

# EXCLUSION-INCLUSION IN THE LIFE AND WORK OF J. L. MORENO

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The expression *social exclusion*, and as a consequence its opposite, *social inclusion*, have become common neologisms in our globalized world. They first arose in describing the painful wounds of contemporary society and refer to the most blatant as well as the most sophisticated social injustices. They also have, therefore, a political and economic connotation which cannot be underestimated. The concept of exclusion-inclusion, however, has gone beyond its initial limits as the feelings arising from these situations: love, hate, fear, envy, jealousy, guilt, shame and others have also come to be appreciated. This broader context has come to include the feelings that arise when people are unable to or are prevented from achieving the condition of belonging. All of us have memories of situations where we have felt this way – in the family, the school, or workplace, and the bitter feelings which then accompany us. On the other hand, we all have also experienced the sensation of fulfillment, satisfaction and joy when we feel accepted. We continually seek inclusion in our relationships, whether in couples or in groups. William Schutz (1971), a group worker influenced by Moreno's ideas, puts inclusion as the first phase in the development of groups. We can visualize this human gregarious tendency as three overlapping concentric circles which represent the personal, group and social contexts.

Moreno teaches that children are born included in a relational network with various influences (genetic, cultural, social, psychological, etc.): the matrix of identity. He also teaches that there are two poles that come into play in these situations: one which seeks inclusion and one which accepts, rejects, or is indifferent. Moreno states that to really be included means to experience the relational reciprocity which is manifested by role reversal – by the tele and the encounter. The concept of the Encounter, one of the pillars of Morenian philosophy, could also be defined as the possibility of being totally included in the *other* or in the *other side* of the relationship. Moreno's work, whether taken from its sociological, educational or psychotherapeutic

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perspective, is founded in the attempt to help people include themselves in their relationships.

As a life and work constitute an existential continuum, it's worth taking a brief incursion into the life of the creator of sociometry and consider a few of the points in his personal struggle for inclusion, in terms of the formation of his psychosocial identity. We will take a brief look at some aspects of Moreno's biography which you are certainly familiar with but which will be presented here according to the theme of this presentation.

### **Inclusion, identity and the matrix of identity**

The identity formation process is the fruit of the way children are included in their matrixes of identity. Here children begin to respond to two basic questions which will be repeated, in different situations and circumstances, their entire lives: *who am I and what am I worth* (affectively, professionally, socially, economically, and politically). We will see how the little boy Jacques (as Moreno was called by his immediate family) learned to respond to these two key questions.

History recounts that Jacques was his mother's favorite child who, influenced by the prophecies of a gypsy, encouraged the family to believe that he was not only an unusual child, but also destined for a grandiose future. Marineau's (1992) research points out that even Moreno's renowned game of playing God, when he broke his arm, was "*repetitive and systematically supported by [his] mother*" (p.31). The boy enjoyed a special status in relation to his brothers, although he paid the price in not being able to feel equal to them (included).

*"His relationship was very different with his brothers. He didn't want to be called by his first name. If one of them used Jacob or Jacques, he simply ignored them. He waited to respond, until he was called 'you'.... This anonymity was rooted in, as we have seen, his feeling of being God's special case."* (Marineau, 1992, p.33).

Moreno paid an even higher price, that of having to fulfill the prophecy of greatness, which could only be accomplished to the extent that he was genetically blessed with a genius intelligence. If he had not been so endowed, he would probably have psychopathologically succumbed under the weight of an unfulfilled destiny. The

characteristics of this particular family inclusion left their marks in his identity which transcended the family sphere. His own words leave no doubt as to this:

*“From the time my behavior started becoming strange, at the beginning of my adolescence, when I became increasingly distant from my family, I also started to distance myself from my name, that is, my first name. I seemed to be looking for a new identity, and perhaps a new name which went better with my new status, this new identity.”* (Moreno, 1997, p.37) *“The secret of my identity became so intense in my mind that even I started to doubt which was my real identity and my real name. ... First, I changed my name from Jacques Levy to Jacob Levy, intensifying my Judaism; later I added my father’s middle name, Moreno, Jacob Moreno Levy. Later, once again, I took another turn and became J.L. Moreno. All these subtle differences started bothering me so I resolved to abandon my name once and for all and become absolutely anonymous...”* (Moreno, 1997, p.111)

