

## THE MORENIAN THEORY OF PERSONALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

Ramona Răducan<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Tibiscus” University of Timisoara, Faculty of Psychology, Centre of Qualitative Research in Counselling and Psychotherapy

Corresponding author: Ramona Răducan, [ramona.lungu@yahoo.com](mailto:ramona.lungu@yahoo.com)

**ABSTRACT:** This research has the task of relating two personality theories based on motivation and creativity, namely two models of therapeutic intervention, the main research instrument being the interpersonal relationship therapist-client based on positive effectiveness and stimulating auto-observation and the self. Even if the therapist is not a contemporary magician who brings happiness to his clients, through the therapeutic relationship he can open doors to their wellbeing, helping them escape alienation and loneliness.

Both models described, the Morenian theory and the humanistic approach on personality, were introduced as an important element in describing the personality creative potential and creativity. It is important to note that both theories give creativity a key role in overcoming stereotypical and predictable social behaviour. Both Moreno and Maslow believe that the main dynamic factors dynamic of personality are its motivators. The two experts disagree, sometimes with serious consequences for personality development.

**KEYWORDS:** personality theories, role, personality dynamics

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The ancient semantic complexity of the personality concept determines the difficulty for framing a strict definition, widely accepted by specialists. Attempts to answer the question: What is the human personality? Is a question that ignited passions and controversy among scholars? From a diachronic point of view there were two major approaches for the personality concept:

- The systemic approach, where the personality is bio-psycho-social, with dynamics and a purposeful adaptive organization,
- The functionalist approach, which emphasizes its role in different theories without defining it in a certain way.

Analyzing the Morenian theory of roles, it can be noted that personality is approached in a unified way, from a systemic and functionalist perspective. The systemic approach - that apparent from the

personality and the way of being points of view is the product of an evolutionary bipolarity, consists of a real roles system and an imaginary roles system, of an undifferentiated world both united in the identity matrix. The functionalist approach is clear in structure and personality characteristics that can be defined as a type of interaction between the real world and the imaginary world of the individual. As an operational concept, human personality “correlates the human being consciousness to the genuine self, which has a unique destiny and can be described as a bio-psycho-socio-spiritual structure” (Lazarescu, Nireștea, 2007, p. 95).

Personality is considered the result of an evolutionary process, of a bio-somatic resultant interaction between social and cultural influences assimilated (modelling, learning and social control) and objectified through social integration. The social status becomes visible through integrating systems, as well as its corresponding activities. In other words, it externalizes the individual’s actions, i.e. behaviour, many of which are generated by prescribed social statuses. Thus, the identification of values, norms and cultural patterns is manifested through games of social roles and individual relationships within institutions, organizations, groups and other stakeholders.

D. Cristea (2001, p.134) stated clearly that “The role is defined as the actual method by which a person meets statutory requirements. The role has a value expression for the person occupying a certain status (...). The character is the result of a synthesis of statutory requirements and behavioural patterns of the subject’s personality and originality, which give a distinctive form to the behaviour role.” Thus, what are visible are the character and the role. These are analyzed mainly because they are currently considered ways of externalizing behavioural manifestations of one’s personality.

As Zlate M. (2002, p.233) stated in 1970 “the entire personality traits are not as important as their value”.

It seems that the specialists' interest for behavioural characteristics is generated by the consumer society; the focus is on the professional role.

It is believed that this current exceeds behaviourism which debuted with psychology as a science in that it took into account the results of the other three revolutions in psychology: psychoanalysis, the humanistic stream and transpersonal psychology.

The emergence of organizations, multinationals or transnational companies has led to the establishing of important centres of scientific interest in management and labour groups. Perhaps that is why in Bales' theory (1970) interpersonal personality has become so popular.

The role of a group or of interpersonal personality "reflects just one facet of the individual's personality, generated by some particular group, the individual's structure and role within the group, the expectations they have from him" (Bales, 1970, p. 11).

It seems that the interpersonal personality model is based on oppositions: dominance and submission, conservatism and radicalism, sociability and isolation, containing important information about the individual's role and thus about the interaction between personality and status.

