The Face Of The Story: A Unifying Psychology For The Art Of Playback Theater

By Mimi Katzenbach

This material is made publicly available by the Centre for Playback Theatre and remains the intellectual property of its author.

PO Box 714, New Paltz, NY 12561 USA
Tel: 845-255-8163 Fax: 845-255-1281 Email: playbackcentre@hvi.net
www.playbackcentre.org

THE FACE OF THE STORY
A Unifying Psychology for the Art of Playback Theater

Mimi Katzenbach

1994

Storytelling is a sacred art. Now, some people they run when they hear that .... Even if I'm bein' funny, I'm givin' my soul. That's a strong statement. Givin' my soul.

Brother Blue, Storyteller

... [In story the living confrontation of the opposites and the transcendent symbol that resolves conflict speak directly to the listener's mind, heart, and imagination in the same images.

Helen M. Luke, The Way of Story

What does an actor want with a conscience, anyway?

Jimminy Cricket, Walt Disney's Pinocchio

SYNOPSIS

At present, the Playback community is divided between seeing Playback as therapy or art. Because Playback's democratic vision of ordinary creativity found support in the group-oriented psychodrama community rather than in the individualist-oriented artistic culture, the psychodrama community's support has paradoxically contributed both to Playback's stability and erosion as a purely theatrical language. Playback is consequently termed the "stepchild" of psychodrama. The promulgation of story-centered therapeutic ideology and the "shadowless" influence of humanistic psychology now threaten to erode Playback's original vision of itself as a story-centered theater of creative enhancement and socio-political empowerment.

An exploration of the iconoclastic Jungian James Hillman's idea of psychology as "soulmaking" gives us a vocabulary which frees us from the identity of "stepchild" without sacrificing the important role psychodrama plays in the development of the Playback practitioner. Using Hillman's language, we can describe ourselves as awakening the aesthetic heart to ensoul the world, releasing us from the false conflict of "therapy" and "art" within our community and challenging us to expand our healing parameters beyond the self to include the world.

PROLOGUE

Every theory is a remaking of the world so that the soul putting forth the theory can live in it. The theory put forth in this paper is no different. It arises from my personal story, the drama of my life's effort to reconcile art and therapy in both an intellectually vigorous and emotionally vibrant way.

I am a published writer who is the daughter of a psychoanalyst who is herself the daughter of a poet. I have been in various forms of therapy, ranging from classic Freudian analysis on the couch to psychodrama, with maverick variations between. Some of the therapists I have seen have been superb; others, terrible. I have trained as a psychodramatist and have a masters degree in health education with a specialty in human sexuality. I have attempted to pursue graduate training in psychology three times. Every time, the creative artist in me has balked. Yet, my creative self continues to feel impoverished without the riches and insights from the field of psychology.

The ideas set forth in this paper are my attempt at this juncture in my life of reconciling these various "mothers" in my personal story. In my personal struggle, I have bent my mind around some serious and sometimes mind-wrenching ideas t so that I could understand how it is that Playback contains my two passions, my many mothers. If Playback is a theater of membership, which I believe it is, then these are ideas which carry for me my own reasons for desiring membership in this unique theater form.

The implications of my ideas for training and the practice of Playback challenge me and, I anticipate, will challenge others. For I am not asking the Playback community to choose between seeing Playback as art or therapy. I am asking the Playback community to allow the taxonomy of "therapy" and "art" to collapse, then steal, like Hermes (patron god of artists) from an unwitting psychologist, an idea. This idea-- ensoulment -- is neither therapy as we would recognize it (despite its being the idea of a Jungian), nor is ensoulment art as we would customarily think of it. It is an idea which I believe can contain Playback as neither art nor therapy while at the same time preserving its debt to both. Ensouling is what we do; Ensoulers are what we are; and, finally, Playback itself is Ensoulment -- as I hope to persuade you in this chapter in my lifelong story about art and therapy, aesthetics and psychology.

If, by the end of my exhortation, I have failed to persuade you that the idea of Ensoulment reconciles therapy and art in the Playback community, I hope that I will at least have succeeded in persuading you that ideas about Playback are critical to the

capacity for membership in each of us. At the very least, I hope I will have aroused other members to undertake their own serious thinkings on what this remarkable process called Playback is.

PART ONE: THE EVOLUTION OF PLAYBACK THEATER THROUGH THERAPY

There is nothing that commends story to memory more effectively than that chaste compactness which precludes psychological analysis. And the more natural the process by which the storyteller foregoes psychological shading , the greater becomes the story's claim to a place in the memory of the listener, the more completely it is integrated into his own experience...

-Walter Benjamin, The Storyteller

I went to see a psychiatrist. He said , "Tell me everything. I did, and now he's doing my act.

Richard Prince, Postcard

PLAYBACK'S ROOTS IN "EFFICACIOUS" THEATER

Ideas about Playback abound in Playback. They inform the many small choices we make during a performance. Ideas lead the Conductor to ask one question rather than another. Ideas shape the choices actors make in the enactment. Ideas subtly determine the story the Teller chooses to tell. Ideas form invisible contours within the audience members, orchestrating their emotional responses. Sometimes the ideas are overt, and we hold them up before our own minds. Sometimes the ideas hover at the threshold of our consciousness, and we are only dimly aware of them. And sometimes they are hidden, buried where we cannot know them directly, and we would be startled to discover what they are.

Of these many informing ideas there are two large ones in the Playback community at the present time. The international Playback community is conflicted between those practitioners, in a number of countries, who want

Playback to be a form of therapy, and those who desire to develop it as a theater art. This conflict is not manifested openly, according to Jonathan Fox, but it is "heated."

People complain about bad performances, and yet resist delimiting Playback as a performance art form, saying the performance quality is secondary to the transformative and healing effects of the experience. Yet this "heat" is a clue to us that something happens which does not feel good, or healing, when the performances are bad. Somehow, the healing aspects of Playback are contained within and heightened by performance. It is as if the intensity of attention performance requires acts like a distillation process which concentrates the power of the "medicine." How? Why? And what word can we call our process which can articulate this intensification of healing through performance? Theater? Therapy? Before we can address these questions, let's step back from the heat -- assured we will return to it -- and ask ourselves an obvious but important question: How is it that a theater form, after twenty years of life, can even be considered a form of therapy? How did we get here?

Playback began as a form of community theater in 1975 during a remarkable period in theater history. In the mid 70s in America and Europe, theater was pulsing with the ideas and methods of Grotowski, Boal, The Living Theater, Schechner's Performance Group, and the genius of Peter Brook, to name a few. It was a period when performance was infused with ideas, many borrowed from psychology and anthropology, about how theater and life were essential to each other. Whether in Grotowski's hieroglyphics and his experiments to make the actor "holy," or in The Performance Group's open rehearsals of Mother Courage on the street, theater was engaged in a global quest for an "efficacious" theatrical form vitally connected to socio-political. process. Influenced by the theology of Paolo Friere and the political theatrical experiments of Boal, Jonathan Fox sought to create an "efficacious" theater which empowered the socially disenfranchised and politically oppressed through the spontaneous enactment of their stories. Hence the Playback expression, "a people without someone to tell their story to is an oppressed people."

As defined by Schechner, "efficacious theater" is on a continuum with entertainment at the other end.1 Because efficacious theater shares with the ritual roots of theater the goal of transformation it is traditional, even when it breaks Western mimetic theatrical norms. Avant garde theater, with its aspirations to transform the participants in the event (e.g., Grotowski's trance state), paradoxically belongs to traditional theater. Using Schechner's model, Playback is a classic example of the combination of ancient and avant garde, which defines Schechner's efficacious theater.

Playback was a theater conceived to be vital to the community, in which the community participated on all levels -- creation, both through telling and through invitation to the audience to be actors; regular or ritualized attendance, as in the traditional monthly performance by the Original Playback Theater Company; and in the continuing life of the theater, through community support. Much like classic Indian

theater, which inspired 70s American practitioners, Playback takes its actors from working members of the community. Playback's everyday, real life content resonates with The Living Theater's experiments to break down the fourth wall and fuse "living" with "theater." Also consistent with American theatrical experiments of the 70s, such as the open rehearsal, Playback reveals its process throughout. The process of creating the enactment is itself an enactment; and, as in the moment when the actors are selecting the cloth, stage business is revealed. Finally, the Playback event in which the participants see enactments of their lives played back effects one's perspective on one's life, thus fulfilling the objective of traditional theater to transform its participants in some way.

Where Playback departs from Schechner is in recognizing that when urban modern Westerners try to create rituals and transformations, "and become shamans in their own time, [they] produce either artificially forced or grossly provocational pieces," according to Jonathan Fox.2 There is indeed something "forced" in Brooks' trip to Africa when his Caucasian company mimicked the native rituals perfectly--but at the same time insulted the tribal members, who were appalled that women and men were dancing their sacred dances together. The provocative acts of the Living Theater when audience members were invited up on stage to fornicate was shocking in New Haven, but once it got to Berkeley it became pornographic and narcissistic squalor. much to the consternation of Judith Malina. 3

Jonathan Fox, aware of the milieu of ritual and the 70s mandate for theater to engage "life" with art, shunned these types of performance inspired by Artaud's "theater of cruelty"4 in favor of a celebrational mode. The model for effective drama that Playback took was one of "awakening in people a sense of their own creativity--not only for art, but for every day social life."5 Instead of forcing shamanisms, Jonathan sought to develop a method in which 5 ordinary contemporary life could be passed through a sharnan-like person -the Conductor -- who did not have to invoke Balinese ideas about art or learn how to scream in order to authenticate or legitimize the process. Jonathan was in search for a way to use story in modern life which could carry the wisdom for the community as story traditionally carried the teachings of the tribe in cultures still based on oral communication, without imitation.

After studying the oral tradition with Albert Lord at Harvard, Jonathan left for Nepal as a member of the Peace Corps. In a remote village, he drew upon his theater skills to perform his Peace Corps duties as an agricultural specialist. Keenly aware of his position as outsider, he never made the attempt to imitate the traditional culture, as did Brook in Africa. He never forgot that he was himself a "deracinated urban child,"6 recognizing that he could not deny his cultural roots without committing psychological and aesthetic fraud. Hence, despite the seminal influence of Nepal on his quest for an efficacious form of story-theater, Jonathan eschewed any replication of 'primitive

cultures' in favor of enactments of our own. He remained faithful to his own story-performing as a seed salesman among traditional shamans--in his quest for a method for "story" to be vital to modern, Western culture.

