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The Different Faces of Drama

We have got used to the fact that the Muse of Theatre traditionally wears two masks – the jolly one for comedy and the sorrowful one in order to suit tragedies. However, drama (we will permit a slight terminological inaccuracy when we make theatre and drama identical, but we do so only in order to make the text clearer) in fact has got many other faces than just those ‘worn’ in the theatre – the independent type of art. The history of theatre shows that:

- Terence’s comedies were played or their reading was illustrated by mime as well as own play production when teaching Latin.

- The tradition was further developed by Utraquist schools that grew out of Lutheran principles as well as the schools of the Society of Jesus. Their school order had actually instructed theatre exercises – the Jesuits focused on the technique of spoken expression, gesture and casualness of their behavior; public presentation was a method of teaching.

- School (theatre) play was in the center of interest for J.A. Komenský. When living in Blatný Potok, he outlined his theoretical treatise about the use of drama play in the classes – it was he, our greatest humanist, who had separated theatre-artistic from theatre – pedagogical means for the first time.

- Relevant literature concerning theatre provides us with information that already Imenhotep recommended theatre, dance and music as a remedy to cure the diseased Egyptians three thousand years before Christ, and that in Athens’ theatre Dromokaiton yearly staged a performance of mentally disabled individuals. The theatre performances of the most famous patient of the asylum in Charenton – marquis de Sade, shall serve as another example of the use of theatre to other than aesthetic purposes. They are well-known, not only from the history of theatre, but also from drama literature.

All the above mentioned examples that show the usage of theatre for non-theatre purposes, thus for purposes that follow from neither artistic value nor aesthetic experience, but the aim of which is some kind of a 'more practical' use of drama. It can be divided into two groups:

1. Theatre (drama) – a means of education;
2. Theatre (drama) – a remedial means (therapy).

We came to address the theatre in its 'other' form as a para-theatre system. Some examples, describing the process of the change of the theatre into a para-theatre system, which are sustained by the remaining literary sources, have been listed earlier. These examples show how the systems that serve other than aesthetic purposes in the first place, divide from the theatre, an independent kind of art.

However, if we had the opportunity to cross the border outlined by written history and started out wandering towards the earliest beginnings of human civilization, somewhere to the age of Lower Paleolith (10–30 thousand years ago), we would make a paradoxical discovery that in fact it is just the opposite of what we mentioned above. The life of the hunter and later the Neolithic farmer was accompanied by some sort of pre-para-theatre systems that was parted from the theatre as an art by the depth of two thousand years development. If we were really able to take this exciting journey back to our ancient history, we could perceive a Palaeolithic hunter dressed into skins of a downed animal, as in the ritual he does not depict himself, but the particular animal chased by hunters. We could possibly see the first farmers in animalistic masks, performing the ceremony related to the yearly rhythm, seasonal works and harvest, the meaning of which was, above all, to keep the tribal traditions and hand over to the next generation all the experience gained from the ancestors. And perhaps, we would be lucky enough to witness the master of rituals – a shaman – at work, circling in the ecstatic mimesis (imitation) around a sick woman, who would get well maybe just because she believes in the expulsion of the bad spirit from her body. The hunting ritual, tribal ceremony and the dance of magic are directly connected with a 'practical' usage of theatre. More precisely, it was connected with a pre-theatrical form of mimesis. The goals of a hunting ritual and the farmer's ceremony were above all an educational witch-doctor's 'performance', which had therapeutic character.

But enough of the history; let's go back to the present. The following two subchapters give a short introductory explanation, obviously not exhaustive, of the most frequent para-theatre systems in the world and in the Czech Republic.

Theatre systems with educational character

Drama in Education (DiE, also Developmental Drama) is, according to many definitions, an improvised, not meant to be performed, and oriented into the inner

working process in which the participants are directed by the leader (teacher) to imagine things, playing and reflecting human experience.

