



Who am I?’ ‘Who can tell me who I am?’

The Importance of the Social and Political in Children’s and Young People’s Drama

Edited by
Carmel O’Sullivan, Susanne Colleary and David Davis

Foreword by Cecily O’Neill

'Who am I?'
'Who can tell me who I am?'

The Importance of the Social and Political in
Children's and Young People's Drama

Edited by
Carmel O'Sullivan, Susanne Colleary
and David Davis

First published in 2023
By Trinity Education Papers
Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Text and notes © School of Education, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Trinity Education Papers (print) ISSN 2009-6003
Trinity Education papers (online) ISSN 2009-6496

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publisher.

The rights of Carmel O'Sullivan, Susanne Colleary and David Davis to be identified as the editors of this work has been asserted by them.

Designed in Dublin by Jerry Huysmans

O'Sullivan, C., Colleary, S., & Davis, D. (2023). Who am I? Who can tell me who I am? The Importance of the Social and Political in Children's and Young People's Drama. *Trinity Education Papers*, 3 (1)

Dedication

To *Bill Roper*

You left things,
Softly, in our way.
It feels like,
Lightening.

For *David*

In profound gratitude

Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say

William Shakespeare, *King Lear*

Contents

Dedication		III
Foreword		V
Preface by Susanne Colleary, Carmel O'Sullivan, Lisa O'Keeffe		VI
Acknowledgments		VIII
List of Contributors		VIII
Introduction by Susanne Colleary, Lisa O'Keeffe, Carmel O'Sullivan, David Davis		XI
<hr/>		
... Enter		
Chapter 1:	David Davis Who Am I? Who Can Tell Me Who I Am?	01
<hr/>		
Chapter 2:	Carmel O'Sullivan and Silke Franz Unveiling the Power of Political Framing through Drama	22
<hr/>		
Flourish	Theory into Practice Papers	
Chapter 3:	Wasim Al Kurdi Memoirs of a Shoe. Drama, Art and Story: Working with Children in Palestine	41
<hr/>		
Chapter 4:	Konstantinos Amoiropoulos Approaching the real: Attempts in early years classrooms	53
<hr/>		
Chapter 5:	Chris Cooper The Drama of Theatre-in-Education	67
<hr/>		
Chapter 6:	Cao Xi 'I Disagree'—Live Through Again, and Again	82
<hr/>		
Chapter 7:	Zeki Özen and Ömer Adigüzel Youth Stake Claim On Their Future Through Drama	94
<hr/>		
Chapter 8:	Adam Bethlenfalvy Making it Real: On the Relationship of Living Through Drama and Bondian Theatre	105
<hr/>		
	Practice in Context Papers	
Chapter 9:	Guy Williams Teaching Ethically in the Marketplace or Babysitting the Trauma	120
<hr/>		
Chapter 10:	Chan, Yuk-Lan Phoebe Drama, education and society: Narrating a drama practice of social concern	135
<hr/>		
Chapter 11:	Li Yingning Introducing Drama in Education to Mainland China	145
<hr/>		
Chapter 12:	Selen Korad Birkiye David Davis' Legacy: Friend and Mentor to Drama in Education in Turkey	149
<hr/>		
Exit pursued by a bear ...		
Chapter 13:	Bill Roper (W. J. Roper) Lacanian Analysis and Drama in Education	162
<hr/>		
Chapter 14:	Drama in Education David Davis Response to Bill Roper: Preliminary remarks	178

Foreword

This important collection makes clear the range and significance of David Davis's life-long contribution to the field of drama and theatre in education. These international authors, each of whom has been inspired by his teaching and writing, demonstrate the far-reaching impact of his work,

At the heart of Davis's work is the struggle to make young people aware of the cultural, social and political worlds in which they live and to help them realise their own relationship to that world. Unashamedly political in his approach, Davis uses 'living through' drama to achieve this new awareness, employing the art form of drama, not to deliver mere propaganda but to awaken the imagination.

Imagination always asks the question 'Why?', according to the playwright Edward Bond, who became a major influence on Davis. And as every parent knows, it's the question that young humans ask again and again. Too often, the inadequate answer we give is 'Because I say so...'

For Davis, the task is to engage with students, pursuing questions and attempting to find answers by co-creating the drama. The teacher's voice is no longer dominant. Instead, there is a dialogic process. Jerome Bruner, who acknowledges that all education is political, argues that teachers need training in the skills of dialogue. Dialogue and discussion are crucial to students' learning. Edward Said, that advocate of critical thinking, claims that his best teaching doesn't come from his own ideas. Instead, his best ideas come from his teaching - in other words, from a dialogic process with his students.

I was fortunate to have been the external examiner for several of Davis's PhD students. He offered support and guidance, but always required from his students the same kind of critical self-reflection that informs his own practice. The authors in this collection, many of whom work in challenging situations and troubled locations, chart their own progress with the same kind of honesty. They work to help their students understand and articulate the contexts of their lives, they reflect on their own assumptions and weaknesses, and they experiment, make mistakes and take risks in the effort to advance their practice.

The current state of drama in education is infuriating - the elimination of the arts from the curriculum, the dearth of TiE companies, the instrumentalism of much that passes for drama education in schools, where any kind of exploration is secondary to preparing for the next exam. The struggle to achieve any kind of drama teaching that is ethical, politically aware and worthwhile may be a long one, but the passionately argued chapters in this book prove that no one is alone in the struggle.

In his chapter 'Memoir of a Shoe', Wasim Al Kurdi quotes from the poet Mahmoud Darwish, who writes that the people of Palestine suffer from 'an incurable disease called Hope'. I was reminded of the words of Pablo Neruda, half a world away: 'Our original guiding stars are struggle and hope. But there is no such thing as a lone struggle, no such thing as a lone hope'.

Cecily O'Neill

'Who am I?'

'Who can tell me who I am?'

The Importance of the Social and Political in Children's and Young People's Drama

Preface

'Who Am I? Who can tell me who I am?' is an international panoramic of voices, all of whom are speaking from within their praxis contexts, that is the social and the political in the personal when working with children and young people, through drama and theatre in education. Each contributor illuminates how they are working within the socio-political contexts as it resonates and influences the personal experiences of their participants. This collection emerged from a conference of the same name, which took place at Trinity College Dublin in March 2019. The conference was organised by the Arts Education Research Group in the School of Education, in association with ADEI (the Association for Drama in Education in Ireland). As organisers, we took great pleasure in inviting participants from across the globe to attend this once in a lifetime event, centred as it was on celebrating the life and contribution of David Davis to the field of Drama and Theatre in Education. The conference was an opportunity for many of David's former students, collaborators, friends, and colleagues, to appreciate anew his passion and drive for drama in education. It was also a chance to celebrate David's lifetime contribution to a field whose work has never been so necessary as it is now, at a precipice of deepening social, political, and environmental uncertainties across the face of the world. For many too, who had encountered David's thinking and practice only through his writing, this was an unmissable event, to experience for the first time the depth of his convictions and the passion and commitment he brings to his teaching and drama facilitation.

It was unsurprising then that the conference brought together a rich array of voices from around the globe and from different traditions and perspectives in drama and theatre in education. We gathered to discuss the central theme of the conference, that of the importance of the social and political in children's and young people's drama to ask, **'Who am I? Who can tell me who I am?'**

The conference became that rare thing, a useful sharing of ideas and practices across national and international borders; a celebration of the common ground amongst us, and an opportunity to discuss the challenges we face now and for the future, where hope is still at hand. And as can happen from sharing, from those illuminations, from the commonality and differences of experience, there emerged a holistic and organic latticework of praxis voices. Strong and fragile simultaneously, that latticework, underpins this collection. At its heart, David's original and ground-breaking ideas on drama and theatre in education threads through all chapters here, the stitches well-wrought from a lifetime's labour, they strengthen and protect. Always challenging, often controversial, David's work not only enriches our field, but his ideas also remain with us for much longer than the immediate impact of the event. This book was always going to be written.

Book Outline

As an extension then, of the 2019 conference, and from its inception, this collection set out to gather up the voices of our conference contributors. We encouraged each one to identify their own particular social/political situations and contexts in which they work and in which the young people they work with are trying to locate themselves. These chapters are framed within those clear contexts as well as highlighting the importance of an internationalist perspective. This pillar is at the heart of David's work and as such significant to this collection. In addition, the contributors also telegraph the connections between their evolving praxis over time and the enduring influences that each have taken from David's work. For drama making that gives time and space for participants to locate themselves, to search for 'for who they want to be' as they navigate and explore their personal and social worlds. Drama as meaning making where the personal is key, understood as an "ongoing dialogic process; entering into each other's consciousness and self-awareness...continuing to ask ourselves **who we are**" (Davis, 1993).

Broadly the chapters held in this work represent three clear types; Historical Contexts; Theory into Practice; and Practice in Context. Within those folds, the 13 chapters described here display a diverse a range of thoughts and approaches to drama and theatre in education. As overture, David's voice is clear to each. As dialogic process, each contributor tells of the drama. From Thatcher's United Kingdom of the 1980s and the effects of the Education Reform Act (1988) to the foundation ideology of the Turkish Republic, to the political and economic crisis of Hungary and Greece and finally the highly competitive educational environment of China. So then, across the landscape of the book, the historical, the socio-political and the personal, is played out through the drama; interrogated, rehearsed, challenged, subverted. In parallel, this collection describes the historical timeline of DiE and TiE from its radical and flourishing beginnings in the UK at the hands of Dorothy Heathcote, Gavin Bolton, Cecily O'Neill and David Davis to its subsequent decline along neo liberalist lines in the west, to the present-day growth and development in China and Turkey.

The panoramic of voices in this work illuminates the drama, as the nexus of the personal and the social/political for both practitioner/educator and their participants. Those praxis conversations are documented here, ebbing and flowing through the thinking and the doing, where voices of context and experience are heard, and where participant and teacher tell of a *felt* knowing, through lived realities on stony ground. The sharing out of those experiences, of that knowing, threads through these papers, patchworking the earth, ringing out.

Importantly, as practical and conceptual departure point, this publication opens doors to give as wide as possible an entrance for readers. Indeed, the whole thrust of the conference from which this work has sprung harboured a clear eyed vision. We were intent on breaking from the mould of conventional academic conferences. So, while this book constitutes a rigorous praxis as discourse, each contributor is writing to their own style in order to best express their work; they are not straight-jacketed into a standard academic format. As organisers, speakers and editors, this is wholly important to us.

Of necessity, this anthology is a brief segment in our field of study. It is a clipping, a selection, a *bricolage*. Its intent cannot be exhaustive on the subject, rather, we tell our stories of how we are working with children and young people through drama and theatre in education. We do so as part of that necessary dialogical process that David speaks of, a dialogic poetic, for we none of us have the whole picture. In our praxis, we work with that which can be incredibly close, which is personal. To understand the personal, we must also reach beyond it, to the cultural and political forces that influence our seeking out of 'Who am I? Who can Tell me Who I am?' That's the spirit.

Susanne, Carmel and Lisa

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to each of the authors who contributed to this book. Without their scholarship, professionalism and dedication to the field of drama and theatre in education, this book would not have been possible. We also wish to acknowledge the contribution of Lisa O'Keeffe who patiently read each chapter and supported the final proof-reading process. Our thanks to ADEI (the Association for Drama in Education in Ireland) who partnered with Trinity College in hosting the conference which gave rise to this collection. We are grateful to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, Annie Ó Breacháin and Elaine Clotworthy. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the expert assistance of Jerry Huysmans in type setting and formatting this book.

List of Contributors

Ömer Adigüzel has been acting Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts, at Ankara University, Turkey since 2017. He was the Coordinator of Culture and Art at Ankara University and the Deputy Coordinator of the Health, Culture, and Sports Department between 2012-17. A renowned figure in Turkish drama in education circles, he has received several awards for his Creative Drama publications. Ömer has been Chairperson of the Contemporary Drama Association (Çağdaş Drama Derneği) since 2003. His research interests include creative drama, museum education and drama, children's museums, cultural pedagogy, and folk dance.

Kostas Amoiropoulos is Associate Professor in Drama and Head of Studies in the Department of Early Childhood Education at Oslo Metropolitan University. He has previously worked as an early-years teacher and as the artistic director of the non-for-profit company 'Diadromes in Drama and Educational Praxis', in Athens, Greece. He completed his PhD in Drama in Education with Prof David Davies and holds degrees in Theatre Directing, Drama, Early Years Education and Primary Education.

Adam Bethlenfalvy is an Associate Professor at Károli Gáspár University in Budapest, Hungary. He is one of the founders of InSite Drama and has worked in theatre in education and across Europe for many years; as actor-teacher, director, and as facilitator. Adam completed his PhD at Birmingham City University under the supervision of Prof David Davis. His research specialism was on Edward Bond's work in *Living Through Drama*.

Chan, Yuk-LanPhoebe is Founder of Chan's Applied Theatre Lab based in the UK. Formerly Head of Performing Arts Research at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Phoebe holds extensive experience in research, drama and education practices. Phoebe convened and taught Hong Kong's pioneering Master's programme in Applied Theatre and Drama Education, co-organised by Griffith University and Hong Kong Art School. She has developed drama programmes for many NGOs, and for over a decade, worked in partnership with Oxfam in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau on Global Citizenship Education.

Susanne Colleary is a Research Fellow in the School of Education, (TCD). She has published extensively on theatre, performance and practice-based research. As a playwright, Susanne was shortlisted for the Joe Gradam award for a short radio play in the Irish Language, and has written and directed work for the Camden and Edinburgh Fringe (2021). Susanne is now working on a newly commissioned work for the stage.

Chris Cooper has worked in TIE and educational theatre and drama since 1988, including 17 years as the Artistic Director of *Big Brum* (1999-2015). He is the author of 53 plays for TIE, youth, and community theatre. He works closely with Drama Rainbow and is a founding member of the NGO Jian Xue (See and Learn) in China. His work in Europe includes long-term collaborations in Hungary, Slovenia, Malta, Greece, Norway and Ireland, where he teaches on the M.Ed. in Drama in Education in Trinity College.

David Davis retired as Emeritus Professor of Drama in Education from Birmingham City University (2000), where he was co-founder and Director of the International Centre for Studies in Drama in Education. After an extensive academic, writing and practice career, David has taught in Palestine and across the globe, including Ireland, Greece, Turkey, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bosnia Hercegovina, Serbia, and China. He has been awarded two lifetime achievement awards: the International 'Grozdanin Kikot' prize (2000) and for his contribution to creative drama in Turkey, by CAGDAS (2012).

Silke Franz is Head of the Department for Modern Foreign Languages at the Seminar for Teacher Training and Further Education (Gymnasium) Stuttgart, Germany. In the context of teacher training, she is particularly committed to the use of drama pedagogy in foreign language teaching and offers workshops for trainee teachers. Silke holds an M.Ed. in Drama in Education from Trinity College Dublin. In addition to her work in teacher training, she has been teaching English as a foreign language at a high school in Stuttgart since 2006, where she also led the drama group for over 10 years.

Selen Korad Birkiye was awarded her B.S. and M.S. from the Sociology Department in the Middle East Technical University in Turkey; her pedagogy certification from Yildiz Technical University; and her Ph.D. from Ankara University. She has been providing dramaturgy and theatre theory courses in several universities as an independent academician since 2004. In addition, Selen has been working as a dramaturg in Istanbul State Theatre since 2001 where she held the assistant artistic director role from 2009-2014.

Wasim Al Kurdi is a poet, writer, and practitioner in the field of Drama in Education. Formerly the Director of the Educational Research and Development Programme/A.M. Qattan Foundation, in Palestine. He also works as Chief Editor of Ru'a Tarbawiyya periodic educational magazine and, as referee, for the National Association for Teaching of Drama (NATD) journal. His research interests are diverse and include artistic production to aesthetic perception and drama as a context for exploring knowledge and artistic inspiration.

Lisa O'Keeffe is a Research Assistant in the School of Education in Trinity College Dublin. She is currently working with Carmel O'Sullivan on a systematic review of Phase One of Creative Youth and in the development of a set of evaluation guidelines and library toolkit for practitioners. She holds a BA in Sociology and Politics and an M.Ed. in Drama in Education from Trinity College Dublin. A theatre practitioner who directs and produces plays with local children, community wellbeing is at the heart of her work. Her PhD is centred around a creative arts programme which will explore the extent to which engagement with the Arts can contribute to better Health and Wellbeing in populations of children and young people at risk of social exclusion and disadvantage.

Carmel O'Sullivan is Head of the School of Education in Trinity College Dublin. A member of the Expert Advisory Group for Creative Ireland, she is currently leading a meta-analysis of Phase One of Creative Youth funded projects (2017-2022) and the design of an evaluation framework for Creative Youth. As a practitioner researcher, she developed and teaches on an arts-based work readiness programme for young people facing significant barriers to entering the workplace (Career LEAP). Carmel's interdisciplinary research interests are in the areas of drama and special educational needs, creativity and inclusivity in education.

Zeki Özen was awarded his PhD at Ankara University, Turkey in 2018. Zeki is a board member of the Turkish Contemporary Drama Association. Over many years, he has worked as a drama teacher across both the university and community environment, holding various positions in the field of facilitation and training. Since 2010, Zeki has been working in Elementary Education, for the Faculty of Educational Sciences, at Ankara University.

Bill Roper worked at Birmingham City University from 1978 to 2013 as a Senior Lecturer in Social Psychology mainly within the School of Sociology. He worked with David Davis on the PGCE and M.A. Drama in Education courses and Doctoral programme. He was committed to teaching and developing psychology within interdisciplinary contexts and to finding a social psychology that both built upon and was adequate to the arts, theatre and drama in education, publishing some 12 papers in that field. Sadly Bill passed away in 2021 and his chapter is being published posthumously.

Guy Peter Williams qualified as a Special Needs teacher in 1982 with a degree in Cultural Studies. Teaching mainstream drama since 1983, he studied full time for David Davis' MA in 1991. He joined the National Association for the Teaching of Drama (NATD) in 1988, becoming its Chair from 1997-2003. He is currently a member of the Journal Committee. Guy now works as a teacher in a Pupil Referral Unit in Brighton.

Cao Xi is a Creative Director with Drama Rainbow Education Centre and an Executive Director of Jian Xue International Education & Culture Institute in China. A writer, director, and a drama teacher, Cao Xi has spent several years developing a radical form of political drama and theatre for young people in China. He has also translated David Davis' book *Imagining the Real*, and several of Edward Bond's works into Mandarin.

Li Yingning is a board member of Jian Xue International Education and Culture Institute and Artistic Director to Li Yingning Drama Studio & Youth theatre. For many years, Li Yingning has introduced drama in education to China's universities and communities. Now retired, she is a visiting professor to Shanghai Theatre Academy and the University of Communication in Nanjing, China. She is the preeminent advocate of drama in education and young people's theatre in the Chinese speaking world.



Introduction

A Story Made Possible

Bruce Jackson (1997) talks about the stories of daily life as being consistently revised and honed; they are dependent on, and cater to, who is listening. Further, Jackson believes that storytelling performances are often tuned and modulated. They depend on who is listening, just as those *who* are listening may well tune and modulate their own diverse responses to the storytelling performance. The story is protean, the story is living, the story serves one purpose today and another tomorrow, or in other words the story is told and retold in the service of a set of particular ends (Bruce in Colleary, 2015).

In the spirit of this thinking and from an editorial perspective, we are aware that the complexity of the works under consideration here is simultaneously eclectic and specific. What we sense throughout however, is the tensile strength of narrative, constructed through the complexities and power of language, open to multiple interpretations, symbolic of its freedoms, contingencies and restraints. As editors, we tell that story. Yet, this is also partial and we do not colonise. We say, these chapters have *made it possible to tell* a story about story itself; diverse, adaptive, resistant, regressive, for both the teller and the listener, as the “cycle of adoption, adaption and incorporation goes on” (Jackson, 2002, p. 20). In some way, we all live in this story weave. The thread that is woven in, the thread that runs through, visualises for us, the individual in the collective and the collective in the individual. Threads within threads, for:

it is in only one small section of the complete idea we have of [a person] that we are capable of feeling any emotion; indeed it is only in one small section of the complete idea [a person has] of themselves that [they are] capable of feeling any emotion either.

(Marcel Proust in Ochs and Capp, p. 22)

We none of us have the whole picture. This tapestry.

Throughout the chapters of this collection part of David Davis' life achievements are visible in the development and establishment of Drama in Education (DiE) and Theatre in Education (TiE) globally. Davis' work transcends cultural and political barriers, and this book describes a person sensitive to and respectful of diverse socio-political systems, but at the same time as a self-proclaimed socialist, eager to hold up a critical lens to those who engage with his teaching.

Bringing together contributions from across the globe, each chapter departs from the personal, describing how Davis' teachings infiltrated personal practice and then subsequently carries the reader into the socio-political realm: the wider historical reality in which each author resides. Davis (2014) endeavours "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). The authors display as diverse a range of thoughts and approaches to drama and theatre in education as they do socio-political backgrounds, reflecting both the multiplicity of practice within the field and its global reach. Just as the self is in society and society is in the self, involving a perpetual exchange and melding of oneself with what and who surrounds us, each author strives to contextualise their practice.

The book mimics a dialogic process between key practitioners in the field in which they debate and deliberate the theory underpinning their practice. A theme running through all chapters is that of creating moments of crisis in drama and the need to question the dominant and often latent ideologies in society by creating gaps in meaning. Bond (2003, 2006) labels this a Drama Event (DE), in which participants are invited to uncover the layers of socialisation they have undergone, and in which they have become so entrenched that they are almost invisible to them. The idea that a crisis brings about change is by no means exclusive to drama practice. Change and transformation have been explored through the disciplines of philosophy, psychology, sociology and beyond. Turner (1967) and Van Gennep's (1908) concept of transformation where change is triggered on entering a transitional liminal space of confusion, uncertainty and crisis, resulting in an altered state of being is one such example. Badiou's understanding of change also resonates; when an entirely incalculable and unexpected event shatters the status quo, altering "a world so radically that, at one and the same time, an old world is destroyed and a new one is assembled in the clearing opened up by the demolition of what was" (Badiou, 2006, p. 417). This 'event' "pierces a hole through previously upheld knowledge" (Badiou, 2001, p. 45), in much the same way as our drama practices aspire to 'crack open' participants' "previous understanding into new awareness, new understanding" (Heathcote, 1984, p. 122).

As a celebration of the life and contribution of Davis to DiE and TiE, the chapters fittingly reveal Davis' impact on the author as a kind of crisis, a Drama Event in itself. Each author's encounter with Davis through conferences, courses, workshops, and the like, has been, in a sense transformational. The DE of Davis has effectively pushed each practitioner out of their comfort zone and into a liminal space in which they questioned their practice, and which subsequently led to new understandings, meanings and methods in their work. The cathartic effect described by these authors, of the impact of Davis' teachings on them and their work is as meaningful and significant as any tribute could hope to be. It may also go some way to explaining the increasing popularity of DiE and TiE in countries which appear to limit personal freedoms and discourage critical thinking. If Davis' central purpose has always been:

to use 'living through' drama as an art form ... to find layers of meaning in the content being co-created to try to fulfil the role that historically drama has always fulfilled: to enable humans to grapple with who we are and where we are; to discuss different value systems and find where we want to place ourselves. (Davis, 2023, p15.)

then these chapters are testament to that. Davis has brought these distinguished drama and theatre practitioners from the personal to the socio-political and back again and his influence has been considerable. In the following summaries we see in what ways and how this influence has imbued the practice of each.

Enter

David Davis' chapter is a stark scene of late neo liberalism and of the precipitous moment, from wildfires in the Arctic, to daily ice loss in Greenland, to the \$4.9tn investment of the oil and gas industry to explore and develop new reserves. Over a long and distinguished career, Davis has been politically driven, and of this he makes no bones. Perhaps his work with noted playwright Edward Bond, has brought him closest to articulating his craft. That said, Davis, describes the deeply uncertain moment of human history that we find ourselves in where we may well witness our own demise. On this precipice Davis makes deep consideration of how drama can help young people examine who they are, become more aware of the political mechanisms which may veil our understanding of the world. Similarly Carmel O' Sullivan and Silke Franz engage the reader in an analysis of framing to understand how people may experience and make sense of life within ideological narratives. They connect the discussion to the centrality of framing as a drama in education approach, arguing that affective involvement through the drama is a significant tool for democratic education. This means of expression can facilitate students' exploration of different perspectives, encouraging student voice and agency to interrogate the ways in which the world is present (ented) to them.

Flourish

In his chapter, Wasim Al Kurdi presents the struggle of the Palestinian people living with the repercussions of the occupation of Palestine. He traces the landscapes of his own history, 'siting' Davis' influences on his professional career, and his evolving praxis for working with the dramatic, the visual and the textual. *Memoirs of a Shoe* is one such project; a group improvisational drama written by Ibrahim Salem who is 11 years old. It is a retelling, a reinvention of a real story of forced mass migration of Palestinians from Yalo village near Jerusalem. However, this is Ibrahim's story, who with others in the group create a new story, intertwined with those that are already told. In this story, is Ibrahim's refusal of immigration. Similarly, Konstantinos Amoiropoulos interrogates value-laden stories as having the ability to transfer hegemonic cultural values and norms. Amoiropoulos uses Aesop's fable *The Hare and the Tortoise* to exemplify how entrenched ideologies can be transferred to younger generations in early years classrooms. He considers how working with these stories through drama can explore questions of identity and belonging without donning the weight of an invisible, ideological 'second skin' (Bond, 2000).

Chris Cooper speaks of silence. He names Davis as a significant figure in bringing the work of Edward Bond into TiE. He recalls the importance of Davis' contribution to his own career as a director, writer and artist. Then, Cooper speaks of the rehearsal space. His play, *The Silence* explores the impact of the Birmingham pub bombings, planted by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in 1974, on the Irish community at the time. Being Irish and 'suspect' *then* is brought into focus, retold in light of the Muslim community living in the city now. *The Silence* creates gaps in meaning so that participants can discover the social and political within.

Cao Xi documents the important history and work of Drama Rainbow in China, which draws substantively from the early TiE movement in the UK. He illustrates the practice through their working relationship with Chris Cooper, and through the co-construction of Cooper's play *The Examination*. A form of *Living Through Drama* within an improvised theatre performance, *The Examination* explores the imagination and its relationship to knowledge. The play foregrounds the student voice and their agency as they navigate and test the fiction; taking ownership of the story, and at times, re-storying the narrative itself. Zeki Özen and Ömer Adıgüzel's chapter recounts the history of dramatic activities in Turkey. Tracing back to the late Ottoman Empire, they describe the unsettled atmosphere of Turkish politics in the 1980s and the resulting Turkish-Islamic synthesis, in which political and social homogeneity were encouraged. These complex conditions made the establishment of a drama association challenging. However, in 1990 the Contemporary Drama Association was founded, with a remit to qualify teachers/practitioners as creative drama specialists.

They foreground the workshops of Davis and Heathcote as highly influential, encouraging educators to address political, social and cultural concerns through creative drama. The authors applaud the next generation of practitioners for the expansion of their practice; for “awareness brings responsibility”, creating a better world for all.

Adam Bethlenfalvy describes regime change in Hungarian society and politics in the early 1990s which brought euphoric freedom and long-lasting global capitalism to the country. Bethlenfalvy credits Davis' work in Hungary, as the opening up of new pathways, a 'drámapedagógia'. Bethlenfalvy details his own research, which interrogates the relationship between Edward Bond's work, and elements of Heathcotian practice. Working with young people, Bethlenfalvy explores Bond's play *The Children* (2000) as the relationship between the adult world and young people. He also discusses corollary practice work entitled *Wild Child*. Both narratives are on some levels, extreme, and Bethlenfalvy finds that protection into role is an important factor, when engaging with the extreme elements of the narratives. He also finds that the extremeness of the narrative itself “reinforced the fictional nature of the drama” creating a second skin of safety. This helped to create a space for young people to ask questions of the practice work including, “How much of us comes from others? What part is really us?” and “What makes a person human?”