Jonathan conceived of the actor not as a specially selected artist nor as a derivative tribal member; but as anyone and everyone, here and now, "selling seeds," as it were. "We are all potential actors: not that kind of performer who speaks other people's scripts under other people's direction, but persons capable of creative human action."7 To make this point, as a theater director, Jonathan never imposed certain actions on participants which he had previously deemed of high political, metaphysical, or performance value; never tapped the shoulder of a participant and took him or her off to the woods for five days of privileged screaming. Jonathan refused to be seduced by "the scream" as a symbol for a pure theatrical language. Instead, he sought to "create a context for communication between actor and audience."8 Playback also refused to go into the woods, to retreat into a specially designated "sacred space"; but chose instead to go right into its neighborhood where it looked to the community itself for the material which was then enacted. It did not seek holy martyrdom or primitive authenticity for its actors or itself; it trusted actors own life experiences to provide insight to the Tellers. Playback's role was close to "the jester in a king's court, with his special license for truth and his ability to provide group cohesion."9

Such theatrical experiments as The Living Theater, Grotowski, and the other disciples of Artaud frightened participants -- actors and audience alike -by their attitude of daring people to do the socially and oftentimes sexually unacceptable in order to be among 'the chosen.' This style of tyrannical machismo bullying combined with the metaphysics of stripping bare, denuding the actor and participants literally, emotionally, and intellectually was dangerous -- intentionally so. The end result of this combination of retreat, outrage, bullying, and denuding participants emotionally in order to attain membership among the select could be not only psychologically and physically damaging, but the ultimate realization of such an "impossible" theater, as Kott eloquently and chillingly explicates, is the nightmare of cultism and Jonestown.

10

In eschewing the tyranny of denuding ideology and membership by special selection in favor of an open democracy of ordinary creativity, Playback challenged the masculine ego of the solitary artist-creator. It became, metaphorically, a safe mother rather than the bullying, 'divine' father. And like a safe mother, though the feeling within her embrace was oceanic, the language she spoke to us was mundane and grounded in the every day. Consequently, in contrast to the other experiments of the time, Playback is intimate with daily life and feels safe. And it is safe when done well, a

point I shall return to later. Its success depends upon trust between the actors and the audience. Hence, no specialized language of scream and gesture, no secret election, no unearthly metaphysics, since these promote anxiety. In choosing a salutary, life-enhancing direction, Playback turned away from the dismemberment of the Dyonisian body of 70s theater to a theater of membership. The challenge it gave itself was how to make "membership" theatrically powerful without any special criterion for belonging. This embrace through story became -- and remains -- the transformational task of our theatrical form.

THE PARADOX OF DISSEMINATION: STABILITY AND EROSION

The emphasis in the artistic culture upon the solitary ego of the creator has yet to yield to Playback's plural, feminine vision of creativity. Instead, Playback has found more welcome in the group-oriented community of psychodrama. At the most obvious level, the population of our membership has shaped our identity as a quasi-theatrical form of therapy rather than exclusively a form of theater. Playback has not attracted as many trained performance artists to its ranks as it has an eclectic mix of psychodramatists, therapists, trainers, and others associated with the human potential movement who circulate within the workshop milieu. Playback's 'go anywhere' portability has allowed it to flourish in a variety of therapeutic modalities, from the classic psychodramatist who may utilize Playback in a hospital setting to European existentialist psychotherapists who see in it an excellent example of situational reality. As a community, we cannot help but be influenced by the many therapeutic perspectives of our members and their applications of the form.

The support of the psychodrama community has helped Playback to succeed at what the other similar theatrical experiments of that time have not: to separate the form and practice from the single mind of its masculine creator. The psychodrama community provided Jonathan with both a container and a strategy for Playback to thrive all over the world independently from him. His method of entrusting his theater to others has been consistent with his philosophy that each and every one of us has creative potential which society has dampened. He has practiced his democratic vision of ordinary creativity. Even more singular to the evolution of Playback as a theater form is that, with the exception of Judy Swallow's group in Poughkeepsie and Jo Salas's Hudson River Playback, companies thrive under leaders who were not necessarily members of the Original Playback Theater Company. This distribution of the form, followed by practicing the form without the presence of the founder, has given Playback a stability and longevity which is remarkable among theatrical languages. Even more astonishing is that this unique theatrical mode is vital after almost twenty years.

However, the idea of Playback as exclusively a form of theater has paradoxically been eroded by the psychodramatic community even as it supported Playback. It has been hidden behind the screen of psychodrama – the community and the process. Playback's geographical center near to the Moreno Institute, Jonathan Fox's personal and professional relation with Zerka Moreno, and Playback's honored place in the psychodramatic community, have conflated Playback's theatrical transformational vision with a therapeutic agenda. Consequently, at its best, Playback is described by the Australian psychodramatist Tony Williams as the most significant variation on the psychodrama mode since its inception. At the other end, Playback is sometimes derisively described as psychodrama's "stepchild."

At the core of this paradox lies the role that psychodrama plays in training for Playback practitioners. As Jonathan was developing the theatrical language that would become Playback Theater, he became aware that more than theater training was required. Taken by a friend to a performance of psychodrama at the original Moreno Institute in Beacon, New York, Jonathan sensed that Moreno's philosophy of intimate membership resonated with his own ideas about story and theater and community. Moreno, then in the final year of his life, had a similar ambivalent relationship to the art forms of his youth (Dadaism and surrealism) as Jonathan had to Artaud and the forced shamanisms of his theater contemporaries. Moreno, like Jonathan, might have chosen to go exclusively into expressionist theater, but instead took the bolder course of seeking a salutary, transformational form of theater which extended the boundaries of stage art through the inclusion of nonprofessionals. Moreno's commitment to use artistic skills to create a method which could empower the politically and emotionally neglected spoke to Jonathan's own struggle with his larger vision for Playback, and he settled himself geographically near to psychodrama to learn what it had to offer him in his quest.

Jonathan came to realize the importance of psychodrama personally through his work as Conductor, when he would come up against emotional blocks which impeded his ability to conduct the stories. In psychodrama, he found a system in place which spoke to the psychological awareness required for his work. Here was a form of "insight training" which used action; hence, the translation of the psychodrama skills to Playback was a fluid one. The listening skills, the particular kind of, expansive acting skills which require using one's own story and one's own insight, the philosophy and practice of role reversal, the plurality of "healers" all supporting the protagonist's struggle, and the idea of the stage as a space of psychic process evolved, through

Jonathan's own personal self scrutiny, into central components of the Playback practitioner's repertoire.

Further, Jonathan came to realize that his theater was not only a theater of membership in performance, but a theater of membership for its practitioners. Group process became another aspect of his theater for which additional training was required. Even psychodrama's most scientized area, sociometry, thus found its way into the art form of Playback. Within group life was the understanding that the more members of a Playback group increased their emotional repertoire through "doing one's own work," the more the entire group's performance repertoire was increased.

In my own experience, the types of stories a group elicits are an accurate reflection of its emotional repertoire. There is an uncanny ability of Tellers to know what kind of story can be done by a group. This "reflection" of the group's level of knowledge in the types of stories the group engenders is one of the mysteries of the Playback process which demands from us respect and humility. We work to expand what we can give to Tellers, so that we can enact whatever story comes our way. In our art which seeks to include the disenfranchised, we recognize the importance of fulfilling Goethe's goal as an artist: "Nothing human should be alien to me." Psychodrama has been the primary (and sanctioned) medium for training Playback practitioners to expand our emotional repertoire to meet Goethe's goal."

Psychodramatists have also found a variety of applications and contexts for Playback, both performance and non-performance, which are specially suited to their populations. The key element which appears to make Playback more effective in some situations than classic psychodrama is what is called the "distancing effect" in Playback. For trauma survivors, for instance, being able to have emotional distance from their trauma is more therapeutic than immersion within it; and, at the same time, being actors in stories which resonate with their own appears to have a salutary effect.12 When psychodramatists use Playback as therapy successfully, and have evidence of its power to heal, it can become very difficult to make the translation back into Playback as an art form.

The term "distancing" itself is a good example of the "stepchild;' problem. "Distancing" reflects the perspective of the psychodramatist rather than the Playback practitioner. It describes the Teller's experience in contrast to that of a protagonist in a psychodrama, as the Playback Teller is allowed to view his story rather than descend into it. From the Playback perspective, however, there is no increase in "distance" when Playback is used in a therapeutic context. We seek always to overcome distance, no matter the context. The dominant perspective and vocabulary of psychodrama in our

community may allow us to speak of what we do in fairly impressive terms, yet without coming from our own experience in the work.

We find similar kinds of language problems in finding our terminology when we try to describe how Playback is healing. We tend to say what we do not do rather than what we do do. We do not push the Teller toward insight. We do not diagnose when we listen. We don't quite listen the way that a therapist does, even though therapists and Conductors both use their intuition. We don't really know how to describe the healing effects on actor-patients, though we see evidence of it. We don't heal the same way therapy does. After a while, we sound like the adolescent who has yet to find himself, and can only protest to his parents that he is not like them.

We now begin to come a bit closer to the "heat" of our conflict, the energy of our pair about "art" and "therapy." On the one hand, the support of the psychodrama community, the role psychodrama plays in our training, and the evidence of its powers to heal when used in therapeutic contexts all drive us further and further toward calling Playback therapy. We want to validate the power of our work. Calling Playback "therapy" seems to meet our desire for validation, for in the twenty years since Playback was founded, theater has lost its claim of efficacy as the Age of the Happening has evolved into the Age of Therapy. The transformational power of theater which Playback originally believed it possessed has been subsumed by therapy which has emerged in the past decades as the primary -- if not sole -- transformational vehicle which can enhance individual and group life.

On the other hand, somehow -- it is very "delicate," to coin one of Jonathan's favorite words -- we also know that our power lies in our fidelity to our method. We know that we "work" in certain therapeutic contexts- because we are not therapy. Though psychodrama has contained and supported us, allowing us to grow, we do not want to be seen as one of many (too many) therapeutic modalities. Hence, we engage in this reactive "not" way of defining ourselves. Our desire for validation lures us to call ourselves therapy, yet our soul, as it were, rebels. The adolescent craves recognition for his unique self even though that emerging self does not yet know who it is. Playback craves 11

that recognition, yet we do not yet possess a vocabulary of our own to engender it. And just as we are striving for recognition that our power is achieved through some other means than therapeutic, searching for our own vocabulary to describe what we are, we find ourselves not only living in a culture enamored of therapy, but our own language, the language of story, is now being usurped by therapy.

Is it any wonder we are beginning to feel hot?

THE SEED SALESMAN

In the context of the experimental theater of the 1970s, allowing people to tell their story on stage was a means to align theatrical performance with authentic, uncontaminated "life." The intact narratives of everyday life seemed like fresh, clear water compared to the dense metaphysics, strained shamanisms, brutal martyrdoms, and damaging denuded spectacles of the time. As we turn our attention to the evolution of the philosophy of story since then, we would do well to keep in mind Jonathan's experience as a seed salesman in Nepal. The seed salesman serves us as an emblem for Playback's commitment to the actual in a context of potential wonder. Not all practitioners of "story" working today have the same commitment, and it is important for our future practice to be discriminating in our influences.

In the decades since Playback's inception, "story" has developed in three contexts, each with its own ideology. They are: story as knowledge, story as art, and story as medicine/ therapy. Each of these is obviously connected to the other; these are loose categories, meant to help us in the discussion.

