SOCIATRY OF MORENO: ONLINE SOCIODRAMA AND SOCIATRY FOR SOCIAL CRISES

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ABSTRACT

In this article, Sociatric and Sociodramatic systems of J.L. Moreno, the founder of the Psychodrama Group Psychotherapy system, are discussed in the context of online applications. With the pandemic, war and other social crises online psychological help has been needed more than ever. There is a need to heal not only the individual, but also large groups and an entire society in such a great social trauma. Moreno is a scientist who wants to achieve this goal with his discipline of sociatry and he is the father of the concept of sociatry. Sociatry is concerned with the healing of societies. In this article, you will find an online intervention that involve a group of professionals with sociatric applications. With the help of online sociodrama studies, we were able to manage crisis intervention work with the affected group. To heal the society is to protect the future of humanity. Moreno, as a great visionary, is a genius who saw this truth a hundred years ago.

KEYWORDS: Psychodrama; Group psychotherapy; J.L.Moreno.

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RESUMO

Neste artigo, os sistemas Sociátricos e Sociodramáticos de J.L. Moreno, fundador do sistema Psicoterapia de Grupo Psicodrama, são discutidos no contexto de aplicativos online. Com a pandemia, a guerra e outras crises sociais, a ajuda psicológica online tornou-se mais necessária do que nunca. Há necessidade de curar não apenas o indivíduo, mas também grandes grupos e toda uma sociedade em um trauma social tão grande. Moreno é um cientista que quer atingir esse objetivo com sua disciplina de sociatria e é o pai do conceito de sociatria. A Sociatria está preocupada com a cura das sociedades. Neste artigo, irá encontrar uma intervenção online que envolve um grupo de profissionais com aplicações sociátricas. Com a ajuda de estudos on-line de sociodrama, conseguimos gerenciar o trabalho de intervenção em crises com o grupo afetado. Curar a sociedade é proteger o futuro da humanidade. Moreno, como grande visionário, é um gênio que viu essa verdade há cem anos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Psicodrama; Psicoterapia de grupo; J. L. Moreno.

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RESUMEN

En este artículo, se discuten los sistemas Sociatric y Sociodramático de J.L. Moreno, el fundador del sistema de Psicoterapia de Grupo Psicodrama, en el contexto de las aplicaciones en línea. Con la pandemia, la guerra y otras crisis sociales se ha necesitado más que nunca ayuda psicológica online. Hay una necesidad de curar no solo al individuo, sino también a grandes grupos y a toda una sociedad en un trauma social tan grande. Moreno es un científico que quiere lograr este objetivo con su disciplina de la sociatría y es el padre del concepto de sociatría. La sociatría se ocupa de la curación de las sociedades. En este artículo, encontrará una intervención en línea que involucra a un grupo de profesionales con aplicaciones sociátricas. Con la ayuda de estudios de sociodrama en línea, pudimos gestionar el trabajo de intervención en crisis con el grupo afectado. Sanar la sociedad es proteger el futuro de la humanidad. Moreno, como gran visionario, es un genio que vio esta verdad hace cien años.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Psicodrama; Psicoterapia de Grupo; J. L. Moreno.

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INTRODUCTION

A sociodramatic perspective: Disruptions in the role of Mother Earth

Many scientists, thinkers and political figures say that the world and all humanity has entered a new era and is in a new test. This is exactly the case in our opinion also. Humanity is amid one of the most important turning points in history of mankind. Before the wounds of the pandemic are fully healed, the world found itself in a war. Again, while the Cold War surrounded the whole world, at the same time Europe came very close to a hot war. Russia and Ukraine are engaged in a war that has displaced millions of people. Ordinary people, voters, citizens, farmers, workers, mothers, children are affected by all the calamities, but, basically, they are the ones who own it all. In addition to all this, as we know, floods, droughts, fires, all elements of a changing climate, foretell the polar regions warming and the global impact on all life including the oceans present themselves as pending or ongoing dangers.

