

Drama Patterns: Extracting and Reusing the Essence of Drama

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ABSTRACT

The knowledge of drama building is somehow an inherent part of us. Albeit, it tends to be suppressed and forgotten. This is leveraged by a common, director or instructor supervised approach, which favors learning lines to produce them without making a mistake. But the essence of drama is in archetypal situations that tend to repeat over and over without ever being the same. These are known as patterns. The notion of a pattern itself indicates an intrinsic tendency of patterns to develop and compose into a greater whole. We need a way of recalling these patterns to build live and immersive drama plays. These patterns set frames within which the actors act, but they also give them a freedom to develop their roles in a natural and unaffected way in accordance with Stanislavski's approach. In this paper, we present the idea of drama patterns and report on its genesis and the experience we had with it so far. We bring a set of four drama patterns (plus one fundamental property) and their composition coming out of a real drama play. We also provide a glimpse of a more than a dozen of other drama patterns with examples of their occurrence. Drama patterns are aimed at the broadest audience without age or background limitations. Directors can use them to build their drama plays, actors can use them to self-organize, acting teachers can use them to teach acting (assuming it's being done through drama building), drama scholars might use them as a way of looking on drama plays and texts, and drama authors can use them to write dramas.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **Software and its engineering** → **Patterns.**

KEYWORDS

drama, patterns, organizational patterns, pattern language, pattern composition

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1 INTRODUCTION

Everyone wants to be a movie star. The National Museum of Cinema in Turin enables anyone to jump right into one of the famous movie scenes and see how they would look like in it. You need not go to Turin: video games are available that will project your face and voice into a movie scene. To act there, of course, you have to learn your lines. But there's more to what attracts people to acting than to be watched by millions. Indeed, more and more people express their interest in acting courses. These courses are often seen as a courtesy of highly skilled professionals, but there seems to be something very natural about acting. A group of children left on their own and without being distracted by fancy toys will eventually turn to a role play, which may develop into a complete drama play. This includes rehearsals to perfect individual scenes.

The knowledge of drama building is somehow an inherent part of us. Albeit, it tends to be suppressed and forgotten. This is leveraged by a common, director or instructor supervised approach, which favors learning lines to produce them without making a mistake. But the essence of drama is in archetypal situations that tend to repeat over and over without ever being the same. These are known as patterns. The notion of a pattern itself indicates an intrinsic tendency of patterns to develop and compose into a greater whole. We need a way of recalling these patterns to build live and immersive drama plays. These patterns set frames within which the actors act, but they also give them a freedom to develop their roles in a natural and unaffected way in accordance with Stanislavski's approach.¹

In this paper, we present the idea of drama patterns and its genesis. We also present some of the drama patterns we discovered so far and report the experience we had with them so far. Drama patterns are aimed at the broadest audience without age or background limitations. Directors can use them to build their drama plays, actors can use them to self-organize, acting teachers can use them to teach acting (assuming it's being done through drama building), drama scholars might use them as a way of looking on drama plays and texts, and drama authors can use them to write dramas. The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 explains the background of transposing the idea of patterns into drama. Section 3 brings in a set of four drama patterns (plus one fundamental property) and their composition coming out of a real drama play. Section 4 provides a glimpse of some other drama patterns. Section 5 explains the process of applying drama patterns,

¹Konstantin Sergeevich Alekseyev (1863–1938), known as Stanislavski, revolutionarized theater performance with his method of natural acting.

summarizes our experience, and discusses the outlook. Section 6 relates our findings to the work done by others. Section 7 concludes the paper.

2 TRANSPOSING THE IDEA OF PATTERNS INTO DRAMA

The idea of patterns comes from the building architecture, where it was formulated by Christopher Alexander [1, 3]. However, it has seen its most significant development within the discipline of software development, where it is applied at all levels. A number of specialized conferences exist, with the most famous series being the Pattern Languages of Programming (PLoP) in several different realizations (PLoP, EuroPLoP, VikingPLoP, AsianPLoP, etc.). Software development, which in many ways represents creative collaborative writing,² is now ready to transfer the experience of working with patterns to other areas. This is, actually, already happening, although it is difficult to assess to what extent this is a matter of transferring pattern experience from software development, and to what extent this is an application of the idea of patterns without this comprehensive background. A huge number of pattern languages unrelated to software development have been reported. As an eminent example, Iba and his collaborators have created more than thirty pattern languages covering the areas of learning, collaboration, presentation, project design, change making, disaster prevention, beauty in everyday life, living well with dementia, cooking, etc. [14]. The Pursuit of Pattern Languages for Societal Change conference (PURPLESOC) is a general pattern conference that gathers all kinds of pattern languages and studies of the theory behind patterns set by Alexander in *The Nature of Order* [2]. Less is known how widely are these pattern languages applied in practice.

