



The Effectiveness Of Psychodrama In The School

Hanane Hattab

Laboratory of contemporary criticism methods and discourse analysis

University of Mohamed Lamine Debaghine setif2 (Algeria).

Professional Email: h.hattab@univ-setif2.dz

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Abstract:

School Theater represents an improvised dramatic form, supervised by the educational institution or school. This theater seeks to develop the personality of pupil and develop his skills.

However, its objectives go beyond dramatic play, fun, and laughter to expand the horizons of imagination and educational influence, and go beyond all of that to enter the worlds of psychotherapy in what is called (psychodrama).

If so, to what extent can school theater turn into a type of Psychological entertainment that modifies human behavior and maintains the internal balance of children and teachers?

Can theater change its stereotypical image of being an artistic performance to being an educational activity, behavioral correction and psychological treatment?

Keywords: school theater, children's theater, psychodrama, psychological acting, psychotherapy.

Introduction:

The arts are closely related to human expression and psychological life. Art in general and performing arts (theatre, cinema, music, and dance) in particular provide a kind of understanding of the human psyche through depictions of psychological emotions, emotional states, and behavioral disorders.

Perhaps the psychological and health conditions associated with the Corona pandemic (Covid-19) and the negative effects it has had on the psychology of our children and their long absence from schools, require specialists to consider the relationship of art to psychology, not as entertainment or fun, but rather as a therapeutic method that falls within the psychology of performing arts.

The fact is that these arts - and theater in particular - work to develop the child's abilities, boost his self-confidence, hone his talents, develop his abilities, and repair the cracks caused by the epidemic on the child's psychological level, especially if it finds the appropriate space (the school) to embrace it and to achieve its educational, moral, and therapeutic goals.

First: Towards the theatrical teaching

1- Theater art:

Theater occupies great importance in Arab culture as the most important literary performing arts that express the identity of the individual and society. Theater, according to Allardyce Nicoll, is: “The art of expressing ideas about life, in a form that makes this expression possible to clarify by means of what is happening, and this is about to the apparent image or external conditions of acting. And as for the internal characteristics of the play, we find that the most prominent of them is the use of that (unexpected factor) that leads to emotional and mental shock, so that whenever the shocks of the play, from its big to small, are cast in a form that contains some poignancy and strength, The novel is great in terms of its theatrical form.”⁽¹⁾

Theater is a purposeful cultural practice that summarizes life's problems on stage, to unleash the audience, purify them, and touch their pain. And it reflects all aspects of their lives.

Therefore, the most prominent feature was that theater “... is not considered a finished literary text like a poem or a short story, because it is an artistic text that calls for other artistic and creative texts, closely related, in order to find a specific way to the stage through multiple and varied channels and indications, hence, reading this text requires the student to recall his natural climate, which cannot be achieved, as Mohammed Kaghat says, except by defining the relationship between sending and receiving, which is a relationship characterized by a kind of independence from the rest of the other creative phenomena⁽²⁾.

Perhaps what distinguishes theater most is its saturation with most of the arts and literature, which give the theater poetry, music, and language, and take from it movement, performance, and vividness. This is what stands out within the overlap of literary and cognitive genres. In theater, we find poetry, novels, biography, music, and fine arts... “In theater, many arts are present, but it digests and assimilates them.” These arts are present only due to their specificity in the identity of the theater only. Poetry is present in the theater, and theater was poetry in the beginning. Then poetic theater became a genre only with what artistic development led to, and the novel is present in the theater. Many have viewed the novel as a theatrical text, but theater represents the novel and its theater is celebrated at the expense of the specificity of the novel, and the art of the story is present in the theater as an element in the theatrical performance, a partial element dissolved in the specificities of theatre, and thus the biography is also present.”⁽³⁾