Even if the social role is generated by the individual's statuses and from particular social structure in which it is performed, it widely mediated personality elements: affectivity, personal experience, skills (especially general intelligence), creativity, personal constructs, self-image and the level of aspiration. Because roles "regulate social relations (...) and ensure personality integration" (D. Cristal, 2001, p.135) these are particularly important for the individual's social and personal life.

## 2. OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

The first objective of this research is to analyze the relationships between roles introduced by the Morenian theory and the humanistic perspective on personality.

The second one is to analyze the relationships between the Morenian theory and the personality theory developed by Maslow.

The first hypothesis is that there is a link between the basic concepts of the personality theory developed by Jacob Levi Moreno and the principles of humanistic psychology.

The second hypothesis suggests that there is a link between the basic concepts of the theory developed by Jacob Levi Moreno personality theory developed by A. Maslow motivational factors.

## 3. RESULTS

The humanistic perspective on personality interprets man as "a being endowed with freedom, creative potential, self-consciousness, able to play a role so that he/she cannot be reduced to a sociological automatism" (Petroman, 2003, p.146-147). This goal can be achieved only when conditions conduct to the development of the person, as exposed by Carl Rogers (cited Petroman, 2003, p.147) "Treat them with respect, trust, sympathy, and unconditional consideration, empathy and accurate congruence in interpersonal relations".

The use of the phrase noteworthy role in the interpretation and explanation of one's personality: if humanists consider only real roles, Moreno (1985, as cited in Vulcu, 2004) expand roles types, considering that the personality is the product of evolutionary bipolarity and consisting of a real roles system and of an imaginary roles system, from an undifferentiated world both united in the universe of a psychosomatic identity matrix.

For Moreno, the personality structure and particularities are dependent on the situation control, on how to live simultaneously in the real world and in fantasy, the ability to pass from one to another (Moreno, 1985, as cited in Vulcu, 2004). This transition is mediated by the spontaneity factor and disclosed the individual through the perception to feel alive, the willingness to mobilize his intellectual, emotional and physical energies, and to establish a proper ratio (which takes into account both the intrapsychic requirements, as well as the environmental ones), which represent correct 'inventing' responses to the situation (Vulcu,2004).

The psychodrama theory postulates that the individual's potential development and his creativity are catalyzed by the spontaneity factor; spontaneity and creativity being intimately linked. "If the status lacks spontaneity, creativity, the human being remains inert, its potential being hidden" (source: www.Psihodramaclasica.com). But if humanists have an optimistic view of human nature and believe that all people can fulfil their creative potential, psycho dramatists believe that all this spontaneity and creativity are present in newborns and appear only occasionally in most adults.

Besides different ways of activating creativity: humanists speak of an exogenous triggering factor (interpersonal relationships), while psycho-dramatists of an "appropriate experience" coming from "vitality,

mental and physical energy” (Source: [www.psihodramaclasica.ro](http://www.psihodramaclasica.ro)), which would provide a permanent connection to the state of spontaneity.

Also, humanistic psychology believes that the human being:

- is and must be a real being, capable of developing aspirations and desires, convinced of his potential because the human being is by no means a being dominated or blocked by instinct;
- has the capacity to choose, create, and auto-actualize, despite some external stimuli acting against him;
- is required to remain a value in that he is able to adapt to constructive and active change to start a relation inside social groups and in the society in which he lives.

By analyzing the above theses, stipulated by the American Association for Humanistic Psychology in 1961 (cited Petroman, 2003), one can say that the psychological model proposed by Moreno in 1934, was a precursor of this guidance, considered to be the third revolution in psychology. One cannot fail to notice the commonalities of the two psychological approaches:

- The human being’s libido for independence, understood as an accumulation of instincts;
- Creativity is the driving force of human progress;
- The main therapeutic tool is called *tele* (positive) by Moreno and sympathy or empathy by humanists, generating congruence in interpersonal relations.

“Tele emerges as the simplest unit of feeling transmitted from one individual to another. It is the expression of the human being’s natural tendency to build emotional relationship with others. Emotions quality that exists in this connection offers an invisible attraction or rejection, in a graduated manner, from a maximum to a minimum, to indifference (which expresses the absence of *tele*). A relationship involves a tele positive attraction and a rejection-negative feeling. The term tele includes what is commonly expressed in different words: mutual empathy, emotional two-way communication, sensitivity to various emotions, emotional warmth, and emotional bridge” (Source: [www.psihodramaclasica.com](http://www.psihodramaclasica.com)).