While still an adolescent, he was already feeling uncomfortable within the family unit. At age fourteen, unable to adapt to life in Berlin where the family had emigrated, he returns to Vienna with the permission of his parents. He rents a room and starts living alone. When his mother and brothers return, as he is feeling resentful toward his mother (about the separation from his father), he refuses to go back to living with the family. At this time he identifies with Christ, Buda and Saint Francis, who also left their homes and adopted humanity as their new families. When he would visit his family, the contact was strange:

*“My brothers looked at me with admiration and fear. ... I locked myself in my room, ate alone, spoke very little or not at all, concerned with matters they didn’t understand. The tension increased.”* (Moreno, 1997, p.42)

### **Fighting for social inclusion**

The Jewish people have a long history of exclusions, from their escape from Egypt in the VIII century BC, to the destruction of Jerusalem in VII AD, to the long pilgrimage of partial inclusions and exclusions (*pogroms*) in different parts of the world, culminating in the Nazi Holocaust of World War II. The Sephardic Jews, the ethnic group to which Moreno belonged, managed for centuries to achieve a creative inclusion among the Christians and Muslims of the Iberian Peninsula (Sefarad). However, at the

end of the XV century, they were expelled from Spain and Portugal by the Catholic royals Isabel and Fernando. From that point on, most psychodramatists know of the Moreno family's long journey through Turkey, Romania, Austria, Germany (Berlin and Chemnitz), Austria once again and finally, to the United States.

The condition of immigrant was a constant in the life of the Moreno family. He himself experienced, intensely, the condition of being a foreigner, of being an immigrant and the difficulty in obtaining a nationality. Born in Romania, the son of a Turkish father, he would emigrate as a child to Vienna. The Viennese Jewish community, which could have been a bridge of inclusion for new arrivals, were for the most part Ashkenazim. It was not always easy even for the Sephardic Jews to integrate into the Ashkenazim community. The Sephardics, as we have seen, have Latin (Hispanic-Portuguese) – Arabic influences, absorbed from living with the Arabic-Judaic-Christian community in the Iberian Peninsula. The Ashkenazim culture originated predominately from Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup>

Moreno describes his family's difficulty with social inclusion:

*“Our transformation into Viennese was, however, never complete. We were one more typically marginalized Jewish family which survived by developing strong family ties. Speaking of this, we were, in Vienna, almost until the time for me to leave for the United States, considered foreigners or refugees. In the Austro-Hungarian Empire of that time, there were thousands of families like ours which were tolerated by the government as long as they led a peaceful life, in no way threatening the stability of the nation. Added to this was the fact that we lived in an atmosphere of aggressive German nationalism, reinforced by a strongly Roman Catholic district. Our family was out of mainstream Austrian life in more than one way.”* (Moreno, 1997, p.30) *“We lived in mixed neighborhoods, with both Jews and non-Jews, in Bucharest and Vienna, exposed to a variety of influences during our childhood. The years that my mother spent in the convent were useful in helping us relate to people from a Catholic culture that was as aggressive as that in the Austria of my youth.”* (Moreno, 1997, p.31)

The Austrian 'nationalism' included anti-Semitism that existed prior to the national-socialism (Nazism) of Adolf Hitler. During his college years, at one point the “nationalist” students communicated to the rector that the Jews couldn't attend classes

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<sup>2</sup> The Sephardic dialect was *Ladino*, based on medieval Castilian, including Spanish and Portuguese dialects. The Ashkenazim (Jews from Northeastern Europe, with later inclusion into Central and Western European communities) dialect is Yiddish, derived from German with the inclusion of Hebrew and Slavonic words.

or congregate on the university grounds anymore. Remember that many of the professors were also “nationalists”. The Jewish students, in groups of ten or twenty, tried to force their way in. A tremendous riot ensued “*with punches, clubs and even knives*” (Moreno, 1997, p.62). Another conflict occurred some years later, at the Baden train station, when a pro-Nazi group of youths threatened Moreno and his Catholic partner, Marianne Lörnitzo. After Moreno punched the leader and confronted the rest of the group, the aggressors dispersed.

