

The magic shop. A brazilian reinterpretation and expansion for clinical use with children

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Abstract

This is done by reading the Brazilian Rodrigues, a dramatic play for groups: The Magic Shop, created by JL Moreno and adapted by René Marineau. The game, which works primarily through negotiations between a participant / buyer and the conductor, is detailed in your steps and applications of the methodology of the Teatro de Reprise. The authors also propose an extension of the game, reporting a case of psychotherapeutic care of a child and discussing their results fast. The game is especially suitable for groups of adults in intimate contexts, which provide a ritualistic atmosphere and the authors suggest good use with groups of children in a playful atmosphere and relaxation.

Keywords: Psychodrama. Magic Shop. Swap Market. Group. Child Psychotherapy.

INTRODUCTION

The Exchange Bazaar was defined by Moreno as a technique in which the director or a member of the group (chosen by the director) would take the shopkeepers role. There would be, by fictional hypothesis, a store “filled with imaginary items, from a non-physical nature” (MORENO, 1997, p.35) which may be acquired by exchanging. In other words, the participants would ask for something they want and, in exchange, they would hand over something abstract with great personal value. According to Moreno: “One after another, the group members offer themselves to go up in the stage, entering the store looking for an idea, a dream, a hope, an ambition.” He exemplifies it with a session part, in which the storekeeper Justus Randolph, according to him a sensitive therapist, deals with a depressive patient searching for peace of mind. The therapist offers the item in exchange for her fertility renounce. The patient give up the trade and Moreno assesses that the director hit “a sensitive spot”, because she would have issues related to sex and birth.

Moreno’s publications about the matter are meager. However, what becomes evident is that the sense of exchanging that he proposed would involve big sacrifice, apparently to charge the buyers. That strategy seems to coincide with the heavily Judeo-Christian point of view from his time, supported by promises and guilt.

There are also Brazilian psychodramatists that report having experienced the Store, by Jerka Moreno's direction and they tell the abstract exchange experience between group colleagues, in line with what gestalt therapy have been doing from long ago, in which those group colleagues exchange characteristics (qualities and defects) between themselves.

Some authors have quoted *The Magic Shop* in articles, such as Rosane Rodrigues (2008) and Maria Luiza C. Soliane (1998), nevertheless it doesn't look like there isn't much psychodramatic writing that goes deep in the topic. Rodrigues has participated in one of those workshops, which ended up becoming a fundamental reference for her reading of the *Magic Shop*, creating her own features, by adapting.

The Shop from Marineau, according to Rodrigues, one of the authors, as she was presented by himself in Jundiai/São Paulo, differs from Moreno's proposition in relevant aspects. In both, there is the valuable abstract exchange, however in Marineau's, they are converted into concrete and symbolic objects. And as an offer to the seller, the buyer would hand over equally concrete and symbolic objects that don't fit anymore. For example, in an exercise of our author imagination, the buyer could ask for a ventilator that symbolizes the lightness he seeks in his life and his exchange currency is a chain, with inmate iron balls, representing the heavy weight he's been carrying. The difference would be in the seller's moving principle. In Moreno, it appears that the buyer is responsible when sacrificing, in renouncing something valuable to accomplish a big wish. Now in Marineau, what makes the buyer responsible is the deal itself, which should give him responsible autonomy to accomplish his wishes himself, in a coconstruction process between buyer and seller. For example, our ventilator and inmate iron ball could be converted into reforms and adaptations that could make it possible for the buyer to realize that without the weight he could stay vulnerable for great dispersion or superficiality. So, the seller could, without using any kind of interpretation, offer a smaller iron ball or one that obey to its commanders willing. Just like if instead of a ventilator, being offered a net in which he could rest and recovery from heavy things and then resume them. And all claiming that, in the store, their ventilator stock has exhausted, for example. That is, without losing the fantastic of the game.

