

# Chapter 10

## Disintegration Its role in personality integration

### *Commentary*

Dag Blomqvist and Thomas Rützel challenge the usual emphasis on order, sanity and rationality, arguing that disintegration is both therapeutically and philosophically important. Their chapter reveals a developmental line which is important in Morenian psychology, in which disorder and psychosis are valued rather than diagnosed. Taking the conventional notions about what was already an unconventional concept, and developing their themes of surrealism and alienation, they show just how powerful and exciting such ideas can be. Their chapter questions perceived cultural and psychotherapeutic norms in a similar way to that which characterised Moreno's earlier creative period in Vienna.

Surplus reality and beyond  
*Leif Dag Blomqvist and Thomas Rützel*

#### **AN EXTENDED CONCEPT OF SURPLUS REALITY**

The psychodrama stage is often described as an instrument having three time dimensions: past, present, and future, and also as an instrument that does not differentiate between fantasy and reality. These descriptions make it difficult to understand fully the concept and the content of surplus reality; what it is, as well as what it is not.

It would be more appropriate to say that on the psychodrama stage there is no differentiation of time at all. There is also no differentiation of different kinds of realities with one regarded as more real, valid or true than another. Surplus reality can be defined as an intersection between different realities, known and unknown, where the ego's ability to control and distinguish ceases. This state determines ecstasy<sup>1</sup> which we understand from its etymological root as *leaving the limits of one's individuality*.<sup>2</sup> This is a state in which one does not experience things as one used to do, but looks upon them from another unfamiliar perspective. This perspective can either belong to an unknown part of the self, to another person, known or unknown, or to an impersonal force.

Psychodramatists nowadays often work with surplus reality without taking into account its philosophical perspective. The psychodrama usually starts with the protagonist's problem and during the session the drama goes back to early childhood experiences to heal the wounds. Surplus reality is in this case often used as a technique to complete and heal something, to have an integrative effect upon the ego so that the protagonist feels better and can get on with his or her life. To bring on stage a dialogue between the protagonist and someone dead or giving him a new father or mother are only two examples of this way of using surplus reality.

However, we feel this orthodox concept and application of surplus reality as a technique to act out fantasies and wishes and, therefore, the ego's needs is very restricted and has little to do with the full



potential of surplus reality. Surplus reality is more an instrument of disintegration and should be regarded as a theatrical instrument for the director to create discomfort, uneasiness and tensions on stage. The dramaturgist Dyfverman states that the key to drama is uneasiness and not the idyll.

A concept of reality that consists only of conventional dialogues and where there is just politeness and lack of confrontation leads to a drama that does not bring life onto the stage. Therefore, we have to look upon surplus reality as an *extension* of reality in the original sense of the word: the aspect of a widening of reality. The word wide is derived from the Indo-Germanic word *ui-itos*, meaning in German, *auseinandergegangen*. The literal translation into English would be: one did go from another, or more simply: to fall to pieces. Here, we see the perspective of surplus reality as a form of disintegration or falling to pieces.

Unfortunately, we look upon our failures in life or our insecurities as something to be got rid of in order to return to our 'normal' selves. That many people come to psychotherapy and psychodrama because of their failures only enhances the demand on psychotherapy to make them return to normal: their normal life, their normal state of mind and their normal success. People are usually trying to find a reason why something or other happened and what can be done about it. Very rarely do we consider failure itself as being meaningful. We thus explore our failures to a very small extent and consider falling to pieces as being negative. It is the opposite of being strong and of knowing what one wants to do. When we start to fall to pieces and enter surplus reality, nothing makes sense any longer.

As therapists we often ask ourselves in a rational way such questions as: How can this brave woman stay with this man who drinks, beats her up and abuses her? Why did she or he commit suicide so unexpectedly? In surplus reality, however, we move from a rational point of view into the dimension of no sense and of no predictable meaning.

We experience a sense of falling to pieces or disintegration when something unexpected happens to us which throws our life out of its regularity. Such incidents could be, for example, separation, losing a partner through death or losing one's job. After such an incident we fall to pieces into many different figures, for example, the one with murderous impulses or the one who wants to heal, and these figures do not seem to co-operate. In German people say: *'Ich fühle mich hinund hergerissen'*, which means: 'I feel pulled into different directions'. Speaking with a forked tongue is another aspect of this. One says one thing and means something else. In the world of surplus reality things do not fit together.

However, it is very important not to confuse the world of surplus reality and the unknown with the world of the unconscious. The principle of opposites influences the world of the unconscious whereas surplus reality or the surreal world is truly Dionysian. That means it is the world of chaos and not the world of opposites. In Jungian psychology the principle of adversity is a central concept whereas in the surreal world of the unknown, the right or wrong of this principle is an open question. In this Dionysian world the opposite to male is not necessarily female, the opposite to death is not necessarily life, the opposite to consciousness is not necessarily unconsciousness.

Most of us suffer from an incurable mania to return the unknown to the known, of bringing back things into the 'light' so that they can be classified and so our brains can then go to sleep.

In the world of surplus reality a protagonist *has* to think, *has* to work, and *cannot* go to sleep. Just as a dream can never be dreamed twice, the protagonist cannot bring back his or her experiences in surplus reality into everyday reality although they will have an effect upon his or her life.

### ENTERING THE WORLD OF SURPLUS REALITY

People often have inner dialogues. Usually these occur in situations when the body is occupied with some kind of activity, like walking home from the bus stop or knitting, and when the mind is running idle. Mary Watkins writes:

I shall place before you the view that imaginal dialogues do not merely reflect or distort reality, but *create* reality; that the real is not necessarily antithetical to the imaginal, but can be conceived of more broadly to include the imaginal; and that personifying is not an activity symptomatic of the primitivity of mind, but is expressive of its dramatic and poetic nature.

(Watkins 1990:58)

When such dialogues are projected onto the psychodrama stage and when the substantial figures behind such dialogues and their interactions take place, we can say that these dialogues *create* the person or the substantial protagonist.

