

Training the Auxiliary Ego

by Rob Brodie

Robert Brodie is certificated as a Psychodramatist and Role Trainer and is the Director of the Psychodrama Training Institute of South Australia. He works in private practice and for organisations applying the psychodrama method in self development courses, individual and group therapy, couples counselling, parent education and team-development.

This paper is the complete thesis written by Rob for his certification as a Psychodramatist. Although written some time ago, the content has an on-going relevance for all trainers, trainees and other group members who will have an interest in developing themselves as auxiliaries. Also, in our aspiration to create a journal, a continuing idea has been to publish some theses as journal articles. The actual format relates well to the written requirement for assessment procedure.

Preface

Difference excites and fascinates me. In my original family, it was the basis for shutting out anyone seen as a threat to a Methodist matriarchy and brought on the ruthless oppression of any deviant behaviour. Writing about this now brings the flat, numb, arid and scratchy feeling so familiar from my childhood. Instant obedience and the clean, tidy intellect were fostered and the accumulation of ideas and facts demonstrated and applauded. "That's a good idea" was the highest accolade.

When I first made love, I discovered that all the words I had read on the subject and pictures I had seen, the resulting ideas, fantasies and expectations I had constructed were irrelevant. They had meant what I could not know until I had experience on which to base them. Experience brought an immediacy, a depth,

a texture and a satisfaction not previously possible. With this temporary fulfilment, my hunger for meaning based in experience, became conscious.

I ventured further from the umbrella which imprisoned me for my "own good." I was intrigued by the example of Rimbaud. From a sheltered, secure life as a profoundly tender Parisian poet, he chose to be a slave-trader at the age of 28. I undertook the exploration of cultures with more broad-minded mores around relationships, drugs, ethnicity, legality, aesthetics and religion. So underlying my lusty adventures in difference is a search for depth, meaning, and connections, both inner and outer.

In psychodrama groups, I discovered a setting where I could venture into territory I had so far only dimly envisaged. Being an auxiliary in another's drama, often demanded

whole-hearted participation in a foreign realm, at the same time maintaining an inner independence. Where else could I usefully be Captain Ahab, heroically and obsessively leading a slaughter, or Mary meeting Jesus, resurrected? Where else could I so fully build a bridge between enlivening fantasies and daily necessity. Rather than being a frustrating, painful delay, fixing a leaky radiator hose in the middle of the near-desert of the Hay Plain could become an incident in the saga of terraforming a hostile planet to create a paradise.

With my enduring hunger for experience, a spirit of adventure and the anticipation of depth and dialogue, I went to the United States in 1985, accompanied by Narelle, to whom I'm married, and 15 month old Adam. While there, I took part in the Annual Conference of the American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama in Washington, D.C. During this Conference, the leaders of the Association of Drama-Therapists in the USA met with leading figures in the Psychodrama movement in order to discuss their commonalities and differences. This concentration of outstanding personalities and distillation of experience attracted me strongly, so I attended. In their discussions about the two groups, several similarities and contrasts emerged.

Among them were the following. Both groups use dramatic improvisation. Both deliberately and consciously work with participants' warm-up to action, themes and interaction. The eclecticism of drama-therapists, who draw from many schools of drama and therapy, contrasts with the coherence of the body of philosophy, theory and practice which is Psychodrama. The presentation of performances to a

paying public as part of drama-therapy has no obvious parallel in Psychodrama.

Drama-therapy demands responsible participation in the preparation of a play through regular attendance and work at rehearsals and in the crucial performance. It requires from the individual a self-disciplined commitment to others. This commitment results in development of the participant's personality. Roles essential to healthy living and an internal organisation which promotes the development of a solid self, both become more established. The reader may wish to refer to the example in the body of the article which elaborates and clarifies these outcomes for one particular person.

I started to look for the origins of similar results in psychodrama. Their fostering is obvious in director training, as the development of core director roles. But what about for the members of the regular, public Personal Growth Groups I direct using classical Psychodrama? At first, apart from regular attendance in the face of stuckness and confrontation in the group, I could only think of delegating the responsibility for preparing supper. Eventually, I saw that becoming an effective auxiliary ego requires this development.