The subject of drama in education is an activity arising from the content of drama art and using the means (i.e. improvisation, interpretation, entering roles, simulation). This activity leads towards a human being and his/her enrichment up to the capability of living through, sharing and conveying. Said in a simple way, drama in education originally uses dramatic means to achieve psychological and pedagogical goals.

Drama in education may occur in form of an independent subject in the school curricula, but it can also occur in form of a didactic and educational method (frequently used for teaching languages and civics). It can be understood as a principle and content of personal development. In the broader sense, children's theatre (theatre play by children) can be included into drama in education.

Theatre in Education (TiE)

The core of theatre in education is a performance played mostly by professional actors, the aim of which is to educate (maybe also in case of threatened youths as well as in case of social prevention). Some of the TiE complexes enable the pupils to enter the prepared roles in a scene (*Participation Theatre*) and partially vary the action as well as the content of the performance.

Para-theatre systems with therapeutic character

The direct ancestors of drama-therapy are various forms of psychotherapy that use theatre techniques and processes. The first examples of drama in therapy are visible in all the approaches oriented in the plot (Gestalt therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, analytical therapy, etc.)

Some of the 'great' psychotherapy approaches and schools employ the dramatic processes either directly or vicariously, and therefore balance on the edge of para-theatre systems. Before we start to deal with the therapeutic approaches that fully belong to para-theatre systems, we should first mention two that stand on the edge, or even more on the 'other side' than earlier mentioned psychotherapy movements. These are Play Therapy and Play Specialist.

Play Therapy focuses on the application of the therapeutic potential of the plays (plays in the non-theatre sense of the word) in individual work predominantly with children (or children and their families), sick children, sexually abused children, children having problems who are placed in a foster family and children who underwent

frustrating experiences, e.g. bereavement, children who suffer from the consequences of divorce, incompleteness of the family or living in a dysfunctional family, and children with learning difficulties and behavioral disorders. Play Therapy emerges from the position of psychodynamic methods of E. Erikson and B. Bettelheim.

A **Play Specialist** is a qualified expert working at the children's hospital departments whose main task is to maintain the natural development of children and youth hospitalized in the clinics, to humanize the hospital environment, to motivate children to play even in (for them) an unsafe place and to try to decrease a degree of their anxiety and fear of medical interventions or operations.

Psychodrama

It is nearly impossible to imagine drama-therapy without the pioneering work of J.L. Moreno, the founder of psychodrama school. Psychodrama is a dramatic improvisation converged for therapeutic purposes. The client dramatizes his/her experiences, wishes, opinions and fantasies. Psychodrama, with its founder, uses in accordance five basic tools:

- stage,
- patient as a protagonist representing first and foremost himself/herself,
- director – therapist,
- auxiliary actors,
- audience

Until today, when choosing techniques, psychodrama relies more or less on the well-tried Moreno methods. These are mainly: playing your own role, monologue, alter ego (a double who impersonates the protagonist's inner voice), and exchange of roles in order to put oneself into the position of the other as the so called mirror; here the auxiliary actors portray a protagonist in his/her presence. Psychodrama aims to create a model of reality with elements of abreaction, it helps to appreciate one's own reactions and enables oneself to control emotions. These therapies are also used to infiltrate into the past traumatic experiences, to uncover them and to surface the experiences so that they can be named. This signifies that psychodrama always solves a client's problem. In a number of European countries, as well as in the Czech Republic, the direction of psychodrama is in the hands of a psychiatrist or psychologist. Contrary to that in America, the borders between psychodrama and drama-therapy are permeable from both sides. Therefore, it is quite usual that a drama-therapist uses purely psychodrama means in order to achieve psychodrama goals (an illustration – in the state of New York, there are more types of academic qualifications – psychologist, psychiatrist, special and therapeutic teacher, and art-therapist – it is important to have professional practice acquired under the supervision of an experienced therapist).

