

THE DOUBLE: THE ESSENCE OF "I AM"

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It has been my experience in Psychodrama that upon entering the realm of the double, one truly enters the role of "I" with another individual. I have chosen this workshop as a representation of my ten years of working with this concept and as a coming out party for another part of myself. It also follows very closely the Spring Quadrant of the Healing Circle (Mosher, 1995) represented by Death and Rebirth and a movement toward new beginnings and the "first universe" of Moreno. I hope that you will grow both in technical skills and in spirit during this workshop.

Workshop Objectives:

1. Students will understand the concept of "double"
2. Group will develop a greater level of cohesion
3. Students will have the knowledge and use of the "double"

In preparation to experience the "double"- three terms that are intertwined in this dynamic must be defined: tele, empathy and transference.

Tele: "a feeling which is projected into a distance " (J. L. Moreno Who Shall Survive?):

"is the insight and feeling into the actual makeup of the other person" (J. L. Moreno, Psychodrama Third Volume Action Therapy and Principles of Practice 1975.)

"the current of feelings that runs between two people whether it is positive, negative or neutral"

"exists when the perception one has of another matches the perception that person has of him or herself."

"is responsible for the mutuality, reciprocity and cohesion in a group." (Ann Hale Conducting Clinical Sociometric Explorations)

functions as a general category to describe the myriad of interactions of attraction, detachment, repulsion and neutrality that exist in human interactions.

Empathy:

begins with the empathizing agent(auxiliary ego) or the person playing the double. It corresponds with a making a sociometric choice from A to B. 11 It is a one-way feeling into the private world of another ego."

Transference:

"is always a distortion and a carryover into a therapeutic relationship of expectations and reaction patterns learned in earlier significant relationships"

(Adam Blatner, **Foundations of Psychodrama, History, Theory and Practice.**)

It is the " the factor responsible for disassociation and disintegration in social groups" (J.L. Moreno Who Shall Survive?)

Empathy and transference are parts of a more elementary and more inclusive process, **tele**.

Moreno also described the use of the therapeutic double allowed for observation and examination of the community both from an individual standpoint and as a group as a whole. pgs. 318-324

It is also important to define for those who are unfamiliar the five basic elements of a psychodrama as enumerated by Adam Blatner in Acting In: Practical Applications of Psychodramatic Methods or the five instruments as defined by Jonathan Fox in Essential Moreno.

The **Five Basic Elements of Psychodrama** are:

1) The **stage** is where the enactment takes place. It provides the actor or protagonist with a living space which is multidimensional and flexible to the maximum. It represents the subjective life of the protagonist. In mythic terms it is the sacred center, the axis mundi.

2) The **actor or protagonist** is the person who is the subject of the psychodrama enactment. These terms represent the dynamics of the situation rather than calling him patient. Its origin according to Moreno is from Greek theater. According to Blatner this is a learned role and requires the willingness to surrender to the psychodramatic process, to express maximum spontaneity in the moment. In mythic terms, the protagonist is the hero whose journey to the center of self will renew the community.

3) The **director** is the person who orchestrates the psychodrama to help the protagonist explore the problem. According to Moreno he has three functions: producer, counselor and analyst. In the therapy groups the director carries dual roles of therapist and director. In mythic terms, the director is the ritualist or shaman.

4) The **auxiliaries or auxiliary egos** was Moreno's term for anyone besides the protagonist and the director who takes part in the psychodrama. Usually the auxiliary portrays someone in the protagonist's life, but they can play more symbolic roles such as dreams, pressure on someone's back and the unspoken feelings. The last mentioned role is the one of **double**.

5) The **audience** refers to the other present during the enactment. They may serve to help the actor as a sounding board or of public opinion or as a cathartic reaction they may be helped by the actor's enactment to reach a new understanding of their own feelings. They are never passive, but in fact are co-producers of the action. In mythic terms, the audience is the community essential to the growth and transcendence of the protagonist. In a sociodrama, the community is the protagonist.

DEFINING THE DOUBLE

It is the role of **double** as one form of **auxiliary ego** and the **technique of doubling** that is the focus of this workshop.

The **double** is a special kind of **auxiliary ego** and hence has all the functions of an auxiliary ego as well as being defined in action form as a technique.