Organizational patterns of software development, which are well established and have been observed in real projects [8], come particularly close to what could be identified as *drama patterns*. A software development process can be seen as a drama. Similarly as actors on the stage, software developers have to be organized in effective configurations in order to play their roles well while preserving their freedom of acting. Each organizational pattern represents a particular intriguing organizational situation that tends to recur in different contexts and gives a clue how to resolve it. For example, (software) architects need to focus on the overall structure, but they should not lose contact with the development reality. The resolution of this conflict lies in letting the architects participate in actual programming. This constitutes a pattern called Architect Also Implement. Each pattern calls for further patterns to arrange the details. In this case, the Developing In Pairs organizational pattern can be applied to further precise how to actually involve an architect in the process of programming (pairing the architect with a regular developer).

Analogically to organizational patterns, a drama pattern represents a particular intriguing dramatic situation that tends to recur in different contexts and gives a clue how to resolve it. Drama patterns can be observed directly on the scene. They are constitutive elements of drama plays. Actors are participants in these patterns: they play the pattern roles. Other drama patterns can precise the

details of what happens on the scene. Drama pattern roles may overlap.

Drama patterns do not instruct actors how to behave step-by-step, but put them into a position that through contradicting forces squeezes out of them the necessary performance. If the scenario is open, the actors are given the opportunity to develop it by making up their actions directly at rehearsals.

It is important to note that to some, drama pattern descriptions might look as if drama patterns are targeting only the mechanical or static part of drama plays, and not the acting itself, but they actually make the participants express what is appropriate in a given situation. This is not different from other patterns: not even Alexander's. They don't tell how to make a building brick by brick. They pull out the best in us and put it into a function of achieving the envisioned goal.

Experts apply patterns unconsciously without explicitly talking about them. Good drama plays and movies are full of patterns despite no one talks about this. Successful drama teaching is based on patterns, too. Popular études, assignments of drama exercises in which participants are required to come with situations in which they will express certain feelings or conflicts, may actually induce patterns. A major difference is that études force participants to discover the appropriate patterns themselves, while with patterns they would have readily usable frameworks for their natural abilities to exhibit. With patterns, these abilities tend to exhibit very quickly. Consequently, a drama built on patterns (not necessarily by following pattern descriptions, but consisting of pattern instances) can be established in a short time while featuring very natural acting. Often, not just a drama exercise assignment is denoted as an étude, but the whole resulting dramatic situation is denoted so. Depending on the dramatic situation, this use of the notion of an étude may then correspond to a pattern instance or, more often, to a pattern composition.

3 THE CASE OF THE REAL RED RIDING HOOD

Consider this short play. Red Riding Hood appears on the scene. Soon afterwards, yet another Red Riding Hood appears. Noticing the similarity between them, the first one asks the other one: "You? And who are you?" The other one answers: "Well, *the* Red Riding Hood. Don't you see?" While they argue, a third one arrives. The situation repeats and the argument intensifies. The same happens with each further Red Riding Hood. At the peak of the argument, there comes a wolf (or wolves) asking: "Which one among you is Red Riding Hood?" Acclaimed Red Riding Hoods start making excuses leaving the scene one by one. The wolf remains on the scene alone and confused, and then leaves as well.

This is a play called *The Real Red Riding Hood* (created by Aleksandra Vranić) performed numerous times by children of various age ranging from five to fifteen years and even with this age span mixed together within one group. It was even played by adults within a research seminar at the Slovak University of Technology [23]. There was no difference in instructing children and adults observed. Each time, it proved to be very engaging for both actors and audience. We are going to analyze it from the pattern perspective (Sections 3.1–3.5). We include some notes on the pattern

²Actually, Coplien reports that Alistair Cockburn likens software construction to group poetry writing [7].

composition (Section 3.6), pattern description form we use (Section 3.7), and diversity of drama patterns (Section 3.8). We assume that the pattern descriptions are readily comprehensible without the necessity to learn about the form in which they are presented, but some readers may wish to see this explanation first, in which case they are referred to Section 3.7.

