

Genodrama as a Possible Processing of Family Patterns and Inheritance

Borbála Tóth

Paediatric Clinic No.2, Semmelweis Medical University, Budapest, Hungary

The introduction of genodrama and genogram with literature references. The subject of the research is discovering transgenerational patterns hiding in the background of a 150-hour long genodramatic process of a group and after processing genogram in a genodramatic play. Genodrama group consist of 10 people, psychologists, and helping specialists, which was organized by the Hungarian Psychological Association and accredited by the Semmelweis University. Methods are registering and processing genogram using the signs of Mc Goldrick-Gerson-Shellenberger in their book titled Genograms. The participants could gain a deeper insight into their family patterns and blind spots by the help of a transgenerational system map provided by genogram; even family secrets surfaced. By drawing the triangulations, the centre straining the family became seeable and therefore processable. All participants gained possibility for a deep emotional (re)living of the situation, which helped living understanding, empathy, and forgiveness for the ancestors, and that the dysfunctional family patterns would not be transmitted. Spirituality appeared in the group in several levels spontaneously, helping the evolution of an “experience of unity”. The study summarizes the effects and strengths of genodrama as a group process. The participants of the group could experience that they carry and bear behaviour patterns and fate of their ancestors, sometimes for hundreds of years, which hide in the background of their trauma, obstruction, or entanglement in life. By processing these after bringing them to the surface, the person is able to cut off the maladaptive pattern. According to the theories concerning the familial unconscious of Lipót Szondi, the person becomes able to exchange compulsory fate for a freely chosen one, this way giving the opportunity of a better quality of life for the next generation.

Keywords: system approach, genogram, genodrama, transgenerational inheritance, revealing trauma, spirituality

Subject of the Research—My Road to Genodrama

Like the great theoretical masters, I was also led to form genogram recordings and develop genodrama through my personal experience in trainings. The 1996 workshop *Genogram: A Royal Path into the Family Unconscious*, held in Hungary by the Polish family therapist Prof. Dr. Irena Namysłowska, had a significant effect on me. In my psychodramatic work, I was inspired to follow my own path by Max Clayton. I participated as a protagonist in the psychodrama workshop held by Chantal Neve Hanquet in Debrecen in 1995, and this experience has turned my professional and personal life around.

I learned about the secrets of genograms through *You Can Go Home Again* by Goldrick (1997) and *Genograms, Assessment and Intervention* by Goldrick, Gerson, and Shellenberger (1999). My knowledge of the field was further expanded by Laura Giat Roberto's (1992) *Transgenerational Family Therapies*.

Hungarian-born Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy and Krasner (2001) added family relationships as values, and the principle of loyalty, to transgenerational family therapy. Transgenerational responsibilities and inheritance are obligations strongly forced by ethics, and are significant and justifiable demands from ancestors to descendants. The essence of the contextual approach to family therapy defined by Boszormenyi-Nagy and Krasner is that transgenerational consequences are unavoidable.

According to Laura Giat Roberto (1992), the genogram is an information network that can be understood as a transgenerational system map, showing us the complexity of the entire family. It helps to discover priorities, such as recurring symptoms and recurring family relationships. On the family system map, one can see the triangles, the coincidental repetitions in numbers, and the significance of name changes and the genogram helps to uncover secrets. On the “cross” of the genogram, transgenerational stress may be explored as presented on the vertical level, while the horizontal stress continuum points to the way the family has dealt with life cycle changes. Multigenerational patterns indicate the behaviors emerging or recurring over three or more generations, for example, in aspects of intimacy, control, autonomy, or conflicts.

In the 1980s, genograms did not have a generally standardized form, even though many used the tool. The standardized genogram was developed by a commission of renowned family therapists and doctors. Among the members were Murray, Bowen, Jack Fromm, and Jack Medalie. They determined the most practical genogram symbols and agreed on a standard format. This format records information about family members and their relationships from at least three previous generations (Goldrick et al., 1999).

The genogram recordings I conduct with families use the standard genogram symbols published by Goldrick (1997). The most interesting aspect of genograms is how families are guided to look behind the one-dimensional, linear perspectives, and how are taught to think in a systematic approach. By creating a systematic approach, the genogram systematic approach explores family events in space and time, and gives the therapist the ability to reframe, detoxify, and normalize the emotionally heated situation.

Arising Problems and Possible Solutions

The study aims to answer how a systematic approach to family therapy, with the help of genograms, is able to deepen and catalyze psychodramatic work in exploring and processing transgenerational blocks and traumas in the genodrama process.

The therapeutic opportunities of a genogram interview lead from the problem defined by the family to a wider, more contextual problem. Starting from the present family situation, we can reach a similar problem in the extended family. We can get from simple questions to more complicated and provocative ones. Present events may reach back into the history of the greater family. During the genogram interview, an emotional connection develops through the family narratives with family members that have “disappeared into obscurity”. Hidden belief structures may emerge. Genograms as transgenerational system maps explore the situation of members of the extended family and catalyze the self-awareness process (Goldrick et al., 1999).

