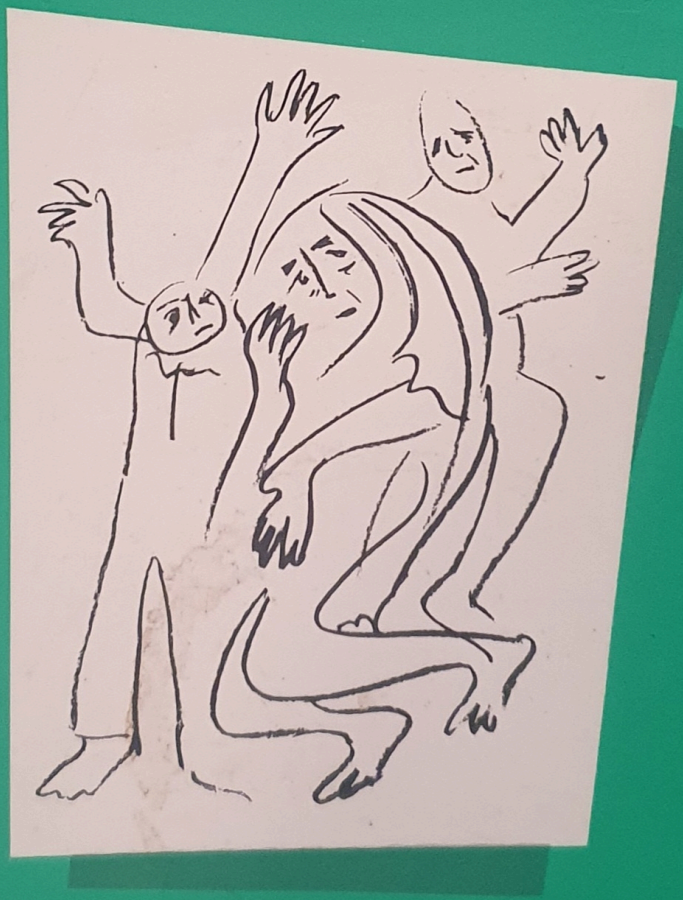
THE PASSIONATE TECHNIQUE

STRATEGIC PSYCHODRAMA WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND GROUPS



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Chapter one

Basic technique

Off the rails

Portia, a flamboyant, attractive, and overweight woman of 30, complains in the group that 'against all reason' she has given up the healthy life style that she had begun in the previous year. Now, she says, she uses cigarettes in the morning to 'kick-start the lungs. She claims she drinks too much, eats too much junk food, and smokes too much dope. Somewhere or other, she went 'off the rails', as she put it.

Don, the director, asks Portia to construct some 'rails'. Portia chooses four people from the group, who lie on the floor in two parallel lines. Portia then stands between the lines and Don asks her when it was that she went 'off the rails'. After some consideration, Portia replies that it was in August. Don asks her what was happening in August. At first Portia cannot remember. Then she recalls that a friend, Lucy, had applied for a job in her organization, and had been very angry when she missed out.

Don tells Portia to 'go off the rails'. She falls over to one side, and hides under a chair; objects representing food, drink, cigarettes, and drugs are supplied to her. She consumes them all, becoming distressed. The more distressed she is, the more rapidly and desperately she smokes, eats, and drinks. Don asks her whether she has been in this state before. Portia replies that it reminds her of a time when she was aged about 3, crouching behind the bathroom door eating bread while her parents were arguing in the kitchen.

The kitchen and bathroom scenes are established, and Portia chooses people from the group to play the roles of father and mother. Portia's parents are having a furious, hysterical argument. Her mother accuses her father of being 'no good' and repeatedly screams at him, 'I don't want to live any more.' Her father rages around impotently and says that he can't understand anything that is happening, that he is totally confused. Portia crouches behind the bathroom door stuffing bread into her mouth. She says she feels 'bad'. She begins to cry uncontrollably.

Her helplessness is apparent. In an aside to Don, she says that she is 'stuck'. Don asks her whether anyone could help her. She replies, 'There is no-one.' He asks her to choose someone from the group to act as herself viewing this scene. Portia steps outside the drama and witnesses Portia as a little girl in this stressful and overwhelming context. Soon this new role as witness is too passive for her. She becomes an indignant protector of the little girl, and calls out to the parents to stop. She insists that they pay attention to their daughter and stop hurting each other.

