

Playback Theatre: audience's thinking.

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Resumen.

El teatro playback es una forma original de teatro sin texto previo, improvisado, en la que algunos espectadores voluntariamente relatan sus historias personales, que filtradas a través del ritual y la estética del teatro, son inmediatamente dramatizados por los actores y los músicos. Desde sus inicios, la intención de los fundadores de esta modalidad teatral fue la de generar comunidad. Los estudios sobre el teatro playback se han centrado en su uso y efectos en diferentes escenarios (educación, ciencias de la salud, intervención social, psicoterapia y organizaciones). Pero no se ha puesto el énfasis en conocer el pensamiento de los asistentes a este teatro tan peculiar. Por ello la finalidad de la presente investigación ha sido: conocer el nivel de satisfacción e interés de los espectadores tras las sesiones de teatro playback, qué piensan sobre los usos que puede tener, identificar los sentimientos provocados por las historias relatadas y conocer la calidad de la participación y la experiencia vivida durante las representaciones. Para ello se ha utilizado una metodología de corte cuantitativo a través de un cuestionario que se ha pasado a una muestra ocasional formada por 279 personas.

Palabras clave.

Teatro playback, pensamiento del espectador, teatro aplicado.

Abstract.

Playback theatre is the spontaneous, instantaneous and unscripted presentation of vignettes, performed in conventional and unconventional venues, which functions under the premise that the telling of oral stories, when presented with specifically delineated elements, and when performed in interactive ways, is, in fact, an art form. Studies on Playback Theatre have focused on its use and effects in different scenarios: education, social intervention, health, psychotherapy and other similar organizations. However, there has been little focus on the emotional and intellectual processes of the audience members. The aim of this study, therefore, is to use quantitative methodology to establish: the level of satisfaction and perceived benefits of audiences after their Playback Theatre sessions; what they believe the uses of the form could be, to identify the feelings provoked by the narration of stories; and to substantiate quality participation and experiences during the performances.

Key words.

Playback Theatre, audience experiences, personal stories, applied theatre.

Playback Theatre: audience's thinking.

Playback Theatre (hereinafter 'PT'), is improvised theatre based on narratives, feelings, dreams and memories told by different narrators who put themselves forward spontaneously from the audience. Since its very beginnings, the intention of its creators was to generate a collective, to tie together vignettes of personal stories as if they were squares of a patchwork quilt sewn together by an entire community. Over its 40-year history, the aims and scope used in presenting PT has diversified. Studies on this theatrical discipline have centred on the use and effects of the form in different settings: education, health, social intervention, and other similar organizations. The focus of this study is the emotional and intellectual connection audience members have to this special form of theatre. To clarify this information, the following overriding questions have been proposed: what is the thinking do audience members have of PT after having participated in one of its sessions as a spectator, and, in some cases, as a teller?, 'what feelings are provoked in audience members by the narrated stories and their representations?', and what is the quality of participation and experience during the sessions? To sum up, the study seeks to identify the opinions and feelings of playback theatre audiences, using a quantitative methodology.

1. Conceptual references.

The theoretical framework of the work presented in this study is broken into two tracks: a) the nature of PT and the research previously carried out on it, and b) the thinking of the audience members, focusing specifically on their decision to spend their leisure time in an artistic venue.

1.1 Research on the purpose of Playback Theatre.

To demonstrate the flexibility of PT, the following are four main groups in which PT has

been used:

Education: Educational institutions use PT in core subjects such as literature and social sciences, in which students might retell stories from the viewpoint of literary characters, or retell historical events, and then represent the narratives using PT rituals. To work on writing skills, the participants might relate personal stories, and after viewing their experiences dramatized by other classmates, they record them in written form. In the scholastic social setting, the issue of bullying is addressed (Salas 2005b). Among other experts, Salas (2005a) and Fedlhendler (2007) have written extensively on the relationship between PT and aspects of verbal language, validating its wide use now in the teaching of a second language (Salas 2006; Motos & Fields 2015). Within university sphere, PT is used in training workshops to help professors foster the development of democratic participation in linguistic competency, aesthetic education (Fedlhendler 2007), and to clearly outline the values held and promoted by all the educators in that environment.

Social intervention. PT is used in this context as a forum in which participants exchange experiences of dramatic scope. These can include: the consequences of natural disasters - floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, and hurricanes- (Salas 2005); racial conflicts; the search for ways of reconciliation with a partner, a child, a friend, etc.; in jails (Hayes 2006); in health education, for instance in the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (Rosado-Pérez 2005); in prisons, in social residences and in youth centers; in immigration camps and in indigenous communities; in communities in which refugees, immigrants and the native population live together; in communities suffering from misunderstandings due to cultural and linguistic differences, with the goal of integrating the new population (Barreto 2008); and in neighborhoods where communication and coexistence has been damaged because of inequality and injustices. In short, PT's goals are, with the involvement of the individuals and communities involved, to open pathways which promote interaction within the existing social structure, to facilitate instead of lead by giving the members involved the power to share values and experiences, to discuss delicate issues in a safe environment, and to support all involved through the telling and representation of their stories (Park-Fuller

2003).

Health Science. Though PT is not explicitly a psychotherapeutic technique, it has become an important resource for dramatherapists through the development of its methods (Landy 2006). It has been adopted in hospitals, mental institutions (Larkinson & Rowe 2003) and in the training and continuing education of therapists and psychologists. Through the narration and later the representation of personal stories in front of other witnesses, participants gain self-knowledge and connection to others and have a venue for catharsis and personal expression (Salas 2008). The theatrical model also stimulates self-esteem as well as an opportunity for diversion, relaxation, and the development of empathy to others (Moran & Allon 2011). Dramatherapists have even used the PT techniques in their own sessions to further activate the therapeutic properties of their methods (Barack 2013). It has also been used in the medical field to help future doctors and nurses in their training (Lipsker 2005), and in the sphere of health education (Wright 2002).

Organizations: PT has been used in businesses to help with issues of supervision, managerial duties, and in the organization of events (Platander 2011). In a study of leadership, Halley (1996) writes about the wide range of possibilities for businesses that PT offers, such as becoming aware of the importance and affects of verbal messages, one's public presence and in the evaluation of different perspectives. Since the mid-1990s, PT has been used as an effective tool in the continuous training of direction, competences in communication, and in appreciating diversity (Stronks 2013). In some cases, the participants describe incidents occurring at work that have given rise to conflicts, or they share their feelings of dissatisfaction. The conductor facilitates a discussion between the narrator and the actors over possible representations of the story and then the actors bring the narration to life. Many participants have described the value of the perspective gained from this dynamic (Dennis 2004) and because of this dynamic of quickly and efficiently creating a community and the value it places on every single voice, PT can play key roles in the efforts of organizational change in businesses (Sheng-Toa 2013). This is true for any organization that is actively searching for ways to develop the most efficient team possible,

the most balanced and equitably directed managerial system, and a participatory leadership on all levels (Halley & Fox 2006).

