

Psychodrama with Miniature Forms

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Psychodrama with Miniature Forms

Preface

Demonic voices residing within me - mimic the criticisms and abuse of the past,
My body stubbornly reacts to the stored memories with rigidity; freezing in the moment...
I wonder what would unleash the hidden me, freeing my soul from this knotted web??
I soaked in the nurturance that came my way from my healer, finally, my body resorting to
calmness -
... And yet, I knew I had to find my answers, as, the love and care did not come from within...

During the past decade, I had realized that in order to grow further, I needed to heal my past traumatic experiences as completely as possible. Since I began my psychotherapy training 12 years ago, I went through many processes, therapy sessions, introspection, working on my trauma, and had come a long way. My body though, still had stored memories that needed to be worked upon. Each attempt at it in the past used to take me to a retrogressive *frozen in fear* role of an utterly helpless and disempowered child. No matter how much my therapist tried, all that the retrogressive role sought in those moments was a hiding place, an experience, that would take me away from the demonic voices, pain, hurt and fear. In those times, my body would feel like a live wire, not only damaging myself further, but also having the potential to hurt my therapist. Receiving nurturance from my therapist proved to be the only calming source that would eventually bring me back to functionality. But I also realized that effectively, my healing source was external. As much as I craved healing, the fixed retrogressive role would not allow any movement within me. This stuckness infuriated me, increasing my guilt, shame, and self-badgering. It made me want to run miles away from facing myself, others and the world at large.

Even in my work as a therapist, I witnessed a lot of my clients struggling with the same issue as mine and my resolve of finding an alternate way got stronger. A few years back, I learnt the concept and approach of Inner Bonding¹ which focuses on healing the child within (The authentic self which went in to hiding in childhood in order to protect itself from pain) and becoming an integrated self. I instantly warmed up to it. I started applying this concept to myself first and later extended it to my clients. Together with my clients, I experienced that this approach helped us to transform from self-badgering to becoming compassionate towards self. It also helped us to take ownership of our 'here and now' reality as healthy adults. This approach brought remarkable changes in the way my clients and I started to relate with ourselves. We began with becoming aware of our hidden selves, to accepting different aspects of us and finally integrating all of them.

¹ Inner Bonding is a self healing process that has been developed and optimized over 30 years by Therapists Dr Margaret Paul and Dr Chopich. It is the process of connecting our adult thoughts with our instinctual, gut feelings—the feelings of the "inner child"—so that we can minimize painful conflict within ourselves. Free of inner conflict, we feel peaceful, open to joy, and open to giving and receiving love.

Not only was there a change in the pace of the process, but even the quality of the interaction between the different aspects within changed remarkably.

However, work with the body still remained a challenge. Every attempt to work on healing the body by me or my clients, would bring the therapy process down to a snail's pace. A nagging question occupied the background space in my mind – If the body requires healing from a traumatic event, yet approaching the event takes the person into a fixed retrogressive role (one which does not keep the present self functional), how or in what way could healing be possible?

This was the time when I was introduced to psychodrama; I believe this to be my cosmic blessing. My experience in a one on one session with Sue Daniel as my director and M as my auxiliary, sowed the seeds for a break through. My body, though engulfed by my fixed retrogressive role, for the first time, allowed partial functionality in me. The experience of my body responding in my drama revived my hope of finding ways to heal traumas stored in the body. I joined the training program of Pil (Psychodrama in India) and also attended as many psychodrama workshops as possible, conducted by Sue Daniel in India.

In the meantime, I also kept reading as much as I could about Inner bonding and Psychodrama. That is when I came across an article about miniature structure– *Integrating Morenian Role Theory and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy with Babushka Dolls: An example of Healthy Role Development in Individual Counseling by Jo-Anne Colwell 2010*. Something touched my cords deeply!!! Slowly, my creative mind started expanding on 'what next'?? All that it kept searching for was, more guidance and understanding.

Simultaneously, I shared my thoughts with a few of my clients about how I wish to explore and experiment with the miniature structure. I am and will forever be grateful to all of them for their enthusiasm and willingness to go ahead and work with me. We started the sessions with less intense work to get a better understanding of it. What manifested from this journey with my clients has been magnificent! This paper here is my attempt to share my journey so far with miniature structures with all my readers. I hope it helps to enrich you personally and gives you something that you could use in your work.

