; 3) environmental reevaluation; 4) self-reevaluation; 5) self-liberation; 6) counter-conditioning; 7) contingency management; 8) stimulus control; and, 9) helping relationships. Consciousness raising, dramatic relief and environmental reevaluation are meant to help people move from pre-contemplation to contemplation. Self-reevaluation can be used to help people move from contemplation to preparation and self-liberation can help people move from preparation to action. Counter-conditioning, contingency management, stimulus control and helping relationships help people move from maintenance to action.

The important aspect of change to consider in integrating Prochaska’s theory with TE is the stage at which the enactment participants enter therapy. Clients who are still in the pre-contemplation to contemplation stages may require a different type of Therapeutic Enactment experience that leads to preparation and action. Clients doing an enactment when they are already at the preparation stage may do a different type of enactment. Clients who do an enactment may experience internal shifts in awareness and sensation but may not follow through with action after their enactment experience. Client’s may follow through on action prematurely and have an experience in their “real lives” that may detract from their enactment experience. For example, the daughter who confronts her abuser in an enactment may gain the courage to stand up to her abuser in

real life and when she does, ends up getting discouraged or even retraumatized. The different stages of change, and what is required to move from one stage to another, are important factors to consider in any study focused on change. However, in a narrative study the focus is kept on the unique subjective experience of the individual stories, rather than assuming that the co-researcher's experience will fall into pre-determined stages.

Group Theory: The Needs of Group Members

The primacy of the group is considered to be critical in TE (Westwood & Wilensky, 2001) and in psychodrama (Moreno, 1946). Perhaps the most fundamental aspect of the present study to understand is that the individual who participates in TE does so in a group context. Each of the narratives contained in this document comes from the experience of an individual who has experienced a group-based therapeutic intervention. As such, one must understand that individual group members have core needs that must be addressed by the group leader if the group and the individual in the group are to function effectively. Although much has been written on the theory and practice of group therapy and group counseling (Bion 1959, Corey 2000, and Yalom 1995), understanding the needs of the individual within the group is paramount when discussing TE and psychodrama.

Schutz (1958) states that individual group members each have personal needs, which must be addressed across various stages of the group and they are: 1) need for inclusion; 2) need for control; and 3) need for trust. Amundson, Westwood, Borgen, & Pollard (1989) define each of the needs as follows: 1) *Inclusion* refers to a group member's need to have a sense of belonging to the group; 2) *Control* is defined as a

group member's need to maintain a sense of being able to influence what happens to him/her and (sometimes) others, in a group; and, 3) *Trust* refers to a group member's need to feel close to, and secure with other group members (pp. 22-23). Creating an atmosphere where group members will be able to meet these needs is very important to the success of group work and, although meeting these needs is a necessary component of successful group work, it is not a sufficient condition for the success of the group.

The need for inclusion, control, and trust are interconnected and mutually dependent. For example, the group member who feels a sense of control over themselves and their environment will be better able to take the risk of trusting the other group members. However, if that same individual does not feel included by their fellow group members this may threaten his/her sense of control over what happens to him/her in the group.

Amundson et al. (1989) outline the needs of the group member in relation to each of the four stages in a group's life: 1) Initial stage, 2) Transition stage, 3) Working stage, and 4) Termination stage. In the "initial stage" of a group (i.e., the meet and greet stage), individual members are dominated by uneasiness concerning inclusion or belonging and this forms the basis for trust formation in the later stages (p. 129). In the second stage called the "transition stage", usually characterized by a falling away of interpersonal facades and superficiality, and an increase in interpersonal conflicts, group members will struggle with their need for control and security (p.165). If the group can survive through the transition stage then it will move into the working stage. In the "working stage," usually characterized by an increased effort on the part of group members to achieve their goals, individuals will struggle with issues of trust. If trust can be established then there

is a general mutual acceptance, much easier ways of relating, and a sort of relaxation of defenses, permitting an easy flow of important feedback between group members (p. 293). The notion of trust is closely linked to the feelings of safety that the group member will feel. The experience of psychological safety is important for increasing self-disclosure of group members, promoting a sense of intimacy and closeness in the group, and is essential for doing the work they have come there to complete. Finally, the group will come to the termination stage. In the "termination stage," group members may find themselves experiencing a grief reaction to the ending of the group and a loss of connection. In this last stage, group members will struggle with the need for support and challenge, which the group has provided up until this point (p. 243). These are the major needs that individuals will struggle with as they participate in a group and they are fundamental to our understanding of an individual's participation in TE. More specifically, other authors have examined the role of the individual in a group.

Martens (1990), in her study on the experience of the protagonist (the individual on whom the group focuses during the action stage of the psychodrama) in psychodrama, reviewed the work of Gibb (1964b) and Bennis & Shepard (1970) stating that these theories help explain the apparent relationship between individual and group development (p. 52). However, it is apparent that the work of both Gibb (1964b) and Bennis & Shepard (1970) merely restate the words of Schutz (1958) regarding the needs for inclusion, control, and trust. Citing Gibb, Martens (1990) states that individual growth occurs as a result of increasing acceptance of self and others, whereas defensive feelings of fear and distrust serve to block growth (pp. 52-53). In Schutz's (1958) terms this could be stated as, "The more a member trusts the group members the greater is the

likelihood of feeling a sense of inclusion (i.e. acceptance of self and others), reducing fear and anxiety.” Gibb’s (1964b) four modal concerns (acceptance, data-flow, goal formation, and social control) are very closely related to Schutz’s (1958) work and all hinge on the notion of trust formation in the group.

Citing Bennis & Shepard, Martens (1990) states that a group member’s ability to profit from a group experience hinges upon his or her ability to overcome anxiety as a source of distortion in communication between members (p. 55). Once again, one can see the centrality of Schutz’s (1958) work regarding control and trust. Anxiety is generally a by-product of a perceived lack of control over oneself or one’s environment. In a group setting, an individual’s level of anxiety will decrease in direct proportion to the increase in their perceived level of control over themselves and their environment.

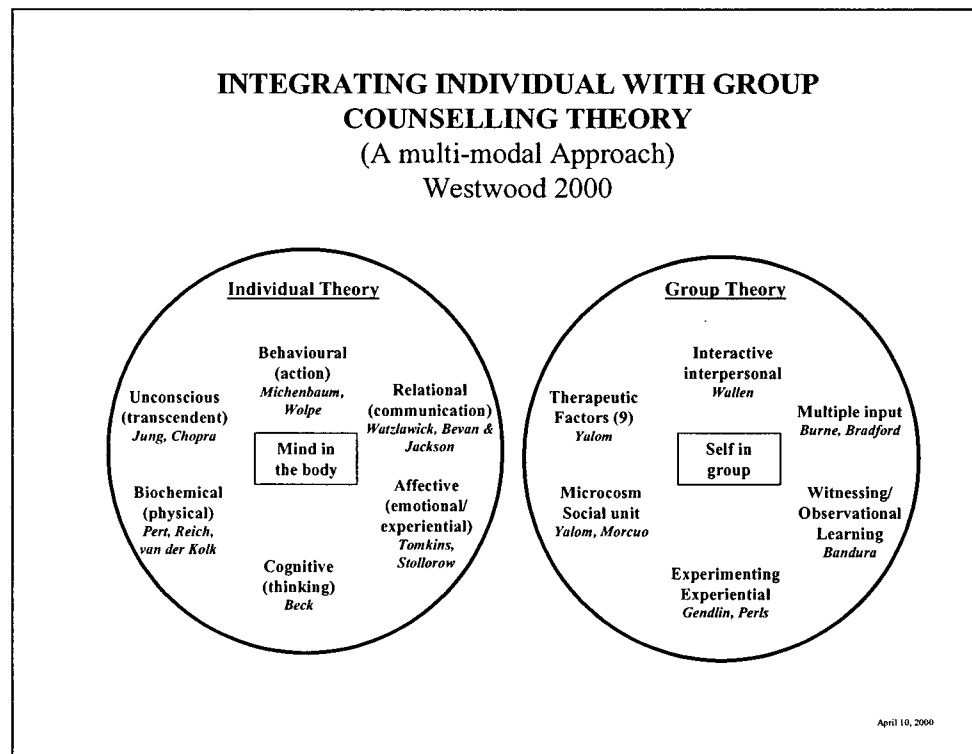


Figure 1- Westwood’s (2000) Theoretical Model

These basic needs of individual group members lay the foundation for the discussion of psychodrama and for TE, which are both group-based therapeutic interventions. Figure 1 represents the theoretical basis for integrating the individual participant into the group as conceptualized by the co-founder of TE (Westwood, 2000). One can see that, just as the mind of the individual is inseparable from the body within which it resides, the individual is inseparable from the group within which he/she participates. Figure 1 gives an outline of the individual theories that Westwood (2000) has drawn upon in developing TE and how those theories operate simultaneously within the context of the group. The theories of the individual exist within the “self in group” at the same time as the group theories are operating. Although the differences between TE and psychodrama will be discussed in detail later, it is important to note that the psychodrama literature does not include any discussion about integrating individual theory with group theory. Before addressing these differences, it is important to examine psychodrama on its own as it forms the foundation from which TE was developed.

What is Psychodrama?

In general terms, psychodrama is a group-based, therapeutic intervention whereby an individual is encouraged to enact their problems and difficulties instead of merely talking about them. Psychodrama is a way of exploring the human psyche through dramatic action and it differs radically from psychoanalysis in its emphasis on action (Gladding, 1995, pp. 386-387). Corey (2000) states that psychodrama is primarily a group therapy approach in which the client acts out or dramatizes past, present, or anticipated life situations, and roles, in an attempt to gain deeper understanding, achieve catharsis, and develop behavioral skills. Significant events are enacted to help the client

get in contact with unrecognized and unexpressed feelings and attitudes, and to broaden their role repertoire (p. 213). Finally, citing Zerka Moreno (the wife of founder J.L. Moreno), Corey states that psychodrama takes a major turn away from treating the individual in isolation to treating the individual in a group setting (p. 214), which was discussed in the previous section. The following section will discuss and present some of the key concepts of psychodrama theory and technique.

Psychodrama Concepts, Method, Process and Technique

Corey (2000) breaks down the main areas of psychodrama into four sections: key theoretical concepts, basic components of the psychodramatic method, stages of the psychodramatic process, and techniques of psychodrama. First, I will examine the key theoretical concepts.

Key Theoretical Concepts

Corey (2000) outlines the key concepts in Moreno's theory of psychodrama as follows: creativity, spontaneity, dealing with the present, encounter, tele, surplus reality, catharsis and insight, reality testing, and role theory.

Brooks defines creativity (1998) as the connection between an individual and God. The creative act was seen as the unification of the individual and God by the same energy, and led Moreno to look for ways to understand how the creative moment is brought into being; and how it could be more methodically approached. These ideas of creativity, in turn, led Moreno to the concept of 'spontaneity' (p. 17).

Spontaneity is defined as an appropriate response to a novel situation; or, a novel response to an old situation (Brooks, 1998, p. 17). Spontaneity is also seen as a key characteristic of a psychologically healthy individual.

Dealing with the present is defined as acting in the “here-and-now”, by speaking in the present tense and using action words, and by placing the members in the present, regardless of when the scenes actually happened (Corey, 2000, p. 216).

Encounter occurs when people talk directly to each other instead of talking about their feelings to the therapist, involving a greater degree of both directness in communication and self-disclosure. It also involves the expectation that, in direct communication, each individual opens his/her mind to the viewpoint of the other (Corey, 2000, p. 216).

Tele is defined as the two-way flow of feelings between two people, which can be positive or negative. Positive tele creates rapport or even intense attraction, and negative tele can create “bad vibes”. It can be seen as a reciprocal empathic feeling (Corey, 2000, p. 217).

Surplus reality refers to the fact that in psychodrama, events may be portrayed that occurred in the past, that have never occurred, that may someday occur, or that may never occur in the “real world”. It is based on the notion that the realm of imagination is not bound by the same concepts of time and space by which the “real” world is bound (Corey, 2000, p. 218).

Regarding the concepts of catharsis and insight, Brooks (1998) states that Moreno recognized two categories of catharsis based on his view of two types of memory: one mental (action catharsis) and the other somatic (catharsis of integration). Citing, Brooks further outlines four interrelated categories of catharsis expanded and developed by Blatner (1996): abreaction, integration, inclusion, and spiritual. **Abreaction** refers to the release of emotion which produces an ‘expansion of the psyche’ as a result of being

aware that one is experiencing new or dissociated feelings. **Integration catharsis** refers to the process of finding a place in the psyche for these new or dissociated feelings, which have surfaced. Once room has been made through the psychic expansion of abreaction, these new feelings must be integrated into the psyche. **Inclusion catharsis** refers to the positive feelings of belonging when one experiences acceptance and validation from others, after expressing one's emotions. [The reader will recall Schutz's (1958) work on the needs of group members]. **Spiritual catharsis** occurs when one experiences a sense of integration with the cosmos, or in Moreno's words, the Godhead (pp. 25-29).

The concept of insight, as described by Corey (2000), would best fit into the category of 'integration catharsis' as defined above by Blatner (1996). Corey states that insight lends a sense of understanding to the release of emotions and an increased awareness of a problem situation. It is a cognitive shift that connects awareness of the various emotional experiences with some meaningful narrative or some growing understanding (p. 219).

Reality Testing refers to the idea that the individual can draw on the group for information regarding situations that one is trying to deal with by acting out the situation in the group and receiving feedback from group members as to how they might deal with it in their lives (Corey, 2000, p. 220).

Regarding the concept of role theory, Corey (2000) states that role theory suggests that we can become spontaneous, improvisational actors, creating our parts without scripts. We thus become not only actors but also playwrights. We can go further

and question which roles we want to take on, as if we were negotiating with an inner agent.

Basic Components of the Psychodrama Method

Corey (2000) outlines the basic components of the psychodrama method as follows: the stage, the director, the protagonist, the auxiliary egos, and the audience.

The stage is the place where the enactment takes place. It can be any space big enough to contain the action and the group members.

The Director is the group therapist who is responsible for creating the enactments and bringing them through to completion and who is responsible for the group process before and after the action stage of the enactment.

The protagonist is the individual who is chosen to enact a scene, who picks the scene to be explored, and around whom the action is focused.

Auxiliaries egos are group members who portray significant others in the life of the protagonist. These others may be living or dead, real or imagined. Auxiliaries may also play the roles of inanimate objects, pets, or any emotionally charged object or being, relevant to the protagonist's psychodrama.

The Audience consists of the other group members who provide valuable support and feedback to the protagonist. They share some experiences of their own that are related to the scene they have just observed, and they provide the protagonist with feedback concerning alternative ways of dealing with the situation. This can help the protagonist understand the impact he or she has on others (pp. 221-225).

Stages of the Psychodramatic Process

Corey (2000) also outlines the stages of the psychodramatic process: warm-up, action, sharing and discussion.

Citing Blatner (1996), Corey (2000) states that warming-up involves activities required for gradual increases in involvement and spontaneity. It includes the director's warm-up, establishing trust and group cohesion, identifying a group theme, finding a protagonist and moving the protagonist onto the stage (pp.225-226).

The action stage includes the acting out and working through of a past or present situation or anticipated event. It also involves bringing the enacted scene to a sense of closure before the sharing and discussion stage (pp. 227-228).

Sharing, which comes first, consists of nonjudgmental statements about one's self, while a discussion of the group process follows. The participants are asked to share with the protagonist their observations of and reactions to the psychodrama in a constructive and supportive way, emphasizing what the enactment touched in their lives. Those who play roles can also share their reactions to those roles (p. 229).

Techniques of Psychodrama

Finally, Corey (2000) outlines some of the techniques of psychodrama: self-presentation, role reversal, mirroring, double, soliloquy, the magic shop, future projection, replay, and role training (pp. 214-238). Gladding (1995) states that there are literally hundreds of techniques used in psychodrama with many variations but he also includes creative imagery, sculpting, monodrama, and multiple double techniques (pp. 391-393). A detailed description of each of the techniques is not warranted here but the

interested reader is directed to Corey (2000), Gladding (1995), or Blatner (1996) for further explanation of these techniques.

Outline of a Therapeutic Enactment

The main features of psychodrama have been presented above. However, Therapeutic Enactment (Westwood & Wilensky, 2001) is a distinct method, which includes some, but not all of the components listed above. As such, the following section presents an outline of the stages of TE and a brief description of the processes involved at each stage of a TE. We begin the discussion with the individual client or as they will be referred to herein, the lead person.

The Pre-Enactment Phase

An individual client experiences some kind of psychological distress and approaches the qualified TE therapist (a qualified group psychotherapist with specialized training in TE) to discuss the possibility of doing an “enactment”. In psychodrama this individual will arise spontaneously from the group after the group has gathered together. In TE, all lead persons are known by one or both of the directors and have been chosen to do an “enactment” prior to arriving at the weekend retreat site.

In conversation with the therapist, the client (potentially the lead person) decides on a scene from their present, past, or future life experiences as the point of entry for the enactment. The final decision as to **which** scene will be used can be made anytime between the lead person’s first conversation with the therapist(s) (in the TE retreats a team consisting of between two to six trained and qualified therapist is used, with the two lead therapists remaining ultimately responsible for all group members), right up to the actual day the enactment is to take place. During the process of engaging in these

conversations with the client, the therapist(s) use their clinical skills and judgment to reach a decision on **how** the scene will be enacted. This is to be contrasted with the classical psychodrama director who spontaneously creates, with the help of the protagonist, the scene within the group in the moment. In TE the decision of **which** scene to be enacted is always made by the client with the approval of the therapist(s).

Ultimately, the decision about **whether or not** the client will enact his or her scene at the pre-arranged time remains at the discretion of the therapist(s), hopefully, but not always, in accordance with the plans of the client. This point, again, is in contrast to the more spontaneous nature of psychodrama in which the director decides, in the moment, who will become a protagonist. In TE, this process of discussing, deciding, and planning the entry scene can take place in a brief half-hour meeting or it may take place over a period of months of discussion and exploration. It never takes place in the group in a moment of spontaneity as it would in a psychodrama. The only criteria required for proceeding with the TE is that the therapist(s) and the client are in agreement as to **which** scene will serve as the point of entry of the TE. **How** the scene will be enacted is the responsibility of the therapist(s).

Once the entry scene is decided upon, the therapist and the client (now the lead person) enter the enactment circle. The enactment circle is made up of a group of between 20-25 participants who have been pre-screened as to their suitability for taking part in a TE weekend retreat. The therapist(s) take responsibility for screening every participant by meeting with him or her in person, or by speaking with him or her over the phone, prior to arriving for the retreat. The screening process does not involve the use of structured tests or formal assessment instruments but those individuals deemed

inappropriate for participation in a therapeutic enactment group are screened out.

Individuals must possess sufficient psychological resources to participate in a trauma group, without the risk of the individual being retraumatized by participating. If there is a significant risk that participation in the group will be harmful to the individual, or to the group as a whole, then further resource development via individual trauma therapy is recommended before such an individual is permitted to participate in Therapeutic Enactment. One or both of the lead therapists must know all participants and must have met with all potential protagonists. This is in contrast to classical psychodrama that may include a myriad of different people with no screening required.

The enactment group is always treated as a therapy group from the beginning. Group composition is as important as are the individual scenes to be enacted and all of the enactments that are chosen for the weekend are chosen based on the needs of the group. That is to say, attention is paid to the number of male versus female enactments to be enacted. Attention is paid to the issue being enacted, in that the therapists will attempt to balance extremely "heavy" pieces of work (e.g., childhood sexual abuse, incest, attempted murders) with some "less intense" pieces of work (e.g., confronting a deceased parent who did not love the lead person as a child). Every enactment is intense but a balance must be struck for the benefit of the group psyche. Classical psychodrama relies on the spontaneous arising of protagonists from the group, which rarely happens in a TE retreat. If a group member does feel a need to spontaneously enact a scene, not previously planned, they must meet with the therapist(s) who will decide whether or not there is enough time in the weekend for another enactment, whether or not the enactment is appropriate given the developmental state of the individual group member, and

whether or not it is an issue that can be adequately addressed in the group. If a decision is made that the enactment can go forward, then the individual must go through the same planning process with the therapist(s) before the enactment takes place in the group.

Given that all enactments have been planned and discussed ahead of time, the therapist(s) also take responsibility for creating and building a group that can contain such an intense process.

The group formation begins with screening (by the therapists) of the individual group members before they arrive at the retreat. Upon arrival, the enactment group is formed into a circle on the first day and group-building exercises are engaged in to build a climate of trust and safety in the group. This is analogous to the warm-up phase discussed earlier. More planning is sometimes done once the group assembles at the retreat site, and planning may continue throughout the retreat, in order to prepare other group members for roles, which the lead persons may ask them to take on during an enactment.

Very few enactments take place with only the lead person and the therapist involved. An individual may wish to say one last goodbye to their dead grandmother and so the dead grandmother must be chosen from the members of the group as an auxiliary role. These roles are a crucial part of the process and so individuals who are asked to play roles are, whenever possible, notified before the actual enactment phase, and they are briefed by either the lead person or one of the therapists as to what will be asked of them during the enactment. Personal qualities, relational dynamics, anything that the lead person or therapist(s) feels is pertinent to the enactment scene are relayed to the auxiliaries before the enactment begins. Once all auxiliaries are prepared and briefed, the

planning and pre-enactment phase is complete. Contrast the degree of planning that occurs in TE, even prior to the group assembling, with the spontaneous nature of the psychodrama. Once the planning phase is complete, the group has been built, and trust has been established, the therapist(s) and the lead person enter the enactment circle and the enactment phase begins.

The Enactment Phase

The enactment phase begins with the walk-around. The circle that is formed by the group members becomes the container, which will hold the enactment until it is complete. It is within the protective walls of the “sacred-circle” that the main enactment therapist and the lead person begin their journey to the scene that acts as the point of entry. In TE, the therapist team splits their roles at the time of the enactment. One therapist takes the role of leading the lead person through the process, while the other therapist attends to the enactment from their place in the circle, providing a much-needed perspective from a viewpoint external to the action.

The enactment begins with walking and talking (if the scene is in the past it is preferable to walk in a counter-clockwise direction, clock-wise to the future, and whichever one the protagonist prefers for present day scenes). During the walk-about the lead person tells the group and the therapist where it is he/she is going to go by creating the story as he/she walks around the circle. In this sense, TE facilitates the embodiment of the lead person’s story, beyond mere telling. The walking and talking is meant to form a bridge between the cognitive memory, and image of the scene, and the physical re-enactment of the scene, experienced in the moment rather than merely verbalized. As

soon as possible, the lead therapist encourages the lead person to stop from telling the story and begin creating the characters in the story, in the moment.

Here-and-Now - Building the Point of Entry

Building the point of entry begins by bringing to life the people who need to be in the chosen scene. One by one the lead person introduces the individual assisting roles to the group in the Here-and-Now. The present tense is used, as much as possible, to describe the qualities of the person (i.e., A lead person introduces his father to the group by saying, "You're a tall man, about two-hundred pounds and you have this big belly laugh that I just loved as a kid."). The present tense is also used to describe the relationship the lead person has to the assisting role (i.e., "You always understood how I felt and we could always talk to one another," or "You never liked me, even as a kid and I have no idea why."). The therapist encourages the lead person to interact, as much as possible, with the assisting role in the moment, as though that person were really there.

The present day "objective reality" of the existence of the individual assisting roles is of absolutely no concern. The process of building the point of entry is concerned with making an "internal or psychological" representation of people, events, times, and places concrete and "external" in the group. One can understand how this works in conventional talk therapies in the sense that speech and language are merely external representations of the inner workings of an individual. For example, when a client tells a story of his or her mother, the words used to describe the event are not the event in itself but a "representation" of the event. In TE, one does not stop at the single representation of language, but attempts to involve the total person, and the group, in constructing the external representation of an inner event. Because the mind, memory, and imagination

are not bound by the constraints of time and space, any internal reality can be constructed as the point of entry. The only limit is the individual's imagination. As the assistants are given their roles in the scene, the therapist then moves to constructing a representation of the actual physical environment. A couch may represent a bedroom; a chair may represent a door; and, a waste bucket may represent a toilet. The inanimate objects are not nearly as crucial as the people in the scene but they do add to the creation of the scene in a significant way.

The point of entry scene is constructed in the above manner with as much attention to detail as is required for the individual to drop into the experience of reliving the event or experiencing the event as real to them. Indicators of the "reality" of the reconstruction of the point of entry are indicated by the lead person's report that they are experiencing the reconstruction just as they had experienced the original event. Once the lead person reports that they are re-living the experience, the point of entry has been accessed fully and the journey to the center of the circle or to the bottom begins (akin to the psychodrama spiral developed by Goldman & Morrison, 1984).

Re-Living: The Heart of Therapeutic Enactment

The first point to be made in this section is that not all TE participants will be able to engage with the external reconstruction of the event to the same degree. That is to say, the degree to which lead persons experience the reconstructed event as a re-lived event will differ from person to person. It is suffice to say that the goal of TE is to create a group climate and a therapist/lead person relationship conducive to trust formation, psychological and physical safety, and intimacy. If these conditions are met, and the lead

person is the final arbiter on this matter, then the chances that the lead person will re-live the constructed event as “real” are increased.

One of the defining features of successful engagement in this stage is the ability for the lead person, at a certain point, to relinquish control over the event and put their trust in the hands of the therapist. The logic here is simple. Maintaining control over an event presupposes a meta-awareness of the degree to which one is in or out of control. The individual concerned with control over the events in the TE must divide his or her attention between experiencing the event and monitoring their experience of the event. It is this monitoring that prevents full engagement with the event itself and thus prevents full engagement with the internal representation. Without a full engagement with the event and an experience of the “reality” of the event, the likelihood of success in TE is decreased. However, assuming that full engagement can be achieved, the lead persons have the opportunity to heal themselves and complete the process. The prescription is to revisit the damaging incident in order to heal the wound, a concept used in homeopathic healing.

The Oxford (1995) dictionary defines homoeopathy as, “treatment of disease by drugs that in healthy person would produce symptoms of the disease.” Full engagement with the TE process is akin to homeopathic healing, which uses small, contained amounts of the toxin to heal the affliction. TE is a homeopathic process in that it uses the toxic event in the healing. During the re-living stage the therapist is very active in helping the lead person find his/her way to the core of the issue and then also in helping them heal the wound and subsequently close the gestalt. It is at this point that the tools of psychodrama are employed, in combination with the skills of the therapist.

The group process at this phase is of little concern as all efforts are mobilized to assist the lead person on this most crucial aspect of their journey. At this point, any description of the “healing moment” would be entirely situational and particular to the individual, which will be included as a part of this study as told by the lead persons. After the healing moment or the core is reached and the lead person is satisfied that they have been able to “do what I came here to do”, then the therapist helps the lead person return to the present day reality of the group, and close the re-living portion of the Enactment phase. Not all participants will reach the core and find the healing that they may have been looking for, but most come to realize what they may need to do in the future to reach that point. Also, some lead persons realize that what they thought they were looking for was not what they needed, and this can be very helpful as well. Following the completion of the Enactment phase, the lead person takes his/her place in the group and the Process phase begins.

The Process Phase

The purpose of the process phase is to knit the group back together and to allow group members to debrief their unique experience of the Enactment. In the past, the large group debriefed together after the enactment was finished but more recently Westwood & Wilensky have split the large group into several small “debrief” groups, facilitated by trained group leaders. The lead person participates in the small group debrief, to the extent that they feel comfortable, and tend to sit in the group facilitated by the lead therapist. In this study, one of the participants experienced the large group debrief, while the other four experienced small group debriefs. The nature of the debrief is identical in both the large and small groups.

In the small debrief group, each member is given the opportunity to express how the enactment impacted them at a personal level. The purpose of the groups is not to critique the enactment or to analyze the process, but rather to allow group members to express themselves after being involved in an intense process like TE. Group leaders encourage group members to speak about their own personal experience of the enactment and to discuss possible personal issues that may have arisen as a result of participating in or witnessing the enactment. In the groups, the individuals who took on roles as assistants are also given the opportunity to release themselves from the roles that they were given and to talk about their experience of taking on their particular roles. These small debrief groups meet for thirty minutes and then the entire group reconvenes for the next phase, which is preparing for the next TE.

