

# Treatment of a Depressive Mood: Protocol and Commentary of a Group Psychotherapy Session

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During a psychodrama-video seminar, 10 group participants meet, some of whom had had no previous experience with psychodrama.

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## Participants

Hans-Werner - Therapist  
Susanne - Protagonist  
Sarah - Mother  
Rolf - Father  
Jacob - Husband Klaus  
Eva - Sadness  
Regina - Self-Reliance  
Birgit - Double  
Jutta - Double  
André - Plum Tree

## Events

1. WARMING UP: The group sits in a circle and prepares for the psychodrama.
2. SOCIOMETRIC CHOICE: The group participants choose the protagonist by laying hands on her shoulder.
3. INTERVIEW: On stage the group leader asks the protagonist questions about her problem.
4. SCENES OF PLAY: With the aid of the therapist and auxiliary egos, the protagonist sets up the

scene. During the play, doubles come onto the stage.

#### FIRST SCENE

Protagonist sets up a scene from her childhood.

#### SECOND SCENE

The feelings which arise lead to imagining a prenatal situation.

#### THIRD SCENE

Protagonist begins to go through life until the point at which sadness appears during a conflict with her husband.

The protagonist relives her old feeling of rejection in a new light. She separates herself from her helplessness and, through support, gains the feeling of self-reliance and the possibility to grow.

#### 5. Closing Phase

#### 6. Sharing

### Events

#### 1. WARMING UP

After the group members have talked to one another their present situation in life, they try to find a suitable song to go with their topic.

*The group members are emotionally very involved with the songs they have chosen. They relate which thoughts they connect with the song texts, and some of them sing the melody.*

The protagonist chooses:

Your beauty will fade, like the stars in heaven were made.

Not just your beauty will go.

Love will depart, just so.

And then comes bitter Death.

„I take away your trouble,“ it says.

*The protagonist has the encompassing feeling of sadness when thinking about the song, but she also thinks about beauty in life, about nature, love and beauty. She feels that everything is transient and therefore enveloped in sadness. Death has positive aspects.*

## 2. SOCIOMETRIC CHOICE

The group members stand up and go to the person whose song particularly interested them and indicate their choice by placing their hands on that person's shoulder. The protagonist receives four votes.

*The protagonist is somewhat confused. She is surprised to have been chosen.*

## 3. INTERVIEW

Now the group leader and the protagonist are on the stage. The leader asks the protagonist questions concerning the feelings which came up while she was just singing the song. He also asks about other situations in which this feeling arose.

*The protagonist remembers three situations in which these feelings arose.*

1. *After the war was over, she had to leave Sauerland with her mother and brothers and go home to her father.*
2. *While fleeing, the protagonist (small child) sleeps on a truck and misses her mother when she wakes up.*
3. *Protagonist (infant) is lying in the garden behind her parents'*

*house in a baby bed under a plum tree and feels all alone.*

## 4. SCENES IN THE PLAY

### First Scene

With the aid of the leader, the protagonist sets up a scene in which she is an infant and lying in a baby bed underneath a tree in her parents' garden.

Doubles intensify the feelings arising.

Together with the leader, the protagonist decides to go back in time even farther to set up a scene from whence the sadness began.

*The protagonist experiences beauty, is interested in the movement of the leaves and nonetheless feels lonesome.*

*Through the doubles, the feelings of melancholy, sadness and resignation become intensified.*

*The protagonist feels that sadness has always been there, that it even came with her at birth.*

### Second Scene

Mother and father are introduced

as auxiliary egos. The protagonist is in her mother's womb, not yet born. She listens to a conversation between her parents in which the mother informs the father that she does not want to have the child at all.

With the birth of protagonist, the auxiliary ego Sadness becomes necessary. It accompanies her through life until she marries and has children herself.

*The protagonist experiences that she is a burden for her mother. She becomes sad and does not want to live any longer.*

*The mother takes care of her, keeps her fed and warm, and is friendly. But the protagonist is too much for her and hinders her. The mother has no pleasure with her child. The child must succumb to sadness. Everything is strenuous and meaningless. The child must possess a lot of energy to live through it.*

*The husband gives the protagonist the feeling that she is needed, wanted. Sadness retreats to the background. Self-reliance and independence become the dominant feelings about life.*

### Third Scene

The husband leaves the protagonist. He tells her about his new girl friend.

*The „womb scene“ is repeated emotionally. Sadness has come again and the protagonist becomes depressed. „Sadness is here to stay.“*

The protagonist is overcome by feelings of rejection, worthlessness and helplessness.

The feelings of independence and self-reliance and the desire for growth become strengthened and conquer the feeling of sadness.

*The protagonist experienced the feeling of sadness as an integral part of her personality and for that reason could not free herself from it. Externalizing the feeling makes it possible for her to come to grips with it. The Protagonist frees herself from it, feels relieved and has a new attitude about her-self.*

### 5. CLOSING PHASE

The new feeling becomes more established during the meeting with the mother.

The protagonist speaks with her mother and shows that she understands her situation.

*The protagonist feels that she is more independent, stronger, and capable of growth. She sees the mother in a different light now. She can understand her now. She is now looking forward to what life has in store for her.*

## 6. SHARING

The participants relate their feelings to the protagonist and tell her at which spots they were able to identify and what their General experience was throughout the play.

*The protagonist is very relaxed and at ease she shows feeling of joy, sympathy and warmth.*

The protocol of the so-called warming-up phase has been shortened slightly.

The following word-by-word protocol of the group therapy session is supplemented by notes, indicated within the text, commenting upon certain issues during the session.

HANS-WERNER (therapist)

I would like you to choose a partner and talk to him about what is most on his mind at the moment. Everybody should please walk

over to another person and ask him what is most important in his life right now.

**(note 1)**

*(short pause; the participants react uncertainly)*

Whom are you going to choose?

*(after a talk period)*

Everybody has spoken with a partner about a subject that is meaningful to him. Now I would like to ask you if a song occurs to you that would apply to this subject Maybe it would be an old song, a children's song, a song that reminds you of something in the past. Think through the song in your mind . Then tell us about it.

*(pause)*

Eva, can you tell us what occurred to you?

EVA (participant)

I thought about the song, „Winter adieu, it hurts to part with you.“ I have been hearing the song a lot recently. My small daughter just loves this song in her songbook and she has been singing it constantly. I like the way she lisps when she sings it; I think it's cute.

*(rubs her nose)* The other thing is that the song reminds me of my own situation because it goes, „Winter adieu, it hurts to part with you. But parting strengthens.“ And then I realize that *(looks upward contemplatively)* it hurts to part with old and bothering habits, too. „But smiles lengthen.“ And then I look at my daughter and feel very good.

HANS -WERNER (therapist)  
Rolf, which song did you think of?

ROLF (participant)  
I thought about the song „Our thoughts are free“. I have mixed feelings when I think about that. On the one hand, I am free to think about whatever I feel like. I can dream; I can go where ever I want with my thoughts. On the other hand, though, I believe that thoughts are molded, or influenced. *(looks to the right in expectation that his neighbor will now present his own song)*

JAKOB (participant)  
Well, I was thinking about how nice the weather is and the song „Summertime, and the living is easy“. I was thinking that I really would like to be lying on the beach and getting a sun tan.

HANS-WERNER (therapist)

Is it because of the situation that you are in his very moment that you had this desire ?

JAKOB (participant)  
Maybe it’s because it had occurred to me how nice it would be to do that this week-end. But it was only a fleeting thought.

HANS-WERNER (therapist)  
*(agreeing)* Hm. *(Jacob laughs and then quickly looks elsewhere)*  
Birgit?

BIRGIT (participant)  
A Jewish song occurred to me. It’s about a Jew who is supposed to pay his rent but doesn’t have any money left at all. And that reminds me a bit about Israel and about some books and stories that I have heard about Jews.

HANS-WERNER (therapist)  
Susanne, which song were you thinking about?

SUSANNE (participant)  
There was a very old folksong that occurred to me. It’s called „Your beauty will fade, like the stars in the heaven were made.“ It has several verses.

