

## **DRAMA AS INSTRUMENT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND CULTURAL DIALOG**

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**Abstract:** It has been indorsed, that intercultural communication through arts is one of the most powerful forms of communication between people from deferent cultures, religions or countries.

In almost all Balkan states, one of most important element of successful intercultural communication depends on daily politics. For this reason, art must be used in proper direction, as the most effective tool that generate understanding of our diversity, our spirituality and our values.

Universal language of art provides the opportunity to inspire visions we have for our future, to give alternative perspectives and approaches, that could make our lives better . The drama play can be form of inspiration for intercultural dialogue if the approach to this mater is made from the right angle.

For many reasons, the art is the most applicable way for better relationship and an important instrument in finding the reconciliation. One of those common cultural ways of artistic communication is the form of theatric play.

For the people who don't share a common language, theatre is opportunity to overcome the difficulties of trying to connect through words, insted, they connect through body language actions and context. Artists have different perspective to the world, they use art as language of communication.

**Keywords:** Drama, theatre, social, change.

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All the definitions of culture agree that culture is a phenomenon that is learned and that the creation of common culture occurs through communication. The most common way of communication of the modern era undoubtedly includes mass communication. When we say mass communication we usually think about TV, radio and theatre. When we listen to radio dramas or watch it in the stage, television or the movie dramas, we actually support culture and social changes that come from one element of the mass communication tool.

By understanding and knowing the possibilities of the mass media and the power of it, people are expanding the usage of them more and more. As we all know the theatre is a collaborative form of art that uses live performers, to present the experience of a real or imagined event in front of live audience, in a specific place called : stage , but as another way of having access or reaching out to audience is through radio – drama. The play that is specially written for radio and broadcasted through radio.

Art may have many definitions and standards, but, it is also used not only as a way of communication and interaction between people, but as a modus of bringing artists and people together. This can be achieved through art based community projects by combining traditional art forms.

Aspects of drama for development resonate with the earliest communication theory addressing aspects of social change. For example, Lerner's (1958) *Passing of Traditional Society*<sup>36</sup> introduced the notion that modernization was a matter of social psychology, with culture (and tradition) being seen as key holdup to progressive social change. He, very influentially, argued that a 'culture of modernity' is spread at the local level by 'advanced individuals' who act as 'reagents' within society<sup>37</sup>. It was suggested that such 'reagents' have an empathy towards aspects of modernity (industrialization, gender equality, rights, etc.) and then demand it. In keeping with the dominant paradigm of the time mass media was deemed essential in stimulating a positive societal orientation towards modernity and social change. Lerner's approach, like many that came after him as Rogers<sup>38</sup> or Schramm<sup>39</sup> is

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<sup>36</sup> Lerner, D. 1958. *The Passing of Traditional Society*. Free Press, New York.

<sup>37</sup> Katz, E. & Lazarsfeld, P. 1955. *Personal Influence*. Free Press, New York, USA

<sup>38</sup> Rogers, E. 1962. *Diffusion of Innovation*. Free Press, New York.

explicitly evolutionist and linear in perspective, modernization and social change are considered needful on the infusion of a rationalist, active and progressive spirit, these being the counterpoint to the stagnation and inertia of tradition.

When we talk about multiculturalism, we usually think about group of cultures and the things that represent them. It means presentation of different cultures that is other than our own primary culture. In Balkan countries, there are many differences in history and culture which define the particular elements of single culture, but in modern society, all of them has a similar approach and expectations for artistic and cultural achievements .

Due to historical, geographical and political occurrence, not only in Balkan but also in the world, the multicultural societies are common phenomena. This kind of society has advantages, it allows people to experience different ways of life, other peoples languages, art, traditions and behaviours. Now day's this is popular topic between modern societies and positive approach toward culture variety that creates multiple access and creates multiple levels witch contributes to the cultural diversity in the world.

The other meaning to the term that refers to multiculturalism is coexistence of people with many cultural identities that live in a common state or community.

For the people who don't share a common language, theatre is opportunity to overcome the difficulties of trying to connect through words, insted, they connect through body language actions and context. Artists have different perspective to the world, they use art as language of communication.