Don asks Portia to become in turn her mother and her father. In these roles, they are first outraged at this new, intrusive person's interference, and then they resume their fighting, ignoring any interruption. Back in role as herself at 3 years old, and with the help and loving encouragement of her protector. Portia grapples with them physically, and after a long struggle and much shouting, rolls them both out the door. She is triumphant, but also very sad. Don has the parents re-enter the scene, and Portia, weeping, tells her mother how she wished the latter had been more 'present to her, and how her mother's depression and 'terrible marriage' got in the way of their ever being close.

Don then returns Portia to the first scene with the friend, Lucy, and reestablishes the four group members as 'rails'. Portia stands between the rails once more. Lucy fumes at her for causing her to miss out on the job. At first Portia begins to wheedle and explain, but after encouragement from her 'indignant protector', who is still watching over her, she exclaims: 'I'm not guilty, I'm not guilty. I might have managed things a little better, but I'm not guilty.' With authority and grace, she goes over to each of her parents, and says, 'I'm not guilty. I didn't cause you, or your hatred, or your messes. I'm not guilty.'

The drama ends with her standing between the rails once more as she embraces her 'witness' who turned into her protector. They promise not to be parted, and declare their mutual need and affection for each other. She pauses for a moment, still connected to the tissue of the past, but free of it. She then thanks the group members who have played various roles, and sits down with Don.

For the next 20 minutes or so, the group tell of the memories, emotions, and thoughts they had about their own lives while Portia was enacting her drama. The entire session, including the 'sharing' at the end, lasts about 90 minutes.

Since action is the essence of psychodrama, it is tempting simply to present the dramas here, one after the other, and allow you to judge them for yourself. After all, they are stories in their own right, chaste and compact, in some ways beyond explanation and analysis. They are human

documents with their own imaginative resonance, their own speech forms, and their own value as aesthetic products. They have created a moral and emotional atmosphere of a place and a time, and endowed events with their true meaning. They are an expression of human passion.

Honestly enacted psychodramas speak to our capacity for wonder and delight, to the sense of mystery and awe in our lives, arousing our sense of pity, beauty, pain, and fellowship with all creation. They can awaken a sense of solidarity, as Conrad (1914, 1974) says in another context, 'that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts, to the solidarity in dreams, in joy, in sorrow, in aspirations, in illusions, in hope, in fear, which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity - the dead to the living and the living to the unborn'. I will call this usage of psychodrama 'psychodrama as revelation'.

Let us now begin with some terms and descriptions: psychodrama is a process where someone acts out personally relevant situations in a group setting. These situations might be distressful, in which case the person will try to alter them, or they might be satisfactory, in which case the drama simply celebrates them. Psychodramas are not solely concerned with anger, pain, or the 'darker' emotions, but can be for the simple purposes of illustration or enhancement. Most psychodramas, like Portia's, contain an affirmation beyond their tragic narrative simply from setting out the narrative itself before others who share one's basic humanity. Psychodramas that are true-to-being present on stage our efforts to live with our own human strangeness.

These first two chapters are intended as 'primers' for the seriously curious about psychodrama's basic processes. Subsequent chapters are more speculative and concern the mutual influence that systems therapies and psychodramatic practice might be made to have on each other. For fuller accounts of the basic process, excellent introductions have been provided by Blatner (1973), Fine (1978), Goldman and Morrison (1984), Kahn Leveton (1977), Starr (1977), and of course Moreno himself in his three simply called Psychodrama (vol. I, 1946, 1964, 1972; vol. II, 1959, and vol. III, 1969). Bischof (1970) has provided an 'approved' account of Moreno's personality theory, and Hare (1986) has elaborated his contribution to social psychology.

The language of psychodrama

Psychodramas are like partisan plays: with apparent naturalism, they chronicle people's lives, deaths, loves, their hatred and suppression, their transcendence, their couplings and uncouplings. The other group members, the audience, discern in the psychodramatic narrative an echo of themselves. The plays are not finished products, like plays in a theatre, but poetic, dramatic works evolving on stage before the audience's eyes. They watch its process of development, step by step, from its beginnings to the moment of catharsis and integration. In Aristotelian drama, the 'catharsis' (the exercise of fear and pity that liberated one from those very emotions) took place in the audience. In psychodrama, the place of catharsis moves from spectator to the stage, to the actors themselves. Rare is the psychodrama, however, where the audience is not moved as well; the catharsis becomes total, involving actors and audience.