Based on this intellectual, cognitive and literary cross-fertilization in which literature and the arts merged, the circle expanded to include the relationship between theater and psychology. If theater is an expressive literary art that expresses people’s lives and problems and reflects their thoughts and conflicts, then psychology is the study of human behavior and psychological phenomena and has multiple branches such as clinical general psychology, the description is psychological”. The reason for this cross-fertilization and interaction is that literature and psychoanalysis are both related to understanding a person and reading his daily life through his speech.⁽⁴⁾

Since the aesthetic experience is a product of human experience, the writer had to identify with and delve into the selves, trying to comprehend them, decode them, and portray them on stage. This is because “the psychological dimension has clear importance for behavior and actions. The thinking, contemplative man is different from the emotional, impulsive man, and the sensual man is different from the spiritual man... the nervous man is different from the lymphatic one, and so on... etc.”⁽⁵⁾

Perhaps the most important theater that has embraced psychoanalysis and made it stand on its stage is the theater directed to the child (children's theatre) or the theater directed to the school (school theatre) as a theater concerned with children's behaviors and trying to correct them.

2-School Theater:

Through an intertwined dramatic plot and a group of conflicting theatrical characters and within a dramatic literary and artistic form, theater goes beyond the idea of humor, fun and laughter, to transform from a popular art that starts from simple categories and directs to them, to enter an educational, guiding and teaching path, and draw the features of a new life depicted on stage to simulate reality with all its boundaries and issues.

It is stated in the Dictionary of Dramatic Theatrical Terms that School Theater is:

“An amateur troupe or theater supervised by the school or educational institution whose goal is to entertain students, educate them, and train them in the arts of theater themselves. The goals of entertainment and fun may extend to their parents and acquaintances.”⁽⁶⁾, theater begins with spectacle, but it goes beyond it to achieve educational goals and establish educational, cultural, aesthetic, and artistic values.

Most references, institutions, and dictionaries have defined the concept of School Theater by referring to the place, building, or school that hosted this theatre, and also linked it to the actors, who are all children, and to the specific topic directed to them in a way that suits their intellectual and age level.

To determine the differences between school theater and children's theater, the American Children's Theater Organization provided a comprehensive and general definition of school theater that can be summarized as follows:⁽⁷⁾

School Theater is an improvisational dramatic form performed by children, and a dialogue acting activity, supervised by an educator or teacher. where participants play imaginary roles that express their feelings and expand their perceptions and ideas. Therefore, its goal is to build a strong personality, not to discover professional actors.

This means that School Theater undertakes an educational mission in which it attempts to present a theatrical performance that serves a group of children and contributes to achieving education through the act of acting.

The collective nature also leads to double benefits that include all attendees, regardless of their age groups. School Theater represents an extension of children's playing, as it works to sharpen their energies and empty it in a form that appeals to their talents and stimulates their imagination.

In fact, School Theater is subject to what theater in general is subject to. “What must be clarified here is the intentional and direct educational action in School Theater as it is synonymous with education and learning.

If we do not say here, its educational function is more prominent due to its connection to the school, and the latter's connection to society, which makes the practice of School Theater, including watching... an educational practice with two dimensions⁽⁸⁾: Didactic and stimulative. This symbolizes the educational and stimulating activity of the school theatre, as it gives the learner the ability to purify and possess skills and the ability to control his behavior and acquire mechanisms to confront difficulties, as well as the ability to reveal and uncover what is disturbing within oneself. For these reasons, for these

reasons, it was important to communicate with “psychology” within the framework of what is called psychodrama or psychological theater acting, how then does theater transform from a way of enjoyment and a means of watching and learning to a therapeutic tool?