The World (Mother Earth) no longer gives people as much confidence as before. Sociodramatically speaking, the world has begun to lose an important role because of the crises created by humans. This is the corruption in the role of the Mother Earth in general. This is a great psychological and social danger for humanity. Every individual born and living will feel more unowned. Society began to become alienated, lonely, insecurity gradually increased, and fear of the future began to show itself more than ever. While psychotherapy was a solution to people's problems, one could not remain indifferent to the problems of societies. For this reason, Moreno created the concept of sociatry and was concerned with the internal organization of societies just as he was concerned with the internal organization of the individual it is from "sociatry," a pathological counterpart of such a science [sociometry] that knowledge can be derived as to abnormal organization of groups, the diagnosis and prognosis, prophylaxis and control of deviate group behavior (Moreno, 1954, p. 13).

In psychodrama role theory, the internal organization of all roles of the person leads to a healthy or an unhealthy personality. Just like this, the internal structures of a society can have an unhealthy or abnormal organization. We can give examples of abnormal social organizations when subgroups in the society are in conflict or the entire society shows paranoid tendencies.

Moreno (1955, p. 88) evaluates the sociatry we have discussed here within socionomy and says: "Socionomy; it has three branches, sociodynamics, sociometry and sociatry, Socionomy is the Science of social laws (or whatever modern equivalent one would give to 'law')".

Human society has an actual, dynamic, central structure underlying and determining all its peripheral and formal groupings. It exerts a determining influence upon every sphere in which the factor of human interrelations is an active agent—in economics, biology, social pathology, politics, government and similar spheres of social action (Moreno, 1950, p. 22).

What is meant by Moreno here is the fact that the structure and quality of interpersonal relations causes the formation of a society or group organization. Thus, organizations can be healthy or unhealthy according to their features or structures. Traumas and other social factors disrupt these organizations and could make the society sick. This is the actual working area of sociatry.

An individual's mental health depends on the functioning of all their roles. Reasons such as role conflicts, role deficiencies, role extinction, role rigidity could make the individual unhealthy. Just like this, all the rigidities, deficiencies and conflicts in the organization of the society can make the whole society unhealthy. Societies can easily become fearful, hostile, anxious organizations. The individual and society are closely interconnected. It should be noted that the restorative nature of the social and organic unity is always there.

The sociodynamic law affects all human relation and operates on (a) interpersonal and (b) intergroup levels. It is found in some degree in all social aggregates whatever their kind, whether the criterion is search for mates, search of employment or in sociocultural relations. Its effect may change in degree but it is universally present, appearing like a halo effect, İnherent in every social structure (Moreno, 1947, p. 290).

However, it should not be forgotten that the field of sociatry is too deep and comprehensive to be covered completely in one article.

Nowadays, *Mother Earth* cannot provide people with a safe environment they want anymore. The ecological balance and various environmental disasters and economic crises that deteriorated apart from the pandemic and war are telling the groups that this generous mother is becoming more dangerous day by day. While discussing the change in the role of Mother Earth, it would be appropriate to dwell on the *concept of role*.

Psychodramatically, the role is always there for the individual, and there is no moment when our role is absent. We take all roles in our development process. These roles also play an important role in our perception of the whole world, and, sociodramatically, the social components of the role come to the fore, which are the collective components of the role. If we talk about a new conceptualization here, we can grasp and experience everything around us through psychodramatic and sociodramatic roles. Therefore, we know that this wonderful Earth has important roles: It (she) nourishes and develops us, it (she) enables us to have experiences, it (she) educates us, and it (she) enables us to have transcendent experiences. Unfortunately, these role of Mother Earth is gradually (or quickly) being destroyed day by day.

So, how will this social problem, in other words, the collective component of the role be improved or healed? The discipline of psychiatry, individual psychotherapies, personality development systems, and spiritual approaches are not enough. At this point, Moreno's sociatry comes up as the answer: As a social improvement/healing and development method, sociatry responds to the needs of this century. Group psychotherapy provides services ranging from the smallest sample group to large communities and society. Every psychodrama group psychotherapist, every sociodramatist is in fact a sociatrist. The solutions they will produce will probably be a solution to the problems of the world and societies. It would be appropriate to look at this issue a little more closely with the thoughts of Moreno and his followers.

Sociatry is a discipline named and created by J.L. Moreno for the mental treatment of society by sociodrama, ethnodrama, axiodrama and sociometric studies in psychodrama group psychotherapy. According to Moreno (1934/1993), sick societies should be healed, and what makes societies sick can be healed. If the mental health of the society is not good enough, individuals in the society cannot be expected to be healthy or it is difficult to protect their mental health.