The most important thing in psychodrama is not to look upon the world from the protagonist's point of view, but to create an opportunity and a platform for the protagonist to encounter his or her antagonists and look at himself or herself with the eyes of the antagonist, from the antagonist's perspective. This refers to the basic psychodramatic technique of role reversal. These dialogues and different perspectives, through role reversal, will challenge the protagonist. When working with schizophrenics or with people who hallucinate and one wants to know more about the figure behind a certain voice the schizophrenic person can rarely give you information about it. Neither can he or she antagonise the voice that attacks him. A psychodrama director working with surplus reality will therefore substantiate the figure behind the voice, whatever it may be, and encourage a dialogue in which the figures are reflecting one another. Some of these figures might represent different known or unknown parts of the protagonist. However, as mentioned before, other parts could belong to other people, known or unknown, or even to an impersonal force. These dialogues can *only* appear when the phenomenon of disintegration has taken place.

Another important aspect that we have to add to the concept of surplus reality is the dissolution of inside and outside. We cannot say that the inner world is a reflection of the outer world or vice versa. We rather must ascribe the phenomena of figures and voices, mentioned before, to creatures or beings with their own consciousness and unconsciousness, be they personal or non-personal. Surplus reality can only be experienced through surplus reality.

Our idea of surplus reality is related to the philosophy of the Surrealists who were always in search of the unknown and were not, as many people now believe, a movement of expression or expressive arts. To relate to these unknown worlds was more important to them.

The expressive function is, however, mentioned in positive contexts as well. That which is expressed is in such cases not conceived of as preexistent ideas or subjective emotions but as something unknown and difficult to grasp. According to one line of thought, it exists only through its expression and is entirely distinguished from the person expressing himself, in contrast to emotional symptoms, for example. Expression in this positive sense (according to Surrealism) is informed by absence of expression in the usual sense of the word. This aspect of Surrealist theory has almost escaped notice, still less been accepted by contemporaneous critics in whose conception of art the idea of expression appears to play a fundamental role.

(Sjölin 1981:410)

Entering the world of surplus reality means the psychodramatist must leave the world of the law of cause and effect behind. He or she also must give up the idea of a certain structure of a psychodrama session such as those described by the psychodramatic spiral by Elaine Goldman or the Hollander curve. The psychodramatist even has to leave behind the traditional aspect of a drama with a beginning or an end.

The dramatic tension of surplus reality exists because the protagonist moves on unfamiliar territory in his or her psychodrama. This is very important because it describes his or her feeling of the surreal experience: He or she is waiting for something. It is a search where even the purpose of the search is unclear. When the drama enters the stage the protagonist and the director are in the hands of the drama and *not vice versa*.

### SURREALISM AND THE WORLD OF DREAMS IN PSYCHODRAMA

The psychodrama stage and the unconscious have similar structures or characteristics as both are beyond time. On the psychodrama stage the past is not in opposition to the future, but rather past and future meet one another and unite. Fantasy and reality are also not one another's opposites, but unite in Moreno's concept of surplus reality. The concept of surplus reality is one of the strongest psychotherapeutic dimensions of psychodrama. Surplus reality also contains the key for working with dreams from a psychodramatic point of view. By challenging the ego's usual tendency to differentiate things and put them opposite to one another, the protagonist and the group are introduced to a mystical world filled with another knowledge, infinite wisdom, beauty, risks and danger.

This world, where opposites do not exist, is, for instance, represented in the art of Renà Magritte. In our lives we will occasionally return to this surrealist world which is beyond rational understanding and reach. In it we mix people and places that we usually keep separate; we will find ourselves in situations and carry out actions that our usual ego would never dream of doing. Strangely enough it is the energy arising from this dream world which is vital for us to be able to cope and deal with our life. In other words, in this timeless world, in this kingdom of darkness, man is connected to the so-called world-soul.

It was a general belief for the alchemists that the soul was partly personal and partly divine, and thus immortal. In this way the personal soul was linked to the world-soul. For the soul, death is as insignificant as it is for the unconscious. For the ego, however, death is a vital threat. It is the soul that adds meaning to life and provides us with the *élan vital*. Not to be connected to the soul leads to a lack of substance and energy for life.

There is also an old belief that time and the world-soul are connected or even, in a way, one and the same. In ancient Greece Aion was the god of time. Originally Aion denoted the vital fluid in living beings, their life span and allotted fate. This was a generative substance like all waters on earth. One can say that Aion was the basic substance of life. M.-L. von Franz writes about Aion: 'Aion, the god of time, is here clearly an image of the dynamic aspect of existence, or what we might call today a principle of psycho-physical energy' (von Franz 1978:6). Time, from this perspective as a creative source of substance, has great importance on the psychodrama stage. It is related to Moreno's principle of the moment, or his concept of here and now. In this sense Moreno's principle of spontaneity and creativity is also such a life-giving substance. By freeing man from the borders between reality and fantasy, as well as time, Moreno believed that the person could become a creator.

Death is a serious matter for human beings and everything living on earth, and, therefore, one of the basic concerns for the ego. However, relating to Aion, death is a part of a greater principle.

The task on the psychodrama stage is to free this energy and unite man with the cosmos. Moreno wrote in *Invitation to an Encounter*: 'In the unconscious state where the dreams are created also a regenerator of energy must be included. In the sleeping dreamstate we regenerate' (J.L. Moreno 1914). When a dream

picks its material it absolutely ignores the logic of our daily ego and its divisions and controls. A dream can pick up places and people that we usually keep separate in time and space. A dream also puts us in the most shameful situations and conflicts.

Since the unconscious was never an important issue for Moreno, he certainly did not consider dreams as being a *via regia* to our unconscious, or that dreams were something that must be decoded from their manifest dream context to understand the latent dream thought. Moreno regarded this as wrong, or as a resistance towards the here and now.