Moreno (1997) states that at this moment he was consumed by an intense consciousness of his identity, excluded on the one hand and on the other included in the Jewish identity which on other occasions, like the other Jews of his time, he tried to conceal: “*it has become notorious that the Jews hide their identities and change their names*”... “*I suppose that I was reluctant to announce the fact that I was a Jew*” (p.111)

Moreno’s inclusion in the Austria of the 1920s became complicated. In Bad Vösslau, the city where he practiced, he was harassed with increasing frequency by extremists. A series of professional projects failed. His greatest biographer, René Marineau (1992), states that “*Moreno was isolated*” (p.103). Moreno decides to try a new inclusion in the New World. He puts his hopes in North America. At the same time, still according to Marineau (1992, p.104), “*No synagogue awaited him, the prophet, no university offered him a contract as a scientist and no theater group was expecting Moreno, the revolutionary.*” His first years in America were hard. Moreno (1997) confesses that he was at the point of returning to Europe.

A few of the relationships that he established during those first years in America, however, served as a bridge for Moreno’s social inclusion. All of them were people who didn’t respond to Moreno with neutrality or rejection, but rather with consistent positive signs of acceptance-inclusion.

### **Including the excluded**

Now we can understand how Moreno, through the failures and successes in his struggle for social inclusion, developed strategies to help others achieve the same goal.

While still young he founded the Religion of Encounter (1908 to 1914) with his friends (especially Chaim Kellmer, perhaps his best friend).

*“..We were all committed to sharing the anonymity, love and giving, living a concrete and direct life in the community with those we met. We left our homes and families and took to the streets.”* (Moreno, 1997, p.56)

In the years before World War I, Austria experienced a period of political and economic instability which generated a great number of people arriving in Vienna in search of a better life. The objective of Moreno and his friends was to shelter them and facilitate the acquisition of their documents and work visas. After dinner he would coordinate meetings in which *“problems were brought up and resentments dispelled”* (Moreno, 1997, p.57). Then they would dance and sing. *“Participating in these gatherings was a religious experience, something very joyful...”* (Moreno, 1997, p.57). This way of celebrating is reminiscent of Hassidic rituals involving singing, dancing, and the expansion of happiness in seeking communication with a higher power.

In 1913, Moreno dedicates himself to the task of including the Viennese prostitutes socially and ensuring their rights as citizens. Moreno’s words speak for themselves:

*“I had in mind what La Salle and Marx had done for the working class, leaving aside the ideology. They made the workers respectable in giving them meaning and dignity; they organized us into unions which elevated the status of the entire class...”*(1997, p. 65).

At the beginning of World War I, Moreno is not accepted as a volunteer for military service due to his dubious nationality (Romanian, the son of a Turk), but soon after, (1915), he is hired by the government to perform, in a Tyrolean refugee camp of approximately 10,000 people (Mittendorf), that which would become his primary pre-sociometric work. Sociometry, in diagnostic terms, means revealing a situation where some people are included and others are isolated and excluded, in a relational network. In therapeutic terms, it means allowing the excluded the possibility of finding new ways of inclusion in the same group or within others.

Regarding Mittendorf, Moreno (1997) reports:

*“Using sociometric methods, even if in a very primitive way, I transferred families, based on their mutual affinities. In this way the basic work, around which the*

*community was organized, was improved. My theory was supported by the fact that, when the people were able to live with those to whom they were positively attracted, they tended to cooperate among themselves and the signs of disagreement went down both in terms of number and intensity.”* (p. 81).

Moreno, however, made no secret of the fact that the emotional motive for his success in this work was his deep identification with the Tyroleans who had a double national identity. They were Austrians, yet spoke Italian as their language. They were removed from their land by the Austrian government, supposedly to be protected from the Italian army which was advancing in their direction. In fact, the Austrian government didn't trust that these southerners speaking Italian would be able to oppose the invaders who came from a similar culture. Moreno knew what it was like to not have a well-defined cultural identity:

*“I began to identify ever more with the Tyroleans, learning their language like a native and delving into their lives.”... “I will never forget the day they returned to their houses, recently formed Italian citizens. The women and children, dressed in the festive clothes they had saved, despite the shortages during the war years. They marched out of the camp, their chests held high, full of joy, singing their beautiful Italian songs. A part of me wanted to go with them...”* (1997, p.81-82).

