

MORENO'S DISCUSSION OF EHRENWALD'S DIALOGUE  
"PSYCHOANALYST VS. PSYCHODRAMATIST"

1. The brilliant and humorous author of this dialogue, Jan Ehrenwald, is in an awkward position: he has practiced psychoanalysis but he has never attended a psychodramatic session much less practiced it. He may play the part of the psychoanalyst but how can he play the part of the psychodramatist without bias? He is apparently well acquainted with psychanalytic literature but he is poorly acquainted with psychodramatic writings. How can he make a fair historical comparison of the two positions?

2. Psychodrama in this *modern* format has no precedent in the history of psychotherapy. The format of psychodrama is the very opposite of the Greek tragedy. The Greek tragedy is a cultural conserve, the reenactment of a play written by a playwright, the psychodrama is a spontaneous creative production, presented in the Here and Now. Not only does it not turn the clock back but it starts a new future for psychotherapy on a realistic and scientific basis. The "psychoanalyst" is not aware that Moreno has systematically reevaluated Freud's concept of the unconscious. The unconscious dynamics as Freud has formulated it for individual analysis is difficult if not impossible to prove. Moreno has introduced instead *the concept of co-unconscious states*. Co-unconscious dynamics operate between individuals. It can be empirically validated. Acting out within a therapeutic setting is the therapeutic counterpart of living itself. It can not be substituted by any form of "interpretation" even if the therapist were God himself.

3. The "psychoanalyst" states that phrases like acting out and group dynamics have been explained and introduced by Freud. This is erroneous. "Acting out" is a term which Moreno has introduced into psychotherapeutic literature. (See Spontaneity Training of Children in "Impromptu versus Standardization," Moreno's Laboratories, New York, 1929, Psychodrama Volume I, page 140-45, Who Shall Survive?, first edition, 1934, page 325). Freud cannot have used the term. It is an Anglo-Saxon term for which there is no counterpart in German. But acting out defined as "acting from within" is a logical psychodramatic term. It has been borrowed by psychoanalysts but given a different meaning. Acting out is often an adequate response to the present situation and not neurotic. In psychodrama acting out is encouraged and permitted; in psychoanalysis it is forbidden. "We remember a feeble-minded girl whose desire to become a nurse took on fantastic forms. Although we knew she would never be able to become one, we encouraged her to 'act out' this craving in training situations. Finally she discovered her-

self that it was not suitable for her and asked to be trained for maid service." (See Sociometric Review, 1936, page 24). Obviously the same term "acting out" is used by psychodramatists and psychoanalysts for two different phenomena.

4. Psychodrama has been submitted in many of its phases to scientific validation. Moreno has pointed out however that "existential" validation plays an important part in every psychotherapeutic process.

The "psychoanalyst" points out that transference and projection have enriched the concept of "encounter." But he is in a characteristic psychoanalytic manner only concerned with the *pathology* of encounter. But what would encounter mean without its essential positive features—contact, communication, co-unconscious states, tele and role reversal?

5. The "psychoanalyst" wants the reader to believe that Moreno does not try to meet the requirements of scientific validation. The opposite is true for everyone who is acquainted with sociometry, group dynamics, group psychotherapy, psychodrama and role playing.

6. The psychoanalyst does not permit the patient to act out his fears or obsessions in the psychoanalytic office; were he to permit that he would turn into a psychodramatist. What he does is to interpret to the patient the meaning (as he, the analyst, sees it) of his wishes to act out. For the psychodramatist the acting out is part of his "fact finding" procedure and not an encouragement to the patient to "exhibit" himself. It is true, however, that many psychoanalysts of 1960 use psychodramatic techniques without admitting it. The "cheater" is therefore the psychoanalyst and not the psychodramatist.

7. Moreno followed Ehrenwald's intriguing dialogue with a dialogue between psychodramatist and psychoanalyst of his own. It has been type-recorded and is being transcribed and will be published in a subsequent issue of Group Psychotherapy.