In genodrama, we can grasp the problems and life situations of the protagonist through a multidimensional approach. Representatives of depth psychology schools, the psychoanalysis of Freud, the analytical psychology of Jung, the fate psychology of Szondi, the contextual approach of Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy and Krasner, and genogram recordings, are all combined in the classical psychodrama of Moreno, and serve as a basis for genodrama, the psychodramatic play. In Freudian psychoanalysis, the path leads from the symptom to the unconscious, to the instinctual life, to sexuality. Jung describes the archetypical nature of symbols in the

collective unconscious dimension in his analytical psychology. “In his fate analysis, Szondi explores the family unconscious through inheriting the ambitions of familial ancestors, which manifests in the person’s choice of fate” (Gyöngyösiné Kiss, 1999, p. 19). The languages of symptoms, of symbols, and of choices, help us understand three different dimensions of the unconscious mind, but these three dimensions may only be understood in continuity and globality (Szondi, 1996).

My dramatic experience is that the patterns and behavioral manifestations of the family unconscious can manifest themselves in the here and now in the dramatic play, and are often graspable in a symbolic form, further refined by the intuition that guides and helps all psychotherapy.

Method

Psychodrama is considered in literature to be a method-specific psychotherapeutic method. The dramatic work has numerous dimensions: psychodrama can be used in self-awareness work, organizational development, and coaching. According to Vikár (2007),

Genograms have a significant role in psychodrama too, they often emerge in the background when the actual conflicts are presented; they point to what the conflicts communicate, and through this, how the previous generations influence the present. Genodrama solves the maladaptive behavioral patterns in the present, which are considered hereditary, whether we assume a genetic or learned mechanism in the hereditary process. (p. 90)

The genodrama I developed does not differ from the classical use of psychodrama in its methodology, but further develops the systematic approach taken from family therapy by using the three-generation genograms already established in family therapy.

The verbal discussion of the genograms in the group is conducted along the following aspects: socio-cultural determination, geographical, historical past, geographical movement, ethnic background, religion and change of religion, naming, parenting, education, job, profession, unemployment, military service, retirement, conflicts with the justice system, abuse which may be physical, chemical (drugs and alcohol), and psychological, or incest—problems related to eating or smoking, dates when family members have left home, diseases, causes of deaths, codependency, interesting characteristics, and gender roles.

The aim of genodrama is the dramatic presentation of the genogram, creating an opportunity to process the relational situations experienced as a trauma by the protagonist, through the method of psychodrama. Through this, manifested or hidden relationship patterns may emerge that could not be explored in such a short amount of time with the “traditional” use of psychotherapeutic methods. While exploring the family dynamics and recording the genograms by drawing relationship symbols into the family tree, the hidden communication patterns of the family become visible, which are also well-represented by the triangles defined by Bowen (1998). In understanding the genodramatic process, besides the systematic approach the approach of depth psychology schools are also necessarily integrated depending on which theory serves best the understanding, exploration, and transformation of the protagonist’s block. The Freudian psychoanalytic approach helps explore the identification process of the person, C. G. Jung helps discover collective experiences hidden in family dynamics, and with the fate analysis of Leopold Szondi, we grasp the laws governing a person’s fate.

Other characteristics of the method: working with the family tree gives us the opportunity to explore the identity formulating role of family traditions, naming and name choice, positive and negative family inheritance, the origins of the relationship patterns with family members (siblings, grandparents), and possible recurring events or diseases, as well as family secrets. The strength of the method is that it simultaneously guides the protagonist through multiple dimensions to

the original family experience, to understand the problem and to catalyze the processing process in a complex way. (Tóth, 2014, p. 61)

Numerous approaches to genodrama are present in international literature. The following is a selection of these:

The first edition of Anne Ancelin Schützenberger's *Aïe, mes aïeux! Liens transgénérationnels, secrets de famille, syndrome, d'anniversaire transmission des traumatismes et pratique du génosociogramme* (Oh, my ancestors! transgenerational links, family secrets, the anniversary syndrome, transmission, traumas, and the practice of genosociogram) was published in 1993. By developing transgenerational therapy, Schützenberger (2016) showed us how we can reclaim our freedom, and how we can stop family repetitions, to finally be able to live our own lives. She firmly stated that "We are able to grasp the opportunity: We can make our destinies our own, we can improve it, and we can avoid falling into the recurring transgenerational traps of the unconscious" (p. 18).

