

The Auxiliary-Ego - Psychodrama Year 1
Reflection piece
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Role 1 - The Hesitant, Self-conscious Participant

I start my sentences with umm.
Preceding the umm
Is a rapidly racing heartbeat,
Denoting terror
At being seen.

(Concretization - a small handkerchief that is used to clean spectacles to denote clearing one's vision or changing perspective.)

Role 2 - The Relatively Comfortable Participant

From a rapidly racing heartbeat
It gallops at an even pace most of the time
With spikes that go too low or too high.
Zoom to the rescue:
I raise my hand when I get the urge to share, immediately,
No backing out now!

(Concretization - a mobile charger adapter to denote connection and medium.)

Role 3 - The Comfortable, even Excited Group Member

Like paneer marinating in tikka batter
I let my group members' stories touch me.
I let them see me
Take important roles in my life and of myself.
Relational healing raises its beautiful face.

(Concretization - a charging cord to show connection .)

Role 4 - The Baby Practitioner

Learning happens best when applying,
Like a child taking her first footsteps,
I help my clients
Big-little aspects of their lives.
Their warm up inspires me to be spontaneous!

(Concretization - A book by a beloved author to denote trying to master an art.)

Role 5 - The Deer Stuck in Headlights

I freeze, go numb, get foggy in my head.
Concretizations make anxious,
Watching relationship dynamics in miniatures
Makes me feel stuck and pointless.
My only movement is my willingness to try.

(Concretization - a close spectacles case to show closed off-ness.)

Role 6 - The Interpreter of How My Body Feels

I act as soon as I feel
I let my spontaneity take the forefront
Once in a while.
Sporadic but expressive,
We make a good team:
Spontaneity and Me.

(Concretization - a half-open spectacles case to show the movement and change in me .)

Role 7 - The Shower of Empathy

I mimic the protagonist
With 35% less self-consciousness,
I understand their tone
And feel what they're feeling.
I even let myself participate from the role!
Turns out,
Role 1 has a lot to say.

(Concretization - a water bottle to show that it can accommodate and hold things.)

Role 8 - The Integration Attempter

Unlike Sisyphus
I carry the infamous boulder of accountability and vulnerability
With progress at each step.
I honor different parts of me
And free them of tenacious judgment.

(Concretization - a cracked mug to show different, fragmented selves as part of one whole and still functional.)

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I was introduced to Psychodrama for the first time during the lockdown in 2020, when everything had shifted online. It was one of the ToLs (Theatre of Life workshop) that Maanas had conducted, and to be honest I was lost between the role reversal, my brain can't take complex information a lot of times. I had become an auxiliary for a friend at the time, and was just happy to be chosen. In the coming year, I got introduced to miniatures and different aspects of Psychodrama work in my personal therapy. My initial response to it, after that ToL, was that of frustration with Psychodrama. What I now understand as resistance, I experienced as lack of movement, feeling confused, lost - and an overall feeling that everything I am doing is pointless. Over the coming months, I attended more ToLs. I was also an auxiliary for a friend's personal work, and I think that experience has stayed with me. Now that I look back, I fail to recollect or understand when that transition to being more open to Psychodrama started happening. Apart from being my friend's auxiliary, 2 things come to mind, I am sure there are many more:

1. In my personal work, in one of the sessions, I had concretized what my childhood had looked like. This wasn't new information, but to see it live in front of me, a version of it, had moved something inside me. Although I froze a lot during that session, after it got over, I came out accepting, or beginning to accept for the first time, that my childhood (or what I remember of it) was filled with emotional neglect, shame, leading to self-betrayal and self-minimization. I was a textbook people pleaser and to put it harshly, quite the doormat back in the day. I knew all of this in my head, but after having concretized it and seen it as an outsider, my body was willing to accept this bleak but true version of the reality. Before the session, there was just a vague idea that things weren't good when I was a kid, after this piece, it became a fact of sorts - not in the immovable sort of way, but I identified it as something that had so much bearing on who I was. I was also open to be a bit more kinder to myself after seeing what the little me had to navigate on her own, and didn't attribute to my lack of confidence or presence of esteem issues to me the person, instead started seeing the role of my environment or understand the role it played in shaping who I was.
2. Secondly, I love stories. At my core, I am a literature student through and through. So to see people taking up roles, playing characters, among a premise of someone's life situation and internal world, deeply excites me. That was one of my main motivations to join the course, to be able to use this power of stories, dramas, memory and imagination to be able to look within in an active way - ways that talk therapy doesn't quite reach.

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For my main assignment, I have written 8 pieces of blank verse, all denoting a role or a part of me that I have discovered and tried to work in the last 2-3 years. The old me would have written an analysis to make sure that I am elaborating and commenting on why I wrote what I wrote,

what did these roles feel like, why do I want to change them or take them forward, but the current me, at this stage of training, wants to not go into analysis and keep it to the pieces to communicate my journey, more or less.

I have named each role, the title of the role is followed by the blank verse, and at the end it is mentioned what I used to concretize it. Our facilitator Roohdar/M, had asked us to concretize the changes we see in ourselves since we were first introduced to Psychodrama. I extended that concretization later and made it the basis of my submission. It was Roohdar who had suggested we take art forms we resonate with, and since I resonate with poetry, she had given me an example of how I can write poems. I am grateful for her facilitation and that idea. I thoroughly enjoyed penning these blank verses.

I want to share briefly, the areas that I feel progress and movement in me, especially since last year when we started our training:

- ★ I am getting in touch with my spontaneity. My old idea that I don't have an iota of spontaneity has been challenged and thrown in the bin.
- ★ I think the biggest gift has been my connection with my group. I feel fortunate to be part of this group, since people from such different walks of lives came together to do a lot of soul searching. I let myself participate because the group was so safe. I think if growing up, I had even elements of such acceptance, I'd be leading a very different life.
- ★ I am a very, very, extremely self conscious person. By opening up in the group, I have tried to work on being more comfortable with being seen, although this remains a big big area of work.
- ★ I have understood how much externalizing and concretizing helps look differently at our life, issues and most importantly, resolution.
- ★ I have always been a theory person - so this experience where for an entire year I picked up no textbook is very different to say the least. It is the result of the impact of this focus on experience and not going in the head - that I have started my assignments with the verses, and haven't provided an in-depth explanation of the same.
- ★ I look at empathy as something active now, rather than just an attitude.

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I have learnt in the journey of becoming a therapist, that it helps to initiate projects, courses and beginnings with a fair and clear idea of what one wants to get out of it, what they expect to achieve. In this case I'd want to share areas that I'd want to work on developing through the next year:

- ★ Develop a deeper connection with my body. Even in my personal life, I am hoping to look at connecting with my body as an on-going process.
- ★ Take up small pieces as a Director.
- ★ Do more auto dramas.

- ★ Start reading Psychodrama theory.
- ★ Work on my anger and sadness about things in the past. Do potent anger work, because I still feel it holds me back.
- ★ Do work around future goal setting and understanding+building progressive roles in myself. More specifically in personal life, work life, intra-personal changes. What kind of a therapist I see myself becoming and how would I want to execute that in terms of establishing a stable and fulfilling career. How I'd want to integrate some changes in my interpersonal life that I have been working on for eternity it seems.
- ★ Understand working with the body, and somatic work deeper for working with clients, and using it as a complement and extension to talk therapy. To integrate into my work as a therapist more solidly and confidently.