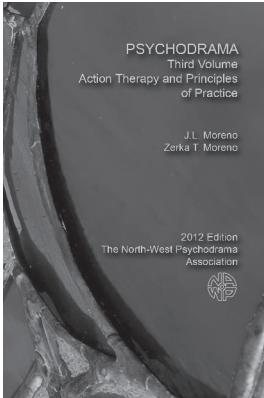




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Psychodrama Third Volume: Action Therapy and Principles of Practice (2012 Edition)

By J.L Moreno and Zerka T. Moreno

Published by The North West Psychodrama Association, UK

Reviewed by Elizabeth Synnot

Psychodrama Third Volume: Action Therapy and Principles of Practice was originally published by Beacon House in 1969, with a second edition offered in 1975. This third edition, known as the 2012 edition and edited by Zoli Figusch, is one in a series of new editions of J.L. Moreno's and Zerka T. Moreno's work published by the North West Psychodrama Association and available through Lulu Press <www.lulu.com>.

This is a book about the application of the psychodrama method. Reading the volume from cover to cover, I am struck by the versatility of psychodrama methodology. The psychodrama enactments presented in the volume are tailored to the immediate participants and their purposes in their particular contexts. I delight in Moreno's seminal contributions of joy and laughter, movement and action, the nonverbal route to the psyche and his orientation to enable a creative revolution. On a practical note, the rules and adjunctive methods outlined towards the end of the book provide a useful and reassuring overview of critical principles for applications of psychodrama across contexts. That said, I find some sections to be a challenging read, particularly the long verbatim records of specific psychodrama enactments. Although critical to enabling the reader to formulate their own views before reading Moreno's analysis, the long unfolding of the spoken words in sessions was taxing for me as a reader. What follows is a brief outline of, and reflections on, each chapter.

Chapter One describes the therapeutic use of the psychodrama stage and presents four key universal concepts: time, space, reality and the cosmos. The step onto the stage and the creation of a new living moment,

here and now as time and space are transcended, are extraordinary phenomena. I have not found elsewhere any concept of surplus reality akin to Moreno's. He emphasises encounter with the real self through the production of surplus reality on the psychodrama stage.

Chapter Two presents psychodramas of childhood and adolescence. Moreno describes and analyses a group in a Well-Baby clinic, applying the method in-situ without the use of a stage. As the mothers sit in a circle with their babies on their laps, he doubles both groups to great effect. Those practitioners whose field of practice is similarly in-situ will readily relate to this example. The drama with an adolescent begins with an interview where the protagonist paints a picture of his life, his vision, his values, his sociometry and his dilemmas. Three enactments are presented, in a court of law, with the parents and waking up from a dream, with each description followed by analysis, commentary and fulsome discussions. Moreno thus shows the life of this troubled protagonist within the social institutions that he is required to face.

Chapter Three relates to pre-marital and marital psychodramas, weaving together descriptions of the dramas with discussions and education of the audience, as well as Moreno's own analysis. The description of a psychodrama of a marriage follows. The benefit of reading this long dialogue is to be able to enter Moreno's discussion and analysis as it relates to this situation. In a closing comment, Moreno offers his view regarding the ethics of an ideal drama, where the actual names of people and places are provided. Such identification of individuals is ethically contentious today, even in professional supervision.

In Chapter Four, *Psychodrama of Psychiatric Disorders*, Moreno opines that people are divided from early childhood on by the dimensions of reality and fantasy (p.165). One key requirement of spontaneity is to readily move between fantasy and reality. In my work as a family therapist, I have found this to be a difficulty for many who have a psychiatric diagnosis. Moreno introduces the concept of psychosis through the case of Mary, who suffers paranoia. He identifies four psychodramatic procedures that can be used in such cases, always keeping the protagonist in mind: treating a single individual, having the protagonist as a spectator in the audience, multiple protagonists in the audience treated at the same time, and multiple protagonists seeing a filmed psychodrama. He describes Mary as having "always lived along two tracks of experience, but the world of imagination prevailed and pushed the world of actual events into the background. ... But these imagined persons did not respond to her, they had no spontaneity like real people. ... One of the genuine functions of an auxiliary ego (is) to free a subject from that extreme form of isolation – hallucination" (pp.170-172). Moreno conceives his treatment of Mary in three phases: realisation, replacement and clarification. Presenting rich pictures of the phases as they

unfold and the psychodrama techniques as they apply, he concludes that in psychodrama the therapeutic aim is to have the protagonist 'create the delusions at will'. He relates primarily to Mary's private world of fantasy and, eschewing psychological laws, he relies on the production of Mary's spontaneity. He highlights the way in which psychodramatic procedures are not restricted to the verbal. Psychodrama is in action. Finally, a motion picture is presented as an exit test from hospital, revealing the patient's readiness to return to the community, the family, work and public spaces. This is televised on a close circuit system in the hospital for other patients, staff and visitors to experience.