3.1 Reversed Advantage

If we look carefully at the situation captured by the play, we may notice that it is about advantage that, at one moment, becomes a disadvantage. Red Riding Hoods are actually advantage claimers. They argue about who has the real advantage over the others until the situation reverses (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Reversed Advantage in The Real Red Riding Hood.

The wolf or wolves are actually advantage usurpers. They come to the site and make clear it's them who are going to benefit from those advantage claimers who really poses the advantage to their disadvantage. In other words, the advantage usurpers endanger those who poses the advantage.

Learning that what seemed to be an advantage has become a disadvantage, advantage claimers reverse their position and start claiming the opposite trying to leave the site.

It is important to notice that advantage claimers reverse their position only externally, while inside they remain convinced they possess the advantage. This directly makes actors perform this role right. Those who had really abandoned their position look different.

Forces:

Advantage claimers want to benefit from the acknowledgment of their advantage by others,
But it occurs that their advantage endangers them when advantage usurpers appear.

Resolution: To protect themselves, advantage claimers (publicly) reverse their claims, yet not yielding their advantage internally (keeping it to themselves). This resolves the conflict of forces.

This is a drama pattern which we call *Reversed Advantage*. Other examples of this pattern include:

- Stolen Wallet (short sketch, Aleksandra Vranić, 2016). People find a wallet and start arguing who's going to take it. When a policeman enters the scene asking who stole the wallet, one by one they decline that they have anything to do with it and leave.
- Patients wait at the dentist's, arguing who should go first. Once the dentist appears asking who's next, due to sudden strike of dentophobia they start making excuses and leave.
- (An analogy to the scene at the dentist's.) Students wait for an exam, arguing who should go first. When the teacher comes out from the office and asks who's first to take the exam, they get frightened and make excuses as they leave.

3.2 Amazing Similarity

There's more to The Real Red Riding Hood play than just one pattern. All Red Riding Hoods are similar. With each Red Riding Hood who comes to the scene, the other ones are amazed how the newcomer looks similar to them (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Amazing Similarity in The Real Red Riding Hood.

Here, Red Riding Hoods act as similars. While one of the similars is on the scene, another one appears. They look (almost) the same, i.e., their most important features are the same. They are amazed by each other.

Forces:

The similars can't believe they look the same,
But everything speaks in favor of that.

Resolution: The conflict of forces is resolved by the similars accepting each other's presence despite knowing that something is not quite right.

This is a drama pattern which we call *Amazing Similarity*. Other examples of this pattern include:

- The Prince and the Pauper, 2000. The scene when the prince meets the pauper who looks just like him.³

³Interestingly, the famous Mark Twain's novel this movie is an adaptation of doesn't contain this pattern.

- Barbie as the Princess and the Pauper, 2004. The scene when the princess meets the pauper who looks just like her.
- Dido – Hunter (music video), 1999. The scene when Dido meets its double.

3.3 Disbelieved Identity

Upon meeting each other, Red Riding Hoods disprove each other's identity (Figure 3). Here, one Red Riding Hood acts as an identity disprover, while the other one acts as an identity exhibitor. The identity disprover doubts that the identity exhibitor is who he or she claims to be (or looks so).



Figure 3: Disbelieved Identity in The Real Red Riding Hood.

The Real Red Riding Hood actually features a special case of this pattern in which the identity disprover is also a carrier of the same identity, turning the identity carrier into another identity disprover. Also, there are multiple instances of this pattern there: one pattern instance per each Real Riding Hood's arrival. Furthermore, all but the first pattern instance involve multiple identity carriers (all the Red Riding Hoods that were on the scene before a new one came).

Forces:

The identity exhibitor exhibits his or her identity,
But the identity disprover doesn't accept this.

Resolution: The identity exhibitor remains sure of his or her identity continuing to exhibit it, while the identity disprover doesn't get convinced of it. Both roles can be represented by groups instead of individuals.

This is a drama pattern which we call *Disbelieved Identity*. A subtle instance of this drama pattern can be seen in Roman Holiday (1953) in the scene when the taxi driver and Gregory Peck don't believe Audrey Hepburn that she lives in Colosseum. This demonstrates that both exhibiting identity and disproving can be implicit. Other examples of this pattern include:

- Little Red Riding Hood. When the wolf pretends to be Red Riding Hood's grandmother.
- The Wolf and the Seven Young Goats. When the wolf pretends to be the young goats' mother.
- Roman Holiday (1953). A subtle instance of this drama pattern occurs in the scene when the taxi driver and Gregory Peck don't believe Audrey Hepburn that she lives in Colosseum. This demonstrates that both exhibiting identity and disproving it can be implicit.

