The JOURNAL for DRAMA in EDUCATION

Volume 38, Issue 1
Autumn 2023
ISSN 1476 – 9395

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Charity Number 1135457

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The Editorial Committee welcomes contributions and letters for publication. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect editorial or NATD policy.

Editorial Committee

Cover design Lucy Fredericks

Notes for Intending Contributors to The Journal for Drama in Education

The Journal for Drama in Education is published twice a year and contains a refereed section. All articles that have been refereed will be indicated underneath the title on the contents page and within the *Journal* where the article appears.

The Editorial Committee welcomes contributions on any aspect of drama and education, contributions which reflect on NATD policy, and more general contributions on education. The Committee will consider all contributions and will publish articles that, in its judgment, meet the needs of the membership of NATD at the time of publication.

It is preferred that contributions are submitted by email to the address on the inside front cover. The author's details should be submitted on a separate page and should include the personal details which the author would like to accompany the article. For articles that are to be refereed, a short abstract of the article should also be included. Authors should also include full address, telephone number and email.

The Harvard system of referencing is preferred for all articles and must be used for contributions that are to be refereed. Footnotes should use Arabic numerals (1,2,3 etc.). A bibliography of cited works should appear at the end of articles using Harvard conventions.

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Editorial
Being human all the time?

This autumn, minister of state at the Department for Education, Nick Gibb, has a lot on his plate. Unlike the four million children living in poverty in the UK. With weasel words and obfuscations, and despite an open letter from 240+ civil society groups, councillors, MPs, faith leaders and 90,000 teachers[1], the minister has declined to offer free school meals to all those who need them.

At the same time, anyone familiar with the time-line of the Grenfell disaster will be finding eerie echoes in the recent RAAC[2] debacle:

- In 2017, a ceiling beam collapsed in a school and a committee was asked to investigate.
- In 2018, a similar but more widespread collapse took place in another school.
- In 2019, a structural engineer warned the government of RAAC's dangers.
- In 2022, construction experts warned RAAC was a "ticking time bomb" and estimated around "half" of the four million non-residential buildings in the UK were affected by the material.[3]

The government responded with guidance and a questionnaire, but no action. During the school summer holidays it was discovered that there was a significant amount of these potentially hazardous materials in our schools and thus the start of term saw the closure of many schools. The exact figure of how many schools, at the time of writing, has not been revealed.

Whether or not this particular buildings fiasco is a result of David Cameron's bonfire of the building regulations,[4] it is still the case that this is another disaster resulting from wilful neglect.

More recently, it has emerged that the DfE has mismanaged the national funding formula for schools. The result is that primary and secondary schools will be given 'at least £50

[1] No Child Left Behind Campaign- National Education Union
[2] Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete- lightweight, porous and recognised as having limited durability
[3] Timeline: The RAAC concrete 'ticking time bomb' that schools were warned about years ago | The Independent
[4] UK Prime minister 2014 Cameron boasted of presiding over the "first Government in modern history to leave office with fewer regulations than when it entered," before revealing plans to tear out vast chunks of the rule book that govern the size and quality of our new homes. What Cameron's bonfire of the building regulations will do to our homes | Architecture | The Guardian

less a pupil'[5] than had been anticipated. This means that head teachers have had to revise their budgets, which in turn means that teachers' jobs will be cut.

These are just three examples of the indifference, disregard and mismanagement that has become the hallmark of the DfE under the present government.

This autumn, in pursuance of our aims to foster a humanising curriculum and seek justice for the young, NATD sponsored two teachers to attend the *Dorothy Heathcote Now International Drama Conference 2023* at the University of Aberdeen; one from Sussex and one from Palestine. We also facilitated the attendance of a Palestinian teacher-educator. There will be a fuller account of the conference in our next issue, alongside some planning work we aim to do arising from it, in the meantime we'd like to share with you a quote emailed to us from the Palestinian teacher. Quite simply she said,

'thanks for being human all the time'.

Given the barbaric events taking place in Gaza, Israel, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Yemen and Darfur there is no more important time for us to struggle for an education system that humanises. All of the material in this Issue approaches work with young people underpinned by being human all of the time.

In *On The Beach*, David Davis shares with us his visceral contribution to the book launch of the Trinity Publication of the papers that were given at the 2019 conference[6]. Four and a half years ago, his Keynote at that conference demanded that we face up to the climate crisis and understand the forces that continue to fuel it[7]. In 2023, his demand was even more urgent. He refers to the novel *On the Beach* which imagines the impact of a nuclear holocaust and follows through the logical impact of such a disaster. The parallels to our world are stark.

Davis takes us back to Gavin Bolton's aims and in particular:

When (and when not to) adapt to the world [the student] lives in.

He goes on to credit the critical work of Bill Roper in foregrounding the work of Lacan:

As Lacan argues, that social order, the symbolic order, is in us from our

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5 England's schools to be given less money after DfE admits bungling figures. The Guardian Fri 6 Oct 2023

6 On the 9th and 10th March 2019, Drama practitioners from around the world gathered at Trinity College, Dublin. The contributors having worked with David Davis over many years were invited by Carmel O'Sullivan (Professor in Education in the School of Education) to deliver a paper to mark his eightieth birthday.

7 For the full text see *The Journal for Drama in Education* Volume 36, Issue 2.

> unconscious to our conscious decision making. We are never free from it: never totally our own person.

He concludes:

> I would argue that our responsibility is to work towards being socially aware of those influences; to work towards shaping for ourselves a human value system whatever that might be. And drama has been invented to play a key role in that process.

We have a choice.

> We can stand on the beach with suicide pills to hand or work for a human future immediately here through our work with the art form of drama in education.

In *Process Drama in the Lowlands: My journey of exploration and discovery,* Bob Selderslaghs charts his pioneering work with process drama in Belgium. He was the first ever in the Low Countries to obtain a PhD in the arts with a focus on drama in education and education in drama. He identifies the cultural preconceptions at work with regard to what drama should be both within the school curriculum and in the education of teachers, some of which will be familiar to UK readers. Coming from this cultural context and at the same time grasping the value of Mantle of the Expert, Selderslaghs is inspired to formulate a research question that investigates a discourse between the two.

He salutes the seminal work of Luke Abbot and Tim Taylor, both for the courses they have provided and their Mantle of the Expert website, in enabling him to understand the pedagogic implications of this process. At the same time he becomes intrigued by the

> …artistic development of students that (MOE) entails

and thus goes on to design a research programme to

> …investigate the artistic added value of Dorothy Heathcote's approach in primary education in Flanders.

As the research unfolds Selderslaghs grows increasingly convinced of the quality of learning offered by Mantle of the Expert to the art form of drama and refines his research to focus on

> …dramatic inquiry towards an artistic result in arts education.

He goes on to track the relationship between process and attainment:

> …without a high-quality process, it is impossible to achieve a high-quality product.

In the light cast by his reflections on his research, slipping between Mantle of the Expert and process drama, Selderslaghs suggests a new development of Mantle of the Expert:

> MoE 2.0: from dramatic inquiry towards an artistic result in arts education.

and he offers us an approach to this. He identifies four worlds of MoE 2.0. and delineates

the interconnectedness and interplay between:

- The real world of the process = out of the fiction/process
- The imaginary world of the process = in the fiction/process
- The imaginary world of the product = in the fiction/product
- The real world of the product = out of the fiction/product

At the same time, he witnesses and advocates the enhanced authenticity and understanding that process drama offers to teachers, as those on the programme

> …were introduced to constructivist learning theory from within.

Selderslaghs' account of his pioneering work is absorbing, and his endeavors are impressive, and as he ventures into the territory of competencies and quality of product his four worlds offer us a useful thinking tool. It will be interesting to see how his work develops.

In *What's going on? From narrative fiction to Process Drama*, Brian Woolland takes us on a journey. He shares with us his thinking behind the writing of his historical novel, *The Invisible Exchange* exploring the source material and his own fascination with it. In taking us into that world, he draws parallels with our own and identifies issues that concern us as human beings. In itself this is an intriguing process, particularly when we are in the hands of a highly skilled and creative author, but it becomes all the more relevant when Woolland brings to bear his vast experience as a playwright and a drama educator. He concludes with the beginnings of a piece of drama that could be transposed into a classroom. It is not a scheme of work but is far richer than that, offering us glimpses of what could be and how an author, a playwright and a drama teacher can mine the same source.

He concludes:

> And so we proceed – sometimes enacting moments from the trial, sometimes using role play to unpick assumptions of misogyny and sexism, sometimes reconstructing events that led to the trial, sometimes creating the 'evidence' (much of it hearsay and gossip) that Coke insists is damning, and always finding ways to reflect on how this resonates for the participants and how the material relates to their world.

In *"Bullying is not ok" - A Scheme of Work,* Margaret Branscombe uses *My Parents* by Stephen Spender to show how a poem can offer a starting point for a piece of drama work and how that process can fold back and illuminate the poem itself. This is a description of work that Branscombe has undertaken with her students and comes vividly to life as she shares their writing with us. It is very clearly laid out and will prove useful to young teachers and teachers of English looking for more innovative and creative ways of exploring text.

In *On the Relationship of Living Through Drama and Bondian Theatre* Adam

Bethlenfalvy shares with us the paper that has been published by Trinity (see above). His contribution to the Dublin Conference was born out of the work he undertook for his PhD. His extract articulates his intentions:

> Living Through Drama is an approach within the field of Drama in Education that focusses on offering participants an experiential relationship to fictional situations that open human, moral dilemmas. This paper describes a process of matching this approach with the contemporary theatre theory and dramaturgy of the playwright Edward Bond, whose central aim is to create gaps in meaning for audiences. These gaps offer space for the audience members to make meaning of what they see on stage. The research reported here explored if gaps in meaning and the living through experience of improvisation can be created at the same time by bringing together these two approaches.

His approach is fascinating and draws us in the direction that Davis is imploring us to explore.

In *The Drama of Theatre-in-Education* Chris Cooper also shares a paper originally given at the Dublin Conference in 2019. It is a very powerful weaving together of the influences of a wide variety of practitioners, primarily David Davis, Gavin Bolton and Edward Bond. It is placed very clearly in a political context as he initially explores the history of TiE:

> The TiE Movement has been all but destroyed in the UK because it enables young people to think independently and critically, and they - the ruling class - will not allow that.

For Cooper:

> In my work, I understand the political in the personal to mean the relationship between self in society, and society in self.

He goes on to illustrate his argument with examples drawn from China where he works extensively:

> While TiE faces a precarious future in the UK and much of Europe, it is all the more surprising that new shoots of growth are emerging in a country where a repressive state manipulates the public's emotions to demobilise dissent and social protest (Hou, 2019).

He also provides examples from work in Birmingham, UK, carefully building an argument for a form of Theatre that has Drama at its heart. The young actors he is working with provide the evidence to help us understand the central concepts of Bond's work.

Ultimately, he is working towards an approach,

> …creating drama that removes the ideological spectacles of actors, audience and participants, so that the confrontation between self and society can occur.

This is a provocative and challenging piece of work that demands much of the reader but even more of us as adults working with young people:

> Theatre in Education (TiE) is a radical, discrete theatre form which enables young people and children to make meaning of the world they inhabit and the future they can shape.

In reviewing *Botheredness: Stories – Stance – Pedagogy* by Hywel Roberts, Margaret Branscombe shares her enthusiasm for his energy. Roberts' teaching is,

> …ensuring schooling is about children…

She concludes saying,

> In summary, 'Botheredness' is worth reading because of the real life student stories that have occurred as a result of the stories that Roberts has told in classrooms and what they have collectively *done* with those stories to create meaningful lessons.

As an Association, NATD is committed to working for a child-centred, humanising curriculum with an internationalist perspective. The climate catastrophe, the barbaric acts that humans are committing upon one another, the increasingly corrupt and careless austerity that neoliberal governments inflict on the most vulnerable in our world demands that we act. As Drama educators, our first actions are in our classrooms and our schools. We hope that this Issue empowers your action.

Chair's Report June 2023

by Matthew Milburn

The tragic loss of the OceanGate Titan, a small submersible that took wealthy passengers to the bottom of the ocean to look at the wreck of the Titanic, provides an opportunity for deep learning.

Any news event like that of the OceanGate Titan provides a rich canvas for the drama teacher. By sharing early news clippings, pupils become interested and start talking about what is happening; their imagination is sparked. It takes moments to mark out on the floor of the studio or classroom the exact dimensions of the tiny vessel. These dimensions and the fact that passengers can't open any doors, provide tight constraints within which drama can occur. It is part of human nature to imagine what would have been said at the final briefing prior to embarkation. The wording of the liability contracts or waivers signed by the passengers. The final words to loved ones and the exact positions of the passengers when the pre departure photos were taken. Understanding the back stories of the five passengers, Hamish Harding, Paul Henri Nargeoloet, Shahzada and Suleman Dawood and Stockton Rush (the CEO of OceanGate) are pictured on the mother ship, waving farewell.

The children could create the sound of the watertight door clanging shut and being bolted down. For teachers who have access to a drama studio, lights could be used to represent the darkening environment as the submersible descends to the depths.

As the tragedy unfolds, and contact with the submersible is lost, our humanity insists that we imagine what it must be like to be trapped inside that tiny vessel under the sea? What are the first signs that the vessel is in trouble? What is said between the passengers? When contact with the mother ship is lost, how do the passengers react? How does the CEO react?

With the children immersed in the story, a huge raft of learning areas open up. For example:

- The history of the Titanic.
- The "industry" that surrounds the Titanic.
- What is the deep sea environment really like?
- The impact of pressure on various shapes.
- How does sound travel in water? Sonar and radar.
- The human need for oxygen and how to conserve oxygen in a confined space.
- Who are the great adventurers through history?
- What motivates risk taking and walking towards danger?
- How contract and liability influences decision making.

I recall Dorothy Heathcote saying; avoid asking children questions that you know the answer to. As a teacher, there are a million questions that I would like to find out more about in relation to the OceanGate Titan disaster. Art should be about exploring such questions and understanding why five millionaires chose to take such risks. Is it a coincidence that they were all men?

As an association NATD is concerned with fighting for a humanising curriculum. It is concerned with making sure that children get opportunities to experience and learn through drama at school and beyond. For the last nine years the Association has been chaired by Liam Harris. His contribution has been extraordinary. At times, he has single-handedly kept the Association from sinking. I am sure that many members of the association will have been touched by his thoughtful, sensitive and caring approach. Liam has got a new job in a secondary school in Sussex and has rightly recognised that he simply does not have the capacity to Chair the association any longer. Liam has been acting in a number of roles for NATD whilst also being Chair! He's at times been head of IT, bursar or at least in charge of all banking arrangements, and secretary – making sure that minutes are uploaded. His efforts have been Herculean, and our association would not exist if he'd not committed so much to it.

I have agreed to step in as Chair for one year only, working alongside a wonderful Executive Committee. We all understand that we are seeking to further re-energise our association and we invite **all members to be more actively involved**. In 2024 there will be a new Chair and new members of the NEC. If you think you could commit to greater involvement, please get in touch. Being a part of the NEC feeds your understanding of drama and education more widely and it gives you the chance to help shape the future of our association.

Membership of NATD should mean that you commit to making sure that we support other drama educators via a formal democratic association. There are many forums, podcasts and individuals online who offer support to drama teachers for nothing. What makes NATD different is that it has paying members, a constitution and is run democratically by its members. In a bid to make the association more relevant and to attract greater membership, the NEC is currently working on key priorities that we would ask members to really get behind. These include:

1. A series of set text workshops to support those teaching drama / theatre at GCSE and A level.
2. A KS3 workshop that is available to specialists and non-specialists alike.
3. Providing an exceptional Journal that supports the promotion of educational drama theory and practice.
4. Actively seeking to collaborate with National Drama to build bridges and alliances on behalf of drama teachers.

5. Representing Drama teachers on the Drama and Theatre Education Alliance group lobbying for greater arts provision in schools.
6. Supporting members who want to attend the Heathcote Now conference in Aberdeen in October 2023.

What else should we be doing and how else can we support classroom drama teachers and those working in theatre education? Please contact the NEC if you have ideas, want to be more involved or look at our website natd.co.uk to find out what is going on and what how you might be able to offer greater support.

On the Beach

by David Davis

I have decided to introduce the book launch by focusing on the central content of the Dublin Conference. We were all focusing our talks and then our writing on how we saw drama in education as being a crucial dimension of the education of young people all over the world. What I was arguing for was the use of drama to find ways to help those young people recognise the social in their personal development. And that this was a political question. In Gavin Bolton's words from way back in 1976:

> In teaching drama in schools my long-term aims are:
>
> 1. To help the student understand himself and the world he lives in.
> 2. To help the student know how and when (and when not) to adapt to the world he lives in.
> 3. To help the student gain understanding of and satisfaction from the medium of drama.

Really all I have done is build on that in my own way ever since I went on his Postgraduate Diploma course in 1969. (Apologies for the gendered language used then). But it was a revelation to understand that both Gavin Bolton and Dorothy Heathcote were starting from the position that we were first and foremost social beings. In particular, I was drawn to Bolton's 'When (and when not to) adapt to the world [the student] lives in'. When not to adapt demands a huge exploration of the social influences shaping us. And I am still asking that question 'Who am I? Who can tell me who I am?'

I want to start with little bit of reminiscing. When I was growing up in the 1950s, going to the movies was a real evening out. There would be the news, then a cartoon followed by a B movie for about an hour. Then would come the interval and we would line up in front of the usherette who would be holding a tray of ice creams in front of her. Then would come the main A movie. So, you can see it was a full evening out. But it meant I watched the news. We had no TV in those days. And on so many news programmes

would be frightening films of atom bomb tests and then hydrogen bomb tests.

Pictures of houses flattened, ships sunk, trees just disappearing and that huge mushroom cloud billowing above with old warships and submarines nearby, to test what would happen to them and dwarfed by the huge mushroom cloud. It was the sort of experience that radicalised many of our generation. We either joined CND (the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) and went on huge marches or joined the young socialists, or ignored it all.

Published in 1957 the book that radicalised many of us was '*On the Beach'* by Neville Shute. I read it in the early 1960s You have probably read it. It is set in southern Australia, in Melbourne. There has been a short but totally destructive nuclear war in the Northern Hemisphere. The radiation from these explosions is moving south extremely slowly but inexorably. It is wiping out every human and animal as it spreads. It leaves behind a world of towns and cities empty of any life form. It is estimated that it will take five months to reach southern Australia. From Melbourne they can track the lights going out all over the Northern Hemisphere, last messages sent – then silence.

The novel details the different ways people deal with living with approaching extinction. One young woman is drinking herself into oblivion but falls in love with an American nuclear submarine captain and starts to pull herself together. He has been ordered to take his submarine to the South to keep it safe just in case the catastrophe doesn't reach there. He is attracted to her but stays faithful to the memory of his wife and two children he knows are already dead. He can't stop himself buying them Xmas presents. Some people are panic stricken - such as the young mother who is the wife of a naval lieutenant seconded to the submarine. She won't face up to what is going to happen. She plants a vegetable garden and trees that will take years to grow even though her husband knows they won't live to pick the crop or see the trees grow taller. She knows it as well but is in complete denial. One of the scientists attached to the submarine spends his time doing up an old Ferrari and racing it with the last fuel he has stored and organises a car race in which several of them are killed. It is the better way to go. There is electricity but no more fuel available to the general public. Getting up, going to work, coming home, meeting friends to share food and drink – all just carries on. There is plenty of drinking. Elderly members of a gentlemen's club drink up the wine in the club's cellar, debate over whether to bring the fishing season forward so they can do a last fish. And they fret about whether agriculturally destructive rabbits will survive human beings. Life just goes on until the first symptoms appear. People generally shut it out of their minds. The government has issued everyone with suicide pills to take at the last minute. The final moments they have learned are dreadful, involving an agonising painful death.

The American submarine captain has orders when he left that if there is no way to escape the radiation, at the last hour, he has to take his submarine out to deep waters and scuttle it with all those on board taking their suicide pills. The novel ends with the young woman

who has fallen in love with him standing on the beach watching until the submarine is out of sight and then she takes her suicide pill.

What is extraordinary but not extraordinary is the way the social order is so strongly embedded in people that they carry on more or less as before – going to work, having a social life, working in hospitals and care homes, milking cows, growing vegetables. And the captain of the submarine carrying out the order to scuttle the submarine. Why is not asked - at least not by him. It is an idiotic thing to do but he has his orders.
It is poor science as little was really known about the result of a nuclear war outside of government science circles. It is also unrealistic as there is no indication of resistance to this fate or the looting and the rioting which surely would have taken place. It quotes from T. S. Eliot's poem *The Hollow Men*:

> In this last of meeting places
> We grope together
> And avoid speech
> Gathered on this beach of the tumid river.

And the first edition also quoted the lines from the end of the poem:

> This is the way the world ends
> Not with a bang but a whimper.