In the United States, Moreno would continue his sociometric projects, among them the gateways to inclusion for the Sing Sing inmates and female juvenile delinquents (from 12 to 18 years old) from the New York State Girls Education School, when he definitively put forth the foundations of sociometry. Within the strategic selection of the population studied (505 girls) based on the results of the sociometric test, Moreno focuses in greater detail on a social unit comprised of five youths. One of them, Elsa, calls his attention due to her seriously excluded affective position. The four girls positively chosen by Elsa from her own cottage (the community was divided into 16 cottages), rejected her, as did 27 other classmates, 12 from her own cottage and 15 from outside it. Moreno studies the *motives* behind both Elsa's choices and the others involved; works to increase the *initial number of her contacts* in the community, increasing her relational possibilities; initiates the use of procedures such as *role-playing* and the *spontaneity test*, to facilitate spontaneous fluency and increase the telic coefficient of the relational network in question. It is then understood that Elsa's exclusion, as well as her transgressive behavior (lying, stealing, etc.) results not only from her intrinsic relational difficulties, but also from the way that the relational

dynamic of her living group interacts with her. Elsa is systematically marginalized and neglected by the group. Knobel (2004), a Brazilian sociometrist, comments that “*any attempt to ‘cure’ her needs to involve all the girls involved, whether directly or indirectly, with her*” (p.202). This author goes on to comment that Moreno, as if he were a clinical doctor, diagnoses the problem, searches for its causes and proposes a therapeutic area for treating the sick *social organism*. The emotional stability is function of the groupal *sociometric status* of the person. Isolated and peripheral members would be more susceptible to illness.

In the end, Elsa, excluded from Cottage 8, is able to find satisfactory inclusion in Cottage 13. Moreno, this time, makes no comment as to his personal reactions to Elsa’s inclusion (as he did in regard to the Tyrolean’s), but one can deduce, based on previous experience, that in helping Elsa include herself, he too felt a little more included.

### **Including madness**

We will now see how Moreno went on to achieve his goals of inclusion in his psychiatric and psychotherapeutic work. In psychotherapy he sought as much the inclusion of the individual with him or herself, or in other words, the inclusion and relational fluency of the different *partial I’s* which comprise the *Global I*, as he did the facilitation of an appropriate insertion of the individual in his/her social network.

Some authors, such as Blatner (1996), Bustos (1975), and Fonseca (1974) comment on Moreno’s pioneerism in regard to the anti-psychiatry movement (Laing, Cooper, 1972) of the 1960s. Much earlier, already in the 1930s, Moreno conducted clinical consultations where his “anti-psychiatry” attitude toward official psychiatry was clear. He proposed, for example, *psychodramatic shock* in contrast to the electric, insulin and cardiazolic shock therapies utilized at that time. His concern (though not a constant in his clinical protocols), was not to directly combat the symptoms, but rather to include them, harmoniously, in the life of the patient. We could say that, to the attitude of operating on, extracting, and excluding of symptoms in Western medicine, Moreno proposed the Eastern attitude of rescuing the creative energy lost to deliriums and hallucinations and including it in the individual’s life. He comments that official medicine aims to return patients to their condition prior to illness. In psychiatry,



however, we are confronted with situations in which they cannot renounce their psychoses which are the result of too many years of deviated creative work. The psychodramatic therapy for psychosis invests, therefore, in the entire realization of the psychosis, reminiscent of the homeopathic principle *similia similibus curantur* (like cures like): the reconstruction of the madness on the psychodramatic stage becomes the therapeutic instrument of the psychosis itself. Madness curing madness.

I have chosen one of Moreno's controversial clinical cases (1974), the "Mary Case", officially denominated *A case of paranoia*, for us to reflect upon in terms of the work he performed toward socially re-including his patient. During the 51 sessions, which took place over a period of ten months, Moreno treated Mary, a young woman of 23 years of age who had been ill for three years. She developed a delirium toward a man, John, whom she had supposedly seen at a Christmas party. She started searching for him obsessively and uncontrollably on the streets and cities. Her bizarre behavior called the attention of the police who took her to a psychiatric hospital. Mary was opposed to any kind of treatment and was transferred from hospital to hospital. Eventually the family turned to Dr. Moreno's Beacon Hill Sanatorium.

