



From Cosmos to Catharsis
Psychodrama and Archaic Religion

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Foreword - 12 years later...

There are several reasons why I want to share a 12-year-old thesis on the Internet and I here present the most important ones.

In Sweden a lot of "shaman"-practices has come to focus on the individual. You contact a shaman and she or he does a hands-on-healing or a journey and it is called shamanistic healing. Traditionally healing was always a concern of a group; family, clan or tribe, since every illness also mirrored something "bigger".

Individual healing with a healer and a client is in line with western culture where we focus on individual health and happiness, where the "I" is always more important than the "We". In aboriginal cultures such a concept is unnatural and would be seen as disrupting the natural order. My belief is that our focus on personal happiness makes us weak and vulnerable, which then makes it easier for us to be great consumers instead of creative human beings. And that is not an individual problem but a concern of (for??) everyone, including the planet we are born to live on.

Another reason is that the philosophical foundation of psychodrama is almost unknown - even to the psychodramatists themselves.

During WW1 J.L. Moreno heard God speak and wrote down what God said, that is how The words of the Father was born (lecture by Zerka Moreno 1996). Shamans always listen to spirits/Gods and during the shamanic healing crises - which is part of the path to become a shamaness - every shamaness gets messages from the other worlds/spirits etc about what the calling or important focus should be for her in her shamanic work. So from a nature religious perspective what happened to Moreno was perfectly normal. By creating first group therapy (in 1932 Dr. Moreno first introduced group psychotherapy to the American Psychiatric Association) and then psychodrama he fulfilled his calling.

But of course channeling was neither valued nor valid during the later half part of the 20:iet century since it was not very scientific. So Moreno created sociometry, which was totally scientific and, I believe, helped to enable

psychodramatic practice to be a respected psychotherapy. And more and more of the active psychodramatists chose to ignore the spiritual foundation of psychodrama. Today psychodrama is mainly used as a therapeutic clinical tool, when in reality psychodrama is an art with a very profound cosmic foundation. Trying to make a flower into a square takes away the beauty of the flower and makes the square incomprehensible. I believe that this is a major reason to why psychodrama has stopped expanding and is instead shrinking. Expansion of the method will come again when we are prepared to embrace it fully. It is a pity because psychodrama is a powerful tool for personal depth work - and it is fun!

Personally a lot has happened since I wrote this thesis. Shirley Barclay became my teacher, I had my shamanic healing crises 2002 and my calling is to bring the Cosmic Mother back into consciousness, which among other things led to registering a Mother Earth church in Sweden. Also I had to change my name. Changing my surname was a conscious choice, since the way surnames are operated in Western society it is always stated that a woman belongs to a man - first the father and then a husband. My view is that people belong together as people, women as well as men. But I also knew that I had to wait until spirits told me my new name, which took 3 years and was quite frustrating. Changing my first name was not a personal choice but something I was told to do - even so it took 2 years until I knew what it was to be. And that is why there are two names as author of this paper.

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Introduction

In my experience there are so many similarities between psychodrama and aboriginal¹/neo-shamanistic² rituals³ that I today would say that a psychodrama/sociodrama can be a ritual.

The cosmological⁴ foundation of psychodrama is similar to the cosmology of many aboriginal people. I didn't understand this until after some time in psychodrama-training when I started to realise that psychodrama is much more than a set of tools used to handle life adequately. This understanding came gradually by being introduced to Moreno's concept of creativity and spontaneity, his concept of God and his concept of cosmos.

After some years in psychodrama I came in contact with a part of the neo-shamanistic movement here in Sweden. At first I was overwhelmed by just taking everything in, but as time went by and I became familiar with the rituals I felt that there was a close connection in the neo-shamanistic rituals to something else. The work people were doing in gatherings and rituals were in many ways the same kind of work people are doing in psychodrama.

As I have studied psychodrama and aboriginal ritual I have found that some of the symbols and techniques used in psychodrama can be seen as archaic⁵ - they are found in aboriginal rituals, all parts of the world.

I here propose to explore and compare certain aspects of the cosmologies that has influenced the neo-shamanistic movement, with that of Moreno's cosmology, and to explore, compare and to a certain extent, analyse some aspects of psychodrama with aboriginal/neo-shamanistic rituals.

1 defined on p 5

2 defined on p 5

3 defined on p 19 - 20

4 defined on p 5

5 defined on p 5

I have mainly dealt with the similarities, partly because of how I believe we humans approach the "New" and the "Different". That which is new and different is exciting, but only if it is not too different, too strange. There has to be some kind of identification to make a meeting possible. Then, after the meeting has taken place, is the time to see that which is different.

I also believe, that in peoples mind, the perceived differences are obvious. I base this on the reactions from friends in psychodrama and in neo-shamanism, when I myself started to see what I recognised as similarities, and expressed them to people around me. Most commonly, especially initially, I was met with a blank stare, sometimes with a "No, you can't compare them" or "Really? How can you see such a connection?"

I have of course not only been met with that attitude, if so this thesis would not have been written. When I put my budding thoughts about aboriginal rituals and shamanism, as compared with psychodrama, to Zerka Moreno she said something like: Yes, that's not a strange way to think. There are people here in the US using psychodrama in that manner. That was the first meeting, and the seed began to grow.

The next meeting was when I finally had come around to writing something about rituals in this thesis, and showed it to Leif Dag Blomkvist and he says something like: I didn't know you were interested in shamanism. You should talk to Shirley (Barclay), it must be 7 o'clock in the morning. I will phone her up. Which he did, and I talked to Shirley.

This was the second meeting, the plant grew sturdier, small twigs beginning to grow towards the west.

I have based my study mainly on Moreno's writings as well as a fairly wide range of literature primarily from the field of social and cultural anthropology, but also from religious science.

Outline

This thesis consists of two main parts:

- 1, Cosmology
- 2, Psychodrama and Ritual

This disposition is in accordance with the theme of the thesis.

First a cosmology evolves, then a myth and a way to enact the myth.

The evolution of psychodrama is similar. First Moreno created his cosmology. Then he created a way to enact it, ie psychodrama. The myth enacted in psychodrama is not a general myth, known to all participants. Instead it is the myth of the protagonists personal life, her life story.

In the first part, Cosmology, I deal with concepts of God as well as cosmology. This is a quite large part of the thesis, since "psychodrama as a ritual" cannot, from my point of view, be considered without psychodramas cosmological implications.

This part is subdivided into three chapters:

- 1, Moreno's Concept of God and Cosmology
- 2, Aboriginal Cosmology
- 3, Comparison

My focus here is Moreno's cosmology and concept of God. I write about this to some detail, since it is, I have come to understand, not very well known.

In *Who Shall Survive*, Moreno writes:

"It is curious that these techniques - sociometry, psychodrama, group therapy - created to implement an underlying philosophy of life have been almost universally accepted while the underlying philosophy has been relegated to the dark corners of library shelves or entirely pushed aside." (Moreno in Sprague 1994:16)

Aboriginal cosmology is sketchily dealt with, especially when compared to the vastness of the subject. Within a limited space I have tried to give relevant and representative examples.

In the third chapter, the comparison I am mainly making, is between what I have written in the previous chapters, but I also, to a certain extent, develop what I have already written.