This, of course, is not for me. Quoting Eliot smacks of nihilism. But I do see the book as a powerful metaphor for now. *We* are on the beach. All our young people are on the beach as are those teachers we work with. The human species is faced with annihilation through a human made climate crisis. But what I am calling for in this publication, as are the other contributors, are not suicide pills but a way to use drama as a form of resistance. Not in itself as direct political action but to work alongside political activism in the way that the best of drama has always worked.

The first real democracy in Ancient Greece demanded a theatre that could involve the people in a critical examination of their social living, their values, their morality, their goals. It developed for the first time the human ability for the 'average' person to become critically reflective. This was new to the human species I would argue. Before this time the heavily top-down social structures such as had existed in Egypt and Mesopotamia provided no room for that more general critical voice and mode of thinking to develop. There was no general critical voice able to develop and no theatre to play back to those people the intricate moral dilemmas they faced.

Humans can be driven by unrecognised desires. Neoliberalism has taken over our mindsets, at least in the Western world. It has implanted in us that the drive to make money is normal. That desire can never be fulfilled. Under capitalism there will be no satisfaction, no matter how much wealth you steal through exploiting others. The more the billionaire counts his imaginary money the more he or she is dissatisfied and only

wants more. There is no satisfaction. And the rest of us are supposed to chase that dream. In the same vein capitalism is a sort of giant ponzi scheme. It is taking us nowhere. It is now not just 'Who am I?' but 'Where are we?'

One answer is '*on the beach'*. That is where capitalism's drive has brought us. I believe that what unites the authors of this publication is the need to search for the forms of drama that most usefully do the job of enabling us to reflect on where we are; to examine how we are owned by the social order we live in. It occupies our unconscious and our conscious selves. The social order is embedded in us from birth. We need for it not to own us. This is not radical thinking. It is only the role that drama was invented to play. Antigone challenged the social order and paid for it with her life. Cordelia challenges the social order and also pays with her life. We live at the present time in an insane asylum. The role of those in charge is to lock us in, exploit us to make vast fortunes that are going nowhere, until it is too late to escape. My dear friend Bill Roper put it so well in his final paper, printed in this volume, written of course during the pandemic lockdown:

> The covid-19 pandemic may be a pause and an opportunity to change the advance of the neoliberal programme but the trajectory still seems to be on course for an oligarchy to suck further capital and wealth out of an increasingly impoverished majority and destroy the planet; so the need for change remains, if possible, even more urgent.

You can see that I have been greatly influenced by my late friend and colleague, Bill Roper's, enormously important critique of my keynote at the Dublin Conference. He wrote it when he knew he had a terminal illness. It was such a great gift to leave. He took apart very gently my mistaken claim that drama enables young people to recognise where and who they are and enables them to take charge of who they want to be. This would be an existentialist position. I am not an existentialist. It is not possible to be totally free in our social order. As Bill Roper puts it 'We are determined *and* free' in a dialectical relationship (my emphasis).

The social order is inside us before we are born. Our parents might decide who we will be called; have dreams for who we might become. We have a brief entry into that world where we may be unconscious of those forces. Edward Bond calls this a period of radical innocence. But in a short while we self-consciously enter that world and are shaped by all the forces we are growing into and influenced by: parental attitudes and values; social customs such as religious celebrations and beliefs; nationalism; schooling; social media and so on all around us and in us. As Lacan argues, that social order, the symbolic order, is in us from our unconscious to our conscious decision making. We are never free from it: never totally our own person.

How then does this tally with the role of drama I have just outlined? I would argue that our responsibility is to work towards being socially aware of those influences; to work

towards shaping for ourselves a human value system whatever that might be. And drama has been invented to play a key role in that process. It is not a question of us working with young people and enabling them to suddenly recognise and decide who they want to be. It is a process of enabling greater and greater searching of our social being and making steps to greater clarity. This has been the pursuit of all the most significant western playwrights from Euripides to Ibsen to Brecht to Bond.

I am at present working with a group of colleagues, Chris Cooper based in the UK, Adam Bethlenfalvy based in Hungary, Kostas Amoiropoulos at present in Norway and Cao Xi in China. We are running monthly seminars online to develop the theory and practice of a drama in education that can meet the demands of our time. We have taken a very simple situation of two people sitting somewhere with a bag between them. Each of us has imagined working with a different age group on that pair's situation. Each of us in the group, working independently, came up with the following situations very briefly described here:

The first one for 7-9 year olds.
A father and daughter in Shanghai airport trying to leave for the countryside during the Covid crisis. They need to get out of the city as they face a total lockdown and travel ban. The daughter is being a child, wanting to ride on the suitcase and father is trying to get her to act like an adult.

The second one for 9-11 year olds.
A child in a forest near the frontier of their country from the time of fairy tales. The king has ordered all babies of the minority the girl belongs to, to be brought to the city. The bag the young girl is carrying holds her baby sister and her uncle is waiting over the border to take the baby. She meets a young boy soldier on patrol.

The third one for 12-14 year olds.
A student with a belt bag with her phone in it and the teacher trying to get her to hand over her phone in the school playground.

The fourth one for 14-16 year olds.
Two middle aged men in 1968 after the crushing of the Prague Spring and the bag is full of banned books which one of the men is trying to persuade his friend to hide for him.

And lastly for 17-18 year olds.
A married couple sitting in a park. They have spent the morning buying baby clothes. These are in the bag. The young man decides to take this opportunity to check out their situation. He is changing his mind about having a baby.

These are mere sketches. The full task and the responses to the task can be found on the padlet with the recordings of this and other sessions:

https://padlet.com/bfalvy/site-b-workspace-dgyvr4wp21wq7g68

My intention here is merely to indicate that here we have very basic drama situations but all of them are designed to find the social order working both in that situation and in the participants. All the above can capture the interest and motivation of the age group they are prepared for. And through using all the knowledge we have of the art form they can explore the world in themselves and their relationship to it. As Bond would say they go 'from the kitchen table to the edge of the universe'. This seems to be meeting some sort of need amongst drama teachers. We are having 70 plus participants from some twelve countries spread across four continents tuning in. This is highly political work: political with a small p.

And as before, I make no apology for being political. Anyone who does not understand that everything is political today is walking blindly towards the cliff edge. They are not just waiting on the beach they are walking towards the edge.

The present social orders across the world are tending to move steadily to the right – to force more and more profit out of more and more working people; all at the expense of human health and wellbeing. We see this in the UK, in the USA, Russia, China, India and around the world. They vie to re-capture lost 'empires' and gain new ones. On the other hand everywhere there are different forms of resistance: the refusal of Ukranian people to submit to the takeover of their land: strikes in the UK over pay and conditions in the NHS, strikers on the railways, in airports, among teachers; the protest movement in Hong Kong against the China mainland takeover; the French yellow vest movement against the raising of the pension age; 250,000,000 taking part in 24 hours strike in India against the deregulation of the agricultural sector; in Iran mass protests by women joined by men in support of women's rights; in Chile mass protests against subway fare rises; and protests of more than a million people at a time in Colombia and Bolivia, and in Algeria, Lebanon and South Korea; in Palestine and even in Israel itself; 114 killed while protesting in Myanmar. I could go on and on – Black Lives Matter protests, women's rights movements against banning abortions, climate activists and so on and on. So many people are not passively standing on the beach. And I would like to say our publication here and the small group I am working with are part of that resistance.

I particularly tune in to Ece Temelkuran, travelling the world and arguing for a new way of humans coming together, for community and action groups linking up for community action on a large scale. As her book title states *Together: A manifesto against the heartless world*.

I have said elsewhere there is no point looking in Pandora's box for hope: Pandora's box is empty. We need to fill it with community action; common humanity; the fight for human values; the courage to fight for a human future. And we as creative artist/educators have a very important role to play. I salute all of you from the different

countries represented here and in this volume as teachers determined to use drama to open the eyes of young people to the reality of the world they are growing into.

And all the time looming over us, just like the radiation cloud in *On the Beach*, is the climate crisis. Scientists have delivered the 'final warning' on the coming climate catastrophe. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (the IPCC) recently set out its sixth comprehensive review of the climate crisis. It took hundreds of scientists eight years to compile and runs to thousands of pages. It boils down to one last message: act now, or it will be too late.

Guterres addressing the UN Security Council said,

> Low lying communities and entire countries could disappear forever. We would witness a mass exodus of entire populations on a biblical scale. And we would see ever fiercer competition for fresh water, land and other resources.

We are heading for 2.4 or 2.7 degrees of global heating. That would be an utter disaster for human life on earth.

Against this backdrop we see that the Biden administration has just approved an $8 billion dollar drilling project on Alaska's north slope. By 2030 it is projected to produce twice as many carbon emissions as all renewable energy projects combined. And a new oil field opening up in the UK. It is insanity. I could go on and on – UK plutocrats are 5th in the world for mega wealth but our poor have 20% less disposable income than the poor of Slovenia.

And just one last example from the UK of the heartless world we live in. This is the way we look after young people with special needs.

A report just published a week or so ago detailed the abuse in residential centres run by the Hesley Group, a company, owned by Antin Infrastructure: a private equity company, set up purely to make money. About 82% of the children involved were autistic, 76% had a learning difficulty and two thirds of them were more than 50 miles from home. The centres had been closed by government inspectors in 2021 but the details have only just come out. It detailed 'direct physical abuse' and staff had 'seriously breached sexual boundaries'. Then more detail was leaked about the horrors that lay behind such words. Vinegar had been poured onto open cuts; one child locked outside naked in freezing temperatures; others punched and kicked in the stomach, made to sit in cold baths and force-fed chilli flakes. Black girls had their heads shaved to save having to comb their hair. This company still runs educational and supported living services for people with autism and learning needs. Everything in the UK is broken unless you pay privately. We are back in Victorian England. As Thatcher said nearly 50 years ago, 'There is no such thing as society, only individuals'. In that 50 years we have seen the steady break-up of any sort of social caring and any sense of human togetherness coming from those who

lead the country. Resistance has been up to volunteers to band together for mutual support. Now we see the outcome of such words.

But just to cheer you up a bit, the pope does not need a wheelchair or a stick anymore.

That has all been a rumour. We see him striding out in mid-winter in his puffer jacket looking healthy and strong.

And of course, enter AI one of the next dangers we face. The photo here is already old technology. AGI systems of Artificial General Intelligence are being developed with the ability to learn autonomously, generating new knowledge as it goes, reaching heights unimaginable to humanity. Thousands of those who understand the dangers posed have signed a letter pointing to the 'possible loss of control of our civilisation'. The head of Google AI has just resigned, fearful of what they are creating. One professor of computer science at the University of California has given an example of a potential disaster produced by such AI. He evoked the possibility of the UN asking an AI system to devise

a means to de-acidify the oceans with the instruction that it be non-toxic, not harming fish. But the result used up a quarter of the oxygen in the planet subjecting humanity to a slow and painful death.

This is only a glimpse of our era: the Anthropocene era. Maybe the last era for humans to exist in any form we could recognise from our standpoint now. Here, for us, the role of imagination in drama is central – to imagine the real.

The Anthropocene is an update on the already agreed period we are living through – the Holocene, the sixth mass extermination of species in world history. This time, not caused by natural disasters or changes in the shifting shape and atmosphere of our planet, but human made. The difference this time is that as well as destroying the environment which enables nature to flourish, we are destroying the very conditions for human life to flourish; through human made global heating. That is where we are. We are on that beach. And we have a choice. We can stand on the beach with suicide pills to hand or work for a human future immediately here through our work with the art form of drama in education. I know my choice.

PHOTOGRAPH: ZHE JUGETTY IMAGES

Soaked in sunflowers Art lovers immerse themselves in the Meet Van Gogh exhibition in Shanghai, China, which aims to take visitors on a journey through the Dutch artist's life.

Sub-titled 'On the Beach'

Process Drama in the Lowlands: My journey of exploration and discovery

by Bob Selderslaghs

Abstract
Process drama is relatively uncharted territory in the Low Countries. In this article, Bob Selderslaghs, PhD in the arts, outlines a context of the use of drama in education and education in drama in Belgium and the Netherlands, and zooms in on the research he is conducting on the subject: from the artistic value of Mantle of the Expert and extending the approach to arts educational settings, to professionalising teaching artists through process drama. He advocates the implementation of process drama in teacher and drama training.

Keywords
Process drama; Mantle of the Expert; drama in education; education in drama; arts education; teacher training.

Point of departure

Let me start with a bold statement straight away: when I dropped the name Dorothy Heathcote among my Flemish colleagues in drama and education a few years ago, 99% had never heard of her. Let alone that the names Brian Way, Gavin Bolton or Cecily O'Neill rang a bell. The same goes for the term 'process drama'. Most (drama) teachers in Belgium and the Netherlands will probably think of courtroom drama rather than of a non-scripted, co-creative approach to drama, teaching and learning. Looking at the Dutch literature on the subject, I find brief mentions of Mantle of the Expert or Drama in Education here and there, but the actual practice has never really caught on in the Low Countries.[1] At best, a few 'adventurers' engaged with it in their own teaching practice, but the work never found wide access in the Dutch-speaking world.

There are several reasons for that. First, of course, the Dutch language area is small. Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, has about 6.5 million inhabitants. The Netherlands is home to 17.5 million people.[2] So together they account for about a third of the population of the UK or less than 1% of the countries worldwide with English as the official language. Moreover, when you take into account that the number of drama practitioners in Flanders and the Netherlands is a fraction of that percentage, you immediately understand why little was invested in translations of key studies, new

[1] Although Luxembourg is also officially included in the Low Countries or the Lowlands, in this article I limit myself to the Netherlands and the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium when using the terms.
[2] The republic of Suriname in South America is not part of the low countries, but also has Dutch as its official language and a population of about 0.5 million.

publications and research in the field. In the past, English publications rarely found their way into the practice-oriented (art) education community in Flanders and the Netherlands. Only with the process of academization of higher education at the beginning of this century (known as The Bologna Process) did this change to some extent.[3] But despite a more international perspective and a growing interest in research, we still have to agree with Australian pedagogue and Professor Anne Bamford when she states, "Arts education is a relatively neglected area for scholarly investigation" (2006: 24). In addition, in their publication on research into art and cultural education in Flanders, Vermeersch and Siongers state that research addressing the methodical/didactic aspects of arts and cultural education remains scarce, especially when it comes to arts-based research (2020).

Let this be precisely the focus of my research practice. In this article, I want to elaborate on the artistic research I have been conducting since 2017 at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp (AP University College of Applied Sciences) and partly at the University of Antwerp, both in Belgium. In 2022, I was the first ever in the Low Countries to obtain a PhD in the arts with a focus on drama in education & education in drama (Selderslaghs, 2022a). When I started my preliminary research, it felt like pioneering work. Nationally there was little to hold on to, fortunately internationally much more so. I immersed myself in the English-language literature on the subject, conducted field research in several schools in the UK[4], participated in training weekends and global conferences, interviewed children, teachers, headteachers, drama practitioners and academics, and developed my own practice in Flanders. I introduced Mantle of the Expert in a number of Flemish schools, translated Tim Taylor's *A Beginner's Guide to Mantle of the Expert* into Dutch and added a chapter on my research into the artistic value of the approach (Selderslaghs & Taylor, 2018). I organised international Summer Schools, set up a Dutch-language website[5] and travelled around the country giving lectures and workshops.

It soon dawned on me that it was not only the small language area that was a cause of this 'blind spot' in our drama practice, but also our vision of both theatre and education. Flemish theatre is internationally recognized for its artistic quality and experimental diversity, but at the same time has a strong text-oriented tradition. This is reflected, for

[3] The Bologna Process seeks to bring more coherence to higher education systems across Europe. It established the European Higher Education Area to facilitate student and staff mobility, to make higher education more inclusive and accessible, and to make higher education in Europe more attractive and competitive worldwide: https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/inclusive-and-connected-higher-education/bologna-process (Accessed: 6 July 2023).

[4] In 2017 I visited Bealings Primary School in Woodbridge, Recreation Road Infant School in Norwich and Woodrow First School & Nursery in Redditch.

[5] https://www.mantleoftheexpert.be/

example, in how several of our Schools of Arts Master's in Drama programmes profile themselves on their websites: from “you perform in classical, modern and contemporary theatre repertoire” and “you perform on stage with self-written or existing texts”, to “text is the cornerstone of our profile and the engine of our practice”.[6] Despite the innovative character of the performing arts in Flanders, we cannot deny that canonical texts and pieces and intensive text-study still often form the starting point for many theatre companies (Kunstenpunt, 2023). Improvisation in Flanders is quickly linked to Theatresports[7] and the legacy of Keith Johnstone (1979). This influence is also noticeable within arts education: theatre is mainly approached through text, and drama through isolated exercises, short improvisations and theatre games, as developed by Viola Spolin (1986). Few drama practitioners are familiar with the holistic approach of process drama. Perhaps this also has to do with the fact that drama was never firmly embedded in the school curriculum in Flanders. At best, attention to drama in primary education is paid within the learning area 'artistic education', but it is often supplanted by the disciplines of music and fine arts. This hierarchy in art subjects is also evident in the Netherlands. “Drama unjustly occupies a subordinate position within education”, argue Bosch and Dieleman (2018). The same applies to drama in primary teacher training. If you look at the curricula of the Flemish and Dutch Bachelors of Education, you will notice that the practical experience prospective teachers get in drama is minimal, if not absent. And the same goes for several other arts disciplines. It is not without reason that the arts as a learning area have for many years scored poorly in audits by the Flemish Inspectorate of Education. In its latest annual report, the inspectorate confirms these persistent deficiencies and continuing development opportunities and states: "It is a pity, since there is scientific evidence that children's participation in artistic activities can have a positive impact on their academic performance and well-being" (Onderwijsinspectie, 2023: 44).

Drama is mostly pushed out of compulsory education in Flanders and the Netherlands and practiced within the arts educational and recreational sector. In Flanders, however, it also takes on a formal character within Part-time Education in the Arts, a form of 'supplementary' education aimed at children, young people and adults who voluntarily enroll in one of the 168 academies across the Flemish region. These academies offer classes in fine arts, dance, music and/or drama in leisure time. The academy teachers are mostly trained as artists in a School of Arts and obtain(ed) a teaching certificate after their bachelor or master's degree in the arts (since 2019 through an Educational Master's degree in Music and Performing Arts). Part-time Education in the Arts is a unique form

[6] Illustrations of how two of the four Schools of Arts with a Master's degree in Drama in Flanders describe their education on their websites: https://www.ap-arts.be/ and www.luca-drama.be/blog/ (Accessed: 6 July 2023).

[7] Theatresports is a form of improvisational theatre, which uses the format of a competition for dramatic effect. Opposing teams can perform scenes based on audience suggestions, with ratings by the audience or by a panel of judges. Developed in the late 1970s by director Keith Johnstone in Calgary, Alberta (Canada).

of education in Europe funded by the Flemish government. This authority provides a comprehensive structure of learning trajectories and prescribes learning objectives that lead to qualifications for the recreational arts sector. In common practice, this form of education often has a product-oriented character with a strong focus on craft and performance skills (Onderwijsinspectie, 2019: 24). The aim is mostly experiencing art with a view to 'performing' or ‘presenting’. Or in other words: art is the objective of the teaching and learning that takes place in the academies; it is rarely used as a medium.

This is roughly the framework from which I departed when I first encountered process drama through Mantle of the Expert in 2015-2016.

The artistic value of Mantle of the Expert in primary education in Flanders

I got to know Mantle of the Expert via YouTube. During an internet search for theatre pedagogues and drama methodologies, I came across *Blackley and Broadene - The Shoe Factory* (Tayor, 2009). I was immediately struck by Dorothy Heathcote's approach and its effect on the children while watching this BBC North series from the early 1980s. This was reinforced when I subsequently also watched *Three Looms Waiting* (Taylor, 2008). In this 1971 BBC documentary the *imagining* - not the *acting out* - by the children struck me, and the authenticity it produced. "Pick up your guns and get used to the feel. It matters. It's all there is between you and the Germans with their guns, isn't it, really?": what happened next, I had never witnessed before.