Based on interviews with the family, Moreno outlines a painstaking therapeutic strategy which has three phases: realization, substitution and analysis of the delirium. The family is oriented to change their behavior toward Mary and accept the reality of her psychosis by participating in the search for John. The parents communicate that they have discovered a doctor who is a friend of John's. Mary insists that she be taken to him. Moreno expands the dramatic context to both the clinic and to life, receiving her and saying that there is a telegram from John to her. The telegram states that he is enrolling for the draft (the action takes place during the Second World War), but that he will meet with her in two days. William, a professional auxiliary ego, is also presented as a friend of John. There is an "exchange of correspondence between Mary and John prepared by the therapeutic staff. Moreno warns that a lay person might find this procedure a mystification, but that on the psychodramatic level it has to be understood as a therapeutic procedure, carefully prepared and directed by experienced therapists and, I would add, running a great risk. William, the auxiliary ego becomes a bridge between the patient and the center of her delirium, John. In the psychodramatic sessions, William is systematically chosen to be John. Mary enacts three different versions for the supposed initial meeting she would have with her beloved. She has the possibility of

being John through the role reversal technique; that is, to experience being her own delirious creation. In one dramatization Mary represents John as if he were an embryo she carries in her womb. A delivery room is set up on the psychodramatic set so she can give birth to her baby. The psychodramatic plot goes on: John is “enlisted” by the army and their meeting is always postponed. Mary’s anguish increases. She hears on the radio that it is possible to perform weddings with absent military personnel through power-of-attorney. William represents John and the wedding is performed on the psychodramatic stage. Mary is a beautiful, tearful bride who is kissed by William-John. During the days that follow, her anxiety over John begins to diminish. The wedding seems to signify the beginning of her progressive detachment from John.

Through realizing the psychosis the patient is able to experience part of their internal life which was previously incompatible with reality. The old Mary is replaced by a Mary II, but a Mary III is yet to emerge. Mary transfers her feelings to the auxiliary egos and becomes dependent on them, as it is only through them that she is able to find John and her imaginary world. Mary demonstrates a desire to extend her relationships with the people who were auxiliary egos outside the sessions. During the dramatic action, a part of William blends into John and this mixture is progressively accepted by Mary. John’s mask begins to take on William’s features. The *substitution* has begun. Mary develops a greater connection to William than would be expected from a “newly-wedded” woman. She invites him on outings and to go to the movies. The relationship between Mary and William attains sufficient solidity to permit a new and daring step: the time has arrived for John to die.

His death on the front lines is announced. Mary has a crisis and remains unreachable for some time while she goes through mourning. Some sessions follow in which, through the mirror technique, she is able to see herself represented by a double. The transference world begins to be substituted, little by little, by the telic world. She begins to make the distinction between the doctors and nurses (auxiliary egos) from the real world and the roles they play in the psychodramatic scenes.

During a scene in which the therapist acts along with her sisters, the truth is revealed: John never existed outside the patient’s imagination. Mary jumps from the audience to the stage and tries to attack the doctor. When the aggressive impetus has passed, she asks for forgiveness and feels ready to continue the work with scenes based on the dilution of her deliriums and hallucinations.

Her interest in William slowly disappears when she is released from the hospital. But the process is still not finalized. Moreno invites a young man, who felt attracted to Mary before she became ill, to participate. The final substitution of the affective project is put into action: from John to William and now from him to George. Mary marries George.

Fifteen years later Mary continues to live with her two *dramatis personae*, but they don't interfere with each other. She found a partner who completes this duality. Sometimes she talks with her fictitious characters, though if someone approaches her she interrupts her internal dialogue and explains that she has just been conversing, in thought, with someone. She negotiates the path between fantasy and reality well. This double life doesn't prevent her from performing her roles as housewife, mother (her son is named John) and wife. Her tendencies toward isolation and inadequacy, previously unhealthy, now appear normal. Questioned by Moreno about why she hasn't visited him, she replies that it isn't necessary as "you have become a part of myself and I talk with you in your absence." The *psychotic I* was re-included among the other "partial I's". According to Moreno (1974):

*"Our goal must be to reintegrate unhealthy people and their aberrant behavior in our culture, as if everything were understandable and natural; to give them the possibility of revealing themselves in all areas of creative activity."* (p. 352)

Moreno (1997) leaves no doubt as to having experienced this himself:

*"The psychodrama in my life preceded the psychodrama as method. I was the first protagonist patient and director of psychodramatic therapy, all at the same time."* (p.44).

And he makes no secret of the fact that if he hadn't adopted this procedure of living with his own madness, instead of hiding or analyzing it, he probably would have succumbed to mental illness:

*"I escaped a destiny as a schizophrenic, who functions in a vacuum and has to fill the void with hallucinatory figures to the point of believing that these figures are interacting with him."* (p.44).