Moreno considered dreams as something man and his ego had to relate to from the dream's point of view. Since the creator of the dream is the *unknown*, something out of the ego's control according to Moreno, we should experience the unknown rather than try to force it under the control of the ego. This unknown is related to the deepest root of nature and existence of man and, consequently, the ego is ruled more by it than admitted. To become acquainted with this world is to become close to the unknown or the surreal.

Dreams connect man to Aion and create a field of force between what the ego has experienced and what is never seen. Renà Magritte believed that what was never seen or experienced becomes present through its absence. In this way a dream is a reality for the surrealists. *What the ego would never dream of doing has already been done.* To see dreams in this way is contrary to the modern analytic tradition, but not to the psychodramatic. The analytic tradition sees dreams and symbols with a somewhat latent content that, through certain analogies, will become better understandable. That is to say that dreams would represent something else other than what is manifest. Even many psychodrama directors continually relapse into psychological interpretations and into finding analogies. If they intend to work with dreams from the perspective pointed out in this article, they must be aware of this attitude.

However, one branch of the Surrealist movement, represented by Renà Magritte, was also sceptical about the analytical interpretation of symbols mentioned above, since it watered down the symbol. A symbol contains a certain energy that will always be unknown to man. However, this energy can be experienced, but will not be explained by any logical thinking and rationalisation.

We experience this in Magritte's painting, in which the object is always taken out of its normal context. Magritte called this technique of disturbing the senses the 'art of the non-related object'. That is, to put things together which we usually see separated or in other contexts. From this point of view, since we are forced to look upon the object itself, everything can be regarded as a potential symbol. Symbols only represent themselves. According to Sjölin (1981) the surrealists express themselves in the following way: a long-standing belief exists saying that nothing exists without cause; on the contrary, every being and every phenomenon of nature contains an enciphered message that gives life to every cosmogony.

Relating to the object as such rather than trying to make it understandable for the ego is an exercise and experience for the mind that Magritte provokes. By using familiar interpretation systems one tries to make the latent dream content understandable to the ego. Magritte's critique to such a procedure was that the wisdom of the dream would get lost in the ego's rational logic. In that sense the surrealist experience, as well as the relationship to the unknown, would get lost. An enigma does not hide anything because it already contains all the necessary information. It is only a matter of finding a new way to relate to the objects that one can get the image; all the material is accessible.

Regarding the concealed meaning of, for instance, a dream, the question whether the meaning is latent or not is not of interest, as from the surrealists' point of view the meaning is there in its manifest form, accessible for everybody to participate in. The surrealists were more focused on the experience of the dream and the participation in the irrational. Surrealism meant to participate in disharmony and disintegration. Dream psychodrama encourages this experience of the enigma through dialogue and action in the different

aspects of the dream. Since Moreno wanted to teach the protagonist to be a better dreamer, this form of dream psychodrama is not restricted to acting out the dream as the ego remembers it. Several scenes of such a dream psychodrama, acted out in the here and now, were often not present during the night but are created impromptu and in relation to the protagonist's presentation of his or her dream. This process is called dream evolution where the spontaneous play directs the development of the dream psychodrama. The dream presented on the stage will be a new production and can go many steps away from the original dream. Production in the here and now is a piece of art in itself and the person is a creator of art within the moment. Sometimes this will lead to relief, sometimes to further confusion and sometimes, nowhere at all. (An example of such a dream psychodrama can be found in the last section of this chapter.)

This kind of dream psychodrama is a way to encourage and train the ego to relate to the absurd rather than to find a latent meaning. This will encourage the feeling of estrangement and prepare us for the so-called surrealist experience. This experience is described as a field of force full of suspense, as *rites de passage* from one condition to another, whatever it will be. They are the *rites de passage* into the unknown. By following the dream and the unreasonable wisdom we hope to make the ego more flexible, tolerant and spontaneous. The meaning will reveal itself through the Dionysian experience of the irrational. Following the wisdom of the unreasonable is to work with an extended perspective of Moreno's surplus reality.

To get in touch with these unknown worlds, surrealists use a technique that they call automatism, which is described as follows:

The experience of estrangement has been described by the Surrealists chiefly in connection with automatic writing. It appears that the person writing feels estranged from, in particular, the meaning of the words he has heard inside himself or which flow from his pen. The experience of estrangement can also be caused by the intonation of the interior voice or by feelings and moods connected with the words written. Sometimes the feeling of estrangement is aggravated by the fact that the words strike the person who has written them as the expression of another personality or even of an impersonal force.

(Sjölin 1981:407)

Another important aspect of the surrealist experience is the one that things, like words in automatic writing, are robbed of their conventional qualities and put into a new estranged context. This also means that not only the object is robbed of its conventional qualities, but also the relation in which it is put is totally changed.

An object only represents itself and does not stand for any hidden thing. What is more important than explaining and interpreting is that one becomes involved in these new unfamiliar experiences and bears the tension. The ego tries to be logical and explain tensions. Surrealism teaches us to bear them. This condition of tension is the surrealist experience. Freud's dream analysis offers explanations that satisfy the ego. However, the surrealist experience is incompatible with an ego-centred psychology. In both surrealism and surplus reality the phenomenon of disintegration is more important than the integration process. Therefore, surplus reality will remain a mystery and a source of creativity.

#### **MADAME BLANCHE AND HER MIRROR—A DREAM PSYCHODRAMA**

The following dream 'Madame Blanche and Her Mirror' is an example of how surplus reality can be used in dream work. The method used in this dream psychodrama was created by a group called the Liechtenstein group. The Liechtenstein project started in 1985 in Vaduz (Principality of Liechtenstein) and consists of

professional psychodrama directors from different countries. Its goal has been to develop knowledge and skills regarding the directing of dream psychodramas. In the research and development of Moreno's concept of surplus reality the group has studied ancient Greek theatre and tragedy in relation to the cult of Dionysus and psychodrama.

For a deeper understanding of surplus reality the group has also made a great effort to understand the mystical world of the surrealists. The attention has, therefore, been focused on the manifest dream as surrealistic painting or experience and the group members believe that symbols only represent themselves, whatever they may be.