The second part, Psychodrama and Ritual is introduced with a general introduction to the term ritual, followed by chapters on the circle, on the group, on reality, on inversion and lastly on catharsis. Those chapters are subdivided in how they connect to psychodrama and how they connect to ritual. This applies for all chapters except on the chapter on catharsis. Since catharsis is originally a religious phenomenon that was, by Moreno, brought into psychodrama and has its roots in ritual, I have here let the concepts of ritual and psychodrama interconnect.

My focus in this second part of the thesis, is on the circle and on reality. Working ritually has, for me, deepened the meaning and symbolism of the circle and my understanding of surplus reality. I wanted to explore the relevant literature. Also, the circle and surplus reality are very closely connected to Moreno's cosmology.

Even if the group is of major importance in both psychodrama and in ritual I have chosen only to touch upon this subject. However interesting and important it is, I had to limit my study. The same goes for inversion. Trying to be consistent, my aim was to do a comparison after each topic. As my work progressed I found that in some cases this would only entail repeating what I had already said. In these cases I have omitted the comparison.

Definitions of Words and Concepts

Aboriginal⁶

Latin, ab; from, away and origo; origin.

Most commonly used meaning: existing in a region from the earliest time (of races, people and natural things).

I have used the word in the sense; from origin ie that which was from the beginning, or from the earliest times, including myths and symbols.

The reasons for using "aboriginal" is partly that the alternatives; "primitive"; "tribal"; "traditional"; are words full of preconceived ideas. In general, in the western, occidental thinking (in our view on history, technology and so forth) that which came first is undeveloped, and that which comes later is developed and thereby better (except in the arts, the original Rembrandt is "better" than the later copies).

It has also enabled me throughout this thesis, to use one word when describing the primitive, tribal, traditional world.

Archaic

Greek, arkhaios, from ancient times

Cosmos

Greek, kosmos, the universe, as an ordered whole; ordered system of ideas, etc, sum-total of experience; adornment.

Quoting Zerka Moreno, as quoted by Blomkvist/Rützel:

"For me the cosmos is an expansion of soul into infinity so that you become infinite when your soul expands. That involves esthetics as well and the whole idea that the esthetic aspect of beauty, the soul, the cosmos and the spirit are all related. It is the idea that beauty is inherent in the cosmos and the soul and reaching for the cosmos means reaching for beauty or, in fact, being beautiful and pure. For me this is a fascinating thought." (Blomkvist/Rützel 1994 :3)

⁶ If no other reference is given th information is from *Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English*, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, *Filosoflexikonet*, *The Oxford School Dictionary*, and Hellquist *Svenske etymologiske ordbok*

Cosmology

Greek, kosmos, and logos; teaching, reason.

Religion

Latin religio, derived from religare, to bind.

That which is concerned with human beings relation to the holy, that which determines the reality human beings live in and their relation to a power outside themselves.

To bind can be seen as tied up, to be bound, not being able to move. It can also be seen as something that binds together, connects. It is in the latter sense religion is used in this thesis.

Many aboriginal people do not have a word for religion, it is called "our way" or something similar. (Hughes 1996, Mbiti 1975)

Shamanism

The word shaman "comes to us, through the Russian, from the Tungusic saman" (Eliade 1974:4) and means the wise one. In a strict religious sense the shamaness is a healer that heals through ecstasy by letting her soul travel to the otherworld where she interacts with spirit helpers, such as power animals, or other entities in order to serve the community. It is also the word social anthropologists use when describing religious and healing practises in aboriginal societies.

"A Siberian term for a complex of religious and ethnomedicinal beliefs and practices found in widely ranging ethnographic contexts including Asia, Africa and aboriginal America." (Seymour-Smith 1986:2561)

Neo-(shamanism)

new; recent; later; lately found or invented..

1. Cosmology

1.1. Moreno's Cosmology and His Concept of God

In Moreno's first book, *The Words of the Father*, published 1920, he presents his cosmology and his concept of God. In a recorded interview with Moreno *The Words of the Father* is presented as his most important work on which all his future work is founded.

In the preface to *The Words of the Father* Moreno writes that he considers it an extraordinary book, since the words presented in it are Gods own words, and that God, in the religion of the Western civilization usually does not speak to man. There God is a remote God and man is not in direct communication with him. Moreno then continues that an anonymous man was made a vehicle for God's own words. The book was also initially published anonymously, but since Moreno has acknowledged it as his own work I will here deal with it as such.

In *The Words of the Father* God's own words are presented in "I"-form, "I, your God". Here, according to Moreno, God is present, acting, creating, being in contact with every atom of His own universe. It is the "I" that is important, it is the "I" that is the new God-concept that makes this book different. It is the I-God, the god we all have inside ourselves, inside our own mind, inside our own universe that is the new concept of God, that, argues Moreno, is needed in our time.

Moreno introduces three concepts of God. The He-God that is the God of the Old Testament ie the cosmic God. The Thou-God that is Christ, the God of love, and the I-God, the God within all of us. First came the concept of the He-God, a God of infinite distance, a God not to be approached directly. His true name unknown, he is called JHVH, four consonants really unpronounceable. Then God came closer to us. Jesus Christ, the God of love speaks to us directly. The I-God, the God-concept that is now created is the God within ourselves, our creativity, and includes both

the He-God and the Thou-God. The I-God is "...also a return to the beginning - to the creator-concept of God." (Moreno 1920:154)

At the same time as Moreno writes the above, maintaining that the words are God's own words, he writes: "It seems to me that, if there is a God, this is the way he would think, feel, act, create and judge." (Moreno 1920:xi)

In *The Words of the Father* God is not distant, instead He is present, connected with all the universes He, according to Moreno, has created. His spontaneous act of creating is of uttermost importance since His relationship with His creation is a relationship based on fellowship. Thus whatever He has created becomes His co-creator. Thereby all the universes expands and grows the whole time. The creation never ceases. God, together with everything He has created, continuously creates. He is the center and the periphery and every point in between of the creation, and so a web of multidimensional relations are formed. And as God is present everywhere He is present in every man, and every man is present in Him. Moreno concludes that as God is present in everything He does not interfere in what is happening because that would be interfering with Himself.

Moreno wrote *The Words of the Father* during WW1, but the ideas presented here were important to him throughout his life.

In an interview recorded in the 1960s Moreno says:

"God may never change, in a philosophical universal way, but the concept of God, which man creates, changes. And the moment has again come to evaluate, and to adjust, the concept of the Highest Supreme, to us, as we are now."

Here he is saying that the time has come to evaluate and adjust our concept, that is to say our idea, of the Highest Supreme. We, our out-look and way of life, is not the same as it was two- or five-thousand years ago. Thereby we need another, a new concept of the Godhead. Moreno means that we have now come to a time in history where we have to know and understand that we have the power of creation, that God is the Creator

and since we are part of God the Creator we are creators. By being creators our action influences all other actions, everything that happens in the world. We have to find our path to creativity thereby becoming creators living in the world we have created. Moreno argues that we have to recognise this and recognise our responsibility. And by that, according to Moreno, God becomes a reality instead of a formal concept.

As we have seen earlier the I-God includes both the He-God and the Thou-God. And there are of course many aspects included in this concept of God. In *The Words of the Father* Moreno speaks of God the Creator and God the Father. The "Word" that has become most famous and which is mostly used when exemplifying this book is:

"I AM GOD
THE FATHER,
THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE.