1.2 Audience thinking.

The second part of this study revolves around the perception, beliefs and reflections of audience members decide to participate in an artistic activity. The focus of the research assumes the following: a) the participant is a reflective subject, is rational, capable of making decisions, emits justice, has beliefs, consciously chooses leisure activities and has a predilection for personal and social development; and b) the participants' reflections guide and orient their conduct regarding whether they will be an active participant, a semi-active audience member, or will simply watch the action from a recording afterwards.

The focus of the audiences' thinking is based on how they make personal decisions and how they process information (McCarthy & Jinnett 2001). The frequency of their participation and whether it is occasional or infrequent, is motivated by the experience they may have had in the past at a specific artistic event, someone else's experience related to them, their years in educational institutions or in their work environment, or experiences they shared with their family and/or friends.

It is McCarthy and Jinnett's contention that the individual decision to participate isn't a debate (to participate or not participate), but is, rather, the implication of complex considerations, attitudes, intentions, restrictions and behaviors. Moreover, it inspires feedback between past experiences and previous intentions. The authors of this study understand that the decision to participate in cultural activities is complex and significant. For clarification purposes, the different factors have been broken up into four phases: background, perceptual, practical, and experiential.

The phase related to past experiences (background) takes into account the general attitude

of individuals toward artistic scenarios. This involves a number of factors: knowledge of the specific art form, the social value given to it, the level of personal development reached for having been involved with the event, etc. The phase regarding perception (perceptual) centres on those elements that have training as a part of participation. It is based on personal gain and cost. The predisposition to participate is influenced by one's attitude towards artistic forms, one's perceptions of social norms, and by reference groups (relatives, friends). The practical phase focuses on the evaluation of a person who goes to an event to participate, attend, or watch the event. The phase related to experience includes past participation a person has had and the reaction and value that person has put on that venture.

2. Objectives of this study.

This study means to weigh the reflections and attitudes that audience members have during PT functions. Considering that specific experiences retroactively nourish perceptions and personal beliefs, the study also focuses on understanding the disposition of a person who has returned to an artistic event and who would recommend Playback Theatre to friends or family.

The general objectives of the research presented herewith has concentrated on:

- ✓ establishing the level of satisfaction and perceived benefits generated by a session of Playback Theatre;
- ✓ understanding the reflections by audience members on how Playback Theatre is used;
- ✓ identifying feelings provoked by the narratives and dramatizations;
- ✓ measuring the quality of participation and the experiences of the audiences during the representations of stories.

3. Methodology.

The attainment of these objectives has required the implementation of short-term quantitative research, based on answers given by audience members at the PT sessions. To evaluate the events and to show the reflections of the participants as accurately as possible, the questionnaire asks for a summary of their reflections of the event. At the end of the sessions the participants were asked to fill in the questionnaires. An average of 90 % of the audience members completed them.²

The sessions lasted about an hour and a half and on average five stories were performed. Each session was different and unpredictable regarding topic and audience. The dates represent nine PT sessions, between the third of February to the 28th of May, 2014. The nine sessions were open to the general public; one was specifically for secondary students; seven were given at the Espacio Inestable in Valencia, one took place in a high school; the last in a community theatre school. All were hosted by the Teatro Playback Inestable.³

3.1. Sample.

In accordance with the objectives stated, and taking into account the limitations previously mentioned and later further explained, this research was developed from a sample set of 279 subjects – audience members from PT sessions.

The sample is a convenience (intentional) sample: the researcher selects individuals from a population directly and intentionally. The sample was people easily accessible to the researchers - the audience members at PT sessions. At the end of the session spectators will be invited to fill in the questionnaire. Thus the sample is composed of those spectators who freely agreed to complete the questionnaire to assess the session they had attended. In

addition, they were told what was going to use their answers.

The profile of the sample includes 64 % women, 40.1 % people between the ages of 20-34, 35.5 % full-time students, 35.5 % full-time workers, and 53,6 % have university degrees. See Table I.

Table I. Description of the sample. Independent variables.

Description of the sample											
Gender			Age			Work status			Level of studies⁴		
	f	%		f	%		f	%		f	%
Men	87	31,2	<20	43	15,4	Full-time student	99	35,5	Secondary school	50	25,5
Woman	180	64,5	20-34	112	40,1	Ful-time worker	98	35,1	Trade	28	14,3
DK/REF	12	4,3	35-49	60	21,5	Student/worker	21	7,5	University degree	105	53,6
			50-65	50	17,9	Unemployed	17	6,1	DK/REF	13	6,6
			>65	12	4,3	Unemployed/ Student	6	2,2			
			Nc	2	0,7	Retired	18	6,5			
						DK/REF	20	7,2			
Total	279	100	Total	279	100	Total	279	100	Total	196	100

3.2 Instrument for collecting information.

The questionnaire was composed of closed opinion questions. Of these, six were multiple-choice and two were number-valued.

The questionnaire was not submitted to experts nor was it used in an experimental group beforehand to test its validity; it was written knowing the variables established beforehand and the theory in which these variables were based. However, the questionnaire remains valid given that it is based on a) tested parameters, b) it gives a clear idea of the goals of PT, and c) presents the difference sources of information in the annexes of the collection of

diverse sources used. So it can be claimed that questionnaire has content and construct validity.

With respect to its reliability, the questionnaire hasn't been submitted to traditional testing to determine its quality. However, whenever a chi-square test is used and the results are identical over repeated testing, it is correct to conclude that there is a strong correlation, as can be observed in Table II.

4. Analysis of results.

The processing of statistical data applied has been a descriptive analysis using SPSS, Version 22.

4.1 The intention to return to a PT session and to recommend one to others.

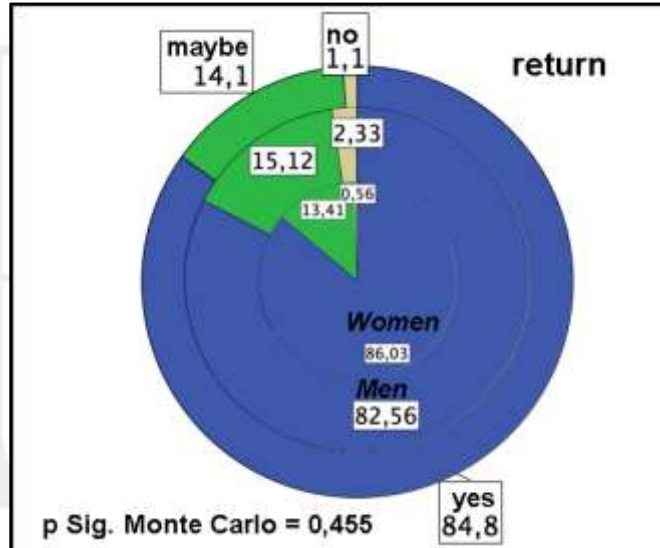
To measure these variables in the questionnaire two items were used.

