

PSYCHODRAMA APPLICATIONS IN WAR¹

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to organize remote psychodrama with people fleeing the war. This study was designed as a basic qualitative research method. Eight young people who migrated from Syria to Turkey participated in the research. Eight sessions were held, each lasting ninety minutes. All the sessions were held with the internet Zoom meeting. Drama techniques such as mirror, role switching, and matching were used in the sessions. In addition, remote warm-up games were used in the sessions. Maxqda 2022 social science computer program was used to analyze the qualitative data. As a result, the categories of education, marriage, work, fear, pain, violence, loss, trust, peace, and happiness were created under three themes as pre-war, during the war and after the war. Codes such as school, work, salary, raid, injury, kidnapping, imprisonment, escape, settlement, aid were made. Studies recommended on how psychodrama during the war affects the participant.

Key Words: War, psychodrama, Syrian refugees.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, the most powerful social event that contains the traces of the past and the plans of the future, which leave deep traces in the collective memory of the nations, where each individual forming the society in which many species live at the same time and in different geographies, is affected as a result of this phenomenon. It would not be wrong to consider the scientific history of war in terms of the first human's landing on the earth and the understanding of property. War; violence is considered separately from aggression and murder and presented as a cultural reflection rather than a pathology that has been eradicated altogether. Thus, there was a natural tendency to war and war became inevitable. There are six types of warfare: (a) Primitive / ceremonial, (b) Political / passionate, (c) Epic / honorific, (d) Sacred / in the name of god, (e) Defensive / protective of a group or country, (f) Terrorist and guerrilla / defensive against an invisible internal enemy (Zur, 1987). While making these definitions of war, two principles are emphasized: the suitability and development of the targets, the conditions of each war situation and the change of the concept of the enemy. According to Zur (1987), the idea that war always exists includes the idea that people are aggressors. In this case, wars mean that the state of aggression in human beings is revealed at certain intervals. Fighting was perceived as an instinctive state, a genetic human temperament. It is very difficult to accept that war is an instinctive situation in today's world. According to Barbera (1980), war is organized physical hostilities between two nations that are at least politically independent in pursuit of ends. In both cases, war is a phenomenon that deeply affects societies and individuals, even though it arises as a result of either a part of human nature or an organized movement.

Although the understanding of war in our age is inspired by all the factual war situations that have been tried to be defined above, war always has devastating consequences in the social perspective. The concepts of mass migration, refugee, population exchange, concentration camps, war victimization have entered the literature as a result of wars. According to Zur (1987), if we agree on a rationally planned and socially organized model of war, we can no longer agree with the easy and fatalistic view that wars are caused by an inherent human tendency to aggression. War is a cultural phenomenon that depends on a complex set of sociological and psychological factors. If we look at these factors from a psycho-historical perspective, we can better understand our present situation and take steps towards a more peaceful future.

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Undoubtedly, children are the most harmed and innocent people in wars and conflicts. Millions of children around the world have been victims of wars, conflicts, and acts of terrorism for centuries. The negative effects of these wars and conflicts on children; maiming, killing, injury or murder of parents or relatives. In addition, physical, psychological, and sexual violence, being used as a soldier in conflicts, being exposed to a forced migration, ill-treatment in the migrated regions, exclusion, marginalization, having extreme political and nationalist tendencies, illness, poverty, malnutrition is also related to war and malnutrition. can be listed as the other effects of conflicts on children. It is also possible for children experiencing migration to have problems in adapting to the home and school environment (Eroğlu, 2020). It is possible to clearly see both the physical and social effects of the chaotic environments in which wars and conflicts occur on children. However, it has been observed that children who are directly exposed to the negative effects of war, witness conflicts in wars or are in chaos, complain of psychological problems such as severe fear or helplessness. The basis of these fears can be based on things like repetition of events, fear of being injured or killed, being alone and helpless, being punished for their mistakes or blaming themselves. Similar fears may occur in children who have not experienced the events such as war and conflict, and who have not been in that environment, and who have seen the news of conflict and war through media organs such as radio and television, because they receive the message that the world is an unsafe and damaging place (Erden & Gürdil, 2009, cited in Eroğlu, 2020). In the light of this information, it can be concluded that the war affected the most innocent people deeply.