Thanking you

Sarita Shah

Acknowledgements

Through all my struggles, it was my faith in my therapist, M, and the healing process that kept me going forward in my journey. Words will never justify my endless gratitude towards her for having faith in me, forever standing by me, encouraging me, nurturing me, healing me and never giving up on me. Every learning, every experience would keep alive in me the desire to find a way whenever I experienced lows. There are people who come as blessings in our lives, I believe it is God's way to help us keep the faith and the life in us alive.

I also feel deep gratitude and thankfulness to Sue who, during one of my supervisions with her in Ahmedabad, suggested that I write a paper on Miniature Structures. She also informed me that there isn't much literature available on the use of the miniature structure. I am forever indebted to her for being so generous and kind with her guidance and encouragement. The reason why I am attempting this paper is due to her suggestion.

My experiences of M and Sue as my supervisors, teachers, guides and mentors are most precious to me; I keep imbibing my learnings in my personal and work roles.

My special thanks to my colleague Radhika for designing the cover page.

Once again, I want to thank all my clients who have participated in my work with miniature structures and given permission for me to use parts of my work with them in this paper.

Section Layout

I have divided my paper into three different sections. In the first section, I share about my connection to the miniature structure, and how it developed new personal and professional roles in me. The second section is about the work I have done on myself as a protagonist using miniatures. And, the final section is about how I have used miniatures with my clients; my purpose behind choosing miniature forms in some of my work and my experience and learning through it.

Section I

a) The New Personal Roles That Developed in Me

My quest to know more about the miniature structure developed a *keen searcher of mini figurines* role in me. I immediately bought two sets of babushka dolls online and got into an *enthusiastic collector of varied figurines* role. I went onto buying human figures, sets of animals, birds, insects. I also collected some pleasant looking angelic masks as well as demonic looking face masks with angry expressions and red light flashing around their eye sockets. I also collected some super hero figures. It felt as if my system was like a radar, looking out for things that I could add to my collection - the role of *full of life, a spontaneous child of four-five years old*! While driving, if I saw anything that was sold on the sides of streets, I would stop to buy them!! My excitement was not only about adding them in my collection, it extended to building a relationship with them! I conversed with the figurines and allowed my mind to fantasise how clients would choose them to represent their internal worlds. By doing so, it brought out the *conversationalist and the fantasiser* roles in me! The figurines became a part of not only my professional but my personal world as well!! For example, the smallest penguin became my inner child² and Lord Ganesha, my higher energy - the divine energy – the Universal Positive Energy that has been my survival source. I chose the big penguin to represent my mentor and therapist. I found myself conversing with all of them, about my thoughts and feelings! The demonic masks I collected became my source of releasing my negative energies. Two of the masks have lights around the eye holes, making them look really mean and angry. They seemed very scary and represented how I experience the demons inside me. They served the purpose of making me face my fears! My imagination and creative juices kept flowing with the various sets and numerous psychodramatic roles as mentioned above kept coming alive in me. As I continued increasing my collection, I also kept clicking photographs, trying out different arrangements. I can go on writing about my collection, but instead I am sharing some pictures here.

² Inner Child is a term used in Inner Bonding for the authentic self of a person who went into hiding due to adverse environment in childhood.

My Mini Collection



b) The New Professional Roles Developed in Me

As I was collecting miniature forms, I started thinking about how I would use them. I took guidance from both the paper on Babushka dolls as well as readings on play therapy to create my own format of using the miniature structure with my clients. As my work unfolded, my initial working model and potency of its impact both got more and more confirmed. Thereby, unexpectedly, *the working model developer* role got formed and strengthened in action.

Selection of the Miniatures

I started visualising how the selection of specific figurines it self would have specific significance in the drama. The selection of each figurine representing an aspect, person or thing would aid the warm up in my protagonist. It would provide a clearer understanding both to the protagonist and me about the protagonist's surplus reality regarding that event, the relationship and the significance it holds in the present moment. All my thinking around the importance of the selection got more and more confirmed in me, as I worked with my clients. Eg. Each form represented the appearance, a characteristic demeanor, specific expressions etc. of what the protagonist wanted to concretise. The size of the human figurines that were chosen for themselves and their auxiliaries ego, the colour of the clothes, the height difference and the distance at which they are placed gave form to their surplus reality onto the stage.

Working with the Miniatures

I further imagined how the protagonist would set the scene using miniatures. I would display the entire range of super heroes, angel masks, angry masks, animal figures, human figures, cartoons characters in one corner of my therapy room. From these, the protagonist could choose figurines that were the closest to their reality. The scenes would be largely set on a small carpet. After setting it, the protagonist would describe it and then start the drama by stating what he/she would like to do. With all this visualising, I realised how *the producer of psychodrama with miniatures role*, further became clearer within me.