Chapter Five consists of an overview of psychodrama rules, techniques and adjunctive methods. I find it reassuring to consider each item from the perspective of my own practice and, in doing so, have my practice validated. The chapter also includes Zerka Moreno's outline of the influence of J.L. Moreno's seminal contributions on the generations that came after him. He 'stuck to his guns' in the face of opposition and misunderstanding regarding the use of auxiliaries and non-verbal movement in the treatment of patients. Indeed, Moreno specifically highlights the importance of the non-verbal and bodily contact through his presentation of the treatment of Richard, a mute catatonic male at the Beacon hospital. The auxiliary assigned to Richard was an athletic male and after a time, twice weekly wrestling and boxing bouts were scheduled in the psychodrama theatre. The stage became a ring, and patients, students and staff attended as the audience. The auxiliary countered every one of Richard's blows and matched his strength. After six months of this non-verbal body contact approach, Richard joined the psychodrama group with other patients. He was discharged into the community after fourteen months and achieved a fair recovery as a taciturn member of society. Moreno also maintains that work with early sexual trauma may require somatic enactments where there is close physical contact between the protagonist and the auxiliary. This physical contact approach is controversial in many quarters today.

Moreno's cardinal guide in treatment is seminal, the replacement of negativism and depression with gaiety and joy. He is known as the man who brought joy and laughter into psychiatry. His methodology and vision remain hauntingly relevant in today's world, as we confront global, social and existential challenges. In Chapter Six, *The Future of Man's World*, he concludes: "Mankind may need still more serious setbacks before it comes to its "creative revolution." Perhaps it is unavoidable that the present human civilization be destroyed, that mankind be reduced to a handful of individuals and human society to a few scattered social atoms before a new rooting can begin. ... The future of man depends upon counter weapons developed by sociometry and sociatry" (p.243). *Psychodrama Third Volume* concludes with a glossary and bibliography of original publication dates.

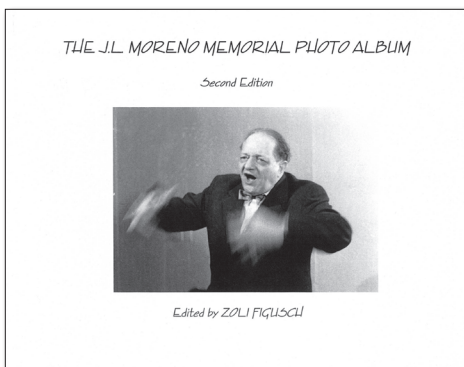
Psychodrama Third Volume is available in print and e-book versions.

Print: <<http://www.lulu.com/shop/jacob-l-moreno-and-zerka-t-moreno/psychodrama-third-volume/paperback/product-20677170.html>>

E-book: <<http://www.lulu.com/shop/jacob-l-moreno/psychodrama-third-volume/ebook/product-20836354.html>>



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The J.L. Moreno Memorial Photo Album (2014)

Edited by Zoli Figusch

Published by the North West Psychodrama Association, UK

Reviewed by Penny Beran

The front cover image of *The J.L. Moreno Memorial Photo Album* is dynamic. There is JL, hands in a

blur, eye gaze steady, mouth open as if using the voice of command as an assured producer. Published in 2014 in the 125th year since J.L. Moreno's birth, this book complements other biographical publications of JL and psychodrama. The author, Zoli Figusch, provides a succinct summary of his *raison d'être* on the back cover, noting that the album is the result of his passion for psychodrama and his more recently found interest in book and photo editing. He aims to capture some of the key moments of Moreno's life, work and legacy through a pictorial narrative interspersed with reminiscences and testimonies. What he has produced is a 50-page landscape format photo narrative with captions, in a loosely chronological sequence beginning with JL's parents. The photos are interspersed with written contributions, ranging in length from 300 to 1,500 words, drawn from JL's