The dream is not reproduced on the stage as the dreamer remembers it. It is rather a locus nascendi for a new surplus reality experience on the psychodrama stage. Many scenes that are dramatically produced did not exist in the dream as the protagonist remembers it. This form of dream work has been inspired by the surrealist painter Renà Magritte. The surrealistic and the Greek theatrical art have very distinct techniques to prepare for the Dionysian journey to these hidden dimensions of the mind and the word protagonist can be understood as the 'initiated to the divine madness' (*theia mania*). These techniques were converted into psychodramatic techniques and cannot be seen as isolated techniques as they cover the whole philosophy of surplus reality.

To maintain the spirit of the psychodrama we did not correct the English of the protagonist or the auxiliary egos very much.

At the beginning of each day group members who dreamed the night before share, if they so wish, their dreams with the rest of the group and without further comments by the group.

After the dream sharing, Roland is selected as protagonist. He is a tall blond man of 30 from Germany; he is a rather quiet person. He has been in the Liechtenstein project from the beginning. At the time he attended this year's seminar he felt down and was looking for new opportunities in his life. He is a psychologist and psychodramatist; he is employed and also works in a private practice. He is married and has one child.

The director of this session is the leader of the project, Leif Dag Blomkvist, and he asks Roland to come up on the stage and sit on a chair next to him. Everybody closes their eyes, and Roland tells of his dreams. He presents them in *tempus praesens* and is instructed not to try to remember things that don't come to his mind spontaneously. He relates his first dream as follows:

Some people are on the run like in a movie. There is a camping lodge like those in the Yugoslavian mountains. There is a man and a woman and Napoleon and I. Napoleon and the woman fall down into a valley. But I feel this is not so dangerous.

Two nights later the following dream emerges:

I enter a villa or mansion and shall repair or paint something there. A sophisticated lady lives in this place. The frame of a mirror has to be painted in white. I paint the frame but on some parts the wood doesn't accept the paint. I try to put several layers of colour on these parts, but, however, the frame rejects the colour and I am dissatisfied. The sophisticated lady, as well as others, is dissatisfied. They say Gnter should do it.

The dreamer is associating these dreams together, referring to his inability to do jobs correctly or knowing what he should do. In his first dream he had to take a group of people through the mountains and did not do his task properly: people fell off the mountains. In the second dream, he failed to paint the frame of the mirror.



The protagonist starts immediately by setting the most important scene of the second dream on stage. Contradictory to the orthodox Morenean dream work, the Liechtenstein school doesn't warm up the protagonist to the role of the dreamer by working on residues of the day previous to the dream. It starts immediately in the dream and, thus, in surplus reality.

Letting the protagonist tell the dream once before the action takes place gives the director a clue of where to enter into or how to warm up for the session. The director, as well as the protagonist, can, in case the dream is very long and has many scenes, select the scene that seems most appropriate to start with.

Roland chooses to start with the second dream. The director asks him to set up the scene in the mansion and Roland moves different chairs and changes the coloured lights to create the right atmosphere of a sophisticated bourgeois mansion in France. The sophisticated lady stands by the entrance door of the room with the mirror's damaged frame. The protagonist calls this woman Madame Blanche. The protagonist reverses roles with Madame Blanche.

MME BLANCHE: I am all alone in this building here in France and it has 15 rooms. A large staff is working for me and I like them, so I pay them well. I am a very nice lady.

DIRECTOR: What is special about the mirror?

MME BLANCHE: It is beautiful. The frame is beautiful. It is baroque. It is hanging in the entrance hall beside the staircase to the gallery. Unfortunately, it has got old and dirty. It is more than 200 years old.

DIRECTOR: Is it from the time of the French revolution or Napoleon?

MME BLANCHE: Yes, something like that. I found it in the cellar.

The protagonist now goes from the role of Madame Blanche into the role of the mirror.

MIRROR: I was made before the French revolution. I was built for use. Everything was breaking down during this time. I was in danger and I am lucky that I did not get smashed. (Mirror turns its head to Mme Blanche)

MIRROR: (to Mme Blanche) I hang here on the wall so you can have a final look before you go out. My glass is very nice but I would like to look better. How wonderful it was in the old times. We had a lot of parties and gatherings here, only the high society, baronets, dukes, etc.

Dream evolution is the expansion of a certain symbol or an aspect of the dream. In this case a scene at a party in the good bygone times is selected. However, this scene never existed in the original dream. The group members prepare themselves for the respective roles. The king and the queen are there, some intellectuals and many more. The protagonist chose the role of a Marquis de Longgellan with his wife. The protagonist also wanted the ordinary hungry people of that time on stage.

MARQUIS: It seems that many people are travelling abroad these times. Especially those who have to pay taxes.

MME DU PONT: Disgusting how the lumpenproletariat is shouting and why are they all so hot for money. They don't know what to do with money anyway.

PROLETARIANS: You are not earning your own money.

KING: Neither do you have anything in your head. You don't know what it means to live because you eat shit the whole time.

PROLETARIANS: We are going to get you.

The scene ends with the storming of the Bastille. The psychodrama theatre looks like a battle ground and the whole group participate in the spontaneous play. It is a principle that catharsis is reached through

participating in the action on stage. This playful aspect of the spontaneous drama is often forgotten. The scene returns to Madame Blanche's villa. Madame Blanche sits alone in her room, thinking about life.

MME BLANCHE: I am sitting here alone. Once I had a husband, but he went a long time ago. The friends that I have I don't regard as adequate for me. I feel life has lost its substance.

DIRECTOR: Well, your craftsman is here, Roland Berger (the protagonist) to fix your mirror. How do you feel about him?

MME BLANCHE: He is good and he is very careful. I got his name from an aunt and she said that he works well.

ROLAND: I feel good coming to you because this is a beautiful house and I will fix your frame.

Monologue technique in psychodrama means that the protagonist expresses different thoughts or feelings that are hidden and not shown in his action on stage. This technique is excellent for expressing the dream ego's action.