- 1) The contributor was asked if s/he would go to another session knowing that each one would deal with different subject matter.
- 2) The contributor was asked if s/he would recommend the TP performances to friends or family.

Return to a PT session.

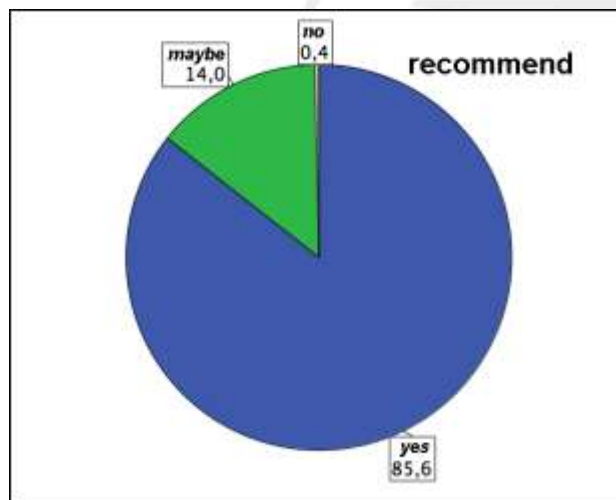
84 % of the audience members give a positive response to whether they would be interested in seeing or participating in another session at the Teatro Playback Inestable; 14 % marked 'perhaps'; 1 % answered 'no'. According to the chi-square test, there is no significant difference between responses given by women and those given by men, nor are there any significant differences in other independent variables such as age, level of studies, and work status. See Graph 1.

Graph 1. Percentage distribution of participants' intention to return to a PT session.



Recommend PT. When audience members were asked if they would recommend a PT session to friends or family, the answers were distributed in the following manner: 86 % 'yes', 14 % 'maybe', 0.4 % 'no'. See Graph 2.

Graph 2. Distribution in percentages of the intention to recommend PT.



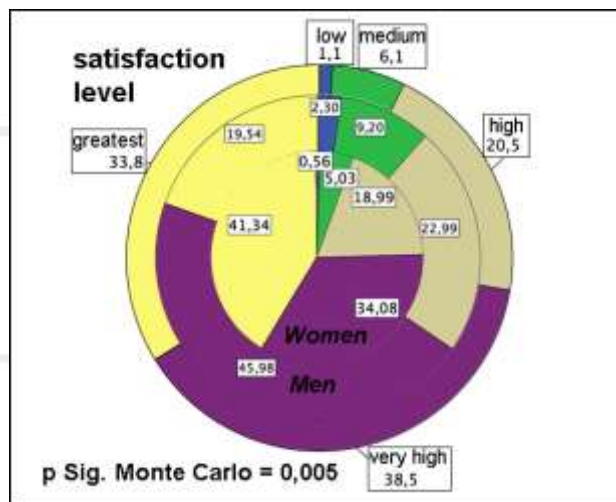
According to the McCarthy and Jinnnet model (2000), the phase of experience is determined by the reactions and value people put on their time involved in a session. Individual reaction to the experience is determined by various elements, including: a) knowledge of the theatre, b) PT specifically, and c) the level of personal satisfaction gained.

In this study, importance was placed just as much on the level of satisfaction felt as the perceived benefits gained. Therefore, the actual act of someone returning to a PT session, or recommending it to another is, for all intents and purposes, positive feedback. The reaction and evaluation of the experience will have directly influenced past decisions to attend this type of theatre or other theatrical forums, as a leisure activity.

4.2 Level of satisfaction.

On a scale of 1-7 (7 being the highest), audience members were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction regarding the session they had participated in. A summary of these answers is the following: 72 % chose 6/7 ('greatest' and 'very high'), 20 % chose 5 ('high'). These results indicate a high level of satisfaction due to the fact that 92 % of the participants' marks were above the average satisfaction level. According to the chi-square testing, there were significant differences between women and men - women responding with a higher level of satisfaction than men. See Graph 3.

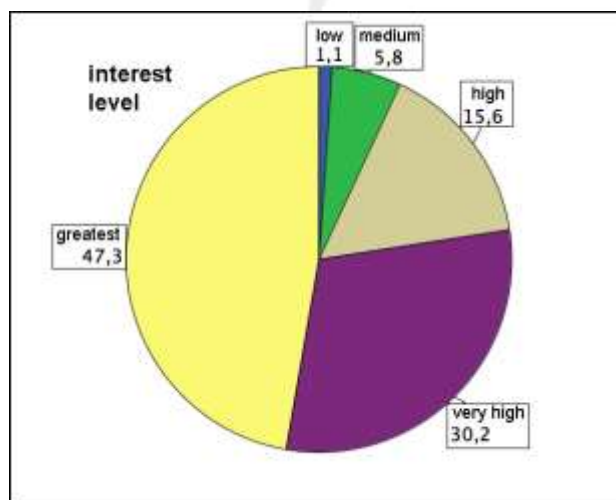
Graph 3. Percentages of the level of satisfaction.



4.3 Level of interest.

Using the same scale, audience members were polled to indicate their level of interest regarding the session they had participated in. 77 % chose 6/7 ('greatest' and 'very high'). Since 92.5 % of attendees rated above average these results show good degree of interest aroused by the performance.

Graph 4. Percentages of the level of interest.



4.4 Contingency tables of the ‘return’, ‘recommend’, ‘satisfaction’ and ‘interest’ variables.

Since the variables used are qualitative (nominal), Pearson's chi-square (X^2) test has been used to establish the statistic significance. This index allows for correlation to be revealed. (See Table II, which does not include the missing values and the negative responses such as ‘no’, ‘very little’ or ‘not at all’, given that these responses were infinitesimal). In order to interpret the coefficient it was necessary to formulate the null hypothesis (H_0) – the values being independent or not related – and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) – the variables not being independent and related.

The X^2 test measures the certainty of a relationship between variables, but not the strength of the relationship. For this, the contingency co-efficient has been used that *does* indicate these ties. Since the data collected is disperse in relation to the number of participants in any given session and the tables are not balanced, the Monte Carlo method has been used. This method compensates for proportions and is always reliable regardless of size, distribution, dispersion or the balance of the data.