THESE ARE MY WORDS
The Words of the Father" (Moreno 1920:5)

In using the word "father" Moreno indicates that God is also an ancestor. But not in the human sense. According to Moreno God is the total chain of ancestors of everything in the universe, of everything that ever has been created, from the first amoeba to that which exists in the universe today. Moreno also writes that one could instead use the word "mother" or "parent". God is not male even though Father is the word used in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament since the Hebrew God was not to be called by name, being such an immense and distant God. According to Moreno it is the paradox of Christianity that such a distant God could be brought so close as to be a parent to a child. But this Christian concept of the God of love from the Hebrew concept of God the father, was only a small step. Now we can take the last step, the step to the creator-concept of God. To take this last step we have to concern ourselves more with the moment of creation than with, what Moreno calls the cultural conserve⁷.

⁷ A cultural conserve is, according to Moreno, something that is already created.

However beautiful or usable the cultural conserve is, the true beauty is in the moment of creating. And Moreno does not mean that it is only creating something new, something that never was created before, that is creating. Even when creating a copy of something that already does exist, it is still an act of creation if it is done spontaneously, since every act of spontaneous creation is connected with thoughts and feelings specific not for the end result but for the act of spontaneous creation.

In one of the last chapters of *The Words of the Father*, "Experimental Theology", he writes that praying is a repetitive behaviour and that "...it would be sacrilegious to change the speech, thought and gesture prescribed in the prayer." (Moreno 1920:203)

So although he sees the prayer as a conserve, that which one feels when praying can be spontaneous if one introduces a spontaneous factor, ie feeling, into the praying.

The last part of *The Words of the Father* are prayers, that according to Moreno refer directly to our troubled times. Some of the prayers, of which I give one example, are closely connect to his I-God concept.

"O GOD,
YOU HAVE HAD YOUR PLACE
IN HEAVEN
NOW YOU HAVE YOUR PLACE
ON EARTH.

NOW YOUR PLACE IS ON EARTH,
NOW YOUR PLACE IS IN OUR VILLAGE
NOW YOUR PLACE IS IN MY HOUSE
IN THE HEARTS OF MY SONS
AND MY DAUGHTERS.
NOW YOUR PLACE IS IN MY HEART." (Moreno 1920:220)

⁷ A cultural conserve is, according to Moreno, something that is already created

In *The Words of the Father* Moreno writes that the "Words" are transcribed to human speech, but, says Moreno "This voice does not speak in any human language." (Moreno 1920:154) The "Words", that is, the message that Moreno captured is the meaning of Gods speech, as far as we can understand them. According to Moreno, the Voice heard is a voice that reverberates, and, says Moreno, it can come to us in extraordinary situations, as flashes of intuition or in moments of bold creativity, and in moments of love. The Voice is everywhere, always, in all the universes, and is heard now, in the present, writes Moreno. Influences that enables us to hear the Voice can be very remote indeed. Events occurring in distant stellar space can, claims Moreno, move us, as well as events very close to us. These experiences can not be accounted for by rational science or psychology. That the Voice can be heard in all universes at the same time, instantly transmitted is, argues Moreno, an expression of the interconnectedness of the whole creation as it is created in the moment. To Moreno this interconnectedness is an image of what also happens between people. One man can serve as inspiration for another man to create.

Moreno depicts God as the ultimate creator. His magnitude in summoning His creativity and spontaneity, which was required - and is constantly required - to create and continue creating the universe makes God the Being that can summon maximum spontaneity and thereby His spontaneity becomes all creativity. So it is here, already in his first book, that Moreno introduces his "Canon of Creativity" and his "Theory of Spontaneity", which was to become the foundation stone of psychodrama, sociometry and group-psychotherapy. Apart from the verses, or as Moreno calls them, "Words" and the prayers, the main part of *The Words of the Father* is concerned with spontaneity and creativity. He here proposes experimental work to create more creative human beings whose existence is founded on spontaneity and creativity.

The Words of the Father also includes a description of the development of the Godhead in world history where Moreno argues that the God-concepts of various times are an indication of the state of the world at that

given time. Until the last two thousand years or more the Godhead was perceived as a Supreme Being the master of mans destiny. By introducing machines and more complex cultural conserves we went from having a God-created universe to a man-made universe and saw God as opposed of modern science. In the new concept of God, that Moreno presents, there is no conflict between God and science, between God and machines.

”There is, in fact, no division of the theological from the natural approach. Both approaches can be reestablished and unified within a more comprehensive frame of reference, a modern concept of the Godhead.” (Moreno 1920:193)

1.2. Aboriginal and Neo-shamanistic Cosmology

To aboriginal people the "world means the whole cosmos. Everything in this world is interconnected. This ancient belief is mirrored in the following Amer-Indian proverb:

”We are all threads in the same web, and whatever you do to the web you do to yourself”.

According to the archeologist Lone Mogensen, the web is made by the Cosmic Goddess, who with her spindle, the Pole Star, turns the vault of heaven. She gives us night and day, she gives us the seasons and she gives us life and death. With her spinning she binds everything together in the great cosmic web. (Mogensen 1996:160 - 162)

Historically as Riane Eisler, internationally known scholar and futurist, puts it:

”... this theme of the unity of all things in nature, as personified by the Goddess, seems to permeate Neolithic art. For here the supreme power governing the universe is a divine Mother who gives her people life, provides them with material and spiritual nurturance, and who even in death can be counted on to take her children back into her cosmic womb.” (Eisler 1996:372)

In some cultures the Goddess is still alive. In some cultures she is supreme, but most commonly she is part of a pantheon of Goddesses and Gods. One of the most important deities of the Navajos, described by Bruce Lincoln, professor in Humanities at the University of Minnesota, is the Goddess Changing Woman (also called White Shell Woman or Turquoise Woman in certain contexts). She is the product of the Hieros Gamos, the Sacred Marriage, between the female earth and the male sky. According to Navajo mythology she was born in a difficult time for the Holy People, since they were being exterminated by monsters. Changing Woman was born to bring prosperity and safety and she embodies the victory of cosmos over chaos. This victory is, according to Navajo tradition, the beginning, or emerging of Navajo culture. In this mythical past, in the beginning of Navajo cultural life, the first female initiation ritual was held. It was the initiation ritual for Changing Woman, and through that ritual, the Kinaaldá, she became fertile. At the end of Changing Woman's Kinaaldá it was, according to Navajo mythology, said:

”this one shall now be made holy [so that] in the future, life can be regulated by her”, and she (Changing Woman) was told ”there will be birth. Vegetation, as well as all without exception who travel the surface of the earth (ie birds, animals, humans), will give birth, that you will have gained (through your Kinaaldá).” (Lincoln 1991:28)

As seen above vegetation and animals becomes fertile through Changing Woman's Kinaaldá, but Changing Woman also is thereafter ready to have children and she becomes the mother of the hero twins, Monster Slayer and Born for Water. Monster Slayer is conceived with the sun and Born for Water with either water or the moon. Changing Woman is the matrix for the two opposing elements, fire and water, both necessary for life. (Lincoln 1991:26 - 30)

J Donald Hughes, teacher at the University of Denver, claims that to Amer-Indians the ”we” in the cosmic web does not only refer to human beings. ”We” is everything which they consider living - animals, trees, plants, stone's, even the earth herself. The web not only binds together what is seen, it also binds together that which we do not see with our

ordinary eyes, ie our ancestors, the spirits and the deities. All parts of the world exist in intricate balance, female is balanced by male and the cardinal directions are in harmony with one another. Human beings are as one with nature. Nature is the larger whole of which humanity is only a part. Hughes continues to say that human beings stand within the natural world, not separate from it. And everything in nature is alive, fully alive in the same way as we are alive and conscious. All things are living beings, personalities, possessing power. Trees, rivers, snakes, birds, human beings and elk reverberate with power and resonate with spirit. (Hughes 1996:134-144)

