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PSYCHOTHERAPY RESEARCH IN THE FORM OF MASTER THESES

AN OVERVIEW OF TOPICS, METHODS AND FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS OF THE 139 MASTER THESES FROM THE FIRST 14 YEARS (2005 - FEBRUARY 2019) OF UNIVERSITY COURSES IN PSYCHODRAMA PSYCHOTHERAPY AT THE AUSTRIAN ASSOCIATION FOR GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY AND GROUP DYNAMICS (ÖAGG)/THE DANUBE UNIVERSITY KREMS (DUK).

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PROLOGUE: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

- 1976 Foundation and institutional establishment of the psychodrama department at the ÖAGG
- 1978 Creation of the first training regulations
- 1991 Decree of The Austrian Psychotherapy Act. -> Psychodrama in Austria is classified as one typ of humanistic therapies
- 1993 Recognition of the psychodrama department as a training institution for psychodrama psychotherapy through the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health
- 1995 Set up of the first psychotherapy training group according to the new curriculum
- 2005 Start of cooperation between psychodrama department and Danube University
- -> Specialised training courses for psychodrama psychotherapists with a university degrees in psychodrama psychotherapy
- -> Additionally "Upgrade"- courses
- 2019: current status: 2005-2019

24 Starts of specialised training courses in psychodrama-psychotherapy and 7 upgrading courses!

200 Students currently studying!

139 approved master theses in psychodrama psychotherapy!

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DEFINITION AND REQUIREMENTS: A PSYCHODRAMA MASTER THESIS ...

- is a scientific text which contains 18.000 – 30.000 words, which is about 80 - 130 A4 pages.
- requires considering scientific principles and applying scientific methods of psychotherapy research.
- must be based on theoretical or practice-orientated topics in the field of psychodrama psychotherapy.
- requires the combination of psychodrama therapeutic practice with psychodrama theoretical concepts.
- must be theoretically based on Moreno's role theory or current developments in humanistic psychodrama.
- can be written individually or as a couple.

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A. CATEGORISING THE CURRENT MASTER THESES ACCORDING TO THEMATIC FOCUS

<i>Total number of master's theses</i>	139	100%
Theoretical Topics	7	5%
Practice-related topics	132	95%

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I. MASTER THESES ON THEORETICAL TOPICS

The following topics were investigated with a theoretical focus from a psychodramatical perspective:

- “Regeneration drama”
- “Encounter scenes”
- The phenomena of "tele" and "encounter"
- The phenomenon of “hearing voices”
- Burnout
- Biologically-entrenched roles and satisfying interaction between babies and their parents
- The role of the father in the treatment of male patients in the works of Moreno

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II. MASTER THESES ON PRACTICE-RELATED TOPICS:

<i>Practice-orientated master theses</i>	132
Questions about certain institutional contexts (stages)	9
Questions about special settings	5
Method-orientated questions	35
Questions about special groups of clients	5
Disorder-specific questions	41
Questions about special therapy topics	37

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II. MASTER THESES ON PRACTICE-RELATED TOPICS: I. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS (STAGES) – 9

The following **institutional contexts** of psychodrama therapy have been explored:

- **school: 2 theses**
 - the Implementation of individual and group therapy in school
 - the extending roles in psychodrama group therapy for primary school children
- **work rehabilitation: 1 thesis**
 - individual therapy in work rehabilitation
- **General medical hospital treatment: 2 theses**
 - the use of puppets as intermediary objects in preparing children for operations
 - the therapeutic care for parents in a children's intensive care unit.
- **Inpatient psychotherapeutic treatment: 4 theses**
 - gender-specific work on establishing self-help resources in a child psychiatric ward
 - the general conditions for inpatient group therapy (2)
 - the effect of the therapeutic environment of an inpatient setting on the individual therapy process.