A certain variation of psychodrama is psycho-melodrama – a form of psychodrama play tinged by music where only the therapeutic team is to play exclusively with the patient. The music helps to enhance and modify the atmosphere of the scene.

Social-drama

Social-drama basically blends with psychodrama except from one difference: psychodrama concentrates more on replaying the personal problems of the client, while social-drama focuses on playing roles in situations containing various social norms and values (therefore a synonym, axiodrama, is used sporadically) – relations of societies, socio-political problems, etc. that immediately touch the clients.

Psycho-gymnastics

Because the core of psycho-gymnastics is a non-verbal expression of situations and relations mostly by using the means of mime, this type of therapy is addressed as psycho-mime. The classical topic of psycho-gymnastics is, for instance, the “forbidden fruit”, towards which the clients must express their relations using mime – on one side of the pole there is a desire to gain a certain value and on the other side of the pole there are moral and social reasons that prevent the client to reach this value. Psycho-gymnastics is nearly identical with *Dance Drama*, due to the use of its outer means that are based on the expression of body and face, preferring abstract and essential elements of movement (i.e. etude ‘of a glowing fire that burns and destroys everything’).

Theatre therapy

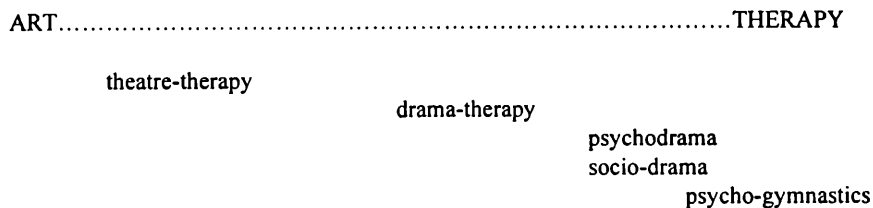
The end of the 70’s and beginning of the 80’s of the previous century introduced a new phenomenon into the cultural life of European theatre enacted exclusively by actors with disabilities (hearing, physical and more often mental or psychotic ones). This phenomenon was brought to life by an Australian film, ‘Stepping Out’, that documented the preparation and also performance of *Madam Butterfly* played in the famous Opera of Sydney by a theatre ensemble, members of which were mentally disabled. It revealed not just a new approach towards the disabled that echoed the

spirit of developing processes of emancipation and integration of the handicapped, but also – without anyone noticing it before – a new sort of theatre. This new sort of theatre differs from its classical form at least as significantly (especially if we speak about mentally disabled actors) as the children’s theatre. The parallel with the children’s theatre comes to the fore, if we focus on the specific means of expression of mentally disabled actors, for instance the contrast of the simulation ability and the entry into a role with the inability to keep the character of the figure, etc.

In the mid 80’s, a number of regular theatre groups mainly compounded of mentally disabled actors existed in England, France, Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands already. Some of them even became (gradually) professional in the course of time. A professional theatre group of mentally disabled actors called Maatwerk from Rotterdam, which was established by Koert Dekker as a specific Pameijer Foundation project in 1987 is known in the Czech Republic owing to its theatre tour. Maatwerk staged during its presence, a series of modified plays from a classical repertoire including street theatre and theatre for children. Maatwerk appears regularly on its own stage and gives guest performances on stages of other professional ensembles; the national TV channel broadcasts Maatwerk’s programs and it takes part in the world’s festivals of “Very Special Art”. The theatre company organizes tours – they have already performed four times just in the Czech Republic (mostly under the aegis of the Special Needs Department at the Pedagogical Faculty; University of Palacky in Olomouc).

All that was stated above shows that Maatwerk’s activities are purely theatre and art. It shows that no therapy fills in the space and therefore it cannot be regarded as any para-theatre form. This truth, however, is partial, because the artistic preparation as well as their own performance serve as re-education, compensation and social rehabilitation and in some cases also as re-socialization. It is obviously therapeutic, its formative features are in a greater part included in special (healing) education, and from the point of view of para-theatre disciplines, it belongs to drama-therapy and theatre-therapy.