As I went ahead in action, experience showed me that in miniature psychodrama, the protagonist largely sits in the mirror position throughout the drama. This mirror position, while selecting the forms, setting of stage and describing the lay out, facilitates the protagonist to experience empowerment vis a vis the event. It also helps the director understand the scenario very clearly. Throughout the drama, the protagonist sits in the mirror position and holds different figures to take up those roles to enact the drama. By holding that particular mini form, the protagonist starts dialoguing with the respective aspects. He/she then gets back in the mirror position to look at what took place, what they are feeling about it and whether they would want to do something about it. Being in the mirror position prevents the protagonist from slipping into any frozen

retrogressive role. It also enables them to be clear seers and choose their next move, may it be confronting, replacing, dialoguing etc. from an empowered place. This experience, especially when working with childhood abuse and trauma, I observed, not only enables catharsis, and confrontation but also helps the protagonist to feel immense amount of safety and a change in power equation vis a vis the abuser/trauma. Both the miniatures and the mirror position, maintain the protagonist in a powerful and progressive role, where they feel in control, where as the director mostly stays in the role of a double.

I present here some of my work, beginning with my own psychodrama piece with miniatures, followed by the work that I did with my clients using miniatures. In all the cases given below, I have put my working model in action and experienced the potency of the miniature form display it self. I have also attached the feedback of my clients in the appendix.

Section II



I shall begin sharing my work by presenting my own piece with miniatures. I am mostly a background person, preferring to be in a shadow than have any sort of spot light on me or become visible to others. Some of it may be inborn, some of it due to my past experiences of criticism and shaming that came my way. When Sue suggested writing a paper, a part of me got into *the creative five year old role* who was ignited with enthusiasm and passion towards miniature structure. But the other *fearful of visibility and petrified of criticism* role in me made the task humongous. *The initiator of things* role in me started mulling over, penning parts and

pieces here and there, but just like other times, the *petrified of visibility and criticism* role in me kept fighting against it, and sapped me of all energy. The struggle was on. At this time, we were to practice psychodrama in our Pil training group. And it so happened that one of my colleagues was warmed up to direct me, that too with miniatures. *The clarity and solution seeker* role in me instantly knew I had to take up my piece. When I concretised my inner world, from the mirror position, the arial view made me a *clear seer* of what happens within. I realised that the voices that I have internalised of my criticisers play up and slip me into a *fixed retrogressive fearful* role. I could see how I feel exhausted dealing with them. Though a part of me feels very safe now with Sue and M, my visibility to others at large is still a huge threat to that fearful self. Role reversal with the *five year old creative child* within made me realise she was wishing that I work on my paper and present it to the others. Being in mirror position, I could experience the swings in the protagonist, shifting roles from being *the enthusiastic creative five year old* to *the fearful protector of the child from criticism*. Zooming in from mirror position helped me see how I slip into a *retrogressive role of freezing in my body* due to the fear of criticism. I realized that this freezing role would come up whenever my fearful self would experience the demonic voices hovering over the five year old child and needed to protect it. I remember my director being in the role of a double, and my fellow trainees taking up roles of my warm companions, encouraging me and asking me to keep breathing. The condition that the fearful protective self put to the protagonist was that “Only if you get rid of these voices, will I allow you to present your work to others”. I, from mirror position, empathised with my *fearful protector of the child*. With this awareness from mirror position, I chose to bring the role of *the believer in growth* that exists in me (depicted by Ganesha in the picture above). The drama ended with the protagonist dialoguing with this believer in growth role to guide her further.

My internal battle is still on but since after the drama, *my frozen with fear of criticism* role has moved to a retrogressive diminishing place. The entire drama created in me the possibility of opening up and sharing that I was thinking of writing this paper and the fears related to it with my supervisor, M. From a *safe warm encourager* role, she suggested I start sharing some parts of what I have penned with her to experience the safety in sharing. This would help me progress further. I, in the mean while, being in *the negotiator role* with the fearful protective self, started writing this paper, not with the perspective of presenting it to people at large, but to experience what I can bring out. My five year old creative child, feeling extremely excited with this freedom, keeps playing around with the photos, editing them, arranging and rearranging them enjoying the process. My *fearful protective self* stays in an *alert vigilant protective guardian* role and keeps an eye on how much am I sharing and with whom. Me, as of now, am just focused on compiling things here. Work in progress...

Section III

My Experience of using Miniature Forms with My Clients

When do I choose miniature forms with clients?