I searched further on the internet for the name Dorothy Heathcote and came across the Mantle of the Expert website.[8] What is now a beautiful and well-organized platform with a contemporary look, rich in information, was then a tangled web. Or to paraphrase webmaster Tim Taylor: ‘an old garden shed so full you couldn't get the door open’. But in that garden shed, I did find in a corner the announcement of a training weekend at Ringsfield Hall (Beccles, Suffolk), masterfully led by Luke Abbott. I decided to sign up, and that’s when the ball really started rolling for me. The more I learned about Mantle of the Expert – through training courses, literature, videos, talks and practical experience – the more convinced I became of its value and the more surprised I became at the fact that no one talked about the artistic development of students that it entails. What was indisputable to me – that through Mantle of the Expert, children are able to interpret fictional situations from an authentic experience in a most believable way – seemed to its users to be a mere afterthought: a nice side effect. For them, curriculum learning was central, and drama was an excellent vehicle to that end that also made the learning exciting, interesting and meaningful. It led me to apply for (and receive) a research grant at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp in 2017 to investigate the artistic added value of Dorothy Heathcote's approach in primary education in Flanders. I conducted a case study in a classroom of an Antwerp primary school (Key Stage 2) in the form of Mantle of the Expert workshops. I worked with a diverse group of 24 eight-year-old boys and girls, at

[8] https://www.mantleoftheexpert.com/

three different stages during the 2017-2018 school year. I assembled an artistic jury of six drama experts who observed the workshops and fielded judgements using a variety of observation tools: these evolved from keeping track of specific observed behaviours, to describing them, and finally to interpreting them during individual in-depth interviews. In this systematic way, next to 'showing individual drive', I found that children indirectly developed artistically through Mantle of the Expert mainly in the competences of 'researching', 'collaborating' and 'creating and innovating', and less so in 'using professional expertise/artisanship' and 'performing'.[9] A remarkable result, because in art education with young children, for example in Part-time Education in the Arts, it is often mainly the latter two competences that are addressed (as I mentioned before) and much less the competences that scored high in this case study. This strengthened my suspicion that Mantle of the Expert's process-oriented approach could be a valuable method not only within compulsory education, but also in arts educational settings, where drama is used not (only) as a learning medium but (also) as a learning objective. Indeed, by adding artistic artisanship and performance skills, Mantle of the Expert could be applied to take both the artistic process and product in arts education to a higher level. This hypothesis gave rise to the follow-up research that became my PhD.

MoE 2.0: from dramatic inquiry towards an artistic result in arts education

Little research has been done on how to create a healthy balance between process and product in arts education. Yet researchers, artists, teachers, teaching artists[10], teacher trainers, students and audiences alike recognise the need for such a balance: without a high-quality process, it is impossible to achieve a high-quality product. During my *MoE 2.0* doctoral research, I explored how Mantle of the Expert, as a form of process drama, could be extended into a methodology in arts education for creating non-scripted theatre performances with young audiences, and thus create a harmony between the artistic process and product. I carried out three single case studies between 2018 and 2022 at DE SINGEL international arts center in Antwerp[11] with groups of children aged between six and twelve. I conducted desk research, kept a journal recording participant observations during field research, held semi-structured interviews and a survey with the participants, analyzed video footage and presented four non-scripted drama performances, developed

[9] Commissioned by the Flemish government, in 2012 experts from the arts education and arts sector created a study profile consisting of six core competences, which were later enshrined by decree as the learning objectives of Part-Time Education in the Arts. It includes researching, showing individual drive, performing, creating and (the urge to) innovate, using professional expertise/craftery and collaborating.

[10] 'Teaching artist' is the term used within the educational programmes of the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp. The term can be defined as follows: A teaching artist (artist educator) is a practicing professional artist with the complementary skills and sensibilities of an educator, who engages people in learning experiences in, through and about the arts.

[11] https://desingel.be/en

through co-creation (three live theatre performances and one video performance during covid).[12]
The research showed that *MoE 2.0* developed into a methodology that not only succeeded in creating a sensible balance between an artistic process and product with young target groups, but also offered tools to achieve a balance between the various artistic (core) competences the government prescribes for Part-Time Education in the Arts (Selderslaghs, 2022a). In this way *MoE 2.0* can be of significance for formal art education as well as other art educational settings.

The *MoE 2.0* methodology proceeds from Mantle of the Expert as an overarching method and connects to it a set of practices that relate to the collective role element and to the non-scripted approach to drama and theatre, to conditions for teaching artists to achieve real participation with young target groups, to the toolbox that is expanded in function of an artistic goal, to a model that highlights the four worlds of process and product both in and out of fiction, and to the holistic approach to artistic competences (Selderslaghs, 2020abc, 2022b).

Let me briefly explain the didactic concept of 'the 4 worlds of MoE 2.0' that I have developed (see Figure 1). It builds on the two worlds for the students to explore and study the curriculum Tim Taylor presents in *A Beginner's Guide to Mantle of the Expert* (2016: 25). The four worlds concern the real and imaginary world of the process (1 and 2) and the real and imaginary world of the artistic product (3 and 4):

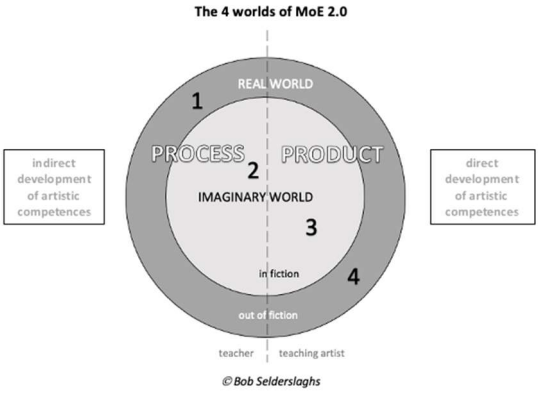

Figure 1

1. **The real world of the process** = *out of the fiction*/process
Participants explore and learn about various elements that occur in the imaginary context or acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to continue the story in the fictional

[12] More info on https://www.mantleoftheexpert.be/menu/menu-en.html

world. For example: What does an archaeologist do? What powers and responsibilities does he or she have? What funeral rites did Ancient Egypt have? How should we communicate with the authorities? How to write a report? How to make a schedule? And so on.

2. **The imaginary world of the process** = *in the fiction*/process
Participants are cast as a team of experts carrying out a commission for a fictional client. Together, they develop a narrative in the imaginary world. In it, they face unfamiliar situations that present them with new challenges. For example: the team of archaeologists discovers a sarcophagus with unusual inscriptions.

3. **The imaginary world of the product** = *in the fiction*/product
The participants represent a team of experts in the narrative they developed together and present it in front of an audience. In doing so, they monitor their performance skills during the artistic performance (self-spectatorship). For example: the performers/archaeologists discover the sarcophagus and adapt their performance to the available space (the scene) and to the transmission to the audience.

4. **The real world of the product** = *out of the fiction*/product
Participants develop artistic competences that enable them to communicate the narrative to an audience. For example: the performers practice intelligibility, accuracy, finesse, spatial awareness. And so on.

The didactic concept of 'the 4 worlds of MoE 2.0' gives drama teachers and teaching artists the opportunity to work not only *indirectly* but also *directly* on artistic competences. After all, for an artistic product, there are a number of skills it is best to work on directly with (young) performers. Otherwise, you risk them perhaps being able to empathize with a dramatic situation, but not being able to communicate it clearly to an audience. Nor is the reverse desirable: performers who devote a lot of attention to their acting, voice and speech technique, who take care of their presentation and are aware of the audience, but who fail to act, speak or perform spontaneously, in a personal and truthful way. In my experience, you will more easily slip into the latter situation if, as a teacher, you decide in advance which competences students need to work on. Only when they make a connection from a dramatic context with an artistic competence to be acquired will they be able to master it effectively. Otherwise, the competences they are taught tend to distract them from the essence and risk detaching them from the drama (Selderslaghs, 2022b).

Overall, this qualitative research has demonstrated that education in drama should pay more attention to (the merits of) process drama, not only in terms of acting artistically competently, but also with a view to a high-quality artistic product. And that brings me back to the beginning of my argument and the observation that process drama in the Low Countries is still often a journey of 'uncovering' and 'discovery', which leads me to my

current postdoctoral project.

Professionalising the (teaching) artist through process drama performances
In this two-year research project (2022-2024), I investigate how teaching artists can develop as artists and as teachers by participating in process drama performances. To do so, I create different communities of practice to arrive at knowledge circulation and creation through interaction and research. The first results of this project are promising. A group of eight teaching artists between 26 and 59 years old participated in a first experiment, consisting of sixteen process drama workshops of two-and-a-half hours (or 40 hours in total), two surveys, a semi-structured interview and a performance without an external audience. The work sessions and performance took a 21-week period between October 2022 and March 2023. The surveys were conducted before and after, the interview in the second half of the working period. I kept an audio log of participant observations throughout the experiment.

From the start, it was clear that the participants had little experience with the concept of process drama, the drama techniques that are part of it and its impact on acting, creating and teaching. On the one hand, they indicated this in the initial survey; on the other, they expressed this during the workshops: "A very different approach from what we are used to" (...) "a new way of working". But they also talked about "new inspiring angles" during the interview. In the closing survey, they all agree that they were introduced to a new way of acting and teaching. They indicate that they learnt – what for them were – new drama techniques, such as forum theatre, adult-in-role, simultaneous improvisation, forms of representation (iconic, motoric, symbolic), witness statements, developing artefacts, designing plans, collective role and creating dream sequences.

About the pedagogical-didactic development they detected in themselves, they write:

> The position you adopt when doing process drama is quite different from the usual teacher position. Interacting with students becomes different as a result (...) So I learnt new forms/ and a different variety of how to encourage someone to create something imaginatively. (...) I was not yet familiar with some drama techniques. (Survey after)

In terms of artistic development, it is striking that mainly the youngest participants detect an evolution in themselves as performers. This translates into increased confidence, freedom in performing, personal involvement and the ability to ‘let go’. The latter is reflected in most participants: less performance anxiety makes them feel less hindered by their self-spectator or self-director: this offers "peace", "space", "confidence", "freedom" as a performer (interviews). The more experienced participants especially detect an evolution as a creator and researcher in themselves: "[which] means you don't get stranded or stuck in a merely performative role, but where you actually are a creating artist as well" (logbook, 16-12-2022).

Their development as teachers is clearer to the participants than their development as artists. Apart from the new drama techniques, ideas and tools, what emerges above all is confidence in process-oriented work and a changed teacher position. You could say that the participants were introduced to constructivist learning theory from within. The active involvement of students in their learning process and the social process in which reflection is essential are central to this. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, for example, is a pedagogical concept very commonly used within process drama (Davis, 2015). In short, this principle means that as adults we can help children and young people bridge the gap between what they can do themselves at a point in time and what they are capable of, albeit with help. This implies an alignment with the target group's knowledge, skills and attitudes, to challenge them from that 'zone', so that they can take the next step in the creation process with self-confidence (Selderslaghs, 2020b). Nowadays, this translates into various forms of Inquiry-Based and Cooperative Learning, the main features of which are a learner-centred approach, active learning, questioning, problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration and research (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008).

And thus, I reach the preliminary conclusion that process drama can make an important contribution to the artistry and teaching of professional teaching artists, and to the integration between the two. This might be explained by the absence, or dearth, of process drama in the curriculum of current drama and drama teacher training programmes in the Low Countries. In particular, the sense of freedom in performing (without feeling the pressure of an artistic product) and the creative and collaborative aspects of the approach could add value to drama artists and teachers in training. To strengthen the performer, creator and teacher skills of teaching artists, both drama and education courses in drama in Flanders and the Netherlands could therefore pay (more) attention to process drama within their curriculum. After all, process drama undeniably increases confidence in and expands the artistic and pedagogical competences of drama artists and drama teachers.

The journey continues

Process drama continues to inspire me, both from the pioneering work of the leading drama practitioners who founded it, to the developments it went through and can still make. Initiatives like the International Drama Conference Dorothy Heathcote NOW[13] therefore seem to me more relevant than ever, not only to understand the past, but also to shape the future. That way, we continue to create a "vision of the possible" (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995: 170). The part I can and want to contribute to that lies both in drama in education & education in drama in the Lowlands: I will continue my journey there exploring, teaching, disseminating and advocating process drama in teacher training, arts education, compulsory education and beyond. And I can gladly say that my fellow travelers are becoming more numerous, to the extent that my bold statement from the

[13] More info on https://www.mantlenetwork.com/

beginning is well past its prime.

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What's going on?
From narrative fiction to Process Drama

by Brian Woolland

Introduction

This article starts by considering the differences between narrative fiction, theatre and Process Drama. It goes on to explore the thinking that underpins planning for a Process Drama using the stimulus of a historical novel, but which encourages and enables participants to make key decisions and explore the consequences and implications of those decisions.

Background

When my novel, *The Invisible Exchange* [1], was published in July 2022, I was asked why write it as a novel rather than as a play? The simple answer was that there were far too many characters for a play, and I didn't think I could get a large cast play staged. But the question provoked me to reflect on the difference between writing plays and writing a novel, and also whether the material I'd discovered in researching the historical, political and social background to the novel could provide the starting point for a Process Drama with young people. The novel did, after all, have its origins in theatre, and my research for the novel revealed a viciously repressive misogynist culture which resonates all too strongly with many of the cultural influences to which young people are subjected today.

Bear with me while I offer some background information about the source material, and I hope you will see why I found it so intriguing. Contemporary events are often alluded to in plays of the early 17th Century. Aspects of Frances Howard's extraordinary story appear (albeit thinly disguised) in several plays of the period – perhaps most notably those by Ben Jonson, Thomas Middleton and John Webster [2]. Frances Howard was the daughter of Lord Thomas Howard (Earl of Suffolk). In 1604, at the age of fourteen, she was married to Robert Devereux, 3rd Earl of Essex, who was about six months younger than her. The arranged marriage was intended as a political reconciliation between two immensely powerful families. But the marriage was a disaster. Despite his inability (or unwillingness) to consummate the marriage, Essex became intensely jealous of his wife's

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[1] *The Invisible Exchange* (Matador, 2022) is planned as the first of a trilogy. A subsequent volume is from the point of view of Alice, the Huguenot refugee, a significant, but not a major character in the first novel.

[2] There are several references to elements in Frances Howard's trial in Ben Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass*. It's been suggested that Vittoria Corombona in John Webster's *The White Devil* is a thinly disguised version of Frances Howard. *The Changeling* by Middleton and Rowley has references to the scandal that are so overt it's been seen as a theatrical re-imagining of it.

popularity at court, and he insisted she leave London and live at Chartley Manor, his moated manor house in Staffordshire, where Mary Queen of Scots had been held under house arrest immediately prior to her execution. Frances was there for much of the summer and early autumn of 1611.

On 25th September 1613, her marriage was annulled, and thus she became the first Englishwoman to successfully seek her own divorce – but in a deeply misogynist society she paid a terrible price for her fierce intelligence and independent spirit. Two years after marrying her second husband (Viscount Rochester, formerly Robert Carr) she was accused of murdering Sir Thomas Overbury, who had been imprisoned in the Tower of London on a charge of treason. No evidence was produced at her trial which would stand up in a modern law court. The central argument against her was that she was a 'creature of the deed' – meaning that if she had the temerity to transgress from society's norms by initiating her own divorce proceedings, then she must be capable of murder.

Misogyny and marginalisation

The story fascinated me for numerous reasons. Frances's trial revealed so much – not only about misogyny, but also about corruption at the heart of the Stuart court. I was intrigued by the parallels with 'modern' times. Frances was treated as a femme fatale who was branded by her prosecutor as so evil that she wasn't allowed to defend herself at her trial, despite having to suffer a stream of damning but unproven accusations and malicious libels.

Sir Thomas Overbury's death could actually have been caused by poisoning from the mercury administered to him by the king's surgeon, but it resulted in the execution of four 'small fishes'[3] and the imprisonment of Frances and Rochester (by then they had become Earl and Countess of Somerset). Frances pleaded guilty to the charge of murder, though it seems likely that this was a kind of plea-bargaining because by then she had a daughter, and the family was allowed to live together in relative comfort in the Tower. That in itself is very strange, for if they had been genuinely guilty of murder they would almost certainly have been executed. After seven years in the Tower, however, they were pardoned by King James, and released.

All of this intrigued me, but although historians are still puzzled about who and what really killed Sir Thomas Overbury, I wasn't interested in writing a murder mystery. I

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[3] Anne Turner, a close friend of Frances Howard, was one of those executed. She coined the memorable phrase that she had been 'caught in a net for small fishes', strongly implying that bigger fish would walk free. Lucy Jago's novel *A Net for Small Fishes* (Bloomsbury, 2021) tells the Frances Howard story from Anne Turner's point of view.

wanted to explore how corruption at the highest levels of society affects those who are normally marginalised by history: the servants, the fixers, the prostitutes and courtesans, the street traders, the bit-part players. The central characters in *The Invisible Exchange* are Matthew (a fixer and a rogue), Alice (a refugee from Huguenot persecution), Frances Howard, Kate (her personal maid) and Hannah (a 'cunning woman,' treated by some as a witch and a madwoman). Although Frances Howard was a wealthy aristocrat, she was marginalised by the Jacobean 'justice' system and indeed by historians until very recently. I was interested in the way the story exposed the ways that institutionalised misogyny vilified and silenced her [4]. I wrote a draft of the novel in which the story was told predominantly from her point of view but found that didn't enable me to reveal the mechanisms of that misogyny, nor the ways in which the repression of women reveals profound fears of female power and sexuality.

Theatrical tradition, characters' journeys and Process Drama

The character of Matthew Edgworth draws on the tradition of those Jacobean malcontents such as Bosola in *The Duchess of Malfi*, Flamineo in *The White Devil*, De Flores in *The Changeling* and Edmund in *King Lear*. The overweening ambition and ruthless cunning that Matthew inherits from his dramatic ancestors drives the novel's plot, but it also gives him access to the palaces and grand houses of the aristocracy, as well as the murky underworld of Jacobean London – the taverns, the gambling dens, the brothels and the prisons. At the outset of the novel he exploits and objectifies women, but the journey he undertakes confronts him with situations which force him to rethink and change his attitudes. That notion of a character's *journey* is central to certain models of how dramatic fictions work. But crucially it involves the writer (the playwright, screenwriter or novelist) putting characters in situations which force them to reflect on their attitudes and ideology. However much agency you give your characters, you (the writer) have to use the narrative to make what might have once seemed easy choices for the character into difficult choices with significant and often uncomfortable consequences. In a well-constructed novel, character development and narrative structure are closely intertwined. A key difference between this and educational Process Drama is that although the teacher functions like the writer in deciding on the starting point, the participants make their own choices and decisions with appropriate help and guidance from the teacher, but not the kind of guidance that takes agency away from them. That is why it is so important <u>not</u> to plan the narrative development. Much of the learning in Process Drama is found in exploring the consequences and implications of decisions made by the participants themselves, and through guided reflection on those choices.

The starting point for a novel and planning for drama

[4] David Lindley's *The Trials of Frances Howard* (Routledge, 1993), offers a closely argued and rigorously research analysis of this institutionalised misogyny.

While researching the background for the novel that became *The Invisible Exchange,* I came across contemporary pamphlets which referred to persistent rumours that Frances was seen in and around London during the period when her husband had her kept under virtual house arrest at his mouldering manor house in Staffordshire. There is no evidence in the historical records that she was spirited out of Chartley, but for me it provoked 'the big suppose' that gave me the starting point for the novel that became *The Invisible Exchange*. In effect I was asking myself *'What's going on here?'*

But that particular starting point – the disconnect between the rumours and the recorded history – wouldn't work for a drama – not least because it's only resonant and meaningful if you have appropriate prior knowledge of the historical, social and political context. I don't want to slip into the position where I take control of the narrative, placing me, as the teacher, in a position of intimidating dominance which would inhibit the participants.

In *The Drama of History*, recently republished by NATD in *The Journal* [5], John Fines and Ray Verrier suggest that any planning process must start with detailed observation of the class and analysis of its needs: their interests, their strengths and weaknesses. For example, do they co-operate well? Do individuals tolerate and support views which contrast with their own? Do they resist or embrace new challenges?

Observing a group and allowing them to reveal their interests

As I'm not attached to a school or an institution, the nature of my own recent work is usually with groups I've not met before. Simply asking them what their interests are is likely to elicit responses which individuals think others (their peers and/or teachers) might want to hear. I therefore usually start with a fairly open-ended improvisation exercise – always pitched at a level within their comfort levels – which gives the participants opportunities to explore their own interests without being seen to put themselves on the line. It's a way of easing them into the work, but also gives me an opportunity to observe closely and get a sense of what their interests are. An example from working in Winchester Prison with men who had little or no previous experience of any kind of drama. I start by asking for a volunteer to sit in a chair, and then for a second volunteer to stand about a metre away. I ask both volunteers not to 'act' nor show expression. I ask, 'Who are these people?' After the inevitable jokes and evasions, a dramatic situation slowly develops. Someone suggests the seated man is waiting in a doctor's surgery. After further questions, it's agreed that he's waiting for his girlfriend who has had an appointment with the doctor to discuss her pregnancy. The standing man is the doctor who's about to call the seated man through. As this is an all-male environment, I offer to play the girlfriend. There are a few ribald comments, but I take the role seriously, and the men clearly want to as well. Bit by bit we bring the situation

[5] *The Journal*, Volume 28, Issue 1 (Spring 2012) through to Volume 30, issue 1 (Spring 2014).

to life. What is each person thinking? What concerns them? What does each person say? Gradually, line by line we develop the scene until the two volunteers feel confident enough to improvise, using some of the techniques of Forum Theatre (where they can ask the 'audience' for advice) and take the scene a little further.