Among the aims of humanistic psychology, a concern for important issues one the position of human beings in the world is taken into consideration, including understanding and conflict, (Maslow) and becoming a solution to present human problems: how to live a life

of success and how to build more satisfying relationships between people (Buhler).

But if humanists did not specify what the success of a person is, Moreno presents, in an original manner, a vision about what is a full and satisfying life. This means neither more nor less than the opportunity for everyone to impersonate God, to highlight creative forces in the synthesis called psycho-dramatic and poetic truth, thus a subjective interpretation resulting.

A humanistic psychotherapeutic methodology requires the therapist to refrain from hasty interpretations or biased assessments and assist the client in the process of awareness, thus in self-knowledge and self-esteem. Starting from the definition of psychodramas, a psychotherapeutic method that explores issues through individual action states that the “individual meets resources, doubts, desires, fears and dreams which he explores in a secure

environment” (source: [www.psihodramaclasica.com](http://www.psihodramaclasica.com)). Based on these considerations the first hypothesis is confirmed, because both theories seem to be similar.

In the personality dynamics, Maslow says that understanding human personality is based on the concept of experiential identity. The theory of Morenian personality is believed to be generated at the centre of one’s experience, because the role, as conceptualized by Boria (1997, as cited in Răducan, 2008, p.115) represents an experiential unit that is “perceptible, observable and modifiable interpersonal relationship and situation”. For Moreno (1964, as cited in Răducan, 2008, p.115-119), the role is a unit of pre-existing experience of the Self, which needs a long time to structure the roles that will get to form, the identity matrix of the individual and considers each as an individual personality structure based on three types of roles:

a) Physiological roles or psychosomatic structured roles are based on the complementarities of structures scheduled inside (all the needs and roles of each individual, e.g. the need for food, thermal stimuli, kinetic, tactile, audible) and external (all the information provided child by environment, under specified conditions, to meet the child’s needs). The resultant interaction between the two types of genetic structures is scheduled as mnemonic traces from which (proto) psychosomatic roles appear. Only after the child begins to mentally represent objects and persons as external realities and perceptions, he can have a relationship with others, then one can speak of a role. Starting from the first meeting with the mothers, until the meeting of two distinct individualities that create each other in an alternating

fusion and individualization, a new psychological dimension is created. The identity global matrix is first of all undifferentiated and then differentiated the roles emerging in the psychosomatic child by gradual transition from undifferentiated to differentiated. Chronologically, the identity matrix or the universe comprise the first period of intrauterine life and extends up to three years.

Full configuration of these (proto) roles (the ingesting role and the role of those who defecate and who urinate) produces both psychosomatic self and ego nucleus, which cannot be modified directly. While the feeling of ego and self-awareness appears as the main event – reflection the Self, in the minds of Moreno, becomes the coagulation point of subjectivity and provides a feeling of well-being and of insecurity in the world. The Ego has a double task: to integrate information from the nucleus of ego and those from the social structure. From now on, the ego can intervene on the core defence mechanisms in order to avoid confusion and encroachment by anxiety.

b) Psychodrama roles can only be provided by a relationship, the child manages to distinguish the real and imaginary experiences transitioning into the Second universe. The perception of the relationship is the cornerstone on which psychodrama roles will be gradually and psychosocially built.

The gradually begin to divide the universe into real events and fictional phenomena, thus into a social world and a fantasy world (Moreno, 1964, as cited in Răducan, 2008), specific child who is older than three years. In the personality is formed and organized in a system that works for fantasy (Moreno, 1964 as cited in Răducan, 2008). It generates the emergence of a system that links child roles to people, objects and purposes that imagines him outside them. Psychodrama roles - as a form of role playing - are rooted in mental representations of the child and can be transformed into action (Boria, 1997, as cited in Răducan, 2008).

