# MODERN FORMS OF THEATRE AS THE METHOD OF THE HUMAN MENTAL RESOURCES ACTUALIZATION: THE PROCESS ORIENTED AND INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

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Since 2001, in Ukraine the project named Kyiv Playback Theatre 'Reflection' has been actively developed. It was founded by Ukrainian psychologists and psychotherapists. The goal of the project is the creation of an informational-emotional environment for reflecting inner emotional experiences, development of the reflection skill and gaining social experience. Playback is one of the modern forms of theatre and psychology that combines dramatic art, psychology and drama therapy all in one, but it differs from improvisation and psychodrama techniques. The word 'playback' was taken from English, it means playing back or reconstructing the past. Theatre is specific in a way that viewers tell stories from their lives stories and professional actors using specific ways of acting improvise and enact them. Thus, actors are like mirrors to the viewers in which they can see themselves, their emotions, feelings and thoughts from an observer's perspective.
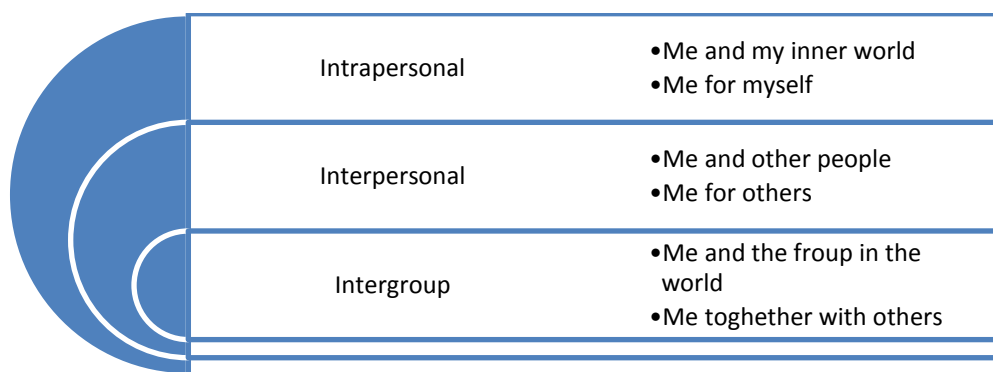
Let us consider the specific characteristics and the algorithm of work in playback theatre. A performance is made in accordance with certain laws and has a specific structure but it is made without preparations and a ready scenario - on the spot. Thanks to that, a trusting atmosphere is created and unique interaction of the participants of the action takes place. Any viewer that tells a story from his life can choose actors to play the roles himself and then watches his story come to life with artistic shapes and nuances. A viewer can tell about anything in his story. The story may relate to the past, present or future, tell about something valuable or be just as a sweet memory or a troubling question. The participant decides what is important to him right now, what he wants to be reflected on the stage. They story can tell about feelings or states. It can be a fantasy or a real life story, but the primary requirement is that it has to be told from the first person and reflect the storyteller's feelings, emotions and experiences.

An American actor and psychologist, Jonathan Fox, the father of this form of theatre who organized the first troop in 1975, writes about the function and the goal of playback: 'the function these performances have is not "healing"' but it is raising of awareness of the whole society, it is kind of teaching. This goal is worth pursuing. If we talk about a more global goal, now it can be connected with yet not defined concept of mental health of the society and healing the society in general. Playback stories become a means of conducting a deep dialogue, which does not need any answers. Performances often turn into something like an expression of everyday wisdom. We feel like we get a lesson from life. Playback process integrating an image, sound and rhythm shapes the story in a deeper way than a thought you realize. The storytellers often get spellblind by the stories they tell when they tell them to themselves and to the listeners. Such moments that are extremely dramatic bring a kind of creativity surprise to the actors and viewers as well. The result that is achieved this way is a social change. The spirit of nobility lies in the basis of a playback experience. The entire process follows the idea of sharing. The storyteller shares his personal story with the public as if giving the viewers a gift. The gift the audience gives is their careful attention. Such dialogue based on honesty in telling a story,

respectful listening and creative reflecting encourages the development of social cohesion and trust. It can be a model for building peaceful relations in the destroyed world. The evidence of the truth may shake the very basis of ours. We have to face the truth of the past to be able to imagine the positive future.