Psychodrama is a treatment method that directs individuals to revive their various problems instead of talking about them (Blatner, 2002). In psychodrama sessions with animation techniques, it is aimed to provide purification (catharsis) and gain insight, test reality and develop logical thoughts, and create learning and behavior change (Dökmen, 2005). Psychodrama, a contemporary method of mental therapy, was developed by the Viennese physician J. L. Moreno and takes its origins from an existentialist psychodrama found in traditional Austrian culture: *"Two people meet; eye to eye, face to face; When they get close, I will take off your eyes and put them on myself, you will take off my eyes and put them on yourself. Thus, you will look at me with my eyes and I will look at you with your eyes"* (Geçtan, 1976).

Research suggests that psychodramatic therapy may lead to an increased sense of competence and self-efficacy. It may contribute to a better understanding and resolution of trauma (Carbonell & Partelano-Barehmi, 1999). According to Geçtan (1976), psychodrama consists of the following elements: (1) Protagonist (The person whose mental problems are taken as the subject or the main actor), (2) Director (Therapist), (3) Auxiliary egos (group members chosen to portray people who have a place in the life of the protagonist and in the formation of his mental problems), (4) Attendance (Treatment group), (5) Stage or an area used for this purpose. Psychodrama has two main orientations:

- 1- Psychodrama that centers the protagonist: In this type, which is applied for the purpose of spiritual treatment, a personal problem of one of the group members is played on the stage.
- 2- Group-centered psychodrama: The subject chosen in this type of practice is a common problem of the group. More schools, factories, etc. applied in places.

Another benefit is that psychodrama has a wide variety of applications. It is adaptable depending on the individual's needs and situation. In addition to being used to help individuals, it has also been utilized in a variety of settings including business, teaching, management, training, and religion (Pramann, 2016). According to Moreno (1958), the concept of psychodrama has four basic theories:

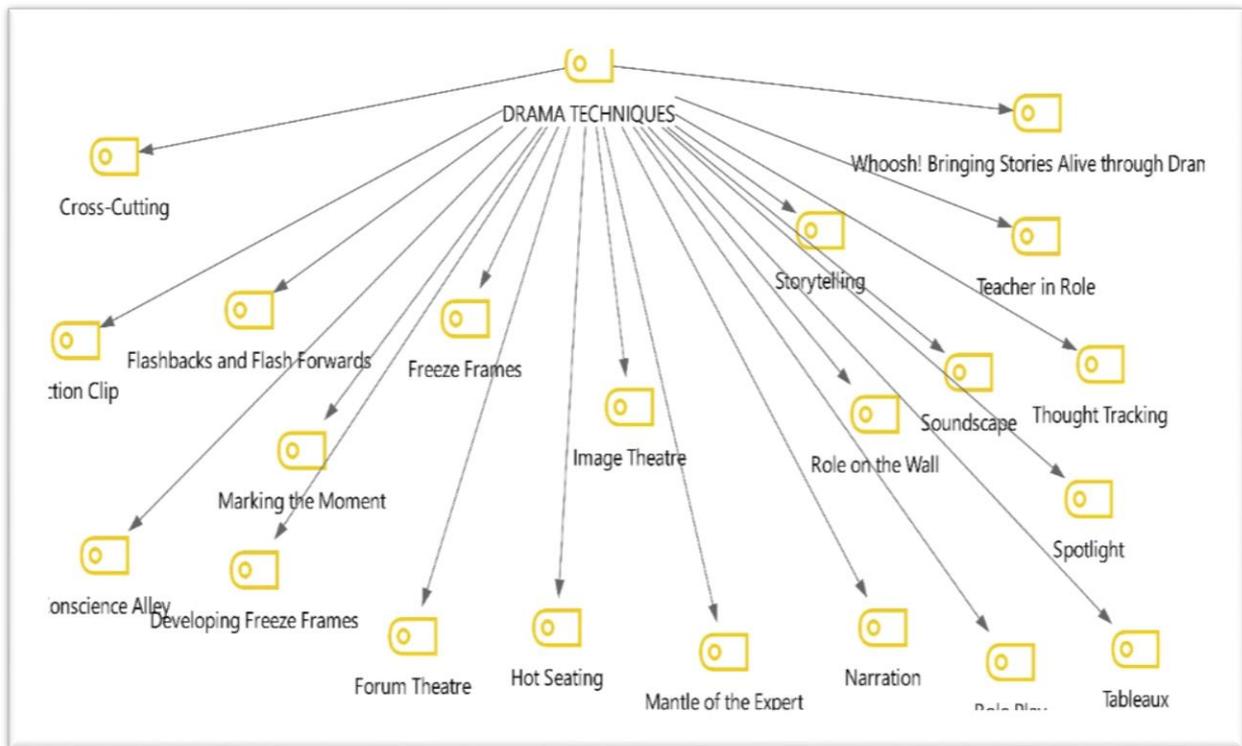
- 1- The production that occurs during the session is the only basis of perception for observation and treatment.
- 2- The psychodramatic process focuses on the present rather than the past.
- 3- Free association gives way to free behavior and interaction, which includes free association with words.
- 4- In classical psychoanalysis, the area of behavior restricted to the sofa or armchair is replaced by the social space. A bare room or stage is used for this purpose.