Practice in Context

Guy Williams' chapter introduces the world of Pupil Referral Units¹ in the UK where young people who are rejected by mainstream education are sent. Williams tells his story, a frank account of his career as a drama teacher to his resignation and his present-day work in a PRU. He foregrounds Davis' important contribution to child centred quality learning in the face of an ever-increasing marketized educational sector. He paints a scathing picture of education reforms by Margaret Thatcher's Tory government and by New Labour, which has dramatically altered the landscape and quality of education in England. Guy tells the story of Amber, a young adult in the PRU, as hard to reach. Guided by the philosophy and methodologies of 30 years as a drama teacher, Guy co-constructs a humanising curriculum with Amber, forming a 'space' within a space, where her stories and her work are believed. A space for self-actualisation, a space, within a space, to belong. Phoebe Yuk-Lan Chan's story recalls June 4th 1989 in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, as a political awakening for many Hong Kong people of her generation. Its indelible mark drives her to reflect on the social and political conditions in Hong Kong and the ever strengthening totalitarian rule of China. Against a dark political climate Chan recounts an important episode. An anti-government social campaign initiated by Chan resulted in social action by over 10,000 students. The students wore black ribbons on their school bags in protest at a proposed new education policy. Across the face of the ribbons, was written '*no brainwashing*'. Amid such direct social action, Chan queries the 'usefulness' and 'effectiveness' of drama in bringing about real social changes. She imagines a plant in cracked soil, struggling to survive, all the while the strong roots are quietly taking shape. A small H, but still, hope.

Li Yingning recounts the influences that Davis has had on her life story and her narrative of practices in Drama and Theatre in Education for almost 30 years. That dialogic process resulted in the introduction of educational drama to China. Specifically, Yingning cites the founding of Drama Rainbow as a key moment in the history of DiE in her country. She also pinpoints the opening of the teacher training centre Jian Xue *International Culture and Education Institute*, as another key moment. These initiatives foster and develop new artistic and educational vision in which independence of thought and creativity are freely developed.

1 PRUs are a type of school that cater for students who aren't able to attend a mainstream school. Students are often referred there if they need greater care and support than their existing school can provide.

Selen Korad Birkiye maps transitional contexts in the Turkish Republic. A travelling: from secular based education to an overtly religious and conservative ideology permeating the educational and political system under prime minister Tayyip Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP). Education, Erdoğan claims, plays a key role in social engineering processes, representing an important part of the state apparatus to disseminate those ideologies. Birkiye highlights the importance of a critical pedagogy such as the one proposed by Davis and Heathcote to foster a critical mind capable of deconstructing dominant socio political and cultural narratives.

Exit pursued by a bear

Bill Roper stories his 41-year relationship with Davis, recounting its major influence on his life and career as a social psychologist. In talking of their dialogic, he sees Davis as a challenging force in his thinking and central to introducing him to seminal thinkers and writers including Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner, Karl Marx and GWF Hegel. Roper engages the reader in an intense analysis of the associations between Jacques Lacan and Drama in Education. Relating the concepts of immanence, consciousness and the self, Roper critiques Davis' key note by arguing that though DiE may provide the opportunity to 'see', the tendency to see what 'we want to see' remains. Nevertheless, Roper acknowledges that *Metaxis and Living Through Drama* may split consciousness, creating a 'free' space in which new meanings could be developed.

Finally, within their dialogic, Davis speaks to Roper's critique of his key note. By way of response, he finds himself writing Bill a letter. Teasing out their respective positions, meeting at their 'betweenness'. Davis discusses what it is to be '*I is Other*', '*I is other*' and '*me is Other*'. Such richness signals the breadth and depth of action and symbol at work in this book. Of the thought and felt knowing, of the knitting up and the casting off. Of story. Ongoing, evolving, becoming.

Susanne, Lisa, Carmel and David

References

Badiou, A. (2005a). *Being and Event*. Bloomsbury.

Badiou, A. (2005b). *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, (A. Toscano, trans.). Stanford University Press.

Bond, E. (2003). The Cap. In *Plays: Seven*. Methuen.

Bond, E. (2006). Freedom and Drama. In *Plays: Eight*. Methuen Drama.

Davis, D. (2014). *Imagining the real*. Trentham Books.

Jackson, B. (1997). 'The Stories People Tell'. *The Antioch Review*, 55(3), pp. 261-276.

Jackson, B. (2002). The Fate of Stories'. *The Antioch Review*, 60(1), pp. 9-27.

Colleary, S. (2015). *Performance and Identity in Irish Stand-up Comedy. The Comic 'I'*. Palgrave.

Ochs, E. & Capps, L. (1996). 'Narrating the Self'. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 25, pp. 19-43.

Turner, V. W. (1967). "Betwixt and between: The liminal period in Rites de passage". In V. Turner (Ed.), *The forest of symbols: Aspects of Ndembu ritual*, pp. 93 -111. Cornell University Press.

Van Gennep, A. (1960) [1908]. *The rites of passage*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.



Enter

Chapter 1

Who Am I? Who Can Tell Me Who I Am?

David Davis

Abstract: An account of the author's key life-time concerns in the field of drama in education. It argues the central role of drama for young people is to help them to locate themselves in the particular social/political/historical context in which they find themselves. In this location drama is a means to help young people develop their own value system. It argues that the forces dominating the social and political at the present moment are the policies and practices springing from neoliberal approaches to economics. These in turn are dominant driving forces for climate change which threatens all our futures. Neoliberal ideology promotes the individual before the social. This ideology tends to dominate the outlook of young people. The chapter traces the influences that helped shape the author's own form of drama teaching. Key influences are identified from Heathcote, Bolton, Bond from the drama world and Bakhtin's work on the role of language in shaping the self.

Keywords: Drama in education, social/political contexts, climate change, neoliberalism, metaxis, Bolton, Heathcote, Bakhtin, Bond.

Personal context

I have been invited to set out my approach to drama in education. This will, necessarily, be political. As Bruner states: 'However much it may be claimed to the contrary, education is always political...' (Bruner, 1996, p. 25).

Key for me is the importance of context in drama, the socio-historical/cultural/political life situation in which young people find themselves. In that context there are forces which push and pull the young person as they develop into adulthood. Forces which push and pull all of us. Do I really want to take this road or that one in life; this job with more money or that job with more prestige; or any job just to feed my family; to leave my homeland and become a refugee; or to find any way to have money to buy a better smart phone? But these forces are usually unrecognised. Instead young people see themselves as in charge of their own lives and decision making. They think they are deciding who they want to be and what they want to do as they grow up. The personal dominates. All the time the young person is seemingly making up her or his own mind but all the time these forces are at work. This is the existential dilemma. Drama provides the opportunity to try to see more clearly the reality in which they are enmeshed. This is for me the central aim of drama in education: the chance for young people to try to locate themselves and decide who they want to become. This is in fact the ongoing struggle for all of us. Underlying all these decisions is what value system do we want to own? What does it mean to strive to be fully human?

The young people we work with will all have different immediate social/political environments affecting them in different parts of the world. We will all have our own understanding of that social/political environment. None of us will have the whole picture. That is the importance of a conference such as the one these chapters sprang from. We can share different points of view. That is the necessary dialogic process.

Climate change and economics

I want to start by elaborating two dimensions of the social/political affecting all the young people we work with no matter where they live in the world: climate change and the underlying economic forces driving climate change. These dimensions in fact affect all of us equally. It may seem a very strange way to start setting out my approach to drama teaching by dealing with climate change and economics but there is nothing more important for any of us than these two areas. You will be familiar with what I am going to say but I want to spell it out in some detail anyway. Rather, we think we are familiar with it but I would suggest most of us are in denial – or we would be out on the streets demonstrating every day.

Climate change is an area of growing concern for young people. They often have much greater clarity of the issues involved than the adults. They are going to be even more forcibly affected in the future than I am for example. Here I want to underline that I am not advocating political action with a capital P. I am arguing that drama teachers need to be fully immersed in the dilemmas of trying to be human in the world today: to be political in that sense. It is the playwright part of the drama teacher. Humans invented drama to try to understand more clearly who we are and where we are. It is that awareness that drives the playwright in the drama teacher. We need to be able to see the themes interconnecting in apparently ordinary situations. Perhaps the drama involves a teenage girl preparing for a school photo. The parents want her to do the family proud. It has cost hard-earned money to buy the school uniform. The school wants the photos to show off how well organised the school is: how uniform it is. Better discipline means harder work by the pupils. Better results mean teachers' jobs are safer. The school will be in line with government targets. But the girl wants to look special. Maybe she wants to wear some make-up forbidden by the school. Or have her hair standing up in spikes or just to have her school tie not quite tied up. How do these pressures clash with growing personal needs? Where do those personal drives come from? Is it the world of big pharmaceuticals influencing her: the world of consumerism? Is she really striving to be an individual? Yes and no. In any ordinary event can be found the connections to the cultural general and the dilemmas of the personal in the social/political. In each particular event, the playwright in the drama teacher is seeking those forces the student needs to unravel to find out where she is. And then to become who she wants to be.

Now I am taking an enormous short-cut here. I am leaving aside, for the sake of brevity, all the complex philosophical and psychological questions. What is a self? Can we ever know who is the I who is speaking? What theory of knowing are we claiming? What is truth? You will have your own answers to these questions. I am taking as my common ground that we and the students are involved in a dialogic process. There are a multitude of voices entering us all the time. We are immersed in a polyphonic social world. These different discourses can be merged to allow a monologic discourse to dominate. This is the danger of ideologies. The drama situation can slow time down to open up that situation, to re-engage with these varied voices. It turns drama into a dialogic process.

The Social Context

So, to the over-riding social context for us all: climate change. I want to be as direct as I can. There is no such thing as *global warming*. There is *global heating* (Watts, 2018). The last five years were the hottest on record. "Global warming has heated the oceans by the equivalent of one atomic explosion per second for the last century and a half ...in recent years the equivalent of between 3 and 6 atom bombs per second...and global marine populations have halved since 1970" (Carrington, 2019a). More than half the carbon released into the atmosphere has been emitted in just the last 25 years (Wallace-Wells, 2019). In 1950 the world emitted 6 billion tonnes of CO₂ annually. This almost quadrupled by 1990 (22 billion tonnes), and emissions continue to grow standing at 34 billion tonnes each year currently, and rising (World Meteorological Organisation, 2022). While scientists had projected a plateauing effect in 2023 (Storrow, 2023), the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic reduced investment in green technology. Of the \$16 trillion that the International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates governments mobilised to address COVID-19, only 2% has been allocated to the energy transition (IEA, 2021). Furthermore, inequities exist with advanced economies accounting for almost 95%

investment in clean energy while developing economies having to direct their limited resources towards short term measures to keep transport, electricity and cooking fuels affordable. Since Autumn 2021 governments around the world have spent an additional USD 630 billion to protect households and businesses from rising energy costs, but only 35% of these affordability measures are targeted at those households and businesses most exposed to the impact of high energy costs (IEA, 2022a). Despite 75 million people recently gaining access to basic energy, they can no longer afford it, and for first time in decades, the number of people worldwide without electricity has started to rise (Cozzi et al., 2022).

Drought, heatwaves, wildfires and flooding are increasing in severity and frequency. The cryosphere (where water is frozen into ice or snow) is melting, sub-sea permafrost in the Arctic is thawing. It could release trapped methane gas causing several times the total amount of CO₂ humans have ever emitted to be released into the atmosphere. Even if we stopped all greenhouse gas emissions it would take 25,000 years for most of what is currently in the atmosphere to be absorbed into the oceans. European temperatures have increased by more than twice the global average over the past 30 years, with 2022 being the second warmest year on record in Europe and the fifth warmest globally. The annual average temperature was 0.3°C above the reference period of 1991-2020, or about 1.2°C higher than in pre-industrial times (Copernicus Climate Change Service, 2023). Data from the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), report that temperatures were more than 2C above the average for 1991-2022 over parts of northern central Siberia and along the Antarctic Peninsula.

Countless glaciers, rivers, lakes, forests and species are already vanishing at a rate never seen before and all this from only 1.2°C increase above a pre-industrial base line. Even if we meet our most ambitious goals, nearly half of the world's glaciers outside of Greenland and Antarctica will melt by the end of the century and with a rise of 1.5°C, global sea levels will rise by almost 4 inches (Rounce et al., 2023). Scientists are predicting a rise of between 2 to 5 degrees Celsius by 2100 if there is no halt to global heating (Swaminathan et al., 2022), with some predicting a catastrophic rise of up to 10°C by the end of the century (Jamail, 2019). The rise so far has caused potentially unstoppable melting of Antarctica and Greenland (Milillo et al., 2019). The Arctic sea ice is being lost at a total rate of more than 10,000 tons a second, and rapid decline has been recorded month on month over the last four decades (Baxter and Ding, 2022). Most climate models predict ice free summers in the Arctic sometime between 2030-2040 as a response to greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (Bonan et al., 2021; Diebold and Rudebusch, 2021). Russia, Norway, NATO, the UK and the US are all moving into the area to prepare to take economic advantage of the total ice melt that is coming (Watts, 2019a).

The latest news from Greenland is that its vast ice sheet, 2 miles thick, separate from its glaciers, has increased its melt rate four-fold since 2003. That is as well as its glaciers melting. The climate change agreement of Paris in 2015 agreed to holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. The fear is that at the present rate of inaction the world is on course for a 3°C rise in the decades to come. Such a rise would submerge cities such as Shanghai, Osaka, and Miami along with parts of Rio de Janeiro and Alexandria. Countries such as Bangladesh will be badly flooded. This would force hundreds of thousands of refugees to move to higher ground (Editorial, 2019). And Southern Spain would, for example, become part of the Sahara (Watts, 2018). The latest Met Office report claims that 1.5°C could, in fact, be reached in four years' time (Homewood, 2018). In many parts of the world 'climate gentrification' is resulting in the poorest residents being displaced and pushed out of elevated ground (Warren-Myers and Hurlimann, 2022; Butler et al., 2021). Largely hidden social and economic injustices and inequalities are starting to emerge from climate oriented policies (Rice, 2020; Li and Grant, 2022).

Within three years after the Paris agreement to limit carbon emissions financial institutions had invested more than \$478 bn, that is 478 thousand million dollars, in the world's top 120 coal plants (Carrington, 2018). While carbon emissions from fossil fuels in 2023 shows a slight slowing in some countries, emissions

stubbornly continue to rise (US by 6.5% and EU-27 by 6.3%) (Rivera et al., 2022). The tug-of-war between coal and renewables continues apace in many countries with heavy reliance on carbon-intensive fuels likely to remain the engine of growth globally (IEAb, 2022; Storrow, 2023).

And then there is plastic pollution.



Fig. 1 Manilla Bay in the Philippines

Taking more than 450 years to decay (Din et al., 2022), a million plastic bottles are bought around the world every minute with a further predicted compound annual growth rate of 6.3% between 2023-2028 (EMR, 2022). This is creating an environmental crisis some campaigners predict will be as serious as climate change. There are five gyres in the world's oceans: areas where the currents circulate and now keep plastic debris floating there. The largest of these is the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, three times the size of France at 1.6 million square kilometres. The amount of plastic produced in a year is roughly the same as the entire weight of humanity. Scientists at Ghent University calculated that people who regularly eat seafood ingest about 11,000 tiny pieces of plastic a year. Plastic is found in almost three quarters of fish (Wieczorek et al., 2018). Plastic is in our drinking water and in human immune systems. Research now suggests that European farmland could be the biggest global reservoir of microplastics owing to spreading of sewage sludge as organic fertiliser as part of the EU directive promoting a circular waste economy (Gerretsen, 2023). Microplastics have infiltrated every part of our world including finding their way into fruit and vegetables as they grow, but it is not yet known the amount of damage it is doing (Laville and Taylor, 2017). The latest research shows it is now in the air around the planet (Wright et al., 2020), raining down from highest peak in Pyrenees to The Galapagos Islands to Shanghai. Microplastics can stunt the growth of earthworms (Boots et al., 2019), disrupt our endocrine system which regulates growth and development (Gore et al., 2015), triggering a host of immune responses and damage to our cells (Danopoulos et al., 2022). To give you an idea of their pervasiveness, there are 365 plastic particles per square metre on average (Carrington, 2019 b).

We are now in the sixth mass extinction of species since life began on the planet. And we are losing species at a faster rate than during any of the previous five mass extinctions. That includes the extinction that saw dinosaurs disappear from earth along with three quarters of plant and animal species (Vaughan, 2015). "The biomass of wild animals has fallen by 82%, natural ecosystems have lost half their area and a million species are at risk of extinction..." (Watts, 2019c). We are set to become the first species to record our own extinction. In the words of the opening lines of David Wallace-Wells new book "It's worse, much worse, than you think" (Wallace-Wells, 2019). In 2019 the Institute for Public Policy Research, a UK progressive thinktank, published a report which underlined all the points I have just been making. Its title is *This is a crisis: Facing up to the age of environmental breakdown* (Laybourn-Langton et al., 2019). It is worth quoting the opening lines.

Mainstream political and policy debates have failed to recognise that human impacts on the environment have reached a critical stage, potentially eroding the conditions upon which socioeconomic stability is possible.

Human-induced environmental change is occurring at an unprecedented scale and pace and the window of opportunity to avoid catastrophic outcomes in societies around the world is rapidly closing. These outcomes include economic instability, large-scale involuntary migration, conflict, famine and the potential collapse of social and economic systems. The historical disregard of environmental considerations in most areas of policy has been a catastrophic mistake.

As George Monbiot (2019) points out, during the summer of 2019 wildfires have raged across the Arctic in Siberia and Alaska, setting fire to peat that was set down millennia ago, releasing as much carbon into the atmosphere as Austria does in a year. Daily ice loss in Greenland is 50 years ahead of schedule. Scientists report that thawing permafrost in the Canadian High Arctic now exceeds the depths of melting projected for 2090. Against this backdrop the oil and gas industry intend to spend \$4.9tn over the next ten years exploring and developing new reserves, and every year governments subsidise fossil fuels to the tune of \$5tn. The US spends ten times more on these subsidies than on its federal education budget (Monbiot, 2019). And the Amazon rainforest which produces 20% of the world's oxygen burns and burns. It is later, much later, than you think.

This is the environment today which the social world has made. It is possible to try to separate the social from the environment. Consumerism works at that every day. The drama I am pursuing insists that the social world in which our young people exist is intimately connected to environmental, economic and political concerns. Drama needs to help young people locate themselves in this milieu.

Is this all doom and gloom? Well, certainly, there is plenty of gloom but doom? Not necessarily.

Greta Thunberg, an autistic 15 year-old schoolgirl, decided that enough lack of action from her Swedish government was enough. In 2018, she went on school strike on a Friday and sat outside the Swedish Parliament. She continued this every Friday saying she would do so until the Parliament called a climate emergency. This simple action sparked a world-wide movement of school strikes called 'School Strikes for Climate'. Thousands of school strikes and demonstrations in over 125 countries took place every month during 2018 and 2019 (Haynes, 2019). They are recognised as likely to be largest climate strikes in world history.



Fig. 2.
Greta Thunberg,
16-year-old autistic
schoolgirl, who, when
15, started sitting
outside the Swedish
Parliament.

Greta Thunberg went to speak at the World Economic Forum, in Switzerland. She travelled 32 hours by train. The rich flew there and parked their 1,200 private planes. I am not being idealistic here. Young people cannot change the world by demonstrating nor on their own. They need the support of adults to change the whole political power structure. In 2018 she spoke to the UN Climate Change Conference in Poland. I think it is remarkable how many key things Greta Thunberg managed to gather in that one short contribution: the need for the whole system to change; how climate change is caused by the pursuit of wealth; how the poor pay for the rich; the importance of equity; how politicians have done nothing; how it is up to the people to act.

On equity: 2 billion of us are overweight; 2 billion of us are undernourished or starving. Just twenty-six of the world's wealthiest people, who could fit into a single small bus, now own as much as half the planet's population. And the wealth of that billionaire class swells by \$2.5 billion a day (Chakraborty, 2019). It is obscene. Why do we allow it?

I want to be as transparent as I can be about where I am coming from. I am a socialist. I am against exploitation of human by human. I am for the nurturing and sharing of the world's resources for the benefit of all. I am against building walls. I am for an economy that produces for human need, not for profit. I am, therefore, clearly biased against capitalism. So, this is a biased argument; just in case that wasn't clear so far!

The Economic Context – Driving the Political Context

I want to take up Thunberg's assertion that climate change is caused by the present dominant economic system: the pursuit of wealth by a tiny few for a tiny few, achieved by exploiting people and nature solely for the benefit of that tiny few.

The story of how the world has become so skewed to favour the rich is, in Euro-Atlantic countries, the story of the growth of neoliberalism. In the 1930s, the then American president, Roosevelt, brought in a whole range of government measures to try to end the Great Depression. He provided support for farmers, the unemployed, youth and the elderly. The New Deal included new constraints and safeguards on the banking industry and efforts to re-inflate the economy after prices had fallen sharply. These were designed to bring a strong measure of control to the broken capitalist economy and put people back to work. Hayek, an Austrian-British academic, saw in these government measures the threat of socialism. He first tried to organise against this threat in the late 1930s, but this was interrupted by the Second World War. During the War he wrote *The Road to Serfdom* (Hayek, 1944). The serfdom which the author warns of comes about when a government interferes with the economy to help the unemployed or the sick. The individual should be allowed to sink or swim. What he means is that the big business entrepreneur should be free from taxation and regulation: free to exploit people and make profit with complete disregard for environment and health. (That is my take of course.)

In 1947 he founded the Mont Pelerin Society: a Society of very rich people drawn to the ideas of freeing capitalism from any form of state control. It still exists and meets annually, drawing in academics, politicians and business interests. You can apply to attend their next annual conference if you can afford it.

Over the years these think tanks and their disciples have spread their economic and political policies which have generally become known as neoliberalism: free market economics. Milton Friedman (2002), who was greatly influenced by Hayek at the University of Chicago, sent out many young economists trained in this approach. Notable among these were the Chicago Boys who spread out in Latin America and became prominent figures in transforming the economies of those countries. They were particularly influential in Pinochet's fascist Chile (Harberger, 1964). In the 1970s Friedman was also an economic adviser to US president Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in the UK. After Thatcher and Reagan took power, the rest of the package soon followed: massive tax cuts for the rich, the crushing of trade unions, deregulation, privatisation, outsourcing and competition in public services (Pierson, 1994; O'Donovan, 2023). Through

the IMF, the World Bank, the Maastricht treaty and the World Trade Organisation, neoliberal policies were imposed – often without democratic consent – on much of the world. Most remarkable was its adoption among parties that once belonged to the left: Labour and the Liberal Democrats in the UK, for example. It has been described as the idea that swallowed the world (Metcalf, 2017).

George Buchanan was also a highly influential figure who based himself at the George Mason University in the US: again, sending out many neoliberal graduates ready to run the thinktanks (see Meadowcroft, 2011). Both Friedman and Buchanan were members of the Mont Pelerin Society: Buchanan a past chairman. Although not organised in one world-wide organisation these ideas spread and have become dominant in Euro-Atlantic economies. A huge number of these neoliberal thinktanks have proliferated in the UK and in the US. Enormous amounts of money are poured into them by the very rich in order to lobby politicians to further their business interests. Trump is an example of a business person who got tired of paying lobbying firms and decided that big business can run the country directly (Klein, 2017). Excellent analyses of how neoliberalism operates in the US, in particular, can be found in MacLean (2017), Mayer (2016) and Kapczynski et al. (2022).

In the United States, as a result of the disastrous Citizens United Supreme Court decision in 2010, billionaires and large corporations can now spend an unlimited amount of money to influence the political process. Its implications are far reaching impacting public health and democracy (see Wiist, 2011). Among the biggest winners of Citizens United were Charles and David Koch, owners of the second largest privately-run business in America: Koch Industries. Among other things, the Koch brothers own oil refineries in Texas, Alaska, and Minnesota and control some 4,000 miles of pipeline. Their personal wealth is in the region of \$50 billion each: each has the equivalent wealth of fifty thousand millionaires. Impossible to imagine isn't it? David died in 2019. Yet, night and day, they wanted more and more, working through the Charles Koch Foundation. During the 2016 presidential election, where they started opposing Trump but ended supporting him, they had a larger political machine than the whole of the Republican and Democratic Parties. In 1980 David Koch stood for political office. He got nowhere which is why all their energies subsequently went into lobbying. I have put all 26 of their manifesto aims in an Appendix. I present just three of them here to give a sense of neoliberal policies in practice.

- We oppose any compulsory insurance or tax-supported plan to provide health services, including those which finance abortion services.
- We oppose all government welfare, relief projects, and 'aid to the poor' programs. All these government programs are privacy-invading, paternalistic, demeaning, and inefficient. The proper source of help for such persons is the voluntary efforts of private groups and individuals.
- We support the abolition of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Promoting climate denial, and lobbying US Government to limit their involvement in health care and climate mitigation, they donated more than USD 100 million to conservative advocacy organisations.

A very clear example of neoliberalism at work came after the illegal war in Iraq. Paul Bremer, described variously as "the arrogant American overlord of post-invasion Iraq" (Steele, 2008), and the 'CEO of Iraq' (Powell, 2003) was put in charge of re-structuring the country. He declared that Iraq was 'open for business' and set out 100 orders to put that into practice. These ordered the selling-off of several hundred state-run enterprises permitting foreign firms to buy them up and take the profits out of the country. Iraqi banks were opened to foreign ownership making Iraq a playground of world finance and investment. At the same time the orders restricted labour organisation and outlawed strikes. Corporation tax on these businesses was lowered to 15%. Many of these orders were in violation of the Geneva Convention, so an interim government was quickly appointed by the United States to enact them. And, just to make sure they would last, one of Bremer's orders declared that no Iraqi government would have the power to change them.

Let's take a closer look at just one of the 100 orders: Bremer Order 81. This order includes a prohibition against the "re-use of crop seeds of protected varieties" (Brown, 2015, p. 143). For 8,000 years Iraqi farmers had successfully grown wheat in the fertile crescent. Iraq was, after all, one of the cradles of civilisation. Farmers had, over millennia, saved seeds for re-planting, cross-pollinating them to increase the yield until there are now over 200,000 known varieties of wheat in the world. In the twentieth century Iraqi farmers started storing seed in a central seed bank in Abu Ghraib. This was totally destroyed in the invasion of Iraq. Wheat production dropped dramatically, and farmers could not sustain the population for the first time in centuries. But help was at hand. Suddenly thousands of tons of wheat seed were flown in and available free or at low cost. It was genetically modified seed from Monsanto. The Bremer order 81 bound them to buying from Monsanto along with the fertilisers they had to use with them. Organic, low-cost, ecologically sustainable wheat production in Iraq was finished (Brown, 2015, pp.144-145).

Neoliberalism has had extraordinary success in invading every aspect of our lives. Schools in the UK have business managers – even primary schools (NCSL, 2009). Parents are encouraged to *invest* in their children. Academy chains of schools have been set up by the UK government. They are outside local government control. They are a transparent route to privatising education. The heads of these schools are called CEOs, Chief Executive Officers. Their salaries can reach £400,000 a year: paid for by the taxpayer. This is three times higher than the Prime Minister's salary. Hospitals as well as schools compete against each other. Competition is the name of the game. Consumerism dominates all. Everything is marketised. Dating agencies advertise their sites as offering a good return for your investment and one encourages you to outsource your love life (Brown, 2015). We have become market actors. Outsource your love life? I dread to think what that means!

In the UK, the fifth richest country in the world, almost four million children live in poverty (Westwater and McRae, 2023). There are over 2,000 food banks giving out desperately needed food to families in dire need, a 40% increase from 2022. Terminally ill patients are being found fit to work weeks, and sometimes days, before they die. This is a direct result of neoliberal austerity policies. This has brought its own form of resistance in UK schools. Lorna Jackson, a London headteacher, had never expected to see two pupils at her primary school sleeping behind rubbish bins at the station with their parents. She explains:

Mum, Dad and the two little children were all sleeping on a mattress they'd found. The family had been evicted, were homeless, and the children had very little to eat. ... I realised that my role had changed. Unless I addressed our children's wellbeing, their education was not going to have an impact at all. (Ferguson, 2018).