As an auxiliary ego, a double:

- * represents the other actors in the psychodrama (Moreno)
- * represents something inside the protagonist (Moreno)
- * concretizes parts of the psyche and helps to put them in their proper relationship to integrate them (Moreno)
- * operates as an investigator of the interaction
and is a change agent
- * is a guide for better integration
- * is an extension of the director in the role of an explorer and guide
- * is an extension of the protagonist portraying the actual or imagined personae
- * is the application of inspired empathy in action

The technique of doubling according to Moreno can be compared to the first stage of the **Matrix of Identity** or the developmental stage of the infant discussed in *The First Psychodramatic Family* and in other works. (see bibliography) This first stage is the stage of identity or the **me-me**. The second stage or mirroring can be compared to the stage of recognition of self or the **me-you**. The third stage or **role reversal** is the stage of recognition of the other or **you-me**. Moreno saw the role of the auxiliary as double as part of the "infant's warming up process for role playing.

BASIC STEPS TO DOUBLING

1. Leave your ego somewhere else. Doubling is giving a gift of truly being in someone's skin. Corrections by the protagonist only further the empathy if the ego is not involved.
2. Physically: Stand to the side and at a slight 30% angle to the protagonist so that you can replicate the non-verbal communications and present a unified front.
3. Pay attention to nonverbal communications by the protagonist.
4. Co-act **with** the protagonist, synchronizing your movements and nonverbal behaviors to the protagonist. Become a "visible" I.
5. Because the body, in psychodrama, is presumed to have memories and that body posture has an effect on the experience of both the double and the protagonist, it is critical that you move consistently in the way in which the protagonist is moving. (John Mosher)
6. The double is a subjective position; therefore, you use your own inner experience of being with and acting with the protagonist as a basis for the first approximation of empathy.
7. Stay in the present tense and speak in the first person as an extension of the protagonist.
8. Pay attention to the words the protagonist uses. Use short sentences and repetition to bring out the feelings.
9. If what you say or do is not an expression of the protagonist's feelings, try to achieve a better approximation of the protagonist's emotional state by correcting your verbal and non verbal expressions.
10. Try to intensify a situation, not dilute it. (Zerka Moreno)
11. Touching within limits can lend assurance.
12. If there is a role reversal, the double should take on whatever role the protagonist is involved in.
13. Do not do the work of the protagonist.
14. **Relax. There is no such thing as a perfect double.**

JOHN MOSHER'S TECHNIQUES OF DOUBLING

** Personalize general and distanced statements: make " it" and " you" an "I"

** Reflect and Summarize

** Give behavioral descriptions: I'm clenching my teeth

** Get frequent corroborations for protagonist

** Make corrections immediately

** Hold onto information and bring it to the here and now from anywhere

Note: if you have explicit or implicit confidentiality contracts with the protagonist you have been asked to double this can severely affect your spontaneity.

** Be suspicious if you are always right. Check it out. Make it explicit

** Be aware of consistent refusals of doubling

** Listen for key phrases and paraphrase in two or three words. Go for the essence, the limited and /or omitted. Paraphrase the emotion in one or two words. Or the action.

** Talk in action where appropriate.

** Avoid asking questions from the double position

** In general, support the protagonist 80-90% of the time.

** Turn the body posture into personal statements

** Extend the body posture

** Be Brief

KINDS OF DOUBLING

1. Dramatizing the Feelings

Maximizing the emotional content ie. I like you becomes I love you

2. Verbalizing Non-Verbal Communications

The double adds more "content" to the self-system or the expressions by the protagonist ie. A tense jaw or clinched fist becomes "this is getting me angry"

3. Physicalizing Words and Gestures

Dramatizing on a non verbal level what is going on emotionally. Such as hitting a chair, crouching in the corner, standing on a chair to speak

4. Silent Non-verbal

Co-acting a protagonist's feelings in a silent, non-verbal way

5. Supportive

The double reinforces the protagonist's right to his feelings ie. "Why should I live up to your expectations (speaking to another auxiliary) "It's okay the way I feel" or "I have a right to my feelings"

6. Contradicting the Feelings

This is a tricky one. It is only used to evoke a reinforced statement or if the double believes the protagonist's feelings and self include a stance opposite to his statement ie. "You know I really don't feel this way at all"; "I don't hate you I need you"; "I hate you and I love you."

