

Humanistic Psychodrama

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New and further developments of psychodrama will be outlined; for example, that of “behaviourdrama” and “tetrahedral psychodrama”. In particular, humanistic psychotherapy will be described in terms of a reconsideration of Moreno’s original thoughts. That which is essential to humanistic psychodrama will be referred to, the client accepts responsibility for his/her own life, the assumption that man has a natural need to grow and to self-realize, and that every psychic occurrence is goal directed and meaningful. The view of everything as a unified whole.

The classical psychodrama of Moreno has lately undergone new and further developments. Time and again the methods of psychodrama have been applied to orthodox psychoanalytical concepts and in combination with C. G. Jung’s generalized ideas. Social phenomena connect Alfred Adler and J. L. Moreno together. Since 1979, the Bergerhausen Institute of psychotherapy in Duisburg teaches Humanistic Psychodrama with is a serious reconsideration of Moreno’s original thoughts, a deed he would have desired. Furthermore it classifies psychodrama as being consistent with humanistic psychology.

In 1980, Hilarion Petzold classified psychodrama as a method of humanistic psychology. He was of the opinion that psychodrama signifies the “oldest method of humanistic psychology”, and Moreno himself as it’s founder who could be thought of as the Nestor and most important pioneer of the psychodrama movement. Already, the most important concepts of humanistic psychology had been developed by Moreno in the twenties and thirties long before Rogers, Perls, Maslow and the many others of the “third force” formulated their own ideas and concepts.

Although, it is a fact that Moreno was called a forerunner, instigator, and inspirer by some of the protagonists, he never explicitly counted himself as coming from the direction of humanistic psychology. Moreno was however, much more successful in establishing his psychodrama as an independent process to group psychotherapy and a demarcation from psychoanalysis. In 1966, he referred to his pioneering group-work in psychology as the “third psychiatric revolution”. He never intended for humanistic psychology to be the “third force”, rather it was intended for his psychodrama, his sociatry. Furthermore, J. L. Moreno stood with all his passion for originality and authorship, which in addition to his prophesying and egotism, in the way of making possible an integration of his ideas. It seems to me though that this is not what he wanted. In his later works he developed a more religious, cosmic world view. In 1959, he wrote:

The new values are psychodynamic in nature. The new lifeforces will come to man through his connection to the cosmos.

The classical psychodrama of J. L. Moreno in Germany, essentially represented through Grete Leutz, has in the meantime undergone new and further developments. A first variation from the original settings was undertaken by Heike Straub, a student of the Moreno school of psychology. She assigns to psychodrama a greater amount of groupdynamic proceedings, while also incorporating methods of other psychotherapies. The methods of psychodrama have time and again been employed in therapies of psychoanalysis. Adolf Friedmann in Switzerland, Serge Lebovici in France and later after 1950, Didier Anzieu Basquin and Widlöcher among others have employed psychodrama to what is still partly known as orthodox psychoanalytical concepts. Erdmann and Hanne see similarities between J. L. Moreno’s psychodrama and C. G. Jung’s analytical psychology, in particular the objectives they both aim for. For example, both aim to achieve a state where the being discovers his/herself completely, which is achieved by encountering the self and thus reaching an augmentation of individual autonomy and sociability. Social phenomena connect Alfred Adler and J. L. Moreno, such that therapists from the Adlerianic school like Ansbacher, Ackermann, Cosini and Dreikurs were able to use psychodramatic methods without having to refer directly to Moreno’s theoretical concepts. Role-playing in behaviour therapy has already been conducted by Zander and Lipitt since the early 1940’s using Moreno’s practice of sociometric intervention. Since then role-playing has been over and over again, employed to train and get the desired behaviour. Under the influence of both cognitive therapies and the theoretical foundations of Lazarus’s Multimodals, roleplay gains significance. Since 1969, Petzold has tried to combine psychodrama with behavior

therapy. He sees his “behaviourdrama” as an expression emphasizing of the elements of behaviour therapy, while at the same time making an effort to remove the psychoanalytical elements of psychoanalysis. The tetrahedral psychodrama should achieve an integration of the different directions that psychodrama has taken. Schützenberger tries to include the theoretical foundations of Freud, Moreno and Lewin under the inception of humanistic psychology. Although their theoretical formulations remain confusing, their effort may nevertheless lead us to see an integrative psychodrama therapy. Petzold has, as he put in, developed the ground work for an integrated drama-therapy; with it establishing the tetrahedral psychodrama while bringing together Moreno’s psychodrama, the therapeutic theatre of Iljine in association with Gestalt, and behaviour therapy. After the initial phase, follows an act phase, which is then followed with an integration phase, and concluded with a new orientation phase. Actually, he has not achieved more than merely adding to the phases of Protasis, Peripeteia, and Lysis which is a phase of training in new behaviours, a role-training to the classic drama of Antike.