As mentioned previously, one of the most prominent reasons I choose miniature forms is when I believe the client's desire is to heal their childhood trauma or when I have experienced them getting to retrogressive or stuck roles in their previous work, not being able to keep their functional-self available. I also use it with clients who have used moving against or away from their own emotions as a way of coping. Drama with miniatures helps them to move towards difficult feelings in a manner that doesn't overwhelm them. Miniature structure of psychodrama enables the client to have an aerial and empowered view of their surplus reality, retaining functionality in their present self and the mirror position further helps to develop an objective understanding of their traumatic experience. The objective view unhooks them from the retrogressive role, thereby enabling them to be spontaneous and creative to make choices of how and what would help them heal. It further helps them to confront and cathart. In case of abuse, it changes the power equation between them and the abuser, maintaining and enhancing the empowered progressive roles in the client throughout the drama.

Client 1 Healing of molestation trauma

This client had been a victim of molestation in her childhood and we had been working on her core shame and low esteem which were hugely influenced by those experiences apart from other reasons. She requested an emergency session, as she witnessed her uncle masturbating in her living room, the previous night. This had deeply triggered helplessness and fear in her, as it reminded her of the time when she had been molested. Upon sharing this with one of her close friends and on her friend's suggestion, she confronted him with his inappropriate behavior. She was deeply shaken up by the experience and she wished to process the whole event to understand the happenings in her internal world.

I asked if she would like to work with miniature forms concretising the whole event and work on it from the mirror position, or work with any of my colleagues if they were free to take up auxiliary ego role in her psychodrama. She preferred using miniature forms because her *fear of judgement* role did not want others present in the drama. Though she had confronted her uncle last night, she seemed to be in some kind of disconnect from her experience of having stood up for herself. Previous sessions with her had brought to the surface, her *inner child's* mistrust towards her present self. I sensed that miniature form would help her feel safe to concretise the previous night's event and it also may help her inner child to experience her present self as her *protector and confronter of her abuser*.

She had in past, shown a desire to heal herself of her childhood molestation trauma and free herself from that victim place. I also believed that today's session may provide an opportunity to do so, and if she chooses, I was convinced this method would enhance the process of confronting her abuser of her childhood and would prevent her from slipping into the fixed retrogressive role that she had in her previous sessions. By concretising the previous evening's event on the stage, and having an arial view of her internal world by staying in mirror position would help her to make her choices for further action.

My Internal Process as a Director before the Drama

A part of me was aware that this was going to be the first drama using miniatures that I would direct that was dealing with confronting a molester. Though this client had actually confronted him in reality, I was not sure what the drama would unfold about her childhood abuse, if at all. This made me nervous and fearful of the emotional charge the client may experience during the drama and the possibility of her going into a fixed retrogressive role. In spite of being nervous, I also suppose my strong belief in miniature structure helped me remain functional. I also reminded myself of Sue's words 'Messy is beautiful'. This helped me fight my battle with my internal fears and I held on to my experience of how relying on my intuition in the past has mostly helped my work as a director. I was listing the steps in my mind of what all can I do to provide safety and what techniques would prevent her from going in to a fixed retrogressive role, keeping her in a progressive, functional and an empowered role.

The stage setting with miniature forms and some scenes

The drama began with her concretising her bedroom on the stage, where she had worked on herself the previous night before confronting her uncle and concretised her living room where she confronted her uncle. She concretised her cousin who was there in her bedroom, placed herself and her *frozen with fear inner child*, and chose a phone to represent the chat she had with her friend who encouraged her to confront her uncle. Before the drama began, I asked her if she would like to create a safe space or bring someone here as her warm companion and she chose Captain America (a super hero) to double her.

Drama

From the mirror position while enacting the scene, she could experience the disgust she had felt when she had witnessed her uncle masturbating in her living room. This role helped her realise how the experience had slipped her in to a *frozen with fear child* role. She then from the mirror position, concretised her *frozen with fear inner child*. Then from the protagonist role she

conversed with the child. Being *the compassionate protective guardian of the child*, she asked her *frozen with fear inner child* to stay in the bedroom, helping her understand that she (The Adult) will confront their uncle and take a stand for them. She then went ahead and confronted her uncle. She was firm in her dialogue, and told him how disgusted she was to see him masturbate in her living room. She found it most inappropriate of him to do so and he should be more respectful. This was one of the most profound experiences for me, seeing this client remain in a progressive role throughout the drama, because in all our earlier work so far, facing her inner child had slipped her adult self in a fixed retrogressive role.