3.4 Reflection Play

Two Red Riding Hoods try to convince themselves that the other one is real by making each other perform the same moves. One of Red Riding Hoods acts as a reflected object, while the other one is its reflection. Then they switch roles, which may occur several times. The reflected object meets its reflection. They copy each other's moves. They don't have to actually look the same. It is not necessary to declare who's the reflection, and who's the Reflected Object. It is not necessary for reflected moves to occur simultaneously, i.e., they can be delayed.

Forces:

The reflected object doesn't believe that what has shown is real and that it is its reflection,
But the reflection behaves the same.

Resolution: The reflected object accepts the existence of what appears to be its reflection.

This is a drama pattern which we call *Reflection Play*. Other examples of this pattern include:

- Alice in Wonderland (a drama play arranged by Aleksandra Vranić). The mirror room scene.
- Metamorfoze, Jugoslovensko dramsko pozorište (2011). The scene when Narcissus meets his reflection.

3.5 Echoes

As the wolf, confused by the behavior of Red Riding Hoods, who left the scene leaving him alone, leaves the scene, too, Red Riding Hoods come back, bowing and receiving an applause by the audience. However, one of them says, „Anyway, I'm the real one." This restarts the argument over who's the real Red Riding Hood. The wolf, of course, notices this and gets back, which makes Red Riding Hoods run away in a rush. This can be repeated several times, each time quicker.

These are echoes of the Reversed Advantage pattern, which, practically, amplify it. Echoes are not a pattern, but one of the fifteen fundamental properties of things that do have life as identified by Alexander [2].

There are many examples of Echoes. A particularly interesting one occurs in Barbie as the Princess and the Pauper (2004), an animated movie, in the scene when the princess meets the pauper, which we mentioned as an example of Amazing Similarity (Section 3.2). And it's exactly Amazing Similarity what is being echoed there. As the princess and the pauper are amazed by their similarity, the camera goes down showing two cats who also look amazed by their similarity, although one is white, and the other black.

3.6 Drama Pattern Composition

To sum up, Red Riding Hoods feature advantage claimers from the Reversed Advantage pattern. As they occur on the scene, they feature Amazing Similarity. Their amazement is amplified by Disbelieved Identity. Consequently, they explore their similarity by performing a Reflection Play acting as each other's reflection. At the same time, the identity from Disbelieved Identity is the advantage in Reversed Advantage. Finally, Reversed Advantage may be amplified by applying Echoes.

By this pattern composition, each actor plays several pattern roles, not counting the variations in their natural personalities. This makes their personality layered and consequently rich in the dramatic sense. The patterns make each of these layers actually exposed to the audience, which is essential for the scene comprehension.

It is important to understand that pattern descriptions are only an approximate and abstract representation of reality and actual pattern instances that occur there. Thus, they can help and they are meant to do so, but descriptions are not prescriptions and one should not feel bound by them. A live setting, i.e., the *context* in the pattern parlance, may reveal lots of other possibilities and these should not be ignored. For example, in The Real Red Riding Hood play, having differently looking girls (and maybe even boys), doesn't provide an opportunity to apply Amazing Similarity. Instead, this is a situation in which rather mutual convincing of how Red Riding Hood really looks like would have a natural fit, and which may be equally amusing as Amazing Similarity.

3.7 Example Based Pattern Form

We use a non-traditional, example based pattern form. Most notably, the context part of the pattern is exemplified. In our experience, examples of drama patterns are readily comprehensible and applicable by analogy to other contexts.

We make the generalization part short and focused on the conflict of the two main contradicting forces, which determine the problem. Other forces that could have been identified are actually counted in within these main forces similarly as in the addition of forces as vectors in physics. Consequently, there is no need for a separate problem statement, which is not present neither in the original Alexander's pattern form, as has been observed by Coplien and Harrison [8].

Forces are followed by a brief description of their resolution. Afterwards, some more examples of the drama pattern are mentioned.

3.8 Diversity of Drama Patterns

Most of the patterns we mentioned are about interaction, e.g., Reversed Advantage, Amazing Similarity, or Disbelieved Identity. Other drama patterns are based on motion, e.g., Reflection Play, Marionette, or Futile Resistance. There are also drama patterns that deal with the high-level structure of the drama or its overall organization, such as Impossible to Be Together, or with the organization of the scene, such as Two Perspectives.