*(pushes herself up from her chair a bit)*

I'll quote the text as I remember it. „Not just your beauty will go. Love will depart too, just so.“ The last verse goes, „And then comes bitter Death. 'I take away all trouble,' it saith.“

HANS-WERNER (therapist)

Do you know the melody?

SUSANNE

Yes. *(laughs, a little embarrassed)*

HANS-WERNER

Could you try to sing it?

SUSANNE

All right. *(begins singing; first looks at the floor, then slowly begins to smile and to look up; finally, looks the other participants in the face)* I think the last verse impresses me most. *(hesitates, assumes an earnest expression)* No, I can't! *(crosses her arms; has a closed expression)*

HANS-WERNER

That effects you emotionally most of all?

SUSANNE

*(sighs; looks at her hands; glances at the floor; folds her hands)*

Yes. Actually, all of the song is important. Beauty is very important to me. Beauty in nature, human beauty, beauty everywhere: in

art, and in music. And yet, at the same time I know very well that everything is only transient, just like the stars that disappear from the sky in the morning. And - I think there's a clear link to Love, too. Beauty fades. And Love is also something very important that dissipates as well. When my beauty fades, Love fades, too. I have the feeling that if I am not beautiful, then I cannot be loved. Similarly, I have often had the feeling that if one isn't loved, it is because he isn't beautiful. And the last verse is the one that makes the biggest impression upon me. It says, „And then comes bitter Death.“ Bitter Death ... that is the end of everything. That is very bitter, indeed. But on the other hand, it takes away all our troubles, so there is something quite positive about it.

HANS-WERNER

Hm.

*(Susanne looks at the therapist a bit questioningly; she finally nods at him to help her out of the situation)*

Sarah which song occurred to you?

SARAH (participant)

Hm. *(looks at the floor)* I thought about the song, „A young man from Nazareth does things that

people hardly understand.“  
(*looks up at the participants*)

HANS-WERNER (therapist)  
Could you sing that, too?

SARAH  
Yes, I can!

(*laughs and begins singing; clears her throat, looks at the the floor or at the participants, a bit nervously*)

“A young man from Nazareth does things that people hardly understand. He doesn’t mind his own business and bothers religious people.“  
(*looks at the therapist for a moment*)

And then comes the chorus: „Where there are people like Jesus, the world will not stay the same.”  
(*pauses and reflects*)

HANS-WERNER (therapist)  
Hm.

SARAH  
That was my song. (*sits back*)

HANS-WERNER (therapist)  
Jutta, what song did you think about?

JUTTA  
There were several songs that occurred to me. They were all songs

about Springtime. The one that I chose was „Come, dear May, and make...”

HANS-WERNER (therapist)  
(*nods*)

JUTTA  
(*sings immediately*) “Come, dear May, and make the trees green again. Let the violets on the creek banks bloom and be seen.”

(*looks straight ahead, concentrating; at the word “creek“, she turns to the others, loosens up and begins to sway to the music, continuing other verses; smiles*)

HANS-WERNER  
You like that, don’t you?

JUTTA  
Yes, I like that.  
(*laughs, folds her hands on her lap and crosses her legs*)

HANS-WERNER  
What is it that you like?

JUTTA  
I think it’s because I feel attracted to the slightly sad sounding melody and the - depressing yes, the depressing mood.  
(*leans on the chair, looks alternately to the therapist and the other participants*)



I remember that my grandmother used to sing that to me.

HANS-WERNER  
Hm.

JUTTA  
I have been thinking about it a lot recently. All sorts of different songs about spring occurred to me. First, I didn't remember the text, and I would have to look it up.

HANS-WERNER  
Regina, what is your song?

REGINA  
An old song occurred to me. Well, it's not really an old song; it's a hit. It's called: „I'm a nowhere man.“  
*(looks at the therapist)*  
I was thinking about what that meant ...

HANS-WERNER  
Could you say that again?

REGINA  
I'm a nowhere man.

HANS-WERNER  
I'm a nowhere man. *(reflects)*

REGINA  
I think that means, "I'm a person who doesn't know where he is ..."

*(looks at the floor; plays with her fingers; looks at the therapist)*

HANS-WERNER  
Yes.

REGINA  
That's what I think, but I'm not so sure ... Yes, mean it's right.  
*(stares into space)*

HANS-WERNER  
You mean it applies to you directly?

REGINA  
Sometimes I think that that doesn't apply. *(moves her shoulders)* Sometimes I think that it does apply.  
HANS-WERNER  
*(nods at Regina; then turns to the rest of the group)*

**(note 2)**

Now we heard a song from each member of the group. With which song is the most important for you? With which song can you identify the strongest? Would please stand up and put your hand on the shoulder of the person who you feel should be the protagonist in our psychodrama.

*(group stands up to make choices; the therapist goes around within the group, walking up to the people)*

*to whom he is talking)*

**(note 3)**

Yes, Birgit chose Jakob. Eva, Susanne received four votes.

SUSANNE  
Your beauty will fade.

(turning to Susanne)

Hans-Werner  
Your beauty will fade. And the other members of the group chose you to be the protagonist on the basis of this song. There must have been some quality of the song that appealed to the others emotionally. Something that you signaled about your feelings towards this song.

Would you like to work on your song?

SUSANNE  
Yes.

HANS-WERNER  
(*to the group*)

SUSANNE  
Well, I don't know if the others had the same feeling, but for me, the predominant feeling in the song is one of sadness - great, all-encompassing sadness. It is possible that the other members of the group felt a similar emotion.

Okay, could you move your chairs to make a semi-circle so that we have room for the stage?

(*short pause*)

Can we begin?

(*therapist and protagonist enter the stage*)

HANS-WERNER  
If you consider the situations in which this great feeling overcomes you, what enters your mind?

HANS-WERNER (therapist)  
(*crosses his arms*) Susanne, during the warming-up session, you mentioned a song.

**(note 4)**

SUSANNE (protagonist)  
Hm.

SUSANNE  
I remember, for example, the time when my mother was returning home to Duisburg from Sauerland with us children. We were coming home to our father, who had remained there the whole time.

HANS-WERNER (therapist)  
That was ...

*(speaks to the therapist, her arms crossed behind her back)*

There is a great feeling of sadness that our protected childhood, our life in freedom, in nature has come to an end.

HANS-WERNER

How old are you in this scene?

SUSANNE

It was shortly before I began school. I must have been about six.

HANS-WERNER

And if you delve further, what occurs to you?

SUSANNE

Sadness.

*(turns to the audience without looking directly at them)*

I'm thinking back even further. I remember when we went to Sauerland. My mother and we children - there were four of us - spent several days riding on a truck, on a tractor. There were many people along. They all had baggage, and I vaguely remember there were a couple of barrels. I sat there on the truck, wedged in between the barrels all around me. My legs were stuck and I felt very helpless.

Late in the evening we stopped someplace. And my mother wrapped me up in a soft feather comforter. It was warm and cozy, but it was dark, and there was a streetlamp ... I felt very sad there. It was the same feeling I had with the song.

HANS-WERNER

In the first scene, when you were returning from Sauerland, you were six years old. How old are you now ?

SUSANNE

About three.

HANS-WERNER

And if you go back a little further in time ...

(pause)

SUSANNE

Two years. -

I envision myself as a very small child, an infant in a little basket *(shows it with her hands)* lying under a plum tree in the garden. I gazed up into the leaves *(smiles)*, in the sunshine, and actually, I felt all alone. My mother came over every once in a while and looked into the basket and smiled at me. And then she went away again and I lay there all alone.

HANS-WERNER

Do you think that we could play that last scene, where you are lying in the basket and your mother comes?

SUSANNE

Yes.

Hans-Werner

*(takes the protagonist by the arm)*  
Can you look around in the group and see who can play your mother?

**(note 5)**

SUSANNE

Sarah.

*(Sarah steps onto the stage)*

HANS-WERNER

All right. Sarah is now the auxiliary ego for Susanne. She is playing the mother.

*(to the group)*

If you will be wanting to make a contribution the psychodrama, you can come on to the stage whenever you desire and be a double. Then, as a double, you will be a part of the protagonist. You will be moving like the protagonist, sympathizing with her; you may say anything you feel appropriate

from identifying with her during the scene.