Story as knowledge asks the question, "What place do stories occupy in the development of the human mind?" In this area we find rich and interesting characters, many of them at the extreme edges of society. We find the neurologically impaired somnambulists and poets of Oliver Sacks' world. We find the chronic walkers and talkers of Robert Coles' experience in training as a psychoanalyst. What these diverse populations have in common is that the method of story reaches them. When the neurologist and the psychoanalyst give up the codified language of theory, and try, instead, to approach their "subjects" through story, their isolation is broken. As Coles asked himself, at issue was "what the nature of my attention ought to be. Was I to "treat," or was I to listen carefully, record faithfully, comprehend as fully as possible?"13 From paying attention to the stories of their subjects, these two men, indoctrinated in the language of medicine, have felt keenly the inadequacy of theory to help them fulfill their roles as healers. The act of listening to stories illuminated the human struggle, the drama, which caused the disease or the disorder; story humanized their approach. We might say that story has returned them to the soil, or the humus, from which the pain and disorders have grown. 14

Being attentive to story has forced these men to revise theories of how the brain and mind work within their respective disciplines. Sacks's "iconic" mode of processing neurological information joins with the cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner's idea of a "story paradigm" as descriptions of mental events. In the field of education, Howard

Gardner's inclusion of the "Intrapersonal" as a type of intelligence speaks particularly to Jonathan's view that Playback can be described as an art form which structures relationships in the moment.15 These intellectual endeavors have moved from theory to story, back to new theory as these men have recognized the role of story in the structure of the mind.

As these men have been allowing stories from everyday life to inform and revise their theories of the mind, storytellers have revived the ancient art of story telling in performance and educational contexts. Some of these storytellers, most notably Bill Hadley from Massachusetts and the extraordinary autobiographical performance artist Kevin Kling, have expanded the revival of ancient stories to include original stories from contemporary life. As the renaissance in storytelling has blossomed, storytellers have expanded their primary role as performers in the educational field with enormous success, reaching into the management training field, the personal growth workshop merry-go-round, and into therapy as such.

Within the storytelling community, there is a debate between the traditional role of storytelling as a way of imparting human wisdom and the uses of story in a human awareness context which borders on therapy. In the former, traditional mode, storytelling enhances wisdom generally. In the latter applied mode, storytelling carries an agenda to achieve a specific goal in personal growth. Some practitioners, have promoted stories as "the latest talking cure for all that ails us ... the key to a kinder and gentler America." A California storyteller describes storytelling as "one of the strongest modalities than one can use to heal, sometimes quite incidentally." She goes on to say that, "In personal stories, when you hear that someone else has a problem, you think, Oh, I'm not alone. I don't feel so bad, or you cry together." (Brecht should be turning over in his grave.) This reduction of Story to "problem" should alarm any storyteller, and it does at least one. "If storytellers get up with the intention of healing people, one, they're assuming they know what's best for other people ... and two, it's just a very refined kind of didacticism." 16 It is this didactic quality of applied prescriptions for the Self, as well as the inflation of all stories into the dimensions of myth, that Jo Salas seeks to separate from Playback when she dissociates our work from the type of storytelling Bly and others are using.17

Bly is a liminal figure, working at the threshold where the poet-bard meets the therapist. Together with Michael Meade, a superb storyteller, Bly has used poetry and story to alert the men in this country to their lost wildness and the tragedy of their lost ancestors. While I agree with Jo Salas that the method of applying ancient stories to psychological growth is fundamentally opposite to the release of wisdom within the quotidian we strive to achieve in Playback, Bly's recognition that white, middle class Americans (men and women) have lost their stories helps us to understand the

attraction of that same population to Playback. There is in the storytelling tradition the notion of the bard 'singing over the bones of the ancestors' to awaken them.18 Bly builds on this exquisite metaphor to lament the literal absence of bones for most Americans whose ancestors are buried in ground we have never seen or touched or tilled. No bones--no song--no story, goes the iconic logic of Bly's view. In a sense, Bly has spoken out loud what Jonathan intuited twenty years ago: the deracinated urban child had lost his ancestral story wisdom -- no bones to sing over. Playback is a way for this population to finds its lost stories without embarking on a spurious journey for the bones.

In his Hermes position at the threshold, Bly has also aligned himself with two very different yet equally remarkable Jungian analysts -- James Hillman and Marion Woodman. One of the most striking examples of his work with Woodman can be found in their workshop on the Jungian concept of the Shadow, in which they combine performance, lecture, and process through the artful alternation of telling an ancient Nordic story with Jungian inspired analysis-19 This movement back and forth between a traditional tale and the Jungian Shadow manifestations in every day contemporary life, all contained by that most modern of rituals, the workshop,20 is at a distance from our story-as-knowledge thinkers. In contrast to Coles and Sacks, who found story to be an antidote to theory, Bly and Woodman use story as theory . That is, Coles and Sacks allow the apparent chaos of life events to help them understand the particular configuration of psyche in their tellers. Bly and Woodman, on the other hand, graft a story upon life events to structure the psyche, assuming the role of teller themselves.

This pattern of imposing a traditional story upon life events at the service of an ideology is taken one (dangerous) step further by the Jungian analyst and contadora, Clarissa Pinkola-Estes. In her best-selling book, Women Who Run With the Wolves, she attempts to define a new "wild woman archetype" by uncovering the patterns of the archetype in ancient and familiar narratives (e.g., "The Red Shoes," "The Ugly Duckling"), and then translating them into contemporary lives. She accompanies each tale with a step-by-step correlation to psychological processes. In so doing, the wonder of the tale is reduced to a formula for awareness. The powerful images inside the stories are packaged as issues, with the implication that we should "get over them." In essence, Pinkola-Estes is erasing the icons (as Sacks would say) as she reifies images into therapeutic agendas. Story as an antidote to theory, as we find in Coles and Sacks, has passed through the art of storytelling to become story as a formula for self awareness.21

Let's now return to the seed salesman in order to understand where Playback fits into these story-based modalities. Metaphorically speaking,

Jonathan's choice to honor the seed salesman he actually was rather than try to become a shaman himself implied a rejection of archetype and myth. No singing over the bones; the bones are lost. Like Coles, Jonathan tuned his ear to the actual, the every day, uncontaminated by theory -- his real-life situation as a seed salesman amidst shamans. For Coles, it was the theory of psychoanalysis that stood between him and his ability to attend to the human beings in his charge. In Sacks' experience, it was the theory of Western medicine and its allopathic orientation to symptom and disease which obscured the rich iconic world of his patients. I am arguing that it was the ideology of "shamanism" or, actor as shaman, which so powerfully influenced the theatrical milieu of the time, which Jonathan distrusted in the same way Coles and Sacks distrusted the allopathic ideology of Western medicine. Jonathan's fidelity to the here-and-now reality of being no shaman at all, but a seed salesman among shamans, is analogous to the fidelity of Coles to his patients' own words when he invited them to "tell a story," and Sacks' attention to the images in his patients' stories without pathologizing them as symptoms.

I need to reinforce that it was a search for a context for story which could engender wonder and wisdom from everyday life which gave rise to the form we know as Playback. The Playback performance can be defined as more than an "intentional act," as Jonathan sometimes describes it. The Playback performance is also a commitment by performers to create a context -- or container -- which has the potential for wonder and wisdom which characterizes Playback's unique approach to story. The stories need not themselves have any claim to wisdom; they need not be variations on ancient, wise tales, or imitate the timeless architecture of archetype. Rather, the reification of the everyday by the intentional act of Playback has the power to engender connection, awareness, wonder and -- sometimes -- wisdom. We may do this foolishly and reverently, but always keeping our commitment to the actual before us. We never know what shape this actual will take, but we approach each story with humility, that is, grounded in the humus, the soil, hopeful that we can shape the story in a way that will give to those gathered a sense of life being delightful, or miraculous, or full of high significance.2-2 Life -- not "story." In short, Playback does not require that thestories reflect a preexisting codification of the collected wisdom of the culture into myth in order to work its effects. The event of Playback, and the intentional act of the community gathered together in the moment, are the reflectors of meaning.

This "seed salesman," or "humble" approach is, therefore, at odds with the Jungian style of Bly, Woodman and Pinkola-Estes. What structures the meaning of stories in Playback is not ideological.. When Playback, which originated as an art form, begins to base itself on ideology, we find ourselves'in the same dilemma as the storytellers; that "refined kind of didacticism" creeps into our work. The worth of stories is judged by their level of archetypal resonance, and "deep" stories are deemed more worthy, theatrically and therapeutically, than stories which are not laden with archetypal significance. Instead of meaning deriving from the story itself, reflected by the Playback performers, the meaning of the story is derived from an ideology. The goal of performance shifts from a commitment to engendering meaning from the soil of the everyday (being a seed salesman) to transforming the everyday into a mythical dimension.

What, one might ask, is wrong with asking people to see their everyday lives in the rich, meaningful dimensions of myths? Isn't the discovery of the mythical aspect of the everyday what Jonathan was after when he developed this form of theater which has been compared to the origins of theater itself? Seeking in the performance to direct the mundane toward the universal -- isn't that what Playback is?

Let me answer by way of a story I recently told at a workshop about going for a swim in a green lake. A friend had told me of this beautiful lake, and we went in search of it one hot day. It took us a long time to find it, with many wrong turns and winding roads. Once we finally found it, my friend talked and talked, and the wonder of this green lake was contaminated by her chatter. In the end, I did not really succeed at getting the wonder that I had hoped to find in the lake. In the workshop, the actors reflected my story as I told it without embellishment. My sense of frustration with my inability to access that wonder of green water was accurately reflected in the Playback performance (by novices). What this "meant" to me, personally, was never revealed or analyzed, and I was able to hold within myself the private meaning of the story for me, which was rich. 23

The workshop participants were then invited to explore the two predominant images of my story, along with other images from other stories, to see what meaning these images had for them. The imaginations and the personal experience of the participants were given free and full license, and the meaning of these images was presented to the group. These presentations were rich with personal significance and the innate poetry of private revelation. Throughout, the wonder of the green water grew. This icon of my story was amplified and augmented by the imaginations of the participants as they allowed the green water to reflect their own lives.

The meaning of the green water was never presumed, yet it very easily could have been. Without much intellectual strain, my simple story could be viewed as an example of the Narcissus myth. The winding roads are. symbols of Narcissus' futile search for love, and the dark green water of the lake is an ample and accurate image for the deep secluded waters of Narcissus' pool. The chatter of my friend is Echo's meaningless repetition of the Self, and the reverent silence I desired is what Thomas Moore eloquently describes as the deep reflection of SoUl.24 I can even make the intellectual leap and see how all of the explorations of the green water presented by the participants spoke to some desire to contact their souls, to reflect themselves in the depths, removed from the 'superficial' chatter of the Self. This analysis has its own richness and truth, and opens up for me certain ideas about the Self and the soul which tantalize my mind.

But in so doing, not only I have lost my sense of wonder in the lake; and what felt rich and spontaneous in the participants' presentations has lost its vitality, the unalloyed connection to life. But the poetic has been usurped by the didactic, and, instead of feeling like a person with a story rich in significance, I feel like an example of someone else's idea of 'how I should mean.' And, the green lake itself is gone, reflecting nothing. I am left with nothing my body can contain, adrift in theory. The unique capacity for story to carry symbols through imagery, the iconic strategy of the tale, has been sacrificed. Because my interpretation is inspired by Moore, my story about being "narcissistic" does not feel pathological. But an air of diagnosis hangs over it, squeezing the mystery out of the story, the poetry from its telling, and the wonder from my life.

