

DIPLOMA THESIS:

Action in Psychodrama: from logic to emotion

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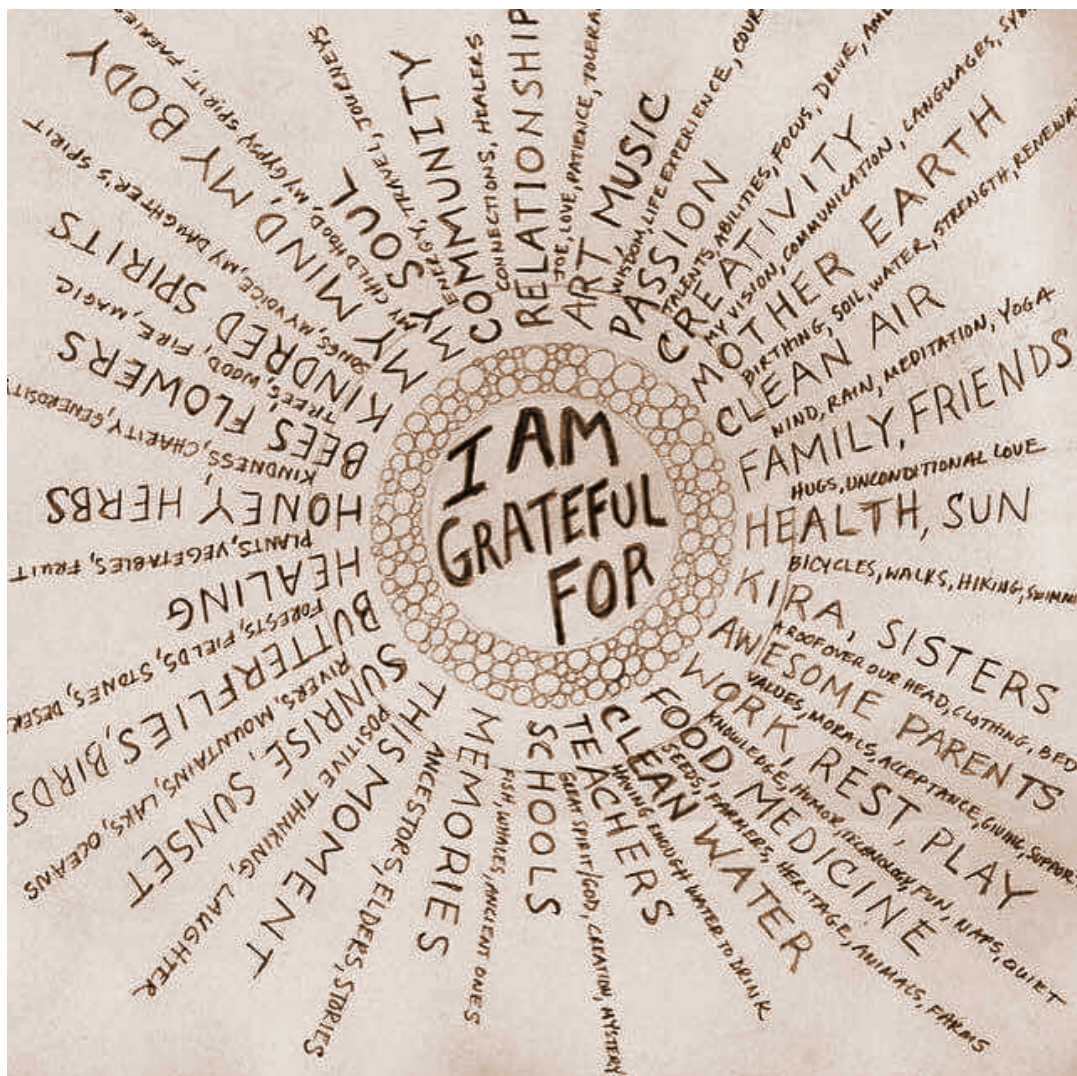
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ABSTRACT

Human behavior is very impressive. There are few moments in life where we do not comprehend why we do what we do. A logical inspection of our actions base on a logical approach can lead to a dead-end. That's the point when we realize that the root must be deeper: in our emotions. The current study focusses on identifying which human actions are based on Emotion and which are based on common sense (Logic). In case studies followed, we explore how an experiential psychotherapeutic method as psychodrama that uses action methods, can help someone reach a deeper understanding, edit and give solutions on his issues through expression of emotion.

Keywords: action, psychodrama, logic, emotion

*“The longest distance in the world is from the
Head to the Heart.”*

Lao Tzu



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Introduction – Historical Data

Plato visualized Logic and Emotion as two horses pulling a chariot in different directions while the driver struggles to make them work as a team. He suggested that the human soul includes three parts: the *logistikon* (logical), the *thymoeides* (spiritual) and the *epithymetikon* (desires). He argued that only when “Desires” and “Spiritual” work under the control of Logical part can the soul be completely human. Both Plato and Aristotle saw Logic as inherently superior to Emotions, with Aristotle arguing that human happiness depends on the exercise of Logic. This idea of superiority of Logic has influenced philosophers for centuries. Logic is what distinguished people from animals, although they have Emotions that get in their way. During the Enlightenment, many thinkers challenged the classical world of Plato and Aristotle. Some, like Rene Descartes, continued to support the superiority of Logic - it was an early form of philosophical rationality. David Hume, a Scottish historian and philosopher who influenced the development of two schools of philosophy, skepticism and empiricism, argued that "Logic is slave to Passions." In particular, he said that we show subjective emotions in our actions and think it is bad if it makes us feel bad and good if it makes us feel beautiful. On this basis, what is considered good or bad? Ethics is merely subjective and cannot be philosophically objective (Doig, 2014).

In the modern world, the science of Psychology explains behaviors and thoughts trying to provide greater consciousness to the people. Many psychotherapeutic methods have been developed over the years, but in particular Psychodrama combined words with actions, brought Logic and Emotion within a framework of Creativity and Spontaneity in order for man to process in an improved way the facts and situations of his life.

On the one hand, the cognitive side of Psychodrama helps someone to make decisions, set goals and contracts for further exploration through action, and share experiences of their personal life that are relevant to the issue of each patient (Protagonist). And, on the other hand, the emotional side helps someone to move on to the *psychodramatic stage (defined space where psychodrama action takes place)* - like another scene of life - and to take other people's role with role reverse technique (Carnabucci, 2014) or as an auxiliary ego. Problems become more tangible and, in this way, solvable.

However, before we can see the psychodrama catharsis on a practical level through case studies, it is important to analyze the specific parts of this research.

Logic and Emotion

Studies and practice show that people who think by definition emotionally are fewer than people who think rationally. All (general population - without any disorders) can think rationally which makes human species stand out from the animal kingdom. The rational mind allows man to perceive the environment around him, categorize, prioritize and use superior mental functions such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Usually problems arise when a situation is of emotional content (Walker, 2012 & Papanastasiou, 2017).