*(turns to Susanne)*

Susanne, you are now ...

SUSANNE

I am about one year old.

HANS - WERNER

Could you exchange roles with your mother?  
*(the players exchange their roles)*  
*(to Susanne)*

So, now you are the mother. What's your name?

SUSANNE

My name is Mrs. Bauer.

HANS-WERNER

Mrs. Bauer ... hm, Susanne is your child.

SUSANNE (as Mother)

Yes, she's my youngest. She is the only daughter I have. I have two sons who are eight and seven years old. They don't need so much attention any more. And the smallest child ...

I am very glad that I have her. Most of all, because our father had really been wanting a little girl, and now we have her. It is very nice, actually, even though she is a lot of work and it is a bit hard on me. I am not

so strong any more. I laid her under the plum tree. It is nice and quiet for her there, and she is all taken care of. She has been fed, and now I have to hang up my washing. That is important right now.

HANS-WERNER

That means the other two children are boys.

SUSANNE (as Mother)

Yes. They are playing outside somewhere.

HANS-WERNER

They are both older.

SUSANNE (as Mother)

They are both scholl-aged.

HANS-WERNER

Susanne is here now.

SUSANNE (as Mother)

Yes. She's the smallest.

HANS-WERNER

And what is the age difference?

SUSANNE (as Mother)

Seven or eight years.

HANS-WERNER

That didn't bother you?

SUSANNE (as Mother)

*(sighs)* Nobody asks you if it bothers you or not.

HANS-WERNER

No? *(questioning)*

SUSANNE

Oh *(crossing her arms)*, her father had been wanting a daughter so very much. When she heard that it was a girl, he was ecstatic.

She's easy to take care of. She's a real dear; she sleeps so nicely.

HANS-WERNER

You laid her down under the plum tree ...

SUSANNE (as Mother)

Yes, yes. You should not bother her. She has peace and quiet there.

HANS-WERNER

And your're busy now. You have three children. Your husband has a job and you take care of the housework? Doesn't Susanne bother you a little? She's so small.

SUSANNE (as Mother)

Oh, no more than any other little kid.

HANS-WERNER

That's true. Then go ahead and lay her down there. She has everything she needs.

SUSANNE (as Mother)

She has everything she needs. She is satisfied.

HANS-WERNER

An easy-going child.

SUSANNE (as Mother)

Yes, yes. She is very peaceful-natured.

HANS-WERNER

Exchange roles.

And now, Mrs. Bauer, here is a plum tree. Which member of the group can be the plum tree?

**(note 6)**

Susanne

André.

*(takes auxiliary ego for the plum tree by his right [protagonist] arm and moves him into the proper placement)*

Yes, you stand here. You are big and strong. You have broad branches and many leaves. Can you do that? The plums in the tree are that big *(shows he size with her hands)*, and you cast a shadow where the basket is.

HANS-WERNER

And Mother Bauer is quite glad that the plum tree is there.

SARAH (as mother)

I really can lay her down here. It's a good place for her. Besides, I can at least get my own work done.

*(therapist joins them with a blanket)*

HANS-WERNER

Here we have a basket that we can lay down .

SARAH (as mother)

There you are, I'll lay you down here.

*(Sarah lays the protagonist down on the spread blanket; groans)*

Oh, it's nice for you here. I'm glad that you're so satisfied. Now I'm going to tackle my work.

*(leaves Susanne; therapist slowly comes up to her)*

HANS-WERNER

You are lying here. Your eyes are looking upwards . The light filters through the leaves . It's pleasant here.

SUSANNE

I often lie here. It's a very nice place. The tree s familiar to me, and the leaves are green, all different shades of green. And sometimes the light shines through, and then it sparkles some. It's

delightful to watch. The wind is always making things move. It's really quite pleasant here.

**(note 7)**

*(Jutta lies down next to Susanne and imitates her body movements and position.)*

JUTTA (double)  
I like it here.

SUSANNE  
Yes, I feel good here. It's nicer here than inside in rooms.

JUTTA  
I can observe what is happening around me.

SUSANNE  
I 'm wide-awake. I see everything all around me.

JUTTA  
I can see the plum tree with the big, fat plums in it.

SUSANNE  
Sometimes I play with my fingers. Somehow, I belong to Nature here.

JUTTA  
I watch the leaves, and now and then the sun shines through, and then it's a little lighter in my basket.

SUSANNE  
Yes. And then I think, „My mother

could come see me now.“

*(mother joins them and bends over the protagonist)*

SARAH  
It's time that I check up on you. Oh, I can tell that you are doing fine. That's great; now I can go back to the kitchen. How fortunate that you're such an easy going child.

SUSANNE (as mother)  
*(stormingly)* She shouldn't bother coming at all. It only makes me upset when she comes over to the basket and then just leaves again.  
*(is silent; seems uncommunicative)*

JUTTA  
And I don't want her to.

SUSANNE  
I don't want her to be here. She shouldn't come at all.

*(waves as if to ward something off)*

JUTTA  
If she comes, then she should stay.

SUSANNE  
*(more forcibly)* She never stays here anyway. So she should not bother coming at all and should leave me alone in peace.

JUTTA  
Then I at least have peace and

quiet. After all, I like being under my tree. But when she comes ...

SUSANNE

... then I am so sad afterwards.

JUTTA

Then I realize what I am missing. Then I am all sad when she goes again.

SUSANNE

Hm. (*swallows*)

JUTTA

Then there is this feeling. Here I am, abandoned under the tree. I am sad; she just comes and then goes. In reality she doesn't want me here.

SUSANNE

I don't cry, either. I don't call, either; there's no point in it. She won't come.

JUTTA

I know there's no use. I'm simply all alone here. It's true that the tree is there, but I am forsaken.

SUSANNE

It takes so long for her to come.

Hans-Werner

Actually, you have experienced sadness for a long time.

**(note 8)**

SUSANNE

I have always known this feeling. It's been around a long time.

(*pause*)

It has always been there.

JUTTA

Just as long as I have been around?

SUSANNE

Yes, it belongs to me. It's a part of me.

HANS-WERNER

Susanne, can you imagine that you are getting smaller and smaller, and younger and younger?

(*Susanne sits down*)

SUSANNE

Yes. I am six months old. And I'm getting younger.

HANS-WERNER

When does sadness start being there?

SUSANNE

It is there already. I am in the womb. I am sitting inside my mother. And I am completely surrounded by it - the sadness.

**(note 9)**

(*looks up to the therapist*)



HANS-WERNER

Can we continue to play here?

**(note 10)**

(the double and the auxiliary ego leave the stage, and the therapist wraps Susanne up in the blanket; the therapist attempts to cover Susanne's head with the blanket as well, but Susanne doesn't allow it)

SUSANNE

My head has to stay outside. After all, I hear something. I can hear, you know.

HANS-WERNER

You hear something?

SUSANNE

I can hear, but I cannot see anything. Well, I can perceive light and dark, but no clear contours.

*(begins to sway back and forth with rocking movements)*

It's just like under the plum tree. Yes, it's very similar.

HANS-WERNER

You are small.

SUSANNE

I am very tiny.

HANS-WERNER

You say you can hear. What do you

hear now?

SUSANNE

I hear - I'm all nice and cozy here in my mother's tummy, and I hear my father talking to my mother. *(looks to the therapist, who is squatting next to her)*

HANS - WERNER

Your mother is there.

*(points to Sarah, auxiliary ego for the mother)* Can you come out of there and choose your father? *(therapist and protagonist stand up)*

SUSANNE

Yes, Rolf.

HANS-WERNER

*(goes over to Rolf)*

You are Susanne's father. You are Susanne's father. Susanne, whom do you hear first of all?

SUSANNE

My mother.

SUSANNE (as mother)

I think I am sitting on a chair.

*(therapist scoots a chair over)*

Because I am far along in pregnancy and I can't be my feet so well any more. Not very well.

*(wants to take the chair herself)*

HANS-WERNER

You are pregnant. You aren't allowed to carry things.

**(note 11)**

SUSANNE (as mother)

But I must.

HANS-WERNER

You must?