Second: The effectiveness of psychodrama theatrical acting

If drama is an artistic means and an aesthetic mechanism for expressing feelings, emotions, and situations in an artistic representational form, then Psychodrama or psychological drama is a form of psychotherapy that uses the art of acting to help the patient solve his problems, and through the help provided by the mentor or therapist and other trained therapists. The patient embodies the situations and relationships that constitute for him reasons for his behavioral disorder. Sometimes real people participate in the psychodrama treatment method to contribute to solving the patient’s problems, and then this solution may require their presence during the sessions, and when these people are absent, others in the acting group take on their roles. ⁽⁹⁾

This means that psychodrama is an attempt to represent or embody reality through the art of acting, and it is a type of psychological treatment using the techniques of theater art, as it works to develop the faculty of imagination through dramatic play, presentation, diagnosis, imitation, as well as role-playing.

So this therapeutic method combines psychotherapy and art, and this is clear from the combination of the name (psychodrama) or psychological theater acting, which is a word, composed of the spirit or soul and the play. It means psychodrama, and it is a mixture of methods and theories that were initially used as a form of psychotherapy. But it was developed in the late 1930s and focused on using theater as an educational method, and through this strategy, individuals represent problems or situations as if they were happening now.”⁽¹⁰⁾

Psychodrama, in this sense, is the use of the art of acting as a therapeutic procedure for psychological trauma and internal disorders, where acting turns from a performing art into a therapeutic performance. where the child or patient is trying, through the act of improvisation, to evoke a specific psychological state or a trauma within a theatrical performance, in the presence of the educator or educational supervisor teaching theater, with his expertise and experience, which supports the child and develops his ability to reveal and open up.

So, through school theater activity and based on psychodrama, this activity attempts to develop the child’s self and help him overcome internal conflicts, by embodying reality by re-enacting it and then trying to overcome this reality. So psychodrama aims to create an internal balance for various psychological conflicts and introduce them into a stage of internal dialogue and reconciliation, which gradually turns through acting into a kind of comfort, catharsis, and the ability to control psychological behaviors. This is why the procedural definition of psychodrama is “the pupil’s re-enactment of his problems in a free expressive form, which gives him, through his acting performance, the opportunity to express his feelings, emotions, and various tensions related to the problem.” As well as the opportunity for self-insight, reincarnation and simulation in order to bring about change, modification and reshaping of abnormal human behavior, as well as in order to achieve psychological harmony.

In this regard, William El Kholy (1976) cites his concept of psychodrama by saying, “It is a form of group psychotherapy or a psychological play in which the patient plays a part of his life in an improvised manner with whomever he chooses from among the patients and nurses, which makes him take a more objective position regarding this play.” He projects on the people and events of the novel much of what he suffers from, which increases his insight into the problem, and increases the therapist understanding of the situation, and may also provide a degree of catharsis.”⁽¹¹⁾

In fact, psychodrama is a performative game and an absolute free expression. It represents a journey to know the “self” and its idea is based on one basis, which is entering the dramatic scene, integrating into it, and uniting with it.

“According to the principles of treatment with this theater, to speak and act out a series of roles that are prepared automatically as part of the direct experience of a diverse life situation that is closely related to the difficulties and problems he suffers from. The patient may represent a dream he had one night, and several members of the Therapeutic group may represent roles that reflects personalities characterized by delusional behavior as imagined by schizophrenic (schizophrenia), but it is governed by two main conditions: ⁽¹²⁾

When holding a psychodrama session in its situational form, that is, a specific situation and a specific place, these two elements are: the availability of the therapeutic group, and the psychodrama writer or writer of the psychological play. In addition, we may also use in the psychodrama session, a desk, a sofa chair, a stage, or any other formal elements, but these formal elements are not necessary for general psychodrama. Rather, what is necessary is the availability of three pillars without which the therapeutic process will be disrupted, which are: ⁽¹³⁾

A- The existence of a problem that can be embodied.

B- Therapeutic group.

C- The hero of the novel.