Let's go one step further, and let's take ourselves out of the Teller's experience and put ourselves into the mind of the Conductor of this same story. Having been on both sides myself, I know that when, as Conductor, I listen with an ideological frame the Teller feels I am not listening to him. The close, intimate attention to the images in the story not only have the wonder squeezed out of them, but morality enters in wonder's stead. In this case, "narcissism" could belong to Moore, a classic Jungian, or a Freudian, each with a different result. Yet this air of diagnosis, this strange, covert moralism as pathology is hinted at with the transposition of a myth onto my story, would be common to all.

Why? In part, because in our culture, when people think of Narcissus, or the ubiquitous "Oedipus," they think of a complex, not a story. When we recast everyday stories into the mythical dimension, we are beset by our own cultural conserve, to borrow Moreno's term. "Myth" in our culture has been conserved as "pathology." No matter how salutary the intentions of a Conductor who finds inspiration in archetype, in the context of the Playback enactment, the cultural conserve works against wonder and wisdom, toward didacticism and pathologizing. (As we shall see later, the restoration of

story to the realm of wonder is the challenge before Playback as we reclaim Soul from its incarceration by Western culture in pathology.)

Playback is not and never has been a theater of the mind. It has always been a theater of the earth, the soil. Holding the image of the foreign seed salesman before us, we see Playback as occupying two positions in the tradition of storytelling: "the resident tiller of the soil" and the "trading seaman." This tradition recognizes that a story is not only the property of specially endowed shamans; but is often the offering a traveler from some far away place gives in exchange for a meal and a bed. Jonathan's role as the Peace Corps agricultural specialist combined both these types -- he was the foreigner selling seeds. The trading seaman knows that his chances of a bed and a meal for another night are dependent on the value of his story, whether he has something of use to the community. The importance of having something useful to offer is most keenly felt in the "resident" teller, who cannot afford to waste the community's time with a story, and, I suspect, cannot himself conceive of a story that is not integral to the craft of living. The usefulness may be a moral, or practical advice, or a proverb which reaffirms the values of communal living. This usefulness lends to the storyteller the power of being a man "of counsel." Counsel not as an answer or an ideology; rather, as "woven into the fabric of real life [which] is wisdom."25 Playback offers this kind of real life wisdom in direct contrast to the esoteric shamanistic wisdom of the seer. We offer seeds-that is, stories which the community may use to increase its yield (of joy, wisdom, life).

Playback is not a theater of idea or of ideology. We are a 'humble' theater of seeds, which are very small and require the dark in order to grow. What any ideological approach to story destroys is that darkness in which the seed of meaning grows. We must not presume to know or to judge the meaning a story has for those who tell, witness, and enact the story. We must not declare that only certain kinds of plants are beautiful. Rather, simply the growing of the seed into a plant connects us to the wonder of life. Each and every and any story can connect us to the wonder of life if we bring our humble attention, our soil intelligence, to bear upon it.

THE HUMANISTIC PROGRAM AND THE PROBLEM OF "SHADOWLESSNESS"

With its original goal to enhance human creative potential, the psychological ideology Playback is philosophically most susceptible to is a humanistic one. Humanistic psychology encompasses an array of methods which have in common setting a premium on consciousness and the harmony implied with the attainment of wholeness. But the term "wholeness" is deceptive, for it does not mean inclusive of everything within the psyche. Rather, "wholeness" is descriptive of a desired state of harmonious integration. It is Pacific in geographical origin and pacific in emotional tone.

"Wholeness" is a surrogate for a new kind of "holiness" which posits that full consciousness of one's issues, and the act of it getting over them" and "working through them," leads one to a kind of psychological sainthood. Everything negative, which is everything that one denies, and all that lives in the darkness of the unconscious, is seen as blocking the progress of one's Self toward becoming "whole." It pushes these energies downward and under as the Self transcends upward into the light. In its valuation of enlightenment, humanistic psychology tends to be "shadowless."26

Shadowlessness is not dramatic, but the opposite: an end to drama. Not only does the seed require the dark to grow, but the evisceration of the unconscious with full light kills off the secret, dark, mysterious part of ourselves wherein our creative energy lies.27 The "negative" is critical to the creative. Rather than convert everything to the angelic in a quest for transcendence, we should keep in mind Keats' definition of genius: "I mean Negative Capability, that is, when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching out after fact & reason.,,28 Keats' own genius intuited the importance of creating evil as well as good if one were to grasp the essence of life with art. The capacity to render evil beautiful puts one in profound moral uncertainty. Keats understood that this moral uncertainty was necessary for truth and beauty to flourish. But many humanistically inspired psychological programs tend to erase uncertainty from our lives. The humanistic program would not only take this uncertainty and replace it with certainty, it would also take our darkness where our moral uncertainties and creative sympathies lie and urge us to erase it entirely.

Light kills stories. Literally. When electricity was introduced to an African village by well meaning liberals who sought to better the lives of the villagers, the villagers were thrilled. A light bulb was installed in each house. At night, the villagers would gather around the light bulb as they had once gathered around the fire. But no one spoke. None of the stories were told.29 The same loss of story in the name of progress occurred in Europe at the turn of the century, as Padraic Column, the folklorist, beautifully describes:

The storyteller seated on a roughly made chair on a clay floor did not look unusually intelligent or sensitive. He certainly did not look histrionic. What was in his face showed that he was ready to respond to and make articulate the rhythm of the night. He was a storyteller because he was attuned to this rhythm and had in his memory the often repeated incidents that would fit it. ...

A rhythm that was compulsive, fitted to daily tasks, waned, and a rhythm that was acquiescent, fitted to wishes, took its place. But when the distinction between day and night could be passed over as it could be in towns and in modem houses, the change of rhythm that came with the passing of day into night ceased to be marked. This happened when light was prolonged until it was time to turn to sleep. The prolongation of light meant the cessation of traditional stories in European cottages . 30

The Greeks found a way to incorporate and to honor the darkness and its purpose in creating harmony in the universe through the metaphor of the vessel. Before every performance of a Greek drama, on the tiers of the amphitheater, at carefully determined intervals, were placed seven urns. The actors were supposed to use their voices during the performance to set each of these urns vibrating. When this was achieved, it meant that the universe was in harmony. 31 The beauty of the idea was that the actors had to enact a full panorama of emotions in order to attain the harmony. Without the dark, deep voices of melancholy and evil, and the high-pitched tones of terror and hysteria and the pitches of reason and wisdom in-between, without the full range of human emotion, the harmony could not be generated.

This image of the hollow container, its surface vibrating when the actors emote," move outward, one after another until a cosmic song is generated, serves as a powerful metaphor for the stance of the actors toward the universe. We are the containers ourselves, empty of judgment, who will use all the tones of the human voice to fill the empty theater with the human story", calling forth the cosmic song with our voices.

The Greek urns, and other metaphors we may generate within our community, allow us to retain Goethe's and Keats' ideals of creative genius as we pursue our healing vision of membership without killing ourselves with enlightenment 11." Remember the court jester: Wisdom can come through the fool, not just the sage.32

THE HEAT SHIELD

Jo Salas has written honestly and passionately of the healing power of Playback not as being derived from art; but, rather, that the healing power is the art itself, the "ontological" gift of art as the means by which chaos acquires form and meaning.33 It is this ontological healing value that could be appropriated by therapeutic agendas seeking to control, for one reason or another, this unique art form. But, despite Playback's long evolution toward therapy, Playback has one marvelous protection against such a theft: the heat, the heat of our feelings when a performance is bad. Into this heat we may now finally go. Inside it we shall paradoxically discover the waters which can heal the divisions in our community.

Whether we like it or not, or understand it or not, this "heat" is evidence that the healing power of Playback is increased the better Playback is performed. There is some part of us which rebels against using Story as a prescription for our behavior, craving the art to nurture and heal us without moralizing. For, when we are moralized we are

pathologized. We feel that there is something "wrong" with our story as we lived it or experienced it. When Playback is not performed well or performed with covert therapeutic or moral agendas, this ontological healing power of art is not realized, and we feel violated or cheated. Even those within the community who recognize and honor the psychodramatic support and training for our art form find ourselves feeling this "heat" when the art fails. Personally, whether the failure is at the level of performance skills or, in a more subtle way, the authenticity of the enactment has been contaminated by the hidden didacticism of a therapeutic agenda, this failure to meet me at the level of my own imagination and experience evokes feelings of sadness, despair, and rage within me.

I have thought for a long time that my rage and sadness at times in the Teller's chair were the result of my own personal story. Whenever I feel therapy contaminate art, I feel the hidden pathologizing of the imagination my mother's Freudian world view which was visited upon me when I was a teenager. Sometimes, my unconscious tricks me, and I perpetrate on others the same pathologizing inflicted on me. It is a lonely place, and devoid of human beauty. All is ugliness there.

But I am not alone in feeling the pain and anger when my imagination is denied full humanity through membership. I have watched my imaginative son try to make his own way through the world, looking for kindred spirits. Many of his friends are "Trojans" rather than "Greeks," and he is keenly aware that he has something which they do not. His favorite cousin fights against a presumably enlightened school system as he tries to make sense out of his riveting gift for mime, for which he has no name. My son and my nephew are hardly the first children to wonder why their friends don't know how to 11play," or who struggle against adults unable to recognize or nurture powers and energies which seem greater and more marvelous than things with names. My identity as an artist, consciously valuing my imagination, only heightens the drama and the pain for me; but the denial of the salutary role of the imagination in human life effects us all, for we all possess imaginations.

This rejection of creative vitality can happen in the most subtle of ways even in Playback- as, for instance, when an image given in a story is "dissected," to uncover the "truer" "hidden value" behind it. 34 1 also feel violated when my own story is reduced to a narrative of "issues" in Playback group process. I feel a terrible, damp echo of my own loneliness as a dreaming child in a school with uniforms when actors fail to give me back the story at the level of image and feeling at which I experienced it. When it is truly bad, I feel that my experience of being in the world has been trashed. When it is mediocre, then all the uniqueness of my experience seems reduced to a dull, gray average. All these examples of the failure of the art of Playback as art reconfirm for me how challenged we are by the original transformational vision of Playback. It is not easy

to heal the imagination from the insults and denials and alienations of modern, therapeutic life.

But it is not only my imagination which has been violated. Something that contains my imagination, something that animates it, is feeling the violation keenly when I am cheated out of full aesthetic expression of my experience. I have heard others who do not value their imaginations as highly as I do complaining of feeling violated,, disappointed, frustrated, hurt when the performances don't awaken fully the sleeping desire within the imagination. People who have no identity as artists feel something in them, for which they have no name, damaged, hurt, denied. What is this thing without a name that feels hurt? What is this energy that fires up when the performances are bad? What has been cheated? And what has "it" been cheated of? Whence the heat?

It is the Soul trying to be heard over the din of therapy, Psyche herself protesting against being pathologized, crying out for us to speak to her in her own language: beauty.

PART TWO: ENSOULMENT

All modern therapies which claim that action is more curative

than words (Moreno) and which seek techniques other than talk

(rather than in addition to it) are repressing the most human of all faculties --the telling of the tales of our souls...

I mean an unceasing attention to imagination from the first story told a child to the last conversations of old age.

I mean the recovery of lost psychic space for containing and of lost mirrors for reflecting.

James Hillman

[H]ow then are Souls to be made?

How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given to them--so as ever to possess a bliss peculiar to each one's individual existence?

How, but by the medium of a world like this?