Have you ever seen a person talking about something extremely sad and laughing at the same time or the expression of the person is blasé? Someone who expresses anger verbally but with a calm voice? Has it occurred to you to be overwhelmed with physical expression like tears in the eyes, sweating in the body and at the same time verbally expressing the opposite or something else? One act comes from the emotional mind and the other of the cognitive mind. It is like having two brain centers: one that thinks and one that feels¹. On the one hand, rational minds lead us to awareness: we are more conscious, balanced and think through. On the other hand, the emotional mind leads us to impulse, to what we love, to what we desire, to our passions. A good balance between these two systems, these well-coordinated different brain circuits, leads to steady steps of evolution and development at all (mental, emotional, spiritual) levels (Goleman, 1998). What happens when this balance is disrupted and the emotional mind is leading?

Human Brain Structure

Primary senses are inserted to the brain through the spinal cord in the base of the skull and travels all the way to the front of the brain so that we can reasonably think about the experience we have. First, senses pass through the limbic system of the brain (about midway through) whereby man experiences emotions. Every day after each experience, memory and learning are created in the limbic system that helps people harmonize their reactions to adapt to changing conditions instead of having rigid and automatic reactions. The neo-cortex,

¹ It is important in Greek language the difference between the two words that are translated as "Feel". There is the verb that comes from an emotional state and the verb that comes from a cognitive state. So, the question: "How do you feel?" can lead the person to think of something mental, while the second concentrated to his emotions. Alternatively in English, is "How are you now?" That is fairly general or "How do you feel right now?" Our concern at the end of the psychodramatic scene is to know what the emotional state of the person is.

brain's front cortex, came through evolution from the emotional centers of the brain that existed in the primitive human brain. The neocortex is the ground of thought. It includes the centers that compose and understand what the senses are capturing. It enables the individual to turn his impulses and emotions into rational acts. It helps to feel what we think and allows us to have emotions about ideas, arts, symbols, intelligent elements. During its development, the neo-cortex, helped develop a prudent behavior that undoubtedly offered many advantages to man's ability to cope with the difficulties. Despite the existence of higher brain centers, which originated through evolution from the emotional centers but also because the emotional areas are interconnected through many coherent circuits with all the parts of the neocortex, the emotional centers have unlimited power to influence the functioning of the rest of the brain including the centers of thought (Goleman, 1998).

About Mind

The word "mind" is used in two different meanings. According to the first meaning, the mind is the set of mental processes that are independent of the material substrate in which they are realized, namely the brain. In the second meaning, the mind is the whole of the mental processes of an organism, expressing the neurophysiological processes of the brain (Papadopoulos, 2005). According to Winston Dictionary (Lewis et al., 1946), the mind is (a) the headquarters of consciousness, reflection, thought, opinion, and emotions, and (b) the whole of the mental experience, all the processes associated with the functioning of the brain and the nervous system. In Plato, the notion of "mind" was used to characterize the higher form of knowledge, while in Aristotle there is the differentiation of the "passive mind" (representations of the objects of the outside world) from the "poetic mind" (view of cognitive species) (Pelegrinis, 2005). According to modern perceptions, the mind is identified with the organized whole of mind, including perception, thought, and emotions (Honderich, 1995).

Expression: basic emotional structure

Expression of logic takes place through speaking. The expression of emotions follows a much more complex process. To better understand the issue of expressing emotions or the opposite; controlling - oppressing them, we can see some simple examples: We control emotions when we want to hide our anger towards loved ones, so we do not hurt them. We try not to laugh at public rituals (church, funeral, etc.). Boys learn that they should not show their feelings (e.g. cry when they are hit or physical pain). We see, therefore, that in our everyday life there are many examples of controlling emotions. There is common ground on the existence of emotions, but not in the way they are expressed.

From a theoretical point of view, emotions can be distinguished in at least two basic categories, depending on where they come from: a) social emotions, and b) basic / individual emotions (Frijda, 1986 in Kafetsios, 2005).

a) Social emotions: they are imposed by the social environment.

b) Basic / Individual emotions: They are characterized by three central structures that interact with each other:

(i) Appraisal

(ii) Physical stimulation - psychophysiology

iii) Emotional expression

About Emotion

Emotion is a term for the exact meaning of which psychologists and philosophers have been debating for more than a century. The Oxford Dictionary of Psychology defines emotion as "Any short-term appreciation, emotional, intentional, psychological state, including happiness, sadness, disgust and other inner emotions", while the English Dictionary of Oxford defines it as "any agitation or disruption of mind, feeling, passion. Any fierce or rampant mental state" (Goleman 1998).

Researchers disagree among them as to which emotions should be considered primarily, which are the blue, red and yellow rainbow of emotions, from which all other shades originate. The main emotion families and some of their members are:

- Anger: rage, anger, bitterness, indignation, despair, effervescence, irritation, irritability, hostility and perhaps, in extreme situations, pathological hatred and violence.
- Sadness: sorrow, bitterness, anguish, gloom, melancholy, self-deception, loneliness, sorrow, despair, severe depression.
- Fear: anxiety, discomfort, nervousness, satisfaction, well-being, pleasure, fun, pride, excitement, pleasure, euphoria, cheerfulness, ecstasy and its extreme form, mania.
- Love: acceptance, friendliness, trust, tenderness, courtesy, matching, devotion, worship, romance, love.
- Surprise: shock, wonder, admiration.
- Revulsion: contempt, discomfort, disgust, sigh, horror, abomination, disgust.

- Shame: guilt, embarrassment, frustration, remorse, humiliation, shyness and repentance.

The argument that there are few basic emotions is based to some extent on Paul Ekman's work at the University of California at San Francisco. He has expressed the view that specific expressions of four emotions (fear, anger, sadness, delight) are recognized by people from different cultures around the world. This makes these emotions global (Goleman 1998).

The controversy that exists within the scientific community is fair and welcome since each professional forms his opinion through their education, experience and personality. Through my experience, I recognize that people feel joy (happiness, satisfaction, bliss), fear, anger, sadness (frustration, mourning, pessimism, indifference, malice), guilt and shame. Moreover, in Modern Greek society, what is often seen according with the general socio-economic situation of the country is the emotion of injustice, personal, professional and / or social. Many people "strive to find their right" to be able to be calm and in a joyful emotional state. When they feel that they lose their right, they are easily led into conflict or emotional withdrawal (social isolation that acts as a defense mechanism).

Need of Emotion in Therapy

As much complex and rich as emotion is presented bibliographically, we discover the necessity of its existence, expression and management in our therapeutic method and practice so that the patient can relate it to his personality and the behaviors he presents in his everyday life.

Psychologist Robert Anderson discovered that the immune system, like brain functions, can be trained. Psychologist David Felden concluded that emotions have a strong effect on the autonomus nervous system, which regulates everything from how much insulin is excreted to the blood pressure levels. Along with a network of researchers he discovered that chemical neurotransmitters that act to a large extent in both the brain and the immune system are those that meet in the neuronal regions that regulate emotion. Further research has shown that the nervous system is not only associated with the immune system but is essential for proper immune function (Ader, 1990). Microbiologists and other scientists are discovering more and more such interconnections between the brain and the cardiovascular and immune system (Goleman, 1998).

