

# **The Jungian approach: in situ supervision of psychodrama**

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The authors present a Jungian psychodrama model of ‘in situ’ supervision where the supervisees have their work supervised on the spot in order to reflect on the multiplicity of processes inherent in a psychodrama group and learn from immediate experience. There are two co-psychotherapists in Jungian Psychodrama – a conductor and a narrator. The conductor directs the session whereas the narrator focuses on the group process, identifies the themes and restructures them into a newly integrated consciousness.

## **1. Different levels of supervision**

Supervision is a fundamental experience for psychodrama trainees and qualified psychodramatists alike. There are various models of group supervision using psychodrama. Those used in the Jungian psychodrama Institute of the *Associazione Mediterranea di Psicodramma* and in the *APRAGI-Psicodramma* are:

- Psychodramatic supervision of individual cases;
- Verbal supervision of newly established and ongoing psychodrama groups;
- Psychodramatic supervision of psychodrama groups;
- ‘In situ’ supervision of psychodrama groups.

This article will investigate ‘in situ’ supervision, a form of supervision in which supervisees take turns at being conductor and narrator and have their work supervised on the spot by the supervisor. The supervisees become protagonists in a psychodrama conducted by the supervisor in a play regarding their work. This type of supervision facilitates a reflection on psychodramatic methodology as to what interventions are more adequate in a specific group and what kind of difficulties may emerge during a session.

## **2. The Jungian psychodrama model of in situ supervision**

There are various candidates for in situ supervision:

- newly qualified psychodrama psychotherapists who have completed 1400

hours of training in four years with their trainers, plus 600 hours of supervised practice;

- psychodramatists who have completed their training but have not yet managed to establish their own group and would like to improve their skills in a safe space where they are encouraged to reflect on their mistakes;
- psychodramatists who need clinical supervision for their groups or who wish to grow professionally through permanent training by focusing on how to implement new and more efficient psychodramatic strategies in their work;
- third and fourth year psychodrama trainees who are training to conduct in advanced groups. Third year students will have completed 600 hours of clinical training, psychopathology, group psychology, group dynamics, analytical psychology, case supervisions, 2 years of psychodrama self-experience in an ongoing group, and will have undergone personal therapy. Third and fourth year students receive 90 hours of supervision in situ during their training, divided into 16 units of 5 hours each.

The ideal composition of in situ supervision groups is 8 to 10 supervisees, equally represented in gender, plus 1 or 2 supervisors. A supervision group lasts for 5 hours, divided into 2 units of 2 and a half hour each, with a 15 minute break in between units. Each unit includes a first session of 1 hour and 15 minutes conducted in turns by a different conductor, followed by a 10 minute narration by another supervisee. Following this, a 1 hour processing of the session takes place, using the grid below. The conductor and the narrator have their work supervised on the spot and are able to learn from an immediate experience and feedback. After the break, a similar session to the first takes place in which other 2 supervisees take turns as conductor and narrator of the group.

The decision to limit the first unit of the group to 1 hour and 15 minutes was due to the vast amount of material which needs to be analysed during the processing and because it is rather complex for inexperienced psychodramatists to conduct longer sessions. The frequency is determined by the objectives and the goals of supervision and by the institutional environment in which it takes place. The standard frequency however is twice monthly for psychodrama trainees or once monthly for psychodrama therapists using supervision as a permanent research group.

In situ supervision combines supervision of the activity, the acquisition of new techniques, reflection on the conductor's and the narrator's counter-transference and the containment of the group. In the Jungian model of supervision, the supervisees who are not conducting the group take turns at being the protagonist.

In situ supervision is like a mystery to be solved by the supervisor: what profound motive moves the conductor to choose to play certain scenes? What 'shadow' prevents the conductor from carrying out certain actions? What unconscious fears, perhaps fruit of transgenerational echoes, influence the work of the psychodrama conductor or narrator?

When the supervisor directs the conductor in situ, images or memories emerge from the unconscious of the protagonist which often clarify the work.

The current model of in situ supervision was developed in Italy during the seventies by the French Lacanian psychodramatists, Gennie and Paul Lemoine. In their model, influenced by the work of Anne Ancelin Schützenberger (1998), there was a conductor and an observer in every psychodrama session. Their supervision method was very similar to the one developed and used in Italy in the late seventies by the Jungian psychodramatist and analyst Giulio Gasca (2004).

Jungian psychodramatists prefer the term *conductor* to the term *director*, used in classical psychodrama, because it refers to a group-analytical concept in which the setting is less theatrical. There are no real theatres or stages, nor instrumentation, props, masks or lights in Jungian psychodrama, only a round circle of chairs and a soft carpet on which the psychodrama takes place.