SUSANNE (as mother)

My husband doesn't carry the chair for me.

HANS-WERNER

He really doesn't? You are very pregnant and yet still must work?

SUSANNE (as mother)

Yes.

HANS-WERNER

You are talking with your husband.

SUSANNE (as mother)

First I'm just sitting here. I'm exhausted. My husband comes in from outside. He was working in the garden. „No, Gerd ...”

HANS-WERNER

What do you say to him?  
*(points to Rolf)*

SUSANNE

Yes, but I'm not looking at him

while speaking.

*(to Rolf as the father)*

Here we are, about - to have another child ... How in the world will we manage? It's just too much for me.

*(to Susanne and Sarah)* Can you please exchange roles?

*(to Susanne)* Would you exchange roles with your father?

*(to Sarah as mother)* Your are talking with your husband.

SARAH (as mother)

Gerd, here we are, just about to have another child. It's simply too much for me. How will we ever manage?

SUSANNE (as father)

Now don't go talking such nonsense, Karin. What's the use of it? We will just have the child, and that's that. What do you mean that it's too much for you?

SARAH (as mother)

Well, after all, I already have two kids.

SUSANNE (as father)

Other people have nine children. What's the use? We'll rear the third one, too. How can you change

things? You're just going to have the child, at's all !

SARAH (as mother)

I simply don't know how I'm going to manage.

SUSANNE (as father)

Karin, a child is a gift from heaven that God sends us. Come on, stop it. Forget it. You can't change things. And I can't change anything either.

*(Hans-Werner indicates by hand movement that Susanne and Rolf should exchange roles. The dialogue between Mother [Sarah] and Father [Rolf] takes place while a double comes over to Susanne)*

JUTTA (as double)

What shall ever come of me after I am born? When I come out of here and enter such a world? My mother can't cope.

SUSANNE

I don't like that. I don't want to be born at all.

JUTTA (as double)

I would prefer staying here inside of her tummy.

SUSANNE

I am fairly well protected here. I am angry. I am angry at my father,

who doesn't want me.  
And as for my mother, —

JUTTA

She can't manage things.

SUSANNE

... My mother is a big warm cow. She gives me everything I need. It is nice and warm and cozy inside her, but she is having a hard time.

JUTTA

I become sad when I hear that. I get sadder and sadder when I think about it.

SUSANNE

I quite understand her situation. I really am too much for her. She should not have had me.

JUTTA

I am not wanted. I haven't any joy in life.

SUSANNE

I don't want to come. I don't want to at all.

*(hides her head under the blanket between her knees )*

I am not supposed to come. But, after all, I really must be born into the world. I can't stay in here. When I come out I will be a burden. My mother can't help it; it's

just all my fault.

HANS-WERNER

*(comes over to the double and Susanne and speaks to Susanne)*

Now Sadness is with you.

**(note 12)**

*(Susanne nods)*

HANS-WERNER

Can you look around and see who could play Sadness for you?

SUSANNE

Eva

*(Eva enters the stage)*

HANS-WERNER

*(to Susanne)* You are now Susanne's Sadness, and you come whenever her parents are talking to each other.

*(the parents begin their dialogue again)*

SUSANNE (as Sadness)

*(bends over Eva from behind and strokes her arms)*

I am your Sadness. I envelop you. I'm very close to you. I'm going to catch you.

*(encompasses her head)*

I'm shutting your eyes, stopping you ears.

*(covers her eyes and ears)*

Make yourself as inconspicuous as possible. I'm going to be staying right by you.

HANS-WERNER

Where are you?

SUSANNE (as Sadness)

I'm completely surrounding her.

HANS-WERNER

Completely surrounding- Are you very dense?

SUSANNE (as Sadness)

Yes. I'm very soft. I'm very close. I cling to you. I am a part of you. I am another layer of skin ... Yes, I'm really not at all foreign.

HANS-WERNER

And Susanne? Is she always going to be remaining small, or is she going to be growing?

**(note 13)**

SUSANNE (as Sadness)

Yes, she tries to get bigger, but I keep holding her down. Maybe she always wants to stay in her mother's womb and I do that for

her.

JUTTA (as mother)

But that really won't work.

SUSANNE (as mother)

No, that doesn't work; she is growing. She gets bigger all by herself, but I still stay right close by her.

*(exchange of roles; Eva becomes Sadness; wraps the wool blanket around herself; for a moment they both listen to the parent's conversation)*

EVA (as Sadness)

I am your Sadness. I am always very close to you. I cover you up. I close your eyes. I close your ears. I push you down. I keep you small.

*(therapist gestures to the auxiliary ego Sadness that she should increase her pressure)*

I keep you small. I close your eyes. I envelop you. I am a second layer of skin. You do want to grow, but I will keep you small. I always stay right by you. I close your ears. I am a part of you.

SUSANNE

(agrees by nodding her head)

HANS-WERNER

*(enters; to Susanne)*

What happens to your sadness when you get bigger?

SUSANNE

I get bigger, but Sadness is always around me.

HANS-WERNER

Can you show us how you grow and get bigger?

SUSANNE

*(wraps herself up tighter in the blanket)*

Now I'm in the womb.

HANS-WERNER

That's very nice for you, isn't it.

SUSANNE

Yes, it's very nice. It's nice and protected. And now, I'm coming out.

HANS-WERNER

You grow.

*(Sadness pushes down on Susanne's head with her hand.)*

SUSANNE

Im growing. It is very bright, and I just have to get used to the fact that I am entering into a family where I am a burden. And sadness is with me.

*(Susanne comes out from her blanket; the therapist squats next*

*to Susanne and places his hand on her shoulder.)*

EVA

I am your Sadness. I am very soft. I envelop you. I'm right next to you. I close your eyes. I close ears. I keep you small. I am a part of you.

*(pause; Sadness keeps Susanne's head pushed down using, both hands)*

I'm very close to you and push you down.

SUSANNE

*(looks up a bit)* Yes, that's how it is.

EVA (as Sadness)

I'm very close to you. I am always around you. I close your eyes, your ears.

HANS-WERNER

*(enters)* Susanne, bit by bit you get bigger. You grow.

SUSANNE

I'm growing.

HANS-WERNER

And Sadness always comes along.

SUSANNE

Sadness is always right there. It is very difficult to grow because Sadness is always trying to push

me down.

*(Sadness pushes Susanne down, and the therapist encourages Sadness to increase the intensity.)*

HANS-WERNER

But you still grow, anyway.

SUSANNE

I have to. I haven't any other choice.

*(Susanne stands up, but Sadness does not relinquish the pressure; in the meantime, the parents begin their dialogue again.)*

HANS-WERNER

*(takes away the blanket)*

Susanne, are you big now?

SUSANNE

Yes.

HANS-WERNER

And you still have this same feeling?

SUSANNE

I still have the same feeling. Sadness is always there. It is a part of me.

HANS-WERNER

You are now going to go through

your life with Sadness.

SUSANNE

I'm in Sauerland; I'm six years old.  
I'm doing fairly well there.  
*(while speaking, Susanne walks  
around on the stage, accompanied  
by Sadness, „going through life“)*

SUSANNE

I'm out in the open, in the stalls,  
on the farm. Then I come home  
to Duisburg and I have to go to  
school. And Sadness is there.  
Then I grow older and begin the  
„Gymnasium“ (higher school).

*(the parents step away into the  
background)*

*(the therapist encourages Sadness  
to begin playing its role again)*

EVA (as Sadness)

I am your Sadness. I am always  
with you ...

*(Susanne tries to resist Sadness  
when it begins to push her head  
down again.)*

SUSANNE

I would like to do many things, but  
I need all of my strength to struggle  
against this — this Sadness.

HANS-WERNER

Susanne, when you go on through

life and grow older, does the Sad-  
ness disappear at some point or  
does it always stay around you?

SUSANNE

No, it goes away when I meet  
Klaus.

HANS-WERNER

Klaus?

SUSANNE

*(laughs)* That is my first husband.  
I met him in Bonn while I was  
studying at the university-

HANS-WERNER

And then this feeling goes away?

SUSANNE

Yes!