About Action

Zhu & Thagard (2012) refer that the position of emotions in human action is undervalued and that there is a false impression that emotions are absurd, expressing passive attitude or have a negligible effect on our actions. In contrast, emotions play a key role in both the production and execution of human actions as well as in their analysis.

Many researchers conclude that depending on facial expressions, even if they are sophisticated, the emotional state of the individual is affected (Ferri et al, 2010). An emotional act, as opposed to a predetermined act (social conserve), is determined by its ultimate or direct purpose. The motivation for each act is its desired final result. The person automatically wonders: "If I do that, how will the situation that I'm living now change?". Man perceives the world by judging whether his emotional actions will bring him closer to the result he wants and whether the current situation will improve. Thus, motivation leads him to an action readiness. Such states of readiness are best described as readiness states to create, maintain, or modify the form of the relationship that man has with each situation (Ridderinkhof, 2017). The readiness of action is borrowed from Dewey's theory of Emotion (1895), which states that the individual is practically ready to act in certain ways in a given situation. Whereas, according to Moreno (Karp et al., 2005) we know that psychodrama teaches the spontaneity through which the person is called upon to give a new reaction to an old situation or an adequate reaction to a new situation.

Moving from the Periphery to the Core

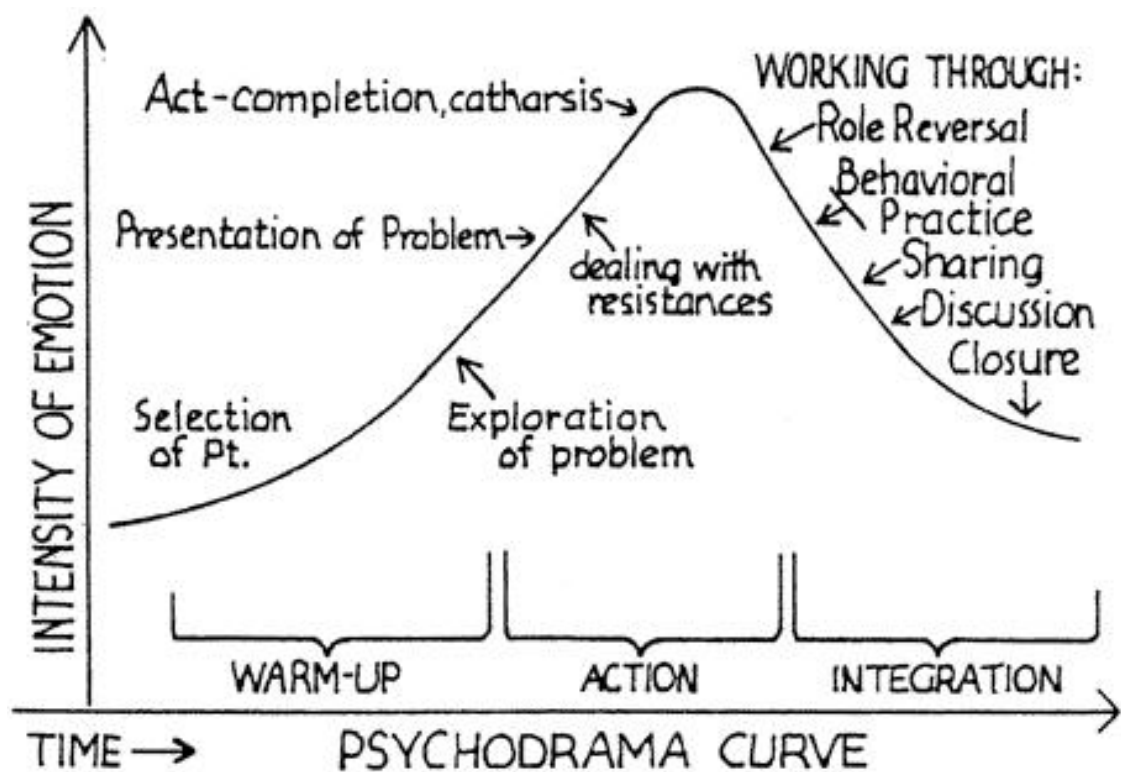
Generally, people cannot emphasize to essential elements when they are in a strong emotional state. Justifications, guilt, accountability to others, difficulty in differentiating between real facts and beliefs of one's or emotional responses to events, and other analogous situations make it impossible to develop a clear awareness of key issues. However, there is an appetite to express and explore a personally significant experience. "That's why it is acceptable to start someone from a superficial event, even one that the director may feel is peripheral in some core conflicts", Blatner says (1996: 72).

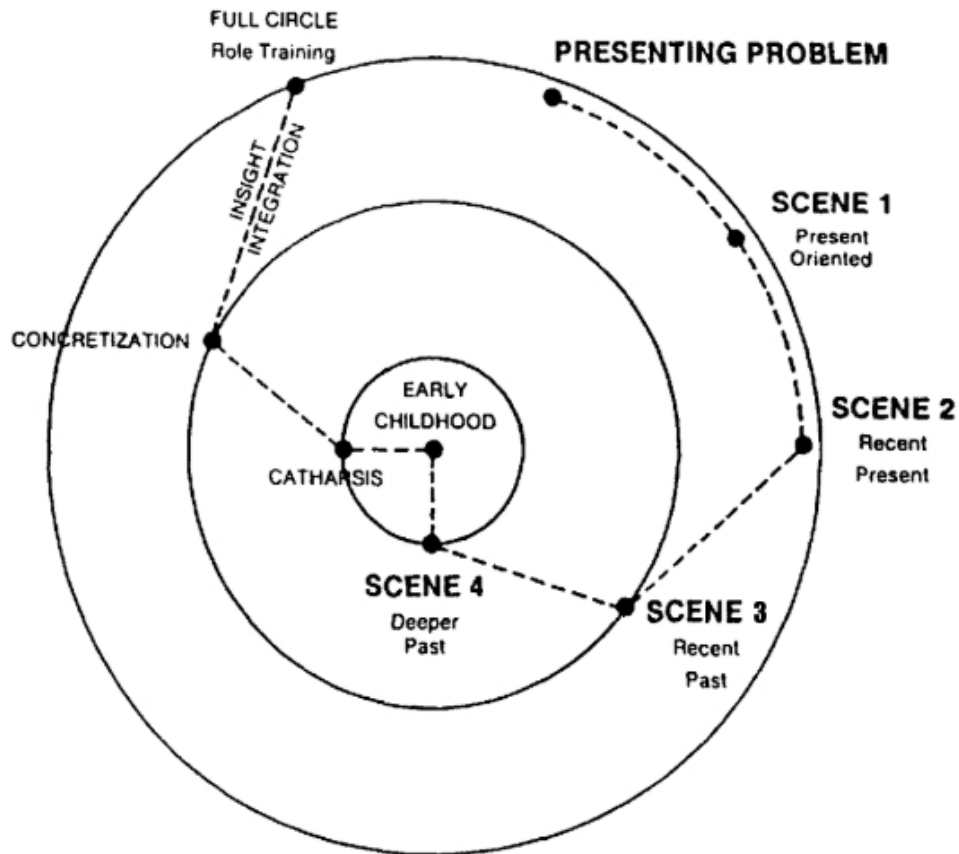
Some therapists may find the presentation of such peripheral issues as avoidance or resistance, but in fact even these actions can act as a source of ideas to encourage the warm-up process. Moreover, it is an act of respect and wisdom in the unconscious of the protagonist

who can symbolically help rather than block. In other words, good directors move along with their protagonists rather than against them (Blatner, 1996).

