

Section 3: Film Reviews

Film Review

***Psychodrama: A Cinematic History.* By Kelley Brower (Director) and Robert Siroka (Executive Producer), 2018.**

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Psychodrama: A Cinematic History is an engaging and delightful film produced by Robert Siroka, the director of the Sociometric Institute in New York. It is a wonderful introduction to the richness and power of the psychodrama, group psychotherapy, and sociometry along with some history and therapeutic applications.

In less than an hour, the narrator defines and describes psychodrama, group therapy, sociometry, and sociodrama along with gently touching on some of J. L. Moreno's basic theories of personality, spirituality, and spontaneity. Also, the use of video clips and commentary on Moreno's development of sociometry at the Hudson School for Girls along with how his ideas inspired the encounter groups of the 1960s and '70s. There are several illustrations of psychodrama and sociodrama that are succinct clinically, capturing the power of the empty chair, role reversal and doubling in therapeutic settings. Furthermore, the narrator focuses attention on the here-and-now concept, a most recognizable expression in psychodramatic therapy, emphasizing how sharing raw, honest thoughts and feelings about what's happening in the moment is innate to action therapy.

Although brief, one can see how utilizing action methods addresses issues that came to a head during a time of social upheaval in the late '60s and early '70s. In addition, there are several examples highlighting how psychodrama, group encounter, and sociodrama were used to address racism and oppression, including what seems like a carefully conducted encounter group directed by Zerka Moreno and Bob and Jackie Siroka.

There are also clips from the documentary *The Company of Men*, whereby sociodramatic methods, especially role reversal, are used to address conflict between the white management and the black workers in the General Motors plant.

It is interesting to note that animated demonstrations are used to show how sociometry and role playing can be effective with groups of intellectually disabled clients via animation. Last, a death and dying scene is demonstrated, applying sociodramatic role reversal (stepping or assuming the role of another), in this case

in the enactment between a dying patient and their spouse with the therapist assuming the role of the wife.

In closing, there are short interviews with some of the United States' most respected psychodramatists, including Bob and Jackie Siroka, Nina Garcia, Jaye Moyer, Dan Tomasulo, Nan Neily Sief, and Jacob Gershoni, all of whom are trainers or were trained at the Sociometric Institute in New York. It also includes commentary by Jonathan Moreno speaking about some of the history and Andrea Sooch, who is a drama therapist.

In summary, one may view this project as an introduction to psychodrama, sociometry, and sociodrama for university students, professional trainings, and conferences and as a reminder to those of us in the field of what it is we love about our method.