### 3. The theory of Jungian psychodrama

Jungian psychodrama (Gasseau & Gasca, 1991) is an analytically oriented group therapy, articulated in reference to the important innovations and concepts of J.L. Moreno in psychodrama such as tele and co-unconsciousness, to C.G. Jung's approach to depth psychology on dreams, collective unconsciousness, archetypal medicine and individuation and to Foulkes' concept of net and matrix (Foulkes, 1975).

Jungian psychodrama is a work of imaginative psychology in which the conductor's task is to gather and focus on the images which emerge from the group: these may include memories, dreams and actively imagined scenes. Role play is important in Jungian psychodrama, as is the representation of the imaginative realm. Particular attention is drawn to images which constitute a group emergence, containing prospectively useful meanings for the whole group.

Jung's concept of dream work is that the structure of dreams is similar to the structure of drama.

In Jungian psychodrama, dreams of all categories are enacted: symbolic dreams, visionary dreams, nightmares, oracle dreams, recurring dreams and

social dreams. Dream incubation is a technique investigated by Gasseau according to the ancient ideas of Asclepius (Gasseau & Bernardini, 2009).

Dramatic plays, myths and rituals are interconnected in Jungian psychodrama. Dramatic plays contain rules (or messages) that rearrange and restructure the confused experience of suffering and the chaotic experience of the unconsciousness. Similarly, the ritual framework in Jungian psychodrama protects against the unconfined inflation of the unconscious. The protagonists in Jungian psychodrama are part of a mythical reality with universal meaning. This helps them to move beyond the experience of alienation into a dimension common to the whole of humanity.

#### **4. The conductor**

Conductors are told that they may decide for a 'time out', similar to the one in a basketball game, in which the group dynamic freezes and the conductor may consult with the supervisor on how to continue the psychodrama. Insecure conductors often need to be reassured on the validity and the usefulness of their interventions - such as playing another scene with the protagonist in association to the one played before, when to close a scene or when to use a specific technique. Sometimes a 'time out' is requested because the conductor doesn't know how to move forward and feels blocked and in need of reassurance and guidance.

The 'time out' lasts for a couple of minutes at the most and the conductor may then resume work with the protagonist. The supervisor goes back to a silent role and observes the scenes. Whenever the supervisor feels a serious omission in the scene may cause unnecessary suffering to the protagonist, due to a momentary impasse of the conductor, the supervisor may get up to double the conductor. The supervisor's intervention must be punctual, prompting the conductor to indicate a different possibility, such as "Maybe you could insert a helper. You could ask the protagonist whom he would like to have nearby in such a dramatic moment" or "Maybe the protagonist could meet his dead grandmother since she is the only one who can forgive him" or "Maybe you could play the unborn child".

Such interventions by the supervisor may confuse and destabilise the project of the conductor, so they are to be used only rarely and only in case of undue suffering of the protagonist. If the play is blocked as a result of a critical emotional state of the group such as inhibited aggressiveness, the supervisor may then double the conductor and suggest "Maybe the aggressiveness is too controlled. Try playing a scene in which the protagonist can express his anger." The

conductor is free to act upon the supervisor's suggestion, having more information with which to decide upon a strategy. The supervisor otherwise never interrupts the conductors but leaves them free to experiment their own choices and particular style. Their work is of course later discussed in the processing of the session.

### *Supervision grid of the conductor*

We have built a grid in order to facilitate in situ supervision of the conductor:

- Listening to the group
- Warm-up
- Selecting the protagonist
- Interviewing the protagonist
- Listening to the protagonist
- Scenic construction of the action
- Role reversal
- Doubling
- Soliloquy, mirror, role exploration and helper
- Length and closure of the scenes
- Scene resolution
- Virtual scenes
- Dream play
- Silence management
- De-roling
- Introducing the narrator

### *Listening to the group*

Jungian psychodrama sessions in ongoing groups usually start in silence. The conductor must learn to respect the initial silence, manage the silences which occur between the communications of the group members and tolerate the emotions that can suddenly develop in this initial phase of the session.

A frequent mistake in analytical psychodrama is to invite the first person who talks about their problems or their suffering to become the protagonist, without giving adequate listening space to the whole group and to their personal themes and conflicts. It is important to train the conductors to listen to the whole group and not only to the potential protagonists. This allows the participants freedom of expression and a wider analytical breathing space.

### *Warm-up*

As mentioned above, ongoing groups of Jungian psychodrama usually start in silence, with no need for a traditional warm-up. Listening to each member talk about their recent life events and personal issues is a warm-up in itself.

