The purpose of this paper was to (1) identify the Pioneer of the Group Encounter Movement, and (2) expose and clarify some of the ambiguities, contradictions and backbiting evident in the Group Encounter Field. The origins of the group encounter movement are examined with a particularly strong emphasis on J. L. Moreno and his introduction of Sociometry in 1931. This is followed by a discussion of Kurt Lewin and the emergence of the Bethel laboratories. The initial training centers established in the 1930's and 1940's are described. The discussion of the initial training centers points out a definite correlation between the Morenean Psychodramatic techniques and sociometric methodologies with that of the laboratory training concepts. A disturbing factor that the author emphasizes is the misunderstanding prevalent among group leaders, group dynamicists, and group therapists regarding the ethics and validity of the many group approaches employed throughout the country. (RW/Author)
The purpose of this paper is to (1) identify the Pioneer of the Group Encounter Movement, and (2) expose and clarify some of the ambiguities, contradictions, and backbiting evident in the Group Encounter Field.

Origin and Development

A brief survey of the origin and development of the group movement is extremely necessary but a most difficult task due to the embryonic stage of the movement. Carl Rogers writes, "It would, in fact, be surprising—-and perhaps worse—-if we were all that sure all this soon about what they are, because the group experience is so new. It is a potent new cultural development, an exciting social invention, a truly grass roots movement that has grown out of personal, organizational and social needs."\(^1\) Rogers is really saying the Group Encounter

Movement has finally become a reality, although, it is quite clear that the movement is apparently viewed as a very recent phenomenon. Due to this contemporary phenomenon, there are many conflicting attitudes regarding the genealogy of the Movement. *

Although the Group Encounter Movement is a recent phenomenon, the ideas and knowledge which it represents are, as developments in the applied behavioral sciences go, relatively old. For example, some of the early empirical-small action group studies stem from Anton Mesmer (1790), Ferdinand Tonnies, (1887), C.H. Cooley (1902), Joseph Pratt (1905), George Simmel (1908), Jacob Moreno (1911 & 1913), E.W. Lazelle (1921), John Dewey (1922), G.H. Mead (1934), Sigmund Freud (1922) and Trigant Burrow (1927).2 It is important to keep in mind that the aforementioned studies certainly had a therapeutic precept but they were lacking a scientific technique.3


*This is well illustrated in (Cartwright & Zander, 1968, Ch.1), (Egan, 1970, Ch. 7), (Hare, Borgatta, & Bales, 1968, Part I), (Moreno, 1953, Preludes), (Ruitenbeek, 1970, Introduction), (Howard, 1970, Ch. 11), (Sorokin, 1966, Ch. 3), (Bonner, 1959, Ch. I), (Siroka, Siroka, & Schloss, 1971, Part One), just to mention a few.
The intensive (encounter) small group concept has its derivatives in the action workshop ideology that dates back to the late eighteenth century. However, the results of these studies were extremely inadequate in understanding what went on in groups, which is understandable, for the researchers lacked the scientific instruments to measure and examine the complexities of the action group process.

The important scientific breakthrough came in 1931 when Dr. J.L. Moreno introduced Sociometry, his system for measuring interpersonal relations. This instrument aids one in examining and differentiating the structure and dynamics of groups, types of forces operating within groups, and the "measureability" of these effects. There is no doubt that "Sociometry is and probably will remain a generic term to describe all measurements of societal and interpersonal data."4 As one can see prior to sociometry, "...no one knew what the interpersonal structure of a group 'precisely' looked like, in parts and as a whole, and, therefore, no one knew how to isolate, prevent or predict disturbances in groups. In the presociometric period all interpretations were based on hunches and intuitive speculations".5 In short, the historical foundations of Moreno's system of interpersonal relations"...is based upon the 'primary dyad,' the idea and experience of the meeting of two actors, the concrete-situational event

preliminary to all interpersonnel relations. These fundamental sociometric foundations date as far back to approximately 1914 when Moreno first defined encounter and the encounter group concept.

Encounter Groups

Going back to 1914, Moreno defined and described "encounter" and the encounter group concept in much the same way as it is presently being experienced in groups. This is best illustrated by Professor Paul Johnson of The Christian Theological Seminary:

In the spring of 1914 Moreno published in Vienna the first of a series of poetic writings entitled "Einladung zu einer Begegnung" (Invitation to an Encounter), which is evidently the first literary definition of encounter, the concept which has become central in the existential movement. To describe the encounter, he portrays two persons exchanging eyes to comprehend and know each other:

'A meeting of two: eye to eye, face to face,
And when you are near I will tear your eyes out
and place them instead of mine, and you will tear
my eyes out and will place them instead of yours,
then I will look at you with your eyes and you
will look at me with mine.'