We repeat the exercise. This time, it's decided that the man standing behind is threatening the man sitting down. I ask where they are? Why is he threatening? What's at stake? And why does he stay sitting down when he's being threatened? Initially they want to develop the situation into their own version of a kind of knockabout gangster movie, in which the threat emerges from a drug debt. But by taking each suggestion seriously and showing that I am willing to work with their ideas, then gently delving a little deeper I get a very strong sense that they want to work on a drama about peer group pressure, and to explore ways of resisting it. In essence, the simple exercise involves presenting the group with material that engages them, then asking, *'What's going on here?'* As they gained experience in drama, they undertook some remarkable, sensitive work about absent fathers. And the culmination of the workshops on peer group pressure was the production of the play, *Stand or Fall*.

The Frances Howard story and planning for drama

We sometimes approach material through drama that the participants already have some knowledge of: working on a novel or a play (for example) that students might be studying elsewhere in the curriculum. At other times we might use drama as a way of introducing the material. In this instance I am assuming that the participants in the drama have no prior knowledge of *The Invisible Exchange*, nor of the historical period in which it is set; and that the participants aren't going to be reading the novel. I'd be using the material to explore issues of misogyny and male power, but in a way that uses the framework of an historical drama to create a critical distance from the misogyny they experience in their own lives through social media and exposure to the hateful diatribes of the likes of Andrew Tate.

As this article is not about teaching a specific group, it's not appropriate to set out a detailed scheme of work, but I will suggest a possible starting point with brief notes about how it might be developed from there. With any group, I'd start by using an exercise such as the one described above, giving the group a chance to get used to me and easing them into the work, and allowing me to get a sense of them and where their specific interests in the material might lie.

A possible starting point

We start by looking at an edited version of the actual indictment of Frances Howard from her trial for murder, presented to the participants in the form of a document made to look as if on parchment. It includes this astonishing statement by the prosecutor, Sir Edward Coke:

You are a whore, a bawd, a sorcerer, a witch… and a murderer … You

are the creature of the deed.
(The implication is that if Frances was capable of divorcing her husband she must be capable of murder).

We examine the document carefully. Participants are encouraged to ask questions. And I ask them questions. Essentially, *What do you think is going on here?*

As they request it, I provide information in written and pictorial form – including images of Westminster Hall, where the trial took place. But I'm careful not to intimidate with facts and information.

Together we set up a physical representation of the court – using actual descriptions (with modernised language where appropriate), which clearly imply it was a highly theatrical occasion at which people paid huge sums to watch. It was effectively a show trial in which Frances was being made an example of.

I offer to take on the role of Sir Edward Coke, the prosecutor. The participants in the drama question Coke. We spend time preparing these questions, so that they can examine the attitudes and assumptions that underpin his accusations.

Historical inaccuracy
When working on historical dramas, I've often been asked by teachers, 'What if they make decisions that are historically inaccurate?' Process Drama allows us to revisit specific moments, see what might happen when we do things differently. The methodology allows us to explore 'what ifs,' thereby questioning the notion that the status quo is inevitable. It actively shows us that the way things are is the product of specific decisions, and that things can be different. This is in itself empowering. Participants have a stake in their own learning, their contributions are seen to affect the drama.

When decisions are made that are anachronistic or take us away from the historical record we go with that, but at a later stage I'll seek opportunities to step back from the drama and ask, 'Would you like to find out what really happened?' This can provoke curiosity, leading to remarkably sophisticated research.

In this spirit, I suggest that the drama described above might now diverge from a re-enactment of the trial of Frances Howard and the attitudes and ideology it embodies. The participants have already had the opportunity to question Coke in a non-confrontational way, but maybe we use what we've learnt from that to set up the court in a way that they think is fairer. I might ask, for example: Who should be given a chance to speak? Who should be present? We might start by allowing Frances to defend herself (which she wasn't allowed to do at the time), and then explore how others might be affected by her trial – for example, her maid, or Frances's close friend Anne Turner, who in 'reality' was

executed for her part in the alleged murder.

And so we proceed – sometimes enacting moments from the trial, sometimes using role play to unpick assumptions of misogyny and sexism, sometimes reconstructing events that led to the trial, sometimes creating the 'evidence' (much of it hearsay and gossip) that Coke insists is damning, and always finding ways to reflect on how this resonates for the participants and how the material relates to their world.

“Bullying is not ok” - A Scheme of Work

by Margaret Branscombe

My Parents

by Stephen Spender

My parents kept me from children who were rough
Who threw words like stones and wore torn clothes
Their thighs showed through rags they ran in the street
And climbed cliffs and stripped by the country streams.

I feared more than tigers their muscles like iron
Their jerking hands and their knees tight on my arms
I feared the salt coarse pointing of those boys
Who copied my lisp behind me on the road.

They were lithe they sprang out behind hedges
Like dogs to bark at my world. They threw mud
While I looked the other way, pretending to smile.
I longed to forgive them but they never smiled.

Introduction

> The ones [students] I meet are not asking for less work, or easier work, they are asking for meaningful work. (1984: 30).

This is one of my favourite Dorothy Heathcote quotes. Pithy, true and full of common sense. My definition of meaningful work would be work that is interesting, relevant and purposeful. Drama not only explores meaningful work but through exploration it can produce work that is interesting, relevant and purposeful. In this article, I describe a series of lessons that explored and produced meaningful work and I hope that the lesson descriptions are useful for Drama teachers in the UK and beyond who may be considering using poetry as a medium for examining the topic of bullying. Bullying is a subject that students find interesting because it’s an ever-present reality in their lives – it is relevant to them - yet it is a messy reality that educators seek to erase.

Background:

Drama does indeed deal with 'mess'[1] and as drama teachers, we examine mess through dramatic frames that spotlight issues and offer up possibilities of change. One of the ways schools are in a mess is related to the number of young people who experience bullying. A 2018 international survey on bullying in schools among OECD countries placed England second in the ranking with an unenviable figure of 29% reported incidents of physical and non-physical bullying in schools (Long, Roberts, Loft; 2020). Unfortunately, the reality of bullying remains a consistent and debilitating reality in the lives of many young people. The forms of bullying may evolve over time but the repetitive, humiliating and controlling actions of bullies towards their victim(s) remain hallmark characteristics. As a social phenomenon that is essentially about seeking control over others, the experience of bullying provides fertile ground for exploration through drama and despite the audible groans in the classroom that can accompany the word 'poetry', I have found 'My Parents' by Stephen Spender to be an accessible Secondary level poetry text for that exploration. Viscerally communicating both the terror and isolation of bullying, the action happens within a three-stanza structure that does not overwhelm and although the tone and context is clearly from another era, the vocabulary is largely comprehensible for Key Stage 3 students.

An introduction to the poem:

The unit of work based around Stephen Spender's autobiographical poem 'My Parents' began with a reading of the poem and an invitation for students to share their thoughts on its content. Despite the poem's title, the 'parents' are only mentioned at the very beginning of the poem, 'My parents kept me from children who were rough'. It is a statement which could be easily overlooked in the reader's rush to get to what the bullies did but knowing it might provide a useful reference point for later drama work, I asked the students what they thought was meant by 'rough' children and why the parents might have wanted to keep their son away from them? I found the students to be very candid and *initially* largely sympathetic to the parents' motives, which was fascinating as I had (wrongly) assumed that students would object to the protective stance of the parents and their classification of some children as 'rough'.

A focus on physicality:

I split the class into three groups and assigned a stanza for each group to dramatise, however they wished. Heathcote describes 'dramatising' as

> …the act of constructing meaning, which may also involve the

[1] Dorothy Heathcote is credited with the idea of drama essentially being about 'man in a mess' and as drama teachers, we examine mess through dramatic frames that spotlight issues and offer up possibilities of change.

interpretations of meaning. (1984: 130).

When the students shared their dramatisations, there was a commonality in expression that was in essence an 'acting out' of each line rather than interpretation. Wanting the students to be more physically experimental in their interpretation of the poem's *meaning* and less dependent on a narrated presentation, I drew attention to the significance of the verbs in the poem. I asked the students to find their own space and react with a gesture or pose as I read aloud selected verbs from the poem. Reflecting on these expressive gestures, the students observed the passivity or 'inwardness' of their movements for verbs associated with the parents and bullied child - 'kept', 'feared', 'looked', 'longed' - compared to the more active and 'outward' motion of verbs that described the bullies - 'threw', 'climbed', 'pointing', 'sprang'. With these clear distinctions in mind, the students were asked to re-group and 'tell' the poem through action and movement alone. This required the students to re-examine the poem and select key words and phrases that encapsulated the *physical representation* of bullying as experienced by the different characters. Interestingly, this dependence on the body alone to 'narrate' the poem encouraged a *closer reading* of the poem by the students and a more visually expressive retelling.

A focus on the characters in the poem:

Having interpreted the poem through movement, it was time to interrogate the characters in the poem and ascertain what we could learn about them and from them that might be relevant to the experience of bullying. Using the convention of 'hot seating', students volunteered to respond in role to questions from the rest of the class. The questions for the bullied child and the parents were initially empathetic in tone but over time, students started to inquire if their behaviour was in some way culpable for the bullying. For example, the parents were asked if their desire to protect their child had made him a target? This line of questioning led to the implication by the students that the parents were also bullies. Initial questions for the bully were along the lines of 'why do you bully?' and 'how do you think it feels to be bullied?' but then became more exploratory in nature. Students queried if the bully had self-esteem issues and/or had experienced being bullied themselves. This deepening of inquiry revealed how the usefulness of hot seating to examine motivation and perspective relies as much upon the questions as the answers provided in role. This became apparent to the students, and they started debating with each other on the quality of the questions or whether a question was fair or not. It was also noticeable how much the students being 'hot seated' enjoyed the opportunity to respond in character and create interesting backstories through the anecdotes they offered to justify their actions. The characters were quite literally being lifted off the page and becoming three dimensional before our eyes.

The students as poets and performers

The hot seating work was followed by a return to the text itself. As a homework

assignment, the students wrote their own stanza for the poem and continued with themes that had been identified so far. (An option with less confident students would be to have them work with a partner to write a stanza.) I compiled these completed stanzas into a narrative that I thought made sense. When I showed it to the students, they disagreed with my arrangement of stanzas and suggested an alternative format as seen below:

They nodded, signalling to me to follow them,
They walked off towards the dark woods.
I was tempted not to follow but I ended up weak.
I feared what would happen, what my parents would think.

I came back home depressed and beaten
And found my parents worrying at the table
They looked at me as if I was alien, questioning the marks
I told them it was ok, that we were just playing rough

My parents told me to get away, but that never happened
They would always follow me like a Velcro dog
I have scars and bruises from the torture I have been through
Being pushed onto the ground, always a struggle to get up afterwards.

They knew otherwise though and looked at the scars
They forbid me from playing with these boys,
Told me they were no good, that these boys are trouble,
And trouble is not me.

They hurt, my scars really do.
Scratches like the paws of strong-muscled tigers.
Torn like the battered clothes they wear.
They shattered my world, but I smiled.
I still smiled.

I don't understand why they make fun of me
When we could have fun together
I don't understand why they hurt me
Because their scars will stay forever

Everywhere I go they are there
Everything I do seems to be wrong
Why can’t they stop?
Why can’t I just live?

But through these adolescent years my trauma was piled

I keep hating myself because of insults made by nothing more than a child
I hear them in my greatest moments of distress
I hate myself for letting these children make me depressed

After my many years of being bullied
I have learnt to strive with my well being
I hope those who start have changed their deed
With something more that they could be seeing

I could tell that the students were proud of their individual efforts to create a collaborative text. The next stage was to create a performance based on the poem that would be shared with the wider school population. Some of the students were not keen but I said it was non-negotiable as performance was part of the drama curriculum. The class was divided into three groups and each group was assigned three stanzas. Each stanza was to be narrated by students and the process of collaborating in groups to dramatise the words for the performance became the focus for several drama sessions. I filmed the students as they devised their stanza scenes and then we watched them together. I asked them what they felt was working and what they thought needed improving and this proved to be an important part of the performance process. Just as we had done with the movements, the narrators were encouraged to experiment with their delivery of the poetry narrative and 'play around' with tempo, pauses and volume to draw attention to key words and phrases that were physically represented. Using stage blocks to create a wall, one group had the victim sitting at the bottom whilst the bully completed a circular route around her - climbing the wall, looking down at her, descending the wall and walking in front of her to begin the circuit again. This repetitive act was made more menacing by the group's decision to have the bully use a taunting voice to narrate the victim's words from the sixth stanza:

I don't understand why they make fun of me
When we could have fun together
I don't understand why they hurt me
Because their scars will stay for ever

When the morning of the performance came, the students were nervous to perform in front of their peers. However, they received a very positive reception from students and teachers. They particularly appreciated the fact that the students had written the poem themselves and I could tell this was a point of pride for the students.

Final reflections:

> Drama depicts matters of significance. School exists to make matters significant to the child. Heathcote, 1984: 131

I believe this scheme of work dealt with matters of significance and produced powerful

drama work. The selected poem held significance for the students in its relevance to their daily lives and they were proud of the work that resulted from exploring its content through drama pedagogy. I do not believe that sitting at a desk to study the poem would have been as meaningful for them as experiencing an embodied and immersive encounter with the poetry text through drama and movement (Branscombe, 2019 and 2021).

We finished the poetry unit with a self-evaluation form (Bennathan, 2000). The three questions inquired about the usefulness of the work, what the work had taught them about themselves and the world they live in and what made them proud. To conclude, I finish with a sample of responses:

"One skill I have developed from Drama is empathy. The acting we have done in drama has helped put myself in others' shoes and understand what other people's situation feel like from their point of view."

"I liked how we all created the poem and how the theme of bullying was interesting because it allowed me to gain a further understand [sic] what it is like to be bullied and be the bully. It also showed the affects bullying can have on people not just the person being bullied and the bully."

"I don't think that they changed me significantly as a person but I know they have helped me with confidence outside of the class."

"I learned to slow down while talking in front of an audience."

"The skills that drama teaches us as students are to be more confident, to show character with emotions and actions, to have creativity and other more. Some of these skills have been useful in other classes and outside of school."

"In drama class I developed my collaboration skills. This is because most of the work we did was with a group which helped me a lot. Learning to collaborate well with others helped me in other school subjects like my core classes."

"When we did 'My Parents' by Stephen Spender it was useful to learn about people's experiences with bullying. It made me rethink how I treat people and helped me put myself in others' shoes."

"The piece of work I am most proud of is the poem because we performed for the middle school. It was interesting to perform a scene where when my partners and I are finished with the lines, we freeze, while the other people are saying their lines."

"I'm probably most proud of our poem that we presented. It was a really cool idea and it was nice to see everyone's work into one big poem"

"I am proud of our final performance. I thought it was very effective at portraying everyone's emotions. And our writing was good."

"I really enjoyed the work on poetry because all of our stanzas were put together to make a poem. The theme of the poem was a [sic] amazing choice because we can see bullying in our daily lives and ***bullying is not ok****."*

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On the Relationship of Living Through Drama and Bondian Theatre

by Adam Bethlenfalvy

Abstract: Living Through Drama is an approach within the field of Drama in Education that focusses on offering participants an experiential relationship to fictional situations that open human, moral dilemmas. This paper describes a process of matching this approach with the contemporary theatre theory and dramaturgy of the playwright Edward Bond, whose central aim is to create gaps in meaning for audiences. These gaps offer space for the audience members to make meaning of what they see on stage. The research reported here explored if gaps in meaning and the living through experience of improvisation can be created at the same time by bringing together these two approaches.

Keywords: living through drama, improvisation, theatre structures, Edward Bond, action research, feral child.

Personal context

I was a teenager studying in secondary school when David Davis held his hugely influential courses in Hungary at the beginning of the 1990s: a time when Hungarian society and politics were in the middle of the 'regime change' which brought some short lived euphoric freedom and also long lasting global capitalism to this small country[1]. Davis' courses opened completely new avenues of development for what was and is called 'drámapedagógia' [drama pedagogy] in Hungary. Although I could not participate in David's course, I was busy trying to survive maths lessons in school back then, it still had an important impact on my life, because my youth theatre group leader, Judit Szakall, participated in both courses, and also in a fantastic study trip to the UK organised by David. She vividly remembers the impact even now, saying that "David Davis introduced me to a completely new drama world – it wasn't just playing that was central, but exploring a problem together with children using drama" (Szakall, 2019). Of course, it is evident from reports (Debreczeni, 1991; Előd, 1991)[2] that Davis offered very particular ways of exploring problems through drama.

More than a decade later he had another important impact on my life as I was intrigued by the particular approach Davis (2005) suggested would be important to explore in the

[1] I will refrain from describing the current socio-political situation in Hungary. An in-depth analysis of developments can be found here: https://www.policysolutions.hu/userfiles/elemzes/303/hungarian_politics_in_2019_web.pdf

[2] I am obliged to mention Erik Szauder's name, who was David's student and translator and had an immense influence on theoretical thinking in relation to drama in Hungary.

field of drama in education in this specific age and socio-political era. By this time I had become quite wearied by my own facilitation of drama lessons. I found them repetitive, lacking excitement and the art of theatre. I had been trained into a methodology that relied heavily on the conventions offered by Neelands & Goode (1990) in *Structuring Drama Work*. This approach placed dramatic forms used by the drama teacher at its centre, making drama more accessible to teachers, serving as Neelands (2010) claims to "democratise drama teaching by identifying and describing the common techniques and conventions used by the great but often mysterious drama educators" (p. xvii). However, I felt that my drama teaching lacked creativity and, strangely enough, it lacked the power of real 'drama' which I experienced when I worked with theatre in education, or in youth theatre. A recent survey conducted by a Norway based research team shows that there are other practitioners in China, Norway and Hungary who feel that this approach can lead to an instrumentalised use of the dramatic forms offered (Cziboly et al, 2021), a notion that pushed me into my original research project.

So, I set out to explore how I could develop my practice in the direction suggested by Davis (2005), as I was fascinated by the immediacy and creativity behind Living Through Drama (LTD) and the power and social critique underpinning Edward Bond's work (Davis, 2014). While LTD, often referred to as drama in education or process drama, seems to be a spontaneous flow of participation in fictional situations, Bond's plays are well known for the explicit stage directions given by the author, which seem to leave little freedom for actors. While one form is focused on enhancing participation, the other one is specifically written for performance. So how might the two be brought together?

This question was at the heart of my PhD practice-based action research, which I will be sharing with you in this paper[3]. I was extremely fortunate to be led in this research process by David Davis.

'Making' and Living Through Drama

As its name suggests, Living Through Drama (LTD) aims to create a lived through experience for the participants of a drama lesson, where they can experience and deal with some sort of 'crisis' from within the fictional context. But the term – with capital letters – refers to an approach to drama that originates in Dorothy Heathcote's early work, also known as the 'Man in a Mess' mode of drama. In his seminal work, *Acting in Classroom Drama,* Gavin Bolton (1998) analyses Heathcote's work and some re-interpretations of LTD, the process drama of Cecily O'Neill and David Davis, along with an analysis of his own work. Bolton considers "'fiction-making' as the defining nucleus for all acting behaviour" (p. 278). Analysing classroom drama from the participants' perspective he differentiates between three types of acting behaviour: presenting,

[3] A detailed description of the research methodology and findings is available in Bethlenfalvy (2020).

performing and making (p. 274). Participants of LTD would be offered a dominantly 'making' mode of involvement, while the lessons could include forms of 'presenting' as well. Bolton (1998) describes 'making' as "any dramatic exercise in which participants are free to explore without any sense of preparing for showing to someone else. It is not rehearsable nor directly repeatable" (p. 274). For example, in his drama lesson based on Arthur Miller's The *Crucible,* Bolton offers a series of tasks that help the students understand the cultural context of that particular incident, but also tasks that help build their roles within different families living in Salem. The drama lesson develops into a huge meeting in the Salem church – with Bolton in role as the Priest – and students with specific roles as adults and children within families responding to the same problem that is also central to Miller's play, but here the lines have not been written in advance. The participants experience and understand the situation from within, but also develop and 'write' it besides playing it: they are 'making' it (Bolton, 1998).

