



Persona and Performance: The Meaning of Role in Drama, Therapy, and Everyday Life

By Robert J. Landy PhD

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This book demonstrates that drama is not only a metaphor for everyday life, but also provides a means of self-examination and life enhancement. Asserting that emotional well-being depends upon an individual's capacity to manage a complex and often contradictory set of roles, the author shows how role offers a uniquely effective method for working through significant personal problems when used as an element of drama therapy. The volume combines theoretical discussions with extensive clinical illustrations, and covers issues including learning to live with role ambivalence, complexity, and contradiction.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This book offers a very human and readable account of a new approach to the uses of role and roleplay in therapy. It will widen the understanding of roleplay as used in family therapy, playtherapy, social groupwork and dramatherapy. A book to be read and thought about for a long time." --Alida Gersie, Senior dramatherapist, University of Hertfordshire

"Robert Landy's book is more than a study of how we may creatively use role-playing at the deepest level. It contains a theory of human communication which enriches the humanities and the social sciences." --Neil Postman, Ph.D., New York University, Department of Culture and Communication

"Robert Landy has researched and written a major contribution not only to the world of dramatherapy, but also to theatre and psychotherapy. Only now can we grasp an in-depth understanding of roles and their essential part of all human development. This book paves the way for a greater awareness of the function of roles in both our everyday lives, as well as in the remediation that is possible through dramatherapy. This is a courageous book which moves forward the theoretical debate in dramatherapy and serves as a model of detailed research for future practitioners. Dr. Landy shows us that our understanding of life needs to come through our understanding of theatre, and that life roles and theatre roles are interconnected in a process that is paradoxical: that we are both in-role and not in-role at one and the same time. Hence the dilemma of Hamlet is our own dilemma--how can we both be and not be?

Not only does Robert Landy guide us through his detailed and meticulous research into hundreds of characters from plays which provides a role taxonomy for understanding human behavior, he also demonstrates how this can be applied both in assessment and therapy with a wide variety of populations. This important book sets up a dialogue between theatre and life; it is a milestone of its kind. Dr. Landy's book should be read by theatre artists and therapists alike, as well as clinicians and educators." --Sue Jennings, Ph.D., London Hospital Medical College

"PERSONA AND PERFORMANCE is a sweeping analysis of human experience in terms of theatrical roles. The book is scholarly, broad in scope, and deep in content. Dr. Landy's carefully reasoned perspective shows us that we express ourselves within a myriad of roles, at the intersection of the individual and society. These building blocks of our personality, our 'Self', do not form a unitary solid, but are more of a continuously moving dance or kaleidoscope. The goal of psychotherapy should be to expand this repertoire of roles, and to make our role-taking more flexible and more responsive to the demands of our lives.

The book includes beautiful case studies of an individual and a group - both reflected metaphorically in the theatrical characters that emerge from this dynamic process. Dr. Landy captures the excitement of his clients' explorations. Incredibly, he demonstrates how elements of world dramatic literature emerge out of ordinary people. Similar to Jung's archetypes, these basic human forms are described as potentialities of spirit, in a well-designed system of classification.

PERSONA AND PERFORMANCE is a remarkable literary achievement. Not only does it advance the field of drama therapy, but it also contributes a fascinating perspective to other psychotherapeutic approaches. I recommend this book to all clinicians and scholars in mental health, the arts, and humanities." --David Read

Johnson, Ph.D., RDT, Associate Professor, Yale University School of Medicine and Director, Post Traumatic Stress Disorders Program, VA Medical Center (New Haven, CT).

"A welcome addition to the literature." --Simone Zaniowka Gordon, D.S.W., Adjunct Assistant Professor, Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University

"The writing style of this unusual book is lucid and holds the reader's attention. Graduate through professional."--Choice
(*Choice* 1996-03-03)

Review

Landy's insights and methods are, I am sure, of particular interest to drama therapists but there is undoubtedly scope for the rest of us to use them as an addition to our repertoire of tools as counsellors. (Counselling)

Landy's lucidly-written book explores the idea that emotional well-being depends on our ability to manage complex and contradictory roles. Aimed particularly at mental health workers, it develops its theory from an extended single case study and a group case study. (Theatre)

Landy writes clearly although the topic is sometimes complex. The reader is carried along by his understanding of and enthusiasm for his subject... the book has much to offer the psychodramatist. The theory it contains, and his eight stage method of treatment can be utilised. (British Psychodrama Association)

This is a courageous book which moves forward the theoretical debate in dramatherapy and serves as a model of detailed research for future practitioners. (Sue Jennings)

This book offers a very human and readable account of a new approach to the uses of role and roleplay in therapy. It will widen the understanding of roleplay as used in family therapy, playtherapy, social groupwork and dramatherapy. A book to be read and thought about for a long time. (Alida Gersie)

This book is welcome as a major contribution to the field. (Changes)

About the Author

Robert J. Landy, Ph.D., R.D.T., is Associate Professor and Director of the Drama Therapy Program at New York University. He practices as a drama therapist and lectures worldwide on the creative arts therapies. He is a prolific writer who also serves as Editor-in-Chief of the international journal, *The Arts in Psychotherapy*.

Users Review

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James Hanson:

Reading can called mind hangout, why? Because when you find yourself reading a book specifically book entitled *Persona and Performance: The Meaning of Role in Drama, Therapy, and Everyday Life* the mind will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each and every aspect that maybe unfamiliar for but surely can become your mind friends. Imaging each and every word written in a guide then become one web form conclusion and explanation this maybe you never get prior to. The *Persona and Performance: The Meaning of Role in Drama, Therapy, and Everyday Life* giving you another experience more than blown away your brain but also giving you useful info for your better life in this particular era. So now let us demonstrate the relaxing pattern is your body and mind will be pleased when you are finished looking at it, like winning a. Do you want to try this extraordinary shelling out spare time activity?

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