

Sociometry and Moreno's Canon of Creativity by Ann E. Hale, M.A., TEP

A student has asked you what Moreno's Canon of Creativity has to do with group sociometry. You give a short explanation and suggest that the group process the next psychodrama in terms of the Canon of Creativity as applied to role development and role choice of auxiliary egos. An answer suggested by Ann E. Hale.

Introduction

The training group had been formally introduced to the Canon of Creativity¹, the central tenet of J. L. Moreno's theories, in a session focused on the warm-up process. To review, Moreno depicted the process of spontaneity, creativity and the cultural conserve as a cycle, with the repository of the end products of all creative acts, the cultural conserve (CC) situated and enclosed in a smallish circle on the right side of a circle. Leading away from this circle, and returning, cycling around, is a representation of the process whereby greater and greater additions of spontaneity (S) are introduced, or later withdrawn, upon return to the cultural conserve (CC). Cutting through the middle of the circle, is a line directed toward the cultural conserve, or back across the line, representing the momentum generated when one is fully invested in an act which results in creativity (C). Soon after the line is completed by a joining once again with the cultural conserve.

Processing a Psychodrama Using the Canon of Creativity

During this training session I ask students to think of their perception of a role, and the expectations they hold about the enactment of the role as a cultural conserve. I have them break down in groups of two or three and each speak about one of the roles we take on as trainees. They are to discuss the role they have chosen, and to give specific examples of what they use to define the perception they have of the role.

Next we generate two lists of roles from a recent psychodrama, (1) the roles taken by auxiliary egos in the psychodrama we are processing (boss, co-worker, girlfriend, parents, etc), and then (2) a list of the roles such as director, double, mirror, auxiliary egos, trainer, coach, etc. Each student chooses one role from either list and gives a brief presentation on the aspects of the role which are clearly within the cultural conserve (role taking), examples when an addition of spontaneity was present (role playing), and whether or not, and to what degree role creating was present. The student closes with a statement about the re-entry of the role within the cultural conserve of the group at the close of the psychodrama and whether or not there were changes present.

A further expansion of processing is a discussion of the cultural conserve which exists in the group related to whom in the group has access to roles,

particularly roles which enable students to practice their skills, and to expand their role repertoire. Are some students fixed in their role repertoire or their sociometric position? Who needs a specific type of role and what are ways the group may organize itself in order that role accessibility increases rather than decreases. The group may identify a moment in the drama when each person present was able to be in the spontaneity mode. This moment may be anchored on the Canon of Creativity and discussed.

Walking the Canon of Creativity

By placing on the floor of the workspace an enlarged depiction of the Canon of Creativity, it is possible to introduce moments of action, and the person presenting is able to describe, and evoke an action recall of moments from a psychodrama which illustrate either role taking, role playing or role creating. Others may choose to comment in action. This opportunity helps students fine tune their awareness of specific events which are connected to the theoretical underpinings of the psychodramatic method. Walking the Canon of Creativity may be used anytime a role is explored. It is possible to have a double accompany you as you walk the Canon, assisting with warming up, identifying issues and the concept of "receptive audience" for the role as it is explored.

1 J. L. Moreno (1934,1953, 1978) Who Shall Survive? Foundations of Sociometry, Group Psychotherapy and Sociodrama. 2nd Edition(1953) . Beacon, NY, Beacon House, p.46. The Canon of Creativity is aslo depicted in Who Shall Survive? Foundations of Sociometry, Group Psychotherapy and Sociodrama. Student edition. (1993) McLean, VA ASGPP, p. 18.

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