ROLAND: (monologue) I am a little bit insecure because I am not a professional. However, I might be able to do it. If I have a little luck it will work out. I have not spoken about the price with Madame Blanche and maybe she can't pay what it costs. This repair is going to take much time, and I don't know what to charge. I feel uncomfortable.

DIRECTOR: Do you like this job?

ROLAND: Yes, I like doing things like this for myself.

DIRECTOR: You did not set a price!

ROLAND: I can't because I am not a professional. A professional person would have done it in his own *Werkstatt* (workshop).

These remarks give the clue to introduce a figure that was not present in the dream, but will enter the psychodramatic dream production in the here and now. That will be the figure or archetype of the 'professional', whom the protagonist calls Mr Schneider. The purpose of such a dialogue is to bring the shadow out in to the open and make visible the shadow figures' projections on to Roland. Mr Schneider, as a shadow figure, projects incompetence on to Roland which is, to a certain extent, true. However, the dream ego does identify itself as competent.

The subjective content projected into the object is not what the object identifies itself with or defines itself as. Rarely, if ever, is anything of what is projected present in the object (von Franz 1980).

Roland takes the role of Mr Schneider, the professional. Mr Schneider has a diploma and much experience in his field. He can prove what and who he is. Roland's role is played by an auxiliary ego.

SCHNEIDER: You idiot, get away from that mirror. You are destroying it. That is what you get when you hire these moonlighters. They do not only steal work, they also do a bad job. Madame Blanche, I don't think you will be satisfied by the work of such a little shit as Mr Berger. I had to learn for 10 years and I am older than him. I will charge you 1500 DM. You might get it cheaper by Mr Berger, but he will ruin your mirror.

ROLAND: I have often done this. *I know how to do it!*

SCHNEIDER: Ignorance, ignorance. You can't even take half the price!

Roland tries to work while Mr Schneider is looking at him with a big smile and Madame Blanche is also watching him. The work starts to go badly, and the mirror is not turning out very well.

Roland is now in the role of himself and Mr Schneider is played by another group member.

MME BLANCHE: This doesn't look very good. The closer I get to the mirror the more dissatisfied I become. This man doesn't do a good job!

ROLAND: I see that the work is not that good. The criticism is correct. The mirror and the frame don't look good. I have over-estimated myself. I have tried, but I can't do it better. I am humiliated. I feel ashamed. But this is not my regular job. I wanted to do a favour.

Shame and humiliation are the feelings experienced when people start to integrate their shadow. The ego that has been too blown up and, therefore, has left the ground is coming back to earth. Lyn Cowan writes:

The word 'humiliation' comes from the Latin word *humus* which means 'earth' or 'ground'. Humus is the dark organic material in soils, produced by the decomposition of vegetable and animal matter. It is essential to earth's fertility. Humiliation, then is a process of decay and decomposition, of matter's feeling rotten. That which is dark and soiled in us, which decomposes and causes us to lose our composure, becomes fertilizing material, life giving, vital.

(Cowan 1982:36)

Symbolically one can say a mirror never lies. The shadow reflects itself upon the ego and that creates the feelings of shame and uneasiness. The work on the frame is not very good. Up to this point the protagonist has been concerned with the frame of the mirror belonging to Madame Blanche.

He has not looked into the mirror itself. Madame Blanche represents a female aspect reflected upon Roland. The frame, in its female aspect, is also a symbol of the self.

Roland plays the role of the mirror and cries out:

MIRROR: Once I was so beautiful. Everybody was impressed by my beauty and I hung in a very important place in the house. But times have changed. Nowadays I can only live in dreams.

DIRECTOR: How do you feel about Roland now, with the work he did on you?

MIRROR: (to Roland) You need more experience. You look tired and pale. You must achieve a better condition. Are you sick? I think it is your damned job in the school. All you do in the morning is read the newspaper, that is what is important for you. You don't have any interest in the classes. All you do is kill time. When you work as a psychologist in your practice all you do is think: When is the time of the consultation up so you can go home and eat.

The mirror is warning Roland about the danger of his psyche's female aspect. If the female aspect, the so-called anima, takes over it can make men sentimental, make them live on dreams, think about how it could be, make them lazy and lacking initiative. Anima can be a *femme fatale*, poisoning the male ego.

ROLAND: All right, but I don't do that all the time. I am not always bored. But the mirror is right: When I feel weak I polish my mask and feel weak.

In the psychodrama of dreams the director has to be aware of the fact that on one level the dream only symbolises itself. It is like a theatre of life and existence. The old Greek dramas were nothing else than reflections of man's relationship with one another and the gods in daily life. In experiencing the dream psychodramatically daily life often attends the spontaneous production, being mixed with the dream and, therefore, a new dream production is performed on stage in the here and now. It would be wrong to keep daily life out of a dream production in a dogmatic manner. Dreams can help us to understand daily life, just as daily life can help us to understand our dreams if we are willing to look a bit closer to our irrational components of daily existence.

Roland tells the director that he feels this way about his work as a teacher and a psychologist in a school for unemployed people. He has the impression that everybody there is lacking in any interest. He also experiences a lack of initiative.

Roland sets up his room at work. It is 8.45 in the morning. He puts the newspaper on his desk, has his basket with food beside him and sits in front of an enormous flipchart. The flipchart takes up the whole room. Roland reverses roles with the flipchart.

FLIPCHART: I am wonderful, I have all these grids and timetables, all these different colours for different activities. When one looks at me one may think the whole place is full of activities. Roland loves to close his door and put plans on me. It is wonderful. I am impressive but who in hell is knocking on the door. Right now when Roland and I are having such a good time?

As Roland has locked the door from the inside he has to unlock it to let his colleague Peter in.

PETER: (outside the room) I would like to talk to you about the situation in the school and in the classes.

