

Chapter 6

Relationships and roles

Commentary

Relationships are the central theme of Max Clayton's chapter. Through many years of clinical experience, he has made role theory an integral part of his work as a teacher and clinician. In sessions he labels aspects of the individual that are neither mystical nor bewildering. Morenian psychology has sometimes been criticised for inconsistency and complexity. This chapter clearly sets out the essentials of role theory in a way that makes it accessible to the non-psychodramatist.

Role theory and its application in clinical practice
Max Clayton

INTRODUCTION

I have applied role theory in a wide range of situations since 1971 and taught it throughout Australia and New Zealand. Therefore my own experience and emphases are reflected in the material presented in this chapter. A large number of professional people in different fields have developed a knowledge of role theory and role analysis and a significant number of reports and papers have presented analyses of individuals and groups based on role theory. Some of this work is included in this chapter. The particular type of role theory presented in this chapter and the concept of role and role relations is that developed by J.L. Moreno (see the relevant sections of *Psychodrama*, vol. 1 (1946) or any of his major writings). The method of categorising and charting roles has been developed in Australia and New Zealand and is in our view consistent with Moreno's role theory. The historical development of role theory and the differences between the role theory developed by Moreno and that of other role theorists have been discussed elsewhere (for example, Moreno 1978:688–92; Biddle and Thomas 1966:3–19) and these subjects are outside the scope of this writing. Here, the emphasis is placed on the application of role theory such that human beings develop a deeper feeling and appreciation of one another. The point of view taken is that role theory may be applied so that incisive analysis is infused with feeling and so contributes to the development of a humane culture.

DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE OF ROLE THEORY

Personal knowledge of role theory develops as a result of a number of factors. High on the list is constant involvement in many different situations and with a wide range of people. The picturing of one's own social relations as well as those of others and reflection on these pictures is needed. The development of role descriptions, frequent guessing about the nature and quality of role relations and the checking of



one's conclusions with others results in the development of abilities such as role analyst, systems analyst and personality theorist, and eventually in the development of a new identity.

Creating written descriptions of individual roles and role systems and complete descriptions of the social and cultural atom of individuals have been of considerable assistance in the learning of role theory. Entering into a supervisory process with a teacher or trainer has assisted in the integration of role theory into clinical practice.

The reading of literature in conjunction with the completion of written work and supervision opens up new perspectives. Jacob Moreno's written discussions of the role concept and of role relations continue to open up fresh perspectives for many readers. These include sections on role theory in *Who Shall Survive* (Moreno 1978:75–9, 533–7) and *Psychodrama*, vol. 1 (Moreno 1964:153–76, 328–47). The monograph 'Psychodramatic shock therapy' (Moreno 1939) contains several social atom diagrams. The monograph 'Psychodramatic treatment of psychoses' (Moreno 1940, 1945) discusses the development of the cultural atom in mental patients. The use of role theory in clinical practice is highlighted in the chapter on Psychodrama in the book *Experiential Psychotherapies in Australia* (Clayton and Clayton 1980) and in several journal article papers including 'The use of the cultural atom to record personality change in individual psychotherapy' (Clayton 1982) and 'Psychodrama with the hysteric' (Clayton 1973). The application of role theory in role training is described in detail in *Enhancing Life and Relationships: A role training manual* (Clayton 1992). A large number of papers and theses discuss the role systems of a wide range of people and include 'The cultural atom as a dynamic concept' (Di Lollo 1987), 'The suicidally depressed person and psychodrama' (Hurst 1992), 'Magister Ludi, the master of play: a role profile of the playwright' (Batten 1992), 'Using psychodrama in individual counselling and psychotherapy' (Fowler 1992), and 'The role structure of a patient' (Crawford 1984).

Reading of literature which discusses role theory from a different point of view will bring a larger perspective to the subject. George Herbert Mead's book *Mind, Self and Society* (1934) emphasises the process of taking the role of the other and incorporating that role into the self. *Role Theory: Concepts and research* (Biddle and Thomas 1966) presents material on the nature and history of role theory and a wide range of other subjects such as role structures, role enactment and role conflict and its resolution.

USAGE OF TERMS

The term role theory refers to the body of knowledge associated with the interactive functioning of human beings. Its focus is on the functioning form of human behaviour as it emerges in response to other people or objects in specific times and places. It is systemic in its nature taking into account individuals and their relationships.

The term role description refers to one of the basic elements in the analysis of a role system. Role description is the identification of a significant segment of human functioning in a meaningful and enlivening way. A number of role descriptions may be made in such a way as to portray the nature of much larger segments of human living and these provide some of the raw data for a larger role analysis.

The term role analysis refers to the consideration of a role system in terms of whether it is achieving its purpose or not and what is required to cause the role system to function adequately. Role analysis focuses at times on the different elements of a single role in terms of their congruence or incongruence with one another and sometimes on the relation between different roles or between one role system or another. The purpose of role analysis is to make sense of systems of roles enacted by individuals or groups of individuals or of role relationships between groups or between cultures and on the basis of such analysis to plan means whereby roles may be developed further so that the aims of individuals and groups can be achieved.

The term role analysis is used interchangeably with the term role assessment. The term assessment is used to conform with the frequently used term 'clinical assessment'.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHAPTER

In the next section of the chapter there is a discussion of the essential nature of a role. This is followed by an example of clinical work aimed at creating a clear impression of the application of role theory in one situation.

The more detailed discussion of roles and role assessment begins by focusing on the making of a role description. Various analyses of role relations and role clusters and discussion of the application of role theory take up the rest of the chapter.

THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF A ROLE

We observe one person and we say: 'There's an adventurer'. Concerning another person we say: 'There's a creative town planner'. We are able to draw these conclusions through attending to the observable actions and emotions. These obvious expressions of a person are given a coherent form through their connection with a map of the universe that may be conscious or unconscious to the individual concerned. This map or picture of the way life works is the essence of any role or role cluster. An adventurer has one vision of how people relate to one another, a town planner another, a Michelangelo yet another. Some kind of vision of how life works is the controlling element in each role we fantasise or live out in the world. In the case of a person who experiences role conflicts, investigation brings to the light of day contradictory maps. A well-functioning person may become conscious of a multitude of pictures associated with each major role in their personality and of the fact that each picture complements the others and contributes to a larger vision. This larger vision is associated with a cluster of roles or with the totality of the roles in their personality.

In one piece of work a person created a dramatic portrayal of cooperative people building up one another in their work and personal interactions. This person had embedded in their consciousness a picture of creative beings interacting respectfully and this provided a motivating force for approaching challenging situations with relevant aims and wellplanned objectives. A disciplined organisation and at the same time a light, free expression were characteristic of this person's functioning.

In another piece of work a resentful person operated in accordance with the laws of strict justice. In their view the universe worked best when individuals determinedly demanded justice and were hard and harsh in response to others. Those on the receiving end realised how unjust and wrong they had been. When this person participated in a dramatic enactment in which people were acting this way, there was an experience of absolute delight. 'Yes, that's the way things are', he said, 'and that's the way it should be.' There was an awakening of consciousness that this interactive picture was the basis of their values. Subsequently there was a participation in interactive systems that portrayed quite different configurations, an experience of new responses—and the beginning of a development of other visions of life.

A person warms up to any role in response to the functioning of another person or persons in the here and now and the personal meaning of the role can be discovered by exploring the different dimensions of the situation. This may be accomplished by bringing about expression of what was not said and done outwardly. The hidden thoughts, feelings and aspirations which are above and beyond what is expressed in life itself are termed the level of surplus reality and it is through the exploration of this level of surplus reality that the various maps of the universe become apparent. There may also be value in enacting situations in which a particular role first came to birth, when a particular map of the universe was first formed, to

become acquainted with the warm-up process of the individual as well as with the social and cultural matrix in which the events took place.

The outward manifestations of the map of the universe of an individual are a set of emotions and feelings and a set of actions. Role analysis takes into account these different elements of a role and determines whether they are congruent or incongruent with one another. Various techniques have been developed for the purpose of harmonising the different elements into a unified, working system. However, the most profound and lasting development of an individual normally involves an experience of living satisfactorily in accordance with a new map of the universe. Then the old map may be dropped and the old sets of emotions and actions become irrelevant and they, too, gradually disappear.

The centrality of a person's view of the universe has implications for where the focus of attention is placed. Some role descriptions emphasise the social dimension. Descriptions of the social roles of nurses, architects, lawyers, bank tellers, cooks, policemen or business managers highlight the development of these roles by a particular culture and when a person is addressed in terms of their social role, they experience themselves as part of a group. Other role descriptions portray more of the individuality of a person and touch their experiencing centre in such a way that their interest is greatly aroused. Role descriptions that accurately pinpoint the experience and aspirations of a person naturally enhance the conscious development of roles that are unique to them. Such roles may be termed psychodramatic. There are many examples of the use of psychodramatic role descriptions in everyday life. One person in a social situation was behaving in an adventurous way and his companion said to him: 'I like what you are doing. You're Marco Polo.' This person was slightly taken aback but continued acting in an adventurous manner with even greater enthusiasm and contributed even more to the occasion. Other roles are psychosomatic such as the roles of the eater or the sleeper.

EXAMPLE OF ROLE DEVELOPMENT IN CLINICAL WORK WITH A CONFLICTED PERSON

I wish to start by presenting a piece of work with an individual which took place recently. The purpose in doing this is so that you will be able to visualise the situation, comprehend the nature of the roles and the role relations, and the means by which a new resolution was found.

Scene one

These events took place in a group of ten people meeting together for the twenty-sixth time. The members of the group were well-motivated and had developed working relations with one another. Early in this session Barry was asked a question. He hesitated and sat thinking as though he were preparing what to reply. The group leader suggested that he was conflicted and Barry immediately said that this was the case. The group leader invited him to focus on this moment with a view to resolving the conflict and developing his ability to freely and immediately make his first response. Barry indicated he would like to do this and the group leader assisted him to set out the situation as he experienced it.

The first scene he portrayed involved his father, mother, and two brothers. He selected four members of the group to be these people and enacted the roles of each person such that the group members were able to portray accurately what occurred. Barry stood at a distance from his father and brothers and his mother was further away behind his father. He became involved in the enactment expressing his emotions and his values very clearly. The theme of the interaction was one of severe criticism and withdrawal. The father acted as a cruel mafia boss in relation to his son Barry. Barry's two brothers sided with their father and

acted as cruel rejectors. The mother was isolated. Barry himself was withdrawn and had concluded that there was nothing to be gained by communicating.

The group leader entered into a dialogue with Barry which began as follows:

You have portrayed a situation that is associated with the cutting off of your immediate expression. But that cutting off is only one aspect of the picture. There is also the creative aspect that begins to express itself in its own unique way. When you were asked the question in the group just now we saw that you were interested to respond right away. So now portray another situation that is associated with the immediate free expression of yourself. Keep the scene that has just been enacted and choose another group member to be yourself in that scene. And create a new scene in a separate area.

Scene two

Barry, who was a part-time musician, quite quickly set out a new scene in which he was a member of an orchestra in a rehearsal that had taken place several years earlier. He created a strings section and a brass section and also chose someone to be the conductor and teacher. The other parts of the orchestra were not portrayed. In the enactment of the scene the timing of the brass and strings sections was not in harmony. Barry portrayed the conductor as humane, competent and able to bring the best out of the orchestra. The conductor made it very clear what was lacking and instructed the orchestra to repeat the section several times until he was satisfied with the timing. Barry enjoyed the practice very much. He liked the attitude of the conductor. He especially appreciated that he was not phased out by the mistakes of the orchestra but rather maintained an attitude of enjoyment while he trained them. The group leader characterised the conductor as a flexible and creative trainer and alternatively as an instructive artist. Barry was pleased by these descriptions and experienced greater love and gratitude toward the conductor.