A more traditional warming-up of the group however is necessary with newly established groups in order to create mutual trust and group cohesion or with specific populations such as adolescents or borderline/psychotic patients.

Conductors may also choose to warm up the group if it has more than 10 members, if many weeks have passed since the last session or if the group energy is blocked: it then becomes necessary to reactivate spontaneity and creativity by warming up the group matrix.

The supervisor takes notes of the verbal indications given during the warm-up and signals any confusion or paradoxical communication in the messages, any incongruence in the sequences, the conductor's tone of voice, the tempo of the indications and any impossible tasks (such as evoking memories without leaving enough time). The warm-up must not be too dissonant with the themes of the session. The supervisor then invites the other supervisees to give a feedback of the warm-up during the processing and discussion.

### *Selecting the protagonist*

In Jungian psychodrama, there is frequently more than one protagonist in each session and they are almost never sociometrically selected by the group. The protagonist may intuitively be chosen by the conductor if they feel someone is in pain or if the conductor senses that a group member has a particularly strong urge to explore a particular theme. Otherwise, the spontaneous criteria of self-selection is followed. The choice of the protagonist is a co-creation of the group, the conductor and the protagonist but it is important that the group emotionally approve the choice of the protagonist so that the psychodrama will be followed with greater attention and empathic participation by the group.

In this initial delicate phase, the conductor may suggest one of the participants play a scene based on a hunch, a feeling or a strategy. Jungian psychodrama consists in identifying images of memories or dreams and then playing them. Conductors must not be scared of playing scenes which are too painful or too dramatic nor must they be blinded by their own inner conflicts or by the problems of a potential protagonist.

It may sometimes be necessary to invite a reluctant protagonist to get up and play. The supervisor will observe how the conductor approaches the pro-

tagonist with words and gestures which encourage the protagonist in committing to a personal, analytical and psychodramatic work of individuation.

When the psychodrama of the first protagonist is over, the next delicate phase for the conductor to manage is the de-roling of the auxiliary egos, preparing the group for sharing and selecting the next protagonist. In this phase, the conductor may make the following mistakes:

- slowing down the work with the first protagonist, not separating from the protagonist's story or not closing the last scene for fear of having to start over with a new protagonist;
- choosing to work with the most cooperative and enthusiastic protagonist or with the easiest theme;
- not conceding a space and time of introspection to the group after the sharing so that a memory or an emotionally charged conflict may emerge.

### *Interviewing the protagonist*

The conductor takes the protagonist by the hand and walks inside the analytical circle of the group while acquiring elements of the protagonist's current situation, past, affections, or fears. When interviewing a protagonist who is about to play a parent or a grandparent, it is important to verify if this relative is living or not. When listening to a dream, it is useful for the conductor to listen to its plot from the beginning, to ask the dreamer for details, and to try to visualise the contents of the dream.

If the protagonist is blocked or silent, or if no associations arise, the conductor must invite the protagonist to walk in the group in order to encourage body movement and reactivate the psyche.

The main mistakes conductors make in this phase are:

- placing themselves in front of the protagonists, hindering their visual field and blocking the flux of associations and memories;
- being too scared to ask the protagonists certain questions or of invading their personal space;
- hastily deciding to play a scene without sufficiently interviewing the protagonist first.

### *Listening to the protagonist*

In a workshop during the FEPTO Annual Meeting in Bulgaria in 2002, the trainers were unanimous in declaring the importance of staying in touch with the suffering of the protagonist and of not escaping the pain. Avoidance is often the result of not wanting to contact one's own unresolved issues: an unmarried

female conductor may have trouble playing a scene where the protagonist buys her wedding dress; a recent death in the family may block a conductor from playing a scene where a relative has died; those whose wish of having a child was not fulfilled may have trouble in playing a scene related to maternity. One of the fundamental tasks of supervision is to help the conductor discover what kind of choices were made and if there were any omissions.

When listening to the protagonist, the conductor must never lose contact with the group. Psychodrama must respect tempo and guarantee adequate timing to the protagonist and to the group. Even when the protagonist is on stage, the conductor must never forget the group and always be aware of any strong emotions or needs which must later be taken care of.

### *Scenic construction of the action*

Viktor Frankl (1997) used to say that a psychotherapist cannot give a patient the meaning of life. The meaning of life is a profound ‘Gestalt’ developed by the patient: the therapist can only help the protagonist to identify and recognise it.

Jungian psychodrama is a group psychotherapeutic model with a strong attention to images and to the image process of the group. The conductor helps the protagonists play the internal images of their dreams, traumatic memories and affects. Scenic construction is a particular art and ample space must be given to the protagonists so that the images of their unconscious have the possibility of emerging.