Psychodrama roles as mental constructs (e.g., roles elf, magician, fantasy princess or other appropriate roles of predominantly intra-psychic requirements) will be grouped in a psycho-drama group himself as amateurs. Parallel to the Ego actor, this role makes its appearance and inner observes and records participant stepping events involving ego actor. This internal observer assumes this role in relation to the subject's agent, becoming an observer.

c) shock-essential roles are forms of role play that put the child in relationship with people, objects and purposes, in an outside context (Moreno, 1964 as cited in Răducan, 2008). "Social roles seen as real

phenomena are rooted in the real objective world and can be represented and activated. The transition from the first to the second universe brings a total change of socio dynamic universe, the child passing from the dyad (mother-child) to a triangular relationship (mother-child-father) and then to a circular relationship (child, parent, child - Other children, child-other adults)" (Moreno, 1964 as cited in Răducan, 2008, p.117). During his evolution, the child will be able to relate simultaneously with individuals who will represent counter roles and experience different kinds of relations born of the social roles system and of the social self.

With the entry into adolescence, with the evolution of thought and the ability to relate and physically mature (reproductive capacity), with a psychological maturity (the ability to be free from psychological dependence to parents seeking independence and self-sufficiency; identifying independent genitors internalized figures - parents) and social maturity (ability to maintain socioeconomic), social roles will gain a collective aspect (axiological) along with the individual.

"The collective appearance and at the same time, axiological of a social role (as father, mother, friend, employee or other derivative forms of the crowd and the specific social groups that the individual is engaged in) is readable and shared by all members of a specific group. This form is a result of overlapping types of expression belonging to a specific culture of the individual's social roles" (Moreno, 1964 as cited in Răducan, 2008, p.118).

Starting from the ability to see and to say something about oneself, i.e. the separation between ego and ego actor observer - witnesses the change agent in relation to the subject - a new dimension is structured in the experiential vertical field. At the maximum vertical dimension the ego ideal observer capacity to evaluate, to judge, the power to shift understanding to complex logic corresponding to existential questions about the meaning of life and death are defined.

Both the psychosomatic (physiological) Self and psycho-dramatic Self alongside the social self that are part of global Self, will be integrated over the years. "Operative links and contacts will gradually develop between the group's physiological role, psychologically and socially until a whole is identified: called ego" (Moreno, 1964 as cited in Răducan, 2008, p.118).

By summarizing, one can say that the genetic structure interacts with external programs, resulting into mnemonic traces from which (proto) psychosomatic roles appear, along with the core ego which emerges into the global

undifferentiated identity matrix; roles that are picked and then social psychodrama, ultimately turning it into a global differentiated identity matrix, which includes the global Self (psychosomatic Self, the psycho-dramatic self and the social self) and the ego. As Moreno stated, with individual maturation and thus with the structuring of roles and of social psychodrama, the original identity matrix is formed, then the social and, finally, the transpersonal one, made up of value roles. It is thus believed the Morenian theory of personality has as main factor a more dynamic personality development and a dialectic mobility consisting of fusion - individualization - otherness. Moreno believes that the human being, from the first days of life is dominated by the satisfaction of two contrary needs: the merger and the individualization.

The need for fusion is by definition the loss and the dive of two people in one entity, while individuation refers to how to differentiate them. Moreno (1964, as cited in Răducan, 2008) believes that before birth and immediately after, the child lives in an undifferentiated universe - called identity matrix - he cannot draw boundaries between his internal needs and his external reality and cannot meet other needs. Therefore, the newborn needs nutrients and support functions provided loving persons (Boria, 1997, as cited in Răducan, 2008). These functions are those that provide individual sensation of well-being in the world or that generate a feeling of insecurity, functions which also coagulate subjectivity to the point that Moreno called the Self. During the child's evolution, from a psychological and characterizing point of view, the first months of life, the fuse phase is only a temporary phase as the need for separation and individuation gradually emerge as important motors, pleasure generators, but also anxiety generators. An invisible network of empathetic perceptions between mother and child, which permeates the undifferentiated identity matrix, will be gradually penetrated. These are structured as the child focuses on one of the two poles of action: on himself or on his mother, delimitation and its abstraction of context being the first results. Basically, perceptions generated by two separate existences lead to the formation of the differentiated identity matrix when an optimal crystallized symbiosis need to know him appears, to make a difference between the individual environment and the real environment.