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II. MASTER THESES ON PRACTICE-RELATED TOPICS: 2. SETTING-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS - 5

Following **therapy settings** have been explored regarding to certain aspects:

- **Social atom: 2 theses**
 - The integration of and working with the social atom in inpatient therapy
 - Work with the real social atom in an outpatient group therapy for children.
- **Couple`s therapy: 1 theses**
 - The possibilities of psychodramatic couples therapy in conflict and crisis management
- **Group therapy: 1 theses**
 - A gender-homogeneous group of girls

II. MASTER THESES ON PRACTICE-RELATED TOPICS: 3. METHOD-RELATED QUESTIONS - 35

- Forms of Interventions: 5 theses
 - primary addiction prevention (children)
 - prevention of sexual violence (children)
 - grief counseling (children)
 - secondary addiction prevention (alcohol dependent drivers)
 - Mediation
- Special diagnostic strategies: 1 thesis
 - inner stage as instrument for diagnosis of structural level
- Psychodramatic (group) arrangements: 3 theses
 - Psychodramatic constellation work
 - Bible drama
 - Therapeutic 'Stehgreif' (improvisational) theatre

II. MASTER THESES ON PRACTICE-RELATED TOPICS: 3. METHOD-RELATED QUESTIONS – CONTINUATION

- Special methodological strategies, arrangements or techniques: 10 theses
 - Mirroring (generally)
 - Doubling (children & Parents)
 - future projection
 - Sharing (group therapy)
 - social atom (in therapy process)
 - warm up process, strategies and techniques (generally) & somatic warm up techniques in mandatory anti-violence training for young men (2 theses)
 - intermediate objects (2 theses, child and adolescents)
 - time line (inpatient setting)

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II. MASTER THESES ON PRACTICE-RELATED TOPICS: 3. METHOD-RELATED QUESTIONS – CONTINUATION

- Shaping of therapeutic role and therapeutic relationship: 7 theses
 - in individual therapy of structurally impaired children,
 - In group therapy (physical involvement)
 - In therapy with women who have experienced sexual violence,
 - in group therapy regarding to the protagonist
 - role of auxiliary ego in children groups
 - Significance of Moreno's Philosophy for Therapeutic Role Design
 - Typical attitude of psychodrama therapist
- certain therapy phenomena: 1 thesis
 - the development of cohesion in a psychodrama annual group
- Inclusion of external methods & techniques: 7 theses
 - Technical: computer-transferred communication,
 - Diagnostic: action list + OPD
 - Therapeutic: body therapy, music (2 theses), movies
- Inclusion of external theory: 1 thesis
 - neurobiological concepts

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II. MASTER THESES ON PRACTICE-RELATED TOPICS: 4. CLIENT-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS - 5

5 theses conducted research to certain **client groups**:

- The principles of psychodramatic child therapy
- The consideration of cultural belonging in the sense of inter-/transcultural psychodrama psychotherapy
- The consideration of gender factors in psychodrama therapy
- Possibilities of empowerment in a women-specific psychodrama therapy group
- Psychodrama interventions in individual therapy with men with the aim to promote their autonomy in relationships

II. MASTER THESES ON PRACTICE-RELATED TOPICS: 5. *DISORDER-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS: 41*

- **F0: Organic disorders:** 1 master thesis
 - 1 research into psychodrama therapy for **senile dementia** (F 02)
- **F1: Mental and behavioural disorders due to psychoactive substance abuse:** 5 master theses
 - 3 deal with different aspects in **alcohol therapy** (F10),
 - 1 deals with psychodrama inpatient group therapy for **stopping smoking** (F17).
 - 1 deals with group therapy for **substance dependence and structural disorders**
- **F2: Schizophrenia, schizotypal and delusional disorders:** 2 master theses
 - 1 investigates the use of **intermediate objects in the treatment of schizophrenia**
 - 1 investigates the possibility of **promoting self-awareness in the treatment of schizophrenia**
- **F3: Mood disorders:** 1 master thesis
 - 1 master thesis sets the focus on **self-help resources** in psychodrama inpatient therapy for **depressive disorders**.