There are some 300,000 homeless people in the UK on any given night (Big Issue, 2023). Jackson turned to the education charity School-Home Support, SHS for short. Using money from her pupil premium budget, she installed one of their practitioners in the school full time. Schools with these practitioners can access the charity's welfare fund, which buys items for struggling families such as food, washing machines and school uniforms. The charity can also support families in navigating the benefits systems and court orders. Jackson has helped more than 100 families at her school this way. This picture is repeated all over the UK. Teachers in many other schools report buying children school dinners, school shoes, socks, underwear and, for teenage girls, sanitary products as the girls were not attending school during their periods. The list goes on and on (Tickle, 2018). It is shocking that this is taking place in one of the world's richest countries. These are but a tiny few of the voluntary fightbacks all over the world. Resistance is world-wide and takes a multitude of forms. Charity, of course, is not the long-term solution to the destruction of a caring society. Charity just keeps us all where we are.

To sum up so far, neoliberalism puts the individual before the community. It encourages the individual to compete and force their way to the top. It doesn't matter who you push out of the way. That person should be stronger. Having to fight your way to the top will make all of us more successful. It is the age of the selfie and the counting of how many likes we get on Facebook, or Instagram or WhatsApp or whatever. Everything is seen from an individual's point of view. This has become a major part of the personal shaped

and influenced by the social/political. This is what I understand Metcalf (2017) to mean in the earlier quote about neoliberalism as the idea that swallowed the world. This ideology permeates down to the young. It infects personal values and attitudes. In the UK, years of economic austerity, as a result of neoliberal economics, has led to some alienated youth riven by unemployment and low paid jobs, the closing down of youth support services, the lack of any future prospects, trying to find an identity through gangs plagued by knife crime. Or looking to make easy money by carrying drugs for organised crime gangs across county lines, as it has become known. They are faced with these models on TV every day. They see leaders of industry making millions each year. What is the point of a dead-end job if there is easy money to be made in this way? This is one aspect of the personal in the social. One only has to look at other role models for the young. For example, the most powerful world leader between 2016-2020, Donald Trump, can lie, make foul sexist comments, bully, be a blatant racist without apparent reprimand. It becomes a potential free-for-all for the young. There will be those who are shocked and seek a different value system and those who are freed to vent their own frustrations in the same way.

These powerful elites, only interested in making money, have warped the notion of truth. The scepticism towards grand narratives that started with postmodernism and poststructuralism in the 1960s has been hijacked by the populist right so that relativism is in the ascendant. We now have personal truths. We live in era of post-truth (Kakutani, 2018). What seems to be happening currently is that those masses of people left behind and pushed down by the elite tiny minority are being scooped up by right-wing populists who are also just interested in their own wealth and power. Trump in the United States, Boris Johnson in the UK, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Erdogan in Turkey, Orban in Hungary, Putin in Russia, Xi Yingping in China instigated policies moving back to national self-interest, and the list grows.

Young people face a potential environmental disaster fuelled by the race to the top of a cut-throat few immensely rich people. These few use their enormous wealth to buy politicians to pursue their neoliberal economic policies. Their utter moral bankruptcy is shown clearly in the plans big business is making to profit from climate change.

In a 2019 interview, I asked Shell CEO Ben van Beurden about a campaign accusing his company of knowing about climate change for decades and failing to act. Van Beurden acknowledged that "yeah, we knew" and added, "Every-body knew." He went on to argue that Shell had since publicly acknowledged the science of climate change, but society had failed to act. In other words, the blame shouldn't fall on Shell; in a free-market economy, the role of a corporation is to make a profit, and in that context, the company was delivering just as it was supposed to do. (Worland and Espada, 2022)

They have invented robot bees to pollinate the plants when the insects have been killed off by overuse of pesticides. Honda is looking at how they can develop generators to produce power when infrastructure crumbles. Big pharmaceutical companies are preparing for expanded markets to prepare for water borne diseases in flood areas. Apple is looking at hand cranks to charge your mobile phones if disaster strikes. Another business anticipates a big increase in the sale of ceiling fans if temperatures increase over time (Mahdawi, 2019). It is madness.

I have tried to show how neoliberal economics has enabled huge businesses to use the natural world as their playground in order to amass enormous personal wealth. That beautiful natural world belongs to all of us. They have turned it into a potential disaster zone. I am not trying to impose my vision on anyone. What I am saying as clearly as I can is that the drama teacher, acting as co-playwright with young people in dramas they are creating together, needs to work to understand the greater picture in which young people are seeking themselves. I am proposing that climate change fuelled by neoliberal economic and political policies is the major international context in which young people have to find themselves.

This is just part of the context in which young people find themselves. I haven't mentioned millions starving or undernourished; the 26 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18 (Amnesty International, 2023); nor wars and the threat of wars. Young people wherever they are in the world have nuclear weapons pointed at them: from the UK, France, USA, Israel, China, India, Pakistan, Russia and North Korea. There are believed to be about 13,080 nuclear weapons in the world (World Population Review, 2023). If this is the overall context, what sort of drama is most useful to help young people locate themselves and work out where they stand? I thought that eventually I ought to say something about drama.

What Sort of Drama is Needed?

I want to make it clear I'm not advocating political plays with a big P: plays that take a single issue such as pollution. This sort of drama has its place and its great uses. I've always been more interested in stories that capture the interest of the students and motivate them. Bolton called this 'play for class'. It was the teacher's role to help the students find the social in that material. This was 'play for teacher'. Little Red Riding Hood might become a play about when to give and when to take responsibility; when to leave the world of the child with no real responsibilities and join the adult world full of responsibilities. Shakespeare was political to the core but dealt with the huge political/social issues of his day through gripping stories. Plays such as Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, are all dealing with Shakespeare's (and our) contemporary politics through personal stories. As were the great Greek playwrights with Antigone, Medea and so on. The plays live on because they contain problems we are still dealing with. The play the drama teacher chooses might be a version of Cinderella for example. Get rid of the fairy godmother and then what can Cinderella do? She is living in a dysfunctional household. How can she jump out of it? Who can she become in that situation? What can the servants do or her sisters or her father? All are probably deeply unhappy people deep down. It is a microcosm of any young person's world today. They are born into circumstances not of their making. They, like you, cannot jump out of those circumstances. How can they locate themselves? What can they do about it? That could be a deeply political version of Cinderella for today's world. None of us can jump out of the world we have been born into.

Another example. Recently I worked with a local youth theatre to devise a play which would be performed as a structured improvisation. It turned out to be about the changing nature of the family spread over three generations. In the first scene a 17 year-old young man and his older sister are sorting out their grandparents' belongings after they have died. The brother handles tools that his grandad used to help him build a go-kart. All the fond memories come flooding back. His older sister has left home and is an independent businesswoman supplying props to film and TV companies: buying cheap and selling expensive. She is encouraging him to sell them all; he cannot bear to part with them. The sister, to escape an alcoholic father had, of necessity, sought her independence unencumbered by marriage or a family. She was 'free' of the sorts of responsibilities her parents had had. This is the idealised neoliberal life: a society made up of individuals, each looking after them self. The play had neoliberalism at its centre, but the word never came up in the play as performed. However, the young people were experiencing it and as devisers of their play they could discuss it and explore it as well as experience it. They were exploring different aspects of the social in the personal and the personal in the social.

The drama teacher is always dealing with young people in specific times and places. There are no general rules that I know of for finding the drama that will give young people the opportunity to search for who they want to be. The only rule of thumb I have had, following the examples of the early Heathcote and Bolton, is to start with areas that the students are highly motivated to make a play about. These will be the areas that are influencing the personal the most at any particular time, in any particular place. Even if the drama is built to find a connection with themes in a play or novel, for example, then the personal angle of connection to the theme or themes is key. How they are interwoven into the social/political is then to be explored.

A Drama Teacher's Journey

I started teaching drama in 1958. I had no idea what I was doing. I just asked students to pretend to be someone else in role. In the 1960s I discovered Stanislavski. My students had to suffer hours of emotional memory training, splitting the play into units and finding objectives and super-objectives and so on. I came to see this was focusing too strongly on the psychological and this was, after all, the revolutionary late 1960s and politics was in the air. It was time to turn to Brecht. But then in 1969 I went on Gavin Bolton's postgraduate course and he and Dorothy Heathcote became my teachers. (For those of you not from the drama in education world, Heathcote and Bolton have been the two leaders in the field internationally.) In 1976 Bolton wrote:

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. (Bolton, 1976)

Please excuse how dated the gendered language is. However, to put the content of the drama first was in itself revolutionary. Drama had been about learning to act. And here were two people, Bolton and Heathcote, saying content and how students can learn about themselves and themselves in society through that content must be central.

I could see that both Heathcote and Bolton had the personal in the social, and by implication, the social in the personal, but not really the political. However, I became obsessed with the living through process drama they were both promoting. I did not follow Heathcote as she began to favour distancing but stayed with Bolton and his 'living through' approach. He introduced into DIE the word *metaxis*. *Metaxis* (or *metaxu*) is the word used by Plato to describe the condition of 'in-betweenness': the place of spirits between the human and gods, belonging to both and making the world an inter-connected whole. The term was introduced into drama education by Boal. I describe the difference in his use of the term and Bolton's in *Imagining the Real* (Davis, 2014).

In Boal, *metaxis* is "the state of belonging completely and simultaneously to two different, *autonomous* worlds ...The oppressed must *forget the real world* which was the origin of the image and play with the image itself in its artistic embodiment" (Boal, 1995, pp. 43–44, emphasis added). In Bolton the meaning is quite different, "the power ... of the experience stem[s] from fully recognising that one is in two social contexts *at the same time* (Bolton, 1992, p. 11, emphasis added). It is this power of 'being' in two worlds at the same time that underlies the sort of drama I go on to describe and I shall be using *metaxis* in the way Bolton describes it rather than the way Boal defines it (see Davis, 2014, p. 52).

Bolton describes it as being in two social contexts at the same time: "a dialectic between the actual and fictitious" (Bolton, 2010, p. 127). In my own work I extended the concept and came to see *metaxis* as the student in role being themselves and the role at the same time and that role being in two social contexts: of the drama and of contemporary society. 'Being' in role here is the key word. The immediacy of the living through experience as *metaxis* led me to criticise Brecht. More and more I came to understand that Brecht was leaving the audience fundamentally in the same place when they left the theatre as when they took their seats. They could comfortably criticise the world in the play they had seen but it would not have challenged their own value system. It was Lear from his high castle walls looking out over the world but not experiencing the hurly burly of life below. I want to digress here and use Shakespeare's King Lear to illustrate my argument about the key importance of living through drama.

King Lear's journey of self-discovery

Let me start with the title of the conference which spurred this book: *Who am I? Who can tell me who I am?* It was my nine-year-old autistic grandson who asked, 'Who am I?'. His teaching assistant told his mother that he had been wandering around the classroom in a daze asking himself: 'Who am I? Where am I? What am I doing? What can I see? Where are my eyes?'. Would that we all asked ourselves those profound questions every day. It reminded me of Shakespeare's King Lear saying, 'Who is it can tell me who I am?' and later he asks, 'Where are his eyes?'. I want to try to use the journey made by King Lear in the play as a rough sort of analogy to the type of drama involvement that I have pursued in my drama teaching.

One of the many themes in the play is how we tend to see what we want to see through the lens of our own self-interest. King Lear, at 80, decides it is time to retire. He will divide his kingdom between his three daughters according to how much they love him. The more they express their love for him, the more they will receive. The two elder daughters profess boundless love for him but the youngest says she will only love him as a daughter should. She can't give him all her love and have none for a future husband. A furious Lear curses her in the most ferocious terms and banishes her. He divides his kingdom between his other two daughters and gives them all his power. They quickly turn on him and first one then the other strip him of his followers, his dignity, his very understanding of himself. As a king he had come to see himself as all powerful. He had become, as Bruner (1987) argues, his own narrative about himself. He had come to believe he was powerful as a person. But he was only powerful as a king.

Lear begins a journey of self-discovery through the play. After each layer of his self-knowledge is shredded by his ruthless daughters, he searches for himself. 'Doth any here know me?..Who is it can tell me who I am?' (Act 1:4). When he is finally left with just himself, all his trappings of kingship taken away, his knights, his servants, he begins to glimpse something else. 'You see me here, you gods, a poor old man ...O fool, I shall go mad!' (Act 2:4). And he goes out into a driving storm with just a loyal follower and his Fool.

He begins his descent into madness or rather into a mental breakdown where he is searching for himself; unable to understand how it is possible to be where he is; sorry for himself. 'I am a man more sinned against than sinning' (Act 3:2). His two followers try to urge him into a little hut. Lear starts to look outwards for the first time rather than just inwards. He sees for the first time how his people have to live. 'Poor naked wretches, ...How shall your houseless heads...defend you From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en Too little care of this! ...Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel' (Act 3:4). He tears off his clothes. He is no longer looking at the world from the warmth and security of his castle but for the first time he is in actual physical contact with how his subjects live. He descends into a complete breakdown. At the end of the play he is for a short while re-united with his youngest daughter Cordelia. He begins to glimpse himself as just a human being. He kneels before her to say, 'I am a very foolish fond old man' (Act 4:7). It is a remarkable change from the raging king at the start of the play. And just before he dies, with a dead Cordelia in his arms, feeling the end near, he asks one of the servants 'Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir' (Act 5:3). What an extraordinary change in him: from tyrant at the start of the play, to someone who will humbly ask and say 'thank you, sir' to a servant. A journey to some sort of self-knowledge has taken place.

I want to take a number of key points from this example. It is a very rough analogy of some key dimensions of the drama I have been pursuing. Lear would never have even begun the journey to some sort of self-awareness if he had stayed in his castle. From the high walls someone may have pointed out to him the poverty below and he may have felt he ought to do something – maybe hand food out at Christmas. This would be like someone pretending to be in role or as in Brecht, alienating or distancing oneself, thinking that way one can see more clearly. Rather than looking out on the world, he had to be shocked into awareness and go naked into a storm to begin to re-make himself. He had to experience it directly. It was visceral for him, emotional, affective, immediate. It stripped him of his supposed identity so he could more clearly find out who he was. These are some of the dimensions that living through drama can bring with an internal engagement with role. There can be real emotion at play. Not raw emotion which is too close to the personal but nevertheless there can be a feeling of anger, shame, despair and so on. Emotion can be

felt when we cry at the death of someone in a film. It is filtered by our knowledge it is not real. A real death might leave us torn apart for days and months. That sort of raw emotion would be far too powerful but the filtered emotion in drama can still be real. With metaxis the person in role would feel it as the person and as the role. The decisions and actions made in role would also resonate with the actual value system of the student. It would have the added impact of feeling as well as thinking: feeling thoughtfully. For example, the student playing Little Red Riding Hood pushes her mother to tell her if she is really going to be in danger or not. She might get a *real* sense of her mother prevaricating. Her mother has to get to work. She does not have time to go to Grandma's. She needs her daughter to be grown up and go for her. She tells her daughter she *will* be safe. Parents do manipulate us. They are not to be trusted. Played from inside the role both can actually get a real sense of the life pressures that interfere and damage the relationship they would ideally want between mother and child. So 'living through' drama became a key part of my drama teaching.

In an aside here I want to pay tribute to Gavin Bolton who is now in his 90s. Bolton ploughed his own furrow in drama teaching. He diverged from Heathcote, from Neelands, from Brecht, and pursued his search for 'being' in role as a new art form. In that sense he is and has been my teacher for the last 55 years. All the key elements of living through drama were invented by Heathcote and in this sense, she was the trail blazer and innovator. Nevertheless, the way Bolton developed and fought for process drama as an art form leads me to regard him as the most important teacher of this form of drama, to date, in the drama in education world.

I want to turn now to two other key influences on my drama teaching. Rather than try to cover the ground that is in *Imagining the Real* (Davis, 2014) I just want to try to focus on a few key areas that underpin the book. It is an attempt to approach a new form of living through process drama.

A part for Mikhail Bakhtin in drama teaching

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, having turned from Brecht and tried to introduce my own form of the political in drama, I came across Mikhail Bakhtin (2014/1981). His work had been re-discovered after a lifetime hidden in the Gorky Institute archives. In the 1960s some students had come across his work on Dostoevsky and recognised how original it was. He was amazingly still alive after surviving the Russian Revolution, imprisonment, exile and the 2nd WW. Before he died in 1975 his work had been translated and become known world-wide. I find Holquist (2002) the most useful introduction to Bakhtin.

I want to try to sketch some key dimensions of Bakhtin's work that appealed to me and which I incorporated into my thinking. I am not any sort of expert on Bakhtin (nor on anything else come to that) but I am just sharing what stood out for me as useful. Bakhtin was consumed with a search for a self and the role language plays in that process. Wherever we are born we are subject to a cacophony of voices: all competing for our attention. He termed this polyphony. But not in a musical sense which might indicate tending to harmony. These different voices are all ideologically saturated, made up of different speech genres. He called this heteroglossia. A car thief can be a joy rider or a perpetrator of crimes against motor vehicles. These different voices tend to combine in order to make meaning and where this is taken over by a dominant voice, such as a political party, then you can have a monologue. This monologism, the language of dictators, needs constantly to be opened out again to create a dialogic process. The problem then is always how can I know if it is I who is talking or another. Bakhtin as an aphorism could be 'I is other'.

Bakhtin analysed Dostoevsky's novels in this way. He argued there is an absence of authorial voice which could introduce a monologic discourse. As a result of this absence, the characters speak for themselves and enter into each other's consciousness in a dialogic process. Dostoevsky was not interested in 'explaining' his characters but rather provoking them to ultimate revelations of themselves in extreme situations. The author stays out of it. This appealed to me as a role for the drama teacher: not to become the dominant, monologic voice but to ensure there were a number of competing voices creating a dialogic interaction. In this sense trying to co-create drama situations where the students would find out about themselves in role.

Another key area was Bakhtin's notion of the situatedness of language. Meaning was always site specific. A dictionary is, in this sense, the graveyard of language. Take the expression 'wow'. It means nothing specific until it is situated. A father, in a hospital, looking down on his new-born child might say 'wow!'. A person, in a doctor's surgery being told they have terminal cancer might also say 'wow'. Context and situatedness totally alter the possible meanings. I could see that context and creating the site of the drama were going to be important for the language and meaning. I used the notion of paper locations to help create the site but that is another story. Bond's (2000, see p. 10) theory of sites elaborated and developed all this which leads me on to the next important stage.

Edward Bond – Experiencing an event differently

In the 1970s and '80s another influence began to emerge, the importance of which I did not at first recognise. I saw most of the first productions of several of Edward Bond's plays: *Lear*, *The Sea*, *The Fool*, *Summer* and so on and later *Saved*. I knew they were important but didn't know in what way. They disturbed me but I didn't know why. In the 1980s I came to know his work better. I could then reflect on my disturbances in a more productive way. Take his play *The Fool* as an example. *The Fool* is a play about the farm labourer poet John Clare. In one scene, in prison, Clare is visiting some friends who, along with a lot of other farm labourers have been arrested for rioting. They were protesting against their land being taken over by the local lord. They have been sentenced to hang. The court decides there are too many to be hung so only five are chosen to hang and the rest to be imprisoned or deported. Hysterical laughter from nearby cells can be heard from those who have been spared. Clare is left with his closest friend who is one of those to hang. Clare starts laughing. It is different to the other laughter. It is genuine laughter and he can't stop. He covers himself with his friend's blanket to try to smother the sound. He rolls onto the floor still laughing only to be stopped when the gaoler pulls the blanket off. I couldn't make sense of it at the time. I very much doubt it had been directed in the way Bond's plays needed to be. Just before he starts laughing Clare has seen a fly going in and out between the prison bars and no one has climbed up and killed it even though they could have. What I came to understand was that Bond was opening a space for the audience to examine what was happening in a different way. The audience may well have thought that the farm labourers should have been allowed to protest. What was happening was unjust. Brecht may well have found a way to alienate or distance this event to force the audience to come to this sort of conclusion. But this wasn't challenging what Bond wanted to challenge: the very notion of prisons in the first place. Bond was not breaking the rhythm of the play but disturbing the audience in a different way. Clare's laughter opened a gap, a space for the imagination to set to work. What was this about? The fly could go in and out. The whole idea of prisons is unjust. You can't have justice of any sort in an unjust society. Bond was inviting the audience to imagine the real; not to look at the scene with their ideological glasses on. I'm not suggesting that Bond had a pre-determined outcome in mind. But I feel sure that he was opening a space here for the event to be examined with different eyes.

Take another example, this time from *Saved*. This was his second play but the first to bring him to wider attention. In the final scene, Len is working at mending a chair that has been broken in a quarrel between members of the dysfunctional family with whom he is lodging. The only words spoken are by Len who asks someone to fetch him his hammer. He is ignored. The other three members of the family do not make any contact with each other. The father fills in his football coupons (the 1960s equivalent of doing the lottery). The mother and daughter flick through the TV programme magazine. Len is given a whole series of very deliberate poses to make while trying to get the chair to stand without wobbling. There are some seven of these: standing, crouching, head down, stomach over the seat, head down on the seat and so on. He is ignored by the other three. I could not work out what was happening. Now *Saved* was written before Bond had begun to fully develop his form of theatre. I came to see this was an early form of making a gap where the audience could not look at what was happening with ideologised eyes. The imagination either would or would not be brought into play. When I first saw it, I thought it didn't make sense. And it didn't unless I could begin to search in a different way. Later I came across where Bond had written about these images. He had in mind the unfinished stone carvings by Michelangelo. A human form is slowly emerging from the

stone but not yet fully human. Here was the image of the human still struggling to emerge from Len despite all that had been levelled against him. A space had been created where the audience could examine closely what was actually going on.

In 1990 I asked him to be the patron of the International Centre for Studies in Drama in Education (of which I was co-founder and director) at the University of Central England (now Birmingham City University). He graciously accepted and fulfilled that role for the next ten years, giving a workshop to my students each year. Through Bond's workshops and his theoretical writings, I came to have some sense of the devices that were at work in his plays. It seemed to me there was a way to use them to develop living through process drama. I needed to find a way where the students in role could open a space and dislodge each other out of their usual way of seeing. The search for this new form is written up in *Imagining the Real*. I did not succeed. I asked Chris Cooper to critique my efforts and his chapter in the book offers a useful starting point for where it needs to go next.

Working to understand the greater picture

To sum up: my search for form combined 'living through' drama, 'being' in role, metaxis and so on from Bolton and early Heathcote; dialogism, polyphony, heteroglossia from Bakhtin; and immediacy of involvement with disruption of the 'known' and his many drama devices from Bond. The central purpose has always been to use 'living through' drama as an art form. That is to find layers of meaning in the content being co-created to try to fulfil the role that historically drama has always fulfilled: to enable humans to grapple with who we are and where we are; to discuss different value systems and find where we want to place ourselves.

I have tried to show how neoliberal economics has enabled huge businesses to use the natural world as their playground in order to amass enormous personal wealth. This has placed climate change as the central concern surrounding young people and all of us. It is in that context that drama needs to help young people locate themselves and forge their value systems. That beautiful natural world belongs to all of us. Neoliberal economics and the drive to exploit greater and greater profits has turned the world into a potential disaster zone. That competitive race to the top has permeated our culture in Euro-Atlantic countries at least. This is the social/political context in which young people are trying to create themselves and their value systems. Figure 3 shows an example of the forces now dominating the personal and seeking to influence adults and young people. Sun, sea, sand and fashion. Real waves, real sand, life-guards at the ready, all in the middle of Paris. Never mind climate change: let's have a fashion parade! Consumerism dominates all.



Fig. 3.
Lagerfeld's Spring 2019
collection shown in Paris, 2018

I am not trying to impose my vision on anyone. What I am saying as clearly as I can is that the drama teacher, acting as co-playwright with young people, needs to work to understand the greater picture in which young people are seeking themselves. Young people need to be able to make themselves not be made to order. None of us can jump out of this world. We have 7 years left before unstoppable decline sets in. In the words of the President of Ireland, while speaking to a biodiversity conference in Ireland:

Around the world, the library of life that has evolved over billions of years – our biodiversity – is being destroyed, poisoned, polluted, invaded, fragmented, plundered, drained and burned at a rate not seen in human history. If we were coalminers we'd be up to our waists in dead canaries. (Watts, 2019 b).

Canaries are birds that miners used to carry. If they died it meant there was deadly gas and the miners should leave immediately. A very useful reminder.

So, the question remains. Who am I? If I am other, who are the others who live inside me and have become part of me? Do I want these uninvited visitors to stay? How can drama help young people ask themselves these same questions?

References

Amnesty International (2023). *The World's Refugees in Numbers*. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/global-refugee-crisis-statistics-and-facts/>

Baxter, I., & Ding, Q. (2022). An Optimal Atmospheric Circulation Mode in the Arctic Favoring Strong Summertime Sea Ice Melting and Ice–Albedo Feedback. *Journal of Climate*, 35(20), pp. 3027-3045.

Bakhtin, M. (2014, 1981). *The dialogic imagination*. University of Texas Press.

Big Issue (2023). How many people are homeless in the UK? And what can you do about it? Available at: <https://www.bigissue.com/news/housing/how-many-people-are-homeless-in-the-uk-and-what-can-you-do-about-it/>

Boal, A. (1995). *The Rainbow of Desire: the Boal method of theatre and therapy*. Routledge.

Bolton, G. (1976). Drama teaching – a personal statement. *Insight, Journal of the British Children's Theatre Association*, Summer.

Bolton, G. (1992). *New perspectives on classroom drama*. Simon and Schuster Education.

Bolton, G. (2010). Drama in Education: Learning Medium or Arts Process. In D. Davis (Ed.), *Gavin Bolton: Essential Writings*. Trentham Books.

Bonan, D. B., Schneider, T., Eisenman, I., & Wills, R. C. J. (2021a). Constraining the date of a seasonally ice-free Arctic using a simple model. *Geophysical Research Letters*, 48, e2021GL094309.

Bond, E. (2000). *The hidden plot*. Methuen.

Boots, B., Russell, C. W., & Senga Green, D. (2019). Effects of Microplastics in Soil Ecosystems: Above and Below Ground. *Environmental Science & Technology*, 53(19), pp. 11496-11506.

Brown, W. (2015) *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. Zone Books.

Bruner, J. S. (1987). 'Life as narrative'. *Social Research*, 54(1), pp. 691-710.

Bruner, J. S. (1996). *The Culture of Education*. Harvard University Press.

Butler, W., Holmes, T., Jackson, A. L., Melix, Z., & Milordis, A. (2021). *Addressing climate driven displacement: Planning for sea level rise in Florida's coastal communities and affordable housing in inland communities in the face of climate gentrification*. Research Report for The Leroy Collins Institute at Florida State University.

Carrington, D. (2018). 'Brutal new': global carbon emissions jump to all-time high in 2018. *The Guardian*, December 5th. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/05/brutal-news-global-carbon-emissions-jump-to-all-time-high-in-2018>

Carrington, D. (2019a). Global warming of oceans equivalent to an atomic bomb per second, *The Guardian*, January 7th. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jan/07/global-warming-of-oceans-equivalent-to-an-atomic-bomb-per-second>

Carrington, D. (2019b). Alarm as study shows winds can blow microplastics across the world. *The Guardian*, April 15th. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/15/winds-can-carry-microplastics-anywhere-and-everywhere>

Chakraborty, J. (2019). Panic is on the agenda at Davos, but it's too little too late. *The Guardian*, January 23rd. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/23/panic-davos-inequality-global-elite>

Cozzi, L., Wetzel, D., Tonolo, G., & Hyppolite II, J. (2022). For the first time in decades, the number of people without access to electricity is set to increase in 2022. *International Energy Agency*. Available at: <https://www.iea.org/commentaries/for-the-first-time-in-decades-the-number-of-people-without-access-to-electricity-is-set-to-increase-in-2022>

Danopoulos, E., Twiddy, M., West, R., & Rotchell, J. M. (2022). A rapid review and meta-regression analyses of the toxicological impacts of microplastic exposure in human cells. *Journal of Hazardous Materials*, 427, doi.org/10.1016/j.jhazmat.2021.127861.