Psychodrama is based on Moreno's theoretical view based on the concepts of spontaneity, action and creativity (Kaner, 2019). According to Moreno (1977), spontaneity is a force that prepares a person for action in a satisfying way to a new situation. Man is an action-oriented entrepreneurial being. Action is a natural consequence of spontaneity. Where there is spontaneity and action, we can speak of creativity. Psychodrama tries to eliminate

the disruptions in creativity by activating spontaneity through warming in cases where spontaneity and creativity are blocked in people. It helps the individual to establish meaningful relationships with himself and others, enabling him to come from a static, frozen state to an open, active and dynamic state (Kaner, 2019).

After the emergence of psychodrama, many techniques have developed (Figure 1). Some of those: (1) The technique of speaking to an empty chair. (2) *Self-talk technique*: The protagonist expresses his problems by singing a monologue alone in front of the audience, (3) *Self-promotion technique*: The protagonist single-handedly portrays himself, his family members, and all other important people in his life. (4) *Binary Technique*: The protagonist tells his problems; a helper ego enacts what is told on stage. (5) *Technique for self-actualization*: The protagonist enlivens his plans for the future in the presence of auxiliary elements. (6) *Mirror Technique*: The protagonist sits in the audience, a co-ego enacting his problems on stage. (7) *Dream technique*: Instead of verbalizing a dream, the protagonist plays it on stage. First, he lies down, looks like he has fallen asleep for a while, then gets up and starts playing his dream on the stage. (8) *World technique with assistants*: The protagonist enacts his own world on the stage, accompanied by auxiliary egos (Geçtan 1976).

Figure 1. Drama Techniques



Source: Figure 1 illustrates all drama techniques.

Today, psychodrama has become a method used by researchers in many fields. It can be thought that the phenomenon of war is an area that can be studied with psychodrama methods, and that the dramatic and traumatic situations caused by war on individuals are portrayed on stage with psychodrama methods, and it can be applied to reveal the psychological attitude of the individual, to express himself and to adapt to the society.

METHOD

Research Model

This study was designed as qualitative research. Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. Qualitative research is the opposite of quantitative research, which involves collecting and analyzing numerical data for statistical analysis.

Qualitative research is commonly used in the humanities and social sciences, in subjects such as anthropology, sociology, education, health sciences, history, etc. (Bhandari, 2022).

Participants

Eight university students, four women and four men, who came to Turkey with immigration from Syria, took part in this study. Eight psychodrama sessions were held with the participants.

RESULTS

Eight psychodrama sessions were held with the participants. The evaluation phase of each session was recorded with the permission of the participants. Recorded conversations were transcribed. In total, fifteen pages of twelve font size were obtained with times new roman font as a word file. Six thousand one hundred and seventy-two words were obtained by removing the repetitions.

