The Enacted Role: Integrating Psychodrama, Phenomenology and Enactivism

Psychodrama represents one of the first experiential humanistic therapies, and one of its basic tenets is the role concept. An attempt will be made to integrate role theory with phenomenological and enactivist ideas, primarily the phenomenological account of ego splitting and absorption, and the enactivist concepts of habit and regional identity. Their relation and possibilities for mutual development will be explored. I will argue that the role is an embodied, embedded, enacted and existential stance which can serve as a foundation for a coherent theory of a dialogical self. Implications for expanding the scope of experiential psychotherapeutic interventions descended from psychodrama (e.g. chairwork) will be explored, as well as space for refining theoretical concepts in modern therapies (e.g. schema therapy modes). Role theory will be confronted with psychopathological phenomena such as voice hearing, diagnostic entities such as dissociative identity disorder, and applied phenomenological concepts such as disturbances of ipseity.

Keywords: phenomenology, enactivism, habit, ego splitting, psychodrama, role theory