

Let's Make a Contract

When the group turns to one person to represent their focus for the occasion, and the careful director welcomes the willing protagonist to the stage, we may see the negotiation of a contract:

Director: *What do you want from me?*

Protagonist: *To help me with this huge problem we've been talking about.*

Director: *Quite a challenge, isn't it? To do all that in one session. You've been coming here for some time and you've seen other protagonists in action. Specifically, how much of what needs to be done may we hope to do today? And if we've done it, what may our success look like?*

The protagonist realizes instant success is not possible, and that it is up to him to take on as much as he can face here and now. The director anticipates what may be forthcoming and suggests how much of what they may do together. If the director has been on target, the protagonist accepts the director's proposal, and they reach a common agreement.

I cherish the evident spirit of negotiation that dialogue brings forth, and recognize that presenting a book lacks the upfront interaction routine for psychodrama, but like the careful director, I anticipate the expectations "Directing Psychodrama Fifty Years Later" may call forth. So let us cut down to size the challenge before us.

In my imagination I role reverse with an eager reader slamming down this book because I failed to touch upon his reason for picking it up. This is not a historical treatise.

I see psychodrama as having begun with the brothel labor union in Vienna in 1911, finding inspiration in the Words of the Father given in the Tower Room of a public health officer, developing with the the Theater of Spontaneity, and having come to America, transferring the process to a rental at Carnegie Hall, where perhaps 1925 or thereabouts, Doctor Moreno conceived out of a love story what became psychodrama. That history should be written, and maybe it has been, but I am much too young to write it, even though I've been on hand as it developed. Accordingly I do not aspire to review the whole psychodrama movement at home or abroad. Nor do I offer to trace my small part in the process. Far from being a history, neither is this an autobiography. What follows is an exposition of classical psychodrama as I remember and practice it personally, though my peers should surely write a very different work.

Here is what works for me. Finally, as our venture into directing psychodrama draws to a close, I overcome self-restraint to suggest how directors may extend their repertoire, and enrich inner processing, as they continue to do what it seems to me they've always done anyway. I rely media, theater and literature, which emphasis I hope may find a welcome reception, for it amounts to mining a resource nearly always at hand, as you indulge your personal taste. Another day, as you return to psychodrama, perhaps you'll recall the essence of my innovation, which should make the fruit of your leisure operate for the benefit of needy protagonists.

When one has been 'retired' seventeen years, don't presume that the record is finished, that the evidence is all in, that for better or worse, the case is closed, destiny has been realized. Not so. I have just begun to live. There is more, much more to tell, even more to experience. As I write I resist the temptation to re-read the first preface. Indeed, I've defied tradition and have cut it from the scene, for I've left the former point-of-view far behind. I live in the same place, but our world rolls on. I'm not as I was at the turn of the millennium, nor are you. I present another point-of-view, which I offer without tedious comparison with the old-me. You're free to do so at leisure, if that's your bent. I hope that you who've not seen the first edition 'could careless.' Now Besides sharing with peers and students I reach out to professionals who've remained innocent of psychodrama up to now.