HANS-WERNER

When you meet Klaus, this feeling  
isn't there any more?

**(note 14)**

SUSANNE

*(softly)* Exactly.

*(Sadness lets go of Susanne; freed,  
Susanne takes a deep breath)*

I'm a completely new person.

*(places her arms akimbo)*

HANS-WERNER

*(points over to the group)*

And when you look over and meet Klaus, whom do you meet?

SUSANNE

Jacob.

HANS-WERNER

Jacob, can you come and be Klaus?

*(the other auxiliary ego leave the stage)*

In the meantime, Susanne is grown up. And you (to Susanne: Would you exchange roles?) are Klaus.

*(to Susanne as Klaus)* What do you say to Susanne?

SUSANNE (as Klaus )

I'm Klaus. I'm a playful type of person. I am somebody who likes to enjoy things. I appreciate beauty.

HANS-WERNER

*(pushes Susanne as Klaus a little bit more to the front)*

Could you two get a little closer?

SUSANNE

I don't like to get so close to anybody. I like to keep my distance a bit. I am always attracted to things that

are farther away. And I like Susanne because she is sometimes a little reticent and somewhat unusual. You know, I have somewhat mixed feelings about Susanne. But as for me, I'm quite an interesting guy.

HANS-WERNER

What do you say to her?

SUSANNE (as Klaus)

Susanne, I am at an age at which I really should get married. All my friends have already gotten married, and it would certainly be good for me if I would soon marry, too. And when I see you, I think that you would be a woman that I could marry. But I am afraid, and I will only marry you if you promise that you will remain independent of me. That is - I don't want to be so tied down-

HANS-WERNER

Hm. Exchange roles, please.

*(takes Klaus by the shoulders, who has been holding his arms crossed while Susanne was speaking)*

Klaus, can you repeat that? The last bit?

JACOB (as Klaus)

I am at an age at which people marry, but I have my doubts. I would like you to stay independent. I want you to do your own thing. Consider



your own potential. That's the way  
I want to live with you.

*(Klaus keeps his arms crossed.)*

SUSANNE

You confuse me somewhat.

*(looks a bit intimidated; holds on  
to her right arm)*

HANS-WERNER

*(goes over to Susanne)*

But, Susanne, you do marry Klaus.  
you just said that he was your first  
husband.

SUSANNE

Yes, I go along with everything you  
say. For you, I'll stay independent.  
The main thing is that you marry  
me. The main thing is that you say  
you want me. That's the most im-  
portant thing. I want you and you  
are okay the way you are. Then I  
am free and have no sadness. Then  
life is very nice.

HANS-WERNER

You can share a bit of your life.  
*(Susanne begins to walk about on  
the stage)*

SUSANNE (as Klaus)

Yes, then we share life for a while.  
I hold on to him more than he holds  
on to me.

HANS-WERNER

Could you two do that once?

SUSANNE

And the sadness is someplace else,  
way far away. But it isn't comple-  
tely gone. And then we have two  
children. Two children that we both  
wanted. And we have our ups and  
downs together, and it's really very  
nice. We understand each other. I  
think.

HANS-WERNER

You are not sure?

SUSANNE

And then the day comes when he  
goes away.

*(while thus talking, Susanne and  
Klaus walk about on the stage,  
accompanied by the therapist)*

HANS-WERNER

Exchange roles!

SUSANNE (as Klaus)

This has got to stop.

*(lifts up her hand defensively)*

I can't go on this way. *(more ag-  
gressively)* I feel closed in here.  
I'm leaving.

*(decisively)*

I've found another woman. Even if she's not so terribly important - or is she? Anyway, that's a woman who is so colorful, so unusual, so lively that she's just what I have been looking for. You are not very interesting for me any more. Of course I love you and all that, and I would like to stay married with you, but now the other woman is more important to me. I can't help being inconsiderate to you. I know I'm hurting you badly, but there's no way to avoid it.

HANS-WERNER

Exchange roles.

JACOB

I have to leave you.

*(continues to keep his arms crossed).*

There's no room for me to grow. Why? Maybe, too, because I met another woman who has more to offer me than you. I just have to go.

SUSANNE

Okay, go.

*(sighs, almost cries, leans over dejectedly, with her back to the wall)*

JACOB (as Klaus)

*(is encouraged by the therapist to continue)*

I really would like to go on living with you, but it's no good for either of us.

*(Jutta enters as double and leans against the Wall next to Susanne.)*

SUSANNE

I'm not listening any more. I know it all anyway-

He's leaving.

**(note 15)**

BIRGIT (as double)

It's perfectly clear what he's saying: He's leaving.

SUSANNE

He can't help it. I know he has to do it.

*(hurt deeply, wants to cry)*

BIRGIT

He has another woman. That's where he's going.

SUSANNE

I'm not the right woman for him.

BIRGIT

No, I'm not the right woman for him.

SUSANNE

I never was right for him.

BIRGIT

He never really accepted me.

SUSANNE

(agreeing) Hm.

BIRGIT

I wasn't important enough.

*(Susanne shuts her eyes and cries.)*

I never have been important. I'm not going to argue. I'm not going to try to keep him. You can't make someone love you.

BIRGIT

That's what I think.

JACOB (as Klaus)

I can't explain to you how it all happened. It just happened.

SUSANNE

*(crosses her arms; to Jutta, the double).*

I'm not listening to him any more. I know it all. I know it all already.

*(turns her back to Klaus, and towards Sadness)*

I would like to get out of here.

BIRGIT

I'm going to turn around. I'm not going to listen to what he says.

SUSANNE

Then I see Sadness. Yes, I see it. Come here (to Sadness). How could I have possibly have thought that you were all gone ?

*(takes Sadness by her hand)*

BIRGIT

I was deceived the whole time.

SUSANNE

Yes, I thought it was a wonderful dream.

BIRGIT

I thought we had a good relationship.

SUSANNE

It was good, too.

BIRGIT

It was really nice. We had our ups and our downs, but as long as I felt accepted, everything was fine.

SUSANNE

Yes.

EVA

I am your Sadness.

*(plays her role again [as Sadness]  
by pushing the protagonist's head  
downward)*

BIRGIT (as double)  
But actually, I was deceived.

EVA (as Sadness)  
Always right where you are.

SUSANNE  
There you are again. You just belong to me. Now there's nothing else to do. In fact, the time has that I should stop living.

BIRGIT (as double)  
I am worthless. I am rejected. Klaus is leaving. Now it's the way it always was. I am worthless. It's time to put an end to everything.

SUSANNE  
I really would like to. I would really like to stop living. I don't want to live. Way back then, I didn't want to either. But now I have two children, and they have a right to live.

BIRGIT  
So I managed to salvage something from my live with Klaus. Not just Sadness. There's some life in me, too.

SUSANNE  
Yes, I have the desire to grow.

BIRGIT  
I want to.

SUSANNE  
I want to be free.

BIRGIT  
I have the desire to be independent.

SUSANNE  
Yes, somewhere there must ...

I am so stubborn and obstinate that I go on living. Even though I would dearly love to just stop living. I must find a way because of the children. It's going to be my job.

I must find a way to go on day by day and make the best of things that I can.

BIRGIT  
That's what I'm going to do.

HANS-WERNER  
Susanne, in addition to the feeling of Sadness that has you in its grips right now, there was something else that you discovered during your time with Klaus. Something that gives you the strength to continue.

SUSANNE  
It is my desire for independence, for growth, for self-reliance.

**(note 16)**

HANS-WERNER

Can you choose someone in the group to play that role for you?

SUSANNE

Yes, Regina.

HANS-WERNER

*(quietly)* Could you two please exchange roles?

SUSANNE (as Selfreliance)

What are you crying for? Don't you recognize me?

*(puts her hand on Regina's shoulder, who is momentarily playing Susanne)*

You must know me. I have always been around you, were always wanting to advance, to grow, to get bigger, to learn and do things. You have always been so active — to a degree, even more than your brothers. You have always made your way even though Sadness was around. Come on, you can do it. Continue on; it's worth it. You are an adult now.

REGINA (as Susanne)

I'm being pushed down by Sadness. I feel so small and depressed.

