

## EXAMINING THE ROLES OF THE DIRECTOR:

### A SOCIODRAMATIC PROCEDURE

by Lynette Clayton  
Wasley Centre, Perth. W.A. 1981.

As Psychodrama and Sociodrama directors develop through the process of training in the method, roles which are generic to the position of director begin to emerge. In my experience as a trainer educator and practitioner, I have often been frustrated in my attempts to teach and have observed two processes which go on simultaneously for the student. One process is the development of the new roles required of the director and the other is the conflict between these new roles and the conserved roles of the student. Creative directing emerges from the integration of the roles of the director with the personal and unique roles of the person who occupies the position of director.

Exploration of each student director's personal role states - the roles they took in the past with their family and are likely to take in the group situation - is important. However, this process of personal development may not necessarily change the behaviour of the student in the role of director. I have, therefore, devised a method for students and educators to examine how they organise within themselves the information which reaches them as directors.

The method is sociodramatic in style in that it aims to change behaviour by a structured method using healthy functioning in the here and now. Various techniques can be used to vary the basic method and allow for spontaneity to develop in the group. My initial technique was to instruct sociodrama students to create a sculpture of six roles and to present to the group the way they use these roles to organise themselves internally to receive and process information.

These six roles of the director I have termed "ways of knowing" as distinct from ways of doing or acting on the basis of what we know. These six ways of knowing are used by all clinicians and therapists; they are not unique to psychodrama and sociodrama. However, the formulation of ways of knowing into roles which form a unique integration within each director is a conceptualisation which allows the sociodramatic method to be used in training directors.

The roles I distinguish as ways of knowing are the clear seer, the clinician, the theorist, the analyst, the experienced wise person, and the believer. The clear seer involves the ability to see clearly, both objectively and intuitively. It involves open sensory channels through vision, hearing, touch and smell, and the ability to absorb this information accurately even when it is not meaningful to the person receiving it. The clear seer includes intuition,

that is, hunches which come to the knowledge of the director via the sense reactions of the director. These sense reactions are subjective and need to be verbalised and tested in reality with the group or protagonist.

The clinician may be called the scientist within us. The clinician constantly generates hypotheses and tests them out with the group or protagonist. Many directors use their personal roles to polarise a group so that roles, attitudes and values become clearer and hypotheses are generated more succinctly and accurately. This process occurs for instance while the director is interviewing prior to setting a scene.

The theorist is the objective aspect of the director. The theorist has also a body of knowledge from reading. The theoretical basis in psychodrama and sociodrama is broadly a social system and role theory basis and differs from other therapeutic methods such as transactional analysis. I have found it necessary to read a much broader range of literature than the psychodrama literature and to translate ideas from other sources into the psychodrama and sociodrama framework. The theorist, then is equipped with an objective mode of knowing that is common to all psychodramatists and sociodramatists.

The analyst uses the theoretical basis and applies it in a particular situation in the here and now. The analyst provides a test as to whether the theorist has broad enough knowledge. For instance when I meet a person with a constellation of roles which is unknown to me I record the fact that this is something I have seen before and do not know about. I need to formulate a map of how this person sees the world. So I will rely much more on my clear seer to discover the process rather than my experience or my analyst. The analyst, while it is an essential role for the director, needs to be kept in the background while directing a session. If the director uses the analyst role primarily then the session loses the art of the drama.

The experienced wise person has collected a body of knowledge from life experience from literature, from the culture, from myths and the wisdom of the ages and from other wise persons who have interpreted life from a compassionate point of view. The wise person allows the director to accept without a personal reaction a wide range of material from social systems which are alien to the lifestyle of the director. The wise person can see fashions, fads and styles of living and of perceiving the world and of therapeutic intervention that come and go. The wise person lives and experiences fully but also transcends the here and now.

The believer is a role which may seem strange in the context of knowing and of directing. However, I have discovered that belief in some kind of systems concept is essential for the director. This concept may vary for example from exploring people's maps, to adventuring into the cosmos, to being a pilgrim on a journey through life, to actualising the creator within us, to expanding the creative genius. These concepts allow the director to move into the process with a protagonist and remain open to a constantly changing configuration as it emerges on the psychodrama stage.

In contrast to this, the belief system of many student directors is based upon their identity in their original family. Thus as director their covert aim for example may be to show the group that authorities are like their authoritarian father who needs to be smashed. Or if the director has experienced power as a cute magical child in their family they may lead the group to believe that life is a magical fairyland in which we trip along and are destroyed by evil witches and devouring wolves. The believer, then, examines the director's basic life orientation, whether this fits with a systems view and whether it allows for other people's systems to be clearly heard and known. It exposes ways in which the director translates incoming information often unknowingly.

As students explore these six roles - clear seer, clinician, theorist, analyst, wise person and believer - using a sociodrama procedure, role conflicts become apparent and can be resolved. Sometimes the need for further personal development becomes clear. At times it is evident that the student needs to broaden the theoretical structure. The advantage of the structured sociodramatic method in this instance is that it allows for self-evaluation as well as self-exploration by the students in a common action medium.