II. MASTER THESES ON PRACTICE-RELATED TOPICS: AD 5. *DISORDER-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS -*

CONTINUATION

- **F4: Neurotic, stress-related and somatoform disorders:** 8 master theses:
 - 2 theses deal with the treatment of phobias (F40): 1 deals with **fear of flying** and 1 with **social phobia**
 - 3 theses deal with the treatment of (other) **anxiety and panic disorders** (F41)
 - 1 deals with individual therapy for a child with **occupied compulsive disorder OCD** (F42)
 - 1 deals with individual therapy for **dissociative disorders** (F44) in women
 - 1 deals with individual therapy for **psychosomatic and somatoform disorders** (F45)
- **F5: Behavioural syndromes associated with physiological disturbances and physical factors:** 5 master theses
 - 2 theses focus on the disorder model of/and psychodrama therapy for **anorexia** (F50.0)
 - 2 theses investigate group therapy for women with **bulimia** (F50.2)
 - 1 thesis explores group therapy for **binge eating disorder** (F50.9) (Interventions)
 - 1 thesis investigates couple therapy for **vaginismus** (F52)

II. MASTER THESES ON PRACTICE-RELATED TOPICS: AD 5. DISORDER-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS - *CONTINUATION*

- F6: Disorders in personality and behaviour: 6 theses:
 - 1 focuses in individual therapy for **Borderline personality disorder** (F60.31)
 - 1 focuses in individual therapy for **histrionic personality disorder** (F60.4)
 - 1 focuses in **dependent personality disorder** (F60.7) and **co-dependence**
 - 1 focuses in individual therapy for **narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder** (F60.8)
 - 1 investigates psychodrama therapy in **dissocial personality disorder** (F 60.2)
 - 1 deals with psychodrama therapy with men with **automatic gambling addiction**
- F8: developmental disorders: 3 theses:
 - 1 focuses on Psychodrama in **group therapy for adolescents with Asperger's syndrome** (F84)
 - 2 theses deal with Psychodrama in **individual therapy for children with Asperger's syndrome** (F84)

II. MASTER THESES ON PRACTICE-RELATED TOPICS: AD 5. DISORDER-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS -CONTINUATION

- F9: behavioural and emotional disorders beginning in childhood and adolescence (F9): 6 theses:
 - 1 explores therapeutic work with children with **ADHD** (F 90.0) in **individual therapy setting**.
 - 2 explore psychodrama **group work** with children with **ADHD** (F 90.0)
 - 1 focuses on Psychodrama in individual therapy for a girl with **social anxiety disorder** (F93.2)
 - 1 focuses on Psychodrama for **elective-mutism** (F94.0)
 - 1 focuses on individual psychodrama therapy with a child with **nonorganic encopresis** (98.1)
- Structural disorders in general without reference to specific diagnoses: 3 master theses:
 - 1 thesis investigates group therapy with patients with **structural disorders in an inpatient clinical setting**
 - 1 investigate group therapy with the same clients in an **outpatient setting**
 - 1 thesis explores the structural interventions for **structural role development in individual settings**

II. MASTER THESES ON PRACTICE-RELATED TOPICS: 6. THERAPY-RELEVANT TOPICS – 37

- Specific psychical phenomenas: 5 theses
 - **Emotions** (in psychodrama group)
 - **Flow** (in individual therapy) with or without accompanying yoga
 - **Grief processing** (children, after the loss of a sibling)
 - Feelings of **shame** (adults)
 - **Basic suicidality** (inpatient therapy)
- Personality (role) development: 8 theses
 - **As-if** and the **ability to play** in children's psychodrama
 - **Role development** in early childhood regulatory disorders
 - **Role development** in a children's psychodrama group
 - **Structural personality development** and social atoms in a psychodramatic adolescent group (girls)
 - The **identity development** in a psychodramatic adolescent group (boys)
 - the **development of the ability to forming scenes** in individual adult therapy
 - promoting the **ability to change perspectives** in individual therapy for people with structural deficits
 - Interventions and techniques in individual settings to strengthen the **personality development** of patients with **multiple sclerosis**

II. MASTER THESES ON PRACTICE-RELATED TOPICS: 6. THERAPY-RELEVANT TOPICS – 37 CONTINUATION

- relationship skills / forming relationships: 4 theses
 - The construct of the "**Helper Syndrome**" from a psychodramatic perspective
 - The topic complex of **love-connection-partnership** from a psychodramatic perspective
 - **Connecting to peers/friends** in childhood
 - Diagnosing and treating **co-dependency**
- Sexuality: 1 thesis
 - Work with the **sexual role** in psychodrama in individual therapy
- (Primary) family relationships/family topics: 1 thesis
 - Processing topics surrounding the father in individual therapy
- Questions on social belonging/integration: 3 theses
 - A way out of social isolation through group therapy for parents of hearing-impaired children
 - Coping with loneliness
 - Integrating migrant children into a children's psychodrama group