In the supervision process, the supervisor often asks the conductor “What is the first memory that comes to your mind?” or “What is the first image associated to this event?” and the memory or image evoked by the psyche of the protagonist is then played.

The protagonist must be helped and encouraged to become the shaman who guides the group into the otherworld and into the images of the unconscious. It is important to build a scene which contains all the necessary roles and elements for its resolution. If the protagonists feel oppressed and the conductor does not help them to find and play the role of their internal oppressor, the scene will never be solved. If the conductor is unable to choose the right auxiliary egos or to place them correctly so as to presentify the scene adequately, the supervisor must then help the conductor understand what might have been necessary in the scenic construction.

Supervision is also helpful for shy or passive psychodramatists to teach them how to contribute to the scene and how to help the protagonist with their verbal directions: “Julia, you are a femme fatale and you are now moving towards Robert” or “You just fell out of bed and you are crying... soliloquy”.

Psychodramatists are like orchestra directors who facilitate the movements, actions and interactions between the protagonist and the auxiliary-egos by guiding them rhythmically with their hands and facial expressions. Jungian psychodrama works on developing inner images, dreams, active imaginations and memories which are transformed into Gestalt images through the psychodramatic scene and the personal research of the protagonist. It is essential to choose those auxiliary-egos which will concretise and substantiate the memory of the protagonist. A dress hanging in a wardrobe calls for an auxiliary-ego to portray the dress, others to be the wardrobe and the unchosen dresses. It is just as important to play symbolic roles such as a wound, a door or a stain.

### *Role reversal*

Role reversal is a fundamental technique in psychodrama. Supervisors must pay attention to which role reversals are necessary and which are superfluous. One of the tasks in supervision is to train psychodramatists in developing vital scenes which are not slow or boring. Time is an essential factor and it is important to learn to role reverse when necessary and to ask the protagonists if they feel they should role reverse with any of the auxiliary egos.

It is crucial to train supervisees on correct role reversal. When playing a highly emotional or dramatic scene such as the encounter with a dead relative or friend, the conductors may feel petrified in their movement and emotional plasticity, in resonance with the protagonist. But a dead person is not only a corpse: it can also become a spirit with which dialogue is possible. Role reversal is helpful to find messages in virtual scenes. Whenever there is a conflict or a fight, the protagonist must role reverse with the sparring partner. Even if the protagonists are lazily enjoying the sunshine lying beneath a tree, role reversing with the sun and with the tree allows them to decentralise their feelings and open up new points of view. A young woman who had been depressed for months, felt a strong sense of peace after role reversing with the tree under which she was standing.

### *Doubling*

In Jungian psychodrama, the protagonist is doubled mainly by the conductor. Especially with psychotic patients or those with a fragile ego, the conductor must give words to thoughts, feelings and emotions which help sustain and empower the protagonist's ego.

The posture of the double is critical: with paranoid patients it may be beneficial to stand to one side so as to shield the persecutory threats perceived exter-

nally. Some psychodramatists imitate the physical bearing of the protagonist in order to double the inner psyche.

Often, supervisees lean their hands heavily on the protagonist while doubling or disappear behind the protagonist in the effort to identify with them. This does not allow for a decentralised position in order to resolve the scene. It is always best to alternate moments of empathic identification with the protagonist with a more external observation of the scene and keep a 'good enough' distance. Conductors who are too rational may double the protagonist repeatedly and excessively.

As for the contents of the doubling, supervisees must be taught not to whisper to the protagonist as the group must also be able to hear the insightful albeit painful echoes prompted to the protagonist when giving voice to thoughts and feelings.

### *Soliloquy, mirror, role exploration and helper*

The soliloquy is a significant technique which allows the scene to be frozen into non action and gives the protagonist the possibility of entering the interstices of their own conscience. Young supervisees sometimes forget to use the soliloquy and prematurely double the protagonist, inducing themes and reflections active only in the mind of the conductor. Soliloquies help the protagonist achieve insightful thoughts on problems or shed new light on suffering. Soliloquies are useful after traumatic events, after an unexpected question or embarrassing request.

Supervisees must be made aware of how helpful it can be to invite the protagonist to observe the scene from the outside by choosing an alter ego as a mirror. This technique changes the observation point of the scene and allows the protagonist a new awareness without being overwhelmed by fear, impotence or sense of loss. The protagonists have the possibility of giving themselves a message and of making an active movement towards their own state of conscience.