Further in the drama, from the mirror position she chose to concretise the scene of her childhood when she had experienced molestation. She brought out *frozen with fear inner child* to heal her. The mirror position enabled her to see how fearful, helpless and disempowered the child felt and seeing that brought her in a *compassionate empathizer* role towards this child. She took up the adult role and conversed with the inner child helping her experience her presence as a protector. This process of integrating her inner child and adult self transformed her from being in a fixed retrogressive to a diminishing retrogressive role. She also demonstrated a *progressive initiator of positivity* role and replaced her uncle from the living room with her loved ones and well-wishers. The mirror position, thus helped her to experience that she can fill her life with positivity from now on. The drama ended in this progressive role with her feeling empowered and experiencing the process of integration of her inner child and her adult self developing trust and compassion towards each other.

What occurred in the drama first was a catharsis of abreaction – her having expressed her anger, disappointment and hurt towards her uncle. As she continued the drama, a moment of catharsis of integration was experienced during dialoguing between her present self and her inner child. Finally another integration happened when she realized that she freezes in a retrogressive role while experiencing helplessness or fear and is not being able to remain in her adult self.

Client's realisations shared with me in the next session

In our conversation in the next session, she shared experiencing safety within herself. This was a major progressive role development in this client. The drama helped her experience herself in the role of a healthy, protective and empowered adult while confronting her uncle. She shared that this was an experience of such relief and pride for her!

My Experience as a Director

Using miniature form and enacting the drama from a mirror position enabled the client to remain in a *functional adult and compassionate empathizer role towards the frozen with fear inner child*. It was one of those moments that made my belief stronger about working with miniature structure with clients who experienced a stuck or frozen retrogressive role vis a vis trauma or abuse. I was alert throughout the drama ensuring I don't make it my agenda to help her adult self to bond with her inner child. I was aware and respectful of her goal to process the previous day's event. I also kept observing the protagonist throughout the drama for any signs of her going towards a fixed retrogressive role. I kept encouraging and reminding her to breathe and share what was she experiencing during each role that she took. I was also in the role of a double, encouraging her in her acts when she would find it difficult to further the drama.

The drama went on for almost two hours. I knew it had extended for too long, but my intuitive self had sensed of some kind of readiness in the protagonist to bring a closure to her past experiences and thus I saw a possibility of integration of different roles within her self. So, I chose to not stop the drama after her confrontation with her uncle and went ahead with her choice to continue the drama to work with her past experience of molestation. With that, I also periodically checked with her if she wanted to end the drama. At times this made me conflicted internally between choosing to end the drama seeing the protagonist's exhaustion or continuing it, respecting her need to bring a closure in her with her past experiences. Stopping her in those times would have meant leaving it incomplete for her. I realize I need to work on this to understand what would be a healthier thing to do. The protagonist was completely exhausted after the drama, but I experienced a great sense of relief in her. I was also very relieved and happy that the drama ended with her being in a progressive role.

I have attached her feedback in Appendix.

Client – 2

Grieving of loss of father and trauma healing

My client expressed a desire to experience the loss of her father which she hadn't allowed herself to do since his death many years ago and grieve for it. (she was 5-6 years old at the time of her father's death.) She said she had assumed the role of *a responsible care taker* of her mother and her younger sister the moment her father died and thus had lost her childhood immediately, never having grieved for her loss. She expressed her desire to free herself from the sense of over responsibility towards them. She felt that due to this over responsible self, she also kept staying in the role of *a succumbing victim to physical abuse* from her mother and in a *mothering* role towards her younger sister. She wished to develop a *self-protector* role and wanted to move away from the *over responsible towards others* role. She wished to develop a *self prioritiser* role as well. During our previous work together also, we had identified a need in her for developing a *nurturing parent* role towards her *hurt/pained inner child* and a role of a *protector of her inner child from the domestic violence*.

Past few months of work was focused on building a nurturing relation with different aspects of herself, namely the scared child, the submissive victim and the over responsible self in her. The work was still in progress and her present self was still developing.