ROLAND: (monologue) What a bore and so tastelessly dressed in a red jumper. This idiot is always toadying. It doesn't help the situation that he is from Hunsrck (rural countryside in Germany). And above all, this idiot is only a social pedagogue. With what rubbish am I surrounded? The staff is not much better than the clients.

ROLAND: Come in!

PETER: The flipchart is looking better and better. But it doesn't really reflect reality. Only a few things are taking place. It is an over-exaggeration. Probably I don't understand it. It is so complicated.

ROLAND: My flipchart is not complicated. It is a plan, it is *a frame of our work that we have to work on*. It is a suggestion for our future and how we should work. You are boring and dry. You drain me.

The next move in the psychodrama has to refer to the frame. The frame already appeared in the dream as Madame Blanche's mirror that Roland had to work on even though he was no professional. The frame now appears as his *frame of work*, as the flipchart.

Madame Blanche's mirror was approximately 200 years old dating from the time of Napoleon. Also, Napoleon appeared in Roland's first dream falling off the mountain. If the ego is inflated by female unconscious energy a great amount of creative energy is realised. However, creative energy needs arms to transform dreams into reality. Moreno calls this spontaneity. If the spontaneous factor is lacking, a certain kind of megalomania, manifested here in the figure of Napoleon, appears. Napoleon is known for his genius, as well as for his fall.

This is the reason for introducing now, in the real situation at Roland's work, a dream figure into the psychodrama. Roland reverses roles with Napoleon who is standing in his room next to a big map. In his role reversals he uses a hat similar to that worn by Napoleon.

NAPOLEON: I conquered almost the whole world. I am a man of great importance. I am going to constitute a Grand-France. Well, people, what can be done to make France greater?

Roland, in the role of Napoleon, gives many different orders. He also asks others for suggestions. He uses the whole room and the group assists him playing soldiers and the crowd.

NAPOLEON: I want to expand. France, it is not big enough for me and you. However, we can't take Spain because it is too big.

SOLDIERS: No, we can't take Spain, but we can take Prussia.

NAPOLEON: That is a good idea. I will send you to Prussia and you will build an empire there.

SOLDIERS: But we have heard that they are going to occupy Paris.

NAPOLEON: Are you frightened? I have wonderful plans. Look at this plan. I am disappointed with you all. Where can I get brave people?

DIRECTOR: Tell me about your death Napoleon.

NAPOLEON: Well, it all began splendid, but the end was not too good!

DIRECTOR: Why?

NAPOLEON: I died in exile. My plans failed. My people did not want me any longer. Maybe there was some conspiracy. I died of a broken heart. But it was fun in the beginning.

Napoleon is being brought to the school where Roland works. This is a good example how surplus reality may be used, and how the psychodrama now has the same components as a dream. That is, the differentiation of time, as well as the differentiation between fantasy and reality, is no longer valid.

Napoleon angrily stands in front of the door to Roland's office.

NAPOLEON: (to the group) What a ridiculous name: *Tageskollegium* (day college), is there also a *Nachtkollegium* (night college). Why is this door locked? Let me in!

Roland stands in his room with some former drug addicts and there is also the flipchart.

NAPOLEON: What does this mean? Let me in!

ROLAND: Who is it?

Napoleon breaks the door down and stands there like mad in the room with a surprised group of people. He sees the flipchart and screams as loud as he can and tears the plan into pieces.

Roland is now in the role of Napoleon. Roland is played by a group member

ROLAND: This is my plan. It was a lot of work.

NAPOLEON: This plan doesn't work. It is not practicable. It is only a soap bubble. All these former drug addicts and prostitutes are still on drugs. They are absent from school every day. How can this low life be included in your flipchart? It doesn't work. Mr Berger, I am talking to you and you are going to listen.

ROLAND: I don't like you tearing this plan into pieces.

NAPOLEON: All these prostitutes who can't make up their minds about anything. This is a *Wolkenkuckucksheim* (Cloud-Cuckoo-Land). The plan is just like soap bubbles.

ROLAND: But I did have something to do.

NAPOLEON: That doesn't mean anything.

ROLAND: People were impressed.

Inflation means, to be filled with hot air and to be puffed up. Napoleon is reminding Roland about the risk inflation imposes to the ego. This is opposite to enthusiasm, which means to be filled with God. Enthusiasm must be integrated in small doses, otherwise the risk of inflation occurs. Megalomania, one could say, is the extreme of an inflated ego.

NAPOLEON: If I were you, I would not be here so often at this job. Why don't you go to conferences? Read some books! Learn something!

ROLAND: I take a book with me every day.

DIRECTOR: What would make more sense?

NAPOLEON: Build up some other things, your private practice, for instance. Otherwise you will not have any energy. I was a gambler and a lot has been happening around me. I invaded Russia. The end was not like this.

ROLAND: I am already tired when I enter this place and this work.

NAPOLEON: There is only empty air here. You can only become sick of it. How often have I tried to help you? I tried to give you great plans, the practice, but you are only killing time!

ROLAND: One has to live on something.

NAPOLEON: I taught you, how to be a new Napoleon. I have invested a lot in you; and what do you make out of it?

ROLAND: Your plans are somewhat out of this world.

NAPOLEON: They are great. Next year you will not have a single client.

The ego is in pain because it is running out of energy and steam. Enthusiasm raises self-confidence, spiritual growth and inspiration. However, it can only be taken in small doses and adapted. If the ego becomes too inflated and gets swamped by the unconscious it will be passive and not in a condition to make decisions and to discriminate. It will also lack initiative.

Our protagonist is struggling inside the ego. The ego, which usually longs for one-sidedness, that is to say either/or, is now torn apart. One can also see how the shadow figure, Napoleon, is confronting Roland's ideas. It is also paradoxical that Napoleon is talking this way, but dream figures are paradoxical. As a rule, integration of the shadow figure brings energy.

During this scene the protagonist reverses roles several times with Napoleon. This encounter is also a major point in the psychodrama. The protagonist, who is usually a quiet and introverted person, is expressing himself spontaneously. The cathartic experience in psychodrama is not to find a solution or a cause. It is rather to give a person a stage and an area where he feels free to express himself. One can't stress enough the importance for people to be able to have a dialogue with their inner figures.