”Indians feel a bear, a tree, a corn plant, or a mountain as a sentient presence that can hear and understand their words, and respond.” (Hughes 1996:139)

The unseen is just as real as that which is seen, every spring, rock and tree has its own life and spirit and everything is connected inside the web of universe. (Hughes 1996:134 - 144)

Mircea Eliade, renowned religious historian and chairman of the department of history of religions at the University of Chicago, describes the shamanistic cosmos as consisting of three regions or levels. The underworld, the middleworld and the overworld. The shamaness can travel between them since they are connected by a central axis. The middleworld is the ”ordinary world” where human beings, animals, trees and so forth live. The over- and underworld are populated by deities and other beings. (Eliade 1974:259-274)

”The sky is perceived as a tent, in the middle of the sky shines the Pole Star holding up the celestial tent like a stake.” (Eliade 1974:260)

The central axis passes through a hole and it is through this hole that the shamaness travels to the other worlds and it is also through this hole that other entities come to our world, the middle world. The nature of the axis differs between different cultures, sometimes it’s a pole, sometimes a mountain and sometimes a tree.

(Eliade 1974:259-274)

Black Elk, a famous medicine man among the Oglala Sioux describes how a tree should be erected at the center of the ceremonial space:

”... he (the tree, my note) will be our center and also the people, for the trees represent the way of the people. Does it not stretch from the earth here to the heaven there?” (Black Elk 1996:471)

Black Elk here says that the tree is the center of the ritual as a representative of the people. By ”people” he means everything living, so the tree is a representative of all trees, birds, animals, humans, stone's and so forth. Thereby everything created is the center of the ritual, represented by the tree.

The above given examples are not chosen at random, but rather because I consider them representative since similar themes tend to recur over and over again when studying this particular, or closely related, fields. Also it is this worldview, with some form of divine power, different worlds, connected through an axis and a web that binds the cosmos together, that permeates the neo-shamanistic movement.

In her doctoral thesis on neo-shamanism, social anthropologist Galina Lindquist writes:

”One of the central tenets of shamanism is the wholeness of the world. Everything is one single web, and all our deeds have repercussions somewhere else. (Lindquist 1997:22)

She points out that the cosmic web is not made once and for all, instead the web is continuously woven. It is not fixed and ready made, it is in constant creation. Being in constant creation destiny is not predetermined, the threads in the web can be adjusted. That is what the shamaness does through her healing work. She adjusts the web of life. (Lindquist 1997:22-23)

1.3 Comparison

In 1984 I wrote a paper on "African Traditional View of Life" where I wrote "In the greater part of Africa ... there are certain common fundamental view of life and a common ethical view. These pervades at all times, during religious holy days just as much as in every day life. Ceremonies and rituals in the religion regulate the whole life. How the ceremonies and rituals are performed of course varies from tribe to tribe, but the background to the ceremonies are, generally speaking, the same." (Lindén 1984) That was my conclusion then, and I still think that in a way it is "true", and although it is a generalisation I consider it to have pertinence.

I here propose to compare certain aspects of the cosmologies that have influenced the neo-shamanistic movement, with that of Moreno's cosmology. As the thesis is mainly concerned with psychodrama, I am aware that my presentation of aboriginal worldviews is limited, which to a certain extent again leads to generalisation. In spite of this, I consider the examples used to be representative, as similar examples can be found throughout the world.

As we saw in the last chapter there are three central aboriginal cosmological concepts:

- the three worlds
- the world axis
- the web.

They all give an image, a picture of how the world looks. In Moreno's cosmology there is no evidence of dividing the world into different worlds or regions which are then connected by an axis, but there is a web. This is not presented as an image, as in aboriginal tradition, but Moreno consistently speaks of the interconnectedness between every created thing and of how we, through our actions influence everything that happens in the universe.

It seems to me that Moreno also believed that everything in cosmos is alive.

”Every quasi-individual organisation, from the crystal to the plant, from the animal to man, from man to superman, has a special subjective experience of the world.” (Moreno 1920:163)

At a first glance it can seem as if one of the major differences between Moreno's God-concept and aboriginal God-concepts is that of one supreme Being. But if we go back to the Neolithic Goddess, Eisler states that the Goddess was both polytheistic and monotheistic. She was worshipped under many names and different forms in different places, but essentially she was the same, and the worship of her is very similar in symbolism and images. (Eisler 1996:373) Eisler means that ”we can properly speak of faith in the Goddess in the same way we speak of God as a transcending entity.” (Eisler 1996:373)

This Goddess resembles Moreno's He-God in the aspect of one supreme, distant being. She is also God the Creator.

In *The Words of the Father* Moreno writes:

”...every part of the universe partakes of the essence of God and that all these places and instants are parts of an indivisible unity.” (Moreno 1920:1536)

The above quotation could just as well be a description of the Neolithic Goddess with her spindle, spinning the threads of life in the web of destiny. Or the Amer-Indians description of the web that binds everything together. Moreno repeatedly returns to discussing the interconnectedness of everything created, and he stresses its importance concerning inspiration to create.

The Oglala Sioux also have a supreme power, Wakan-Tanka, the Great Spirit, whom is ”our Grandfather”. Being ”our Grandfather”, Wakan-Tanka is also the ancestor to all people. (Black Elk 1996:472-473) As is God according to Moreno. But to Moreno there is one supreme being, a

parent. (Moreno 1920:153) To the Oglala Sioux the male is balanced by the female and "Our Grandmother" is the earth herself.
(Black Elk 1996:472-473)

When discussing the concept of the I-God Moreno means that being God is a great responsibility. It makes everyone of us responsible for not only our own lives, but also for everything that happens on earth, in fact of everything that happens in the universe. As everything is connected we have a great responsibility, our actions influences every other action, and everything that happens. Thereby we are all creators of the universe and part of the Godhead.

Similarly the Navajo initiation ritual, the Kinaaldá, stresses the fact that what the initiand does, influences not only herself, but everyone around her. During the initiation she becomes the Goddess. She first becomes the Daughter of the Goddess, and then the Goddess herself. This is accomplished through songs, through the way she is dressed up and through consciously repeating the Kinaaldá of Changing Woman. This is most important in the ritual, since it is also a way of telling the kinaaldá girl that she is responsible towards the tribe and towards her surroundings. Since she becomes Changing Woman all fertility - her own, the fertility of the land, of animals and of other women becomes her responsibility. (Lincoln 1991:31 - 32)

In the Kinaaldá the initiand first becomes the Daughter of the Goddess, which could be compared to Moreno's Thou-God and then she becomes the Goddess herself - comparative to Moreno's He-God and at the same time she is experiencing the I-God, since she really is the Goddess, the creatrix. (Behold - I'm not saying that it is the same, I'm saying that I see a likeness!)

