

hospitalize her. The psychodrama progressed to the hospital, with the friend resisting every step of the way, and various scenes developed—doctors, nurses, insane patients, etc. The group had one of its gayest times playing patients in a ward in a psychiatric hospital. (The most fun they ever had was playing the disturbed children in an in-patient treatment center.) The nice thing about psychodrama is that you can assume all the roles that you would never allow yourself to be in real life.

Various confrontations followed: Friend and doctor, mother and doctor, friend and friend, friend and patients, etc. The session became quite wild, various patients in the group escalating self-chosen roles. When the final confrontations took place, protagonist vs. mother, with reversal of roles, heightened by doubling, enriched by auxiliary egos, a stark truth emerged: *Sanity is what mother says it is.* And, what do you do when your mother is insane? Especially when she has not been diagnosed as such? That is when patients seek treatment away from mother. They return to her in psychodrama sessions and finish the unfinished business of the past.

Moreno described psychodrama as “the depth therapy of the group.” It begins during the assembling of the group, somewhat the way an audience arrives to see the play, in which they may also be the actors. The first phase is the warm-up, when individuals have arrived from their individual preoccupations with their individual time and space, to an awareness of the immediate time and presence of themselves in a group. Often one or more members may experience a problem of such intensity that words do not suffice and begin to act it out in the group before this is explained. The problem is often shared by members of the group; they spontaneously make room for him, giving him space. Another member may argue with him and soon it is obvious which member will be the protagonist. In the main part of the session, the enactment is a spontaneous description of the part of the life script of the protagonist he is already acting out. The skillful director assists by helping the protagonist clarify the situation, with pantomime, with a minimum of verbal description of the situation and with use of other group members enacting the roles of whatever others the protagonist describes as relevant to his problem. The situation is further clarified by the protagonist demonstrating the roles of these others by enacting them as well as others playing the role of the protagonist. Spontaneous “doubling” is encouraged. This is a second person that stands slightly behind, enlarging the role by duplicating it, as well as exaggerating either what is being shown or what it is felt is being concealed.

As in all dramas, it ends with a kind of new integration, which the protagonist experiences either as clarification, catharsis, or resolution. A skillful director has seen to it that spontaneous insights of the group were

utilized to enlarge the drama. Equally important, the director has also seen to it that the problem of the protagonist is as fully understood by the group as the protagonist's script permits.

In this way the drama subsides into the sharing. The protagonist, better understood by the group as well as by himself, merges back into the group while other members verbally reveal what feelings were aroused in them by this psychodrama. Any "analysis" is discouraged. Sharing feelings and owning to them with the pronoun "I" is encouraged. This empathic experience reunites the group, which then begins to disband, first by disintegration into little sub-groups and finally individual separation, until "next time." The sharing is an essential part of a psychodrama although it usually is about the last fifth of the total time spent. The protagonist, lost in a depiction of a world he perceived during his psychodrama, is astonished by the warm empathy of the sharing, learning once again that he is not alone. The group, whose feelings have often been deeply stirred, whether they took an active role in it or remained spectators, are eager to inform the protagonist how at one with him they felt.

It is a play without a script, the group is the author. It is psychoanalysis without a psychoanalyst, the group is the experiencer. The individuals in the group are the interpreters to themselves of what they have just experienced.

To see ourselves as others see us, a group reflects. To see ourselves as our antagonist sees us is what reversal of roles provides. To experience our antagonist (as we usually refuse to do) as he experiences himself, reversal of roles facilitates. To see what is happening to us when our observing ego is weak or overwhelmed, is what reversal of roles with an audience member provides, when the scene is rerun.

One of the most remarkable things about psychodrama is the discovery of the roles in life that we can play extremely well but never permit ourselves to do. In someone else's psychodrama we have a place where it is helpful, not damaging, to play the abandoning mother, the sadistic father, the castrating spouse, the deceiver, the psychopath, the patsy, etc. To feel, think and play them is a freeing experience from suppression and repression.

Moving through the parts gives us access to memories often inaccessible when lying on a couch. Muscular memory is attached to verbal recall. The stimulus of interaction calls forth recollections seldom aroused in the one-to-one situation of patient and therapist.

The resistances in psychodrama that spring up—transference reactions to other group members—are quickly dissolved by the separation of object from perceived object. As in psychoanalysis, it is the perceived world of the analysand that we must help with. Often the perceived world

blinds one to the real world, just as the past unintegrated memories blind one to the current reality of the moment. There are repeated opportunities, in a protected environment, to be the active doer, not the passive endurer in the re-enactment of a life's script. It will be found, in astonishment, that one is remarkably talented as a socializing expert, when playing a successful mother hostessing the party she is giving, and someone else has the old role of the child who must not compete with her, and sometimes be her fall guy, the clumsy oaf that makes her look even more successful. There are many creative and inspiring roles to be played, known how to play, but forbidden to play in life. There may be no recollection that these were forbidden, only the knowledge of "you can't." It is not always I-choose-not-to. It is frequently I-am-not-allowed-to.

The introjected object, at long last, is out there to be seen, experienced passively and actively, and eventually to be understood and forgiven—sometimes to be accepted as a part of the self, sometimes to be left in the outside world from whence it came, as unsuited to the self. A better separation and individuation has occurred.

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