> Davis (2014) also defines his approach to LTD in relation to 'making':
> I tend to use "making" to describe the tripartite process of working for those moments of "living through" that form the key moments of the experience: I am making it happen (the role building in the drama event); it is happening to me (the living through experience); I am conscious of it happening to me (producing the metaxis effect). (p. 53)

Being in the fictional world and in the real world at the same time is what Davis refers to as the metaxis effect and is a central aspect of both his and Bolton's drama. Metaxis is crucial to what Davis (2014) states as his aim in developing LTD, which is "to provoke the opportunity to find one's relationship to those social forces [operating in that particular situation], thus providing an opening for us each to create our own humanness" (p. 1). He also argues that "Bolton and Heathcote were both developing drama that was concerned with students re-cognizing their world and their relationship to it" (p. 30). In an interview with Cecily O'Neill (2011) she states that good theatre and good drama are both successful if they move the audience or participants "either emotionally or intellectually to a new place, where they see things anew". Similarly, Heathcote (1984) claims that students participating in her drama lessons "have the same privilege as other artists in ordering and reordering their worlds, as they gain new information and experiences" (p. 90). These pioneers of LTD seem to agree on the aim of their work in creating new understandings for participants in relation to the world around them. There is also clear reference to the relationship to creating, or making, as artists and an awareness of their position and tools in this creative process.

An analysis of drama lessons from these four pioneers of drama education [Heathcote, Bolton, O'Neill and Davis] revealed a difference between living through improvisations, which are an important part of drama lessons, and the LTD approach as a whole. The two are often confused (Bethlenfalvy, 2020). Bolton (1998) explains that this misunderstanding might stem from people assuming that LTD is defined by the question 'What shall we make a play about?', a common starting point in Heathcote's early period drama lessons. He hastens to point out that "this is far from the case" (p. 178). The

Hungarian translation of this iconic question asks 'What would you like to play about?' seemingly missing a central point in Heathcote's pedagogy which asks participants about 'making' a play rather than just 'playing' as is reflected in the Hungarian translation. This further supports a powerful connection between making theatre and the practices of Living Through Drama. In more recent times, this connection was made even more explicit in the work of the British playwright Edward Bond. A controversial figure, Bond is known for such works as *Saved* (1965), *Lear* (1969), *Bingo* (1973), *The War Plays* (1983-84) and *Chair* (2005), and is described as "one of the most provocative voices in British theatre in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries" *(Billingham, 2014, 1,)*. He is also known for his more recent work for young people in partnership with Big Brum Theatre in Education company in Birmingham, such as *Eleven Vests* (1995), *The Under Room* (2005), *The Broken Bowl* (2012) and *The Price of One* (2016). With a dynamic and challenging world view, his works tend towards the political and explores how society reacts to events. Davis found a fresh insight in the work of this playwright whose writing and comments often made audience members, performers and theatre directors feel uncomfortable. Davis recognised a synergy between what we are trying to do in drama education and Bond's approach, particularly in how he questions dominant discourses through drama. In the following sections, I will explore some key tenets of Bond's work, and how these components connect with LTD.

Edward Bond's theory of drama

Alongside writing over fifty plays in different genres, Edward Bond has also created a body of theoretical writing that offers a political and social critique of the contemporary world and outlines the role of drama in it. Bond (2009) refers to his own writing as drama rather than theatre, because "theatre may help you find yourself in society, [but] drama requires you to find society in you" (p. xii). The purpose of drama in facilitating finding society in yourself is important to Bond. He perceives growing up in society as a process of accepting its culture, accepting the explanations and narratives offered by a society to individuals to accept their place within it. Bond (2000a) describes culture as a collection of narratives that relate to human needs and questions in different ways. He explains that "a culture's story is a plot which binds its people to their place and means of existence. It gives life meaning and so it is the source of judgement" (p. 3). He (2006) argues that when we are socialised into a culture, we accept its interpretation of the social and material world as reality itself. The Self integrates the culture into itself, but this happens around our core-self, which is the basic human need to be at home in the world: ultimately the need for justice (Bond, 1991). He uses the term Radical Innocence to describe this need. In Bond's theory, radical innocence is inherent in our natural or core self. It refers to a state of innocence in the newly born child (the neonate) which exists before the processes of socialisation and acculturation occur, which later become corrupting and dominant forces in human lives. At this stage, the neonate is trying to interpret the world around it and give it meaning, and it does this through the imagination. It does not engage with ideology and must rely on its own spontaneity to create meaning. However, to enter society, "the child must be corrupted: its imagination is 'ideologized'"

(Allen and Handley, 2017, 311). In receiving and acknowledging the teachings of society, the child loses their right to create themselves through their imagination. Through growing up in a society of antagonisms, politics, economics, militarism, class and cultural deformities, they lose their core self and their radical innocence which otherwise would develop naturally through experience and learning into a desire and practice of shared common justice (Bond, 1998). Citing Bond, Allen and Handley (2017) note that Bond's drama aims to create "the journey for, to humanness" through presenting extreme situation in his drama where we "are confronted with our radical innocence", the human imperative to be at home in a just world (Bond, 2009, 213.) He stipulates that "Drama is imagination's language. Drama seeks understanding. … We create ourselves in new understandings" necessary to make society just (Bond, 1998, 9). In contrast to performance art, drama does not seek to remove problems but to explore and understand through asking *why* rather than *what* or *how* questions: "Why is the imagination's question. Only minds able to imagine may ask it" (Bond, 1998, 2). Thus, for Bond, drama allows us to recover our autonomy and creativity (which originated in the neonate), and the self is returned to its core self. Drama reverses the human process which ideology has deformed and corrupted (Allen and Handley, 2017, 311). It asks troubling questions and explores human subjectivity in the interplay between drama and society (Chen, 2018). Of course, this is a crude summary of a complex and detailed theory which I describe in detail in the second chapter of *Living Through Extremes in Process Drama* (Bethlenfalvy, 2020).

Drama Events - Opening gaps from within

Bond offers many concepts to help the staging of his plays and put his theory into practice. One of the central concepts that aims to create the possibility for the audience to 'find society in themselves' is his Drama Event (DE). Bond claims that "we should be dramatizing the conflicts within the self, and what art and drama should be doing is increasing human self-consciousness" (Billingham, 2007, 3). DEs should be "extreme situations which impose choice" (Bond, 2006, 213), and the choices are created by enacting "the articulation of the paradox, the way the self's need for justice is misused in society" (Bond, 2003, xxxiii). By dramatizing a paradox, an unresolvable human dilemma is placed in front of the audience, a gap is created because while the extremeness of the situation demands some answer, there isn't a good response, and the audience needs to fill the void with some meaning they create themselves.

DEs need to be created in performance, but I would argue that possible DEs can be identified in the text as well. I would like to share one such example from Edward Bond's *The Children* (2000b), a play written for a group of young people and two professional actors. The drama explores the relationship between the adult world and young people. I will share a brief snapshot of the plot to help contextualise the example below. A disturbed mother asks her son Joe, to burn down the house with the mauve door in an adjacent estate. She manipulates him until he finally does the deed and then abandons him. Joe finds out that the house was not empty, and a child died in the fire. Fleeing from

police, the group of friends he meets on an abandoned lot by the rail track decide to join him and leave their homes, because they know about the incident and are afraid of repercussions. As they are about to leave a man arrives and falls among them. He is unconscious. They decide to take him along because they don't know if he has heard what they were talking about. The children take turns at carrying the seemingly unconscious man, which becomes more and more difficult because each night some of the children disappear. The man comes round but keeps asking for the children's help. The audience see him killing some of the children at night with a brick that he has previously used as his pillow. Only five of the children are left when the following happens:

> *He [Man] walks among the sleepers - the brick in one hand, the towel trailing from the other - searching as if he were lost. He sits down in the middle of the sleepers.*
>
> **Man** When I was a sailor one day I said I'll take my son to sea. Show him the world. The good. The bad. The violence that destroys it. (*Looks at the sleepers*.) If it was different we'd be friends. Take care of you. Treat you as mine. So much to learn before we know ourselves. (*He has begun to cradle the brick and stroke it*.) Lately my sickness has been worse. I shan't survive. A few more days then dead. (*Hums a few notes*.) My son my son… (*Stops*.) Time!
>
> *Suddenly he twists to the side - flaring the towel - falls on Donna - smothers her - kills her with a blow of the brick.*
>
> **Man** Hgn. (Bond, 2000b:48)

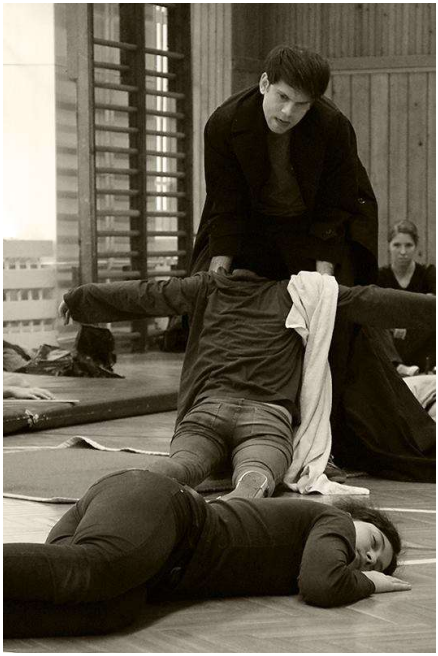
This moment becomes powerful because the audience get a glimpse of the Man's humanity. He was seen brutally murdering children so far, but now we can see that he is doing it to take revenge for his son, who died in the fire. He is sick, but vengeance is keeping him alive. The viciousness of his killing is in contrast with the softness of his humming and his explanation. His sentence "So much to learn before we know ourselves" suggests that he understands himself as the murderer he has become, and this situation has enhanced his understanding of himself as a father. It is quite extreme to see the human side of a monster.

The Man does two contrasting actions with the brick, and this offers the possibility of a DE. He first cradles it as a child and hums a few notes. The brick-child receives the value of the Man's son when he says 'my son my son'. A few moments later he is using the same brick to crack the skull of someone else's child. The sudden change in the use of the object makes the contradiction underlying the Man's understanding of fatherhood as vengeance tangible not only on an intellectual level, but also as a felt impact. It is possible to understand why he is doing what he is doing, but it is also possible to see its

atrociousness. Bond (2013) calls this change in the value of an everyday object cathexis[4].

This excerpt also demonstrates the concept of Centre offered by Bond (1996), which states that a play returns to its central problem in different forms, through different characters, and by its repetition it "will develop, becoming more clarified, revealing and definite" (p. 161). This play was inspired by a mob attacking the van carrying the two children who murdered the two-year-old James Bulger in 1993 in Liverpool. Bond states that the "play is not about the murder of the boy but about the attitude of the adults" (Tuaillon, 2015, 27). A quote from *Medea* after the title of the published play also refers to the subject of how children can become the victims of adult conflict.

This excerpt also offers examples of dramaturgical structures I identified in different Bond plays (see Bethlenfalvy, 2020). Besides the extreme action, it presents a sudden shift between two different understandings of fatherness. This is not only there in the



1. Image from a performance of The Children by the Örkény Theatre youth group. Photo: Attila Ledő

[4] Chris Cooper (2010) defines a Drama Event through Cathexis itself: "A DE occurs when objects that are ideologically neutral or where the ideological content is striking in a given dramatic situation, are deconstructed by cathexis and decathexis" (p. 44).

lines "(*Looks at the sleepers*.) If it was different we'd be friends. Take care of you. Treat you as mine", but is also presented in the two uses of the brick: the cradling and the killing. Another example of creating a gap is the "hgn" sound after killing. The sound – depending on how the actor performs it will invite the audience to make meaning. It occurs immediately after a shocking action and how the audience interprets it forms part of making sense of the paradox of being a parent that has just been presented. The use of gibberish language, or ideologically uncaptured sounds is a device used by Bond in other plays also. These examples illustrate the opening of gaps for the audience's imagination, for meaning making to happen from within the narrative.

In my doctoral research I explored how these concepts and structures can be used within the framework of LTD. The most explicit advocate to date for connecting the two has been David Davis (2005, 2014), who explores the relationship between Bond and Heathcote's work in the following quote:

> What Heathcote and Bond share in common is that a play is not just telling a story but the story is the means of exploring our humanity. Heathcote sees drama as the foundation of human knowing and Bond sees no progress for humanity unless we can dramatise ourselves. Imagination is key to both practitioners. […] Both are concerned most importantly with re-examining who we are. Central to Heathcote's approach is the notion of developing the self-spectator; Bond is concerned that the audience are provoked into re-examining how they live and how they might live life differently. (Davis, 2005, 170)

My PhD research journey sought to explore if further ways of connecting these dramatic traditions could be found, and whether possible synergies might enrich and deepen my participants' experience in our drama lessons. The results of a two-cycle action research study are presented in the sections below.

First cycle: Learning from errors

I conducted my action research in two cycles. In the first cycle I did three series of three drama lessons each with 9 to10 year old children, in three different schools. I investigated if Drama Events can be created within a Living Through Drama framework. I employed a variety of data collection tools, including questionnaires and focus group discussions with participants, interviews with observing class teachers, and video documentation of lessons. I relied primarily on Bondian concepts and theory in the planning of the lessons in this cycle. To discuss the findings, I will principally focus on one of the three series here.

The first series was based on *The Children* referred to above. One of the lessons centred around an image from the first scene of the play. Here Joe tries to abandon his toy doll (which is dressed similarly to him according to the stage directions), because he is too old for it, but he is unable to, and finally he batters the toy with a brick. The whole scene,

but particularly the final image raises question about the impact of the adult world on children. Bond's (2000a) concept of Site offers a four layered structure that helps to connect the times we live in with the audience's imagination through what is dramatized in the performance.

> In Bond's conception of the "site", theatre is regarded as an intermediate social site in which the dominant ideology of society can be temporarily suspended and questioned in a structure of self-reflexive critique. (Chen, 2018, 174)

Although Bond regards theatre as exemplary in this regard owing to the relationship between stage and spectator, this capacity for self-reflectivity is not limited to theatre and can be actioned in any social sphere that has potential to criticise the society in which it is located (Chen, 2018). Bond identified schools as potential sites in which self-reflexive structures can be developed. In addition, there can be several sites within a scene which locate different places on stage. The audience also occupy their own site (Allen and Handley, 2017). I employed this concept in the planning of these lessons.

2. Drawing created by one of the participants after the drama lesson, showing the meeting place, the new estate and the burning house.

The lesson started with planning the meeting place of a group of young people, that is outside a small town, beside the railway tracks. The space was set up in the classroom

through tasks that also helped protect the group into role as the friends of Joe. Some important elements of the plot were brought in through Teacher in Role with me playing Joe, who shares that his Mum asked him to burn down the house with the mauve door on the new estate. Further developments were also shared in improvisations through role. I did not follow the play's plot through but structured the lessons according to what seemed to most interest the group. The dramatic tension built on Joe making the group swear to keep his secret, but this alliance was tested by meeting adults with different stakes in the story as the situation developed. The participants stayed mostly within the frame of Joe's 'group of friends' through the three lessons and were offered many opportunities to work in role and improvise around situations that developed through their exploration of the broader storyline.

This series brought about useful learning in relation to the extremeness of the narrative. The class teacher who was present during the lessons also raised questions, asking whether a story in which a mother asks her child to burn down a house is appropriate for 9-10 year olds. The participants expressed their thoughts about whether that action was too extreme in the play, noting:

> "That was good. It was needed."
> "Because otherwise it would be boring."
> "Exciting things need to happen."

They also reflected on the difference between extreme events happening in fiction and in reality, the difference between being in the fiction and watching it from outside, and also the difference between the point of view of children and adults:

> "When we are in the story we feel that it is completely fine for us. But if you are an adult watching it from the outside you might think it is too heavy."
> "If it happened in reality then it would be too much, but if we are playing it and imagining ourselves into it then it is not a problem."

It was evident that the process of protecting the participants into role and their being active in making the fiction were important factors in enabling them to engage with the extremes present in Bond's play. My research found that that ownership and control of the fiction created engagement in the drama, but the loss of control over the narrative created extreme moments and a motivation to understand and build the story further. Interestingly, it became clear during this series of drama lessons, that the extreme-ness of the narrative reinforced the fictional nature of the drama, making it safer for participants to explore freely. This is a phenomenon also associated with extreme climate change narratives and visions of future urbanism in fiction (Mączyńska, 2020).

The research demonstrated that the powerful images and moments within the fiction also helped participants make connections between the fictional world and events happening around them. In the focus group where we were discussing the burning down of the house one participant said: "Terrorists come and burn houses down, Putin drops bombs." When probed further about this thought, he continued: "I just said it because of the burning house, that is what they do these days, burn down houses. Blow them up". The disturbing

nature of the image from the play opened up a critical discussion about social justice issues, and participants connected some of the powerful images and scenes they have seen on TV and in the news media with their drama work based around the play. For many of them, this was one of the first opportunities they had to express and discuss openly their own thoughts and opinions about these acts. As a consequence, I built the next series of drama lessons conducted in the first cycle on the contemporary issue of migration and from the data on both series of lessons, it was evident that participants easily recognised contemporary social problems and were able to connect them with the issues being explored in the fictional world. This is a defining hall mark of Paulo Freire's (2000) critical pedagogy. However, the research also demonstrated that these can only be investigated in-depth if the underlying problems are manifested in the story through striking images, situations, roles and objects that participants can connect to or manipulate in the dramatic moment. This was particularly clear from the failings of the second series of lesson, where this in-depth investigation did not happen. Although the participants enjoyed being in role as refugees trying to flee Earth to live on another planet in the drama lessons set in an apocalyptic future, the structure of the lessons focussed on the development of the plot rather than deepening understanding about specific situations.

I also explored the role of objects in the drama lessons in each series. For example, I used a teddy bear and some bricks in the first series in order to determine what their use brings to lessons. I found that they can make space for bringing in participants' interests and problems, and help change the perspectives of participants. Joe used the brick to swear upon when he asked his friends to keep his secret. But the father of the child who died in the fire also brought a brick from his burnt down house when he talked to the group of children trying to find out if they knew anything about who did it. While in the improvisation they stuck to their roles, but when I offered the brick in the discussion following the improvisation it helped participants look at what happened from the father's perspective and re-focused their reflection and discussion.

It was clear from the three series of drama lessons that, although there were many possibilities for group and individual improvisation, and these were tested out with a variety of dramatic constraints in place to create tension, these situations did not really help participants to create gaps in meaning for themselves or for those watching. The participants did not create Drama Events. The data revealed that participants' approach to the improvisations was either to resolve the problem they were facing, limiting the possibility of leaving a gap in meaning, or to demonstrate their thinking, as can be seen in the example below. The latter suggesting more of a cognitive engagement than an embodied lived through experience. In reflection, what might have influenced participants most in how they reacted to improvisations was how they perceived their own role within the activity. The images below are from an individual improvisation which was observed by the whole class. The child who was in role was also given the constraint that he should not talk. So, he turned to demonstrating his thinking in order to

make it understandable to all. The task itself created a situation which did not help him immerse himself in the improvisation. In other cases – mostly pair or group improvisations participants might have felt that what is expected of them in the drama is to solve the problems dealt, as is the case usually in school settings.

3. This participant's hand gestures in an improvisation show how he was trying to demonstrate his thinking through gestures. The participant's understanding of the purpose of the activity influences what they do in different improvisations.

Therefore, the main question for the next cycle of lessons became: How can I facilitate participants to work towards creating gaps in meaning in their improvisations?

Second cycle: Explicitly offering underlying concepts and structures to participants

I realised that if I wanted participants to consciously work towards creating gaps in meaning in the scenes and improvisations they were creating then I needed to explicitly offer them this opportunity, and also offer appropriate tools to use. In this cycle, I worked with seven different groups of young people (14 to 18 year olds) and conducted drama lessons based on three different themes in the ten sessions I held (the drama lessons were broken down into two sessions for three of the groups, hence the difference in the number of sessions and groups). I worked with three groups within schools setting while sessions with the other four were held in informal education settings, this allowed me to reflect on how the settings of the drama lessons impact on the participants. The findings from the first cycle made it clear that underlying concepts and dramaturgical structures need to be offered explicitly to participants and I decided to work with secondary school students in this cycle to make sure that the participants age does not become a hindering factor.

I found an idea that I wanted to develop further in one of the examples Davis (2014) offers from his own practice. The drama lesson is based on a text Davis quotes from Jeffrey Mason's book titled *Against Therapy* (1990) which describes fathers leaving their daughters who have been labelled morally insane at the "Bellevue clinic in Kreuzlingenan, Switzerland" (Davis, 2014, 69.) in the late nineteenth century. Having read the relevant extract, Davis asks participants to make a scene about the moment of handover from the father to the doctors at the railway station, based on the text. After a

first version he asks the group to develop their scenes further, and offers Heathcote's five layers of meaning (Davis, 2014, 69.), a structure that helps to break down the different aspects of meaning that can underpin one specific action. This helps raise deeper questions than 'what is the motivation behind an action?', such as 'what is the historic or social model behind it', or 'what is at stake through the action, and what stance does it express'. Offering Heathcote's structure enables participants to be more aware of the use of signs in drama and consequently create greater depth in their scene. It assists them in transferring this learning to the following task, in which they improvise a situation that could have happened earlier, and which pushed the father towards leaving his daughter at the Swiss clinic. While Davis offers many of the parameters of this situation that create the dramatic tension, the students also have the freedom of improvisation within the scene.

