

Section 1: Theory and Research

Integrating J. L. Moreno's Heritage

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This article focuses on Moreno's contributions to the fields of individual and group psychotherapy through the development of psychodrama and sociodrama. The author stresses the importance of integrating all social and neurological sciences within Moreno's theories and methods. He sees the future of Moreno's heritage in a creative and systematic use of all the tools developed in line with the understanding of individuals and societies. The 21st century could see the Morenean philosophy enhanced by a common effort of every field and science toward the well-being of every subgroup within the greater Society and entire Cosmos.

KEYWORDS: Moreno; psychodrama; sociodrama; sociometry, psychological and social integration.

INTRODUCTION

In my view, the actual state of psychodrama, sociometry, and sociodrama have to be reassessed. In a world where different approaches are being offered to solve individual and group problems, we need to stand tall and firm. As a reflexive practitioner, I think there is a continuous responsibility to answer the following question: «What do I do when I do what I do?» (Marineau, 2004, p. 182). I have been involved with group work and action methods for more than 40 years. The possibilities are unlimited. However, I notice that systematic review of our work—the boundaries of discipline, the specificities of our approaches, the depth of research, and the rationale for training professionals—still need to be addressed. While there are many associations devoted to the development of our field(s) of action (International Association of Group Therapy, Federation of European Psychodrama Training Association, American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama, Association québécoise des psychodramatistes), we still find in our ranks people of different venues and orientations: This is great, as long as we

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can understand our similarities and differences. Even within the Morenean tradition, there are different perspectives, which are also welcome. Having said this, there is a need for greater clarity and some unity of action.

Moreno's heritage can bring answers to suffering population of the 21st century. However, we are competing with other approaches and professionals, and we need not be satisfied with our relative success. In fact, more than ever, we must seize the opportunity to evaluate what we do. The future of Moreno's heritage lies in our ability to make it valid and appealing for various groups, including clinical psychosociologists, educators, mental health practitioners, and even world leaders. At the present time, it remains difficult to establish a bridge with those in charge of establishing health policies and with the teachers, trainers, practitioners, and researchers in our fields of expertise. Even though we may not have the full control of developing strategies for the future development of our disciplinary fields, we have enough leverage to facilitate the growth of the Morenean perspective within the academic and health communities, and the society at large.

In this article, I will focus on a road map that could lead us to a brighter future. I will confine myself to Moreno's perspectives, being aware that the same journey would need to be undertaken with other approaches and that a greater integration of different epistemologies should remain a major objective for all of us. First, I will underline some historical and epistemological reference markers to make clear some of the challenges and problems in relation to Moreno's theory (or theories), validation, and application. Then, I will focus on strategies that our own community—namely, psychodramatists and sociodramatists—should adopt to fulfill a global mission linked to what Moreno called the sociatric and sociometric revolutions.

MORENO'S HERITAGE

Moreno was a genius, both in his way of thinking and doing. He left us with a rich but complex heritage. He offered a view of the world that is basically sound and simple. However, his desire to create a new epistemology led him to develop within a large territory (the world, the cosmos), a new language that evolves within his own timeline—on some occasions, reaching a more finished product (psychodrama), on some others, remaining sketchy (sociatry) (Marineau, 1989, 1994).

As for the disciplinary territory, Moreno (1953) clearly stated its scope in *Who Shall Survive?*:

A truly therapeutic procedure cannot have less an objective than the whole of mankind. But no adequate therapy can be prescribed as long as mankind is not a unity in some fashion and as long as its organization remains unknown. It helped us in the beginning to think, although we had no definitive proof of it, that mankind is a social and organic unity. (Moreno, 1953, p. 3).

This sentence is very important: It speaks about the disciplinary territory, the process of change, and the necessary content to achieve it.