People who act out the situations, protagonists, express their phenomenal world outwardly in scenes, just as in a play. 'Protagonist' was the title of the chief actor in Greek tragedy: 'Protagonist' means man in a frenzy, a madman. A theater for psychodrama is thus a 'theater of the madman, an audience of madmen looks at one of them, living out his life on stage' (Moreno, 1964, p. 12). A scene is a term used to indicate a time and place that is being presented in a session. A scene may be elaborately constructed, or can be a mere fragment suggesting a real or imaginary time and space. The scene helps the person warm-up to that time and place.

A passage from the diary of Cocteau, the French playwright, illustrates the link between a scene and a warm-up: finding himself in his childhood neighbourhood, Cocteau tries to recapture lost memories of walking along a wall and tracing his finger along it, as he did as a child. The memories are few and lifeless. He is disappointed. Then suddenly, he remembers that as a child he had trailed his finger along the wall at a different level, over different stones. Cocteau bends down, closes his eyes, and trails his finger over the wall. He writes:

> Just as the needle picks up the melody from the record, I obtained a melody of the past with my hand. I found everything; my cape, the leather satchel, the names of my friends and of my teachers, certain expressions I had used, the sound of my grandfather's voice, the smell of his beard, the smell of my sister's dresses and of my mother's gown. (Cited in Van den Berg, 1975, p. 212)

A child has a different perspective from that of the adult, as Cocteau found. By re-expressing the event that gave rise to that perspective, the experience can be re-evaluated in terms of the adult world. At the wall Cocteau is simultaneously child and adult. Like Cocteau, protagonists fit into the groove of the past as in a record, they 'pick up the melody of the past'. Ultimately they re-evaluate it in terms of the present, usually by having altered that melody in the enacted scene from the past, as Portia did in her kitchen and, as we shall see, so many protagonists do. After these first two introductory chapters, some nonstandard ways of altering that melody will be suggested.

The first scene of a drama usually takes place in the present, and around the presenting problem. Portia's first scene was in fact an imaginary one derived from acting out her metaphor of 'going off the rails'. A first scene usually contains insufficient information for an understanding of the difficulty, and subsequent scenes, sometimes as many as four, take the action first to other parts of the person's life, and then, perhaps, into the recent or distant past. In Portia's drama, the second scene occurred with Lucy, and was only briefly enacted, while the third scene took place in the family kitchen when Portia was aged about 3.

The scenes are enacted on a 'stage', which may be a formal raised platform, but is more usually a section of the room cleared for that purpose. The protagonist's physical world is expressed outwardly by means of chairs to represent objects doorways, benches, walls, beds, TV sets, stoves (a surprising number of psychodramas are enacted in people's kitchens), sofas or dining tables. The props in psychodrama are thus very simple - usually half a dozen chairs or so. Group members, called auxiliaries, represent relevant persons, whether these be relatives, spouses, friends, teachers, bosses, or even parts of the self. An 'auxiliary' is the term for anyone besides the director and the protagonist who takes part in a drama. In keeping with the dramaturgical nature of the process, the therapist or group leader is called a director. Auxiliaries assist the director in producing a full experience and satisfactory resolution of whatever is dramatized by the protagonist.

One of the scenes may be from early childhood, where the origins of the primary feelings and indeed of the presenting problem itself is thought to lie. The aim of the presentation is not so much analysis as a deeply felt reliving of the relevant experiences. In the core scene, the director may encourage protagonists to give full expression to their experience, which could be one of rage, intolerable grief, or a wonderful unity with another person. The emotional events of the drama are experienced, rather than

merely talked about. At the level of passion, a psychodrama needs only to reach the secret springs of human emotions; these secret springs are often difficult to tap, but when protagonists do find them, their qualities of freshness and purity are quite evident. Although the experience of 'the abyss' might have been very painful, protagonists after a drama usually exhibit a lovely calm, shown even by physical changes in their face and body. They seem to have snatched back a fragment of life, and it shows. It is difficult to doubt the veracity of the change, at least at the time, and audience members are usually intensely involved with and moved by the protagonist. The experience seems to carry its own authentication, sealed by the evocative nature of the images and language.