*"As a result, I wanted to show that a man who exhibits all the signs of paranoia, megalomania, exhibitionism and other forms of individual and social imbalance, can still be quite well controlled and healthy."* (Moreno, 1997, p.53)

Moreno (1997) and his colleagues from the Religion of Encounter were bold in including madness in the concept of God:

*“Since the greatest crime in our culture is to be pathological, to behave pathologically, He would appear as a pathological man and would exhibit, humorously, all the paraphernalia of insanity. He would say: ‘I am mentally ill; look at me; let all the mentally ill come to me.’ Christ heard voices. We all hear voices. Whoever doesn’t hear voices isn’t normal. ‘This time Christ will be nude.’ He will hear voices and the voices will tell him what to do, and he will hear the voices we hear inside us.” (p.50)*

Moreno built, therefore, a psychiatry and a psychotherapy that were very different from those that existed in his time. His daring and recklessness cost him a great deal of resistance and opposition. He doesn’t put forth the colonizing attitude of imposing on others what one believes to be right. Moreno believes that in madness there is creative potential to be liberated and that, from then on, each must go his own way.

### **The ultimate inclusion**

In August of 1973, at the Grand Hotel Dolder Berg in Zurich, nine months before his death, Moreno finalizes his last act of inclusion. He presides over the founding assembly of the IAGP (International Association of Group Psychotherapy), an institution which promotes the inclusion of all group therapists in the world, with no distinction between approaches or schools of thought. United there are psychodramatists, group analysts, Gestalt therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, pedagogues, clergy, in short, all those who are dedicated to working with groups. Grete Leutz (2004), his friend and follower describes:

*“Moreno sitting at the head of a long table, presided the assembly: at least twelve persons sat by his side. Facing the afternoon sun, he did not speak much, but smiling benevolently, he was very present and appeared satisfied.” (p. 164)*

Moreno (1973) writes a short note saying that they had fulfilled *“one of the major goals I have been trying to attain since 1951.”* (p. 131) He displays the feeling of having accomplished a mission. And his smile, presence and satisfaction, so poetically described by Grete Leutz, represented his farewell to our community.

## **The inclusion of psychodrama in Brazil**

In my country, or, more specifically, in my city, São Paulo, the psychodramatic movement was bred within a specific social and political context. At the end of the 60s, we were going through the beginning of a military dictatorship which extended for 20 years. Many times, our pioneering group aroused suspicion, whether because we were meeting in groups, and groups could always be subversive, or because we helped people who had been victims of torture, or because we were young and opposed to the classic psychiatric establishment and traditional psychology. We introduced noisy therapy groups into the silent and well-behaved waiting rooms of psychoanalytic clinics, we used music and dance in therapy sessions, and we broke with the formality and distance in the treatment of our patients.

This beginning culminated with the realization of the V International Congress of Psychodrama, in 1970, which brought together roughly 3,000 people at MASP (The Art Museum of São Paulo). There were not only young therapists in search of new ideas present there, but also actors, dancers, artists, writers, politicians, and, as had to be, given the circumstances, police officers disguised as participants. It was a scientific congress which gained a political connotation, not only due to the large number of people gathered, but also due to the power of its development. Psychodrama brought a breath of freedom to our oppressed hearts. The MASP Congress, as it came to be known, transcended the limits of psychodrama, constituting a highlight in the intellectual life of São Paulo.

Psychodrama in Brazil began with the mark of exclusion. When not rejected by reactionary chiefs of staff (after the Congress, for example, I was prohibited from running psychodrama groups in a psychiatric hospital), we were considered superficial, as it was said we applied play techniques with no therapeutic power. Our struggle for inclusion within the scientific community was long and hard. Today, we have among us a great number of Masters and Doctors at the prestigious Brazilian universities, over a hundred books on psychodrama published in Portuguese and a national organization (FEBRAP – The Brazilian Federation of Psychodrama) which affiliates approximately forty associations uniting roughly 4,000 psychodramatists.

In March of 2001, thanks to the initiative of a few psychodramatists<sup>3</sup>, the São Paulo city government conducted roughly 150 simultaneous public psychodramas in different locations around the city: day-care centers, shelters, schools, public squares, etc. The event was denominated Psychodrama of Ethics and Citizenship. The objective was to promote reflection about how each citizen can better live in their city and how to contribute so that others can as well.