Davis, in the example above, offers his participants a structure to create a consciousness of the different layers in the content being explored, and an awareness of the power of signing in drama. However, I wanted my participants to achieve more complex aims. When participants in process drama work in the 'making' mode they are not just working as actors, but also as playwrights and directors (Bolton, 1999), and they are doing all this from within fiction. So, it seemed logical that they need to have access to tools of playwrighting as well.

Informed by Davis' approach, I framed the participants as co-researchers and asked them to explore with me how theatre structures from Bond's work and process drama might be brought together, specifically to explore how gaps in meaning can be created in improvisations. It was important to place participants into an explorative mode of being and the frame allowed me to offer some elements of knowledge they could use in this investigation, while also giving them a purpose and elevating their role in the research process. I also offered the notion of 'creating gaps in meaning' as one possible aim of drama, and this idea was explored through a task in relation to their lived experience of a drama situation that led them to new understandings: both of the subject matter of the drama and also of drama structures themselves.

I share one of the drama lessons conducted so I can offer specific examples of how I included the concept of Centre and four specific Bondian dramaturgical structures to enable participants in creating gaps in meaning in their improvisations.

The three hours long *Wild Child* drama lesson was built on a feral child narrative. Participants were offered the role of the staff of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that helps people with issues related to integrating into communities. Right at the offset of this narrative I offered the Centre of the story we engaged in, so it stayed with them throughout the lesson as a reference point. In Wild Child's case the Centre I shared was: *Can you find/be yourself in contemporary society?* This was a question we could return to during the session again and again as the plot and situations developed.

In the first phase of the drama lesson the roles of the participants and the fictional NGO's context were built through tasks of mapping their previous professional successes and their attitude to social problems. The NGO received a request to deal with an extremely difficult case of a nine-year-old child who had been raised by a pack of dogs. A series of tasks helped engage with different aspects of the situation; these included making lists of the most important things the child needs to learn, exploring in space how growing up with dogs impacted on her movement, and so on.

Participants were then asked to create scenes about the education of the child by the NGO experts. After the participants shared their first ideas about their scenes I offered them four of the more easily implementable seven dramaturgical structures I had identified in Bond's plays (Bethlenfalvy, 2020, 117-118.), so they could work as playwrights and designers when they were developing their scenes further.

I will share the four structures here with examples from Bond's play *The Children* discussed above:

(1) Unexpected/extreme action
An example from *The Children*: The Man being carried by the children says, "My son, my son" and cradles the brick that is from his burnt house and which he uses to kill the children.

(2) Turning social roles upside down
An example from *The Children*: The Mother asks her son (Joe) to burn a house down and explains why it is in the interest of Joe to do it.

(3) Creating gap in time or space or meaning
An example from *The Children*: The Man says "hgn" after smothering one of the children with a towel and smacking her on the head with a brick.

(4) Everyday objects
An example from *The Children:* The brick which is used in the first scene by Joe to whack his doll, is also used when the whole group swears to keep his secret. And the Man also uses a brick to take his revenge.

In his theoretical work Bond also offers concepts to help create Drama Events, but I recognised these recurring dramaturgical structures in his plays, in his practice. As the first cycle made it clear that participants need to operate more consciously as makers of drama in order to create gaps in meaning in their living through improvisations, I decided to offer them these structures in the process of them devising scenes. Before sharing the findings related to the impact of this decision, I will finish the description of the *Wild Child* drama lesson.

The NGO received a huge donation because of the good press they received for their successful nurturing of the child, but one of the criteria was that the child (whose gender depended on the group's gender ratio) should be present at the ceremony. A small group improvisation was played out as the reluctant child is persuaded to leave for the

ceremony and the event itself was played out as a whole group improvisation. In different versions I tried a). setting the objects for them to use in the group improvisation (these reflected the objects they had already used in their scenes, a mirror for example, or biscuits) b). leaving the choice up to them, or c). using a mix of offering some and also giving participants the option to choose for themselves. All tasks, scenes and improvisations were related to the dilemmas and paradoxes of integrating someone into society, the Centre of the drama lesson.

The data collected through a mixture of semi-structured focus group interviews and questionnaires showed that narratives based on profound dilemmas of human life generated space for participants to bring in their personal and social interests and concerns. Both in and out of role participants raised questions related to social structures:

> "Is it useful if we integrate her into society? I know part of it is caring for her, but it felt it is more about controlling others; that we decide about their lives."
> "It made me think about why people want power, why do they want to rule over each other?"
> "Does integration mean she has to think and behave like everyone else?"

And connections were also made to their own situations.

> "There are lots of expectations on this little girl. But lots of other kids feel like that too."
> "When we did the scenes about the education of Wanda it was interesting that they all showed her on the border of being human and animal. I think secondary school students are also on the border, not of being animals or humans, but there is a duality in them. Perhaps we also held onto this, because we are also still searching for ourselves. How much of us comes from others? What part is really us?"
> "What makes a person human?"

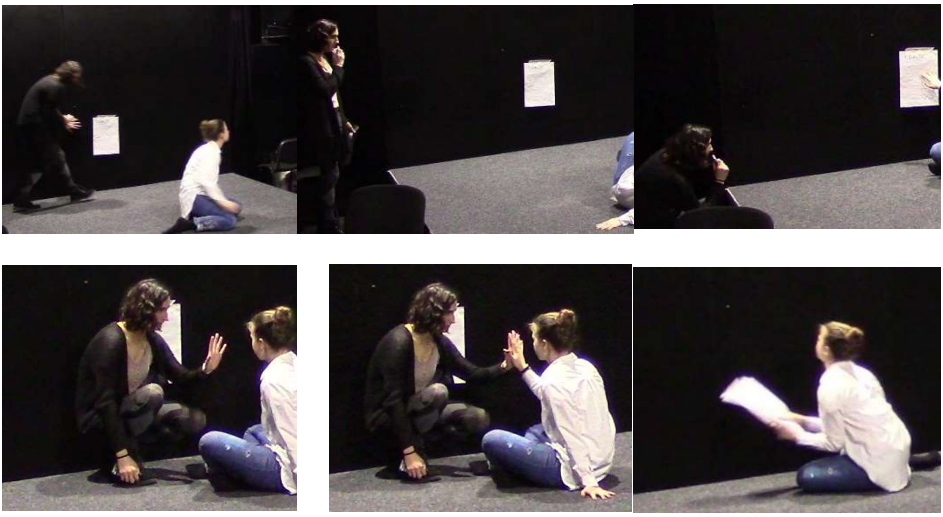
One of my most important research questions was to explore whether the theatre structures that were explicitly offered to participants in the second cycle would inhibit the living through, experiential improvisations that are central to LTD. Participants' reflections about the drama experience show that this was not the case.

> "I didn't know what my partners would say in the scene and I had to think and react on my feet. I had this feeling of not having boundaries, that we can bring anything into the situation."
> "You have to keep re-defining everything for yourself. Because the improvisation will throw you some other responses than what you had expected."
> "It was exciting that you didn't know what will happen next."

The study sought to explore if Drama Events could be created within living through improvisations, and what impact if any, they might have on the quality and depth of the work. The following excerpt from a drama lesson noted after a close analysis of the video recording and the participant's reflection, collected two months after the session provide

evidence that the use of Bondian dramaturgical structures did not hinder, but in fact heightened the living through aspect of the improvisation.

In this example from *Wild Child*, the space created for the improvisation by the participants was a room with a window. The feral child (the girl in the white shirt on the screenshot) stared out of the window (represented by the flipchart). In role, the NGO staff member brought in and placed a mirror on the wall, then left and observed, commenting on the actions from outside the room in role as an expert researcher. The child first flinched from her own reflection, then went up to it and touched the mirror.



4. Screenshots from the video documentation of the 'Wild Child' drama lesson

The staff member went in and placed herself in front of the child's reflection mirroring her action. The child touched her hand similarly to the mirror. The staff member left the room to observe further and left the child together with the mirror. The child tore the mirror off the wall.

It was a powerful improvisation, and as part of my data collection strategy, I contacted the participants of this planned improvisation two months after the session and the girl in role as the NGO staff member gave the following description of the situation:

> I have quite intense memories of the situation – it was perhaps the first improvisation of my life. The strongest feeling was the excitement. I got engulfed in the excitement of the situation, of finding out something special and new in the examination of Wanda. I also remember the uncertainty that I realised in the middle of the scene that I don't know how I should behave in

> such a situation. We had planned the scene with M. (for example, that I will be recording my comments on the side) – but what does a researcher comment on? What is significant and what isn't? The importance of things changes when you have a human living like an animal. The classic stories like Mowgli and Tarzan are useless here, this is an issue that creates a hole in human thinking – when the borders of the categories we know shift we freeze, we feel uncomfortable, and don't know what to do.

This participant reflects on both the improvisational nature of the situation and the gaps that participating in it in role offered her. Besides the new understanding made through this experience she also describes a felt, bodily response as well as an intellectual one, which suggests that it can be seen as a Drama Event. The influence of the dramaturgical structures and a reminder of the Centre of our investigation before they re-worked their plan for the improvisation was tangible in the outcome of their work. There was heated debate after this improvisation among participants about what the NGO staff member *wanted* to teach and what did she *actually* teach, and also about what is useful for a child to see and what isn't. However, although the data are limited and it was not possible to definitively determine if it operated for those observing the improvisation as a Drama Event or not, there is some evidence that there was deep engagement with the fictional situation in the improvisation and also a powerful reflection on the situation at the same time. The duality of felt bodily response connected to imaginative reasoning reflected in the participants description is exactly what Bond (2000a, 17.) aims to achieve in his Drama Events.

Conclusion

This research set off to explore if the structures used by the dramatist Edward Bond can be implemented in Living Through Drama. In the process of this two cycle action research I found that that ownership and control of the fiction created engagement in the drama, but the loss of control over the narrative created extreme moments and a motivation to understand and build the story further. It also became clear that the extreme-ness of the narrative reinforced the fictional nature of the drama, making it safer for participants to explore freely. The research also demonstrated that the powerful images and moments within the fiction helped participants make connections between the fictional world and events happening around them. The use of objects can help create space for both action and reflection. But most importantly it became clear that the explicit offering and use by participants of dramatic structures does not hinder their experiencing of living through improvisations.

The journey I went through in the process of this research raised many new questions for me, in addition to offering new possibilities and directions for research and practice in drama education. It made me more confident in relying on the power of theatre within my process drama lessons. I recognised that trusting the art form itself offers immense possibilities for creating new understandings. It also become absolutely clear for me that without experimenting, making mistakes and taking risks, it is very difficult to bring

back life, excitement and imagination into drama.

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The Drama of Theatre-in-Education

by Chris Cooper

Abstract

Theatre in Education (TiE) is a radical, discrete theatre form which enables young people and children to make meaning of the world they inhabit and the future they can shape. This requires the enactment of the relationship between self and society that creates an event on both the 'stage' and in the participants that penetrates imposed ideological meanings. This chapter will reflect on contemporary theatre in education and the importance of the social, historical and political in the personal. It will examine the relationship between drama and theatre, and form and content in theatre for children and young people.

Key Words: Theatre in Education; theatre and drama, form and content; self and society; enactment; social and political in the personal.

Personal context

To contextualise my chapter, I want to begin by paying tribute to Professor David Davis; his has been an extraordinarily important contribution to the working lives of so many in the field, and I am no different. I am a theatre maker and I want to talk about theatre in education. David is rightly recognised for his achievements in the field of Drama in Education (DiE) and educational drama, but he made a significant contribution to the development of the British TiE movement through SCYPT (the Standing Conference of Young People's Theatre) and the National Association for the Teaching of Drama (NATD). His exploration of the work of Edward Bond and as editor of Gavin Bolton's writings, have forged new ways of knowing, thinking and being which find inspirational articulation in his seminal text *Imagining the Real: towards a new form of drama in education* (2014). He was instrumental in the development of Big Brum Theatre in Education Company as Education Consultant over many years during my time as its Artistic Director. He brought rigour and attention to detail to this role, his questioning of our practice, if not always comfortable or what we wanted to hear, was nevertheless welcome and it is through this working relationship that David has perhaps taught me most. It was David who first really encouraged and challenged me to find ways of introducing Bond's complex, and at times dense, theoretical writing from *The Hidden Plot* (2000) into the rehearsal room in practice. Over time, with his ongoing support and in collaboration with other colleagues, and of course Bond himself, I believe that Big Brum developed an approach to TiE that took our field into a new phase of development. This was of personal significance not only as a director but as a playwright. He also encouraged me to write theoretically about the work and it was through David that I received many invitations to teach internationally, including here in Trinity College. And like all the best teachers, David demonstrated the value of rigour to me over many years, and later, in the course of discussion between drafts of *Imagining the Real*, helped me to know my own mind as an artist.

Introduction

I have called my contribution to this collection 'The drama of theatre-in-education'. It's a big subject and I will try to outline what I mean by it. For me the practice of Theatre in Education (TiE) is the very embodiment of the relationship between the social and political in the personal. It is about the function of theatre and drama in society and the relationship between form and content. We are in a crisis which too often manifests itself in a drive to make theatre for children and young people which separates form and content in favour of empty aestheticism. There is an urgent need to reappraise or understand the importance of the relationship between form and content. It requires us to engage with the philosophy that underpins the theory and practice of our work through rigorous analysis. Without doing this we cannot locate the social and the political in the personal in any meaningful way.

In my work, I understand the political in the personal to mean the relationship between self in society, and society in self. Children and young people are natural philosophers; they constantly ask and seek answers to the most fundamental questions about the human condition: Why am I here? Who am I? Where did I come from? Why are people as they are and the world as it is? TiE enables participants to explore the diversity and complexity of humankind to draw into themselves the richness of human culture; to know themselves as cultural, historical, social, technological, political, emotional, imaginative, thinking and creative human beings. As Vygotsky wrote, the dynamic of the personality is drama, or the struggle and continuous change internally and in tandem with the environment. The 'stage' on which this 'drama' unfolds is the individual mind within the socio-cultural context. TiE does not tell young people what to think. It enables them to think for themselves, responsibility lies with the participants. It is through the process of dramatising self in society, and society in self, that we begin to make meaning of our lives, determine who we are, and how we want to live. If we cannot take responsibility for ourselves, we cannot take responsibility for others and the world we live in. In this fundamental sense the personal is political.

This chapter begins by highlighting the destruction of the TiE Movement in the UK, and identifying seeds of new growth in arguably hostile environments. Taking examples from the rehearsal process of two plays for young audiences, I attempt to chart the totality of the site of drama involving people as social, historical, political, human, beings. I argue that without dramatising this site we are left with generalisation and empty theatre effects. Drawing support from the work of David Davis, Gavin Bolton and Edward Bond, I explore the symbiotic relationship between DiE, TiE and politics in order to create gaps in meaning for participants to engage with.

The dismantling of TiE in the UK

Following Davis' and O'Sullivan's overview of the state of the species in their contributions to the conference held in Trinity College Dublin in 2019, I became a little

agitated when the discussion later drifted into the need for hope. I must insist that it's not enough. We must do better than that. The TiE Movement has been all but destroyed in the UK because it enables young people to think independently and critically, and they - the ruling class - will not allow that. They want to stop this work and have all but succeeded.

For the TIE movement, born in 1965, the 1980s was a period of continual and profound crisis. This was driven by Thatcher's wholesale assault on the pillars of the welfare state, public services and the trades unions through privatisation and increasingly authoritarian intervention. No more was government more interventionist than in education following the 1988 Education Reform Act. There was good reason for this as Davis noted at the time:

> What lies behind the Tory Government's plans for education? I would like to suggest there are two main reasons: one ideological, and the other financial: British capitalism has to renew itself or die. It is the oldest capitalism in the world and the most outmoded among the advanced industrial countries. The Tory strategy for renewal is based on Friedman-like monetary policies which advocate the ruthless paring away of anything that cannot pay its way - including inefficient capitalist enterprises and stretching out to the health service and education.

(Davis, David (1988), The Education Reform Bill: Tory Class Legislation, Theatre & Education Journal, Lancaster)

The National Curriculum not only ushered in a reductive and obsessively political controlling of State education, but the de-professionalisation of teachers, and Local Management Schools. LMS paved the way for taking state schools out of the control of Local Education Authorities which had been the cornerstones of progressive educational practice since the 1944 Education Act. The arts too came under attack with cuts to subsidies, often politically motivated – independent critical thinking was not enshrined in the new national curriculum. I came into the field as an actor-teacher in 1988 at the same time David was penning the article quoted above. It was a time of funding cuts and company closures. The 1990s brought no relief, and the 1997 New Labour government fundamentally continued where Thatcherism left off. By the beginning of the mid 2000s, TiE as I understand and practice it, had all but disappeared in the UK.

I believe that while the future for TiE lies not in the UK but elsewhere, there is still much in participatory theatre and drama for children and young people, to fight for, and when we look at the ecological crisis we face, we certainly have to fight not hope. Greta Thunberg recently stated to the EU that she didn't want politicians' hope, adding, what if there was no hope, that it is too late for us to stop irreversible climate change. What then? We would still have to take action.

As noted above, the destruction of the TiE Movement in the UK takes me abroad to both

Europe and most often to mainland China.

Hungary has seen the most significant growth of TiE in Europe over the last two decades, although the encroaching authoritarianism of the Orban government seriously threatens those gains. But above all, since the crash of 2008, austerity policies and obscene wealth inequality continues to be the greatest existential threat. Apart from the universities and colleges, all the organisations I collaborate with in Europe are small organisations or companies with limited resources, often dependent on dwindling public funding. At the same time, they are struggling to sustain and develop practice in an increasingly reactionary and politically hostile environment. Populism and right-wing politics are on the rise in Europe, and globally (Nagan & Manausa, 2018), and is understood as a growing dissatisfaction with political institutions where people's needs are not being met by the state (Sheri, 2019).

Conversely, in China everything that is radically socially progressive, like arts education organisation *Drama Rainbow*, comes through the private sector, which by default limits its reach into society. As a company *Drama Rainbow* puts what it is to be human at the heart of its practice, encouraging children as young as three to explore the social and political in the personal through story, and does so in a highly competitive, marketised, politically censorious and controlled environment. This is both courageous and unique in China. In a country where economic development is changing towards increased state-led financialisation and control, the State is becoming more intrusive (Pan, Zhang, and Wu, 2020). The trade war with the US is spilling over into the political arena and militarisation threatens what many foresee as the emergence of a new cold war (deLisle, 2020), and indeed, perhaps, even, actual conflict. But despite all this, there is a growing demand in China amongst teachers and artists for educational theatre and drama, and amongst parents. The demand is particularly strong among middle class parents, many of whom do not want their children to have the same experience of their own One Child policy childhood (Zhang et al., 2020).

While TiE faces a precarious future in the UK and much of Europe, it is all the more surprising that new shoots of growth are emerging in a country where a repressive state manipulates the public's emotions to demobilise dissent and social protest (Hou, 2019). Why so? China is on target to build a 'moderately prosperous society', a Chinese term originating in Confucianism used to describe a society composed of a functional middle class, by 2025. In a population of around 1.4 billion people (2019), this is no small achievement and amounts to over 400 million people, more than the entire population of the United States. As a class it is a very wealthy consumer whose influence is set to grow. The government has a policy of what is referred to as the dual circulation of economic growth. One part of this is "internal circulation", the other is "external circulation". The source of growth for internal circulation is domestic demand from domestic consumption, making domestic consumption the main driver of its growth. China will continue to further expand domestic demand.

> Doing so will make production, distribution, flow of goods and services, and consumption in China more based on domestic market, and it will make the supply system better adapt to domestic demand.
> (Xi Jinping APEC CEO Dialogues 19 November 2020)

This growing influence of the middle class in mainland China mirrors what has already occurred in Hong Kong and other parts of Asia as a consequence of development. Contradictorily, it nurtures a plurality of practices and views. What is true for the consumption of goods is true of the consumption of services such as the education and cultural sectors. Drama Rainbow is a beneficiary of that, but at present, too small an organisation to be of note politically to the State.

As noted above, TiE is a product of the progressive radical post war social contract in the UK, a discrete and radical art concerned with exploring the relationship between self and society. Its survival and development in China (or anywhere else) will depend upon sustaining a unity of form and content and exploring the key concern in this paper: the drama of theatre in education.