"...in order to exist meaningfully we must find the path of creativity and let it lead us in direct communication with the Creator. Thus we all become not only a part of creation but a part of the Creator as well". (Moreno 1920:xiv)

Moreno means that the creator-concept of God has been thoroughly misunderstood. When we perceive God the creator as if the Godhead once and for all created the universe we haven't understood the true nature of God the Creator. God the Creator never ceases creating. The Godhead continuously creates and recreates the cosmos. Comparably, the name of the Navajo Goddess, Changing Woman literally means "the woman who is transformed time and again". (Lincoln 1991:25) She is the ebb and flow of birth, death and rebirth. In Goddess oriented religions there is no question of the cosmos having been created once and for all, instead it is fundamental that there is a constant re-creation. This re-creation is assured by rituals.

2. Psychodrama and Ritual

Both in psychodrama and in ritual something is created. In the moment, entering another reality, symbolized by the circle, something is both created and re-created. Whether it be one's personal myth or the creation myth of cosmos it is Here and Now, within this circle, that it is created. In the myth it might have happened millions of years ago but in the ritual the Goddess is Here and Now creating the universe. In linear time and reality people involved in a psychodrama might long be dead, still within the circle they are alive, participating in creating new life for the group and the protagonist.

2.1. Psychodrama

Psychodrama is sometimes called the theatre of truth. Using psychodramatic techniques one becomes aware of how many different kinds of truth there really are in any given situation. Meeting one's children, husband, boss or parents on the psychodrama stage is meeting many different

”truths” which usually are quite different from my ”truth”. And then there is the truth of the chair, the table, the room itself and the picture on the wall...

The aim of psychodrama, as I perceive it, is not conformity but that every group member should grow in understanding of herself and others and learn to live with all these different ”truths”.

A psychodrama is an act of creation where one practices spontaneity. To learn how to act in a new way in old situations and adequately in new situation is a major aim in all psychodramatic work.

”The object of psychodrama, was, from its inception, to construct a therapeutic setting which uses life as a model, to integrate into it all the modalities of living, beginning with the universals - time, space, reality and cosmos,..”
(Moreno 1975b:11)

Using life as a model, exploring some part of one's own life on the stage gives one, not only the possibility to see one's own life from the perspective of others, but also an opportunity to explore how part of one's own life could become different if one makes different choices from one's usual choices. There is a possibility to explore what it feels like, and what could happen if one, for example quitted one's job, without having to do it in ”real” life. It is an opportunity to try out and practice meeting one's fear in a specific situation with another response than for example anger or self pity. Psychodrama gives an opportunity to see and experience that there is more than one option, that there is more than one possible choice.

To explore this you have to leave everyday reality behind, you have to enter another reality. To create this other reality, this unlimited reality, the four universals time, space, reality and cosmos are altered. The ordinary reality of our everyday life is, in this altered reality, given a new or other dimension.

2.2. Ritual

In ”The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English” ritual is defined as being:

”all the rites or forms connected with a ceremony; way of conducting a religious service”.

According to Hellquist ritual comes from the Latin *ritualis* - as concerned with religious practice to *ritus*, rite probably derived with the Greek *arithmós*. (Hellquist 1989)

Around the Mediterranean in the ancient time arithmetic and numbers were allotted cosmic qualities. They were used to describe the construction of cosmos. Arranging the numbers in certain patterns was to make a map of cosmos, a symbolic picture of how the universe is constructed. Numbers were also used in how to understand, relate to, and sometimes change, the cosmic, or universal influences.

(Cooper 1993a:188-189)

As ritual is derived from *arithmós* let us connect ritual to the ancient concept of numbers. Then a ritual is to be understood as an enactment of the cosmic structure in order to understand, relate to, and sometimes change, the cosmic influences.

The understanding and knowledge of the cosmic order is gained through myths. In ritual another reality is entered, and it is within that reality that humans can reestablish contact with the mythical past.

(Ray 1976:41)

The *Kinaaldá* is one example of a myth enacted. It is a re-creation of the first *Kinaaldá* performed, the *Kinaaldá* held for the Changing Woman, one of the most important of the Navajo deities. The ritual is built up by singing, led by a chief singer, a person expected to have perfected her thoughts and have full knowledge. She then, by singing, has the power to recreate the world of the present into the image of the world and time of their myths. (Lincoln 1991:24-26)

In this thesis I am proposing that there is a connection between psychodrama and aboriginal rituals. Moreno himself saw the connection.

”For a true precedent we must look into civilizations of the prehistoric period. In primitive dramatic rites the aboriginal performer was not an actor, but a priest. He was like a psychiatrist engaged in saving the tribe, persuading the sun to shine or the rain to fall. In order to draw from natural forces an appropriate response, methods of pretending, persuasion and provocation akin to primitive psychodrama may have been widely used.” (Moreno 1985:13)

Since time immemorial humans have used rituals. We do not know exactly how, or to what ends, the rituals were conducted, but humans, mainly women, in ritual circles are depicted in cave paintings in Europe since the Paleolithic time. According to Eisler both life and death, the benign side of life as well as the darker aspects of reality, were processed in rituals.

”At the same time that religious rites and ceremonies were designed to give the individual and the community a sense of participation in and control over the life-giving preserving processes of nature, other rites and ceremonies attempted to keep the more fearful processes at bay.” (Eisler 1988:20)

In *Psychodrama since Moreno* Martti Lindqvist, sociodrama director, writer and trainer, and Doctor of Theology, writes:

”As a matter of fact most rituals, religious and secular, are means of describing, mastering and changing life in dramatic form.” (Lindqvist 1994:192)

He argues that drama has been used to heal people, to unite them and that it is through experiencing the common myths of human history, with emphasis put on the spiritual, that this unity has emerged.

(Lindqvist 1994:192)

Both psychodrama and aboriginal ritual are enacted in a circle.

2.3. The circle

As a worldwide symbol of wholeness and a cosmic image the circle has been used by mankind since time immemorial.

Aboriginal symbolism is often difficult to date, but an ancient circle-symbol that is possible to date is the Yin and Yang dated 2852 - 2738 BCE. The Chinese symbol of Yin and Yang is the circle as a symbol of cosmos, containing both the female principle of Yin and the male principle of Yang. The black is the female principle, that which is dark and hidden, white is the male principle, the light, clear for anyone to look at. The black is perfectly balanced with the white and both the black and the white field has a little dot of the opposing color - both the Yin force and the Yang force holds the potentiality of its opposite.

(Cooper 1993b:30 - 33)

This is a form of "mandala". Mandala is Sanskrit and means magic circle. A mandala is a circle containing other shapes, often squares and triangles arranged around a center. (Blomkvist/Rützel 1994:16, Cooper 1993a:121)

"A mandala is an image of the universe: it constantly grows out of a center and tends towards the periphery, and at the time converges from diversity towards the center." (Blomkvist/Rützel 1994:16)

As a symbol of the universe the mandala contains everything. Another circular symbol, universally spread, is the Ouroboros, the snake that bites its own tail - my end is my beginning. The Ouroboros symbolizes the undifferentiated whole, the aboriginal one-ness (unity) and the cycle of birth, death and re-birth. (Cooper 1993a:143) As the 0 the circle is full, it contains everything, but at the same time it is void for you to fill with your own energy. (Cooper 1993a:189)

The circle is the ever changing wheel of time. It encompasses everything that was, everything that is and everything that is to be. It teaches us that everything that was is also that which is to be, since the circle transcends time. Being everything that is to be the circle is also a symbol for destiny, the destiny of every individual, the destiny of everything in cosmos. (Cooper 1993a:27)

2.3.1. The Circle in Psychodrama

The original psychodrama stage is circular, the circle being a symbol of wholeness containing everything. At the same time a circle is void for you to fill with your own form of energy, with whatever material you need to produce.

