Is There a Viral Potential in “Suggestion” as a Quality of Theatrical Human Nature?

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this work lies in characterizing “suggestion” as a quality of theatrical nature of a human being with highlighting a viral potential of theatricality. The author has a theory that the theatricality as an instrument of personality’s adaptation and a human being uses it at every turn. However, except some examples of description theatricalization a human being behavior and some societal examples of theatricality it is hard to find any other information about theatrical nature of a human being, something that could explain the “Homo Theatrical” as the phenomenon.

Applications of this study. The results of the study can be useful for the philosophical Sciences, human Sciences, for the development of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of a human being as a complex open, self-organizing system. The results can be useful for the development of a dialogical scientific paradigm, a useful relationship between the Sciences of spirit and Science of nature. The results of the study expand the understanding of a human being as a philosophical problem.

Novelty. The novelty of the work is determined by the interdisciplinary approach to the problem of “Homo Theatrical”. The genetic and virology stuff help to understand viral potential of suggestion in a new way. Anthropology helps find out clear examples of life theatricalization and using some of theatrical approaches and instruments of suggestion for psycho therapy. Philosophy helps take some knowledge about theatrical nature of a human being to a new level of understanding, to a level of interdisciplinary search.

Keywords: “Homo Theatrical”, theatrical nature of a human being, virus, “psycho contagion”, meme, suggestion

1. INTRODUCTION
A human being is theatrical and it is not a secret. We use stagecraft in everyday life, at work, daily routine, with ourselves and often even do not notice that. Sometimes we are successful in artistic techniques, sometimes we play too much and forced but, what has been noticed fairly by famous masterminds in the past, - the Theatre was and is very important thing in human’s life. The Theatre has a great power, plays major part and takes unpredictable place in everyday life.

It should be note that this research will not analyze the histrionic personality disorder. Pathologic aspect of superfluous theatricalization in behavior might take some important place in other work but not here.

This research tries to understand some qualities of theatricalization as a phenomenon and analyze theatricalization as a method of a human being adaptation to life itself.

Here we would like to understand something special about nature of theatricality because of its great opportunities of human being life adaptation. It is common knowledge that such kind of tasks is unpredictable and hard to investigate but on the other hand this research seems to be very amazing and intriguingly. Just because it’s look like a long-long way to home, to itself.

So, the theatricality is widely met in social and personal life but what we know about that? What we could say when is trying to characterizing theatricality as a phenomenon? Which criterions could name? What about “suggestion” for example? Does “suggestion” carry some viral potential? Put in other words does “suggestion” has capacity to infect anybody by ideas, thoughts, which are useful for one, who suggests these ideas and thoughts, and useless or hurting other, who has been infected by suggestion?
2. METHODOLOGY

This article relies on scientific data of genetics, virology, psychiatry and neurology, anthropology and philosophy. The paper presents a comparison, analogy, analysis of scientific data of the Humanities and natural Sciences about a human being. An interdisciplinary approach is used as the lead. Philosophy is conceived as an scientific instrument of co-operation between the Humanities and natural Sciences because of her meta – abilities. Methodology of Philosophy helps to adapt some empirical data, analyze them, construct analogy, and build interdisciplinary connections. Thus, Philosophy helps to find out a specific level of human being’s understanding, especially in issue of His Theatrical nature that has been given to him by Nature, is necessary to survive and has a huge power about the human being at all.

3. DISCUSSION

First of all let’s suppose that the theatricality as phenomenon is a quality of psychic nature of a human being. It is a kind of psycho mechanism of adaptation human being to different issues or challenges inner or external order. The theatrical nature of a human being manifest itself own in some specific ways of thinking, attitudes, actions etc, which oriented to survive in social circumstance.

This mechanism assumes the presence of a virtual world in a person and the great need a human being for it, as well as active participation of virtual world in decision-making (intentional, physical, mental).