Role exploration is a technique which allows the auxiliary egos to be more empathic. The protagonist introduces the different roles to the group but role exploration must be used sparingly as it may slow down the psychodramatic work.

The helper is a role which protects the protagonist during a difficult experience or traumatic event and helps them to feel less alone when playing painful memories. It is an empowering aid, a new role in the theatre of the mind of the protagonist. A sexually abused person can summon up the presence of a parent who was not there at the moment to protect. Interior dialogue with the helper is

a resource which emotionally restructures the experience of impotence and abandonment and helps to build a new inner role of strength and resiliency.

A woman protagonist once played a scene in which she heard gun shots coming from her house in Sicily. She realised someone was being murdered by the Mafia in the room next to her. She was curled up in a foetal position and the conductor asked her if she needed anybody there with her. She knew her husband and her children were in the other room where her father in law was being shot and she was desperate for their presence near her. The husband and children were evoked on the scene and she was able to hug them and protect them and internally restructure her experience of helplessness.

Supervisees must be guided into using their counter-transference in order to sense when the solitude of the protagonist may become intolerable or when their need of protection may be inexpressible. Intuition of the feelings of the protagonist is essential in order to sense their deepest needs.

### *Length and closure of the scenes*

Scenes must never be too long nor should conductors become trapped by their guilt because they don't know how to resolve the conflict. Scenes which drag on endlessly can become boring or superficial. But scenes - excluding vignettes - can also be too short if the conductor does not explore the roles adequately or if there are insufficient role reversals or soliloquies.

When a scene has expressed all its energy, it is advisable for the conductor to conclude it and open another. Conductors may be uncertain as to when to close a scene or may not know what to do in a moment of impasse. When there has been a catharsis such as laughter at the height of an emotional scene, supervisees must be taught to close the scene because the energy of the scene has dissipated. When all role reversals have been done and the play has nothing left to express for the personal development of the protagonist, the supervisee must be taught how to open a new scene based on the associations of the protagonist so as to tap on the transformative capacity of psychodrama.

### *Scene resolution*

Zerka Toeman Moreno (2006) taught us that dramatic life experiences must be lived at least twice: the first time in reality and the second time in psychodramatic semi-reality. The scenes however cannot simply re-enact the dynamic but must be transformed and resolved.

It is important not to avoid the drama but to play it homoeopathically (Gasseau, 1995) or have the protagonist observe their alter ego play the scene. It

is useful to teach supervisees how to introduce the technique of giving messages which activate communication among roles in the theatre of the mind of the protagonist, in order to achieve a deeper understanding. Messages convey unexpressed and meaningful contents to significant others. Scenes in which the protagonist is frozen or petrified on the scene, as in reality, may be contagious for the conductor who will end up being incapable of directing a scene in which transformation is possible. Correale describes a condition called ‘memory hypertrophy’ as a fixity of memories and a rigidity of roles which causes repetitive and obsessive behaviours (Kaes et al., 1998). When the protagonists are blocked, the conductor must help them contact their own inner subjectivity, not only by doubling them or by using soliloquy but by encouraging them into action. During the processing, the supervisor suggests how the conductor could have transformed the unresolved or blocked scene and considers possible alternatives. The task of the conductor is to help the protagonist recover communication when lacking, to encounter a loved one, to go into a protective situation of the past or to visit an imaginary happy place. In order to activate these scenic transformations, the conductor must be creative and master a vast psychodramatic repertoire of different solutions.

### *Virtual scenes*

Virtual scenes are considered those in which events or relations have never actually taken place in life or in the dreams of the protagonist. These include meeting with an ancestor which the protagonist has never actually met – a key scene in transgenerational psychodrama (Perrotta, 2011) – or the encounter with a friend or relative who has recently passed away. The supervisor must observe how the conductor directs the scene and if the expression and the narration of the story are facilitated by the presence of these spirits. Supervisees are encouraged to be brave enough to play these scenes. They must learn how to facilitate the interaction among the various roles of virtual scenes, as if they were active imaginations, and practice facilitating the protagonist in answering questions or giving advice in the role of the ancestor. Role reversal is fundamental in order to identify with the psychic programming of the person evoked and to be able to talk in virtual scenes.

Supervisees must be helped on the timing of role reversal and on how to deal with the messages and the strong emotion the encounter with a dead spirit invariably causes. Particular attention must be paid to the way the supervisee closes a scene with a ghost and how to help the protagonist say goodbye. Derolling auxiliary egos from the role of a dead person is crucial and must be performed ritualistically and intensely.

A virtual scene can also portray the anticipation of an important event yet to come: a job interview or a declaration of love. Critical exchanges such as the communication of parents' divorce to their child or the infraction of a marital taboo to a spouse can be practiced and role played in a safe space.

