

Sourcing Human Madness

PSYCHODRAMA, SEXUALITY AND A NEW ORDER

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ABSTRACT

'Megalomania Normalis' was a name Dr J.L. Moreno invented to describe everyday inhumanity – madness. He invented Psychodrama to address this universal social phenomenon. *Sourcing Human Madness* addresses questions of central importance to 'who shall thrive' in this 21st century. These are:

What is the core nature of the human being? This essential religious question used **Role Theory** to explain sexual preference.

How might this human nature be better nurtured? This scientific question addresses (a) the complications that have stymied prior researchers of sexual preference and (b) some work-in-progress in Dr Moreno's **Theory of Role**.

KEY WORDS

Moreno, megalomania normalis, role theory, psychodrama, spontaneity, gay, sexual preference, psychology of person, nature, nurture

Following Swedenborg's example, Moreno, the doctor of medicine, was allowing his inner 'voices' to speak, in an attempt to unite religion and science. Later, when developing his philosophy in the United States, Moreno was to insist on the importance of this revolutionary task of integrating religion and science.

Marineau, 1989:67

Introduction

Openly gay men and women allow their sexual preference to speak their inner voice. Despite a long history of cultural oppression, openly gay men and women continue to

put this foundational principle of sociometry into action. It is not gay men and women who have failed themselves, family, parents and social decency but a dis-unified society that fails them. It is their existential validation that reflexively validates them.

There are at least two living expression of this life and death dilemma – a man who is gay and therefore role-playing for the purpose of learning, and a closet-gay man who is playing-it-straight and therefore role-taking for the purpose of social conformity. Unresolved in Dr. Moreno's theory of role, the dilemma is here identified and resolved in a progressive world order. *Sourcing Human Madness* proposes an enabling solution — reality.

Role Theory

The Politics of Sexuality

Many gay people experience enormous distress in coming out. It is difficult to realise that one's conditioned straight-self is unreal and that one has therefore a negative identity, and then to create from nothing a real and positive identity. It is a double jeopardy when one also realises that homosexuality is demonised by family, organisations and institutions. However, this negative identity need not become destructive. Using a photographic analogy, a negative comes before a positive print. The closet gay has an identity that is not yet real.

Negative identities result in psychological disorders (Franklin, 1988). They can be destructive to self, or socially destructive to others through delinquency and criminality. Historically, our societal mentality has maintained that homosexuality is caused by an inherent defect in human nature. The Catholic Church has demonised homosexuality. But nurture, not nature, creates social dysfunction, and asocial and antisocial behaviour (Franklin, 1988). Our nurturing values are disordered and need treatment, not the gay individual.

How does Moreno's theory explain the origin of these asocial and antisocial roles? Is psychodrama part of a new order? That self emerges from roles, and not vice versa, contradicts a commonly held scientific and religious conserve of right order. Dr. Moreno identified in people a mad-normality he called 'Megalomania Normalis'. In one's own mind, one is an egotist. The toward-against-away coping conserves that we use as a framework in psychodramatic analysis are actually 'Megalomania Normalis' but are presented as though reality. *It is people* who create mental and criminal disorder in the absence of unity. *It is people* who learn to cope with disorder and then call those coping roles normal. It is spontaneity-lost, this fallen-ness from reality as a reaction to Basic Anxiety (Horney, 1992). Traditionally, Catholics have recognised it as Original Sin. As a theorist, Dr. Moreno did not explicitly resolve this paradise-lost dilemma, and psychodrama theory can therefore seem un-unified. However, he developed psychodrama to treat this normalised madness of everyday people, and the abused and neglected victims of this persistent socially-constructed inhumanity.

High Cost of Coping

The gay community pays a penalty for these unanswered questions. As a clinical psychologist, I hear stories most days from gay men and women who 'come out' and are ostracised by their parents, families and by society. These are the 'torture-tales' of normalised madness, maintained by tradition and other collective conventions and embedded as values in socio-cultural roles. What mentality in our society causes this fragmentation? Why do gay people continue to experience abuse and neglect? In whose name do parents and others such as the Catholic Church believe they act? Rather than blaming individuals, our society needs to heal itself and become unified so that this social fragmentation, metaphorically Satan, is not passed onto the next generation.