The literary magazine Daimon, of which he (Moreno) was the editor, carried in the February issue, 1918, a dramatic dialogue by Moreno entitled "Einladung zu einer Begegnung: Die Gottheit als Autor" (Invitation to an Encounter: The Deity as Author). In this article appears the term "interpersonal communication" (zwischenmenschlicher Verkehr). The term "interpersonal relations," which Robert MacDougall used in 1912, came to prominence in his book Who Shall Survive? (1934) and in the journal he founded in 1937, Sociometry: A Journal of Interpersonal Relations.

During the years 1918-1920, Martin Buber was a contributing editor of Daimon, and his articles appeared side by side with Moreno's prophetic of the role each would have in the history of interpersonal theory. The I-Thou concept of God was the keystone of the interpersonal arch as documented in their publications, 1920-23.

6J.L. Moreno, Who Shall Survive?...p. 64.
In Moreno's early writings one can readily trace an awareness of interpersonal sensitivity and the sensitivity-group phenomenon when he writes:

There are actors who are connected with one another by an invisible correspondence of feelings, who have a sort of heightened sensitivity for their mutual inner processes, one gesture is sufficient and often they do not look at one another, they communicate through a new sense as if by a 'medial understanding.'

In psychodrama, one individual is representative of the group in a self exploration of his life, under the supervision of a director and supported by group members. One does this by reversing roles with the significant others in his world and viewing them and himself through different eyes. Like the many forms of sensitivity training, psychodrama uses both verbal and non-verbal techniques in exploring one's self as well as developing the emotional interaction of the individual and the group.

"Take my ideas, my concepts, but do not separate them from their parent, the philosophy; do not split my children in half.

---


like a Solomonic judgement. Love them in toto, support and respect the entire structure upon which they rest. Make them your own as completely as I do. Role reverse with me and put yourself entirely into my position."\textsuperscript{10} This is Moreno the man and this is Moreno’s credo; it was due to this quality of thinking that he was able to disseminate his ideas. However, after voluminous reading, the results of Moreno’s philosophy become sadly apparent. Yes, Moreno’s concepts have been internalized and implemented into the contemporary concept of the group movement. Nevertheless, in most instances, the original creator has been all but forgotten.

At the risk of painting too grim of a picture let me cite you an example from Jane Howard’s article entitled “Inhibitions Thrown to the Gentle Winds” (1968) where she described some of her experiences at Esalen and the variety of techniques employed by the Human Potential Movement.\textsuperscript{11} Although she is one of the individuals who is seemingly unaware of the historical roots, perhaps her omission can be overlooked for she is not a behavioral scientist. However, Dr. Abraham H. Maslow, a former president of the American Psychological Association and a founder of the School of Humanistic Psychology was nevertheless compelled to set the record straight and so responded to her article. He

\textsuperscript{10}Zerka T. Moreno, “The Heretic’s of Yesterday are the Orthodoxy of Today”, \textit{Group Psychotherapy}, Vol. XXII, No. 1-2, 1969, p. 5.

wrote to the editors:

Sirs:

Jane Howard's article on Esalen and other new developments in education and psychology was excellent. I would however like to add one credit where credit is due' footnote. Many of the techniques set forth in the article were originally invented by Dr. Jacob Moreno, who is still functioning vigorously and probably still inventing new techniques and ideas. 12

Waltham, Mass. Abraham H. Maslow
August 2, 1968

Maslow is certainly emphasizing the point that group trainers have absorbed Moreno's techniques and concepts. But at this writing the result is the separation of ideas from the parent, the philosophy.

In further support of this statement, Siroka, Siroka, & Schloss (1971) emphasize that the majority of "sensitivity trainers", perhaps unaware of the historical development of the group movement, implement Morenean techniques as part of their basic repertoire; these techniques were developed in psychodrama. The authors feel this is understandable "since many of the most important names in sensitivity training were at one time students or observers of Moreno. This list includes Kurt Lewin, Ronald Lippitt, and Leland Bradford some of the original founders of the National Training Laboratories". 13 (N.T.L.). However, this author questions the attitude of


"understandability", for it is this type of attitudinal framework which perpetuates mistrust and future ambiguities. I am in firm agreement with Maslow's position that one receive "credit where credit is due" and that Moreno should not be just one more man to be discovered posthumously.