So, virtual world plays a great role in inner personal life of human being, carries a set of functions such as therapeutic, compensatory, regulative etc. One of its properties, as it seems, is the property of “suggestion” or “autosuggestion”, more precisely, the craving, the desire to “suggest” something to someone for achieving a certain goal. In such a case suggestion based on representation, artistic demonstration, in a sense, deceiving the interlocutor.

With the help of theatrical means of expression, a person seeks to impose his own point of view, the desired. To achieve the goal, as a rule, gestures, verbal manipulation, deception, flattery, game elements, pretense are actively used, and the person himself, who has used the mechanisms of theatricality, is not always aware of the manipulative scope that he uses.

Suggestion is not the only tool that theatricality operates in a person. However, in this paper it is important to focus on it.

A human being is theatrical not only toward to other people, to outside environment. Often he is theatrical toward to himself and makes a deal with himself “made”, “cook up”, “virtual”, “and theatrical”. In that cases a human being “suggests”, “thrust down throat” many thoughts, cliché, ideas and stereotypes to himself too.

There is some thought that the theatricality is necessary to surviving and adapting a human being to social life, any outside environment, to reality which is full of routine that is uninteresting and insincere from time to time.

So, for a range of reasons the theatricality has abilities to hide truth, something that real, real motives for example, or decisions. For a range of reasons this phenomenon uses “masquerade” and “games elements” as instruments. For what reasons? This question is without answer for today but the question “how does it work?” is not a lost cause, and we could find some results.

4. THEATRICALITY AND PLAY

The theatricality and “Play” are bound up with each other closely. We know that Johan Huizinga in “Homo Ludens” has written about their historical bond: “there was a time when it was generally accepted, though in a limited sense quite different from the one intended here: in the 17th century, the age of world theatre. Drama, in a glittering succession of figures ranging from Shakespeare and Calderon to Racine, then dominated the literature of the West. It was the fashion to liken the world to a stage on which every man plays his part. Does this mean that the play-element in civilization was openly acknowledged?” [1].

Hereafter Johan Huizinga offers to take a closer look in “this fashionable comparison of life to a stage” and after that to spy out some “markedly moralistic accent”, which are little more than “an echo of the Neo-platonism”. Johan Huizinga, however, sets a goal to understand essence of “play”, to “show that genuine, pure play is one of the main bases of civilization” [2].

We could search and find both similarities and differences in the characteristics of the “play” and “theatricality” for ages. But this is not the point. The point is that “Homo Theatrical” uses “play” as a kind of technique, method, the way but does not play purely, does not play sincerely. That is the point.

Let’s remember some thoughts of Johan Huizinga about nature of “play”. He has told that “play is a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is “different” from “ordinary life”” [2].

But what we see is that “Homo Theatrical” when he needs could change the rules as the game progresses, besides he could manipulate the rules in order to get real result. It is hardly looks like “pure play”:

When “Homo Theatrical” acts he does often it in selfish, pragmatic way, and if he needs any tricks, dishonesty, dissimulation, artistry for getting aim he will use it.

Meanwhile, Johan Huizinga writes about “play”: “To our way of thinking, cheating as a means of winning a game robs the action of its play-character and spoils it
altogether, because for us the essence of play is that the rules be kept, that it be fair play” [1].

It turns out that after all with certain similar characteristics, theatricality and play have something that deeply distinguishes them from each other. Perhaps one of the distinctive properties is precisely the property of “suggestion”, which the theatrical human being aspires to.

5. THEATRICALITY AND “SUGGESTION”

To characterize the specifics of “suggestion” it is interesting to refer to the work “Suggestion and its role in social life” by Russian psychiatrist, neuropathologist, physiologist and psychologist, Vladimir Mikhailovich Bekhterev.

Vladimir Bekhterev points out that “suggestion should be understood in the broader meaning of the word, as one of the ways of exerting influence of one person over another even under conditions of ordinary life. From this view, suggestion is an important factor in our social life and must be the subject of interdisciplinary study, not only for physicians but for all people who study the conditions and laws of social life” [3].