In groups like these, members are frequently called on to take parts in dramatic action. I started to focus more on training participants in Personal Growth Groups to be adequate auxiliaries, an ability essential to daily living anyway, as psychodramatic roles are integrated into everyday functioning and relationships.

This prompted me to detail the aspects of being an effective auxiliary. The statements here are based on my own training as a Psychodramatist and on my experience

conducting Self-Development Groups in the community and Director Training Groups for professionals.

Originally, I wrote this article to distribute to people participating in Personal Growth Groups. It has also proved useful to Trainee Directors of Psychodrama and Sociodrama and as a check-list for practising directors, whose comments have been helpful in making this version more accessible.

My deep gratitude goes to the following people who have engaged generously with me in the course of my training, writing and practice.

As well as his profound understanding of Psychodrama and his love of the freedom it can engender, Max Clayton has provided rigorous modelling of commitment to living fully, especially through contacting and expressing inner process, and of spontaneous auxiliary work under direction. His coaching is summarised, according to my understanding, in many of the statements written here.

Tom Wilson has given gently relevant advice and his unflagging validation of my adequacy and ability to bring out my self with authority.

By her coaching as an auxiliary ego, Zerka Moreno led me to fuller and deeper appreciation of the contribution to healing and growth possible through adequate auxiliary work in the later stages of a drama.

Lynette Clayton has supervised me in the production of this article with humanity, equality and humour.

Many people in groups I have conducted have responded so vividly to my attempts to work together effectively in bringing greater fullness and riches to life. They especially are my never-tiring teachers and fellow voyagers.

Introduction

Jacob and Zerka Moreno(1) write: "The director must trust the psychodrama method as the final arbiter and guide in the therapeutic process." When this is done, "the psychodramatic method becomes a flexible, all embracing medium leading systematically to the heart of the patients suffering, enabling the director, the protagonist, the auxiliary egos and the group members to become a cohesive force, welded into maximising emotional learning."

These words convey the overall coherence and power of Psychodrama. Auxiliary egos are an essential component for most effective work in this method. In a group setting, with trained auxiliaries, the power, delicacy, breadth, depth and vigour of Psychodrama can emerge fully.

As well as being a co-therapist or co-educator with the director, an auxiliary ego derives considerable personal learning. They may approach their own sensitive areas and enter them sideways while they would be too defensive to face them directly in their own work.

The ability to be an auxiliary ego is an essential life-skill. Developing this ability is part of the work of any group whose goals include participants relating more fully with others. The self becomes more solidly integrated as the individual develops the internal organisation necessary to staying in touch with their own inner experience and, at the same time, being able to discipline themselves to act in a way which furthers the work of the protagonist and the director of the drama

Some of the roles the individual will develop through learning to be an auxiliary are *Creative Organiser*, *Competent Producer*, *Team-member*, *Playmate* and *Spontaneous Actor*.

Frequently there are no trained auxiliary egos included in groups which draw members from the community. If some participants are already trained, they are models for the less experienced. In any case, the director must repeatedly teach the method during the course of the group. Intensive coaching in all aspects of auxiliary ego work is part of this teaching.

The writing which follows addresses two aspects of auxiliary work, namely, the changes that result in individual personality and the teaching of group members by a director.

After a review of the literature, a section of this article presents an account of work with one particular person as they become more adequate as an auxiliary ego and consequently more functional in their daily living. It illustrates the director coaching an auxiliary ego and their resulting personality development.

The focus in the subsequent section is on information and ideas that participants require to move from a feeling of raw ignorance to a sense of playful, responsive confidence based in their developed ability to take the role demanded by a particular moment. It will further the understanding of auxiliary work and the sometimes obscure demands of psychodrama process.

In experiential groups, the material gathered there would be raised by the director at appropriate times over many hours in the life of the group. Presented all together, it can be overwhelming. One way to deal with this is to choose what appeals and to work on other aspects when they in their turn become of interest.

Directors will find the section useful in helping them to reverse roles with participants in groups they run and in coaching them.

Literature Review

In the books and journal articles about Psychodrama, writers have focused on aspects of technique, theory and philosophy and on applications of the psychodrama method in different settings. The present article builds on this work by specifying how a director may work with an auxiliary in a particular situation.

