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Forward Theater

English version

**FUTURES STUDIES PROJECT REINTEGRATION INTO SOCIETY. ADULT WOMEN IN
IMPRISONMENT. MEXICO CITY.**

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Presentan

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INTRODUCTION TO FORWARD THEATER

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INTRODUCTION

"...well, Dr Freud, I begin where you finish. You met people in artificial sites such as their office; I do it in the street, at their homes, or in natural sites. You analyze their dreams. I give them the courage to dream again. You scan them and divide them in parts. I let them act their conflicts of roles and help join the parts together again."

Jacobo Levy Moreno in his encounter with Sigmund Freud.

Potentialities of this Fine Art, Theater, have resulted in an integrative, holistic manner of coordinating groups through action. Telling stories as scenarios and fitting in alternative ways to build them emerges in Forward Theater. It is not the same to think about scenarios as acting them. Living them. Created from human groups to human groups, each individual strengthens itself. Making up the roles we play on life, everybody being actors at a time turns this resource into a therapeutic pedagogical process. Working with spontaneity, imagination, creativity, human reality and experiences are assembled as the reflection of the created futures becoming a prospective teaching method, an existential via to build futures. Forward Theater, thus, is a means of Futures Studies like a way of being, not just of doing.

Theater radiates a particular fascination. Among three walls it is develop a complete artistic expression in which several possibilities can be exposed: to draw the scenography, express feelings that cannot be show up other ways, sing, dance, a whole attainment of the human being. And the reaffirmation of being... human.

WHAT IS FORWARD THEATRE?

Within all Prospective methodologies, techniques, methods we have found that Forward Theater applies in an integrative manner a grouping of techniques and methods in its elaboration. It ends in a representation lived by the characters themselves that build their future and also including therapeutically appliances.

With these specialized elements, Forward Theater is executed after a previous sensitization. This is through some exercises which will end in a play and will help eliminate inhibitions and flourish creativity.

Exploring Forward Theater is an open incitement for everybody interested. Prospective and theater open infinite possibilities that could be generated collectively.

Then this work explains the methodology of Forward Theatre (FT) as well as its utility on Futures Studies (FS). In Latin America it is used Prospective as the subject of studying futures.

Forward Theatre as the main tool of new branch of Psychology, Anticipatory Psychology or Psycoprospective with its brief description and where does FT come from along with the virtues of its source, are first related. The basic manner of proceeding in this technique mentions three parts of the structure: warming up, theatrical techniques and evaluation. Key FT techniques are described. It is presented in broad terms the cases of application under an academic situation, what important elements have been found within the course of these activities and it ends the importance of looking at the future “face to face”.

ANTECEDENTS

Prospective is action. Without action there is only discourse. Action changes our way of acting in the world; changes paradigms, attitudes, ways of thinking, it drops us out of the box we are submerged in with no creative or different answers, just vicious cycles.

Two main issues mark the point of departure of FT:

- Theater is one of the Fine Arts which potentialities have resulted in an integrative, holistic manner of coordinating groups through action
- Jacobo Levy Moreno, a Judean Romanian psychiatrist in 1921 established the Improvisation Theater with the idea of therapeutically possibilities through the release of emotional unsettled situations by representing them in an active and structured manner

In a few words, Levy met Freud and once, the first told the other:

...well Dr. Freud, I begin where you met people. You bring people on artificial sites, as their office, I do it in the street, at their homes, or in natural sites. You analyze their dreams. I give them the courage to dream again. You scan and divide them in parts. I allow them to act their conflicts of roles and help join the parts together again.

The main questioning of Moreno was focused towards a society that tends to restrain instead of encourage spontaneity and creativity, a society that privileges the product on detriment of the creative act, a society that restricts every human instead of being the space he or she needs to grow.

The main antecedent of Forward Theater is Improvisation Theater lately worked as psychodrama.