The Reason I Chose to work with Miniature Forms

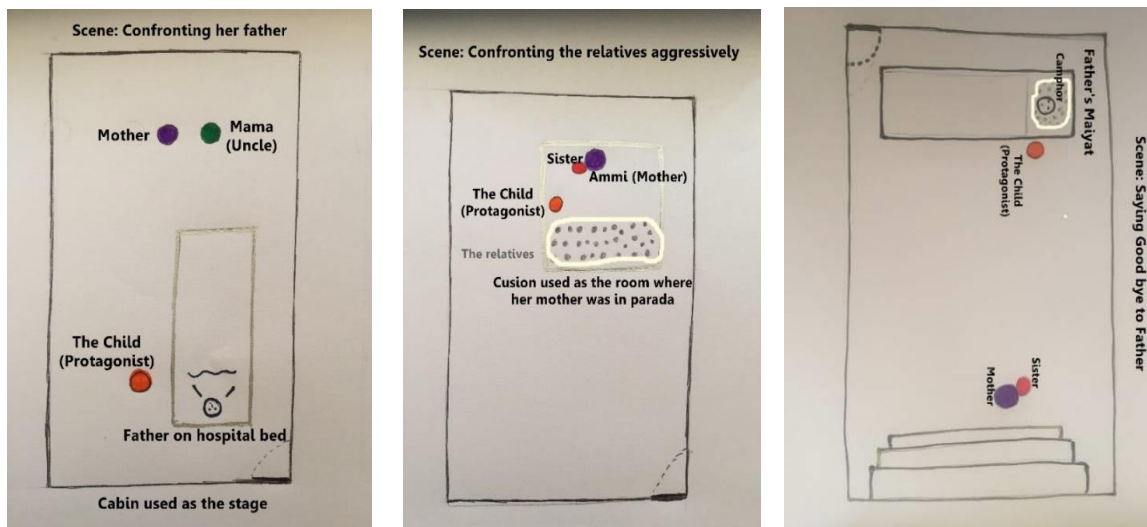
We had used the miniature structure in previous sessions and she had realised the method was more effective for her because she found it safer to be her authentic self. She had shared that people taking up auxiliary ego roles had kept her aware of their presence and it had inhibited her freedom to be herself. I believed miniature forms would help this client remain empowered in the mirror position while recreating the scene of her father's death. I also believed being in a mirror position would provide her a bird's eye view, enabling her to be spontaneous and creative. It would help her to get into a clear seer and a decision maker role, strengthening her developing adult and thus enabling integration of different aspects of self.

Over a course of time, we had also identified that she had bottled up anger towards her mother, her extended family and towards the society for denying her any acknowledgement of her emotions related to her father's death. I believed this drama would provide an opportunity for catharsis of those emotions. I was anxious but was warmed up to directing this drama, as I had a tele with my client on her being extremely warmed up to work on herself.

Drama

Before she set the stage, I asked her to create a safe space and explained to her that this drama can be stopped at any given time if she chooses to do so. She chose whole therapy room as her stage and chose the space outside as her safe space. The stage was initially set with the hospital scene where her father was admitted. The 5-6 year old child was brought there and was placed

in the hospital parking lot, sitting under a tree in the early hours of winter morning, along with her younger sister by her side and one of her uncles who had brought them there. I then asked her to take the role of that child, role interviewed the child, asked her to return to the mirror position and asked the protagonist what she saw was happening to the child and what would she like to do about it. This is how the entire drama was enacted, by zooming in on the child of that time, then taking the protagonist in the mirror position to choose what would she like to do to help that child heal.



Diagrams of the stage at different points of the drama

The drama enabled the protagonist to have a bird's eye view of the child during her traumatic experiences. The protagonist became a *clear seer* from the mirror position and that helped her remain in an *empathic compassionate nurturing adult* role towards the child. The drama unfolded eight different scenes. Mirror position enabled the protagonist to bring significant changes in each of them to help the child release her bottled up emotions. When I role interviewed the child during each scene, it enhanced her visibility for the protagonist, and helped her cathart the various emotions which were denied to this child at the respective times. Eg, in the beginning of her drama when she set up the hospital scene depicting the time of her father's demise, she remembered that she and her sister were not told the truth. The protagonist, from a *firm assertive decision maker* role, denied brining one of her uncles on stage at the scene saying 'I don't like him and I don't want him here'. Experiencing *the protector* in her present self, helped the child experience safety, respect, acceptance and empowerment. This I believe gave the protagonist some strength to take the drama further. In the role interview with the child, she shared that she was not allowed to meet her father when he was in the hospital and began to cry. A while later I asked the child 'so would you like to go visit him now?' And being surprised, wide eyed she asked, 'can I?' I said, 'of course, this is your drama, you can do what you wish...' and she chose to visit him, complained to him that he never came to visit them and that she misses him. Thus, dialoguing with her father enabled catharsis of abreaction for the protagonist. In another scene, when her mother was in Parada, (a ritual where the widow is kept behind a

curtain (parada) and is not allowed to come out in the open) the ladies gathered there, sympathized with her for not having a son and losing her husband at this young age. The child was hurt and angry. From the mirror position, the protagonist encouraged the child to do what she wanted. Experiencing her adult having her back, finally the angry hurt child ended up shouting at them and with powerful strength throwing all of them out. One more scene at her father's *maiyyat* when they were about to take him away for cremation, she was not allowed to meet him or say her good bye to him. The child, in this drama feeling safe, was able to go close to him. With silent tears rolling down, she in a soft whispering tone, bid him good bye with her little prayer. She finally ended up crying for her loss. Even as I am writing this, I can feel goose bumps!! I was amazed at the kind of resolve and perseverance she had to want to face the most traumatic times of her childhood!