'They're only acting': Lacking social, historical and political knowledge

To do this I would like to share an anecdote. I am fortunate enough to have two plays in production at the moment in Birmingham [2019]. One of them is a community play, *The Silence,* which explores the impact of the Birmingham pub bombings planted by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in 1974, on the Irish community living in the city who collectively became a 'suspect community'. The story brings together the past experience of Birmingham's Irish community with today's Muslim 'suspect community'. This was the first production to mark the opening of The GAP's[1] Basement Theatre, committed to making political theatre for young and community audiences in a small intimate space. In a conversation with the director, Ceri Townsend, and I have had similar conversations recently with others, including Richard Holmes the Artistic Director at *Big Brum*. We were discussing the apparent inability of the young professionally trained actors she was working with to read the script [*The Silence*] accurately, often imposing words that weren't there, omitting others that were and changing the meaning of the text. Townsend noted a constant struggle over stage directions, reporting that they either didn't do them fully, ran them into lines, or often didn't execute them at all. For example, if the text said 'She searches in her bag', the actor would only pretend to do it. 'Why?', I asked. 'Because they're only acting' she replied. 'They don't think they actually have to do it.' And then Townsend (2019) made a very interesting observation:

> Obviously, that is how they are trained. The performance is generalised. It's all about them. It's as if they are unable to have empathy with the audience – to put themselves in their shoes and imagine how they experience it. It's enough to give people the gist of the play. We had to really work on empathy. It's a real challenge for them – thankfully its one they are rising to.

This is striking on a number of levels, not least regarding how professional actors are trained, but also that they are young people themselves. How do actors acquire that empathy? It's not just a technical question – about training – it's educational in the broadest sense. It's about culture, the social and historical, the political in the personal. Watching these talented and committed young actors at work, I became acutely aware of how easy it is to separate form and content. For example, as with the searching in the handbag referred to above, the stage directions state that the same woman in the play "*takes a man's checked shirt out of the basket. Begins to iron it" (The Silence)* for the duration of a very long speech. The tendency of the actor, however, was to focus on the speech as if that was somehow more important. This led to generalised 'ironing acting' rather than a precise enactment of the whole situation in which the experience of ironing out the creases in a shirt with a steam iron is critical to what and how she is speaking, and therefore the meaning of the play. And later in the same section, the same character retrieves one of her bedsheets on which neighbours have daubed an abusive message with red paint. "*She goes to the kitchen and returns with a bottle of bleach and a brush. She gets down on her knees and pours the bleach onto the sheet and begins to scrub it with the brush. Scrubs harder." (The Silence)* The stage directions state that she scrubs until she is exhausted and can do it no more, to such an extent that it triggers a miscarriage shortly after. Once again, the tendency, initially, was to act scrubbing the sheet, rather than enact seeing and reading the words, cognising the meaning, and experiencing trying to scrub the threat away with bleach (creating an image resonating 'miscarriage' on the sheet in doing so). This is essential not only for the actor but for the audience to make meaning, hence I think, Townsend's reference to the need for empathy with the audience. This emphasis on enactment rather than acting is crucial for the drama of theatre in education. Acting closes down meaning, the actor has already fixed and determined what she is showing for the audience. Enactment is a process of becoming for actors which opens meaning up so that the audience can imaginatively enter actively onto the 'stage'. In this sense, enactment is closer to play, it is also the imagination in action. And it is through the imagination that we connect with the basis of our humanness.

I offer these examples to demonstrate how theatre can become conventionalised, form and content separated, and meaning generalised, which renders it superficial. This undermines the art form itself.

Furthermore, theatre has become another commodity to be consumed. Actors, like theatre, have become a commodity in the marketplace, where the emphasis is on producing what they think directors want (Spatz, 2010). It cultivates an instinct in the actor for theatrical effect, in the cases of the ironing and scrubbing of the sheet referred to above, this generated acting that was awash with generalised emotion, in this case fear. But fear is never generalised, it is specific and shows itself in manifest ways, even in the same person, depending on the situation. The theatrical effect offers a reductive shortcut rather than the enactment of a dramatic event through the precise use of emotion, a particular moment of fear in a young woman, on that particular day, at a particular

moment of history, in that particular context - what the totality of the site and situation actually is.

Reflecting on this reminded me of another conversation that took place one lunch time during a weekend of workshops I facilitated at the beginning of the rehearsal process. Given its subject matter, *The Silence* has a strong historical context. One of the actors in the play is of Indian Punjabi Muslim origin. I overheard him saying to another actor, 'You know India and Pakistan were once the same country, don't you?' The other actor said that she did. I intervened to say that I never thought I would hear a conversation like this in Britain given our imperial past. 'I'm not being funny' he replied 'it's just that young people don't know. I always have to tell them.' Then the other actor he was talking to acknowledged that she only knew because she watched a documentary on the BBC about a year ago. 'It was some anniversary I think' she said. I assumed she was referring to the 70th Anniversary of the Partition of India by the British. I was assured by everyone in the room that the history of India under colonial rule is not on the history curriculum in the UK. It raises the question of how can actors play the complex and nuanced situation of *The Silence* without such knowledge? How far back exactly are they expected to go in the Stanislavskian pursuit of a character's back story? Evidently not far enough, because the problem goes much deeper. It's cultural, a sensibility, society's self-knowledge. It relates to grasping the movement of the world through people as social, historical, political, human, beings. This is the totality of the site of drama. And without dramatising this site we are left with generalisation and empty theatre effects.

In his book *Cultural dementia: how the West has lost its history and risks losing everything else,* historian David Andress (2018) argues that the former colonial powers of the 'West' have abandoned political attention to history, and with it the understanding that this gives us a clear empirical grounding in how we have reached our present situation. Andress (2018) argues that in Britain, France and the USA, the 'historical stories' employed in public debates are dangerous myths. Such a view certainly explains the senile fantasies of the European Research Group[2] dragging 'debate' in the British parliament back to the 19th Century during the recent Brexit crisis. Of course, they can only do this because of widespread ignorance, the ideological master narratives perpetuated in the media, and the de-politicisation (or perhaps I should say *the* politicisation?) of the history curriculum which selectively remembers our imperial past as a force for good in the world, rather than a more balanced counter memory which records imperial wrongs (Rasch, 2019).

When an actor enters into the situation in *The Silence,* they are entering into this social, historical and political site embodied in the roles in it, whether the roles are conscious of it or not. The actors playing the role, need to be conscious of it, but the tools required to be so cannot be fashioned in a rehearsal process alone. And in this sense our ability to read what is in a text is deeply influenced by the ideological spectacles we see the text through. This relates not only to the words spoken in the play, but the actions described

too.

'Being aware': Shifting our understanding

In an attempt to process the conversations I've shared above, I found myself revisiting Davis' (2010) edition of *Gavin Bolton: essential writings*. In this collection Davis included Bolton's paper entitled 'It's all theatre'. Its central argument is that whereas the history of drama education has been marked by a concern shared among its pioneers to establish a separateness from theatre, now is the time to recognise that all dramatic activities are rooted in theatre. Bolton asks:

> *What is the audience actively doing? - 'reading into an action or object and treating it as fiction'*. This I believe provides the key to defining theatre. Thus not only must the audience (including the 'spectator' component of the players) see what is going on as something created, they must further see it 'as meaningful in a fictional context', that is, going beyond the immediate sense of the action by pointing to something beyond itself. (Davis, 2010, p.167, italics in original)

Bolton highlights the social dimension that characterises his work, where 'self-spectatorship' is an important part of the process requiring an awareness that what is being seen has been created in order to achieve a shift in understanding. Combining this understanding of how theatre works with how children create in drama in education, Bolton drew on Vygotsky to argue that just as in child's play and in theatre, "Action retreats to second place and becomes the pivot for meaning" (Davis, 2010, pp.169). The professionally trained young actors discussed above did not have an awareness that action becomes the pivot for meaning. They saw themselves as somehow removed or distant from the socio-political context of the play, as professionals charged with *delivering* a performance in accordance with the director's intent, but which somehow did not involve them personally. Their behaviour revealed a separation between content and form, feeling that they could 'play' or portray the characters without living through the experience. Underlining the importance of socio-cultural activity in creating drama is where Bolton (Davis, 2010) recognises a deep synergy between drama and theatre. He calls for an awareness of the value of structure and form, within an implicit recognition of content, values and the wider socio-historical, political and cultural rules that surround us:

> I believe what is searched for is a 'structure', the underlying dynamic governing an action or the placing of an object. The spectator asks … 'What does the empty chair amount to?' What are the possible underlying values or rules or parameters or laws?
>
> But it is its hidden, structural content that can only be discovered if there is someone asking, 'What might be the values, causes, parameters, rules or laws here in this particular fictional context?' This, I believe, is what often happens when a child plays at 'being mother'. The very phrase that I used above 'playing at being mother' takes us in the wrong direction, for

> when s/he plays s/he is not pretending to be mother, but rather, s/he is posing the more generalising question of 'What are the rules here — in my 'mother's context?' — and this is theatre in the broad sense I am advocating. (Davis, 2010, p.179)

I would add that what the child is doing is focussing on 'motherness', on *being* in order to experience and explore her values and the social norms and rules which surround her in this role. She is dramatising the self within the social and political context, through the personal. There are interesting connections between what Bolton is referring to and what Bond would call playing the situation. In the case of the young professional actors rehearsing *The Silence*, they were relying on a training which equips them to approximate the drama and create effect without exploring the totality of the situation. The 'structure', the underlying dynamic governing the situation, is sacrificed for what is ultimately, though unintentionally, a superficial fix lacking drama and excluding the audience.

Theatre with drama at its heart

In Davis' and Bolton's understanding above, theatre provides the form, and what is dramatised using the form provides the content. It is my contention that increasingly we are training actors, and audiences, to use or read form. Consequentially the process of asking 'What does the empty chair amount to?' is circumnavigated. When the child subordinates action to meaning in play she is asking the question: what does this mean? When form is separated from content we don't question the presence of the chair, or even notice it, or the question has already been answered for us by the theatre maker and we have no meaning to make ourselves: the gap is filled for us. The space to ask is filled for us, often with abstract symbolism. We are left with a form of empty aestheticism. But as Bond notes in the foreword to Nicholson's (2009) *Theatre as Education* "The aesthetic is given cognitive meaning only in drama, a truth which an age of irresponsibility denied. Theatre may help you find yourself in society, drama requires you find society in you" (xii). So, there is 'no drama without theatre' - in the sense that without theatre form there are no underlying values or parameters or laws as Bolton would have it - and therefore no meaning to be made. I would go so far as to contend that much theatre is created without any drama in it at all.

Theatre with drama at its heart has defined the best TiE practice for the last 50 or so years. In fact, it defines the best theatre full-stop. But this awareness, this struggle for clarity, and to theorise it, is what has made TiE a radical discrete art form and it is not only under threat from funding perspective but also from a reductionist approach in what has become the applied theatre industry. Applied Theatre is a problematic term for me, and you could be forgiven for thinking at times that it's a form in itself, when it is of course a vague umbrella term. TiE, like DiE, is often categorised, for example, with Museum Theatre under Applied Theatre. But is Museum Theatre a form or context for theatre performance? TIE, like DiE, are art forms underpinned by coherent and holistic philosophical, aesthetic and pedagogical principles. While I acknowledge that TiE

practice continues to influence other forms of theatre for children and young people, any argument that this represents some kind of evolution and continuity in new forms of applied theatre is, to my mind, a specious one. Cherry picking techniques from TiE practice and applying in different contexts without embracing the art form of TiE as a whole separates form and content.

The unity of form and content is praxis based, and much of our theorised practice is in large part thanks to DiE and pioneers like Heathcote and Bolton which greatly influenced the work of SCYPT TiE companies. I would also like to acknowledge the work of playwright and director Geoff Gillham (See What Life is For: An Analysis of Dorothy Heathcote's 'Levels' of Explanation, Theatre and Education Journal,1988; What is TiE, SCYPT Journal No ,1993; Six Plays for Theatre in Education and Young People, Trentham 2011), TiE's greatest pioneer, who did more than anyone to bring the influence of DiE into TiE, and in so doing, unite the social with the political through the personal.

In many respects this has always been at the heart of theatre; dramatising the 'desperate' human condition through the dilemmas different characters face. But how to do this unrestrained by predetermined ideological narratives remains the challenge. How do we see the situation for what it is and how do we see it in ourselves? Brecht struggled in my own view to achieve this. Essentially Brecht focussed on the objective, as he saw it, certainly the social, and pays little attention to the subjective, the personal. His method counterposed points of view or confirmed them through narration, titles, song and other forms of dramatic commentary. It is at this juncture that Edward Bond becomes a critical figure. And along with Geoff Gillham, Davis has done more than most to bring the work of Edward Bond into TiE, and with it a concrete struggle for a new form of theatre which has drama at its centre. Bond's relationship with SCYPT reaches back to the 1970s but it was his relationship to Big Brum between 1995-2015 that has been most significant in this respect because the collaboration produced ten new plays for young people consciously striving to create a new form of theatre with drama at the centre that frees the spectator from the ideological spectacles I referred to earlier.

Drama and the political

Having foregrounded theatre, it is timely to define what I mean by drama. In outlining my perspective I want to acknowledge the formative role that Edward Bond, as well as Geoff Gillham and David Davis, has played in shaping what I mean by drama and the political. The most powerful drama doesn't deal with the issues of drugs, smoking, bullying, knife crime, the dangers of social media etc., in isolation. These problems may be part of a dramatic situation because they are part of contemporary society, but they are incidental to drama's main purpose: what it is to be human. Drama does not prepare children to enter society but their humanness; what Bond has described as the "Promethean self", the "rightful discontent of being human*"* (Bond, 2007). This is not a problem that can be 'solved'. To deal with 'issues' without also asking what it is to be human is a distortion: but values are acquired only through the imagination. The universe

or natural world that is independent of human beings observes natural or physical laws, but it has no ethical or moral values. These have to be created and they are created by human consciousness, and it depends upon our capacity for self-reflection and to empathise with the situation of others. This is acquired through the imagination. The imagination then, is the source of both self-knowledge and the human in us. And because the imagination is a specific form of human consciousness it is therefore also a form of reality. Drama is the imagination in action. In drama, imagination animates the 'other', by which I mean it recognises the existence of other people and their needs. We must take full account of this and in doing so it makes us socially and personally engaged because we not only see an 'other' to ourselves but by dint of this see ourselves in the 'other'. This is how we meet ourselves on the 'stage' when we engage in drama. The engagement is felt, and it is through this felt connection that ideas we meet on the 'stage' concretely connect to our own personal lives and the decisions we make as a result are political. The politics relate to self-government. In drama this self-government means taking responsibility for the situation and therefore for ourselves, but because drama is a social art form with social implications (which mirrors life in all its fundamental structures) it also means taking responsibility for others, this creates a unity between the social and the political in the personal.

When we are working for this dimension in the drama of theatre in education, there is no message, no right or wrong answer. Young people and children use another's situation in order to learn how to be themselves. That is what drama uses theatre form for: it accesses the audience or participant to what is being dramatised in order to enter other people's subjective selves. You have to put yourself (subjectively) not just in the other person's situation. You put yourself in their mind to know how they live in their situation. You have to enter their reality. While research in non-humans lacks empirical evidence at the moment, only our species has unequivocally been shown to do that (Adriaense et al., 2020). Citing Singer and Lamm (2009), Adriaense et al. (2020) note that,

> Broadly speaking, empathy allows us to respond to and even experientially share the feelings of others, and thus to better understand and relate to their inner emotional and mental states (62).

Being human is always a cultural, shared, creation and when we enter the situations and minds of others in a drama that engages us with the social world, in all its contradictions, it brings that world home to the self and in turn we can feel at home in it. It harnesses the relationship between self and society - and everybody, whoever they are, and whatever their situation, needs to be at home in the world. It is what Bond has called the human imperative (*Young Civilization* Letter to Big Brum, 7 May 2007), and he argues that it creates our need for justice. This is because the infant's creation of a self, is the child's way of seeking to be at home in the world. It creates its self by interpreting and interacting with its environment and learning how to survive in the world. In doing so the child gives meaning to society and to itself. The need for justice - to be at home in the world - arises out of this process. The meaning of justice will of course shift with history, but the need is innate in the new born. This is why Bond calls it the human imperative. It is a paradox

because there is a conflict between something permanent and something always in the process of change – a conflict between self and society, but as society is also in us, we are in conflict with ourselves too. According to Bond,

> "Drama is our only means of *enacting* humanness in the face of the necessary contrivances and compromises of culture and law. It is the agon of Antigone and Creon." (*Young Civilization*)

In my opinion, this conflict is the drama of political theatre in the true sense of the word.

A symbiotic relationship between DiE, TiE and politics

The symbiotic relationship between drama and politics has been corrupted by the commodification of culture in a modern technological age. Human beings have become so integrated into the logic of the market place, which knows the price of everything but understands the value of little else, it fractures experience, human identity and the self (Banda, 2020). Through market ideology society speaks through us, our story becomes absorbed into society's story. Although people post more online about themselves now,

> "…technology's commodification of human identity promotes people to privatise their inner selves from the public" (Banda, 2020, p. 4),

leading to the undermining of social solidarity, and increased alienation. In a conversation with Sean Illing, social and cultural 20th and 21st century historian Michael Bess (2015, 2016) challenges us to ask the right questions about changes in society and

> "What does it mean for a human being to flourish?" (Illing, 2018).

For those of us working in DiE and TiE, it means creating drama that removes the ideological spectacles of actors, audience and participants, so that the confrontation between self and society can occur.

This is the power of tragedy, and the tragic, arguably the comedic also, because its extremities are present in every drama. The most powerful TiE engages the Promethean self because children and young people need it, because they experience all the fundamental experiences that go to the heart of being human, in their own way, just as we do: love, grief, joy, fear, hate etc., and the need to make sense of it. They need the space to see themselves and their situation on the stage – and by stage I use the broadest definition of the word. The imagination is always expressed in action, and like Shakespeare's truth 'will out'. This is because the human imperative for justice which is rooted in imagination is either creative (more human) or distorted and destructive (ideologised), and it must be acted upon.

> "Imagination is either creative or destructive. There is no passive state in between. We need to imaginatively understand human problems so that they – and we – do not become destructive. We solve them only by being creative. It is not the vitality of our imagination that makes this necessary: it is the urgency of the problems. This makes imagination the basis of human education" (Bond personal letter, 1996).

As Bond himself has noted, someone had to imagine the gas chambers at Auschwitz before they were designed and built. This is an act of a corrupted imagination put to an

ideologised and destructive use.

When we create drama in our TiE programmes we seek to penetrate ideology and create gaps in meaning that are filled by the participants. By harnessing the creativity of the imagination, we create an event *in* us. This does not allow us to sit idly in judgement on the 'other' or the foreign, or casually reassure ourselves that *we* would never do *that*. No, we are confronted by the potential to be destructive that is in us all, and our choice is whether to embrace that reality or deny it, to be more or less human in ourselves. Most importantly, to see society in the self or to shut it out. But I would argue that drama doesn't make judgements for us, that is our responsibility – that is choosing how we shall live. Understanding this need for drama and its function in society requires forms that can remove the spectacles of ideology, and to do that we need a form of theatre that structures this process. This brings me back to the young professional actors discussed above.

Enactment: Opening gaps in TiE

The second of my plays in production in 2019 was an adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 novella *The Strange Case of Dr. Jeykll & Mr. Hyde*, written for Big Brum (Cooper, 2018). I had the opportunity to watch artistic director Richard Holmes working with actors on the opening of the play. These are the stage directions:

> 1886. London. Night. A back street. A thick fog.
>
> To the right, a street corner. To the left is the door to a rundown building. The paint on the door is flaking and there is a crack running scar-like across it. The handle is functional.
>
> Depiction: A startled Mr. Enfield is stood on the opposite side of the street, between the door and the street corner looking over towards the corner.
>
> Action: Off: a collision, stamping, a small child's screams. Enfield strains to see more around the corner through the fog without crossing the road. A child's dolly lands in the road. Hyde appears, spiralling around the corner, a shawl wrapped around his boot which he untangles with the use of his other boot. He kicks it away and calmly makes his way towards the door. The crying continues. Enfield watches Hyde and then looks back towards the corner. A commotion is building off – doors opening and people calling, the child crying.

Watching, it was noticeable that once again the actors had real difficulty in reading what

was actually on the page. They were rushing the moment – only half executing each stage direction in order to get to the first exchange between Enfield and Hyde because that is where they assumed the real drama lay. We all know Hyde is 'evil' and what he has just done, trampling a small child under foot is horrifying, but all the energy was focussed on showing or acting a generalised evil. Playing the character rather than the situation. But what does 'evil' look like? And what does evil look like in this particular context?

Holmes, the director, began to break the situation down so that we could see what it actually is and is focussed on: Hyde appears, spirals around the corner, a shawl wrapped around his boot which he untangles with the use of his other boot. He kicks it away and calmly makes his way towards the door. Gradually by working in microscopic detail on the image, action and object in this site/situation (Bond, 2000), we were able to explore through enacting the situation. What exactly does 'spiralling' mean? How does he spiral and why? How does he untangle himself from the child's shawl? How did it get wrapped around his boot? How does he kick it away?