Upon analyzing the intersection of the variables ‘date’ with ‘return’, ‘recommend’, ‘satisfaction’ and ‘interest’, it was determined that the H_0 hypothesis could be rejected as the indices of significance are lower than 0.05. And that there was a 0.95 probability that returning to a PT session recommending one, being satisfied and seeing the benefits that one could glean from one, had to do with the dates. Those sessions which took place on different days and with different narratives, influenced the value the audience members placed on the event. The results show that the participants understood that each session is different and therefore they needed to return to the forum as each one had completely different possibilities. See Table II.

Table II. Table of contingency of basis variables and 1,2,3, 4 variables. Pearson Chi-square test and contingency coefficient.

Table of contingency. Pearson Chi-square test and contingency coefficient.									
		Return		Recommend		Satisfaction		Interest	
		Value	Signif. M.C.	Value	Signif. M.C.	Value	Signif. M.C.	Value	Signif. M.C.
Date	X ²	26.863 (gl=16)	0.045	32.308 (gl=16)	0.007	46.159 (gl=32)	0.048	47.216 (gl=32)	0.039
	CC	0.297		0.323		0.377		0.383	
Gender	X ²	1.806 (gl=2)	0.454	3.343 (gl=2)	0.177	13.939 (gl=4)	0.005	6.496 (gl=4)	0.173
	CC	0.082		0.111		0.223		0.155	
Age	X ²	7.343 (gl=8)	0.504	7.813 (gl=8)	0.409	24.551 (gl=16)	0.074	11.906 (gl=16)	0.746
	CC	0.161		0.166		0.286		0.204	
Work status	X ²	6.531 (gl=10)	0.723	9.096 (gl=10)	0.374	21.015 (gl=20)	0.370	8.611 (gl=20)	0.987
	CC	0.157		0.185		0.274		0.180	
Level of studies⁵	X ²	4.270 (gl=4)	0.353	5.710 (gl=4)	0.257	7.962 (gl=8)	0.443	7.166 (gl=8)	0.528
	CC	0.151		0.174		0.204		0.196	

As for the gender variable in relation to ‘return’, ‘recommend’, ‘satisfaction’ and ‘interest’, a 0.005 p-value was determined in cross-sectioning ‘satisfaction’ with gender. The conclusion is clear that women show more satisfaction than men in participating in a PT event given that the indicator is very low; these results are not random.

The relationship between the variables ‘age’, ‘work situation’ and ‘level of studies’ with ‘return’, ‘recommend’, ‘satisfaction’ and ‘interest’ is over 0.05 p-value and so the null hypothesis (H₀) cannot be rejected. There is no relationship between these values.

The conclusions of the study are then, that PT audience members, independent of their gender, work situation and level of studies, consider this theatrical model one to recommend to others, and there is determined evidence that their intention is to return to another session of this type of applied theatre. In this sense, there is a pattern that clearly shows that some audience members *have* returned already. It can also be concluded that the variables ‘return’, ‘recommend’ and ‘interest’ are independent of gender, age, level of

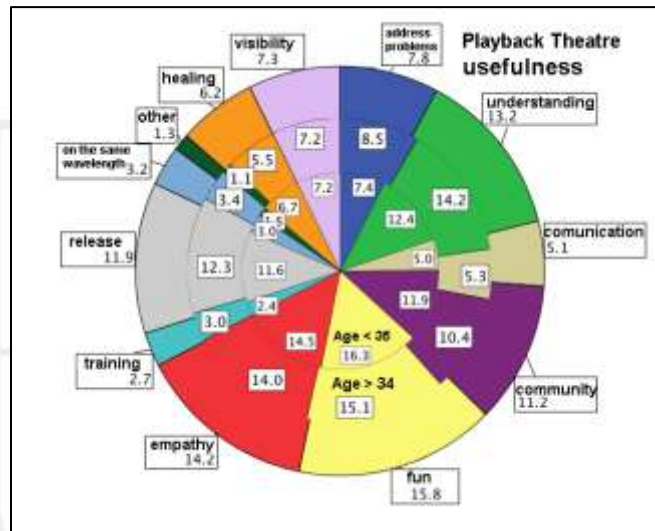
studies or work situation. Lastly, ‘satisfaction’ *does* have a correlation with gender: women show more satisfaction than men in PT events.

4.5 Usefulness.

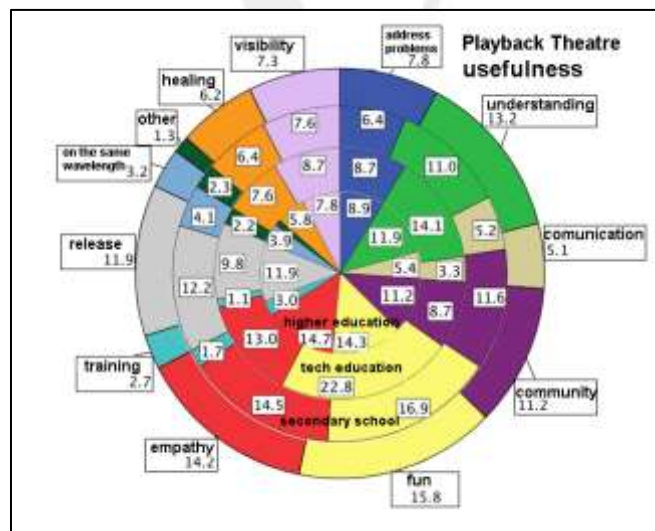
To know what participants think about how PT can be useful, they were asked to mark three of the 11 uses presented. These 11 options were taken from published literature that dealt with this theatrical model. The options given were: 1) fun, 2) relief from tensions, 3) improvement of understanding, augmentation of communication and interaction between people, 4) the ability to be on the same wave length as other participants and the pleasure of being in a social setting, 5) therapeutic healing, 6) creation of community, the opportunity for dialogue in sharing experiences, 7) the opportunity to express oneself in public and be visible, 8) continuing education, 9) communication with people of other ages and cultures, 10) a safe environment in which to address issues: problems in scholastic settings and work environments, gender issues and incidents of violence, etc., 11) to promote empathy, to consider other points of view, and to expand one’s perspective. As can be seen in the outer ring of Graph 6, the answers are varied and disperse. Those marked with the most frequency are: fun, diversion (16%), promotion of empathy and the capacity opportunity to consider other points of view (14%), and the augmentation of empathy, understanding, communication, and social relations (13%). Of the remaining, only two – relief from tension and communication with people of other ages and cultures – received more than 10%.

To analyze the correlation between age and other factors, and to simplify the graph, this variable has been divided into two groups: participants who are 34-years-old or younger, and those who are 35-years-old or older. The variable regarding ‘level of studies’ has been divided into completion of: secondary, trade (vocational training) or university. (See Graphs 5, 6, & 7.).