II. MASTER THESES ON PRACTICE-RELATED TOPICS: AD 6.THERAPY-RELEVANT TOPICS – CONTINUATION

- **Questions on stress/burden/overburdening: 3 theses**
 - The effects of parents overburdening their children on their well-being in adulthood
 - The effectiveness of one psychodrama individual therapy for the problem of burnout
 - The effects of burnout on the social atom
- **Physical diseases and limitations: 3 theses**
 - Considerations for barrier-free psychodrama for people with a disability
 - A psychodrama follow-up group for people with breast cancer
 - Psychodrama in individual therapy for obesity
- **trauma/trauma processing: 9 theses**
 - A group therapy concept for traumatised children
 - Group cohesion in the inpatient therapy of traumatised patients
 - Structure-related, developmental interventions in psychodrama inpatient group therapy with complexly traumatised people
 - A psychodrama group of women with experience of violence
 - Gender-specific processing of traumatic events in adulthood
 - Accompanying the separation of women from violent relationships
 - Sociodramatic encounter groups for family members of national-socialist perpetrators and victims
 - An encounter group of "German" and Slovenian-speaking Carinthians
 - Use of "Timeline" in groups with male Arab refugees

B. CATEGORISING THE MASTERS THESES ACCORDING TO RESEARCH DESIGNS

<i>Total number of master's theses</i>	139	100%		
Literature reviews	8	6%		
Empirical research theses	39	28%	quantitative	4
			qualitative	27
			Mixed method	8
Practice reports	92	66%	process-oriented	24
			topic-orientated	68

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FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO THE AGE GROUPS OF THOSE WHO WERE RESEARCHED

<i>Empirical research and practice reports</i>	131	100%		
Children/adolescents	34	26%	Children	29
			Adolescents	5
Adults	96	72%	Adults	85
			Elderly	1
Children and adolescents (e.g. families)	2	2%		

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FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO THE RESEARCH SETTINGS

<i>Empirical research and Practice reports</i>	132	100%
Classical research design	14	11%
Therapeutic research design	118	89%
Individual setting	54	
Couples setting	2	
Social atom	3	
Group setting	47	
Single + group	12	

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2.2. MASTER THESES WITH QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGNS: 4

- Quantitative evaluation studies: 3 master theses evaluated a psychodrama group therapy using **quantifying examination methods** (tests, self-evaluation scales) in a **pre-post design**:
 - Grauf: inpatient group therapy for structural disorders
 - Trinkel: outpatient therapy group for structural disorders
 - Schabata: psychodrama follow-up group for breast cancer

- Quantitative comparative study: 1 master thesis
 - Hupmann: the experience of the technique of sharing in 2 different psychodrama groups

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2.3. MASTER THESES WITH QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGNS: 27

- Analysis of the documents: 1 master thesis
 - Fellöcker: analysis of a **stage play** used for addiction prevention of primary school children by means of a **qualitative content analysis**

- Case studies: 5 master theses
 - Bachler-Klein: therapy for childhood obsessive-compulsive disorder (Bachler-Klein)
 - Karlhuber: the phenomenon of hearing voices, **individual interviews** and the **qualitative content analysis**
 - Amann: the technique of mirroring, **individual interviews** and the **qualitative content analysis**
 - Tornow: burnout biographies, **individual interviews** and the **qualitative content analysis**
 - D. Wagner: on identity development of adolescents in psychodrama group therapy, **group interview** and the **hermeneutic sequence analysis**

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AD 2.3. MASTER THESES WITH QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGNS: CONTINUATION