The powerful synthesis of sensory and perceptual information helps form new meanings and organizes experience in new ways. According to psychodramatic theory, the change has come because protagonists have at last enacted roles that are inwardly truthful and appropriate to the original situation The spontaneity involved in the new interaction illustrates and changes the core dynamic of the original dysfunctional interaction and creates new perceptions, responses, and interactional patterns. Directors hope to create a powerful framework that will give new meaning to experience, and go on influencing protagonists' lives long after the drama is over.

We shall be making the point throughout this book that passion is not a ‘thing’ in itself but is fundamentally relational; it is used strategically to help people define themselves in interactions and can be very significant in understanding and changing relationship dynamics. The passion that emerges in strategic psychodrama is understood cybernetically - it has not resided somewhere in the person, full-blown but out of awareness. Rather, it is newly synthesized in interaction with the director and the group. Strategic psychodrama uses the drama as a staging area for change in the person's everyday life, rather than the place where change is to occur. Emotionally charged situations are reframed or relabelled in ways that lead to new structures in relationships. The emphasis is more 'outside' than 'inside'. But now let us return to our description of a conventional psychodrama.

When the core scene is complete, protagonists are led out of that scene back to the present. Usually some attempt is made to link the presenting problem with the core scene - perhaps by replaying the first scene. So Portia ended up on the ‘rails' again, but not before she had confronted Lucy in a manner where she was fully 'present', rather than being a guilty, hiding child. In revisiting the first scene, protagonists have the advantage of the new roles that they developed in the course of the drama, as we shall see in the drama of 'Wiping the sink' in the next chapter, and in numerous others reported more fully in this book. The final moment of the drama, therefore, tends to be present-oriented.

Protagonists' perceptions of themselves and others are acted out so that they may experience outwardly the truth that they experience inwardly. They not merely tell, but enact their memories, their dreams, their fantasies in the theatre of therapy, so that they may live more effectively in the theatre of life. Apart from the interview-in-role, directors seldom interpret during the drama, but gather information from the action itself; they attend to significant cues, watching for patterns and repeated actions. Protagonists are encouraged to maximize all expression and action, rather than reduce them: so-called delusions, hallucinations, soliloquies, and fantasies are not only allowed but actually encouraged as part of the production.

The aim of psychodrama as revelation is to find the forms, the colours, and the light of what is fundamental and enduring in people's lives - the very truth of their existence as it appears to them. A

drama presents 'what is there' and also creates 'what is there'. Dramas can fail as revelation by being derivative, ornamental, and lifeless; they can also fail therapeutically

if these qualities are dominant. Psychodrama as revelation helps people to develop new capacities, to become more expressive and creative in their daily lives, especially in their relationships. Dramas can fail therapeutically and as revelation by not arousing protagonists to the truth in their lives, and by not presenting adequate pathways to spontaneity. The revelatory and therapeutic meanings of spontaneity will be elaborated in Chapters 4 and 5.

As revelation and as therapy, dramas work on people's 'act hunger' their drive towards fulfilment of the desires and impulses at the core of the self and at the core of their interactions with others. The director helps protagonists towards a symbolic fulfilment of their act hunger, which is usually to express a fundamental part of their psychological truth Kellerman (1987, p. 79) suggests that while drama may be a healing experience, and while psychotherapy may be dramatically satisfying, psychodrama cannot be categorized simply as theatre. No matter how much we attempt to dilute what is done in psychodrama, it is definitely a form of treatment It is with precisely this question that this book is most concerned whether a therapy can be a passionate technique. But for the moment, let us continue with our basic definitions and processes.

In the act itself, protagonists usually have no clear idea of what they are doing. They are alternatively delighted and terrified by glimpses of potentiality, of promise, and the sweet joys of uncomplicated action. They move in and out of time, and in and out of the conventional structures of reality. Being a protagonist gives them a passionate sense of what they are, somehow more deeply and explicitly than they usually experience in their every day reality. In the moment of spontaneous action, life is at last simple. So when Portia confronted her parents, she experienced more fully her own guilt at their distress, but also her rage that they were as they were to each other, and heedless of her needs as a 3-year-old. As she acts out the anger to her parents, her need for them and the frustration that they are not adequately present to her also becomes evident.