### *Dream play*

Jungian Analytical Psychology considers dreams to be the doorway of access to the soul and to the image reality of the unconscious. However, Jungian psychodramatists must be careful not to become overly fascinated by dreams, allowing the oneiric world to drape its mantle upon reality. A conductor may be seduced into playing the highly symbolic and archetypal dreams of an obese protagonist and overlook her problematic body dysphoria.

Psychodrama is one of the only modalities with which dreamers can walk in the landscape of their own dreams and have a perceptive experience of the dream images. Supervisees must be guided into helping the protagonist accompany the dream with all their psychic functions (Barz, 2009) so that they may feel with their senses, float in their free associations and help the dream to reveal its mystery.

Dreams have a dramatic structure and Jung believed that "the whole dream-work is essentially subjective, and a dream is a theatre in which the dreamer is himself the scene, the player, the prompter, the producer, the author, the public, and the critic." (Jung, 1934, pp. 149-172). When a man dreams of meeting a beautiful woman, symbol of his Anima, and of accompanying her into a forest and taking her into his arms, the dreamer must be invited to feel the warm hand of the woman in his perceptively, like in the dream. He must be able to smell her and play the dream with all of his senses.

Supervisors must be careful to observe the following things in dream representation: why wasn't the beginning of the dream played? Why didn't the protagonist role reverse with one of the auxiliary egos? Why wasn't the end of the dream played? In a particularly long dream, how could it have been divided into different scenes?

Oneiric scenes must be well staged and try to reflect the emotional richness of the dream itself. In the dream of a protagonist, her psychodrama group was enjoying a festive picnic in the countryside, eating fish and drinking local wines. The sky was strangely brightened by the simultaneous presence of the Sun, the Moon, the 7 stars of the Ursa Major and the North Star. Judge Giovanni Falcone, who had been assassinated by the Mafia, appeared and approached the group. Everybody was silent as the judge spoke: "I am Judge Falcone. I was murdered without being able to complete my work. Justice is important and you,

social workers, physicians, therapists and teachers must continue my work.” The rich ‘Gestalt’ of this dream had to be respected and auxiliary egos were chosen for the Sun, the Moon, the 7 stars of the Ursa Major and the North Star as well as for Judge Falcone and the group. The protagonist role reversed with each of the stars and was encouraged to give messages from the different locations in the sky.

Dreams give life to the dramatic ‘personae’ of our inner theatrical world and each of these represent a different philosophy present in the mind of the dreamer, different emotions, obscure feelings and ‘shadows’ which are hosted in the unconscious. Conductors sometimes forget to stage important roles. A conductor once overlooked the role of a stolen bag and the protagonist was left without the possibility of finding the bag and exploring it. In another dream, an abusive father had been kidnapped but the conductor had forgotten to choose an auxiliary ego for the missing father, thus depriving the protagonist of the possibility of a dialogue with him. In another case, the protagonist had found the key to a treasure chest but the conductor omitted choosing an auxiliary ego to play the chest and therefore the protagonist never got the chance to look inside the chest. Important symbolic elements can be found in certain roles which can give new meaning to the dream.

Moreno taught us to continue dreams and that nightmares were only unfinished dreams. When the dreamer is awakened by the terrifying contents of a dream, it is an unfinished dream, or as Grete Leutz says, a tragedy with no catharsis. The conductor must always invite the protagonist to continue the nightmare, allowing the protagonist the freedom of spontaneously and creatively transforming the end of the dream.

### *Silence management*

Supervisors must draw their attention to the personal anguish evoked by silence: death anxiety, a sense of void, emptiness or feeling lost. Supervisees must be guided into silently listening to silence and to reassure the group with their presence. Silence is precious when it reflects a moment of introspection in the group, especially at the beginning of the session when group members often need a moment to themselves to get away from the chaotic outer world from whence they just came.

### *De-roling*

De-roling is immensely important. It helps the auxiliary ego to shed the role taken on at the service of the protagonist. When auxiliary egos are called upon

to enact intense and dramatic roles such as that of a suicide, a confused psychotic or a corpse, they risk absorbing elements of that role into their psyche. Ritual de-roling is the only modality available to protect the auxiliary egos from being subconsciously colonised by a foreign graft and dragging the consequences of that role into their own personal lives after the session.

De-roling consists in a ritual to help exit semi-reality. The protagonists place their hands on each auxiliary ego and tell them imperatively to quit playing that role. They announce they are no longer that persona and they repeat the auxiliary ego's name: "You are no longer my dead grandfather, you are Peter".