I believe being able to meet her father in the hospital, confront the relatives and being able to say good bye to her father was possible for her only because of the miniature structure. She could let herself flow freely without becoming conscious of another person's presence in auxiliary ego role. It helped her finally to bring a closure to her traumatic past.

My Experience as a Director

This has been singularly the most challenging piece for me so far as a director, being a double to my protagonist. In some ways, it is also a piece that has touched me the most! I feel inspired by my protagonist's strong resolve, courage and persistence to heal and integrate the various fragmented aspects of her!

I would like to share the uniqueness of this drama here - there were no role reversals throughout this drama! All scenes consisted of enacting from the mirror position, protagonist or the child role. This was because what the protagonist had asked for was to grieve for her loss and heal her traumas. I believed at the time that role reversing with any of the aspects would have taken the focus away from the child, and would have prevented the protagonist in helping the child to experience her emotions, as the focus on others would have brought her to her conscious self and the experience of the power others had over her at the time of his death. That would have stopped her from experiencing empowerment to change the traumatic experience and release her bottled up emotions. Though role reversal is one of the most significant aspects of psychodrama, this drama was an exception. The amazing realization is that this came to my awareness only when Sue asked me in the supervision why was there no role reversal. I believe I was an *intuitive director*, and spontaneous while being in flow with my protagonist. I wonder if role reversal would have enhanced her catharsis or would it have curbed it.

The other significance of this drama was that eight different detailed scenes were set up in the drama on the same stage, being able to accommodate all of them there and the protagonist could actually have an overview of all of them at once. That, as a director, made me experience and

learn the influence one can have of the collective experiences of a chain of events. I believe this was possible because the protagonist kept returning to the mirror position which helped her to stay in functional. A clear seer from the mirror position made her feel empowered and it prevented her from slipping into any retrogressive roles like in her previous sessions. I kept checking how the protagonist was feeling and/or experiencing throughout the drama and periodically kept reminding her to breathe. In the beginning of the drama, she opted to go in the safe space outside the cabin. This alerted me and I was conflicted within me if I should continue with the drama. But the tele between us was strong once she reconnected with her *persistent adult* role even before setting up the next scenario on the stage. When I would ask her if she wanted to end the drama after each scene, she would from a *firm decision maker* and *goal setter* role, insist on wanting to continue further. Though she experienced intense level of exhaustion, our tele made us experience the need to go on till she could bring a closure in her vis a vis her father's death. Finally, we both experienced reaching an end when she could cathart very deeply at the *maiyyat* of her father. I experienced a deep pain surfacing in the protagonist when she asked me to switch off the lights. We sat silently in the dark cabin; she finally experienced her painful loss.

I experienced the catharsis of abreaction in the protagonist when she expressed her anger at her family for not allowing her to meet her father in the hospital. When she finally went to meet him and with crying eyes complained to him how he never came to meet her, my client experienced catharsis of integration. The anger and the aggression she experienced while she threw her relatives out of the parada scene, shouting at them that they (she, her sister and her mother) do not want their sympathy. Lastly, when she collapsed while crying, saying good bye to her father at his maiyyat, before they took him for his burial.

I took supervision from Sue for this piece of work. I am forever and extremely grateful for her guidance, it taught me fundamentals of psychodrama and the use of miniature structure.

I have attached her feedback in Appendix.

Conclusion

From the above cases and many others, I have come to believe that psychodrama with miniature structure is a potent method for healing the past traumatic issues/childhood traumas. In situations where possibility of a client slipping into frozen coping role or fixed regressive role due to other people's presence as auxiliaries in the drama, miniature structure can be a very suitable alternate. It is helpful for those who wish to do one on one work. The method can also be handy where there are space restrictions for spatial spread of stage or due to some issues with physical disability, illnesses or difficulty in movement due to old age.