7. Defending Against the Feelings

The double actively verbalizes the paradigm's of the protagonist's habitual defense mechanism of denial. ("This can't be happening") isolation; ("I don't feel a thing") projection; ("I would never feel toward you the way you feel toward me") displacement; ("Somebody's got to take the blame") rejection; ("I better leave you before you leave me")

8. Self-Observation

The double notes the protagonist's general situation by introducing some comment on the protagonist's behavior ie. "I seem to be getting more upset." "Oh I'm explaining again." "I'm making excuses again for his behavior"

9. Interpretation

This is another tricky one in which the double needs to be careful about the introduction of information outside of the protagonist's awareness. Commenting on what is not being said is one way ie. "I'm not saying anything about Mom, just Dad"

10. Satirical

The use of humor in doubling is a delicate art but at times very effective. The use of satire, opposition and provocation in doubling can add power to an enactment if used with sensitivity and the proper timing. Without the "art" it leads to distraction and dissonance; so be sensitive to repeated denials by the protagonist. Satire appears as: "Yeah I want it" "I want love and a contract and obedience. "

11. Divided Double

The double represents a divided part of the protagonist. the director may two or more doubles on the stage ie. The self-blaming or the externalizer ie. the happy or the sad

12. Good/Bad

This is a doubling technique used by Zerka Moreno to represent the part of the double that they feel are bad or good. This particularly comes up in situation where the protagonist has definite polarities within their self-system

13. Soliloquy

The double can be with the protagonist even when there is no specific interpersonal interaction, that is when enacting a soliloquy. Examples of such scenes would be "on the way to work," "getting up," "walking around the stage."

OTHER FORMS

1. Multiple Doubles

The director may allow several people to express their feelings to the protagonist. Each auxiliary doubles for the protagonist as a whole person not part or a divided part of the protagonist's psyche.

2. Group or Collective Double

This is an extension of the multiple double. The director throws the interaction open to the audience and has them shout their double statements. Sachnoff (1991) adds a variation where group members spontaneously enter the scene, take the double position, say a few things, allow themselves to be agreed with or corrected and leave.

3. Double for the Audience

A double may be assigned to help the audience express its feelings, positive or negative, toward the events on the stage or any of the participants in the enactment, including the director.

4. Double for the Warm-up

From the onset, a double can be used to move the action along, particularly if they are a trained auxiliary.

5. Double for the Director

This form of double is used when the director becomes stuck and the momentum of the drama has slowed because of feeling that the director may be feeling. This is often done by a group member elicited by the director or by the Trainer in a training session.

FUNCTIONS OF THE DOUBLE

The double's first task is to establish an empathetic bond with the protagonist, this is usually done through the assumption of the body posture and co- moving with the protagonist.

Adam Blatner lists several function of the double in his book, Acting In: Practical Applications of Psychodramatic Methods:

- (1) To stimulate interaction by facilitating the portrayal of the protagonist's psychological experience to its fullest range
- (2) To provide support for the protagonist and help the protagonist take more risks in order to enter the interaction completely
- (3) Is a vehicle for giving more effective suggestions and interpretations to the protagonist

John Mosher has indicated several functions of the double that include:

- (1) To establish an empathetic bond with the protagonist
- (2) To co-act with the protagonist, synchronizing his/her movements and other non-verbal behavior
- (3) Use the subjective position to provide an inner experience as a basis for the first approximation of empathy
- (4) Other functions include supportive other, extender, amplifier, ally, listener, understanding witness, challenger, speaker of the unspeakable, sayer of the unsaid, expresser of resistance

Other functions that are similar to those of other auxiliary roles include: An actor portraying roles for the protagonist; a counselor who guides the protagonist to more spontaneity; and a social investigator. Lastly, the double is both an extension of the director in his or her exploratory and guiding functions and that of the protagonist in the portrayal of personae.

TIMES FOR THE DIRECTOR TO USE THE DOUBLE

A double or the doubling technique is viewed as one technique for expanding the consciousness of the protagonist and in turn increasing the spontaneity. When a protagonist is anxious there is lowered spontaneity. A double can function depending on the type and the art to increase that spontaneity or reduce it. Specifically, you might use a double when:

1. The protagonist is limited in verbalizing their feelings. Caution: Make sure the double does not overpower the protagonist.
2. A double can function as a silent or verbal support for the protagonist.
3. To investigate further the protagonist's inner world (Paul Holmes)
4. To provide a safe container for the protagonist to experience all aspects of their surplus reality
ie. Kate Hudkins "containing double" provided internal support and cognitive balance
5. The extension of the role of the director as guide and explorer is necessary
6. A safe way to investigate intrapsychic issues (ie. protag in role reversal with their double) is needed.
This adds an element of detachment.
7. The protagonist appears overwhelmed and partialization into several doubles might prove helpful.
8. A double becomes part of surplus reality in creating a new role. This allows the protagonist to safely practice a new part of themselves.

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