Davis, D. (2014). *Imagining the Real*. A Trentham book, Institute of Education Press.

Diebold, F. X., & Rudebusch, G. D. (2021). Probability assessments of an ice-free Arctic: Comparing statistical and climate model projections. *Journal of Econometrics*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j>.

Din, U. A., Mukhopadhyay, S., & Tariq, U. (2022). A Robotic System for Automatic Identification and Collection of Recyclable Plastic Bottles. *5th International Conference on Communications, Signal Processing, and their Applications (ICCSPA)*, Cairo, Egypt, pp. 1-6, doi: 10.1109/ICCSPA55860.2022.10018969.

Editorial (2019). The Guardian view on Davos: elites without answers. *The Guardian*, January 23rd. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/23/the-guardian-view-on-davos-elites-without-answers>

EMR (2022). *Global Plastic Bottles Market: Report by Expert Market research*. Available at: <https://www.expertmarketresearch.com/reports/plastic-bottles-market>

Ferguson, D. (2018). *Headteachers turn to charities as families sleep by bins*. *The Guardian*, May 15th. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/may/15/headteachers-turn-charities-families>

Friedman, M. (2002). *Capitalism and freedom*. University of Chicago Press.

Gerretsen, I. (2023). How microplastics are infiltrating the food you eat. *BBC Future*, January 4th. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20230103-how-plastic-is-getting-into-our-food>

Gore, A. C., Chappell, V. A., Fenton, S. E., Flaws, J. A., Nadal, A., Prins, G. S., Toppari, J., & Zoeller, R. T. (2015). EDC-2: The Endocrine Society's Second Scientific Statement on Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals. *Endocrine Reviews*, 36(6), pp. E1–E150.

Harberger, A. C. (1964). Some Notes on Inflation. In W. Baer & I. Kerstenetsku (Eds.), *Inflation and Growth in Latin America*. Richard D. Irwin. (pp. 319-351)

Hayek, F. A. (1944). *The road to serfdom*. Routledge Press.

Haynes, S. (2019). Students From 1,600 Cities Just Walked Out of School to Protest Climate Change. It Could Be Greta Thunberg's Biggest Strike Yet. *Time*, May 24th. Available at: <https://time.com/5595365/global-climate-strikes-greta-thunberg/>

Holquist, M. (2002, 1990). *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his world*. 2nd Ed. Routledge.

Homewood, P. (2018). Met office 5-year forecast. *The Guardian*, February 1st. Available at: <https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2018/02/01/met-offices-5-year-forecast/>

IEA (2021). With only 2% of governments' recovery spending going to clean energy transitions, global emissions are set to surge to an all-time high. *International Energy Agency*. Available at: <https://www.iea.org/news/with-only-2-of-governments-recovery-spending-going-to-clean-energy-transitions-global-emissions-are-set-to-surge-to-an-all-time-high>

IEA (2022a). Government Energy Spending Tracker. *International Energy Agency*. Available at: <https://www.iea.org/reports/government-energy-spending-tracker-2>

IEA (2022b). Coal 2022. Analysis and Forecast to 2025. *International Energy Agency*. Available at: <https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/91982b4e-26dc-41d5-88b1-4c47ea436882/Coal2022.pdf>

Jamail, D. (2019). *The End of Ice*. The New Press.

Kakutani, M. (2018). *The Death of Truth*. William Collins.

Kapczynski, A., Singh Grewal, D., & Britton-Purdy, J. (2022). How Law made Neoliberalism. *Boston Review*, 47(2,) pp. 86-100.

Klein, N. (2017). *No Is Not Enough: Defeating the New Shock Politics*. Allan Lane.

Laville, S., & Taylor, M. (2017). A million bottles a minute: world's plastic binge 'as dangerous as climate change'. *The Guardian*, June 28th. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jun/28/a-million-a-minute-worlds-plastic-bottle-binge-as-dangerous-as-climate-change>

Laybourn-Langton, L. Rankin, L. & Baxter, D. (2019). This is a crisis: facing up to the age of environmental breakdown. *Institute for Public Policy Research*. Retrieved from <https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/age-of-environmental-breakdown>

Li, H., & Grant, R. J. (2022). Climate gentrification in Miami: A real climate change-minded investment practice? *Cities*, 131(6), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2022.104025>.

MacLean, N. (2017). *Democracy in chains: the deep history of the radical right's stealth plan for America*. Scribe.

Mahdawi, A. (2019). Looking on the bright side of climate change, think of all the money corporations can make. *The Guardian*, January 28th. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/commentisfree/2019/jan/28/looking-on-the-bright-side-of-climate-change-think-of-all-the-money-corporations-can-make>

Mayer, J. (2016). *Dark money: how a secretive group of billionaires is trying to buy political control in the US*. Scribe.

Metcalfe, M. (2017). Neoliberalism: the idea that swallowed the world. *The Guardian*, August 18th. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2017/aug/18/neoliberalism-the-idea-that-changed-the-world>

Meadowcroft, J. (2011). *James M. Buchanan (Major Conservative and Libertarian Thinkers)*. Continuum Publishing, Bloomsbury Collections.

Milillo, P., Rignot, E., Rizzoli, P., Scheuchl, B., Mougnot, J., Bueso-Bello, J., & Prats-Iraola, P. (2019). Heterogeneous retreat and ice melt of Thwaites Glacier, West Antarctica. *Science Advances*, 5(1), DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.aau3433 Available at: <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.aau3433>

Monbiot, G. (2019). How the world's dirtiest industries have learned to pollute our politics. *The Guardian*, August 7th. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/aug/07/fossil-fuel-lobby-pollute-politics-climate-crisis>

NCSL (2009). Discover the benefits of school business managers. *National College for School Leadership*. Available at: <https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/userfiles/file/School%20Funding%20Team/Discover%20the%20benefits%20of%20school%20business%20managers.pdf>

O'Donovan, N. (2023). Demand, dysfunction and distribution: The UK growth model from neoliberalism to the knowledge economy. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 25(1), pp. 178-196.

Pierson, P. (1994). *Dismantling the Welfare State: Regan, Thatcher and the Politics of Retrenchment*. Cambridge University Press.

Powell, B. (2003). The CEO of Iraq. *Fortune*, 148(3), pp. 102-112.

Rice, J. L., Cohen, D. A., Long, J., & Jurjevich, J. R. (2020). Contradictions of climate friendly city: New perspectives on Eco-gentrification and housing justice. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 44(1), pp. 145-165.

Rivera, A., Movalia, S., Pit, H., & Larsen, K. (2022). *Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions: 1990-2020 and Preliminary 2021 Estimates*. Rhodium Group. Available at: <https://rhg.com/research/global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-2021/>

Ritchie, H., Roser, M., & Rosado, P. (2020). CO2 and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Available at: <https://ourworldindata.org/co2-and-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

Rounce, D. R., Hock, R., Maussion, F., Hugonnet, R., Kochtitzky, W., Huss, M., Berthier, E., Brinkerhoff, D., Compagno, L., Copland, L., Farinotti, D., Menounos, B., McNabb, R. W. (2023). Global glacier change in the 21st century: Every increase in temperature matters. *Science*, 379(6627), pp. 78-83.

Steele, J. (2008). *Defeat: Why America and Britain Lost Iraq*. Counterpoint.

Storrow, B. (2023). Will Global Emissions Plateau in 2023? Four Trends to Watch. *Scientific American*, Jan 6th. Available at: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/will-global-emissions-plateau-in-2023-four-trends-to-watch/>

Swaminathan, R., Parker, R. J., Jones, C. G., Allan, R. P., Quaife, T., Kelley, D. I., De Mora, L., & Walton, J. (2022). The Physical Climate at Global Warming Thresholds as Seen in the U.K. Earth System Model. *Journal of Climate*, 35(1), pp. 29-48.

Tickle, L. (2018). Food, clothes, a mattress, and three funerals. What teachers buy for children. *The Guardian*, May 1st. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/may/01/teachers-buy-children-food-clothes-mattress-funerals-child-poverty>

Vaughan, A. (2015). Humans creating sixth great extinction of animal species, say scientists. *The Guardian*, June 19th. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jun/19/humans-creating-sixth-great-extinction-of-animal-species-say-scientists>

Wallace-Wells, D. (2019). *The Uninhabitable Earth: A story of the future*. Allen Lane.

Warren-Myers, G., & Hurlimann, A. (2022). Climate change and risk to real estate. In P. Tiwari, & J. Miao (Eds.), *A research agenda for real estate*. Edward Elgar Publishing. (pp. 139-164)

Watts, J. (2018). Global warming should be called global heating, says key scientist. *The Guardian*, December 13th. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/13/global-heating-more-accurate-to-describe-risks-to-planet-says-key-scientist>

Watts, J. (2019a). Military build-up in Arctic as melting ice reopens northern borders. *The Guardian*, January 24th. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/24/military-buildup-in-arctic-as-melting-ice-reopens-northern-borders>

Watts, J. (2019b). World's food supply under 'severe threat' from loss of biodiversity. *The Guardian*, February 21st. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/feb/21/worlds-food-supply-under-severe-threat-from-loss-of-biodiversity>

Watts, J. (2019c). Human society under urgent threat from loss of Earth's natural life. *The Guardian*, May 6th. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/may/06/human-society-under-urgent-threat-loss-earth-natural-life-un-report>

Westwater, H., & McRae, I. (2023). Child poverty in the UK: the definitions, causes and consequences in the cost of living crisis. *The Big Issue*, Jan 25th. Available at: <https://www.bigissue.com/news/social-justice/child-poverty-uk-definitions-details-causes-consequences/>

Wieczorek, A. M., Morrison, L., Croot, P. L., Allcock, A. L., MacLoughlin, E., Savard, O., Brownlow, H., & Doyle, T. K. (2018). Frequency of Microplastics in Mesopelagic Fishes from the Northwest Atlantic. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 5, DOI: 10.3389/fmars.2018.00039.

Wiist, W. H. (2011). Citizens United, Public Health, and Democracy: The Supreme Court Ruling, Its Implications, and Proposed Action. *American Journal of Public Health*, 101(7), pp. 1172-1179.

WMO (2022a). *Provisional State of the Global Climate in 2022*. *World Meteorological Organisation*. Available at: <https://public.wmo.int/en/our-mandate/climate/wmo-statement-state-of-global-climate>

WMO (2022b). Eight warmest years on record witness upsurge in climate change impacts. Sea level rise accelerates, European glacier melt shatters records, extreme weather causes devastation. *World Meteorological Organisation*. Available at: <https://public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/eight-warmest-years-record-witness-upsurge-climate-change-impacts>

Worland, J., & Espada, M (2022). Why We can't Just Quit Oil. *TIME Magazine*, 199(19/20), pp. 42-46.

World Population Review (2023). Nuclear Weapons by Country. Available at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/nuclear-weapons-by-country>

Appendix

The Koch brothers' campaign for election in 1980 included the following manifesto aims. They embody in an extremely clear way the social values of neoliberalism and how they are intended to impact on the personal.

- We urge the repeal of federal campaign finance laws, and the immediate abolition of the despotic Federal Election Commission.
- We favor the abolition of Medicare and Medicaid programs.
- We oppose any compulsory insurance or tax-supported plan to provide health services, including those which finance abortion services.
- We also favor the deregulation of the medical insurance industry.
- We favor the repeal of the fraudulent, virtually bankrupt, and increasingly oppressive Social Security system. Pending that repeal, participation in Social Security should be made voluntary.
- We propose the abolition of the governmental Postal Service. The present system, in addition to being inefficient, encourages governmental surveillance of private correspondence. Pending abolition, we call for an end to the monopoly system and for allowing free competition in all aspects of postal service.
- We oppose all personal and corporate income taxation, including capital gains taxes.
- We support the eventual repeal of all taxation.
- As an interim measure, all criminal and civil sanctions against tax evasion should be terminated immediately.
- We support repeal of all law which impede the ability of any person to find employment, such as minimum wage laws.
- We advocate the complete separation of education and State. Government schools lead to the indoctrination of children and interfere with the free choice of individuals. Government ownership, operation, regulation, and subsidy of schools and colleges should be ended.
- We condemn compulsory education laws ... and we call for the immediate repeal of such laws.
- We support the repeal of all taxes on the income or property of private schools, whether profit or non-profit.
- We support the abolition of the Environmental Protection Agency.
- We support abolition of the Department of Energy.
- We call for the dissolution of all government agencies concerned with transportation, including the Department of Transportation.
- We demand the return of America's railroad system to private ownership. We call for the privatization of the public roads and national highway system.
- We specifically oppose laws requiring an individual to buy or use so-called 'self-protection' equipment such as safety belts, air bags, or crash helmets.
- We advocate the abolition of the Federal Aviation Administration.
- We advocate the abolition of the Food and Drug Administration.
- We support an end to all subsidies for child-bearing built into our present laws, including all welfare plans and the provision of tax-supported services for children.
- We oppose all government welfare, relief projects, and 'aid to the poor' programs. All these government programs are privacy-invading, paternalistic, demeaning, and inefficient. The proper source of help for such persons is the voluntary efforts of private groups and individuals.
- We call for the privatization of the inland waterways, and of the distribution system that brings water to industry, agriculture and households.
- We call for the repeal of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.
- We call for the abolition of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- We support the repeal of all state usury laws.

Chapter 2

Unveiling the Power of Political Framing through Drama

Carmel O'Sullivan and Silke Franz

Abstract: In everyday life, experiences are 'framed' or presented from sociological, cultural, political, philosophical, communication, historical, or psychological perspectives, and this is increasingly prevalent in our digital world dominated by social media. Frames shape the way we interact with and make sense of events depending on how they are presented or experienced by us. Shifting frame can result in changing the viewpoint we hold about our circumstances and help us interpret and make sense of situations experienced.

The term 'frame' is widely used in drama in education (DiE) and is usually traced to Goffman's (1974) sociological conception of frame. In DiE, frame is an important planning and organisational principle and an effective approach to stimulate critical thinking, practice, and evaluation. In this chapter we explore how a drama approach to democratic education can unveil the manipulative mechanisms of political framing. Considering recent successes of populism in Western democracies, educators need effective educational concepts to help students develop critical literacy skills to successfully navigate the digital world. To achieve this, we argue that greater attention needs to be paid to the political dimension of frame in the drama community, to exploit the full potential of a dramatic approach to democratic education.

Keywords: framing theory, political framing, populism, democratic education, drama in education, multiple perspectives, frame distance.

Introduction

It is not by force or coercion that a regime maintains itself but through its ability to shape our world view. (Gamson, 1985, p. 614)

As the world we live in becomes increasingly complex, liberal democracies globally are facing a multitude of challenges such as globalisation, migration, and climate change. For many, these developments evoke feelings of uncertainty, fear of downward mobility and the need for a sense of belonging. Tapping into and exploiting these feelings populists, who espouse a dualistic world view, fuel distrust in democracy and in its institutions, thereby initiating processes of disintegration (Blassnig et al., 2019; Hamdaoui, 2022). These developments also pose new challenges for schools and universities as places of reflexive, critical and creative education. To tackle them, Ministries of Education globally are encouraging the development of guidelines for democratic education at all levels, with the goal of promoting values like pluralism and diversity, strengthening students' social skills, self-efficacy, media skills, and fostering social and political participation, so that children and young people can deconstruct and resist anti-democratic ideologies and extremism. To prevent students falling prey to populist demagoguery (Mudde, 2016), such guidelines advocate critical exploration of different forms of communication, persuasion and manipulation which can be powerful yet often hidden means of influencing people's perceptions and decision-making processes. In addition to critical analyses of different forms of populist rhetoric, educational curricula increasingly require teachers to present students with differing opinions and multiple perspectives, so they can form their own opinions and make informed choices for themselves. Prioritising critical exploration of communication, its persuasions and manipulations and foregrounding pedagogies that advocate for student agency and student voice in classrooms across the education system is vital. To achieve this, drama in education can play a role in facilitating students to explore different perspectives (Feil, 2019).

This chapter discusses drama's pedagogic role in exploring how events and situations are framed. The concept of framing has been widely researched in a number of disciplines, for example, communication, sociology, psychology and political science. While there is a lack of consistency around how the concept is defined, scholars agree that framing influences thinking (Entman, 1993; Wehling, 2016). If framing, as this chapter argues, has the potential to affect people's beliefs and opinions, it also has implications for the classroom. If schools and universities want to support learners in becoming responsible, critical, well-informed citizens, educators need to support students' critical awareness of the framing devices and language employed in all forms of discourse and social political engagement. Therefore, this chapter aims to introduce teachers and drama facilitators to the theoretical and practical applications of frame as a key planning and organisational device in supporting their students' development of critical thinking skills and reflection.

Framing theory and Drama in Education

No message is entirely able, by virtue of its construction and points of emphasis, to dictate entirely the thoughts of its audience. Yet structural elements of a message may still guide one's train of thought effectively. (Price & Tewksbury, 1997, p. 198)

The sociological roots of framing theory can be traced back to Erving Goffman (1974), who defines frames as "principles of organization which govern events [...] and our subjective involvement in them" (p. 10-11). Focusing on individuals and how they construct meaning in everyday encounters, Goffman (1974) comprehends a frame as an interpretive scheme which is applied to make sense of events. Simply put, frame analysis potentially provides an answer to the question of "What is it that's going on here?" (Goffman, 1974, p. 8). Gamson (1985) understands framing as a "bridging concept between two levels of analysis - between cognition and culture" (p. 615). To illustrate, he argues that frame analysis involves two aspects: the realization that the world we perceive is encoded and that there is more than one way of decoding it. Thus, the framing process becomes "a locus of potential struggle" (Gamson, 1985, p. 615), which allows for more than one valid version of reality. This also has implications for political sociology:

A cultural analysis tells us that our political world is framed, that reported events are pre-organized and do not come to us in raw form. But we are active processors and however encoded our perceived reality, we may decode it in different ways.
(Gamson, 1985, p. 615)

This realisation is highly relevant in drama in education because actively making sense of the world by interpreting situations through different socio-cultural frames implies a sense of agency; of not being passive recipients of knowledge. It is also a good starting point for drama teachers who want their students to understand and explore various perspectives, for example, in role work. By taking on a role, participants imagine they are other people, and they can experience and actively interpret an imaginary world from a different perspective (Edmiston, 2003).

Borrowing the term from Goffman, Dorothy Heathcote, a pioneering figure in the field of drama in education, employs it as a key concept in her work. In *Signs and Portents* (1984) she defines frame thus:

... in any social encounter there are two aspects present. One is the action necessary for the event to progress towards conclusions. The other is the perspective from which people are coming to enter the event. This is frame, and frame is the main agent in providing tension and meaning for the participants. (p. 163)

In life, there are many possible ways of looking at or perceiving the same event depending on who you are, and where and when the event occurs. Your circumstances in life will determine how you respond or act in a particular situation. Similarly in drama in education, it is possible to explore or examine a situation from multiple viewing points, and each perspective may result in a different action or response. The selected dramatic frame will result in a myriad of different perceptions and understandings of the same event, thereby allowing participants to gain a more holistic view of a situation than might otherwise be possible. A frame provides an entry point to a drama, and the teacher/facilitator must decide which frame or perspective the participants should begin to examine the situation/event from. If the frame is appropriate, it will elicit belief and commitment from participants and help to progress the drama. If an inaccurate/inappropriate viewpoint or frame is selected, participants may feel isolated or confused, and either not take the work seriously or opt out of the drama entirely. Heathcote (1984) believes that depending on how a person sees an event and how (and to what extent) they feel part of it, determines how they understand and think about that event.

However, the concept of role is not only restricted to drama or theatre. In fact, Goffman's (1974) claim that "all the world is like a stage" (p. 124, italics in original) suggests that even in real life nobody is ever out of role, we take on different social roles depending on the situation or with whom we interact. Accordingly, Goffman also examines social situations in which people function either as performers or spectators, for example, weddings, sport contests or lectures, and distinguishes between them according to their 'purity'. To him, theatrical performances are the purest, because they are formalized and have been prepared for an audience to experience - they are "a demonstration of life for others who spectate" (Heathcote, 1984, p. 105). On the other hand, social encounters that occur spontaneously or by chance, for example, a person watching a worker on a construction site, are considered the most impure. What all these social occasions reveal though, no matter how well-prepared or spontaneous they are, is "how we function as social animals trying to explain and make sense of the world" (Heathcote, 1984, p. 106). This is relevant for drama teachers, because they can draw on a wide range of experiences and multiple perspectives when setting up a drama. Being aware of these processes seems even more important when taking account of the vulnerabilities of frames. Goffman (1974) warns us that every individual will occasionally become "a victim of deception and delusion" (p. 445) and that these delusions can be produced on purpose. This is because frames are vulnerable to tampering, for example, by limiting information which provides the context necessary to make sense of what is going on. In this situation, Goffman also calls the reliability of news coverage into question, since only a very small part of current events is depicted, often with some form of comment or verbal interpretation.

Although Goffman declared he is not interested in politics, claiming to be only concerned with the sociology of everyday life interactions, he nevertheless left a legacy to political sociology (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015). Gamson (1985) sees the significance of Goffman's ideas in the moral stance that informs his work, which had considerable impact on the shaping of political consciousness, as a way of seeing and acting in the world. In his observations about social institutions, he exposes hypocrisy and covert manipulation by institutional authorities "who are in a position to give official imprint to versions of reality" by determining the frame (Goffman as cited in Gamson, 1985, p. 607). Like Goffman, teachers should attempt to disclose manipulative framing if they wish their students to form their own political consciousness and make informed choices in life. However, in the context of digitalization they need to think beyond institutional authorities and traditional news coverage. With the rise of online media, practically anyone can now distribute their own version of reality, their own frames relatively uncensored.

Framing in populist rhetoric

With authoritarianism making a comeback, and liberal democracy on the retreat (Shaw, 2022), for example, resulting in the recent invasion of a democratic European country by an authoritarian regime, we need to ask why and how authoritarianism continues to spread (Adler et al., 2023). Considering contemporary society and the use of new media, three key groups who disseminate populist messages and language can be identified: populist actors, the media, and citizens (Blassnig et al., 2019). To analyse the workings and effects of populist rhetoric, but also to raise awareness of citizens' responsibility, attention needs to be paid to all three.

Unsurprisingly, the same juxtaposition between the 'common, decent people' and the 'corrupt, conspiring elite' reflected in populist ideology is also at the heart of populist rhetoric. The "core idea of populist communication [is] framing attributions of blame" (Hameleers et al., 2019, p. 1146). Biegon (2019) goes a step further, claiming that populism is not an ideology but a discourse, more precisely "a framing style that constructs antagonisms around 'the people' and their adversaries" (p. 518). He argues that populism is ideologically ambiguous, since it can be leftist, rightist or centrist, top-down or bottom-up, democratic or authoritarianist etc. That is why, to him, "populism is an 'argumentative frame'" (p. 522) promoting the dichotomy between 'the people' and the elite, not an ideology. While the question of whether populism is an ideology or a specific rhetorical strategy is controversial in the literature (Zembylas, 2019), there is consensus that populist rhetoric and polarisation influences attitudes and decision-making processes of an audience (Farrar, 2022). Therefore, framing theory is a valuable approach to identify the mechanisms behind it.

Busby et al. (2019) identify several aspects which directly link populist rhetoric to framing theory. First, the context in which populists disseminate their messages matters: "Populist rhetoric should only prompt populist attitudes in contexts in which a populist message is sensible" (p. 618). This means that if the relevant background, for example, failure of governance, is lacking among audience members, it is unlikely to have any effect. Moreover, framing theory identifies specific rhetorical elements of populist discourse, such as the so-called 'dispositional attribution' [which] unilaterally blames policy failure on the intended behaviour of some members in society instead of analysing what events or circumstances outside of the control of the individual might have brought about the problem, which would be 'situational attribution'. Through this approach a section of society is demonized. In contrast to dispositional blame attribution, situational attribution is common in pluralist discourse, which accepts different opinions and criticizes political opponents instead of vilifying them. In a study conducted with adults during the US presidential primaries in 2015 and 2016, Busby and his colleagues show that if social or political problems are framed dispositionally, it increases support for populist actors, whereas this is not the case if issues are framed situationally. Such knowledge is valuable for teachers, because if the appeal of populist actors can be limited through framing problems in terms of situational factors, it provides a starting point to discuss political problems seriously with students.

To ensure their attributions of blame are not only applicable with existing frames, but also guide their audience's train of thought, one strategy populism employs is to not only use catchy slogans but constantly repeat them. The reason why this is so effective can be explained with the help of neurolinguistics: "Words are neurally linked to the circuits that determine their meaning. The more a word is heard, the more the circuit is activated and the stronger it gets, and so the easier it is to fire again" (Lakoff, 2016). Because of repetition, certain political ideas and interpretations can gradually become 'common sense' (Biegon, 2019), even if they are evidently oversimplified or false. An example is Trump's framing of Hillary Clinton as 'Crooked Hillary' during the 2016 election campaign. By repeatedly referring to her as 'a crook', Trump's framing achieved two goals simultaneously. Not only did it satisfy the corrupt political elite versus the decent people dichotomy, it also depicted his opponent as a criminal, and constant repetition resulted in many people unconsciously thinking of her as such. Biegon (2019) reminds us that where a rhetorical style is forceful, unwavering and consistent, it leaves a lasting effect on people's opinions.

The second actor reinforcing populist messages by repeating them is the media. While journalistic styles cannot be completely neutral as reporting always involves an interpretation of events or issues by the journalist (Wolfgang et al., 2021; Goffman, 1974), "journalistic constructions of reality can be regarded as differing to the extent to which factual information or interpretation of the events are highlighted" (Hameleers et al., 2019, p. 1148). By means of framing, journalists can actively emphasize blame attributions or use an emotionalized style to stimulate audience response. Thus, a distinction can be made between populism through and populism by the media (Blassnig et al., 2019). Considering offline media, transcending the dissemination of factual information in favour of interpretative journalism is a strategy most often employed by tabloids (Hameleers et al., 2019). Instead of simply conveying the opinions and messages of populist actors to the public, tabloid journalists actively use "their professional agency to reconstruct issues in terms of the causal and moral opposition between the people and culprit elites" (Hameleers et al., 2019, p. 1159). A good example to illustrate this are the frames used in connection with the German word "*Klimahysterie*" [climate hysteria], a word used by right-wing populists to defame climate activists and their attempts to fight global warming. When it was elected ugliest word of the year 2019 by a jury of German linguists, the largest German tabloid BILD published a comment with the headline, '*Sprachpolizei will Kritik an Klima-Aktivisten ächten*' [Language police want to outlaw criticism of climate activists] (Piatov, 2020). By calling the jury of linguists 'language police' and claiming they want to dictate to Germans how to talk, BILD employs the 'us' (ordinary German citizens) versus 'them' (academic elite) divide, using an emotionalized style to agitate readers.

However, the chance of being exposed to populist attributions of blame is not limited to traditional media. Not only are online social media outlets such as Twitter or Facebook even more prone to mediatized populism (Jakubowski and Pajak-Patkowska, 2022; Hameleers et al., 2019), they also bring the third group of actors into focus: citizens. Since online media enable interaction with news content and allow users to express their opinions, citizens are not only exposed to populist rhetoric more regularly and easily, they can also become active agents amplifying populist communication. For example, a study conducted by Blassnig et al. (2019) analysing reader comments in online news demonstrates that populism in online media induces populist behaviour among recipients: "We find that populist key messages by political and media actors in news articles do not only provoke more reader comments but also prompt citizens to use populist key messages themselves in their comments" (p. 2). Interestingly and perhaps somewhat worryingly, it does not seem to matter whether journalists assume a positive, neutral, or negative stance towards the populist content of their articles. This coincides with Lakoff's (2012) framing theory that even negating a frame activates it. So even if journalists condemn populist rhetoric, the effect is the same: "populism in articles leads to more frequent and more populist reader comments" (Blassnig et al., 2019, p. 15, italics in original). These results are supported by other scholarship showing that dispositional blame attribution not only increases support for populist actors, but also prompts participants to use populist rhetoric themselves (Halperin, 2023; Busby et al., 2019; Tremblay, 2020; Farrar, 2022).

