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## DRAMA IN PERSONAL GROWTH AND IN TRAINING OF SOCIAL ROLES

**Krystyna Pankowska**

*Drama is an educational method whose basis is to play new and difficult roles in various roles in order to understand their essence and to gain or deepen knowledge about the world, about oneself and about other people. The educational space of drama is a special experience due to the concentration of role interactions in life topics and situations. Drama, therefore, is part of this trend of thinking about human education, which draws attention to the human inner experience, its diversity, contacts between people and their influence on the spiritual maturity of a person. The techniques evoked in drama were created thanks to the observation and use of specific human development processes and the specificity of human social functioning. Therefore, even a young child is equipped with specific drama properties, which are manifested in play, in playing roles. Role plays are even a specific developmental imperative of the child. By playing roles, the child gets to know the world and its laws, and has the opportunity to test his or her skills and emphasize his or her individuality. Also in the life of an adult, the role is both potential and ubiquitous. For man does not only have specific predispositions to play roles, but in reality he plays them constantly in life. During the course of one's life each person, reaching its successive stages, learns different social roles - the role of a child, the role of a pupil, a student, etc. Looking for an answer to the question what is the phenomenon of drama, I suggest to look at one aspect, namely the ability to play roles as a specific human property. This issue needs to be looked at from an anthropological, psychological, sociological and philosophical perspective.*

**Key words:** *Drama, roles, experience, play, child, development, life stage, social roles.*

Drama is an educational method whose basis is to play new and difficult roles in various roles in order to understand their essence and to gain or deepen knowledge about the world, about oneself and about other people. Brian Way, an English drama expert, pointed out that the answer to many simple questions could take one of two forms: information or direct experience. The first type of answer belongs to the category of academic education, the second type is appropriate for drama. As an example he gives obtaining an answer to a question: "Who is a blind person". A simple encyclopaedic definition may be the answer.

An alternative answer, on the other hand, appears at the moment of following the instruction: "Close your eyes and without opening them, try to find a way out of the room full of different equipment." The first answer contains a concise piece of information that can help the intellect to be satisfied. The second answer goes beyond mere information and moves the heart and soul in the same way as the mind. (Way, 1990 [1967], p. 17).

The educational space of drama is a special experience due to the concentration of role interactions in difficult life topics and situations. Drama, therefore, is part of this trend of thinking about human education, which draws attention to the human inner experience, its diversity, contacts between people and their influence on the spiritual maturity of a person. The Latin source of experience links its meaning to the trial, passage, crossing or even to the threat and danger. It is not difficult to notice that it semantically approaches the specific experience gained from the old initiation rituals, which are no longer present in our culture. Such an experience was seen as a necessary condition for the development of the self. Today, experience is also an invaluable value at all stages of growing up to maturity, as it leads to the internalization of experienced states and experiences, which become the building blocks of identity and constitute a special weapon, and at the same time a protective shield in difficult life situations.

Hans Georg Gadamer points out that the dialectic of experience is not fulfilled in the closing-off knowledge, but in the openness to the next experience. Each experience is unique, each one also changes the view of reality ("nothing is the same as it was before"), at the same time causing a change in the person functioning in it. Assuming that every new experience is a kind of questioning of the existing knowledge, it is also a crossing of the border of possibilities which until now seemed to be impossible to cross. In drama, this is realistic even in relation to so-called border experiences, as it is governed by the principle of conventionality in a fictitious simulation, and not by reality as such. Drama, which always has the character of direct interactions, guaranteeing the unity of the person(s) with the experience, therefore fulfils the basic condition for the experience to be talked about at all. In the final effect, understood as life training, it is a polyphonic form of multiplying experiences and acquiring meanings leading to a change in attitudes, divided into voices. This dynamics activates the dormant potential of a human actor on the life stage. In drama, the dependence of changes on the subjective activity of people is immediately visible. The participants of the workshop activities, gaining new experiences, then have a chance to transfer their effects into "post-drama" spaces, i.e. into real life.

The techniques evoked in drama were created thanks to the observation and use of specific human development processes and the specificity of human social

functioning. Looking for an answer to the question what is the phenomenon of drama, I suggest to look at one aspect, namely the ability to play roles as a specific human property. This issue needs to be looked at from an anthropological, psychological, sociological and philosophical perspective.

