**Creative Participation An evaluation of the Theory and some food for thought**

**Robin Joubert, 1984**

1. **Introduction**

In order to gain deeper insight into Vona du Toit's Theory of Patient Volition and Action (Creative Participation), it is necessary both to critically evaluate the theory and to look at other schools of thought similar to and influential in the development of this theory.

1. **Critical Evaluation**
2. Although Vona du Toit wrote many articles on this theory, she often failed to acknowledge her sources of reference at the end of her articles, thus making it difficult to truly understand the influence of other schools of thought in the development of her theory. In a paper presented at the 4th International Congress of Psychiatry held in Jerusalem in May 1972, she acknowledges the work of Florence Kluckhorn - "Dominant and Variant Value Orientation" (Rehab. Literature February 1972, Vol.33 No.2).

In many of her lectures and discussions on the theory, she often referred to the Philosopher Martin Buber and his book "I and Thou" (T and T Clark, Edinburgh) and the Phenomenologist Karl Rogers. The works of her daughter Marie, as well as Dain van der Reyden, Carole Pretorius and Lyn Watson, were of considerable help in developing her theory.

1. Lack of Empirical Evidence

Many of Vona du Toit's followers have applied the principles of this theory to activity selection and patient treatment (especially in the field of Psychiatry) with apparent success. However, there is virtually no written evidence of research in this area to reinforce these assumptions.

Carole Pretorius presented a paper at the 8th International WFOT Congress in 1982 entitled "The Evaluation of Creativity in Mentally Handicapped Children" in which research findings were tentative and difficult to align completely with Vona du Toit's theory in view of the fact that the subjects were mentally retarded and thus pure evaluation of CP is more difficult (variables).

1. Difficulty of Application to Physical Pathology

Although the stages of Volition and Action appear to apply fairly consistently to psychiatrically ill patients, it is far more difficult to apply them to the various types of physical pathology. (Refer to notes OTT IV CPA.)

1. There is not enough written material on the theory, and the way in which the theory is presented in writing is not completely congruent with its application in practice, e.g. there is the implication that if one simply applies a barrage of concrete creative activities appropriate to a specific level then the patient will automatically move on to the next level, i.e. there is not enough emphasis on the importance of using specialised handling techniques for each level as well as applying the principles to all activities of daily life.
2. Summary

There is no doubt that Vona du Toit's theory offers much food for thought and can certainly be of considerable assistance to Occupational Therapists in helping select and apply activities, as well as helping in guiding the handling of specific patients. There are, however, many questions that need to be answered and one would hope that many future Occupational Therapists will use this field as an area of research.

1. **Other Theories with similarities to Creative Participation**

In particular, the Humanistic Psychologise Abraham Maslow and his theory on the hierarchy of needs, as well as the Phenomenological Psychologist Karl Rogers and his views on the fully functioning person, "the good life" and creativity, have similar theories to those of Vona du Toit. Martin Buber's "I and Thou" philosophy also has related aspects. (Refer to OTT I Lecture notes compiled by M. Lombard.)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Volition/Action** | **Motivational Processes** | **Actualising Tendency** |
| **Du Toit's Creative Participation** | **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs** | **Roger's Self Theory** |
| 1. Tone (Pre-destructive)
2. Self Differentiation (Destructive)
3. Presentation (Explorative)
4. Participation:
* Passive (Passive))
* Imitative (Imitative)
* Active (Originative)
* Competitive (Product Centred)
1. Contribution (Contributive)
2. Competitive Contribution (Competitive Contributive)
 | Physiological Needs (most basic, powerful & obvious of needs, e.g. eating, sex)Safety Needs (security)Belongingness and Love NeedsSelf Esteem NeedsSelf RespectEsteem from OthersSelf Actualisation (desire to become everything that one is capable of becoming - full use and exploitation of talents, capabilities and potentialities) | (No timetable of critical stages)Undifferentiated Phenomenon Field (Unaware of self as separate being, e.g. neonate. No distinction between what is me and what is not me.Self Differentiation (Part of organismic actualisation tendency - gradual distinction of self from othersEmergence of Self Concept (Re-valued and positive valued)Needs - For positive regard, conditions of worth, unconditional positive regard, defence mechanisms, perceptual distortion and denialFully Functioning Person - moving in direction of becoming a fully functioning person. Use of talents, realising potentialities |

1. Maslow's "Self Actualisation"

If all the other needs in Maslow's Hierarchy are satisfied, the need for Self Actualisation comes to the fore. This is characterised by:

* moving towards fullness and exploitation of talents, capacities and potentialities;
* desire for self improvement;
* drive for self improvement;
* drive to become actualised in what he/she potentially is;
* need not take form of artistic or creative endeavours.
1. Roger's "Fully Functioning Person"

This is not a destination but an onward moving direction. It designates individuals who are using their capacities and talents, realising their potentialities and are moving toward complete knowledge of themselves and their full range of experience.