He marks that “the term “suggestion” is adopted from everyday life. It was initially employed in medical circles as hypnotic or posthypnotic suggestion. But we should remember that suggestion is not necessarily associated with the particular state of mental activity known as hypnosis, because it is demonstrable by cases of suggestion carried on in the waking state”, everyday, everyday etc. [3].

Based on professional experience, Vladimir Bekhterev comes to a conclusion that “suggestion is a direct induction of psychic states, ideas, feelings, emotions from one person to another by words or gestures. The result of suggestion is nothing other than an invasion of extraneous issues into the psychic domain without the direct participation of the personal sphere, owing to which the latter is, in the majority of cases, either completely or almost completely incapable of rejecting the suggestion and driving it out of the personality, even in instances when its absurdity is obvious. Penetrating into the mind without active attention, the suggestion remains outside the personal sphere of the mind. Because of this, all consequent effects take place without the control of the personal sphere, and without the corresponding inhibition” [4].

How Vladimir Bekhterev characterizes nature of “suggestion”? He has a theory that nature of “suggestion” has a viral character: “nowadays people talk so much about physical infection through “living contact” (contagium vivum) or so called microbes that I feel it is useful to consider “psychic contact” as well (contagium psychicum), which causes a psychic infection” [4].

Psycho microbes, there are similarly to physical microbes, but are transferred through words, gestures, and movements of surrounding people, through books, newspapers, etc. So, V. Bekhterev marks that we are “in psycho danger” every day and we are exposed to the action of psychic microbes and therefore we are in danger of being psychically infected [3].

In order to being psychically infected, enough being scatterbrained in thoughts, distracted, have some noncritical attitude to information getting from without. And “psycho infection” might be much more fast and effective achieving goals when “psycho contagion” uses such kind of theatrical approaches as representation, manipulation, artistry, rich gestures. Thus, “psycho contagious” forces suggest a human beings something (ideas, thoughts, images, patterns) and we are becoming a carriers suggest states.

6. ABOUT VIRAL POTENTIAL

Isn’t that how viruses behave? Let’s look at the specifics of their work. In the work of Alexander Smorodintsev “The Battle with Invisibles, or the Fight for life”, the author notes that viruses are not able to reproduce independently, they need a suitable living cell and to “penetrate” it, viruses attach to special receptors on the surface of such cells.

Some viruses that have a special “penetration enzyme” that dissolves the cell wall are introduced through such an opening into the cell. Other viruses are absorbed by the cell itself, taking them for an edible protein [5].

And now, when the virus “got” inside the cell, an incredible event occurs – it disappears. Scientists have called this stage of reproduction “Eclipse”, which means “Eclipse” (obscuration) in Russian. Neither the virus particle nor its individual components can be detected in the cell. In the “Eclipse” stage, the viral particle breaks down into proteins and nucleic acid (the inherited substance of the virus).

This “Undressing” of the virus is done by the cell itself with the help of its enzymes, “hoping” to use the viral proteins as food necessary for building its own components. It seems that the cell does not suspect the presence of aggressive intentions on the part of the “alien” and moreover, it is located benevolently, uncritically, absent-mindedly.

However, the released nucleic acid of the virus begins to act as an aggressor inside the cell: in the interests of the virus, it suppresses signals from its own nucleic acids. The entire process of synthesis of proteins and other substances necessary for the life of the cell stops. Now the virus, using the synthesizing systems of the cell itself, “forces” it to produce everything necessary for the appearance of many thousands of new descendants [5].

Virology is more in demand today than ever before: various types of viruses and cellular responses to intrusion are being studied. What do scientists note? They write that “during viral entry, the cellular microenvironment presents invading pathogens with a series of obstacles that
passive “suggestion”, which is everywhere found in the public space, and also searches for the essence of “suggestion” not in certain external features, but in the special relationship of the “had suggested” to the “I’m” of the subject during the perception of the “suggestion” and its coming true [3].

He speaks of the involuntary “suggestion” produced by natural communication, and gives an example of “a magical influence when a single merry gentleman appears in a bored society. All at once involuntarily, without noticing it themselves, become infected with mirth, and become feel more cheerful in spirit. In turn, the revitalization of society has an “infectious” effect on the most merry fellow” [4].