These are the focus of any psychodrama session. ⁽¹⁴⁾

Since theatrical performances are a reflection of our problems and conflicts in various fields, psychodrama takes on the character of group performance, as the therapeutic session forms a collective image of a specific situation or case in which multiple parties contribute. This treatment is subject to five elements that must be present, which are: ⁽¹⁵⁾

1 - The Group

2- The protagonist of the novel

3- The director

4- Assistant therapists or auxiliary egos

5- A specific organization of methods and techniques appropriate to the requirements of the situation, and the five components combined together constitute the necessary organization of the elements of psychodrama treatment.

From here, it seems that psychological theater acting (**psychodrama**) finds its purpose in educational institutions and schools that try to involve the child in these processes in order to achieve pedagogical educational goals on the one hand, and to stimulate them mentally, emotionally, and physically on the other hand. The method of integration and coexistence is the most important assistant in the success of treatment and achieving psychological balance for the child, and the most important benefits of Psychodrama for children can be summarized as follows:

1 - Revelation, disclosure, purification, and self-recreation, as the theatrical performance gives the actor the freedom to express his inner feelings, emotions, and internal personal conflicts, including reaching the stage of emotional venting of problems.

2- The ability to simulate situations and recreate the events that the child was exposed to and hidden in his subconscious.

3- Enhancing personal strength through the ability to face difficult situations and get rid of psychological disorders, anxiety and tension.

4- Treating many psychological, behavioral and neurological diseases.

5- Enhancing self-confidence through frankness, disclosure and confrontation.

In order for psychodrama to achieve its guiding and educational goals, it has adopted a number of techniques and mechanisms that work to apply them to the learner and adapt them according to the psychological state he suffers from, and they can be summarized in a number of elements: ⁽¹⁶⁾

- 1- Chair Techniques (Auxiliary Chair): It is one of the techniques used by all therapists, as a means of preparation and with the aim of summoning and arousing a certain feeling, forming a certain idea, or with the aim of directing a certain feeling towards an individual.
- 2- Role reversal: By this we mean the exchange of roles between characters, such that "A" becomes in place of "B", so that he experiences the situation from his own perspective.
- 3- The substitute: The substitute expresses the hero's feelings and feelings, such as expressing the hero's feelings of fear or love.
- 4- Monologue (or a person speaking to himself) is a useful technique for expressing latent, hidden thoughts.
- 5- The best friend (the shadow character) is an artistic form that replaced the "soliloquy", where the best friend appeared on the stage in a psychodramatic performance and was justified by the hero's need to talk to someone to express his feelings to him.
- 6- The mirror: It performs its role in that it can exist by making the auxiliary egos depict and embody the role of the protagonist in his presence and existence, as he sees for himself how he performs his role.

Conclusion:

In addition to the above, this research paper arrives at a number of results that can be summarized as follows:

- School theater contributes to developing the child's abilities and enhancing his talents
- stimulating the child, sharpening his energies, and translating them into theatrical and movement performance
- Giving the child and learner the ability to confront, dialogue, express positions and opinions, and self-confidence.
- Contributing to achieving the educational and cognitive role of the child in accordance with modern educational methods

- Meeting the psychological needs of the child through disclosure, communication, and representation of reality, trying to overcome internal disturbances, and the ability to treat some psychological conditions such as: tension and fear...
- Integration into school and dialogue with the teacher, educator, and students, as well as acquiring skills to integrate into society and accept others.
- Treating speech defects in children such as (stuttering).

In contrast to this, psychodrama seeks, through School Theater performances, to achieve a number of goals that can be monitored as follows:

- 1- Enabling the child or student to confront his internal conflicts and emotional trauma.
- 2- Purification, catharsis, and achieving inner comfort through movements and fluctuations
- 3- The ability to control behavior and achieve personality balance
- 4- Acquiring a method or mechanism for facing difficulties and accepting them
- 5- Get rid of situations of stress and anxiety
- 6- Stimulates the child and develops his abilities
- 7- Acquiring skills that enable him to accept and live with others
- 8- Learn the skills of dialogue, disclosure, and speaking out (reaching unfolding state)
- 9- Self-development and emotional control.

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Footnotes:

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