Entering roles is a result of natural human predisposition, which has already been pointed out by the experts of developmental psychology, including the Polish psychologist and pedagogue Stefan Szuman. During the observation of young children we can see how spontaneously they take on a role. By playing with the doll, the child takes on the role of the mother, treating it -the role of a doctor, playing with cars, takes on the role of the driver, police officer, etc. This is a spontaneous action of the child, not imposed by anyone. S. Szuman describes the behavior he observes and says that the child immediately externalizes what he or she has thought in speech and in playing various situations. (Szuman, 1962). The child improvises these situations, because there is no previously written script which they themselves create while playing. Observing a child, we also see his or her absorption and involvement. However, a child does not need an audience, he or she is an actor, a spectator, a director, a stage designer – so he or she is a total theatre artist or, to put it another way, a total person of drama.

Therefore, even a young child is equipped with specific drama properties, which are manifested in play, in playing roles. In these plays, the child evokes and updates a wide range of ideas, which consist in a "pretend" introduction, assuming the conventionality of the situation, of what a child already knows about the world, including the world in which adults live and work. These plays are an attempt at combining the already learned facts and situations into a new whole, with commitment, physical, mental, constructional and creative activity. In this way, the previously acquired experiences are transformed into concrete actions, and the resulting experiences become the child's own experiences, which nothing can replace in the process of their development.

Role plays, in the literature of the subject called thematic (imitative, functional, fictional or role plays), are even a **specific developmental imperative of the child**. (Pankowska, 2000). A child deprived of the opportunity to observe the social environment and social functioning associated with thematic plays is not able to develop properly, as confirmed, among others, by the cases of so-called "feral children". By playing roles, the child gets to know the world and its laws, and has the opportunity to test his or her skills and emphasize his or her individuality. In the case of older children, the social value of playing roles also enters into the pre-school age (a child, as a director, assigns roles: *I will be a teacher, you a student, I will be a salesperson, you a customer*).

The subject matter and content of role-playing depends on the conditions in which the child lives. In role-playing the child recreates and transforms reality,

corrects it according to his or her own ideas, but also compensates and supplements it with fiction. At the beginning, however, the child usually limits themselves to reproducing what they managed to remember and isolate from their previously acquired contacts with reality. They first mimic simple actions, and then learn how to combine them into cause and effect relationships. On the one hand, they improve in the ever more concrete performance of tasks observed in life, and on the other hand, they gradually move on to attempts to break away from specific situations and objects, to give them substitute meanings, and thus enter the stage of symbolisation. M. Debesse, pointing to the transition from simple role plays to those that incorporate creative invention, says that a child starts to generalize his or her roles, e.g. playing the role of a doctor, a child does not play a specific doctor, but a "doctor in general", who is in a specific situation and has relations with other people. In such a game, the child learns to separate certain situations and activities from other phenomena and combine them into a logical whole. They also learn to distinguish in a human being, an animal or an object which they play the characteristic features belonging only to this object. This is the basis for a conscious play, undertaken with understanding, that fulfils important developmental functions.

The child therefore takes on a role with some initial knowledge of the nature of these people's activities and the things they will be playing in the game. This knowledge comes from direct contacts, from stories, from reading books, from watching films. Therefore, the child's sources of knowledge are diverse; it can be assumed that playing roles will not bring anything new to this knowledge, that it will cover only what the child is already familiar with. This is not true, however, as by playing the role children reach a higher level, which gives this knowledge a more conscious and generalised character. Never is the child's theme play the same, it does not repeat itself, which is not due to lack of skills, but to the imperative of enriching experience, trying out new possibilities.

By participating in role plays, the child also gets to know the world of social relations much more complex than those available in his or her non-play activity. In these natural processes of self-creation through roles, the child first perceives their action, but this action is at the same time the action of another human being, another person whose role they have taken on. In this way, a child's own actions are objectified by the attitude and conduct of someone else. The child learns more about the life and complexity of the situations he/she encounters by following the different life situations and playing different roles. (Okoń, 1987). By recreating the phenomena derived from life in a play the child makes attempts to associate individual episodes and links them into a consistent sequence of events, trying to assign a specific role to specific people who occur in these situations. What they know only from hearing and seeing, they meet in

their own way and directly in play. Therefore, the synthesis of imaginary and real life, the synthesis of a child's previous activity in the world, as well as the synthesis of the absorption of the world and self-expression and expression are important in children's playing of roles.

A child of preschool age is already able to distinguish between a role and a fictitious situation in play and reality. For example, in the case of playing shop, when an adult involved in a game wanted to pay with real money, they heard from children: ma'am, this is only a game, candies are not real and money is also "pretend". Another example: one dad found his four-year-old son sitting in the first chair in a row and playing the train. Dad kissed the child, to which the son reacted spontaneously: "Daddy, you are not allowed to kiss the locomotive, because the wagons will think that it's all not true." Therefore, children consciously move from the real world to the fictitious world. And everything can be done in a fictional role. What a child cannot do in reality can be achieved by playing roles. (Szuman, 1962, p. 50).