The need for fusion that guides a person towards another being, along with the need for individuality that separates a person from another, do not disappear with the transition to the second universe. In fact, all

life forces remain dynamic and acting, mobilizing the person to develop relations.

An alteration of roles capable of meeting these needs causes discomfort to the person (Boria, 2005). Balance leads to a new fundamental need that meets the need to search for a person other than himself: the need for otherness. This manifests every time a person gets into a new situation, the perception of safety (or relative certainty), to be part of everything and be an autonomous entity: such a perception seems capable of opening the gate access to the universe of the new, the unknown, the realm of non-experience, according to different names that have been given by psychologists, philosophers and poets (Leonardis, 1994 as cited in Boria, 1997).

The need for otherness can be understood as the need for growth and change into something else, it springs from the curiosity of discovery, wanting for new communication and relationships that generates an active search and autonomy for the pleasure of discovering the new and the unknown.

Like Moreno, Maslow believes that the main factors are the personality motivational dynamics. In Maslow's view, a need is a tension linked to a necessity, geared to a category of objects. As in Morenian explanation of the personality dynamics, the individual is driven to seek a state of equilibrium. Maslow's opinion is that the structure and functioning of these necessary conditions are responsible for personality development.

If Moreno believes that the emergence of fusion needs, individuation and otherness is made during a period of time, in Maslow's view, dynamic personality necessities, as structures, are organized into a hierarchical pyramidal structure with five levels, called the pyramid of needs. These needs are physiological, safety, affiliation, esteem and self-actualization.

Both Moreno and Maslow, considering that occurrence of necessities is achieved gradually, draw, of course, the principle of emergence and consider it as a motivational need that does not appear unless the "lead" has been satisfied, in theory this situation only applies to the Morenian need of otherness.

In addition, both Moreno and Maslow believe that needs, through specific behaviours, reduce body tension and balance forces, generating positive emotional

experiences (principle of homeostasis). The Morenian theory refers to taking and playing roles (satisfactory) in terms of the merger, individuation and otherness. From the perspective of Maslow,

behaviours of satisfaction, even if not mentioned specifically, are different.

The two experts disagree on the issue of unmet needs, in which case the tension is maintained, sometimes with serious consequences for personality development. In addition to the above similar principles, Maslow (cited Răducan, 2008, p.71) makes a number of other principles governing the operation of these necessities pyramid:

- “The more satisfied and continuous a need is, the less voltage it generates;
- Higher order needs of self-realization can be satisfied only through specific behaviours (reception and production of moral values, intellectual, artistic, scientific, etc.) are accompanied by decreased blood flow;
- the need for self-actualization and fulfilment of the human ego is a fundamental need, which leads to behaviour that demands its satisfaction, to personality development”.

Physiological necessities - located at the basal level of hierarchy include biological needs of hunger, thirst, sleep or sex. Absolutely necessary for survival and development of normal people and animals, these needs are highly energetically charged, their satisfaction leading to a voltage discharge. The safety need - located on the second level of the pyramid, refers to creating individual sense of security or safety. This can be achieved by transforming the unknown into known (familiarity situations, events, objects etc. generating safety), especially accented by satisfying the human tendency to make existence predictable. It may refer to physical, emotional, organizational stability, creating a sense of control over situations etc. The need for affiliation - which is the next level, it is the force that drives behaviour networking, it creates the individual's desire to belong to a group, motivates the initiation and reception of friendship and intimate relations. A poor satisfaction of these needs, in Maslow's view, represents the source of serious personality disorders. The need for esteem - can be dominant only when the human person becomes a social partner. The satisfaction of this need mobilizes the person achievement behaviours in some areas, based on ability and results. The need for self-actualization - called need of self-realization, refers to the momentum of growth, development and fulfilment of native potentialities, turning into a real attitude, focusing on personal growth.

Outside these needs, Maslow (cited Petroman, 2003) believes that the needs of Self motivating can also be added. The supreme need of the human being

is the longing for self-realization and self-actualization, which entails creation.