Subsequent to the enactment of these two scenes, Barry asked someone else to play his role in the second scene and then stood in a position where he could see both of the scenes enacted at the same time. He was very satisfied to see himself acting in two quite different ways at the same time. He felt strengthened in his ability to express himself freely. He affirmed the value of his unique ideas and expression. He saw clearly that two quite different ways of functioning had been occurring one after the other and accepted this.

Visualising the situation

This description of these scenes and [Figure 1](#) are aimed to enhance the visualisation of this brief piece of work and to enable any interested reader to begin to experience being there. Visualising any piece of work with people is of great importance and assists practitioners to maintain and deepen their contact with the original living situation, to keep seeing new facets, and to develop fresh perspectives. It is an advantage for a supervisor or interested colleagues also to be able to visualise a situation since this enhances their ability to be companions with the practitioner and co-operate in the creation of further effective work. Practitioners and supervisors have found that the utilisation of role theory both in verbal description and in diagrammatic presentation of work has also enabled them to picture and enter into situations easily and quickly. The practitioner who is well trained and versed in the use of the language of role theory can convey, through a very brief role description, a comprehensible idea of quite a large segment of the actions and emotions of a person and the view of the universe that is expressed by those actions and emotions. This economy of words has been a great boon in supervision sessions allowing more time to be spent on teaching and coaching.

The nature of the roles and role relations

An apt characterisation of the relationship between the protagonist Barry and members of his family is the term 'fragmenting role system'. Consistent with this is the fact that there is a mutual negative relation between Barry and his father and brothers which prevents intimacy.

The role system is disconnected from the fulfilment of Barry's life purpose and, according to him, fails to satisfy other family members. Barry's motivation is low, there is a sense of meaninglessness and his consciousness is not focused on the adequate aspects of his functioning. He indeed experiences fragmentation. One aspect of his personality is expressed and after that another and then another without much awareness of the relationship between the different roles. The term 'dysfunctional role system' also fits since the word dysfunctional highlights the contribution that each person is making to the functioning and organisation of any family system. The term fragmenting, however, better portrays the inner experience of the people involved.

The roles and role relations enacted in the second scene reveal a positive two-way relation between Barry, the conductor and the members of the orchestra. The role system may be characterised as progressive since the fulfilment of Barry's purpose is being enacted. His functioning expresses his own unique individuality as well as social elements. This blending of the social and individual elements in his roles is one expression of his spontaneity and we may expect this to continue to develop through constant practice.

The means for developing a new resolution

At the beginning of this work there was a clear purpose, namely, to resolve Barry's conflict which emerged in the here-and-now group situation. The clear delineation of purpose was undoubtedly a major factor in the production of a new resolution. Human development involves raising into consciousness the purpose for which a person is involved in any situation. Purpose is an integrative factor in living and when a person is able to articulate their purpose the inner self awakens like a sleeping giant returning to consciousness. Sometimes the consciousness of purpose takes other forms such as an inner sense that life has a meaning or the form of an almost imperceptible feeling. In the work just described the consciousness of purpose increased as the protagonist valued his uniqueness while he continued to express himself.

A number of other factors contributed to Barry's development of a new role system. There was the bringing to consciousness, early in the work, the existence of progressive functioning. This increased his ability to resolve conflicts, to free himself from negative memories and to gain mastery over non-functional habitual patterns. Another factor was a willingness to enact his experiences. During the enactment there was an increase in spontaneous expression and a letting go of over-control by the mind. The structure of the session was also clear and this assisted him to feel safe enough, to enter a deeper level of feeling, and to let go of emotional reactivity.

ROLE ASSESSMENT AND ITS APPLICATIONS

Assessment of roles and role relations has an important place in effective work. This may take the form of tentative role assessments made very quickly on the basis of intuitive observation or of well thought through role assessment based on lengthy and repeated observations of a person in different situations. A basic requirement for role assessment is the accurate identification and description of individual roles and this is focused on in the next example.