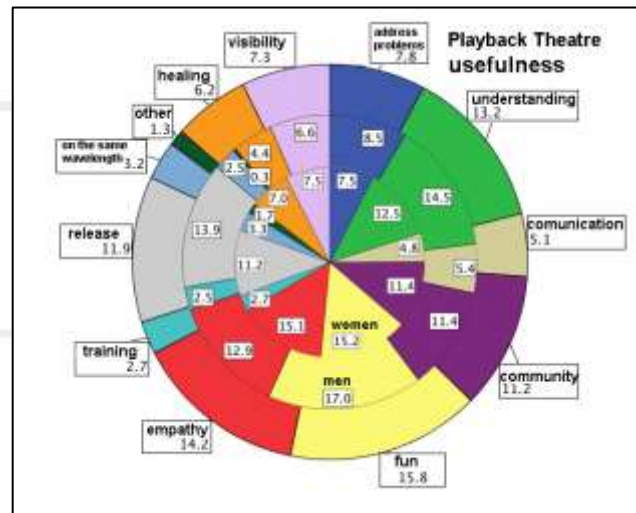
Graph 5. Distribution in percentages of the usefulness of PT according to the age.



Graph 6. Distribution in percentages of the usefulness of PT according to the academic level.



Graph 7. Distribution in percentages of the usefulness of PT according to gender.



The results of the analysis of the base variables of ‘usefulness’ are found in Table III. One of the correlations that appears has a significant p-value between ‘work situation’ and ‘fun’ (0.014) and between ‘work situation’ and ‘understanding’ (0.041). There are also significant p-values between ‘age’ and ‘empathy’ (0.000) and between ‘level of studies’ and ‘empathy’ (0.057). Between ‘level of studies’ and ‘to be on the same wave length’ (0.063) there are indications of dependency, but it is not obviously significant. According to these indications, it can be concluded that a person who is 34-years-old or younger feels that PT promotes understanding, communication, and social relations. This variable ‘age’ also reflects an approval factor regarding empathy and the opportunity to increase the capacity of seeing other people’s points of view. The analyses also show that the level of empathy is tied to academic studies; those who have gone no further than completing their secondary education show much stronger indications that PT is very useful in getting on the same wave length as other participants, and that it increases the pleasure of being in a social setting. The analyses demonstrate that women consider PT to have very healthy therapeutic properties. Finally, those who both work and study show strong indications that PT serves as a diversion and a way of promoting understanding, communication and social relations.

[Table III. Table of contingency of basis variables and ‘usefulness’. Pearson Chi-saquare test and contingency coefficient. This table is elaborated eliminating the missing values].

Table of contingency of basis and ‘usefulness’ variables. Pearson Chi-saquare test and contingency coefficient.									
		Gender		Age		Work status		Level of studies	
		Value	Signif. M.C.	Value	Signif. M.C.	Value	Signif. M.C.	Value	Signif. M.C.
Diversion	X ²	0.169 (gl=1)	0.692	5.121 (gl=4)	0.280	13.544 (gl=5)	0.014	2.265 (gl=2)	0.316
	CC	0.25		0.135		0.223		0.111	
Release	X ²	1.055 (gl=1)	0.359	2.293 (gl=4)	0.475	4.759 (gl=5)	0.453	4.187 (gl=2)	0.135
	CC	0.063	0.363	0.091		0.134		0.150	
Under-standing	X ²	0.373 (gl=1)	0.602	11.113 (gl=4)	0.024	11.248 (gl=5)	0.041	2.825 (gl=2)	0.252
	CC	0.037		0.166		0.204		0.123	0.252
Same wavelength	X ²	0.733 (gl=1)	0.425	1.551 (gl=4)	0.828	1.941 (gl=5)	0.871	5.514 (gl=2)	0.063
	CC	0.052		0.075		0.086		0.171	
Healing	X ²	4.030 (gl=1)	0.047	4.135 (gl=4)	0.400	4.804 (gl=5)	0.440	2.552 (gl=2)	0.887
	CC	0.122		0.121		0.135		0.037	
Communi-ty	X ²	0.224 (gl=1)	0.693	4.711 (gl=4)	0.323	2.964 (gl=5)	0.711	4.330 (gl=2)	0.118
	CC	0.029		0.129		0.106		0.152	
Visible	X ²	0.824 (gl=1)	0.386	0.872 (gl=4)	0.934	5.054 (gl=5)	0.421	1.187 (gl=2)	0.564
	CC	0.055		0.056		0.138		0.080	
Continuing education	X ²	0.199 (gl=1)	0.831	5.303 (gl=4)	0.246	7.541 (gl=5)	0.170	3.517 (gl=2)	0.185
	CC	0.021		0.137		0.170		0.187	
Comunica-tion	X ²	0.016 (gl=1)	1.000	4.999 (gl=4)	0.291	5.355 (gl=5)	0.375	2.560 (gl=2)	0.298
	CC	0.008		0.133		0.142		0.177	
Adresse	X ²	0.071 (gl=1)	0.887	4.769 (gl=4)	0.320	9.126 (gl=5)	0.101	4.733 (gl=2)	0.098
	CC	0.016		0.130		0.184		0.159	
Empathy	X ²	3.279 (gl=1)	0.088	20.745 (gl=4)	0.000	6.978 (gl=5)	0.225	5.868 (gl=2)	0.057
	CC	0.010		0.264		0.162		0.176	

4.6 Feelings

This variable has been defined by the feelings audience members have while listening to the narratives and watching the dramatizations of the stories told. According to Augusto Boal (2004, p. 91), audience members become emotionally involved when watching a theatrical production on three different levels: identification, likeness (recognition) and resonance. This study has added one other: indifference and emotional distance. Participants were asked to choose between the four. The 39 % of the audience members found that it was easy to relate what was heard in the narratives to what their own experiences were. This happened when there was no direct identification between the story and the personal experience of the audience member, but even so, this latter was able to put her/himself in the place of the former.

A total of 29% of audience members indicated that the narratives had a certain resonance, which means that “for whatever reason, even unconsciously, the story told affected the listeners profoundly” (Boal 2004, p. 91). The 28 % identified with the person telling the story and could put themselves in the others’ place, experiencing the same feelings as the narrator, as if the story were a scene from their own lives. According to Boal (2004, p. 91) identification occurs “when the similarity is complete between the narrative told and the lives of the audience”. The percentage of people indifferent to or who remained emotionally distance from the stories while or after listening to them, were less than 4%.