When asked how ideas and mental states of other people could be instilled, Bekhterev suggests that the transmission and reinforcement of ideas takes place through the senses (hearing, vision, facial expressions, gestures, tactile, muscular feelings) [3].

In the book “The Selfish gene”, Richard Dawkins addresses the problem of the viral potential that exists in culture. He suggests that the transmission of cultural heritage is similar to genetic transmission [9].

“According to Dawkins, a successful replicator needs fecundity (fertility), longevity (capable of sustaining itself across generations over time), and copy-fidelity (faithful in copying the original information accurately). So long as all three conditions are met the replicator will continue to propagate itself, whether a gene, meme, or some other, yet-to-be-articulated replicator” [10].

And just as genes are replicators, so are “memes” - conventional units of information of culture, cultural heritage.

Examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches. Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation [9].

Dawkins is writing: “… memes should be regarded as living structures, not just metaphorically but technically. When you plant a fertile meme in my mind you literally parasitize my brain, turning it into a vehicle for the meme’s propagation in just the way that a virus may parasitize the genetic mechanism of a host cell”. Dawkins marks that “the survival value of the good meme in the meme pool results from its great psychological appeal” [9].

Taking up the baton of the importance of “memetic” culture, Dan Dennett presented his version of the role of infectious and attractive memes in culture, which are often dangerous and destructive to society: “Ideas, not parasites, are what take over our brains,” says the philosopher: “and they are infectious”. Each of us is already a carrier of certain memes. Everyone is responsible for spreading memes and the “viruses” they bring to the world. For D.
Dennett, it is particularly important that people and culture develop immunity to “toxic ideas”[11]. This is particularly important “since memes both represent and construct social perceptions, and, technologically at least, their diffusion across national borders is easier than ever, they may facilitate the creation even of global digital cultures”[12].

So, all this talk about the viral potential of the “meme” as a unit of cultural information, “suggestion” as a common element of social life and “psycho contagion”, ultimately helps to recognize the viral potential of the theatrical nature of a human being, which cannot but rely on the “memetic” heritage and the craving for “suggestion” as a tool for influencing and achieving the desired. In this regard, it is not superfluous to recall that the powerful psychic and theatrical power of “suggestion” was guessed deep in “archaic times”, when the professional skills of healers, sorcerers and magicians contributed to the psychic recovery of people who were accidentally or deliberately affected by the “psycho infection” of negative suggestion. V. Bekhterev also mentions the “magical” power of sorcerers and healers to help get rid of “suggestion”. However, it would be nice if we point out an example from another literature—an anthropological plan.

7. THEATRICALITY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

In the book by Olga Artemova “Personality and social norms in the early primitive community (according to Australian ethnographic data)” there is an interesting fragment that tells about the healing techniques of some healers and sorcerers. The author notes that “along with performing certain rites aimed at achieving certain specific goals, in many tribes one of the functions of healers of a “broad profile” was to publicly demonstrate their extraordinary abilities during religious rites or during public rituals. In the course of such sessions of magic healers, as the natives say, walked on hot coals without getting burned, extracted from the mouth (sometimes from the stomach) extremely long cords woven from animal hair or human hair; mysteriously disappeared before the eyes of the audience and reappeared; sitting or lying on the ground, suddenly began to rise up and so “hung” for several minutes, etc.”[13]. In short, they carried themselves brightly, artistically, theatrically. Not every child could become a potential healer. A child must have a special look. In addition, the healer could be distinguished by another feature: during a cough, small shells that were considered magic items should fly out of his mouth”[13].