In an interview by Blomkvist, Zerka Moreno says:

”The idea that the stage is circular means that you learn to control your own world here. The metaphor is very clear. Another thing about a circle is that it is total and complete in itself, and it is infinite.” (Blomkvist/Rützel 1994:14)

In psychodrama one can work consciously with the circle and its qualities. In the circle we not only control our own world, but, as seen in previous chapters, we create it. Shaping the circle as perfectly as possible when sitting in the group, and being aware of its symbolism lifts the qualities of the circle to a conscious level and helps us to use it purposefully. Working psychodramatically is working within the circle. Generally psychodrama sessions begin in a circle, during the ”come-together” of the group. In the warm up we are, according to Lindqvist reconnecting with the first universe, and the process of becoming ”I-Gods”. (Lindqvist 1994:201)

The symbolism of the circle can, in different ways, be brought to a conscious level. One way in which I do this in my tarot courses (that are a combination of psychodrama self-experience group and a course in the symbolism of the tarot and how to interpret the cards) is to use the tarot card ”Wheel of Fortune”. ”The Wheel of Fortune” is the ever changing wheel of time and concerned with destiny (among other things). To let the group-members experience one aspect of the card, ie that destiny and how one relates to it differs depending on time and criteria, we make a wheel by putting a length of cloth on the floor in a circle. The wheel, symbolized by the length of cloth, moves sunwise, and to emphasise that this is also a physical reality, growth is placed to the east, ripeness to the south, decay/integration in the west and death/rebirth in the north.

Then I ask the group-members - where on the wheel are you? - giving

different criteria. The criteria given can move in time, or be different aspects of the group-members current life. Moving around the wheel, putting into words why a certain position is taken, has been experienced by group-members as: "I am my own circle which is related to all other circles. My circle contains, simultaneously, everything I have experienced and which position I take depends on, among other things, how I relate to an experience. I feel different depending on the position I take, so I generally must be feeling many different feelings at the same time, only I have never thought of it" (group members). Since the wheel is made of a length of cloth it gets disarranged when group-members walk on it, and has to be reshaped. This act of constantly reshaping the physical symbol of the cosmos is part of a warm-up to the possibility of rearranging one's own cosmos.

In *The Theatre of Spontaneity* Moreno says that he has taken the model of the stage from nature itself.

"Therefore, after I had constructed a stage for the new theatre which was to give mankind a sort of dramatic religion, many asked by whom I had been influenced to build a stage of such dimensions, one which is placed in the center instead of the periphery; one which permits movement unlimited instead of limited; one which is open to all sides instead of in front; one which has the whole community around it, instead of only a part; one which has the form of a circle instead of a square; one which moves up in vertical dimensions, instead of maintaining a single level. The stimulus was not the stage of Shakespeare or the stage of the Greeks, I had taken the model from nature itself." (Moreno in Blomkvist/Rützel 1994:16)

2.3.2. The Circle in Aboriginal Societies and in Neo-shamanism

In the neo-shamanistic groups the symbolism of the circle is closely connected to the forces of nature. Their rituals take place in a circle, whether it is a drum-journey, a vision-quest or a Sun-Dance, a sacred circle is created. The sacred circle is the cosmos, but a more powerful cosmos than the "ordinary" cosmos, since the forces of nature, Goddesses, Gods and spirits are invoked into the circle.

Black Elk puts the aboriginal belief around the circle as follows:

”You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the power of the world always works in circles, and everything tries to be round. Everything is done in a circle. The sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball, and so are the stars. The wind in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so is everything where Power moves.”
(Black Elk in Mosher 1995:0)

The Amer-Indians tipis and the Sami kåtor are circular to symbolize the dynamic movement of the circle. (Cooper 1993a:27) It is not out of convenience many aboriginal people have round houses, instead they are round to symbolize cosmos. And tents has a central pillar which, according to Eliade means that ”every human habitation is projected to the ”Center of the World”. (Eliade 1974:265)

When working ritually sacred space is, as we have seen, created in the form of a circle, a symbol of cosmos, or as Black Elk puts it:”...that in setting up the sun dance lodge, we are really making the universe in a likeness;...”
(Black Elk 1996:470-479)

This is done in many different ways. It can be a mental or physical circle. When the Oglala Sioux and other Amer-Indians prepare for the Sun-Dance the lodge is built, and objects, symbolising different parts of cosmos are brought into the lodge.

Another, and last, example of the creation of sacred space is the Navajos Kinaaldá. It is held in the hogan, the house, of the initiand. The hogan is a circular house, and it is sung into a sacred space:

”Heye nene yana -
I fully understand it, I fully understand it,
I fully understand it, I fully understand it.

Now with my doorway, now with my doorcurtain
 the house has come into being, it is said
 I fully understand it, I fully understand it,
 I fully understand it, I fully understand it.”

The singer goes on singing creating the frame, the floor, everything the house is made of. Then she, with her song, creates what is needed in the house and finally she concludes:

”Now long life, now everlasting beauty,
 were brought into the interior, it is said.
 I fully understand it,
 I fully understand it, I fully understand it.
 I fully understand it, I fully understand it,
 I fully understand it, I fully understand it, it is said.” (Lincoln 1991:18)

Both psychodrama and rituals are mainly performed in, and together with, a group.

2.4. The Role of the Group

2.4.1. The Role of the Group in Psychodrama

Since his early youth Moreno was aware of the power of a group. And when reading his views on cosmology it can easily be understood why interaction and encounter were of importance to Moreno, why he created methods to work with groups instead of methods to work with individuals separately. In psychodrama it is the whole group that works, and the drama belongs to the group. At the surface it can look as if it is mainly the protagonist working, it is her drama and she is aided in it by the auxiliaries. But once the psychodrama has started the protagonist is the therapist, the

director the catalyst and the psychodrama belongs to the group and is a group production. And according to Moreno:

”The process of healing - catharsis - does not take place in a physician’s secluded consultation room, it takes place in the group, in the midst of community.” (Moreno in Mosher 1995:266)

2.4.2. The Role of the Group, in Everyday Life and in Ritual, as Seen in Aboriginal Society

Everything I have read on the subject has made me believe that in early history, as well as in most aboriginal societies, ritual work was/is mainly performed together in a group. Even if the ritual is led by ritual leaders everyone attending is also participating. There is not a division between actors and public, instead the whole group is involved. This wholeness, here exemplified by the whole groups involvement in the ritual, permeates, as we have seen in connection to the ”web”, aboriginal thinking. Since everything is bound together in the web, life is not divided into everyday life and religious life, rather religion, and thereby ritual, is a way of life. Religious beliefs, ceremonies and tradition regulate life. Religion is not a belief in a certain goddess or god. Life revolves around religion and more or less every act you carry out is a religious act. Hunting, planting, harvesting, preparing food, copulating, giving birth, marriage are all religious activities.

”Religion, through the eyes of its participants, sustains the cosmos - the seasons, the fertility of crops, the power of magic - without which human productive effort could not be realized.” (Keesing 1981:186)

As everything is bound together in the web, there is an aspect of aboriginal society that differs greatly from our individualized society. In an aboriginal society the good of the tribe/group is always of more importance than the wishes of the individual member. And at the same time the tribe is of uttermost importance to the individual member. In many parts of Africa, and in many tribal societies all over the world, a person is generally defined in terms of the social group they belong to. A person is thought

of first of all as a constituent of a particular community since it is the community which defines who she is and who she can become.