For example, a protagonist who has a very intense conflict with his mother accompanied by a heavy emotional burden, and for this reason has difficulty sharing it as an issue, may be a catalyst to represent a similar situation with a vendor who accidentally crashed with her a week that has passed and brings it to his weekly treatment.

In the figure below, we see that as the psychodramatic process advances, the intensity of emotion grows. Starting from the warm-up during the action, we have an emotional climax of the Protagonist in order to have a Catharsis.





(Figure 5.1 - Blatner, 1996:65)

A complete psychodrama cycle

After warming-up the team and selecting the protagonist, the psychodramatic process passes into the second phase, the Action, which involves exploring the issue of the protagonist. The logical sequence of scenes in the classic psychodrama is shown in the above diagram (Figure 5.1) created by Goldman and Morisson (1984). "Psychodramatic Spiral" shows the local and temporal rotation of the scenes used to explore the problem.

❖ Presenting Problem

Each psychodramatic process is unique. During the interview, the situation in which the protagonist is located is presented. An effort is made by the director to express the protagonist his superficial emotions and thoughts that accompany his behavior.

❖ Scene 1 - Present Oriented

During the first scene the protagonist presents his problem in the “*here and now*”, so that he can spontaneously and creatively experience their deepest need. The protagonist, with the help of the director, tries to give a title to his stage presence to make the request clearer and slowly with the help of the "auxiliary ego" and the role reverse technique allows the protagonist to connect and express his superficial emotions, as well as to become aware of his relationships with other roles that take place in his problem.

❖ Scene 2 - Recent Present

On the occasion of the events of the first scene, the director instructs the protagonist to discover the causes that have led him to the emotions he is experiencing now, acquiring a clearer picture of his reality and relationships.

❖ Scene 3 - Recent Past

Through the above investigation, it is possible to bring to light some repetitive patterns of behaviors of the protagonist's past that help him to realize the timing of his request, as well as a possible untreated trauma that excites the present.

❖ Scene 4 - Deeper Past

Having the protagonist realize the timing of his problem and the possible trauma with which he is correlated in the here and now, on this scene we connect the deeper emotions of the protagonist that emerge through scenes of the past.

❖ Early Childhood

The protagonist, having an emotional but also a mental deep awareness of his problem, has the possibility, if and if he resists emotionally, to connect to the core of his issue, which is the foundation of the attitudes and reactions of his childhood experiences that end to be problematic for the protagonist in the present.

❖ Catharsis

Through the presentation of these core conflicts, the protagonist often revives the initial emotions of mourning, fear, anger, craving, shame, guilt, or confusion. The expression of these emotions usually involves a moment of purification. The challenge is to help the protagonist find constructive ways to come back into contact with his emotions that may have been repressed. Scenes with vulnerable emotions must be followed by scenes that bring to the fore emotions of efficiency and hope. This process explains Moreno's saying: "every mental cleansing is good to follow by a cleansing of accomplishment," through which the protagonist regains vitality and strength from the previously hidden aspects of himself.

❖ Concretization

After a long time in stage where the protagonist has probably dealt with many of his personal affairs and his present emotional state is loaded, the director has the responsibility before focusing on the stage process to focus on here and now on the issue from which started the stage presence of the protagonist and made more concrete the solution - purification that he experienced and correlating it with here and now.

❖ Insight Integration

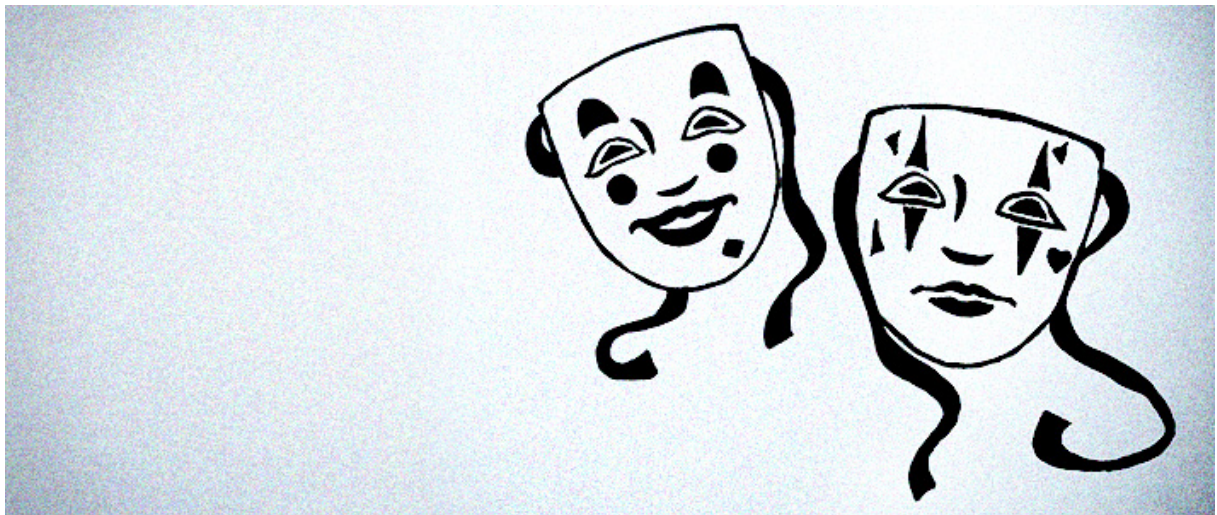
By completing the process with the protagonist having multiple possible thoughts about what he experienced on stage, the director is called upon to help him focus on a proposal so as to make the cognitive understanding of his issue clearer.

❖ Role Training

Having a better awareness of the role of the role played by the protagonist, the director calls on the protagonist to be trained in this new social role.

Exploring unexpressed emotions

In psychotherapy, one of the therapist's greatest challenge is to help people gain consciousness of themselves. Psychodrama uses the combination of imagination and action into more traditional forms of verbal communication and self-reflection. Entering into the realm of imagination, an active visualization of events is created, which allows for the re-examination of an experience with an opportunity for new processing, new understanding and a new emotional impact of the event on the individual. Through the action hopes, fears, expectations, projections, internalizations and critical attitudes come to light. The protagonist-patient has the ability to openly express his emotions to the group and symbolically survive with them (Blatner, 1996), regardless if he chooses to change them or keep them.



PSYCHODRAMATIC TECHNIQUES

How does action help patients to proceed with their treatment? Blatner (2006) compares Moreno's techniques as the carpenter's tools: They can be useful either making a chair, a home or a stylish jewelry box. Depending on the case the master uses the appropriate tool or a combination of them. In Psychodrama we also use the following techniques according to the Protagonist and his needs each time aiming to have a Catharsis.