First, let's have a look at the disciplinary territory. For Moreno, the object of his pursuit was the whole of humanity; namely, the "private" and the social human being. He saw his mission in terms of bringing together every community under a unique supra-scientific umbrella to understand and transform the whole of humanity. His basic idea was that each of us participates simultaneously in what came to be termed in today's language, "numerous systems." To function adequately, all the people and the systems (what Moreno called the "ecology") must be working according to an intended unity, which is the basic and final intention of his philosophy. Let's quote him again:

It becomes evident indeed that the biology of man is, in a thousand ways, a reflection of his surroundings, that human evolution is going on apace, that variation, selection, differential fecundity and differential death rate are biological realities affected by the social situation. . . . Civilized man is an organism forced to make a very exceptional and special type of adaptation, and no physiologist, no psychologist, can study man as an organism except in the light of his ecology, and his broader social antecedents. (Murphy & Moreno, 1937, p. 5)

These comments are part of the Editorial Foreword of a new journal launched by Moreno in 1937, *Sociometry: A Journal of Inter-Personal Relations*.

Moreno's theory implies that the person cannot be extracted from his environment and that many subdisciplines converge and combine in explaining the fate of the people—from biology and psychology all the way to sociology, anthropology, religious studies, and political sciences. In his view, sociometry (the science of interpersonal relations) and sociatry (the science of sane mental health individuals) would be the integrating supra-sciences that would serve as an umbrella to other biological and social sciences.

While his thinking developed, Moreno involved himself in different working projects, with different groups of academics and practitioners in ways that were always significant but somewhat fragmented (Marineau, 1989, p. 141). The philosopher and researcher in him talked to social scientists, while the therapist (I would even use the term "psychiatrist") would connect with people practicing therapy. He was involved in sociometric research at the Sing Sing Prison as well as creating a small mental health community with a psychodrama stage at Beacon. He created two distinct journals: one oriented toward social research and practice (*Sociometry: A Journal of Inter-Personal Relations* in 1937) and one dedicated to individual psychodramatic interventions (*Sociatry: Journal of Group and Inter-Group Therapy* in 1947). This choice of working on two different fronts (which reveals some kind of a split inside Moreno himself) was to consecrate, in the long term, a division among colleagues, students, and followers. There was Moreno the sociometrist and sociodramatist, and Moreno the psychiatrist and psychodramatist. The same division was somewhat true for most of the students and followers. In 1955, Moreno transferred the first journal (*Sociometry*) to the American Sociological Association, and from that point, sociometry and sociodrama became somewhat secondary in his daily agenda. In reality, Moreno chose to spend much

more time on the psychodrama end of the continuum (“the private individual”) rather than to focus in the areas of social conflicts as being treated through sociodrama.

To put it bluntly, Moreno tried to define a new disciplinary field that would encompass the whole of humanity: He claimed, rightly so, that to gain unity of our species, we needed to be involved with every segment of the society, from the individual and his “private world” to national and international entities. He did experience working with different groups, was active in different contexts of life, and yet the magnitude of the task made it difficult to reach and convey a real sense of integration. Even though the intent was unity of the species and Moreno developed proper methods to achieve his goal, he still mainly confined himself to a more limited territory: The psychodrama stage became his main tool, and he left the biological factor aside, and, in some ways, the social networks behind.

As time elapsed, Moreno also somewhat deserted the academic world, and the academic world deserted him. When he traveled to Europe in the early 1950s, the therapist in him was more in the foreground, even though he succeeded to attract the attention of very well-known sociologists European scholars and mobilize them in interesting areas of research. But to carry on his shoulders the magnitude of the new “disciplines” whose scope was the entire world was too much for one person or a small team. He would have needed, to use his term, “an army of scientists” (Year, p. X) in every region of the world, have them work together, orchestrate means of integrating their findings and creating appropriate ways to translate all of this into action methods. He came close to achieve a good part of it but failed, for different reasons, to unite and integrate his views into a more global theory.

Moreno created a new way to look at the human race: His focus was the relationship among people, and action-centered methods were his main tools. He developed new concepts, dozens of them, sometime creating a fresh and original way of looking at the experience of the moment, sometime working hard to differentiate himself from Sigmund Freud or Kurt Lewin. A whole new body of knowledge emerged, the boundaries of which were the whole universe. His effort to brand a new theory—a truly Morenean theory—was both a success and a failure. The success resided in his ability to provide an integrated view of the world, of suggesting meaningful ways to solve intrapsychic and interpersonal conflicts, of being able to impose new concepts and words, of creating institutes for training practitioners. However, by wanting to be the Creator, the Generator of a new system, he minimized the contribution of past creators and was quite reluctant to include co-creators of the present in his own social atom. At the end of his life, he chose to be associated with other schools of thought (creation of IAGP), but in his heart he remained the Creator amongst Creators.