The Lead Person – Beginning Integration

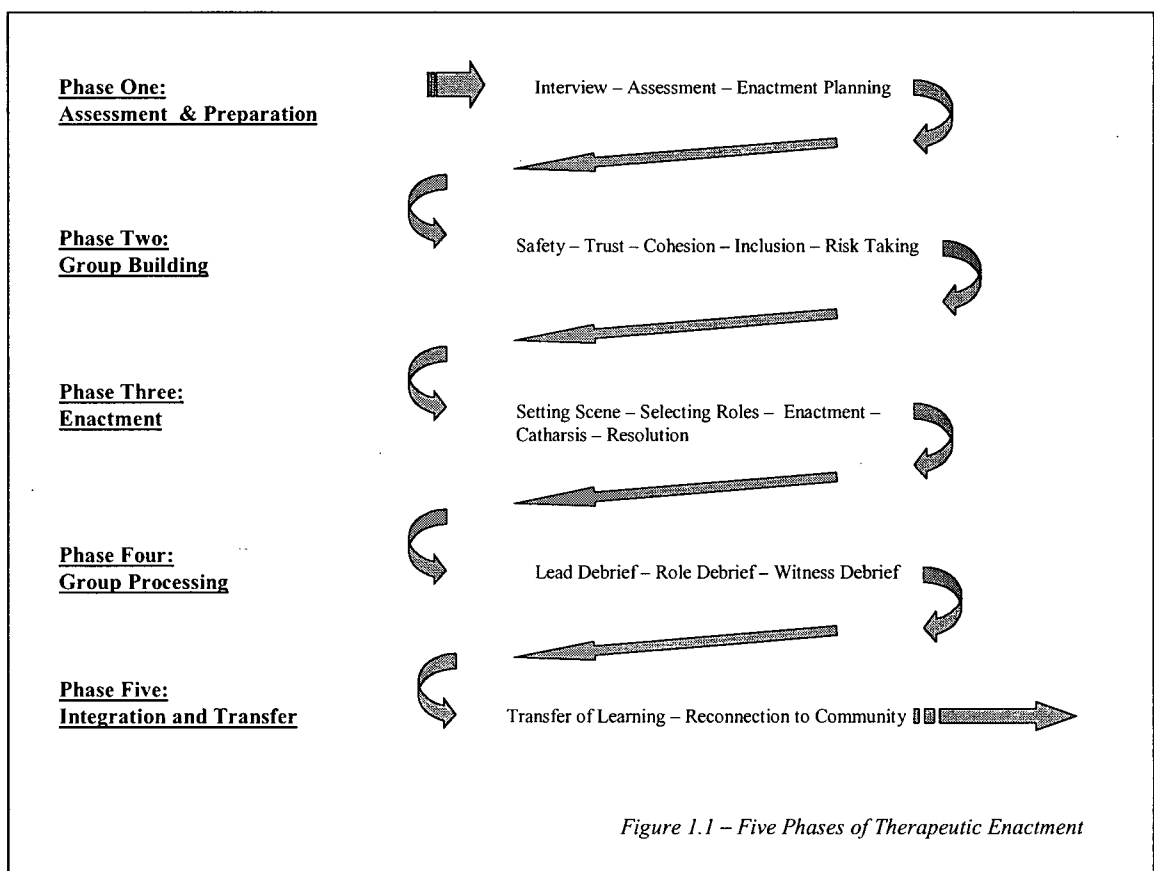
Once the group reconvenes and prepares to go through the next enactment, another individual prepares to enter the “sacred circle” and begin the walk-around. The circle is often considered “sacred” not in the traditional religious sense but in the sense that the work done inside the circle is of a nature that is not entirely secular. It is a place where time and space can be bent to the needs of the lead person and it is in this sense that the circle is sometimes considered “sacred”. But, what of the previous lead person? The wound has been opened, the operation has been completed and the incision has been closed. It is now that the process of healing and integration begins and during this time the lead person may remain in a very tender and/or vulnerable position following their enactment. For the remainder of the TE retreat, the lead person is treated with care, much the same way an individual who has undergone surgery might be treated.

The lead person is given the choice as to how much they wish to participate in the rest of the retreat. No one will expect them to undertake anything that might jeopardize the potential gains made as a result of completing their own enactment. The decision is left to the discretion of the individual. For example, Bill has just completed his enactment where he confronted the man who sexually abused him as a child. The TE was very successful and Bill is still feeling very “raw”. Mary is the next lead person who will be doing an enactment where she confronts a school bully who physically and psychologically tormented her all through her high school years. Mary had thought that she might ask Bill to play the high school bully because he bears a striking physical resemblance to the actual person. The directors reiterate the fact that Bill should feel no obligation or pressure to participate as the assistant and play the bully. Bill acknowledges that he would really like to help Mary by playing the bully, but he declines the request and is supported by the group, and by Mary, for being self-respecting and displaying a high degree of self-care. The therapists help Mary to find someone else to play the bully in her enactment and the group carries on. This process continues throughout the enactment weekend until all of the lead persons have completed their enactments.

Figure 1.1 represents a conceptual view of the phases of TE and the interventions used by the practitioner in the TE process described earlier. It is evident that this process is a multi-modal, multi-faceted event that requires a great deal of planning and preparation as well as a sharp focus on the details of the individual enactments and the group processes that inevitably arise. The fundamental process of TE requires a “tight group container”, that is to say a group that has achieved a sense of safety and cohesion,

and one that is formed and maintained by the leaders. If the group container cannot be established, then the therapist will not “drop down” into the enactment space, but will cycle back to group building instead.

When the therapist has decided to go forward with an enactment, the scene is activated in the walk-around described above and the scene is then co-constructed with the lead person. Once the scene has been established, the assistants are then chosen and integrated into the scene and the scene is finally directed to completion. There is no pre-determined outcome that *must* occur in the enactment but the therapist team keeps in mind the therapeutic needs of the lead person, while allowing the course of the enactment to emerge and develop in a co-constructed manner.



The process and debrief follows and then the lead person is reestablished as member of the group and the group moves forward.

The individual needs of the client in the group are dealt with and struggled through in the initial stages of the process, needs such as inclusion, control and trust. When a sense of safety has been established only then will the individual feel secure enough to risk-take and enter the enactment space. Once in the middle of the circle, the lead person begins to focus, with the help of the therapist, on the enactment scene that will be co-constructed. Once the scene has been co-constructed, then the scene is enacted and the lead person begins the process of re-experiencing the event. This stage often involves catharsis, or emotions, but is not necessarily a foregone conclusion. The lead person then moves out of the highly emotional space of catharsis to a more integrated cognitive space of experiencing and reflecting on the event that begins the process of repair. Transfer of learning and integration will begin here and may continue for weeks or even months following the enactment. Finally, the lead person returns to the group.

Figure 1.1 represents a skeletal diagram of how a TE comes to fruition, which, combined with the description of how a TE is created, offer the reader a kind of road map to help in understanding the following sections on the differences between psychodrama and TE. It is also meant to serve as a contextual beacon for readers to help situate themselves in the narratives that will make up the results section of the study. The following section will look at the basic differences between psychodrama and TE, with the purpose of helping the reader to understand the subtle but important differences between TE and classical psychodrama.

The Difference Between Psychodrama and Therapeutic Enactment

Therapeutic Enactment (TE) is a variation on the classical psychodrama technique that is distinct and unique. TE employs many of the concepts described in the preceding section on psychodrama, but the differences between TE and psychodrama can best be described as theoretical differences regarding the process of *how* the psychodrama techniques are employed and in the respective attention paid to the principles of group counselling and therapy. There are few, if any, differences in the techniques used in the two methods.

Martens (1990) states that psychodrama has evolved over the years, since its founder J.L. Moreno encouraged groups of Viennese children to act out their problems extemporaneously, but the core of the method is that it is a group-based intervention. It is a therapeutic technique practiced internationally that proponents believe effects change at the cognitive, behavioural, and emotional levels for not only the main actor but potentially for all group members as well (pp. 1-2). The founder of psychodrama, J.L. Moreno, stated that he saw the task of psychodrama as helping people to recover their core selves which become lost through the pressures and demands of daily living (Moreno & Moreno, 1969). Although traditional psychodrama is still practiced in different forms, some group practitioners have moved away from referring to their work as “psychodrama”.

Brooks' Concept of Therapeutic Enactment

Brooks' (1998) study focused intensely on enactment as the crux of change, supported by other researchers (Baum, 1994, and Martens, 1990) who found that participants experienced living through physical action as central to the facilitation of

change (p. 51). Brooks defines “therapeutic enactment” as the intentional and conscious use of enactment for therapeutic ends, to be distinguished from the unintentional and unconscious manifestations of enactments as they arise in the course of therapies (p. 8). Westwood & Wilensky (2001) have since adopted and expanded the term Therapeutic Enactment (TE) to describe a process that is distinctly different from psychodrama, as most classical practitioners would understand it.

Westwood & Wilensky’s Therapeutic Enactment Intervention

Westwood & Wilensky (2001) use the term Therapeutic Enactment (TE) to describe their variation on classical psychodrama in which pre-planned, highly controlled enactments within a group setting are used for the repair and restoration of the individual client’s experience of self. Westwood, Keats, & Wilensky (2003) state that four aspects of Moreno’s model jeopardized the possibility for resolution and repair for individuals both as lead persons and as members of the therapy group. The four key areas are: 1) individual safety, 2) role of spontaneity, 3) purpose of catharsis, and 4) attention to group processes.

Psychological Safety of the Individual

Westwood & Wilensky added the elements of careful planning and preparation of the enactment to allow for a highly controlled and circumscribed revisiting and reenacting of events from the individual’s life. This process brings more control and psychological safety into the restorative processes for the lead person and the therapist.

The fact that TE and psychodrama are conducted in a group setting means the practitioner would benefit from a comprehensive understanding of group psychology and the nature of individuals in a group setting. As mentioned above, group members all

share personal needs outlined by Schutz (1958) as inclusion, control, and trust and these needs arise across the various stages of the group. A sense of control will more likely be experienced by a group member who feels a sense of belonging, and who feels he/she can trust the other group members. If any of these needs are neglected or unattainable in any group (not just therapy groups), then that group will not function well, and the individual will not function well in the group. These needs are further heightened and intensified when one wishes to conduct *therapy* in a group context, and are of paramount importance when one wishes to conduct therapy with traumatized individuals.

The Contribution of Trauma Theory

The concept of psychological trauma and its consequences, although as old as humanity itself, is a relatively modern notion that was not fully understood (nor is it presently fully understood) at the beginning of the twentieth century. Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was given the status of a formal diagnosis by the American Psychiatric Association (APA, 1980) in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III, APA, 1980). As Herman (1997) states, "The fundamental question of the existence of PTSD [post traumatic stress disorder] is no longer in dispute (p. 238)." While much has been written regarding the crippling nature of PTSD, and the effects of sub-syndromal PTSD or Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms, it was Herman (1997) who wrote at length on the therapeutic needs of trauma sufferers.

Herman (1997), wrote extensively regarding the therapeutic needs of trauma survivors, outlining the three stages which unfold in the process of recovery from trauma: 1) Safety (both psychological and physical), 2) Remembering (telling of the story) and Mourning (grieving the loss of life to trauma and its effects), and 3) Reconnection (re-

establishing non-trauma related relationships in the world). The stages are not mutually exclusive and will overlap and meld into one another and, as important as each stage is to recovery, virtually nothing can be accomplished in therapy without the individual's ability to establish a sense of psychological and physical safety in the presence of the therapist.

Psychological safety is considered the most important factor in beginning the road to recovery for trauma victims. This factor becomes exponentially important, and challenging, when conducting therapy in a group context. Just as the average group member feels the need for inclusion, control, and trust, the traumatized group member, due to his or her highly developed need for safety, may have significant difficulty simply entering into a group of strangers. The paradox, when considering the use of classic psychodrama in dealing with troubling personal events, is that spontaneity and safety increase and decrease in direct proportion to one another and are they also temporally ordered. Safety *must* precede spontaneity, and spontaneity increases with an increased sense of psychological safety and decreases with a reduced sense of psychological safety. Spontaneity must be distinguished from impulsive or compulsive acting out.

Role of Spontaneity

Individuals who feel anxiety at heightened levels often tend to seek discharge of that anxiety. Spontaneity, however, can only occur in the absence of anxiety. In the therapeutic enactment model, personal spontaneity becomes the end result of a highly successful process, rather than the key element of transformative learning. Westwood & Wilensky (2001) found Moreno's use of spontaneity, as transformative learning, "unsafe" within the context of doing deep psychological repair work in a group setting.

Classical psychodramatists value spontaneity above all else, with Moreno stating that God is defined as “Spontaneity” (Moreno, 1989, p. 49). Moreno believed that spontaneity is the basic life force and is a catalyst for our feelings, our thoughts, and for our creativity (Martens, 1990, p.25). As such, participants in classical psychodrama, as well as members of the group are encouraged to “act spontaneously” and let their “true nature” (or as Moreno described it, “the highest common denominator” of mankind) surface. In terms of narrative research, the notion of one’s “true nature” would be seen as a subjectively defined experience of a self that is dynamic and multi-faceted and would not necessarily be viewed as an objective “thing” that is defined from without.

Brooks (1998) states that Moreno believed spontaneity has two qualities. First, spontaneity is ‘unconservable’, meaning that it belongs to a contextual moment and cannot be carried over to another. Secondly, spontaneity can be ‘trained’ and this may be the most important factor for psychodrama. Brooks goes on to say that an essential function of psychodramatic techniques is to train people toward more effective ‘directed spontaneity’. Citing Blatner (1996), Brooks further mentions that developing spontaneity strengthens a person’s flexibility of mind for taking responsibility for new possibilities. Spontaneity is thereby defined as the adaptive or creative response to a new situation or by a new response to an old situation (pp. 17-18). The concept of spontaneity in psychodrama, then, lies in people learning how to be more spontaneous in life.

Following the writings and philosophy of Moreno (1989, 1969, and 1946), Westwood & Wilensky (2001) view spontaneity as a characteristic of the psychologically healthy individual and they view human beings as inherently spontaneous organisms. However, an individual’s ability to behave in a spontaneous manner becomes blocked as

a result of a myriad of experiences that the individual may be exposed to in his or her life (e.g., trauma, shame).

The purpose of TE is to help clients resolve and integrate these critical life events so that a person's natural spontaneity can be expressed. In TE, this resolution and integration is achieved through the planned and highly controlled use of enactment to re-create the critical event and to help the individual move, through the process of repair, restoration, and completion, towards resolution. Instead of 'spontaneity training', TE focuses on removing the impediments to healthy functioning through enactment.

Yablonsky (1976) introduced the metaphorical notion of robopathy, describing it as the pathology of robot (repetitive or prescribed) behaviours in response to situations in daily life. TE practitioners would view robopathy as an indication that there are unresolved critical life events that consume the individual's creative energy and prevent spontaneous behaviour from occurring. Instead of attempting to insert spontaneity or train it into the person as the antidote to robopathy, the TE practitioner helps the lead person re-create and resolve the event that caused the robopathic behaviour in the first place.

Moreno and the psychodrama practitioners encourage psychodrama participants to behave spontaneously so as to reveal their "true nature" as part of the therapeutic process. This view of a "true nature" seems to imply a single, unitary nature that all human beings possess, which according to narrative epistemology does not exist. This issue will be addressed in Chapter 3, where the epistemological assumptions of narrative research have been outlined. In contrast, TE practitioners view the ability to act and behave in a spontaneous manner as the *end* result of a highly controlled and circumscribed process of revisiting and subsequently re-enacting troubling events from

one's life. Spontaneous actions will occur only when there the individual feels a sense of psychological safety, whereas compulsive actions will occur in both safe and unsafe arenas. Compulsive acting out is usually an attempt to relieve psychological anxiety that has built up in the individual to a point where it cannot be contained any longer. It is on this point that TE and psychodrama diverge.

Purpose of Catharsis

In contrast to psychodrama models, catharsis is not the end of the enactment, but rather, the beginning of reparation and healing. Resolution begins when disowned suffering and grief are accepted, expressed, and integrated by both the individual and the group. In this process of catharsis, the individual is able to reach out and reconnect with a social network that includes the self, family, colleagues, and society. The term catharsis comes from a more psychodynamic paradigm of understanding the individual. The narrative approach would not necessarily label an emotional reaction as a "catharsis" but would seek to understand the individual's story of their emotional reaction and the meaning they make for themselves in telling that story.

Attention to Group Process

Finally, psychodrama does not explicitly attend to the benefits that all individuals can obtain from being within a group context in therapy. Therapeutic enactment practitioners utilize the dynamics of the group process through this expressive therapeutic approach, as a means for preventing group dynamics from impeding the enactment process and as a means of allowing the beneficial aspects of the group dynamics to enhance the enactment process for the participants. (Westwood, Keats, & Wilenksy, 2003).

The difference between TE and psychodrama is a qualitative one that is important to understand before proceeding with a study investigating the narratives of individuals who have participated in TE. TE can be viewed as an intervention, which employs all of the tools of classical psychodrama but, in contrast, is a highly planned, intensely focused, and decidedly non-spontaneous process of repair, that attends to the principles of group therapy and process. TE is contrasted with classical psychodrama, which can be viewed as a more fluid, creative, and spontaneous process for all of the participants. In TE, spontaneity is viewed as one of the end products or results of the intervention, which may or not be achieved at the end of one enactment. In classical psychodrama spontaneity is viewed as one of the key elements that characterize the entire process.

Therapeutic Enactment (TE) Research

There have been comparatively few research studies done on psychodrama that have not been plagued with methodological problems (D'Amato & Dean, 1988), and/or definitional problems (Kipper, 1978). Brooks (1998), citing Buell's work, states that the majority of the studies done with a quantitative focus were published in the *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama, and Sociometry*, a journal not subject to peer review, leading to questions regarding research and publication standards (p.37). As well, there have been no studies that have given in depth accounts of what the actual psychodrama practitioners did in the psychodrama sessions. Also, there are rarely, if ever, any indications as to the qualifications of the directors for using psychodrama as a therapeutic intervention.

Brooks (1998), in his comprehensive review of the literature on research in psychodrama from a quantitative approach concluded that, "Clearly such a fragmented

approach to proving psychodrama effective combined with the resulting disparate findings has been unable to reveal detailed and holistic patterns that might advance a more unified theory of psychodrama, or describe enactment as a core change process (p. 38).” However, when one examines the literature done within a qualitative framework the picture becomes less ambiguous.

Brooks (1998) cites several qualitative studies in his review of the literature including: Hofrichter, (1973), Del Nuovo et al. (1974), Neuman (1990), Martens (1990), Baum (1994), and Buell (1995). Since Brooks’ study was completed, several qualitative studies have been conducted on Therapeutic Enactment specifically (Keats, 2000, and Morley, 2000). Brooks goes on to state that qualitative designs have been able to deal more meaningfully with the multi-variate complexity of psychodrama, given its state of theory development, than quantitative designs (p. 38). Given the previous discussion on the difference between Therapeutic Enactment and classical psychodrama, it is important to note that several of the studies listed above (Baum, 1994, Brooks, 1998, DeVries, 1999, Keats, 2000, and Morley, 2000) represent a core body of research on Therapeutic Enactment (Westwood & Wilensky, 2001) that can be compared and contrasted on one very important factor, which is the therapist variable.

In all of the qualitative studies examining the impact of TE on the lead person (Baum, 1994, Brooks, 1998, DeVries, 1999, Keats, 2000, and Morley, 2000) the role of the therapist (director), and the relationship between the therapist and the lead person, have been found to be of critical importance in the experience of change in the individual through TE. What is more interesting, in terms of reviewing the literature on TE, is that,

in each of these studies, the therapist team of Dr. M. Westwood and Dr. P. Wilensky conducted the enactments for the participants in the study.

Given that the role of the therapist has been shown to be a critical piece in the use of TE, the fact that each of these studies employed the same therapist team make them comparable on this centrally important variable. Furthermore, whereas the studies done by Hofrichter (1974) and Del Nuovo (1974) investigate the impact of *psychodrama*, the studies conducted by Morley, 2000, Keats, 2000, Brooks, 1998, and Baum, 1994 all examine the impact of Therapeutic Enactment as a distinct intervention, separate from classical psychodrama (Westwood, 2001).

The studies conducted at the University of British Columbia (Brooks, 1998, Baum, 1994, Keats, 2000, and Morley, 2000) provide the most relevant research on TE. They also form a unified and consistent body of literature on a clearly defined intervention, conducted by the same therapists, over a period covering more than ten years. In terms of the research on psychodrama, with its concomitant problems, the research conducted at the University of British Columbia represents a unique body of literature on a clearly defined and consistently practiced therapeutic intervention, which is an anomaly in the existing literature on psychodrama. The present study fills the gap in this growing body of literature, as the participants in this study also participated in TE with the therapist team of Dr. M. Westwood and Dr. P. Wilensky. Each of the studies conducted, using a variation on the phenomenological method, identifies a multitude of themes that arose from the transcribed interviews with participants.

A full presentation of all of the themes is not warranted here, but the essential structures and core elements that are presented will be included to orient the reader to the

literature on TE. Note that throughout this document the terminology for director, protagonist, and auxiliary has been changed to therapist, lead person, and assistant respectively, to elucidate the differences between psychodrama and TE. In the studies reviewed later, the findings are reported using the original terminology for director, protagonist, and auxiliary. Appendix B presents a summary table of the TE findings from the studies to date. The key findings that are presented in the table represent a distillation of the theme statements into one or two key words or a phrase that I have used to describe a theme. As such the key findings summary is meant to be a visual aid to the themes that follow to assist in the comparison of the studies reviewed. Although Keats' (2000) study was an auto-ethnographic/narrative study, a column representing her study has been included in the summary table, in so far as the findings of her study support the previous studies cited in the table. The findings of Keats' (2000) were not presented in theme statements and, therefore, where a shaded box appears in the column entitled Keats (2000), the shaded box represents my interpretation of Keats' findings providing support for the themes in the phenomenological studies cited in the table.

Martens' (1990) Study

Martens' study is included in this section because it represents the last research study done on psychodrama as conducted by one of the two founders of TE, Dr. M.J. Westwood, at the University of British Columbia. The next study, conducted by Baum (1994) represents the first study to be conducted on Therapeutic Enactment as a distinct variation on psychodrama (Westwood, 2001) and, thus, Martens' study represents the link between a more classical view of psychodrama and TE as a distinct entity. It is important to note this link because the therapist who conducted the psychodramas in

Martens' study was already developing the method, which has come to be known as Therapeutic Enactment.

Martens (1990) asked the question, "What does it mean to be a protagonist, who reports to have experienced significant life change as a result of their participation in a psychodrama?" Using the existential-phenomenological method, she interviewed six co-researchers, two female and four male, ranging in age from their late twenties to their late forties, all described as Canadians. The occupations of the co-researchers included elementary counsellor, graduate students, recreation director and high school counsellor/teacher. Martens reported 10 themes in the "before the psychodrama" category, 10 themes in the "during the psychodrama" category, and 8 themes in the "after the psychodrama" category.

Before the psychodrama

1. There is a felt sense of personal readiness for the psychodrama experience.
2. 'Being ready', whatever that means to each individual, is perceived as necessary prerequisites to the experience.
3. Along with the readiness, there is a felt sense of urgency, or a strong desire, to go through with the experience.
4. A general trust in the leader's abilities contributes to a feeling of safety.
5. A general trust in the group also contributes to a feeling of safety.
6. Feeling safe is regarded as an essential prerequisite to doing psychodrama.
7. Regarding the choice of subject to enact, there is a felt sense of movement from somewhat unclear to a very specific clear focus, and this can happen instantaneously, or throughout the warm-up process.

8. Clarity of focus for the psychodrama is achieved through a combination of cognitive processing, emotional involvement, and actual physical movement.
9. Before the psychodrama begins, awareness of the group and all its members begins to recede.
10. There is a build-up of inner tension, experienced at both a neuromuscular and hormonal level, that is, a felt sensation of muscle tension and a rise in energy.

During the Psychodrama

1. Once the psychodrama has been initiated there is a transition from talking about the situation to experiencing a “real” situation.
2. This transition is felt as a movement away from experiencing control of the situation, towards a lack of personal control.
3. There is a high level of emotional involvement and expression of strong feelings.
4. During this period of emotional involvement, there is no awareness of other group members.
5. The psychodrama is experienced through engagement of the whole self: emotions, cognitions, and the physical body.
6. Physical body movement is perceived as being particularly facilitative of therapeutic outcome.
7. During intense moments in the psychodrama process, there is a felt physical experience of “shock”, a “shift”, or a “release of energy” throughout the body.

8. There is a felt sense of potential danger, either in a physical or a psychological sense, and a feeling of safety, which arises from trust in the leader and the group.
9. At some point, there is a feeling of total emotional and physical exhaustion.
10. At some point, there is a felt sense of the action being complete; a feeling the psychodrama closes itself.

After the Psychodrama

1. It is crucial to return to the group and receive acceptance from them.
2. There is a felt need to verbally process the experience with other group members, yet at the same time it is difficult to do immediately afterwards.
3. Cognitive insights are experienced during, immediately after, and in the weeks that follow the psychodrama experience.
4. Action is taken (behaviour change) following insights.
5. Along with insights, comes a felt sense of high physical and emotional energy.
6. Periods of disintegration, depression or emotional difficulty, can be experienced.
7. There is a sense of significant, positive change, and a feeling that an old pattern has been broken.
8. There is a felt change in the way the physical body is experienced, a sensation that something has been dropped or released.

We see that the experience described in Martens' (1990) study involves multiple dimensions for the individual including body sensation, behaviour, cognitions, and emotions. There are also references to the fact that change has occurred yet we are not

provided with the context describing what exactly changed for the participants. Baum's (1994) study builds upon the findings in Martens' (1990) study, using the same methodology but asking a slightly different question.

Baum's (1994) Study

Baum's (1994) study represents the first study to be conducted on TE as a distinct variation on classical psychodrama (Westwood, 2001). Whereas Martens (1990) asked the question, "What does it mean to be a protagonist, who reports to have experienced significant life change as a result of their participation in a psychodrama?" Baum asked the question, "What is the meaning of the experience of 'significant change' as reported by participants in a psychodrama?" The participants included four protagonists and two participant observers ranging in age from 34 to 41 with four males and two females. All co-researchers were graduate students. Baum does not break down the demographic information according to whether or not the co-researcher was a protagonist or a participant-observer. Using the existential-phenomenological method, she came up with 32 themes for the experience of the protagonist. I will review only those themes that are related to the experience of the protagonist in Baum's (1994) study, in accordance with the focus of the current study on the narratives of co-researchers who were lead persons in their own enactment. Although there are some minor differences in the wording of the themes, Baum's (1994) finding support the work of Martens (1990).

Before the Psychodrama

1. Protagonists have been involved in personal development or counselling before this experience.

2. Protagonists have experienced being a participant, auxiliary ego, or a protagonist in a psychodrama.
3. There is an idea already formulated about what the protagonist's experience will be. A skeletal structure is in place of how to do it.
4. Protagonists have an established relationship with the director that included feelings of trust, safety, and comfort before the psychodrama begins.

Warm-Up

5. There is a comfort and safety in having a close friend/colleague in the group.
6. It is helpful to observe other psychodramas in the workshop to focus on how to develop one's own.
7. There is a need to feel safe in the group.
8. There is a movement to an emotional level.
9. There is a growing tension, which is felt emotionally, cognitively, and physically, before the protagonist begins his/her psychodrama.
10. There is a lessening awareness of the group as one's psychodrama develops.
11. There is a need to use setting, roles, and story to make one's psychodrama more focused and move into role.