Sociatry is healing sociometry. It is as pure a science as sociometry. They differ in method and emphasis rather than purity. Research science is no purer than a therapeutic science. The concept of *remedial* should not imply a lower degree of accuracy. Sociometry can often be considered as applied sociatry, at the same time sociatry is an applied sociometry.

Sociatry is theoretically the healing of society of the socius or sick society. The term derives from a Latin and a Greek root, the one is *socius*, the *other fellow*, the other *iatreia*, healing. Sociatry must be defined as to ist position within a system of both, social and medical sciences. Psychiatry is the branch in medicine that relates to mental disease and its treatment; it treats the individual psyche and soma. Sociatry treats the pathological syndromes of normal society, of inter-related individuals and of inter-related groups. It is based upon two hypotheses:

- 1. "The whole of human society develops in accord with definite laws";
- 2. "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" (Moreno, 1934/1993, p.3).

There are many social methods that can be used to heal sick or traumatized societies. The social methods are *socioanalysis* (Haskel, 1962), *clinical sociology*, *psychodrama and group psychotherapy*, *and especially sociodrama* (Moreno, 1934/1993). Moreno

treats society as an organism: "At this point, social role analysis comes to the fore as a field that I am particularly interested in" (Moreno, 1953, p. 379). Understanding and analyzing the group can be done easily with the help of sociodrama and sociometry. Powell (1986, pp. 63-65) said that "From this point of view, sociodrama is the action-oriented equivalent of group analysis".

Sociatry aims at a science of the normality and pathology of large masses of individuals, of entire communities and nations, and perhaps, someday in the future, of the entire mankind. Psychiatric concepts such as neurosis and psychosis are not applicable to group and mass processes. A group of individuals may become "normotic" or "sociotic" and the syndromes producing this condition have been called "normosis" or "sociosis" (Moreno, 1964, p. 153).

Moreno (1953), in his important work Who Shall Survive, explains that the sociodynamic effect changes at certain moments. According to him, social energy is in the capacity to spread. It can spread due to various triggering reasons, economic war, migration, mass diseases and deaths can be given as examples. According to him, these special moments reach the society in one or many dimensions for social change. These dimensions can be axiological or economic.

A higher concentration of many choices over a few individuals and a weak concentration of few choices over many individuals skews the sampling distribution even more than it does in chance experiments, and in a direction that it need not necessarily take by chance. This distribution feature is an expression of the phenomenon which has been called the "sociodynamic effect" (Moreno & Jennings, 1938, p. 353).

The stage of a psychodramatic session has opened the way to action research and action therapy, role test and role training, situation tests and situational interviews, whereas the audience portion has become the common ground of the better-known forms of group psychotherapy, as lecture methods, dramatic methods and film methods. Scientific foundations of group psychotherapy require as a perquisite a basic science of human relations, widely known as sociometry. It is from sociatry, a pathological counterpart of such a science that knowledge can be derived as to abnormal organization of group, the diagnosis and prognosis, prophylaxis and control of deviate group behavior (Moreno, 2009, p. 68).

Significant findings focus on a tool Moreno called "social microscopy," which Zerka Moreno named the "social microscope." This "has not yet penetrated our society" as Zerka wrote about it. The social microscope combines a unique application of sociometry with Moreno's developmental theory (as written about by Zerka in *The Quintessential Zerka*). The social microscope is an action-instrument to explore the world-wide sociometric meta-structures impacting and underlying social justice and social organizations (Schereiber, 2021, p. 1).

To understand Sociatry, it is necessary to pay attention to another important concept of Moreno—social microscopy.

This new sociometric objectivity owes a great deal to sociomicroscopic studies. By sociomicroscopic configurations we do not mean only the informal small groups, but the dynamic social units of which they are comprised, the pattern variants of social atoms, the clustering of social atoms into larger associations invisible to the eye of the human observer (social molecules), psychosocial networks, the clustering of numerous such networks into more comprehensive formations; finally the study of dyads, triangles, quadrangles, pentagons, and chains of persons. We assumed that the study of these primary atomic structures of human relations is the preliminary and indispensable groundwork to most macrosociological investigations (Moreno, 1953, pp.55-56).

