



IN MEMORIAM

Eva Leveton

by Adam Blatner

Eva Leveton, MS, MFT (December 12, 1934 - March 28, 1915), was one of the pioneers of psychodrama in Northern California. In 2004 Eva was given the Zerka T. Moreno award for her distinguished work based on publication and other activities—not least of which has been being a bridge to drama therapy.

Ms Leveton was the author of the widely used paperback introductory book, *Psychodrama for the Timid Clinician* (1977), later renamed in a 2nd and 3rd edition, *A Clinician's Guide to Psychodrama* (1992 and 2001). This was in addition to books on family therapy and other writings. Living in Mill Valley, just north of San Francisco, Eva had been ill for several years and finally succumbed to a type of leukemia.

She taught psychodrama at the Drama Therapy program as an Associate Professor at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) in San Francisco, retiring in 2002. (That program is directed by Dr. Renee Emunah). Eva also gave workshops internationally for decades in Canada, England, Germany, Austria, Poland, Romania, Turkey, India, and China, often along with her psychiatrist husband of 47 years, Alan Leveton.

In addition, Ms Leveton also had been a consultant in the department of psychology to the University of California in San Francisco (UCSF) Medical Center and was a founding member of the San Francisco Family Therapy Center (1984-2002). Eva continued as adjunct and or guest faculty until she became ill.

Ms Leveton conducted family therapy and psychodrama sessions and group and individual therapy since 1962. Her background is a complicated mix of activities in those fields with an added Jungian orientation that came from her own therapy.

Background:

Ms Leveton received her master's degree in psychology from San Francisco State College and then graduated from the Mental Research Institute's (Palo Alto) Intensive Family Therapy training Program. She combined her academic training with her experience as a professional actress to write about and teach about psychodrama. In 1966 she, her husband, Alan Leveton (a psychiatrist), and Ben Handleman (a social worker) founded the Family Therapy Center in San Francisco, which continued to 1994. (I was fortunate in knowing her since the late 1960s.)

Other books she's written or co-written include a memoir of her childhood as the child of a Jewish father but a gentile mother, growing up under the shadow of Hitler: "Eva's Berlin." After her immigration here after the war, she did well as a student, lost her accent, and went on to become a family therapist in a place where family therapy was really taking off. From this, and in conjunction with her psychiatrist husband, Alan, Eva wrote *Adolescent Crisis*. More recently, Eva edited a book titled *Healing Collective Trauma, Adolescent Crisis*, in addition to her books about psychodrama.



Ms Leveton led psychodrama groups and classes for the past five decades in day centers and hospital wards, in universities, organizations, and schools here and abroad. In her book she described her favorite psychodramatic techniques and explained their use. Most importantly, her goal was "to let you now as much as possible about my experience in using these techniques: my hesitations, my questions, my conflicts."

Eva presented at professional meetings here and in Europe: She was an early member also of the (now) North American Association of Drama Therapy (NAADT) as well as the American Society

of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama (ASGPP), Psychodrama Institute fur Europa (PIFE), the Leipzig Psychodrama Institute International Teaching Experience; as well as universities and professional institutes in India, Germany, Austria, Turkey, Poland, and China.

However, her work has concentrated on the San Francisco Bay Area in California, where she was in private practice for a half a century, as well as working in most of the major teaching hospitals and many universities. In addition to teaching Psychodrama, she also taught classes in Human Development and Clinical Skills.

Here's a sample of her writing:

www.isi-amburg.org/download/0_Experimental_Techniques_with_Couples.pdf

Books:

A Clinician's Guide to Psychodrama (Springer, 1977; 1992, 2001) 3rd ed.

Adolescent Crisis: Approaches in Family Therapy (Springer, 1984)

Eva's Berlin, Memories of a Wartime Childhood (Thumbprint Press, 2001)

Leveton, E. (ed). *Healing Collective Trauma with Sociodrama and Drama Therapy*. (Springer, 2010)

Films:

1973: *Children in Trouble; Families in Crisis*. University of California, Davis. 2004

McEwan, M. & Palermo, S. (directors) *Reconcile: Germans, Jews, and the Holocaust* (Three person documentary).

2005: Balzer, K. (director) *Eva's Berlin, the story of a California immigrant*. Documentary, German. Presentations:

Eva's work is methodologically difficult to define. It creates a wonderful blend of mainly psychodrama and drama therapy in conjunction with clinical knowledge, poetry, music and movement, what makes her work as psychotherapeutic as well as a family and group counselor.