Encounter

12. Moving from talking about the story to acting it out in present tense facilitates immersion in role/character.
13. There is a growing consciousness and power of the director and the auxiliary egos.
14. There is an intermittent awareness of the group.

15. There is a feeling of movement (fluctuation) from being in control of the experience to allowing the director to control the experience.
16. There is a sense of fear, or danger at taking the risk to fully experience the drama.
17. Physical movement facilitates the experience.
18. There is a feeling of being lost in role – a change in control, being in a trance.
19. There is a feeling of actually reliving the experience – in touch with old feelings.
20. Pacing and silence have an impact on the process. Experienced directors are cognizant of this while doubles and auxiliary egos may not.
21. There is a natural flow of events.
22. There is role expansion experienced.
23. There is a sense of importance to the event derived from being a protagonist in front of the group.
24. There is a feeling of vulnerability from the swift change of emotions.
25. There is a need to return to the group for reconnection, support, and sharing.
This is on an emotional level as one is too depleted to cognitively process any discussion.
26. There is an intensity of feeling, which is different for all the protagonists. It ranges from feelings of peace, comfort, depression, and vulnerability to grief.
27. There is a physical aspect to the understandings derived from the experience.

Integration

28. There is an increase in cognitive processing of the experience sometimes later.

New insights keep arising and connections made. Ideas about future psychodramas arise.

29. There is a feeling of a shift having occurred; a reconnection of old feelings in a new way and of having completed an issue. Change has occurred.

30. There is a need to act on the change – re-script one's life.

31. There is a need to reconnect and find support from the director soon after the experience is over.

32. There is a reprocessing of the experience through the interview, which is helpful and supporting to the protagonists. There is an essential working through of the issue in the interview.

In terms of the current study, Baum's (1994) findings point towards the inherently narrative characteristic of TE. Theme number 11 establishes the importance of telling one's story to help focus the enactment and theme number 30 describes the need for "re-scripting" one's life through action, following participation in an enactment. In accordance with Martens' (1990) study, there are references made to change for the participants including feelings of grief, depression and peace, action being taken and even the general statement that "Change has occurred," made in theme statement number 29. There is evidence that change is taking place but again we are left without a context to facilitate a fuller understanding of what has changed. We also see in Baum's study the importance of the director becoming more pronounced.

Brooks' (1998) Study

Brooks (1998) asked the question, "What is the meaning of change through therapeutic enactment in psychodrama? Using a mixture of existential-hermeneutic phenomenology and narrative methods he interviewed eight co-researchers, ages ranging from 34 to 53 years of age. There were two males and six female co-researchers with one participant who was a cross-cultural student from a Mediterranean country. The occupations of the co-researchers included graduate students and professionals with a graduate degree. Brooks came up with an extensive list of 59 themes, which have been condensed into several essential, or core, change processes. It is in Brooks' study that we see the clearest declaration of the importance of the director in effecting change.

Brooks discusses several essential structures termed "core multi-modal change processes" and is perhaps the most important study to date on TE. It is the study that first introduced the term "therapeutic enactment" in psychodrama. These core change processes are as follows:

1. Hope is engendered by the breaking down of the barriers of reality to allow for the resolution of issues previously perceived as unworkable, resulting in an increased desire to approach the problem.
2. The relationship with the director is of critical importance.
3. An increase in focused attention on the scene to be enacted results in increased emotionality building towards catharsis.
4. Acting out the scene in the group is the pivotal process via remembering through action.

5. Possibilities are opened through interaction with and in the enacted scene including:
 - a. Possibility of doing, redoing, undoing, finishing, mastering scenes through action.
 - b. Possibility for differentiating between feelings and meanings, through interaction with others.
 - c. Possibility for trying out and establishing new boundaries between self/other, present/past, somatic/mental, conscious/unconscious, beliefs/reality.
 - d. Possibility for emotional catharsis and re-scripting of old dysfunctional scripts.
 - e. Possibility for shifts between conscious/unconscious during differentiation process.
 - f. Possibility for developing new ways of feeling and practicing these new ways within the group.
6. The importance of witnessing for validating and supporting change in the individual and experiencing the reality of interactional ethics.
7. The importance of debriefing with the group for integrating differentiated feelings, meanings, boundaries, and encouraging new behaviour outside the group.
8. Internalization of these new ways of being, thinking, feeling taken from the experience.

9. These internalized changes help to reinforce and support change in new and enhanced roles in ongoing life.
10. Practice with these new ways of being helps to integrate old ways of being and can reinforce new ways of being, thinking and feeling.

Brooks' (1998) study represents the most in-depth and comprehensive examination of the literature on TE to date and touches on many different outcomes of participating in TE. The role of the director and the role of the group are stated to be of importance and again there is reference made to re-scripting, which points to the narrative quality inherent in TE. Brooks states that new ways of thinking, feeling and acting are evidenced but again we are left without the context describing the changes for each participant. Brooks does include narratives for each co-researcher, which is confusing given the existential-phenomenological method that he employed. As comprehensive as the study is in length, the combination of three different methodologies in one study weakens the study's findings somewhat, especially the presentation of the narratives. The current study uses a clearly defined narrative method and produces a narrative result consistent with that method.

Morley's (2000) Study

Morley (2000), using a combination of multiple case study method and existential-phenomenology, asked the question, "What is the lived experience of the trauma repair process through therapeutic enactment?" Morley interviewed two co-researchers, one male and one female, who were both graduate students. Morley found that 27 themes emerged from in depth interviews with the participants and these 27

themes were organized according to the stages of the enactment process. Briefly the themes are:

Themes prior to the enactment: Precipitating conditions

1. The TE experience was precipitated by a trust building process with the director
2. Positive prior exposure to therapeutic enactments contributed to the formation of trust with the director
3. Intense observation of the director during previous enactments led to the formation of trust
4. Witnessing the director successfully handle critical incidents in previous enactments led to trust formation
5. The director “planted a seed” to move co-researchers [the participants] in direction of considering doing a TE around the trauma
6. The director was experienced as operating from an altruistic position rather than a competence based position, sincerely wanting to facilitate repair through TE
7. An intimate personal experience with the director precipitated the enactment, deepening the relationship with the director, and further building trust
8. The enactment planning process was tentative, inclusive, and very client-centred
9. Prior to the enactment specific safety plans were put in place
10. A sudden awareness of the trauma’s continued impact on the co-researcher precipitated the enactment
11. TE became an option for the co-researchers only after trying other techniques to deal with their traumas

Themes associated with the Therapeutic Enactment

1. Prior to a critical point in the enactment, both co-researchers [participants] experienced significant dissociation
2. Co-researchers [participants] experienced an inability to recall specific details of their enactment, immediately following the enactment
3. The co-researchers' [participants'] main memories of the enactment are physical memories
4. Both co-researchers [participants] were largely unaware of individual group members and their contribution
5. During the enactment the co-researchers experienced an acute awareness of the director's voice, which voice served to help keep the co-researchers "present"
6. The director's voice linked two realities; simultaneously re-living the past trauma in the present moment.
7. The co-researchers and the director(s) formed an intensely close therapeutic alliance
8. The enactment entailed high risks
9. The enactment was experienced as intensely real and resulted in the protagonist's experiencing a loss of control
10. Control was returned to the protagonist
11. After the climax of the enactment, both co-researchers experienced intense feelings with significant meaning

Post-enactment Themes

1. Co-researchers experienced substantial repair

2. The co-researchers experienced a lack of desire to watch the video tapes of their enactments
3. Follow-up with the directors after the enactment was experienced as furthering the therapeutic process
4. "Over deconstruction" or analysis of the enactment experience of the enactment was not helpful
5. The enactment experience deepened the relationship the co-researchers have with the director

A simple examination of the data produced by the Morley (2000) study shows the importance of the therapeutic relationship with the director as being paramount to the experience of the co-researchers. It also underscores the notion of the degree of planning and assessment that goes into enactment of a more traumatic nature. Contrast this with a psychodrama group in which a participant might spontaneously decide that they want to revisit a trauma from their past and the director begins to explore the scene in the moment. Morley's finding state that the co-researchers experienced "substantial repair," but once again we are left without the context and description of what changed for the co-researchers. The final study that I will examine is one that most closely relates to the current study.

Keats' (2000) Study

Using auto-ethnography, Keats (2000) investigated the use of masks in the healing of trauma through therapeutic enactment. The study produced a compelling and comprehensive narrative account of the enactment process, written from multiple-self perspectives by the researcher/participant. Through the use of imagery and photographs

embedded in the text combined with a lyrical and poetic writing style, this study provides what may be the premier account of one person's experience of using TE in the healing of a horrific personal trauma. The presentation of the findings took the form of an enacted play where five different people read the parts of the people in the narrative. It is not warranted to attempt to reproduce the text in this document but this study stands alone in terms of narrative accounts of trauma repair using TE. Briefly, Keats' findings supported the importance of the following concepts taken from the literature on TE studied from a phenomenological perspective:

1. The readiness of the participant
2. The need for safety of the participant.
3. A feeling of being involved in the enactment with her whole being.
4. Returning to the group.
5. The relationship with the director.
6. Seeing other enactments before doing her own.
7. The director's voice.
8. The importance of being witnessed.
9. Physical sensations.
10. Reconnecting with the director after the enactment.
11. The director planting a seed to do an enactment.
12. Feeling the director had her best interests at heart.
13. The planning process being client centred.
14. Experience with previous therapies.
15. Experiencing dissociation.

16. Inability to recall parts of her enactment.
17. Physical memories of the enactment.
18. The enactment involving high risks.
19. The loss of a feeling of personal control.
20. A return of the feeling of personal control.
21. The experience of repair.
22. A lack of desire to watch her video.
23. Debriefing being helpful.
24. Over analysis not being helpful.

Keats' (2000) study is the piece of research that most closely captures the human experience and context of change in TE and one that focuses a narrative account of her story. It is in this spirit that the current study was undertaken. There is a clear gap in the literature on change in TE from a narrative perspective, using a narrative methodology.

Summary

The literature on TE is growing into a body of knowledge regarding this potentially powerful intervention. The indications that TE can produce change have been demonstrated in these studies, which reveal a process whereby the relationship between the director and the lead person is of critical importance, as well as the importance of the group in the process. None of the studies on "psychodrama" mention these factors as being a significant factor. The main differences between TE and psychodrama lie in the concepts of spontaneity and trauma/safety, as well as the importance of the relationship with the therapist, and the importance of the development and context of the group.

The gap in the literature on change in TE is in the lack of narrative studies examining *what* has changed in the lives of the TE participants. Keats' (2000) auto-ethnographic study being the exception, each of the studies on TE to date has used some variation of phenomenology to study change. The TE literature covers, in great depth and detail, the underlying structures, which contribute to the experience of change but, to date, no study has examined the subjective individual narratives of change for TE participants using a clearly designed narrative method. This study addresses the gap in the literature by using a narrative method to address the question, "What are the subjectively constructed narratives of individual change told by those individuals who have taken part, as lead person, in their own Therapeutic Enactment, during a residential retreat?"

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

The scientific paradigm within which this study is situated is that of the postmodern narrative inquiry, to be distinguished from the modernist narrative paradigms which are based on the study of grammar, the rules of language, syntax and the like. Although the post-modern paradigm is not clearly defined in positivistic scientific terms, it *is* distinguishable from the modernist tradition borne of the enlightenment period (Arvay, 2001). The post-modern position largely defines itself in opposition to four major doctrines of the modernist (Enlightenment) position:

1. The notion of a rational, autonomous subject;
2. The notion of a foundationalist epistemology (foundationalist means the scientist can know absolutely or with certainty that the knowledge claims are the truth, or real);
3. The notion of reason as a universal *a priori* capacity of individuals; and,
4. The belief in social and moral progress through the rational application of social scientific theories to the arts and social institutions.

Conversely, the post-modern position is against totalizing discourses or meta-narratives and it endorses heterogeneity, difference, fragmentation, and indeterminacy in the subjective experiences of individuals and cultures (Arvay, 2001).

Narratives and storytelling are a universal, cross-cultural phenomenon that have existed, it would seem, since the development of symbolic language, as evidenced by such archeological findings as the pre-historic cave drawings discovered in Dordogne, France, to the discovery of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, in Northern Africa. Hones (1998), in discussing the historical evolution of narrative in the social sciences, states that

narrative research takes hermeneutics a step further by arguing that people understand their lives and explain their lives through stories and that these stories feature plots, characters, times, and places. Citing Polkinghorne (1995), Hones goes on to state that the narrative is uniquely suited for displaying human existence as situated action. As such, the narrative is well suited to an investigation of therapy through action methods.

Polkinghorne (1988) also states that the narrative is the primary cognitive structure by which humans understand and give meaning to the events in their lives. How we come to know our world and ourselves, within this paradigm, is through the telling of, listening to, and re-telling of stories (Polkinghorne, 1988).

Epistemological Assumptions of Narrative Inquiry

Certain epistemological assumptions underlie the use of narrative methods in social science research and they are as follows (Arvay, 2001):

1. There is no objective truth that can be ultimately known in subjective human experience
2. Humans make our own lives and the lives of others known through the stories that we tell
3. Interior reality is pluralistic, contextualized, and subjective.
4. Stories provide coherence and continuity to our experience
5. There can be no universal reader, no single unitary reading, or interpretation of the text
6. Our stories are always recollections of our experience
7. Our stories reveal our purposes and intentions as human beings

8. Cultural tales impinge on stories (i.e., we create our stories and they are situated within a cultural discourse regarding what can be told, to whom, and under what circumstances)

In the narrative method, the researcher comes to know the participants in the study through the stories they tell about themselves, understanding that each story is fluid, dynamic, and an interpretive representation of events. Mishler (1995) states that researchers must decide the main purpose of the study. The first question to be asked is, "What is the primary focus of analysis, the actual 'succession of happenings' or its textual representation?" That is, are we interested in the "facts" of the story or are we interested in how the story is told as a holistic representation of the event? Second we want to know, "How does one specify what is termed connected succession"? He explains that researchers focusing on the actual "succession of happenings" will tend to define "connected succession" as temporal ordering. The focus of the analysis depends on establishing a correspondence between a sequence of events and the ordering of those events in a narrative account. The story, from this perspective, is a "re-presentation," in speech or writing, of a series of temporally ordered events (p. 90). This type of analysis is not the purpose of the present study. The present study will focus not on the actual "succession of happenings" but on the textual representation of the happenings as told by the participants. According to Mishler's typology, this falls under the subcategory of analyses he calls, "reconstructing the told from the telling" (p. 95).

Drawing on the work of the philosopher Nelson Goodman, Mishler (1995) distinguishes between the "order of the told" (i.e., an assumed sequence of actual events or a succession in 'real time') and the "order of the telling" (i.e., an ordering of these

events in their representation, as narrative). The present study will employ the “order of the telling” as a focus of analysis, specifically “reconstructing the told from the telling”. As this is a co-constructed study, I am present in the telling of the stories and I do not seek to simply list an assumed sequence of actual events. Rather, I seek to understand and come to know the “story” within which the sequence of events is situated. People, when telling their “stories” often do not tell about their experiences in temporal order. They will often digress from a unitary storyline or make general comments without clear temporal markers (p. 95).

Even when guided by interviewers to tell the story in temporal order, respondents will digress and interject with other stories, which may or may not be directly related to the main story line. As Mishler (1995) states, when faced with these problems, researchers reassemble selected episodes from interviews and reconstruct an order of the told from the telling(s), which then becomes the narrative for further analysis. In this manner then, the narratives that are produced are a co-construction of an experience or experiences, often shifting back and forth in time, created by the interviewer and the participant in their dialogue with each other, (p. 95). The goal is not to present an historically accurate or “objectively true” account of actual events in chronological order, but rather to co-construct a narrative, which acts as one type of representation, or representation, of an individual’s subjective experience in such a way as to impact the subjective experience of the reader. The co-constructive narrative method aspires to achieve mutual understanding between the researcher and co-researcher about the co-researcher’s story. The story that is co-constructed is a unique function of both individuals and thus represents a truly collaborative project whereby the balance of power

between researcher and co-researcher is equalized. Engaging the co-researcher in an inter-subjective dialogue, the researcher avoids treating the co-researcher as a depersonalized object to be studied. Instead, the narrative method strives to engage each co-researcher as a unique subject to be understood dialogically, not examined monologically like a “bug in a jar”.

Appropriateness of the Method for the Question

In research, the model of analysis must fit the data. This is true for both quantitative, statistical analyses and for qualitative analyses. The model used in the analysis of the data will be inextricably linked to the purpose of the analysis. As Rogosa (1995), in his discussion of statistical methods and models used in the analysis of change and growth in human subjects states, “...different research questions dictate different data structures and thus different statistical models and methods” (p. 37). To paraphrase, the model used to analyze the data must fit the data it is analyzing and the data gathered will be dictated by the question that the researcher is asking. Take, for example, the research question, “What is the change in individuals across time as the result of receiving a therapeutic intervention?” First, one must struggle with the measurements or instruments that will be used to collect the data. Assume that the instrument being used yields a quantitative value for each individual, and assume further that the instrument has been constructed so that it is sensitive to changes in individuals over time (these are two very broad assumptions that are rarely if ever met in most quantitative studies on change in the individual). Given that these assumptions are met one must choose a research design and a method of analysis that will answer the question posed above, “What is the change in

individuals across time after receiving a therapeutic intervention?" The choices made prior to collecting the data are crucial.

In the above example, assume that the researcher chooses the Impact of Events Scale (IES) for assessing subjective experience of traumatic symptoms and he or she chooses to compare two groups of fifty individuals in a multi-wave, delayed control / treatment experimental design. Further, assume that they plan to analyze the data using ANOVA. Several problems arise in this scenario. First, the IES was not constructed to assess change over time but rather to assess a single point in time. The fact that the IES may yield different scores at various measurement points does not change the fact that this was not what the scale was designed for and, therefore, would render the IES statistically questionable as a valid measure of change in individuals over time. Second, the use of ANOVA would yield results that are not indicative of the change in individuals over time but in how individuals differ from the mean of the group and in how means of the groups differ from each other.

Clearly, this model and method of analysis would not yield an appropriate answer to the question posed. This does not make the results wrong, but rather it makes them less useful in terms of answering the question that has been posed. A more appropriate method would employ an instrument that is constructed to be sensitive to change over time, a design that will yield appropriate data (such as a multiple single-subject design) and model that would allow the data to be analyzed in a way that would answer the question being posed by the researcher. Given the above example, it is my contention that the use of the narrative method for investigating the subjective experience of individuals is the most appropriate choice for the question that is being posed herein.

Narrative Method as the Appropriate Choice

The instruments that will be used in the investigation will consist of the researcher, the participant, audio recordings, video recordings, photographs, drawings, music and any mode of expression the participant requires to express their subjective experience of the TE weekend. The data that these instruments will yield is appropriate to the question regarding subjective experiences. The method of analysis will allow the researcher to indwell in the data, to digest it and to attempt to render a narrative that reflects the researcher's subjective experience of the participants' stories in a way that the researcher and the participant achieve resonance with one another regarding the nature of the story. This will represent a co-construction of experience in which the researcher and the participant come to know each other through the sharing of experience.

This method of analysis fits the purpose of the study because of the nature of the intervention, which is a psychotherapeutic intervention. In the process of therapy the client and counsellor come to know one another through dialogue and understanding. The therapist comes to know the client through self-disclosure and interpersonal communication, while the client comes to know the therapist by the therapist's understanding of this communication and by the expression of that understanding to the client. Both client and therapist contribute to and are changed by the interaction and communication. Therefore, an appropriate method of gathering subjective, dialogical data regarding a therapeutic experience, and analyzing that data, is through an analogous process such as the interview method with a trained researcher.

The goal is not to agree on an external, objective truth or an objective reality but is to achieve a mutual understanding and to express that understanding between two

people. The narratives (i.e., the results) of the study are the product of this co-constructed subjective reality shared by the researcher and the each of the participants. The reader is able to read this co-constructed narrative of subjective experience and engage in the process of understanding and knowing the experience at the subjective level. This is of paramount importance for counseling psychologists who want to know about the impacts of TE on clients, in order to become informed about the intervention. Also, because the researcher is a counseling psychology student, the results will be the product of co-constructed understanding from within the profession. Each individual reader, based on his or her own subjective reality, will make decisions regarding the usefulness of such information. Counseling psychologists, potential clients and the academic community all stand to benefit from the narrative accounts that have been generated by this study. In conclusion, the research question, “What are the narratives of change for participants who have experienced their own Therapeutic Enactment at a weekend, residential retreat?” can be effectively investigated by the proposed narrative method. The chosen method fits the data, as recommended by Rogosa (1995).

Purpose of the Study

Since 1996, the TE therapist team, consisting of Dr. Marv Westwood and Dr. Patricia Wilensky, has conducted residential TE weekends at a rural retreat outside the city of Vancouver, BC. I have participated in both residential TE weekends and non-residential TE weekends with Dr.’s Westwood & Wilensky and feel that there is a qualitative difference between the two experiences. For the sake of operationalizing “residential” versus “non-residential”, the difference is as follows: residential weekends are conducted over the course of three days wherein participants stay overnight for two

nights at the chosen facility; non-residential weekends are also conducted over a period of three days but the participants do not stay at the facility overnight. Instead, they return each morning to the facility to participate in T.E. This study, using the narrative methodology outlined by Arvay (1998), examines the narratives of change as told by individuals who have participated in a residential TE weekend.

The possible stories that could be told about TE participants are innumerable and could encompass whole lives of experience. This study examines the individual stories of change as told by TE participants, beginning with their decision to partake in a personal enactment and ending with the present day. I believe that there is a story of each experience that will provide the reader with an in depth, unique, and individual personal account of taking part in a TE in a residential setting, that does not currently exist in the TE literature. In the analysis of the data, I read for several factors with a particular focus on the notion of change.

In therapeutic work, the main impetus for clients is the pursuit of change. Whatever clients are experiencing in their lives, they are looking to change something and so the business of therapy, by definition, requires a systematic and careful tracking of the changes that clients experience in their lives from day to day. The method that most therapists use to track changes is the use of stories and asking clients such questions as: "What was your week like?" or "How has it been since we last spoke?" These questions are used to elicit stories about change in individual lives. Even stories involving the complete lack of change in experience are useful to the therapist working with clients. The research question is as follows: "What are the stories of change as told by individuals who have been a lead person in a residential Therapeutic Enactment

weekend?” A narrative study of individual change in TE has never been conducted prior to this point and, as such, this study represents a unique contribution to and fills a gap in the literature on TE.

Rationale for Choosing the Narrative

Pearson (1999), reviewing the work of John McLeod on narratives in psychotherapy, states that, when a story is told, changes occur in the inner world of the teller and in their audience on deeper, more significant levels of consciousness than those which are engaged by the simple events of the story. Pearson also cites the work of J.S. Bruner, who outlined the gap between the kind of knowledge that can be obtained through stories (narrative knowing) and that obtained through science (paradigmatic knowing). As such, stories convey intention and feeling. The human capacity for reflexivity, for monitoring experience and reflecting on it, is largely suspended when a story is being told, which means that stories are received a different way than other forms of communication (p. 2 of 4). Given that stories convey intention and feeling, the reader will experience the narratives. The reader will become engaged in the narratives, not simply read dispassionate temporal accounts of events. Given that the previous studies on TE have used primarily phenomenological methods, this study seeks to add the complexity and depth of the personal experience of change in TE to the body of TE literature and to convey the intention and feeling that is characteristic of narrative methods. The narrative method fits the data because experiences of TE are very often imbued with deep emotionality and transformative learning.

The Co-Researchers

The co-researchers for this study were selected on the basis of having completed one TE as a lead person at Loon Lake. There were three women and two men, all of who were either graduate students or professionals with graduate degrees ranging in age from late thirties to mid-forties. The co-researchers came from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The Method

Denzin's (1994) method of "interpretive interactionism," is described by Hones (1998) as beginning and ending with the biography and self of the researcher and one which encourages personal stories that are thickly contextualized and connected to larger institutional, group and cultural contexts. In addition, the stories presented in the text should be given in the language, feelings, and emotions, and actions of those studied (p. 4). Denzin's description provides the context for the type of narrative that will be produced in this document. I will interpret the information generated in the interviews that I participate in with the participants. The creation of the narratives in the interview will be interactive and co-constructed by each participant and myself. This study is a collaborative production of stories, co-constructed and co-experienced by the participants and myself. Finally, Hones outlines the difference between that analysis of narrative and narrative analysis.

Hones (1998), citing Denzin, states that the analysis of the narrative begins with the stories told and moves toward common themes, whereas narrative analysis uses the stories told to construct a larger story (p.4). In this vein, I have employed the latter

method and have constructed an integrated story based on the individual in-depth interviews with each participant.

Data Collection

Data was collected via the use of in-depth, audio and videotaped interviews, to record the verbal and non-verbal communication by both the researcher and the participants. The role that I have taken in the interview is that of the active listener and partner in the telling of the story. Engaged in active listening, I am embedded in the telling of the story as much as I am embedded in the analysis of the interview. I represent the second half of the telling of the narratives and so represent a unique influence on the teller and the story told. I am a partner and an interpreter, as I accompany the teller on their inner journey to recollect (re-collect) the story of their experience of their enactments. I view the participant as the giver of a very personal gift and my role has been to take this gift and honor it, making the goal my best interpretation of their experience. I returned to share it with the giver for their approval, hoping that the story matched the subjective truth of their original gift of the story. The method of analysis is outlined in more detail later.

Although the basis of the interview will be open-ended questioning (see Appendix 1 for a sample questions to be used) I avoided restricting the type of data that could be collected. I did not limit their stories by requiring that they be told in a verbal mode of expression only. Anything the participants required to communicate their experience to me was used as data. This follows the writing on semiotics (Manning & Cullum-Swan, 1998), which studies whatever can be taken to be a sign. A sign is something that represents or stands for something else in the mind of someone (p. 252).

Data Analysis: Arvay's Narrative Method

The analysis of the interview data followed four steps outlined by Arvay (1998) and they are: 1) setting the stage, 2) the performance, 3) transcription, 4) interpretive readings, 5) writing the narratives, and 6) sharing the story.

Setting The Stage

Arvay states that it is important to meet with all the participants for the following reasons: 1) to develop rapport, 2) to begin facilitating a dialogue pertaining to the research question, 3) to explain the research process by detailing all the stages of the research, 4) to describe the roles and responsibilities that both the participant and the researcher will have in the research, 5) to articulate one's own values regarding the relationship, and 6) to explain basic philosophical values upon which the research design rests (e.g., the storied nature of our lives, that the self is constituted through the stories we tell, that telling our stories can be a transformative experience, that stories always change with each retelling and that the researcher can never hope to recapture the lived moment of the telling in the research text).

The Performance

Understanding that the process of research interviewing is a very complex and multidimensional human interaction is the underlying principle of the process itself. The interview is a dialogical interaction between the researcher and the participant, or co-researcher, that requires the researcher to become engaged with the co-researchers at both an experiential and a reflexive level, which Arvay calls "holding dual consciousness." The counseling psychologist, as researcher, is particularly well suited to this type of interviewing, which involves paying attention to not only what is said but also how things

are expressed by the co-researcher. The researcher also attends to how the *researcher* expresses him or herself, as well as remaining aware of the interpersonal process that arises between the two people. It requires paying attention to the content of the dialogue between the parties as well as attending to the interpersonal process that underlies the dialogue. This dual consciousness is developed and refined by counseling psychologists as a part of their clinical practice where they must be at once engaged with the client and at the same time reflect on what the client is saying and on what dynamics are occurring between therapist and client.

Arvay discusses the notion of “inviting stories” which I view as interacting with the co-researchers in a manner that facilitates an environment that allows stories to emerge in dialogue. Adopting a stance of warmth, genuineness and unconditional positive regard for each co-researcher is fundamental to creating such an environment. Gentle probing, paraphrasing and clarifying were used to help the co-researchers articulate their stories and expand on them. These things combined with open-ended questioning that facilitate exploration of the narratives were used to create an environment that “invited stories” to be told.