The most important of these techniques is **role reverse**. It is fundamental as psychodrama is based on this technique. It is the opportunity for the patient to get into someone else's role and to see from another angle the issue that concerns him. The difference of psychodrama with other representational techniques is that it is protagonist-centered, and all roles act according to the protagonist's instructions without acting arbitrarily. Thus, the protagonist first enters each role and shows to the auxiliary ego how to play that role. However, if he does not do it properly, he'll role reverse again and shown again. After practice and after some time the auxiliary ego can work a little spontaneously but always the director checks if what he says and does if apply. There is an **indirect role reverse**, where the protagonist chooses an auxiliary ego who is always in the role of himself and is called the **alter ego**. When there is the alter ego no other auxiliary ego I can take the role of the protagonist except that and any auxiliary ego selected for a particular role remains in this role forever. In the **direct role reverse**, no alter ego is used, and the auxiliary egos can take any role according to the needs of the scene.

Doubling is the second most basic technique in Psychodrama and in the present work very important, since it catalytically helps the protagonist in the expression of his emotions. With rescue, the director (or an advanced member of the group) stands next to or behind the Cast and expresses unmistakable thoughts and emotions.

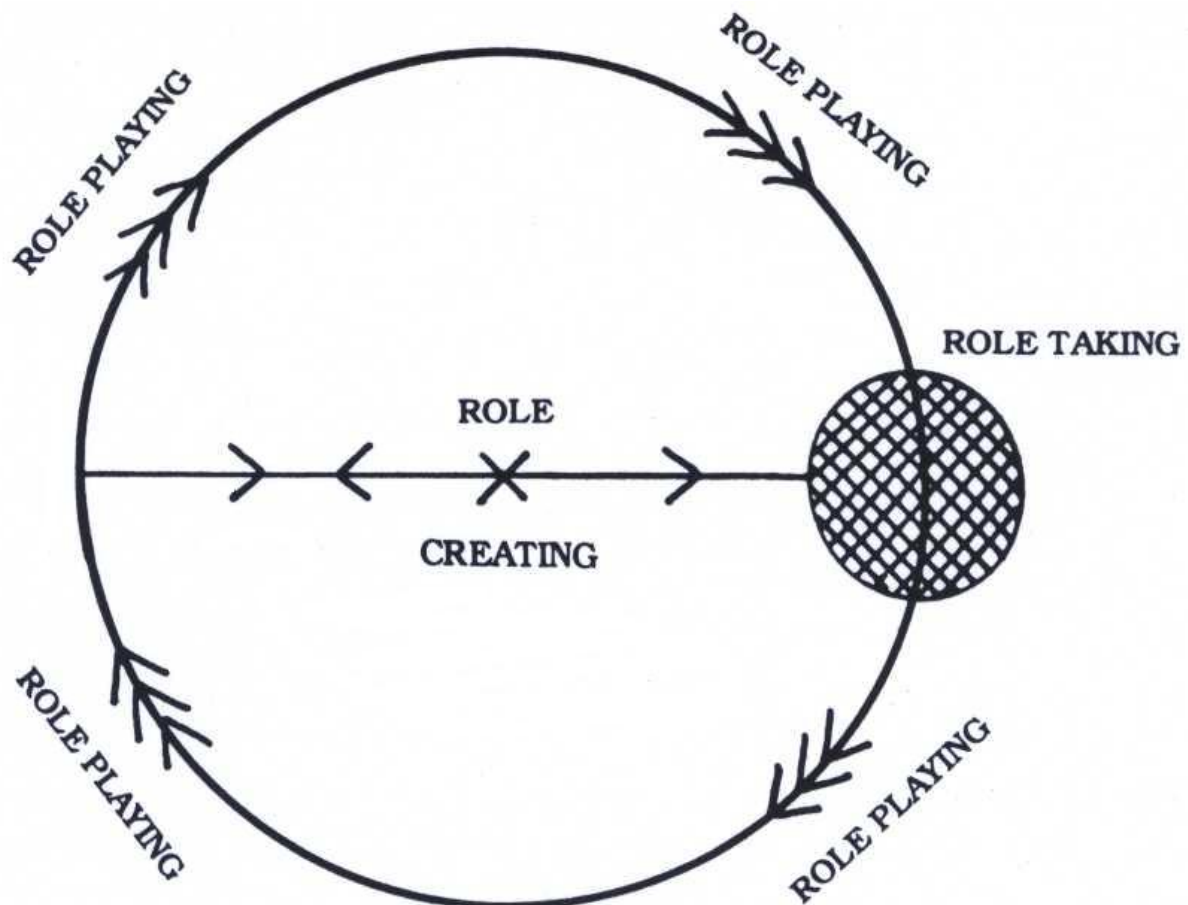
Mirroring is another basic technique in which the protagonist, in order to be able to see objectively what is happening at the moment on the matter that concerns him, comes out of the stage, even puts in his own role an auxiliary ego (alter ego) and observes it from the outside. Many times, with this technique, most of the realization is made, as the protagonists for instance say, "So this is how the relationship with my partner is" when some women visually see that they are degraded or "This is how I behave to my child" when some mothers watch how cruel they may be with their children even though they originally came with having issues of an aggressive child.

Soliloquy is the technique used by the Director to warm up even more the protagonist in expressing out loud what he thinks. Often, you can become a protagonist through what you

experience sinking into inner thoughts. At that moment it is important for his therapy to express them within the group so he can hear them himself and proceed further. It can be thoughts, emotions or intentions.

It is amazing how some people who do not know the technique of the *corrective scene*, act on their own and change what they have just imagined with something they want, In this way they see their goal, what they want to achieve, but the most important thing is that they experience the emotion associated with this altered state, which so far with the elements of the former situation what they experienced was a burden which they did not know how to manage it.

Among the techniques is the *role training* mentioned in a previous section of this paper. Techniques in Psychodrama are even more than just the basics. We will recognize other techniques in case studies below such as the *empty chair* and the *sculpture / portrait*.



CASE STUDIES

Case 1: Unexpressed Anger

In a group warm-up starts with an exercise where members randomly select two cards (one image and one word) for the past, two for the present and two for the future. The instructions given are: "We are the masters of ourselves. We have the responsibility for how we perceive life. I have two packages with different cards here. On cards we see things that we may enjoy or not. We may see reality as it is or as we perceive it. Pick a word and image pair of past and present cards respectively. Who wants to talk first about his cards?"

They take some time to process and they start to share with everyone their own perspective the cards they have in front of them. K. (which we will later be the protagonist) takes the floor secondly.

In the past, she has the word "slave", and, in the picture, there is a tree surrounded by people holding hands and comments: "Cards are very representative of what I'm going through. I am the tree that seeks to take root, but I am lost in what others want me to be. I'm going to be a slave".

The word is "erase" in the present, and there is a camera and two people in front of the camera and comments: "If I do not erase the images, I have for myself and the others for me, the future is difficult".

