

**A Guide to
Auxiliary Ego Development**

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AUXILIARY — assistant, helper, partner, ally,
confederate, alter-ego,
supplement.

By its structure, Auxiliary requires another person, place or thing and cannot exist without its counter, an agent to which it must relate, attach or respond. In a relationship, each person is an auxiliary to the other.

EGO — self, personality, and the conscious subject of all experience.

As purported by Moreno, (Moreno, 1943, 331). Ego connotes the sum total of one's repertoire of roles. Personality and Self are inferred through the roles one enacts. Our Ego is always in the process of development — proceeding from role playing to role taking to role creating. There is no ego at birth. It is acquired through socialization and manifested through behavior.

AUXILIARY EGO becomes more than the sum of these two words. As originally conceived, Moreno said an Auxiliary Ego functioned in three ways . . . "actor, portraying roles required by the subject's world; the function of the counselor, guiding the subject; and the function of the social investigator." (Moreno, 1953, 83). Auxiliary ego has recently been expanded to include actual or fantasy people, things, animals, places or worlds in which each of us lives, acts, interact, and requires. (Moreno, 1969, 17). No one can live and grow in complete isolation. Therefore, each of us requires supplemental structures to promote our spontaneity and aver our realities.

In life we are co-actors in relationships. For every role we enact, there is the role of the other. There is no social role by itself. We either interact socially with a counter-role or with a parallel role. For example, the role of aunt requires the counter role of niece or nephew. Or, one must have a friend to be a friend (parallel roles). Each role is an Auxiliary ego to the other. Whenever someone is required by us to function, we may accurately identify that person as an Auxiliary ego.

Role Structures

Before any of us develops a sophisticated social role repertoire, we develop two earlier role structures. According to Moreno, the first role structure we possess is the Psychosomatic. During our initial development Psychosomatic roles are those prelingual body motions that reflect those sensations occurring within the infant. Since there are few socialized verbalizations which the infant can employ, we who are the parents or observers of the infant must infer from its somatic gestures and sounds what the infant is "acting out." We then, through our frames of reference, attempt to interpret the message the child is sending. Sucking, smiling, crying, eliminating, cooing, clutching and hiccupping are examples of Psychosomatic roles. In later development this role continues to exist. However, it takes on complementary form and function with those roles that later develop. Premordial as they are, the Psychosomatic roles are essential precursors for the later two forms of role development: Psychodramatic and Social roles.

The second role structure to evolve is the Psychodramatic. Psychodramatic roles are the natural resources underlying the Social roles. Our Psychodramatic roles are those in which we express our feelings.

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The second role structure to evolve is the Psychodramatic. Psychodramatic roles are the natural resources underlying the Social roles. Our Psychodramatic roles are those in which we express our feel-

ings and interact with others. Through our dreams, our fantasies, our private stories and our play, we rehearse the manifold ways we perceive the world and express our emotions about what we perceive. Through Psychodramatic productions we place ourselves in almost any type of role and with the parameters of safety provided through this structure we can try and fail without repercussion of pain or punishment. We become giant animals, soaring eagles, movie idols, geniuses, babies, warriors, villains and heroes as methods to express our emotions. We may imitate those we emulate and play out the scenes in which we imagine or anticipate. Through the medium of play we enact private roles with the aid of toys and games. It is through this stage of our personality development that we begin learning how to feel and to express our emotions. Once Role Playing has become a significant part of role learning, the roles which are chosen to be retained in our repertoire as well as in relationships is considered Role Taking — a more permanent role structure. As more and more of our feelings, thoughts and impressions are incorporated into our roles, we tend to expand from role taking into a Role Creating process. Role Playing as it evolves into Role Taking and later to Role Creating requires the interaction with significant others, significant alters, i.e., Auxiliary egos.

The interactions we develop have four aspects — 1) the way I see myself, 2) the way I see you seeing me, 3) the way I see you seeing yourself, and 4) the way I adapt my behavior to maintain our relationship. The roles I've developed constitute my sense of self and are outgrowths of these four interdependent processes. As each of us ages, the three role structures continue to function throughout life. When we do not possess sufficient language to express ourselves, we call upon

non-verbalizations such as psychosomatic complaints, physical gestures, subtle non-verbalizations, illness and accident (Psychosomatic roles). As adults we continue to experience and to express our emotions via mental images, rehearsed scenes, reveries, day dreams, hallucinations, delusions, nightmares and nocturnal dreams (Psychodramatic roles). Our social roles are ever expanding — testing and expanding our spontaneity as they develop. Moreno differentiated Psychodramatic roles as *a* mother, *a* supervisor or *a* neighbor from Social roles of *the* mother, *the* supervisor or *the* neighbor. The broader and the deeper our role repertoire, the more spontaneously we feel in relationships. To feel and identify with the role we're Taking and Creating is tantamount to owning that role rather than accepting the stereotypic role model designed by society. Those roles which we personally tailor tend to develop emotional propriety and our spontaneity and capacity to manage relationship dramatically increases.