4 SOME OTHER DRAMA PATTERNS

In this section, we describe several other drama patterns we identified to illustrate how broad the field is. Besides these patterns, we

identified, but have not yet written out many more drama patterns, which, for now, carry the context dependent names like:

- *Audition* (actors at an audition make the director go crazy with their lousy performance)
- *Photographer* (a photographer can't make their subjects stand still)
- *Deaf Postwoman* (a postwoman in a post office mishears addresses; *Deaf Witch* is another application of this pattern)
- *That's My Picture* (animals get in the possession of a mirror and argue who's picture it shows)
- *Frozen Scene* (actors stop all at once and stand still for a given time)
- *Possession* (a diabolic look example of which is given by Jack Nicholson in *The Shining*; used also in *Pokušenje* (Temptation) in a dance arrangement [4])
- *Wall* (known from Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*)
- *Two Perspectives* (used in *Il Filo di Arianna* [11])

4.1 Thoughts Reflecting Environment

A girl is lost in a forest. She can't find her way home. The birds' twitter that resonates in the forest starts to embrace human speech reflecting the girl's thoughts. At first, it's desperate "I'm lost. Where's the way out? I'm cold..." As the girl starts to see the way out, the words in the twitter change: "Here's the way. Soon I'll be home..." This scene was included in many Aleksandra Vranić's plays: *Alice in Wonderland*, *Snow White*, *Hansel and Gretel*, etc.

The girl acts as a hero passing through the forest with birds that represents an environment. The environment reflects the hero's thoughts providing them to the audience.

Forces:

There is a need to express the hero's thoughts,
But without having the hero directly express them.

Resolution: The environment reflects the hero's thoughts by modulating the sounds or visual expressions it already makes.

This is a drama pattern which we call *Thoughts Reflecting Environment*. Other examples of this pattern include:

- *Pokušenje* (Temptation) [4]. The name "Prym" resonates through a diabolic music tune.
- *Killer/Papa Was a Rollin' Stone*, George Michael's video. The product logos change into the words of the song.
- *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* (2004). The scene in which Bridget (Renée Zellweger) rushes through the city and a commercial displayed on a banner changes into "go Bridget go."

4.2 Impossible to Be Together

Romeo and Juliet's love couldn't survive under the circumstances it occurred.

Forces:

The heroes can't live without each other,
But the circumstances do not allow them to be together as they are (being real themselves).

Resolution: The heroes together turn to a different reality, which often (but not necessarily) means death.

This is a drama pattern which we call *Impossible to Be Together*. Other examples of this pattern include:

- *Zimna vojna* (Cold War, 2018). Zula and Igor commit suicide together after learning that there is no place in the world for them if they are to be what they are.
- *Blade Runner* (1992/1997/2007). Although Deckard and Rachel manage to escape, it doesn't seem they will live "happily ever after" ("It's too bad she won't live. But then again, who does?").
- *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967). Bonnie and Clyde's unacceptable "lifestyle" is ended as they are shot dead at a police ambush.
- *Natural Born Killers* (1994). After one last killing, Mickey and Mallory step into a normal life.

4.3 Marionette

The theater play called *Pokušenje* (Temptation) [4] based on Paulo Coelho's novel *The Devil and Miss Prym* features a scene in which the stranger telekinetically manipulates moves of the miss while she tries to resist. The miss is an apparent marionette controlled by the stranger as a marionettist.

Forces:

The marionettist makes efforts to control what appears to be a marionette,
But the marionette attempts at making her own moves.

Resolution: While the marionettist imposes the control over the marionette, the marionette manages to demonstrate his or her own personality.

This is a drama pattern which we call Marionette. Other examples of this pattern include:

- *Chicago* (2002). The marionette scene, in which Richard Gere controls Renée Zellweger as if she was a puppet, which then extends to the whole press as a metaphor of manipulation.
- *Il Filo di Arianna* [11, starting at 12:30]. The scene in which the actress's hands and then the whole body are being moved by the actor.

4.4 Reversed Nature

In *Mixed-Up Fairy Tales* (Aleksandra Vranić, 2015), the Lazy Wolf scene, in which a wolf refuses to eat up Red Riding Hood, claiming that he only wants to get some sun and to relax. The wolf reverses his nature, i.e., behaves contrary to it. The Red Riding Hood teases the wolf until he frightens her, upon which he continuous to behave lazily.