As an educative modality, psychodrama had its origins on 1911 in Vienna. Since 1908, Moreno used to watch children playing on gardens and parks of Vienna. He noticed that they rehearsed familiar and cultural roles such as mom, dad, king or queen, police, etc. He also realized that children used fantasy representing myth or fables roles which corresponded more to their needs or frustrations. He began to use the role playing technique with them as means of enlarge or correct his personal perception. The children played the role of their parents or teachers and then they saw everything with another point of view.

As a matter of personal progress and growing, Moreno used psychodrama methods in its Spontaneity Theater, developed between 1921-1923. Groups of actors and actresses who worked along him represented with spontaneity and without rehearsal, suggested topics from the public. Some persons of the public went to stage to exemplify some roles of characters involved on that topic.

He defined psychodrama as a “method” to sound out the truth of the soul through action.

FORWARD THEATER AS THE MAIN TOOL OF PSICOPROSPECTIVE

Specialists in Psychology Martha Jaramillo (Colombia) and Alethia Berenice Montero (Mexico) are building a new brand of Psychology called Anticipatory Psychology or Psicoprospective.

This is a fusion between Psychology and Prospective. Under the motto “Future starts on the mind” Psychology as the science which studies the human mental processes and the human behavior seems to be the most suitable discipline to study how people think and act about future.

Departing from Theater as a dramatic art in which stories are represented in front of an audience, that operates as a mirror where people can look at the reflection of a diversity of situations, thus people can look at the future through Theater. Combining roles, feelings, emotions, reasoning of both, audience and performers, Theater can impact on the people's knowledge and perspective about future.

Stories are the focus of Theater and have a direct relationship with Futures Studies.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STORIES AND FUTURES STUDIES

Moreno reprimands us and tells that the economy proletariat is a minority, that the oldest and voluminous is the therapeutic proletariat. They are victims of an intolerable world order; they suffer from another form of misery, psychic misery, social, economic, political, racial or religious. There are poor and wealth emotionally, isolated social groups, disdainful or marginalized (Moreno, 1979, p. 22).

It is therapeutically to move forward on time and space since every therapy should consist on an inventory of possible alternatives.

While the main function of psychodrama and social drama is therapeutic, on Forward Theater the main function is to build futures and live them.

The study of the future tends to be an abstract and unconvincing argument. Through the entertainment we write family stories that attract and earn attention. It can be based on research and extrapolation of data available on global trends.

Becoming Theatre has a deep political potential, it is critical, the strength of the drama gives us a representation of reality with audiences judging events on their own because they pass in front of them.

In Futures Studies, there are quantitative methods and qualitative methods. Regardless the variety of classifications we can find on FS, Prospective scenarios are situated within the qualitative methods and are the archetype of FS (Bishop, 2007). Moreover, stories form part of the prospective scenarios. This is where Forward Theatre begins its journey.

In terms of FS, stories as part of the prospective scenarios are divided in:

- Eutopia: is described as "the good place" but in contrast to utopia, its existence is real. It is an approximation of the human fulfillment.

- Utopia: an idealized world alternative to the existent world.
- Dystopia: is the anti utopia. A malign utopia in which reality occurs opposite to an ideal society.

Why to use stories for learn about futures? Stories are powerful devices which explore many aspects of human futures, in ways not accessible to reason, analysis or futures research techniques. They permit regeneration, ideas, and possibilities. They also can use FS techniques such as backcasting, incasting, visioning and many others which are relevant to FS. Besides, they explore social, technological, environmental aspects in the influences of change and they can be based on research, extrapolation of available data about global trends, too.

At this point, which process are we referring to?

THEATRICAL TECHNIQUES

In order to get the students prepared for Theater, a warming up is crucial. The starting point is to make breathing exercises. Diaphragmatic respiration is taught. Next, with the same respiration the air is turn into sound, in form of the vocals. The following activity is to execute a brain gym exercise. This is combined with breathing, after. Until here, we have warmed up body and voice at the same time that we began training both brain hemispheres, oxygenated mind and body and get ready to start the adventure of making theater.

THEATER ELEMENTS

1. Basis

Basic elements of theatre are:

- Actors
- Public
- Story.

