

3.20. On Realistic Psychotherapeutic
Theatre - RPTT (1995-1997)

Чтение: (pp. 288-291)

In: Бурно М.Е. Клиническая neuropsychia -
-и.: Академический Проект, ОППЛ, 2000.-719с.
(Clinical Psychotherapy)

[Translation into English]

Reprinted in "Creative clinical neuropsychia" (2000, 2006)

3.20.1 Basic features of Realistic Psychotherapeutic Theatre (1995)

1. It's not a psychodrama. It's a special group (company of actors) of creative self-expression-curing by means of artistic creation. This group - for single patients suffering from hard feeling of inferiority. It's an artistic part of Medicine, but not Psychology, not Art. As a rule patients simultaneously participate in the work of usual clinical groups of creative self-expression within the framework of the my clinical method of Therapy by means of creative self-expression (Burno M.E., 1989-198). Thus the Psychotherapeutic Theatre helps patients to become a bit of Psychiatrists=Psychotherapists for themselves and others.

2. The fact that only the creative works (plays, stories, poems, photographs etc.) of patients and psychotherapists are staged, performed and shown at this Theatre-makes it unique. Only music, dances, photographs of some pictures, photographic portraits used in performances - may be of different origin.

3. Although patients actors are included into the beneficial psychotherapeutic process developed and organized by clinical specialists they should realize that the main task of the Theatre is the psychotherapeutic and psychoprotective influence on the audience. That's patients - if the performance occurs at some medical institution or some healthy people if the performance takes place at school, club, etc., as people with psychological problems can be found in any audience. Thus I am talking about psychotherapeutic and psychoprotective (and for audience too) performances and concerts. It's also important for the patients participating in performances - to understand that what they are doing is first of all meant for the audience because otherwise they will feel that they are watched by the audience as guinea-pigs. Who are treating themselves by rehearsals and

performances and even the natural curing joy of such a performance will not help to avoid this sensation. It would be preferable to support this approach by the presence of a few healthy actors act as psychotherapists. Patients cure the audience. As for the psychotherapeutic value of the artistic creation for themselves - it's another matter and it has nothing to do with the audience. Eventually, every real artist in the higher meaning of the word cures himself by his own art and every gifted psychotherapist helps himself by giving spiritual psychotherapeutic help to others. [p. 288].

3.20.2. «It's all about me!» (1996)

Realistic psycho-therapeutic theatre is a special treatment group existing within the framework of the Creative Self-expression *Therapy*. It normally includes 10-15 people and is primarily meant for lonely patients suffering severely from the inferiority feeling of endogenous and professional origin. The theatre is an artistic part of the clinical medicine and it does not belong either to art or psychology. Chronic sub-depressive disorders, loneliness and the feeling that they do not fit in among people as well as conscious dislike of the anesthetic and robotic effect of psychotropic medicines usually unite the patients who become actors of this theatre. While acting sincerely and realistically according to Stanislavsky method they get friendly and learn characters and mental disorders and their manifestations in acting. At the beginning this is probably the only place where they are able to touch each other warmly, tell each other some tender words, embrace or kiss each other while playing their parts. Certainly, sometimes they quarrel and feel jealous but this can be helped by warm therapeutic approach. A weekly rehearsal arranged in cozy surroundings lasts two hours. Once a month they enjoy a party while playing in front of the audience. Psychotherapeutic plays, stories, poems, slides, etc. for the psychotherapeutic concerts - all this is written and made by the psychotherapists and patients in a special treating and artistic way for the audience and for themselves. For example, when some important, penetrating and moving psychotherapeutic feeling is planted in the souls of patients-actors in the form of monologues and dialogues it normally helps much more than a simple psychotherapeutic conversation with a doctor. Being sort of within the play, story, poem or a melody brings them a healing effect and teaches them to be more confident when they are in their sub-depressive state as well as to find their own subtle ways in life. Patients of psychiatric and psycho-neurological clinics proved to be the best

audience. The important psychotherapeutic method or "mechanism" of "treating yourself while treating somebody else" (M.Burno., 1992) ("when you feel bad help a person who feels even worse and you will feel better yourself") is in effect here. When some lonely and unhappy mental patients of psycho-neurological clinics watched these plays or slides, or listened to stories and music plays they started feeling that the creative process as well as communication with the nature or going deep into their own past can really help much more and in a more pure way than handfuls of medicines they awoke from their medical sluggishness and exclaimed, "It's all about me!". [p.289].

3.20.3. Shelter Community (1997)

The basis of the Realistic Psycho-Therapeutic Theatre (RPTT) is formed by the whole complex method of the Creative Self-Expression Therapy (CSET), that is, medical teaching of elements of clinical psychotherapy, psychotherapy itself and natural science - all presented in the form of warm and colourful process of patients' versatile creative work helping them to find their own ways as well as to find the meaning of helping each other and to aspire for doing it. However, it goes without saying that in the theatre where patients play their parts we concentrate on medical acting. RPTT (as well as CSET in general) is meant for patients suffering from severe forms of chronic anxious, depressive and defensive states (but not acute psychosis) of endogenous and processive as well as of psychopathic origin. It can be applied in different forms even with only mentally normal professional actors on the stage and patients only in the audience.