Moreno doesn't describe if he used ego-auxiliary, just show how the director acts. In 1970, *The Store* was replicated in Brazil with at least one ego-auxiliary performing the deal on scene, mediated by the director. Marineau, demonstrating his way of doing *The Store* in Brazil didn't use any auxiliary ego as permanent staff, although used to request spontaneous auxiliary, such as ego-actors [Moreno's term (1997, p.458) to designate the emerging group substitution on stage], withdrawn from the audience right after the deal is made, to show the dealt object and his final result. The storekeeper – which is both character and director – after the dealing and the buyer's agreement about the finalization of the object he will take, show the buyer's request, making use of the Playback Theatre (SIEWERT, 2014) methodology. In other words, its asked for the buyer to pick someone to be himself and the other parts of his object. The spontaneous egoactors perform to the visualization and resonance of the buyer and then the storekeeper asks if he is satisfied with the demonstration he has received. In case his answer is no, the director set up the scene again with the changes the participant requested, like one do in Playback theatre, which is not based on co unconscious notion.

THE MAGIC SHOP OF ROSANE RODRIGUES

Since the artistic inspiration from Marineau in Jundiai city, brought by the

colleague Luzia Mara Lima-Guimarães, place where she used to teach classes back then, Rosane Rodrigues has performed the Magic Store. At first to show the students what she had watched. And then, in every intervention, a new touch would reveal from her creativity.

It is worth a little stop to exam the game question. Rodrigues (2008, p.106) considers the Magic Store a dramatic game, not a dramatization, because it makes a difference saying that any game has as first goal, the pleasure. Be that dramatic, competitive, by chance or skill wise, based on Roger Caillois (1967) classification. After the pleasure, the game's goal could be to warm up, disparate spontaneous states, prepare classes, etc. In order that the goal is purely pleasure and thrill, it must be played with developed or "neutral" roles (neutrality does not exist, but what is important here is to designate something that generate low tension on whoever is playing the role), social or imaginary, because the tension must never surpass the pleasure. Now in dramatization, just like in theater, the scene is centralized around one or more conflicts, that need to be found a measure to create a resolution flow in that force field. This means, at minimum, forward for a solution.

The dramatic game, just like any other game, can only be considered playful if it keeps the players relaxed on the field. And to travel in a context that is between the dramatic and the group: the playful context (Rodrigues, 1995, pp.112-114). In Magic Store's case, for that reason, the action direction may occur between the character and the director's image. There is a physical initial warm up in which the participants relax lying down or sitted, with their eyes closed and are conducted to detect a wish, convert it into an object, detect what they do not want anymore, convert it into an object and follow an imaginary road to get to the store. Meanwhile the director gives the directed fantasy instructions, he goes along with the egoactors crew, dressing up for a magical outfit. Rodrigues (2008, p. 106) differs the term directed fantasy for groups, from the term internal psychodrama, that would be for a single person, in which the director could follow every step from the subject's image and adapt it to fit its story. In directed fantasy the conductor gives the same instruction to everyone in the group, adapting only to match his perception and intuition. The instructions set up the wishes choice, route and vehicle to go to the pictured Store. In that moment is crucial to keep the eyes closed and the environment with lights turned off. The magic in this game relies in that, when the participants open their eyes, they found, by the same calm and boring voice tone, the director incarnated on a mythical character of an old ancestor.

Along with the Grupo Improvise, Rodrigues has done interventions with the Magic Store following the steps:

SETTING FOR SPONTANEOUS STATES

- Low lights, paused and well articulated instructions.
- Close the eyes and begin the directed fantasy, relaxing the body and warming up the mind.

DIRECTED FANTASY FOR THE WISH

- Wish identification and transformation into concrete object.
- Identify what one does not want anymore and transformation into concrete object. Verification of how each one will carry its exchange currency.

