

Psychodrama in the 21st Century

Clinical and Educational Applications - edited by Jacob Gershoni

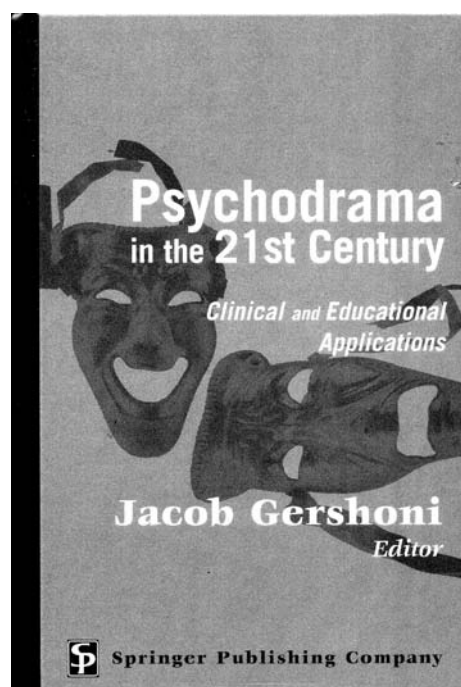
Reviewed by Kate Hill

At last a book that gives psychodrama its rightful place in the world of psychotherapy, education and the arts. It concretises the way that elements of psychodrama, such as role playing, have become mainstream and illustrates the efficacy of these techniques in training a wide spectrum of professionals. In the forward Robert Siroka points out that *"Moreno's original ideas - directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously - influenced the contemporary psychotherapeutic scene"*.

The book consists of three parts: Psychodrama and Other Methods; Applications with Various Groups; and Applications in Training and Consultation. The book can be picked up and read chapter by chapter and is a great reference for specific areas of interest.

In Part 1, the triad approach is emphasised in many of the chapters. This approach sees sociometry, psychodrama and group psychotherapy as three interdependent aspects in a triadic theoretical system. Louise Lipman gives a very readable chapter focusing on sociometry through the process of the psychodrama session. This would be useful for trainees who wonder where sociometry fits into the larger picture.

Sandra Garfield demonstrates the integration of psychodrama and psychoanalysis bringing



new literature to the realm of psychodrama from the French school. Back in the late 1980's I attended the AGPP conference where Sandra ran a wonderful session combining the two schools using video to process the sessions. It was great to see the theoretical background to this session two decades later. I recall thinking at that time how many psychodramatists had trained in other areas and then were in the process of integrating the two. Rumour had it that after Moreno's death his students were free to use the method in a variety of ways. This book demonstrates their work: Chris

Farmer with family therapy and psychodrama, Jean Peterson with art therapy and psychodrama and Mary Anne Carswell and Kristi Magraw with 'The Body Talks'. This book fills the gap in placing psychodrama in the mainstream.

Part 2 demonstrates the application of psychodrama to specific areas including children, adolescents, couples, gay communities, veterans and trauma. Tian Dayton gives great explanation of the use of the social atom in the healing process of women with addictions. Many exercises are included which demonstrates the application of the theory to practice. Adam Blatner's passion for making psychodrama an everyday tool is illustrated in his chapter. These chapters are a valuable resource for practitioners and include case studies, exercises and outcomes.

In Part 3, the application of psychodrama to experiential education, legal and medical training brings hope to Moreno's words that "we cannot have less of a vision that the whole of mankind".

This book takes you on a journey to all areas of personal and professional development using the psychodramatic method and giving it a place in the theoretical dissertations of psychoanalysis, art therapy, education, and working with specific populations. It is also valuable in bringing a new perspective on Moreno's theory. While many psychodramatists balk at reading the theory, possibly because of Moreno's style of writing, this book enables the reader to browse, take in, review and integrate his theory. Each time I read another psychodramatist's interpretation of Morenian theory I re-evaluate my own interpretation.

This book certainly lives up to its title - Psychodrama in the 21st century. I'd encourage both practitioners and trainees to get this book and read and reread it and then discuss it. It is a good step forward for psychodrama at a time when we are wondering about its relevance.

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