2. Supplementary elements

- Roles or characters
- Relationships between characters and environment
- Situations where there are and the characters interact
- Language

- Movement and non-verbal signs
- Mode or emotional tone of scenes and characters
- Focus main attractions that attracts the audience
- Voltage or handling of levels that trap to the public
- Symbols can give a specific meaning to the work
- Times of occurrence that can be expressed in various forms
- Space occurs where the interaction
- Place where occurs

PHYSICAL ELEMENTS

These concepts are mentioned very broadly, without forgetting that each one includes many more details. There are not for this text

Stage

Any activity or action requires a space and time.

It should take into account the site where the participants are located, conditions and resources which are available. You can be adapted as a classroom, a field area, a patio, any area that complies with:

- The area should be safe for actors.
- Be an area where the public focus to what you will see, ensuring an optimum visibility at any angle.

If you have or you can adapt what we shall see below, it will be a good complement for your stage and hence for their theatrical development.

Illumination

Good lighting will also lead to a positive environment of scenic development. According to the requirements of the "Mise en scene", proper management of lights will complement what is happening on the stage.

Also, the lights serve as signals or guidelines. For example, sometimes turning off the lights at the end of some action can tell us that there will be a change of activity

or that it will be a new action. They can create an atmosphere of suspense, surprise, and play with effects belonging to what is happening.

Again the safety of the players is very important, adequate lighting shall ensure their view and their movements; the public will enjoy seeing the face of the actors as well as another point of focus where the scenic work requires it.

Scenography

It is a complement to create the environment of the scene to develop. This is “what decorates the stage”. It can be done by the same actors and can include technology, special effects, background images, objects that correspond to the scenic act (e.g. room).

Tools

Items and objects that exist in a scene.

Costumes

Clothing, as it does in everyday life, characterizes us according to our personality, the activity performed, the place to visit... Likewise, in a character costumes should be according to what you want to express it. It must, in addition, be consistent with the time where events unfold

Makeup

It affects the traits and characteristics of the character.

Public

They are the subjects which become spectators of the play. It is an active element, to enjoy the privilege of establishing communication with actors.

KEY ELEMENTS

Drama

It is considered a literary genre. Literary genres are models of formal and thematic structuring of the literary work offered to the author as the scheme prior to the creation of his work. They are groups or categories in which we can classify literary works according to its content. It means do or act peculiarity is the predominance of the appellate function of the language, the absence of a mediator (performers, actors) between the created world (the fictional reality) and the reader and the

virtual ability to be represented. The theater is the realization of the drama and includes the acting, the music, etc. That is, items that are not themselves to drama as a linguistic reality bounded only to speech. The analysis of a drama can make from literary criticism, while the analysis of theater should include factors such as performance, the evaluation of the spectacle, musicians, lighting, and so.

Space

Own, others, location (venue). Which develops the representation-actors and public focal point.

Time

“Time” (tempística). timing; referred to the rhythm, speed and pauses in the action.

BELIEVE IT!

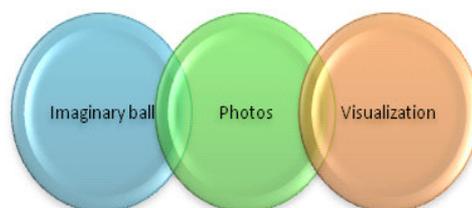
If there is something truly crucial in theater (and in all what you do) it is to believe it! It is another experience and each one is unique and unrepeatable. They are moments where you are representing life and if you don't believe what you're living, no one will believe you.

AND ENJOY IT!

BEST THEATRICAL TECHNIQUES

In each group, after the warming up mentioned above, several theatrical techniques were applied. These techniques are based on acting training and have been adapted to Prospective.

There are three fundamental techniques that have been used:



Source: own elaboration. Top three of theatrical techniques of FT.

There are some other techniques that have been implemented randomly in the sessions, which are going to be just mentioned better than explained, that basically are to reinforce the elements develop in the first three. These others are: Trip to the moon, Animals, Numbers, Sequence Movements, Copycat movements.