Analyzing the variables with those established in the feelings section (Table IV) confirmed that the null hypothesis (H_0) could be rejected given that the p-value was less than 0.05 in the following comparisons: between ‘age’ and ‘resonance’ (0.044), between ‘level of studies’ and ‘resonance’ (0.046), and between ‘gender’ and ‘indifference’ (0.015). The conclusions based on the analyses of these correlations are significant: participants 35-years-old or older identify more with the narrative upon hearing and seeing the dramatization. This can be explained by the recognition that over their lifetime they have

had more experiences than the younger audience members. The level of studies also is significant in relation to a feeling of resonance with the narrative. Those with university education show significantly more resonance. Finally, men identified themselves to be more indifferent or emotionally distant than women. In fact, sensitivity is characteristically more developed in women than men (Del Giudice, Booth & Irwing, 2012).

[Table IV. Table of contingency of base variables and the variable ‘feeling’. Testing of Pearson’s X^2 and Contingency coefficient. This table is elaborated eliminating the missing values].

Table of contingency of basis variables and ‘feeling’ variable. Pearson Chi-square test and contingency coefficient.									
		Gender		Age		Work status		Level of studies	
		Value	Signif. M.C.	Value	Signif. M.C.	Value	Signif. M.C.	Value	Signif. M.C.
Identifi- cation	X^2	0.016 (gl=1)	1.000	4.288 (gl=4)	0.373	0.566 (gl=5)	0.991	2.730 (gl=2)	0.261
	CC	0.008		0.123		0.047		0.121	
Recogni- tion	X^2	0.004 (gl=1)	1.000	2.461 (gl=4)	0.657	6.179 (gl=5)	0.299	1.032 (gl=2)	0.587
	CC	0.004	1.000	0.094	0.657	0.153	0.299	0.075	
Resonan- ce	X^2	0.093 (gl=1)	0.778	9.780 (gl=4)	0.044	4.102 (gl=5)	0.543	6.112 (gl=2)	0.046
	CC	0.019		0.185		0.125		0.180	
Indifferen- ce	X^2	6.621 (gl=1)	0.015	2.524 (gl=4)	0.658	6.649 (gl=5)	0.216	0.917 (gl=2)	0.656
	CC	0.156		0.095		0.158		0.071	

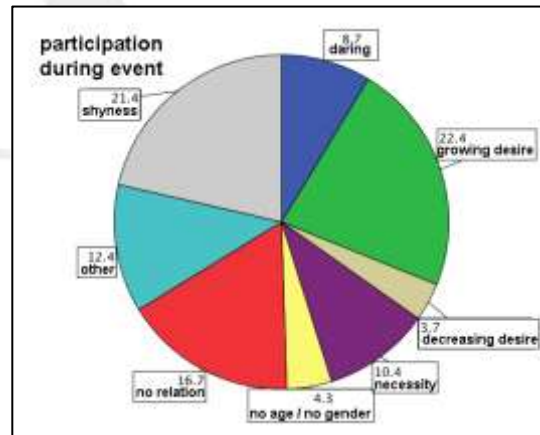
An evaluation of the Monte Carlo analysis also reveals significant results. There is a total correlation in men and women’s answers between their feeling of identification and resonating with the content of some of the stories told and their personal experiences.

4.7 Participation and the quality of the experience

Participating during the function. The second-to-last option on the questionnaire asks audience members to choose a motive that best reflects their decision - between eight possible reasons for participating. (See Graph 9). A total of 22 % of the audience members

state that their desire to tell their own stories increased as the sessions progressed. Approximately the same percentage admitted that reticence was the reason they did not volunteer to narrate their stories. Almost 17 % marked the option ‘felt that my story was not related to the overall theme’. This often happens when a session is based on a subject chosen by the audience at the beginning of the function. The conductor chooses this option with the understanding that this potentially eliminates the possibilities of participation of many who have attended the event.

Graph 9. Distribution in percentages of participation people had during the PT session.



According to the analyses, 10 % of the polled members of the audience indicated that they would have liked to have told their story, but the timing of the event would not permit it. The options ‘I didn’t tell my story because most of the other audience members were not my age or gender’ and ‘as the session progressed my desire to tell my story decreased’ was less than 5 %. Approximately 9 % of the audience members were willing to tell their own stories. This percentage is low probably because in any given session an average of only five stories are narrated and dramatized as the sessions usually last 90 minutes and there isn’t time for more than that number.

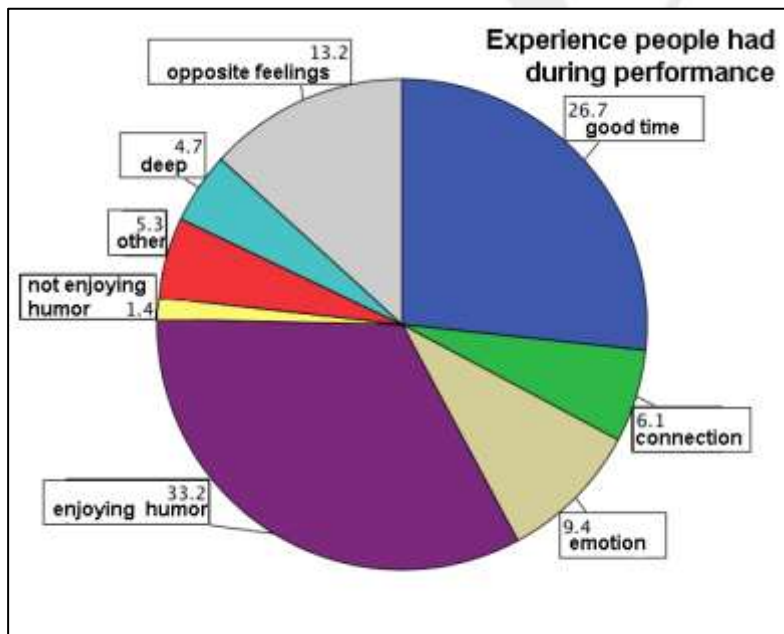
[**Table V:** Table of contingency of the base variable ‘participation’. Pearson testing of X^2 and coefficient contingency. This table was created eliminating the missing values].

