


## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

 On a very hot Friday afternoon in July of 2016, I sat with six women and two men (another woman would join us the next day) for the start of a four-day residence on psychodrama in the small town of Highland, New York. After introductions by each member of the group, the psychodramatist had us gather on the original stage that J. L. Moreno had built in 1936. Each group member was asked to discuss the psychodrama she or he would like to enact in the session. Using a sociometric technique, which involved each member placing a hand on someone's shoulder and then reading the flow of energy within the group, the various participants collectively chose the person whose drama they wished to see. To my utter surprise, the group chose me, even though I was the only person who had never done psychodrama before. Through a strange series of events, my scholarly research for this book had led to this moment of finding myself in the spotlight among a group of strangers.

The genesis of this book has its roots in a keynote address that I gave at the first Screenwriting Research Network (SRN) conference in Leeds, England, which I eventually revised into an article for the *Journal of Screenwriting*. It was equally sparked by watching J. L. Moreno's psychodramas on television as a kid in the New York City area. The psychodramas were intense sessions of group psychotherapy. I remember my mother's dismay at discovering what I was watching. Whatever age I was, she didn't think it was an appropriate program. This didn't prevent me from viewing it subsequently; I simply kept the volume down. I find it

fascinating how seemingly random early experiences end up shaping the direction of people's lives in profound ways. When I saw my first Warhol film as a college student, a light bulb went off inside my head. The same thing happened with Moreno, although it took me many years to grasp this connection more fully.

Like all films, books are a form of collaboration. Scott MacDonald's pioneering work on William Greaves was crucial to this project. Louise Archambault was an invaluable source of information and a major resource. She helped me set up interviews with Jonathan Gordon, as well as Shannon Baker and Audrey Henningham, the two principal performers in William Greaves's *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take 2½*. I also appreciate the psychodramatists who generously gave of their time to speak with me at some length: Robert Siroka, Marcia Karp, John Nolte, Jim Sacks, and Nan Nally-Seif. It was John Nolte who first encouraged me to do psychodrama if I wanted to understand it fully. Kate Merkle also shared her knowledge of psychodrama. I also interviewed several filmmakers: Sean Baker, Sam Fleischner, James Solomon, and Spencer Parsons. I am grateful to Bianca Hunter for her willingness to discuss her performance in *Bad Lieutenant* and to Lawrence Michael Levine for discussing *The Zone*. The book would not be nearly as informative without the input from these interviews. Special thanks to Sean Baker for providing the image from *Tangerine* for the book cover.

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Little did I know, when I accepted the invitation to give the keynote at the first SRN Conference, that the scholars I would subsequently meet through the organization would profoundly influence my subsequent research and thinking about the screenwriting studies. These scholars include: Ian Macdonald, Kathryn Millard, Steven Maras, Steven Price, Eva Novrup Redvall, Adam Ganz, Jill Nelmes, Alex Munt, Jule Selbo, and Paul Wells.

On a personal level, the pressures of writing a book affect a person in all kinds of ways. There is an antisocial component in having to focus one's energies so intently on the work at hand. I feel lucky that my loving partner of many years, Nancy Mladenoff, who spends long hours painting in her studio, remains so understanding.

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## REWRITING INDIE CINEMA