EVA (as Sadness)

I am your Sadness. I close your

eyes; I close your ears. I am always near you.

SUSANNE (as Selfreliance)

I am an enticement, a view, an encouragement.

BIRGIT (as double)

You tell Susanne she should come along and do something. You can combat this Sadness.

SUSANNE (as Selfreliance)

Send Sadness away. It's superfluous.

REGINA (as Selfreliance)

You know me. Come — come closer.

SUSANNE

*(begins struggling against Sadness by trying to push her head back up)*

EVA (as Sadness)

I am your Sadness. I am always with you.

*(therapist encourages auxiliary ego Self-reliance to increase intensity)*

REGINA (as Selfreliance)

Come closer, Susanne.

Susanne, come to me.

Susanne, come. Come here. You

have enough strength. You can grow and be independent, an active adult. Susanne, come on. You can do it.

EVA (as Sadness)

I am so soft. I envelop you. You can't go anywhere without me. I am a part of you.

SUSANNE

*(closes her eyes)*

I am so paralysed. I am so paralysed.

REGINA (as Selfreliance)

You can do it. You really can do it, Susanne. You can send Sadness off and away. Come. You have gotten to know me. You know who I am. Not Sadness, Susanne. Me. Come to me. I will hold on to you tightly, so come. Come to me. I can take you along.

SARAH (as mother)

*(comes up from the background after having been signaled by Hans-Werner)*

I really don't actually need you around there. You are a burden; you cause me effort and work. You limit me and make life harder for me.

SUSANNE

(looks questioningly at Regina as Self-reliance)

REGINA (as Selfreliance)

You are strong.

Come, Susanne, come. You can do it.

SUSANNE

I am afraid. I'm afraid.

REGINA (as Selfreliance)

You and me can do it together. I will support you. will make you very strong. I will make you very strong .I am sticking right by you because you know me.

EVA (as Sadness)

I am always there.

HANS-WERNER

Could you two exchange roles?

HANS-WERNER

*(to Eva as Sadness)* You come first.

You are the first.

EVA

I am your Sadness ...

*(continues reciting her role)*

HANS-WERNER

*(to Regina as Self-reliance)* And then you come.

EVA (as Sadness)

I will always stay with you.

HANS-WERNER  
(to Eva) From the very beginning.  
  
(indicates that she should continue playing her role)

EVA (as Sadness)  
I have always been around you, from the very beginning.  
(Sadness pushes Susanne's head down once more and also holds her down by her left shoulder.)  
  
(Susanne lowers her head and has her hands folded in her lap)  
I push you down, I envelop you.

HANS-WERNER  
(to Regina) You have gotten to me, too.  
(sends Self-reliance to them)

REGINA (as Selfreliance)  
Susanne, you know me. I'm here, too.

SUSANNE  
Yes, that's right.

REGINA (as Selfreliance)  
Send Sadness away.

SUSANNE  
That's hard to do.

REGINA (as Selfreliance)  
You can come to me.

SUSANNE

I can't see you very clearly.

SUSANNE  
(struggles against Sadness and Mother and shoves them off)

Why am I bothering with that old stuff?

REGINA (as Selfreliance)  
Come, you can do it. Come on. You are really strong.

SUSANNE  
Yes.  
  
(laughs at the therapist; finally frees herself from Sadness)

(Susanne takes Self-reliance and runs away from mother and Sadness; is pleased)

SUSANNE  
To the devil! (shakes herself)

HANS-WERNER  
What do you say to Sadness?

SUSANNE  
(to Sadness) You know what — get lost!

**(Note 17, 18)**  
  
(Hans-Werner nods encouragingly to Susanne)

SARAH (as mother)  
I am your mother.

SUSANNE

You are my mother (*goes over to her*), and I understand you. I understand quite well that you couldn't have me, and didn't want to have me.

SARAH (as mother)

It was all too much for me.

SUSANNE

I know. And nevertheless, you still had me. You look care of me and fed me. You did your very best.

SARAH (as mother)

Yes. I wanted you to have a very good life. But it was just too much for me.

SUSANNE

I know. But that is all a part of the past. Now things are new and different. I am an adult. I don't need your Sadness any more.

(*to Sadness*) And you can go, too. For certain, there are times in life that are sad, situations where you belong. Then you can come. But I don't want to have you hanging around on me all the time. I want to live now.

HANS-WERNER

Can you exchange roles?

(*points to Mother*)

SARAH (as Susanne)

I don't need you any more, Sadness. You can leave. And you, Mother, I don't need you any more, either.

JUTTA (as double for Susanne as mother)

She doesn't need me at all any more ... does she?

SARAH

Yes, you are my mother, but the Sadness that you gave me, too — that's what I don't need any more, either.

HANS-WERNER

What is your reaction? (*to Susanne as Mother*)

SUSANNE (as mother)

Sadness? I don't know what in the world you're talking about. You were my daughter, and I loved you. You know how much I think of you. Sadness? You always have the craziest ideas, you and your psychology. You know that I have always loved you and that I did everything I could for you.

SUSANNE



Okay, Mommy, it's okay, it's okay.  
Really, it's all right.

HANS-WERNER

What's okay? Can you say that?

SUSANNE

It's okay what you did. It's good that you were my mother. And that you did your best. You really did give a lot. And it's good that I have gotten free it all and have grown up and become independent.

SARAH (as mother)

Yes.

Hans-Werner

What do you have to say about this feeling that is still in the background?

SUSANNE

Sadness.

For many years, I valued you highly because you protected me from going out and leaving and being injured and destroyed. But now I am grown up. I am independent and self-reliant and I don't need you any more. You can come sometimes, okay. You are a part of life, too. But you shouldn't make me small. I am not small.

HANS-WERNER

Role exchange.

EVA (as Susanne)

You, Sadness.

You really can go now. There are, of course, sad situations in life, That's true. But then you are a little bit farther away. What I do not need, though, is for you to be a hindrance for me and to keep me small . I want to grow and to see things and to experience life.

SUSANNE (as Sadness)

Yes, I can see that . Go ahead.

Hans-Werner

Are you disappointed as Sadness?

SUSANNE (as Sadness)

Nope. I was a part of her, but if she doesn't need me any more, then I will leave. I will come as I belong to life, but I don't want to bother you any more.

HANS-WERNER

What will you do?

SUSANNE (as Sadness)

I will cling to things that are worth it. There are things that are sad, but her life isn't sad.

HANS-WERNER

Role exchange.

EVA (as Sadness)

Yes, now it's your turn to do things. I will come once in a while when things are really sad, but in general

I don't belong there all the time,  
in her face.

SUSANNE

She is right. I have a husband who  
loves me. I have three children.  
I have a profession. I can learn,  
grow, have friends. It's all just  
fine. I think I can manage without  
you.

HANS-WERNER

You can say good-bye.

SUSANNE

*(shakes hands with Sadness)*

HANS-WERNER

Shall we get back into our circle?  
*(the players leave the stage, fix up  
the circle again)*

HANS-WERNER

At the end of a psychodrama, the  
members of the group have the  
opportunity to relate their feelings  
to the main actor, who is Susanne  
today. You could maybe tell about  
having experienced something  
similar to Susanne or having had  
similar feelings. Perhaps there  
was a situation with which you  
identified. And the other players  
could also tell Susanne how they  
felt while playing the role they had.

ANDRE

Actually, I was able to identify

with Klaus very much and with  
his feelings. When he wanted to  
quit the relationship, that really  
got to me because I saw myself in  
the action.

BIRGIT

Yes, and I would like to say that I  
was able to identify with you, Su-  
sanne, because I have the fear that  
Andre feels too closed in.

On the other hand, I am always  
having to struggle against my  
desire for independence and free-  
dom. I often have the feeling that I  
should crawl out, that I need secu-  
rity somewhere without having to  
worry about doing anything. And I  
always end up feeling really good  
when I notice that I don't need  
Andre so much. Then I cannot lose  
so much, either.