- Vehicle's choice for each one to use to get to the store and how the route is, depending on what is chosen.
- Climatic and geographic obstacles potential suggestions (resistance interpolation)
- Meeting and both the Magic Store and salesman imagination
- Open the eyes

THERAPEUTIC NEGOTIATIONS

- Ask the name (playful context, between group and dramatic)
- Negotiate the deal, guiding it through the search of the buyer (active listening from what and how he explicit the wish)
- Ask if the buyer if he would like to see a result demonstration of the deal, performed by egoactors
- Offer musics inspired on the buyer's wish, meanwhile the helpers prepare an object following the playback theatre methodology. It can use egomusicians or the own audience making suggestions. In that last case, the seller should be tuned to lead with disinhibition the whole song, even if he does not know it.
- Theatric demonstration and object's resignify. Suggestion: symbolic deliver of the object.
- More trades according to the available time

THE COOL DOWN

- Ask for everyone to close their eyes again. For those who participated as an audience (That means that they did not traded with the seller directly), it is suggested that they verify if the order stays the same and that they perform the trade mentally. Everybody is instructed to follow back the route carrying the new object, verifying also if the path or the vehicle has changed too.
- Sharing time, stimulating everyone to tell how was the route, stimulating those who did not trade directly.

The game can be accomplished by only one director, as Marineau did in Brazil, but the exchange gain a lot in dimension and poetic when the crew can be composed of some egoactors that also transvestite as help characters that receive what the buyer does not want anymore and make the wish happen theatrically. This way, by asking the buyer if he would like a demonstration, Rodrigues prefers to use the Teatro de reprise (2013). In this case the egoactors, those who also work as therapeutic agents, agree with a way of representing the bought object. In other words, to play the roles freely, without the buyer's

choice on who will do what, and that way the counconscious flow can happen in a intense manner by the intuition and preparation of the egoactors. Also the sensitive hit is big and the mistakes the buyer points out won't be corrected, because it essentially makes part of that group counconscious. The pointing is accepted, but the scene is not made again, guaranteeing the buyer will take exactly what he ordered.

To get it right on the object that the buyer is going to leave behind is also below the desirable, because sometimes people position themselves like they do not need anything, which is self-overrating. For example, recently a buyer from a group Magic Shop presentation was wishing to get a door that made her see the dead and wanted to hand over a heart shaped pillow, representing how much she missed those people. The door was converted into a tilting window that could not be opened anytime and a balloon would be slowly filled with the loss feelings that might occur in her life. But, if she would hand over the representative of all what she misses, for what would she want that door? Then, that was reformed in a way she could realize she could not stay without her precious emotions: The pain that moves and potentiate changes in all of us.

This way, even if it is guaranteed that it is a store that has everything because everyone that passes by leaves amazing things there, when the buyer asks for things he might can't handle or that are too ideal and far from their realities, in this moment the magic salesman can say that he does not have exactly the object the buyer wishes. Also offer one object more besides the ordered one, in a manner of developing therapeutically unworkable proposes and bad self-awareness. All of this is done with delicate look exchanges and humorous dialogues between the salesman (seller) and his helpers, who can make objects suggestions and order adaptations for the exchange. And always with sensitive hearing from the crew in what matters to what the buyer seeks.

The object's confection, both made by spontaneous or egoactors, counts on the coconscious and the counconscious in force at that time, believing that if the warm up and the negotiation happen in a supplemental reality and magic climate, as this psychodrama modality propose, the egoactors group will always get it right. There won't be mistakes in that case, because all the participants, including the crew will be warmed up in the process and what may look like a mistake will be only part of it. In the spontaneous egoactors case, Rodrigues recommends that, differently from what Marineau does, they get summoned from the beginning of the session, that way they can remain with the serving function and don't regress in the directed fantasy.

It is worth to remember that all experiences are accepted, without any judgement or criticism, even those that don't follow the direction instructions, because it is about a dramatic game.

The Store produce an atmosphere of fantasy, by means of a good warm up, the setting of the room, the clothes both director, egoactors and characters are wearing. It is a moment in which one gets involved with what happens, experiencing all with lots of poetry and sense of humor. This atmosphere starts from Moreno's concept of supplemental reality (1965 apud MORENO, 2001, pp.212-213). For him, the psychodrama does not take place only when we perform scenes from past, present and future situations, but also in a field in which there is something we call reality, possible thanks to our imagination. This expansion from experience is allowed in psychodrama by methods that are not used in life, like ego-auxiliaries, egoactors, empty chair, the dual, role reversal, the mirror, etc.