Figure 2. Themes, Categories and Codes

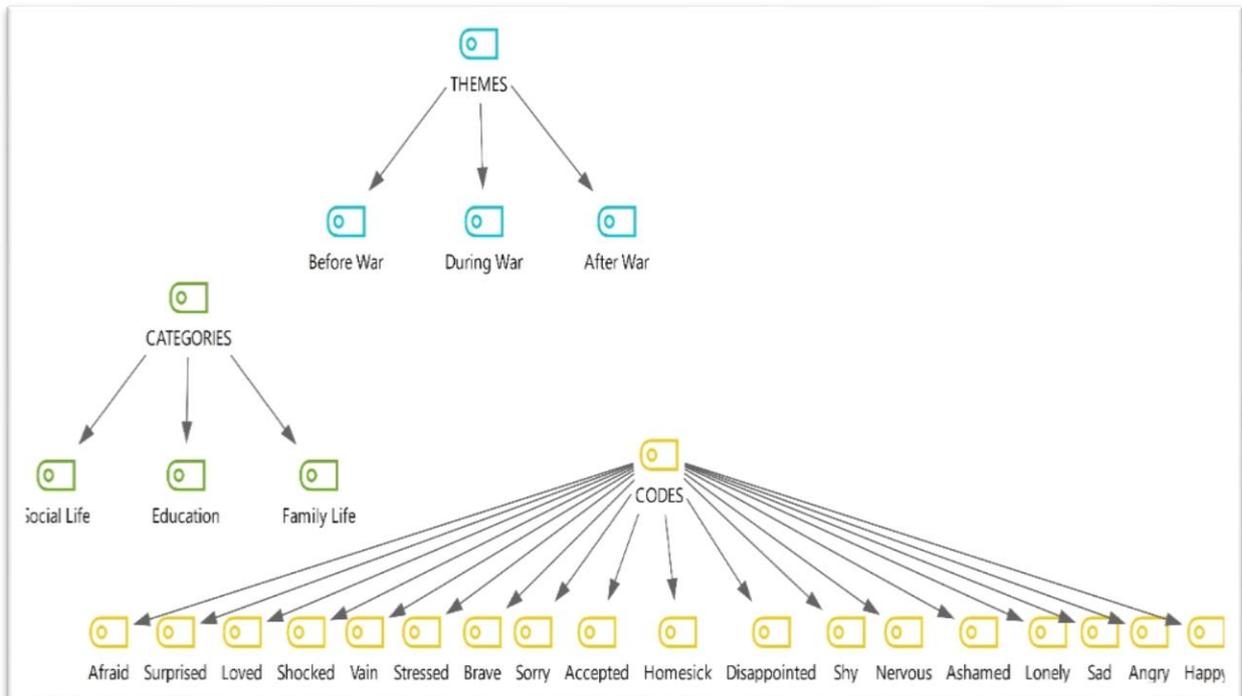


Figure 2 illustrates themes, categories, and codes of this study. The written text was carefully read by three experts. Experts determined the themes, categories and codes. The agreement among experts is eighty-two percent. As a result, three main themes were determined as pre-war, during the war and post-war. Three categories were created under each theme: social life, education life and family life. By looking at figure two, it can be seen that each category is included in a mixed code group.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

War is an undesirable event where people die, are injured, leave their homes and experience very difficult situations. The benefits of psychodrama, then, go beyond merely solving the problem at hand: they develop skills in mental flexibility and social interactivity. Psychodrama is an interaction that helps alleviate the pain of war.

Mankind has been fighting since the day it appeared on the stage of history. People fight each other for food, land, and prestige. However, there is no winner in the war, and it leaves behind death, injury, loss, and destruction. War is an armed conflict between nations, governments, society, or paramilitary organizations such as mercenaries, rebels, and militias. Extreme violence, aggression, damage, and death are common features and are carried out by conventional or irregular military units. War refers to behaviors and characteristics common

to different types of warfare or wars in general. Total war is defined as conflict that is not limited to legitimate military objectives and can result in significant civilian and non-combatant suffering and casualties. Some war researchers believe that war is a universal and ancestral component of human nature, while others believe that war is the result of specific socio-cultural, economic, or ecological conditions.

Psychodrama is a method invented by Jacob Levy Moreno. Basically, psychodrama uses the therapeutic power of theatre. Psyche means "essence" (or "spirit"), it means "of" and drama means "event". As a result, it can be taken literally as "soul drama" or more simply and truly as "what happens to a person in relation to the surrounding environment". It is a sociometric (interpersonal) strategy that requires a relationship between the self and the mundane world of people, objects, and animals. Psychodrama can be used to explore a topic, celebrate something, or embark on a journey of discovery. It is not about finding a solution to a problem or discovering the truth.

Moreno (2022) asks a question: "Who shall survive?" He also answers people who are spontaneous and creative are the winners of this struggle. Psychodrama provides an environment that gives both psychological and physical confidence to its participants. A bullet or bomb, from where it was fired, can mean human life at any time. Those who endure the negative pain of war can express themselves through psychodrama. The benefits of dramatherapy and psychodrama as follows: social, relief from tension, insight and integration, rehearsing a future, distance and empowerment, prevention of suicide and self-harm (Casson, 2004). While clinicians are often riveted by psychodrama and sociometry and recognize its benefits, they don't feel sufficiently trained in the method and are appropriately concerned about using it (Dayton, 2005). The benefits of psychodrama, then, go beyond merely solving the problem at hand: they develop skills in mental flexibility and social interactivity and also self-expression (Blatner, 2000). This study generally focused on psychodrama during the war. Other studies are recommended on how psychodrama during the war affects the participant.

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