John Keats

AN ENCOUNTER

The same question of how to be effective which inspired the 70S theatrical experiments, including Playback, has inspired James Hillman, the iconoclastic Jungian, to spin his decades-long critique of ego psychology. In the twenty years that Playback's quest for effectiveness has been influenced by therapeutic ideas, Hillman has turned to aesthetics as the answer to how to make therapy effective again, appropriating the imagination and beauty to psychology. I believe it is no accident that, in virtually the same historical time span, a psychologist and a story-oriented theater have evolved to the point where they each require something from the other to believe themselves effective. Now, as Playback and Hillman meet face to face in this essay, we would be advised to follow the course of the classic Moreno encounter, and try to see ourselves both with and in each other's eyes.

In linguistically dense, self-consciously ardent, and maddeningly esoteric rhetoric Hillman "revisions" psychology as "a discipline of the imagination. "3 5 He aspires to "free psychology from personalistic confines and to revert its vision to poetic principles.1136 The first step is to abandon the medical model altogether. Psychology's consummate error, Hillman argues, is in the medical model's pathologizing of Soul. If psychology is to reclaim its eponymous roots as "soul knowledge," then it must cease to pathologize Soul:

We cannot recover soul from its alienation in professional therapy until we have a vision of pathologizing which does not require professional treatment in the first place.37

Instead of pathologizing Soul, psychology should be about the business of "soulmaking." "Soulmaking" is not "aimed at the betterment of persons"; it has no covert moral agenda.38 Nor is it another method among too many. "Soulmaking" is no program for self improvement, for the proper activity of psyche-therapy is neither to improve the personality, nor even tend to the personality. Rather, the activity of psyche-therapy should be consistent with its etymology: "to care for and serve for the soul."39

The way to rescue the modern alienated soul is for psychology to return to its roots in the Italian Renaissance, where Hillman claims psychology was born. As psychology reclaims its Renaissance roots, it will inevitably turn to the imagination as its arena of both inquiry and practice; for, it is in Renaissance writings that the imagination is recognized as the agent of the making of Soul. As Hillman develops his concept of Soul via the Renaissance, Soul sounds less like a religious concept than an idea about the

nature of the imagination: "To be in soul is to experience the fantasy in all realities and the basic reality of fantasy," Hillman asserts. 40

This imaginal Renaissance psyche, Soul, is not to be confused with the later Christianized spirit. Unlike spirit, which lives in the air and avoids the vicissitudes of the body, "Soul sticks to the realm of experience and to reflections within experience."41 Soul is "a self sustaining and imagining substrate .... [It is] that unknown component that makes meaning possible, turns events into experiences"

> *Soul: refers to the deepening of events into experiences ... the imaginative possibilities in our natures, the experiencing through reflective speculation, dream, image, and fantasy - that mode which recognizes all realities as primarily symbolic or metaphorical*. 42

How the Soul is "made," how we "deepen" the events of our life into experiences endowed with meaning, is through The Word. "Only continued attempts at accurate soul speech can cure our speech of its chatter and restore it to its first function, the communication of SOUI.1143 Not only is the Soul's language oral narrative; but, according to Hillman, "depth psychology [itself] is the great carrier of the oral tradition, the telling of tall tales." 44

Having introduced this much of Hillman's deliberately dense rhetoric, let's see how these initial ideas apply to Playback. To begin with, we have in common the inadequacy of the therapeutic or the aesthetic alone to contain our vision. Hillman reaches for the aesthetic to grab hold of the imagination as the path of soul knowledge; we reach for the therapeutic to help us articulate the salutary and celebrational quality of our art. For Hillman, the enemy of the imagination has become psychotherapy itself, with its pathologizing of the Soul and its covert moralistic agenda of personal betterment. He would rather awaken individuals to seeing "life less as the resultant of pressures and forces than the enactment of mythical scenarios."45 His vision of life as nonpathological, 'imaginal' enactment is consistent with Playback's original vision of each person as capable of creative human action. Playback, too, shied away from 'pathologizing' in its refusal to engage in abusive spectacle making. It refused to pathologize the creative process, seeking instead a non-egocentric means to enhance creativity. Further, Jonathan made no claims that his method of theater would improve one's life. He only sought "a context for communication" in which theater and life would further the participants in their respective creative capacities. So we see both Hillman and Playback concerned with the salutary creative potential of human imagination. '

Secondly, both Playback and Hillman are in retreat from ideology. Playback, in its break from the ideology of a "theater of cruelty," sought a different route to effective acting, a route which recognized the threat to authenticity of the ideological ego. Playback did not want to inculcate new scripts in people, but the opposite. Some of us are now wary -- and I believe rightly so -- of therapeutic scripting, whether in the Story-centered approach of the jungians, or in the transcendent and shadowless goal of the humanists. Hillman condemns all existing forms of psychological practice for producing scripted behavior, "programs" for the Self which, he believes, insult the soul. "A discipline of the imagination does not have to become a program of the imagination.,,46

Thirdly, this discipline of imagination which addresses the soul is oral narrative. Rather than a script, Playback uses story as a means to awaken story in others. Hillman implies the same requirement that both the concern and the method of psychology be story, the "oral tradition." While we might be well advised to question Hillman's rhetorically drenched claim that depth psychology is the carrier of the oral tradition, we can agree that the language of the narrative imagination is the language of soul. (See Epilogue below.) We should have little difficulty in agreeing with him when he says, "We are different at the end of the story because the soul has gone through a process during the telling." 47

Finally, as Hillman defines Soul, we cannot help but find articulation for something we sense keenly in our process. Hillman's conception of Soul as the vehicle whereby 'events are *deepened*' into experiences speaks powerfully to the Playback experience. In fact, I might go so far as to say that Hillman has given us a superb definition of what happens during the Playback process -that the participants are collectively engaged in an imaginal process of *deepening* events into experiences, of using the imagination to deepen facts into meaning as we participate in metaphorical enactments, in "fantasy work." We make no claims for what the meaning of the events should be; only provide a means for that imaginative, metaphorical deepening to take place.

DRAMA AND SOULMAKING

Like the 70s theater artists, Hillman turns to the rituals "of religion, theater, loving, and play" in his search for a methodology of soulmaking. Ritual itself is a source for "deliteralizing events," that is, for deepening events into experiences endowed with meaning.

As we go into ritual, the soul of our actions "comes out"; or to ritualize a literal action, we "put soul into it." Here not only can the priest and the alchemist point the way; so too can the actor, the entertainer, the ballplayer. They are able to divest the concrete of its literalism by the psychological style they bring to an action. 48

This psychological style is a special combination of play and love, a delighting in and wondrous erotic engagement with the world. It is more than speech, because the soul needs a language that speaks to itself in its own language -- "emotionally, dramatically, sensuously, and fantastically." The 'method' is "to build new imaginal arenas for the bull, new imaginal circuses for the crowd of persons and theaters for the images, new imaginal processions Hillman writes, leaving it to us to imagine what these new arenas, circuses, theaters and processions might be.49

He also turns to a Renaissance idea of theater as a source for this language which would inform a putative method. It is a theater which was no theater at all, but simply an idea of one. It was called "the memory theater," and was the creation of Giulio Camillo, a man of singular brilliance in rhetorical performance. No one ever actually saw his memory theater, and it is unclear not only where it was, but what it was. Evidence suggests that it was conceived as a fairly large box. This box was to be opened by an individual. Therein he would find images placed in highly symbolic locations which were designed to activate the viewer's entire memory of everything he had experienced or learned.50 This "box" was never built. Yet, despite its lack of physical existence, the power of the idea of this theater was enormous in Renaissance thinking about the human mind; so enormous that, in references to it it is not a box at all. It becomes a huge -- but hidden -- open air amphitheater, built in a secret location known only to certain elite.

This theater has little to do with our idea of the history of theater art, or even of action. Rather, Camillo's memory theater provides a metaphor of the psyche as a theater of images. It is this metaphor of the psyche that Hillman wants to replace the 19th century hydraulics metaphor which Freud used. Any psychological method that would match this metaphor must be, in Hillman's eyes, as densely iconic and imagistic as Camillo's lost box. He is anxious not to confuse this idea with literal theater, i.e., with Moreno. He despises anything literal and believes that literalization kills the soul. So we must not, according to Hillman, make a simplistic correlation between the inner theater of the soul and an outer stage. Literal action is not the language of soul. Mythical action is.

However, Hillman virtually drops his typical Jungian mythical bias when he gingerly approaches what a method to access this "theater" should look like. Gone is the

Jungian trip fantastique into myth and archetype. Instead, "psychologizing" or soulmaking proceeds with simple, here-and-now questions which echo our own when we approach a Teller. "Our questions will be addressed towhat things are, and where, and who and in which precise way they are,"51 Hillman declares, abandoning the "why" questions of ego psychology. As he elaborates on how soulmaking can be engendered in someone, he sounds uncannily like he is describing the art of Playback conducting:

Psychologizing [i.e., soulmaking] asks "What?" What happened? What do you feel? What do you want? This search for "whatness" or quiddity, the interior identity of an event, its essence, takes one into depth. It is a question from the soul of the questioner that quests for the soul of the happening. 52

THE AESTHETIC HEART

Yet, for all of the sheer mightiness of his intellectual effort to recover the Soul from its alienation through some putative dramatic, story-centered method, the question of psychology's effectiveness was still not answered for Hillman. The problem lay in Hillman's continued focus on the interior and the subjective, the "depth" direction. "Whatness" finally emerges as more important than "deepening" as Hillman shifts his own focus away from the human being to the actual world in which we live, the "whatness" that surrounds us. Though we have been pursuing "soul sophistication" for a century, now, Hillman says our actual physical environment has become hideous during those same one hundred years. As we advanced in (presumed) inner awareness, the world disintegrated into ruin. He wants out of the interior focus of even his own "revisioned" psychology's microscope onto the Soul and to move the Soul outward, into the world. This shift toward the world is the critical step toward psychology "imagining itself more like an aesthetic activity" than a science. 53 He wants, finally, to get out of the "ology" altogether, and enter, at last and fully, into aesthetics. The agent for this shift is the heart.

Now, as we turn to the heart, my discussion above about the shadowlessness of humanistic psychology is critical to keep in mind. By "heart," Hillman does not mean the sentimental or interior locus of emotion. He means nothing so abstract or gooey. He certainly does not mean a moralizing, transcendent vehicle for universal love, as might be construed by humanistically inspired Playback practitioners. "I am not talking of body feelings in simplistic psychology--whatever I feel is good; deep down inside my heart, I'm okay; what comes from the heart is good per se," Hillman cautions. He is after a specific heart, located in a specific historical, intellectual tradition (the Italian Renaissance), to help him with his quest for psychology being effective in the world. 54

Rather than drown in Hillman's dense and fascinating scholarship, let us accept that we are speaking of an *agent for soulmaking*, which *thinks*, *imagines*, and *desires*. This new heart will apprehend the *world* , not just the Self, in a new way. It will be a heart which possesses a type of "intelligence" which allows the heart to apprehend the world, the "whatness," aesthetically. With this new, aesthetic heart attuned to beauty itself, soulmaking is now reframed by Hillman as "a self-steering process through aesthetic reflexes."55 That is, this aesthetic heart is our guide through soulmaking.