In order for the shells (mussels) to “fly out” correctly and in time, potential healers resorted, among other things, to theatrical means of expression. For example, the researcher Threlkeld “asked the interviewee if anyone had seen the bone come out of a particular healer. He replied that no one is allowed to be present at this, the healer goes into the thicket, where the spirits help him in extracting the bone”[13]. In some cases, magicians act openly, presenting evidence of their art to their fellow tribesmen and using various, sometimes complex tricks. For example, the trick of “sucking blood” from the patient's body. Where the healer sucks the skin, there are no wounds or scratches. However, he regularly spits a red liquid into a special vessel or on a flat stone. The secret of the trick is as follows: the healer showed the “smart people” of the white man (anthropologists – researchers) a small sharp fragment of stone, which during the “treatment” he kept in his mouth and periodically pressed his tongue to the roof of his mouth, making light cuts[13]. It turns out that he knew who could be trusted with secret information about his deception, and who could not. He uses theatricalization as concealment for their own (tribesmen) and disclosure of the secrets of the focus for “strangers”.

In order for the tribesmen not to doubt magicians abilities, sorcerers and healers “consciously “made believe, suggested” tribesmen quite another from what they themselves thought about the origin of their abilities, about the meaning of witchcraft or medicine rites, what they knew about their magical activities”[13]. A number of researchers-anthropologists (J. Beckett, Elkin) call this phenomenon “noble fiction”. Obviously, it would be more correct to call it prescribed or sanctioned disinformation[13], which, however, satisfied everyone. One of the most common ailments of that time was what psychiatrists J. Cavte and M. Kidson[14] call traditional mental illness – a special state of the mind and nervous system that has no direct analogues among the neuropsychiatric States of Western culture[13]. The cause of the disease could have been severe neuropsychic shocks, emotional experiences, somatic diseases, trauma.

In the emergence of “traditional psycho illness” a large role was played by self-suggestion of the patient, sometimes the suggestion of some other person[13]. Even a small spark (an unkind look, a laugh, a sigh) was enough to form doubt and uncertainty and creep into the mind of the unfortunate man. After reflection, discussion, gradually his suspicions grew into confidence. And now a human being refuses to eat or drink, does not notice anything around him, lies on the ground by the fire, indifferent and motionless, with his eyes fixed on one point. Or it may be different: he is convulsing, screaming desperately, tearing its hair; or it suddenly begins to see in every neighbor a secret enemy, constantly runs away from someone and hides, trying to disappear in the forest. In any case, there is a real threat to life[13]. The essence of the medicine healers’ treatment in such situations (they were able to cure the disease), obviously,
consisted in a deliberate effect on the patient's psyche [13]. Here is one of the stories of illness and healing, told by the patient himself to B. Spencer (an ethno social group of cockatoos in the North of Arnhemland, the beginning of the XX century).

Waking up one morning, the narrator - Mukalakki, - felt unwell. After thinking about it, he decided that the time had come to pay for a taboo violation committed many years ago (he once ate the forbidden meat of a kuloanyo snake). A living near there healer confirmed this theory and concluded: “Today you will die!”

In the evening, Mukalakki became very ill: the spirit of kuloanyo “wrapped” around his body, “pierced” his head, and from time to time “has been poking out of his forehead, looking directly into his eyes”. All this was accompanied by violent convulsions, so that several men had to hold Mukalakki by the legs, hands, and head.

Aware of the gravity of the situation and obviously not wanting to accept the verdict of the local healer, the relatives of the patient decided to consign out for a famous doctor from a remote group- a Morpoon. This healer was not slow to respond to the invite: like an ambulance, he walked for 14 miles, or even ran, without ever resting. When he came to the camp of the sick man, he stopped at a distance, and for some time, in silence, watched what was happening.

Then, deciding that it was time to act, the Morpoon first ordered the women who were near the patient (and, as you can guess, were expressing their sympathy with loud screams and lamentations) to move away.

When Mukalakki yet again has jumped up, because “the snake kuloanyo again came out of his forehead and began to look into his eyes”, the Morpoon, coming close to the patient, suddenly grabbed the “snake” by the head.

No one but he and Mukalakki, couldn’t see that. Morpoon kept the snake very firmly and gently “unwound” it, releasing the body Mukalakki. When this operation was successfully completed, the Morpoon “coiled the snake and put it in his bag”.