In the future she has the word "lie" and in the picture there is a storm and comments: "If I do not change the present I will drown in a lie. Wow! It's what I'm negotiating right now in my life. Thank you." I answer: "Thank you", and the next ones go on to describe their cards.

By finalizing the process, I invite those who want to see something more on stage to think of a title they want to put into their issue. And those who do not want to see anything more to close their cards. There are 3 people that do not close their cards. The first person to talk at the first part, K. who spoke secondly and the last person. I ask them to tell us the title of their issue. K. first says her title: "Farewell to my fake image." Then the other two people say the title of the issue they would like to work on. I get up on stage and call on the first who wants to come. K. spontaneously comes without second thought. I ask the other two members to put their cards on the side telling them that we can see their issue later.

We are on the stage with K. and I ask her to repeat what she wants to work on.

Protagonist (K.): I want to see my mother and my mother's projections. Very big lie, I am living in a fairy tale. A vast fairy tale!

Director: Choose someone to do your Inner Self.

Protagonist (K): X.

Director: X. is it ok for you to play this role? *(X. nods Yes and comes to the stage as Inner Self)*

Director to Protagonist: You have your inner self in front of you. What do you say?

Protagonist (K): Why am I crying? **Role Reverse.**

Protagonist as Inner Self (I.S.) to K.: You are afraid that you will miss the train. It's easier to lie. **Role Reverse.**

Protagonist (K.): "I do not know what to say."

Director: Does the Fake Image has come from others?

Protagonist (K): Yes, and I wore it like a garment.

Director: Choose someone to play the role of Fake Image (F.I.).

Protagonist (K): L. *(L. agrees and comes on stage in the role of F.I.)*

F.I. and the Protagonist stand opposite each other.

The role of the I.S. is being used as alter ego. Indirect role reverse of the protagonist with F.I.

Director to F.I.: Tell K. how many years are you in her life?

F.I.: I have been in your life for many years. Since you were 17 years old. We met at a coffee-shop near the White Tower *(Thessaloniki)*. **Role Reverse.**

Director to the Protagonist: Who did you meet that day?

Protagonist (K): My mother and a director.

Auxiliary egos are being chosen for the role of mother and director and they come on stage. The stage is set as a coffee-shop with chairs and a table. I ask the protagonist (K.) to sit in her seat at the age of 17. I ask her: "What is happening right now?"

Protagonist (K): It's afternoon, my mom has brought me to see how the director will prepare me to take exams at the National Drama School of Northern Greece.

Director: How do you feel?

Protagonist (K): I think "I will make my mother proud".

Role Reverse with Fake Image (F.I.)

Director to F.I.: How did you come? What do you say to K.?

Protagonist in the role of F.I.: You will make a lot of money. You will make your parents proud and become famous as Viougouklaki (*famous greek actress*). **Role Reverse.**

Protagonist (K) listening to these words: Wow! That's awesome!

Director **Doubling** the Protagonist: I was expecting this from a young child. Now it's happening!

Protagonist (K): It came by my mom pushing me.

Role Reverse with Mother.

Director to Mother: Did you arrange this? What do you say to your daughter?

Protagonist in the role of Mother: "Whatever you want my child I will support you. Together we'll do it. **Role Reverse.**

Protagonist (K): You live in a different world. You are not next to me. This is your life, not mine to live!

I understand that the protagonist through this scene listening to her mother saying these words is getting aware of something and has left since the age of 17.

Director: Are you talking as your 17-year-old self or as now in your 42-year-old self?"

Protagonist (K): Now.

*I urge the protagonist to leave the cafeteria scene (she thanks the auxiliary ego who plays the director and cleans the stage) and to get in touch with her mother now. F.I. is left behind in the stage present. I'm **doubling** the protagonist to warm-up to what she has realized and express her feelings towards her mother.*

Director **Doubling** the Protagonist: "You are in your world and I realize that I have been burdened since then. You are not with me. It's this Fake Image. I want to tell you now..."

Protagonist (K): I'm tired of living like that. You care about what will other people say, why I live abroad, how much money I make. You do not listen to me. You did the same to my brother. I want to end the relationship with you. I'm not living a life for me.

Director: How do you feel?

Protagonist (K): Relief that she does not speak over me. (*To her mother:*) Whether I have children of my own or not, it's my concern. Why do you care about how I will grow old? Let me live without this role. Change or we will have to end this relationship.

Director **Doubling** the Protagonist: Wow! I speak and she listens without saying a word!

Protagonist (K): You are faking that you are listening to me.

Director **Doubling** the Protagonist: I would like you to hear me, but it will not happen.

Protagonist (K): No even with a surgery. Life is not about money and showing off. My life is

not like that. Your mother at my 24th birthday, told me that I should do a boob job. You become like her as you grow older. You've done it all. Leave me.

Director **Doubling** the Protagonist: I wonder: is this the only way to unblock? Fake Image is paying attention. How can I be separated?

Protagonist (K): If we don't work on our relationship, things cannot go any further. When will you do a little work? **Role Reverse.**

Protagonist in the role of Mother: I have been working all the years. Did you hear any objection from me? It's easy for you to say. Open your eyes and see what happens in your life. **Role Reverse.**

Protagonist (K): You are never at fault in anything. You do not take your responsibilities.

Director **Doubling** the Protagonist: I'm 42 and I'm going to wait for others to take their responsibilities, but I do not have the strength. Where is this power?

Protagonist (K): Inside me. *(to her mother:)* Let me in my peace of mind to live my life. No one can communicate with you.

Director **Doubling** the Protagonist: And that's fake. (showing F.I.)

Protagonist (K): Yes. You do not look deep inside. Your shit. Shut up and listen. You are tedious and you do not inspire me at all.

Director **Doubling** to the protagonist: I want you to stop talking!

Protagonist (K) gradually sinks into her anger, talking incessantly expressing it and her thought circling around the same issue. Now she is silent, and her face looks calmer.

Director: So, today, you decide to say goodbye to the F.I.

Protagonist (K): If the Fake Image and my mother are not separated, I cannot have a relationship with them.

Director: So, you have to say goodbye to both.

Protagonist (K): Yes. I have to cut the connection. I did it in the past.

Director: And why did you come back?

Protagonist (K): I felt sorry.

Director: Now you can say goodbye to them.

Protagonist (K): For good. I'm tired of you.

Director: And do they leave?

Protagonist (K): Yes. I do not care any longer where they are going. What I care about is myself. *The protagonist takes a breath.*

Director: How are you?

Protagonist (K): Much better.

Director: Let's bring your inner self.

Protagonist (K) and Inner Self hold hands.

Protagonist (K): Do you want us to go to the USA?

I.S.: Nice idea.

They hug each other for a long time.

Director: This hug with your inner self is really important. Let's stop here for today.

The protagonist agrees, thanks the auxiliary ego cleans the stage and sits back in the group.

Feedback from the auxiliary egos and sharing follows.