There is an emerging understanding that a new order of humanity is required. Moreno's psychodrama awakens that new order in people. Psychodrama theory and practice proved to be a robust guide for my doctoral research in the 1980s. Role theory, particularly the concepts of social role and psychodramatic role, are crucial to understanding sexual preference. The question about what makes a person gay or straight is not, however, the first question. The first questions revolve around 'what makes a person?' and 'what makes a unified person?' These metaphysical questions anticipate an existential dilemma posed by psychodrama. How do people create a unified reality that is not divided by difference between the psychological and social, the individual and the collective. Without a personally experienced unified sense of self, reality appears divided and sexual preference seems born of conflict. There are two theorists of role and social unity, Mead (1934) and Moreno (1934). In the following sections I will discuss the contribution of each.

What makes a Person?

This question may seem simple. However, there is no accepted and universal theory of human personality. Psychology is not unified and the fragmentation coalesces around a philosophical and practical dilemma — is the scientist outside or inside the field of his or her experiment? Without a unified model of human personality, there is no generally accepted theory of reality and roles emerge from a reified self. Science is not unified, acknowledging relativity but not the absolute (Franklin, 2008). The integration of relativity and the absolute in personality, and in society and its institutions, is required so that closet-gay people, as exemplar, are not required to live out the social imperative of institutionalised duality.

In my doctoral research (Franklin, 1988) I proposed 'Psychology of Person' as a systems theory of personality, drawing on von Bertalanffy's (1968) general systems theory and Moreno's role theory. Whereas Mead (1934) confused social role and unified role, Moreno (1934) proposed role as the unified expression of psychodramatic *and* social role. The psychodramatic role expressing an individual human psyche is crucial in understanding individual experience, personality, individuation and sexual preference.

Psychology is generally defined as the study of the mind and consequent behaviour. Person includes one absolute, psyche, and four potentia. In developmental order these four potentia are the psychological, biological, social and spiritual. Developmentally,

the self or spirit arises from the roles, not the roles from the self. Person also includes three developmental paradigms — the psychosomatic integrating body and soul (green), the psychosocial integrating psyche and socius (mature), and the psychodramatic integrating universality (ripe). Our psyche is innate in these paradigms, our soul existential or god-given. Psyche is prime and absolute, and is then subject to man-made nurture. Power is not given to mankind to alienate a man from his soul without causing asocial and antisocial dysfunction and dis-unity in society. Many people, including gays, have constantly to resist the power-mentality of 'Megalomania Normalis' that is institutionalised in family, community, state and church.

This divine or innate bond between potential self and psyche is enacted socially in the attachment of child to parent. The child experiences anxiety and develops a phobic mentality instead of spontaneity, to the extent that the parent fails in their nurturing role as double. In 1945 Horney called a phobic mentality Basic Anxiety, although the Catholic Church had first named it Original Sin. I usually call this existential angst that is expressed through a cover or coping role, social phobia. Moreno understood anxiety as the absence of spontaneity and this has been empirically demonstrated (Franklin, 1988). Coping with that absence, and hence confusion, creates a virtual reality, a normalised pathological state, 'Megalomania Normalis'. An exemplar, the closet-gay, denotes a failure of adequate socialisation by the parent who is doubling in loco parentis for society. And this cycle regenerates itself because society is not unified.

'Megalomania Normalis' describes a parlous state of antisocial and asocial role development. It has numerous manic expressions and names including parentification, narcissism, road-rage, control freak, bully, terrorist and obsessive compulsive disorder. These covers name a way of coping for the abandoned and depressed self which, like a gay identity, are demonised by a dis-unified society, in the name of unity. This cover of darkness requires a transformation, or to use a religious term, a resurrection that draws spiritual life from death. Psychodrama awakens this new order in people. *It is people* who can transform and together bring about a new social order of unity.

Theory of Role

Unity of Person

Picture first a known person. Role is their expression of person. In Western thinking this can mean unity as one, indivisible, one-is-one. This convention used by Mead (1934) in *Mind, Self and Society* is often used by scientific disciplines, such as psychology. Role taking, this first theory of role, derives from the Mosaic tradition of unity, unity as indivisible (Franklin, 2004). On the one hand, this known person has an innate relationship or bond with self, an absolute subjective-nature expressed by the psychodramatic role. On the other hand this known person has a relationship with the other. This social role is companionable, relative and negotiable. Objectively this socius, or companion in person, expresses social values. Social roles express nurture, the person's developmental history of learning, and therefore unified roles are relatively adequate, over-developed,

under-developed, conflicted or absent.

