

Review

Moreno Movies

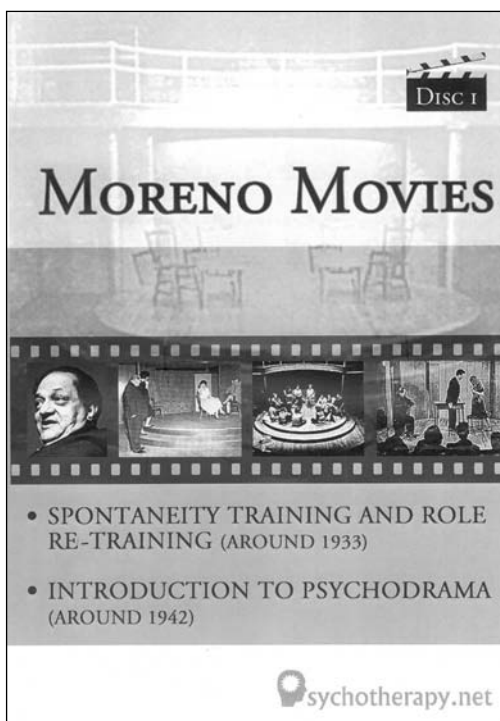
4 DVD Set,
Produced by René Marineau, 2003,
published by <psychotherapy.net>, USA.

Reviewed by Diz Synnot

Viewers of the Moreno Movies will gain a fresh perspective of the early development of the psychodrama of dreams, couple work, psychodrama in a mental institution, future projections, role training, assessments and audience warm-up and sharing.

These movies show JL Moreno in action, and, as part of his ambition to progress society, are an experiment in mass communication to show group processes. There are four discs of movies, running between 54 and 101 minutes per disc, produced by René Marineau. They form a set when viewed historically, covering 1933 to 1964. However, when used to show, for instance, working with couples, they are best viewed separately. The dramas are directed by Moreno, the founder of sociometry, group therapy and psychodrama. These movies show historical material of great value in their own right. On this basis alone I commend their viewing to psychodrama practitioners, trainers and advanced trainees. Like me, you may find yourself distracted at times by comparisons with present-day movie production processes and become irritated by too much commentary.

The movies will prompt trainers and students to reflect on the development of psychodrama methods and concepts over the years and on your own journey of discovery and development. For instance I realized I have become overly utilitarian in my approach to mirroring by focusing on the use of mirroring to expand self-awareness and integration of new identity. When I warm up to Moreno's



'mirroring the psyche' I relax and open out to a myriad of other possibilities.

In Disc 1, 'Spontaneity Training and Role Re-Training and Introduction to Psychodrama', Moreno makes an analysis of transference and spontaneity training. He also provides a lecture/demonstration of doubling and role reversal and working with people with a mental illness. Moreno presents his five instruments used in the therapeutic theatre, viz., the stage, the protagonist, the director, auxiliary egos and

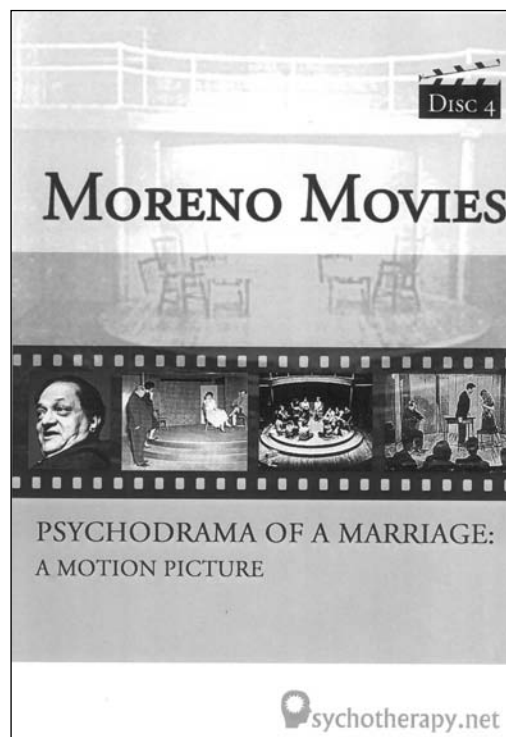
the audience. I was stimulated and reflected on my practice and understanding of his method.

In Disc 2, 'Psychodrama of a Marriage', we see these processes enacted dramatically on the stage. This movie is based on an actual couple treated by Moreno in 1939 in the Therapeutic Theater of Beacon. Here Moreno's style of stimulating spontaneity in the audience and protagonists alike, of audience sharing and of the integrative phase of a psychodrama are on display.

In Discs 3 and 4 Moreno presents his wisdom and assessment of the sessions to camera and to the audience and protagonists. Disc 3, 'Psychodrama In Action', shows Moreno at work in a mental hospital in California focusing on the question "Are these patients ready to be discharged?" Disc 4, 'Psychodrama of a Marriage: A Motion Picture', was shot in Paris during the First International Congress of Psychodrama in 1964. In these two later discs I am struck with Moreno's intention to have the director be on an equal footing with the protagonist and audience and, for his directing to be congruent to this end. Moreno's sometimes brusque manner, which could be judged harshly today, did not appear to bother the protagonists.

Judicious use of these movies, with attention to the viewers' warm-up, is recommended with inexperienced trainees and experiential psychodrama groups. Moreno intended these movies to be a catalyst for exploring issues that are personal and sociological. In particular, René Marineau, the DVD producer and commentator, advises that the 'Psychodrama of a Marriage' in Disc 2 has been used with a range of different audiences and creates a strong and differing warm-up in viewers, depending on with whom they identify.

These movies introduce us to the some of the concerns of adolescence, fidelity and commitment in marriage and mental illness. René Marineau's commentary shapes our warm-up. He draws our attention to the efficacy



and dilemmas when the director has similar unresolved issues to the protagonist. He also asks us to consider the objective of psychodrama in marital conflicts and the ethics of open and public sessions. Marineau's leader-led warm-up went against my own open curiosity. It was not timely for me to focus on the particular dilemmas Marineau raises. Fortunately, these movies do stand alone and such commentary can readily be omitted depending on the purpose and composition of the gathering. •

Moreno Movies, set of 4 DVDs, produced by René Marineau, in collaboration with Marie Louise Morieau from original film reels, was published in 2003 by <psychotherapy.net>, USA.