Rituals may differ slightly: Anne Ancelin Schützenberger invites the protagonist to slide their hands over the body of the auxiliary ego as if washing the role away. Some conductors have the auxiliary egos jump up and down three times while repeating their names or run around the room. What is essential however is the invocation of the person's real name and the invocation to quit the role.

Protagonists sometimes hug the auxiliary ego at the end of an emotionally charged scene, without actually de-roling them. Supervisors must point this out as the lack of de-roling can sometimes be devastating. Some auxiliary egos need an especially intense de-roling, especially when they have acted dramatic roles which resonate with personal issues or if they deeply empathised with the protagonist. Roles delve into the psyche, and can be healing or iatrogenic. It is the conductor's responsibility to protect the auxiliary egos, as well as the protagonist, at all times.

The whole group also benefits from a good de-roling. Scientific evidence has demonstrated the existence of a mirror neuron system matching action perception and execution (Damasio, 1999). Mirror neurons are increasingly being recognised as playing a fundamental part in interpersonal psychic processes by mediating the understanding of others' behaviour: to perceive an action is equivalent to internally simulating it. The same neural circuits are involved.

As Gallese posits in his work, embodied simulation is the functional mechanism at the basis of intentional attunement, our capacity to pre-reflexively identify with others (Gallese, 2005). *Stricto sensu*, mirror neurons tear down the self/other barrier and facilitate an embodied encounter with alterity. Thus, even from a neurophysiological point of view, the direct experiential link between agent and observer argues in favour of an adequate de-roling process.

### *Sharing*

Sharing is the phase which follows the plays and is extremely healing: it integrates various therapeutic factors such as catharsis, cohesion, self-knowledge,

existential factors, infusion of hope, universality, and therapeutic alliance with the psychodramatists and with the group (Yalom, 1985).

The plays are a gift the protagonist gives to the group and the sharing is a moment in which the others can give their own gift back to the protagonist.

The sharing must be well conducted and not left to the devices of the group. The auxiliary egos and the other members of the group must not analyze or interpret or exceed in role feedback but share their life stories or personal issues and show their empathy and personal attunement with the protagonist.

### *Introducing the narrator*

Jungian psychodrama ends with the voice of the narrator. The transition from conductor to narrator must be smooth. The conductor must take special care in introducing the narrator but also in forewarning the narrator when it is almost the time for the narration. The final part of the session – usually ten to fifteen minutes - are devoted to the narration and the conductor can start to introduce the narrator with suggestive words such as “Let us hear a few more sharings and then listen to what the narrator has to say regarding the mysteries of this group”.

Self-centred conductors sometimes forget to introduce the narrator and remain silent after the sharing or they devalue the work of the narrator by grumbling a few words under their breath about listening to the narrator.

Another mistake that conductors should avoid is to add their own point of view after the narration. Narrators have the final word and it is their task to find the fil rouge which connects the various scenes. The narration is a personal view of the group dynamic and hence never absolute and it is more reassuring for the group to listen to only one point of view rather than to have their co-therapists vie for the last word of attention.

## **5. In situ supervision of the conductor**

In situ supervision takes place immediately after the session, with no break in between so that the tension of the psychodrama is still strong. The supervisor asks the conductor which themes they felt were particularly active in the protagonists and in the group. The conductor shares difficulties, criticalities and moments of impasse and how they worked through them. The supervisor will have taken notes during the session, based on the supervision grid shown above. The supervisor will also share any counter-transferential feelings evoked by the psychodrama and will suggest anything that might have been played differently. This part of supervision exposes the supervisor personally as well as profession-

ally since the supervisor suggests which moments of the session were uncertain, which fears were blocking the conductor or the group, which depressive moments of stagnation were smothering the spontaneity and where the conductor had difficulty getting out of murky waters. In this phase of supervision, supervisees can take notes and this is also the time to clarify any technical, methodological or epistemological uncertainties.

The supervisor encourages the supervisees to respect their stylistic differences. Supervisors do not expect an exact replica of their own style but encourage the supervisees to explore their own personal and idiosyncratic modality of conduction.

#### *Protagonist's feedback to the conductor*

The supervisor asks the protagonists to give feedback to the conductors on how they felt during the psychodrama: if they were forced into being protagonists, if the doubling and the role reversals were pertinent and if the scenes expressed their inner reality. The supervisor also asks the protagonists to say if they had any special needs which were not met.