There is one more form of therapy - Process Theatre. Its techniques are similar to playback drama techniques but are based on the approaches of process oriented and integrative psychology. Process oriented and integrative psychology is a modern branch of psychology which is based on the integration of ideas of mathematics, quantum psychics and psychology and promotes changes in the states of mind as well as expansion of the creativity application field, solutions to conflict situations, tension and anxiety relief and helps preserve the personality integrity. It is actively used by associations of psychologists worldwide, including American and Swiss Communities of Process Oriented Psychology, Moscow Institute of Process Oriented and Integrative Therapy and Ukrainian Institute of Process Oriented Psychology and Development.

From the point of view of methodology Process Theatre is most similar to Art Therapy, drama therapy in particular, and from the point of view of the spirit - it is similar to the postmodern approach. Therapeutic effect is achieved as participants get the state of mind changed. And it includes the feeling of happiness. It is achieved with the help of individual and group methods of creative activity. The process is aimed at catharsis and insight, inner strikening and observation and not appraisal or interpretation. During the process theatre work the focus of attention switches to feelings, self-image and social interaction. This is how it encourages the actualization of mental resources of a person. Process Theatre is aimed at satisfaction of the social and psychological needs of a person at the three levels:

| Intrapersonal | •Me and my inner world<br>•Me for myself |
| Interpersonal | •Me and other people<br>•Me for others |
| Intergroup | •Me and the froup in the world<br>•Me toghether with others |

Pic. 1. 3-Level Model of the Process Theatre Work

The stages of the game work are organized in accordance with the traditions of Theatre originated from mysteries and spiritual practices of the Ancient World:

1. The participants create a trusting atmosphere, make a Circle for the game. They call the Spirit of Game.
2. The open up and present themselves in roles of their characters. The analogy is repentance.
3. With support of the circle members, the storytellers share their stories sincerely and trustfully, the actors play their roles. All of them accept others' stories without appraisal or conditions. Intensive emotional expression and impression. I present myself and accept myself and the way others present themselves. The analogy is inclusion, connection, oblation, communion, sacrament of the Eucharist, thanksgiving.
4. Catharsis – reaction, repeated experiencing and relieving from something, inner tension relief and emotional release. The analogy is purification, observing a fast.

Catharsis has been well known since the time of Sophocles and was described in 'Poetics' by Aristotle.

5. Insight, strikening, a sparkle of clarification of the mind, diving into the depth and meanings of the process. The analogy is revelation, transfiguration and transformation.

6. Getting pleasure, fulfillment and enjoying the very process of the Game work, the process of learning, harmony with yourself, being part of the World and the people. The analogy is bliss and radiance.

7. Returning to everyday reality, projecting the Game experience to the reality of the social interaction. Formation of the corrective emotional experience. Constructive changing. Developing the participants' ability to build relevant and adequate relations. Applying the achieved results and the learned ways of solving problems to the social activity. The analogy is the Character returning with the gifts.

The participants engage in the game process in 3 dimensions: The first one is reality (it is objective, true and they realize it); the second one is fantasy, the world of fiction and metaphor; the third one is sliding, switching between the first two dimensions. And this is exactly the dimension where we work through the inner dramatic material either realizing it or not. We start our journey from reality to the world of our own fantasies and dreams and those of others, but we return from this journey having real emotional experiences and thoughts, having new life experience.

Thus the expected result of the game work includes the following important components: reaction, catharsis, insight and the corrective emotional experience. These are effective psychotherapeutic factors affecting all the components of the life of personality: emotional, cognitive and conative ones which are connected with the disclosure and identification of various models of behaviour and the system of human behaviour in general.

