

PSYCHODRAMA IN BRAZIL: CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS IN MENTAL HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND COMMUNITIES

PSICODRAMA NO BRASIL: APLICAÇÕES CONTEMPORÂNEAS EM SAÚDE MENTAL, EDUCAÇÃO E COMUNIDADES

PSICODRAMA EN BRASIL: APLICACIONES CONTEMPORÂNEAS EN SALUD MENTAL, EDUCACIÓN Y COMUNIDADES

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Embarking on a literary journey through the pages of *Psychodrama in Brazil: contemporary applications in mental health, education, and communities* (Fleury, Marra & Hadler, 2022), unveils the rich contributions of psychodrama theory and practice in the Brazilian context. In a country that has birthed to the world influential figures in both the social sciences and dramatic arts, such as Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal, the cultural and socio-historical soil of Brazil embraces the creative revolution proposed by Jacob Levy Moreno, and here his theory finds fertile ground flourishing with the creativity and spontaneity of a people who derive strength and resilience from collective bonds and their ancestral roots. Naturally, such a revolutionary approach emerges not merely as a psychological technique, but as a dynamic force, a transformative tool weaving through the fields of art, pedagogy, psychotherapy, politics, and psychosocial dynamics.

Following the epistemological foundation of the psychodramatic theory, the book is composed of 24 chapters, organized in four acts, respectively approaching the “Historical act: fundamentals of Brazilian psychodrama”, the “Clinical acts: psychodrama, psychotherapy, human development”, the “Sociotherapeutic act: psychodrama, psychosocial practices and vulnerable populations (or turned vulnerable populations)”, finally followed by the final act, “Sociomic acts: psychodrama, politics and society”. As we navigate through the chapters of this extensive work, crafted by over 40 authors from diverse perspectives, we unravel the distinctive threads of psychodrama’s evolution in Brazil. We witness its emergence as a powerful catalyst for societal transformation, addressing contemporary challenges in the Brazilian context focusing on resistance, inventiveness, and social transformation (chapter 1).

The first act is an invitation to understand the roots of psychodrama in Brazil. Beginning with its philosophical and historical foundations embedded with the demographic, socio-political, and cultural aspects of the nation, Brito and Merengue (chapter 2) identify significant historical moments related to political oppression (such as acts during the authoritarian dictatorship, re-democratization times, and contemporary democratic years amid left and right wings power shift governments); moments with the highlight of scientific production, mostly in the health sciences, bringing Morenian theory and practice to inside university scenarios; as well as relevant marks as the psychodrama related to minorities’ rights, since its introduction in Brazil by the sociologist Guerreiro Ramos (1915–1982), putting the ethnic-racial debate to the stage, until recent debates such as the indigenous movement, sexual diversity, health and illness, and all the resulting social pathologies such as sexism, racism, homophobia, Brazilian elitism and classism, religious or philosophical fundamentalism, and anti-science themes, recently brought by multiple authors in psychodrama. After understanding some philosophical and theoretical aspects intertwined with Brazilian historical and cultural context, the following chapters in the first act elucidate the development of Brazilian spontaneous theater (chapter 4), public psychodrama in

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Brazil (chapter 5), and the foundations of the training in psychodrama, highlighting the roots of the Brazilian Federation of Psychodrama, and its commitment with the political pedagogical project to educate new professionals in its progressive and emancipatory approach.

The second act explores the clinical aspect of psychodrama, mostly the sociatric part of Morenian theory and how it is applied in psychotherapy and human development. The reading turns into about its psychotherapeutic modality with children, adolescents and elderly people, family, and group psychotherapy, adding a chapter about psychodrama as a psychotherapeutic modality of choice for the treatment of sexual dysfunctions in a thematic group psychotherapy program, as it can be seen in chapter 14. Exploring challenges during the COVID-19 health crisis, the second act provides practical examples of how to conduct online psychodramatical sessions in psychotherapy. In addition, another interesting move from the section is to delve into the minimalist aspect of the modality, probably the most reduced and simplified way of applying the Morenian theory, in individual psychotherapy, named relational psychodrama, by Fonseca, in chapter 10. The reader gains insights into how this simplification can be also useful in fitting psychodrama into a rentable clinical way of psychotherapy, the well-known 50-minute individual session, without giving up psychodrama theory.