When Moreno died, he left behind a legacy that translates itself in concepts and people. Let’s think about psychodrama, sociodrama, sociometry, sociatry, tele, role theory, spontaneity-creativity theory, and hundreds of other terms. Let’s recognize that those are embodied in thousands of people who still follow in his footsteps as sociometrists, psychodramatists, and sociodramatists.

THREE CONCLUSIONS

From these comments, I wish to propose three conclusions:

First, because Moreno's heritage is rich and still timely (or even more timely today than a century ago), we need to let it reemerge. Moreno provided the thinking and the tools to face today's challenges. Let's imagine a society that would use sociometric methods to evaluate social problems and sociodrama to find solutions. If the last century was person-centered, this one may be more community or group-centered. The amount of conflicts at all level, from couples and families to communities and nations, will require more and more system-centered re-evaluations and therapies.

Second, there is a need for integrating Moreno's views and translating them into a language that speaks to people of the 21st century. Diverse disciplines need to find ways to talk and interact with each other. Without losing their identity, they need to acknowledge that no one theory or approach can explain the whole of humanity. Moreno's unity concept and action methods can be of help in finding common ground and inserting new findings in the understanding of both the individual's private life and his interactions with others. All scientific communities and all disciplines need to be part of a new integration of knowledge around mankind.

Finally, the integration must be rooted in real-life contexts and include theory, research, training, and practice. It is necessary to do away with fragmentation and isolation. If the Morenean perspective is to be of help, it will need to secure knowledge from all sources, explain its rationale, validate it from strong research, and translate it into methods adapted to this century. There will be a need to have a better understanding of Moreno's philosophy without being fearful of making it appealing for the actual generation where the means of communication are radically different from those experienced by Moreno himself. Like animals or birds in the spring, Moreno's views may need a new coat, new feathers. It also needs to share the stage with all approaches that can contribute to the understanding of human nature.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

Having said this, I suggest that we reflect in four areas.

Scope of Our Discipline(s)

First, we need to re-identify our fields of action, recapture Moreno views as to the proper territory for our discipline and re-assess the scope of our work. Moreno (1953) stated that "a truly therapeutic procedure cannot have less an objective that the whole of mankind and require striving for its unity and knowledge of its organization" (p. X). This statement is clear: It defines a new disciplinary territory, or at least a new way to look at the universe that calls for a cooperation of a number of disciplines that are involved in the well-being of humanity. Moreno argues in favor of interventions that covered every segment of the population. In reality, he somewhat ignored the contribution of two basic

segments: first, what we called today the neurosciences and clinical psychosociology.

Today, with the progress of science, there is this unique opportunity to focus on the unity of the person. Let me quote from Cozolino (2010):

Using evolution as an organizing principle, we begin with the assumption that our highly social brains have been shaped by natural selection because banding together in groups enhances survival. The more tightly interwoven we are as a group, the more eyes, ears, hands, and brains we have available to us. We know that the expansion of the cortex in primates corresponds to increasingly larger social groups and the development of language, problem-solving, and abstract abilities. Our larger and more complex brains not only allow for a greater variety of responses to challenging situations and across diverse environments, but also process the vast amount of social information needed to support communication and group coordination. (p. 177)

I am taking this quote as an example of a translation of Moreno views by a clinical neuropsychologist. Moreno looked for unity, and more and more, there is proof of significant links between the biological basis of human nature and the contribution of social contexts. Sure, not all scientists have such a broad and open perspective, seeing the development of the brain in relation to its ecology. There is still a temptation for many biological-oriented scientists to “cure” the brain, to alleviate the pain through medication, or to treat the symptom using a very narrow approach. However, without excluding every avenue, if we cooperate, for example, with clinical neuroscientists, we may find that Moreno’s hypothesis of unity within the person is gaining ground and validity. More and more research in neurophysiology and neurobiology support Moreno’s view, and we could find comfort in works by van der Kolk (1994, 1996), Cozolino (2010), Siegel (2007), Badenoche (2008), and Porges (2011), to name just a few. What is implied here is the importance for the followers of Moreno to acknowledge the importance of biological sciences that in return can recognize the validity of Moreno’s views.