In this chapter I would like to describe only one form of RPTT the one where the theatre with patients involved in medical acting also includes a tea-table with candles and it all forms a kind of shelter community for patients with continuous disorders which will never be totally cured. It aches them to live among normal people who are unable to understand them with their healthy minds, to forgive them their frequent malicious depressive hysterics, extravagant tricks and are unable to comfort them with their healthy warmth. Normally, this is all impossible for healthy people even when they are this patient's close relatives because on the one hand the patient does not look really crazy and on the other hand he always annoys them with the lack of common sense and elementary patience as well as with unpredictable behaviour.

Such people are not offended and patronised in a healthy authoritarian way only in the companies of alcoholics and drug addicts where every member of such a group hides behind the depersonalising curtain of intoxication. Sometimes such patients also find each other in psychiatric clinics and spontaneously organise in communities whose members do not annoy each other with the lack of common sense. Such absence (or weakness) of common sense with defensive psychopaths quite often results in especially deep realistically analytical, subconsciously psychological or autistic symbolic talents and schizophrenic "polyphony" (Dobrolyubova, 1996) provides the one suffering from it with an opportunity to contemplate the world in endless and unexpected "tomographic sections" and forms the basis of truly surrealistic creative work and avant-garde art of this century.

In our psycho-therapeutic theatre practically all our defensive patients who are usually lonely and unable to live in a family want to enjoy real human warmth (that's why our theatre is also referred to as realistic). Only here, especially at psycho-therapeutic rehearsals one can see and feel their deep endogenous and processive tension. A doctor should touch the quick of the soul of the patients, enliven and move them making the patients embrace, kiss or caress each other warmly while "playing their parts", to touch each other's hand softly as they cannot and will not be able to do these simple warm human things in the society of normal people which is absolutely strange to them. Here in the air of tense defensive listlessness and bleakness of attractions sensual and sexual bursts practically never happen due to fine almost soft delicacy and spirituality of these non-organic patients. In this theatrical shelter, in our creative friendly slowness accompanied with warm mutual care patients get enlivened by inspiration and tender touching each other. Looking

form inside a psycho-therapeutic play or a concert number they learn how to feel sort of enlightenment and live creatively, for example, while suffering from a chronic depression. They play mostly themselves or some other mentally sick characters, somebody else's depression in order to find their own way in life through it. Many patients say that they really live in the theatre while in the world of normal people they just pretend to be normal while the latter they also learn to do in the theatre. [pp. 290-291]

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REALISTIC

PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC THEATRE AS A PART OF THE THERAPY BY CREATIVE SELF-EXPRESSION (CREATIVE SELF-EXPRESSION THERAPY)

This is not a kind of Moreno's psychoanalytic theatre but it is a clinical psychotherapeutic theatre. The clinical psychotherapy experienced its highest development in the countries of the German language and in Russia in the first part of our century. Its representatives of this period are: Ernst Kretschmer, Germany, Max Mueller and Jakob Klaesi, Switzerland, and Semyon Konstorum, Russia. The essence of the clinical psychotherapy is that its different peculiarities originate from clinical and personal aspects. For example if the patient is an autistic type than a physician may work with him by means of one of psychoanalytical methods which is close to him. And if the patient is a realistic synthonic type we use a realistic psychotherapy. In this sense only the clinical psychotherapy is the field of clinical medicine and only a physician but not a psychologist can actually apply it. In the USA they sometimes call the clinical psychotherapy - medical psychotherapy. It goes without saying that only the clinical psychotherapy could develop in this country in Stalin and stagnation times and only its realistic part. The essence of the therapy by creative self-expression is that by means of investigating the characterological radicals and all different ways of self-expression which give you a whole picture of a character a patient is seeking his way in life, the sense of his living and uses his characterological peculiarities to the advantage of the society. And due to this a psychopath compensates and a depressive or schizophrenic patient achieves a stable remission. The therapy by creative self-expression is meant for different patients with the suffering resulting from the feeling of inferiority. This hard feeling of uncertainty or inferiority alleviates in the course of creative self-expression. When the individuality becomes apparent in the process of creative work the patient experiences a raise of spirits and inspiration as a meaningful meeting with himself. The ideal of the therapy by creative self-expression is a stable creative inspiration and almost a continuous light of creation in his soul. The psychotherapeutic theatre helps the patients to feel and investigate characters better through the stage performance and to express themselves in similar characters. This is possible even in a special psychotherapeutic tale play which we are rehearsing now. For example the wolf is an epileptoid, the fox - a demonstrative type, the she-bear - a synthonic type, the deer - a psychosthenic, the cat - an autistic type, etc. I write these plays myself. And finally the patients cure themselves by making their performance beneficial for the public. They play in the charitable hospitals, closed schools and public centres. The plays are written and staged in such a way that what is going on on the stage has a psychotherapeutic effect on the audience.

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