Zerka Moreno (2001, pp.60-61) afterwards defined the supplemental reality as a technique used to "complete and heal", capable of providing the subject a integrating effect, granting the person more autonomy to move on with life. The author gives examples from scenes in which supplemental reality is used; such as perform a dialogue

with someone that already died or a scene where the main character can expose all the contained anger towards his boss, among others.

Soliane (1998) claims that the supplemental reality is not a technique, but the reality that psychodrama works with. It may not be much perceptible when, in a dramatization, the main character reverse roles with his son, the boss, etc. Or make a presentation in a more intense manner when you play a god's role, or mythological beings, dream characters, etc. Therefore, whenever we act within the dramatic context, we are also inside a supplemental reality.

The supplemental reality makes its presence in any psychodramatic session, but in the Magic Store it emerges with exuberance, because it utilizes concrete and symbolic intermediates objects, what allow the participants to travel to a imaginary world, where it can be possible to give wings to fantasies and desires. And the best of it is having the possibility of being contemplated from their requests, which would be unviable in the world of consequences. That means, in the social context, with its more rigid and limited consequences.

THE MAGIC SHOP'S PRINCIPLE FOR KIDS IN ROSE OTAKA YUKIMITSU'S PERSPECTIVE

One of the authors had her first contact with the Magic Shop at Rosane Rodrigues's class, taking a Level 1 psychodrama course in DPSedes. She experienced the audience role by watching the colleagues performing trades with the salesman and also the buyer's role when she chose a wanted object, exchanging it for the other one that had no use for her anymore. What has marked her was the record of an intense and transforming experience. And by means of the received magical object, she became stronger to face the challenges that were presented in her life at that point. Sometime later, she started to use this modality adapted to a psychotherapeutic bipersonal attendance with a child. Therefore, the clinical case here reported is about a session, in which the director management was to incorporate the salesman role to conduct therapeutic actions.

The client was a nine years old boy, who is going to be called Pedro in here, his parents looked after psychotherapy help due to their son's low performance in school. The father claimed that he was tough with the kid and that he constantly asked the boy for a higher performance, several times proposing deals from this kind: "if you start writing with cursive handwriting, you will be gifted a new video game". In contrast, the kid frequently tried to reach for the proposed goals, but were always failing, showing low self-esteem in phrases that depreciated him, for example when he used to say that he was smart only playing around.

The session that is briefly described in here was initiated from a invented story by Pedro, in which the sun had put sunglasses and was explaining to the moon that he was protecting himself, however his own solar rays had reflected on the lenses and hurt his eyes. That way a dramatization begun in which Pedro were playing the sun and the therapist was playing the moon. The author, by seeing the hurt sun, instantly remembered the experience from the Magic Store and decided to adopt the salesman posture, putting herself at disposal to offer the sun some object that would help him to take care of his bruise. Then, still playing the moon, she asked him what he needed and the sun/Pedro answered that he was giving away light and heat but never getting anything in return. In that moment, the client/character brought the exchange matter and following the Magic Store principle, the author considered the light and heat as the things the sun was offering to hand over to the store, that is, to exchange for the items he would wish to receive. In

that way, the sun/Pedro asked the moon for a pool for refreshing. Together, they set up a pool made by pillows and by the end of it; the sun/Pedro was invited to try the object. They got into the pool and he said he was satisfied. After the trade, Pedro decided to keep going with some planets negotiations. With the Earth, the sun/Pedro said: "I came to charge you! I give you light and heat and I don't get anything back. From you, I want a 60 km air conditioner!". The Earth/therapist answered that she was out of raw material and had no technology to build such a large air conditioner, so she bargained a delivery of a smaller one. The sun/Pedro agreed. Talking to Pluto, the sun/Pedro complained that this planet had nothing but ice. Considering that ice was the only thing to offer, the deal was that the ice could be put in the pool and be melted by the sun. The sun/Pedro accepted satisfied.