Blatner (1973) draws attention to the psychotherapeutic maxim: Don't ventilate the hostility without protagonists also experiencing their dependency. That is, the protagonist's need for something (let us say, love or acknowledgement) is frustrated in some way by the significant other people's frustration and apparent hatred is usually more accessible than their need, and hence the layer of anger must be experienced before the layer of love can be even seen In Portia's enactment, therefore, we do not have anger or hatred as the real basis of the drama, even though those emotions occupied much of the narration. Thwarted love is the underlying theme. She is blocked from the love and stability that a 3-year-old might reasonably expect from parents and tries to comfort herself with food. The catharsis of rage usually triggers a catharsis of longing: so Portia weeps, then rages before she can weep in a different fashion. And then, it seems, she can cope with conflict and demands.

Only some of Portia's drama concerned what 'actually happened'. The narrative of Lucy's anger and disappointment with Portia was probably realistic enough, but the narrative of the fight in the kitchen is doubtless made up of a mixture of memory of that fight overlaid by memories of other and similar fights and experiences, and her own reflections on the experiences. We shall discuss the constructed nature of therapeutic reality more fully in Chapter 3 in a drama called 'Dale's dilemma'. For the moment, though,

it is clear that the rest of Portia's drama was overtly fantasy, where actions and dialogue clearly occurred for the first time on the psychodramatic stage. This is called in psychodrama surplus reality the reality that did not actually happen, but which possibly 'should' have. It is constructed according to the psychological reality of the time, and according to how reality 'should' have been. Portia is only 3 years old; it is not only not advisable for her to confront her parents in the way she did in the drama, it is not possible either. But the primitive reality is there: she is angry and she is suffering unbearable loss. So the protagonist's hopes, fears, impulses, hurts, judgements, and world view are brought to the stage. On stage, protagonists live through and enact all of these as fully as they can; for a while, Portia can experiment with a rather alarming kind of utopia where the only morality is the truth as she sees it.

After a drama, the session closes with sharing. The props are no longer tables, double beds, stoves, refrigerators, etc., but have returned to their rightful status of humble and ordinary chairs. The auxiliaries have been deroled, acknowledged for who they actually are as group members, and have sat down in the circle. The protagonist and director rejoin the group, and sharing begins. Sharing is not an informal chat, or a means of processing the drama, but is a semi-formal linking of the group is feelings and responses to the narrative and emotions of the drama.

Group members are given to understand that this is not the time for analysing, interpreting, or advice-giving, but a means of integrating themselves with the protagonist and the protagonist with them: The protagonist may have been 'on stage for one or two hours, for the most part heavily involved in another place and time, and relatively oblivious to the group's presence and to current space and time. Their deepest experiences, most terrible fears, most traumatic moments may well have been enacted. They themselves may have been totally consumed with rage, fear, or melting tenderness, showing these to the group while at the same time being largely unaware of the group. In the sharing, protagonists 'come back to earth'. They realize, through companionship, that they are not alone with these feelings and experiences, and incorporate the acceptance by the group of their glories and weaknesses, their eccentricities and singularities. At the end of a drama, in fact, no matter how ugly the scenes depicted, or how frail and human protagonists think themselves, group members are usually in awe of the power of the human spirit and the grandeur and beauty of the

person who has shown his or her life. Protagonists of honestly enacted dramas become somehow grand figures generous, laughing, raging, fearful and weeping bearers of all the parables and paradoxes of humanity itself.

Many of Moreno's key concepts were not those of an individual on his or her own, but concepts that relate to social organization or interpersonal space: roles, for example, were essentially defined as interactive, as we shall see in Chapter 4. Tele was another important term. It was the process of interaction between individuals. Tele is the simplest unit of feeling transmitted from one individual to another (Moreno, 1953, p. 159). It is the emotional feeling tone that exists in almost all human relationships. But the word itself is Greek meaning far or far off, or in Moreno's slightly altered sense, 'distance'. Unlike empathy, it is a two-way process, the flow of feeling between two or more persons. Tele, as opposed to transference, is not a repetition from the past, but a spontaneous process which is appropriate in the present here and now (Kellerman, 1979).