These findings have important implications for democratic societies and their institutions. Although participation and interaction in the online news sphere can be seen as something positive where readers express their opinions and debate with other readers, the danger that they contribute to the dissemination of populist rhetoric or even become populist actors themselves is problematic from the perspective of liberal democracy. Not only does the anonymity of the internet in combination with blame attribution

induce incivility or even hate speech, but the creation of echo chambers “may lead to increasingly polarized or fragmented audiences [and] the construction of in- and out-groups” (Blassnig et al., 2019, p. 4).

As populist rhetoric resonates and multiplies via different outlets, offline and more frequently online, with journalistic contextualisation not mattering significantly (Blassnig et al., 2019), it might be tempting to simply dismiss it as ‘cheap’ or ‘idle talk’. However, it needs to be taken seriously, since it helps to create support for populist actors (Adler et al., 2023). Considering the immense role of the internet and social media in the lives of children and young people (Atay and Ashlock, 2022; Kahne & Bowyer, 2018), it seems even more urgent for schools to raise their awareness of this issue. Underlining the importance of enhancing students’ capacity to successfully navigate the digital world and detect biased information (OECD, 2021), exposing students to multiple, competing frames is identified as a strategy to counter framing effects and to supporting them in integrating opposing viewpoints in their decision-making processes (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Pluwak, 2011; Wehling, 2016).

Signalling to the points above, the following sections further probe the concept of frame in drama and how it may help unveil the hidden power of framing in children and young people’s lives.

Frame as a tool of experiential interpretation in drama

There is an additional aspect which needs to be considered when adapting Goffman’s (1974) framing theory for DiE. In his account of the theatrical frame, Goffman clearly distinguishes between the performers on stage and the audience, which “has neither the right nor the obligation to participate directly in the dramatic action occurring on stage” (p. 125). In DiE, there is no such boundary. On the contrary, it is the participants themselves who provide a sense of audience, as they both create and observe the imagined world: “Like spectators in the theatre, they live within two overlapping circles of experience – that of the dramatic world and that of their own actuality. But participants in process drama actively inhabit both the real world and the imagined” (O’Neill, 1995, p. 119, italics in original). In other words, while the participants in a drama make meaning of the imagined world just like an audience when watching a play, they don’t just interpret but actively create it by making things happen. This sense of agency is also relevant for democratic education. Instead of being represented by actors, drama participants actively and equally make and negotiate meaning together, thereby discovering the ideals of participatory democracy in play (Neelands, 2016).

To Heathcote (1984), taking on a role does not mean that participants should start acting as if they were on stage, but should take up attitudes and operate with them within the drama. Since roles are adopted loosely, it is likely that the group will display a range of different attitudes towards an issue. While the attitudes of the participants might vary, they should nevertheless be “placed in a quite specific relationship with the action” (Heathcote, 1984, p. 163) to ensure they become involved and care for that situation. This means the frame set by the teacher-in-role needs to be clear, so that participants can enter the action in role. Similarly, Davis (2014) claims that it is frame which “provides students with a different, specific responsibility, interest, attitude and behaviour” (p. 85). In keeping with Goffman, Davis (2014) compares the drama situation to real life situations, in which people adapt their behaviour, language and attitude according to their interpretation of these situations. So, while a set frame is necessary according to Davis (2014) to “find a way into an event or situation” (p. 89), drama participants are free to interpret it and to adapt the behaviour, attitude etc. of their roles accordingly. This is why role rather than character is central to DiE: it provides flexibility to be a self-spectator and respond to a situation as it unfolds, rather than being driven by a pre-determined agenda framed by character.

Compared to Heathcote (1984) and Davis (2014), where participants can adopt their own attitude towards the situation although it is informed by the frame, others worry that this may result in participants ‘floundering’ in the drama and lacking an entry point to begin a dialogue in role (Bowell and Heap, 2013). Advocating a ‘communication frame’, Bowell and Heap (2013) for example, suggest that by framing students as inhabitants of London “who are discontent with their lives” participants are provided with a specific point of view, “an attitude about the situation” (p. 58-59), which will facilitate dramatic communication in

the drama. However, it may also result in limiting participants' options to make sense of what is going on for themselves. It serves to illustrate how challenging it can be for teachers to provide a clear frame which places students in a relationship to the dramatic action without overly confining their decision-making processes. Through her pre-text/preliminary frame O'Neill (1995) offers somewhat of a middle ground here. Rather than defining an attitude for the roles she refers to "clearly accessible intentions for the roles" (p. 20) suggested by the pre-text/preliminary frame, for example, a task to be accomplished or a decision to be made. This way of framing participants can prevent them from experiencing difficulties in deciding what to say or do next and still allow them to adopt different attitudes depending on how they make sense of the unfolding dramatic events.

The functions of frame in drama in education

Gillham (1988) analysed Heathcote's five 'levels of explanation': action, motivation, investment, model, and stance, each offering a unique perspective. Using the analogy of a kaleidoscope to explain the different levels, he (Gillham 1988, p. 31) notes it's "as if you were turning a prism around, exploring an action or event through its various facets", each time you are looking at the frame through fresh eyes. Similarly, O'Toole (1992) suggests that "A drama is like a picture frame with a range of interesting pictures that fit inside it. Once you have the frame you can keep swapping the pictures around until you have the one which suits your purpose" (p. 109). The frame not only provides participants with a certain perspective, helping them to become actively involved, but increases their level of care for what is going on, bringing with it "the responsibility, and more particularly, the viewpoint which gets them into an affective involvement" (Heathcote, 1984, p. 168). In consequence, social encounters during drama become more complex and diverse, another important function of frame in drama. Highlighting 'collective concern' and affective engagement, Bowell and Heap (2013) emphasise the potential of frame to bind participants together by providing the same viewpoint on an event. This does not imply that there cannot be differences in opinion as students in role react to the events and responses of others according to their lived experiences and opinions, which might differ or even compete. This diversity of opinion facilitated by frame is what causes friction, which in turn evokes dramatic tension: "the imperative for active participation" (Bowell and Heap, 2013, p. 53).

Heathcote (1984) also understands frame as "the main agent in providing (a) tension and (b) meaning for the participants" (p. 163). The difference between her and Bowell and Heap (2013) is that tension does not arise from differences in attitude among participants, but from their affective involvement. To achieve this, participants need to be framed in a position with the power to make decisions which influence the action, so that they feel responsible. Moreover, the level of affective involvement depends on the relationship of the role assumed by participants to the event at the centre of the drama (O'Toole, 1992), the so-called 'role distance'. Heathcote and Carroll's schemata (see Fig. 1) shows a set of nine dramatic frames, each containing two qualities: surface and depth. Surface refers to the role the students take on, while depth refers to how far removed the teacher wishes them to be from the event which informs the viewpoint they adopt during the drama. Different frames are used to manage how close or distant participants get to the central event. The 'angle of viewpoint' as O'Toole 1992 refers to it, can be:

- Inside the event (the people to whom the action is happening);
 - On the edge of the event (people who are connected to the event or affected by it, but not centrally);
 - Outside the event (people who are from another context, to whom the event itself is far-off).
- (O'Toole and Dunn, 2002), p. 14)

Fig. 1 demonstrates Heathcote and Carroll's nine distancing frames using an example that explores historical (and contemporaneous) issues of slavery (see O'Toole, 1992, p. 110). For example, students can be framed as participants who are in the event, as demonstrators who re-enact the event or as researchers who need to know about the event.

Role	Frame distance	Point of view
Participant	I am in the event.	You are tired, weak, and hungry after travelling by boat for weeks. You have been put in a dark, windowless room and told you will be sold in the morning.
Guide	I show you how it was.	Market seller describes the slave auction and the condition of the slaves.
Demonstrator	I re-enact so you can understand.	Sculpture for exhibit in memory of the people who lived their lives enslaved. How will we mount the exhibition?
Authority	I am responsible because ...	Meeting between politicians who do not wish to pass the bill to end slavery, and community members who are opposed to slavery.
Recorder	I am interested in the event because it occurred.	Deck-hand. Slave trader. Master. Free slave.
Reporter	I can tell you of the event.	Newspaper headline and first line of article – "Mutiny on board slave ship".
Researcher	I need to know of the event.	Researching facts and figures – use the database to find a slave who has been accused of stealing from his previous master.
Critic	I interpret the event for you as an event.	Start preparing television expose of the practice of slavery. Improvisation. Roles. Interviewing.
Artist	I transform the event.	Compose music or create a piece of art work to portray an event.

The concept of role distance is also relevant regarding another function attributed to frame: role protection (Carroll and Cameron, 2005). Several writers agree that frame serves to protect students in a psychological sense by distancing them from the instantaneous emotional impact of the drama, so they experience the issues as less threatening (see Boland, 2013; Wooster, 2004; Bryer, 1990; Eriksson, 2011a, 2011b). By employing role distance, students don't need to be in the focus event to explore it, but can do so from a safe viewpoint, which can be closer or further removed from the event, depending on the frame (Carroll and Cameron, 2005). This is important for teachers to consider when working with minors or vulnerable groups to prevent them becoming fully immersed in a situation that could seem threatening or overwhelm them. In contrast, Davis (2014) argues that the frame does not determine participants' mode of affective involvement. He suggests that although it is useful to know what the relationship to the main event is, the role does not have to be distanced, as all frames could be developed into drama "where the participants are in the event" (Davis, 2014, p.88). Arguing that even a frame distant from the main event could be structured to provide a 'living through' experience. He believes affective involvement mainly depends on the "original immersion in a story" (Davis, 2014, p. 93), thereby emphasising the importance of storyline. Davis seems to

lean more towards framing the event than framing participants. The concept of frame as 'organizational premise' (Goffman, 1974) could explain his focus on the drama event and how it is structured instead of concentrating on role and role distance. However, Davis (2014) acknowledges that frame and mode of involvement are interrelated, as frame can set up roles which act, for example, in what he calls "rational thought mode" (p. 96) as opposed to high levels of feeling. This is explicated in his example of a nursing home drama, where participants are framed as an enquiry committee asked to review the case of two carers accused of stealing from a deceased resident who committed suicide. Her family members identified that some important personal items were missing when they collected her belongings. He notes that if the committee members are invited to read the evidence rather than improvise the scene with the care workers, this might be done in mainly rational thought mode. The levels of 'feeling thoughtfully', 'thinking feelingly', and emotional responses (raw or 'as if') all depend on the mode of involvement the drama teacher puts in place. In his nursing home drama, Davis (2014, pp. 90-96) demonstrates six different modes of involvement which frame participants at different distances from full immersion in the story.

The question arises as to what degree the frame should enable participants to draw on personal experiences from real life? Considering that the learning area which is explored through drama might often deal with times, places, or people unfamiliar to students, how can the drama be framed to make it a meaningful experience and prevent students from floundering? To achieve this, teachers might ensure that the chosen frame enables participants to "draw on their own real-life experience so that they can bring authenticity to the drama" (Bowell and Heap, 2013, p. 57). While students' roles do not need to be limited to the social roles they occupy in real life, they need to be able to rely on "their own social and cultural [...] frames" (Edmiston, 2003, p. 224, 225) to interpret events in the drama like they would in real social situations. So, if students have little prior knowledge of the roles they take on but can employ a frame of reference based on their social and cultural identities, they can occupy unfamiliar roles quite successfully.

While distancing is often primarily considered a means of protection by drama practitioners, it can also serve as an aesthetic principle and a poetic device (Eriksson, 2011a). The concept of 'making strange' (Eriksson, 2011a) to get a fresh perspective, open new insights and discover new meaning is crucial in DiE. This can be achieved by employing distancing devices like Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* in theatre (Wooster, 2004). What might have seemed familiar can be made strange and lead to new awareness.

[T]he modes of thought used in daily life have an automating and dulling effect on the awareness; the practical events of daily life weaken people's perception with the result that we are no longer being able to see, but rather merely to recognise. (Eriksson, 2011b, p. 103)

This is also relevant for teachers dealing with political framing in the classroom. Most people are unaware of how political framing influences their ways of thinking and reasoning (Lakoff, 2010). By using distancing devices in drama, participants get a fresh perspective on the language they hear, read, and use in everyday life, becoming aware of how language can be used to manipulate opinion and decision-making. Linguistic features such as repetition, reversal or wordplay can be used as practices of estrangement, to stimulate participants' perception of language (Eriksson, 2011b). Additionally, different frames can be employed to elicit new perspectives by offering different angles to contemplate an event. According to Wooster (2004), both feeling and reflection are needed for a cognitive response to drama, so shifting between in- and out-of-role experiences as well as experiencing the same event from different frames allows "meaning to be made through creating, participating, reflecting and witnessing" (Streeter, 2020, p. 87).

The political dimension of frame in drama in education

Since the focus of this chapter is on political framing and exploring how DiE might be used to unveil its mechanisms, it is important to examine whether framing in drama has a political dimension. As discussed earlier, framing is often used deliberately to influence public opinion and decision-making processes. Thus, the question arises whether frame can also be used as a manipulative tool by drama teachers. This could happen intentionally to achieve a certain end or learning outcome, or unknowingly, as people are mostly unaware of the impact framing can have on our way of thinking and reasoning (Lakoff, 2010).

According to Davis (2014), frame is “a very useful tool for the teacher” (p. 84), and Howell and Heap (2013) describe it as “the most important planning principle of all” (p. 54). Underlining the significance of frame as a planning tool, these comments imply that it is the teacher or facilitator who frames the drama, and not participants. While this might seem natural or at least pragmatic from a teacher’s point of view, it contrasts with the claims of many drama practitioners who advocate using frame as a means of empowering students. Edmiston (2003), for example, suggests that by creating a dramatic world and framing events differently, a change in the power dynamics of the classroom takes place. Chatterjee (2019) claims that DiE in general contests traditional classroom power structures “by placing the learner at the centre of the learning” (p. 98). To achieve this change in the power structure, it is necessary that participants are “*framed into a position of influence*” (Heathcote, 1984, p. 168, italics in original), which implies that teachers must be willing to position themselves with a lower or at least equal authority as their students.

While using frame to empower students is widely accepted, it is unclear how much authority they are really given in the dramatic process where it is typically the teacher who establishes the frame and determines the parameters which guide participants in a certain direction. Arguably students are not entirely free to take ownership of their learning, as it is the selection of frame which “delineates the dramatic meanings which are available for participants to construct” (O’Toole, 1992, p. 109). Although Edmiston (2003) acknowledges the power of the teacher “to structure and shape activities” as well as to “position the students” (p. 226), he does not call this practice into question. Acknowledging instead that all activities set up by the teacher are designed to build “community and the beginnings of a shared frame of trust, safety, collaboration, respect and democracy” (Edmiston, 2003, p. 224). His hope is that students can bring these competences to the real world and use them in other situations, both in and out of the classroom. While highly desirable, we must ask how democratic our classrooms can be if we continue to frame the situation and set boundaries for the choices our students can make. It is argued that if the teacher has the power to ‘contain, constrain and guide’ the dramatic process, it is not fully learner centred (Chatterjee, 2019). This is not to suggest that teachers should give up their entire authority but be aware that the means of trying to achieve well-intended and meaningful goals might not be as democratic and empowering as they first appear, especially if teachers try to usher their students towards specific points of view.

Overtly conscious political framing in DiE jars with Heathcote’s understanding of frame and drama. She saw the need for a “questioning process that does not tend towards a final, obvious interpretation” (Bryer, 1990, p. 7). Similarly, O’Neill (1995) emphasizes that drama has the strongest impact if it is not used to get a particular message across:

At their most powerful, neither theatre nor process drama has as definable or detachable a thing as a message or even precise ‘learning area.’ [...] Instead, they create an experience of intensity and significance from which we emerge changed in some way. (p. 151)

On the other hand, it is understandable why drama teachers may want to arrive at a clear conclusion at the end of a dramatic process, feeling pressure to wrap up the lesson to show results that will satisfy the demands of school boards, principals, the curriculum, or parents. The indeterminacy of DiE pitched against the obligation to achieve particular learning outcomes might not only deter teachers from introducing drama into their classrooms, but also reveals “a duality in education systems globally” (Villanueva & O’Sullivan, 2020a, p. 103). In their demand for achieving specific curricular objectives, education systems leave little room for contradiction or doubt, or fundamental questioning of social realities, cultures, customs, values, or even of the education system itself. With that in mind, the political dimension of drama

becomes obvious, as Bryer (1990) highlights: "The consequence of this may be the effective reinforcement of a dominant value system" (p. 3). Without allowing for time and space in classrooms to question their ideas about the world and how they arise, children and young people are easy prey for political framing and the prevalent ideology in their respective society. Therefore, teachers should continuously engage "in critical self-reflection" (Boyd et al., 2016, p. 173) on their own educational biographies to develop critical perspectives, and to recognize knowledge and identity as being closely aligned with how we socially construct and represent polemical topics such as unemployment, migration, the death penalty, abortion, etc. As drama teachers, being aware of how we socially construct and represent situations can heighten our critical sensitivity towards our own perception of a given issue such as vaccination, climate change, and our attribution to others of these situations: "what the other group think" (Prost et al., 2022, p. 1). Bryer (1990) and Boyd et al. (2016) argue in favour of challenging both students' and teachers' perceived ideas about society, supporting Davis' (2014) belief that it is necessary to identify and question the ideology that informs people's view of the world. To him, drama is an effective way to achieve this:

Drama needs to be able to involve us in such a way that we meet ourselves giving us the possibility of reworking the ideology that has entered us: the possibility of glimpsing how society has corrupted us.
(Davis, 2014, p. 43)

Like Goffman (1974), Davis believes that humans seek to make meanings to understand themselves and their relation to the world around them, and ideology plays an important part in this meaning-making process: it is "a conceptual framework of the way people deal with reality" (Greenspan, 2008, as cited in Davis, 2014) and has considerable influence on how humans imagine social reality. Therefore, drama could create a space for participants to reflect on and question their own perspectives and opinions, to realize how ideology influences their ways of thinking and, in Bryer's (1990) words, ensure that "the construction of the individual's subjectivity becomes the subject of enquiry" (p. 3).

Davis' (2014) claim of the corruptive influence of ideology is also reflected in the findings of researchers exploring frame in other disciplines, for example, language. According to Lakoff (2010), political ideologies are characterized by ideological language which activate a system of frames. The more often this ideological language is repeated, the more normal it appears to the hearer. But even if the language appears 'normal', it still activates "that ideology unconsciously in the brains of citizens" (Lakoff, 2010, p. 72). While Lakoff believes that framing cannot be avoided, he argues that people need to become aware of whose frames are activated and thus strengthened in the minds of the public, or in other words, whose ideology is dominant in society, in news coverage or in online media. In an educational context, this is not to say that teachers should regard their students as passive consumers who blithely accept any message disseminated on digital or traditional media, but support and encourage them in their journey to becoming active, critical readers able to "deconstruct these texts for the ideological messages they convey" (Boyd et al., 2016, p. 182). Becoming aware of and consciously reflecting on the activated frames, unveils hidden influences which can be reviewed, challenged and contested. Davis (2014) arrives at a similar conclusion: "We are not prisoners of ideology unless we desire to be or are not conscious of our imprisonment" (p. 135). To him, drama has the potential to tackle issues of ideology by opening a space to bring about this awareness. Unfortunately, the political dimension of framing in drama, appears under researched in the literature. However, it resonates with some approaches to implement "drama as a critical form of pedagogy" (Winston, 2007, p. 272), especially in the context of promoting social justice (Villanueva & O'Sullivan, 2019, 2020b, 2023). Teaching for social justice through drama promotes awareness of how power operates, and in the tradition of Goffman's sociological concept of framing, widens "the lens of awareness to positively impact the self and others" (Streeter, 2020, p. 83).

We walk, talk, feel and respond to the argument of the drama through the lens of difference. We are ourselves but also not ourselves. We seek out the differences and the connections between humanity in all its diversity through embodying the life world of others. [...] And through this process our own sense of righteousness is challenged and confused. We further complicate an already complicated world.
(Neelands, 2016, p. 38)

Neelands is here referring more to the construction of personal and social identities, than to more explicit political and ideological issues advanced by Davis. The literature evidences much greater attention to the domain of softer political constructs such as personal and social empowerment, identity formation and wellbeing, with many education systems worldwide tending not to support exploration of political topics, fearing it may entail questioning of the political role of education (Villanueva & O'Sullivan, 2020a). However, considering the complexities of our post-modern world, the emergence of new media and the recent surge of populist parties, it becomes ever more pressing for teachers to foster students' critical thinking and reflection skills, so they can unveil the mechanisms of framing reinforcing populist ideology. This is where the significance of dramatic framing comes to the fore: "Illumination comes through the approach to the work in different frames, which works to shatter the veneer of coherence and consistency that is set up by ideology and that offsets critical enquiry" (Bryer, 1990, p. 7). By enabling students to see and explore a situation from multiple frames/perspectives, they understand the world as complicated (Neelands, 2016), that there are usually no simple answers to complex questions, an illusion often generated by populists and others with political agendas. In her study of the effects of competing frames, Borah (2019) found that enabling people to see multiple perspectives of a political issue has crucial implications for how they react to these frames: "The exposure to competing values leads to ambivalence, and the findings also show that this ambivalence can lead to increased information-seeking" (p. 145).

Considering challenges democracies face today, such as globalisation, migration, digitalisation or populism, democratic education has gained increased attention by educational administrations, for example, in the German state of Baden-Württemberg. The core idea of democratic education is to encourage and empower young people to act autonomously and democratically (Feil, 2019). Many definitions of democratic education emphasise the interplay between "*belonging together on the one hand and differing from each other on the other*" (Mårdh & Tryggvason, 2017, p. 603, italics in original), but not the concept of antagonism and discontent characteristic of populist ideology. Considering that populism also reflects discontent with the political status quo and "an affective need to express dissent" (Petrie et al., 2019, p. 498), dealing with it in the classroom enables young citizens to become more aware of the multiple perspectives and complexities present in democracy (Mårdh & Tryggvason, 2017).

To critically engage with populism and populist framing, it is necessary to create spaces and opportunities for critical dialogue in classrooms. Eventually, students should not only be able to analyse populist frames but be equipped with strategies to respond. In other words, these spaces should allow educators and their students "to enact affective counterpolitics" (Zembylas, 2019, p. 161). To achieve this, teachers need to find opportunities to build a culture of 'conflictual consensus' which acknowledges different perspectives and opinions and takes them seriously, but also critically assesses problem definitions and their solutions (Petrie et al., 2019). Providing students with opportunities to question their own beliefs and take on new perspectives, supports them in reframing their positions. By creating different frames and enabling students to take on various roles, DiE provides "dialogic spaces where children [can] take up other perspectives to re-examine their own and others' previous assumptions" (Edmiston, 2008, p. 9). Using a dialogic approach in classroom drama can support complex meaning-making processes, as it enables students to experience various viewpoints and allows for "a dynamic interplay of contested, yet interrelated beliefs and interests with the potential for continual transformation of meaning" (Edmiston & Enciso, 2002, p. 868). By generating space in which they struggle for meaning, a dialogic approach focuses on developing students' understanding about themselves and others.

Building the kind of intellectual, moral and cultural basis for a progressive politics, that is to say, a participatory political process of informed and critical engagement has to work on and through people's experiences of the contradictions and conflicts of everyday life in a dialogical process of understanding people's affective and cognitive motivations. (Petrie et al., 2019, p. 491)

This approach offers several opportunities to deal with the topic of populism. Firstly, through exploring different viewpoints, students may understand the complexities not only of everyday life but also of political questions and issues, which counteracts the one-sided explanations of populist rhetoric with its dispositional blame attributions. Furthermore, it may foster students' understanding of the motivations drawing some people towards populism, including emotional as well as economic considerations. This is important because among a group of young people there may be some with leanings towards populist attitudes, and it is essential they do not feel vilified or alienated by other group members. Such a risk can be avoided/reduced through dialogic dramatic inquiry because it requires "teachers and students to set multiple meanings in motion in which conflict between discourses (rather than people) are experienced" (Edmiston & Enciso, 2002, p. 869).

Although belittling jokes about prominent populists such as Donald Trump are common, "the goal of democratic education is not to criticize individual populist leaders as such [...], because this effort can easily boomerang" (Zembylas, 2019, p. 163, italics in original), especially if individual students come from a family background impacted by situations such as political instability, migration, differing abilities, etc. Instead of dismissing or ridiculing populist representations, examining the emotions and beliefs of those who are attracted by populist politics can foster understanding and help students take these emotions seriously. DiE could be an effective starting point for teachers who wish to create "space for exploring emotions as locations of, and resources for, political learning and struggle" (Petrie et al., p. 496) because it enables participants to take on new perspectives and "the opportunity to explore and realize a range of values and identities" (O'Neill, 1995, p. 91). In this context, a challenge for educators might be to expose populist movements which draw on racist or sexist ideologies and language, without attributing such beliefs to be intrinsic to citizens who feel addressed by some of their arguments. Indeed, teachers need to protect students from becoming too emotionally involved in a negative worldview. Approaches such as frame distancing may help shield learners from the emotional impact of the drama when exploring racist or hateful speech for example.

Another potential trap for teachers when dealing with populism in the classroom is "employing moralistic and populist pedagogic tactics" themselves (Zembylas, 2019, p. 163). For example, by creating a frame that distinguishes between a morally superior, liberal 'us' and a despicable, populist 'them'. Such a frame could reinforce existing negative sentiments among students who feel alienated from or neglected by the social, political and educational systems. Moreover, it could contribute to cementing the same social divide invoked by populists instead of attempting to close it. Considering that populist pedagogic tactics should be avoided, the question arises whether teachers should "enable articulations that frame 'the people' as a unity standing against 'the political elite'" (Mårdh & Tryggvason, 2017, p. 611). Political elite is here understood as a small group of powerful people who hold a disproportionate amount of political power at any given time and who shape a country's political climate. Individuals are exposed to their "narratives, frames and arguments" through the consumption of mass media, personal communication or social media (Schmidt-Catran and Czymara, 2023, p. 87). Although tapping into this sort of populist framing might seem risky, it raises a question which is essential in a democracy – the question of identity: "The possibility of answering the questions 'who are we?' and 'who are we not?' can [...] be seen as constitutive for both the definition of the people and for the people's definition of itself as a democratic public" (Mårdh & Tryggvason, 2017, p. 610). Aside from democratic education, enabling learners to discover and define their own identity is a central educational aim and there is evidence to suggest that a DiE approach could provide the space to raise and explore these questions:

The best way of discovering ourselves and learning our powers and potentialities is through our encounters with others, both real and imaginary. Through the dramatic roles and worlds that are available vicariously and directly in process drama, we can learn both who we are and what we may be. (O'Neill, 1995, p. 91)

Therefore, drama not only enables students to discover who they are and who they are not but through exploring possibilities of who they may be could inspire them to imagine and create a more positive and inclusive concept of society, and arguably counteract divisive populist frames.

Moreover, considering that low efficacy is one of the main drivers of emotional support for populists (Magni, 2017), democratic education needs to ensure that students do not feel disengaged and powerless themselves: "Democracy as a political system has to be built on the foundations of democracy as a way of life, as an ingrained cultural practice" (Petrie et al., 2019, p. 489). To achieve this, learners need to have a sense of agency, a sense of their own power to make a difference beginning in the classroom. With the help of DiE, the traditional power structure between teacher and students can be suspended: "Teachers using dramatic inquiry may shape social interactions to change the power relationships among children and adults" (Edmiston, 2008, p. 20). Experiencing empowerment in the dramatic world can strengthen students' confidence and resilience, and in turn they may be less vulnerable to populist messaging. In addition to impacting power dynamics in the classroom, DiE can also give learners an insight into power structures and their complexities: "Students of any age may reassess their assumptions about how power operates to experience and evaluate dialogically some of the complexities of acting to affect power relationships" (Edmiston, 2008, p. 10). By exploring and critically reflecting on social and political power structures, learners can understand that simply blaming the elite will not suffice to solve complex societal problems. Affecting political change in a democracy requires commitment, objectively weighing different perspectives and often perseverance. Dispositional blame attributions and other populist 'all or nothing' extremist frames cannot be the answer. However, in light of such complexities, democratic education might seem a daunting task for teachers, which is why it is important to consider what kind of contribution it might make.