In these plays, the child does not only imitate real life processes, but also, as a director, adapts and transforms them. They create new situations, highlight those moments which, in their opinion, are most important and correspond to the characteristics of a given person or situation. The child's plays are therefore similar to the theatrical play seen on stage, where the director makes available to the audience only certain generalised human problems. For both the role plays of a child and the stage art, there are not only images and fictitious situations, but also certain problems presented. In play, these problems broaden a child's horizons of thought and are a prototype of a child's future, serious actions in their psychological structure.

Drama is connected with the art of theatre, with which it is linked by the phenomenon of a role. The concepts of theatre are used today by various human sciences, including philosophy and sociology, which formulate such metaphors and comparisons as "the world as a scene of life", "human being as an actor", "theatrical and social role", "the actor's mask and the mask that life imposes on human beings". In this terminology, the analogy between the actor and a human and the world they create is emphasized. The task of both drama and theatre, which can be expressed in these different categories and versions, is first of all to search for the truth about human beings and the world around them, to search for different dimensions of becoming human.

Luis Vives, a great Spanish humanist and educator of the Renaissance period, was one of the first to present the anthropological theory of theatre in *Fabula de homine*. The content of the fable is as follows: At the Olympus, Jupiter prepared a sumptuous feast for the gods, with an abundance of ambrosia and nectar, food and drink guaranteeing the immortality and eternal youth to the

gods. However, in order to make the meeting even more sumptuous, after the feast Jupiter invited the gods to a theatrical performance specially prepared for them. He built the stage and the decorations himself – "the whole world, the world so big, so ornate, so diverse and so beautiful". He also called the actor, who was Man created by him. This actor entered the stage and played the whole world - he played plants, appeared "in the shape of a thousand wild animals, it was a lion angry and raging, it was a wolf predatory and always hungry, it was again a harsh wild boar, a cunning fox, a lustful and dirty pig, an anxious hare, a jealous dog or a stupid donkey. In the next installment, in the next act, the man returned to the stage to play himself, in various forms, in various functions and roles, personal and public. However, it was not the end of the theatrical play of Man - in another act the surprised and astonished gods saw how "suddenly he appeared transformed in their own form, crossing the borders of human nature and expressing himself in a pure reason". Finally, Man played the role of Jupiter himself and played it so perfectly that the astounded gods "thought in excitement and confusion that it was their ruler and father who came onto the stage". There was no end to the applause, and as a reward for his playing, Man, after taking off his stage costume, was invited to take a place among the gods. The gods were curious "about how Man played the plants, wild animals, gods, the ruler of gods - Jupiter on the stage. They wanted to know what methods to use, what gestures." Man answered questions, and the gods began to treat him as a true "fellow citizen of their kingdom." They understood that "Man is everything", because he can play everything, can impersonate everything. (Suchodolski, 1981).

Vives' fable shows the deepest truth about a man who can play himself and the whole world, the one he found as nature, and the one he himself created as civilization, as culture, and the metaphysical world of gods. Vives is also one of the first to point out the fact that taking on roles belongs to the nature of man.

A young child already has this ability, but in the later stages of human development the willingness to play a role changes. With growing up and in accordance with developmental principles, the role becomes internal. According to G. Santayana, the expression of an adult is an immobile mask. But **also in the life of an adult, the role is both potential and ubiquitous.**

After all, it happens that an adult also throws off their mask when no one sees them, when they get rid of shame related to the role of "being an adult". And often in their thoughts they play imaginary situations "what would happen if", play roles and formulate appropriate behaviours in relation to the situation.

However, regardless of the degree of spontaneity in behaviour, roles are also defined by certain characteristics. For example, Jerome S. Bruner, analysing both the determination and certain potential of human nature in many roles, writes that: "In every person there is their own cast of characters – ascetic and

maybe a glutton, a pedant, a frightened child, a boy, even an observer, sometimes a Renaissance man. The great plays are such an internal cast spread out among individuals, translating an internal drama into an external drama, transforming an internal cast into *dramatis personae*". (Bruner, 1971, p. 68).