Generally two people finding themselves initiating a relationship must practice their roles with one another in order to learn just how well their individual roles are suited for the other and likewise how well the other enacts the role with him/her. Each person enacts a role 1) proportionate to the clarity of one's role model; 2) one's perceptivity of that role; 3) one's ability to weave personal creativity and emotions into the role; 4) the actual skill required to enact the role; and 5) the status of one's sociometry and social atom. Understanding and translating these variables is no mean feat. The problems mount as we appreciate the inherent possibilities for malfunction. For example, what does one do when one's role model is substandard or inadequate? How does one create a role when society has not established the norms which are necessary for a role to be defined —

as with a couple living together without a formal marriage pronouncement, or when a divorced man with custody of his daughter incorporates a woman partner who is neither the daughter's mother nor step-mother? Again, how does someone who has difficulty expressing an emotion express himself/herself if that emotion is central to their message in a particular role — e.g., "loving parent;" "consoling friend;" "sexual partner;" "joyous victor;" "saddened widow(er);" "angry victim."

Roles provide the parameters which enable the incumbent of a role to feel spontaneously. When roles cease to function, the propensity for impulsivity occurs. Frequently rage (not anger) and depression (not sadness) become manifested when roles are ill-defined, malfunctional or unacceptable. Where there are no roles, there are no Auxiliary egos. Ergo — Auxiliary egos engender feelings and spontaneity; Roles define Auxiliary egos; Auxiliary egos complete the structure for establishing relationships. Without relationships there cannot be sufficient parameters for the expression of feelings nor a forum in which to present one's creativity. Hence the probabilities for anxiety, fear, boredom, depression and rage increase.

The people who participate in psychodrama portray the roles of characters who constitute the social system within which the protagonist will interact. Therefore, it become imperative for the characters who are selected to take various roles to initially do so exactly as the protagonist defines them. As the roles are taken, it is the responsibility of the Auxiliary egos to become (not imitate or pretend) the emotional surrogate for the character they have been selected to portray. Their primary responsibility in becoming the character they've been selected to enact is to reproduce the emotional tenor of their character. As they successfully engage the protagonist in an emotional exchange they no longer are

seen as a fellow group member who is role playing with another character. Instead, they are seen as the provider of an emotional tone that catalyzes the interactions of a familiar relationship replete with actions, communications, feelings, thoughts and conflicts much like the actual and original enactment being reproduced in the psychodrama. As an Auxiliary ego replaces the person for whom he or she is representing there is an hypnotic-like sensation within the protagonist.

Contrasted with more familiar dramatizations on television and in the theatre, psychodrama requires ad lib remarks, spontaneous responses and realism without rehearsal. Written scripts are prohibited and in their place biographical, dream-like or future projections are extemporaneously enacted. Psychodrama is a controlled methodology in the sense that exacting parameters are required for the extemporaneity to eventuate. Within these parameters, Auxiliary egos are encouraged to portray those roles which may have lain dormant within them but in this context find adequate and acceptable expression. To elucidate the point, many of us do not value those roles within our total repertoire that may be considered cruel. Because cruelty may not be a valued behavior we chose to expose since it could lead us to social rejection, it frequently will find its ventilation via day dreams, night dreams, or vicariously through television, movies or plays. Sometimes during psychodrama, the protagonist may require a role that represents near-cruelty, near-sadism and near-abusiveness. If that role is to be expressed through one of the parents, then you or I may be asked to inveigh all the demeaning, effacing and perjorative invectives we can muster in that parental role. In so doing the role will enable the protagonist to emotionally relive and release the suppressed feelings that have been inhibiting parts of his/her life. Not only does the protagonist stand to gain from the

catharsis but the Auxiliary ego likewise is benefitted by possessing a creative context in which to express that which in any other context would be an undesirable expression!

Self Presentation

The most common psychodramatic procedure for introducing Auxiliary egos is the *Self Presentation*. The Self Presentation is a simple method wherein the protagonist becomes each of the characters who are to be portrayed in the scene. Speaking as the character, the protagonist shows us the Auxiliary ego rather than describing the person. Through gestures, walking, language and emotional expression, the audience learns from the protagonist how to portray the character should any one of them be selected to act out the part. After each Self Presentation, the Auxiliary ego is then picked from the audience.