Transcription

The contents of the interviews were transcribed using a method of coding the written text so that it reflects the diversity and complexity of the range of verbal, non-verbal and interactional communication attached to each word or phrase. Within the verbal communication that the person uses, there are different aspects of the communication that were attended to: tone, volume, pacing, fluidity, and coherence or cogency. The different aspects of the verbal interactions in the transcript were coded

using different font sizes, font types, letter spacing, and the like. For example, a passage that would normally be transcribed as, “I was devastated. He made me so angry when he said that...I could just scream!!” where the speaker’s voice goes from very quiet to very loud and also goes from slower to faster pacing in the process of speaking might look like this:

“I was devastated...*he made me so angry when he said that...I could just scream!!*”

In this example, the transcription reflects a variety of volume from low to high and an increase in the pace of speaking, indicated by the italicized letters.

The non-verbal components of the interviews were also identified in the transcript. Emotionality is often evident non-verbally before it is evident verbally and so this was identified through a colour-coding scheme as follows.

<u>Level of Perceived Emotion</u>	<u>Color Code</u>
High	High (Pink)
Medium High	Medium High (Red)
Medium	Medium (Orange)
Medium Low	Medium Low (Green)
Low	Low (Blue)
Neutral	Neutral (Light Grey)

This color-coding scheme served as a quick reference for perceived levels of emotion in the text. Therefore, the above passage might evolve to look something akin to the following:

“I was devastated...*He made me so angry when he said that...*I could just scream!!”

Finally, each transcript was coded for non-verbal gestures, facial expressions and body language through the use of notations in the transcript itself. The final transcript of the above statement might look something like the following:

“I was devastated...*He made me so angry when he said that...*I could just scream!!” (looking out the window with hand on forehead)

The goal of transcribing was not to transform the audio or video tapes into an objective representation of the interview but rather to represent the innumerable procedural and methodological decisions that I, the researcher, made while transcribing, reflecting my own theoretical assumptions and rhetorical purposes (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). The transcription represents the first level of interpretation in the analysis of the interviews and is not an attempt to represent a stable, external reality (p. 75). Where possible, the semiotic “signs” provided by the co-researchers have been reproduced and included in the narrative, in order to best represent this type of communication.

Interpretive Readings

Arvey (1998) outlines four different types of interpretive readings and they are as follows: 1) reading for content; 2) reading for the self of the narrator; 3) reading for the research question; and 4) a critical reading. The first reading for content was to organize the transcript into a coherent story line with temporal ordering. People do not tell stories in an interview with a beginning, middle and an end or with a specific temporal ordering. The first reading put the events of the story in order as they happened. The second reading, for the self of the narrator, looked for how the narrator viewed himself or herself,

the metaphors her or she used to describe him or herself and the voices used (e.g., victim or hero) when they talk. The third reading for change looked at the research question and what actually changed. I went through each transcript and noted any comment where the co-researcher referred to any kind of change, whether it was momentary or more lasting in nature. The fourth and final reading was a critical reading. While going through each of the readings, there were questions, thoughts and reactions that the transcripts provoked in me as a researcher. The three previous readings involved a process of me taking from the transcript, whereas the fourth reading involved a process of acknowledging what the transcript brought forth in me as the researcher. The narrative stories were then constructed from the transcribed interviews with participants.

Writing the Story

Arvey suggests that, before writing the narratives, one should summarize the interpretive readings into one blended text. This includes devising a plot line placing the episodes in temporal and sequential order but not confining the final text to a modernist tale with a clear plot that builds to a crisis and then ending with resolution. The stories are written in the first person as a literary device to bring the stories “back to life” and they are left with unresolved issues and ambiguities that reflect a more “real” life quality of life in process.

Sharing the Story

The completed first-person narratives are given back to each of the co-researchers so that they might take the opportunity to make any “final edits” in the form of amendments, omissions, or rewrites to their story. This helps to balance the inherent power relationship between researcher and co-researcher.

Criteria for Validation

In a study that seeks to represent the story of subjective experience so the reader might know the narrator's inside world, there must be concordant criteria for evaluating the worth of the study. I drew from the work of Ken Wilber (2001, 1999, 1998, 1995) to examine the validity of the study in general followed by examining several specific criteria for validity, germane to this study in particular.

Wilber (2001, 1999, 1998, 1995) developed what he terms an "Integral Model" of human experience, which contains four quadrants as seen in Figure 1.2. The four quadrants are divided horizontally with the upper half representing the individual world space and the lower half representing the collective world space. The quadrants are divided vertically with the left half representing the interior/internal world space and the right half representing the exterior/external world space. The two right-hand quadrants represent those things in the universe which have simple location, meaning they can all be seen with the senses or their extensions; they are all empirical phenomenon; they exist in the sensorimotor world space.

The two left-hand quadrants represent those things in the universe that do not have simple location and thus cannot be seen by the senses and their extensions. Wilber cites the concept of altruism as an example of something that does not exist in the right hand quadrants, but nonetheless exists. Altruism itself does not exist in the sensorimotor world space but it does exist in a cultural world space. Wilber is explicit, however, when he states that all subjective UL quadrant experiences have objective UR quadrant counterparts.

	Interior	Exterior
Individual	<u>Upper Left (UL)</u> Interior Subjective Space Truthfulness “I” Language	<u>Upper Right (UR)</u> Exterior Objective Space Truth “IT” Language
	<u>Lower Left (LL)</u> Interior Inter-Subjective Space Justness “WE” Language	<u>Lower Right (LR)</u> Exterior Inter-Objective Space Functional Fit “ITS” Language
Collective		

Figure 1.2 - Wilber's Four Quadrant Model

The Upper Left (UL) quadrant represents the interior/subjective aspects of the individual, such as consciousness. The Upper Right (UR) quadrant represents the exterior/objective aspects of the individual, such as atoms, molecules, and cells. The Lower Left (LL) quadrant represents the interior/inter-subjectively shared world space or cultural world space, including things such as language. The Lower Right (LR) quadrant represents the exterior/interobjective or social world space, including things such as family units and government. Each of the four quadrants is an equally important and yet partial aspect of the known universe and Wilber states that none of the quadrants can be reduced to any other without remainder.

How the knowledge from each of the quadrants is gained is also an important factor. The left hand quadrants cannot be seen or measured from without in a monological fashion. The knowledge gained about the interior quadrants is dialogical in nature, meaning it can only be apprehended through dialogue between people. Information from the right-hand quadrants is monological knowledge. It does not require

a dialogue to gain knowledge. The knowledge generated by the four quadrants might look something like this, if we take as an example of the sport of skiing.

UR quadrant knowledge might include the molecular structure of the skis, the crystallization patterns of the snow flakes, a heart monitor to register the increase in beats per minute in the skier, and a measurement of the amount of drag on the skier's racing suit. The UL quadrant would include the subjective experience of the skier herself; the description of her feelings of exhilaration or fear; and, her self-perception as an athlete. The LL quadrant might include a conversation that she shares with her friends at the end of a ski run about how "radical" or "sick" a particular jump on the run was to jump off. The LR quadrant might include an examination of the socio-economic factors that contribute to being able to go skiing and the impact of the ski industry on the surrounding areas economically and environmentally. Each of the quadrants has a specific and unique validity test as well.

The UR quadrant, where most modernist scientific inquiry would reside, asks how *true* is the knowledge gained in that quadrant. The UL quadrant, where subjective experiences, postmodern science and internal psychology reside, inquires about the *truthfulness* of the knowledge generated in that quadrant. The LL quadrant concerns itself with the *justness* of the knowledge generated in that quadrant and the LR quadrant is concerned with the *functional fit* of the knowledge generated in that quadrant. Taken individually, each of the quadrants judges the knowledge it generates according to its own validity claims and any attempt to judge one quadrant by the validity claim of another quadrant results in what Wilber calls gross reductionism, or the attempt to reduce or collapse all quadrants into one. Wilber calls the attempt by most modern, scientific

inquiry “flatland empiricism” to describe the lack of depth that exists when one tries to reduce all quadrants to the UR.

The data generated by this study resides in the LL quadrant or in the cultural world space. The interior experience of the individual resides solely in the UL quadrant and can only be known internally by each of the co-researchers. The data that has been generated by this study is dialogical in nature, meaning that it takes at least two people to generate the data. In this case, the two people are the researcher and co-researcher. In order for this data to be generated, both the researcher and the co-researcher are required to share a cultural world space. The most primary space that they have to share is a common language, without which the data cannot be generated. Given this shared cultural space then, the data that can be generated will be a function of the other culturally shared world spaces such as experience attending enactment weekends and being present at the enactments themselves. The data generated in each interview will be a function of this shared world space and it can, therefore, never be data directly generated by the UL quadrant.

Validity in a narrative study is, generally speaking, concerned with the *truthfulness* of the individual interior subjective experience being reported and the *justness* of the collective interior subjective experiences being reported. The present study will be assessed for three separate kinds of validity, specific to a narrative study: co-constructive or relational validity, narrative validity, and access validity. Specific parties assess each kind of validity. Co-constructive validity is concerned with the perceived and agreed upon congruence of the representation between the researcher and the participant. Both researcher and participant must be in accordance that the story

reflects their shared experienced of co-constructing the narratives and that both parties agree they are both in the narrative in a way that respects each individual's contribution. The narratives themselves are a *just* representation. Narrative validity is concerned with the effect of the narratives on the reader, in as much as he or she can be impacted by a story. The question asked is, "Does the story succeed in allowing the reader to suspend their capacity for reflexivity and experience the *reading* of the story at a deeper level?" The reader at large determines this kind of validity on a case-by-case basis. Access validity is concerned with the accessibility of the narratives to all parties involved. If the narratives are not accessible (i.e., easily understandable), then the worth of the study is compromised. The researcher, the storyteller, the members of the professional community, the members of the academic community, and society at large must be able to access the findings to meet the criteria for access validity. This will be determined by the readability of the narratives across these groups, thus addressing the implicit power structures inherent in much academic "social" research that is largely inaccessible to the majority of society, which it means to serve. The research findings are presented in the form of stories of change connected to Therapeutic Enactment.

Significance of the Study to the Field:

Therapeutic Enactment is a therapeutic intervention that has shown to be effective in helping individuals to resolve personal issues in a group. The literature thus far (Keats, 2000; Morley, 2000; Westwood, Shaw & Devries, 1999; Brooks, 1988) has demonstrated the effectiveness of TE in multiple areas of functioning. The significance of the present study is that it provides an important addition to the growing body of literature on TE as it relates to client change. Also, the narratives will potentially assist

practitioners and potential consumers of TE to understand the impact of a TE experience, and its relation to client change, from the perspective of a first person account. TE Directors can be involved with the participants from the early stages of the preparation phase until months, and sometimes years, after the enactment itself has taken place. The narratives in this study provide a window into the experience of change as reported by TE participants that is invaluable. Potential participants who want to learn more about change in TE from a non-academic standpoint will be able to read the narratives and make informed choices about their participation in such an intervention.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The narratives contained in the following section represent the results of the analyzed transcripts using Arvay's narrative method. In order to help make the narratives more succinct and less repetitious, I am including a brief introduction to the narratives in order to orient the reader to the codified and disguised names of the characters in the stories.

Introduction to the Narratives

In the years between 1998 and 2002 Dr. David Johnston and Dr. Julia Handfield conducted residential Therapeutic Enactment workshops for adults wanting to work through therapeutic issues in a group setting. The enactment workshops were all conducted at a place called Loon Lake. David and Julia are the TE therapists of the workshops and they met with each of the participants to plan the enactments, prior to entering the group and directing the enactment itself. As they work very closely with the participants you will hear their names mentioned often in the stories that follow. David and Julia also work very closely with a colleague named Heather, who is a trained TE therapist. As you will see, Heather also figured prominently in several of the stories. There are five narratives in total as told by Claire, Grace, Ellen, Gabriel, and Leonard and they are told in the first person. Here are their stories.

CLAIRE

If I am going to tell my story of change related to my therapeutic enactment, I would have to say that it has to do with coming to terms with my relationship with my mother. Although I have been to several therapeutic enactment weekends, I can still remember the weekend that I did my enactment very clearly. I can remember the crunch

of the tires on the road approaching the Loon Lake campsite; that, Tom, was sitting at the window of the main house as we approached; the quietness of the place; the air; many feelings are aroused in me thinking about that weekend. It is not difficult for me to transport myself back to that time. My enactment represents a major change in my relationships as well as myself, and I feel not only happiness, but also some sadness and regrets when I look back on it.

I went to the enactment weekend at Loon Lake not knowing that I would end up doing my own therapeutic enactment. On the Friday night, I took part in a woman's enactment and I became aware of a childhood memory involving my mother. I had always had this memory but that evening it somehow seemed more important. The incident occurred when I was a young girl, maybe 9 or 10 years old. I was sitting at the piano and my mother stood in the hallway between where I was and where I needed to go, which was up some stairs past her. Mum told me to go to my room and I knew going past her, I was going to get hit because she was angry. It felt like a double bind to me and that I couldn't win no matter what I did. I tried to get past her and she hit me on the head with her hand. Prior to going to Loon Lake, my friend and colleague Brian, who had been to several of these weekends before me, told me that, if I wanted to do an enactment, I should tell the directors, David and Julia. Brian said that sometimes they make space for people to do enactments that aren't planned before the start of the weekend.

I shared a room that weekend with Bonita who was struggling with emphysema. She had brought along her oxygen container, which sat upright beside the bed in our room. I told Bonita about the memory with my mother and she suggested that I talk to

David and Julia. I went into the kitchen area of the main house, where we took our coffee and muffin breaks, and told them about the memory. As I watched them talk to each other about it, I could see that they were really in sync with each other. Although I knew that they were both married to other people, I felt that there was something really special between them. I also felt that they knew what they were doing. At one point Julia said to David, "Well at least it's not sexual abuse." When she said that, I had this strange almost physical reaction to the word "abuse". I never viewed my mother hitting me as abuse. So, when Julia used that word it felt strange and that has stayed with me to this day. I don't like being seen as having been abused.

David and Julia told me that they would leave a space for me to do my enactment on Sunday, which was the last day of the therapeutic enactment weekend. Despite the fact that they left it open and allowed me to decide for myself whether or not I wanted to go through with it, I felt like, "Oh, do I really want to do this?" I was undecided until Saturday, when I announced to the rest of the group of about twenty people, that I was going to do an enactment. Looking back on the weekend I am amazed that I did the enactment at all, considering how I've reacted to group experiences in the past. I remember being terrified to even say anything in one of my school classes. I was absolutely petrified just sitting in the class, let alone speaking up. Nonetheless, Saturday night I made my decision to do an enactment about the memory of my mother hitting me.

There were several people at that enactment weekend that I knew already but there were also many people that I had never met before. I remember meeting Gordon on the Friday afternoon and having a conversation with him about children. I was nervous and found myself tuning out and being a little distracted with the conversation. I

remember looking to find a familiar face in the crowd of people milling around, and I saw John who was the man I drove with up to Loon Lake. Incidentally, I had also had a conversation with John about children and families on the drive that afternoon. I remember looking at John, listening to Gordon and saying something to Gordon about being a good father.

At the close of one of the enactments on Saturday evening, I made my announcement to the group that I intended to go through with doing my own enactment. I stood outside afterwards with two other women, and we talked about my enactment and how scared I was. One of the women, Audrey said, "I'll help you out with this." It was very supportive and I was relieved because I was nervous about who would play my mother. I had trouble sleeping that night and had many strange dreams even though I took half a sleeping pill to try to get some rest.

What stands out for me the next morning was at breakfast when I noticed a scared look on Gordon's face. He had been scheduled to do an enactment that morning, right before my enactment and I thought that I recognized how he might be feeling. He was sitting with some other people and I sat across from him not saying anything, though I felt some sort of connection to him.

During Gordon's enactment, I reacted very strongly, and I'm not sure if it was related to the issue with my mother or not. Gordon was doing an enactment around his family and his relationships. David, who was directing Gordon's enactment, was prompting Gordon with lines to say to his wife but Gordon did not repeat them. I sat there watching David, Julia and Gordon and I found myself completing the prompts in my own head. The strangest thing was that I found myself getting more and more angry

with Gordon for not saying the lines. Looking back on it now I realize that I must have been experiencing some sort of projective identification, but at the time I just knew that I was furious.

Gordon's enactment finished by him making a vow. Julia said to the group that we were all the witnesses to Gordon's vow and that she wanted each of us in turn to say to Gordon, "I am the witness who has witnessed your vow." By the time it came my turn to say the words I was so mad, and when I stepped forward, I looked at Gordon and said the line and then cried when I took my place back in the circle. I watched the next group member, Ken, get down on his knees and look into Gordon's eyes and say the words so sincerely and with so much meaning that I immediately snapped out of my anger and sunk under a wave of shame and guilt. How could I have been so selfish? Here was Gordon trying to do his piece of work and all I was thinking about was myself. I felt so ashamed but I didn't tell anyone. When I talk of regrets, this is one of the pieces of that weekend that still haunts me.

Gordon's enactment ended and I walked up to Julia and said, "I can't go through with this. I think I've hurt Gordon." I remember it so clearly. Julia took both my hands in hers and looked into my eyes and said nothing. She simply smiled in a way that showed she understood my apprehension. I paused for a moment, waiting for her to say something but she didn't, and so I said, "Okay, I'll do it." Just like that.

Before I went through with my enactment, I felt that I needed to talk with Gordon to make sure everything was all right. However, I never got the chance. After someone finishes their enactment, people sometimes mill around the person, talking and hugging and that was the case after Gordon's enactment. People were surrounding him after his

enactment so I decided to go to come back and talk to him later, hoping that the people would have dispersed. I was already very anxious about doing my own enactment and after I got a glass of water, and was on my way back into the main room, I bumped into Sharon, one of the other group members. I spilled some of my water on her and I'll never forget what she said to me, "Good Lord woman get a hold of your self!" I instantly felt a rush of fear and shame, and I turned around and literally ran away from her into the main room through the opposite door. It felt like everything at the time was magnified, anything that perhaps would not have affected me so strongly was at that time catastrophic.

Although David and Julia were the directors for the weekend, they had asked Heather to help me prepare my enactment by talking with me beforehand. I remember she had these jangly bracelets that she wore on her wrists and, thinking of her, I can still hear them tinkling in my mind and it gives me a warm feeling. I started my enactment Sunday afternoon by walking around the circle with Heather but at a certain point, I remember David was then walking beside me as well. I think that Heather wanted to bring my mother in but I was stalling and when David came in, I thought about how it was just like when my daughter Stephanie was born. There were some complications in delivery and the "team" had been called in to assist in the delivery and that's what it felt like when David was directing as well, like a team helping me. I knew that I was in good hands. I also remember choosing the people to take on the various roles in my enactment, my brother, my mother and my father, and then I chose a double to be with me.

My mother was a hard choice because of the relationship with her and the nature of the enactment. Initially I thought I might choose Sharon, the woman that I spilled my water on, but as it turned out it was a blessing in disguise that I didn't choose her in the end. Instead Audrey played my mother as we had agreed to the night before. I chose Kevin to play my brother and I think if I were to do it again I wouldn't choose him. I chose Kevin because I knew him and I felt that he might benefit from being part of my enactment, but the person I would have liked to have chosen was a man named Steve. I knew Steve prior to the group and I think in some ways he resembled my brother more than Kevin did. Steve had my brother's strange sense of humour and if I could do it again, I might choose him to play my brother. Steve had also done his own enactment that weekend and I had played his sister; also, he had been in Gordon's enactment, so maybe that is why. I don't know. The person who was going to play my father was clear to me from the beginning. It was Gordon. Although I feel a little badly about this now, it didn't matter to me that he had just done his own enactment before me; something I *would* consider now in choosing people for roles. At the time, I just knew it had to be him.

I chose a woman named Aria to play my double, the person who stands in as me in the enactment if I need it. I didn't really like having a connection to Aria because she had been sexually abused. She had suffered incest at the hands of her own father until she was a teenager. I felt a connection to her because of my own abuse but I don't like the fact that I felt that connection. It's a push and pull situation for me to this day and I still don't think the word abuse should really apply to me. So many people have had it much worse than I did, and Aria was one of them.

I remember at one point during the enactment, we made my mother kneel on the ground as I told her how things were going to be. I told her how things were going to be in relation to me and in relation to my own daughter Stephanie. David asked me if my mother had ever hit Stephanie and I said that she had, but it was a reflex. Then David asked me what would happen if my mother ever hit Stephanie again and I said that she would never see her granddaughter again. That's when I had an "as if" reaction – I knew I was sort of talking to myself and addressing my own fear of hurting Stephanie. At the end of the enactment, I decided to send my mother out of the circle and that was when David and Julia brought in Elizabeth to play the "good mother".

My mother was sent out of the circle and Elizabeth came into the circle, stood in front of me and I quite literally fell into her arms. I remember crying a lot. As she held me up, Elizabeth said, "You can lean on me. I am strong." At that moment I realized that I never had anyone in my life that I really felt I could lean on in that way. I realized what a difference it would have made in my life if I had had someone like Elizabeth as my mother. She held me in her arms and then the whole group surrounded us in a massive group hug and began singing and it was wonderful...and then it wasn't. I was feeling very loved and content when a voice inside me said, "No-no-no, this is too much, you don't deserve this" and I lost that comforting feeling. Looking back at that moment, I realize it was a valuable lesson about how able I am to accept nurturance, or not accept it I guess. I know that it felt good to begin with but then it instantly shifted and I felt smothered or something.

I realized later, in individual therapy, that the roles between my mother and me were reversed. I was the one who had to be strong and my mother was actually very

needy in her own way. That was one of the biggest changes that came out of my enactment experience at Loon Lake, the realization that I wasn't overly needy after all. I had believed all my life that I was too needy and weak. I know now that, although I can be weak at times, I can also be strong. After the end of the enactment weekend, I have since had the opportunity to work with Elizabeth in the real world, in my professional life, and I still get a charge of her strength and support every time I see her. Like with many people from that enactment weekend, when I see Elizabeth, I have a physical sense of relief.

The singing and the group hug ended and, after my enactment was over, Gordon came up to me and hugged me. Actually, it felt like he was clutching onto me rather than hugging me and I remember he was talking and I remember him saying, "Claire, you told me that I was going to be a good father and I still think that's true. These things happen to us when we are little but we can still be good parents." At the time, I felt really horrible. I felt like I had pulled this man into my enactment and now he was distressed because of it. I didn't consider his needs when I asked him to play my father right after his enactment, just like I didn't consider his needs when I was so angry with him during his enactment. In the debrief circle following my enactment, Gordon asked me what my father did while the stuff with my mother was happening. I told him I was glad he asked that because I had been having these reactions to him all weekend and it felt good to be able to at least say that.

We broke for coffee and deserts and when I walked back into the room, Gordon motioned to me to come and sit in the empty chair beside him so I did. When I sat down he leaned into me and I felt a rush go through my body. It was very strange, but it also

was a relief to feel like I was connected to him, like everything was going to be all right. David and Julia, at the end of the weekend, said people should call each other after the weekend. They said that it might be important for the person's process or for your own process and I can say now that I wish they had talked to us more about connecting with someone after an enactment weekend. The enactment weekend ended on Sunday evening and I never really debriefed the reactions I had, especially to Gordon.

I drove home with John, or should I say John drove us home. I was in a total daze and couldn't drive my car. I remember John and I went for dinner on the way back and we sat in this restaurant feeling very surreal! I arrived home and tucked Stephanie in to bed and didn't really talk to my husband Robert much then. In the next couple of weeks, Robert and I did talk and I told him exactly how I felt in our marriage. The strange thing was that he acted like this was the first time I had ever mentioned these things to him. I was sure I had been telling him how unhappy I was all along. Then I thought, maybe I hadn't said anything and I was only saying the words in my head or not really saying what I needed to. Once we talked, we decided to have a "trial separation". The "trial separation" turned into a permanent separation and a divorce. If I had not done the enactment, I don't think I would have had the courage to say what I needed to say to Robert or to make that change in my life.

I saw David a couple of weeks after Loon Lake and he said that I looked different to him. He and others said there was something different about my eyes. One of the group members during the weekend also said that she could see the smile in my eyes. Having heard them say that was a big thing for me because I always thought that my mother has eyes that don't smile even when her mouth does. I felt so different in those

couple of weeks after the weekend. Everything seemed brighter and more vibrant.

Colours in the trees were more alive and vivid. It felt like I had been wearing cloudy glasses that were now off and that cotton had been removed from my ears. I felt very happy, despite feeling scared and sad at the thought of my marriage ending.

I spoke with Heather after the enactment weekend and asked her about Gordon and she hesitated. I remember thinking that I have to call him and try to debrief the reactions that I had around him during the weekend. I had also talked briefly to David about the same thing and he suggested I call Gordon as well. So I tracked down Gordon's phone number from Tom. I did talk to Gordon then and I have talked to him many times since but to this day, I have not really talked to him about all the reactions to him that I had that weekend.

Since the enactment, the biggest change for me has been in the relationship with my mother. I had "the talk" with her about what she did to me when I was a child and, she accused me of having no compassion and of being cruel for bringing up the past. In the past, I felt like there was no separation between my mother and me. I never quite knew where my mother ended and I began. Now I know what is *her* stuff and what is *my* stuff and I don't get trapped as much into her stuff anymore. That talk also helped me realize that I need to let go of expecting more from her. I know that I could never lean on my mother the way I leaned on Elizabeth in the enactment and so I've stopped looking for that from her. As a result, we have begun to form a new relationship that is better. I'm clearer, at least in my own mind, about where I start and where I end in relationship to her.

Even though I am clearer on my relationship with my mother, I am still confused about the relationships I have with the men in my life, both past and present. I am still trying to figure out how my dad fits into all of this, and what part my ex-husband Robert plays. My therapist told me that when I worked through my “father” issues, then my relationships with men would be clearer, but I am still confused.

Going to Loon Lake for the first time, I didn’t anticipate that I would be doing my own enactment and sometimes I can’t believe I actually spoke up in the group and announced that I would do one. Things are different now. I know that I want to do another enactment and that it will probably focus on my relationship with my ex-husband Robert. I don’t know when it will happen but I know that’s what it will be about.

The last thing that I want to include in my story of change has to do with the way I am in groups because so much has changed in that area of my life. I used to feel terrified in groups and now I don’t have that “I need to flee!!” feeling. I don’t feel totally at ease but I am able to lead my own groups now and I relate that to my enactment. I know my other therapist would say it has to do with the EMDR I did afterwards as well, but I feel it is mostly related to the enactment. Now I am working on becoming an even more skilled and more competent group leader. I’m not satisfied just surviving a group. Now I want to be the most effective leader I can be. As a group leader, I try to pass on some of the wisdom of my experience with Loon Lake to the people who participate in the groups that I run. I tell the group members, when we begin a group, to be aware of transference and counter-transference, how that can get played out between group members, and to talk about it to someone about it as I wish I had done.

Now I feel like I have more control in my life and I can make better decisions. I paid a price for some of the choices I made following the enactment weekend at Loon Lake but I have also gained a lot in the process. I know I am a better mother to Stephanie, which is the most important thing of all.

GRACE

In order to understand my story of change after doing my enactment at Loon Lake, you need to understand how I went into the enactment. I went into the enactment in acute pain because of a decision I made about six weeks before the weekend took place. I doubted whether or not I should be going to the weekend because I knew that, even if I wasn't at real physical risk, I was in an emotionally risky headspace. Six weeks before the enactment, I allowed my lover to inject me with methatrexate, which resulted in me losing our baby. I use the word methatrexate because I still don't like to say abortion. This is my story of how I went from being in acute pain to not being in acute pain. I would like to be able to say that I went from being in acute pain to being at peace, but I don't think that would be accurate.