Heading to the third act, the reader finds a breathtaking compilation of sociotherapeutical applications of psychodrama with vulnerable—or turned vulnerable—populations. Keeping an eye on the processes of social exclusion, the raw social context in Brazil is marked by colonial practices resulting in greater oppression of specific social groups, generating, and reproducing violence. Responding to the same reality, the third section brings examples of psycho-social interventions using psychodrama in a transformative way of dealing with it, when addressing interventions against sexual violence in chapter 15, followed by a chapter by Conceição and Penso, approaching psychodramatical interventions with children and adolescents under the justice system protection.

In the same section, following the reflection on a country of immense social inequality, psycho-social interventions in psychodrama arise with practical interventions to secure and advocate for human rights with deeply marginalized groups in Brazil, such as the homeless population (chapter 17) and indigenous people (chapter 18), both chapters bringing important reflections on ethno-racial and class oppression. The chapter on psychodrama with the homeless population brought important reflections on how the partnership between psychology and social work professionals can use sociodrama to strengthen public policies of social justice, to protect the rights of every citizen, especially the most vulnerable ones in the urban environment, and bringing necessary reflections on the application of sociodramas in action research methods in psychology and social work. Following in Hardler et al. (chapter 18), the reader explores entanglements in philosophical approaches, stemming from the Morenian theory connecting with the indigenous renowned author Ailton Krenak and the dialogical approach of Paulo Freire's pedagogies, favoring multiple perspectives of knowledge and transformation, applied in the stage of popular health education with indigenous people in the public health system.

Finally, the fourth section goes deeper into the core of socioeconomic roots in Brazilian society, bringing psychodrama and politics together in the struggle to fight inequalities, multiple marginalization, and colonial practices, by envisaging social justice. Therefore, the final act addresses psychodrama and politics (chapter 19), ethnic psychodrama (chapter 20), an Afrocentric approach focusing on an anti-racist application of psychodrama, public sociodrama against homophobia (chapter 21), experiences of using psychodrama as a pedagogical strategy to implement public policies in health and in education (chapter 22), among other practices.

In the final section, a highlight must be given to the chapter by Malaquias et al. approaching Morenian ethnodrama and African psychology, intertwining ethnic-racial relationships and the future of psychodrama. Then, it is important to remember that the deep roots of ethnic-racial issues date from its first sociodrama taking stage in Brazil, with the Black sociologist Guerreiro Ramos approaching the Black movement in the late 1940s. The paradox of its invisibility in Brazilian psychodrama memories until recent times is also an indicator of the great importance to be given to ethnic discussions in the field, which takes its rightful space to grow in the future of Brazilian psychodrama.

The book *Psychodrama in Brazil: contemporary applications in mental health, education, and communities* extensively and critically explores decolonial contributions in the practice of psychodrama in Brazil, calling for a creative cultural revolution in society. While psychology as a science often mirrors Eurocentric paradigms, this book courageously navigates through

the intricate layers of colonial legacies, calling for a transformative shift in perspectives, shedding light on their marginalized voices, and challenging the hegemony of dominant discourses, showing contributions from psychodrama to be seen reflected in broader social, educational, and health sciences, as well as their first nest in the dramatic arts.

There, the reader encounters an intersectional psychodrama that makes sense in its practice in Brazilian society, recognizing the interconnected nature of social identities and systems of oppression. In this sense, a book crafted by multiple hands brings multiple perspectives, resulting in a psychodrama that recognizes the complex interaction between race, gender, class, and other axes of identity in the history and contemporary dynamics in Brazil. Even though understanding diversity, and considering the extension of the book, the anti-ableist aspect of psychodramatic practice in Brazil was only briefly mentioned in chapter 7, when the author highlights the outcomes of psychodrama with neurodivergent children. Perhaps in future editions, the potential of psychodrama as a tool to approach disability and the rights of people with disability in a wider discussion will find space, as well as other emergent themes in psychodramatic practice.

Finally, the encounter of renowned authors in Brazilian psychodramatic scenarios with new emerging voices is one of the book's highlights, resulting in a plural and modern perspective that reflects the power of diversity in composing this work. Nevertheless, upon considering this meaningful contribution, it would be important to have Portuguese and Spanish versions of the book available for the audience. Though understandable editorial reasons for promoting broader and more inclusive access having it in English, the contributions in this book could enhance the dialogue in the Brazilian context even further. It is a pleasant and intriguing literary journey through a book that opens the curtains to voices from the global south to share rich contributions to the development of psychodrama around the world. The taste of it awakens the reader's mind and eagers to explore further editions of psychodrama around the world from this editorial series to come.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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