By the end of this session Pedro drew the moon and the sun inside a pool and the last one is taking off the sunglasses with a dialogue box that says "I don't need it". In the next week the kid brought comic books that he created himself, telling the exchanges that took place between the sun and the planets, showing the sun with all the new received objects in the end.

An important difference related to Marineau's and Rodrigues's stores in the reported session is that the trade is not demonstrated by egoactors but lived directly by the buyer in the scene with the received objects. In the case which the Magic Shop is used as a dramatic game for children groups, probably those adaptations would be also necessary because of the kid's characteristics of being dynamic and active. In that way children could interact with the costumes and props and place their bodies in action by performing scenes with their new objects. Another interesting point to be observed is that the sun was offering endless resources, so he wouldn't be sacrificing himself in any way (like it would be in Moreno's Shop), neither handing over something that didn't fit for him anymore. The negotiations stood focused in the desired objects, where some adjustments were made considering the possibilities of the planets to produce what the sun was requesting. For example, in that fantasy the Earth could actually produce the 60 km air conditioner, but the therapist intuitively worked with the notion of reality when she was playing the role, so the object was modified to a smaller version. In Pluto's case, the object remained the same; however it was pointed that it could be efficient by putting it to melt by the sun. This therapeutic posture was adopted because of the kid's personal history, in a way that his negotiations with his father were always ending up in a goal he couldn't reach in that moment. The child could know a new model of how to answer to the world's demands, recognizing that one don't need to be as great as a 60 km air conditioner, or to find out that the features can be good (Like Pluto's ice, which initially seemed useless for the character). Besides that, Pedro experienced, in a playful context, the possibility of being recognized as a full quality sun that deserved to get things in return for the benefits he offered. By getting the magical objects, the sun could grow stronger and get rid of a protection that was also hurting him, because he got what he needed to look after himself. The boy could abandon an old resource that also brought him suffering: the symbolic filter of the sunglasses.

Everything was possible by means of the supplemental reality, which allowed approaching Pedro's issues through his imagination, in a way that the therapeutic work was experienced as a big game of trades between planets. What can enrich Pedro's experience, bringing new possibilities of being and relating from a co creation between client and therapist, expanding the spontaneity and creativity of both.

An important fact is that Pedro has established communication by means of the writing when creating a comic story, being precisely the teacher and parent's complaints his main difficult and lack of motivation. Therefore, the session stimulated Pedro to

express himself in a new and creative way, which unleashed a creator act. The result from that was that in further sessions with his parents, the kid started to position himself with more power, by expressing what he thought about his parent's decisions that concerned him, like the change school proposition, the therapy schedule, among others.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The use of the Magic Store game for adults and children could be interesting to arouse the spontaneity and generate power among the participants. The several ways of utilizing it were compared and the Brazilian manner from Rosane Rodrigues emphasize the esthetic subject, make Moreno's creation live again.

In general, the Magic Store is applied as a bipersonal psychotherapy principle, like in the studied clinical case, or as a dramatic game for children group sessions, in which they could benefit from the dive into the supplemental reality. It is about a way of working the subjectivity through by imagining a universe of unlimited possibilities, where children can "buy" objects that may help them take better care of themselves. That resource can also facilitate for the child to experience new models of relation in which reciprocity happens (exchange, give and receive) and can develop new answers, more spontaneous and creative ones, to eventually enlarge to similar situations in life.

Also for the psychotherapy and adult education (training, specialization, etc.), the Magic Shop can be a strong resource for transformation, very quickly and durable. The impression for those who submit to it, it is transformation is large scale, commonly described as a unforgettable moment. The theatrical magic and the co-unconscious communication are very powerful for those who participate, in almost sacred climate, including the director that may feel also in such spontaneous state that starts to guess right several things that weren't said. And certainly the whole group can benefit direct or indirectly from each other's trades and that is how a co-constructed diagnosis should be done.

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