

Jenny Ockwell

STUCK

I have been saying all week that I need to work but allowing others who seemed more 'warmed up' to do theirs first. It is Friday afternoon and we are due to leave Holwell on Saturday p.m. This time I say that I need to work **now**.

I am invited to choose somebody in the group to direct my psychodrama. I already know that I shall ask one of two people and that the other will be an important auxiliary in my psychodrama. I ask Sue to direct me and she agrees. I am aware that I have Sue and Peter in mind because of their spontaneity and creativity and I feel stuck. Sue invites me to come onto the 'stage' with her and as we walk around the space together, she invites me to tell her what it is that I want to work on.

It is something to do with what happens to me in relationships. I get into describing my feeling of lostness - like losing a limb - when I returned from holiday and saw my partner onto a train . . . out pops a contact lens . . . stillness and panic for a moment. Then Sue sees it on the floor and having marked the position, asks me to tell it does to me when it falls out. I can't see properly and I am often distracted and embarrassed when it comes out - I have to stop what I am doing to scrabble around on hands and knees to find it . . . Sometimes it's funny too, but painful at the same time. I'm angry with it for letting me down. I reverse roles and become the little contact lens lying vulnerable on the floor where I might be trodden on - I don't feel very small and vulnerable although I think I should do . . . maybe I'm quite powerful in a way as a contact lens . . . or maybe it's just that the situation is unreal and I'm not small down here on the floor in reality. I reverse roles a few more times before we move on to another scene:

I have been saying that I am currently living half way between two "lives" - one in London with lots of good friends for whom I care deeply but between whom I seem to be dashing much of the time because I want to keep in touch with them all and there is my work too, which takes up a lot of my energy and enthusiasm . . . The other life seems to offer space and tranquillity outside London. Sue suggests that we divide the space in two - one half represents my life in London now. I am to sculpt who is in this part. I ask various members of the 'audience' to come up and represent various people who are important to me . . . I find that I include some people who don't live in London but who I feel I should visit regularly. The space is becoming very crowded and they are all talking to me. I can't move . . . I'm stuck standing in the middle . . . Each seems to be looking out to the space on the other side of the 'stage'... They each say things that strike home and make sense . . . I can't move or think . . . I'm rooted to the ground. Sue tells them to start walking around me and I can stop anyone and speak if I wish. I speak to one or two - but still I'm stuck. Sue asks them to move round faster and takes me round the other way. I begin to feel dizzy and a bit sick. They begin to move in towards me and as I sway, turn me round between them . . . gradually I slip gently to the floor - I can't

take any more . . . too giddy. I recover and break my way out of the circle into space . . . I'm sobbing and I don't know what to do with myself but it's a relief to be out there. I am told to lie on the floor and feel the space . . . It feels good - I'm aware of the texture of the carpet beneath my hands and of the floor supporting me and the feeling of space around me. I want to stay there a while . . . Now I'm meeting my partner in this space . . . I want to discuss something with him . . . I take a long time to go about it . . . a very long time - I'm not sure whether I can take the risk of asking him for what I want: so I tell him what it's about (and hope that he will do it for me) . . . He won't. I carry on that way for a long time, going nowhere and I'm really stuck again. Sue suggests that I become the director of a film called "Stuck" and someone stands in for me. I am to give the orders for how this scene is to be . . . I can't. I'm stuck.

There seem to be two couples on stage, I throw one couple off but what to do with the other? I try shouting orders at them but they won't take much notice . . . nothing changes . . . I don't know what to do next and I'm still stuck with two people on the stage who won't make up their minds what to do . . . well "Jenny" won't say what she really wants and he isn't going to do it for her! Somebody suggests that maybe he's not the right actor for the part . . . I'm not sure what they mean . . . I'm aware of the frustration in the group . . . something's **got** to happen . . . I throw him off the stage and am not sure what that means. I don't feel finished but somebody else is warmed up to work and time is short - The group agree to go straight on with the next protagonist. I'm sad, lost, not sure and I sit and try and watch the new action . . . my eyes keep turning to the person who represented Hugh in my psychodrama.

I know that I have to phone him and get together to discuss this. I also know that I will have to be clear in what I am asking of him and to make sure that he hears me. He does hear me.

AN ACCOUNT OF A BRIEF PIECE OF WORK DONE BY A PATIENT IN A HOSPITAL GROUP.

For the purposes of this article I have changed the Patient's name and will call him Sam.

Sam had been in an acute psychotic state for about eight weeks, and was just coming out of his psychosis when this work was done.

We had begun with a short warm up and then gone fairly quickly into a guided fantasy. People imagined going on a journey to an old house which had a picture gallery. I described the setting, and then asked people if they wanted to, to go into the picture gallery and look for their own picture on the wall. I asked them to take time to see their picture. Who was it? What the colours were? Which kind of frame? Was there a date and so on. I then asked them to choose whether they wanted to bring it down from the wall and bring it back with them into the group, or if they wanted to leave it where it was.