Contemporary psychological research confirms this potential of roles in human behaviour. Eric Berne, who conducts research in psychotherapeutic groups, observes certain behavioural traits during the research: people change their body postures from time to time, their voice and their way of expressing themselves change. Berne does not use the notion of role, but says that probably every person has a certain repertoire of ego states, which are the psychological reality of an individual, and he calls them Parent, Adult, and Child. "At any time, each person in a community will show the state of ego of a parent, adult or child, while being able to change one state of ego for another." Berne says that everyone carries their parents and, as an adult, a little boy or girl within them. (Berne, 1997).

However, it is not only about the potential multiplicity of human roles. For man does not only have specific predispositions to play roles, but in reality he plays them constantly in life. Shakespeare already used the metaphor of the role in relation to people as actors on the life stage. In the twentieth century, however, this metaphor, of the role and man in life's theatre, made a staggering career in social science. Jean Duvignaud, theatre and drama theoretician, says: "The fact that in a complex society an individual can play multiple social roles (be a construction manager, a football goalkeeper and, at the same time, a trade unionist) shows that many roles can interweave in the life of one person and that every person takes part in different ceremonies; during these ceremonies, the individual identifies himself with a type of person determined by tradition and behaves in accordance with the manner of conduct which this identification imposes." (Duvignaud, 1991, p. 75).

So there is no escape from the role. Simply put, in real life every person, always and everywhere, more or less consciously, plays a role, and it is in these roles that people know each other and themselves. What is more, there is no escape from playing roles, there is even their specific social imperative. A person in their intended period of life is forced, whether they want to or not, to play their numerous social roles and to play them in a specific way, making an appropriate impression on their surroundings.

It is therefore no longer a metaphor of life as a theatre, present in the European consciousness for centuries, but the use of specific categories from the aesthetics of theatre for research on society. It was considered to be the main model and principle of explaining all social facts. Therefore, a person has been placed as an actor on the scene of social dialogue, where, playing numerous roles

in contact with other people, they use specific techniques and means in order to make an intended impression on them. Taking on roles would therefore be based, among other things, on a willingness to meet the expectations of a particular environment, which takes place as a result of both unconscious and conscious human actions.

The theory of social roles, the development of which is linked to such names as George Herbert Mead, Florian Znaniecki or Erving Goffman, is crucial. In this theory, the role that determines the system of social relations acts as a normative model or as a tool for making impressions.

When several people meet, they always first define the situation, i.e. distribute the roles they will play in relation to each other," says Znaniecki. This situation is similar to the theatrical one: "Just as Hamlet can only be imagined in relation to the King and Queen, Ophelia, Polonius and all other characters, we define ourselves in the same way, and can be defined by others, in the process of overlapping our conduct with that of all those who accompany us on the journey of life." (Znaniecki, 1986, p. 17). Therefore, the social environment always implies the existence of specific social roles. This is because individual people usually occupy some position/role in a given social environment. For example, the position of father, mother, wife, husband, son, brother, etc. in a family can be indicated. There are certain behavioural patterns associated with certain positions (e.g. how and what to say in certain situations, in turn how to behave or even how to dress), certain privileges (what to expect from others), certain requirements (what tasks to fulfil). All these elements of an individual's position define his or her social role. During the course of one's life each person, reaching its successive stages, learns different social roles – the role of a child, the role of a pupil, a student, etc. As people grow up and mature, their environmental circle expands (it may be a family, a school or some more general cultural and social circle), thus increasing the number and type of social roles they learn and at the same time play in their lives.

Goffman's theory is therefore based on the belief that people are guided in their actions by the desire to make a good impression on others. People are therefore constantly playing in front of each other in order to present themselves in the best possible light. This is connected with the fact that a person can never free themselves from the presence of other people and the overwhelming tendency to shape themselves in relation to them. "Other people are our constant companions on the journey through life - faithful, constant spectators – and none of us would be able to build a self that was not closely connected with the other "selves", playing their roles on the same stage." (Goffman, 1981, p. 89). So the presence of others transforms every human activity into a performance. Even those who are not directly present among us are still exercising their influence.

Social psychologists are interested in exploring how and why our thoughts, feelings and behaviours are shaped by these external social environments, full of persons in their roles.

The model of "drama" human functioning in the light of various scientific theories has been outlined. This clashing and meeting of different positions testifies to the vitality and value of the role in the world of people, and the juxtaposition of different perspectives of human functioning in the space of life links the pedagogy of drama with deeper assumptions about the nature of the human world.