		Gender		Age		Work status		Level of studies	
		Value	Signif. M.C.	Value	Signif. M.C.	Value	Signif. M.C.	Value	Signif. M.C.
Daring	X^2	2.415 (gl=1)	0.128	3.366 (gl=4)	0.497	2.733 (gl=5)	0.756	0.457 (gl=2)	0.791
	CC	0.095		0.110		0.102		0.050	
Shyness	X^2	5.170 (gl=1)	0.027	2.755 (gl=4)	0.609	5.021 (gl=5)	0.424	1.530 (gl=2)	0.467
	CC	0.138		0.099		0.138		0.091	
Need	X^2	0.370 (gl=1)	0.676	2.097 (gl=4)	0.739	4.481 (gl=5)	0.477	0.792 (gl=2)	0.634
	CC	0.370		0.087		0.130		0.066	
Increasing desire	X^2	0.147 (gl=1)	0.760	12.050 (gl=4)	0.019	2.522 (gl=5)	0.805	0.708 (gl=2)	0.863
	CC	0.023		0.204		0.098		0.062	
Decreasing desire	X^2	0.147 (gl=1)	0.760	12.050 (gl=4)	0.190	2.522 (gl=5)	0.805	0.708 (gl=2)	0.863
	CC	0.023		0.204		0.098		0.062	
No relationship	X^2	6.653 (gl=2)	0.026	6.661 (gl=8)	0.536	4.991 (gl=10)	0.737	1.764 (gl=4)	0.778
	CC	0.156		0.153		0.137		0.098	
No age	X^2	1.840 (gl=1)	0.233	4.904 (gl=8)	0.289	2.525 (gl=5)	0.802	2.431 (gl=4)	0.241
	CC	0.083		0.132		0.098		0.114	

Crossing the base variables (see Table V) with the components of ‘participation’, the H_0 hypothesis was proven false in three relationships, which leads to the conclusion that there is a significant tie between gender and the ‘shyness’ (0.027), between gender and ‘no relationship’ (0.026), and between ‘age’ and ‘growing desire’ (0.019). These dependency factors imply that there is a significantly higher degree of reticence for women than men when it comes to expressing themselves in such a setting. Women also stated that they didn’t tell their stories because they believed that they didn’t have any relationship to the themes chosen for that session. Another conclusion extracted from the analyses is that as the functions progressed, audience members 34 years of age or younger felt a growing desire to tell their stories.

Quality of the experience. The last item on the questionnaire asks the participants to choose from a list of eight possibilities, which best expresses their experience in having attended the PT session. The breakdown of these responses are the following: 32% stated that they especially liked how the actors included humour in their dramatizations, even when dealing with sensitive topics; 27 % indicated that they were attracted to how the other audience members showed signs of pleasure – smiling often – and generally seeming to be enjoying themselves during the sessions; and 13% said that the contrasting emotions – laughter and tears – impressed them. The options ‘the stories reached into the depths of my very soul as the session developed’, ‘I felt more and more of a connection to the stories’, and ‘I didn’t like how the actors included humor in their dramatizations given that some of the issues were delicate’ were only chosen by 10% of the audience. No one marked the option indicating that they remained indifferent to the narratives and dramatizations. (See Graph 10).

Graph 10. Distribution of percentages of the experience people had during the PT session.



[Place Graph 10]

Approximately 60 % of the options chosen revolved around humor, laughter and smiling. Humor that is positive, with no intention of harming or insulting, in which any inkling of aggression or insult is absent, is what makes PT a healthy and therapeutic outlet for the public. Humor creates ties and builds confidence between people. It establishes a healthy emotional distance and the ability to intellectualize negative experiences. It widens perceptions and helps people consider new perspective regarding conflicts. And it supports the model that focuses on problems, relieves tension, and promotes social, emotional, intellectual and physical relations.

Humor in a PT session can be used only with the greatest care, understanding and respect for the theme at hand. Used this way, it is, in fact, art. When humor is used from this perspective, it becomes natural for the audience members to be on the same wave-length as the actors, to laugh, to relax, and to relate more easily to the narrative, however difficult the subject may be. Humor produces catharsis and the sense that “the individual or group purifies his inner balance by removing a problem” (Boal 2004, p. 92).

Crossing the base variables with the subgroup ‘participation’, it was found that there is a significant relationship between ‘work situation’ and ‘opposite feelings’ and also between ‘work situation and ‘emotional’, given that the p-value is less than 0.05. (See Table VI).

Table VI. Table of contingency of basis variables and ‘experience’ variable. Pearson Chi-square test and contingency coefficient. This table was created eliminating the missing values.]

Table of contingency of basis variables and ‘experience’ variable. Pearson Chi-square test and contingency coefficient.									
		Gender		Age		Work status		Level of studies	
		Value	Signif. M.C.	Value	Signif. M.C.	Value	Signif. M.C.	Value	Signif. M.C.
Deep	X ²	0.006 (gl=1)	1.000	2.373 (gl=4)	0.678	7.690 (gl=5)	0.163	1.365 (gl=2)	0.533
	CC	0.005		0.092		0.170	0.163	0.086	
Good time	X ²	1.248 (gl=1)	0.296	5.088 (gl=4)	0.288	6.314 (gl=5)	0.284	0.288 (gl=2)	0.875
	CC	0.068		0.134		0.154		0.040	
Enjoying humor	X ²	2.997 (gl=1)	0.086	3.069 (gl=4)	0.557	7.271 (gl=5)	0.202	1.784 (gl=2)	0.403
	CC	0.105		0.105		0.1165		0.098	
No enjoying humor	X ²	0.847 (gl=1)	0.395	3.463 (gl=4)	0.487	2.055 (gl=5)	0.830	0.359 (gl=2)	0.864
	CC	0.056		0.111		0.089		0.044	
Opposite feelings	X ²	2.201 (gl=2)	0.164	6.797 (gl=4)	0.143	10.542 (gl=5)	0.057	3.502 (gl=2)	0.181
	CC	0.090		0.155		0.198		0.137	
Connection	X ²	0.539 (gl=1)	0.539	4.695 (gl=4)	0.317	2.598 (gl=5)	0.768	3.111 (gl=2)	0.191
	CC	0.045		0.129		0.100		0.129	
Emotional	X ²	0.677 (gl=1)	0.483	6.301 (gl=4)	0.174	12.702 (gl=5)	0.027	4.450 (gl=2)	0.123
	CC	0.050		0.149		0.216		0.154	

Analyzing the contingency relationship, it can be concluded that there is a strong tie between ‘work situation’ and ‘opposite feelings’ (laughter and tears) and ‘emotional’ feeling generated by the narratives told. Students are clearly more affected by the stories and respond more to the two opposing emotions. The same results appear in the audience members regardless of their age, gender or studies.

5. Limitations of the present study.

It is understood that the conclusions of the present study cannot be used to make generalizations since there is no certainty that the extracted sample is representative of a non-prejudicial population; not all the audience members had the same probability of being chosen. Further, conditions must be considered with regard to the validity and reliability of the tools used. Although the questionnaire is valid with respect to the content and construct, it behooves the researchers to submit new applications to a set of proceedings that the theory prescribes. In fact, the questionnaire is now in the hands of experts with the prospective of amending it for use in the next round of PT sessions.

Acknowledging these conditions and being fully conscious of the fact that attempting to measure a person's feelings and thoughts about an artistic event requires a much more advanced and more detailed methodology, and without pretensions that the conclusions herein stated are absolute; the authors of this study believe that the conclusions drawn regarding the audience members' reactions are still valid. We recognize that, given the nature of the subject of this study, is needed to complete it with a qualitative methodology.