Social atom was another organizational/interactive concept, but one that, unlike tele, does not have positive or negative poles. It is the 'smallest living unit one that cannot be divided'. Tele describes the feeling tone, social atom describes the structure. Modern usage, or at least certainly the usage in this book, is to consider the social atom as all the significant relationships that a person has at a given time. Thus a current social atom may consist of spouse, sister-in-law, father, first best friend, second best friend, work, the dog, the Catholic Church, and a former lover. A person's social atom when they were a child will be obviously different: included may be all immediate family members, a favourite aunt, some friends, school, a particular teacher, and the family pet. We each, therefore, see ourselves as the nucleus of a little world; social atom is a convenient way to describe or map out that world.

Essential philosophy

The originator and driving force behind psychodrama was Jacob Moreno, a Rumanian psychiatrist born in 1892 who received his medical degree from the University of Vienna in 1917. During his student days he developed a deep interest in the work now known as psychodrama. He began to devise a form of role playıng between 1909 and 1911, and he became involved in group psychotherapy while still a young man. In fact, he is said to have originated group therapy, and to have coined the term. In 1922 he had a stage especially adapted to spontaneity work -Das Stegreiftheater spontaneity theatre. The first actors in his 'company' were children, but gradually they were replaced by adults. In Moreno's spontaneity theatre, striving after perfection was rejected in favour of being-in-the-moment-of-creation. Adventure and radicalism were the keys;

> The difference between my own stage construction and those of the Russians was that their stages, however revolutionary in the external form, were still dedicated to the rehearsed production, being therefore revolutionary in external expression and in content of the drama, whereas the revolution I advocated was completed, including the audience, the actors, the playwright and producers, in other words, the people themselves, and not only forms of presentation. (Moreno, 1964, p. 100)

Members of the theatrical community in the theatre of spontaneity were urged to return to some kind of original, dynamic, unitying innocence (Ginn, 1974). The spoken word, which for the legitimate actor was the point of departure, is for the spontaneity player the end-stage. The spontaneity player actually begins with the spontaneity state:

> The legitimate role player has to be untrained and deconserved before he can become a spontaneity player. Here we have another reason why so many 'non'-actors pass the test for spontaneity work successfully. Their fountainhead is life itself and not the written plays of conventional theatre. (Moreno, 1964, p. 74)

Moreno's Stegreiftheater closed down, possibly because of the complexity of the task (of having actors whose fountainhead is life itself), and the difficulty of training not only actors but audiences out of their embedded preconceptions about theatre. Before his sort of theatre could succeed, he argued, the attitude of the public would need to be changed. This would require a total revolution of our culture, a creative revolution (Moreno, 1947, p. 7). But simultaneously with the work of the Stegreif theater came Moreno's recognition of the 'therapeutic' benefits of his procedures on participants and audience: what if spontaneity, so vital, so interesting, and such fun, was actually the key to 'mental health'? Moreno

watched his actors carefully, and occasionally observed a beneficial overflow from the stage to their personal lives: spontaneity was paying off at home.

The spontaneity movement was essentially religious and transformational. Moreno maintains that he chose the course of the theatre and instead of founding a religious sect, joining a monastry or developing a system of theology (Moren0, 1947, p. 3). Between 1908 and 1914 he underwent a Hassidic period: he changed his name from Levi to Moreno, which was also a family name and meant 'chief rabbi'. He and four other young men formed a 'religion of the encounter'. They were committed to anonymity (Moreno did not last long at that!), to loving and giving, and to a direct and concrete life in the community. They would take no money for

their services, but any gifts received went into a fund for the 'House of Encounter', which was a shelter for displaced people in Vienna in the tumultuous period before World War 1.

Moreno began to apply his transcendental ideas and the insights he gained from expressed spontaneity in the theatre to therapy. In therapy, in theatre, and in religion, people gather to heal themselves and one another, to connect with their own existence. They seek meaning, commonality, and redemption. In spontaneity the two selves the conscious analytic teller and the unconscious doer harmonious whole. Action flows smoothly and freely; action and evaluation of action is automatic and hence unproblematic. Moreno consistently maintains that the highest value of spontaneity and creativity is a totally spontaneous being, the 'godhead'.