Hillman here presents a profound challenge to the Playback practitioner. For he is saying that it is not enough to heal through art. It is not enough to say that we all need beauty to feel healed. This type of aestheticization of healing does not help us to heal the ugliness of the world, but only keeps us inwardly directed into the Self's propagation of "good feelings." We have fed the soul with beauty, and in our soul we feel this nurturance, we recognize this ontological gift as our lives are rendered formally coherent and beautiful. This could be where Playback stops: nurturing the alienated soul with beauty through imaginative acts. But Hillman challenges us to go one step further. We must not put beauty inside us and hoard it within while the world uglifies and expires around us. We must not settle for taking the story and making it beautiful so long as the story of the earth is one of unspeakable horror. Our lives may be felt as more and more significant and beautiful while the world continues to grow uglier and uglier. If we are to heal ourselves, then we must cease to use confession, the confessions of the interior, feeling heart as our method of healing. We must turn outward, recognizing that emotions are not *within* us, but are all *around* us:

> *Like afflictions, emotions put me in the center of things, giving importance and existential assurance to human beings. They seem so centrally mine. Yet they are external to the individual person. We share in emotions and hold them in common; they transcend history and locality; we read them in another's face beyond language and culture, feel them in the gestalt of landscapes and natural things, receive them from images buried thousands of years ago and from the sounds and shapes and words of inorganic art objects. Grief, jealousy, comedy have their images that require no interpretive apparatus; they bear archetypal significance beyond your or my personal experiences of them.*56

Hillman's hint of the world as a theater of feeling, his evocation of the iconic power of emotions, directly challenges Playback's vision of enhancing creativity in individual life. He exhorts us to reframe our embrace of membership as a "re-membering" of the fragmented world alienated from beauty. This "re-membering" is another gloss on the injunction to the bard to sing over the bones to revitalize the dead body, rejoining its members. If we are to fulfill our original mandate both to enhance and to empower the imaginatively and socially disenfranchised, then Playback must

reify membership as re-membering not just of individuals, but of the body of the world itself. We must also re-examine what "healing" can be in our sick and diseased world. We must listen to Hillman's call to the soul of the world:

> *Therapy must shift its focus from saving the soul in the personal patient to saving the soul of the world, the resurrection of the world rather than man, the celebration of creation before the redemption of creativity in the individual*. 57

What does Playback begin to look like if we meet Hillman's call to awaken the aesthetic heart, and turn it toward the soul of the world?

It begins to look less and less like a "stepchild," and more and more like itself.

PLAYBACK AS ENSOULMENT

We in the Playback community have comfortably, assumed that a significant part of our healing power depends upon the liberating effects of confession. We have framed "telling" as a type of confession, analogous with the "telling" that goes on in traditional therapy, including psychodrama. This assumption has blocked from our perception the more radical and startling process we are engaged in. For Playback does not work upon the confessional heart; it invites the aesthetic heart to come into the world. It has done so long before Hillman ever gave us a name for the heart we call forth in others and in ourselves. Always we have been a method of "re-membering" via the aesthetic heart.

We invite a Teller to "tell a story," thus beckoning her (or him) into an aesthetic mode. We welcome what they will tell us with our own desiring aesthetic hearts, eager for the story (not the hidden truth). The Teller begins to tell a story. Sometimes, the Teller begins to drop downward into confession -but the moment we say, "Choose someone to play..." We not only lift the Teller's heart out of the confessional mode, we literally lift her eyes out of her downward, inward gaze and turn her attention to the world.58 As we do so, more than the creative within the individual is redeemed. The Playback process resurrects the world when the actors rise, beckoned by the Teller's aesthetic heart. "Watch!" For the actors are about to *ensoul* us all.

We "ensoul" the "whatness" of the story, its quiddity, its essence. Playback enactments animate the surface, the *anima mundi*, or the soul of the world of the story. We are *animators*. We set the story into movement with enlivened images, and when we do so, we "move" the Teller and the witnesses out of confession into *reflection*., "the soul's habitual activity."59 Ensoulment animates the world of her story so that we, the

audience and all those present, can participate in the animated world of story through the reflected animation -- the 'playback.' All those who witness the Playback event contact this ensouled world as the actors respond in action to the aesthetic heart of our Teller calling us forth.

There has been a transfer from the inner world of the Teller to actors and audience through the "vessel" of the Conductor. But the type of transference which has occurred is not the projection of inward contents of the psyche outward onto things or people, as in psychodrama and other forms of therapy. Rather, as we animate the world of the story, we "move the heart from its confessional mode of experiencing to a prayerful response to its images -witnessing."60 To witness is to be present as a reflector of meaning, to be present with the attention of soul. Playback is a theater of reflection not of the Self, but of the soul as we collectively engage our aesthetic hearts to steer the self through and into beauty. Within this mystery of reflection lies perhaps the greatest challenge to the Playback practitioner. When the actors stand, empty of judgment, ready to reflect, their own souls are made available to the soul of the Teller. We are chosen for our roles in the story by our own "quiddity," the "whatness" of each of us. If we stand back and reflect upon the roles we are chosen to play, and the stories we engender in performance, we will see the *anima mundi* of our particular Playback group.61

We do not interpret; as Hillman says, we are all far too good at making meanings when what we need is to generate responses. We respond to the call of the aesthetic heart through a special kind of attention, or attending, to the thinking, imagining, speaking heart of the Teller. It is an intimate act, the kind of attention we would give to the beloved. This is less spiritual than it is animal knowing and loving. We seek to "know" this story in an animal sense, for the aesthetic heart is filled with desire. It seeks to know intimately, and "intimacy releases [us] from confession into immediacy, the courage of immediate intimacy" with the Teller. 62 This type of attention Hillman calls *noticia*. *Noticia*, the act of intimate attention to the small, surface cues coaxes the essence out of the surface so that we can apprehend its soul. 63 We go deep not beyond the surface, but deep "on" the surface. We hold ourselves close to the face of the story.

By allowing this intimate knowing of the face of the story to fill us and lead us into action, the gift the Teller has given us is mysteriously transferred to the group. We are entrusted to carry the face of the story with our own faces. Prayer and witnessing behold the face of the story as we ensoul it with our own aesthetic hearts guiding our soulmaking. Then, the enactment completed, the face of the story beheld, the actors face the Teller. The face of the story meets the face of the Teller through our faces. And, the audience faces us, and they, too, reflect the story.

All of these reflections are contained by the ensoulment. When we turn and face the Teller, we freeze; and irk that stillness and silence, which is the grammar of prayer, the entire enactment is stilled. In our minds' eyes we hold up the images we have given her, which she has given us, reflecting back to the Teller not her own, literal face; not her "ego," not her Self. But we reflect on our faces the inward face of the story she has been seeing inside. We show her her own aesthetic heart, brought out into the world for a moment and then returned to her, ensouled by us. The face of the story is the face of her aesthetic heart as it faces her own soul, reflected in our faces, reflected in the faces around her.

The ensoulment has taken place.

THE DEBT TO APHRODITE

When soul appears, beauty appears. Not beauty which prettifies. Not beauty which removes the monsters or changes the devils to angels. Not beauty which glosses over or covers. Not beauty which makes nice. Rather, a kind of beauty which finds beauty "in the form of what is presented, that which is breathed in, aisthesis., and by which the value of each particular thing strikes the heart, where judgments are heartfelt responses." This beauty, which appears when we ensoul the story,

> *is the manifest anima mundi [soul of the world]...*
>
> *[and] refers to appearances as such, created as they are, in the forms in which they are given, sense data, bare facts, Venus Nudata. Aphrodite's beauty refers to the luster of each particular event--its clarity, its particular brightness. [We apprehend] the very sensibility of the cosmos, that it has textures, tones, tastes ... [for] beauty appears wherever soul appea*rs. 64

In the history of theater and art, Dionysus and Apollo have a long tradition which we have seen influencing the direction of Playback. Not only did Playback refuse to be a theater of the rarefied soul, the Apollonian Grotowski, but an even bolder move was Jonathan's rejection of the Dyonisian "dismemberment" of the Artaud inspired experiments. While I hesitate to characterize Playback as a theater of Aphrodite, since Playback rightly. distrusts all mythical aggrandizement's of its humble work, I do believe that we can honor the presence of Aphrodite in our theater as the style which properly opposes the Apollonian and Dyonisian.

`Because Aphrodite has been degraded in the patriarchy as a "sex" goddess, her essential meaning has been lost. Aphrodite symbolized for the ancient world that essence of soul in the most ordinary, tangible, surface things. She is the goddess who makes the mundane, the superficial, the "skin" of our lives lustrous and radiant. Her body seamlessly embraced the entire world, her ubiquity achieved through the idea of her skin covering the surface of the earth with amorous radiance. Her power was rhapsodic, in that she called forth beauty. Recovered without the degrading lens of the patriarchy, Aphrodite's power to carry beauty on the surface of everything, even the most trivial, metaphorically describes the movement of Playback away from the ideology of the specially elected masculine-creator toward our democracy of ordinary creativity. Aphrodite reminds us that this democracy is realized when we bring our attention to the surface of the story, to its "face," and call it forth. Unlike Dionysus, who spreads his energies through dismemberment and dismantling, Aphrodite spreads her luster over the entire surface of the world coherently, sparking soul into the surface of all for she is all the surface. She combines those elements of the oceanic and the mundane which are at the core of our embrace of the quotidian language of everyday story, entrusting it to carry all we need it to carry without any Apollonian ideology or Dionysian dissection. Aphrodite is the metaphor for the beauty we find in our art form through our attention, our loving noticing, of the "face value" of the story.

Chekhov beautifully describes these aspects of Aphrodite in his story, The Student. One cold evening while walking home, a student stops to warm himself by a fire in a priest's garden. Inspired by the fire, begins spontaneously to recount the story of Peter's betrayal of Christ to a peasant woman and her idiot daughter who are warming themselves, too. As he builds the drama of the story, he slowly becomes aware of some power moving within him. When he observes the face of the peasant woman listening to his account, the student says he has moved his listeners not because of his own storytelling talents; it is not his power which has moved her. Rather, as the teller-actor of the story, Chekhov's student senses the presence of the nearness of the peasant woman's 11soul" to the soul of Peter in the story. As the student looks at the peasant woman's face, he understands his role as the agent of soul moving through him.

This experience of being the creative agent, the conductor, who helps the woman to experience this special closeness between her soul and Peter's, lifts the student from despair. By the end of the storytelling, as he looks out over the world around him, the student

> *... was thinking that the truth and beauty which had guided human life there, in the garden and the chief priest's palace, had continued without a break up to the present day and evidently constituted the most important thing in the lives of men and on the earth in general... and life seemed to him delightful, miraculous, and full of high significance*.65

The student has told a story, and his audience has been moved. This experience has moved him from cynicism and despair to feelings of hope and the "high significance" of life all over the earth. It has happened through the ordinary act of telling a story (which may be why this story was Chekhov's personal favorite). The student's feeling of the continuity of "truth and beauty" echoes Keats and the Romantics, who, along with the American Transcendentalists, share with Playback an aesthetic vision of an ensouled world, a world in which the ordinary surface of things carries something of wonder and meaning -- the world of Aphrodite regained.