So, what purposes are pursued with this training or what is the *raison d' être* of using theatrical techniques to develop prospective scenarios? Several elements emerge within these exercises, many of which them we encounter to be characteristic of studying futures:

- Collective imaginary: the body of symbolic landmarks through which any collectivity inserts itself in time and space.
- Creativity: the act of create something new, different.
- Perception: to organize, identify and interpret the sensory information in order to represent and understand the environment.
- Consideration to the other: in space, time and action.
- The concept of neutrality: be aware of whatever happens.
- Cooperation/collaboration through teamwork: environment of trust; everyone "speaks the same language".
- Roles combination: be other one or other thing.
- Integration to the group.
- Selection and decision making: how, who, when.
- Self discoveries: limits, possibilities.
- Human energy: sinergia, share virtues, qualities
- One step closer to consciousness: what we do, who we are, the other and the universe

CASES OF APPLICATION

The following are some cases in which this method has been applied:

- Five groups of BA on Political Science and Public Administration. Subject: Social Prospective Workshop at UNAM, Mexico City.
- One group of BA on Communication. Subject: Organizations Management at UNAM, Mexico City.

- Three groups of BA on Political Science at UNAM, Mexico City.
- One group of futurists at 21st WFSF World Conference Bucharest, Romania 26th-28th June 2013 GLOBAL RESEARCH AND SOCIAL INNOVATION: TRANSFORMING FUTURES.
- One group of Master Degree on Organizational Leadership. Subject: Prospective at Gestalt Institute, Mexico City.
- Group of the Permanent Seminary of Prospective Studies at UNAM, Mexico City.
- Seven groups of Strategic Thinking and Prospective Master Degree at Universidad Externado de Colombia, Bogota, Colombia.

The trip began with the entire track of warming up to theatrical techniques. The pupils at first were concerned about the relationship between breathing, moving, etc. and prospective. They were told to be proactive in front of those dynamics and that at the end they will see where this gets to.

So they start all the exercises expecting, a little bit tense. Just as the exercises were flowing, they could relax and react in a positive way, as if they were waiting to be surprised. After the warming up, groups feel relaxed, but at the same time, active, as one Colombian student said “I feel like ready to make scenarios”.

EFFECTS OF THEATRICAL TECHNIQUES ON CASES OF APPLICATION

Being “Imaginary ball” the number one technique, it consists on making the students, standing up in a circle, play with an imaginary ball.

In general, we have found that here collective imaginary emerges. The whole group plays with the ball, although it changes of size, texture, the ball is never lost and the throw is continuous. They all became accomplices, as “speaking the same language”. Suddenly, we were witnessing a ball choke, control of the object as professional football players, spins over one finger, amazing tricks, a “Flubber” like shot... a variety of creative stuff and actions which meaning has coincide among many of the participants: “I can do what I cannot on real life”. Every single mate cooperates and collaborates on the game. Necessarily, each one has to choose and decide who to throw the ball. And at that moment, how. Is a matter of decision making and take advantage of the time being yours. Perceive the others, feel their energy, share take them into consideration trying not to “hit them” or take care of their own space and be respectful of their performance has born like an implicit law between the games. They also expressed to feel reliable on the others and discovered what were they capable of or what limits to work on; and very

important, the majority told they had fun. Learning under a funny environment is relevant to the personal growth. Being creative, perceptive, considerate, cooperative, collaborative and with imagination, are good characteristics of futurists.

Making a “photograph” by teams, under a predetermined theme and just using their bodies and some objects as help, is the other top activity. The other teams must guess what the photo is about.

“Photos” is a great region for corporal expression, but it also a big chance for creativity. Most of the topics given are related to current conditions of society. For example, “transportation”, which gets very clear to either performers or public. But we have asked in all groups to display situations in the future, getting difficult to make a difference between a picture of the present and a picture of the future. The “water problem by 2050” (taking 2050 just as a future horizon) has proven to be more descriptive, because everyone has heard about what can happen in the future with water. So the focus has been on the message we want to send, that is hard to represent a future passage with just the body and some objects, imagine if it can be hard to make that on real life. Previous information, then, is the impulse to represent something; since we don’t know the future, it is easier to depart from what we know and guide to a common understanding of things

“I have always heard about the water problem in the future, but I never realized how worst it can be until I saw it”, Colombian student.