The five major characteristics are:

1. Openness to experience

Both inner and outer experience; acutely aware of own feelings and openly act upon or acknowledge them.

1. Existential Living

Global quality of living fully in each and every moment of one's existence. Self and personality emerge from experience. Flexible, adaptable, tolerant and spontaneous.

1. Organismic Trusting

Fully functioning persons attend to their organismic experiences with valid sources of information for deciding what they should or should not do. Not reliant upon social norms, codes, etc., laid down by a specific institution.

1. Experimental Freedom

Free to live their lives any way they wish; operate as free choice agents; totally responsible for their own future.

1. Creativity

The type of person from whom creative products (ideas, projects, actions) and creative living emerge; live constructively within their culture while at the same time satisfying their own deepest needs. Adaptable to changing environmental needs. Non-conformists; not prisoners of society.

1. Allport's "Real Self" or Proprium

Proprium represents the positive, creative, growth-seeking and forward moving quality of human nature (self as known/selfhood). This includes all aspects of personality that contribute to a sense of inward unity as marking the consistency associated with the individual traits, intentions and long range goals. He did not regard it as a "thing". Allport's so-called propriate functions develop gradually in order of sequence:

1. Sense of bodily self - sense of own body, sensations, functions
2. Sense of self identity - recognition of self as a distinct and constant point of reference
3. Sense of self esteem or pride - evaluation of himself; egocentric
4. Sense of self extension - although other people and things are not inside my body, they are still part of me ("mine"), e.g. my mother, brother, doll's house, etc.
5. Self image - expectations of others on self
6. Sense of self as a National coper - full realisation of capacity to find solutions to life's problems so that he can cope effectively with reality and demands.
7. Propriate striving (compare to Self actualising and Fully functioning) - pursuing long range goals, having a sense of directedness and intentionality in striving for defined objectives, imparting to life a sense of purpose - this is the essence of propriate striving.
8. Martin Buber's "I and Thou" Philosophy

(Information compiled by Chookie Naidoo)

Buber's striving for perfection is strongly influenced by religious elements. To him, God is the absolute person and man's actualisation comes in his ultimate relation with and realisation of God, i.e. his striving to attain the spiritual levels congruent with God. This is his basis to true humanity. He also discusses various levels of growth:

* Our life with nature (I, it)
* Our life with man (fellow beings) (I, you)
* Our life with Spiritual Being (God) (I, Thou)
1. Vona du Toit's highest level of physical development, i.e. Competitive contribution

A level not frequently attained. At this stage, the individual demonstrates the motivational capacity to live and act according to convictions. He has sufficient determination to make those things happen which he believes to have merit, and to do this in spite of competition or resistance from people or circumstances. An example of the latter could, of course, be his physical disability.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Adler** | **Piaget** | **Jung** |
| Birth - 6/126/12 - 1yr | HelplessnessInferiority | Sensory motor | *(Personal - Ego)*AnimaEarth mother - Primitive,Reproductive & sexual functionsHelen - Sexuality, Romantic Idea, purity | *(Personal - Ego)*AnimusSamson/Atlas - Athletic,Physical power & strengthInitiative & Efficiency - plan & carry out actions |
| 1 - 22 - 3 | Striving for superiority | Pre-functional thought |
| 3 - 44 - 5 | Mastery & self esteem | Intuitive thought |
| 5 - 11 | Self | Concrete operations |
| 11 - 18 | Realisation | Formal Operations | *(Collective Meaning)*Virgin Mary - Spiritual ,Sexual, MaterialWisdom | *(Collective Meaning)*Logos mindWisdom |
| Early Adult |
| Middle Adult | Self determination |
| Old Age |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Freud** | **Klein** | **Erikson** |
| Birth - 6/126/12 - 1yr | Oral | Paranoid - SchizoidDepressive | Trust vs Mistrust |
| 1 - 22 - 3 | Anal |  | Autonomy vs Doubt |
| 3 - 44 - 5 | Phallic |  | Initiative vs Guilt |
| 5 - 11 | Latency |  | Industry vs Inferiority |
| 11 - 18 | Genital |  | Identity vs Role confusion |
| Early Adult |  |  | Intimacy vs Isolation |
| Middle Adult |  |  | Generativity vs Isolation |
| Old Age |  |  | Integrity vs Despair |