Because the theatre has mostly joyful, collective, truthful and actual nature, it is almost difficult to escape the message that was initially the intension to diffuse to local communities. When we talk about theatre in the development context, we don't usually talk about classical theatre, but about popular format of theatre play known as theatre for development. The most popular forms of theatre for development are forum theatre, interactive theatre, and the theatre debate.

One of the characteristics of this theatre is its social content and social issues perplexed in the plot. The actors are usually local or regional and not always and necessarily professional. There is a need to consider theatre as a powerful tool of communication which contributes in the development of society and get involved in the search for solutions. As an art form, theater is a representation of an experience, which is real or imagined, interpreted to an audience through the stage which is powerful medium where contact with audience is created. The theatre as special kind of media integrates a number forms of art as music, dance, songs, mime, poetry, painting,

With this kind of stimulation of the awareness of life situations and circumstances being presented on stage by actors. The play writers use theatre to create and rise awareness of the audience and to transform the problems of society in overall. Theatre involves the interest of people through a theatrical presentation of problems. It makes people, and audience to be aware of the problems in their surrounding. This is a very important potential of the theatre as an art form. When used properly by the artist and community, it might have a incredible positive influence on the audience.

Theater has influence in the transformation of the society. Through theatrical performance, the masses are able to determine what they consider to be the practices, insults and misapplications of authority in the environment. Through the years, drama has proved its potential to arouse the consciousness of a people towards its social, political, and economic states. Drama is a medium excellently well-matched for making psychological analyses of consciousness in a community. Theater, in particular, could be used for progressive adjustment of society. Theater has been found to be in constant dynamism with the political trends of the society and it also reflects the realities and opens the way toward more humane society. Theater has been known as a tool which pledge transformation. The effect of theater is direct and much faster than any other form of artistic expression. The society brings up issues of social worries in created plays, it is a potential check against oppression, social problems and below progress. National political interests especially in a plural, multi ethnic and multi cultural nation found this kind of cultural programs very helpful and beneficial for society overall. Social art succeeds only if the society is prepared for teamwork, interest synchronization and collaboration between the playwright, actor and the spectator. In this case theatre interprets to the people in their own language and expressions that deal with issues of relevance to their own lives. The community development is achieved through dialogue only when the awareness is raised and the consciousness of community is included. Suitable management and advice should be guaranteed education and empowerment in order to prevent the abuse of program.

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<sup>39</sup> Schramm, W. 1964. *Mass Media and National Development*. Stanford University Press.

Across history, radio has proven to be able to influence people minds, for the worst (use of radio for propaganda in Nazi Germany or during the genocide in Rwanda), but also for the better.

Radio is also used in northern Uganda as a tool for reconciliation. There are a lot of non- government NGO's that help and support reconciliation programs and projects that are used as means for arising awareness in the societies, different communities and cultures. But, mass media is not used only as a tool of reconciliation but also as a health related issues raising awareness for issues such as AIDS or domestic violence for instance.

Radio drama is a dramatized, purely acoustic performance broadcast on radio or published on audio media such as tape or compact disc. With no visual components, radio drama depends on dialogue, music, and sound effects to help the listener imagine the characters and story and as a such it has the ability to stimulate the mind. It is auditory in the physical dimension but equally powerful as visual force in the psychological dimension. The Roman playwright Seneca was known as a pioneer of radio drama. His plays were performed by readers as sound plays, not by actors as stage plays. Seneca had no significant successor until the 20<sup>th</sup> century when technology made possible the extensive broadcasting of sound plays. The real concept of radio drama, was using sound and words to create clear pictures in the minds of listeners.

### CONCLUSION

**Why dramas work?** The answer to this question can be easily found in the supported projects that helped audience to develop sense of identification with characters and situations, and this kind of identification leads to discussions about issues raised. According to the outcome researches, dramas specially written and performed by the community helps people to change their behavior, whether on health, reconciliation of multi ethnic societies or the community and social problems overall.

In terms of promoting social change, documentary film remains one of the most efficient ways to improve understanding on a mass level. The same can be achieved with radio documentaries. Hearing voices of other “ordinary people”, the audience can develop a strong sense of affective identification. Since the play represents action of a characters played by artists in order to tell a story, which involves the psychological motivation that lie behind visible behavior. With a carefully written story plot, supported by functional dialog and dramatic situations that stimulates audience, social change can be reached.

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