*“It isn’t possible to achieve individual happiness without this involving the necessities of others. In other words, true ethical exercise can only be considered effective when it takes into account the rights and duties of an entire community.”* (Feo, 2004, p.1)

The experience of the City Psychodrama provided deeper reflection on the community mission of psychodrama. In the end, Moreno’s desire was to take psychodrama outside the psychotherapeutic consultation room. The number of spontaneous and play back theater troops has increased. The Cultural Center of São Paulo, an organ of the São Paulo municipal government, now performs<sup>4</sup> free weekly open psychodrama sessions.<sup>5</sup> The audience is comprised of the unemployed, housewives, retirees, university students, low-income workers and all those who, there for other activities, are drawn in by a group of people brought together to act out the dramas and stories of their lives.

### **Moreno’s legacy**

The pain of social exclusion, in its various manifestations, served as Moreno’s inspiration to create instruments: sociometry, group psychotherapy and psychodrama for helping those like him. His life was dedicated to the excluded: the poor, prostitutes, refugees, inmates and the mentally ill. He left us a legacy and it is up to us, contemporary psychodramatists, to carry it on. Psychodrama, obviously, cannot cover all the dimensions of social exclusion, because many of them transcend the limits of our

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<sup>3</sup> With the leadership of Marisa Greeb.

<sup>4</sup> Under the coordination of Antonio Carlos Cesarino.

<sup>5</sup> The Daimon-Center for Relationship Studies, São Paulo, has conducted regular open sessions since 1984.

work. We need not get caught up in the Morenian utopia of trying to treat all of humanity. Our instruments are sufficient, however, to carry on the work Moreno began.

In this way, there is a connection among individual, group and sociocultural feelings. The Dutch philosopher Espinosa (1957, book II), a Sephardic Jew from the Iberian Peninsula, discusses democracy and liberty based on human feelings, proposing a system of ideas in which the psychological, social and political-ethical appear intertwined. The social psychologist Bader Sawaya (2003, p.39) comments that *“this option represents a change in the paradigm of transforming action, toward an ontology and an epistemology which don’t separate reason from emotion, the socioeconomic organization of subjective configuration, the private sphere of the public nor the aesthetics and ethics of politics.”* The psychodramatic method facilitates this intersection (of social, group and dramatic contexts). In working with the feelings of shame, sadness and hatred of a humiliated protagonist, we bring forth, as if in a spiral, the other dimensions involved (group, social, and ethical-political).

I will narrate a scene which took place in a spontaneous theater conducted in a public shelter.<sup>6</sup> The audience is comprised of “street men and women”. The protagonist feels sad and alone. She sees couples together and has no one for herself. In the first scene an interested man appears, but he soon wants to hug and kiss her. The protagonist pushes him away. In the second scene a romantic man appears who respects her shyness. The scenes are long but the viewers vibrate with the “not now” of the protagonist in the first scene and the careful permission of the second’s approximation. The women present really identify with the story, but many of the men also root for her and shout, “That’s right, you’ve got it!” A social worker states that many women start living on the streets as children and are systematically raped from then on.

The individual feelings of our protagonist gain resonance in the group present and in the social condition of all the participants. Working with the personal feelings of humiliation, shame, fear and hatred, in addition to allowing the person to own her story and social context, also means taking it to the collective dimension of exclusion. Taking ownership of one’s own body, having an identity, earning the respect of one’s peers, deciding when and with whom to have a sexual relationship, and experiencing a civilized seduction were the desires of all those in the group. The protagonist’s “no”

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<sup>6</sup> The scene narrated was conducted by the Agruppaa spontaneous theater group, directed by Milene de Stefano Feo.

was also the group's "no" to their denial as persons with their own desires and the right to choose.

Working with feelings of exclusion doesn't mean helping people feel a little better about being poor or numbing the pain. This would result in the officialization of their suffering. Nor is it to require false happiness. Feelings of happiness and sadness "*are good when they correct the intellect and not obscure social criticism*" (Sawaya, 2003, p.47). The goal is to increase consciousness of the situation, allowing new attempts for inclusion to be sought out. According to Paulo Freire (1980), we should consider the passage between '*naive consciousness*' and '*critical consciousness*', as it is in the latter that the possibility of transforming reality resides.

I confess that before preparing for this conference, I hadn't considered how important the *inclusion-exclusion* axis was for Moreno. This revision has given me a true insight, a new understanding of Morenian theory. Many "between the lines" have become lines and a new perspective has been revealed to me. I am doubly thankful, first for the ASGPP (American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama) invitation to be here, as it signifies my inclusion within your community and, second, for the fact that it has provided me with this creative re-reading of Moreno.

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