Kurt Lewin--Emergence of the Bethel Laboratories

Another important figure in the group movement was Kurt Lewin (1890-1947), who followed shortly after Moreno. Lewin further developed the sociometric concept and concentrated on the dynamics of group structure, group ideology, conflicts between and within groups, various types of group spontaneous substructuring, the stability of a variety of spontaneous group structures versus structures created by external authority, minority problems (1935), renegade, scapegoat, and double loyalty conflicts.14

Lewin's acquaintance and enthusiasm with sociometry and some of the work of Moreno carried out in Europe, especially das Stegreftheater and Who Shall Survive? and his devoted interest in group or action dynamics was further enhanced after he met with Moreno several times in 1935.15 Furthermore, Lewin's publications prior to his meetings with Moreno, did not con-


15J.L. Moreno, Who Shall Survive?...pp. cci.
centrate on group or action dynamics, but rather he was known for his work in Gestalt and topological psychology.\textsuperscript{16} However, his first publication dealing with group theory, action theory, and methodology appeared in the Journal of the Moreno Institute, 1938, regarding "Techniques to investigate 'democracy' and 'autocracy' as group atmospheres."\textsuperscript{17}

Moreno reports that during their meetings, "He (Lewin) expressed in our talks particular interest in the democratic structure of groups, in contrast to their laissez faire and authoritative structure, problems which I experimented at that time;..."\textsuperscript{18} Pitirim A. Sorokin writes "The initial impetus to the study of small groups was given by Moreno's theory of the social atoms and his 'Sociometry' followed by Kurt Lewin's studies of small groups.\textsuperscript{19}

Furthermore, Muzafer Sherif reports in his article, "Integrating Field Work and Laboratory in Small Group Research", that the various psychological 'trait' theories or personality typologies were extremely inadequate in explaining social


\textsuperscript{17}Kurt Lewin and Ronald Lippitt, "An Experimental Approach...", pp. 292-300, also in P. Hare, E.F. Borgatta, R.F. Bales, (eds.), \textit{Small Groups}..., pp. 648-655.


When Moreno's work appeared in this country in the mid-thirties presenting his sociometric technique for the study of interpersonal choices and reciprocities among individuals, (i.e. role relations), it quickly found wide application. A few years later Kurt Lewin and his associates demonstrated the weighty determination of individual behavior by the properties of group atmosphere. This line of experimentation was the basis of other subsequent studies coming from the proponents of the Group Dynamics school.20 (Italics mine)

Thus, Kurt Lewin, a proponent of the Group Dynamics School, is usually credited with developing the first T-Group* (training group) at a 1946 summer training conference of community leaders at a State Teachers College in New Britain, Connecticut. The result of this training conference opened new avenues for research, thus, the following summer, 1947, Lewin's associates established a training laboratory (N.T.L.) in Bethel, Maine, to further develop and understand the T-Group process as an un-


structured group.  

In Moreno's words, "...my pioneering status in this field was already established and so I became the model for his first efforts in this, for him, new direction of research."  

The Initial Training Centers

Originally in the 1930's and 1940's there were only two private organizations devoted to the teaching and training of group leaders.

(1) Sociometric--Psychodramatic Institutes, Beacon, New York and New York City, 1937.


Since their inception, training and growth centers have been rapidly emerging and spreading throughout the world. There is no doubt that the group movement's breadth is so vast and

---


varied that no one to my knowledge has been able to compile a complete training or growth center directory. In the spring of 1971, The Personnel and Guidance Journal devoted the April issue to the group movement and designed it particularly for the practitioner, with the hope that he would find within it "...a clearer understanding of the multiplicity of group procedures." Partial fulfillment of the Guest Editor's goal was the inclusion of a selected list of institutes where one can receive training in group work. Unfortunately, the list is neither exhaustive (60 training centers) nor completely accurate, however, it does illustrate the extent to which the Personal Growth center business has grown.

In discussing the initial training centers, Gotschalk and Pattison (1969) point out a definite correlation between the Morenean Psychodramatic techniques and sociometric methodologies with that of the laboratory training concepts employed by the National Training Laboratories (N.T.L.). They write:


The direct development of the training laboratory came from the collaboration of three men: Leland Bradford, Ronald Lippitt and Kenneth Benne. All three had an educational background in psychology, experience in working with community educational projects dealing with major social problems related to human relations. They had been exposed to and influenced by J. L. Moreno's methods of psychodrama and had experimented with various role-playing procedures in community educational projects directed toward effecting social change.26

Furthermore, Kenneth Benne, a founder of N.T.L., and Bozidar Muntyan credit Moreno as being the pioneer of the action and group research movement. They write:

The editors make special acknowledgment to Dr. J.L. Moreno, who has pioneered in the areas currently referred to as psychodrama, sociodrama, roleplaying, action dynamics, warming-up technique, group psychotherapy and sociometry, and who first introduced these terms into the literature, with some of the meanings emphasized in the present volume. To a great extent, the basic impetus for certain new trends in group and action research can be traced to the work of Moreno and his numerous associates.27