REGINA

Let start with freedom. (laughs)  
Look at that. Susanne looks com-  
pletely different! It was nice to  
get you out of there because at the  
same time - shit -

*(begins to cry, waits, looks down,  
plays with her fingers, sighs and  
breathes in deeply)*

This wanting to die and this —  
*(shakes her head, is silent a mo-  
ment)*

But the freedom was really good. *(laughs again)* And while that was all going on, I felt just a bit myself that there is something that is worth while going for . I think that you were able to send Sadness away in your case, and I would to be able to do that myself, too.

*(laughs again; waits a bit)*

And now I need a handkerchief. *(receives one)* Thank you!

HANS-WERNER

Freedom and self-reliance would be worth-while goals for you, too.

REGINA

Hm.

HANS-WERNER

And you feel that you can do something to achieve them.

REGINA

More now than before. Earlier, I may have known that in my head. On the other hand, I am afraid to send Sadness away. That's a situation I know so well , too. The feeling that I should keep Sadness around, no matter what.

HANS-WERNER

But during this play, you saw that it was possible to succeed at getting

rid of it. Just a minute ago you said yourself that Susanne looked completely different.

REGINA

I think so. Somehow that changes things. Afterwards, Susanne seemed so much bigger. And when she pushed her head up so forcefully and Sadness was supposed to go away ... and then when gathered her strength to make it go away and shoved it so that it practically flew over the stage, I thought that was fantastic. I thought it was great that she was so forceful and so strong. I would like to have a little of that, I really would.

SUSANNE

I can confirm what you say. I really do feel different.

HANS-WERNER

How is it now?

Susanne

I can breathe better now. I feel free, and I think that I will be able to tackle whatever comes along now. No matter what happens, I will manage, somehow things will work out.

REGINA

You look like it, too.

SUSANNE

Things won't always be hunky-dorry, but I can manage things. I'm not so small any more and not so knuckled under.

REGINA

But I thought it was great, a little bit for me too, when you said that there are situations when you really do need Sadness . But not for all the time.

SARAH

I was able to identify quite well with my role as the even though my experiences as a mother were very different. But this feeling of bringing a child into the world without being able to know whether it was going to work out, without knowing I were really going to manage it all - that is a feeling I experienced as a mother, too.

JACOB

My ... my role was very hard for me to play because I knew that I would hurt you while doing it. And I personally know situations within my life that end that way. So I was especially pleased that for you things turned out so well .While I was having to say all those terrible things to you, I was silently hoping that you would manage to

overcome them and that you would be able to become completely independent of me.

*(pause)*

When I think about the scene now, it becomes more pleasant to me.

EVA

I have been thinking about the end piece of my role, being sent away, banished. I concluded that I would much prefer going away of my own volition. And independent of this Sadness, I have been thinking about the strength it takes to leave. That is a situation which I am in at the present in many respects. I'm trying to leave situations I don't want. In my life I have experienced being sent away, too, and I must say that it is unpleasant and painful. On the other hand being away here was simply a part of a psychodrama and it didn't bother me to be sent away as Sadness. We differentiated. At an earlier date I think I would have been very hurt personally to have been sent away in such a manner. I notice that quite a few things have changed for me. That's a big difference: to feel hurt personally or be able to see the whole situation.

HANS-WERNER

Yes, we have all experienced a psychodrama together. I would

like to thank you all for having participated so lively. I would like to end the session at this point. A psychodrama contains very many aspects with which one can identify, with which one can become attached emotionally, and so one psychodrama can lead to many other psychodramas. And as for me, I hope that in the future we will be able to continue playing them.

### **Some Afterthoughts of the Protagonist's**

Half a year after the Psychodrama

My psychodrama dealt with depression. Three scenes occurred to me during the play and we acted them out one after the other. The first one dated back to the time when my mother was pregnant with me. She talked to my father, telling him that she did not want to have me and that I was just too much for her.

During the play I felt the great sadness of the unborn child who was unwanted, and I was unhappy about being a burden to my mother.

This unhappiness accompanied me throughout life. In the psychodrama, I relived a few episodes and experienced how the sadness tended to keep me passive and small. I felt how much energy it required for me to live and grow in spite of it. When my husband left me, I experienced renewed rejection and I felt that even now, at the time of the psychodrama, I was still bothered by the depression even though I was loved and needed. It did not seem possible to separate myself from the sadness.

It was not until I reached my present age in the psychodrama that, as a grown woman, I was able to reconsider my own independence within the presence of my mother and realize that I had no need for the depression any more. On the basis of my present knowledge, I was able to understand my mother and why she had not wanted me during her pregnancy. I could see that I was not responsible for being a burden to her and I suddenly realized that the fact that she had not wanted me was no longer of any acute danger to my sense of well-being.

She had given her best back then, and nowadays I did not her any more. A feeling of liberation came over me and dispelled the sadness. It seemed to me that for the first time in my life I was able to walk completely upright and breathe freely. I had a feeling of joy, of „rightness“, and of curiosity about life.

## **NOTES**

### **Note 1**

At the beginning of a psychodrama session, there is a so-called warming-up time. This enables members of the group during the course of the session to portray scenes taken from their own life that were of emotional importance to them, to act as auxiliary egos and play roles for the protagonist.

For this session, the group members were not previously acquainted with one another. Therefore, it is necessary to help the members overcome social fears. At the same time, the warming-up helps each participant to focus in on a topic that could be enacted during the session of the psychodrama.

During the second part of the warming-up, each participant is requested to associate a song with the topic of momentary importance to him. This form of presentation has several advantages: the topic is abstracted from its particular framework; emotional content can be projected; new perspectives can be achieved through the elaboration and expansion; and as a result, each

individual topic becomes emotionally more poignant and concrete. Relating one's topic in this manner to the other participants tends to increase their interest, and through the group interaction the attention is finally focused on the protagonist's particular presentation.

**Note 2**

During this psychodrama session, the group members choose the protagonist by laying their hand on her shoulder, whereby her topic is shown to be of general interest to the group even if it has not been verbalized as such. The main actor of the drama is thus reassured that the group will share with her and will support her actively during the play, which generally functions to increase the main actor's motivation to dramatize.

**Note 3**

Upon observing the emotional relationships amongst the participants, one notices that there is a concentration of the structure about the future protagonist. As a general rule, a majority of the group members is particularly interested in this topic or in him personally, even if they are initi-

ally unaware of it. In other words, by acting out his own topic, he becomes the group representative. He has the opportunity to work on a problem, to free himself from something he had previously felt threatening or limiting; and he does this not only for himself but, at the same time, for the whole group - the fellow players and the audience - who are all partaking in his experiencing a new form of behaviour pattern and perception.

**Note 4**

On the basis of his previous experience, the protagonist has a particular view of his own self and a way of experiencing and -resultingly - of suffering.

At the beginning of the psychodrama, the therapist attempts to find a scene together with the protagonist that will help focus in on the topic. In so doing, he often goes back in time, but not in search of the „source“ of the problem, the dramatic representation of which would necessarily be altered because the protagonist's memory of the original happening is coloured by later experience. Instead, the therapist looks for a scene that is well suited to illustrate the protagonist's

particular manner of perceiving conflicts and working them out. In this particular psychodrama, the therapist goes through a series of scenes with the protagonist, each scene having its own value and offering a variation on the main „theme“ of feeling rejected. In its totality, the series of scenes develops and „processes“ the topic. During the course of the scenes, certain elements come up which enable the protagonist to overcome his feeling of rejection.

#### *Note 5*

The protagonist chooses so-called auxiliary-egos to represent the most important elements which come up during the psychodrama. These are members of the group and they enter into the action with the protagonist on the stage. During this protocol, for example, Andre takes on the role of the plum tree. In order that the psychodrama become a representation of the protagonist's subjectively experienced truth, the other members of the group playing in the drama with him must become acquainted with his individual realm of experience. Therefore the other players should not improvise. Instead, they are first introduced into this

realm by the protagonist, who takes over each of their roles initially, acting the part as he sees it. Then, the protagonist and auxiliary ego again exchange roles, and the other players carry out their part with empathy. Because of this unity of experience for the protagonist, he feels he can express various aspects of his personality to an ideal degree. He is at the center of attention, the most important person in his own world. He encourages his own authority and competence. He begins to act freely and to re-structure his own, less „effective“ world creatively.