I heard about Therapeutic Enactment, about four years prior to the weekend I attended, from a close friend of mine named Peter. He's kind of a psychologist wannabe and has always been searching for something. When he told me about Therapeutic Enactment, I figured that it was just another Peter "thing", like his Ashrams and what not. He told me this story about a woman who re-enacted a rape scene and another story about a woman enacting her own death and going through a death canal. I thought to myself, who is taking care of these people? Peter assured me that the enactment directors were

always in control and that it was all done very safely, but I was skeptical to say the least. Every May and November, for about three years after that, Peter would say to me in his singsong voice, "Enactment weekend's coming up!" and I would singsong back to him, "I know! Shut up!"

One night a few years later, I was watching Peter at a dinner party he was hosting and I noticed something different about him. I've watched Peter in his dark times and I've seen him battling his demons. The night of the party, I noticed that he was different. I wasn't really part of the group and was kind of on the outside, but as I watched him, I saw how these people at the table loved him. Peter attributed this, and his sense of peace, to the enactments that he had done. Peter's partner, Charles, attributed it to also having a loving and supportive partner! I thought that there had to be something to this and so that night I decided that I would go to an enactment weekend and see for myself.

I made the appointment to meet with David before the enactment in his office at the university, which I had trouble finding. If you were going to the Loon Lake weekend, you had to meet with David or Julia beforehand, so I went to meet with David. He asked me why I was going and I said that I was going because I was curious and because Peter said that it was important for caregivers to do this. I was a physician and so that put me in the category of "caregiver" I guess. David and I talked for a while and I felt that he was very warm towards me during that conversation. About a week later, I saw him again, this time with Julia, at a funeral for one of Peter's friends. They both gave Peter a warm familial kind of hug and when David saw me he gave me a big hug as well. It felt warm and sincere and they both just had these big smiles on their faces. It was very nice.

That was in October just before the horror occurred, just before the methatrexate, just before the abortion. I know I shouldn't call it "the horror" but it's still hard to talk about.

A couple of weeks later, I spoke with David again, on the phone this time. It was a very different kind of conversation because it was shortly after the abortion, which I told David about. He asked me how I was doing and I began to cry. He said a few things that I could hold onto about honouring my experience but I think it was *how* he heard me that mattered. It didn't really change anything but I did feel a little better because it was so concealed and I think it was good to just tell another person. There was so much for me around judgment and punishment and I almost wanted all of that to come on me, but David just heard me and I felt like there was understanding. He said that he could understand and that he could *so* relate to where I was coming from, but he didn't go into any details about why.

The baby's father, my lover Ian, had administered the methatrexate and just before the needle went in, I remember a voice in my head saying, "You can take this pain." The pain that I felt was unlike anything I had ever experienced and, when I spoke to David that day on the phone, he said that if I wanted to do an enactment that he would leave a space for me to do one. I doubted whether I should even attend the weekend and when I told my therapist, Judy, she wanted to know about what kind of follow-up they provided for people after the weekend. I told her that they provided follow-up for everyone and she thought that if that were the case, then it would be okay for me to go. I decided I would go, but I didn't know if I would do an enactment.

Getting to the camp on Friday afternoon and stepping into the main room of the big house, I really wondered whether or not I should be there. It felt like the first day of

school, standing there kind of smiling awkwardly and I thought to myself, "I'm gonna kill Peter when I get back." The group started without David and without Tom, who was one of the helpers. Julia announced that David and Tom would be arriving later on but that she wanted to get started. She began to speak to the group in a language that I really didn't understand. It was all about symbolic meaning and the group and I remember saying to myself, "Okay, what are we talking about here?" It seemed like this was going to be a really long weekend and, again, I began to fantasize about killing Peter when I got home. It was at that point that it seemed to me like there were two groups, an inside circle and an outside circle. A lot of the people there had been to several enactment weekends before and all knew each other. The rest of us had not been to as many or had never been to a weekend. I was definitely in the outside circle.

David arrived with Tom and I felt a little better because at least I knew someone who knew what had happened. David was the person, the director. It felt like the circle was more complete when they arrived and David led the group in a check in, where everyone had to say one thing they needed to put aside for the weekend. My turn to speak arrived and, before I knew it, my mouth had said the word "suicide". I couldn't believe that it came out because I said to myself, "I'm not gonna say suicide." But, it came out anyway. David looked at me with understanding and it felt better. I was shocked that I actually said "suicide" into the group. I caught several other people's eyes after I said it and they were just so warm and accepting that it made it easier. The check-in ended after each group member had spoken into the circle and then the enactments began. Tom did the first enactment of the weekend about getting stabbed in his apartment and it was intense for me to watch. Earlier in the evening, when he and David

had first arrived, Tom appeared happy to be there and kind of jovial and then during his enactment he was emotive and vulnerable. It was helpful to see that because I didn't think that I could hold it together for forty-eight hours. I guess it kind of gave me permission to let go if I was gonna let go.

The entire weekend, the enactments seemed to be full of babies and mothers. On Saturday morning, I watched an enactment about a man and his relationship with his father, and at one point he was in front of me and his head was down. He was leaning forward and I just closed my eyes and I thought to myself, "Oh, he's crowning." I wanted to bolt out of there but I couldn't leave because, on Peter's *helpful* advice, I had left my car at home and gotten a ride from one of the women in the group. It seemed like every enactment triggered me during the weekend. I watched a man screaming at his mother for how she treated him as a boy, and then I was chosen to play someone's baby. It was all around me.

I remember the enactments being really male dominated Friday night and Saturday, which wasn't necessarily a bad thing. On Saturday night, the men all rallied around one group member who did his enactment, and it was kinda like "Raaa!!" and I thought amusedly, "Oh you males!" I thought it was charming but I guess that enactment triggered some issues for some of the women in the group and what happened after the enactment finished was uncomfortable. As I mentioned, it was clear to me that there was an inner group and an outer group that weekend and I definitely felt that I was part of the outer group. Looking back on it, I think the inner group was having problems with that particular enactment weekend because it was the last one that Julia and David would be running together. I don't know how it happened exactly but after that one man's

enactment Saturday night, the men were sent upstairs while the women stayed downstairs in the main room. Julia said that we had to make the circle safe again and so the men were to go upstairs.

In the women's group, Julia asked each of us to go around the circle and say what we were feeling. All of these women were so articulate and they could see all the symbolism in things but I just wasn't getting any of it. After a while, it felt to me like they were just dickin' around and I thought okay, let's move this along here. I'm not into wasting time. I've been in the operating room when people are dickin' around and I don't like it, but, being that I was in the out-group, I didn't feel like I was in a position to say, "Lighten up ladies!!" I learned something valuable, though, from watching what happened between David and Julia after the group split.

David came storming into the main room, after being upstairs with the men, and he was angry. I have issues around anger and I don't know where it comes from but it scares me. When David came into the room, I saw how he could express his anger and say *why* he was angry to Julia. We then moved on to do the final enactment of the night even though there wasn't really closure on the issue. I thought to myself, "Maybe you don't always need to have closure to move on." I saw it again, just before my enactment on Sunday afternoon, when David got into an argument with Jenny, one of the women who had been helping out during the weekend. I don't think that there was closure between the two of them either but we were able to move on and do my enactment. I learned that maybe we don't always have to agree and that maybe sometimes we can just say, "To be continued." I learned how to have conflict by watching how Julia could avoid personalizing criticism and how she could look at the situation and try and accept

what were valid complaints and what complaints she felt weren't valid. I, on the other hand, would totally personalize criticism but she didn't and it just seemed so adult to me. I feel like I learned that there are ways to finish things and move on, even when you don't have closure.

I still wasn't entirely sure I should be doing an enactment. Up until half an hour before I did my enactment, I still wasn't sure if I could go through with it and David always reassured me that I had the choice saying I should do the enactment only if I felt safe. David and I talked and he said that he had something in mind for the enactment around telling my family and bringing in the role of the baby's father. I finally decided that I would go through with it and the next thing I remember is collapsing in the middle of the circle screaming, "I KILLED MY BABY! I KILLED MY BABY!" as David held on to me. I looked up to see that the other group members had moved in close towards David and me. They were all looking at me with caring and love, and compassion, which I didn't feel I deserved. I wanted judgment. I wanted punishment. So, David and Julia set up a courtroom scene with God as the judge.

I looked around the room and initially thought I would choose a man named Christopher to play God because he looked really scary. Then I thought he might be a bit too scary so I asked Julia if *she* would play God and she refused. I gulped and thought to myself, "She said no! Can she do that? Hey, I'm vulnerable here! Give me something!" But then Julia said that she couldn't play God because she was going to be my advocate and, feeling relieved, I thought, "Okay that works." I remember kneeling down in front of God, who was standing on a chair high above me, and I remember looking up at him. Christopher's eyes were so crystal clear and they just got transluminated if that's a word.

They were luminescent and soft and kind and forgiving. I was awed. I felt that it was God's presence that I was seeing. I had revealed the worst thing that I could imagine, and I had had the feeling of being in the outer circle all weekend, but there was nothing but a warm, caring and loving feeling that I received from everyone. It felt like love that I received that weekend. It felt like the best of why we are here.

I also wanted punishment and retribution and so God handed down my sentence. The penance I was to perform was that, following the enactment weekend; I would continue to deliver babies into safe, loving hands. The enactment weekend came to a close and I received love and compassion from so many people. Several people said things to me that I won't tell you because that is their private stuff. Christopher said something very special to me as he left the camp, but I'm not going to tell you what it is. It made a difference to me though.

Getting back into my professional life, I started out by overcompensating with my patients. I felt that I had to be really nice and really caring and really loving but maternity is hard hours and I thought, "Do I really have to do this the rest of my life?" It became so hard for me to do and Judy, my therapist, said that it seemed like a lot of pressure to be that perfect with every patient. Judy helped me gain some perspective on that issue. I think that with time and being humbled, I have become better at keeping boundaries and being professional and being loving in the moment with patients, but not putting too much of myself out there.

The enactment weekend ended and I was back home when I talked to David about forgiveness because he has faith. I asked him what does he do as a psychologist when he hears all of these sad, bad things and things happen in his personal life as well. I asked

him what he does to stay above water and he said that he gives it up to God because, with certain things, we can't forgive. He said that only God can forgive and that's how I feel. During my enactment Heather, one of the other directors, asked me if I had compassion for myself and I couldn't answer that question. I said I would believe it from the group and the group said that they had compassion for me, even though I didn't have it for myself. I don't forgive me but maybe God does and that helps.

There have been two times in my life when I have heard a voice inside me that I will call the voice of God. The first time I heard the voice was when I was traveling down south by myself. I had been mugged in Berlin and didn't want to feel afraid to travel so I was trying to get back on the horse, so to speak. Driving on the highway, I was having a conversation in my head with my friends who were asking me why I had faith. I couldn't really say it in words so I thought, "Wouldn't it be nice to ask for a sign?" I thought about the whole burning bush thing, but then I thought that was too dramatic and besides we were camping and it might start a fire. I thought a rainbow would be nice and at that moment I looked up and, in this beautiful brilliant blue sky, there was this rainbow. A voice from deep within me said, "As long as you keep trying, it will be okay." The second time I heard that voice was just before the methatrexate needle went in and it said, "You can take this pain." I still hold on to the hope that God can forgive me for what I've done.

Six weeks after the enactment weekend finished, I went to the follow-up meeting that David and Julia scheduled. I told the group that I was seriously considering a fertility clinic and donor insemination and nobody really said anything about it. There are times when, if I allow myself to look at it clinically, I am repulsed by the idea, but I

have to try and I am in that process now. During the weekend, when the men and women split up on the Saturday night, one of the women in the group said that she had miscarried and then she had conceived around the same time that she had lost her baby. She felt that there was a continuum and that the baby was just waiting to be born and so I hold on to that idea for myself. I believe that there is a little star in the sky waiting to come back to this womb and into the right scenario without the hurt. I hold on to that and I think how can I not try? I would be filled with regret if I didn't at least try. Even my first generation immigrant parents were supportive, although I never told them about the abortion. They came with me to one of the appointments with heavy hearts but at least they came.

I realize now that some things happen in enactments but they don't change in real life. Part of my enactment involved me telling Ian, the father of my baby, to stay the fuck away from me. The men in the group were asked to tell Ian what they thought of him and it was very strongly put. I remember that part of the closure of the enactment had to do with me not seeing Ian anymore, but I still do. He is the only one in my life who has to share the due date with me and he is the one who has to share this pain. He is the only one who got in my world and pain can be very connecting for people. It is very complicated in the real world. The real world is not enactment world and although I don't think that it is right to be with a married man, I struggle because of what we have been through together.

I went into the weekend in acute pain and as much as I would like to not have any pain I think that is impossible. I felt so much lighter after the weekend and almost at peace but not quite. I think that I have been able to move from grief to mourning and I

still grieve a little bit each time I get my period. There are moments when I'm filled with guilt about not having a father for my baby. I felt so alone and ashamed when I went to Loon Lake and now I go back and forth between the pain and the spiritual connection that felt at the end of my enactment. It's like I live most of my life in the first part of my enactment with the pain and I need to remind myself of the second half of my enactment and the love that was shown to me. I watch the videotape of the second half to help remind me. I don't really know what is the right thing to do in my life, whether I should just go with the stream or swim against it and make my own stream. Trying the donor insemination is definitely making my own stream, I know that much.

On Sunday, we finished the weekend with some music, which I still remember. One of the group members named John brought his guitar and played Eric Clapton's song, "Tears in Heaven" to end the group. The lyrics include a verse that goes, "Cause I know...I don't belong...here in Heaven." I had gone to the weekend giving up suicide and death and suddenly hearing those lyrics to that song made me realize that it wasn't my time to die. It's just not my time. The enactment weekend finished Sunday afternoon but it didn't feel finished to me. I arrived back home and went to work on the Monday following the enactment, which was a bad idea. Part way through the morning I told my secretary that I was sick and I was going home for the afternoon. Thomas, one of the group members that had been a support for me over the weekend, left a message for me to call him.

Thomas had become my substitute for my friend Peter during the weekend, and I had become close to him over the two and a half days at Loon Lake. He sounded like a "Chatty Cathy" on the message so I called him back. I don't know what we ended up

talking about but we spent the next two hours on the phone chatting and laughing. I felt lighter when I left the office. Unfortunately, one of my patients whom my secretary had not been able to get a hold of to cancel the appointment saw me leaving chirpily. Luckily for me my eyes still looked awful and bugged out. It wasn't until then that I felt the weekend finally ended for me.

I am still on a roller coaster with Ian. On many levels, it is a wonderful friendship and then there are times it's destroying me. I wonder why I can't have the strength and consistency to completely break it but then he doesn't help when he asks how I'm doing. I have stopped doing the "should, would, could" and I don't beat myself up about it anymore, but I am still very tough on me. I don't struggle with spirituality but I do struggle with consistency and I see my enactment as a catalyst for survival. The original enactment David and I had planned, with my family, didn't turn out the way I thought it would. What we did do was much better than what we had discussed. In the closing circle, I was given a stone in a velvet pouch with some lavender. I'm not usually into the "new-agey" stuff but that stone has come to symbolize my connection to Loon Lake and it is very spiritual to me. I kept the positive pregnancy test and it stays with my stone from Loon Lake where it is safe. I hesitate to say that I feel there are moments of joy now because it doesn't feel like there are, until I watch that second half of my video from Loon Lake. I'm just not in acute pain anymore. You might ask me if you know my whole story of change from Loon Lake and all I can say right now is that you know enough.

ELLEN

How do I start to tell a story of change that I have experienced since my therapeutic enactment? So much is different in my life now and I see the changes connected to my experience at Loon Lake, among other things. I guess the first part of the story really has to do with my relationship with my father when I was a young girl. The Therapeutic Enactment that I did focused on a particular aspect of the relationship with my father in a way that I would never have anticipated. The directors brilliantly demonstrated to me what had always been wrong with my relationship with my father but that I could never see for myself. They helped me unhook from my father and that is what my story of change and Loon Lake is about.

My parents split up when I was six years old and divorced by the time I was eight. It wasn't necessarily a bad thing. I remember my brother and I being very frightened as we looked down from the banister and listened to my parents fighting. The problem with the divorce was the role that I ended up playing for my father. He was quite broken down and emotional in the years following the break and he would tell us how much he loved mother and how he didn't know why she was doing this and how he would do anything to get her back and if only she would let him in the house. My mother told me that on the weekends I would get up and cook scrambled eggs for my father at age seven because there was no one there to care for him. I remember my father crying in my arms when I was still a little girl of six years old and I remember feeling that I would never abandon him and that I would always care for him and that my mother was such a bitch for hurting him like that. How could she be so mean and do that to him? Didn't she know he loved

her? What did she expect out of life anyways? I was clearly indoctrinated with my father's psychology.

I thought if my mother could do that to my father, why wouldn't she do it to my brother and I as well? She told me that she would never do that because we were her children and I remember thinking, "But he is your husband and we are a family." I couldn't grasp the difference, as a child, between a husband and children. I remember feeling so ripped apart by my parents, almost at a very cellular level. My DNA was one strand each from both of them and so it felt like it created some kind of cellular discord. I began to wonder if the experiences with my father were behind some of my difficulties I was having with men in my adult life.

I've dated all kinds of men. Yogis, businessmen, gem and diamond dealers, stunningly handsome, incredibly wealthy men, I've dated them all, but I started to notice a pattern with these men that was bothersome. I have always wanted a partner and to have children, but I could get only so close with these men and then they would back off. They kept me hanging on the line for a long time only to say at the end that they couldn't, or didn't want to, have children. They would ask me to wait until one more business deal went through or they would say that their golf game was more important or that their guru told them not to have children because they loved too much. They would say that they couldn't have a baby because then they wouldn't be seen in the relationship and I would be like, "Okay, go find a mommy! Not me." I'd heard it all and, around the time that I was thinking about doing my own enactment at Loon Lake, I had been dating this Iranian man named Fahid.

Fahid was wealthy and wonderful, charming and gorgeous. He would treat me to these lavish dinners and shower me with things like gold bracelets. But there was no sex due to his religious convictions, and no commitment to the relationship due to his work schedule. I would invite him away on these weekends and it would never come to fruition. I didn't understand what the problem was and it was at this point that I began to wonder if the issues I was having with the men in my life might be connected to my relationship with my father. If I had been born in Tibet, I might have wondered about past lives, but if you grow up in the west and have read Freud you think about your relationship with your father. I decided to look into it as a possible unconscious driver for my relationship issues with men.

I heard about the enactment weekends from a colleague of mine who had attended a weekend on her own. I was fascinated by the stories of transformation and the powerful release she described people having. As a young girl, I remember doing some Virginia Satir enactment stuff, which I enjoyed. My mother is a therapist and I was exposed to that kind of thing early on in my life. There you are at age fifteen being asked to play somebody's wife. It was fun! I had also done some art therapy and so I realized the power of being able to by-pass the intellect to get to some of the deeper structures. When I heard about enactments, I was interested and wanted to see the technique for myself. Maybe I could get something out of it for me and maybe I could pick up some techniques I could use with my patients at work. I had been working at a walk-in clinic in a really rough section of town and was dealing with all sorts of trauma and despair and I thought maybe I could take something from one of these enactment weekends.

The first weekend I went to, I didn't do my own enactment but I had a powerful experience in one of the debriefing groups. I had been triggered by a woman's enactment of being raped. As I watched her enactment, I felt as though I was seeing my own experience, of non-consensual sex, on a TV screen or a movie screen. In the debrief groups, Tom, one of the helpers, said, "I know you don't think what happened to you was rape but it was rape." I tried to dismiss it saying you know things were heated up or whatever and he replied that it was wrong and men shouldn't do that to women and that non-consensual sex is rape. I experienced a tremendous release in that small debrief group and was able to let go of something that I didn't realize had bothered me so much. I knew then that the Loon Lake environment could help people in a powerful way in a short period of time. I actually lost ten pounds from my thighs and bum after that weekend that I think was connected to that event in my youth. I decided that I would do my own enactment the next weekend.

I spoke with Julia before the second enactment weekend when she came over to my place to do the pre-enactment interview. Talking to her unleashed a little gate and I was quite embarrassed when I realized that I had been talking about my life for an hour and half. Talking with her, I was also able to identify some of what I had been experiencing at work as vicarious trauma symptoms. I had started having dreams about my patients, who are all so needy and so troubled, and I couldn't clear their life experience from my mind stream. I found myself unable to side step patients, like I used to do in the past, who started to get verbally aggressive. I had this sense of panic with a couple of patients and a feeling like I needed to get out of the room now!! My patients are a high need population and a lot of them are IV drug users with just phenomenal

trauma throughout their lives and who have induced trauma in other people. In the past, I was very artful about deescalating these kinds of situations but these alarm bells started going off for me. In addition to dealing with my father issues, I thought maybe Therapeutic Enactment might be helpful since I couldn't figure it out with my intellect.

On Friday night at Loon Lake, I planned out my enactment with David and Heather in the dining hall after dinner. I'll never forget what David said to me after I told him about how I desperately wanted to have children and that I was dating this man, Fahid, who wouldn't have sex with me. David leaned across the wooden table and said in a quiet voice, "Ellen, I just want to let you know that um, in case you didn't know, in order to have a baby you have to have sex." And he laughed out loud and told me how good it felt to be able to tell a doctor that!! We talked a bit more and I could see that David and Heather were planning things out that I wasn't privy to, and I could see pennies were dropping for them. I wanted to know what was ahead and try to pin everything down but they told me not to worry that it would all work out. I'm glad I didn't know what was coming the next day.

My enactment took place on Saturday and it began with me walking around the circle with David. I told the group my story and tried to use some humour and make fun of myself to ease the tension before we headed into the scene with my father. I knew we were going into the "swamp" and I knew it was serious. It's like that moment when you're cliff diving and you finally push off. It's both frightening and exhilarating but you know you are alive! I chose the people to play the various roles including the person who took the role of my father.

David and Julia wanted to create the dynamic with my father so they positioned me, as a little girl, holding my father in my arms, almost like you would hold a baby to breast-feed. That felt very uncomfortable but I understood what they were trying to do and so I went with it. All my life I couldn't get myself unhooked from my father's need to be loved and his need to not to be abandoned. I never really understood the concept of putting on your own oxygen mask first in an airplane. I thought that was ridiculous! Of course I would always put the child's oxygen mask on first and save them and, when it came to my father, I would never abandon him even to save myself. As the enactment progressed, David and Julia had my father saying things like, "Don't leave me!! I need you!!" and I kept replying that I would never leave him. Nothing the directors tried worked to unleash that hook I felt with my father. Or so I thought.

Julia came up to me and said that we were going to do something that was hard but that I needed to stick with it. She actually came up behind me and put her arms around me and held me close to her body. I can still feel her solidness, strong and feminine, in my body to this day. The "hard thing" that they did came as a total shock. They had my father, and the woman playing me as a little girl, stand up and face each other holding hands. Then they had my father say to my child double, "Ellie, I want to have sex with you." At first I was confused because I knew he had never said that to me, and then I went completely cold and the penny dropped. The room fell silent for what seemed to me like an extended pause. Then, just like that, I knew what I had to do. The words were like a knife slicing through the connection between my father and I. The hook was removed forever. I understood that my father would stop at nothing to get his needs met through me. Julia later identified the dynamic between my father and I as

“emotional incest” and it was true. At that moment, I was no longer hooked into his neediness. I put my arm around my child self and pushed my father away saying, “I love you but you cannot have her she’s mine.” I turned away from my father in the enactment and told him to deal with his own life and to grow up and get a life. I protected my child self from him and when David and Julia had him keep calling me back trying to hook me in but I just walked away, free. I put my own oxygen mask on first.

I realized that my father was an endless pit. The hook with him caused me to get into relationships with men in which I would put their emotional needs first and, if I didn’t, I felt so screwed up about it. I would stay in relationships that weren’t working for me because I wanted to give the men hope that they could make it. I’d tell them that they shouldn’t leave because, even though they didn’t want kids now, I would stay with them and one day they would want kids. I would never abandon them, just like I would never abandon my father.

During the enactment set-up, I had included the role of Fahid in my life, a role that was taken on by a colleague of mine. Once I unhooked from my father, I was able to deal with the Fahid character in a very quick and easy manner. I told him that I couldn’t wait for him and that if we met later it might be nice but I was moving on with my life and I couldn’t wait for him because I really wanted children. Following the enactment weekend I told the real Fahid the same thing. It was over between us. I felt that I had reclaimed a part of myself in the enactment that had been left behind. I felt that I had reclaimed my little girl for myself and that I was going to protect her and keep her close to me. At that point I thought that the enactment was finished, but then Julia spoke up and said there was one more thing to do. It was very unusual that an enactment would finish

and then start up again. But, Julia had the whole group stand on one side of the room and then she had me standing on the other side of the room by myself. She asked me, "What if it doesn't happen? What if you don't meet someone and you don't have a child? What is your biggest fear?" I suddenly started to cry.

Late at night, when I was alone writing reports or papers, usually after a long day at work, emotional thoughts would bubble up out of me that it just wasn't worth it. I would be exhausted, working with woman after woman who would abandon, neglect and abuse their children and do drugs when they were pregnant. I would be thinking about those women, wanting a child of my own, knowing that I would love it and take good care of it, but not being able to have that. All of these things would be going through my head and then fleeting thoughts of suicide would bubble up in my awareness. I would feel guilty for feeling that way because my life was nothing like these women whose lives were filled with trauma and sorrow.

I felt so stupid because I have good friends and a good family and when Julia asked me what my worst fear was, it all came out and I felt so ashamed. Julia lined up the group and had a man named Paul stand in the middle. Paul had a history of suicidality and had come through his own, very powerful piece of work earlier that day. He was like a pillar standing there in the middle of all those people. With Julia standing beside me, I suddenly realized in that moment that, even if I never had children, I could still have a full life that was not only passable but also very rich and beautiful. It was like a huge dropping away of the hope and that freed me to go on living. I ran across the room and dove into the arms of the group members and they lifted me up above them.

The enactment weekend finished on Sunday with dancing and singing and I felt an energy surging through my body. It was Eros and life flowing through me. David said something to me before I left Loon Lake about what might happen when I got back into the real world. He said, "I want you to know that sometimes, when people do an enactment like yours, other people experience them differently. I think some energy has been released in you that you may not be aware of and you may start getting attention from men that you may not know what to do with." David's words were prophetic.

Following the weekend, I spoke to Fahid and told him that it wasn't going to work. He was very loving and told me he understood and that if I ever needed anything, to call him. That part of my life changed immediately, and I also noticed that my relationship with my father changed. My father would call and he'd be drunk on the phone and he'd be whining about this or that and, in the past, I would have thought that he really needs me. I would think that maybe I should stop working and travel down to Florida to see him and take care of him because he was probably lonely. I have clarity about my dad, his needs, and our relationship and, when he phones me to complain, I can say to my father in a friendly manner, "You know that, is your gig. If you want to work it out why don't you and your wife go to therapy? Why don't you go and get some friends? You are an adult male dad. If you're retired and you want to sit at home and drink and not have a life, that's your choice." I have clarity about my boundaries with my dad when he phones and I'm able to keep those boundaries clear when I speak with him. It's not in an aggressive way but it is strong and clear. He called me within a day or two of my enactment and I just felt so happy and so free from that hook. It was great.

Even though my dad still does things today that bug me, I am clear on my relationship with him.

Following the enactment weekend I had massive attention from men. People were asking me out and stopping me in the street to talk to me. I've had that kind of thing happen to me when I'm on vacation, but never when I'm in work mode like a rat in a maze. It's not like I was some Breck girl walking down the street in a commercial or something, but I had about six guys ask me out on dates. I realized during that time that I was different and that things had changed in how I dealt with these men. I went on one date and it was clear to me from the beginning that this guy had way too many "mommy issues" to deal with. When he dropped me off, he had this little "hissy fit" meltdown and called me all panicky about what the date was like and what happened. In a situation like that in the past, I would have called him back and tried to reassure him that everything was fine and try to make it better for him. I would have gone on another date with him just to prove to him that everything was all right and that he was a good person and that I didn't mean to reject him. Instead, when he called all upset, I just said to him that the date was fine but that I didn't think it would work and let him deal with his own stuff. I stayed out of it and I felt completely clear that it was *his* stuff and had nothing to do with me.