Moreno's influence upon the early N.T.L. leaders is obvious for they were exposed and influenced by his methods. They also published their articles dealing with group and action methods between 1938 and 1953 in the journals of the Moreno Institute:


Sociometry and Group Psychotherapy. More importantly, voluminous contributions have effected and inspired the group movement in general, but also education, industry, mental health, hospitals and government agencies. Moreno is held in the very highest esteem by many as well as being considered a controversial and mystical figure by others. Hannah Weiner, a renowned Psychodramatist, writing about Moreno’s pioneering ventures emphasizes that “he creates before our eyes. What is disturbing is that he has not one style of creation and he has a balance logic of his own. Therefore, Moreno is not always understood”. She further emphasizes that “a key to Moreno is his acceptance and love of children who he feels hold the key to survival and the future”.

Nevertheless, whether he is accepted or rejected, it is important to note that his theories and methodologies are held as a signal contribution. Moreno is well aware of this dilemma when he expresses, “there is no controversy about my ideas, they are universally accepted. I am the controversy”.


30 Ibid.

31 J.L. Moreno, Who Shall Survive??, p. cvii.
I do not think anyone would disagree that "to encounter Moreno is to not forget him". 32 (Italics mine)

However, I would now like to mention the present aura of confusion that permeates the group movement. For example, all one has to do is survey the literature on small group theory and action and one can easily detect the lack of consistency from one author to the next. This is partially due to recent literature and audio-visual material, both popular and professional, devoted to sensitivity and encounter experiences, laboratory training, counseling groups and other group activities. Unfortunately, much of this literature eliminates the historical background as well as misrepresenting the many philosophical rudiments of this movement. Rather, we have witnessed a hodgepodge of "group literature" that appears to be somewhat representative of the group spectrum; this places many people in limbo regarding the foundations of the movement as well as creating skepticism regarding the applicability of the many group techniques.

Another disturbing factor that the author would like to emphasize is the misunderstanding prevalent among group leaders, group dynamicists, and group therapists regarding the ethics and validity of the many group approaches employed throughout the

32Hannah Weiner, "J.L. Moreno--...", p. 144.
country. In support of this, many professional organizations* are calling for follow up studies on the various group techniques as well as advocating professional guidelines to aid readers in evaluating some of the dangers, limitations, as well as accuracies of the various group experiences.

In a recent survey, Gazda, Duncan and Sisson (1971) report that there is a great lag between the development of both standards for training and practice as well as a code for ethical behavior and practice in group work. They emphasize that the Morenos recognized these dangers facing the group movement and were the first to develop and recommend a guide of professional standards which would be broad enough to include both medical

*Recently the Board of Professional Affairs of the American Psychological Association, in October 1971, recommended the publication of a draft statement entitled "Guidelines for Participation in Growth Groups". This statement was published in the December issue of the APA Monitor, and is presently being revised. Also, in September, 1971, a new organization emerged, the International Association of Applied Social Scientists, Inc.. Their purpose is to educate the public on how to use human relation consultants and to act as an accrediting board by certifying and developing standards of competence for professional practitioners of applied social science. The Board of Directors is chaired by Kenneth D. Benne. See November, 1971 issue of the APA Monitor, p. 7. Also, The American Personnel and Guidance Association devoted their April issue 1971 to the growth of the group movement, and again in December 1971, their journal concentrated on ethical practices, with particular emphasis on the lack of professional guidelines in group work.
and non-medical expertise. These professional standards appeared in 1960 and again in 1962 in the Journal of Group Psychotherapy.33

It apparently seems then that the group movement preaches "trust", "honesty", "sincerity", "discovery", "ecstasy", "self-awareness", "freedom", etc., yet some leaders seem to act in a contrary manner. Consequently, this backbiting and stealing of ideas, giving credit to a friend rather than to the creator, separating methodology from philosophy, appears to be normative among some leaders of the group movement. In respect to this, "the disowners undermine a system of thought, a view, a philosophy of the world, a synthesis of methods which hang together and whose break-up produces confusion instead of enlightenment.


invite disaster instead of producing cohesion."34

Rather than experience a group breakdown we must obtain a mutual meeting ground, an environment that will foster cooperativeness, assimilation, inventiveness, spontaneity, and unity.* It is imperative that we come together to exchange ideas, to listen and respond to one another in the here and now. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all of us to be more open and not less so.


* In 1969, Moreno listed the "assets and liabilities" of both the Bethel and Beacon centers. This was another effort "to establish valid standards of teaching and training" and thus aid in preventing a further disintegration of the Group Encounter Movement.
REFERENCES

Bain, Reed, Sociometry, Vol. VI, 1943.