Schützenberger reminded us to respect Jacob Levi Moreno as well, besides the theorists of the schools of depth psychology that had the biggest influence on her. According to Schützenberger (2016), the seed from which genodrama grows can also be traced back to the first conclusion of Moreno, which he discussed through the connections between family systems and the social atom. Schützenberger further develops the merging of the social atom and the genogram, creating a so called "genosociogram":

We keep deepening and enriching the genogram until we get a genosociogram, combining it with psychosocial and psychoanalytical elements, and using tools such as the observation of non-verbal communication, paying attention to the reactions and changes happening in the client, for example in the way they inhale and exhale, or the color of their skin. Furthermore, we shed light on the things we do not speak of, the social and emotional links and connections of past and present in a kind of psychohistorical framework, during which we often work with historical dates of the 19th and 20th century. (p. 26)

The work of Faller Vitale is also based on the foundations set by Moreno, building on the use of genograms and other action techniques. Vitale referred to the master in relation to the novelty of the dramatic work, too. He quoted: "When a new need presents itself, therapists often feel that they have to create a new method or alter an older method in order to solve the given situation" (Faller Vitale, 2008, p. 122). Presenting the methodology of psychodrama, he wrote: "the usefulness of the psychodramatic method is practically unlimited—only its core is unchanged" (Faller Vitale, 2008, p. 122). Vitale made references to Moreno's family therapy-based ideas. "He often helped families in trouble by discussing their problems and the possible solutions to them openly, repeating his experience with the prostitutes in Vienna. He called this spontaneous approach "*théâtre réciproque*". Vitale primarily used genodrama in couples' therapy. A prominent aspect of it is the understanding of the organization and reorganization of family tendencies across generations, as well as the redefinition of these in the case of the protagonists themselves" (Faller Vitale, 2008, p. 122).

To understand transgenerational effects, for thousands of years written and unwritten behavioral systems have been at work across cultures, which helped keep the balance from generation to generation. Just think of the *Ten Commandments* permeating Judeo-Christian culture, set as a law in the *Old Testament* for millennia, compliance with which became obligatory in European culture, and provided a framework for the behavior of the people (Tóth, 2017, p. 76). "Our existence does not begin at birth, rather we carry our family inheritance encoded in our genes, and the lives of our ancestors live on in us as a "pattern or imprint" (Tóth, 2017, p.75). We leave a mark on our descendants, who carry "the impressions of our lives, in their futures, habits, behavior

and in their memories that influence them on a deep level, often unconsciously” (Koltai, 2003, p. 3). There are numerous examples of the transmission of transgenerational patterns in both Hungarian and world literature. Just think of *The Tragedy of Man* by Imre Madách (1942), *Confessions of a Bourgeois* by Sándor Márai (1990), or *Roots* by Alex Haley (1976). Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy and Krasner (2001) referred to Ezekiel 18:2: “The parents eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge” (p. 140).

I would like to highlight as a strength of the genodramatic method that it leads the person and the group to a deep, cathartic experience, and the understanding of the connections between family dynamics, in a relatively short amount of time.

The group process is always preceded by the presentation and interpretation of genograms and family trees, and reflections on the emerging questions and connections in family dynamics by the protagonist and members of the group. During individual sharing, it can be an especially shocking experience for everyone to tell family stories. This has enormous potential and power to teach.

I have often seen that there are young members in the group who do not have any historical knowledge or experience of their original families. Remarkably, this phenomenon can be observed mostly in the case of young women brought up by single mothers; in these cases, there are practically no memories from the father’s side. These young women show signs of serious relationship disruptions, as much in finding their partner as in keeping them. As they have not experienced a harmonious family pattern through their parents’ relationship, this causes serious deficits in the development of their personality, femininity, self-awareness, and self-esteem (Tóth, 2017).

Genodrama Process Analysis

The case I discuss below was created through the recording and dramatic transformation of the genogram of a participant in a session of a 150-hour genodramatic self-awareness process.

Frida is a 28-year-old physiotherapist, presently a senior student at a university preparing for a helping profession. She joined the genodrama group aiming to improve her self-knowledge, at the recommendation of a professor at the university. At first impression, she is characterized by anxious, dim eyes and rigid, distraught facial expressions. She does not share much of herself, starts to cry, produces psychosomatic symptoms (clearing her throat, heavy breathing, and headaches). In the first couple of sessions, she is “allowed” to stay silent, to progress in her own rhythm. During the first interview before the group session, she says that she has participated in several psychiatric treatments, psychotherapy, and support meetings, but she later gives the feedback that she only realized during the interview that she is seriously traumatized. “It was then that I realized what I am dealing with, as I was not aware of it before”. On her life path, she carried on the “career” of the women of her family, longing for affection, and instead becoming a victim of sexual harassment. Her parents lived together, but as she heard from her mother her father, a respected coach at a Hungarian sports team, left them for another woman. The mother was a waitress, and while she was working she left Frida with her own mother, the grandmother with whom Frida had a close but ambivalent relationship. The mother “lived as she pleased”, getting pregnant four times from four different men, of which Frida was the first and only one to be born.

Frida was very talented at school, and her teachers took notice of her. This is how she was accepted to one of the best high schools in the capital. Still, due to her psychosocial background she was marginalized, associating with the wrong crowd. Nobody cared about her or paid attention to her in her family. She had

attempted suicide multiple times by the age of 14 years. She was unable to maintain her relationships, and unable to connect. She currently has three jobs besides attending university. She studies mental hygiene at the university, and feels fine. She says that the secret lies in the Rogerian Triad: empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard. The training institution represents these values, and that is very good for her. She is accepted.