This process opens up gaps. We have to really empathise with the audience and allow them to see for themselves a small child being trampled into the ground by Hyde through how the shawl is used. In the enactment of the situation, then, the actor is a mediator through which the play speaks and through which the audience speaks to the play. It's not a question of finding the inner motivations of the character, but playing the play. As Davis (2014) puts it:

> [Bond] means start enacting: start to lay bare the processes which enable, or deprive us of, our humanity.

Acting closes down meaning. Enactment opens meaning up and the world becomes an open question. We can achieve this in *Dr. Jeykll & Mr. Hyde* by working with the shawl in time and space and action, working on the totality of the site, every aspect *of* the situation – the collision off stage to the apprehending of Hyde at his door - moment by moment, each step is part of the map we are making. We cannot afford to miss one single step. Gradually the situation reveals itself to us and we are confronted by our own self and values through the event it creates in us, and we have to make choices.

Hyde of course is very calm when Enfield confronts him and says,

> "I am naturally helpless if you choose to make a scandal of this. A gentleman always wishes to avoid a scene. Name your price" (Episode One, Cooper, 2018).

And we realise that the centre of the drama is not concerned with evil acts and inequality in Victorian London, but hypocrisy. We sentimentalise children and childhood but capitalism depends upon their abuse and exploitation. And Hyde is not the hypocrite; he is the most honest person in the story – that is Jekyll. Hyde's degeneracy is not the atavistic descent into the underclass which so fuelled the fears of bourgeois society at the time, but the logical outcome of middle class hypocrisy. Stevenson played on those fears but he could see society in the self, and he was a visionary who anticipated our present

reality. Jenny Davidson notes in the introduction to the Barnes and Noble edition (Stevenson, 2004):

> …Jekyll makes the discovery 'that man is not truly one, but truly two'.

Is this an insight endorsed by Stevenson, or does Jekyll display a pathological understanding of his own relation to society? Both may be true, as the sentence that follows suggests a grandiose, even monstrous but nonetheless persuasive vision of the fragmentation of personality in the modern world. Jekyll speculates that his discovery that man is two will be followed by far more extraordinary developments:

> 'Others will follow, others will outstrip me on the same lines; and I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens'. (p.58)

The virtue of Victorian England reveals itself as great a myth as the present European Research Group's (ERG) fantasy of a new British Empire 2.0.: ideologised values imposed on lived reality that divides the self. Stevenson [1886] anticipates the impact of technology and the market on the fractured self of those who will come after Jekyll. 'Empire 2.0' was first coined in March 2017 when it was reported that Whitehall officials had used the term to describe plans for Britain's post-Brexit trading relationship with the Commonwealth (Olusoga, 2017). According to historian David Olusoga in *The Guardian* (2017),

> "It is a fanciful vision of the future based on a distorted misremembering of the past. It's a delusion and, like all delusions, has the potential to lure us into a false sense of security and lead us to make bad decisions."

Today, Britain possesses little of the political, financial, industrial, technological or military advantages that characterised Empire 1.0. Nevertheless, such notions feed the frenzied nostalgia that characterises the ERG's fantasies about 'making Britain great again' (Hare, 2019; Miliband, 2019; O'Toole 2018; Shafak, 2019).

Conclusion

Who am I? Who can tell me who I am? David Davis chose this as the title of the conference. It is no coincidence that this exploration of the dramatic search for the social self has characterised the power of educational drama and the drama in theatre-in-education at its best for half a century. The search though, becomes more entwined with the commoditisation of culture. Many voices in the field of DiE and TiE acknowledge globalisation, but until Davis' *Imagining the Real* (2014), too few had done more than suggest ways that young people can be better prepared to live in a globalised world. As stated earlier, drama does not prepare children to enter society but enter their humanness. It is often easier to avoid the problem by separating form and content, as the experience of the young actors discussed above testifies to. To reiterate once more, Theatre in Education (TiE) is a radical, discrete theatre form which enables young people and children to make meaning of the world they inhabit and the future they can shape. This requires the enactment of the relationship between self and society that creates an event

on both the 'stage' and in the participants, penetrating imposed ideological meanings. It has been my intention to reflect on the importance of the social, historical and political in the personal, to chart the totality of the site of drama involving children and young people as social, historical, political, human, beings. Without dramatising this site we are left with generalisation and empty theatre effects.

I conclude by citing Davis (2014):

> "We are culturally insane. We are complicit in driving ourselves and the planet to destruction. We have glimpses of what is happening and momentarily look to see if there is a brake but then let those in power crack the whip and hurtle us more rapidly into the crisis. Unless we are able to get greater clarity about our situation and develop new forms of drama then we only aid the process of self-destruction."(p. 2).

Realising the drama of theatre-in-education is part of the process of finding those new forms, I am deeply grateful to have David Davis alongside us in the struggle.

Notes

1. The_GAP is a youth and community arts project organisation based in Balsall Heath, Birmingham. The_GAP welcomes some of society's most vulnerable and marginalised to make sense of the world through creative and cultural action. It is unique in Birmingham, and it too struggles to survive, fill the void created by the cuts to local authority provided youth services.

2. ERG: The European Research Group is a research support group for those Conservative Members of Parliament who choose to subscribe, defined by its opposition to the UK's membership of the European Union. Founded in 1993, it is a far right influential grouping within the Party that serves an annual average of 21 MPs including cabinet members. The group's focus is the single issue of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. The ERG is currently seeking to engineer a No deal Brexit. Given a lack of transparency it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of ERG supporting MPs, although current estimates range that it is between 35-70 of the 313 Conservative MPs in Parliament. In January 2018 Jacob Rees-Mogg was elected as the group's chairman, taking over from Suella Braverman.

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Botheredness: Stories – Stance – Pedagogy

by Hywel Roberts

Published by Independent Thinking Press, Carmarthen, Wales, UK 2023 ISBN: 978-178135409-4

Reviewed by Margaret Branscombe

Botheredness by Hywel Roberts is a charming book. Newly opened from its packaging and lying on the coffee table, my husband who is not a teacher, picked it up before I'd had a chance to look inside, read the introduction and declared "You're going to enjoy this, it's really funny". And it is. For 'Botheredness' is a personal and beguiling work which weaves together classroom pedagogy and practice as experienced by Roberts in his life as a 'travelling teacher'. Previously he had been a Secondary teacher and there are elements of memoir interspersed with countless references to movies, TV programmes and music that provide a backdrop to his life beyond the classroom. The many footnotes needed to explain these references, along with the captions, drawings, quotations, and bulleted lists that are scattered throughout the text make it a very 'busy' book that matches Roberts' undoubted enthusiasm for teaching. These layers of content, however, intentionally serve to build a picture of what does and does not constitute the central tenet of his practice - 'botheredness'. Essentially Roberts defines 'botheredness' in the classroom as

> …ensuring schooling is about children…

and he offers up the importance of *stories, stance* and *pedagogy* for making this happen.

Stories and narratives are at the heart of Roberts' teaching because of their ability to make memorable connections, enhance understanding and offer protection into learning - sentiments that will resonate comfortably with this readership. Roberts' methodology is clearly steeped in a Drama in Education context, yet the word 'drama' does not appear until page 83. Here,

> …drama and enquiry pedagogy…

are offered up as,

> …ace vehicle(s) where children can stand in the shoes of people living other histories than their own. (p. 83)

Whilst I understand Roberts' intent to make his approach of teaching 'botheredness' accessible to all teachers, I'm not sure how realistic this is for those unfamiliar with Drama in Education methods, although the Afterword which lists the applied drama conventions does go some way to addressing this issue. To be fair, in his introduction to the book, Roberts makes it clear that he is not asking for readers to merely copy what he does, but to

> …consider and reflect on where you're up to in your educational journey…to develop knowledge acquisition with warmth and optimism. With botheredness. (p. 6)

And in an amusing anecdote involving glitter and Viking shields, many teachers will recognise the act of 'doing' a particular activity because,

> …it's Week Three…

in the scheme of work. Whilst acknowledging the prevailing climate that undermines teacher professionalism, he appeals for teachers to question if they are promoting a 'pedagogy of poverty' (doing for the sake of doing) or one of 'richness' where children

> …develop motivation for learning.

In other words, if we want the children to be bothered, teachers need to be bothered and 'botheredness' can only emerge from us being bothered enough to question why we do what we do. However, Roberts is enough of a realist to chillingly observe that

> …many teachers [are] entering the profession believing that the pedagogy of poverty is what teaching actually is.

Against a growing backdrop of 'teaching by numbers', he is fighting a tough battle and I applaud him for trying but when I read,

> We need to push back against cold mediocrity and embrace warmth, imagination, transformation practise and botheredness… (p. 50)

I wonder if those responsible for current education policy would even recognise what those words look like in a classroom. Moreover, Roberts identifies perhaps the most urgent and pressing concern of our time when he writes,

> ….we don't just need folk to get into teaching and stay a couple of years we need heroes who will stay some distance. (p. 120)

Being bothered in today's schools takes endurance and the current teacher retention crisis shows endurance is under threat.

However, pessimism aside, much of the book consists of detailed descriptions of lessons that offer hopeful glimpses into what teaching can look like. In these lessons children become deeply *invested* in the stories and Roberts' use of the word 'investment' as opposed to 'engagement' is critical here. His observation around engagement is that engaged, i.e. busy, children are not necessarily learning much. Whereas investment in learning happens when children are guided to take on more ownership of how a narrative unfolds so that the stories become their stories and the learning that results is purposeful. Roberts describes the first step to this investment 'buy in' as stemming from a carefully crafted question, 'If we're living in the time of the Vikings, what don't we have?' or the proposition 'Let's say…' Such verbal ponderings are invitations into what Roberts calls 'the middle ground',

> …where we respond rather than react to things. (p. 71)

It is a space that requires both teacher and student to activate imagination, thus opening up a collaborative botheredness. However, Roberts does not present a misty eyed Hollywood version of these classroom moments and recalls the kind of answers – such

as Greggs[1] to the Viking question above - that have the potential to derail a lesson. But in the true spirit of botheredness he observes that when

> …the kids are throwing eggs, they just need help making the omelette…

and he demonstrates how saying 'yes' to all ideas is the mark of a bothered teacher. Indeed, with the Viking project, saying 'yes' to the possibility of Greggs led to a purposeful discussion about Viking diets, farming practices and climate.

In summary, 'Botheredness' is worth reading because of the real life student stories that have occurred as a result of the stories that Roberts has told in classrooms and what they have collectively *done* with those stories to create meaningful lessons. I hope this book falls into the hands of newly qualified teachers *and* those who are experienced yet still have some reserves left for trying a different approach beyond the 'Week Three' restraint of curriculum delivery. The chapter titled *Curriculum Adventures* includes a recollection of a lesson based on Harper Lee's 'To Kill a Mockingbird' and it is breathtakingly beautiful. We may not all be able to teach like Hywel, but we can all be bothered to tell the story of those who do. And we must.

[1] Greggs is a popular British bakery chain, known for produce such as sausage rolls, sandwiches and doughnuts.

Biographies

Adam Bethlenfalvy is Associate Professor, Department of Arts Studies and Art Pedagogy, Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church, Budapest, Hungary. He has worked in the field of Theatre in Education (TiE) and Drama Education since 1998. He is one of the founding members of InSite Drama, an NGO working in the field of drama and theatre education. This organisation has conducted a national survey of the field of Educational Theatre and played a crucial role in defining terminology. InSite also participates in large scale international projects, conducts training and creates theatre projects. Adam has worked as an actor/teacher in Kerekasztal TiE Company in Hungary and Big Brum TiE Company in the UK. He works in the outreach department of the Örkény Theatre. Adam frequently works as a drama teacher and has directed contemporary plays in different theatres in Hungary. He is the course director for the Drama in Education course at the Károli Gáspár University in Hungary.

Margaret Branscombe has enjoyed a diverse teaching career in the US and the UK. She has taught at the primary, secondary and higher education level in state and private schools. In 2015 she completed a PhD in Literacy Studies from the University of South Florida. Her research focus was on Drama as a tool for boosting literacy across the curriculum and she has published two books on this subject*. She is now embarking on a freelance career as a Drama Practitioner in the community. *Teaching Through Embodied Learning: Dramatizing Key Concepts from Informational Texts. Routledge, 2019 Embodied Learning: Bringing Knowledge to Life for Primary and Secondary Teachers. The United Kingdom Literacy Association, 2021

Chris Cooper has worked in TIE and educational theatre and drama as an actor-teacher, director and facilitator since 1988. He is also a playwright and the author of 38 plays for TiE, children's and youth and community theatre. Cooper was the Artistic Director of Big Brum Theatre in Education Company between 1999-2015. In 2008 he created his own company, Accident Time, to develop international theatre and drama projects. His work in Europe includes long-term collaborations in Hungary, Slovenia, Malta, Greece, and Norway. In 2009 he became Consultant to Drama Rainbow, Beijing where he is now a regular visitor throughout the year. In January 2017, he became a founding member and director of Jian Xue (See & Learn), which is an NGO working in the field of educational theatre and drama in mainland China and Hong Kong. He has written widely on the theory and practice of educational theatre and drama. He has been teaching on the Masters in Drama Education Summer School at Trinity College since 2009.

David Davis retired in the year 2000 as Emeritus Professor of Drama in Education from Birmingham City University (formerly University of Central England) where he was the co-founder of and Director of the International Centre for Studies in Drama in Education and course leader for MA, MPhil and PhD studies in Drama in Education. He taught for 15 years as a drama teacher in secondary schools. Since his retirement he has taught

many courses in Ireland, Greece, Turkey, Hungary, The Czech Republic, Bosnia Hercegovina, Norway, Serbia, USA, Malta and China and taught extensively in Palestine. He has been awarded two lifetime achievement awards: The International 'Grozdanin Kikot' prize for the contribution to the development of drama education for the year 2000 and in 2012 by CAGDAS (Turkish Contemporary Drama Association) for the contribution to creative drama in Turkey. In 2001 he was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the Turkish Drama in Education Association for 'Services to Turkish Drama in Education' and in 2001 Honorary Life Membership of the National Association for the Teaching of Drama 'For services to UK drama teaching and work internationally'. His recent publications include:

2009 Editor and a 30,000-word introduction and notes to Student Edition of Saved by Edward Bond, London: Methuen; 2010 Gavin Bolton – The Selected Writings (Ed.), Trentham Books; 2011 Geoff Gillham: Six Plays for TIE and Youth Theatre, (Ed.) Trentham Books; 2014 Imagining the Real: Towards a New Theory of Drama in Education, Trentham Books at IOE Press (Translated into Arabic, Turkish and Chinese)

Bob Slederslaghs has a PhD in the arts and is a teaching artist, postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp (AP University College of Applied Sciences and Arts), Belgium.

Brian Woolland worked as a senior lecturer in theatre at the University of Reading, before resigning his post to develop a freelance career as an educator, writer and theatre director. He has written and directed plays for theatre-in-education companies and in prisons as well as in mainstream theatres. He contributed to numerous NATD conferences. His first historical novel, The Invisible Exchange, was published in 2022.

Back-copies of The Journal for Drama in Education

The following back-copies are available at £3.00 each. (Earlier back-copies are also available. Details of these can be found on the NATD website natd.co.uk). Please make cheques payable to NATD specifying the Issue you require e.g. Vol 37, Issue 2. Please write to: Guy Williams at guy.williams@natd.eu or
74 Rotherfield Crescent, Brighton, BN1 8FP.

Volume 37, Issue 1. Autumn 2022

Includes: *Poem*, Michael Rosen; *The White Paper 28th March 2022 - How our education system can level up and the case for a fully trust-led system,* Matthew Milburn; *Tipping Point, Throwing Point Why do we wait until children are in crisis to intervene?,* Viv Cohen Papier; *Belonging and Not Belonging,* Lex Butler; *The Arts and Education*, Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton; *What's happening when children are doing drama at depth?*,Geoff Gilham; *Real in All the Ways that Matter: Weaving Learning Across the Curriculum with Mantle of the Expert,* Viv Aitken, Reviewed by David Allen; *Reading Shakespeare through Drama*, Jane Coles and Maggie Pitfield, Reviewed by Chris Green; *Obituary for John Airs - 11th March 1941 – 20th August 2022*, Brian Woolland.

Volume 37, Issue 2. Spring 2023

Includes:
David Davis: *Mentor Of Drama In Education In Turkey* Selen Korad Birkiye; *Teaching Ethically in the Marketplace or Baby-sitting the Trauma* Guy Williams; *Dorothy Heathcote's 'Four Levels' Charts, with Commentary* David Allen; *Entertainment, Shakespeare and our Situation* Edward Bond talks to Lewis Frost; *Obituary for Roger Wooster* Guy Williams; *Interview with Roger Wooster, 12 August 2022, Pontypool* Interviewed by Chris Cooper.

The Mary Simpson Fund

For nearly 20 years, members of NATD who require financial assistance to attend our events have been supported by the Mary Simpson Fund. Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton were close friends of Mary. Gavin outlines the history of the woman in whose name so many teachers have been able to attend our Conferences and Regional events.

Mary Simpson nee Robson 1907-92

Having begun her career as a primary school teacher in 1924, Mary Robson was appointed to the newly set up Emergency Training College in 1946, (becoming a two-year training establishment after three years and then, in 1961 amalgamating with Neville's Cross College, Durham) under the auspices of the University of Durham. It was based at Wynyard Hall, property of Lord Londonderry whose estate is on the edge of Teesside. From the start, a feature of the college was the insistence by the Principal that it should revive the pre-war tradition of the Londonderry family of promoting the Arts by arranging concerts and play performances for the local community. This is how Mary, an artist, actress, theatre director and much-loved trainer of teachers established her reputation in the Northeast. Her early productions included 'Tobias and the Angel' and 'Peer Gynt'. One of her students at that time recalls that 'She nurtured everyone and brought out the best in them. She was kind, gentle and unassuming with a twinkle in her eye and a wonderful sense of humour.'

Such was her reputation that Professor Brian Stanley, Director of Durham University Institute of Education, in 1950 offered her the post of working with experienced Drama teachers (there was no other such post in the UK) but she turned this down because she wanted to continue to work in Art as well as Drama. Her non-acceptance of such an invitation is not without its significance in the history of UK Drama Education, for Dorothy Heathcote would not have been appointed and her whole career and influence on the world's drama teaching would have been much less influential had she accepted it. And my career too would have been seriously affected, for it was Mary Robson who introduced Dorothy and me to each other when I was appointed Durham Drama Adviser in 1961. She invited us both to tea (a popular way of entertaining guests all those many years ago!) and because I replaced Dorothy at Durham University two years later when she moved on to Newcastle, we were able to share our work for the next 30 years!

In 1969, Mary retired and in 1978 she married her cousin, John Alfred Simpson (popularly known as Alf Simpson), also an artist. She died in 1992.

Mary bequeathed a sum of money to continue the nurturing of students and young Drama teachers. In 1992, Dorothy Heathcote and Tony Grady recommended to the NATD committee of that year, that using this money a fund could be set up to enable all members to attend Conference. That fund still exists in Mary's name and continues to ensure that

all who wish to can attend our events. We are always looking for ways to top up the fund and at each conference there will be an event or activity that encourages you to contribute. Please give generously. In addition, you may like to consider paying your membership fees by standing order and adding a small monthly amount that will go directly into the fund. Please contact the Treasurer for further details and a standing order form.

If you would like to receive support from the Mary Simpson Fund, please write to the Chair of the Association indicating your reasons for needing support and the proportion of the Conference fee that you would like to receive.

The Tony Grady International Fund

Tony Grady was twice Chair of the national executive of NATD. He was an outstanding leader, always careful to develop the theory and practice of drama and theatre in education, always with the needs of the young firmly at the heart of all endeavour. Tony was also on the editorial committee of *The Journal* of NATD for seven years, again providing a focus and leadership that was second to none. Underpinning all of Tony's work was a great humanity born of which was his leadership of 'NATD to think and work as internationalists'1. He was a founder of the International Association for Drama and Theatre and Education, and led developmental work in Bosnia, Serbia and Kosova, always working to bring international delegates to NATD conferences.

In 2003 Tony died, much mourned and missed, not only for his insight and guidance, but also because he was a good mate to so many of us. When the arrangements for his funeral were being discussed his partner, Angela asked that, instead of flowers, money should be donated to NATD to create a fund for bringing international delegates to NATD conferences. In this way, through the Tony Grady fund, NATD seeks to continue, both in conviction and in action, an internationalist practice.

We are always looking for ways to top up the fund. At each conference there will be an event or activity that encourages you to contribute. Please give generously. In addition, you may like to consider paying your membership fees by standing order and adding a small monthly amount that will go directly into the fund. Please contact the Treasurer for further details and a standing order form.

If you are a practitioner from outside the UK and would like to receive support from the Tony Grady Fund or you know of someone who would benefit from it, please write to the Chair of the Association indicating your reasons for needing support and the proportion of the Conference fee that you would like to receive.

1 Margaret Higgins 18th December 2003 – letter to NATD