THE STEPCHILD GROWS UP

Now we are finally ready for this "stepchild" to show how fundamentally different she is from her stepfather, Moreno. Let us begin by saying that, because psychodrama bases its dramatic enactment on the confessional heart of scientized ego psychology, the form and style of action is virtually opposite to the Playback form, which responds to the aesthetic heart. Psychodrama dismembers through penetrating the surface (Dionysus). Playback ensouls through animating the 're-membered' surface (Aphrodite). Psychodrama actors work to bring insight through revealment; Playback actors work to bring revelation through our meeting with the face of the story

Psychodrama builds its drama from the idea of confession, of partial revealment, and seeks to reveal more as it progresses. Consequently, it is interruptive and driven by the Self further inward. The "form" we become aware of in psychodrama, as the interview progresses, is likely to be a complex or some ideational awareness as we move *inward*. Playback, in contrast, moves the action forward by invoking the formal powers of contouring as the aesthetic heart of the Teller is directed by the Conductor's questions to shape the drama. We work *toward containment*. Playback seeks to gather only so much information as necessary to enact the story, trusting that the images will carry resonance. We are discriminatory, recognizing like all artists that emotions alone are insufficient; we must shape them. As the interview progresses, we become increasingly aware of the nascent enactment being contoured by the Conductor's questions as we move *outward*, casting actors in their roles. This contouring and shaping we do, this containment with language as our tool, is art growing within us as the interview continues. We progress by the laws of Art, of form, as we simultaneously shape and find the story.

Psychodrama filters "story" through an ideology steeped in scientification, and builds the drama of enactment via this ideology. Enactments are conceived as complex manifestations of the system of the interior psyche (and culture) as conceived by Moreno. Some part of this psyche is being probed and taken apart. Hence, the drama

builds through prodding further, penetrating through in one area only (the area of conflict, trauma, denial, etc.). Psychodrama would take the top off the container of the confession, so its form opens and opens, prying sometimes, banging at the door other times as actors repeat and expand in as many ways as possible to open up the confessing heart. Using the auxiliaries to pull back layer after layer of resistance, the quality of a psychodrama is *agon*, conflict.

But in Playback, the actors *layer* image upon image to amplify the mystery--which may be quite joyful--of the story. Because Playback has no ideology for story, and makes no case for these enactments as being reflections of an interior psyche, it does not penetrate. It stays on the surface, looking for the face of the story. Through *noticia*, the Playback conductor and actors can find in the surface all that they need.

Because psychodrama filters the story through ideology, the auxiliaries work from the script written by this ideology. When we double, we often double with a purpose or direction, a narrative line which comes from the script of psychodrama's ideas about the Self and culture. Though we use our own insight and our own words, we are informed always by this ideational script. Further, the term "auxiliary ego" suggests support or assistance in the service of this ego, so our whole warm-up to the action is to serve this ego. "Ego," here, means far more than the person; the psychodrama actor is conceived as an assistant to the entire role-complex of the Self. Playback actors also have a script which grounds us -- the telling of the story by the Teller. But we do not serve "ego," this interior complex system. We serve the Teller's own creation of experience, her own imagining substrate -- her soul -- which has shaped the story for us to enact. We are not the auxiliaries, but the animators of her story. How utterly and simply we are just that: animators, those who set this story into motion, seeking to reflect the face of the story with our own animated faces.

These differences between psychodrama and Playback coalesce in the conceptions of the stage in both disciplines. Psychodrama, for all of its attention to actual space and time, uses the stage as the site for interiorizing. As auxiliaries work to pull back the layers hidden within the confession, the protagonist is led further and, further into and within her Self. The stage space becomes increasingly symbolic of the interior of the psyche as the drama proceeds with this penetrating spiraling inward. Usually at some point in a psychodrama, one loses one's sense of real space and time when the layers have been pulled back and the core of the psyche is exposed. We are located within the protagonist's psyche. Playback, because our dramatic unfolding is kept close to the face of the story moving outward to the world, does not convert the stage space into an abstract interior. We keep to the images, the icons, the "faces" of the story. No matter what kind of a face the Teller gives us when she tells her story, we meet it with our own.

CONCLUSION: A PSYCHOLOGY FOR "BEING," A PHILOSOPHY FOR "DOING"

Practice means to perform, over and over again in the face of all obstacles, some act of vision, of faith, of desire.

Martha Graham

I must now ask myself, out loud, if I have not accomplished in this essay the opposite of my hope -- namely, to have reframed Playback as yet another therapeutic modality among a surfeit. Do I mean to persuade you that Playback is Hillman's putative method realized?

No, I do not.

I have deliberately excised from my discussion most of Hillman's Jungian ideology. Because Hillman shares with all Jungians a bias toward the mythical over the quotidian, he calls his psychology "polytheistic." Aphrodite, crucial as she is to reinstate without the degrading lens of patriarchy, is not enough for Hillman. He wants to call all of the gods to be present during the lifelong process of soulmaking.66 However, Playback does not require that all the gods be present. We may find archetypal resonance in a story, but we do not require the presence of archetypes to ensoul. Ours is a more human and more humble enterprise. If the gods choose to appear, they may do so without an invitation from us.

However, I do believe that Hillman would see the usefulness of Playback as a training vehicle for the new type of psychologist he envisions working to awaken the aesthetic heart. He does want a "training... based in the imagining, sensing heart: call it forth and educate it Training programs must be themselves "embodiments of the anima mundi, whether in language, in arts,

in rituals, attempting to train the eye and ear, nose and hand to sense truly, to

make moves, right reflexive acts, to craft well 67 Certainly, Playback would

meet these requirements.

As we embark on the project of how to develop excellent Playback practitioners, we can use Hillman's idea of ensoulment as I have applied it here as a foundation for our training at the Jonathan Fox School. We can then lay down four cornerstones upon this foundation of ensoulment: story, acting/theater, politics or ethics, and psychology. As we train our future practitioners in the capacity for story, we must renew our debt to the oral tradition; increase our awareness of Playback as a context, or a container, for story; and explore the many aspects of story as knowledge, story as art, and story as medicine. We can also place ourselves in an aesthetic tradition which includes the European Romantic Poets, especially Keats who first coined the term "soulmaking,"68 and the American Transcendentalists and others from the many cultures represented in our community. As we build our scholarship of story, we can join Hillman in rescuing myth from its allopathic jail. The training in acting and theatrical skills shall make us great lovers, great it noticers," as we learn the arts of Noticia and of Reflection, attending to the face of the story with our faces and bodies and hearts and minds. As we renew Playback's commitment to empower the disenfranchised, our training program should expand the idea of who is disenfranchised, and how, with the recognition that what is now oppressed is the earth herself. We can develop a moral vision which is not based on pathologizing but, rather, awakening the anima mundi. And, the fourth cornerstone, psychology, should include but not be limited to psychodrama. Expanding the discipline of psychology to include the cognitive work of Bruner, Sacks, and Gardner, the explorations of the aesthetics of soul in the work of Moore and other disciples of Hillman, and pursuing the idea of essence or "quiddity" as first developed by the American psychologist William James, we can develop our own psychological tradition informed by the aesthetics of being.69 In this larger context, psychodrama will become but one of many ways to develop our emotional repertoire without continuing to confuse its language with our unique grammar of ensoulment in performance. Psychodrama and Moreno's group action methods are still a fluid translation to many aspects of our group life, and our new independence from our "stepfather" should in no way mean that we abandon all that he has given us.

What shall we then be practitioners of --art? Therapy?

We shall become practitioners of Playback.

EPILOGUE

'WHERE DID THE WARM THING GO?"

I would like to leave you with a story. It is a story about how the soul first came into human consciousness through a story. It is also an idea, and I am not ashamed to say that I like stories which have ideas in them. This particular story gives us a clue as to why it is that our form, ensoulment, may be the healing modality we most need today as

we turn away from the century of the confessional heart toward the aesthetic heart of the world. The story comes from Joseph Campbell, and it is his explanation for why human beings need imaginations to give birth to stories. So, since it's a story about birth, it should come as no surprise that the story has death in it.

One evening, a long, long, long time ago, when humankind still carried its fire about with it for the long, dark nights of dancing and eating, someone died. The body lay there, and it did not move. Loved ones gathered around it as the darkness fell, wondering why it did not move. Someone from the tribe reached to touch it, and pulled back, in horror and amazement, for the body was cold. Other hands came close to touch, and continued to touch the entire surface of the body, especially the face, looking for the warmth which had once been there. Noses came close to smell, and others rubbed up against the cold body as if they could bring the warmth back through their own warm bodies. Yet no matter how intimate their attending, no matter how close their noticing, they could not find the warmth which had once been there.

Where did the warm thing go?

They puzzled and puzzled. The warm thing that had been there, where was it? This thing was cold. Where was the warmth?

After a long time, as the fires of the evening began to die, one of them began to imagine where the warm thing was. She imagined that the warm thing might have gone upward, toward the place where the sun was, for it liked warmth. She began to speak of the journey of the warm thing toward the sun. And as she told the story, another member of the tribe began to see in his mind's eye this warm thing that had been inside his brother. It seemed to him that it had flown up to this place in the sky easily, for as he touched his brother's dead body, he noticed how heavy it was. So the warm thing must have been the thing that made his brother's body light enough to run swiftly in the hunt, and to dance. It was the thing which animated his brother's body and made it beautiful to watch. He began to dance her words as they told the story of where the warm thing went. As they performed, all the members of the tribe remembered his face when it was alive.

And thus it was that as the story grew in the telling, the body of their member was ensouled.

All stories are children of this first story about death, and each story seeks to answer this question in its own way: "*Where did the warm thing go?*"

Where did the warm thing go? Is the question of this cold, dying time in which we are living now. It is a question which Playback has one way of answering -- if you have the courage to ask with us.

FOOTNOTES

1. Schechner, Richard. (1977). *Essays on Performance Theory*, 1970 -1976. New York: Drama Book Specialists, 75. "The basic opposition is between efficacy and entertainment,

not between ritual and theater. Whether one calls a specific performance ritual or theater depends upon the degree to which the performance tends toward efficacy or entertainment." He places Moreno on the efficacy side of the continuum. For avant garde as traditional theater, see 120 ff.

2. Fox, Jonathan. (1982). Playback Theater: The Community Sees Itself. In Drama in Therapy, Vol. 11. Richard Courtney and Gertrude Schattner, Eds. New York: Drama Book Specialists, 295.

3. Kott, Jan. (1984). *The Theater of Essence*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 154 (Brook in Africa); 149 (Malina).

4. Artaud, Antonin. (1958*). Theater and Its Double*. New York: Grove Press. See also Schechner, op. cit., 60ff, for origins of theater in violence.

5. Fox, op. cit., 296.

6. Personal Communication, 3/94.

7. Fox, op. cit., 305.

8. Ibid, 304

9. Ibid, 303. 1 would go further and say that Playback's position is what ritual looks like from the inside. Viewed from within the tribe, as a member, ritual is fully integrated into the daily life of the tribe. The "scream" is what primitive looks like if one uses an evolutionary model of language which presumes that the language of emotion is less developed and more "animal" than human; and 2) carries this same model into judging primitive behavior as being emotionally "raw." The opposite is often the case. Indigenous peoples can have extremely sophisticated languages for emotional states. See Kott, op. cit., 147ff, for critique of the "scream." ("Only those who know how to speak should be taught how to scream." (151) For account of Brooks African experience, see Heilpern, John. 1978. Conference of the Birds. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merril.