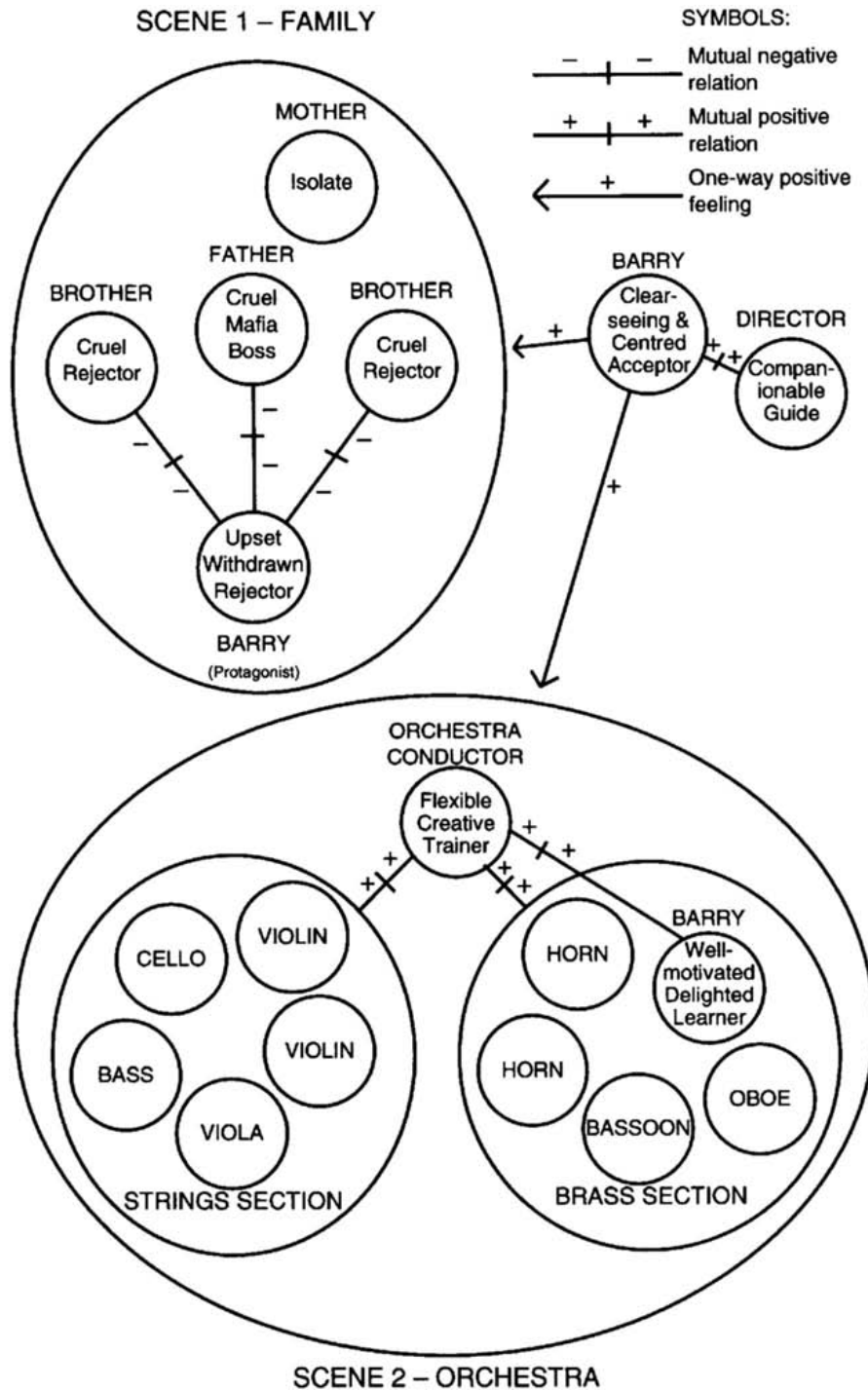


Figure 1 Barry observes family interaction and orchestra practice, simultaneously

Example of role description increasing the involvement of group members

In many heterogeneous groups individuals have been invited to walk around the room several times. Other

group members have been invited to observe them and to write down their immediate impression of the role of each person. In one group the following were some of the descriptions of one individual offered by the participants:

Harem girl

Indian dancer

Warrior

Priestess

Cavalier

Chinese lady with bound feet

Walking on the edge of a vast ocean

An animal—a spirited deer

Each of these descriptions was enlivening for the group member concerned and the others present. When they were stated out loud there was a greater level of enjoyment, discussion and exploration.

Those who presented each description focused their attention on the real essence of the person. The descriptions for the most part were not a product of the intellect. They represented an attempt to penetrate the surface level and to say something which made sense out of many different aspects of the person's functioning. Thus, we may conclude that each description was an integrative concept. When one group member said 'Harem girl' all the members of the group looked at the person from that point of view to see if all the movements, feelings, emotions and thoughts that have been expressed fit that description. The best descriptions are those which fit the present warm-up of the protagonist, their present life circumstances and the present challenges which life is throwing up at them. Projection is naturally a factor distorting perceptions but on the whole has not been very significant.

Examples of tentative assessment of roles and role relations during an interview

Example one: learning through viewing a person in relation to others

Like other professional people I regularly sit with a person in the first interview and listen to their story of what is motivating them to come and see me and what have been the particular circumstances of their life. I not only listen to the details of the story but also notice the person's way of telling the story and the effect this is having on my functioning.

During one interview George was very earnest as he tried to teach me something. I thought that maybe he fancied himself as a coach. I thought he probably coached various people with varying degrees of success from time to time. This musing and tentative assessment assisted in making sense of aspects of his functioning that might otherwise have been ignored.

Example two: developing a list of roles and identifying role clusters

In one case a person had finished telling their story and after a pause I suggested that we review all the different ways of functioning which I had noticed. I suggested that as I mentioned different kinds of functioning, they write them down on a piece of paper and that after I had mentioned five ways of

functioning they would mention one and then we would take turns to identify roles until we had made a large list. In less than five minutes we developed the list of roles which follows:

Artist
 Playful funlover
 Coach
 Companion
 Adventurer
 Manipulator
 Teacher
 Despairer
 Self-doubter
 Guard
 Frightened, abandoned orphan
 Anxious and suspicious fantasiser
 Angry controller
 Condemning critic
 Friend
 Father
 Good listener
 Lover
 Perfectionist

We then engaged in the task of organising these roles into clusters and determining which role clusters are progressive and functional and which are fragmenting and dysfunctional and which are expressions of an effort to survive and thus are part of a coping system. This task was also completed in a short time. In the process this person became more organised, more thoughtful and began to make sense of a wider range of his behaviour.

Example three: listing progressive and functional roles

In a similar manner during my work with Louise in the first interview we made a long list of different roles. She was experiencing low self-esteem and in line with this was extremely self-critical. There was a low level of trust with me. I was the object of suspicious observation. When she had made a self-presentation including why she had come to see me I suggested that we make a picture of all their different attributes. I explained the concept of role and suggested that I would list a number of roles and also have her

suggest some roles. In several minutes we had come up with the following list, each one being printed in capitals on a separate sheet of paper. The list is as follows:

Imaginative dreamer
 Thoughtful planner/organiser
 Warm self-appreciator
 Sensitive caregiver
 Playful enjoyer of life
 Lover
 Poet
 Listener
 Passionate dancer
 Lowly and co-operative servant
 Practical joker
 Lone warrior
 Ruminator (wishful thinker)
 Mean street-fighter
 Nature lover

Most of these roles are progressive and functional. I deliberately focused on all those aspects of her functioning which I personally enjoyed. As I concentrated only on these aspects and became increasingly successful at eliminating from my mind the dysfunctional elements, I found myself moving closer to her. Obviously I was finding points of connection. Subsequently I stated in a straightforward way the functional aspects which I observed and experienced and enjoyed and she began to argue, telling me that other people had not evaluated her in such a generous fashion and that she was not as worthwhile as I was indicating. I had already noticed an immediately positive response to my appraisal and so I said to her that she was clearly happy when I actively related to these particular aspects of her functioning which were real and that she was sufficiently in touch with herself to know that she had felt happy. She said yes, she did feel happy, but there were other aspects of her. I said that my first task was to build a good foundation and the best foundation was for us to give proper recognition to those abilities which she had built up over many years through much effort. She accepted what I said and her enjoyment increased. She stopped looking at me suspiciously. She simply enjoyed being with me just as I was enjoying being with her.