Frida's genogram analysis and play happened in the final period of the 150-hour group process. She had played several roles by that time and understanding the "full" phenomenon described by Moreno, it was not a coincidence that she was chosen to play the role of a grandmother traumatized in World War II in the play of another protagonist. This grandmother passed on the maintenance of constant control and awareness in everyday life, saying "one must always be on guard" to her grandchild, because this is the only way to lessen "everyday" anxiety. The following sentence was uttered by Frida as the grandmother: "The Russian front went through us, and the German front went through us". We saw a shocking example of the delegation of transgenerational anxiety in the play of a 60-year-old female psychologist. Frida could experience that her family was not alone in carrying the shame of sexual humiliation.

During the genogram analysis, Frida talks about how the women in her family fell into the roles of victim. She is certain that her grandmother and mother were both victims of sexual exploitation. This situation was discovered by the fine intuition of a group member who, looking at Frida's genogram, associated a "sacrificial altar". Frida was struck when she heard this. She "prepared" for processing the genogram, because she had insufficient information on her family. There was nobody in the family who would pass anything on. Then, she contacted a distant relative, Aunt Gizi, who could only "confirm" the parts of the family narrative that Frida had experience of already: "You will not be able to solve this genogram, your family could never solve anything. Your grandmother hid under the bed on her wedding night, too, and your grandfather left her, went to America. Although he did come back, but your grandmother never took him back. So, the village ostracized her. Shame never left her in her life".

In Frida's play, "shame" became one of the main motifs, even though she did not mean to manifest this consciously. We learned the following from Frida's genogram interview:

- Women became victims for generations;
- Every woman had a single child;
- Women were left by the men;
- An abusive relationship developed between mothers and daughters, as Frida put it: A wave of violence was passed from generation to generation;
 - Every woman was brought up by someone other than the mother; either the grandmother or someone else;
 - Men disappear from the women's lives. The women were beautiful "femmes fatales". Frida had always thought that infidelity was the sin of the men; she only realized later that the women did not support these men, who were actually the victims. And so was her father.

Before processing the genogram we made a sculpture—"My Mother and I" and "My Father and I"—with every group member, with a technique well-known in family therapy, which we developed further by dramatization. In the case of Frida, switching roles had an enormous effect in both situations, as she had to identify with the people with whom she had a serious emotional break. In the "My Mother and I" position, she kneels in front of her mother as a regressive little girl, unable to make eye contact. The group comes to her aid with "inner voices". Deep emotional pain is brought to the surface; Frida cries throughout the scene. Still, she

comes to the next session relieved. A member of the group notices the change in her look and says out loud: “Your hair is alive”!

When switching roles with the father she is asking Frida, as her father, to let him closer to her. Frida’s answer: I cannot do that. Still, in the role of her father she hugs Frida, and while in her own role she feels that she is unable to reciprocate, her fingers grasp the father’s shoulders. What the mouth is unable to utter is “given away” by gestures. Both vignettes have prepared Frida for the play following the processing of the genogram. In the follow-up sharing Frida admits, astonished, that she keeps repeating the same sentences about her father that she had to listen to from her mother and grandmother for decades.

Before beginning the play, I asked the group to share with Frida if they had similar experiences of sexual harassment. Three members of the group entered and told “selected” stories of becoming the victims of a ticket controller during an evening train ride, of a family man next door, or of a man while hitch-hiking. The supportive presence of the group “opened” Frida to the game.

During the promenade, she is unwilling to hold hands; she cannot bear being touched. The focus of her play is being alone. She feels that her mother and grandmother did not let her move on. We looked at this in four scenes.

(1) Scene: Frida is 5 years old, cowering in the corner, terrified of the aggression of her mother, who comes to her with a broomstick and hits her. She is unable to take on the role of her grandmother, because she is afraid that she will be so infused by anger that she might hurt someone, so we help her with auxiliary ego doubling. As her own grandmother, she expressed her aggression verbally using obscene language.

(2) Scene: She is eight years old, sitting in the bathtub while her mother tests her on the multiplication tables. She should be reciting the tables, and the bath water is getting cold. The mother argues with her: “We have been studying the multiplication tables for two hours now and you still do not know how much is 6×7 . And I have to go to work”. Frida confesses shamefully that she passed on the same situation to her dog, but she cannot talk about it; she does not have the right words to express it. Now, she is ashamed of it. A “fine” example of the repetition compulsion described by Freud in 1920 can be seen in this situation, when the psyche tries to free itself from the painful and traumatic experience, and reach a stress-free state by repeating the traumatic experience as the active party. Judit Nóra Pintér (2014) described the situation as follows:

It seems that the powerful visual, replaying, “active memory” fundamentally characteristic of children may be activated in adults too when triggered by trauma. Thus, one might not be able to give a narrative of the traumatic event, they might not be able to integrate it through the codes of normal memory and let them become a part of the person’s identity, the “unity” of the person’s life narrative. Instead, the memory is expressed through activity, or repetition (p. 41).

The antagonists who played the roles of the mother and the grandmother have all told us that only the words came to them in these roles, while they experienced apathy and emotional emptiness.