While democratic education is unlikely to stop global or national populism, it can influence at the micropolitical level (Zembylas, 2019). Taking a micropolitical perspective "invites us to learn how to act in the midst of the ongoing, unforecasted situations and experiment with ways of discerning and tending to the 'otherwise'. [...] It embodies a hope for other futures" (Anderson, 2017, p. 594). Similarly, exploring and experimenting with different possibilities in a dramatic context allows participants to reflect on the real context and imagine positive change. It can "give us a vision of our humanity and a sense of the possibilities facing us and the society we live in" (O'Neill, 1995, p. 152). Thus, micropolitics operating within a DiE approach could be described as "a method of hope" (Anderson, 2017, p. 594), revealing possibilities for effective action against the affective rhetoric employed by populists. Although a micropolitical approach is not necessarily limited to a local context, focusing on local interventions could help to frame issues situationally: "[L]ocal scales of intervention are important because the provision of alternative vocabularies for reframing social problems can help people to map their emotions onto a critical analysis" (Petrie et al., 2019, p. 497). This highlights how significant the work of educators and teachers in their community is, seeding an important contribution in their classrooms by cultivating a culture of 'hopeful criticism' (Zembylas, 2019).

Conclusion

There is evidence to support that dramatic frame could be effective in unveiling the disclosed power of political framing by creating a protected space in which students are free to 'meet themselves', raise fundamental questions about the nature of society, and become aware of what influences their decision making. Considering the complexity of our digitalized and globalized world, the traditional classroom power structure in which the teacher is the only one who knows and students are passive receivers seems insufficient (Chatterjee, 2019). Instead, a new understanding of teaching and learning is required, in which "education is no longer just about teaching students something but about helping them develop a reliable compass and the tools to navigate ambiguity" (OECD, 2021). In responding to the major challenges facing our world, it is evident that if we want to effect change and create a more inclusive, diverse and equitable society, we must empower students to discover that the world is not one-dimensional, and questions do

not have one answer. As discussed above, drama in education can encourage students to question, enquire, look at the world in different ways, and experience change. Achieving this in practice can be challenging, however frame can be a facilitative mechanism. It provides an entry point for participants and places them in relationship to the dramatic event, increases their affective involvement and creates dramatic tension by facilitating diversity of opinion and complexity. At the same time, frame distance protects participants from becoming too emotionally involved, but can also be used as an aesthetic principle providing participants with a fresh perspective on issues (Eriksson, 2011b). New perspectives can generate a new awareness of the world, of society, and of one's own identity.

This chapter discussed the potential of drama in education to create the space for critical engagement and thus be a valuable approach to democratic education in general, and to dealing with populist framing in particular. Through dramatic framing, participants are given opportunities to make choices, see alternatives in the way they approach situations, look at the consequences of actions and see the possibility of change in their lives (Prendiville & Toye, 2007). An appropriately framed drama can prepare students to handle complex social, personal and political relationships and the ability to assess a situation from a variety of angles and respond appropriately (Heathcote, 1980).

References

- Adler, P. S., Adly, A., Armanios, D. E., Battilana, J., Bodrožić, Z., Clegg, S., (...) Sheppard-Jones, K. (2023). Authoritarianism, Populism, and the Global Retreat of Democracy: A Curated Discussion. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 32(1), pp. 3-20.
- Anderson, B. (2017). Hope and micropolitics. *Society and Space*, 35(4), pp. 593-595.
- Atay, A., & Ashlock, M. Z. (Eds.) (2022). *Social media, technology, and new generations: digital millennial generation and generation Z*. Lexington Books.
- Biegon, R. (2019). A populist grand strategy? Trump and the framing of American decline. *International Relations*, 33(4), pp. 517-539.
- Blassnig, S., Engesser, S., Ernst, N., & Esser, F. (2019). Hitting a nerve: Populist news articles lead to more frequent and more populist reader comments. *Political Communication*, 36(4), pp. 629-651.
- Boland, G. (2013). Role and Role Distance: The Heathcote/Carroll Collaboration that reframed the social context for drama-based learning and teaching. *NJ*, 37, pp. 53-64.
- Borah, P. (2019). Competitive frames and accuracy motivations: Testing the role of ambivalence in value framing effects. *Journal of Media Psychology: Theories, Methods, and Applications*, 31(3), pp. 137-148.
- Bowell, P., & Heap, B. S. (2013). *Planning process drama: Enriching teaching and learning* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Boyd, A., LaGarry, A. E., & Cain, J. (2016). Moving from self to system: A framework for social justice centered on issues and action. *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 7(2), pp. 171-197.
- Bryer, T. (1990). Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert and rolling role: A personal account of two historic conferences held earlier this year. *Drama Broadsheet*, 7(3), in *The Journal for Drama in Education, Dorothy Heathcote Special Issue*, Summer 2012 pp. 2-7.
- Busby, E. C., Gubler, J. R., & Hawkins, K. A. (2019). Framing and blame attribution in populist rhetoric. *The Journal of Politics*, 81(2), pp. 616-630.
- Carroll, J., & Cameron, D. (2005). Playing the game, role distance and digital performance. *Applied Theatre Researcher*, 6(11), pp. 1-11.

- Chatterjee, M. (2019). Drama for democracy: Material theatre. *ArtsPraxis* 6(1), pp. 97-110.
- Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2007). Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies. *The American Political Science Review*, 101(4), pp. 637-655.
- Davis, D. (2014). *Imagining the real: Towards a new theory of drama in education*. Trentham Books Ltd.
- Edmiston, B. (2003). What's my position? Role, frame, and positioning when using process drama. *Research in Drama Education*, 8(2), pp. 221-229.
- Edmiston, B. (2008). *Authoring complexity with dialogic dramatic inquiry*. Available at: <https://www.mantleoftheexpert.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/BE-Authoring-complexity.pdf>
- Edmiston, B., & Enciso, P. (2002). Reflections and refractions of meaning: Dialogic approaches to classroom drama and reading. In J. Flood, D. Lapp, J. Squire, & J. Jensen, (Eds.), *The Handbook of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts* (pp. 868-880). Simon & Schuster Macmillan.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), pp. 51-58.
- Eriksson, S. A. (2011a). Distancing. In S. Schonmann (Ed.), *Key concepts in theatre/drama education* (pp. 65-71). Sense Publishers.
- Eriksson, S. A. (2011b). Distancing at close range: making strange devices in Dorothy Heathcote's process drama Teaching Political Awareness Through Drama. *Research in Drama Education*. 16(1), pp. 101-123.
- Farrar, B. (2022). Political Communication as a Tragedy of the Commons. *Political Studies*, pp. 1-18, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00323217221138414>
- Feil, R. (2019). *Demokratiebildung: Schule für Demokratie, Demokratie für Schule [Democratic education: Schools for democracy, democracy for schools]*. Ministerium für Kultus, Jugend und Sport Baden-Württemberg.
- Gamson, W. A. (1985). Goffman's legacy to political sociology. *Theory and Society*, 14(5), pp. 605-622.
- Gillham, G. (1988). "What life is for: An analysis of Dorothy Heathcote's 'Levels' of Explanation". *Theatre and Education Journal* (1), pp. 31-38.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harvard University Press.
- Halperin, Y. (2023). Reclaiming the People: Counter-Populist Algorithmic Activism on Israeli Facebook. *Television & New Media*, 24(1), pp. 71-87.
- Hamdaoui, S. (2022). Anti-populism during the Yellow Vest protests: From combatting the Rassemblement National to dealing with street populists. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 24(3), pp. 493-510.
- Hameleers, M., Bos, L., & de Vreese, C. H. (2019). Shoot the messenger? The media's role in framing populist attributions of blame. *Journalism*, 20(9), pp. 1145-1164.
- Heathcote, D. (1980). *Drama as context*. The National Association for the Teaching of English.
- Heathcote, D. (1984). Signs and portents. In L. Johnson, & C. O'Neill (Eds.), *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected writings on education and drama* (pp. 160-169). Hutchinson.

- Jacobsen, M. H., & Kristiansen, S. (2015). *The Social Thought of Erving Goffman*. Sage.
- Jakubowski, J., & Pajak-Patkowska, B. (2022). 'More Social' Means 'More Flawed': How New Media is Contributing to the Breakdown of Polish Democracy. *Political Science Review / Przegląd Politologiczny*, 3, pp. 47-56.
- Kahne, J., & Bowyer, B. (2018). The political significance of social media activity and social networks. *Political Communication*, 35(3), pp. 470-493.
- Lakoff, G. (2010). Why it matters how we frame the environment. *Environmental Communication*, 4(1), pp. 70-81.
- Lakoff, G. (2012). Explaining embodied cognition results. *Topics in Cognitive Science*, 4(4), pp. 773-785.
- Lakoff, G. (2016). *Understanding Trump*. Available at: https://press.uchicago.edu/books/excerpt/2016/lakoff_trump.html
- Magni, G. (2017). It's the emotions, Stupid! Anger about the economic crisis, low political efficacy, and support for populist parties. *Electoral Studies*, 50, pp. 91-102.
- Mårdh, A., & Tryggvason, Á. (2017). Democratic education in the mode of populism. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 36(6), pp. 601-613.
- Mudde, C. (Ed.). (2016). *The populist radical right: A reader*. Routledge.
- Neelands, J. (2016). Democratic and participatory theatre for social justice. There has never been a famine in a democracy. But there will be. In M. Finneran & K. Freebody (Eds.), *Drama and social justice: Theory, research and practice in International contexts* (pp. 30-39). Routledge.
- OECD (2021). *21st-Century Readers: Developing literacy skills in a digital world*. PISA. OECD Publishing.
- O'Neill, C. (1995). *Drama worlds*. Heinemann.
- O'Toole, J. (1992). *The process of drama. Negotiating art and meaning*. Routledge.
- O'Toole, J., & Dunn, J. (2002). *Pretending to learn: Helping children learn through drama*. Pearson Education.
- Petrie, M., McGregor, C., & Crowther, J. (2019). Populism, democracy and a pedagogy of renewal. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 38(5), pp. 488-502.
- Piatov, F. (2020). *Sprachpolizei will Kritik an Klima-Aktivisten ächten [Language police want to outlaw criticism of climate activists]*. Bild, January 14th. Available from: <https://www.bild.de/politik/kolumnen/kolumne/unwort-des-jahres-sprachpolizei-will-kritik-an-klimaschutz-aechten-kommentar-67323388.bild.html>
- Pluwak, A. (2011). The linguistic aspect of strategic framing in modern political campaigns. *Cognitive Studies | Études cognitives*, 11, pp. 307-319.
- Prendiville, F., & Toye, N. (2007). *Speaking and Listening through Drama 7-11*. Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Price, V., & Tewksbury, D. (1997). News values and public opinion: A theoretical account of media priming and framing. In G. A. Barnett & F. J. Boster (Eds.), *Progress in the communication sciences* (pp. 173-212). Ablex.

Prost, M., Piermattéo, A., & Lo Monaco, G. (2022). Social Representations, Social Identity, and Representational Imputation: A Review and an Agenda for Future Research. *European Psychologist*, doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040/a000489

Schmidt-Catran, A. W., & Czymara, C. S. (2023). Political elite discourses polarize attitudes toward immigration along ideological lines. A comparative longitudinal analysis of Europe in the twenty-first century. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 49(1), pp. 85-109.

Shaw, S. (2022). Authoritarian leadership: Is democracy in peril? *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 48(9), pp. 1247-1276.

Streeter, J. R. (2020). Process drama as a liberatory practice. *ArtsPraxis*, 7(2b), pp. 79-91.

Tremblay, M-C. (2020). Editorial. The wicked interplay of hate rhetoric, politics and the internet: what can health promotion do to counter right-wing extremism? *Health Promotion International*, 35, pp. 1-4

Villanueva, C., & O'Sullivan, C. (2019). Analyzing the Degree of Consensus in Current Academic Literature on Critical Pedagogy. *Scenario*, 13(2), pp. 70-92.

Villanueva, C., & O'Sullivan, C. (2020a). Drama in education as a form of critical pedagogy: Democratising classrooms in Chile. *ArtsPraxis*, 7 (2b), pp. 92-115.

Villanueva, C., & O'Sullivan, C. (2020b). Dramatic codifications: possibilities and roadblocks for promoting critical reflection through drama in Chile. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 25(4), pp. 526-542.

Villanueva, C., & O'Sullivan, C. (2023, forthcoming). On the pathway to critical consciousness: fostering critical thinking through drama in a Chilean 'vulnerable' school. In Ware, V. (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Arts and Global Development*. Routledge.

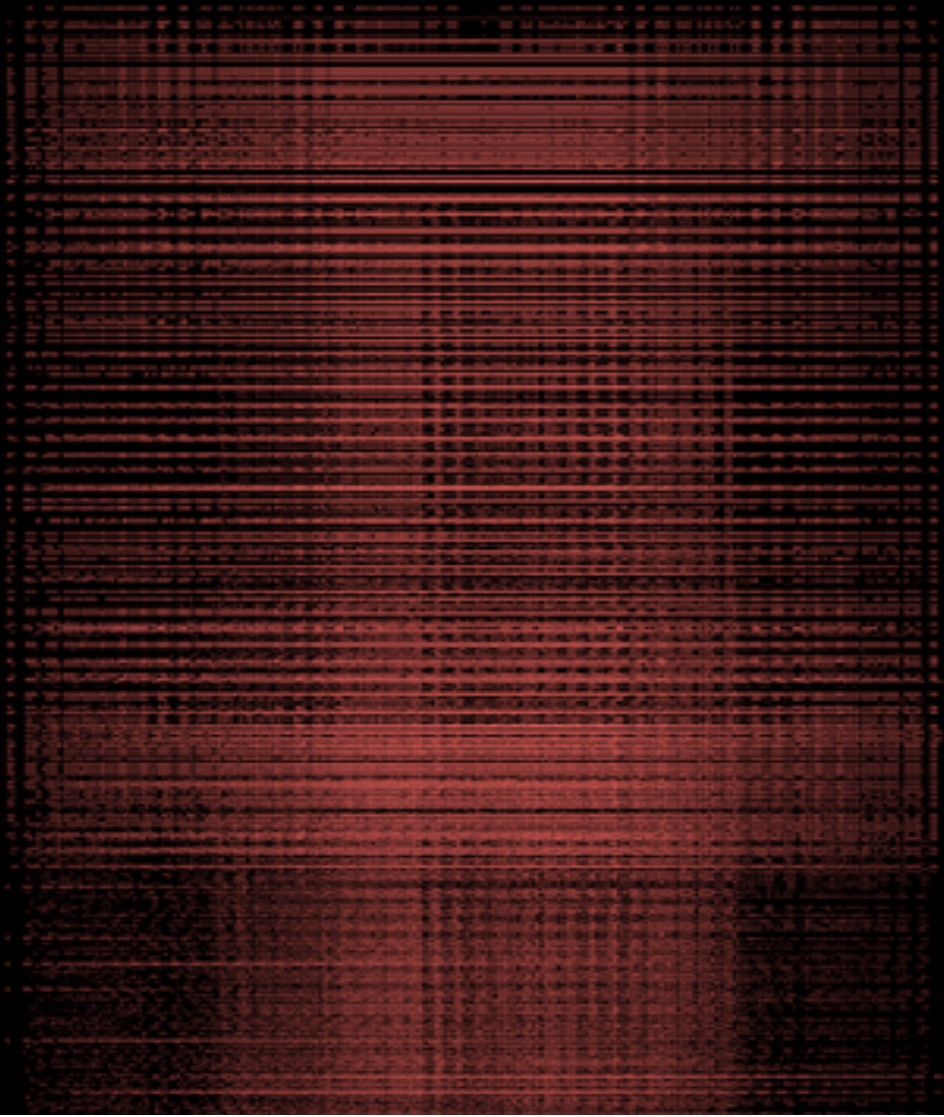
Wehling, E. (2016). *Politisches Framing: Wie eine Nation sich ihr Denken einredet – und daraus Politik macht [Political framing: How a nation talks itself into thinking – and turns it into politics]*. Halem.

Winston, J. (2007). Citizenship, human rights and applied drama. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 12(3), pp. 269 - 274.

Wolfgang, J. D., Vos, T. P., Kelling, K., & Shin, S. (2021). Political Journalism and Democracy: How Journalists Reflect Political Viewpoint Diversity in Their Reporting. *Journalism Studies*, 22(10), pp. 1339-1357.

Wooster, R. (2004). Emotional involvement or critical detachment? Heathcote's links with the ideas of Stanislavski, Brecht and Boal. *Drama Magazine*, 11(2), pp. 14-20.

Zembylas, M. (2019). The affective modes of right-wing populism: Trump pedagogy and lessons for democratic education. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 39(4), pp. 151-166.



Flourish

Chapter 3

Memoirs of a Shoe Drama, Art and Story: Working with Children in Palestine

Wasim Al Kurdi

Abstract: This chapter focuses on the artistic experience that young participants had, when working through a drama in education programme in Palestine. This artistic experience, alongside the dramatic experience, produced works of art through drama including visual and textual artefacts. The chapter proposes that drama can endow the ability to discover, study, and formulate perspectives about issues. Further, the artefacts that are produced through dramatic discovery constitute reciprocal dialogues of encounter and re-encounter, as that which can be returned to again and again.

Keywords: art, aesthetic experience, drama, writing, dialogue, social issues.

Personal context: Chance, coincidence and an unexpected journey

As a young man I took an interest in theatre, and during my MA studies in the UK my background in theatre was a point of reference that helped me understand Drama in Education. My experience as a teacher of Arabic language and literature led me to focus on language, and I used drama to develop the concept of verbal and non-verbal dialogue. I then expanded my circle of interest to view drama as inclusive of all disciplines. My work, whether with teachers or children, later developed to include social and political issues like migration and gender. My interest in developing some sort of relationship between teaching and arts in general, and drama, led me to experiment with associations that combine drama with visual arts as a series of interconnected relationships.

Chance often plays the role of necessity. Today I work in education, with teachers and children. I also write poetry and songs. In my youth, however, I loved the theatre, especially acting, and I did act. At the same time, I had some vocational training. I learned to be a metal lathe machinist and worked as such for quite a while. I left the theatre because of the unhealthy competitive atmosphere I experienced there, and I left lathe machining for health reasons. But the theatre never left me; it was moving away physically but moving closer emotionally, and I could never get rid of that feeling. Perhaps, in a way, I never wanted to. Until, by coincidence, it all came back to me in the form of a phrase that I heard from a speaker in a seminar I attended, by chance; she mentioned Drama in Education. From that moment on I discovered a whole new world, one that was not completely detached from who I was then. On the contrary, it allowed me to use all the history and experience that I was carrying at the time towards the new and different steps I was taking: in theatre, in education and in literature.

I was working at the Friends Schools in Ramallah at the time, teaching Arabic language and literature, trying to introduce literary texts into my teaching, texts that we normally do not find in our mostly traditional textbooks. Then, in one of my teaching years, I took part in a workshop on writing as a process which changed my concepts and understanding of writing as a technique and as a process. I confess now that it did instigate a change within me which helped my students in their written expression, but it was all still lacking something: it lacked imagination.

But let us go back to coincidence once more. Ramallah, April 1996, when I attended that seminar on Drama in Education. The woman I am referring to is a theatre professional, and a specialist in educational theatre. Her name is Samar Dudin. After the seminar I invited her for a coffee, and we went to a nearby café with a few other friends. I inquired about her work, which she explained. I then asked her for names I could contact, and she mentioned *that* name. The next day I searched - an internet search at the time was still primitive in my country - using an early version of Windows 3.11. I found hundreds of people with the same name, so I searched and refined my search over and over until I found someone who seemed to be the right person. I sent him an email, and a few days later he replied: *'We have a foundation course in Drama in Education in the summer; you are more than welcome to join.'*

I still don't know how David Davis risked accepting me on that foundation course, leading to the MA programme. Anyone else could have asked; what can this young man achieve with his very limited knowledge of the English language? I was carrying a dictionary with me to class, searching for the meaning of each word: a very time-consuming task. I used to write down in Arabic the general idea that I understood from the lectures, and I am sure a lot of the meaning was lost in translation or in the writing journey. My theatre background helped me bridge a few gaps and I resorted to my friend, Serene Huleileh, to translate from Arabic into English.

David accompanied me in this learning journey up until my dissertation, which he part supervised and where I worked with a group of 12-16-year olds, examining questions of justice, freedom, the homeland, oppression, memory, etc. Between David's work, Augusto Boal's techniques of theatre improvisation, the poem 'Eternity of Cactus' by Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish (2001), and Michael Bakhtin's (1981) theory of utterance, I constructed my first formulations of knowledge in this field.

A School for Drama in Education in the Arab World

As the Director of the Education, Research and Development Programme (ERDP) at the A.M. Qattan Foundation, I witnessed over many years how the Foundation manages to lay solid ground for integrative and interactive educational practices in Palestine and the Arab region. Drama in Education is one of the main programmes of ERDP. The school has been held annually in Jordan since 2007. It has provided training and resources to hundreds of teachers from all over Palestine and the Arab World, primarily through the Drama in Education Summer School (DiESS). This school was jointly developed and led by David and I in its early years, and David was its first Academic Director. Teachers involved in the programme are trained on how to use drama to enliven the learning process, within the confines of the national curriculum, and to provide students with the space for exploration, analysis, expression, vision-building, self-reflection while building their awareness of the community and wider world.

DiESS is a three-year (three-level) programme during which teachers participate in a series of courses on employing drama as an innovative tool for integrative education in the classroom. The content of the courses is developed and offered by teaching staff that include some of the brightest names in the field of Drama in Education worldwide, in addition to qualified local trainers in the field. On conclusion of each level, teachers are expected to implement the knowledge they have acquired in their classrooms. This happens in an ongoing process under close mentorship by the ERDP staff, a process during which teachers prepare, discuss, develop and implement lesson plans. They also reflect on their experience through documenting it and writing about it. This is followed by an evaluation of teachers' performance conducted by the DiESS academic committee which reviews submitted requirements, assesses, and makes decisions regarding teachers' qualification to progress to the following year.

Establishing this Summer School was an important transformation point in my career. A transformation that I believe will contribute later to a breakthrough in the educational system not only in Palestine, but also in the Arab world, providing professional training for teachers through a constantly evolving programme, namely the drama in education programme. 2023 will mark the 17th year of the Drama in Education Summer School, an experience that I claim is unique in our region. This experience was an adventure, and still is. It's an experience that looks critically at reality and presents an imagined realistic vision of it. As such, the Summer School represents my attempt to wrestle with an educational system in Palestine that has suffered from an oppressive occupation for many decades. One which has deteriorated beyond revival, for many reasons, even though Palestinians were pioneers in education at the beginning of the last century. This was manifested in two schools in Jerusalem: the Dusturiyyeh School¹ [1909] and the Arab College [teacher education college established in 1918], both of which were very close to what is considered today as progressive education. The repercussions of the occupation of Palestine during the first half of the 20th century prevented the natural development of the Palestinian experience in all its manifestations and resulted in a historic severance that we still suffer from to this day. Today we experience the fragmentation of the land, oppression of the occupier, corruption of the political system and the collapse of neighboring countries (Shafir, 2017; Bashi, 2020; Rickard, 2022). This harsh reality is probably a vital critical environment to nurture 'hope' as renowned Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish once wrote but these harsh conditions test the quality of that hope.

Few people have ever expressed the hopes and aspirations of Palestinian people better than Mahmoud Darwish. Here is his beautiful poem on Hope for Palestinians, hope for a life not as victims and not as heroes, but as whole human beings who can live out the poetry of everyday lives (Safi, 2014):

*We Palestinians suffer from an incurable disease called 'hope':
Hope for liberation and independence
Hope for a normal life where we shall be neither heroes nor victims.
Hope to see our children go to school without danger.
Hope for a pregnant woman to give birth to a living baby, in a hospital, and not to a dead child in front of a military control post.
Hope that our poets will see the beauty of the colour red in roses, rather than in blood.
Hope that this land will recover its original name: 'land of hope and peace'.
Thank you for carrying with us this banner of hope. (Mahmoud Darwish)*

Drama, Art, and Writing – Aesthetic Accumulative Praxis

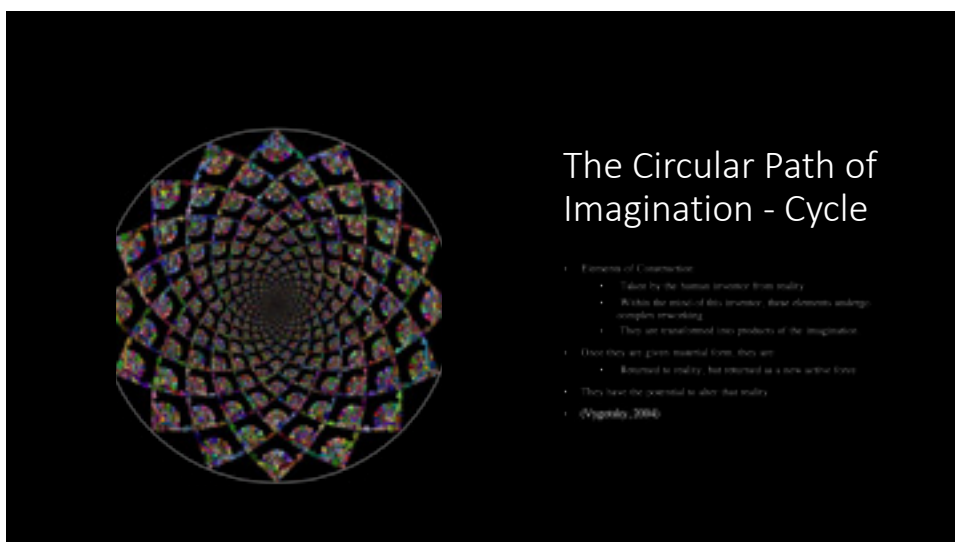
Edward Said (1996) once wrote about Antonio Gramsci's vision of the organic intellectual, as those individuals that are "active within their community: in other words, they are constantly struggling to change opinions...constantly mobile, always being formed, unlike teachers and priests, who seem to be frozen in space, doing that same thing year in year out" (p. 22). The question that informs this chapter is: Can the teacher be transformed from a preacher, from such a frozen image, to an organic activist? Can the teacher be transformed to nurture the hope that Darwish speaks of? Can the teacher with Gramscian characteristics, take on the hard task of becoming a community activist, an organic intellectual, and not just a cog in the wheel of an inadequate educational system?

1 Khalil Sakakini's [founder] teaching method was revolutionary for virtually all his contemporaries. He emphasized music, education and athletics. He also introduced new methods of teaching Arabic through anecdotes and playful engagement with students. He abolished physical punishment as being "barbaric and medieval" and replaced exams with the teachers' and students' self-evaluation. Teachers were instructed not to take a presence and absence roll call. Students were free to leave school if they got bored; this procedure, he felt, would force the teacher to be innovative and entertaining to maintain the student's attention (Tamari, 2000).