All three together in one, the psychodramatic role, the social role and their higher-order spirit of unification, makes role a measure of human personality. Philosophically, role-playing derives from the Christian tradition of Trinitarian unity, meaning three-in-one or integration. Here, personality or the psychology of person, is both singular, 'of psyche' and plural, 'of socius'. The absolute and the relative exist in one person and are integrated in unity. In order, though not in dis-order, person integrates subjective and objective experience in one.

Old and New Unity

Dr. Karen Horney (1885-1952), psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, first published *Our Inner Conflicts: A Constructive Theory of Neuroses* in 1945. She observed the phenomenon of Basic Anxiety that is resolved neurotically through coping by going towards, going away or going against. *The Person*, such as a closet-gay, develops partiality by abandoning self and in this abandonment of Eros-nature lives in unreality. In metaphorical terms, this is Satan abandoning God. Psychologically, this abandoned state is variously described in the literature as parentification, social phobia, narcissism, original sin and 'Megalomania Normalis'. Its effect is disorder, dehumanising mental and criminal behaviour. As though imprisoned in mind's collective unconscious, *it is people* less amenable to new, complex and contradictory learning in social life. Like a child surviving in an old-fashioned, loveless orphanage there is a profoundly stupefying effect on the realised self. The individual's spontaneity and social learning ability are impaired at an early age. Maturity and adult spiritual development, what has come to be called individuation, are compromised.

Society generally attributes disorder at the individual level, as though there is an inherent fault at the core of an individual person. Gay men in a ridiculing society are the research exemplar. The gay man who develops a closeted identity joins the cult of 'Megalomania Normalis' and thereby abandons and demonises his Eros-self, or soul. To avoid persecution, he lives reactively instead of genuinely, and that is the tragedy.

Historical religious absolutes and relative scientific confusions seem to block a genuine understanding of human sexuality. It is important for researchers to comprehend reality before applying dysfunctional analysis to sexuality. My research tested old and new versions of unity implicit in Moreno's theory of role — Mosaic and Christian, role-taking and role-playing. Old theories, good for their own time, are superseded by new theories because each has its use-by-date. We can look back to childhood as though longing for a time of safety. Our parents may have failed to provide adequate doubling and we may have developed basic anxiety, depression and a sense of failed existence. The here and now may seem unknown and unsafe. Looking back to the Mosaic vision of social unity, we see a jealous God who mirrors our own experiences of grumpy 'Megalomania Normalis'. We may stay locked into old coping behaviour, over-valuing the conventions and traditions of our culture and creating a dysfunctional personality that expresses a problematic mentality. Like Lot's Wife, backwards-looking conflicts with forward progress to meet a newly emerging unified society.

Sexual Preference

The Adam and Eve model of opposites attract, of difference, has been a dominating hetero-normative myth applied as though fundamental to social unity. Similarly, Western science has created a negative reality whereby differences are valued over similarities. The reductionist effect of this narcissism is described in *The Wreck of Western Culture: Humanism Revisited* (Carroll, 2004). An observer of culture can readily see symmetrical gendered relationships and the consequent power struggles that continue male domination and female subjugation, and hence disorder in the world. In *On Rage*, Germaine Greer (2008) sees the disenfranchisement of Australian Aboriginal men as a means of understanding their collective and personal dilemma.

Adam and Eve, the genesis figures in the old Mosaic tradition, have created a myth that reality is about heterosexuality, that a gay person is unreal and incomprehensible to a god given heterosexual order. My 1988 doctoral research showed that Adam is gender-female, though male-bodied and masculine and Eve is gender-male, though female-bodied and feminine. Eve's female sexual identity is erotic to Adam, and his male sexual identity is erotic to her. Fizz and fireworks — Eros at play! But this is true for same sex male couples. His male sexual identity is erotic to the other partner and vice versa. Reality is subjectively based on gender, on psychodramatic role functioning. Homosexuality and heterosexuality are an expression of that reality. Self, whether homosexual or heterosexual, man or woman, emerges from the union of psychodramatic and social role. Given the hard time many gay men and women get in the name of nurture, this emergence of self seems more a resurrection from brutality than the development of a human and humane spirit in a civilised world.