I had a couple more dates like that where I was just really clear that the person was not for me and I was able to end it in a very short period of time. In the past, those kinds of relationships would have continued on for a couple weeks or even months, but that dynamic ended for me after removing the hook with my father. My dating experience

went on for a few more months until one day, when I was on vacation with some friends of mine; I met a man that would change everything in my life.

I had gone on vacation with some friends to a world heritage site in the islands for a holiday and we were taken on a guided tour of the local village. Throughout the tour, our guide was describing the significance of the architecture and the alignment of the poles and the water, and the symbolism of the house being like a vagina and the totem pole representing the penis. I thought it sounded more Kabbalistic than native. As the guide took us through the tours, Steven, who was a good friend of the people I went on the trip with, kept talking about another one of the guides named Robert. Steven said, "Robert says you can think about this place with your left brain and analyze everything and how beautiful it is or with your right brain and appreciate the structures and relationships they have with each other and the sea, or you can take the no-brain approach and just lie here and take it all in!" We all laughed and then all of us lay down on the beach looking up at the sky, using the no-brain approach. We were this mess of bodies lying on the beach laughing when this little "leprechaun" looking fellow with a mischievous grin came trundling along.

The leprechaun with the mischievous grin was Robert, the other guide we had been hearing so much about. Immediately Robert took to me and started flirting with me. He was unlike any of the men that I had dated before. Robert was handsome but not in the way some of my previous boyfriends had been. He was an activist and an artist and didn't have much money and he was a little overweight. But he appeared to be funny, creative, inquisitive and intelligent. A generous big-hearted guy.

He wanted to be with me and he made no secret about it to the others. He invited us to anchor in the harbour and stay for a feast, just because he wanted to spend more time with me. Over the next few days he flirted outrageously with me, which was phenomenally embarrassing for me in front of my friends. It was such a contrast from the men I had been dating. Everything about his behaviour towards me was sperm-like. Even as he drove his boat through the water towards our boat, it looked like a sperm wiggling its way towards me, the egg, waiting on the boat. I thought how different it was from Fahid who was so standoffish and would barely even kiss me. Robert told me, within two weeks of us meeting, that he wanted to make a sea otter lined bassinette for our baby! He came to me one day and took some eagle down and stuffed it inside the edge of my shirt and said, "Now you don't have a chance! The "baby" angels have sent me." Eight months later I was pregnant with our daughter. Conceived out of bliss, the first time we tried.

What is important to me about my relationship with Robert is the intimacy that we share. "We have had a few challenges in the relationship including sexual ones but nothing that has proven insurmountable." But, the intimacy we share is not just the sexual intimacy, which only goes so far. We have moments of real emotional intimacy, sensual intimacy, and just life intimacy. It is so different from being with someone whom you might have great sex with but who could not go the full distance emotionally. I am with a man who is loving, fabulous, flawed, and grumpy sometimes, and he's forgiving of my moods. It's very real. I don't expect him to be some idyllic thing that he isn't and I don't have to be some idyllic thing that I'm not. I feel more integrated and more aware and I can be playful with Robert. Things don't always work out perfectly but that doesn't

last and we can laugh about it together. I have been able to let go of my checklist and see Robert as a person who is so much more than a list of qualities.

Things also changed for me at work following the enactment. I found I could set better boundaries for patients and I immediately discharged all patients who had threatened to harm me. I declined allowing their re-entry into the practice despite many antics, which in some cases included further threats. It may sound strange but I had often made excuses for my clients' aggressive behavior, understanding that it was a communication style adapted from the street. No more. Threaten me and you are out! I also stopped spending so much free overtime. The work at the clinic is endless and so I restricted myself to only about 1/2 hr of free overtime per day (occasionally more) and I had Robert come pick me up so that I couldn't linger.

The story of my enactment at Loon Lake and what has changed for me is full of so many things that have changed. My relationship with my father is still somewhat strained and the things he does piss me off sometimes, but I am no longer hooked into him the way I used to be. I am going to be a mother of a beautiful little girl and I am with a man who loves me and who is wonderful and is the father of my baby. He is responsive to my needs, instead of being wrapped up in his own stuff, and we have found a gorgeous place to nest that we can just afford. I feel the completion as we sail on together. As I finish telling you this story my baby has started to cry drawing me to the other room to breastfeed her. She is such a joy. We are all three in the love bubble together and there are so many blessings. Robert and I have become much closer and our love has grown richer from living our lives together and co-parenting our baby. I have never been happier. He is my heart treasure and she is my bliss bundle. I am so grateful.

LEONARD

I have never understood conflict or violence of any sort. It just never made any sense to me when people would get so upset and fight or just the mindless kind of violence some people get into playing sports. Perhaps part of it was that I was always intimidated by it as a boy. My family were immigrants and had moved to Canada from England when I was a boy of eight or nine. I was a small kid by comparison to other boys my age, I had an accent, and being advanced academically, I was always the youngest. That particular combination of qualities is sort of like the holy trinity of things NOT to be when you are growing up as a boy in a new school, a new city, and a new country. My enactment experience at Loon Lake is related to that little boy and to the man that he subsequently became.

I had done some enactment work with David earlier on in my graduate career but I had never been to a residential weekend. I guess David and Julia started doing residential weekends after I had graduated and moved on, although I had never seen them work together. I had been doing some individual work with Julia prior to the enactment weekend and hadn't considered doing an enactment until about a year before going to Loon Lake. I think the fact that I was so comfortable with both David and Julia was important throughout the weekend. I planned on attending the group in the spring and so I guess it was about February when I finally committed to going and doing an enactment. I had been processing a lot of the issues already, getting psyched, and so I think a lot of the work had been done before the enactment. I had also spoken to David about what my enactment might look like but it didn't exactly turn out the way we had planned.

Growing up as a child, my father was prone to these fits of rage that were so out of control and so uncoordinated that it created a lot of anxiety for me. The scene that David and I had talked about centred on an event that occurred between my father and my grandmother when I was a teenager. My father had treated my Grandmother so terribly and I felt so strongly about the way he was treating her and had such a sense of his violation of her that I had made an attempt to challenge him. Unfortunately, it wasn't nearly as powerful as I would have preferred at the time and so David and I talked about recreating the scene with my father where I would confront him more forcefully. I didn't get a chance to take a poke at the old man, as much as I would have liked to but the enactment still shifted things for me.

I had to work on the Friday and so I had to arrive late. The group had already started and the enactments had already started. I knew that for the group dynamics, I had to be there from the beginning but that wasn't going to happen. As I arrived, I could see that someone was doing their enactment, so I parked and when I went inside, the group was taking a break. A number of people were experiencing such an emotion and someone told me what was going on so I sort of stayed out of it. I remember feeling more uneasy at that point because I wasn't a part of what had happened and so I didn't feel included. I knew the importance of group norms and getting people to fit in and I wasn't certain how all of this was going to work. Luckily I wasn't left standing there for long because an old friend, who I didn't know would be there, came and greeted me outside.

"Leonard!" I heard this voice say. Heather was a woman I had known from years ago and she came up and greeted me very warmly. She knew that I was coming but I had

no idea that she would be there so it was a very pleasant surprise and it was helpful. I knew that arriving late and being prepared to reveal my issues in front of all these strangers wasn't, theoretically, supposed to work, but I guess I was sufficiently committed to doing it that I thought, what the hell, I'm going for it. There was more risk involved than I would have preferred but I felt like no one was gonna stop me. Still, I didn't feel as included as I would have preferred at the beginning of the weekend.

When the group started up again, I was immediately asked to participate which helped me to feel more included. It was interesting that I was asked to play somebody's father since much of my issue was regarding my own father. In fact, I was asked to play the father role in, I think, four enactments that weekend. That was interesting because being a father was not something that I had ever been. In fact, it was something that I had determinedly avoided, not wanting to risk turning out like my father and putting other children through what I went through. I guess I just cut off that part of my own potential and so it was interesting that that many people saw me in that role. It also reminded me of how I hadn't taken on that role in my own life.

The real processing for me that weekend, I think, began during one of the other enactments that same evening. A woman was doing her enactment and had asked Tom, who was helping out that weekend, to play the role of a lion. I watched Tom playing the lion and he seemed to embody not just the strength and, I guess, the courage that one would normally associate with the lion, but he also presented the playfulness. Sitting in the group watching Tom, I was aware that that kind of playfulness was never part of my childhood and I welled up with grief. I became aware of the great sense of loss I felt at not having that playfulness in my childhood. I grew up as a serious child and that sort of

spontaneity wasn't something to which I was accustomed. I would perhaps aspire to the courage and strength of the lion and at times even claim it for myself but the playful side was something I never had.

We were to choose accommodations for ourselves in one of the cabins that were spread throughout the property. I chose a cabin to sleep in that was down in the lower part of the camp below the dining hall. I chose not to share the cabin with anyone else, as many of the group members did, because I prefer to be alone. That night, I lay in my bed and had a bit of a cry, reflecting over past miseries and trying to prepare myself for the next day when I would do my enactment. I thought about past losses and losses of potential, not necessarily around parenting, but of just not moving ahead as quickly or in the directions that I would have preferred. I guess you could say I was priming the pump as it were.

It was decided that I would do my enactment on Saturday. As I said, I had planned an enactment with David prior to beginning my own but it turned out differently than we had planned. I began walking around the circle with David, setting up the scene and I remember being very aware of what I was creating and even tried to be a little bit playful in the process. I remember telling parts of my life story with the various calamities and distractions that had brought me to this point. Then we recreated a scene from my childhood in which I had been playing with a fort and some toy soldiers that I had arranged into neat lines and regiments. My little brother, who was all of about one, came in and started messing and up my regiments and destroying whatever it was I was trying to create. He ends up in tears because I'm trying to keep everything together and

then my father comes in, raging that I need to be good and play with my brother, and then he destroys my fort.

Now what I found interesting in the enactment was that the person I had asked to play my father didn't throw the fort down very well, so *I* had to go over and do it. I went over and took the fort and held it above my head and threw it down. I realized at that moment how out of control my dad really was and when I looked down at whoever it was who was playing me, he looked so tiny. At that moment, I realized that as a child, I had every right to feel overwhelmed by my father's behaviour. The perspective I gained by smashing the castle gave me instant permission to be fearful of that stuff, when all my life I thought that it was some character flaw on my part. I always thought that I should have been able to handle my father's rages better and that maybe I just needed to be tougher. I realized that I was so tiny and small and that it was understandable how I would have been fearful of my father's actions. I always viewed myself as sort of gentle person and given my physical size, I guess my father's behaviour just reinforced a sense of physical insecurity and inferiority.

I never really learned how to stand up for myself and whenever I would see scrapping, I was always intimidated by it. It just made no sense to me. I remember this one occasion when I was in scouts, several years after the castle incident with my father. The patrol leader was getting a rough time from someone that I was sort of responsible for and I got into a rage and picked this guy up and was about to duke him, when all of a sudden, poof, all my energy was drained. I said to myself, "What am I doing here? This doesn't make any sense to me." I realized that from that point on that I had better be careful about precipitating any kind of confrontation, especially if my energy would be

drained that quickly. These types of events in my childhood led to some difficulties in my adult life.

I was never one to really stand up for myself at work or in relationships. I would always try and accommodate whenever I could. I would struggle with knowing that situations weren't right and then I would get upset with myself for not challenging them. I would find a reason to justify the circumstance to stay as it was. I gave up an awful lot of myself being accommodating, especially in my marriage and subsequent relationships until I eventually left. I felt so bound that I didn't realize I had the right, and the need, to assert myself earlier. Well, the enactment helped me change that.

After taking the role of my father and gaining the sense that I had permission to feel justified in my fear and intimidation, the enactment took a turn that wasn't planned. I remember saying to the directors that I was stuck. I can't remember if it was Julia who said something about making me stuck, but what happened was they had a group of people gather round me and grab onto my arms and legs and start pulling me towards the floor. I remember feeling that I needed to get up and, just like the incident in scouts, I felt this rage building up inside of me the more I struggled. I thought, "Somebody's gonna get hurt here!!" I started moving and I could see that this force in me would get out of control and I would start swinging and end up duking somebody. That wasn't what I wanted to do but there was still a part of me that was willing to start swinging. I got worried that I was gonna break loose and I was gonna hurt somebody and so I just started sinking back down, losing my energy. Then the lion showed up.

After seeing the lion in that woman's enactment Friday evening, I decided that I would enlist him to be in my enactment as well. I wasn't really sure what role he would

take but I wanted him to be a part of the enactment as a symbol of what I would aspire to in my life, to embody the strength and the courage with the playfulness. Tom, whom I'd asked to play the lion again in my enactment, had not been a part of the enactment up until that point. I had brought him in at the beginning of my enactment but he had been off to the side mostly and wasn't really aware of him, until I started sinking under the weight of people pulling me down. I was ready to go down when Tom yelled at me, telling me to roar and as he yelled he let out a roar. When I heard the roar of the lion, I felt the rage well back up inside of me and I started to roar out loud!! I let out a tremendous roar from deep inside me that energized me and, roaring louder, I stood up and broke loose from the hands and arms that were holding me down.

I was shocked! I stood there in the middle of all these people. I was able to break free when I realized that I didn't need to start swinging. I just needed to energize myself and stand up and the roar helped me to do that. Again, it was this sudden permission to stand up for myself, literally, and the realization that I could stand up without anyone getting hurt. Not only could I stand up but I should stand up. It was tremendously releasing and I felt a great sense of calm and almost peace following the enactment.

The roar that I found during my enactment has now become a little mantra for myself in my life. When I find things are getting a little tough I will give an internal roar and stand up for myself. There is a lot of freedom knowing I can be assertive when I need to be, in a way that's controlled, and trusting that I'm not going to explode and create mayhem. I can take a stance that just says "No!" and I don't have to be physical about it. I hadn't thought about how much the lion has been a symbol for me in my life until talking about my story. Of course, there is the British lion to which I feel really

attached but there is another lion that is also important. I had been running a small practice out of my home and one of my cats became a co-therapist with a particular client, sitting on the client's lap, providing warmth and comfort. When we finished our work together, my client gave me a stuffed lion and I never thought of claiming it for myself but I am glad that I kept it around. The lion has become a part of me and I have noticed the changes in myself.

Over the past year, I have become quite confident and I've become clearer about boundaries that I will draw and choose for myself. As opposed to succumbing to the demands of other people and trying to accommodate them, I'm more clear, particularly at work, about what I'm gonna put up with and what I'm not. I'm not as prepared to be pushed around as much as I might have been before but more prepared to take a stance and say, "No more!" I used to let the stress of things get so bad that something *had* to be done, but now I can do or say something much earlier; hence, I feel much more comfortable.

Breaking free in the enactment was such a release, and a relief, and it gave me a greater sense of confidence. I came to understand that the struggle that I had been going through all my life was not so much between my father and myself but it was an internal one. I came to accept that struggle in myself, but that doesn't mean I wouldn't have liked an opportunity to take a poke at the old man. Nevertheless the old bugger died but I am free. I'm free from the chains that I built for myself and free from the blame I directed at my father and at myself. I'm free from the guilt I felt for not having done things I would have preferred to do and there are other issues that are more present and future oriented to deal with rather than all the shit from the past.

I confronted myself and I survived it and now there's a sense of more optimism about what my life is gonna be like. I am calmer and less uptight in general now and I recognize that stuff will sort itself out and I don't have to take it on and get into a struggle with it. The first part of my enactment, which I haven't really talked about here, was an acknowledgement of the kinds of relationships that I have had in my life with the two most significant women I have been with. I am happy to say that I have a new relationship now that is approaching an anniversary. It's a much more calm and comfortable relationship than I've ever had in my life and I think going through the enactment has enabled me to make better choices. The problem was that in the preceding relationships, I had been involved with women who were just like my father. I was just getting from one crazy situation to another and this new relationship is not at all like that. It is like night and day in comparison! In my past relationships if I was upset I would put on a mask of stoicism, you know stiff upper lip and all that. Now I allow myself to get into a little snit if it seems to be appropriate and I allow myself to be a little more out there, a bit more expressive. Instead of getting all embroiled in the shame and self-blame and all the negative messages, I think I can filter them out a bit better now. I can say, "I don't need to take that on" and I certainly have a greater sense of ease and comfort. I'm looking forward to a surge in productivity in my professional life and also personally in this relationship. There's a lot more to be enjoyed.

I used to be a victim of life and what had happened to me in my childhood and now I see myself as more heroic. I've changed from being down on myself for not doing or not acting in ways that I would have preferred to feeling proud that I have survived some pretty nasty life experiences and become a reasonably productive member of

society. I wasn't overwhelmed by my past as some others might have been. There are costs and some losses but I just have to accept that. The lion is scarred and there are some warm patches of flesh still visible but it is inside me and it roars...and no one gets hurt.

GABRIEL

I can tell you the story of my enactment but first I will tell you about how, as a young boy, I became a steel ball. My mom's brother killed himself by jumping off a bridge when I was seven years old and my sister and I began to worry that my mom might do the same thing to herself. My mother and my uncle were twins and, after he killed himself, my mother started acting strange. I'm not sure if it was my sister Lisa who initiated it or not but she and I would stand between my mom and the water, whenever we were on a wharf. There were a lot of wharfs on the island where we grew up and there was a mountain called Mount Skilling, where we used to go for walks up to a lookout point on a cliff. My sister and I would stand between my mom and the ledge of the cliff, worried she might jump. I remember feeling a real need to take care of my mother during that time. She was fragile and a bit crazy and, even as kids, we knew it somehow. It was during that time that the steel ball started to form itself around me, protecting me, and helping me not to make any waves that might upset my mother.

I was probably eight years old, playing in the gutter with my boats, in the pouring rain, when my parents called me to come inside one day. They sat me down with my sister and told us that they were not going to be together anymore and "CLANG!!" The edges of the steel ball slammed shut! I sat there in stunned silence as they told us they

were getting a divorce and then watched as they went their separate ways. I guess after my mom's brother killed himself, my mother decided that since he had lived his life the way he wanted to, she would live her life the way she wanted to. Living her life the way she wanted to meant becoming a lesbian and divorcing my father. What the hell, my world was falling apart but I didn't get upset about it. I didn't want to cause any more waves, and so the steel ball encircled me, protected me, and it helped me hide what I was feeling inside. .

I was *always* worried about my mother. I learned how to edit myself and make sure I didn't make too many waves because, if I did, my mother might become really depressed and kill herself. I turned into a steel ball, hard, impenetrable and reflecting the world around me perfectly. I became that way with everyone, paying attention and being really careful around people, so that nothing bad would happen. I went to three different high schools, bopping from school to school, between groups of friends, always touching but finding it hard to really connecting with anything or anyone. The steel ball protected me from the outside and it helped me keep things together on the inside. The steel ball could go through any kind of hell and so could I.

The steel ball worked for a while but then it wasn't so good. My high school girlfriend complained about how I wouldn't let her too close to me and, eventually, she had an affair, which ended our relationship. Later on, my first wife also got fed up. She used to say, "You're not letting me in that inner part of yourself. You're not showing me who you really are. You're not responding to me!!" She became really cold and pissed off and had an affair with my best friend. The steel ball had worked to perfection. I didn't get angry or pissed off at my wife or my best friend who had betrayed me. The

steel ball worked but I was imploding and, eventually, the steel ball wouldn't be able to hold it in.

Prior to Loon Lake, I did an enactment with David and Julia that was supposed to help me crack open the steel ball and burst it open. The enactment worked. It worked too well. I didn't want to silence all of this stuff anymore and so during that enactment I let all of the anger at my parents, my ex-wife, and my best friend blast out. I was absolutely present and told them everything I had kept inside. It unleashed something in me that had never been allowed out and, after the enactment, I wrote a poem about what was coming forth from inside of me. I called it "Real Time",

Now is the time shift

Fall back, surrender to the tide of night

Let the Raven's curl their black tongues beneath my window

And speak fire into my dreams

Let the moon wallow its shadow presence

Behind my heavy lids

Let the whole be also darkness

*My formless ocean self, from which I will grow outward to the
world*

Now is the time shift

What was daylight is now night

*What was then is not now,
forever...*

The steel ball was about protecting myself, and making sure that the world didn't fall apart in a crazy way. I needed it to make the world more predictable around me, and to make sure that I didn't cause any waves that might upset things. Now I had let the darkness come out and there was a feeling of power in that and a feeling that I could let my passion out and if it changed things, or knocked somebody around then so be it! The steel ball cracked open but it was just the beginning. The enactment took place on December 29th...my mother's birthday.

Shortly after the first enactment, my second wife, Elizabeth, and I planned on going to India. I was still on this high from the enactment itself and had decided to stay down in California with my mother, before we flew off to India. I wanted to be frank and honest with my mother after the enactment and I was. We ended up having this big blow out where she said to me, "I never wanted to be a mother. I don't want to be a mother. I want to be your friend. I was never a good mother anyways." I wanted her to stand up to the role she had played and to take responsibility but she abdicated the role of the 'good enough' mother. She said she never wanted to be a mother and at the same time she was telling me that she loved me and that she was here for me and that she's in my life. I had tried to take care of my mother for so long and here I was laying it on the line and saying that what she did was a terrible thing. She couldn't count on me to keep it nice and quiet anymore and to protect her. It was a major shift in our relationship and in myself. I

couldn't go on in silence inside the steel ball and the trip to India would make sure that I didn't.

Elizabeth and I left my mother in California and headed off to India. Travelling through that amazing and wild country, I experienced a moment of creative mania and was writing constantly. In my heart I had always dreamed of being a writer, but the steel ball had held me back. Now, I had just finished my graduate degree and I felt that there was no reason for me not to just put it all out there, show my passion and "let the ravens speak". I fanned the flames of the mania and finally had a psychotic moment. We travelled from India to Thailand and I remember in Thailand there were these storms overhead. During one of the storms there was this huge BOOM!! And I thought, "That happened inside that didn't happen outside." At that moment there was no separation between the universe and me. There was no steel ball anymore, no separateness. This incredible feeling lasted for about a week. It's hard to explain but it felt sort of like, "It is my world. I am the sand on the beach and the moving of the palm trees. I am the islands that I see in the distance. I am God!"

It was like being in this very intimate dialogue with the universe. It was like the universe responded to my thoughts, not in a controlling way but in recognition of the mutual connection. I would think about the leaf on the tree moving and "ahah!" I see that the leaf is responding to me. I really freaked everybody else out because I wasn't in my head anymore. The steel ball exploded and became a supernova and I loved the feeling of power that it gave me. I was God and I understood that I had to share the universe with other beings, who were gods as well, but the problem was that Elizabeth couldn't understand me. She said that I wasn't making any sense to her. I decided that if I wasn't

making sense to Elizabeth and if I wasn't making room for her, then it wasn't gonna work. I agreed to let Elizabeth put me into a hospital where I spent two days. It was a beautiful spot and I was still kind of off my head when we left and flew straight home to stay with my dad in Arizona. I calmed down while staying with my Dad. I felt he could really understand me because he's really into the phenomenological constructivist kind of thing, which makes it easy to go to those "out there" kinds of places. So, with some help, I got my feet on the ground and realized my limits again.

My relationship with my mother changed after that period of time. She went into a major depression over the next two years and gained an absurd amount of weight, falling into this pathetic kind of self-destructive "save me" mode. In the past, I used to feel so connected to my mother and we would hook up arm-in-arm and walk all the way up and down the beach with Elizabeth walking beside us. The intense connection with my mother drove Elizabeth nuts and it used to drive my first wife nuts as well. That connection changed drastically. Now, I was getting angry with my mom every time I was around her. Elizabeth would say things like, "Wow, she's really pushing your buttons!!" Up until that point I never even knew I had any buttons when it came to my mother, but I would just seethe with anger towards her at times.

After she put on the weight and got so depressed, I felt torn. Even though I was so angry with her, there was this push/pull thing happening and I didn't know what to do. I would wonder, was my mother going to take care of herself? When was she going to start taking care of herself? Was I supposed to keep on loving her, despite the fact that she was killing herself, or do I just not care at all? My sense of how frank and honest I

was with my mother would come and go alternating between rage and not wanting to push her over the edge to where she really did kill herself.

A couple of years passed and I ran into my mother's lover, Gayle, at a funeral. Somehow we ended up talking about Therapeutic Enactment and the kind of work that I had been doing and what people actually did in an enactment. Gayle said to me, "I certainly remember that time we were sitting at the table and your mother gave you that backhand and you landed on the floor on your ass." Gayle was recalling an incident from my childhood in which my mother had hit me across the face. I must have been nine years old and my mother was really into writing and reading her own poetry at the time. One day, she was reading her poetry at the kitchen table, Gayle was sitting there listening, and I came into the kitchen asking for my mother's attention. My mother smacked me across the face with the back of her hand and I went flying across the floor. Lying on the floor, I didn't cry. I didn't get angry. I didn't make any waves. I just thought to myself, "I'm outta here."

I decided that the kitchen table scene would be the scene I would enact at Loon Lake. I drove up to Loon Lake on Friday with a colleague of mine named James. As we approached the back roads leading through the forest to the camp, it felt like we were a couple of adventurers heading into the great unknown. We even rang out a chorus of "The Last of Barrett's Privateers" as we wound our way through the trees towards the camp.

Oh the year was 1778

How I wish I was in Sherbrooke now!!

We arrived at the main house and although I felt a little shy, I realized that I knew most of the people there and I was happy they were going to be a part of the workshop. It felt safe and good to be there. I started thinking of whom I would pick out people to play roles for me in my enactment. I chose a woman named Laura to play my mother because I had already played her son a couple of times in previous enactments that she had done.

I did the advanced preparation for the enactment with my colleague James on the Friday night. James was training to become a director so, after planning the scenario out with me, he consulted with David and Julia about what we had discussed. The enactment took place on Saturday and we began by constructing the scene where my mother had backhanded me. In the enactment, my father was placed in another room, reading, while the scene in the kitchen unfolded. I screamed at both my mother and my father during the enactment. I told my mother that she could kill herself if she wanted to and that it was *her* to look after herself and that it was *my* job to look after me. I was not going to be responsible for her anymore. I yelled at my dad for not being there for me and I asked him where he was and why he didn't do something. It was intense and my voice ended up going hoarse.

The part of the enactment I remember most is the ending of the enactment, because that was a total surprise to me. After the scene with my parents, there were two more pieces of the enactment for me to do, which I didn't know about beforehand. Both parts were totally unexpected and spontaneous. James had created this right of passage ceremony out behind the main house. The men separated from the women and the men went out back to the parking area, which was just a dirt and gravel lot. James led me out to where the men were standing in two parallel lines holding cedar boughs. I was told to

walk through as the men kind of whipped me. I think they were supposed to use them more vigorously but I don't know what the ceremony is exactly. At the end of the line was this big drum that one of the group members had brought with him. I was told that I was to lead the men in the drumming and I started to beat on the drum, just wailing on it. It was a wild and powerful feeling as I beat the drum and yelled. I don't know how or why but I suddenly knew when it was time to stop drumming. I put down the drum stick and led the men back into the main room of the big house where the women had formed a half circle. It looked like a kind of a half moon that had to be filled in.

Once in the main room, the men filled in the other half of the circle and I took my place in the circle. That was really powerful for me. It was like I created a container for myself that wasn't the steel ball or the supernova. It was balanced. My mother and father, masculine and feminine power structures were balanced and I remember feeling that was good. A foundation had been created for me that was a permeable but stable boundary in my life. The rest of that weekend I didn't feel shy in front of the people in the group. I felt really open and played music for the group on my guitar with a colleague of mine named Tom. I felt really contained afterwards and really stable. I wanted the stability and the containment.

Later on that night, after all of the enactments had finished for the day, I had a dangerous feeling come up that reminded me of the power of the supernova in India. One of the women in the group was dealing Tarot and I was one of the first people to sit down with her. Although I would normally not engage that kind of stuff, I sat down and felt this surge of power when she started to deal the cards. I felt very decisive about each of the cards that I wanted her to deal. There were three cards representing past, present

and future and she tried to deal the cards in order but I said, "No, I want that one to go here and that one goes there and that one goes here." I was very decisive and it gave me a very powerful feeling.