This social microscope is a living puzzle that seems to have fitted itself together. The study and practice of the social microscope (as an aspect of sociatry) takes a deep dive into Moreno's understanding of the first universe—which is always present as the formless field of Intelligence, the Godhead—in a relationship with the second universe—the universe of form, matter, time, space, and place. Zerka writes: "This is similar to what quantum physicists describe as the unified field" (Schreiber, 2021, p.1).

If we need to take a closer look at the effects of traumas and significant changes in society: Kellermann (2007) talks about the concepts of "collective consciousness" and "selected trauma" while examining social pathologies. According to him, individuals in society are burdened with excessive stress, and social pathology develops, the shadow of the tragic history settles in the unconscious as collectively suppressed. This situation necessitates the treatment of all subsequent generations with sociodrama.

When Moreno said that "We believe that sociometric and sociatric approaches to common human and scientific problems hold one of the major keys toward integration. Among the sociatric approaches, particular attention will be given to group psychotherapy, psychodrama, sociodrama and ethnodrama" (Moreno, 1953, p.75), he drew attention to the above-mentioned facts and emphasized that common human problems and even scientific problems should be approached with these methods.

When Moreno start to introduce sociodrama to the field and he says "As soon as the individuals are treated as collective representations of community roles and role relations and not as to their private roles and role relations, the psychodrama turns into a 'socio-psychodrama' or short sociodrama" (Moreno, 1972, p.325). This is *sociotherapy* in a broad sense.

When Moreno said that "Sociodrama (Socio-Psychodrama) is the dramatic deep action method, which deals with intergroup relations and with collective ideologies" (Moreno, 1943, pp.434-449), he was making the definitions of the first social treatment methods. Today, these definitions are more important than ever. These definitions and the system created were gaining momentum from an important fact. This fact is the need to understand the group and its nature as well as an understanding of man and his nature. Sociopsychodrama group works need to be done with large audiences for all the problems of the Mother Earth, and virtual reality and online studies offer a great opportunity to reach this large audience.

This naming of Moreno was accepted by his followers. Monica Zuretti (2001) says that the analysis of a sociodramatic scene can only be achieved by transforming it into a short work of a protagonist and that it can give the social matrix a chance to change, and sometimes a protagonist's work cannot be analyzed without relating it to his social environment. The name of this system is *sociopsychodrama*.

Sociodrama is a group-based social learning activity. Participants explore a group topic that reflects the interests of group members. Moreno (1993/1934) states that sociodramatists organize protective, didactic and reconstructive group work in which the community works and lives, and confront, clarify and cope with the chronic problems and social events that communities live in such as major strikes, races, political party conflicts and so on.

In the context of online sociotherapy, sociodrama and sociatry are the process and management of the group as a whole to explore social phenomena and resolve intergroup conflicts in virtual reality. Sociatry is the body of knowledge, and sociometry and social microscopy are their very comprehensive application method of the sociodynamic effect, the organic unity, and to reverse and heal the sociodynamic effect.

Social measurement, with sociometry as its exponent, established the first solid bridge beyond psychiatry into sociology. It proposed sociatry, a concept of healing which transcends psychiatry. It is inevitable that all these applications will take place in virtual reality in our time of difficulties.

Sociatric and sociodramatic group work, which will be explained in detail below, will help us understand what the world is like in many ways and how people perceive it. As society enters *socius*, that is, as it cuts off its connection with reality, it prepares its own end.

It can also be easily said that it is easy to distinguish between intelligent people and cunning people. Cunning people do not respect others, they think they are stupid, and their fiction is above that belief. Intelligent people, on the other hand, respect others. The world is full of cunning and this is our disaster.

Ken Sprague (1998, p. 252) said that:

Our primary goal is not to protect the rainforest or prevent dolphin deaths, although we support such campaigns. Or it is not to protect bird lineage and support habitats, even if they are important sociodrama issues. Our main goal is to protect our humanity, so that is what is important to achieve all our other endeavors at this stage of our evolution.

When you look at this window, everything is very clear. One of our most important goals is to protect our humanity by remaining in our role as sociodramatists, and in this way to positively change the actual organizational structure of the human community.