(3) Scene: I asked her after the two plays about her feelings. The feelings that overwhelmed her: shame and disgrace. We manifested these two feelings by switching roles. “Shame” and “disgrace” manifested through the touching of two foreheads. The main feeling of shame is solitude, and of disgrace it is being bound. When I asked her about any memories, she might have of these feelings and her answer was negative. Then, a memory fragment emerged, the secret about her great-grandmother, who went to prison for deceptive business practices (she notes that the whole family is guilty of this). The great-grandmother contracted tuberculosis in prison, which eventually killed her. When she got old, she could only sleep in the garden because she was

suffocating. And that reminds Frida that she also suffers from fits of heavy breathing. Traumatic emotions were passed on at an integrational level, and Frida was the last link in the chain.

(4) At this point, Frida asked to stop the play. Then a wise member of the group, highly trained in psychotherapy, turned to Frida and said: “I would like to bless you”. Frida answered: “I will kneel down”. In the surplus reality field of the genodrama, Frida received the feminine (motherly) blessing that she needed to carry on with her life, and the group stood by her providing a “supportive family environment”.

Diagnostic Analysis

Looking at her individual life path, Frida has suffered serious trauma from people important to her (her mother and her grandmother) starting in early childhood. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5)*, she carries symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which were not sufficiently focused on, and her condition not only has not improved but in fact became worse. As we have gained information about the childhood and lifestyle of the patient in the framework of genodrama, we are unable to clearly answer actual diagnostic criteria. Presumably, the following criteria of PTSD, or more accurately the complex PTSD defined by Judith Herman, are fulfilled: Negative self-image; significant negative thoughts about herself and others; negative emotional state with a consistently depressed mood and feeling of shame; isolation and alienation from significant people in her life; inability to experience positive emotions; inability to feel happy and satisfied. She feels that she is unlovable and experiences a feeling of numbness and stupefaction. Besides the above, she is characterized by a fear of impulsivity, or losing control.

The following point to reactive attachment disorder: her personal relationships lack emotions; in her partner relationships, there is neglect or deprivation; there is a constant lack of satisfaction of the fundamental emotional needs for stimulation or for love. Further, changes in the person of the caregiver hinder the development of secure attachments.

She is also characterized by a lack of social and emotional responsiveness. When she is in contact with others, she responds with little emotion. The above criteria have been with her from early childhood.

In her work *Trauma and Recovery*, Judith Lewis Herman suggests that the anxiety, phobias and panic of traumatized people are not traditional anxiety disorders. Their physical symptoms are not traditional psychosomatic disorders. Their depression is not traditional depression. The impoverishment of their identity and relationships also cannot be categorized as traditional personality disorders. The symptomatic picture is complex in the case of survivors of long-term, recurring trauma. They show characteristic changes of personality, including various distortions of identity and attachments. In these cases, Herman suggests the use of the expression “complex posttraumatic stress disorder”. She emphasizes that this has to be considered a spectrum of conditions, rather than a single disorder. In the case of Frida, the trauma may qualify as “Type 2”, as defined by Leore Terr, as it is recurring and long-lasting in duration (Herman, 2003). Examining the time experience of the trauma, Judit Nóra Pintér (2014) concluded that trauma expresses the impossibility of fading into memory: “Although it only has a retrospect present, this can be more persistent than any other, actual present. Following the model of the “past that has never been the present”, we can say that trauma is built on a reversed time structure: Trauma is the kind of present that will never be past” (p. 39).

In the process of the genodrama group, Frida was able to explore and externalize the suffering manifested in her life in the safe environment of the group and experience the beginning of the healing process. Following the conclusion of the group process, she has continued to work in individual psychotherapy.

Genodrama as Spiritual Channel, Axiodrama

I would like to emphasize that we have never suggested or expressed actual expectations of spirituality during the group process. It always presented itself spontaneously, as an integral part of the group process. It appears that in the present case, genodrama is able to open up in front of the participants as a spiritual channel, and depending on their upbringing, life experiences, religious inclinations, or sensitivity, they are able to experience the common experience. Whether one is religious or not has no influence on them having a spiritual experience.

The last couple of decades brought a “novel” phenomenon in psychological research—the science of psychology publishes research and studies on the manifestation of soul and spirit. The Hungarian publisher Gondolat Kiadó published the second volume of its *Encyclopedia of the Soul* in 2016. In its preface, Emőke Bagdy interpreted the wholeness of our being as follows: “We are unique stars of our universe. There is nothing in us that is not in the universe as we know it. We are part of the whole, but our knowledge is still just ‘partial’” (Simon-Székely, 2016, p. 17). Bagdy’s thoughts coincide with the scientific experience of numerous quantum physicists, including Hans Peter Dürr, who openly claims to be a spiritual person, and who states that “everything originates in a potentiality wearing the features of a holistic spirit”.

The modern holistic psychological approach, with Ken Wilber at the front, does not work with the idea of hierarchy, but introduces the idea of holarchy in the footsteps of Koestler and Smythies, which is a constantly growing system of wholeness made up of holons, while at the same time being part of other systems. This is how we reach the subatomic world, which conveys the knowledge with the power of revelation: Our solid, material world becomes “immaterial” (spiritualized) according to quantum theory, quote: “As for example the molecule is a part of the cell, the atom is a part of the molecule, and even the atomic nuclei disappear in the virtual clouds of the subatomic world. (Izsó, 2006, p. 35)

In his discussion of qualitative psychological research, Anton A. Bucher highlighted the state of ‘feeling togetherness’ as the core of spirituality theories.