To explore such questions, I embarked on an aesthetic experience, looking to deconstruct clichés with my students, desperately trying not to fall into the trap of ready-made formulae, or turning into an educational preacher. Although my work has spanned many years, for the purposes of this chapter, I have selected one experience that I wish to share. It does signal to others. Entitled 'Memoirs of a Shoe', the drama process and the resulting artefacts, that of written story and visual representation demonstrates, in my eye, both a clear example and means of addressing perhaps some of the central questions that inform and underpin my current praxis. These can be articulated thus:

- How can students own the tools of their learning not those of their teachers?
- How can students extract their power through re-producing power relations and re-distributing them?
- How can practice turn into knowledge that can turn into new practice?
- How can all of that contribute to liberation, challenging injustice, and moving towards justice?
- How can one express experience in different forms: in language and image?
- And most of all, can the teacher in Palestine carry all this burden? For we as a people are trapped between a ruined revolution and an oppressive occupation, trying to live life ... living life.

On embarking and as an exploratory umbrella to guide my thinking, I am using Arnold Berleant's (2013) discussion of aesthetic engagement broadly, as that which "emphasizes the holistic, contextual character of aesthetic appreciation...[it] involves active participation in the appreciative process, sometimes by overt physical action but always by creative perceptual involvement" (p. 2). Such creative perceptual involvement connects to Goldblatt's (2006) work where she summarizes John Dewey's view on how art expands the traditional means of knowing. "With art as core education and studio, students themselves interpret, express, perform, and create their experiences lived and scaffolded on the artwork of others" (Goldblatt, 2006, p. 25). To further expand, I ask: Can students interpret, express, perform and create their experiences scaffolded on the arts work of others, including stories used as stimulus, as dramatic ballast? To return to the story for a moment, 'Memoirs of a Shoe' comes from a real story of forced mass migration of Palestinians from Yalo village near Jerusalem. Using this story as example speaks to the overarching aim. I wanted to work with students through drama processes to explore oral histories and create visual and textual artefacts: the intertwining of the dramatic, the visual and the textual. One way to hold these concepts together was to use Lev Vygotsky's (2004) Circular Path of Imagination.



Vygotsky argued that elements which are taken from reality, are reworked in the human mind by the inventor, taking on a transformational quality, by becoming products of the imagination. Further, Vygotsky asserts that when these products of the imagination are given material form, and returned to reality, they constitute a new active force. In Vygotsky's (2004) argument, such reworked imaginative material, as active force, have the potential to alter reality. Within such a loose formula, ideas of drama, art and writing emerge as imaginative fodder, holding the potential to be reworked and remade. Using the cycle as a conceptual

safety net, the work describes the contexts and processes that formed the 'Memoirs of a Shoe' project, working through drama as the creative ballast through which to construct the visual and textual artefact. In order to do so I now look at the drama approach used in this project, before linking to its expression by visual and textual means.

Improvisational Truth

The term 'devising' has long been linked with drama. As Fleming (2017) notes, devising can be understood as a process which does not use a ready-made or decided upon script, rather the work is created from the improvisational work of the participants involved. Characteristic of improvisational work is the use of a hook or stimulus (prose, poetry, lyric, newspaper etc.), to inspire creative responses and improvisational sparks for development (Robinson, cited in Fleming, 2017). Similarly, Howell and Heap (2017) describe the improvisational moment as that where participants are "thinking on their feet", and for the most part giving unknowable responses to a known stimulus" (p. 9). But what of difficult subject matter either as stimulus and/or as that which may emerge through the drama process? Wilhelm (2016) discusses 'edgy, 'ethical' and sometimes 'out of bounds' material, arguing that "Drama makes all this edginess safe because it provides a 'liminal' space for trying out ideas" (p. 175). *Liminality* means that we experiment in the space on the threshold between the real and the imaginary (Wilhelm, 2016). However, drama strategies must protect participants by distancing them from moments which are potentially too difficult emotionally (Fleming, 2017). Within a supporting scaffold, the students in this project were invited to play out their improvisations, using the stories of the past, gathered, heard, or already known.

Using improvisation and devising methods, visual and textual products resulted from the exploration of story through drama, either immediately, at the end of a session, or within a relatively short timeframe thereafter. At that moment, the material was fresh for the participant: its heat could conjure what had just happened, re-produce it, dialogue with it, interpret it, often establishing the abstraction of the experience through a visual artefact. In tandem, working through drama opened up to other interactions, specifically the relationship between drama and writing. According to Dobson and Stephenson (2018), using drama processes give children more agency in their writing, involving embodied experience and writing as problem solving. When fully engaged, drama can help "young writers develop what they want to say, find their position and perspective, and prepare them to commit this to paper...at such moments, children's writing seems to flow from the imagined context with relative ease... reflecting their engagement in the issues" (Cremin & Myhill, 2012, p. 39). This highlights how an interdisciplinary approach to drama can create multi modal artefacts within the Vygotskian imagination cycle; drawn from the imagination, using stories and drama as the imaginative fodder and ballast for the work both in and of itself and in tandem with other forms of aesthetic knowing. Aesthetic knowing comes through art and through writing as manifestations of a new and active force, with the potential to remember, to trace and retrace; to create new stories from that which has gone before.

As both dramatic, visual and textual dialogue, the artefacts constructed represent what has been achieved and gives the opportunity to reformulate the details, and elaborate on the components that we went through, and are still going through, in our journey of learning through drama. It remains an ever-present material in form and content, that opens up two experiences: one aesthetic and one cognitive. It is present as a process, as performance and as artefact, allowing for the possibility of re-telling the children's experience, creating their experiences as Dewey (1925) would have it, through the art works of others, and thus creating their own arts works. Coming to new learning experiences, those art works create crucial engagements with both process and artefact, as reciprocal dialogues of encounter, and re-encounter, as that which can be returned to again and again. Such is the power of story, through processual drama, its manifestation through illustrative means and its iterative power through creative writing. The following sections deal with the praxis specifically, drawing attention to and resonating with the discussion here, before moving forward towards some final reflections on working through drama under an interdisciplinary sign.

On Migration: Drawings and Stories - The Memoirs of a Shoe

The following describes some manifestations of the integrated drama, art and writing processes discussed above. It presents the results of working through drama with my students. You will notice that the issues raised can be broadly categorized into politico-social dealing with migration, forced migration and war.

Ramallah

Children visit the villages of Yalo and Imwas in the Jerusalem governorate: both villages were destroyed after the 1967 occupation. The elders tell the children stories of the expulsion that took place, and the children return with heavy stories. I tried in this drama to liberate the children from the weight of it all by protecting them *through* emotion and not *from* it. Through drama I tried to use this visit as a case, a situation, a moment, a purpose, a feeling... and work on it in different drama contexts. These contexts and the children's dramatic work in light of these stories gave us many possibilities to produce our own stories. It is as if we were 're-telling' the Nakba² story all over again. But nothing was repeated, nothing can be. Memory reproduces itself in a new and different form. Every narrative is unique, narratives cannot be copied or re-produced. They become new stories, intertwined with those that were told, and in the re-imagining they become our stories. In this way, specifically in relation to the Vygotskian imagination cycle, from the emergent drama and improvisations, the young people came to write their own stories, creating meaningful and powerful illustrations to accompany them.

In 2000, I led a drama and creative writing workshop for children in Ramallah. Ibrahim Salem, an 11-year-old child, remade a real story he had heard from migrants who left their village, into his own story. 'Memoirs of a Shoe' (see figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8), was inspired by dramatic improvisations we did and by our field visits exploring the forced mass migration of Palestinians from Yalo village near Jerusalem. Ibrahim turned those who fled their homes, into a group lost in the hills of Jericho: a vast barren area near the Palestinian-Jordanian border. The shoe, whose owner sold it for need of money, escapes from his new owner and follows the group. When the shoe discovers that they are lost he appears to them and tells them that he knows the way to Jordan. They follow him to suddenly find themselves somewhere near the village they were forced out of (Salem, 2000).



Figure 1.
Cover page, 'Memoirs of a Shoe,' short story, written and illustrated by Ibrahim Salem (11 years old), a drama and creative writing workshop for children, Ramallah, 2000.

2 Al-Nakba is an Arabic word meaning catastrophe. It refers to what happened to Palestinians in 1948 when most of the Palestinian people were expelled from their cities and villages and became refugees living in exile and refugee camps. At the same time the state of Israel was founded on Palestinian land.

Memoirs of a Shoe

On my way to school, I saw a worn out shoe on the sidewalk. I was startled. The shoe had eyes, ears, a nose and a mouth. I ran away but the shoe was quick to talk which made me stop and listen to what the shoe had to say.

The shoe began, "Abu Mohammad" and "Abu Amin" were walking a narrow rocky path. "Abu Mohammad" was swaying left and right. My soles were tattered from all the walking. "Abu Mohammad" stopped and said with sadness in his face: "Oh, what are we going to do now? I lost my wife and my two children". "Abu Amin" responded: "Oh, do not reopen my wounds".



Figure 2. page 1

They continued their search and reached Ramallah. They rested for a while and then continued on their search. They arrived at an abandoned place and entered it. To their surprise, they found their wives and children inside. After their meeting they started pondering about where they will go.

While they were thinking, I started remembering the day we were displaced, and as I did, I felt warm tears falling on my tip. It was "Abu Mohammad". He was crying. He said with deep sadness: "What are we going to do?... What are we going to do?!" While he was crying, a man passed.



Figure 3. page 2

The man said: "Why are you sitting here?" We said: "We are lost". He asked: "Where do you want to go?" We said: "To Amman". The man said: "I will take you to Amman for five gold coins". We said: "Where are we supposed to get gold?" He responded: "That is not my concern".

“Abu Mohammad” thought about selling me since he owns another pair of shoes. He started looking for someone to buy me, and after a while he found a merchant. He offered me to the merchant, but the merchant refused at first. He must have thought to himself: “These are useless worn out shoes”. He turned away and started walking. But then he heard me tapping on the ground, he turned back and was amazed to see me moving on my own. He quickly bought me for four gold coins.



Figure 4. page 3

The merchant placed me in a cloth bag and sealed it. After a while I found myself on a shelf in his store. The merchant was calling: “Beautiful shoes for sale.” That’s when I decided to run away. Under the cover of night, I jumped towards the ground and started to run and run until I reached a place I do not know.



Figure 5. page 4

A friend passed me by on the road. She is a shoe, just like me. She knew the way to where “Abu Mohammad” and his group went. We started to run until we caught up with them.



Figure 6. page 5

We found “Abu Mohammad” and the others resting. We hid behind a large rock and watched. We noticed that “Abu Mohammad” kept looking at the guide, who had his eyes closed. He thought he was sleeping and tried to wake him up. He did not wake up. “Abu Mohammad” placed his ear on the guide’s chest and after a while looked up with sadness in his face and said: “The guide is dead, what are we going to do?... What are we going to do?”



Figure 7. page 5

While “Abu Mohammad” was preoccupied thinking about what we will do, my friend and I approached them. “Abu Mohammad” was surprised to see me and said: “What brought you here?” I told him what had happened, and told him the story of my new friend and said: “My friends knows the way to Amman.” “Abu Mohammad” rejoiced and walked with us. After a few hours “Abu Mohammad” noticed that we are approaching Ramallah. He screamed: “How did you deceive me? Is this possible?!” I said: “I brought you to Ramallah so you can be closer to your village.”



Figure 8. page 5

The young storyteller leads the group to an area close to their town, tricks them, brings them back, as if he rejects the idea of immigration. Convinced that they will not respond positively, he is forced to deceive them. The 11-year-old didn't want his characters to leave, so he created a fictitious event, but couldn't find a human who can convince them to turn back from their journey and displacement. He therefore used an object, in this case a shoe, the walking shoe that moves and talks, and saves its owner twice: by the money the latter received through selling the shoe, and by the shoe's wily guidance in coming back home. Bodies are guided by their destinies and led by their shoes.

During this project we tried to understand the relationship between the personal and the social, and its connection to the communal and political sphere. We used art, story and drama as an expression of the relationship between the individual and place, and how places can expose the structure of social relationships in the personal, and how changing them produces other relationships. As an embodied experience, we worked a lot with our hands: working with the hands, thinking with the hands, and imagining with the hands.

Drama as an Applied Cumulative Experiment

In the story above I share with you one of the components resulting from my experience in drama with children and young people, which formed the basis for the production and re-production of meaning. Drawing and painting as an aesthetic and artistic act of expression was one of its products, or let's say manifestations. But it was also a documentation of meaning in a certain sense. It was a memory, but also created material that could be used later for another purpose. This guided me and the participants to another language, a visual one. It formed the basis for embarking on a new learning experience. In this project, artistic experience was transformed into a process experience: the production of experience through art as practicing and making art. This transported us to another understanding of art. It was not the artistic product in itself, but the experience that we went through while making or encountering it in drama and story.

Under the title of empowerment, Goldblatt (2006) summarises Dewey's view on how art expands the traditional means of knowing: "With art as core education (Dewey, 1925) and studio, students themselves interpret, express, perform, and create, their experiences lived and scaffolded on the artwork of others" (p. 25). She points out that students possess four proclivities:

1. Social Instinct (the wish to communicate with others);
2. Constructive Impulse (to make things);
3. Instinct for Investigation (to find out);
4. Expressive Impulse (to create). (Goldblatt, 2006, p. 25).

In this project, the students learnt how they could change things through working with their hands, eyes, and bodies. This learning was achieved through an interactive social context, where everyone participated in thinking, making and reflecting. This is what I try to do in artistic experiences with students like Ibrahim. They experience the artistic/aesthetic process like the artist experiences it. Thus, art no longer remains exclusive to the elite, or a prisoner in museums and galleries, but anyone can experience it. This "aesthetic engagement emphasizes the holistic, contextual character of aesthetic appreciation. Aesthetic engagement involves active participation in the appreciative process, sometimes by overt physical action but always by creative perceptual involvement" (Berleant, 2013, p. 2). Using another artistic medium, in addition to drama provided the participants with:

- The possibility to construct another image that simulated the dramatic image on the one hand, and dialogued with it on the other;
- Paintings re-produced the cognitive, aesthetic, and value laden expressions through another artistic medium;
- The relationality between different artistic and cognitive components, all things were interconnected.

Conclusion

This chapter highlights my career in the field of Drama in Education in Palestine. The journey has taken me through several stages: theatre, teaching, Drama in Education, working with children, and finally working with teachers. Within the texture of this journey in all its components and at every stage, drama as pedagogy was intertwined with art and writing as expression and as a community of exploration. To return to Ibrahim. He confronts the memory of the adults with his own, producing through the drama work, his own short story, with his own illustrations. The work constitutes a re-telling, or re-producing in the form of his own version, his own short story. Yet, as I said earlier, nothing is repeated, nothing can be. Memory reproduces itself once again in a new and different form. Every narrative is unique, narratives cannot be copied or re-produced, because then they will become new stories, intertwined with those that were told, and they become our stories. This is Ibrahim's refusal of immigration.

I am also aware that the narrative here is a linguistic act, which is by necessity a contextual act built on the clash of utterances (Bakhtin, 1981). The narrator produces his own speech, this speech is a cultural and cognitive product with its own significances. It may be closer to individual speech by its style but may also be distant from it by simulating the ready-made public voice. In the first instance the act itself might seem like it is liberating language from social power, yet it is hostage to the power of the social and is captured within its words. I wasn't expecting or hoping that the children working with me would be completely free from the authority of discourse that has been internalized over many years, but I wanted to open a space that enabled these children to find their personal voice and try to represent it in the form of words/talk, and a story under the imaginative sign and the artefact as discussed here. I asked the question earlier, can the teacher be transformed from a preacher, to an organic activist? Hence this attempt of mine.

To conclude, I will borrow from the experience of one narrator when working in Jalazone Refugee Camp near Ramallah, inhabited by Palestinians expelled from the cities of Lod and Ramleh and 36 surrounding villages. The students I worked with were attending an UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) girls' school. In this experience, I used oral history and stories collected from the students' grandparents who experienced the expulsion in 1948. Hiba Barakat's story, 'On the way of the night' spoke about the journey of forced migration and thirst, and about the old man who fell, not because of a bullet or a rocket, but because of a dangerous and contagious disease. Yet, it was a death caused by war. Hiba, was 13 years old when she wrote:



I lost everything, my mother, my father, my childhood, all of this because of the war. Here I am, older now, and a writer showing people the disadvantages of war, and calling on them to end it, but I haven't forgotten those difficult times that I lived through during my childhood. (Barakat, 2000)

Figure 9. page 3, short story, 'In the Road of Night' written and illustrated by Hiba Barakat (13 years old), drama and creative writing workshop, 2000, Jalazone Camp, Ramallah.

Working alongside David Davis for many years has nurtured in me an interdisciplinary practice reflecting the politico-social and socio-political experiences of children and young people's everyday lives in Palestine. In Ibrahim's refusal of immigration and Hiba's identification as a writer, they articulated the personal in the social political and are responding to the question of: 'Who am I? Who can tell me who I am?'

References

- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. by C. Emerson and edited by M. Holquist. University of Texas Press.
- Barakat, H. (2000). *Fi Tareeq al-Layl* [In the night road]. Unpublished manuscript.
- Bashi, S. (2020). Human Rights in Indefinite Occupation: Palestine. *International Comparative, Policy & Ethics Law Review*, 3(3), pp. 801-856.
- Berleant, A. (2013). What is Aesthetic Engagement? *Contemporary Aesthetics*, 11, Article 5. Available at: https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/liberalarts_contempaesthetics/vol11/iss1/5
- Bowell, P., & Heap, B. S. (2017). Putting Process Drama into Action. *The Dynamics of Practice*. Routledge.
- Cremin, T. and Myhill, D. (2012). *Writing Voices: Creating Communities of Writers*. Routledge.
- Darwish, M. (2001). *Lematha Tarakta al-Hesana Waheedan* [Why did you leave the horse alone?] Riad El-Rayyes Books.
- Dewey, J. (1925/2018). My Pedagogic Creed. *Journal of Education*, 101(18), <https://doi.org/10.1177/002205742510101803>
- Dobson, T., & Stephenson, L. (2018). "I think it fits in": using process drama to promote agentic writing with primary school children. *Literacy*, 53(2), pp. 69-75.
- Fleming, M. (2017). *Starting Drama Teaching*. 4th edition. Taylor and Francis.
- Goldblatt, P. (2006) How John Dewey's Theories Underpin Art and Art Education. *Education & Culture*, 22(1), pp. 17-34.
- Rickard, J. (2022). *The Fragmentation of Palestine: Identity and Isolation since the Second Intifada*. Bloomsbury.
- Salem, I. (2000). *Muthakirat Hetha* [Memories of a shoe]. Unpublished manuscript.
- Shafir, G. (2017). *A half century of occupation: Israel, Palestine, and the world's most intractable conflict*. University of California Press.
- Said, W. E. (1994). *Representations of the intellectual*. Random House.
- Vygotsky, L. (2004/1967). Imagination and Creativity in Childhood. Trans by M. E. Sharpe. *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, 42(1), pp. 7-97.
- Tamari, S. (2000). A Miserable Year in Brooklyn. Khalil Sakakini in America, 1907-1908. *Institute for Palestine Studies, Jerusalem Quarterly*, 9. Available at: https://www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/jq-articles/17_khalil_2_0.pdf
- Wilhelm (2016). Recognising the power of pleasure: What engaged adolescent readers get from their free-choice reading, and how teachers can leverage this for all. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*. (39)1, pp. 30-41.

Chapter 4

Approaching the real: Attempts in early years classrooms

Konstantinos Amoiropoulos

Abstract: Frequently used stories in early-years classrooms can present a variety of opportunities for approaching our modern reality through drama. Depending on a teacher's social awareness, these stories could be used for building a context where children can decide for themselves when to adapt to society and when not. But the very first step for developing this context is finding a relevant *centre* for our dramas. This chapter will explore these issues with reference to the early-years sector.

Keywords: Stories in early-years drama, site, centre, contextualisation, neoliberalism, interpellation.

Personal context

When I was accepted on the MA course in the University of Central England (UCE) in drama in education back in 1996, I felt confident that I was well informed on the subject and quite certain that the work would be a 'piece of cake' for me. After all, I had gained three years of experience and knowledge about drama from studying and practicing theatre games in Greece. Fortunately, even in the first few weeks attending David Davies' course my assumptions were proven to be 'solid melts into air'. I remember being frustrated with how in every lesson he managed to challenge my previous understandings of drama, the things I took for granted, and revealed a new drama world of questioning the world around us and ourselves, of challenging ideas, of understanding, of dramatic tension, of deepening the work, of coherence throughout the dramatic experience, of metaxis, of

Yes, drama was fun and full of enjoyment but in David's approach the fun and enjoyment were of a different kind from what I knew before. They came from 'felt understanding': a situation where you understand 'feelingly', and you feel thoughtfully. That was and remains the cornerstone of his approach, although the means employed may have changed and become further enriched through the years.

The influence of David's approach is still evident in practitioners around the world including Greece where, together with many of his ex-students, we formed a drama association in 1999 in which David was the main figure of reference and taught in many seminars and workshops throughout Greece. Things have changed a lot since then. Financial and cultural crises have delayed or blocked the development of drama, but the ideas and practice endure. This chapter hopes to contribute to the continuation and development of these concepts.

Introduction

You teachers think that life is a fairy tale with a happy ending. But you know nothing of real life. In this world, you have to be the winner, or else you will be the victim. I want to prepare my kid to live in it – to fight for himself, even if this means to kick and punch. This is what the world is like.
(Parent feedback, 2019)

The above pithy account of our world came from a parent defending his child's persistently aggressive behaviour towards other children and adults. For the purposes of this chapter, I want to highlight this account as a story reflecting values which not only intends to describe what the world is like, but from that perspective prescribes how we should live in it. Human beings have always used value-laden stories in various forms, whether narratives, discourses, personal or official accounts, advertising and marketing, jokes, fairy tales, fables or fictional stories, to describe the world they live in and to justify how they live in it (Fisher, 1984; Polkinghorne, 1988; Hamby, Brinberg & Daniloski, 2019). Reflecting an ontological primacy for narrative, these stories describe personal or collective identity, selves and future, expectations, hopes, ideas, values, actions, behaviours and roles within a given world (Griffin, 2009). It is these value-laden stories, with special attention to fictional stories often used in early years settings, which are the focus of attention in this chapter. I wish to explore whether value-laden stories can be used in drama practice with young children; specifically, how we might relate our drama work to our modern reality, using stories to create dramatic contexts for children to explore fundamental questions around identity and belonging: To unpack this inquiry, I will firstly discuss some crucial elements of the nature and function of stories in our cultures and their relation to our reality. Subsequently, I will explore their relation to ideologies, and finally explore an Aesop's fable, the Hare and Tortoise, identifying a possible drama structure for approaching questions related to 'Who am I? Who can tell me who am I?' which lie at the heart of this collection.

Stories and ideology in culture

Storytelling is universal, essential to human communication, and is as old as humanity itself (Bowman, 2018). The stories we tell seem to be of extreme importance for the construction of the self. As Bruner (2002) suggests, the self, as it is not pre-structured or essential, is constructed and reconstructed through the stories we tell about who we are and why we are doing what we are doing. On the other hand, these stories, told either by individuals or institutions, are neither constructed nor received in a cultural vacuum (O'Toole, 2018). Whether we are aware of it or not, there is always a social and cultural background which determines to a greater or lesser extent how we generate and perceive narratives, as well as the meanings we extract or construct from them. Exploring the interplay between cultural and public narratives and the creation of new individual narratives, O'Toole (2018) suggests:

there are many different established narrative forms sedimented at different depths within a culture, to which individuals can turn in order to make sense of their own experiences and communicate that to others. (p. 178)

Indeed, it can be said that their sum constitutes the wider, all-encompassing story which we call culture and therefore infuses all levels of personal, social and cultural life (Bruner, 1984). We are beings of culture and we need stories to describe and to understand who we are and how we should live. A trickier situation arises, however, once these stories develop in such a way that they begin to structure the reality they intend to describe, thereby determining how reality is perceived: when they become what the playwright Edward Bond (2000) calls our invisible 'second skin', that is, our ideology. Stories become invisible in the sense that we learn to live by them and accept them as being as natural as our own skin. Bond (2000) holds that:

[The story] ... appeared in language: coloured words, drove idioms, prescribed rational language and evoked poetry. The story was served on plates and eaten. It was worn. It was beaten into weapons. People lived and died for it. (p. 3)

The relationship between language, narrative and ideology is well established with Herman & Chomsky (1998) and Fairclough (1995) identifying the tendency of people to perceive events through the cultural, political and economic prism of the dominant elite. Stories are situated in social worlds and “discourse is steeped in particular ideologies” (Henderson, 2018, 157). Fairclough (2012) recognised that different social agents have different strategies for change which project narratives and “imaginaries for new forms of social life” (p. 460). In representing past and present, the language of stories reflects social order but also shapes it, constructing new possibilities for the future (Henderson, 2018).

Fictional stories

Taking account of the relationship between narrative and ideology in shaping our interactions with the world, I'd like to focus on fairy tales, fables and other forms of fictional stories which we so often use as a basis for drama with early years children. We recognise that they, similarly, are products of a culture; that they are value-laden in the same way as other groups of social actors are, in a world where culture is the medium through which our identities are constructed (Eaude, 2019). As Zipes (2012) has argued in the case of fairy tales, they can be regarded as symbolic acts of intervention “in socialization in the public sphere” (p. 11), and as discourses “within a historically prescribed civilizing (sic) process” (p. 171). As such, they may be deterministic in their influence on young children's norms and values. Within any particular social context, they may introduce a particular image of a society and may promote, deliberately or not, specific values, rules and attitudes, a specific mode of socialization and construction of the self for children. Indeed, in the view of Stephens (1992), narratives wholly free of ideology are unthinkable.

The ideas communicated by fairy tales and fictional stories may not be so obvious at first glance, because they relate to, derive from and even constitute our own ideology: our second, invisible, skin. But the possibility of ideology becoming invisible in a narrative confers on stories an extremely powerful way of reproducing and naturalising ideological formations in a reader's mind. As McCallum and Stephens (2011) argue in reference to children's books:

Ideologies can thus function most powerfully in books which reproduce beliefs and assumptions of which authors and readers are largely unaware. Such texts render ideology invisible and hence invest implicit ideological positions with legitimacy by naturalizing them. In other words, a book which seems to a reader to be apparently ideology-free will be a book closely aligned to that reader's own unconscious assumptions, and the identification of such ideologies will often require sophisticated reading of the text's language and narrative discourse. (p. 360)

Awareness of this leaves us, teachers and practitioners of drama, with some serious responsibilities. If we hope to create dramatic situations in our classrooms which encourage children to decide for themselves when to adapt or not to a society's norms, we first need to identify the possible ideological positions concealed or latent within the story we are using. We need to decide how we are going to deal with these ideological positions in drama because they may thwart our purpose by validating or reinforcing particular forms of socialisation of children within our modern reality. This is not to ignore young children's own positionality and agency as social contributors in their own lives and biosphere, which is increasingly recognised in participatory work which facilitates children's 'presence' in society, culture and community (Blaisdell, 2019). Recognising and respecting young children's complex subjectivities is at the core of what we do as drama teachers.

Positioning child and adult as critical co-inquirers creates rich temporal, spatial, and material practices in which to “shape the ways in which children’s participation is made real” (Blaisdell, 2019). Learning alongside children is a defining feature of drama in education, which is discussed below.

... and in Drama

Using a simple example, I would like to illustrate possible, latent ideological positions in a story, and their potential effects on children’s socialisation when used uncritically in a drama. Imagine, let’s say, a drama lesson based on one of the best known of Aesop’s fables, *The Tortoise and the Hare*. This story is frequently used in early-years classrooms in Greece, where many teachers use it to pass on certain values to their students, values they consider beneficial for children to embrace if they are to prosper in our contemporary world.

The story of the fable itself is simple and short: In a forest, a hare mocked a tortoise for her slow walking and short legs. But the tortoise did not hide in shame. She responded by challenging the hare to a race. Hare accepted and, since he was much faster, naturally he soon left tortoise far behind. So confident was the hare and so certain of victory, he decided to take a nap on the side of the road during the race. The tortoise didn’t give up, however, but steadily made her way to the finish line while the hare was fast asleep. Shortly after, the hare woke up, and realised that the tortoise, although slow walking and short-legged, had managed to defeat him and win the race.

