

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS OF PSYCHODRAMA IN WESTERN EUROPE\*

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Moreno called psychodrama "the method which elicits the truth of the soul through action." In order to assess the expansion of psychodrama as a special psychotherapeutic method in Europe we must take a look at the cultural and scientific setting in which it was conceived, developed and introduced and in which it has begun to spread. These four phases seem to overlap with the four quarters of our century.

J.L. Moreno, the founder of psychodrama, was a physician. He completed his medical studies at the University of Vienna in 1917, but he was simultaneously deeply concerned with theology, philosophy, anthropology, literature and the theatrical arts. This multiple involvement accounts for the fact that he conceived, described and practiced his original triadic psychotherapeutic method now known as psychodrama-sociometry-group psychotherapy. All the basic concepts of this action-method were already formulated by him in Europe before his emigration to the United States in 1925, but had left no impact on psychotherapy and medicine. During the first quarter of the twentieth century, the prevailing form of psychotherapy was psychoanalysis. Contrary to Moreno's method it concentrated on the psychodynamics of the individual and excluded action from the therapeutic setting. The triadic approach to psychotherapy must have appeared antithetic and unacceptable. At the same time, internal medicine and psychiatry were so involved with the studies of physical and biochemical effects upon the individual organism that phenomena like interaction and group fell outside their field of consideration.

The practical development of psychodrama, sociometry and group psychotherapy occurred in the United States during the second quarter of our century, in the more favorable climate of American social psychology. At the time when the first results of the triadic approach were published in the United States, psychotherapy in Germany was being suppressed by the Nazi-Regime. When an exchange of ideas could have taken place the countries of the European continent were cut off by the war. The only exceptions were England, where psychoanalytic psychotherapy was flourishing in the Freudian style, and Switzerland where, in addition to Freudian psychoanalysis, the Analytical Psychology of C. G. Jung

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and the Daseinsanalyse of Ludwig Binswanger had been developed. The latter, based upon phenomenology, had a considerable influence on French psychiatrists and psychotherapists like Minkowski, Lacan et al. It may therefore not be purely accidental that the introduction of psychodrama (which can be considered as practical phenomenology) into Europe began after World War II, in France.

In 1946, the French scholars Fouquet, Delay and Monod had visited the Moreno Institute in New York and upon their return to Paris started to apply psychodrama to children's groups at the Claude Bernard Centre. In the early fifties George Gurvitch, chairman of the Department of Sociology at the Sorbonne, organized a sociometric laboratory within his section. Also in the fifties Action and group methods received their consistent impetus in France when Anne Ancelin-Schutzenberger after her studies with Moreno founded "Le groupe français d'études de sociométrie, dynamique des groupes et de psychodrame". Since then, she has energetically pursued its spread in professional circles, and in 1964 organized the First International Congress of Psychodrama in Paris. Now she teaches psychodrama at the universities of Paris and Nice and is a consultant on psychodrama for the World Health Organization. In addition, since the early fifties psychodrama met with the interest of French psychoanalysts (Blajan-Marcus, Lebovici, Widlocher, G. & P. Lemoine, et. al.) who practice and teach a special variant of psychodrama, while existentialists like Bour supplement their concepts with the related theory of psychodrama and its practice. Spanish psychiatrists such as Sarro and Obiols expressed their appreciation of psychodrama by organizing the Second International Congress of Psychodrama in Barcelona in 1966. Two years later, the degree of Doctor-Honoris Causa was bestowed upon Moreno by the medical faculty of that city.

The International Foundation of Human Relations was founded in Amsterdam by the American psychiatrist and psychodramatist Dean Elefthery and by other Dutch and Belgian colleagues. It provides a four week training extended over two years. Many professionals have been trained within its framework. In the Netherlands, psychodrama is now applied in various hospitals, especially in the treatment of alcoholics and training of hospital staff.