By analyzing the necessities described above, one would be tempted to think that the need for fusion could be equated to the need of affiliation, but it is more than that, while the concepts of individuality and otherness do not they find their counterpart in Maslow's pyramid of needs. Based on these considerations one can consider that the second hypothesis is confirmed.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Both models introduced an important element in describing personality with a creative potential and creativity. It is important to note that both theories give creativity a key role in overcoming stereotypical and predictable social behaviour, which turns the individual into what is called the crystallized psycho-dramatists schema and the sociologic humanist automatism.

It can also be considered that the Morenian models formulated in 1934, represent a precursor for the entire humanity, his theory being considered the third revolution in psychology through concepts common to the two psychological approaches: one's independence against instinct, creativity as a propulsive force in human progress, affectivity being the main therapeutic tool generating congruence in interpersonal relations.

An important similarity between psychodrama and humanistic psychology is that used as working method and self-observation as theorized Moreno. The manner in which psychodrama essentially occurs in relationships and “produces a restructuring of dysfunctional ways of” being “over others” (source: [www.psihodramaclasica.com](http://www.psihodramaclasica.com)), lead to the idea that both methods have the same therapeutic relational purpose. Even more than that, both guidelines are intended for the person to become an autonomous spontaneous being.

Both Moreno and Maslow believe that the main dynamic factors of a personality are its motivators. Genesis of necessities and needs is achieved gradually, after the “lead” one has been satisfied. The satisfaction of needs through specific behaviours reduces body tension and balance forces, generating positive emotional experiences (the principle of homeostasis). The two experts disagree on the issue of unmet needs, their conclusions leading to serious consequences to the theory of personality development.

Like any other research, the present one has its limits. The first theorized concepts were analyzed by

two specialists, without taking into account the social and historical context in which they were formulated. We do not know if Moreno was familiar with the concepts Maslow or if Maslow developed his own theory without knowing the Morenian concepts. Given that the pattern is a difference of nearly 20 years and the Second World War, one can only assume that the social environment in which these theories were conceived underwent changes and generated necessities / needs described by two specialists. Perhaps after the Second World War, human needs were more diversified than when Moreno spoke about fusion, individuation and otherness. In addition, Jacob Levi Moreno was essentially a practitioner who has worked with people in distress, and he identified that three needs were the basis of dysfunctional relationships which he centred in psychodrama. This research has the merit to relate two theories of personality, in which the central place is occupied by motivation and creativity; namely two models of therapeutic intervention where the central instrument used is the interpersonal relationship therapist-client, based on positive affectivity and on stimulating auto-observation and an observation of the self. Thus it is believed that these core principles remain in therapeutic practice and in the contemporary Romanian cultural space, even if technological developments have been on the formation and dynamics of the clients' therapeutic personality therapeutic. An excessive focus on careers, social networking mediated by technology have done nothing but generate superficial interpersonal relationships, emotionally poor, intrapsychic and unsatisfactory relationships. The excessive society

emphasis on cognition and consumption led to the formation of behavioural stereotypes of people who have lost their spontaneity, autonomy and contact with emotionality. Even if the therapist is not a contemporary magician to bring happiness to his clients through a therapeutic relationship he can open doors to their wellbeing to help his clients escape alienation and loneliness.

## REFERENCES

- Bales, R.F.** (1970). *Personality and Interpersonal Behaviour*. New York: Holt
- Boria, G.** (1997). *Lo psicodramma classico*. Milano, Italia: Franco Angel
- Boria, G.** (2005). *Psicoterapia Psicodramatica, Sviluppì del modello Moreniano nel lavoro terapeutico con gruppi di adulti*. Milano, Italia: FrancoAngeli
- Cristea, D.** (2001). *Tratat de psihologie socială*. Romania: ProTransilvania
- Lăzărescu, M., Nireştean, A.** (2007). *Tulburările de personalitate*. Iasi: Polirom
- Petroman, P.** (2003). *Afirmarea psihologiei – Direcții și orientări în cadrul psihologiei explicite*. Timișoara: Eurostampa
- Răducan, R.** (2008). *Introducere în teoriile personalității*. Timisoara: Solness;
- Vulcu, R.** (2004). *Concepte de bază ale psihodramei*, Unpublished course notes, Romanian Association of Classic Psychodrama
- Zlate, M.** (2002). *Eul și personalitatea*. Bucharest: Trei