It appears that the simple and clear delineation of progressive and functional roles does, under appropriate circumstances, lead to the heightening of self-esteem. It also leads to the development of a positive two-way relationship or, using other words, a mutually positive tele relation, and to co-operative, purposeful work. Others may wish to see this in terms of the development of a positive transference.

Example four: example of maintaining emotional contact while making a lighthearted assessment

In another piece of work Luke was focused on his inability to refuse other people's demands. In the interview phase of the psychodrama he was distressed that he constantly gave in to the wishes of others. He was very sensitive to criticism. He focused on a situation with his wife where he felt constrained by her demands. He was unable to be centred within himself or to develop his own interests and activities while he was in his own home. In this situation the director and group members imagined him functioning in the submissive way that had been described and in this way became much more conscious of his situation. They also made a tentative assessment in a somewhat lighthearted vein even though the protagonist's plight was serious. The emotional contact with the protagonist was sustained at this time demonstrating that it is quite feasible to be lighthearted and to increase the level of emotional contact at the same time.

DEVELOPING AN ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Since the making of tentative assessments is so valuable for increasing the intelligent involvement of a director and group members, it is necessary to develop a workable process for carrying this out. The following is an outline of a possible process by which assessments may be made. The most simple and basic elements are considered at the start. First, there is the sociometric perspective and simple elements of sociometry:

- How many people are there in the person's social network?
- Are the feelings being projected towards the other people by this person positive, negative, or neutral and what is the nature of the feeling being projected towards them by the others?
- What is the strength of the feeling projected towards each of the others and the strength of the feeling from them to him?
- What is the nature of the person's feeling towards himself? Is it positive, negative or neutral? And what is the level of warm-up?

In the example just described Luke revealed that he is unable to refuse other people's demands. At this point it is possible to picture him in a situation with others, then picture him in another situation and then another. There are likely to be quite a few people in the man's social network. There are most likely to be negative feelings projected out from him towards these others as they make demands on him. The feelings are likely to be strong. He is likely to be negative towards himself for having these negative feelings towards others. Thus, he does not express his negative feeling overtly. He is conflicted. We may imagine that he looks at himself afterwards, sees himself caught up in conflict constantly and is angry with himself for being weak. This angry feeling will be strong.

After focusing on these simple basic elements it is necessary to concentrate on the sociometric perspective more fully and tentatively identify the roles and role relationships, the role clusters and the central role in each role cluster.

At the beginning of the interview Luke focused on his lack of ability and on the fact that he suffers because of this. Could we say that one of the well-developed roles in one of his dysfunctional role clusters is that of 'unhappy martyr'? Another role in this cluster will be 'incessant self-critic'. After this we may begin to see him as a person who has been seeking recognition in order to feel a greater sense of existence on the planet and also seeking approval and acceptance to build up his self-esteem. Could we therefore tentatively say that he has developed the role of 'distressed yearner'? Perhaps this is the central role in this role cluster. It would be in this role that he is so sensitive to criticism. And yet another role in this cluster would be 'helpful red cross nurse'. In this role he endeavours to relieve the pains and worries of others, including his children,

his wife and his own mother. Through acting as a helpful red cross nurse he hopes to win the approval of others and gain the emotional closeness and affection which he lacks.

Other people in his life may have wittingly or unwittingly taken advantage of this dysfunctional role cluster. They may have avoided developing themselves in a well-rounded way. They may have asked him to do things for them which they would have been better off doing themselves. They may have assisted him in the creation of a strong system of dependency.

We might well speculate about what map of the universe Luke has created and which now sustains a social atom that produces such an inner sense of frustration and meaninglessness. The idea that he views the universe as a place where people are self-absorbed, needy suckers whose whims have to be indulged so that relationships can be maintained is consistent with the concern he has presented in the interview.

During this early stage of work in the initial interview there are several other areas on which the director may helpfully focus. A clear awareness that social-atom repair work needs to take place and identification of some of the functional roles in this man's personality will assist the director's warm-up. Being conscious of the existence of adequate roles at the interview stage is of great assistance during the setting and early development of the first scene in a dramatic enactment. This makes it much easier for the director to warm up a protagonist to roles that will be of assistance to him in bringing about a new resolution to any conflict. The director would also do well to keep in mind an additional factor, namely, that there is a central role in any progressive role system, a role that organises and harmonises a number of roles that would otherwise operate in isolation.

What is the central role in the progressive role system of Luke? Observation of other people who are functioning well provides a clue. This reveals that they have developed healthy, workable concepts about how any system including a family system works, are possessed of a good inner organisation, are able to formulate and execute plans and have an enjoyment of life. Observation of this particular protagonist reveals that he has at least begun to develop a concept of what will work in a family. He knows that it is necessary to be able to refuse another person's demands. He certainly has not developed this ability but at least he has an idea of it and is dreaming of taking a risk. Could we say he is beginning to develop as a daring planner? We also see him wishing to be able to organise creative activities of his own while at home. This ability is also very underdeveloped but again the motivation is there and therefore we may conclude that he is developing as a creative organiser.