For example, in psychodrama, we may stress the importance of going back to a traumatic experience, bring about a catharsis of repressed feelings before aiming at a reconstruction of the personality. This is consistent with van der Kolk’s (1994) view: “The highly elevated physiological responses that accompany the recall of traumatic experiences that happened years, and sometimes decades before, illustrate the intensity and timelessness with which traumatic memories continue to affect current experience” (p. X). In other words, even though other approaches may focus on verbal therapy, or stay away from the past, there are indications that therapies that address more archaic brain organization are worthwhile and meaningful. When one works in very archaic traumas that took place in the preverbal era, the reptilian brain or limbic system is of great help in understanding the function of catharsis and future restructuring. Conversely, the emergence of a depression can be evaluated not

only from the brain structure but also from the ecology of the immediate environment. Simply said, scientists from all walks of life can today join hands in helping us understand and cope with mental illness and prevention. They can validate our methods—psychodrama, for example—and show that the unity of the person is a reality.

At the other end of the spectrum, we need to pay more attention to issues that reveal a changing world: In the western world, families and couples of the present are quite different from those of the Moreno era; tensions relating to race and religion are perverting relationships at all levels, from communities to nations; the technology and its rapid evolution are changing the way people relate, far beyond from what Moreno envisioned. Moreno was very much attuned to the contexts in which he lived. We need to do the same. To survive is to adapt. Moreneans need to address more fully actual social issues and finally bridge them with individual dynamics. For example, psychodrama and sociodrama should not be as separate as they are now: They are, in fact, twin brothers or sisters of the same being. This does not mean that everyone needs to act on both stages, but an awareness of the intertwined relationship should always be present. For example, sociodramatists now have their separate meetings (Sociodrama Networks), which in some ways, accentuate division and reveals two different paths. Also, it would be much more meaningful if, when running a psychodrama session, there would be space for looking at the situation with a sociodramatic eye. It would be then possible to observe in the group what belongs to a bigger “system” and what is more singular.

Our field of action shall be the whole world, intrapsychic as well as interpersonal, and the cooperation of all scientists should be welcomed. However, our intent and strategies call for keeping the focus on the importance of the relationships (sociometry) as they unfold at every moment and in concrete situations. People reveal themselves in concrete situations.

Be More Research-Oriented

Second, we need to foster research. When we go back to the 1940s and look at the content of the journals, we can see a tremendous number of research studies being performed both in sociometry and psychodrama. Naturally, the Second World War was quite instrumental in boosting research works with groups, leadership training, post traumatic interventions, and so on. At that time, Moreno's ideas were popular among academics, both in social psychology and sociology. On the therapy side, the *Sociatry* journal was filled with articles that included action research and case studies. Gradually, academics took a different path than Moreno as he focused more on treatment. The *Sociometry* journal went a different way, being transferred to the American Sociology Association (Marineau 2007), and the *Sociatry* journal, renamed many times, was handed to Heldref Publications and encountered many challenges. For years, the editors had difficulties finding research articles. People who wanted to publish were often discouraged by the standards set by the board of editors, and in return the board often failed to accommodate well-intended authors. But the journal never

died and is now more alive than ever under the helm of the American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama (ASGPP).

That said, research is seen as more and more important in our society and in some academic circles in particular. However, research with groups, small or large, remains a challenge: Experimental methods need to be adapted, and researchers have to accept to dedicate themselves to more complex and demanding research designs.