Jacob Moreno(2), the creator of Psychodrama, relating to the Classical Greek theatre, first used the words "auxiliary ego" and he consciously developed the functioning of auxiliaries. As with other concepts he developed, the power of this one is sustained by its basis in real life processes. Frequently in his writing, he elaborates aspects of auxiliary work. For instance, he does so at several places in a general essay(3) on the nature and development of Psychodrama, which has specific illustrative examples, as well as in the summary of his theories presented in the introduction to *Psychodrama Volume I*(4).

Other writers too have added to the clarity of thought and the fullness and precision of practice in this area. Those mentioned here have paid particularly direct attention to auxiliary ego work.

Barbara Seabourne(5) has addressed auxiliaries from a professional audience whose thinking and perspective on auxiliary work and psychodrama is sophisticated. In this comprehensive article, she presents auxiliary ego functions in a wide range of situations and at the different stages of a drama, and, also, instructions for doubling.

In his article, Norman Zinger(6) presents concepts to guide the actions of auxiliary egos. From his own understanding and discussions

with Zerka and Doctor Moreno, he examines the varying functions of the auxiliary in relation to the protagonist, director and group. There is an exposition of how an auxiliary may help a protagonist enact old roles and develop new perceptions and roles. There is a list of tasks performed for the director by the auxiliary. Finally, ways of working to develop the sociometry and culture of a group are presented. Language is technical.

Heather McLean(7) discusses the directing of a drama with particular mention of the use of auxiliaries and doubles. Her writing is oriented to trainee directors.

Zerka Moreno(8) writes on the function of the auxiliary ego with special reference to psychotic patients. In her introductory section she describes J.L. Moreno's use of auxiliaries with such patients and urges others to work in this area. She concludes this section with a poetic description of the developing relationship between an auxiliary ego and a protagonist.

She says of the protagonist, "It is as if they stretched out a hand saying: 'This is my world. I trust you. Come and be with me inside it. Live my pain, my sorrow and my joy, that you may know me better.' This leads to becoming a genuine auxiliary ego, eventually able to stretch out one's own hand to that person, indicating, 'Now that I have been in your world, let me take you into mine.'"

She then sets out with great clarity "The Five Functions of The Auxiliary Ego." This is done in abstract and technical language.

The following two references employ language which is more ordinary, less technical.

Carl Hollander(9) expands on the meaning of the words "auxiliary ego" and the significance of auxiliaries in everyday living. He discusses Role

Structures in individual personality and relationships and the implications for auxiliary egos in a psychodramatic enactment. Subsequently he details changes through the course of a drama in how an auxiliary plays a role.

The auxiliary ego, firstly, replicates a role that arises in a protagonist's self-presentation. They progress to expressing their subjective experience in role expansion and then introduce balance into the presentation of some other person by role creation. The final stage described is the auxiliary ego's integrating function as a drama closes.

Hollander goes on to discuss the effects of an auxiliary ego being sensitive to the rate of warm-up of their protagonist in psychodrama and life. Finally, in a guide to auxiliary ego development for practitioners, educators and trainers, he lists functions, techniques, prescriptions and proscriptions for auxiliary egos and directors, and includes suggestions about doubling.

In his book(10), Howard Blatner devotes a section to the auxiliary ego. He lists ways of selecting an auxiliary from a group. He details a variety of other auxiliary roles – the auxiliary chair, the silent auxiliary and the audience as auxiliary ego. He presents a collection of shoulds and possibilities for directors in warming up and training auxiliary egos with some examples.

The present writing gives specific instruction on the training and coaching of auxiliaries who are new to this method. It uses everyday language such as a director might use in a group.

Example from practice

This is an account of how one group member develops personally through participation in another's

drama and through learning to be an adequate auxiliary. She is sustained in doing so, at least in part, by her commitment to the other person's growth.

In her forties, Jean had taken on tertiary studies and was experiencing difficulty. Her course-work required presenting herself both through writing and verbally to groups. When she started weekly psychodrama personal-growth groups, she didn't make eye-contact, was pasty-skinned, inert in the group and quite unable to maintain a role as an auxiliary in another's drama. Her overdeveloped *harsh critic/stubborn refuser* role-cluster left her triumphantly immobile when she was selected as an auxiliary.

After about 30 sessions, during which she was protagonist a few times and occasionally a conflicted auxiliary, she worked on a scene that she vividly recollected while she was preparing to present a tutorial paper.