Based on the data, there are two types of the sense of togetherness: horizontal and vertical. We primarily connect to nature and the cosmos horizontally”, while the “sense of vertical togetherness is directed towards a higher being, in the Abrahamic tradition: God. (2016, pp. 134)

As Buchner defines it, there is not a single definition of spirituality, it would be a mistake trying to find it, but we may want to start with a few considerations on what we mean by spirituality.

- Spirituality as the experience of being interconnected with all manifestations of life.
- Spirituality as the relationship with God or a greater whole.
- Spirituality as being merged into and connected with the all-encompassing, final reality exceeding the person (Tomaschek-Habrina, 2016, p. 102).

Using the methods of psychodrama, we must not overlook Moreno’s relationship with spirituality. The spiritual roots of Moreno stem from the Judaic-Sephardic-Hassidic traditions, and the influence of Christian philosophy” (Tomaschek-Habrina, 2016, p. 102).

Moreno dramatizes the ethical efforts of the individual collective psyche, specifically in the dealing with axiological subjects, such as righteousness, justice, beauty, mercy, compassion, perfection, eternity and peace. Existence, death, the meaning of things, ethical choices, urges, and convictions also have to be present, which are included in the system of the picture we created of our world [...] In axiodramatic situations, one can meet the utterly different, the non doable [...] Axiodrama is a controlled and controllable practice, which might even open a transcendental dimension. (Hochreiter, 2016, pp. 116-117)

According to Pedro H. Torres Godoy, genodrama can be considered, like axiodrama, as a socio-method revealing the fundamental values of our ancestors with the goal of transforming it for our descendants as well as our professional successors, passing the values onto them in a spontaneous or creative way.¹

Last but not least, I must mention Hungarian research works on spirituality, which are mostly marked by the name of Theodóra Tomcsányi. Tomcsányi took on a pioneering role in the foundation of the Hungarian mental hygienic approach and training, while also courageously standing up and publishing in the field of psychology of religion and spirituality-related subjects for over thirty years. Presently, Tomcsányi and others are conducting comprehensive qualitative research on the psychotherapists' and their practices' connection to spirituality, examining how their experience of spirituality manifests within therapy.

Relevant to my subject, I quote conclusions of theirs about the manifestation of spirituality in psychodramatic work.

- “In the psychodramatic process, it is primarily the manifestation, action governed by the patient that may bear the mode of communication along which the therapist and the group may learn about the world, the spirituality of the patient.”
- In psychodrama, the subject of spirituality typically appears in connection with liminal situations (birth, death, the dead, and God).
- Surplus reality, this essential work method of psychodrama, creates a unique opportunity to manifest spiritual contents, and does it in a way through which therapist and patient may both experience great freedom” (Tomcsányi et al., 2014, p. 46).

The study provides a differentiated analysis of the therapists' connection with spirituality by including a complete code tree.

Results: The Effects and Strengths of the Genodrama Group Process

In the genodrama group process, the presented case is not only the story of the protagonist. Members of the group could experience the sense of togetherness together; they became part of each other's lives, experiences and feelings through switching roles, and thus spiritual experiences also had a common effect on the group members. What could not be expressed in words deepened into silence or a tear-jerking shock?

Group members and leaders experienced the following during the genodramatic work:

- The genodrama process can be described as a family tableau. The family structure may be explored beyond three generations, together with its hidden repetition compulsions and behavioral patterns.
- Genodrama may be grasped as a symbol. A definition given by a group member is a good example for this: “It is like a cobweb, if you touch it in one place the whole system starts to resonate”.
- Genodrama as a magnifier, a peek into historical time. The genodramatic process may draw participants into a “time vortex”, as if they are part of historical events.
- Genodrama as a guideline to consolidate identity, developing female and male gender roles. In the words of Szondi, looking for and finding the opportunity to find our fate of choice. The question might arise: Does Fate or Divine Providence govern the life path of man? For me, the two are inseparable. Accepting, transforming or refusing the Fate given to us by divine providence is our own individual, free choice.
- Experiencing “condensed time”: to be present in the Kairos. I call on Frida's story to stand as an example

¹ Dr. Pedro H. Torres-Godoy, Psiquiatra psicodramatista: Edras, Chile.

for the Kairos experience. Preparing the genogram and sharing it with the group takes approximately two hours per participant. The genodramatic process is approximately three hours long. During this period, we can witness the protagonist's stories, internal and external experiences, all the way down to physical experiences embedded in the "family time" that might reach centuries back. This mode of being in the Kairos may be described in two ways by the person: as a "long journey", or over in a second. Frida summarizes her experience on this with the following words: "In the course of ten months, I lived through a hundred, a thousand months. I have really tried many things, but this was the only psychotherapy that worked for me".