An International Online Sociodrama Workshop

Great trauma of Covid-19 started to make the society as well as individuals sick from different perspectives. Efforts were being made to find solutions to this important problem, which affects the general public, and, naturally, the necessity of psychological and medical aids came to the fore, and these aids had to be provided in a virtual environment. Social media and various programs began to come to the fore. People started to meet in virtual environments, give trainings and receive psychological help. The world locked in homes was encountering the online reality, and people started to reach each other in large numbers with Zoom, Microsoft Team, Skype, YouTube, Free Conference Call, Meet, Instagram and similar apps and web programs.

While all these studies were going on, psychodramatists in the Russian Federation, under the leadership of Victor Semenov, started to organize online conferences and workshops within the framework of the 100th Anniversary of Psychodrama, and I made a presentation on *Sociatry, Sociodrama and Collective Traumas* at the conference they organized. After that conference, they suggested me to make a workshop with the same group in the same organization. I thought it would be appropriate to direct a sociodrama work while there are so many problems in the world.

A group of 25 people participated in the three-hour workshop. A good workout depends on a good warm-up. Warming-up processes have an important place in all sociatric and sociodramatic applications, just as in psychodramatic applications. Warming up and spontaneity are directly related to each other, as Moreno said: "The warming up process is the operational expression of spontaneity" (Moreno, 1948, p. 438).

We know well that physical warm-ups and action-based warm-ups always give better results if they are used primarily in the group. In online sociodrama and psychodrama studies, this is naturally not possible. Instead, it is necessary to take advantage of the virtual environment. Objects and chairs placed in the photograph of the classical psychodrama scene can be used easily. Videos with sound can also be used for warming up from time to time. Another good option is to use the breakout rooms in the Zoom program. Thus, it becomes easier to warm-up the group by dividing it into small groups. All warm-up games lead to strong learning.

With the help of online warm-up games and the games that allow group members to get to know each other better the group brought closer together at the beginning of the workshop. Who-knows-who talk in the virtual space is always a good warm-up and informs the leader about the sociometric dynamics of the group. This information can be obtained by sociometric applications, but also by simply asking; such as "Who has experienced sociodrama? Who believes that the problems of the world can be solved?" and so on. Sociometric questions always provide extremely fast warm-ups and introductions, which was the case with this group. It is important for the leader to give importance to physical warm-ups in both sociodrama and psychodrama sessions. Physical warm-ups are in our nature and are the strongest initiators. In the online study, the members were asked to move into the role of Earth by moving in the room they were in and to show what they felt in the role with a voice and movement. Such warm-ups prepare the group for sociometric study very quickly.

Since the pandemic and the social trauma that followed in this workshop, the Earth makes different sounds before and after it is polluted or losing some part of the role of Mother Earth.

After these warm-ups, an Earth figure was placed in the classical psychodrama stage projected on the Zoom screen, and the participants were asked to voluntarily enter the role of the planet and voice it. Entering a role is not a simple act and must be carefully controlled by the therapists. The leader's tele and intuition help him distinguish who is entering the role and who is resisting the role. A member of the group entered the role of Earth and said "I warned you in many different ways. Every change in me should have been a message to you, but you did not pay attention to my messages," but another member in the same role said "the world has aged, so the problems,"—she was not speaking

from the role of world; she clearly showed that she wasn't playing the role of the Earth on stage, she was resisting to reverse role and when she was warned about the situation, she pretended to say the same words from the mouth of the world again. This is the situation and the problem of humanity itself. The person who does not take responsibility and who does not take the role of others is preparing his own disaster. This is a kind of lack of empathy. This work can be sustained in several ways. Covid-19 and the world can talk to each other on the psychodrama stage and this dialogue can reveal the truths people need to hear. This enactment is only a warm-up exercise and is not considered the main work of sociodrama.

After these warm-ups and enactments, the group split into two subgroups with breakout rooms in Zoom to discuss what has prepared the pandemic and other global issues. All the warm-ups so far had been aimed at making people feel a need to redefine the organization of the new society. This is one of the main goals of a sociatric approach and aims to reverse the sociodynamic effects caused by traumas. The group will begin to look at its own structure again under social microscopy.

After completing their work, the small groups returned to the main Zoom screen and conveyed the important issues they discussed through their spokespersons, who were previously told to choose a spokesperson from among them.