Forces:

The character has an apparent nature according to which the public expects him or her to behave,
But the character does the opposite.

Resolution: Although at moments the character is provoked by the public to show his or her nature, he or she manages to maintain the reversed nature.

This is a drama pattern which we call Reversed Nature. Other examples of this pattern include:

- *Wizard of Oz* (movie, 1939). The Cowardly Lion, contrary to his lion nature, behaves as a coward.
- *Miris poljskog cveća*, a movie by Srđan Karanović (1977). An actor refuses to act.

4.5 Futile Resistance

In the theater adaptation of Andersen's *Fairy Tales* by Róbert Csonotos, Meteorit, International Theatre Group (2016), a girl tries to survive the ruthlessness of people marching around her and striking into her so that she even gets knocked down (Figure 4). The girl is a resister trying to survive the strikes by the ruthless.

Forces:

The resister passively fights the ruthless,
But the ruthless are stronger.

Resolution: The resister succumbs being carried to a different reality.



Figure 4: Andersen's *Fairy Tales*: the Little Match Girl scene (featuring Aleksandra Vranić).

This is a drama pattern which we call Futile Resistance. Other examples of this pattern include:

- *Il Filo di Arianna* [11, starting at 8:40]. The scene in which the actress is being stroke to the ground by an invisible force. This demonstrates that the ruthless can be imaginary.
- *Numb*, U2 video
- *Cracked* [5]. The homeless is molested by the people going around.

5 APPLYING DRAMA PATTERNS

While many other drama patterns are waiting to be discovered, they are ready to be applied (Section 5.1). Based on our experience so far (Section 5.2), the approach has a great potential (Section 5.3).

5.1 Process

As we said in the introduction, drama patterns can be used by directors, actors, acting teachers, drama authors, and drama scholars. While we can't claim we applied the drama scholar perspective beyond identifying drama patterns in plays, movies, and text for

our own needs, we have a continuing experience with all other perspectives. Here, we will briefly describe the process of applying drama patterns in drama teaching. At the same time, this covers also the director's perspective (with the teacher being a director) as this kind of drama teaching always leads to a drama play performed by the children in front of the audience.

The process typically starts by picking one of the drama patterns by the teacher based on the initial discussion with the children. The pattern is introduced not in general, but in the context of the story being elaborated.

The children are encouraged to try the pattern. The teacher observes the resulting pattern instance and directs children with very brief cues to help them get into the right mood. For example, in the *Photographer* pattern, where a photographer can't make the subjects stand still (mentioned in Section 4), the child playing the photographer often acts much better if instructed that he or she is being late for a flight. Then the photographer really has a reason to lose patience. However, the flight is never mentioned in the sketch itself!

The teacher gradually introduces further patterns, both along the lines of the developing plot, i.e., towards the next situations, and to elaborate the details of already established situations.

The whole process of applying drama patterns is amusing and engaging. It encourages creativity and exploration. Sometimes, children have an urge to try something new within the scene or they simply do that spontaneously. Often, it happens that what they performed is another pattern.

All participants contribute to establishing patterns making this process inherently inclusive. Once a pattern instance is established, each participant can try different roles, which adds even more to inclusiveness. As the essence of patterns is a conflict resolution, the participants experience a transformation of a conflict into creativity. This conditions them to channel conflicts into creativity in the real world.

The activities the drama teaching or building based on drama patterns consists of can be perceived as patterns themselves. However, such patterns form another pattern language different from the drama pattern language as such. This has been observed in the process of teaching creative writing with creative drama elements driven by the needs of children [22], which involves several pattern-like techniques for dynamically dealing with the situations within a teaching lesson, such as *A Child Refuses to Collaborate—The Teacher Has a Work Plan, Writing Crisis, Parents Criticize Children's Texts, Reading Own Texts*, etc.

5.2 Experience

Aleksandra Vranić's experience related to drama patterns includes:

- Elementary art school drama education classes, with final drama plays performed with each group of children after each half-year period (attended by almost five hundred children so far),
- Public children performances at:
 - The Bratislava University Hospital (2018), to support oncological children patients

- The Bratislava city library (2018/2019), as a part of its cultural program for elementary schools (on several occasions and with more than seventy children at one of them)
- A Children's Day festival in an open space in Bratislava (2015), which involved groups of children from different schools who never met before the actual performance
- Contests, with a very good reception by the audience and small children in particular
- Seminars on how to teach creative writing and drama in Slovakia, attended mostly by elementary school teachers
- Hrajme sa na divadlo (Let's Play Theater), a community project in Serbia (2018), organized in an ethnically mixed environment (Slovak/Serbian/Roma)
- Research seminar at the Slovak University of Technology [23]

Based on our observation, we may say that children themselves— as actors—are capable of working with drama patterns by analogy. They recognize drama pattern instances on their own and are able to apply them by analogy to other contexts (stories). This gives us a reason to believe that a group of self organized actors without a dedicated director role could build a drama play using drama patterns.