- Improving, enhancing empathy. Through switching roles, the sensitivity towards themselves and others may become more refined.

- Experiencing flow—to be present in the flow. The flow experience may be connected to the Kairos experience through experiencing that "time has stopped", and "I am in my own time". In the case of Frida, Flow was a "driver" of the play, and she used the thoughts of Csikszentmihályi (1997) to find the way back to herself, to feel that "everything is alright", which dissolved her anxiety, fears and feelings of insecurity about the future.

- Improving self-awareness. Frida has put it this way: "I can finally openly be who I am. I am relieved; I realized that the self-awareness work is a life-long process. Not only have my relationships changed, but I figured out how to handle these periods. Thanks to this, my physical symptoms improved, I am less anxious, and I have the tools to recognize the process before I lose control".

- Understanding hidden family dynamics. It is a special way to experience the phenomenon that participants may carry a heavy communicational pattern loaded with mind games for decades, and through the recorrectional modifications of the play it is not only them who begin to act differently, but their family members too, who did not even take part in the dramatic process.

- It opens up a preventive road for future generations. According to Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy and Krasner, "We inherit the future". Thus, if the lives of fathers and mothers are settled, it can be liberating for the new generation while also supporting their development.

- Experiencing FATE: Understanding the idea of Erik Erikson (1991) that our predecessors could not have done differently than they did. Healing the soul is possible not only through understanding, but through a deep, emotional understanding and forgiving.

Conclusions

In my study, I presented the individual and family use of genogram recording and theory, as well as working with a genogram in a group setting in the so-called genodrama process. Besides individual experiences, I quoted the system-based theoretical and practical experiences built on foundations set by Moreno of prominent personalities of psychodrama (Schützenberger, 2016; Faller Vitale, 2008). As relevant to genodrama, I supported the focus on the field of spiritual phenomena permeating the dramatic process with relevant literature, highlighting the connections between genodrama and axiodrama. I presented the genodramatic process analysis of a participant of a 150-hour group process, and finally, I collected the extra benefits of the genodrama process, which were "produced" by the group process.

Participants of the genodrama group may experience that in the background of many of their blocks and traumas they could be carrying their ancestors' fate and behavioral patterns unconsciously, even from as far back as several generations or centuries. By discovering and transforming these patterns, the person is able to

stop repeating the maladaptive pattern. According to Hungarian-born Leopold Szondi's theory on the family unconscious, the individual may become able to replace their set fate with a fate of choice, and thus give the next generation a chance for a better quality of life.

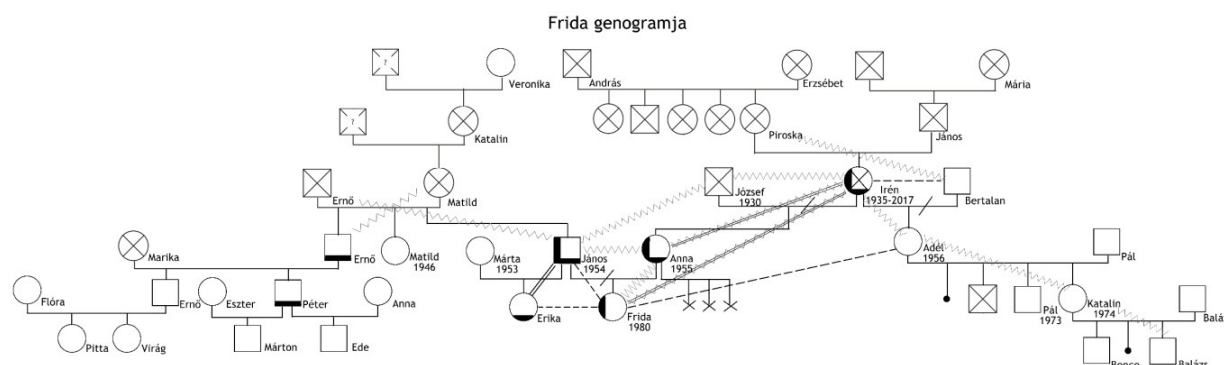


Figure 1. Genogram.