Letting imagination fly on the mind of every participant, sitting around, eyes closed paying attention to nothing but a musical piece. Followed by an exchange of what everyone saw in their imaginative journey and unifying a single idea for staging along with that music, is the process which corresponds to the name of “Visualization”.

It is the previous step to concrete scenarios. While someone is narrating what he or she imagined, some others, therefore, are visualizing what that person is saying. Students paid attention to every argument and the process of agree on a single idea, has caused in each group to build a story together, based on everyone’s imagination which made them feel, laughing or getting surprised or nostalgic at listening to others’ visualization journey. Most of them ended up satisfied of accomplished the agreement. Most of them enjoyed living a story which made them go “out from the box”. Their bodies talking, their faces shouting. Some dance or just gestures and body language. All this guides them to sensibilization for such work. Students in every group have said “we couldn’t have done this (dramatic representation) without the previous exercises”. Them all were acting.

In none of these techniques is permitted to speak so that they use their own source with their body. In all these techniques, they experienced different roles form not being just them, but a tree, or a future character, or much more.

THE CAKE'S CHERRY OF FORWARD THEATER

A final product annexed was a play. This happened at the first two BA groups and two of the Colombian Master Degree. After the whole sequence of warming up and get through the theatrical techniques, the group, previously divided into three teams, write their scenarios. A single topic is chosen, for instance, "Education on Bogota, Colombia by the year 2050" and each team picks a kind of story up among eutopia, utopia and distopia. Sometimes, FT can come after doing a World Café (a FS participative methodology of generative dialogue), as we did in the second Colombian group of students, in which they have detected priorities to attend, future vision, strategies to tackle and immediate actions. So those elements are taken as topics for the theatrical techniques.

The use of wardrobe, make up, props, scenography completes the experience of doing a play directed to future (prospective) scenarios.

Apart from attending a moment of laughs, reflections, surprises, revelations, curiosities, a range of feelings-emotions, significate learning stays in their being converting futures in a first- hand experience. Testimonies of pupils in every group "now I really have an idea of what can happen in the future".

Under these foundations, we realized these got into an idea which is becoming almost a premise: IT IS NOT THE SAME TO THINK SCENARIOS RATHER THAN TO LIVE THEM.

CONCLUSIONS

We are all actors; in our daily lives we develop not one but several roles and not always representing them in a successful way. Roles should afford a full realization as human beings, but it is not, we are dissatisfied fragmented beings, encased in a paper, representing roles that many times we didn't want. Roles away from our desires, our hopes, our dreams until we are given the opportunity to represent them and create them in the future. That is the objective of forward theater.

It is inclusive of diverse prospective techniques, it is generator of stories where the roles are seen as action, not as acting.

The individuals can be "face to face" with the future and has multiple possibilities integrating the performance with psychology, with art, with foresight, with politics, with the results that this implies.

Theater is not only a technique, it has been proven and reaffirmed with different groups, with students, with officials and futurists, and has left the participants astonished by the potential, benefits and capabilities that gives its analysis. Forward Theater thus, becomes an exercise that brings individual and group action, therefore, multidisciplinary action responses are given sociological, artistic, psychological, therapeutic possibilities and visions of the future. Created from human groups to human groups, each individual strengthens itself. Making up the roles we play on life, everybody being actors at a time turns this resource into a therapeutic pedagogical process. Working with spontaneity, imagination, creativity, human reality and experiences are assembled as the reflection of the created futures becoming a prospective teaching method, an existential via to build futures.

Stories developed theatrically addressed to the future, have potentialities which can impact on perceiving future.

Forward Theater as the main tool of Psicopropective.

Forward Theatre is a form of looking at the future face to face.

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