However, with the benefits, this method also has limitations and therefore should be judicially used. This method limits the work with the protagonist taking roles of different entities and dialoguing which prevents the actual experience of people taking up auxiliary roles. Sometimes hearing the other helps the protagonist to empathize with them and understand their reality. While miniature may prove to be beneficial for space restrictions, it also prevents one from having body movements, sometimes essential for the protagonist. Having an Aerial view may help, but it is also necessary to let your whole body become a part of the drama.

My experience with miniatures has only encouraged me to learn further. My belief in the process is getting stronger each time and I am also valuing the judicial use of them. I would like to end this here by dedicating this paper to my clients, mentioned here and to all the others for having faith in the process and specially for putting their trust in me. I am forever grateful to them and to my supervisors and mentors, M and Sue for being so patient with me and generous in their help and guidance. This would not have been possible without their warm and loving encouragement.

Client feedback on work with Miniature Structure:

Client 1

I don't think I would have had the courage to take this up in a larger group, with an audience, having to choose auxiliaries etc. Here I could choose from props/mini forms.

It was easier (relatively) to go through the entire series of event when there were miniatures involved because being in mirror position and replaying the event was not experienced as a threat and I could remain in an empowered state while I enacted the scene of confrontation. I did not have to go through that ordeal once again.

Due to the element of size the power dynamics changed. The abuser didn't seem like this huge, powerful, overbearing entity. I could throw him out of the drama.

For that matter, the entire event looked very different from this perspective. Everything was so tiny that it didn't feel like something huge and difficult has happened to me. I could look at it as something from which I can move on. (Not a life altering reality, something I can deal with. Felt empowered and things did not overwhelm me.) (Here I'm talking about the encounter from previous night)

Sexual abuse is a very traumatic and painful subject for me to explore by itself, but because I was in a mirror position/adult stance I looked at the entire encounter from a stance of empowerment. (Here I'm talking about the childhood sexual abuse history)

I felt safer to explore deeper on the themes of sexuality, sexual abuse and taking a stand, safety etc. after the drama. This goes to tell how impactful the work was for me.

I can't put a finger on exactly what worked. Either of these or both.. but the fact that there were miniatures involved and/or I was in the mirror position, they reduced the intensity of the pain drastically (when I say drastically reduced intensity I mean I could experience the pain and suffering with intensity of an appropriate level and be compassionate without getting overpowered by the pain and grief).

Being in the mirror position, I could narrate, experience, look at things from an objective point of view, and could actively engage in providing safety to the inner child. I felt much more confident in myself and have slowly started putting trust on the 'adult' in me.

I could add elements that would've otherwise made me feel very helpless or powerless like my uncle (abuser) etc. I still can't believe that I did a piece where the abuser was on stage and I didn't die!

Client 2

In this particular session I found miniature structure most effective. In this session I was very spontaneous, I was very aware and was ready to put my all guards down. I sensed that I was spontaneous because I saw dolls and props. For my little one it was a play where I can create my world and dialogue by taking different roles like mother, father, sister, teacher, friends and myself so for her it was the same. So, like this, connections built with miniature psychodrama. I was amazed as how creating a scene warmed me to the actual experience of that time. the difference I experienced about miniature verses psychodrama was that I could get in touch with the wholistic experience of that time where as in psychodrama since there is a human experience of the auxiliary, I am unable to do so as my focus remains only in the relation with that person or the aspect. While setting the stage eg at the hospital, because I could focus on that time, I could experience the cold weather, the smell of that tree etc. For the first time I was allowing most painful emotions to be expressed without putting extra connotations, or being selective, or being judgmental. I was ready to accept my painful reality and allow myself to grieve. I was amazed after the drama how I could remember all of these things like the hospital, home, curtains, tube light, telephone booth, camphor etc. In conscious awareness I have a sense that I have taken many responsibilities of others and the house to fill the void in the family. Post the drama I could realize my desperation even at that young age, to hand hold my younger sister and how that prevented me from allowing my self to experience my loss, pain and grief.

In this drama I have also expressed anger about society and rules – as a child I perceived this custom of parada as society punishing my mother because a child understands being confined to a room as a punishment - 'kamre mein bandh hona ek punishment hai!!'. So, in this session the child experienced the power in her to throw all people out and could create space to grieve which was not allowed in real world then.

For me miniature structure provides me with the kind of safety that I would not experience with other people being around even as auxiliaries, especially in this drama. If there would have been people around, I would not have been able to put out layers. Also, in this particular event, there were multiple traumas that I experienced which I could deal with along with my grieving. This would not have been possible for me if there were real people as my auxiliaries. Having a bird's eye view helped me to experience everything that I was going through, each of the traumas and resolve them here.

I am more spontaneous with miniature forms and props than auxiliary.