- **Field research:** 11 master theses. Following authors used **interviews** as data collection method:
 - Mundt-Smejda: the specific cultural factors and the way they can be applied in inter-/transcultural psychodrama-therapy
 - A.Wagner: the significance and effect of the change in perspective in mediation.
 - Weigl: how to build relationships with sexually traumatised women.
 - Hölzl & Klausegger: the work with the real social atom in therapeutic outreach family work.
 - Beer: psychodrama-specific therapeutic attitude of Austrian psychotherapy trainers.
 - Ortner: possibilities of psychodrama therapy in dissociative personality disorder.
 - Heider: appearance and processing of shame in psychodrama therapy
 - Helbich: gender sensitivity of psychodrama psychotherapist trainers
 - Fink: importance of Moreno's therapeutic philosophy for contemporary psychodramatists
 - Licka-Beinhofner: psychodrama group therapy in an inpatient context through expert interviews with therapists.
 - Gutmann: the role of Auxiliary Ego in the psychodrama group with children (**group discussion** of children and auxiliary egos)

Most of these researchers used the **content analysis of Mayring**, Ortner used the **typological analysis**.

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AD 2.3. MASTER THESES WITH QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGNS: CONTINUATION FIELD RESEARCH

- **Field research:** 6 master theses
- Following authors used other (than interviews) or additional research methods to investigate their field of psychodrama therapy:
- Kühbauer: possibilities of the somatic part of the warm-up phase in mandatory anti-violence training for young men in a forced context- **observation, group discussion & expert interview**
 - Kastner: the appropriate therapeutic support for women with complex or childhood trauma (with dissociative identity disorder) - **Grounded Theory**
 - Jelinek: encounter group of Slovenian and "German" Carinthians - **recorded conversation contributions & content analysis**
 - Pek: use of "lifeline" in group work with male Arab refugees - **participant observation, interpreted by scenic understanding**
 - Goger: the possibilities of direction in offering choices (for the protagonist) in psychodrama in inpatient groups – **observations & theoretical interpretation**
 - Neureiter-Penn: group cohesion in the group psychodrama therapy of traumatized patients in an inpatient context - **a questionnaire (Stuttgarter Bogen) & content analysis**.

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AD 2.3. MASTER THESES WITH QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGNS: CONTINUATION

- Qualitative evaluation studies: 3 master theses
 - Ressel: an individual psychodrama therapy in burnout - **therapy report of the patient & content analysis (Mayring)**
 - Ehrlinger: emotion-promoting psychodrama techniques in group psychodrama therapy - **group therapy protocols & interpretation**
 - Etlinger: group therapy in bulimia - **interviews & content analysis (Mayring)**

- Qualitative comparative study: 1 master thesis
 - Krautschneider: the flow experience in individual psychodrama therapy with and without accompanying yoga training - partially-structured interviews & grounded theory

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2.4. MASTER THESES WITH MIXED-METHOD RESEARCH DESIGNS: 8

- Document analysis: 1 master thesis
 - Sageder: the role of fathers in treating male patients in Morenos reports - **quantitative and qualitative evaluation of Moreno case reports by means of a content analysis.**

- Field research: 2 master theses

The field studies by *Lechner* and *Grissenberger* investigate the respective field with the help of quantitative and qualitative survey methods:

- Lechner: involvement of parents in the therapy process of their children - **asking the parents by questionnaires & quantitative + qualitative evaluation**
- Grissenberger: the effects of forming social relationships in alcohol therapy –**social atoms (produced at 4 different points) & quantitative and qualitative Comparison**

2.4. MASTER THESES WITH MIXED-METHOD RESEARCH DESIGNS: CONTINUATION

- Evaluation studies with mixed method research designs: 5 thesis
 - Zauner: individual psychodrama therapy with one male depressed adolescent - **psychometric data from clinical-psychological diagnostics** (quantitative) and **observation protocols, visual therapy material and an expert interview** (qualitative)
 - Kührtreiber: the role development of children in a children's group - **quantitative observation data & interview protocols**
 - Pfohl: a social competence group of adolescent Asperger patients - **FEEL test (quantitative) & semi-structured interviews** (participants) & **observations (group)**
 - Starzer-Eidenberger: psychodrama in a group for quitting smoking - **various quantitative data collection tools and qualitative data on the therapy process** (HAT, therapy diary).
 - Heger: the use of movies in psychodrama group therapy - **problem-specific questionnaires and scales on social competence and self-efficacy (pre and post).**

EPILOGUE

Thank you for your attention!

If anyone is interested in hear more, Gabi Biegler and I could showcase master theses on all empirical designs at the next Fepto-Research meeting in Vienna in autumn. We could also ask students to present their master's theses themselves.