However, it is true that on the imaginary line stretched between two polarities, art and therapy – the theatre-therapy is among the para-theatre systems of therapeutic character placed closest to art (graph 1).



Graph 1. Placement of single disciplines in relation to art and therapy

The relation between therapy and art is unilateral – while the level of artistic experience is completely independent, the level of art-therapy is directly proportional to the depth of aesthetic experience.

There is a number of theatre forms, theatre groups (also a school) that are interested in artistic production of disabled actors. The greatest renown belongs to The Theatre Company Bohnice, led by an actor and director, Martin Učík, who works with chronic patients of the psychiatric clinic. The Theatre Company functions for the indisposed patients suffering psychotic disorders as an opposite of non-structured and thus anxious reality that the patients live. The theatre leads them through the experience towards realization of a fixed structure; moreover, it has a re-socialization importance, because it may adjust self-confidence and communication abilities.

References

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Różne odstony dramy

Streszczenie

Artykuł przedstawia wykorzystanie teatru w celach niescenicznych, a zatem w takich, które nie stawiają wartości artystycznej ani doświadczenia estetycznego na pierwszym miejscu, lecz mają bardziej „praktyczne” zastosowanie. Może być ono dwojakie:

1. Teatr (drama) jako środek służący edukacji;
2. Teatr (drama) jako środek leczniczy (terapeutyczny).

Drama w pedagogice może występować jako suwerenny przedmiot w szkolnym programie nauczania, a także jako metoda dydaktyczna i edukacyjna (często używana w nauce języków obcych oraz w wychowaniu obywatelskim). Może być rozumiana jako podstawowa zasada i treść rozwoju osobistego. W szerszym znaczeniu, teatr dziecięcy (sztuka teatralna grana przez dzieci) może być włączony do dramy w zastosowaniu edukacyjnym.

Teatroterapia to zjawisko powstałe w końcu lat 70., a w latach 80. XX w. wprowadzono do teatru europejskiego niepełnosprawnych aktorów (z uszkodzeniem słuchu, niepełnosprawnością ruchową lub intelektualną, a także chorych psychicznie).

W połowie lat 80. w Anglii, Francji, Hiszpanii, Belgii i Holandii istniała już znaczna liczba prawdziwych grup teatralnych złożonych głównie z aktorów z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną. Niektórzy z nich z czasem stali się profesjonalistami. Profesjonalna grupa teatralna aktorów z upośledzeniem umysłowym z Rotterdamu, o nazwie Maatwerk, założona przez Koerta Dekkera jako projekt Fundacji Pameijer w 1987 r., znana jest w Czechach z racji tournée teatralnego, które tam odbyła. Maatwerk przedstawiła cykl inscenizacji z reper-

tuaru klasycznego, angażując teatr uliczny i teatr dla dzieci. Grupa regularnie gra na własnej scenie, występuje gościnnie lub w telewizji publicznej, bierze udział w światowym festiwalu „Very Special Art”. Teatr regularnie organizuje tournée – cztery razy występowali już w samej Republice Czeskiej (głównie pod egidą Instytutu Pedagogiki Specjalnej Wydziału Pedagogicznego Uniwersytetu Palackiego w Ołomuńcu).

Powyższe fakty świadczą jednoznacznie, że działalność Maatwerk to czysty teatr i sztuka. Nie ma tam miejsca na terapię, stąd grupa nie może być uznawana za formę parateatralną. Jest to jednak częściowa prawda, ponieważ zarówno przygotowanie artystyczne, jak i występy służą reedukacji i społecznej rehabilitacji, a w niektórych przypadkach także resocjalizacji aktorów.

Ten rodzaj twórczości ma terapeutyczny charakter, gdyż posiada cechy przypisywane kształceniu (oddziaływaniu) specjalnemu, i z punktu widzenia dyscyplin parateatralnych należy do dramaterapii i teatroterapii.