At the outset, the audience member who is asked to portray the role (by the protagonist) accepts the role exactly as depicted by the protagonist in the Self Presentation. As Moreno said, "*Living through the subjectivity of the patient and identifying himself with all the patient's expressions as far as organic limitations allow is the first function of the auxiliary ego.*" (Moreno, 1945, 58.) Our intent is to create the reproduction of the character as clearly as possible. We want the protagonist to feel the character that has just been presented and allow those feelings and interactions to develop naturally and spontaneously. Once the protagonist appears to be spontaneously involved in the scene, the Auxiliary ego begins with subtlety to diverge from replicating the character initially portrayed. Instead, the Auxiliary ego begins to bring into the role his or her personal responses and reactions. It is through

the role expansion and the spontaneity of the Auxiliary ego that integrity of perception is gleaned. Many ask, "Isn't the character portrayed merely a projected perception of the protagonist rather than a more objectified truth?" Often this is true. Therefore, it is imperative to test this phenomenon. One way to investigate the process of the relationship is to allow the protagonist to affect the Auxiliary ego through the interactions sufficiently to test the natural responses of the Auxiliary ego. It is important to be mindful that the protagonist is carrying with him/her unique patterns which when catalyzed will elicit a common pattern of responses, no matter what arena or with which person the actions occur. Psychodrama becomes, therefore, a microcosm for introducing a myriad of variables in order to assess behavior.¹ In essence, the Auxiliary progressively moves from *Role Taking* to *Role Creating*.

Calling forth the emotions, thoughts and mannerisms that are naturally elicited during the dialogue with the protagonist, the Auxiliary ego introduces into action those feelings, thoughts, perceptions and gestures which are honestly being evoked within the existential relationship, although these exchanges were not actually articulated during the Self Presentation. The psychodramatic progression from reproducing in action those characteristics of the Auxiliary ego as initially introduced by the protagonist, to infusing one's private perceptions into the role is called *Role Expansion*.

Role Expansion

Role expansion is quite crucial to the psychodramatic process. It enables the protagonist and audience to view a character in more than one subjectified stereotyped dimension. For learning to hold sway within the psychodramatic process, honesty and the pursuit of honesty is

absolutely necessary. Through the Role Expansion procedure, honesty is more optimally insured. It is incumbent upon Auxiliary egos to reduce unidimensional stereotypes to three-dimensional human beings. Commonplace as it is, a protagonist will portray some person in his or her life with biased malicious hate. As invectives and predatory characteristics are attributed to a personality, an Auxiliary ego will move from Role Taking these hateful characteristics to Role Creating (combined is Role Expansion) and initiate a sense of holistic probity for balance.

For example, Alan sees his mother as a psychotic woman whose craziness has caused him untold problems throughout his thirty-three years. He portrays her as disgustingly dependent, self-referential, ungiving and unfeeling. His anguish is expressed by his wish to have been born into another family and the wish that his mother die. He cannot imagine her to be in any capacity a kind woman, as having any talents or skills, and incapable of compassion or sensitivity. The Auxiliary ego who became Alan's mother became the woman he described in every respect. Railing at her and crying in abject fury, Alan told her how much he had harbored his resentments. Then in time the Auxiliary ego portraying his mother ceased listening and acting irrationally and answered, "Alan, you're absolutely right. I have been acting selfishly and want to know what you wanted from me all these years." Without hesitating, Alan recounted his need for love, understanding and respect from her. Continuing, she asked, "Why do you suppose I've been so reluctant to do these thing for you, son?" Still in dialogue and without losing his spontaneity he answered, "Because you didn't get enough from

Dad or us kids. You know, Mom, I never thought you even cared whether we had anything to give you or not. Why didn't you say something?" She answered, "I felt too alone, Alan. You, your sister and brother and father seemed so close that I felt completely dejected. I never knew you even cared about me." Alan in astonishment turned to the director of the psychodrama and said, "She's right, I never told her and she never told me." At which point he began to weep and acknowledge his yearning to be loved.

Auxiliary egos have at their disposal the power to heighten someone's spontaneity as well as reduce it. Depending on the psychodramatic phase being enacted, both the heightening and/or diminishing of spontaneity may be desirable. For example, in the early development of the action, the goal of the Auxiliary ego is to remain focused on the spontaneity of the psychodrama session, the director and the protagonist. Toward the conclusion of the session it is the function of the Auxiliary ego to enable the protagonist and audience to become integrative and cognitively directed rather than affective.