The first two cards were the Hermit and the Hierophant, with two students at his knee, but it was the third card that tipped the scales. The third card was the Wheel of Fortune, which surprised the woman dealing the cards. It was surprising, she said, because it meant that the future could be whatever I wanted it to be and that I would have the power to make it happen whatever way I wanted it to. At that moment, I felt the power and I felt that I had a connection with the cards. I was engaged in that intimate dialogue again and the cards were responding to me. It was kinda scary so I tried to let it go and remind myself of the balance that I had created in the enactment. I *was* able to let it go but even to this day there is a part of me that doesn't want to let it go. I don't want to let go of that sense that we do live in this kind of intimate dialogue. When the cards were dealt, part of me felt that it was too much, but then the other part was screaming, "OH Yeah!! All right!!"

I was able to let it go and just leave it be that night. I told myself that if I hadn't sat down I would never have known and it's probably better that way. I told myself, "Just let it be and if it happens, it happens." I was able to get myself back into the balance of the circle. Another part of the weekend that made an impact on me was on Sunday when I participated in the Magic Shop with David. He told me that I could have whatever I wanted from his shop but I would have to trade for it. The Magic Shop is always fun and everyone in the group ends up laughing a lot, but it is also very powerful. I went to the Magic Shop where I traded in some of my "inner sanctuary" for some

“bullshit detector”. I guess what I did during the weekend was I gave up the inner sanctuary of the steel ball, and learned how to detect the bullshit of my mother.

In some ways the relationship with my mother has become more complicated after my enactment at Loon Lake. I’m not just making it okay with my mom any more. For example, we have issues now around finances and some money that she invested in my home, which I owe back to her. We are sort of in this process of deciding how much money it is, exactly, and how we’re dividing it and so on. In the past, I would have just laid out the red carpet for my mother and given her whatever she wanted, but I’m not doing that anymore. There was a real confrontation involved with the money but I just had to sit her down and tell her this is the amount you invested and this is the rate of return we’re agreeing on and that’s final. I don’t worry about making waves with my mother anymore. I take the time to clarify with her what she is saying and then I tell her when I don’t understand or I don’t agree with something that she is saying. I still don’t get it done as quickly as I would like but I’m not willing just roll over. I’m not taking care of her anymore.

I have noticed changes in my work as well and my confidence and decisiveness are coming out professionally. I do therapeutic work in groups and so I decided to run my own enactment weekend with a colleague from work named Mark. We put it together on the fly because one of the participants wanted to do his enactment before he went home to his family. We put the weekend together in about three weeks and after the first day Mark said to me, “You know, for the first time in my life, I’m not nervous.” I realized that I felt the same way. I felt calm and this sense of calm has translated into some of the other work that I do running training groups. I know that, in some instances,

I could prepare for the groups more, but now I feel like, "Well you can always prepare more! It might have helped but it might not have helped. So, here we are." I feel more engaged with my life now and at the same time I feel less vulnerable.

I feel less vulnerable to people not liking me or to people deciding that what I'm offering is touchy-feely and bogus. The big shift for me is that, before, I would be filled with this nervousness that I would lose people's confidence in me and that they wouldn't believe me. I would adjust myself to try to win them back and convince them that what I was saying was true. Now, I can say, "Well that is their opinion and this is where I'm at so let's go from here." Even when I see on people's faces that they think what I'm doing is bogus, I can just rest in my truth of what I know works in groups. I used to worry about how I presented the material to the group members and that maybe there was something wrong about how I came across or whatever. Now I just say, "Well I've offered it the best I can offer it and maybe in a year it will be more polished but right now, that's the way it is and if you don't want to take it, then that is your choice." I don't have to try and shift myself to fit someone else's perspective.

It has changed my work with my clients as well. I can be more spontaneous and be more of myself with them, which sometimes means I'm more of a nerd, making stupid jokes but at least it's me. I'm more engaged now than I ever have been and I do lose people from time to time but then I just pick up the pieces again. It just seems to work better. When I finished my graduate work, I felt as though I had to be a professional. I had to act professional, say the right thing and help people solve their problems in life. It was all just to cover up my fear and lack of confidence that I could actually help someone. Now I have dropped the professional mask I am able to be more present with

my clients and be open and honest with them. I had a client, whom I'll never forget, say; "I'm going see someone else because they do real therapy!" Part of me was thinking, "Ah, you little shit! What do think we've been doing all this time?" I know now that things like that will happen and I can just let it go instead of worrying about changing myself to fit what the client thinks I should be doing. Another one of my clients went to see a psychiatrist who, when he heard how long I had been working with the client said to the client, "You've been seeing him for *how* long? You should be further along by now. What's he doing? Tell him to be more directive!" In the past that would have really bothered me but now it's like fuck it! There are people who will question what I'm doing but I know what I'm doing and I know it helps people heal their shame. I can be honest in the relationship and not try to be something I am not.

I feel like I can be honestly present in all of my relationships now, with my wife Elizabeth, my mother, my father and my sister, and with my friends. In particular my relationship with Elizabeth has changed because I tell her when things are going on for me. Instead of keeping it all inside until it explodes, we talk about things as they happen. I am no longer the steel ball nor am I the supernova. I am the balance of having boundaries and at the same time staying engaged with people. I've come into myself and have been able to separate myself from the enmeshed role of protecting my mother. I had to edit myself to support her and now I have left that little world behind. I have my own foundation and strength, and a solidity that I never felt before. I have broken free from the world of my mother and I'm not protecting her from her own guilt and her own feelings of inadequacy.

Now I am starting to look at the next part of the story and I am thinking it may be about breaking free from my father's world. I was once the devoted son who wanted so much for everything to be okay in my parents' world. I wanted to make sure that nothing else would go wrong, and so I played my role carefully, so as not to make any waves. The role I played was the steel ball. Then I was let loose on the world and burst open to find my own place and be my own hero, a hero who had to let go of being a prince in my mother's world and make his own world. I am starting to think that maybe I may have some work to do around breaking out of my father's world. That part is very different for me though. It's much more subtle.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the limitations of the study, the relationship to the current literature on change in Therapeutic Enactment, the unique findings of this study, future research directions, and the implications for the theory and practice of Therapeutic Enactment. The final section of this discussion will include the researcher's personal reflections on conducting a narrative study of change. First, I have included a brief cross-narrative comparison of what changed for each person.

Cross-Narrative Analysis

The general model that I use when examining change in individuals looks at, what I consider to be, the six fundamental components of awareness related to individual change. Counsellors often focus on the three fundamental aspects of change: thoughts, feelings/emotions and behaviours. I believe these three fundamental aspects can be expanded to include three more components based on gestalt principles of awareness. At any point in time, an individual can become aware of his/her thoughts, feelings/emotions, and behaviours, but he/she can also be aware of their bodily sensations, their relationships, and their sense of a spiritual connection. All of the components are interconnected and inclusive and each of them can potentially impact an individual's sense of self and the change process. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2, on both psychodrama and Therapeutic Enactment theory and research, indicates that each one of these six components represents a potential area in which change may occur for the protagonist/lead person. As such, I have included in this section a cross-narrative analysis of change in each of these areas. None of the six can be examined in isolation,

as each person is a whole, comprised of parts which influence and effect each other and which combine to influence the whole.

Body Sensations

Perhaps the most fundamental awareness that a person possesses is their awareness of bodily sensations. It begins at birth and continues throughout life. In support of the research done by Martens, 1990, Baum 1994, Keats, 2000, and Morley, 2000, the co-researchers in this study reported that they experienced different kinds of body sensations related to both their enactment and, interestingly, related to telling the story of their enactment. I found that body sensation was the most variable and fluid kind of change that people experienced and that it changed momentarily and often. Grace explained that she went into the enactment in acute pain and that she left the enactment without that acute pain. Claire described how she had a physical reaction to Julia saying the word “abuse” and that she had a physical rush when Gordon leaned into her in the circle. Leonard described a feeling of being more at ease and more relaxed following his enactment. Ellen described how she “went cold” when the directors asked her “father” to say that he wanted to have sex with her child double and she reported that she still feels the solidness of Julia’s body pressing up behind her to this day.

Several of the co-researchers reported changes in bodily sensation over the course of telling their stories. Claire actually began to sweat as she told her story and Gabriel felt that his stomach was in knots talking about his mother and then he reported that it had loosened up as we moved on to other parts of his story. These bodily sensations are a significant component to the stories of change because they remind us that the individuals

are also sensing beings that have access to a wealth of information in their bodies throughout the TE process and afterwards.

Emotions

Perhaps one of the most significant categories of awareness in the stories was the awareness of changes in emotions and how they fluctuated. Emotions are intimately connected to bodily sensations in that they are a higher order of awareness, which allows bodily sensations to acquire meaning for the individual. In this sense I am using the word emotion as a synonym for feelings. In support of the research conducted by Martens 1990, Baum, 1994, Brooks, 1998, Keats, 2000, and Morley, 2000, emotional reactions and processing was a central feature of what changed. Claire described her anger towards Gordon during his enactment and her feelings of fear that she had somehow hurt him by how she had behaved. These feelings were then assuaged by Julia holding her hands and looking into her eyes with understanding and this allowed Claire to carry through with her own enactment. Claire also described how her fear of being in groups is no longer a factor for her in her professional life, changing from being terrified just sitting in a group to leading groups with confidence.

Ellen describes how she used to get pulled into her father's neediness. She tells us that her feelings of wanting to take care of him have now shifted for her since the enactment, to the point where now she gets "pissed off" with him when she senses that he is acting that way and trying to draw her in. She also reported that her fears of never having children were finally expressed and she was able to then look forward to a full life and give up the idea of suicide. Gabriel described how his anger for his mother surfaced after his enactment and how it now fluctuates with his fear that she might hurt herself.

Gabriel also reported that his fear of losing people's confidence in his group work and his fear of losing clients' faith have been replaced with a feeling of self-assuredness around his personal style of working and his expertise. Leonard stated that he now feels that he can "get into a bit of a snit" if he feels it is appropriate and that the ability to allow his rage to surface without anyone getting hurt in his enactment has translated into changes for him at work. He says he does not let things build up in him the way he used to. Grace reported that she was able to feel loved and seen by God and that this helps her to feel forgiven for what she feels is an unforgivable act on her part and she said she was also able to give up her feelings of suicide as a result of the guilt she felt for having the abortion.

Behaviours

Behaviours are often mediated by emotions and body sensations, as well as by an individual's thoughts, which will be addressed in the next section. Each of the co-researchers told stories of how they felt their behaviours had changed after their enactments in support of the research done by Martens, 1990, Baum, 1994, and Brooks, 1998. Ellen behaves differently with her father when he phones now by telling him to complain to someone else or to get some therapy. Ellen also reported how she was able to deal much better with "needy" men that she dated and get rid of them sooner rather than later. She also made changes in her behaviour at work by setting limits on the behaviour of her aggressive patients and expelling them from her practice, while reducing the amount of time that she spends at work. Gabriel is able to be more present with his mother and tell her how things are going to be between them. Gabriel also reported that he tells more stupid jokes and is more himself with his clients, while Leonard reports that

he now speaks up at work when he feels things need to be discussed. Claire was able to have “the talk” with her mother about being abused in childhood and she also divorced her husband following her enactment. Claire also speaks of how she now warns people, in the groups, that she runs about transference and how she is working on becoming the most competent group leader she can be. Grace on the other hand has moved on to try donor insemination as a means of getting pregnant but she also told us how her behaviour has not changed in that she has continued to see her lover Ian, despite telling the Ian character during her enactment to “stay the fuck away” from her.

Thoughts

The thought patterns that seemed to be reported most by the co-researchers were in reference to how they view themselves. The ability to have thoughts about self and about others is inextricably linked to both body sensation and emotions as well as to an individual’s behaviour. The results of this study support the findings by Martens, 1990, Baum, 1994, and Brooks, 1998 in this regard. Leonard always thought himself to be small and weak and that this was a character flaw of his, but now he realizes that he had every right to feel afraid of his father who was so much bigger and out of control. Claire viewed herself as always being overly needy and now she realizes that her mother was the one who was overly needy and now she sees herself as occasionally needy and at the same time possessing strength. Grace wanted to be punished and judged for her crime and she was given penance to repay in her work with pregnant mothers, yet she reported how her perspective changed when she realized how much she had been overcompensating with her patients following the enactment. Ellen realized that there would be nothing she could do to satisfy her father’s neediness and that it was she who

needed protection from her father all along. She also realized that she could have a life that was full despite the fact that she might not have children. Gabriel was able to define his role in relation to his mother and come to the awareness that it was not his job to keep his mother alive.

Relationships

Thoughts, behaviours, emotions and body sensations combine to influence how an individual relates to others. The most striking changes that were reported by each of the co-researchers were the changes to their relationships. With the exception of the relationship with the director/therapist, none of the previous studies addressed the issue of change with respect to the lead person's relationships outside of the enactment weekend. This can be considered a unique finding of this study and will be discussed further in the section entitled Unique Findings. Gabriel's relationship with his mother went from one of constant worry and care taking to ensure that she would not kill herself to one where Gabriel recognized what his role was in relation to his mother. He realized that his job was not to keep her alive but to take care of himself, which resulted in his being able to confront his mother when they were discussing the finances of the property they had invested in. Claire reported that she had a better relationship with her mother after the enactment and that she was able to confront her regarding her treatment of Claire as a child. Claire also feels that she is able to be a better mother to her daughter Stephanie since the enactment, despite the fact that she also ended her marriage. Leonard recognized his problems with romantic relationships and how the women he dated and married resembled his father and now he is in a romantic relationship which is much more enjoyable and coming up on an anniversary.

Finally, Grace reported that she still struggles with her relationship to Ian and that sometimes he is a great friend but sometimes the relationship is destroying her. Grace's narrative is particularly interesting in this regard because her enactment followed so soon after her abortion, whereas the other enactors enacted scenes from early childhood.

Perhaps we see more change in relationships with the other four narratives because they have longer standing patterns of relating to people that are influenced by the enactment topic. Ellen reported that her relationship with her father has changed for the better in that she does not "hook into him" the same way she used to and that her relationships to men have changed as well. Her relationships with ambivalent men have changed so much so that, after a series of dates and boyfriends who had "mommy" issues, she now is the mother of a baby girl with her lover turned husband Robert.

Spiritual Connection

The sense of connection to some form of higher power is a universal and cross-cultural phenomenon. A sense of spiritual connection, by definition, transcends thoughts, behaviours, emotions, body sensations, and human relationships but nonetheless includes all of them as well. Likewise, the sense of spiritual connection was not addressed in the theme statements of any of the previous studies and can be considered a unique finding of this study. However, in the classical psychodrama literature, Moreno (1946, 1969, and 1989) does address the notion of joining with the "Godhead" and so, in this respect, the findings of this study provide support for Moreno's previous writings. Grace's story is the most concrete example of a change in spiritual connection through TE. She reported that she actually felt God's presence, through the eyes of the man playing God in the enactment. Grace felt that she experienced the compassion of God in her enactment and

that she was seen by and forgiven by God. Gabriel's experience of change after his first enactment is what would be called a transitory "non-dual" (i.e., no separation between self and spirit) spiritual experience. He describes how after the steel ball burst, the supernova occurred and he felt that there was no distinction between himself and God, which is characteristic of the "non-dual" experience. Gabriel felt that when the cracking of the steel ball occurred it left an opportunity for the supernova or non-dual (this is my interpretation of what Gabriel has termed a "psychotic moment") experience to occur. This experience stayed with Gabriel in his next enactment but he was able to find a balance in himself between the supernova and the steel ball.

It seems then that TE has the ability to influence the change process in all six of these areas of consciousness as described in detail by the narratives of change presented herein. The next section will examine the limitations of the study.

Limitations of the Study

The study of change is always problematic for the empiricist because of the ubiquitous extraneous and uncontrolled variables that influence an individual's experience. This study is no different. The research question posed was, "What are the individual narratives of change in Therapeutic Enactment?" The narratives have been presented but what do we now know for certain about change as it relates to Therapeutic Enactment. What can we say is true about TE and change? This is not a controlled study, using a pre-post test design and so from a modernist standpoint, it is fraught with extraneous variables.

One cannot predict in any concise manner what change in Therapeutic Enactment will look like in the future. The data do not allow one to predict what will occur in the

future and the data are not presented in a manner that fits into the dominant discourse of what scientific research looks like. This may prove to be a detractor from the study for scholars more accustomed to a presentation of data that is presented as a statement of propositional truth or facts that are clear, concrete, and observable and that point towards greater predictability in TE. Thus, the lack of a set of “results” packaged in the manner many scientist practitioners are accustomed to may prevent the study from gaining acceptance into the more dominant “scientific” community. This is a limitation of the study but it is not an apology. The epistemological foundations of this study are sound and the research question has been adequately addressed. The limitation lies in the fact that this study exists in a cultural context that may make the results of the study seem less than “scientific” to some scholars who conduct psychological research using a more modernist paradigm.

The results of this study are not generalizable to other populations. The Loon Lake experience is a unique function of each group of participants, the helpers, and most importantly the personalities of David and Julia. Any attempt to generalize the results of this study to other enactment retreats would be misguided because of the myriad of extraneous factors that were present. Likewise, the study was designed to address the in-depth, intra-personal experience in detail and is a function of who I am as the researcher and who each co-researcher was with me in the interview. Again, Grace let’s us know about the limits to the rapport with the researcher and how much the researcher will know when she says at the end of her narrative that we “know enough”. Perhaps her best and closest friends would know a different story?

The idea that the results of the study, from a more modernist standpoint, are not generalizable is a limitation of this kind of study, conducted using a post-modernist, narrative paradigm. However, in lieu of generalizability, the *learning* that results from reading the narratives in this study is *transferable* and therefore useful for the individual reader. Practitioners can transfer the learning to their own method of directing enactments, while consumers of the TE method can transfer the learning to their decisions about participating in TE. Scholars can transfer the learning to their pre-existing knowledge of the TE literature or use the narratives as an introduction to the literature on TE research.

Finally, the reliability of the study is not testable in the empirical sense of the word reliability. Are the results of this study reliable and could another researcher get the *same* results if they conducted a study using the same method outlined herein? The answer to this question is two-fold. First, if another researcher were to follow the injunctions outlined in this study's method, they would indeed gather the same *type* of data that I have gathered. They would be able to gather individual narratives of change in Therapeutic Enactment. In that sense of the word reliability, the study and the method are reliable. However, one of the measurement instruments that is not replicable is the researcher.

In narrative studies, the researcher is viewed as one of the key instruments of measurement. Given that I am an individual who is influenced by a myriad of factors that combine to make me unique, *I* am not replicable and therefore any further research conducted by others using this method will be missing a key component of this study. In addition, because I am not a static entity and I am constantly growing and changing

myself, I myself may not get the same results with the same people if I followed exactly the same procedures. Therefore, a limitation to the study is that it is not entirely replicable and will most likely yield different results in the future. I see this as a limitation due to the culture within which this study sits at the university I attend; a culture that values more modernist epistemological approaches to studying internal-subjective experiences. These approaches seek to establish the reliability and validity of scientific studies to discover some form of propositional or objective truth. Research conducted using a particular paradigm or injunction will always be partial and this study has examined *narratives* of change in Therapeutic Enactment using the *narrative* injunction, which inevitably poses limitations on the study when viewed from an alternate paradigm. This in no way detracts from the results of the study; rather it acknowledges the partiality of the results.

Criteria for Validation

As mentioned in Chapter 3 this study is being evaluated on several kinds of validity. In terms of the requirement for truthfulness, I believe that this criterion has been met, given the constraints of the research relationship as indicated by Grace's comments that I knew "enough". In terms of justness or inter-subjective fit, these criteria have been met. The validation of the narratives by the co-researchers and the subsequent amendments being made demonstrates that there is an understanding between the co-researchers and myself that the stories contained in this document are a representation of their subjective narratives of change in TE. This also addresses the need for criteria of co-constructive or relational validity as mentioned above. Readers assess narrative validity for themselves, and my experience of reading the stories in this study indicates

that the criteria for narrative validity have been met. Finally, the criteria of accessible validity required that the findings of the study be accessible to those who are not necessarily a part of the academic community. I believe that, although some jargon is used in some of the narratives, the criteria for accessible validity have been met. I believe that someone who is not a part of the academic community would understand the subjective experience of change in TE as co-constructed by the co-researchers and myself.

Implications for Research on Change in TE

This study fills a gap that has existed in the TE literature on change beginning with Martens' (1990) study examining the experience of protagonists in psychodrama. All of the TE studies cited above (Baum, 1994, Brooks, 1998, Keats, 2000, and Morley, 2000) examined what the underlying structures were that supported change as experienced by the lead person. None of the studies examined in detail "What" actually changed for the participants and no study to date has used a purely narrative method to investigate change in TE. The present study fills the gap in the literature regarding: 1) what kinds of changes TE participants experience, 2) what kinds of external factors that are not directly related to the TE intervention contribute to both positive and negative change in TE participants, and 3) how participants make meaning from their TE experience as it relates to individual change. The current study gives a much-needed context to understanding and interpreting the results of past TE studies examining change. At the same time, the results of this study support many of the findings from the previous studies.

Reviewing the literature on TE studies to date, we see that only two underlying structures were found to be of importance in all cases. First, the concept of wholeness was found to be an outcome of all of the studies from Martens (1990) to Keats (2000). Wholeness, as described by Martens (1990) is an experience of being fully engaged in the process of the TE and involves the importance of bodily movement (action) in facilitating a therapeutic outcome, a “shock, shift, or release of energy” throughout the body, and a felt sense of completion and/or closure of the process. It is interesting to note that in the case of Leonard, Ellen, and Gabriel, there were distinct experiences of engagement and closure, combined with a release of energy or a shift throughout the body. Grace, on the other hand, reported that although the enactment had an ending to it, her sense of closure was not carried through into her life with her lover Ian. Likewise, Claire reported feeling a rush of nurturance when she was being held followed by a pulling away from the experience feeling smothered. She also was left with a sense that the issues with Gordon were left unfinished. Despite the fact that all of the studies to date have found this to be a key underlying structure in TE, this study adds a new dimension to the term. It seems that even if there is closure in an enactment, it may not translate to a closure in the person’s life outside the residential retreat.

The second concept that was found across all studies was the importance of the relationship with the director(s)/therapist(s). All of the narratives in this study indicate that this was also an important factor for each of the participants. Leonard was connected to David, Julia and Heather, as was Claire. Grace seemed to have the strongest connection with David alone, while Ellen seemed to connect with both David and Julia. Gabriel reported that his enactment was planned and designed by his colleague James,

and we see that his connection was with James as the therapist, while David and Julia were the supervising therapists who guided James in the process. The fact that the connection exists is consistent with the other studies on TE but what we have provided here is the context for the shape that the connections actually took. Leonard's connection with the therapists was based on a shared history with David and Heather and was based on the experience of personal therapy work with Julia prior to the weekend. Claire's connection began in the kitchen when she told David and Julia about her memory that emerged and with Heather in the pre-enactment meeting. Ellen seemed to connect with Julia at the pre-enactment interview and with David at the supper table at Loon Lake. Grace felt connected to David, mostly, after meeting with him and talking to him on the phone, and also after seeing him at a funeral where David gave her a hug, which she felt was very warm and inclusive. Gabriel's connection to James came in the form of driving up to Loon Lake together and singing songs about sea-bound adventurers. It would seem then that the actual event of the enactment itself is but a piece of those things that contribute to change for participants.

Two other findings were present in all but one each of the studies cited above. "Safety" was stated as a key factor in all but Brooks' (1998) study and "Return to Group" was cited as a key factor in all but Morley's (2000) study. "Safety" is experienced as a sense of trust in the directors and/or the group before the enactment takes place and the current study supports this finding as demonstrated in each of the narratives. "Return to Group" is characterized as a need for acceptance and affirmation by the group and by a physical rejoining of the protagonist to their place in the circle. The "return to group" finding was evident in the stories told by Leonard, Gabriel and Grace but did not appear

as a significant factor in the stories told by Ellen and Claire. Table 1 outlines how the current study supports the previous findings of in the literature on TE.

Table 1: Summary of TE Findings 1990-2003

Study	Martens (1990)	Baum (1994)	Brooks (1998)	Morley (2000)	Keats* (2000)	Black* (2003)
Key Findings						
Readiness						
Safety						
Focus						
Transition						
Wholeness/Full Engagement						
Tension/Urgency						
Awareness of Group Reduced						
Return to Group						
Insight/Action						
Intellectual Understanding						
Relationship with Director						
Previous Experience						
Director's Voice						
Witnessed						
Emotional Processing						
Physical Sensation						
Reconnection with Director						
Hope						
Possibilities						
Director "planted seed"						
Altruistic Directorial Stance						
Client-centred planning						
Previous Interventions						
Dissociation						
Lack of recall						
Physical Memories						
High Risks						
Loss of Control						
Return of Control						
Experience of Repair						
Lack of desire to watch video						
Debriefing Helpful						
Over Analysis Unhelpful						
Completion						
Emotional Difficulty After						

***Note:** As in the case of the column entitled Keats (2000), I have used shaded boxes in the column entitled Black (2003) to indicate those themes from the previous phenomenological studies for which the present study provides support.

Unique Findings of the Study

The current study supports many of the findings of the previous studies and it contributes some unique findings to the literature. As mentioned above in the cross-narrative analysis, two of the unique findings of this study relate to the changes that people experience in their relationships and in the changes they experience in their spiritual connection. No other study on TE has addressed these issues and I believe that it is a function of the method chosen for this study. Based on personal experience and anecdotal evidence, it is not surprising that this was illuminated in the stories. I have witnessed many occasions where people have experienced significant change in their relationships as well as changes in their sense of connection to the spiritual during or following a TE retreat. I feel that these two findings fill the gap in the literature regarding what changes in a lead person who does TE.

It became evident that at residential retreats, that the group was a significant factor before, during *and* after the enactments. The theoretical literature on TE suggests that the group is important for “containing” the enactments and the research on TE suggests that returning to the group is also important once the enactment has finished. The current study suggests that the group and the individual group members can have an impact on the individuals taking part in an enactment beyond simply providing a safe container in which to do an enactment.

Grace commented on how her experience of the group processing when the men and women separated both detracted from her experience at Loon Lake and added to her insights on the expression of anger. Ellen spoke of how a comment made to her in a debrief group had an impact on her ability to acknowledge being raped when she was a

teenager. Claire explained how individual moments with group members impacted her on several occasions. She described the comment that was made by the woman she spilled water on before her enactment and the moment when Gordon was clutching on to her after her enactment. Claire also described how important it was that the two group female group members agreed to help her in her enactment by taking on the role of Claire's double and the role of Claire's mother. Gabriel reported that the incident with the Tarot cards caused him to reconnect with the feelings of becoming the supernova. Finally, Leonard commented on how he felt included in the group when Heather greeted him outside the enactment room when he first arrived.

The aspect of what happens to the lead person after a TE retreat was also another key finding of this study. All of the participants stated that a great deal changed after their enactments from relationships ending to divorce, from new relationships beginning to attempts at artificial insemination, and from "psychotic moments" to watching a tape of the enactment in order to remember what it felt like to feel seen and forgiven by God. The process of change seems to take place after the enactment and the results of this study demonstrate that the weeks, months and perhaps years following the enactment seem to be the most fertile time for changes to occur. It would seem then that the changes that are experienced during the enactment, such as emotional discharge, are a small part of the changes that occur in the life of the individual. Finally, the present study demonstrates that the use of unplanned events in enactments seems to have a profound effect on the lead person doing the enactment. The use of planning in the construction of the TE is emphasized in the literature on the theory and practice of TE but

no study to date has addressed the potential impact of unplanned events (i.e., unplanned insofar as the lead person is concerned) as a finding as it relates to the practice of TE.