A positive effect on inclusiveness, collaboration, and involvement was observed in all these activities. In drama education classes, children from different social groups, of different age, and of different ethnic origin collaborate very smoothly. Marginalized children being marked as difficult to deal with by regular teachers often tend to show as some of the most creative students in drama education classes, with a very positive effect on their attitude towards regular school program reported by their teachers. In the Let's Play Theater project, a Roma boy considered by the local community as problematic (allegedly for violence and theft) was accepted by other children and smoothly collaborated with them.

It is worth noting that although the Let's Play Theater project consisted of only two three hour sessions within two days, with more than twenty children with a huge age span (five to fifteen years) taking part in it, the children managed to make a final performance that included one longer play (Alice in the Wonderland), one short play (The Real Red Riding Hood), and several short sketches. This demonstrates the efficiency of the approach.

In a research seminar we organized [23], ten participants of a very diverse background and age managed to play The Real Red Riding Hood in three different versions, each of which could have been directly presented to the audience at least as an amateur performance. This was achieved in a less than hour time followed by a fruitful discussion that touched also the essence of patterns in general.

In a focus group we organized this year's EuroPLOP, we managed to build another version of The Real Red Riding Hood with eight conference participants (including two focus group organizers) in only 75 minutes and perform it at the conference banquet [24].

Drama patterns can be used to generate drama scripts and have been used for this by Aleksandra Vranić and children in her drama groups. One of the scripts created this way is The Real Red Riding Hood. Others include:

- A Film Studio Fairytale (Rozprávka vo filmovom štúdiu, 2017)

- Conceited Káča (Namyslená Káča, 2017)
- A Hungry Wolf and a Fairytale Cocktail (Hladný vlk a rozprávkový koktejl, 2016)
- A Song for the King (Pieseň pre kráľa, 2010)

5.3 Outlook

Drama patterns are not meant just to support inexperienced drama practitioners. On the contrary, drama experts can use drama patterns as a means of both synthesis and analysis. From our own experience, we may say that even experts may forget their great ideas. Drama patterns can help them recall what they have forgotten.

Drama patterns can help in teaching all kinds of patterns, including design patterns. The pattern community knows how challenging is to provide a good definition of a pattern,⁴ while understanding the definition might be even more challenging. Drama patterns make people *experience* the essence of a pattern.

Drama patterns open new possibilities for social/applied theater. They make actors more happy and confident about their performances because they can see and feel how alive and involving to the audience they are. Speaking from our experience again, children actors were very happy and proud playing for long-term hospitalized children on the oncology department. It is important to note that our objective is not to reinvent social theater, but to provide a means to make it more efficient. Drama patterns are naturally collaborative and as such represent a good vehicle for sensing mutual understanding. They also enable people to safely experience the position of others. Since patterns are based on resolving conflicts of contradicting forces or, better said, putting them into an equilibrium, creating drama based on drama patterns can have a psychological effect of increasing the ability of people to deal with conflict situations peacefully seeking the mutual understanding.

6 RELATED WORK

The concept of a drama pattern is close to the concept of a dramatic situation known from the thirty-six dramatic situations drama theory [17]. Both aim at generalizing conflicts and roles that take part in those conflicts so that they can be applied in different story contexts. Indeed, some of the dramatic situations are drama patterns. Obstacles to Love is virtually the Impossible to Be Together drama pattern, so it may be said we rediscovered the same pattern. *Impossible to Be Together* addresses the high-level structure of a drama (recall Section 3.8). In effect, it seems that other dramatic situations also operate on this level. However, in some of the thirty-six dramatic situations, such as Pursuit, Disaster, Involuntary Crimes of Love, the forces tend to be obscured. This does not necessarily mean that these are not drama patterns, but that their current presentation does not provide sufficient grounds for such a claim.