Soon Mukalakki felt great relief, he was able to breathe freely and then fell asleep. The healer spent the night in the camp of the sick man and the next day went to “his own country”. “The spirit of kuloanyo” he took with him to release it far away in the mountains into one of the reservoirs with the words: “Stay at the bottom, don’t go back”.

Since then, kuloanyo has not disturbed Mukalakki, but He experienced a huge shock and was sure, as well as all the other witnesses of this incident, that if it were not for the Morpoon, he would have died [13].

But who has told, who has guaranteed that with consolidation of our civilization, with evolution of “memetic” culture, the humanity has got free out of ancient archaic “psycho” fetters that many years ago in a one moment could infected and paralyzed aborigine’s conscience just by word, or intimation, or barking of dog, or black look into his side?

As judged by huge speed expansion of “toxic meme’s”, “psycho contagion” in social sphere, the power of “suggestion” and “autosuggestion” has kept forceful, artistic and pragmatic as usual.

On the strength of that we can make a conclusion that “suggestion” as a phenomenon has definite viral potential. And as far as theatricality as a way of personal adaptation for external and inner challenges always tries to use any possibility of “suggestion” for getting aim, we can suppose some viral potential and into theatricality itself.

It is very important to mark that the theatricality as a quality of psychic culture of a human being is necessary precondition of adaptation and surviving a human being in a social sphere. That’s why the "theatrical nature of a human being" being investigated not rather than with moralizing but analytic position with some footing on interdisciplinary.

8. CONCLUSION

1. Theatrical nature of a human being is an element of psychic culture if a human being.
2. The theatricality helps a human being to adapt to himself and to life in social sphere.
3. The theatricality is a mechanism of personality’s surviving and her ways of adaptation to external and inner challenges.
4. There are several qualities of the theatricality such as dissimulation, representation, manipulation, artistry, trick, game elements, pragmatism and “suggestion”.
5. Play and the theatricality as phenomena of culture are connecting to each other but not equal to each other.
6. Play does not assume failure to comply with the rules while “Homo Theatrical” breaks the rules when he wants and needs it.
7. “Suggestion” is quite wide definition, very widespread at social sphere. It is one of the ways of exerting influence of one person over another even under conditions of ordinary life. “Suggestion” is an important factor in social life and must be the subject of interdisciplinary study, not only for physicians.
8. “Suggestion” carries a viral potential being a kind of “psycho contagion” for human’s mind.
9. “Homo Theatrical” tries a lot to use “suggestion” as psycho- instrument for getting any results and this is the reason why theatrical nature of a human being assumes there being viral potential too.
9. LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

“Homo Theatrical” as a research area seems to be very perspective and richness but there are and several difficulties in investigation. First of all, it is difficult to identify “theatricality” as a quality of human nature. “Theatricality” as definition seems to be indistinct; his bounds are “unfocused”. Theatricality can be confused with “Play”, with “games element” in human’s being behavior, to histrionic personality disorder etc. Secondly, as a rule, research papers about theatrical behavior of a human being and theatricalization of society has being limited by theatrical examples description without any investigation of essence of theatricality or “Homo Theatrical” as phenomena.

There are many psychiatry, psychology’s papers about some orders of pathologies, which associating with theatricality but their professional diapason often is limited by psychological studies. There is a lack of an interdisciplinary approach to this problem, where the “Homo Theatrical” is studied in many aspects: at the biological, socio-cultural, psychological, axiological, anthropological level. The results of the study can be useful for the philosophical Sciences, human Sciences, for the development of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of a human being as a complex open, self-organizing system. The results can be useful for the development of a dialogical scientific paradigm, a useful relationship between the Sciences of spirit and Science of nature. The results of the study expand the understanding of a human being as a philosophical problem. The novelty of the work is determined by the interdisciplinary approach to the problem of “Homo Theatrical”. The genetic and virology stuff help to understand viral potential of “suggestion” in a new way. Anthropology helps find out clear examples of life theatricalization and using some of theatrical approaches and instruments of suggestion for psycho therapy. Philosophy helps take some knowledge about theatrical nature of a human being to a new level of understanding, to a level of interdisciplinary search. This research is expected to continue.

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