Surprisingly, my research showed that straight women and gay men are male-gender persons in biologically female and biologically male bodies respectively. Psychologically, their gender is male. In other words gender of person identifies their male or female Eros nature regardless of the sex of their body, and their subsequent bio-social conditioning towards a sexual identity. This erotic nature appears to have only one social consequence — sexual preference where male-gender persons prefer men and female-gender persons prefer women. Prior research had shown that men's and women's sex and sexual identity does not cause sexual preference. In the subsequent twenty years, no compelling evidence of a bio-genetic cause has been found (Holland, 2004; Stein, 1999) or seems likely.

Heterosexuality is no more created in nature's name than is homosexuality but that customary myth has created disorder. It has allowed the delusion — that straight men are gender male — to continue unchallenged and thus denied a true understanding of human sexuality, including the erotic nature of creativity and reality. The creativity and spontaneity world order contradicts that negative socially constructed reality. It instead values similarity prior to difference. I propose a first natural law that relationship is firstly an attraction of same. Natural law relationships, gay and straight, are based on similarity from which difference emerges. A society founded on this natural law could be unified. Emergent differences, gay and straight, would add social capital and social stability to cultural diversity in the same way that biodiversity aids the stability of other

natural ecosystems.

Thus, heterosexual and homosexual relationships are identically based on innate or god-given identity. The male or female Eros identity in each person is absolute. Soul is an existential phenomenon arising naturally as creativity. The three religions expressed by Moses, Jesus and Mohammed are similar, in that each has a unified society as its vision. I propose that social institutions and individuals review their ideas, beliefs and values about sexual preference, relationship and unity. As psychodramatists, we must look again with fresh eyes at our healing paradigm that is developmental rather than counter-cultural, and regard sociology as a third, newly emerging phase in human culture. The discriminatory legal restrictions defining marriage as only between a man and a woman must be transformed. The Catholic Church will need to address its oppression of gay people, their sexuality and relationships. A papal apology is called for to help remedy a long standing wrong.

Reflections on a Complication

In 1934, Dr Moreno asked 'Who Shall Survive?' My research, discussed above, validated the psychodramatic paradigm over the psychosocial as explanatory of sexual preference (Franklin, 1988). It demonstrated Moreno's hypothesis that anxiety is a personal human experience flagging loss of spontaneity. The background to that experience is social phobia (Franklin, 1988; 1996) or Basic Anxiety (Horney, 1945), arising socio-culturally. The disorder and consequent angst is thus socially constructed. But Moreno's theory of role contains unfinished business. A main complication is the unresolved challenge to the extant Mosaic theory of conserved social unity, embodied by Jesus and Moreno in their practice and theory. This means there are two espoused though different theories of unity in use today and this creates confusion. In socially constructed disorder we humans lose our spontaneity and gain anxiety instead. My research used Moreno's theory of role, and showed that sexual preference is based on innate law and not man-made defect. Innate law takes precedence over socially constructed laws, thus creating a natural metaphysic-physic order.

Summary and Conclusions

In this paper, I have described what makes people gay and straight. A person's male or female psychological nature identifies the nature and origin of sexual preference. That nature question could not be scientifically answered without first resolving nurture's complication. In practice, nurture is confused by two seemingly opposing theories of role. There cannot be two theories of reality in practice without duality and disorder, unless these are complementary. *Sourcing Human Madness* shows that this dualism is integrated in person and in order through spontaneity.

Psychology of person uses the psychodramatic paradigm and resolves the coping dilemma of going towards, against and away in a progressive unification of self and society. With this new order in society, nurture works with nature rather than

dominating it. Instead of man-made law and order, order and law emerge naturally in the space-time continuum. Human motive and time's arrow now point the same way.

Person restores correct order. Historically, Mosaic theory of role is prior to Christianity. However, in practice role-taking prior to role-playing creates a cart-before-horse scenario. Sexually, arousal's warming-up underpins performance. Developmentally, children who have to take roles before they can learn the role through play get stymied, and instead develop basic anxiety and coping behaviour. This is true for adult learning too. However, coping and its accompanying disorder are already normalised.

It is people who, like Lot's Wife, become pillars of salt. Backwards-looking creates a reversal of time and space. Chronology usurps mythology. This 20/20 hindsight can judge and blame, exaggerating a coping sense of a failing and failed existence. Rather than having to repeat history, hindsight can help integrate understanding and compassion with action.

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