References

- Bagdy, E. (2010). *Hogyan lehetnénk boldogabbak?* (How could we be happier?). Kulcs Lyuk Kiadó.
- Boszormenyi-Nagy, I., & Krasner, B. R. (2001). *Kapcsolatok kiegyensúlyozásának dialógusa* (The dialogue of balancing relationships). Budapest: Coincidencia KFT.
- Bowen, M. (1998). *Family Therapy in clinical practice*. New York, N.Y.: Janson Aronson.
- Bucher, A. A. (2016). Úton a spirituális pszichológia felé? (On the way to spiritual psychology?) *Zeitschrift für Psychodrama und Sociometrie* (Journal of Psychodrama and Sociometry), 1, 131-143.
- Csikszentmihályi, M. (1997). *Flow: Az áramlat. A tökéletes élmény pszichológiája* (Flow: The psychology of optimal experience). Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- Erikson, E. (1991). Az életciklus: Az identitás epigenezise (The life cycle: The epigenesis of identity). In E. H. Erikson (Ed.), *A fiatal Luther és más írások* (The young Luther and other articles) (pp. 437-498). Budapest: Gondolat.
- Faller Vitale, M. A. (2008). Genodrámá: Dramatikus munka genogramokkal párterápiában (Genodrama: Dramatic work with genograms in couple's therapy). In Z. Figusch (Ed.), *Szambadrámá. A brazil pszichodrámá* (Samba drama, the Brazilian psychodrama) (pp. 119-226). Animula.
- Freud, S. (2011). *A halálösztön és az életösztönök* (Death instinct and life instincts). Belső Egészség Kiadó.
- Goldrick, M. M. (1997). *You can go home again*. New York, London: W. W. Norton and Company.
- Goldrick, M. M., Gerson, R., & Shellenberger, S. (1999). *Genograms, assessment and intervention*. New York, London: W. W. Norton and Company.
- Gyöngyösiné Kiss, E. (1999). *Szondi Lipót* (Leopold Szondi). Budapest: Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó.
- Herman, J. (2003). *Trauma és gyógyulás* (Trauma and healing). Budapest: Háttér kiadó-Kávé Kiadó-NANE Egyesület.
- Hochreiter, K. (2016). Spirituális tapasztalatminőség (Spiritual experience quality). *Zeitschrift für Psychodrama und Sociometrie*, (Journal of Psychodrama and Sociometry) 1, 115-121.
- Izsó, N. S. (2006). *Hermetikus lélektan* (Hermetic psychology). Akadémiai Kiadó: PSZI Book Series.
- Koltai, M. (2003). Transzgenerációs hatások a családban. Szuicidium-gyász- megbékélés (Transgenerational effects in the family: Suicide—grief—peace). In M. Koltai (Ed.), *Család-pszichiátria-terápia* (p. 276). Budapest: Medicina Könyvkiadó Rt.
- Laplanche, J., & Pontalis, J. B. (1994). *A pszichoanalízis szótára* (The language of psychoanalysis). Akadémiai Kiadó.
- Madách, I. (1942). *Összes művei* (Collected works) (Vol. I). Budapest: Révai Kiadó.
- Márai, S. (1990). *Egy polgár vallomásai* (Confessions of a bourgeois). Akadémiai Kiadó-Helikon Kiadó.
- Nussbaum, A. M. (2013). *A DSM-5 diagnosztikai vizsgálat zsebkönyve* (Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders). Oriold és Társai Kiadó és Szolgáltató Kft.
- Pintér, J. N. (2014). *A nem múló jelen: Trauma és nosztalgia* (The present that does not pass: Trauma and nostalgia). Budapest: L' Harmattan.
- Roberto, L. G. (1992). *Transgenerational family therapies*. New York, N.Y.: The Guilford Press.

- Schützenberger, A. A. (2016). *Ős-szindróma. Transzgenerációs pszichoterápia és a családfa rejtett kötelékei* (The ancestor syndrome: Transgenerational psychotherapy and the hidden links in the family tree). Budapest: Medicina Könyvkiadó.
- Simon-Székely, A. (Ed.). (2016). *Lélekenciklopédia: A lélek szerepe az emberiség fejlődésében* (Encyclopedia of the soul: The role of the soul in the development of humanity). Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó.
- Szondi, L. (1996). *Ember és sors* (Man and fate). Kossuth Kiadó.
- Tomaschek-Habrina, L. (2016). Menedzsment, szervezetfejlesztés és spiritualitás: Moreno axiológiai szerepdimenziói és jelentőségük a vállalatok értelem és értékorientációjáról szóló vitában (Management, organizational development and spirituality: The axiological role dimensions of Moreno and their significance in the corporate debate on reason and value orientation). *Zeitschrift für Psychodrama und Sociometrie* (Journal of Psychodrama and Sociometry), 1, 99-113.
- Tomcsányi, T., Sallay, V., Szabó, T., Kiri, E., Csáky Pallavicini, K., Horváth-Szabó, K., & Martos, T. (2014). Spiritualitás a pszichoterápiás és pszichodramatikus praxisban Magyar pszichoterapeuták tapasztalatainak kvalitatív elemzése (Spirituality in the psychotherapeutic and psychodramatic practice: A qualitative analysis of the experience of Hungarian psychotherapists) *Zeitschrift für Psychodrama und Sociometrie* (Journal of Psychodrama and Sociometry), 1, 31-54.
- Tóth, B. (2014). Genodrámák: A családi mintázatok és örökségek dramatikus átmunkálásának lehetősége (Genodrama: The possibility of dramatic reformation of family patterns and inheritance). *Pszichodrámák Magazin, Autumn*, 55-66.
- Tóth, B. (2017). *Sorsunk rejtett mintázata: A genogramtól a genodrámáig* (The hidden pattern of our fate: From genogram to genodrama). Budapest: Kairosz Kiadó.
- Vikár, A. (2007). *Pszichodrámák. A komoly játék. Egyéni folyamatok a csoportban: Csoport folyamatok az egyénben* (Psychodrama. The serious play. Individual processes in the group: Group processes in the individual). Budapest: Medicina Könyvkiadó.