The scene is set one afternoon at the farm where Jean and her parents live when she is nine years old. Father is out working with the cows. Mother is standing, ironing Father's shirts. Nearby, Jean is sitting on the floor absorbed in cutting out material for a dress she has chosen to make. In role-reversal as Mother, with great vehemence, she suddenly says, "You're useless, look at the mess you're making of that material."

Back as herself, Jean looks down, stops cutting and sits without moving. In an aside, she says sadly, "I wish she'd let me do it my way." She directs this to Mother who, again with Jean in role-reversal, stridently attacks her for being a nuisance and making life more difficult. Jean accepts this perception of herself and sees Mother as trapped and in no way responsible for how she treats her.

In the role of Father, her shoul-

ders sag and her voice is flat as he responds to this interaction by defending the girl against Mother. In interview, we find that he feels helpless, rejected and unjustly criticised too.

Jean is unable to express to her parents her sense of being used as a weapon between them or the neglect and loneliness she feels. Mother has only to mention her own struggle in the face of her disappointment at the censure of her in-laws for Jean to completely lose her own warm-up and to become swept away by her understanding for Mother's "plight". Her *clear-seeing spontaneous actor* role is underdeveloped and conflicted with the social role of *understanding resigned forgiver*. The session is rounded off unsatisfactorily with a sense of anti-climax and frustration.

In the next group session, Jean takes on an auxiliary role in Simon's drama. He has been very active in the group. Like Jean, this protagonist has been working for some time in a series of dramas to separate emotionally and psychologically from his parents. Jean had a fierce fight with him early in the life of the group and a growing relationship since then. Simon played Jean's father last week. This week, he chooses her to play his father.

In this scene, he warms up to his frustration at being repeatedly controlled by his father's oppressive demands and rationalising and discounting statements. Simon stays with his own experience and becomes an *angry truth teller* with fullness and conviction.

On role-reversal, Jean changes position with Simon to take on the protagonist's own role then stands limply, turns to me as the director and says, "I can't." I say to Simon "Pause there as you are, a moment"

and to Jean "Will you go along with me coaching you." She agrees to do so. "Imagine Simon as you've just seen him standing when you're his father. Can you see him?" She nods. "Stand as you see him standing." She moves her right foot forward and leans her upper torso over it towards Simon in the role of his father. "Notice how he's holding his right fist clenched." I raise her fist and she clenches and starts to shake it.

This section is a manual about auxiliary work. To make it accessible, it is written as a series of responses to an enquirer new to Psychodrama. In it, the writer answers questions frequently asked by beginners and students in action methods.

"Now, hear Simon's voice and his words 'I'm not like my mother. She's not crazy either. It's your own violence you're scared of. I'm different from both of you.' Go ahead and say these things to your father with the feeling that's in you." She does so with conviction equal to Simon's, not the whine she has had in the past.

The scene closes with several role-reversals where the father genuinely hears Simon and deeply shares his own experience. They come together and embrace. Jean has persisted and enacted the roles as they have shifted, adequately and with confidence.

She displays this developing ability to take on and persist in a role

a couple of weeks later as she takes a central auxiliary role in a public demonstration of role-training, simply, accurately and without self-consciousness. At a weekly session, she shares her joy at playing house with a six year old girl – previously an unthinkable activity for her. She is much more able to carry through her warm-up to full enactment. She is more solid in herself.

Later, Jean cries about not being able to get to write the essays required to pass the course she's undertaken. During the course of the ensuing brief drama, she displays the development of far more adequacy in the roles enacted earlier as auxiliary and their increased integration into her personality. She confronts Mother strongly with the guilt learnt from her around reading books instead of "working" and separates herself clearly from her mother. She identifies her father's unfulfilled dream of academic prowess. She has previously tried to live out and partially rejected this dream and now wholeheartedly affirms it as her own. She recognises her fear of losing her admired tutor's respect and accepts this possibility with equanimity.

She misses the next two sessions on the following Saturday as she is writing an essay. When she comes again, Jean's skin has a good colour, her eyes are mobile and and she is active in the group.

Through auxiliary work in others' dramas she has more fully developed and integrated essential roles and has a stronger sense of self.