Role analysis assists a person to develop a picture of their personality

A person recently came to me for a session and told me of the suffering they had experienced as a result of several tragedies and losses. This person was very upset indeed and spoke of needing to work on these things for a very long time. Already this person had done work with first one psychotherapist and then another every week for the past year and during this work had formed the notion that there was some very deep work that had to be done about early childhood experiences. I noticed that throughout the early part of my meeting with this person the roles being displayed in the here-and-now situation were becoming clear. I found that when I was aware of the different roles being enacted, my perception of what was being said developed. This person was telling me at one point of experiencing great fear and yet their actual functioning at that point was of a person who was quite angry about what had happened and who was determined to get on with life in a productive way. After a short time I said this:

Let's just pause there and both get clear about the different things you have been saying and doing over the last few minutes. And, in particular, let's set out the different roles you have been enacting so

that you have a true picture of your present functioning and appreciate the abilities that you have developed.

So pretty soon we had set out in my office symbols of several roles. There were three roles that were taking her towards the fulfilment of her goals— one role was assisting her to survive, and the other roles were causing her to be stuck in a rut. She looked at the picture and soon was reflective and began to make a fresh analysis of herself. A while later she began to organise herself and plan some fresh steps so that her personality functioning was more attuned to her purposes.

Role analysis portrays the personality in different situations

A visual picture of the personality functioning of an individual in a specific life situation can be created through a role diagram. A series of role diagrams portraying a range of different life situations build a picture of the total personality functioning. A composite diagrammatic representation of all the roles and role relationships of an individual may be termed the cultural atom of an individual. In this particular section examples of role diagrams of the individual in particular situations are presented.

The person involved is a 35-year-old woman named Jean who participated in a number of psychotherapy sessions in a community clinic.

Figures 2 and 3 are of Jean's relationship with individuals in different situations. In the first situation Jean is at work. She has been presented with a new office machine and initially was overwhelmed with fear and did not use the machine. At the same time she knew that she had no option but to use it. She anxiously said to her boss 'I can't use it.' He firmly responded 'Do it!' She became acquainted with the machine's manual and slowly began to use the machine.

Figure 2 portrays the relationship between Jean and her boss. The roles of security seeker, panicky balker and withdrawing ostrich cause a sense of fragmentation within her own self and isolation from her boss and therefore are termed fragmenting dysfunctional roles. The functioning of the boss assists in the development of a fresh approach by Jean. Jean's new functioning as a problem solver, risk taker and pace setter is in the process of developing adequately and therefore these roles are termed a progressive role system.

Figure 3 portrays a second situation in which Jean is with her younger brother, Jack, who has moved into her flat after recently returning from overseas. He has little money, pays no rent, and is expected to do odd jobs around the flat in lieu of rent. He is a painter by trade. Jean asks Jack to paint a window frame for her and in response he looks helpless and says 'You know it's too stressful for me'. Jean gives up on Jack painting the window and walks off feeling helpless, inadequate and frustrated.

Observation of the role system in Figure 3 reveals an absence in Jean's functioning of planning and organisation. Both of these are necessary for her further development and for a resolution of the conflict with Jack. It would be good for a director to be alert to the expression by Jean of any aspects of the roles of daring planner and creative organiser and to make appropriate interventions to develop these roles further.

Role analysis as a guide for further work

Many practitioners put together into a more complete diagram the roles that have been delineated in a number of sessions. The complete diagram charts the roles under three major headings, namely progressive, coping, and fragmenting. In addition the diagram includes other subcategories which portray the dynamic movement of the person's development. Progressive roles are listed under the subcategories of well

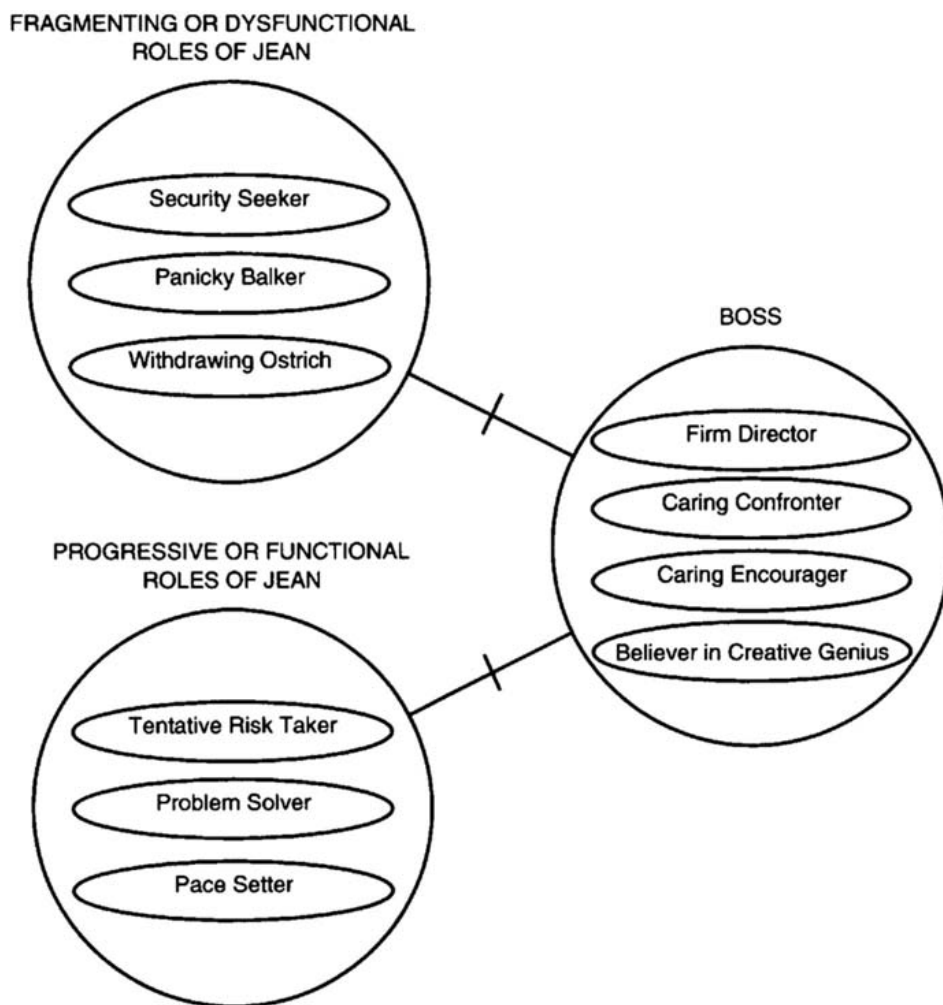


Figure 2 The relationship between Jean and her boss developed and developing and this assists a practitioner to develop a more fine-tuned analysis and to see at a glance where their interventions are best placed.