While introducing a specific role to the others during the role-exchange, the protagonist experiences fundamental, new aspects of his personal situation. By creating his world on the stage, speaking like other persons, moving, thinking and empathizing with these persons, he has the chance to re-evaluate his previous perception of the situation and to make new discoveries.

After having returned to his own role and letting the so-called auxiliary egos take over the side-role, the protagonist experiences the person or the situation in a new light. The auxiliary egos



acting within the new framework of meaning, which he himself created, allow the protagonist to view from outside the attitudes which have crystalized within himself. He can interact with the attitudes, can try out how convincing he finds them, and can look for an answer to the question of whether the newly discovered situation is better for him.

**Note 6**

Please compare the article „A Plum Tree or the Problem of Setting up a Scene in Psychodrama“, by Rüdiger Müngersdorff in the first volume of “Humanistic Psychodrama”.

**Note 7**

The so-called double entering the scene here is a player who assumes a therapeutic quality for the protagonist. Beginning with the process of empathy, the player should develop the doubling process to the point that the double and the protagonist form a kind of integrated, communicating unity. On an outward level, the double should take on the protagonist’s movements, posture and action. Inwardly the double should approach the protagonist’s feelings until he is so close to

them — that they become his own feelings. Through this process of empathy, the double gains insight into the protagonist’s past experience and perception, and his task is now to act out this information to the protagonist. (Consequently, the double remains, at least to a degree, in a position to make his own reflective observations.) By grace of varied forms of interaction between the protagonist and the double (e.g. questioning, supportive, suggestive), the protagonist is able to accept or reject comments made by the double and in so doing, takes a stand concerning his own state of mind.

**Note 8**

In the choice of scenes, each humanistic psychodrama follows a certain theme. As a general rule, this theme - which determines the course of action and comes up in every scene - should crystalize during the therapist’s exploratory interview with the protagonist at the beginning of the set-up of the first scene. It develops from the warming-up, and the protagonist does not of necessity have to be conscious of it.

The theme of this particular psy-

chodrama lies in the feeling of being rejected. The protagonist does not feel accepted as she is. She feels she should represent a value to others in order to be accepted. This value stems from being „embedded in the world“. Individuality, being different from the others, or representing one's own self are all characteristics that would possibly cause rejection. The protagonist feels she should avoid being conspicuous at all costs; she must be quiet and patient, should wait and by no means make any claim to be alive. In this manner she can correspond to the conception her father has of her of being a gift from heaven above. It is better not to be born or at least to behave as if one could not possibly have desires fulfilled totally by other people. At the same time, the protagonist senses plainly that her mother could actually be much more than a person who just comes and goes without obligation. The protagonist's sadness results from this conflict: She feels abandoned and longs for what she has to do without. And although she achieves self-satisfaction solely by being a „gift from heaven“, she feels plainly that it is impossible to be that and at the same time to be active - independent of her parents, too

- and find her own place in the world. The only thing left to do is to wait passively for a positive release that puts an end to the vegetating way of living. The plum tree with its leaves in the sunshine awakens hope. The protagonist also experiences the feeling of hope on the dark sleeping-pallet with the soft feather-comforter on the truck with a view of the street light, or when her mother comes to check on her child every once in a while.

#### *Note 9*

A scene in a humanistic psychodrama is the concrete, visible production of the protagonist's subjective world.

This comes into being because reality is always viewed from a certain point in time. Every perception of reality is an apperception - and therefore an enrichment, a selection, and an organization of experience.

For this reason, the scene which is chosen and then acted out can in fact never be original scene, but instead a product of the particular manner of viewing things and dealing with the world.

**Note 10**

During the interview, the protagonist suggests scenes that treat her theme and could possibly be played. The therapist takes up one of the suggested scenes which he feels contains, or at least makes indirect reference to, certain elements necessary for the structuring of the drama. These elements conflict with one another. There is a tension amongst them or even reciprocal exclusion. They make the play dynamic and if it is structured carefully enough, they help to bring the area of conflict to a dramatic climax during the play, whereby possibilities for change become evident in the „plot“. It is the therapist's task to pinpoint these dichotomous elements and utilize them within the play.

In this psychodrama, the conflicting elements would be: the coming and going of the mother; light and shadow under the plum-tree; the pleasure of watching the swaying leaves and yet missing the mother. Even in the very first scene that the protagonist suggests, these elements are present. Her „Self-reliance“ can be seen at the very beginning as a

contrast to being „dependent upon sadness“: the child sits in the womb but can hear. And the protagonist protests when she is supposed to be completely covered up by the wool blanket. Keeping her head outside the blanket means keeping control of things, staying above water, or not going down.

This element of self-reliance is taken up. Via the support of the therapist, the doubles and auxiliary egos during the course of this play, this becomes stronger than the feeling of „being inadequate“. The protagonist is helped to find a new view of her situation in life.

**Note 11**

Upon comparing the protagonist's verbal comments with her actual movement sequences while she introduces roles to the auxiliary egos, the psychodrama therapist frequently gets tips concerning the conflict areas in the theme.

The mother says she cannot stay on her feet so well because she is far along in pregnancy, but at the same time she tries to take a chair from the therapist and carry it herself. She feels she has to rely

upon herself and carry the burden of pregnancy all alone. She feels inadequate and rejects the pregnancy for this reason.

**Note 12**

Other group members can become auxiliary egos on stage and represent either persons in the protagonist's surroundings, or else his thoughts, ideas or feelings.

Thus, the protagonist has the opportunity to view them detachedly, to get to know them, to evaluate them and modify or reject them.

**Note 13**

*(see Note 10, also)*

Once the therapist has externalized the predominate feeling of sadness via an auxiliary ego, he then turns to the contradictory element in order to initiate a change of attitude in the protagonist. He does this by referring to the element of self-reliance which had already cropped up previously.

**Note 14**

During the protagonist's marriage

with Klaus, the feeling of sadness retreats to the background. „I am a completely new person“. The protagonist experiences how it is to be wanted. „That is most important“. Then life is pleasant. In life, the husband played the necessary supplementary role so that the protagonist did not have to reforge any of her own strength to gain her own independence and individuality. He represents an ever-present buffer as to the protagonist's claim to find her own orientation in the world.

Sadness still lies await around the corner because the protagonist finds that the husband's motive for marrying is ambivalent. The husband wants her to remain independent so that he will not lose his own independence, and he wants her to develop her own potential so that he may go his own way. In the end, the protagonist finds herself reconfirmed in the feeling from her childhood that she is not loved and accepted for her own self. She fulfills a function similar to the scene with her father where she felt she must be a gift from heaven and she once again feels she may not realize her own self-conception. „For you, I will remain independent“.

**Note 15**

In this situation the protagonist is not going to listen to anything new. „I know it all already“. She shuts out the rest in order to return to the old manner of viewing things. „I'm not the right one“. She feels at home with the feeling of sadness, with the theme and variations on, „I really should not be in the world“. „I already know that“, makes for continuously renewed trauma. By creating constructions in which the protagonist can place new experience, she makes her subjective realm of experiences constant.

**Note 16**

There is no part here to lead back to the situation which originally set off the reaction. Nor does the new behaviour be practised. Instead, the therapist asks if an extant element may specifically be included so that, in light of the theme and its development up until this point, this particular element can be more clearly delineated in relation to the old, limiting elements. This means that the now occurring feeling of self-reliance will make the previously dominant feeling of sadness relinquish some of its

importance.

**Note 17**

The protagonist frees herself from the sadness which had been accompanying her because a new interpretation of her life story begins. She reevaluates the elements influencing her perception of life and concludes that the burden and hindrance are expendable. The sadness can go away because self-assurance “is there too” and because the protagonist decides to place more weight upon independence within her concept of life. („Why am I bothering with that old stuff?“).

**Note 18**

When the mother reappears, the protagonist's change in perspective, evaluation and behaviour becomes evident. She experiences her mother differently.

**Note 19**

While the protagonist is playing the role of Sadness, the therapist asks her to reevaluate the importance of this feeling. Her answer gives clues to her new evaluation of this previously bothersome feeling and to what degree she has been able to free

herself from her old attitude.