Detailed Coaching

This section is a manual about auxiliary work. To make it accessible, it is written as a series of responses to an enquirer new to Psychodrama^A. In it, the writer answers questions frequently asked by beginners and

students in action methods. Some technical terms useful for a new person are explained in footnotes included here^B.

What is an auxiliary ego?

An auxiliary takes and maintains fully the role^C of an absent other person or object or an aspect of the protagonist^D in a drama. They assist the director^E in producing a full experience and satisfactory resolution of whatever scene or abstraction is dramatised by the protagonist.

What is meant by a drama?

Loosely *a drama* is used to mean any enactment with a sense of dramatic form. It can be a vignette, with a single scene, or a full psychodrama or sociodrama, with a series of scenes around a particular theme.

Before the drama, the group warms up to one another and to the theme.

At the beginning of the drama, the specific time and place are set out and the characters established using objects and people. Auxiliaries learn their roles.

Then the drama moves more freely and the protagonist, assisted by the director and auxiliaries, acts spontaneously^F, giving rise to new roles.

Finally, the protagonist closes off the drama by experiencing the new

ways of being that have arisen and connecting them to everyday reality. Sharing from the rest of the group completes the drama.

What is necessary to be an auxiliary?

Primarily, the willingness to learn, to be open to the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of others, to try on new or shunned behaviour, to be open to direction, to accept the discipline of staying in role and to get involved. Your abilities will develop from there.

What are the benefits from being an auxiliary?

You get the satisfaction of contributing directly to another's growth and freedom, a broadening of your life-experience, freedom to express yourself in ways you would normally avoid, an increased ability to put your own self-preoccupation to one side as you objectively help another, a deeper connection with others, new insight into your own values and reactions, a greater ability to act in the face of obstacles and practice to develop adequacy^G in many roles you require to live fully.

What if I can't act?

All the better, you'll be more natural. Go ahead and take on the role anyway. It's the responsibility of

A. **Psychodrama** is the body of philosophy, theory and practice originated by J.L. Moreno and developed by students of his. He called it "rehearsal for living", "the theatre of truth". Improvisational dramatic action is based on the immediate concerns of a group or individual in a group. The application in group psychotherapy is also called Psychodrama. The application to task, organisational and educational groups is known as Sociodrama.

B. For fuller discussion see J.L. Moreno(11).

C. **Role** Used by Jacob Moreno to mean "the functioning form assumed by the whole self in interaction with another person or object in a particular situation at a particular moment." It is not pretending or hamming or purely external as is often implied when the word is used.

D. **Protagonist** is the person who embodies the theme in the group at the moment and enacts a drama on behalf of the group with the help of the director and auxiliaries. Sometimes the whole group may be protagonist.

the director and protagonist to assist you to do it well enough. This they will do.

Why does a protagonist choose me in particular?

Mainly because they sense that you can provide what they need in order to do the required work. Other considerations might be that your size reminds them of the absent other, that they know or sense that you have had similar experiences in your life or that someone is required to play the role.

How do I know what to do?

Observe the protagonist in role-reversals^H.

Listen to interviews with the protagonist.

You can then take on the role and enact it. This enactment includes position in space, body posture, non-verbal behaviour, tone of voice, language style and rhythm, specific words and actions. Respect too, the physical scene and objects set out by the protagonist, i.e., no walking through walls or picking up fridges.

Experience how it is to be inside the role you are taking.

Respond freshly to the protagonist and others in the scene moment by moment.

Accept and act on prompts and instructions from the director.

What do I do when the director says to reverse roles?

This will vary with the stage and

rhythm of the drama, so notice any special directions from the director.

In general, once the drama is under way, immediately change position with the person you are interacting with and enact and speak their most recent actions and words. This is most effective if you use the protagonist's own words rather than paraphrasing in yours and if you include all non-verbal behaviour.

From then on, respond from the role to the protagonist and other auxiliaries, as they present at every moment.

Get inside the role and let yourself go.

What do I do as an auxiliary as a drama goes on?

When you first take on a role, *early in a drama*, enact it accurately in some detail as described by the protagonist or as presented by them in role-reversal.

In *subsequent role-reversals*, immediately take up the role enacted by the protagonist, repeating back the last line and action. Then allow the protagonist time to respond, otherwise the drama is likely to drag or get repetitive.

Continue to interact in the moment from your role, with the protagonist and others. Explore what is going on in the system being set out.