Close / Summary: K. had many repressed emotions and mainly anger towards her mother and she was not given the opportunity in the past to express them to her. Being on stage with a silent mother for the first time, K. was able to say everything she thought and felt. Although the duration of the scene was long and it looked like she was in a delirium, it was important for the patient to feel free and strengthened (with multiple doubling) in her need to get angry with her mother, show her this anger, put her boundaries and to claim the things she really wants in life. Through this process she came into direct connection with her emotions and what she really wants.

Case 2: Rational Anger

We are in a three-hour psychodrama workshop on "Forgiveness". D. is married with 4 children. He has a 20-year-old son diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. He has participated previously in a two-hour workshop for parents held in a special school where he had shared about his anger towards his dead father.

In this workshop we do with each member of the group *vignettes (small scenes)*. He participates in sharing talking about his father and how much anger he feels - only verbally without emotional tinge in his voice. His father has died for 15 years but in his mind, is still alive. After the vignette of one of the group members he is the last one in the process of sharing.

This time he speaks using even more intense emotional words while his voice and face looks calm. Having a calm voice, he says he wanted to kill his father and stopped because of his mother. I feel that G. revives his drama. I complete the sharing session of the previous vignette and I ask G. how he is, thinking that what group listens verbally we can see it non-verbally by putting his body and his emotion on the stage in action.

We get on stage with G. and think that this Protagonist needs to match the words with his emotion and that it would be comforting for him to feel that his father is dead inside him. Knowing the traumatic relationship with his father I felt that it would be good not to focus on what he lived with his father but on his relationship with his father today. So, we bring on stage the dead-absent father in his coffin, who is no longer living but emotionally still in his life.

The psychodramatic stage has the magic to enable the possibility to talk to people who are not alive and to express emotions in order to have a catharsis. I put pillows on stage and cover it with a blanket telling the protagonist: "I feel how important it is for you for your dad to die, as you said, and in Psychodrama we can live everything, you can live a *surplus reality* where your father is here, he does not live, he is in his coffin. I can feel you are still angry with him, I wonder what you would like to say to him". G. He stands and does not speak. I try to warm him up with a **Doubling**: "Father, I want to tell you that ..." He, with a gentle anger, says, "You did not behave right to me and my brothers", "You were a bad man, a bad father", "You brought the money home, but you made our life like hell. Protagonist stops for a minute to speak.

I'm **Doubling** with *maximization (exaggeration in voice and body movement intensity)* repeating the words the protagonist have said in the group on how he feels about what his father has done to himself and his brothers: "You beat me and my brothers", "You

were going to hit my mother but they stopped you", "You destroyed our life", "You destroyed me".

Watching the group being warmed-up by protagonist's action and wanting in a short time to include them, I think that using the technique of Doubling will give them this opportunity and at the same time support the protagonist. The group one by one get on the stage and double. The team exaggerates the tension to manifest this anger: "Die!", "I no longer want you to live in me", "You destroyed me and my brothers", "If you were alive, I would kill you with my own hands", "Stay in the soil, where you truly belong", "You were not worthy of anything", are some of the expressions that the group said in Doubling.

I thank the group that returns to their seats. G. has blushed in his face and I ask him how he feels and what does he want right now. He tells me he wants his father out of his life. I ask him how he wants to do it. With intense anger (like the one he has taken in his childhood) he starts kicking 2 or 3 times his "father" (pillows) shouting at the same time "I do not want you in my life. I do not want you any more".

With the last kick, the pillows representing the dead father and coffin have been thrown away to the edge of the stage and the protagonist stands in the middle of the stage with the intensity on his face left, clearly showing satisfaction in his eyes. At that moment I realize that it is the moment of Catharsis in the stage. I ask him how he feels, and he says: "Relieved."

I explain to the protagonist that what happened today is very important because his oppressed emotions that he was holding so many years stored, have been given space to be expressed through action and allow him to continue his life more freely and we can stop here for today. He agrees. Scene closes.

Rich sharing follows. Group members, while not sharing similar personal experience, they share how much they engaged to the role, how well they have felt, and how well they feel that they have expressed this anger. I understand that this is a part of their subconscious anger towards people in their environment but the workshop is near the end so there is no time for further exploration.

It is very important because the group came into action and could express rationalized emotions. D. helped the group to reach at some point of catharsis through his psychodrama and catharsis. In the end, the protagonist repeats that he feels relieved, sharing that for so many years he was having these thoughts and inner dialogues but did not dare to express them. Now he feels good because he could say it openly and publicly.

Closing / Summary: At first G. was not in connection with his emotion. His words showed intensity while he had cut off any emotional connection to that particular problem. This was blocking him from being able to process and manage it in order to move on with his life. The vivid representation from a secure and powerful position enabled him to express everything he was afraid to express in the past. G. coming to the next workshop shared that these recurring inner thoughts had diminished considerably and that he felt great relief with that particular issue.

Case 3: Repressed Desires

In a group of parents **and** of children with disabilities after some familiarization exercises, the participants are divided into couples and talk about the story of their name. Returning to the group I introduce the concept of *reverse role* and how they will stand behind the other person to present it. It starts **with** the first couple and completes it.

In the second couple, P. states that she does not want to get into the role of G. and present it. She speaks to her about her personality. Then C. gets comfortably and enters the role of P. and presents her. I take note of this resistance in getting into the role of others. This exercise is completed.

We do a sharing session about what they lived, and P. starts to talk about her difficulty with her daughter. She has 2 children; the son is in a special school. I call her on stage and accepts to process the issue. On the stage I place 2 *empty chairs* one for P. and one for her daughter. The protagonist (P.) sits in her place and starts talking to her daughter (empty chair): "You are in your world, you do not care about anything in the house". I ask her to **role reverse** and get into her daughter's position and she tells me she does not want to. I understand she needs to be heard so I ask her to choose a person from the group to do her daughter.

When the **antagonist** (daughter) sits, she becomes even more expressive: "You are creating problems at home. You don't tidy your room. You're out and making me worry". I let her for about a minute to express everything she haven't said. Her face calms down. I ask her how she feels and tells me "Well". I understand she can go one step further and now she can get into her daughter's role. I ask her to **role reverse** with her daughter and she accepts.

We make a **direct role reverse**. Entering the daughter's role, I ask her name and age (K. - 16 years old) and tell her to listen what her mother has to say. She listens and then she answers: "I do not care what you do. I want to live my life". **Role Reverse**.

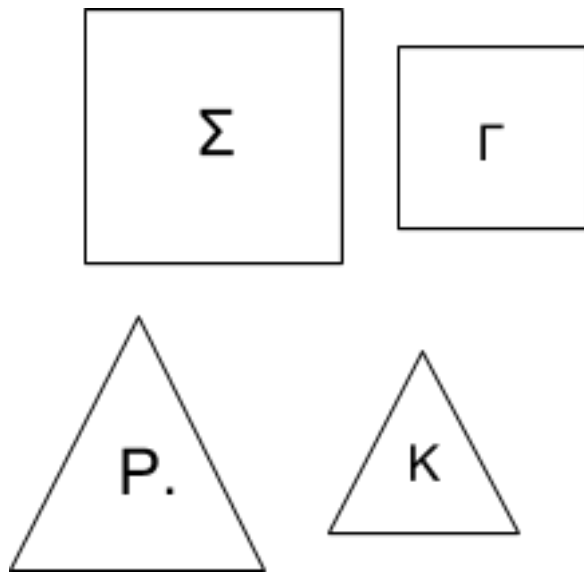
P. listen to what her daughter tells her.