The thirty-six dramatic situations drama theory assumes there are only thirty-six dramatic situations and no other dramatic situations different than these can be discovered. This is a too rigid limitation, which contradicts the very spirit of pattern languages. As all natural languages, pattern languages tend not to be closed, i.e., they do not exhibit only a finite number of patterns. In his critique

⁴Gabriel considers the whole book *The Timeless Way of Building* [1] as a definition of a pattern [6]. Undoubtedly, an essential reading to anyone who wants to explore patterns, more than five hundred pages of reading might be an unrealistic requirement for an average practitioner just to start working with patterns.

of the thirty-six dramatic situations drama theory, Souriau [21] comes very close to the concept of a drama pattern and does so via revising the concept of a dramatic situation, which he sees as being determined by a conflict of forces. Afterwards, he decomposes dramatic situations into what he finds are their elementary constituents: dramatic functions. These are: force or desire, rival or opponent, desired good (object), desired recipient, arbiter, and helper. Each dramatic situation is then a combination of dramatic functions. Taking into account certain limitations in combining these dramatic functions, Souriau comes to an acclaimed number of 210 141 dramatic situations without providing the exact calculation. Leaving aside the correctness of this number, the most important difference between Souriau's approach and drama patterns lies in usability. While drama patterns are readily usable frames of interaction aimed at capturing and transferring expertise, Souriau's approach is merely an analytical tool based on very general dramatic functions.

Sparks [19] uses the notion of a drama pattern to denote specific human behavior in real life that people should get free from and become what they really are instead of acting. Such patterns are actually antipatterns: the patterns that should be avoided. However, rather than naming or delineating drama patterns, Sparks talks of their categories and pattern roles, such as codependents, pretenders, ignorants, etc. In *The Celestine Prophecy: An Adventure*, Redfield's famous novel [18], people learn how to liberate from control dramas, which are also described mainly through roles, such as aloof, intimidator, "poor me," or interrogator. While in the psychological sense it is important to understand that we are a part of drama in order to be able to get out of it and get out of the role we have been forced into, this is opposite in drama plays and movies, where we strive to engage in drama and the role we should play the best we can. In both cases, being aware of drama patterns and being able to manipulate them is essential.

Drammar [16] is an approach to express drama by an ontology based on the elements considered to be necessary to express dramatic qualities, which include agents and conflicts. There is an obvious correspondence of the two to roles and conflicts of contradicting forces in drama patterns. As it is with all non-trivial ontologies, ontological models in Drammar tend to be very large and complicated, as much as class diagrams of software systems are. It is reasonable to expect that drama patterns could be recognized on top of Drammar ontological models the same way design patterns can be recognized in class diagrams.

While this paper presents an instance of transposing the idea of patterns from software development to drama, thus contributing to drama, according to Laurel [15], theater can be used as a metaphor for computers to help us better understand and design human-computer interaction.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER WORK

In this paper, we presented the idea of drama patterns, the constitutive elements of drama plays that can be used to both analyze existing drama plays and build new ones.

We report the four patterns we worked with in a composition that constitutes a short drama play called *The Real Red Riding Hood*. We use a short, example based pattern form to present these patterns.

We also mention several other drama patterns we discovered so far, despite being in a less elaborated state.

Our experience so far confirms that drama patterns ensure liveliness of drama plays, making them more involving both for the actors and audience. They enable to start with the actual acting immediately even with people who have never met before. Rather than being prescriptive, drama patterns encourage an exploratory approach. This applies not only to performance, but also to the plot to the extent that drama patterns can be used to collectively grow a completely new story.

There are many drama patterns and relationships between drama patterns waiting to be documented and this is a straightforward direction of further work. The director's or teacher's pattern language for resolving the problematic situations during rehearsals or teaching lessons (indicated in Section 5.1) also needs to be documented.

While drama patterns are certainly different from organizational patterns of software development, the same cognitive apparatus for recognizing patterns, along with the corresponding methods and tools of expressing patterns established for the sake of software development can be applied there, too. There are several description forms that can be used, but an easier pattern comprehension may be achieved by animating them as text adventure games using Ericksonian conversational hypnosis language for an immersive experience [10].

Patterns can be reapplied to capture pattern languages in a more compact way with its dynamic side expressed in the form of state machine diagrams [20].

Graphical software modeling approaches can be employed to express the relationships between patterns in pattern languages and the inner side of the patterns in terms of the roles they feature. Complicated graphical models can be made easier to grasp by using a 3D layered representation [9, 12, 13]. With the raising number of identified drama patterns, such a representation could be of tremendous help.

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