6. Discussion and Conclusions.

Taking into account the above considerations, the following conclusions are presented. The profile of the most responsive PT audience member is that of a female, between the ages of 20-49 years of age, who works, studies and has a university education. These results coincide with those presented in research laid out by Quero (2003) which concludes that the typical audience member to attend theatrical performances is a woman between the ages of 24-44 years old, single, without children, and with university studies. The Maitland (2000) research concurs that education is a key component of the profile of a person who attends a theatrical event. It is found repeatedly that individuals with a higher level of education are

predisposed to consider the theatre as an option for leisure activity and personal development. Another conclusion which can be drawn from these results is that the profile of a person who returns to a PT session is independent of gender, age, studies and work situation. The theatre model attracts the public in general and no pattern can be established regarding specific sectors of the population (Salas, 2009). This stated, it is important to remember that PT originated out of the desire to work with children, the handicapped, neighbors and the family and friends of the two creators of the model.

Another conclusion is that this theatrical form is most attractive, and produces the most satisfaction, to women. In both variables, women represent 92% of the answers stated with the qualifications 'maximum', 'a lot', and 'enough'. Where the experience has been found to be positive, it is perceived as an opportunity of personal significance. The level of satisfaction is very closely related to the amount of knowledge of the theatrical form: the more audience members know of the methodology beforehand, the more receptive their experience will be (Maitland 2000).

A total of 86% of the audiences stated that they would like to participate in another session as well as recommend it to friends and family.

These results confirm that PT helps engender positive attitudes towards an unscripted theatre model. As Mccarthy and Jinnet (2001) conclude, participants' perceptions and attitudes change during the sessions, as well as the adjustments that happen to the cultural baggage they carry emotionally. The PT audience members are reflective subjects who make decisions and judgments and are very deliberate in how they spend their leisure time. Because of this, PT can be used in educative settings not only to the end of helping students with their studies, or to search for alternative solutions to resolve conflicts, but also to stimulate the participants to learn more about more conventional models of theatre.

The question must also be put forward regarding whether the results thus described are

positive due to the request for the questionnaires to be filled out immediately following the closure of the sessions and if the audience members felt free to answer them or not. It is entirely possible that those who filled out the questionnaires were those who most enjoyed the event and were still influenced by the emotional experience. To verify the results, it would be a good exercise to give the same questionnaire to a sample group a month after attending the performance to check the consistency of the results.

Participants 34 years old or younger felt that PT promotes understanding, communication and human relations; it stimulates empathy, amplifies one's capacity to consider other points of view. Of this group, only those with secondary studies felt that it promotes empathy. Women felt that it has therapeutic benefits and those who work and study believe it to be useful for diversion, to promote understanding, communication and relations amongst the population.

In general, the test subjects consider that PT serves principally as a diversion, engenders empathy, arguments the capacity to see other points of view, to promote understanding, communication and human relations. In this sense, Jonathan Fox suggests that if we are striving for personal and social transformation, we need to listen to others on a deeper level. The theatrical model PT creates the space to learn, and creates ties between people. Fox (1994, p. 12) describes this art form as a force which "preserves the social ecology by transforming the lives of people and forming groups".

One of the strongest factors which attract people to this art form is the experience of feeling that they have had very similar experiences to the narratives they hear. This is the second level of strong feelings, says Boal (2004, p. 91), which corresponds to what he calls 'recognition'. This has to do with finding that one has experiences something very similar to what is being related and dramatized and one can put oneself in another's shoes.

The personal experiences narrated by the public are the scripts for the PT dramatizations. It

is fundamental, therefore, that an environment of trust be created between the audience members and the company of actors. One in four people who attend the sessions say that as the event progresses, they feel a growing desire to tell their own stories. The conductor has a key role in creating this emotional connection.

One in four people find their own reticence to be the obstacle in sharing their stories. This occurs mainly in women. Another obstacle which impedes participation by 17 % of the audience members, is the subject chosen for the session. This normally happens when a specific theme is chosen by the audience at the beginning of the session. The conductor needs to understand that this option will inherently decrease the number of willing volunteers; however, it is important that no matter how large or diverse the audience may be, the conductor needs to offer this option. Another restrictive factor is the limitation of time. The majority of the audiences do not have the opportunity to participate precisely because of this.

The most positive experiences for one-third of the participants is seeing the actors use humor in the dramatizations despite the delicate nature of some stories told. As Meixner says (2009) difficult and negative experiences can be addressed and their emotional charge dissipated, through PT. Participants find that they can relax and be amused by subjects which in other settings would produce pain, oppression and irritation. Humor creates an emotional distance and empathy which fosters new perspectives, widen perceptions, and dissolves tensions.

PT creates a balance between humor, an audience which enjoys the experience themselves, or watching others enjoy it, and the emotion the narratives promote. These elements create a positive environment; engender communication and empathy at the same times as creating emotional distance so that the stories affect people on another level.

The therapeutic affects of PT is to connect to a story told by another participant which can

be enjoyable, liberating and even healing. As Jo Salas says (2005, p. 34), “telling stories to other helps us to integrate the personal significance of the story has for us”. The events create connection because to hear the story of one is to hear the story of all. At the end of the session, the ritual of tying together all the narratives forms a patchwork of personal stories of the people present. They have shared not only their stories but also their knowledge, experience and feelings. To paraphrase José Saramago, the public must remember that they are stories of stories telling stories.

7. Final considerations.

Although the basic idea of PT is simple, there are, nevertheless, complex and profound implications. When people are invited to tell their personal stories with the intention of dramatizing them, various and diverse messages and values are communicated. People and their experiences need to be honoured, and telling personal stories is an art form; the experience gives the listeners the opportunity to hear their own story told on some level, to learn from them, and to become emotionally involved in them. PT gives participants the opportunity to look around them and reflect on what given the world sense and structure. This theatrical model also drives home the message that artistic expression is not the sole province of professional artists; everyone has the ability to create something beautiful. Everyone acts, interacts and plays. All of us are actors. Even the actors, Boal states, and adds “to be human is to be theatre” (2004, p. 25). Side by side the grand literary theatrical production, the more accessible, simple and viable venues which come out of the need for communication through a ritualistic aesthetic have always existed. A paradigmatic example is Playback Theatre.

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² Audience members at the Espacio Inestable paid an entrance fee of 6€.

³ This company was created as a project to continue the training of theatre in education students at the University of Valencia. It consists of a director (conductor), three actresses, two actors, an actor-trainer, a musician, and a person responsible for accounting and communications.

⁴ Studies level hasn't been asked in the questionnaire during two first performances (February 3th and 10th). This is the reason why the total of frequency of this variable is 196.

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