If we are to survive in the 21st century, we need to recapture the spirit of intellectual curiosity and occupy the field of research. Already, we could see a positive trend in the last conferences of IAGP: There is now a poster presentation of research results. In November 2014, Athens will host the First International Congress on Research and Group Psychotherapy and Process. Also, there have been great efforts from within ASGPP to assist practitioners in initiating research and publishing results. Although the umbrella under which psychodramatists and sociodramatists perform is wide and deep, we need to visit, explore, and research all corners of our territory. Even though more traditional paths are appealing, mainly for subsidiary reasons, we need to develop avenues more suited for the kind of work that we perform: We need to be creative in our methodologies. We still need basic research using experimental methods but even more action research to validate our tools and processes. If we are to reach for unity of the field, we need multidisciplinary research involving the neurosciences as well as the whole array of social sciences: clinical and social psychology, sociology, economy, linguistic, and others. We also need to develop case studies of groups, not only of individuals in the group; we need applied research both from psychodrama and sociodrama. We need to develop instruments, tools for validation of our work. For example, I was conducting a sociodrama seminar in London: There were 16 participants from 15 different countries. In two days, we were able to identify 15 different social issues (every continent was represented) but some common themes. One universal theme was, "How to go beyond psychological paralysis to bring significant social changes." Using our rich differences, we were able to pinpoint many areas of research, here to give voices to all protagonists in Israel or Ukraine, there to deal with the Ebola crisis. The discussions were but one step in interdisciplinary approach to worldwide issues.

Above all, we need to reenter the universities to develop research designs, to put our theories to test, and get some research grants. Naturally, this would bring back young students in our organizations: Students are our future and we really need them, both as scientists and practitioners. As we will see, we need at least to train our practitioners to be good users of research results; even better, to prepare them to perform action-research with their own groups. We need reflective practitioners.

Foster Unity of Actions

Further, if our scientific object is the simultaneous study of people relating to each other, we need assessing the need for and using our action methods:

Traditionally, Moreno used sociometry, psychodrama, and sociodrama. However, often psychodrama is used alone, and some patients never experienced how they are affected by the broader social contexts in which they live. Sociodrama, one of Moreno's better insights, became his neglected child. We need to come back to the original idea that every one of us is experiencing simultaneously different roles, physiological, psychological, and sociological. We need to come back to a more unified perspective where therapy work is more inclusive of the whole person and the whole world. This will not mean that every Morenean does everything. However, everyone in the field is aware and open to a greater remediation: Each client or patient is "prescribed" a type of therapy that goes from his private world to his social involvements, and the whole planet is also prescribed a remedy that help to reach global integration and unity.

In sum, Moreneans need to stop thinking that psychodrama and sociodrama are separate entities. They are ways of looking at the same reality.

Training

Finally, we must review our training programs and institutions. At one point, psychodrama training was quite present in the universities and organizations: Harvard, for example, had its psychodramatic stage, while St. Elisabeth's Hospital in Washington officially recruited and hired psychodramatists. Now, very few universities have psychodrama or sociodrama research or training programs as compared to other intervention modalities. Gradually, training became the exclusive affair of institutes (often led by entrepreneurs), and programs focus more and more on the professional aspects of psychodrama and sociodrama. With the actual structures in today's society—insurance policies, for example, or evidence-based results—there is a need to reconsider the content and delivery of our programs. Programs need to be updated to take into account research training, people's capacity to pay for services, and society's needs.

The relative place of universities versus private institutes should also be reassessed: There would be great opportunities for mixed curriculum where part of a program is taken at university, part through private institutes or professional schools (Marineau, 2004). It could be a win-win situation, helping develop more subsidized research, working closely with younger students while retaining the expertise of trainers active in the field. I am afraid that if we do not reenter the academic world more fully, our future will remain bleak, our expertise marginal. It would be a shame since as psychodramatists and sociodramatists, we have the vision, the theories, the tools to bring about significant changes in personal lives and the social arena.

CONCLUSION

There is a future for Moreno's philosophy and methods. I think that we psychodramatists and sociodramatists need to reflect into what we intent to achieve and how we plan to do it. Like good reflective practitioners and researchers, we need to answer the question: "What do we do when we do what we do?"

I also think that ASGPP needs to create a group of researchers and practitioners that would dedicate themselves to continue this questioning. A group that would act as a World Academy for the development of Moreno Heritage and not hesitate to challenge Moreno and each of us in view of what is needed today in our world (Marineau, 2010).

Beyond, each of us has to reflect within his or her own self to clarify what he or she is aiming at achieving when doing what he does in the field of clinical psychosociology.

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