DREAMS ON STAGE:
PSYCHODRAMA WORKSHOP WITH LEANDRA PERROTTA

The dream is the small hidden door that leads to the most hidden and intimate soul, open on the original cosmic night that was soul long before there was any ego-consciousness. A dream... is a product of the total psyche. Hence, we may expect to find in dreams everything that has ever been of significance in the life of humanity.

*Dreams.* C.G. Jung

Dreams speak the language of the unconscious, a symbolic language which uses metaphors and is expressed through images and analogies. Symbols are expressions of content that have not yet been fully recognized in consciousness. We can conceive of the dream world as an altered state of consciousness that contains repressed elements from the individual psyche, archetypes from the collective unconscious and split-off parts of the self reflecting one’s present and past state of being.

Dream work is a narrative-based medicine which can provide meaningful insight into unconscious beliefs and desires. Psychodrama helps us to decipher the language of the unconscious by putting dream imagery into action and gives us insight about aspects of our inner world which might otherwise be difficult to understand intellectually and grasp emotionally.

J. L. Moreno, the founder of psychodrama, likens the dream to an inner theatre. The protagonist is encouraged to re-dream the dream, to continue the dream on stage, and to end it in a more empowering manner. At some time between 1912 - 14, Moreno met Sigmund Freud at one of his lectures in Vienna and said to him, "Well, Dr. Freud, I start where you leave off.... You analyzed their dreams, I try to give them courage to dream again." (Marineau, 1989, 30).

For C. G. Jung, the dream embodies archetypes of the collective unconscious. In working with a dream, Jung focused upon the immediate context of the dreamer’s life, viewing the imagery, first through the lens of the present, then through the archetypal lens of the universal and timeless.

Dream work is a work of imaginative psychology in which the therapist gathers the images which emerge from the group: these may include memories, dreams and actively imagined scenes. Leandra Perrotta's method draws on Moreno’s perspective of psychodrama and Jung's approach to depth psychology on dreams, the collective unconscious and individuation. In the workshop, we will learn how to enter dream space by enacting our dreams and extending them in the here and now, creating new endings to unfinished dreams or nightmares. We will explore different categories of dreams, such as symbolic dreams, visionary dreams, recurring dreams and nightmares. We will examine different ways of using, analyzing and contextualizing a dream in a therapeutic setting. We will assess dreams from various perspectives, including the mythical, archetypal, alchemical, and collective and learn how to pay attention to those which resonate most strongly emotionally and elicit a physical response. Finally, we will experience different methods of enacting dreams on stage, including the use of masks.
Special attention will be paid to rituals, considered a protective framework of the experience. We will focus on the use of ritual and music, evoking the healing aspects of traditional ceremonies which sacralise time and space. Rituals provide a feeling of safety, connectedness and belonging, facilitate the expression of feelings in a symbolic manner and establish trust by reinforcing the dynamic matrix and the “holding” function of the group experience.

The workshop is designed to give an opportunity for personal exploration and professional development in a safe and supportive environment. We will engage with relevant theories as well as understand and experience the psychodrama method while learning about overall group process. Participants will be able to identify and develop proficiency with psychodramatic and dreamwork techniques, methods and interventions that can be applied in practice with individuals and groups, and learn how to assess the interpersonal connections between individuals and subgroups within a larger group for the purpose of improving interpersonal and group dynamics.

Suggested Reading

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