DIRECTOR: How does Napoleon come to this prognosis?

ROLAND: Because people don't have to pay for their therapy themselves. That means next year is endangered.

DIRECTOR: You will be needing this job?

ROLAND: Nobody is interested if I sit here or not.

NAPOLEON: I am interested. I am disappointed in what you are doing. Start with your ideas.

ROLAND: I am not interested. in your advice. It doesn't seem to help me. How many people had to die because they followed you. Everything went wrong for you at the end and you died in jail.

NAPOLEON: But I had energy. I did something.

ROLAND: I am doing something. What I do is enough. I read the sports news. The Cologne team has won. This is very important. When I am here I can do what I want. I can take my time in the morning. Nobody gets on my nerves. This place is important for me because of its security. The job gives me money.

When people are confronted with their shadow too forcefully, they tend to regress. Right now the protagonist is becoming defensive, rejecting his complicated situation and struggle within his ego. One way for the ego to get rid of painful or unpleasant feelings of ambivalence quickly is to become one-sided by making a stubborn decision.

From a directorial point of view the director has to watch this process. At this point it would be important to break off the scene because the protagonist's ego can't integrate more shadow material.

DIRECTOR: How do you see the difference between you and Napoleon?

ROLAND: Well, security was not important to Napoleon, it is important to me. But on the other side, Napoleon had more steam in his bones (courage).

DIRECTOR: Where does Roland have steam in his bones?

ROLAND: At the sportsclub. In his psychodrama group. In the practice.

DIRECTOR: I think it would be advisable to talk to Napoleon about the way you feel he influences your life.

ROLAND: Napoleon, you make me feel dissatisfied when you look at me with your great plans. On the other hand you give me steam and liveliness. You have too big plans and when they don't come off you get disappointed and critical.

The protagonist decides to look at the duality of Napoleon. In a certain sense one can say that Napoleon also represents a Dionysian energy. Dionysus is really the god of joy and, therefore, adds flavour to life.

However, this joy can turn into a destructive madness as well. From the myth of Dionysus we know that the people who rejected the Dionysian madness became mad themselves, whereas for the people that followed him a greater, more rewarding life was to come. Dionysus is also famous for his primitive wildness and, therefore, can take his own brutal course if the ego rejects him. Worship the gods for what they are. Our protagonist has decided to do so.

Napoleon leaves the stage and we are back at Madame Blanche's room where Gnter repairs the mirror. Madame Blanche, Roland and Gnter are standing around the mirror. Gnter turns out to be a person in the protagonist's real life that he can't stand. We are still dealing with the shadow and projections of the shadow. Gnter is a person that functions as a projection hook for the protagonist.

The protagonist is asked to take the role of Gnter. In the role presentation we can see a description of Gnter certainly contains a great amount of projections of a negative character. The presentation is stereotypical, very negative, and would be absolutely contrary to how Gnter would present himself. Eros, the god of love and relation, is lacking. Moreno spoke of tele as the opposite to projection. Tele is two-sided, its fundamental process is reciprocity (of attraction, rejection, etc.), and it contains Eros. Tele is based on a sense for and recognition of the *real* situation of others. This is certainly not the case in Roland's presentation of Gnter.

GNTER: I am unemployed. I am more a mother than a man. Frankly, I almost have tits. Also I have an extremely high and screaming voice. The tits I got from sports. A couple of years ago I was a sports champion, but that was 20 years ago. I have long ugly greasy hair. In general I look like a pig or a slut.

The protagonist is very excited and dresses as Gnter. A wet towel represents the greasy hair, and pillows, pushed under the protagonist's jumper, represent his tits. The protagonist is full of energy and is acting out spontaneously. Always in psychodrama when people act out the shadow, the entire human being is there.

MME BLANCHE: I think Gnter can repair that mirror! He is very practical.

ROLAND: Gnter is ridiculous, and, by the way, he has tits.

DIRECTOR: What happened to you Gnter?

GNTER: Well I grew up, got married and then had children. I am unemployed and married to a physician. My marriage is bad and I have to clean up the house before she comes home.

DIRECTOR: Well, Gnter, that doesn't sound too good. Could you show us a scene of how it is when your wife is coming home?

GNTER: (still played by Roland) Sure!

Full expansion of a psychodrama means to be able to act in the role of the other. In surrealist psychodrama, these do not have to be scenes that the protagonist has experienced himself. The protagonist is now acting out a scene he has in his mind, a scene where he himself as Roland is not included. To act out such scenes is to act out the shadow. The protagonists, in general, have fun and a sadistic pleasure in their performance.

As a rule, when something is coloured by the phenomenon of projection the protagonist will refuse to see that the presented material has anything to do with him. Insight doesn't help, but action does. The protagonist is

acting out shadow material; one can say it boils off through the action. After a while or in a later session, the protagonist will automatically make certain connections to own traits.

The scene shows Gnter at home with his wife and children.

THE WIFE: God, what an awful day in the clinic. I can't stand it and now I have to come home to this shit I happen to be married to. I do all the work and he doesn't really do anything. He is a *Schlappschwanz!* (literally that means: soft tail or soft cock; in English the words softie, wet or weakling would be an appropriate match)

GNTER: Hello, how was work?

THE WIFE: The house looks a mess. What did you do all day? Go and clean up. I am tired of doing everything. The children get on my nerves, I am tired and I don't want to be disturbed. Is that clear?

GNTER: Come children, mother is tired!

THE WIFE: Put on your socks and stop walking around. This is not a zoo here. I need a rest. (monologue) My God, I really was married to a champion once and look what happened. Why am I putting up with this?

GNTER: Well you are bankrupt. Your practice doesn't bring in anything. It is all over with you.

THE WIFE: How dare you even talk to me that way. If it wasn't for me we would be on the streets. You cannot support your family at all.