Figure 4 charts the roles of a person early in the work they planned to do and Figure 5 charts the roles after a good deal of work was completed.

An imaginative look at the roles listed in Figure 4 reveals a person who developed a number of progressive roles that provide a foundation for productive work and social living and, in fact, these roles show a person of quite considerable ability. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that this person gave excellent guidance to school pupils with learning difficulties and was an effective consultant with teachers both individually and in groups. The two central roles are those of analyst and celebrator of life. The objectivity and precise computation which are aspects of the process of analysis are balanced by a subjective involvement in the celebration of life. The other roles cluster around these two. The work of planning and organising are associated with the analytic ability. The expression of friendship is associated with celebration of life. The roles of teacher, pioneer and scientific fiction buff are associated with both analysis and celebration of life.

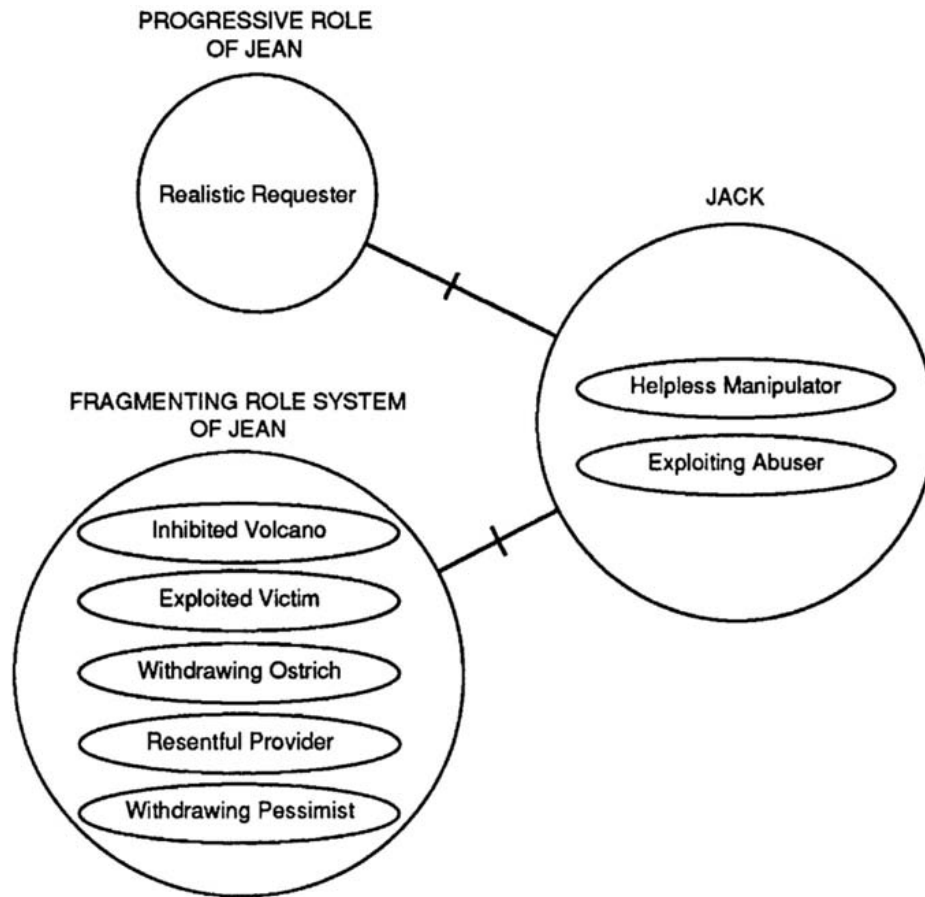


Figure 3 The relationship between Jean and her brother, Jack

We also see a development of three roles for dealing with situations in which survival is threatened. These roles involve all of the means of coping and this is a distinct advantage. A person who relies on only one means of coping tends to develop a narrower range of personality functioning as compared to a person who is free to either move towards, or away or against. Someone who only copes by moving towards tends to overdevelop roles that include reactive elements such as submission. Likewise observation shows which roles a person tends to develop if they have learned to cope by only moving away or only moving against. The fact that this person has the ability to cope by acting as a helpful fixer or as a fearful and defenceless wimp or as a stubborn arguer brings about a warm-up to a much wider range of productive expression and therefore a more flexible personality.

The central role in the fragmenting role system is that of ashamed self-doubting brooder and the other roles cluster around this. The picture here is of an unstable emotionally determined person. Whilst brooding, much emotional pain is experienced and the other roles assist in the relief of this pain.

The role analysis provided a basis for planning further personal and professional development. The major focus of the plan was the much greater development of the roles of analyst and celebrator of life. It was predicted that when these two central roles in the progressive role system were well developed, all the other roles in the progressive role system would develop further, that new roles would develop, that the reliance on the coping role system would diminish, that much stronger working links would develop between the

PROGRESSIVE FUNCTIONAL ROLE SYSTEM		COPING ROLE SYSTEM			FRAGMENTING DYSFUNCTIONAL ROLE SYSTEM	
Well Developed	Developing	Moving Towards	Moving Away	Moving Against	Diminishing	Unchanging
Science fiction buff	Observant astute analyst Slightly wooden planner Part-time organiser Exuberant celebrator of life Compassionate and encouraging friend Flexible realistic teacher Social pioneer	Helpful fixer	Fearful defenceless wimp	Stubborn arguer		Ashamed self-doubting brooder Impotent rager Furious intolerant dominator Perfectionistic blamer Anxious prophet of doom

Figure 4 Role analysis early in work.

progressive and the fragmenting role systems and that as this occurred the fragmenting roles would move from the unchanging category to the diminishing category.