In Belgium it has been promoted by the child psychiatrist Fontaine of the University of Louvain who founded the French language division of the International Foundation of Human Relations under the name of "La Verveine." Considerable interest in psychodrama was aroused in Sweden when in the 1969-1972 period, I gave lecture-demonstrations at various psychiatric hospitals, psychotherapeutic institutions and within the framework of the two Swedish Group Psychotherapy Organizations in Stockholm and Lund. In recent years continuous training has been provided by a number of psychodramatists from various countries. Psychodrama is now practiced in a number of psychiatric institutions by Swedish professionals.

In the German speaking countries of Austria, Germany and Switzerland, a

most drastic growth and rapid expansion has taken place since 1970. Before we consider this expansion let us also look at the historical development. Sociometry and Group Psychotherapy respectively were introduced by the German sociologist von Wiese, the Austrian psychiatrists R. Schindler and H. Teirich as well as the Swiss psychiatrist A. Friedemann. They were more readily accepted than psychodrama with which only Friedemann had experimented as early as the nineteen twenties. Later he worked with it at a psychiatric treatment center for children. This method consisted of: Play, theater, and acting out, the latter was described in the psychoanalytic literature as inadequate behavior. Even colleagues who were impressed by lecture-demonstrations Moreno had given in these countries from 1954 on, felt it was safer not to get involved. In Germany it was A. Ploeger who first began to treat patients with psychodrama on the psychotherapeutic ward of the Tuebingen University Hospital. He now applies it at the University of Aachen. The German psychologist Helga Straub studied with Moreno in the mid-fifties, and upon her return to Germany treated obsessive-compulsive patients of the Buergerhospital at Stuttgart. I myself had translated *Who Shall Survive?* into German, and studied psychodrama with Moreno in 1951-1952 before his first return trip to Germany. I have been connected with the introduction of psychodrama into these countries since 1954. Between 1961 and 1968, I used psychodrama in my work with neurotic and schizophrenic patients at the Psychiatric Hospital Bellevue at Kreuzlingen, Switzerland (where I am still applying it) and on a visiting basis at the C. G. Jung Klinik am Zuerichberg. Furthermore, I taught sociometry and psychodrama at the Institute of Applied Psychology at Zurich. Three events paved the way for the rapid expansion of psychodrama in the German-speaking countries; they coincided almost exactly with the third quarter of our century.

Firstly, The Third International Congress of Psychodrama organized by F. Knobloch in Prague had to be transferred to Baden near Vienna due to the political events of August 1968. It aroused the interest of a considerable number of psychiatrists and psychotherapists, and thus created the climate for the second event which further expanded the application of psychodrama. Secondly, in 1970, the "Psychodrama Section" was founded within the German Association of Group Psychotherapy and Group Dynamics. Friedemann, Leutz, Petzold, Ploeger and Straub formed a special committee to deal with questions of training and spreading of information. Since that time all these persons have demonstrated psychodrama at numerous conventions and published books and papers which drew attention to this method.

The third event to mark further progress was the foundation and registration of the two Moreno Institutes - one at Stuttgart, the other one at Ueberlingen in April 1975. They are directed by H. Straub and G.A. Leutz respectively. The two institutes operate in close cooperation with each other. They provide training based on the same program in sixteen German cities and in several cities in

Austria and Switzerland. Here follows an outline of the training program which is the vehicle for further recognition and expansion of psychodrama. It is carried out on two levels, basic and advanced - each of two years duration - and covers three areas: the training of psychodrama-therapists, psychodrama-leaders and psychodrama-assistants; these levels depend upon the professional background of the candidates. Candidates holding degrees in medicine or psychology are admitted to the psychodrama-therapist program: those holding degrees in education, sociology, social work, theology, etc., to the psychodrama leader program, while paraprofessionals such as nurses, occupational therapists, etc., are admitted to the psychodrama assistant program.