”In the traditional context religion can not be a purely personal affair; the relation to the sacred is, first of all, a communal one... African ritual has a specifically soul-functional character, and this is clearly recognized by the participants themselves. Every sacrifice is a recreation of the groups solidarity, every rite of passage a reforging of the corporate life.” (Ray 1976:17)

As we have seen life, group and religion is interwoven and can therefore not wholly be dealt with separately. In that aspect the neo-shamanistic practitioner stands closer to the psychodramatist. Both neo-shamanistic rituals and psychodrama take place in groups coming together for the specific purpose of working ritually/psychodramatically.

Both in psychodrama and in aboriginal/neo-shamanistic ritual reality is extended.

2.5. Reality

Living is being in actual reality. The way one handles life differs, and the manner we handle our reality may be defective and inadequate. Changing one's self-perception can be very threatening, and extremely difficult. To make it possible to work towards a transformation, you, in psychodrama as in a ritual, enter into another reality.

2.5.1. Surplus Reality

Moreno calls this other reality surplus reality. In surplus reality the limitations and restrictions of ordinary life, of our everyday reality, are suspended. In the foreword to *Psychodrama* volume 1 he writes that in psychodrama reality and fantasy is not in conflict with each other.

”Surplus reality ... means that there are certain invisible dimensions in the reality of living, not fully experienced or expressed, and that is why we have to

use surplus operations and surplus instruments to bring them out in our therapeutic settings.” (Moreno 1975a:16)

Psychodrama tries to integrate all aspects of living. To be able to express and explore those dimensions we have to leave our ordinary day to day reality. The circular time- and space-concept is the basis for this other reality. The linear time of every day life does not exist. Blomkvist argue that:

”On the psychodrama stage there is no differentiation of time at all. There is also no differentiation of different kinds of realities with one regarded as more real, valid or true than another. (Blomkvist/Rützel 1994:16)

One can be a very old woman in one scene and an unborn baby in the next. One can even have two scenes with two different time-aspects on the stage at the same time.

Space is also unlimited. In ordinary life space regulates our movements. If you only have little space your movements are restricted. Since the creative space in psychodrama is unlimited it gives you options. Do I want to fill the space with a lot of things and furniture to make it cozy, or do I want to leave it as empty as possible to give a feeling of possibilities and movement? In surplus reality you can travel to the stars or walk the bottom of the sea, you can build your own castle or go out horseback riding. You can put the whole of you hometown on the stage, or the whole stage can become one single bed. Our everyday perception of space, and thereby size, belongs to our everyday life. Naturally we can bring everyday life concepts into psychodrama, but psychodrama gives us the option of many other realities. In surplus reality our images are our reality. Surplus reality can be used to explore and understand one's roles, exploring and understanding one's everyday reality and learning to handle life more adequately. But you can also explore your own butterfly if you want to. The only restriction is the restriction of one's imagination, one's will to explore and one's own limits of creativity and spontaneity. Surplus reality though, has a much deeper dimension as well. According to Moreno:

”Man is a ”*cosmic man*,” not only a social man or an individual man...Within the

framework of psychodrama...cosmic phenomena can be integrated into the therapeutic process.” (Moreno 1975a:19)

Human beings have since time immemorial been concerned with the creation of man and the creation of the universe, with the divine, with where do we come from and to where do we go, and how, where and what is the power of our destiny. To Moreno it was essential to bring these aspects into the therapeutic setting.

2.5.2. Neo-shamanistic and Aboriginal Reality

The ordinary reality in aboriginal societies is, as we have seen earlier, animistic. Animism is a worldview where everything is alive, everything has soul and spirit. Since everything is alive, and everything is part of the cosmic web everything has the same importance as a part of the web. That means that everything created has the same dignity. Humans are not superior to other life forms, instead other life forms are seen as another kind of people and it is therefore perfectly normal to ask a stone for permission to pick it up.

(Hughes 1996:138-140)

When working ritually one enters another reality.

2.5.2.1 Non-Ordinary Reality

In the neo-shamanistic worldview the ordinary, actual reality is only a part of the total reality. The other part of reality is called Non-Ordinary Reality and is inhabited by ”living forms, energies, or forces, sometimes seen as ”Spirits”. (Lindquist 1997:14) This Non-Ordinary Reality is entered through altered states of consciousness achieved through ecstatic techniques affecting bodily sensation, for example drumming, sweat-lodge, singing or dancing. The Non-Ordinary Reality one travels to has three levels.

The overworld, the middleworld (even if the middleworld is our world, the world of all people and of human habitation, one can travel in it in an altered state of consciousness and see and experience things we usually do not see in our everyday world) and the underworld. The landscapes one visits and the beings one meets are one's own and can be seen as spirit helpers and/or as symbols of one's own unconscious. (Lindquist 1997:14-17)

In aboriginal societies the different worlds and their inhabitants are connected to the tribes myths. As stated earlier, the three regions, the overworld, middleworld and underworld, is a common determinator. But, as Eliade describes shamanistic practices from all over the world, the description of how the worlds look varies. The over all symbolism is the same, but how the other worlds, and the beings inhabiting them, look, differ. That is because they are closely connected to the mythology of the tribe. The myths describe the worlds that the shamaness travels to. Therefore the worlds and the entities populating them are not as individual and in the same way unique as in the urban neo-shamanistic practices. But even if the spirit-helpers of the aboriginal shamaness is traditional to that particular tribe, it is still that specific shamaness' personal spirit-helper. (Campbell, Mosher, Lindquist, Eliade)

2.5.3. Comparison

When we enter surplus reality in psychodrama we enter an animistic world. According to Blomkvist (supervision December 1996) Moreno said that in psychodrama everything comes alive. On the psychodrama-stage we can talk to a tree or the room, and get answers. But there is always a person being in the role of the tree or the room. We don't really expect to get answers from the room itself. From a neo-shamanistic perspective one would expect exactly that, even if not in words, in human language, but in a feeling or kind of energy that the room would use. To aboriginal people, as we have seen earlier, it is perfectly normal behaviour to take a specific question and put it to a bird and ask for help. So that which we consider as

surplus reality in psychodrama is partly ordinary reality to the neo-shamaness or to aboriginal people.

But sometimes in psychodrama we also enter a deeper dimension of surplus reality, more similar to the Non-Ordinary Reality. That is when encountering the divine. And by this I don't mean when someone in the group is taking the role of for example God or Jesus. Instead I'm referring to those precious moments in psychodrama when I have felt the presence of a divine power entering the session.

2.6. Inversion, the World Upside Down

2.6.1. Inversion in Psychodrama

Moreno knew that when one inverts the cosmic order something new is born. He assigned April 1, April Fool's Day as the birthday of psychodrama. He describes how, during the middle ages the adults would reverse roles with the children, the children running the village while the adults played, usually forbidden, games.

In psychodrama this is used in the "Do", "Undo" and "Redo". My interpretation is that the "Do-phase" of psychodrama is recreating the cosmos as seen by the protagonist in the matter concerned. It can be a meeting with one's boss, a childhood experience or whatever the protagonist needs to work with. The "Do-phase" is seen from the protagonist's perspective. In the "Undo-phase" everything is inverted, that which could not possibly happen is enacted. In the "Redo-phase" the protagonist enacts how she wants it to be done, now. I will give an example.