I ask P. what she wants to do in her life. She starts talking to me and I ask her to address these to her daughter.

Protagonist (P.) to her daughter: I, also, want to do things for me and not run for all of you so much and be so exhausted at the end of the day.

We bring the role of "Exhaustion" on stage. With role reverse we see how "Exhaustion" hangs from the Protagonist. The protagonist removes "exhaustion" off her and tells "exhaustion" the things she is able to do without it (without exhaustion). Exhaustion role gets off stage.

As a final scene, I ask her to build a *family portrait* as she would like it to be. P.



builds a portrait where she stands in front with her daughter (K) on her left, her husband (Σ) behind her and her son (Γ) on the left side of her husband.

In the portrait no one touches anyone. In a *mirroring* I ask her if she likes it and she says yes.

She gets in her role and I ask her to say something to every member of her family, but she refuses. I understand she wants to stay with herself. I ask her to make a *soliloquy*

(*monologue*) as if she were alone and to talk to herself. She starts by saying, "I want time for myself, for the things I want to do". I mention that this is a contract with herself and a commitment and I ask her to share this with her family and tell them what she just said to herself. She repeats the same words to her family. I leave some time and I ask her how she feels, and she tells me "I'm calm". We close the scene.

A rich sharing session follows where almost all parents share how they have "given up" on themselves and are trying to satisfy everyone else in the family. In the next psychodrama vignette with another protagonist, P. is being chosen as an auxiliary ego, where she plays the role without resistance, gives feedback from role and sharing.

Close / Summary: The initial difficulty of warm-up exercises in getting in another mother's role and presenting her was the first sign of having an issue. People who are in a strong emotional state cannot hear and take on the role of someone else. Psychodrama is ideal in such cases because it is easy to recognize this through the role playing and the auxiliary ego. Through psychodrama, the protagonist can go ahead and manage his issues better and then through the auxiliary ego can practice active listening and empathy by "getting into the shoes of the other".

Case 4: Frozen Emotions

In a workshop on "Boundaries", warm-up exercises are conducted in pairs where team members have the opportunity to talk about themselves and to think in which part of their life, they want to set boundaries. B. is the fourth time she comes to an open workshop through warm-up exercises on the stage indicating she wants to put limits on her mother (F.).

I know she has been doing individual psychotherapy for the past few years, and attended my previous workshops where she has dealt with her professional matters, what she wants to do in the future and her hobbies. In the group she had only mentioned about the difficulty in communication with her mother and even though she attended a themed workshop for ancestors she didn't actively participate.

Now on stage she stands in the center of the space and in front of her is her mother looking at her (mother has her back to the group). As soon as her mother stands in front of her, she freezes and lowers her eyes. There is a long pause. I'm **doubling** the protagonist (B.) saying, "I do not want to look at you because...". The protagonist does not react and keeps her eyes lowered. I'm **doubling**: "I'm frozen", is it true? Protagonist continues not to react.

Role Reverse with the mother.

In Mother's role (X.) turns her back to B. and says: "I have my own problems, I do not care what she says." The mother does not even address to B. **Role Reverse**.

Protagonist (B) speaks to her mother who has her back to her and says: "You do not accept me, with ignorance." "I do not feel love, recognition, acceptance."

These words are said with a drained apathetic voice.

I ask the Protagonist to choose an alter ego. We get into mirroring and ask her what she sees. She speaks for herself like it's some else: "She does not understand anything, what is happening, she may be shocked." She gets back to the role of the mother and repeats that she does not care.

She, then, returns to her own role and listens to her mother's words again, she recalls a memory and shares that this reminds her of a dream she had: "There was a child and they buried it and I feel that this child is symbolically me, that I did not get love, I want to be born again and I feel ready to do this and live my life.

As the protagonist narrates the dream, I think that we can create the dream on stage. However, since she is a therapeutically mature member and as she shares her thoughts and emotions for the dream, I realize that she has already made the necessary connections and is ready for the next step. We thank the auxiliary ego who made the mother and I ask her to choose a person for the role of "her life as she wants it".

She chooses a young girl from the group wearing a pink t-shirt, has a wide smile and has nice makeup (protagonist wears dark gray pants and a light gray blouse).

Watching the wide smile of the auxiliary ego, the Protagonist (B) smiles, her whole body comes to life, in contrast to before where her body and face were moody. Spontaneously the protagonist says: "I feel hope".

In the role of Life, the Protagonist says: "I am glad to see you smiling so much. I'm here. You can grab my hands and move on together". **Role Reverse.**

Protagonist listens to what "her Life" tells her but does not react. I tell the auxiliary ego to repeat the phrase. Auxiliary ego repeats it but no reaction. The Protagonist looks reluctantly at her Life. On the 4th time which her life repeats the phrase, the Protagonist grabs her hands and says: "How much we look like!" I ask her to make a contract with "her Life".

Protagonist in the role of "her Life": I want to live my life.

Director to Protagonist: Tell her!

Protagonist in the role of "her Life": I want to live you and accept myself.

I instantly think of bringing her back to the original scene with her mother to declare it in front of her, but I feel she has gone a long way and I want her to stay with herself and her commitment without taking away the strength she found to take this first step. We close the scene.

Closing / Synopsis: Action in psychodrama worked like a catalyst as it helped the protagonist realizes how much her mother influenced her. Causing her fixation, does not allow her to feel anything and move on with her life. With the help of the group and the auxiliary ego, the protagonist comes back into connection with her emotions and with herself.

CONCLUSIONS

Psychotherapeutic practice clearly shows that the absence or excessive presence of emotions can be an inhibitory or difficult factor in every person's life. Through the direction of many psychodrama groups, it is conceivable that the majority of issues treated have their root in the emotional impact of their experiences. The person repeating the dysfunctional moments gives new meaning through the new emotions he experiences on stage in a functional way and to the appropriate extent he needs it.

Case studies seem to prove in practice the bibliographic research on how emotion overrides logic and how by working with the emotional world of the patient that can lead to a catharsis. Through the cognitive part, the therapist gets the initial material needed to lead the patient to a greater depth, taking into account the non-verbal information of motion or not and the posture, as well as the facial expressions and breathing (light, heavy, sighs).

The research in Psychodrama is limited. It is recommended for further exploration to use a wider sample of people, with a complete history, to record the emotional blockages, psychodramatic techniques used in each case and the evolution of these people over time (6 months, 1 year, 5 years). This can be done both in the general population and in special population groups (e.g. public service / service), where the need for survival did not allow them to manage their emotional world until then.

All minorities groups need it, especially the group of refugees who were forced to leave their country from fear of their own lives, there is no room for expressing their emotions. Also, the group of drug users who are very sensitive people with a lot of disturbed emotions leading them to impulsive behaviors.

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