The director brings Roland once more back to the scene in Madame Blanche's house and encourages the protagonist to encounter Gnter over the mirror.

One can see clearly now that the scene includes hidden fears of not being a man. How a man can be dominated and lose his male identity and be under the dominance of a woman. This image is adequate when the male ego is not in control of consciousness but is rather ruled by the anima. The marriage between the male and the anima turns into slavery rather than into a fruitful union.

DIRECTOR: Could you please express your feelings towards Gnter and also express your relationship to him!

ROLAND: You have dominated everything. I am tired of you. Just look at the kindergarten where our children go to. It is all on your terms, your ideas about picnics, building houses for the children, etc. Already after half a year nobody can stand you. You have these Napoleonic ideas.

GNTER: You are a typical psychologist. You say nothing and you don't do anything. You are a failure.

ROLAND: A failure?! Just think about the kindergarten house that you were going to build. What happened? Nothing!

GNTER: Everybody left me and I had to build it alone. What can you do with others? What do you have to offer?

Gnter, who reflects the shadow, is now touching upon a great problem for the protagonist, who is an introverted person and has big problems with extroversion. Introverted people have also a great longing for participation, but that includes giving up some of their inner world and expectations in favour of the collective. The problem for an introverted person is the balance between the inner and outer world. They either feel overwhelmed by people or control them. This certain energy for a free flow between people is lacking.

Our protagonist has brought up this issue several times, but as many introverted people, comes to the conclusion: It is too much work and it is better not to do anything.



ROLAND: I can work together with my wife, and I have a brain you don't have (the protagonist hesitates and then turns quiet)

DIRECTOR: What is on your mind?

ROLAND: He has more courage than I have. He has the courage to do something even if everybody laughs at him. He is a child and loves what he is doing with full energy. But then everything goes wrong. And everybody can see his ups and downs, *only a few people know mine*.

Slowly, the protagonist is making the connection with his own shadow and feels it. The action is not an intellectual insight but a dramatic one, experienced in the moment and, therefore, we can see a therapeutic effect of the psychodrama. To be aware of one's own shadow is impossible and its integration into the ego is a process that is often related to a great deal of suffering and pain called *katabasis* (the Dionysian journey into the underworld), or, as the proverb says: 'One has to bear one's cross patiently'. Awareness of the shadow is not related to its integration. At best it could be a beginning. Many people in psychotherapy, including psychotherapists, usually end the psychotherapeutic work at this starting point, that is to say, they end where psychotherapy actually starts. However, this awareness of the shadow gives the client a feeling of profound work on himself. The difference between awareness and integration of the shadow is the same as, for example, two people talking about Paris: one has seen Paris on postcards and pictures, another went and lived in Paris for a year.

Gnter has left the stage and Roland stands with Madame Blanche on the stage in the hallway of Madame Blanche's residence. Madame Blanche looks at him and then at the mirror.

Roland is playing himself and a group member plays Madame Blanche.

MME BLANCHE: Well, I don't think the work is too good. I would like it to have been perfect.

ROLAND: *I can't do it that well! I can't do it as you want it. If you want it perfect you have to get a professional. However, I like doing it for you because I like you and it won't be bad. I am good.*

MME BLANCHE: Well, I would have liked it to be perfect.

ROLAND: (monologue) If I had a mirror like that I would like the work to be perfect. She has the right expectation, but it makes me depressed.

MME BLANCHE: I have my ideas of how things should be done.

ROLAND: I have done as well as I can and I also need your appreciation, but you can also adapt to me, the person I am and what I am! Your criticism hurts and just gives me a feeling of not being capable of doing anything right. I want to be good.

MME BLANCHE: I am sorry, I am really sorry. I have to admit if I had done it myself it would have been worse. I am sorry.

Roland leaves the stage. This is the end of the scene and the psychodrama. The dream psychodrama doesn't turn back to the role of the sleeper. The psychodrama ends when there is an emotional closure. The Liechtenstein school doesn't make the traditional distinction between dream life and daily life. However, it should be noticed that there is a difference between Roland the dream ego and Roland the creator in the dream psychodrama. In a certain sense we have followed the dream ego on its journey through the dream. However, many aspects of the psychodramatic dream production were not in Roland's dream itself. This would include the aspect the surrealists called the 'never seen' and its relation to the unknown. It is a surrealist opinion that we experience the never seen by its absence. Dream evolution would refer to this aspect where the dream ego leaves the remembered dream and brings up aspects that were not there. With an orthodox analytical mind one might say this is to play out a hidden aspect of the dream; but this is not the case.

We actually don't know or have nobody to confirm whether a scene is a hidden aspect or not. The purpose of the psychodramatic dream production is not necessarily the understanding of the dream but *to experience the dream and experiment with it*. This turns people into creators, not only the protagonist, but also the group. The dream is not produced, as in the classical dream psychodrama, as an absolutely personal experience for the protagonist.

The word protagonist in psychodrama refers to the session's main character. It is his or her story that will lay the foundation for the spontaneous dramatisation and the drama will be presented from his or her point of view. However, this has been quite misunderstood nowadays. If a psychodrama is presented *only* from his or her point of view, the juice goes out of the session. The group and the auxiliary egos will only be background figures and the psychodrama session would be rather untherapeutic and the word protagonist would then also have lost its heritage to the Dionysian theatre.

The Liechtenstein school does not regard the dream as particularly the protagonist's dream. Rather, it emphasises the aspect of the *non-personal* related to the gods and the collective. Therefore, the dialogue in the dramatic production is, to a certain degree, unrestricted for the auxiliary egos.

The protagonist's creative experience is achieved with and shared by a group. Group members participate in the dream production and develop their own relation to it. Therefore, the sharing phase is, from an emotional point of view, essential in this form of psychodrama.

## NOTES

- 1 In theological matter this word is often used in the meaning: The soul departs the body.
- 2 In-divi-duality means: indivisible two (natures). We see here that this word also refers to the law of the opposites, which is very important in Jungian psychology and will be referred to later.

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