As the drama progresses, an auxiliary expands the role. You draw on your experiencing in the role to improvise by bringing out feelings, thoughts, hunches and insights, while

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- E. **Director** The leader of the group who works with the group and any protagonist to produce a drama, with artistry, fullness and resolution. In Australia and New Zealand, a certificated Director is rigorously trained according to the Standards of the ANZ Psychodrama Association.
- F. **Spontaneity** is seen in a new and adequate response to an old situation or an adequate response to a new situation. There is often a sense of freshness and surprise.
- G. **Adequacy** is the word used to describe a role or action that is appropriate to its context and purpose. It's far more positive than the common meaning of "pass with a push".
- H. See next question.

staying in the role. This deepens the protagonist's involvement in the drama and provides a full sense of the reality.

Late in the drama, you extend the role to help the protagonist to make the most of their work. This will require you to act in life-enhancing ways from your own spontaneity so that the protagonist can experience with satisfaction what they haven't in their life before this and become more adequate in their responses.

During the sharing stage of the drama you express fully how it is for you to play that role, thus making the most of your own learning from the drama.

What do I do after the protagonist has made an aside?

Store the information away inside you and maybe there will be a use for it later. Certainly it increases your understanding of what is going on. It's not part of the action unless the protagonist brings it directly into the interaction themselves.

How physical should I be?

Role-reversal will show you this. Use the same amount of strength as the protagonist does, to create a full experience for them.

In interaction with other auxiliaries, it is only necessary to create a convincing appearance.

Protect yourself. The director will do so too.

How do I know when my auxiliary work is effective?

When the protagonist behaves more spontaneously, with less conflict and greater absorption in the drama during interaction with you and when the director signals.

What if I don't know what to do?

Warm-up¹ to the role by doing the following.

Feel into the role by taking up the body posture shown by the protagonist when they are in this role and by imagining yourself as having the physical characteristics and clothing they present.

Ask and answer these questions inside yourself.

- What do these clothes feel like to my fingers?
 - What sort of person am I? How do I stand, think, feel, speak, act?
 - What is important to me as this person? What do I like and dislike?
 - What is the nature of my relationship to the protagonist and others presented in this drama?
 - Who/what/when does this remind me of from my own experience?
- How did I think, feel, stand and act?

Improvise, make it up, and be aware of the responses of the protagonist and the director. Even if you don't hear or understand something they do, don't ask, take courage. Enact whatever you do have, perhaps your sense of not knowing. E.g., "I don't know what's going on here." Chances are it belongs in the system being set out, anyway.

What if I do it wrongly?

It's not possible to make a mistake. Any action you do from a role furthers the drama if you notice and act on the responses of the protagonist and director.

Accept gracefully any changes from the director or protagonist and continue to enact the role with this modification included.

I. **Warm-up** refers to the processes at the beginning of an action. Fires are stoked, imaginations fired, muscles stretched. If warm-up is full, the resulting action will be too.

What other points can I consider as an auxiliary?

Personalise and bring into the present. For example:
Protagonist as Father:
He always did sit on the wrong side.

Director:

Reverse roles.

Auxiliary as Father:

You always do sit on the wrong side.

Ask questions to bring out material and make it more specific.

For instance:

Protagonist:

You used to say you liked me doing that.

Auxiliary as wife:

When did I say that?

Protagonist:

That time at the beach...

Listen for cues from the protagonist and work them into your role. For example:

Protagonist:

You're always telling me I'm hopeless.

Auxiliary as Father:

*You **are** hopeless, no matter what I do, you won't change. You're hopeless all right.*

Stay in role. Once you have a role, stay in it. The protagonist's involvement in the time and place of a scene will be deepened by looking for an object to represent the stove. If you point out where a cushion is you will engage them with you as yourself and distract them from the scene. Never "help" the protagonist.

Provide something for the protagonist to push against, by staying in the role, rather than agreeing or accommodating thus changing the role. This helps them to express fully their own role. Continuing the example:

Protagonist:

Well you're hopeless too.

Auxiliary as Father:

I am not. How dare you speak to me in that tone of voice. You don't even respect your father.

Draw on the following to fill out your role as the drama continues, on cues from the protagonist, on previous information and on your own thoughts, feelings and impulses in the drama.

