Dramatizing Software Patterns

EuroPLoP 2023 Focus Group Proposal

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Many formats have been proposed for the description of software patterns in an effort to make them more understandable. Examples of patterns are being studied for this purpose, too. But how would it be to become a part of Observer, Mediator, or Visitor? Or some organizational pattern of software development, like Architect also Implements?

In this focus group, we will revive software patterns as drama scenes. For that purpose, we will use drama patterns, which enable setting lively plays in no time and in a highly creative, collaborative, and inclusive fashion. Drama patterns also make possible to see patterns from within and to understand why the conflict of contradicting forces is the essence of a pattern and how patterns generate so diverse solutions depending on the context.

Some drama patterns seem to correspond directly to certain software patterns. For example, Observer can be played directly as Thoughts Reflecting Environment [4], where the subject is the protagonist whose thoughts are being observed by other actors who, consequently, take the corresponding actions. Visitor can be played as Loosely Coupled Situations [4], where the visitor is the protagonist who virtually visits different situations (usually rooms or other physical places) and changes them.

Some other patterns—especially those that are higher in the hierarchy like Model-View-Controller—may require several drama patterns to be dramatized. The resulting plays may be more or less allegorical. Other kinds of software patterns like organizational or analysis patterns can be also dramatized. The choice will depend on the participants.

This focus group can accommodate up to 15 participants. It can be repeated in case of a greater interest. No acting experience is required. No knowledge of software patterns is assumed. Everything will be explained on the spot.

A room with at least 4 x 8 m^2 of free space is needed. In case of good weather, the focus group can also be organized outdoors. In both cases, a white board or flip chart would be of help. We assume that a time slot of 75 to 100 minutes would be sufficient.

The results of the focus group could be easily extrapolated beyond its time and space delimitation. Interested participants could make small performances for other participants within gatherings, during the conference banquet, in the bar, etc. There are drama patterns instantly applicable with a large number of people without any kind of preparation required, which may be used as games throughout the conference [2].

The organizers discovered the concept of a drama pattern and published several papers on this topic [2, 3, 4, 1]. They organized a successful focus group entitled *Drama Patterns: Seeing the Patterns from Within* at Euro-PLoP 2019 that ended in a banquet performance [2]. They also organized a workshop entitled *Understanding Humane in Patterns Through Drama* as a PLoP 2022 PLoPourri event (remotely).[1] They have experience in applying drama patterns with hundreds of children of all ages and dozens of students within a regular univeristy cours.[2]

References

[1] Patrik Honíšek and Valentino Vranić. Mining drama patterns in dramatic situations. In *Proceedings of 27th Conference on Pattern Languages of Programs Online, PLoP 2020, PLoP 2020*. ACM, 2020.

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[3] Valentino Vranić and Aleksandra Vranić. Drama patterns: Extracting and reusing the essence of drama. In *Proceedings of 24th European Conference on Pattern Languages of Programs, EuroPLoP 2019*, Irsee, Germany, 2019. ACM.

[4] Valentino Vranić, Aleksandra Vranić, and Waheedullah Sulaiman Khail. Growing organizations with patterns: Lessons from drama. In *Proceedings of 25th European Conference on Pattern Languages of Programs, EuroPLoP 2020 Online*. ACM, 2020.

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[1]`http://fiit.sk/~vranic/pub/plop22/`
[2]`https://is.stuba.sk/katalog/syllabus.pl?predmet=393400`