#### *In situ supervision of the psychodrama: the conductor becomes a protagonist*

In every supervision session, after the processing during which the supervisor points out limits and strengths to the conductor and after the protagonists' feedback, the supervisor invites the conductor to stand up and to play a scene. Psychodrama with the conductor as a protagonist helps the unconscious of the supervisee to produce an image or an underlying memory which clarify their work. The supervisor may sense a block in the protagonist, the fear of developing a certain scene or may perceive the difficulty in exploring themes of separation, intense sexuality or conflict.

The supervisor may ask "What is your first association to separation?" or "What is the first thing that comes to your mind regarding sexuality?" or "What do you associate to your parents' conflict?" and then has the protagonist role reverse with the 'personae' of his memory. This memory, in association to the previous psychodrama is a profound 'gestalt' which often reveals the difficulties experienced as conductor. Sometimes it is sufficient to ask the conductor "what is the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of the session?". It is a dialogue with the unconscious of the supervisee and the protagonist's associations will reveal any problematic knots.

The kind of associations requested by the supervisor are memories of the protagonist's daily life and not of dreams, active imaginations or virtual scenes which can distract from the real problems underlying the conduction.

In one case, the conductor's mother had recently passed away and she found herself with two potential protagonists in the group whose parents had just died. They both wished to work on this theme in order to cope with their grief but the conductor avoided the subject and decided to play a much less dramatic scene. During the *in situ* supervision, she played her own ambivalence about visiting her mother's grave at the cemetery. The supervisor associated her "not being able to go to the cemetery" to "not being able to play a scene with dead parents". The supervisee realised that she was unable to play the scene because her own psychic experience of the mourning was still unresolved.

In another case, the conductor avoided interviewing the protagonists and never asked them the necessary questions to understand their life experience so as to understand what scenes to play. The conductor seemed scared of asking questions and so during the supervision, when the supervisor asked her what she associated to this problem she remembered that as a child, she was often scolded because she asked too many questions and her parents would tell her to shut up. These imperatives had caused a fear of asking questions and the need to be silent. This attitude was not useful for a psychodramatist but her play as protagonist helped her to develop a new awareness of her personal declinations and of how to react to certain themes in the group.

The narrator is also invited to associate a personal memory to the material exposed during the narration and to play the relative association. For instance, a narrator with a decade-long experience was once watching a protagonist playing her panic-stricken self at the age of seven, watching her parents argue. The narrator suddenly closed her note book and blanked out. When it was her turn to narrate, she muttered a few things about the scene and completely forgot to mention that there had been another protagonist afterwards. When invited to be the protagonist during the *in situ* supervision, she remembered her parents fighting furiously and that she was very scared and had decided to hide herself in a big wardrobe so that she couldn't "see anything". And that is exactly what had happened to her during the narration. She had locked herself into an interior darkness which had not allowed her to see anything else.

*In situ* supervision is essential in order to help the conductor and the narrator gain new awareness of their tendencies to avoid or escape or forget. It helps them to confront crucial knots and problematic issues in a more mature way, in tune with the needs of the protagonist.

## 6. Narration in Jungian psychodrama

In Jungian Psychodrama, the narration is a powerful function of holding and containment. The final narration gives meaning to the session and is a vital therapeutic factor.

From a ritualistic point of view, the narrator is witness and protector of the group's transformation. The conductor alchemically dissolves whereas the narrator coagulates the dispersed elements and restructures them into a newly integrated consciousness. The narrator is the group's self-reflective memory and the narrator is a narrative-based medicine, a story that heals, identifies discrepancies and weaves the threads of the plot between past and present. The narrator gives voice to that which is unsaid or inexpressible.

One of the narrator's most important tasks is to identify the collective theme to which the group is reacting, the coherent mythical framework giving unity to the plays. The narrator opens up new perspectives and possibilities and plants the seeds generating creativity, allowing the new and the unexplored to enter the group. The narration is the space of memory, the historical and mythopoetic continuity of the group (Perrotta, 2009).

### *Supervision grid of the narrator*

We have built a grid in order to facilitate supervision of the narrator in Jungian psychodrama.

- Identification of the collective theme of the group
- Synthetic skills
- Narrative and story telling skills
- Feeling skills
- Visual contact with the group
- Analytical skills
- Connecting the plays of the session
- Connecting to the previous sessions
- Use of counter-transference
- Missing elements or denial
- Amplification process
- Conclusion

The grids which have been introduced must not be followed rigidly but are a useful tool to investigate aspects and themes during supervision.

In situ supervision is a complex experience. The in situ approach of supervision in Jungian psychodrama presented by the authors establishes a model in which the conductor and the narrator have their work supervised on the spot in order to reflect on the multiplicity of processes inherent in a psychodrama group and learn from immediate experience. It is indeed an opportunity to explore issues as they resonate and are enacted.

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