Introduction

WHEN I WAS FIRST ASKED to edit the papers that comment on Jacob Moreno's autobiography, I was puzzled. Why ask me? I searched for an answer. Then I recalled my great professor, Gardner Murphy, who felt that there was merit in parapsychology. Early in my professional training, he brought Moreno to the City College of New York—in what I call its "golden days"—so that Jake could demonstrate to a group of psychologists what he was doing and why he was doing what he was doing. Later, Zerka Moreno was a student of mine at New York University. Was ESP at work? I decided that there must be messages that were not as yet clear to me, and I accepted the invitation to edit.

A few years before Moreno died, I spent hours in his company, making movies that captured his vitality and intelligence. The movies have disappeared, but I remain confident that they will be found. In his final years, as I captured some of his wit and humanity on film, before he was wracked with pain, Moreno remained vital and cantankerous but always sincere and caring. The two verbs, to heal and to cure, are basically synonymous. The verb, *to heal,* stems from the Teutonic and means to become whole or to make whole. The word *cure* comes from the Latin *curare*, meaning to care. Moreno believed in healing and curing. How he went about it made him a subject of controversy, which he probably enjoyed because he was not one to dodge controversy.

Among his most bitter enemies (and Jake did have some) was Sam Slavson, who claimed in one of his articles (1979) that Joergensen of Sweden had introduced the idea of Stefgreiftheater, the spontaneity theater. He wrote that Moreno brought the idea to the United States in the early 1930s. I do not believe that Slavson was accurate or that Moreno lost any sleep worrying about who did what. What I found in the Slavson article tells quite a lot about Moreno, which I am sure Slavson did *not* intend. This is Slavson, explaining Moreno's influence:

> It must be remembered that in the 1930's "creative expression" in the theater, in literature, in education and in art had been a dominant motif, as indeed it was in all the self-expressive fields. . . . It was in this period that "free verse," cubism, dadaism, surrealism, e.e. cummings, originated and flourished. (Slavson, 1979, p. 460)

My reading of this quotation came shortly after I had seen a fine documentary describing the New York School of painting, whose members included Gottlieb, Pollock, de Kooning, Reinhardt, and others. During the film, I kept musing about Moreno. Then it all came together. Moreno was attempting to break away from all of the constraints and restraints, as these artists were and as all creative people attempt to do. Not rebel—but break away—that is what Moreno was struggling for and toward. Only time will tell whether his struggle was successful. His theory of spontaneity was part of a search, and he was an explorer. That is why Murphy (1947) wanted us to meet Moreno early in our professional careers. In his classic book on personality, Murphy defined spontaneous as "proceeding without constraint." He wrote that "the Moreno procedure for training in personal spontaneity consists of breaking the cold stereotypes of social attitude" (p. 352). Murphy continued:

> SPONTANEITY is here conceived as the shaking off of the encrusted habits of the social routine, the setting free of impulses that are both naive and organized. The child's first need is conceived to be the need for sociality, the need to respond to others and to be responded to by them. This means that for each individual the deepest, most naive impulses are love and hate, and that therefore the first task of the educator or psychiatrist is to allow the individual through the spontaneous selection of his own social world, to define the influences which enable love rather than hate to serve as organizing principles, or to direct and channel hate into the form of hating things that threaten humanity. . . . The Moreno technique appears, then, to support and supplement the techniques used in progressive education, experimental hypnosis, and psychoanalysis, all of which tend to show that there are vast energies within the core of the ego which have as a rule been left to accidental expression. . . . Creativeness . . . is not private property; it belongs to humanity, and wherever there is human material it can be nursed, cultivated, and brought to flower (pp. 475–76). . . . Moreno has continually made clear, that the habit of submitting to mechanization is transferred to one phase of life after another, so that nothing short of systematic "spontaneity training" is adequate as a counterpoise" (p. 528). . . . Two of Moreno's contributions, sociometry and the psychodrama reveal his basic concept that each individual is liberated, made creative, when he is in the situation that is right for him; from this it follows that therapy, instead of getting inside the skin, as in psychoanalysis, should attempt to restructure the situation so as to permit the person to be himself and to grow. (pp. 877–78)

Murphy classifies Moreno's approach under the category of situationism, that is, any person must discover the requirements necessary to fulfill the role that society expects him or her to enact. Moreno, like many explorers, was not really very clear about his final goals, but he knew the overall landscape. In an ironic way, although Moreno would deny this, he was probably close to ego psychology and the newer movements in self-psychology. He was certainly in the direction of Franz Alexander's "cor-

rective emotional experience" and was very distant from the drive theory of the classical Freudians.

Moreno was an artist, and all artists are the carriers of a culture. He might be likened to an exponent of cubism and what cubism has meant to the culture of the twentieth century. Cubism is unsystematic and Moreno, too, was unsystematic, in a different way. Cubism captures the entire expanse of life or, as Adam Gopnik recently wrote in *The New Yorker*, "Cubism . . . is a response to the radiance of ordinary things and an evocation of the give and take that shapes perception . . ." (Oct. 23, 1989). Picasso stated that reality in cubism is like a perfume, and perfume is a fragrance that can never really be captured. Moreno did not want to believe in a reductionism; he was a free spirit and he believed in the power of the imagination—another definition of science, one that is very unsettling to those who stress a plan or program. Through psychodrama, Moreno challenged the participants to take pre-existing experiences and join them together in new ways. He was whimsical and speculative and that is why he chose a theatrical format. Above all, he was a pioneer.

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REFERENCES

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