Warm Up Time

Stepping into a digression and moving momentarily outside of the framework of psychodrama and into the non-clinical and non-academic settings and into life in general — it is a frequent occurrence to see someone in a relationship who unwittingly frustrates their partner by interrupting their warming up process. Because every person requires preparatory time to activate the expression of their feelings, thoughts and actions, it is crucial in a relationship to permit that time to evolve. When a friend or relative is insensitive to the other's slower warming up tempo, they will invariably and unwittingly

cut it off by interrupting them. Most usual among those who feel the victims of this process make the following comments, "I can't feel myself in her presence;" "He seems to be manipulating me!" and "I can't seem to say what I mean." Because the warming up process originates at different rates of speed with each person and because every act, each feeling and thought requires separate warm up processes, the ensuing spontaneity which eventually is expressed reflects the completeness or incompleteness of that warm up. Paying attention to the methods and time we and others warm up is probably as important as any interventions that are made in therapy, counseling or treatment. Too few people know enough about their own warming up patterns and style to fully appreciate how the warming up process is enacted by others. As Auxiliary egos for clients, patients, supervisees and families, we must attend to those first few moments of contact, those subtle nuances in a pause, and the level at which we may facilitate the spontaneity of those with whom we relate (talk, act and feel).

The following section is an outline that may be useful to the psychodramatic practitioner, educator and trainer. It is a guide for Auxiliary ego development.

Auxiliary Ego

- I. **Definition:** Members of the audience who assume roles required by the protagonist. (Auxiliary egos in life are those people who help others do what they cannot do alone. We are all Auxiliary egos for people at different times.)
- II. **Responsibility:** To vitalize and revitalize people in the protagonist's private life by assuming their identities.
 - A. Auxiliary egos are extensions of the *Director* and the *Protagonist*.
 1. Auxiliary egos are extensions of the *Director* in the sense that they are social investigators, emotional catalyzers, and co-therapist, co-teacher, etc.
 2. Auxiliary egos are extensions of the *Protagonist's* world by acting as substitutes for missing people who are required in the psychodrama.
 - a. The Auxiliary egos portray their assigned role as defined by the protagonist.
 - 1) Some examples of auxiliary egos are: wife, lover, daughter, monster, angry parent, drunken friend, gentle companion, dog, dead loved one, child, and the voice of a house.
 - 2) Sex, age, race, physical stature, personal politics and religion become qualities that can be discarded or adopted by auxiliary egos in relationship to what the protagonist requires from the role.

- b. Auxiliary egos rely heavily upon their experience with a defined role, then couple that prototype with the role which was defined by the protagonist. Auxiliary egos employ their notion with the description given by the protagonist.

Auxiliary egos are catalyzers of spontaneity.

1. Through spontaneous interactions with the protagonist, the auxiliary ego stimulates the protagonist to emotionally respond to the role being portrayed in order to reproduce the same feelings one has about the actual person.
2. Auxiliary egos provide a context for the interaction such that sufficient parameters are defined to enable spontaneity to develop.
3. Auxiliary egos accept the role as depicted by the protagonist; portraying it as presented (even when it is one-dimensionally stereotyped or highly biased); then proceed to expand the role by introducing the personal existential feelings, perceptions and thoughts that are honestly felt or experienced during the course of the psychodrama.

C. Auxiliary egos function differently during the psychodrama.

1. Prior to the Catharsis of Abreaction the tasks of the Auxiliary ego are to expand the feelings (i.e., spontaneity) of the scene and facilitate the warm up of the protagonist.
2. Subsequent to the Catharsis of Abreaction the Auxiliary ego works toward cognitive integration of the perceptions and feelings of the protagonist.

3. Auxiliary egos proceed into a psychodrama by first "role-playing;" next, "role-taking;" and third, "role-creating."

III. **The Double Ego:** A specialized Auxiliary ego.

A. **Definition:** A person who perceptually, intellectually, emotionally and physically assumes the same identity as the protagonist. Often protagonists feel and think to such a large degree that they require the help of someone in order to externalize those thoughts and feelings.

1. The Double is often referred to as the protagonist's conscience, inner feelings, conflicts, thoughts, perceptions and experiences.
2. The Double is only attached to the true protagonist, not to Auxiliary egos.

B. **Function:** People asked to become a Double learn to incorporate their role conserves with the conserves of the protagonist.

1. Doubles mirror the body posture of the protagonist when lying, standing, sitting, running, jumping, bending, stiffening, collapsing, laughing, crying and screaming.
2. Doubles position themselves beside or behind the protagonist, and speak loudly (not softly and privately) to the protagonist.
3. Doubles can only talk with the protagonist. Other Auxiliary egos may not engage in dialogue with Doubles.
4. Doubles speak in present tense, first person singular tense, not past or plural, e.g., "I'm playing in my backyard." (preferred form), as

opposed to, "We used to play in the yard."