The basic training consists of a minimum of sixty days, with at least six hours per day, in groups averaging twelve members. The trainer and co-trainer, usually a man and a woman of different professions are staff members of the Moreno Institutes which are also responsible for the supervision of their work. The continuous training in a stable group is supplemented by a variety of special psychodrama seminars in open groups dealing with special topics such as fantasy, dreams, sociometry, etc. The pedagogical aspect involves the following criteria:

- A process of self experience in a stable group
- The realization of the impact of social interactions upon one's psychodynamics and behavior and the latter's influence on the environment
- A basic understanding of psychodramatic techniques through both experiential and didactic learning
- Self- and group evaluation in regard to each candidate's psychodramatic abilities and modes of behavior such as role-flexibility and empathy
- A protocol of one session as proof of the candidate's ability to understand, follow and summarize the psychodramatic process. The graduated psychodrama-assistant is expected to be able to function as auxiliary ego in any type of psychodrama. The assistant is especially needed and useful in the treatment of psychotic patients, but not allowed to run psychodrama sessions.

The advanced training is continued in a stable training group. The candidates now learn to direct scenes and sessions under the immediate supervision of another trainer. They study the diagnostic application of sociometric and psychodramatic procedures as well as prevention of crises. Recommended reading deepens the understanding of psychodramatic theory and of other psychotherapeutic methods, and provides the fundamentals for understanding psychosomatic, neurotic and psychotic syndromes. The practical training on this level consists of a) a practicum in psychodrama of at least twelve weeks duration with the candidate functioning as a co-psychodrama therapist in the treatment of patients and writing an extensive report on this experience and b) the application of at least forty psychodrama sessions (sixty hours) to patients within the candidate's own professional field or specialization with twenty hours of individual

supervision or nine control seminars (fifty-four hours) during the last year of training.

Candidates are admitted for graduation upon completion of their training, provided they have practiced their professions in a clinical institution over a period of two years; physicians must have worked in a psychiatric-psychotherapeutic hospital for at least one year, and psychologists in a counseling institution or department of clinical psychology.

There is an oral examination during which the candidates discuss the psychodramatic treatment of a specific case; the written part of the examination consists of a paper in which the candidate explains a psychotherapeutic problem in the light of psychodramatic theory. This description of the training on the advanced level delineates the program for psychodrama therapists. The program for psychodrama leaders differs mainly in the practice and in the recommended reading.

The effectiveness of the training program of the Moreno Institutes can be measured in terms of the output of qualified psychodramatists who become mature practitioners and teachers: these in turn introduce psychodrama into psychiatric and psychotherapeutic centers. This distinguishes the Moreno Institutes' graduates from self-styled or autodidactic psychodramatists who may be tempted to indiscriminately ride the present wave of "groupism."

As a direct result, an increasing number of hospital boards, university clinics, and particularly health insurances have placed their growing confidence in the Institutes. This is reflected in the following:

- Invitations extended to staff members of the Moreno Institutes to present psychodrama at congresses, conventions and universities.
- Permanent and temporary teaching appointments of the directors of both institutes by the departments of psychology at the universities of Tuebingen, Konstanz, Hamburg, and by the medical faculties of Hannover and Zurich.
- A steadily increasing number of applications from professionals, mostly psychiatric residents and graduate psychologists.
- Partial aid granted to candidates for their psychodrama training by their employers; and last but not least by
- The establishment of a psychodrama division with seventy-seven beds in the new psychotherapeutic hospital Hardtwald-Klinik II at Zwesten near Kassel upon the request of the BFA, one of the biggest health insurance companies in Germany. The Hardtwald-Klinik II is a private hospital under contract with the Moreno Institute of Ueberlingen according to which four medical positions and one psychological position of its psychodrama division are to be filled by trainees of the Institute. Supervision is provided by the Institute.

Research is being planned in the form of comparative studies of the results of psychodramatic treatment as against psychoanalytically oriented brief therapies,

administered to the same diagnostic category of psychosomatic patients spending the same length of time on the two other divisions of this hospital.

Additional modes of application of this method are its integration into the treatment of addiction, rehabilitation, and prevention. Finally, we are giving increasing consideration to the combination of the triad psychodrama, sociometry, and group psychotherapy which mutually benefits the interchange of ideas with colleagues of other psychotherapeutic denominations.