One of the techniques of the Process Theatre work is based on an ontological model of the cognitive development of the human psyche suggested by J. Piaget:

**'Movement-sound-imagination-image-role-character-notion (verbalization)'**

The conductor of the game suggests that the participant of the game starts moving spontaneously (spontaneous sensomotor activity), then he lets him spontaneously make any sounds. Everyone can watch a spontaneously made image come to life, continue to move and sound like this image does, developing it and turning it into a specific role, creating a character. They let this character be expressed in their movements, in sounds they make, in words and phrases they say, in monologues and dialogues they make and in their interaction with other characters of the game whose roles other participants play. After the game is finished, all the participants discuss their thoughts, feelings and actions. It is the time for group reflection and realization, verbalization and actualization of the experience. This way we awaken unconscious impulses in the body, let them create characters and bring outside the information, reflect it and realize it. In a more extended version the work model looks like that: sensomotor activity - dramatic playing - applied dramatic playing - improvising and playing the role - extended dramatic playing - dramatic performance - verbal expression and gaining experience.

The next work technique is based on the principle of conscious simulating the reality and testing it by playing and experiencing. This is 'correcting' and changing the situations and roles you have in your life, stimulating the development of the personal roles repertory and the system of roles. It lets you differentiate unacceptable, destructive patterns of behaviour and find variants

of alternative, adequate behaviour, gain the experience of searching for variants in solving non-standard and unforeseen situations. We simulate the situation 'I'm there in the problematic past or future' in a trusting atmosphere in the circle of our game, 'here and now', First we simulate it on a cognitive level asking one of the participants to tell his present, past or future problematic situation. Then the storyteller himself or with the help of other participants crates, simulates the desirable and acceptable for him scenario of development and solving the conflict situation. They make up a 'happy end' for the story, the desirable way of development of the situation 'if it happened like that'. Then this fantasy comes to life in acting, the participants play their roles. In the first, dramatic, phase of the game the storyteller, like a viewer, can watch others play. And he can give his role of himself in the story to any of the participants. Then, at some moment, when he feels he is ready to join the game as an active participant, he joins it. He either plays his own role of himself in the story and changes some other participant to take it or he plays the role of any other character. All other participants of the game help the main character to play, play up to him and 'serve' him. The character lives a new desirable scenario and finds new ways of seeing the situation. But a Game is a Game, it can turn the scenario in a most unexpected direction! And in this changing you will experience both catharsis and insight. How many times have you made most unexpected and magical discoveries when playing a game? The game itself, the territory for playing can make a phenomenon of Game. In the final phase of the game, after the denouement and finding the happy-end, all the participants of the game come up to the main character and contact him physically in a way desirable and acceptable for him — touches, embraces, strokes. And the group is in such a contact until the main character feels it is enough and says himself 'Thank you, it's enough!' After that they discuss and verbalize the game experience. There are also forms of work with metaphorical maps, various objects, dreams, fantasies...

A few words about the group work dynamics. These are certain therapeutic norms and rules that are established and followed: no appraisal, but benevolence instead, active participation. The participants can appraise only their own reactions to what is happening and use them as a material for self-observation and self-reflection. All the participants and the process itself are regarded to be the mirror of your own reactions, and the game is viewed as an opportunity to look at yourself in the mirror with the help of others. This is a phenomenon of social facilitation — stimulation of an individual in the group and the improvement of his results in the group. We have to remember that the actors that reflect the storyteller's story like in the mirror are direct participants of the therapeutic process. Living other person's story may bring both a positive and a negative result, unfortunately. Experiencing other person's emotion may bring you an emotional release and form your social experience.

So, we can conclude from everything brought to your attention earlier that the modern forms of theatre encourage the actualization of a person's mental resources as they:

- develop creativity and expression. The participants are taught to express themselves and thus can use this potential in the social communication. The creativity skill is like a resource.

- develop social communication and learning skills. They develop emotional intelligence of the participants. They help the participants to acquire the patterns of behavior they need in everyday life, and particularly, this is non-verbal communication and concept-based solving of problems.

- aim at insight, self-reflection and further changing. The game has a therapeutic orientation - the unconscious processes of the participants find a way to express themselves when the participants recall the situations from the past, imagine the situations of the present or future, they reflect their fantasies and dreams in the game, the transformation takes place and the participants gain new experience.

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