> In the psychodramatic world, the fact of embodiment is central axiomatic and universal. Everyone can portray his own version of God through his own actions and so communicate his own version to others. That was the simple meaning of my first book, in which I proclaimed the I-God ... But it is the l which matters; it is the I which was provocative and new. And it is the I-God with whom we are all connected... It is amusing to think retroactively that my proclamation of the I was considered as the most outstanding manifestation of megalomania from my side. Actually, when the I-God is universalized, as it is in my book, the whole God concept becomes one of humblenes, weakness and inferiority, a micromania rather than a megalomania. God has never been so lowly described and so universal in his dependence as he is in my book. (Moreno, 1969, p. 21)

In 1925 Moreno emigrated to the United States, where he began private practice as a psychiatrist in 1928. He married a woman called Zerka Toeman, who co-authored Volumes I and Il of Psychodrama with him. As Zerka Moreno, she had a profound influence on the psychodrama movement. Moreno favoured a horizontal social-systems approach to psychodrama, while Zerka Moreno favoured a 'vertical approach that concentrated on a primal past experience. This latter cathartic approach provided the training basis for the modern generation of students, and is today considered ‘classical’ (Fox, 1987).

Moreno set up a private teaching and treatment centre at Beacon, in New York State, whence he taught and wrote prodigiously until his death in 1974. He believed that his techniques were more advanced than Freud's: through the spontaneity of psychodrama both client and therapist could actively participate in lifelike situations and change behaviours in situ, as it were. Moreno's concept of the highly

functioning person was based on the idea of the multirole personality a person who was flexible and adaptive, who could act appropriately in whatever situation life served up.

> The problem is not that of abandoning the fantasy world or vice versa - but of establishing means by which the individual can gain full mastery over the situation, living in both tracks, but being able to shift from one to the other this is spontaneity. (Moreno, 1964, p. 72)

Spontaneity is the ‘here and now', it is ‘Man in action, man thrown into action, the moment not a part of history but history as a part of the moment' (Moreno, 1956, p. 60), A certain degree of unpredictability always exists in life. If one could know the future, there would be no need for spontaneity a fixed pattern of behaviour might be worked out to meet all oncoming problems. But since the future cannot be known, one must be ready for anything. Even an infant just after birth already operates spontancously by initiating demands for food, changes of clothes, and human contact. In adults, lack of spontaneity generates anxiety, as spontaneity increases, anxiety diminishes: the person is able to handle the next moment indeed, to create it. The person not only adapts to new situations, but responds constructively to them. He or she not only meets new situations, but creates them.

Moreno valued the becoming, the actualizing, the creating, the actual experience of creativity. In its highest form, spontaneity leads to creation which may be simply a new way of behaving for an individual or group, or it may be a product, such as a painting, a poem, an invention, or a building. If spontaneous output is genuine and consistent, there usually occurs a creative act, the results of which may be new to the individual, but not necessarily to the rest of the world: they may be something so simple as a new relationship between two people. Thus true creativity can be found in daily living.

> Spontaneity and creativity are thus categories of a different order; creativity belongs to the categories of substanceit is the arch substance spontaneity to the categories of catalyzer it is the arch catalyzer. (Moreno, 1953, p, 40)

For this reason, perhaps, action was essential in his approach to therapy: his focus on the group, on intense encounter, and on action was much more revolutionary in the psychiatric world of the 1920s and 1930s than it appears to us now. Action was synonymous with interaction; since role flexibility was the goal, and since roles are nearly always interpersonal,

psychodrama was established as essentially an interpersonal therapy. As far back as 1916 Moreno used diagrams to indicate the space and movements between psychodrama actors, much in the same way that Lewin was to adopt them in 1936. Even his notion of the unconscious was dynamic and interpersonal, and he was thus critical of Freud's emphasis on the 'unconscious as an entity’. Psychodrama directors have followed this dynamic but rather simple view; they tend to regard material not so much as 'buried' in the unconscious but rather that some meanings are not available to people for a number of reasons. In this light, the so-called 'repressed' material is merely an extension of a current structure, rather than existing in a different state altogether. Psychodrama emphasizes the extension and creation of meaning rather than the excavation of something buried in the unconscious that contains the meaning. Directors enter with the protagonist into an experience that may not at the time make sense, and leave the integration for another time (the 'processing' of a drama). Moreno postulated a common unconscious, or a 'co-unconscious'. To encourage experimentation in their clients,

directors themselves need to be able to experiment: spontaneity must be two-way. He was thus a wonderful champion of recursiveness between therapist and client (Campernolle, 1981). The recursive nature of therapeutic interaction will be one of the themes of this book.