The unique findings of this study include the impact of unplanned events during the enactment phase but they also centre on the processes that occur outside of the specific enactment phase of the TE retreat. The results point towards future research that could be conducted on change in Therapeutic Enactment as well as towards recommendations for the continued refinement of the practice of TE. Both of these issues will be considered in the sections below.

Implications for Future Research

The current study indicates that future research on TE residential retreats would benefit from focusing on the change in the relationships of lead persons following TE retreats, the impact of events that occur outside of the enactment phase of TE, and the events that occur during the group processing phase. Much of the change that was reported in peoples' relationships occurred long after the TE retreat had ended and an entire study could be devoted to this topic alone. Likewise, a study on the experiences of individuals who have experienced a change in their sense of spiritual connection could be conducted.

Many of the events that the co-researchers in this study included in their stories on change occurred in the moments between enactments, after enactments had finished, or during group processing times. Future research might use critical incident methodology to investigate what helps and what hinders the lead person during an enactment weekend at the times when they are not actually in the center of the circle doing their enactment weekend. This makes intuitive sense, given the fact that the entire enactment phase of

TE may only last two hours in a three-day retreat. Researchers could ask questions about what happened during meal times at the retreat, during coffee breaks, at the end of the day when all of the enactments had finished. When people are living, eating and sleeping in the same environment, there are bound to be events and conversations that will either add to or detract from a lead person's experience of change and the narratives in this study indicate that this is the case. In Claire's story, she reveals the impact of getting a "clutching hug" from Gordon; when she talks to her roommate Bonita about her childhood memory, and Sharon's reaction when Claire spills the water on her. These are just a few of the examples from only one narrative that point towards continued research on these kinds of events at TE retreats.

The group processing time at the end of each enactment could be studied as a distinct experience to investigate what helps and what hinders during that phase of TE. This study indicates that the group-processing phase can be both helpful and hindering as in the cases of Ellen and Grace respectively. Ellen experiences validation and support in one of the debrief groups, while Grace felt marginalized and silenced during the debrief session with the women of the group. Both of these experiences, however, occurred after they had witnessed other enactments, not after completing their own enactments as lead persons. This study indicates that there is much to be learned about how the group-processing phase of TE, which is a key component to TE that separates it from classical psychodrama, can impact on an individual's experience of change.

The current study also indicates that the follow-up/integration phase of enactment is a time when the majority of changes take place. This also makes intuitive sense in that a TE retreat is usually no longer than three days in a person's life. Grace indicated that

her TE experience was a catalyst for change. All of the narratives describe a myriad of changes that occurred after the TE retreat. As such, research questions that could be asked might be, what are the factors that operate to maintain the changes that the lead person experiences during the weekend? Are there particular issues to be considered in this phase with respect to the time that has passed since the TE was completed? What are the differences in the experience of integration for a lead person who does his/her enactment on the first day of the TE retreat, at the mid-point of the retreat, or for a lead person who does his/her enactment on the last day of the retreat? What are the issues to be considered in the first week following the TE retreat, the first month, or the first year? The narrative nature of this study allows future researchers to consider many different avenues for future research and, as such, represents another contribution of the current study to the development of the growing body of TE literature.

Implications for Theory of Therapeutic Enactment

Westwood & Wilensky (2001) state that the four key concepts that separate Therapeutic Enactment (TE) from Moreno's psychodrama are: 1) the psychological safety of the individual, 2) the role of spontaneity, 3) the purpose of catharsis, and 4) attention to group processes. The results of this study speak to the importance of these four concepts in TE as it relates to individual change. First, several of the narratives described how the individual was given the final choice and control concerning whether or not they would do their own enactment right up to the time just before the enactment was to begin. Claire's narrative in particular speaks to the importance of psychological safety outside of the group as well and how the comment made to her by one of the group members during the break decreased her sense of psychological safety before her

enactment. Each of the individual's took a risk by trusting the judgement of the therapists during their enactments to engage in unplanned activities, which indicates a sense of psychological safety sufficient to risk take. This sense of safety and control that the co-researchers experienced was also important with regards to the role of spontaneity.

Westwood & Wilensky state that the role of spontaneity in TE is the outcome of tight control and careful planning by the therapists. In all of the enactments described by the co-researchers, the unplanned aspects of their enactments impacted them greatly. Grace's meeting with God, Leonard's roar, the statement made by Ellen's father, Gabriel's balance in the circle, and the group singing at the end of Claire's enactment are examples of spontaneous and unplanned interventions by the therapists. All of these unplanned aspects of the enactments had impacts on each of the co-researchers and all of them were spontaneous decisions made by the therapists during the enactment. In the literature review, I mentioned that the spontaneous reactions by the participants were the result of careful planning by the therapists and I believe that is still accurate. However, the careful planning of the enactments also seems to allow the therapists to respond spontaneously in the enactments as well. Paradoxically, careful planning and tightly controlled norms around enactment participation not only allow for the spontaneous emotional expressions of the lead persons to emerge but they also allow the spontaneous therapeutic wisdom of the therapists to emerge. I believe this is a major contribution to TE theory, which supports the role of careful planning and control on the part of the therapists.

The role of catharsis in TE is not to be the end result of the enactment but rather the beginning of reparation and healing. The narratives presented herein perhaps

illuminate this point most vividly. All of the co-researchers described experiences that support the psychodynamic concepts of the different types of catharses during their enactment. Claire, Ellen, and Gabriel experienced integration catharses. Both Leonard and Grace experienced abreactions and Grace experienced inclusion catharsis and spiritual catharsis. Each of these catharses was a beginning point towards integration or towards disintegration depending on the “fallout from the enactment” as Claire describes it. What is interesting is that there were also strong catharses, which occurred outside of the enactment, in the larger group. Claire’s experience with Gordon after her enactment is one example. The narratives each give a life-context to the research on TE, which demonstrates both the significance of the impact of a TE experience *and* the relative significance of the TE experience in relation to other life forces. The TE itself, for all of the co-researchers, was not an ending but rather a beginning. As Grace describes it, “It was a catalyst for survival.”

Finally, we see the importance of the attention to group processes in the narratives. Therapeutic enactment practitioners utilize the dynamics of the group process through this expressive therapeutic approach, as a means for preventing group dynamics from impeding the enactment process and as a means of allowing the beneficial aspects of the group dynamics to enhance the enactment process for the participants. The narratives show how attending to or not attending to group processes can enhance *and/or* impede the process of enactment. Claire wished that her feelings for Gordon had been processed in the group but felt that, due to the lack of time for a group debrief following Gordon’s enactment, she did not have the opportunity to talk about her reactions to him. Grace commented that the processing that occurred when the group was split up into men

and women was not helpful and even left her feeling more excluded from the group of women, because she disagreed with some of the comments made by members of the “perceived” inner circle. Ellen commented that in one of the debriefing groups she experienced a profound insight into her date rape experience as a teenager, which led her to have confidence in TE enough to do her own enactment.

The group process phase I believe should be extended to include all aspects of a residential retreat. There seems to be a false separation between those things that are said or processed in the group or during the enactment and those things that happen outside the group. In a residential weekend, I would suggest that there does not exist a space that is outside the group. The narratives describe several incidents that happened “outside the group” but that still impacted the group members for better and for worse. Gabriel talked about sitting down and dealing Tarot cards and the impact it had on him after his enactment. Claire described how a comment made by the woman she spilled water on impacted her in a negative way. Leonard spoke about how arriving late impacted his ability to fit into the group and how the greeting he received from Heather helped him feel included. I believe that residential TE retreats are full of these kinds of incidents that occur “outside of the group”, and that impact the group members. I believe that the concept of attending to group process may need to be expanded in the case like Loon Lake when the group lives, eats and sleeps in the enactment space.

The Implications for Practice of Therapeutic Enactment

TE is, first and foremost, a group intervention but it is also a brief therapeutic intervention. Given that these are the defining characteristics of TE, what are the implications for practicing TE that we can glean from the present study? I think that this

study has particular significance for the use of TE and the specific focus on change. The different stages of TE, as described in Figure 1.1, are: 1) assessment and preparation, 2) group building, 3) enactment, 4) group processing, and 5) integration and transfer. In terms of the five phases of TE, the narratives demonstrate how attention or lack of attention to detail in each of these phases can have an impact on TE participants.

Assessment and Preparation

The narratives presented herein demonstrate the need for careful assessment and planning on the part of the therapists. I have also outlined above, how spontaneity of therapist wisdom can be a positive by-product of this phase. It would seem that, as the co-researchers looked back on their experiences in TE, those aspects of their enactments that were surprising to them or that were unexpected, tended to make an impact on them that was crucial in their enactment process. Leonard's roar, Claire's reaction to the group hug and the singing, Gabriel's drum ceremony and the balanced circle, Ellen's father saying that he wanted to have sex with her, and Grace's courtroom scene with God are examples of how unexpected enactment components can have an impact on the enactor.

The element of surprise, when introduced at an emotionally vulnerable moment in an enactment, may account for the fact that the participants recall the event as important. However, I would offer that the conscious use of undisclosed enactment scenes or techniques might be an important factor effecting change in TE. TE therapists might benefit from strategically deciding which components of the enactment will be disclosed to the lead person and which parts will be more therapeutic if they are not known ahead of time. Given that there are inherent ethical complications with this approach I believe it warrants further investigation. It is currently standard practice that a certain amount of

the enactment scene will be left to the therapists and the lead person is not informed ahead of time, but I believe that if it is consciously included in the assessment and preparation phase, there could be more strategic decisions made about when and how to introduce unanticipated enactment material.

Group Building

The phase called group building usually involves some sort of group disclosure exercise at the beginning of the weekend. Grace described an example of what group building can look like at a TE weekend, when she talked about David asking each group member to state one thing they needed to put aside for the weekend. I would suggest that, as mentioned above, group building be extended to include activities that occur outside the group or the enactment space. I would also suggest that the events that occur outside the group are as critical as those events that happen during an enactment.

Practitioners would be wise to attend more consciously to events that happen outside the enactment that may both strengthen the group dynamics or that may serve to undermine the group dynamics. As mentioned above, there is nothing that is “outside the group” at a residential enactment weekend. Subgrouping can be a problem as indicated by Grace’s feeling that there was an inside and outside circle. Likewise, individual actions outside the group can be detrimental, as in the case of the comment made by the woman Claire spilled her water on. In contrast, individual actions outside the group can be helpful as in the case of Heather’s greeting of Leonard when he first arrived.

The question I would pose is how the natural tendency for subgrouping and for individual actions can be used for the benefit of the group building process. I would suggest two options. If enactment participants were assigned a “buddy” at the beginning

of the weekend, this would establish a personal link for each participant. This link would help to increase feelings of belonging and support, as in the case of Claire talking to her roommate Bonita, and it would be a natural deterrent to spontaneous subgrouping. It would ensure that no one was left out of the group and enhance feelings of inclusion.

Likewise, TE directors could randomly assign subgroups, which exist as support networks or a type of expanded “buddy” system. These subgroups could serve to prevent haphazard subgrouping, formed by circumstance, sending the message that the group does not simply exist when everyone is sitting in a circle. The rebuttal might be that this is unnatural, is contrived, and is too much like summer camp or babysitting. Given that the fundamental need for group members in the early stages of a group is inclusion, and given that this is a brief therapeutic intervention, little time can be wasted waiting for inclusion to occur organically or haphazardly. Trust in the group cannot be established without inclusion and since there is so little time to work with in a residential setting, it would benefit the practitioner to be more purposeful about ensuring that inclusion occurs. Group member needs must be acknowledged as connected to the various stages of group development and given the short duration of a brief therapeutic encounter such as TE, one must focus their attention on the beginning stage of group formation and not assume that the group will progress through the stages of development in one weekend.

Enactment

The phase of TE in which enactment occurs is perhaps the best and most well researched aspect of TE. The suggestion about using undisclosed interventions is the only aspect of this phase of TE that I believe can be added by the findings in this study. It is the phase that requires the most innovation and therapeutic acumen of the

practitioner and I believe that the results of this study indicate that the enactment phase of TE is the most carefully refined of the five phases. It requires years of clinical training and supervision to become a competent TE director and to be able to hold together all of the issues that inevitably arise over the course of an entire weekend. That being said, in terms of a narrative understanding of TE, the results of this study speak to the notion of narrative in action during the enactment phase.

Moving from telling their story to enacting their story meant that the co-researchers could begin to re-story their lives in action. Leonard has an embodied memory of roaring like the Lion and Ellen feels the hook of her father's neediness has now been removed. How could the verbal narration of a story ever access those kinds of experiences for clients? Leonard had to use his body and his muscles to break free from the chains of his past, represented by the actual hands and arms pulling him down. Ellen literally put her arm around her child self and removed her from the hook with her father and then cradled her child self and danced with her in the circle. Enactment is the embodiment of the story that people co-construct for themselves. TE is unique in this aspect and the findings of this study underscore the importance of embodied stories in therapy and how the use of action can help individuals co-construct new narratives, especially during the enactment phase of TE.

Group Processing

The group processing phase of TE occurs when lead persons finish their enactment and then rejoin the group for a debrief of the enactment. What is interesting in this study is that this phase of the process did not appear to have any real effect on any of the co-researchers, with the exception of Claire who would have liked more of an

opportunity to debrief her reactions to Gordon. How is one to interpret the impact of the group-processing phase, given that it was barely mentioned in this study? Lead persons, when coming out of the enactment phase, often say that they don't hear or remember what is said by group participants in the debrief. I can say that, as a lead person in many enactments, I remember nothing positive that was said from any debrief circle of which I was a part of. The only memories that I do have of group members' comments in the debrief circle are those occasions when things were said that were unhelpful or that had a negative impact.

I would ask the question about whether or not the group-processing phase needs to include the lead person. Perhaps practitioners need to re-examine the need for the lead person to be present in the debrief circle as there seem to be inherent risks involved. They are often in an emotionally sensitive state and are often in a state of high receptivity to negative statements, while very little is revealed about the impact that positive statements by group members make on the lead person in that state. However, based on personal and clinical experience, the group-processing phase has real benefits for the group members who have witnessed the lead person's enactment. It allows witnesses to talk about their reactions and to potentially discharge emotions that may have been triggered by watching the lead person's enactment. Despite the benefits to the group participants, none of the literature on TE indicates that the group-debriefing phase, following the completion of an enactment, impacts the lead person in a positive way. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that the risk of negative impact following an enactment is substantial, when the comments made are perceived as negative. What is the theoretical reasoning behind the group process phase and what form should it take?

Does the lead person need to be present during this phase or not? These are questions that can be addressed by future research with the TE directors.

Integration and Transfer

This phase of TE is perhaps the most nebulous of the enactment phases. It would seem that the integration of the enactment is a process that does not occur until after the enactment weekend has finished. It also seems that integration of the enactment may or may not occur in a linear fashion and transfer of learning outside the enactment may or may not occur. The narratives in this study demonstrate that the integration of the enactment continues to happen even years after the enactment itself. Every one of the co-researchers in the study had completed their enactment over a year before the interview and for one of the participants, the enactment occurred more than four years prior to the interview. There is also evidence to suggest that the transfer of learning occurred in some cases and not in others. Grace described how she is still involved with Ian despite her enactment ending with her telling him to stay the fuck away from her. Leonard stated that because of the “roar” he now feels better able to stand up for himself at work. How can directors make the integration and transfer phase more explicit in terms of a treatment plan for a lead person?

I would suggest that directors explore with the lead persons what their vision of the future will be like after the enactment. A tremendous amount of energy and time is spent on the assessment and planning for the enactment phase. Perhaps more time can be spent on discussing the integration and transfer phase, during the assessment and planning stages. Helping lead persons to see TE as a process that could potentially involve years of integration might benefit those participants who feel that it all has to be

done at the end of the weekend. There is a follow-up group that occurs after every enactment and only two of the co-researchers mentioned the follow-up group during the interview process. There is yet to be any study examining the follow-up process in TE and I would suggest that, based on the narratives in this study, the follow-up may constitute a much larger component in the change process than the enactment itself. Preparing and planning for the post-enactment phase, I believe, would be beneficial to address in the planning stages before the enactment. I would suggest that the TE therapist incorporate a series of pre-planned individual counselling sessions to follow the TE retreat. Perhaps two or three follow-up meetings with each lead person should be planned and appointments made prior to the retreat. This would add to the lead person's sense of safety and support and would help to reinforce the notion that a TE retreat is the beginning of a process and not an end in and of itself. To use the metaphor of a major surgery, what the patient does following the operation can be as crucial to what they do to prepare before the surgery. Including the lead person in a discussion about the post-enactment phase is an area that can be strengthened in the TE model.

The Experience of the Researcher

I entered into this study wanting to examine the narratives of change in Therapeutic Enactment at Loon Lake. I have discovered several things about myself and about the research of internal/subjective experiences in the process of interviewing my co-researchers. First, I have realized that to try and encapsulate "change" in an individual is metaphorically not unlike holding dry beach sand in your hands. The more sand you pick up the more it seems to sift through your fingers. When I asked the co-researchers in this study to tell me their stories of change in TE I could not have anticipated that I

would be inundated with examples of change almost from the very beginning of the stories. I purposely left the notion of change open, to be defined by each co-researcher through the telling of the story. Thinking about change, I have realized that what we often look for in psychotherapy research are not the momentary changes in bodily sensations, emotions, behaviours, thoughts, relationships, consciousness or spiritual experiences, but the longer lasting changes in each of these domains. Yet, changes are occurring second-to-second, and minute-to-minute as well as occurring over longer periods of time.

I discovered in doing this research that people are not static but are always changing. It would be more remarkable to find someone who has *not* experienced change than to find someone who *has* experienced change. What do we mean when we talk about change? I have looked at what has changed but I realize that I have emphasized those aspects of the individual that have changed and then been maintained over time. I have not attended to the myriad of momentary changes that each of the co-researchers described both at the enactment weekend and during the process of the interview. Some of the co-researchers went through physiological and emotional changes during the course of the interview process. One of the co-researchers actually began to sweat during the interview process. Several of the co-researchers disclosed that they were glad they had done the interview because they felt better after telling their story. This would be consistent with the narrative theory, which holds that people derive meaning and integration of life experiences through the process of telling stories. All of the co-researchers told stories of how they changed from moment to moment both during the enactment itself and over the course of the whole weekend.

I have focused on those things that changed as a result of participation in TE.

One might question whether or not I am making causal statements to the effect of, "TE caused the changes to occur in how Leonard viewed himself in the world." The criticism being that there are too many other factors that may have contributed to that change and that we cannot say for certain that TE caused the change. I believe that in psychotherapy research this misses the point entirely. Psychotherapy is a dialogical process whereby two people come to understand each other through the process of dialogue. Wilber would say that the criteria for validation in psychotherapy are mutual understanding and cultural fit. I would offer that the same could be said in this study as well, in that the last question that I asked each of the co-researchers at the end of interview was, "Do you feel that you have told the story of your enactment at Loon Lake and do you feel that I have heard your story?" Each of the participants indicated that they felt they had told their story and that I knew what I needed to know to understand their story. In terms of validation then, each of the co-researchers felt that we had reached a mutual understanding by the end of the interview.

I must mention that not all of the co-researchers validated their narratives as I had written them. I cannot say which narratives were edited and which ones were validated as they were written, as I feel that this would be a betrayal of those co-researchers who wanted their stories changed or altered before appearing in this document. Suffice to say that some of the narratives you see in this document were written from the interview transcripts and subsequently validated "as is" by the co-researchers, while others were altered substantially in content. What does this mean in terms of the validity of the research?

I chose to return the narratives to each of the co-researchers by mail or my email instead of meeting with them individually to validate the narratives. The reason I chose this method of validation was due to the fact that I believed meeting with the participants face to face might involve a subtle yet powerful form of coercion. I believed that meeting with the co-researchers to show them the narratives (that I had worked on for six to eight months!) so that they could validate or edit the text, presumed that they would feel comfortable telling me what parts of the narrative they disliked. If they did not like what I had written and did not feel comfortable telling me to my face, then they might feel pressured into validating a story they did not want included in the text. The interesting aspect of the validation process involved the kinds of changes that were made to the narratives.

The substantial changes that were made to the narratives were not made to portions of the story that I had misinterpreted or misrepresented. Rather, the substantive changes were made by co-researcher(s) in cutting out parts of the story that the person had told during the interview, but did not want included in the final draft. One of the narratives had two full pages of content removed after validation by the co-researcher. The portions of the story that were edited out were things that the individual had disclosed and were taken directly from the transcript but did not want included in the final draft.

In terms of qualitative research, what are the implications in terms of the validity of the study? I believe that to judge a study based on the trustworthiness of the co-researcher alone misses a very important aspect of the research process, which is the validation of mutual understanding or cultural fit in reference to the results. I believe that

the validity criteria for trustworthiness has been met and, in terms of the interview process at least, the criterion of mutual understanding and cultural fit were met as indicated above. However, in terms of the final narratives being presented, I must state that the criterion of mutual understanding has not been met between researcher and co-researcher in every case. Some of the stories presented herein are not reflective of the actual interview process in terms of my understanding of the story and therefore, my understanding of the story has changed since the interview occurred. I am unable to disclose what has changed about the stories but I can state that my understanding of the end narrative, compared with my understanding of the story following the interview, has changed in some cases, supporting the notion that narratives are fluid and not fixed.

I think that there could be several reasons that the story told during the interview process is not the same story that is included in the narrative. The interview process took place at a single point in time between each of the co-researchers and myself and reflects only that one point in time. It does not necessarily represent an immutable truth about that person's life. Since people change daily, perhaps the individuals who changed their stories wanted an updated story that reflects how they feel at this point in time. Secondly, during the interview process, a climate of acceptance and safety may have been experienced and the co-researcher revealed aspects of their story in the interview that they later regretted. In the process of psychotherapy, it is essential that the client is prepared for feedback from the therapist or it may not be received well by the client.

In the research process, it is possible that over the course of two to three hours in an interview, a co-researcher's defenses may have come down, allowing them to reveal parts of themselves that they wouldn't otherwise share. Having those aspects of himself

or herself reflected back to them in the form of the narrative, before they are ready to see that part of themselves, might adversely impact the individual. I think that in terms of a narrative approach to research, the benefit of the collaborative approach is that the co-researchers have the power to decide what is told about them and what is not. Giving the co-researchers the power to edit out parts of the story they do not want included balances the power dynamic in the relationship.

The second aspect of mutual understanding that I will address has to do with the understanding that occurs between the researcher and the reader. Part of strengthening the mutual understanding between researcher and reader includes this section of the dissertation whereby the researcher lets the reader into his/her world and experience of the research. The mutual understanding reached between researcher and co-researcher is separate from the understanding reached between researcher and reader. In considering this separation then, I would say that the inter-subjective validity between reader and researcher is addressed in this section outlining my experience of the validation process. Although my understanding of the story has changed for some of the co-researchers, I feel that by giving the reader the background to the study, and the editing that took place by the co-researchers, it helps to increase mutual understanding between the researcher and the reader.

The ultimate value of this study for me has been to gain a critical understanding of the change process in TE and how complicated that process can be. It became clear to me that the TE experience at Loon Lake, for each of the co-researchers, contributed to the meaning of change that each person experienced. Their stories provide a picture of how

far reaching the effects of TE can be in the subjective experience of change and how the TE experience for each of the co-researchers was a pivotal event in their lives.

Concluding Statement

The current study fills a gap in the TE literature on change and adds new understanding to the process of change in TE. This is the first narrative study on change in TE and serves to complement the previous studies that have employed primarily phenomenological methods. The subjectively constructed narratives of change that have been presented herein provide a context for and a depth of understanding of what changes for an individual who has been a lead person in his or her own TE at a residential retreat. The embodiment of their stories is a major contribution of the TE method in that the enactment phase itself is the individual's story embodied in action. The use of a narrative method to investigate embodied narratives has expanded the understanding of what happens for an individual before they do their enactment, what happens to them during a TE residential retreat, and what changes for them following a TE residential retreat. The story that has been told throughout this study echoes the narratives of the co-researchers and ends with the beginning of a new story. This chapter of narratives and embodied stories in action points towards the next chapter of future research and practice of Therapeutic Enactment that has yet to be written

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Appendix A:

Sample of Interview Questions

1. Where would you like to begin the story of your enactment at Loon Lake? Feel free to begin wherever you like, going as far back as you think you need to or starting today if you like.
2. How did you come to decide that you wanted to do your own enactment? Tell me the story of how you came to find out about enactments.
3. What was the moment that you decided you were going to go through with it?
4. What was it like driving up to Loon Lake, knowing what you were going there for?
5. What was it like to arrive at the camp?
6. What was your experience of waiting to do your enactment?
7. What events during the weekend do you feel are an important part of your enactment story? What do you remember most vividly about the weekend?
8. What would you like me know about your experience of going through the enactment itself? After the enactment? Leaving Loon Lake? Arriving home? The next day at work? What it's like today?
9. What has changed for you in your life since doing your enactment? In your body sensations, emotions, behaviours, thoughts, relationships, spiritual connection?
10. Who were/are the important people in the story of your enactment? Who needs to be included in the story? What kind of role did you play in your own story?
11. How does the story of your enactment end?

12. Do you feel that you have told me your story of your enactment at Loon Lake?

Do you feel that I have understood your story?

Appendix B:
TE Summary Findings (1990-2000)

Study	Martens (1990)	Baum (1994)	Brooks (1998)	Morley (2000)	Keats (2000)*
Key Findings					
Readiness					
Safety					
Focus					
Transition					
Wholeness					
Tension/Urgency					
Awareness of Group Reduced					
Return to Group					
Insight/Action					
Intellectual Understanding					
Relationship with Director					
Previous Experience					
Director's Voice					
Witnessed					
Emotional Processing					
Physical Sensation					
Reconnection with Director					
Hope					
Possibilities					
Director "planted seed"					
Altruistic Directorial Stance					
Client-centred planning					
Previous Interventions					
Dissociation					
Lack of recall					
Physical Memories					
High Risks					
Loss of Control					
Return of Control					
Experience of Repair					
Lack of desire to watch video					
Debriefing Helpful					
Over Analysis Unhelpful					
Completion					
Emotional Difficulty					

*Note: Shaded boxes indicate the phenomenological themes for which Keats' (2000) study provides support. Keats' (2000) used an auto-ethnographic/narrative method that does not produce theme statements and, as such, the shaded boxes represent my interpretation of Keats' (2000) findings as they relate to and support the findings from previously conducted phenomenological studies.

Appendix C: Consent Form

Project Title:

Individual Narratives of Change in Therapeutic Enactment

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Marvin J. Westwood – Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada.

Contact # 604-***-****

Co-Investigator:

Timothy G. Black, M.A. – Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada.

Contact # 604-***-****

This study is part of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counselling Psychology.

Purpose of the Project:

The purpose of the current study is to allow individuals who have participated in a Therapeutic Enactment the opportunity to tell their stories of change as it relates to their Therapeutic Enactment experience.

The researcher will then construct first person narratives of each individual's experience as a means of understanding fully the personal experience of participating in a Therapeutic Enactment.

Confidentiality:

Any and all information provided by participants will be held in the strictest of confidentiality via the use of pseudonyms and coding for all names and places that might reveal the identity of participants. Also, raw data in hard copy form will be kept in a locked cabinet, while any computer information will be kept in a password-protected file on the researcher's hard drive.

Time Requirements:

The study will require the participant to engage in an in depth discussion/interview with the co-investigator to tell their personal story of their experience with Therapeutic Enactment. The interviews will involve a time commitment of 5-6 hours for each participant, which will be split into two periods of time: 2-3 hours for each interview and 1-2 hours for each narrative review. Each of the interviews will be videotaped and audio taped for transcription purposes.

Questions or Concerns:

The principal investigator and co-investigator, as named above, will be available to answer any questions and address any concerns participants may have regarding the study procedures.

If participants have any concerns regarding their rights or treatment as research participants they may contact the Director of the UBC Office of Research Services and Administration at 604-822-8598.

Right to Refuse to Participate:

Each participant has the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time.

I _____ have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

I hereby consent to participate in this study,

Signature

Date