Be an amplifier for a quietly spoken protagonist so that others can hear what they say. For example:

Auxiliary as mother:

I work all day looking after this family. Nobody cares.

Protagonist:

(mumbles) I'm no use to anyone.

Auxiliary as mother:

(loudly) You say you're no use to anyone. What about me, no-one appreciates me?

Be sensitive to the rhythm of the interaction. Sometimes, especially early in a drama, a protagonist will need a short time to establish themselves before you enact the role.

Be sensitive to the protagonist. Stay alert to the possibility of overwhelming the protagonist if you enact a role more forcefully than they portray it.

Be sensitive to the shape of the drama and to where the protagonist, director and audience have their attention. Don't take over. It's the protagonist's drama, as directed by the director. If you are near the focus of the action, enact your role fully, if you are further from the centre, it is appropriate to stay in role but probably more subdued.

Remember these points:

1. Stay in contact with the protagonist.

2. Stay in contact with the director.
3. Act spontaneously.

When can I step out of role?

Most simply, never.

Speaking out of role cuts across the protagonist's warm-up to the scene being produced in the here and now. The work of an auxiliary is to increase that warm-up. Sometimes for special reasons, a director may interrupt the dramatic production. This will be made clear at the time.

What if I see something I consider vital?

Find some way of expressing it from your role into the drama.

For example, you notice from the role of Father that the protagonist does not look at you, so, depending on the nature of Father's role, you could say, "Look at me when I'm talking to you," or "I hurt when you won't look at me," or "Why won't you look at me, dear?"

Another example: As Mother, you notice the protagonist consistently avoids dealing with you by focusing elsewhere and, after some time, the director doesn't seem to notice this. You might speak directly to her from role, "Madam Director, deep inside I really want to sort out this relationship with my son, please get him to talk to me." Go along with her response.

Trust the director and the psycho-drama process to bring out what is central in this particular drama for this protagonist.

How much do I lead the protagonist?

Only as far as they are willing to enact, themselves. If you introduce hitherto covert material, drop it if the protagonist does not respond or pick it up at the next role reversal. You may be inaccurate or attempting to

work for the protagonist or taking over the drama with your own issues if you don't follow this guideline.

How much do I extend a role?

Not much. Stating an unspoken thought, expressing a feeling more fully, maximising a minimal non-verbal response, may deepen the protagonist's warm-up and be picked up by them at the next role-reversal in more or less modified form. If they don't use it, let it drop. Either you're inaccurate or they're not focusing on the same as you at the moment. Notice the responses of the protagonist and director and accept direction gracefully. Keep on acting the role.

What is my relationship with the director?

You are an intelligent, assisting co-producer under the director.

Keep an eye and ear on the director for directions.

Directors appreciate greatly, and protagonists benefit hugely from, your persistent energy.

Am I just a puppet of the director?

By no means. Auxiliary work requires active, intelligent and whole hearted participation. It is enhanced by acute and detailed observation of the subtleties of what is happening. There is plenty of opportunity to practise listening and your ingenuity by applying what you hear in the role you are taking. You will work internally to value your experiencing and to develop persistence in the face of criticism and rejection and uncertainty. You will also see and feel others blossoming from your work.

None of the statements made here are inviolable rules. All of them are subject to the protagonist's spontaneity, your spontaneity and the director's direction.

Conclusion

Auxiliary work is central to psychodrama method and a necessary aspect of individual development.

In the preceding writing, there is an illustration of its relevance to and the development in one client.

There is also a section giving detailed instructions to new participants about performing as an auxiliary.

In that section, there is an emphasis on an auxiliary ego working from their own inner experience whilst staying in touch with the embedding systems of the drama and the director. This is an attempt to convey the sense that a role taken by an auxiliary is an interactive, living entity. This must be engendered on the basis of experience as must a sense of appropriate timing.

One area not addressed is that of individual readiness and potential for adequate participation as an auxiliary. Personal difficulties with learning and performance will be attended to by the director, in the course of the group.

Many of the situations mentioned could be fruitfully elaborated with reference to examples from practice.

Of course, not all situations encountered in all dramas have been covered. Some are new. Some are too complex to address in a document oriented to the requirements of naive participants. In such situations the wisdom and spontaneity of the director prevail. Further writing about these topics would benefit the practice of psychodrama.

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