Moreno considered his psychological system superior to that of the big three; Freud, Jung, and Adler. These authors were criticized, rather hastily, perhaps, for not having a theoretic foundation based on 'logic', and more substantively for their clinical methods not going conceptually beyond the individual being analysed. He regarded his own treatment of interpersonal groups to be far wider, and to include a total understanding of human behaviour in fact, he thought the formulations of creativity/spontaneity were the root forms of all behaviour, including the entire behaviour of the universe itself.

Although quite widely celebrated in his own lifetime, Moreno never received the recognition for which he yearned (e.g. Moreno, 1953). He called his methods 'therapy for fallen Gods', and thought of himself, perhaps, as a not-so-fallen god. He was not a person to aim low in his therapy, as some of his titles suggest: 'Words of the father', or 'Psychopathology and psychotherapy of the cosmos', or 'Psychodrama of Adolf Hitler', or 'Ave Creator'. Moreno's vision was essentially a theological one (Kraus, 1984) which got translated into therapy and is now practised as such, a point that will become a focus of this book. Many find the naïve grandeur of his ambitions for the movement he founded warming and sympatico, it was not likely to win him many accolades in the scientific community, however, although his 'science' of sociometry made a very strong impact in the 1940s and 1950s:

> He is now remembered, if at all, as part of an early classic period of social psychology. This is in sharp contrast to his development of the group therapeutic method of psychodrama, which is still practised in the manner he initiated. (Hare, 1986, p. 90-1)

He edited Sociometry between 1936 and 1956, and also used the journal Group Psychotherapy as a major outlet for his writings. He was largely self-published and some of his works have a somewhat self-congratulatory flavour (see, for instance, Moreno, Moreno, and Moreno, 1963; Moreno, Moreno, and Moreno, 1964; Moreno, Z., 1967; 1968). He reprinted his own work frequently, often under another title or amalgamated with new work (Fox, 1987).

Moreno had the courage to create his own world, and urged others to do likewise. But he also endured a prolonged cultural trauma: he had somehow to reconcile his optimism and messianism with the fresh evidence each day that the world was not improving as predicted. He ambitioned psychodrama and sociodrama, not only as a third revolution in psychological practice (Moreno, 1964), but with a place in the political and social process as well (Masserman and Moreno, 1957; Moreno, 1968). The opening words of Who shall survive? are: 'A truly therapeutic procedure cannot have less an objective than the whole of mankind' (Moreno, 1953). The unconscious was the lowest common denominator of humankind, and spontaneity was the highest function. He saw the destiny of the twentieth century as dependent on the successful unfolding of people's relationship to their spontaneity. When the evidence seemed to be against this happening, his character led him to look even more determinedly for unambiguous answers.

His ambitions for psychodrama and sociometry have not so far been fulfilled, and maybe they never will be. Although most psychological professionals and even many lay people have heard of psychodrama, on a world scale the full process of psychodrama (as distinct from action methods) is little used as a clinical modality. It made some impact in Europe (Leutz, 1973) and is widely popular in the Latin

American countries. Nevertheless, it has hardly been the ‘third psychiatric revolution' that Moreno predicted. Even its founding house at Beacon has been sold. While the movement has many newsletters of local associations, there is only one refereed journal in English. Psychodrama is rarely taught in university-level psychology, psychiatry, or social-work courses, and does not seem to be the subject of much outcome or conceptual research, either in the English-language *Psychodrama Journal* or in other scientific publications. It receives no significant citations as a personality theory (Bischof, 1970). At most, bits and pieces have been stripped of Moreno's genius, and applied in clinical settings as 'action methods’, adjunctive techniques to other ways of doing therapy. It has always been thus, from the days of group therapy on, and a considerable part of Moreno’s writing has been devoted to crying ‘Thief!’