The Renaissance philosophy already proclaimed man as an actor in a world theatre with an almost unlimited choice of roles, although created by God, but with divine intervention largely suspended. This infinity was to provide a human being with the freedom to reach the essence of humanity, and the taking up of a role and the way in which it was to be played was to become the realization of human freedom. The privilege of man is, as Juan Luis Vives said, "that he does not receive a role, that he can be everything". However, the fable of man does not only talk about the properties granted to man; it also talks about their activation, about the potential of a man who can exceed himself, his individual life, his limited time and space of existence towards unknown worlds, towards specific parallel worlds and infinite possibilities. Towards multiplying life and reaching for the impossible. Therefore, this fable indicates the possibility of human transgression. It points out that human humanity is based on the fact that while being the same, a man becomes still different, that being limited to a specific form of being, a man becomes everything. The above picture also conveys a more general message for education: towards transgressional education, including education through drama.

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#### РОЛЬ ДРАМИ У РОЗВИТКУ ОСОБИСТОСТІ ТА У ПІДГОТОВЦІ ДО ВИКОНАННЯ СОЦІАЛЬНИХ РОЛЕЙ

Христина Панковська

Драма – це метод виховання, в основі якого лежить відтворення нових і важких ролей у різних варіаціях, щоб зрозуміти їх суть і отримати або поглибити знання про світ, про себе та про інших людей. Навчальний простір драми є особливим досвідом завдяки концентрації взаємодії ролей у життєвих питаннях та ситуаціях. Тому драма є частиною цього напрямку мислення про освіту людей, яка звертає увагу на внутрішній досвід людини, його різноманітність, контакти між людьми та їх вплив на духовну зрілість людини. Методи, що беруть початок в драмі, були створені завдяки спостереженню та використанню конкретних процесів людського розвитку та специфіці соціального функціонування людини. Тому навіть для маленької дитини характерним є наявність специфічних драматичних властивостей, які проявляються в грі, у виконанні ролей. Рольові ігри – це ще й особливий імператив розвитку дитини. Граючи роль, дитина пізнає світ та його закони, має можливість випробувати свої навички та підкреслити свою індивідуальність. Також у житті дорослої людини роль є як потенційною, так і всюдисущою. Бо людина не тільки має певні схильності грати ролі, насправді вона постійно грає їх у житті. У процесі свого життя кожна людина, досягаючи його послідовних етапів, вчиться грати різні соціальні ролі – роль дитини, роль учня, студента тощо. У пошуку відповіді на питання, що таке феномен драматизму, я пропоную звернути увагу на один аспект, а саме на здатність грати роль як особливу властивість людини. Цей аспект проблеми дослідження необхідно розглядати з антропологічної, психологічної, соціологічної та філософської точок зору.

**Ключові слова:** драма, ролі, досвід, гра, дитина, розвиток, етап життя, соціальні ролі.

## РОЛЬ ДРАМЫ В РАЗВИТИИ ЛИЧНОСТИ И В ПОДГОТОВКЕ К ИСПОЛНЕНИЮ СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ РОЛЕЙ

**Кристина Панковская**

*Драма – это метод воспитания, в основе которого лежит воспроизведение новых и тяжелых ролей в разных вариациях, чтобы понять их суть и получить или углубить знания о мире, о себе и о других людях. Учебное пространство драмы является особым опытом благодаря концентрации взаимодействия ролей в жизненных вопросах и ситуациях. Поэтому драма является частью этого направления мышления об образовании людей, которая обращает внимание на внутренний опыт человека, его разнообразие, контакты между людьми и их влияние на духовную зрелость человека. Методы, берущие начало в драме, были созданы благодаря наблюдению и использованию конкретных процессов человеческого развития и специфике социального функционирования человека. Поэтому даже для маленького ребенка характерно наличие специфических драматических свойств, которые проявляются в игре, в исполнении ролей. Ролевые игры – это еще и особый императив развития ребенка. Игровая роль, ребенок познает мир и его законы, имеет возможность испытать свои навыки и подчеркнуть свою индивидуальность. Также в жизни взрослого человека роль является как потенциальной, так и вездесущей. Потому что человек не только имеет определенные склонности играть роли, на самом деле он постоянно играет их в жизни. В процессе своей жизни каждый человек, достигая ее последовательных этапов, учится играть различные социальные роли – роль ребенка, роль ученика, студента и тому подобное. В поиске ответа на вопрос, что такое феномен драматизма, я предлагаю обратить внимание на один аспект, а именно на способность играть роль как особое свойство человека. Этот аспект проблемы исследования необходимо рассматривать с антропологической, психологической, социологической и философской точек зрения.*

**Ключевые слова:** драма, роли, опыт, игра, ребенок, развитие, этап жизни, социальные роли.

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