The first group emphasized the disorientation of people, the lack of reliable leaders, ecological pollution and contempt for nature, educational problems, wars for power and control, disconnections in politics, lack of communication. The second group brought forth the themes of bad competition between countries, individualization and separation, concealment of facts and manipulations, unreliability of states and governments, the lie of democracy, global warming and ecological problems, conflict with religious groups, dissatisfied people, diminishing the influence of the individual.

These topics, which the groups found themselves, caused each group member to think more richly and diversely about the subject. This will change the entire group and the relationships between them. More importantly, it will cause the group to react more effectively and differently to traumas, events and situations. This means developing a positive new identity for the group, which we call group healing in sociatry. Sociosis will slowly begin to resolve and the group will begin to see the truths in the moment.

It was necessary to summarize the emotions and facts created by these themes and these were defined as *anxiety*, *hostility*, *helplessness*, *loneliness*, *uncertainty*, *fear*, *deep pain*, *anger*, *disappointment with the group*. The determination and underlining of the emotions by the leader together with the group, lays the groundwork for possible action catharsis.

These studies could be followed by various online sociodramatic studies. An example can be given to the mutual conversations of the Society and the Individual on the stage, or "I am responsible for ..." or "People are responsible for ...", doubles can be made by all members one by one in an order behind an empty chair standing on stage. These sociodramatic studies lead to the discovery of how a healthy society should be reorganized, and in this way the sociometric structure begins to change.

The sociodramatic workshop was not limited to these studies and continued. It is extremely important for individuals to produce simple and applicable solutions to social problems.

Afterward, we started to another online group work. The group was again told to come up with a simple but convenient solution that they could do by discussing within the same two subgroups. This is hard work. Everyone expects the solution from others. "The education system should be changed, politicians should be changed, people should be sensitive to the environment", while general recommendations like these are floating around, the leader conveys that these are not appropriate suggestions and that they are looking for simple solutions that they can produce themselves. A few members came up with a solution in this group as well. One solution was stated: "I can ask all people to send each other a smile to start relationship and peace on social media. I can initiate it and it can spread. Like this, sending love, writing to each other about the special point where everyone feels responsible, what I won't do next is this!" Suggestions such as starting relationship chains have been witnessed as a simple solutions. Creativity knows no barriers at this point, and the aim of online sociodramatic studies is to create creative people in society. In this way, sociatry aims to integrate every individual in the society with the society and to achieve a healthier structure in a huge number of people.

All these sociometric group practices we provide *shed light on a sociometric fact*. This fact is one of the secrets of being healthy and staying healthy. We live in a protective network where important ties are formed which is called *social atom*, one of these important sociometric structures is *the psychodrama groups of experts and students* as well and the psychodrama family they belong to. It reaches a meaningful unity (a strong cohesion) with the leader, and this sociometric structure that holds and manages all groups is kept alive and protected down to the last detail. *This structure ensures that the society and the individual remain healthy*.

There will be problems, there will be mismatches, but always your group is there and it is your mirror, showing you and pulling you into the truth. We get sick or get well in a group, the sociatry aims to provide a good recovery environment for individuals by helping the group recover. We are very lucky that in the coming years, when there will be more and more difficult problems, we will not be alone, and just like this year, we will be able to turn problems into learning with brave steps. We need to deliver all these sociometric improvement studies to large groups, and this seems to be possible only with online studies.

CONCLUSION

As we can see, every kind of online sociometric workshops, group psychotherapies and psychotherapy trainings will always be part of the field from now on. Even if we try to do in person training as much as possible, the importance of adapting well to this new situation is obvious, and online reality is also seen as a set of opportunities. Reaching more people and removing borders between countries are some of these opportunities.

Issues brought by the virtual environment such as privacy violations, ease of recording, difficulties in concentrating the attention of the participants, being influenced by the participants' own home environment, and the fact that they can be easily hidden, remain as important issues for therapists. This new situation requires many rules and process management.

The world can be a better place and people can have a better life. We have the power to create heaven or hell on this planet. Maybe, Moreno's sociatry is a powerful system and method of making the world a paradise. The role that falls to us as psychodramatists, sociodramatists is to completely renew *the role of mother Earth* as a social role and to maximize the cohesion between people with the help of protecting our humanity.

CONFLIT OF INTEREST

Nothing to declare.

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