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The Psychotherapy Institute Bergerhausen in Duisburg/Germany established in 1979, where Humanistic Psychodrama is taught, does not provide any new form of psychodrama. It is a serious reconsideration of Moreno’s original ideas, something Moreno would have often liked to do himself but could not, due to his own stature which was a hindering factor. It is a first systematic representation of his ideas, thoughts, and theories and the integration of psychodrama with humanistic psychology. The collective general behaviours and nature of a person are placed at the centrepoint. The ethical principles of faith, love, and hope along with the idea of a humane community are made possible by psychodrama. Knowledge in the sense of intuitive sight that comprehends things in its wholeness, the understanding of dialectical polarities, and the renunciation of absolute authority seem to have a decisive influence on the image of man and his life.

Everyman here is autonomous, and simultaneously socially bound. He is responsible for his own life.

This means for humanistic psychodrama therapy, that an individual in his social setting is called upon and able to learn and change. It also means that the therapist cannot be permitted to take responsibility whilst “treating” the individual from the outside; instead, the individual is encouraged to explore himself, define his goals and then follow them through. The client remains accountable for himself. The therapist has his professional competence to further the changing process. As psychodrama requires that an individual self-express himself with and through the help of the group, the group becomes of major significance, similar to the that of the therapist-client-relationship; it becomes a help in bringing about and shaping the individual’s self-expression, such as auxiliary ego or double. Every group member is basically required to become his/her double, whereby the member taking part decides how often they would like to participate in doing so. It takes a long time for members to reach the stage of giving and taking under an imbalanced balance, yet the means to that end is achieved through looking on and self-testing which leads to an increased realization that engagement for other signifies independence and enrichment; it is gratifying and valuable, and means being able to demand from others, understand others, become close to, and important to others as a person and proceed on a common path.

The more a group member uses the opportunity during the course of the therapy, to become the “Double” the more possible will it be for that member go about with other people in a less frightened manner. One of the fundamental intentions is to bring about and encourage a participant to develop a more independent role within the group. All psychodramatic methods follow this objective, which group members refer to, the group as a whole refers to, and which centres itself on the protagonist as representative of the group. The group members determine the subject matter and the degree of their activities, which is primarily circumscribed by the group’s social reality.

Representatives of humanistic psychodrama believe that it is characteristic of man to have a natural need to grow and self-realize.

It becomes possible to fall back on this need during the process of group-therapy. It allows the group leader and the group members to proceed in a non-judgmental, calm and trustful manner that is called for during the therapy process. It also makes possible for the client, who is constrained by his/her social setting to self-realize by means of his own strength. Therefore, in the psychodrama play, the protagonist determines among other things, place, time, and act. He/she selects an auxiliary ego, determines the role to be played by the auxiliary ego, as he/she himself/herself experiences it; the protagonist determines the degree of spontaneity, shapes his/her subjective world, and finds within it its corresponding possible solutions to the conflict. Also in the process of the Double, the protagonist is required to remain under his/her own authority.

Every psychic occurrence is goal directed and meaningful.

The search for meaning and fulfillment, even beyond one's own existence, has to be regarded as an essential motivation of man. It signifies for psychodrama therapy that such motivation can cause man to examine and improve his/her relationship to the natural setting, and thus discover a more open and wider experience in the interaction and communication with his/her fellow-man, which alters and restores his/her life-view.

Man is to be understood as a whole being; as a subject interacting within his social setting.

Humanistic psychodrama does not treat isolated disturbances, but rather puts man with his/her life-view at the centre-point of the changing process. Throughout, that individual will be guided by the therapist, and his/her methods, as well as by the other group members in shaping the events which will take place during the therapy. The therapist will represent humanistic values like, freedom, justice, and human dignity, which will be conveyed through his methods and guidance. Humanistic psychodrama considers human nature to be essentially good. It always strives for an improved structuring of the world (Umwelt) and for a better understanding of the individual.

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