10. Kott, op cit., 158. Jonathan's reluctance to be a guru and his refusal of cultism may be indebted to his "humility" in being a seed salesman. See note 14 below.

11. One can frame Playback's "reflection" as a reversal of conventional

psychological transference. In conventional therapy, the "transference" of

feelings and ideas from the client to the therapist presumes that the therapist is a blank slate onto which the client may project the inner contents of his or her psyche. The Playback idea of "reflection" suggests that a meeting of two souls istaking place, and that both the individual group members and the group itself carry within their beings essences which are sensed by the Tellers. Here is a good example of Moreno's "tele" invisibly at work. These telically conveyed essences influence the Teller's selection of story, and are then "transferred" in

the selection of actors to play the roles, One consequence of holding the

reflection-tele" paradigm, rather than the transference-projection one, is that Playback Tellers are empowered as guides for the direction group members' emotional repertoires need to go. If, for instance, a group is only getting certain kinds of stories, it suggests limits in the group members' emotional repertoires. The reflection-tele paradigm also has a critical ethical component, for it disallows a group to 'blame bad Tellers.' The reflection-tele paradigm is not an easy paradigm to hold, for it demands honest and courageous self scrutiny of oneself and one's group.

12. 1 am here relying on a workshop presentation and discussion of Rebecca

Rucker's work in Houston, Texas.

13. Coles, Robert. (1989). *The Call of Stories*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 25.

13. Luke, Helen M. (1992). KaleidoscQpe. New York: Parabola, 7, gives

etymology of "humility." See Coles, op. cit. , for further development of the moral issue of the physician's power over the powerlessness and the necessity for humility.

14. See Sacks, Oliver. 1990. *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for A Hat*

NY:Harper Perennial. Bruner, Jerome. (1986). *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

16. "Storytelling," Fall 1993, 20

17. Salas, Jo. (1993). *Improvising Real Life: Personal Story in Playback Theater*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt.

18. See note 21, below. Also, "Interview with Robert Bly." In "SUN: A Magazine of Ideas." Chapel Hill, North Carolina. May, 1993, 8-11.

19. Bly, Robert and Woodman, Marion. October, 1991. "*Facing the Shadow."* San Francisco: Cassette Tape.

20. Schechner, op. cit. , 61: "The workshop is a way of playing around with reality, a means of examining behavior by re-ordering, exaggerating, fragmenting, recombining and adumbrating it. The workshop is a protected time/space where intra-group relationships may thrive without being threatened by intergroup aggression. In the workshop special gestures arise, definite sub-cultures emerge

.... The aim of the workshop is to construct an environment where rational, a-rational and irrational behavior exist in balance." These qualities place the workshop within the category of ritual.

21. Pinkola-Estes, Clarissa. (1992). *Women Who Run With The Wolves*. NY: Ballantine. Hillman offers this critique of the approach taken by Pinkola-Estes: "Living one's myth doesn't mean simply living one myth. It means that one lives myth, it means mythical living Myths do not tell us how. They simply give the invisible background which starts us imagining, questioning, going deeper." (Hillman, James. (1977,1992) Revisioning PsycholQ". New York: Harper Perennial, 158.)

22. See below, note 65.

23. See Luke, "The Secret and the Open." In KaleidoscQpe

, op. cit. , 111- 117, especially 115: "The spirit of honesty can never be lived when reverence for the secret, the mystery at the center of life, has been lost, and it follows that the spontaneous openness of the child, who is not yet invaded by the inevitable 'shoulds' and 'should nots' of man-made laws' also disappears. Only if the secret remains inviolate in the inner life can the growing boy or girl, the adult man or woman, remain true to the values of the heart."

24. Moore, Thomas. (1992*). Care of the Soul*. New York: Harper Perennial, 55-76.

25. Benjamin, Walter. (1955; 1969). "The Storyteller." In Illuminations. New York: Schocken Books, 86-87. He develops two prototypes of storyteller -- the"resident tiller of the soil and the trading seaman." Jonathan in Nepal embodied both. This interesting bit of biographical metaphor gives us a clue as to our style--quotidian yet evoking the magical imagery of the unseen land..

26. The ideas about the "shadowlessness" of humanistic programs is indebted to James Hillman in Revisioning Psychology op. cit., 65: "[Humanistic psychology] is shadowless, a psychology without depths, whose deep words remain shallow because transcendence is its aim. To transcend, it leaves the lower, baser,,and darker behind as 'regression values.'"

27. It was out of fear that he would lose his creative powers if he lost his devils that Rilke chose to hold onto his devils, and not allow Lou Andreas-Salome, Freud's disciple, to convert them all to angels. The result of his decision was the "Duino Elegies," arguably his greatest work.

28. Keats, John. "Letter to George and Tom Keats, 21,? 27 December, 1817." In JQhn Keats. Kermode, Frank, Ed. (1990). Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 370. Keats

developed this idea as he contemplated Shakespeare's capacity to create an Imogen and an Iago in contrast to Coleridge's discomfort with "the Penetraliurn of mystery."

29. Anecdotal.

30. Padraic Colum. (1972). "Introduction." In *The Comlplete Grimm's Fairy Tale*s. NY: Pantheon, vii. An interesting variation on this idea is expressed in Benjamin, op. cit., 91: "This process of assimilation, which takes place in depth, requires a state of relaxation which is becoming rarer and rarer. If sleep is the apogee of physical relaxation, then boredom is the apogee of mental relaxation. Boredom is the dream bird that hatches the egg of experience. A rustling in the leaves drives him away. His nesting places--the activities that are intimately associated with boredom-- are already extinct in the cities and are declining in the country as well. With this the gift for listening is lost and the community of listeners disappears. For the art of storytelling is always the art of repeating stories, and this is lost when the stories are no longer retained. It is lost because there is no more weaving and spinning to go on while they are being listened to."

31. 1 first heard this metaphor from Kristin Linklaeter, during an acting workshop with Shakespeare & Co., May, 1980.

32. See Luke, Helen M., "The Sense of Humor" and "The Joy of the Fool." In Kaleidoscope. op. cit.., 123-138, for role of humor and joy in compassion.

33. Salas, Jo., op. cit., 32.

34. Ibid, 16.

35. Hillman, James. (1977; 1992). *Revisioning Psychology*. New York: Harper Perennial, 74. [Hereinafter referred to as "RVP."]

36. Ibid, Preface, ix.

37. Ibid, 78. Emphasis his.

38. Ibid, 148.

39. Hillman, James. (1965). Suicide & the Soul. New York: Spring, 113-116. After a review of the various etymological roots for words related to the profession of psychiatry, Hillman concludes that psychiatrist" means "animator or inspirer of the psyche.

40. RVP, 23.

41. Ibid, 146.

42. Ibid, XVI. Emphasis his.

43. Ibid, 217.

44. Ibid, 20.

45. Ibid, 146.

46. Ibid, 40.

47. Ibid, 145.

48. Ibid, 137.

49. Ibid, 225.

50. I located a Ph. D. Thesis on Camillo's Memory Theater, only to discover that there was no "theater" at all, but only the iconography of memory as conceived by Camillo. Of far more interest was the biographical information. Camillo was an obese homosexual whose genius was in spontaneous rhetorical performance. The work on the memory theater -- lost -- was his only written record of ideas developed in performance and conversation. The following he developed for his spontaneous performance suggests an interest during the Renaissance for improvisation which intrigues me. (Apologies for losing the reference to the chaos of remodel on my house.)

51. Hillman, James. (1993*) The Thought of the Heart and the Soul of the World.* Dallas, Texas: Spring Publications, 113. [Hereinafter referred to as "H & S."]

52. RVP, 138. My emphasis.

53. H & S, 112.

54. Ibid, 6. For discussion of the three heart concepts, see 3-37.

55. Ibid, , 59.

56. RVP, 176.

57. H & S, 118.

58. According to Rebecca Rucker, this action is recognized by NLP practitioners as shifting the brain's focus from self to world.

59. RVP, 117: "The soul's first habitual activity is reflection .... [and] reflection by means of experience. Otherwise we have had the events without experiencing them, and the experience of what happened comes only later when we gain an idea of it--when it can be envisioned by an archetypal idea [i.e., a mythical narrative]. Also, 128: "Through psychologizing [i.e., soulmaking] I change the idea of any literal action at all--political, scientific, personal-- into a metaphorical enactment. I see the act and scene and stance I am in, and not only the action I am into ... entering all actions in the role of an idea."

60. H & S, 37.

61. See Note 11 above.

62. H & S, 74

63. Ibid, 115: "Noticia refers to that capacity [of the soul] to form true notions of things from attentive noticing. It is the full acquaintance on which knowledge depends." See also 120ff for the "loving" aspect of knowing.

64. H&S, 43-44.

65. Chekhov, Anton. "The Student." In *Selected Stories.* Coulson, Jessie, Tr. (1963). London: Oxford University Press, 105-110. Note that the student does not tell a nice story; he tells a story of betrayal. And, as he looks at his audience, he is aware of the casual cruelty which has been inflicted on the idiot daughter. Yet, the experience of story connects him to wonder. So here again we are reminded that it is not the story itself, but the context for the telling, which has the power to lift us from despair. How much easier to offer the panacea of answers with formulas than to do what Chekhov does: return wonder even to this cold, cruel, dying world.

66. Michael Ventura, a man of grit (i.e., soil intelligence), has made inroads into Hillman's polytheistic bias, grounding Hillman more and more in the here and-now. See, Hillman, James & Ventura, Michael. (1992). *We've Had A Hundred Years of Psychotherapy and the World's Getting Worse*. New York: Harper Collins.

67. H & S, 112.

68. Keats, op. cit., 473: "The common cognomen of this world among the misguided and the superstitious is'a vale of tears' from which we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken to Heaven--What a little circumscribed straightened notion! Call the world if you Please 'The vale of Soul-making' Then you will find out the use of this world ... I say 'Soul making' Soul as distinguished from an Intelligence--There may be intelligences or sparks of divinity in millions--but they are not Souls till they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself ... how then are Souls to be made? How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given to them--so as ever to possess a bliss peculiar to each ones individual existence? How, but by the medium of a world like this?" [All punctuation--or lack thereof-- his.]

69. The attribution of quiddity to William James comes from Hillman. One could develop some interesting parallels between Kott's and Hillman's ideas of metaphor, William James' ideas of essence or quiddity, Wallace Stevens' aesthetic of poetry, and the idea of vertical infinity in the work of Milan Kundera. What these aesthetic-perceptual theories have in common is the quest to articulate "depth on the surface" (Hillman's "deepening" of event into experience) without the ideological trappings of confession. I believe that such an exploration would add an interesting dimension to developing the nonliteral style of Playback's theatrical language. In the structuring of "stories," linear narrative is a flattened, horizontal repeat of the already told story. "Depth" or "vertical" or "quiddity" offer us a language of dichtung, the distillation of the account into poetry. In this vertical, deepening dichtung lies the mystery of ensoulment. We are not doing mirrors. We are doing the deeper reflection of the soul in the waters stirred by prayer.