5. Doubles concentrate on emotional data early in sessions and incorporate more rational data to facilitate integration later in the session.
 6. Doubles remain with the existential protagonist and move whenever the protagonist moves (as in a role reversal).
- C. **Variations of Use:** Multiple Doubles may be assigned the protagonist to illustrate the various facets of feelings and thoughts.
1. Doubles may represent the protagonist at different stages of the protagonist's life (e.g., the child part of the protagonist's biography, a powerful adult, or an elderly person of the future).
 2. Protagonist ambivalence and polarizations can be enacted by employing a positive Double and a negative Double (often utilized by pulling the protagonist's arms physically in opposite directions).
 3. Doubles may act to restrain the protagonist from acting destructively or impulsively.
 4. Doubles may be called upon to represent several emotions which are experienced in one situation as love, anger and sadness.
 5. Audience-Double (or Audio-ego); One person acts as the Double for the entire group or various members of that group.
- D. **Emotional Techniques of the Double:** The Double is charged with supporting the protagonist, i.e., to communicate that another person

can be emotionally intimate and understanding.

1. Doubles may agree and thereby affirm the protagonist's feelings.
2. Doubles may disagree and confront the protagonist's point of view (after tele and rapport are established).
2. Doubles must initiate open channels with the protagonist in order to negotiate feedback from the protagonist (regarding accuracy or inaccuracy of comments made by the Double).
4. Doubles focus on four separate and cooperative levels.
 - a. Mirroring (i.e., imitating) body posture and reporting verbally the associative feelings or sensations related to the postures or gestures.
 - b. Social implications of behavior.
 - c. Psychological counterparts of interpersonal and intrapersonal meaning (as in internal struggles, poorly developed self-concept, e.g., "I don't like myself very much, do I?", emotions, values, fantasies and dreams).
 - d. Perceptions.

IV. Prescriptions For Using the Double and Auxiliary Ego.

- A. When protagonist is in need of help in self expressing.
- B. When protagonist is demonstrating an unawareness of self during the interaction or enactment.

- C. When protagonist loses or needs further warming up and heightened spontaneity.
- D. When protagonist needs understanding and warmth.
- E. When protagonist needs help integrating exposed feelings.
- F. When Director needs more cues with which to proceed in the psychodrama.
- G. When Director needs to accelerate or decelerate the protagonist from bogging down or running away.

V. Proscriptions for Using the Double and Auxiliary Ego.

- A. When protagonist pulls back and permits the Double or Auxiliary ego to be the foil, i.e., Auxiliary ego does the work for the protagonist.
- B. When Double or Auxiliary ego's needs interfere with and conflict actively with those of the protagonist.
- C. When protagonist purposefully selects someone from the audience toward whom insulting, alienating or polarizing comments have been made (to such a degree that tele cannot be developed).
- D. When protagonist selects someone who obviously is too preoccupied to be brought into the action.
- E. When protagonist selects someone for a Double or Auxiliary ego who refuses to enter or help in the psychodrama.
- F. Auxiliary egos may interfere with a session if their warm up is incomplete.

1. If the initial audience warm up is incomplete, those Auxiliary egos selected from the audience will introduce their incomplete warm up by misperceiving roles that are asked to be portrayed, thereby confusing the protagonist.
2. If the role presentation by the protagonist is insufficient to elicit a clear character portrayal, the person asked to portray that role will do so incompletely and require an increasing number of role reversals in order to clarify the character of the Auxiliary ego.

Epilogue

Auxiliary ego development requires practice. As spontaneity develops, becoming an Auxiliary ego frequently follows. Absorption within a role is crucial. Once we allow ourselves to be free from observing ourselves, our objectivity becomes reduced sufficiently to permit our subjectivity to emerge. Role failure occurs when observing the role exceeds full subjective involvement. Moreno & Moreno wrote, "When a person is entirely absorbed by a role, no part of his ego is free to watch it, and so to record it in his memory." (Moreno & Moreno, 1944.)

Footnotes

1. Yet, there are methods for controlling the response variables in the event we suspect that an Auxiliary ego is skewing the situation and attenuating the protagonist's responses. Should the Auxiliary ego unwittingly become overly directive and aggressive in leading the protagonist to other less pertinent themes or processes, the director should manage the situation accordingly, e.g., dismiss the Auxiliary ego from the psychodramatic enactment, reverse roles, or ask for clarification from the protagonist.

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