In the first scene the protagonist acts out her childhood home. She is brought up in a very strict and religious family. Sundays are devoted to bible reading, it is forbidden to eat meat or drink alcohol. There is a grown up sister in the family who is mentally retarded. She is served meat at meals because she is believed to need it. She also has a number of other extra favours. The protagonist feels that her sister is always getting privileges,

and that her mother helps the sister with things she is capable of doing herself. The protagonist also feels that the older sister has not had a chance to learn and develop, being overprotected by her mother.

In the second scene there is meat at the table, there is alcohol, dancing and singing. All the sisters get favours, the grown up sister is not specially favoured and is also capable of doing things for herself.

In the third scene there is a meeting between the two sisters where the protagonist is, on more equal grounds, talking to her sister.

2.6.2. Ritual Inversion

Ritual inversion is common among aboriginal people all over the world, either for healing, or, as rites of cosmic maintenance, a way in which people ritually contribute to maintain the world as it should be. Ritual inversion varies from tribe to tribe, both in how and when the rituals are conducted, but the purpose of the ritual, that cosmos shall be well ordered, is widely spread.

There are many healing rituals described where an inverted phase plays a major part, as with the Gogo of Tanzania.

The Gogo are semipastoralist people, and when their cattle are sick and listless they stage an inverted ritual where the men take on the women's tasks and stay in the village, while the women herd the cattle, which is usually forbidden for them to do, since it is otherwise the men's responsibility. When something is not as it should be, in this case when the cattle are sick, the Gogos consider the cosmos to be in disorder. They call this "a bad ritual state" which means that the ritual order is upside down. The only way to return it to "good ritual state" is to undo the bad order. "...the role reversal of the women is logically correlated with the rest of the Gogo cosmology, so as to create a "reverse" ritual state." (Ray 1976:98) When the women enact the role of men the ritual order is reversed as they are beha-

ving out of the cosmic order, and thereby reverse the order of things. The ritual state that was bad is hereby reversed and becomes good.

The reversal of roles goes on for two days. Afterwards the women remake (redo) the cosmic order through dance and song and "throw away" the cattle disease.

2.6.3. Comparison

In the above given example of ritual inversion there is no "Do-phase" comparable to that of psychodrama, since that which has to be healed, the cattle disease, is common knowledge to the group. The "Do" is the cattle disease itself. In the psychodrama the "Do" is here presented through the scene with the strict religious family. This is not common knowledge to the group. That is one reason why it has to be enacted. Another reason is for the group and protagonist to achieve "proper ritual state", ie enter surplus reality.

In the "Undo phase" of the psychodrama the "impossible" is acted out. To the family of the protagonist, as described above, feasting was an impossibility. This is directly comparable to the "impossible" created by the Gogo in their ritual inversion. To them the idea of women hunting and herding cattle is an impossibility. In both cases when that which is considered impossible takes place it opens up new possibilities for change.

The "Redo phase" is used to reshape cosmos, giving it the shape we want it to have. By meeting the sister on a new level the world is, Here and Now in the psychodrama, as we want it to be. To the Gogo people the ritual "throwing away" of the cattle disease is comparable to the "Redo phase". The remaking of the world through singing, dancing and throwing away the disease should result in the disappearance of the disease. If the disease does not disappear it is because something in the ritual was left undone.

In psychodrama we generally do not believe that there is a factual change

in the ordinary reality, rather than that a process of change has been initiated. According to Kate Bradshaw-Tauvon (supervision September 1997) it is rather common though after a psychodrama for the protagonist to go home and experience that others have changed.

In both examples catharsis can be experienced.

2.7. Catharsis

Catharsis means purging or purification. Aristotle used the word to describe the purging of emotions a spectator experienced whilst watching a tragedy. In a play the actors are acting from someone else's script, not from their own emotions and experiences. As a spectator you know that the actors are acting, but you can still be moved. This is what Moreno calls a secondary catharsis. In psychodrama it is the life and emotions of a group member that is acted out. It is "real life" and your involvement is of a deeper dimension. When Moreno studied the concept of catharsis he found that it was connected with spontaneity. To differentiate the Aristotelian form of catharsis, the secondary catharsis from the catharsis Moreno describes, the catharsis that one can gain when one self is involved, when acting one's personal myth, one's own emotions and experiences, Moreno calls this catharsis primary catharsis.

"Catharsis is a central concept in psychodrama and describes the feeling of relief that the protagonist experiences in connection to the session."
(Blomkvist 1987:2)

This does not mean that every psychodrama should or will lead to catharsis. One should not strive towards a cathartic experience during a psychodrama. Catharsis will come when the time is ripe. Sometimes many sessions are needed and/or time to process the drama. Sometimes catharsis comes during events in everyday life, without one being consciously aware of it having anything to do with a previous psychodrama.

In the aboriginal rituals catharsis is a fundamental part of the ritual.

”In the religious concept the process of realization took place in the subject - the living person who was seeking catharsis.” (Moreno 1985:XIV)

In *Psychodrama* volume 1 Moreno writes that in group work catharsis has to be inter-personal, that one person’s catharsis is dependent on catharsis in another person. This is also true for rituals, as they have a cathartic effect on the participants when proper ritual state is achieved.

”Catharsis in psychodrama[is closely connected with death. The protagonist must let old and incorrect notions around himself as a person, what he is and who he is, die” (Blomkvist 1987:2)

Death is a necessary part of rebirth. If nothing dies nothing new is born. If there was no death in the world there would not be any movement at all. The wave of the sea would stand still at it’s peak, the bird would be still in the air, the rose-petal falling of the rose will just have reached the ground. Eternally.

It is when we are able to let old personal myths, old patterns of behaviour die, that we give room for something new to be born within us. This can be a painful process, but it is necessary if we want to grow. If we don’t go through that process our conservative I, the part of us that wants everything to remain the same, will try to keep us locked up as we are. Eternally.

A psychodrama as well as a ritual gives humans a possibility to experience catharsis, and to connect to the world and themselves in a new way. Something is born inside.

Both in psychodrama and in ritual something is created...

Epilogue

To Moreno

for creating a word like "normosis"
 for giving the subjective the same value as the objective
 for writing in circles instead of in a line.

Breath

Listen more to things
 Than to words that are said.
 The water's voice sing
 And the flame cries
 And the wind that brings
 The woods to sighs
 Is the breathing of the dead.

Those who are dead have never gone away.
 They are in the shadows darkening around,
 They are in the shadows fading into day,
 The dead are not under the ground.
 They are in the trees that quiver,
 They are in the woods that weep,
 They are in the waters of the rivers,
 They are in the waters that sleep.
 They are in the crowds, they are in the homestead.
 The dead are never dead.

Than to words that are said.
The water's voice sing
And the flame cries
And the wind that brings
The woods to sighs
Is the breathing of the dead.
Who have not gone away
Who are not under the ground
Who are never dead.

Those who are dead have never gone away.
They are at the breast of the wife.
They are in the child's cry of dismay
And the firebrand bursting into life.
The dead are not under the ground.
They are in the fire that burns low
They are in the grass with tears to shed,
In the rock where whining winds blow
They are in the forest, they are in the homestead.
The dead are never dead.

Listen more to things
Than to words that are said.
The water's voice sing
And the flame cries
And the wind that brings
The woods to sighs
Is the breathing of the dead.

Birago Diop

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