

METAPHOR AS A METHOD OF CREATIVE SELF-ACTUALIZATION OF AN INDIVIDUAL

Self-actualization as a term was introduced by Abraham Maslow, one of the representatives of humanistic psychological theory, meaning an individual's willingness for fulfillment of the highest needs and search of sense in life. Maslow defined self-actualization to be «the desire for self-fulfillment, namely the tendency for him [the individual] to become actualized in what he is potentially. This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming» [1]. Self-actualization is a process which goes far beyond satisfaction of a person's basic survival needs while creativity (or creativeness) was placed on top of Maslow's pyramid of human needs. Carl Rogers also created a theory implicating a «growth potential» whose aim was to integrate congruently the «real self» and the «ideal self» thereby cultivating the emergence of the «fully functioning person» [2].

When talking about self-actualization, we should introduce the notion of creativity as a person's urge for discovery of his or her own growth potential based on this person's individual cognitive, biological or psychological advantages with the purpose of their realization in the outer world. Self-realization, as well as life itself is rather a creative process and does not end after a certain goal is achieved. Desire for creativity is typical for every living human being which can be clearly seen in children, as most adults do not permit themselves to create their own life as this would bear a challenge to both their comfort zone and predictability of mundane life.

According to S. Rubinshtein, «creativity is action, aimed at creation of new material and spiritual values» [3]. Creativity is an inner resource or potential which impowers us with original problem-solving skills and uncommon vision which gives us opportunity to see usual things differently. Creativity starts to flow when one steps outside of established frameworks and starts thinking out of the box. Creativeness as ability to think and process information in unusual way is a quality of character which makes decisive impact on an individual's self-realization in social life.

One of the ways to encourage creativity is to use metaphors or rather activate metaphoric thinking, which is a thinking technique that connects and compares two different meanings. After all, people tend to look for similarities, and process of comparison helps them grasp complex issues by making metaphorical comparison between a complex problem and a recognizable situation. A metaphor means comparing two things that are not literally the same. Metaphors were considered a sign of genius by the Greek philosopher Aristotle. According to him, the individual who can perceive the similarity between two very different concepts, was intelligent

and had a special gift. In linguistics metaphor is regarded to be the most frequently used method for mental models' creation, as metaphor makes it possible to verbalize images that appear in human inner world.

Trying to understand things through logic alone disrupts creative process. When using a metaphor, an individual combines two elements that have little or no logical connection. Breaking rules of logic allows metaphors to access the creative side of our brain, our subconscious. As Karl Yung suggested, our unconscious is capable to form images and to use them afterwards as symbols, that are afterwards brought up in our dreams, through which our subconscious sends information to our conscious. Thanks to mindful visualization of these images a new situation is being created, where subconscious material is being openly presented to the awake consciousness. Yung regarded this process to be the manifestation of transcendental function as integral influence of conscious and subconscious factors [4]. Metaphorical thinking is stimulated by images, ideas and concepts, it might seem strange, but eventually it leads to more insight and brings solutions to surface. Thinking with the help of images is also necessary for learning process, as it forms the base of abstract thinking. Metaphors conjure up lively images and help us look at things from a new perspective in order to understand them better. The main principle of human thinking is based on images and symbols which via associative thinking break through to human consciousness, bringing with them understanding of the real picture of a person's life. Metaphoric intellect is a person's ability to grasp the deep sense of life through associative thinking.

Nick Owen in his book «The Magic of Metaphor» wrote: «Metaphor is not just a poetic or rhetoric device, it is a powerful tool to change a person's experience and system of perception. If we use a metaphor which means a certain notion, we make it possible to understand it in a few different ways. Thus, such change of perspective leads us to more extensive variety of choices, by which we act and learn about the world» [5,p.12].

Metaphorization is an extremely powerful method to develop culture, thinking and language of a personality, it becomes more and more complicated, as in our contemporary postmodern life all the notions have already become metaphors if we look at them from cultural point of view. Thus, we can state that one can judge by a person's ability to think metaphorically about this person's creativity, psychic flexibility and mind adaptability, as well as his or her personal and professional success in social life, especially as our world is constantly changing and evolving.

It is understood that if a person gets introduced to metaphoric thinking from early childhood, while learning native language and folk culture, the learned images form the basis of the deep subconscious, and at any age afterwards this person would be able to recognize and rediscover the metaphoric sense of these images, moreover, even to independently find analogous similarities between them and the facts which happen in his current life, as subconscious keeps the information about the structure of personality and all the personal history. Thus, any human activity in certain sense can be rendered through a metaphor.

Introduction to ancient myths, national legends, folk fairy tales and works of art has always been an important and necessary part of esthetic and cultural upbringing

of a personality, since these traditions go deep into the world history of human development. Contemporary system of education offers diverse methods of creativity development for both children and adults. Creativity as a person's ability for constructive, non-standard way of thinking, as well as for understanding of someone's personal experience, in great measure defines self-realization and success of a person in social and professional life. Creativity influences in a positive way a person's flexibility, sense of humor and ability to adjust to new conditions of life; it also helps to quickly structure and solve problems in original way with utmost attention to details. Self-assuredness and well-developed consciousness are essential conditions of self-actualization, as they help a creative person to be a subject (not an object) of a transforming process, and to refuse from fixed understanding of the nature of things and events.

Self-actualization is all about a person's urge to personally grow and develop. A personality which is able of self-actualization can always be recognized thanks to talent and intention for creative activity. Modern society like never before is in high demand of human community which solves the mankind's contemporary problems and reaches its' highest goals in a non-standard way. World psychology has various definitions for the word «creativity», while creativity in a certain sense is still a mystery, and we still do not know for sure if the theory of creative process will ever be described, but we know for sure that every product of human creativity influences our world and the people living in it. Creativity is a socially, economically and evolutionally important factor for mankind, it is practical and mindful activity aimed at creation of original and unique values, finding new facts and regularities, as well as means of transformation of material world and spiritual culture.

References:

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5. Nick Owen. *The Magic of Metaphor*. – Crown House Publishing, 2001. –P.12.