The work with this person was carried out in accordance with the plan and the predicted results were achieved. The chart in Figure 5 portrays the new role system.

The analytic functioning is now well developed. Organising no longer occurs on a part-time basis but is constant and finely tuned. Planning is imaginative and no longer wooden. The role of teacher is still in process of developing. New expression as a dramatic artist is already well developed and work as an imaginative writer, as an expressive singer and as a social pioneer has emerged and is integrated into professional functioning. Recent correspondence from this person included these words: 'I have a will, organization and energy which persist most of the time since February, in contrast to only occasionally before February.' This same letter also commented on the problematic aspects of personality which are all diminishing: 'Of course I still have trouble not going to pieces under stress.'

For both the practitioner and this client, role theory and the diagrams which were based on it were relevant to the ongoing work. Role theory assisted in the observation of this person in daily life, in the identification of what was adequate, overdeveloped, underdeveloped, conflicted and absent. It assisted in identification of the different elements of physical, mental and emotional functioning and in the assessment of how well these elements were harmonised. The diagrams assisted the process of discovering why their functioning affected other people in the way it did and what needed to be said and done in these situations. The diagrams made it easier to be aware of the complementary and symmetrical role systems that developed

PROGRESSIVE FUNCTIONAL ROLE SYSTEM		COPING ROLE SYSTEM			FRAGMENTING DYSFUNCTIONAL ROLE SYSTEM	
Well Developed	Developing	Moving Towards	Moving Away	Moving Against	Diminishing	Unchanging
Observant astute analyst	Imaginative writer	Helpful fixer	Fearful defenceless wimp	Stubborn arguer	Ashamed self-doubting brooder	
Imaginative planner	Expressive singer				Impotent rager	
Finely tuned organiser	Flexible realistic teacher				Furious intolerant dominator	
Exuberant celebrator of life	social pioneer				Perfectionistic blamer	
Compassionate and encouraging friend					Anxious prophet of doom	
Dramatic artist						
Science fiction buff						

Figure 5 Role analysis after completion of work

with other people and of the fact that there was an increase in complementary role relationships. As ability to analyse, plan and enjoy life came to the fore, so those roles pertaining to intimacy increased. There was a welcoming of closeness and an interest in complementing what others were doing. The aggressive approach to others diminished and along with this a lessening of symmetrical role relations and of the competitive dynamic that is associated with these. There was also a development of a real sense of being a role creator. Previously there had been much more of a sense of being a mundane person. A look at the diagrams also confirmed the ability to create forms of expression through which life purposes could be fulfilled. The experience of being a role creator was accompanied by an increase in motivation.

Application in role training

Role theory is relevant to every phase of a role-training session but is especially relevant during the assessment and planning stages of the session.

Role training aims to bring about the development of specific, limited aspects of human functioning so that a person's professional or personal goals are achieved more adequately and therefore it does not focus on a total personality reorganisation which is a major intent in a classical psychodrama session. A session normally begins with the delineation of specific aspects of functioning where development is desired and the dramatic enactment of a relevant situation. This enactment is followed by a role diagnosis and as has already been discussed this assists in the development of the organising ability of a person as well as appreciation of the self. The role diagnosis provides the basis for the detailed planning of the remainder of the session including the specific techniques to be used.

Role training is carried out in sessions specifically set up for this purpose or part of a session in which other modalities are used such as psychodrama, transactional analysis, gestalt, or psychoanalytic methods. In the course of a series of psychodrama sessions with a protagonist, it may become clear that this person is very deficient in his or her organising ability. One or more role-training sessions could be conducted focusing on specific areas such as the development of a more effective warm-up to organising, development of greater awareness of specific deficits in the role of organiser, development of self-esteem while expressing this role or the generating of new forms of expression in this role.

A role trainer can make effective use of the total range of psychodramatic techniques and a session may involve the enactment of different scenes as in a classical psychodrama session. The factor differentiating role training from psychodrama or other methods involved in the reorganisation of personality is its sharp focus on building up a single role or one specific aspect of a role.

SUMMARY

Role theory may be understood and applied in the assessment of the functioning of individuals, groups and intergroup relations. A well-presented role analysis pinpoints where human functioning is fulfilling its purposes and where it has broken down. Role analysis also provides the necessary material for planning the means for increasing the effectiveness of human functioning and relationships. The examples given have aimed to assist in the integration of theory and practice and to confirm and stimulate the creative expression of professional workers.

With respect to the conduct of a psychodrama session, a working knowledge of role theory is of value in every phase of the session. During the beginning, or warm-up phase, of a group or individual session when interaction between people takes place or where group activities are organised, a range of individual roles and role relations emerge. These roles and role relations are an expression of different cultural systems and of the values of the individuals. An analysis of the role systems and of the level of warm-up of group members to each subgroup assists the process of identifying the best protagonist for the group. The director of a protagonist-centred psychodrama, who is clear about the roles and role relations expressed during the warm-up phase of the group session, is better able to generate ideas concerning the dramatic structure and which psychodramatic techniques may be appropriate during the action phase of the session. Thus, the director is more ready and able to work with the protagonist when he or she comes to enact similar role systems.

During the production phase of the session when the protagonist is enacting his or her situation, a role analysis makes clear which aspects of the protagonist's life are best attended to during the more detailed investigative phase. During the final therapeutic phase of the session, role analysis indicates whether or not the protagonist has arrived at a satisfactory resolution.

The psychodrama session concludes with the sharing or integrative phase and during this period role analysis is again of assistance. Observation of the roles of each group member and their relation with the director, the protagonist and with one another indicates what they have gained from the psychodrama and what areas are to be focused on in subsequent sessions.

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