It is a reasonable enough position to assume that the fable offers a fertile ground for teaching morals and values to children. For example, if a drama lesson is framed from the point of view of the tortoise, it could teach that if we are persistent enough, we may prosper in life even if the situation does not appear to be in our favour. If it is framed from the point of view of the hare, it could teach, perhaps, that if you are overconfident, you risk underestimating a competitor and being defeated in life even if you are more gifted than your opponent. I have seen and read about the story being used for a variety of different educational purposes. A teacher may use it in exploring the topic of bullying, for example, exploring how a victim could confront a bully or how it feels to be bullied. On other occasions a teacher may use the story to explore different abilities, and the varying physical appearances or needs of individuals. Other themes may include otherness, inclusiveness, respect for others and their needs, and so on.

In practice, if a drama lesson is structured from the point of view of the tortoise, children may be positioned in the role of other animals of the forest and shadow the tortoise’s struggle throughout the lesson. Questions in such a drama may include: Did the tortoise do the right thing in challenging the hare? What does she think and how does she feel when the hare is mocking her before and during the race? The drama could continue with children in role encouraging the tortoise by advising her or cheering her on to win. In the end of the drama, they may collectively create a ‘sculpture’ of the winner and proceed to a discussion about the tortoise’s persistence that led to her victory. Although this is an invented case for structuring the drama, I have shaped its basic steps from various dramas developed on this story which I have attended or read about in the past.

While I don’t have anything against exploring these values and attitudes with students in early-years settings, I distrust the possible didactic form a lesson may take when based on such fables with, intentional or not, moralising objectives. Nonetheless, my main issue is not merely with the possible didactic form of the lesson itself but with what is made visible and, more importantly, what remains invisible in this drama in relation to the greater representation of the world our children are growing up in. In fact, there are some crucial questions to consider along these lines. Is this story, socially speaking, an unbiased one? Does the story present an ideology-free situation? If not, how is the drama lesson dealing with the issue of its potentially hidden ideological positions? The ‘race’, if located within our modern cultural setting, should not be regarded as ideologically innocent but, quite the opposite: it gains meaning/value from participants’

experience of their current cultural environment which itself is ideologically structured. In other words, the participants could identify and interpret, rather unconsciously, the situation in the drama with the one they understand and recognise as their own. The theory of the reader-text relationship can be usefully applied, especially when a story is left untouched or not interrogated as in the fictional drama above. To clarify the point:

... the relationship between a subject's activities as a reader and a work of fiction which is the object of reading both replicates other forms of subject/sociality interactions and constructs a specular, or mirroring, form of those interactions. (Stephens, 1992, p. 47)

The fictional drama did nothing to reveal the assumed values which are taken for granted and does not create the possibility of helping reveal these interactions but rather leaves them concealed and, their implications on us and on participants unexplored. Thus, the condition of the race is left untouched, it is taken for granted, without ever focusing on why and if it is necessary or what is its meaning. Why is there a race in the first place? And, maybe, what does it mean to accept or provoke a race in our current cultural environment?

Staying with the example of the Hare and the Tortoise, I would like to examine how it can be developed in an alternative way in the sections below.

The need to contextualise stories

First, I will try to offer a kind of historical approach to the specific lesson. But then again, I am not implying that Aesop had something similar in mind when forming the original fable even if 'they' were not a real person, and these fables were simply products of a collective culture. I mean historical in the sense that I aim to contextualise the moral lesson for our time by identifying possible meaningful connections between the lesson and the substance of the fable. Davis (2014) continually draws attention to the value of contextualising a drama and its events, considering such dramatic contexts vital to understanding the real nature of our world and "how it shapes and influences each one of us" (p. 59). One of his most inspiring pursuits, which he has 'stubbornly' maintained over the years and to which my own teaching approach in part pays tribute, is this drive to contextualise stories in such a way that their ideologies are made manifest, along with the implications of these ideologies for participants' lives. I suggest that, if adequately contextualised, the drama lesson on the hare and the tortoise may be seen to validate, intentionally or not, assumed ideological values about how we should live in our particular world. Specifically, it can be seen to reproduce some of those entrenched cultural values which could be regarded as constituting (in Bond's phrase) our contemporary invisible skin.

Cultural values are socially constructed and reflect multiple dimensions of inequality (McAndrew, O'Brien, & Taylor, 2020). Recognising that values play a key role in guiding our behaviour, and in how we organise our lives and make decisions, Hofstede (1980) created a model of cultural orientation which included the premise that subordinates or followers accept and expect unequal distributions of power in their life. Imbued with values, culture is the 'software of the mind' (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), which "tell[s] people what standards to use when presenting themselves in society and when evaluating or judging other members of society" (Beckwith, 2009, p. 448). Anthropologists recognise that people follow leaders and are impacted by their values but also by their ethical ideology (their moral philosophies which guide their judgments, actions and reactions in different contexts) (Smith, 2011). This strongly resonates with those of us working in education. Althusser's (1971) identification of education as the greatest ideological state apparatus in contemporary society highlights the extent of its formative grip on children and young people and gives much cause for concern. He advocated intense analysis of the ubiquity of ideology and "of how we 'live and move and have our being' in ideology" (Leask, 2018, p. 861, citing Althusser, 2014).

Human societies secrete ideology as the very element and atmosphere indispensable to their historical respiration and life. (Althusser, 2003, p. 232)

Althusser's (2008) description of how ideology induces the submission of individuals offers us an interesting direction to scrutinise the drama lesson with the hare and the tortoise. In Althusser's theorising of the process of submission to ideology, an important step is called interpellation of the subject. Interpellation of the subject is a process similar to when someone hails an individual, as when, to take the simplest example, you are walking on a street and hear someone calling with a direct phrase like: "Hey! You!". In such a scenario, any of us would most probably turn around, believing we are the object of the call. Whenever you are being hailed, for Althusser, you are immediately interpellated, which means that by simply responding to the call you are in some way acknowledging the power of the caller over you and submitting to an imposed (even if momentary) identity as the called-upon person who will respond. In being hailed by an ideology, you immediately assume the particular identity which that ideology imposes on you. The individual is interpellated or 'formed', as a particular subject, with a particular identity, rules and values, in other words with a particular ideology where traditional notions of interiority are removed and the subject is presented as having been 'produced' (Althusser, 2014; McLaren, 1988).

In my view, in this imagined drama, the tortoise, and together with her the participants in the lesson, are placed in a position very similar to that of an interpellated subject. The hare hails/mocks the tortoise because of her short legs and slowness. She is not only hailed by the hare but she accepts the particular rules of judgement that the hare imposes as given and true, and decides to play fully the role of an interpellated subject. But in doing so she accepts a given identity by a worldview which is not the one of Aesop's milieu and does not, merely, value speed over slowness, or long legs over short ones or even persistence over overconfidence. The worldview that hails the tortoise in the particular drama nowadays in our classrooms, and to which the tortoise responds, reflects our own contemporary worldview, or put more clearly, reflects the unconscious ideological assumptions of participants and of teachers as determined by our own contemporary dominant ideology. And what is the dominant ideology that determines our own and our participants' experience and understanding of ourselves and our society? I believe this ideology relates to neoliberal capitalism which is explored in the section below.

Cooperation versus competition

So, what is the modern worldview that hails us and our students, and subsequently structures our responses and values within this drama? What are the 'subject/sociality' interactions that may be mirrored in it? Most significantly, how does this drama orient young children in relation to our modern societies and their dominant ideologies? What view of the world are children, explicitly or implicitly, being asked to take?

Turning attention to our modern reality, we see that this lesson may, even if indirectly, reflect the growing dominance of neoliberal capitalism, under which central components of liberal democratic states are inverted, or transformed into their opposites, for the sake of financialization. The specific liberal component relevant to our case is the dimension of inclusion and cooperation, which in the neoliberal order is inverted to competition (Brown, 2015). The naturalisation of racing does not encapsulate the whole of our reality, but it is arguably true of much of our reality. What is happening out there is transforming our societies into threatening, unstable places where people habitually, and increasingly unquestioningly, submit to a call to compete with each other for survival. In *Time* magazine, McMillan Cottom (2020) refers to the pervasive presence of competition as a 'hustle', a strategy which many people in the US, particularly the poor and Black low-income workers are forced to play in order to survive what she calls 'a rigged game'. In turning workers into hustlers, they are forced to monetize their human capital. Often presented as an economic opportunity, "It is an ode to a type of capitalism that cannot secure the futures of anyone but the wealthiest" (McMillan Cottom, 2020, p. 42).

The impact of political conflict and economic competition is borne by the millions of refugees and immigrants who fight their way over borders, mountains, rivers, walls and seas to a place of supposed shelter and hope. The weak and the unlucky will not make it. And in those supposed havens, millions of natives are fighting back trying to keep them away because they accept as true the idea that what is occurring is fundamentally a struggle for domination over their territory resulting in a burden on their resources and competition for their jobs (Nouri & Roland, 2020). Fuelled by nativism, fear and authoritarianism, populist far right organisations and political parties have been growing in Europe since the 2008 recession. Peddling in hate speech and false narratives, these organisations talk about differences in ethnicity, values, and security issues as their dominant discourse (Nagan & Manausa, 2018). Two main causes behind the rise of populism have been identified, notably, economic and cultural (Nouri & Roland, 2020).

Under the growing cultural influence of neoliberal realism, which promotes “a certain model of individualism” (Fisher, 2018, p. 541), solidarity and empathy are in danger of extinction. Wendy Brown in her book *Undoing the Demos* (2017), explains that in our contemporary reality, all domains of human activity are structured and evaluated as markets, and individuals are “presumed to be market actors”, comparable to “little capitals (...) competing with (...) each other” (p. 38). Although this model of existence declares the “self-directed individual” as its basis and purpose, we are not considered free to choose our lives and our values at will; we are “no longer creatures of moral autonomy, freedom, or equality” (Brown, 2017, p. 194). Individuals become quite the opposite of what the phrase “self-directed individual” would seem to suggest. Our given task is to conceive and comprehend all of our endeavours as market-related, and the control we have consists merely in having a means to increase our market value and our rating or ranking (Brown, 2017). The modern subject, constructed as human capital for itself, for a firm or for a state, is at “persistent risk of failure, redundancy and abandonment (...) regardless of how savvy and responsible it is”, and becomes under these conditions an instrumentalised, dispensable element of the whole (Brown, 2017, p. 40). Brown recognises the ubiquity of neoliberal rationality, particularly in the West, which alienates, excludes and dissolves equality into market competition. Drawing on Foucauldian analysis and a materialist Marxist critique, Brown (2017) highlights the economisation of everything: politics, the workplace, the legal system, culture and education.

A parallel neoliberal infection in education is identified in Chomsky’s critique of the growing tendency for assessment of teachers and children, especially via standardised tests through which a ranking is produced:

So, you are giving some kind of a rank, but it’s a rank that’s mostly meaningless. And the very ranking itself is harmful. Not into doing things that are valuable and important. (Chomsky, 2015, cited in Taylor, 2015)

I believe that these values and rules which support competition and ranking are reflected in the feedback from my pupil’s parent cited at the opening of this chapter: “In this world, you have to be the winner, or else you will be the victim” (Parent feedback, 2019). I do not think however, this is a unique perspective, rather it is faithful to our contemporary cultural context. It is a view which emerges quite naturally from our everyday involvement with our neoliberal reality, a reality, we must remind ourselves, which also structures and conditions our children’s experience. It is evident in the extended hidden curriculum and the overt predisposition in education policies, in schools, in communities and in broader cultural contexts, for students, no matter how young, to prove their value and seek their self-worth in competing and ranking. The great problem is that these values and rules are perceived, not only by children but by their parents and other influential figures, as givens, as reflecting a ‘natural’ state of things, rather than understood as constructs. The consequence is that they become entrenched and remain unchallenged in our collective (un)consciousness. Although we can describe eloquently what the world is like, we too often lack the capacity for deep understanding of its real impact on our daily lives, or to imagine viable alternatives. Certainly, we understand that things are indeed bad, but at the same time many of us continue to accept and assume that the only action we can take is to privatise our responses. In this way, we rule out any question of social, systemic causation and we develop a sense and position of what Fisher (2009) has called “reflexive impotence” (p. 21) towards our own predicament.

Making ideologies visible through drama

Returning now to the drama lesson with the hare and the tortoise, I suggest that what our worldview asks from the tortoise, predominantly, is to respond to the hare's boasting by proving that she is worthy to be included or respected, or even to exist, within the community. And she conforms: she responds by adapting herself to be a competitor. When the tortoise accepts these rules and suggests a race, she has already submitted to an ideology and worldview that normalises competition. Hence the most important idea, but generally unperceived, in this drama is precisely the one which would endorse the contemporary ideology which naturalises competition, establishing the idea in children's imaginations that competition is the natural means to value the self and human beings in general. Thereby encouraging children to shape their ambitions and self in conformity to this ideology. The children, in role as other animals who are positioned as tortoise's supporters, could get caught with her in the same trap. They are at risk of being interpellated, through the tortoise in the drama, by being made to accept unquestionably the competition, without ever managing to challenge or even become aware of the assumed values imposed on them by the situation. In my opinion this is the definition of a defeat, not a victory.

But the tortoise's and children's defeat does not suggest that the hare is the winner either, although I can imagine him smiling while he is turning over to continue his nap. He is already an interpellated subject, one who trumpets the values of this particular ideology. It is the normalisation of the race that exercises power over both. In this race, the real champion is the race, which stands unchallenged on the finish point from the very first moment the race was declared. The notion of 'healthy competition' amongst children is flawed from its basic premise that one person only can succeed if others fail (Kohn, 1992). A contradiction in terms, Kohn (1992) argues that competition is not an inevitable part of human nature, and indeed, can destroy self-esteem. Studies show that when children compete, they are less able to take the perspective of others and see the world from their point of view, they are less empathetic, and less intrinsically motivated (Vallerand et al., 1986; Gerrard, Poteat, & Ironsmith, 1996; Tomaselo, 2009). Teaching children about competition is key to ensuring that they are prepared for it, and not groomed to take part in it uncritically (Kohn, 1992).

I am thus afraid that my fictional drama lesson not only misses the opportunity to bring into focus our modern predicaments, but it contributes, intentionally or not, to strengthening the naturalisation of these ideologically structured values or rules in participants' imaginations, abetting the process of making these ideologies invisible and legitimate. The accountability becomes clearer when we take into consideration Haste's (1987) conclusions on the process of children's construction of a variety of rules, where the very first step consists of accepting a socially-constructed rule as a given and where "the justification of the rule" itself is based on "arbitrary appeals to authority" (p. 168). In our case, we, teachers, may stand for that authority which, albeit unconsciously, legitimises these rules for children even in the simple presentation of a situation in a story.

There is a serious question now, about what drama can do for children and for teachers within our modern neoliberal predicament. Frankly, I don't think that drama can change the world immediately. But we can, through drama, create with our participants situations where the implications of what our reality imposes on us and demands from us can be seen and felt again, with a critical and imaginative sight. Davis (2014) offers an articulate perspective on the purpose of drama in our modern world, proposing that:

Art in this epoch must be focused on enabling the audience, spectator, reader, participant to glimpse the 'real' self-situation: the way in which every daily event is shaped in some way by these large social forces. It needs to open a space where we are faced with the 'actual' (...) and where our actions can be shaped by choices where fundamental questions of value can be fought out. (p. 22)

The question remains as to how we might create dramatic situations which facilitate this glimpse of the real self-situation. How might the fable of the tortoise and the hare be turned into such a dramatic space?

A possible way forward

I would like now to explore some of the ideas which I have come to consider particularly useful for our endeavour. One of these comes from the playwright Edward Bond, whose approach to theatre became a focus of drama in education primarily through Davis' (2005, 2014) contextualised approach.

Bond (2000) argues that drama occupies many sites. Site A, in this schema, refers to social sites, like the city, the era and culture, which an audience finds familiar and recognises as their own. What is of particular interest in Bond's account is that Site A, our reality in a specific place, should be conveyed to an audience through Site B, which, somewhat simplified, could be understood as the specific fictional context and characters of a theatre play. In process drama terms, Site B can be understood as a drama's fictional context, which needs always to reflect Site A, the participants' specific reality which they recognise as their own. There are two more sites in Bond's account, Site C and Site D. The former refers to the dramatic devices through which Sites A and B are conveyed to an audience, and the latter to the audience's imagination (Bond, 2000). We could partially describe this model by saying that drama functions as a channel of communication and bearer of meaning among these four sites.

But the even more interesting point in Bond's elaboration of this set of sites is that he explains and intentionally incorporates all of them in his plays as locations of "contradictions and conflicts" (Bond, 2011, p. xx) which define individuals and societies. That is, he seeks to capture in a play how the conflicts and contradictions in Site A (the social), impact Site B (the situation and the characters of the play) and, in turn Site D (the imagination of the audience). This process takes place throughout the whole of a play, rather than being restricted to setting the dramatic context in the opening (Amoiropoulos, 2013). For example, Site A should not be regarded simply as a kind of a one-off building of a fictional context, which drama teachers usually confine to the beginning of a drama lesson, but it has to be present throughout the lesson in order for the actions, gestures, objects and words to mean something. All these should be explored against the real context, our Site A. The aim is for the audiences/participants to see themselves within the truth of their situation and comprehend its implications for them. These contradictions and conflicts could be related to what Davis (2014) described above as the "real self-situation" and the "actual", which in our case means what is really happening in our lives, the whole gamut of predicaments, paradoxes and impasses we face within our particular social and cultural context. Both Davis and Bond, and theatre director Chris Cooper in his directing of *Big Brum* TIE programmes (Amoiropoulos, 2013, 2023), saw these conflicts and contradictions as crucial in opening a gap of meaning within a story, a gap whereby reality could be approached in new ways; where the audience/participants could face their "real" self-situations, and where their "actions can be shaped by choices where fundamental questions of value can be fought out" (Davis, 2014, p. 22).

A careful selection of one or more of these conflicts, with an awareness of their potential implications for children, may help a teacher contextualize the drama and focus on the social when planning or applying a drama lesson. This selective focus on specific conflicts and paradoxes may constitute the 'Centre' of a drama, a technical term in Bond's theory. The Centre contains the salient ontological questions to be felt and addressed in a drama. It is a kind of crisis, a situation of confrontation with ideology (Amoiropoulos, 2013) that should be pivotal to, and continually apparent in various forms and situations in the drama being explored. The Centre, thus conceived, could help teachers maintain awareness of and attention to possible ideological positions assumed in a story, inform how they are dealt within the drama itself, and, ultimately, influence the creation of dramatic situations where children face and work through these conflicts themselves.

With these references in mind, I will now attempt to explore some possibilities for approaching our specific fable in a different way. I am not assuming that these approaches are the correct ones, I am simply attempting to open and further a discussion, rather than imposing a formula. I would specifically like to explore how Site B, the fictional context of a drama lesson based on the hare and the tortoise, may be structured in such a way as to reflect and convey our Site A, which children recognise as their own reality. We may need to focus more on values and rules which are regarded as givens in this forest where the tortoise and the hare agreed to compete with each other. We might need to formulate some relevant questions which we consider appropriate for a group of children, such as 'How does this forest function? What is the purpose and the value of racing in there? Is it a forest where only the fastest animals manage to reside? Is it a community where any animal has to have survival skills to cope with a threatening environment? Why and how are these 'given' values of the forest achieved? How have the animals of the forest come to adopt them? How do these animals see their world? What is at stake in having or not having a race? What does it mean to win or be defeated in this specific forest? And finally, how do these selections relate to our world and our experience of it?' Our world promotes and submits to a rather peculiar situation, if you think about it. How is it possible for a community to be sustained as a community via competition?

Obviously, I am not suggesting that these are the only possible questions. Moreover, I am not suggesting that they are addressed to children in the way and with the words I have just employed. I am suggesting that these or similar questions can help a teacher narrow the focus of the class, by choosing one of them to work on as the centre of a drama, something which children can experience in a dramatic form rather than address theoretically.

In practice, we might read the story to the point where the tortoise challenges the hare to a race and invite participants to take on the role of the organisers of the forthcoming race. This role may position them, initially, on the side of the society's rules and values and may accommodate their own assumed values and growing urge for competing. Before they assume their roles, we might present relevant material like, an article from a newspaper, the "News of the Forest", where the tortoise's challenge to the hare is presented in bold letters. We may imagine the layout or environment of the forest by creating a map or a model. We might try to identify the special features of this forest. Perhaps there is a specific route which organised races routinely follow, or a training site where animals work out. Or a podium with the number 1 step placed somewhere high enough to be seen from every corner of the forest, or a ritual song or dance of the winners or the losers. We could create the award that this forest bestows on winners as well as organising the award ceremony to follow or set out the rules that need to be followed in a race. We could even invent a list of the previous winners and losers of past competitions. And then we could locate on our map where these animals are now. Where are their homes, and how did their victory or defeat impact their lives? Do they live among other animals or do they occupy special areas reserved for winners, or losers? How does this forest community remember them?

We may then choose to focus our drama on the felt experience and the implications of the race for the central characters. We perhaps could follow the preparation of the two contestants and try to understand what is really at stake in winning within this special forest. Why are these two animals doing what they are doing? What are their expectations and investments? Maybe we need to explore why the hare and the tortoise see their lives in this. Why did the hare mock the tortoise? What did he invest in this action? From where or how did he learn this? What does he believe about the present condition of the forest? What about the tortoise's investment in the race? Why is she inviting the hare to a race? Where did she see that kind of response before and why did she adopt it in this situation? And how she connects to the forest?

We may then need to create a kind of crisis situation in our drama: a crisis that could bring children closer to the Centre of the drama, where conflicts and contradictions of the site impact the characters of the story. Where a specific ideology is, somehow, revealed to children's/participants' imaginations.

Here is a possible choice: the hare has taken the award, hidden in his nest (form) and refused to give it back to the organisers, even though he has been defeated. Perhaps the hare is refusing to hand over the award because he is feeling that a part of himself has been torn away. He has learnt to self-identify as a winner

and has after all been the champion year after year. He feels, perhaps, that if he hands it over, then his very selfhood may collapse. He may feel lost and threatened, confused and disappointed. Maybe he cannot value himself without the award and the status it confers. The organisers/participants may have to deal with this situation, since the award ceremony is about to begin, and all the cheering animals of the forest are growing restless because of the delay. The ceremony is in danger, and with it the whole structure of the forest's ideals. Perhaps the organisers would need to understand more about how the hare came to this situation in order to deal with the problem. A teacher in role as the hare may ask questions resembling the central questions of this book: Who am I going to be without this award? Am I going to have a place in the forest without it? What can this place be? Did I disappoint you all? Am I not worthy to live around you ...? Who decides that? And so on.

I see these questions as relating to Davis' (2014) "real". Not simply to reality, but to the felt implications of reality on us. These questions may conclude in the minds of the participants a process which connects the situation of the drama with their own actual situation. Connecting these two situations, while being in both of them at the same time, may induce participants to critically consider and question their own beliefs and values. As organisers of the race in this forest, they face a 'gap' in meaning which the stories and values of the forest may not be able to seal. They may comprehend the impacts of a specific ideology on people generally and on themselves. They may be induced to reflect imaginatively within the situation on these values and stories. 'Why am I trying to convince the hare to hand over the award? Do I agree with that? What is a race? Why I am accepting it?' and so forth.

This process is based on metaxis, that is, living imaginatively and rationally in two contexts, the fictional and the real, at the same time. It is probably one of the most interesting areas to explore and concepts to employ in drama. It is an idea passionately expounded in the work of Davis (2014, p. 52), and it is very different from simply distancing oneself from a situation or adopting a critical point of view toward it from the outside. Metaxis is the state of being simultaneously in two stages, in and out of role, where participants are enabled to act and monitor their actions at the same time:

In role I stole some money, which I would not do in real life – or would I? Why did I take that action in role? There needs to be an impulse to critical self-reflection from within that process. It is the self-spectating from within the dual role (...). (Davis, 2014, p. 59)

There could be several other possibilities and developments here. The important element is to choose dramatic events that will bring the situation to a crisis point that open up a space "where we are faced with the 'actual' (...) and where our actions can be shaped by choices where fundamental questions of value can be fought out". (Davis, 2014, p. 22)

Conclusion

The importance of contextualising drama is crucial if we wish to explore questions like the ones at the centre of this collection: 'Who am I? Who can tell me who am I?'. This contextualisation is central to David Davis' approach and can aid us in focusing our drama on the immediate experience of our current reality, meaning the participants' own experience of their own reality. As suggested here, Bond's notion of the site could offer a useful way of thinking and working 'into drama practice' for such a contextualisation to take place and create a dramatic context where participants could start imagining their own "real" (Davis, 2014).

References

- Althusser, L. (1971). Ideology and ideological state apparatuses. In *Lenin and philosophy and other essays* (pp. 121–173). (Trans by B. Brewster). New Left Books.
- Althusser, L. (2003). *The humanist controversy and other writings*. (Trans. by G. M.Goshgarian). Verso.
- Althusser, L. (2008). *On ideology*. Verso Radical Thinkers.
- Althusser, L. (2014). *On the reproduction of capitalism. Ideology and ideological state apparatuses*. (Trans. by G. M.Goshgarian). Verso.
- Amoiropoulos, K. (2013). *Balancing gaps: an investigation of Edward Bond's theory and practice for drama*. Doctoral thesis (unpublished), Birmingham City University.
- Beckwith, D. C. (2009). 'Values of Protagonists in Best Pictures and Blockbusters: Implications for Marketing'. *Psychology & Marketing*, 26(5), pp. 445–469.
- Blaisdell, C. (2019). Participatory work with young children: the trouble and transformation of age-based hierarchies. *Children's Geographies*, 17(3), pp. 278-290.
- Bowman, R. F. (2018). Teaching and Learning in a Storytelling Culture. *The Clearing House*, 91(3), pp. 97-102.
- Bond, E. (2000). *The hidden plot*. Methuen.
- Bond, E. (2011). *Plays 9: Innocence, The balancing act, Tune, A window, The edge*. Methuen Drama.
- Brown, W. (2017). *Undoing the Demos. Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. Zone Books.
- Bruner, J. (2002). *Making stories: law, literature, life*. Harvard University Press.
- Davis, D. (Ed.) (2005). *Edward Bond and the dramatic child: Edward Bond's plays for young people*. Trentham Books.
- Davis, D. (2014). *Imagining the real: towards a new theory of drama in education*. IOE Press University of London & Trentham Books.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2012). *Critical discourse analysis. International Advances in Engineering and Technology (IAET)*, 7, pp. 452-487.
- Fisher, M. (2009). *Capitalist realism: Is there no alternative?* Zero Books.
- Fisher, M. (2018). How to kill a zombie: strategising the end of neoliberalism. In D. Ambrose (Ed.), *K-Punk: Mark Fisher: The collected and unpublished writings of Mark Fisher (2004-2016)* (pp. 539-544). Repeater.
- Fisher, W. R. (1984). Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument. *Communications Monographs*, 51, pp. 1–22.
- Gerrard, L. E., Poteat, G. M., & Ironsmith, M. (1996). Promoting Children's Creativity: Effects of Competition, Self-Esteem and Immunization. *Creativity Research Journal*, 9(4), pp. 339-346.
- Griffin, E. (2009). *A first look at communication theory* (7th Ed.). McGraw Hill.

Hamby, A., Brinberg, D., & Daniloski, K. (2019). It's about our values: How founder's stories influence brand authenticity. *Psychol Mark.*, 36, pp. 1014-1026.

Haste, H. (1987). Growing in rules. In J. Bruner, & H. Haste (Eds.), *Making sense: the child's construction of the world* (pp. 163-195). Routledge.

Henderson, K. I. (2019). The danger of the dual-language enrichment narrative: Educator discourses constructing exclusionary participation structures in bilingual education. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 16(3), pp. 155-177.

Herman, E. & Chomsky, N. (1998). *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. Pantheon Books.

Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*. Sage Publications.

Hofstede, G., & Hofstede, G. J. (2005). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. 2nd Edition. McGraw-Hill.

Kohn, A. (1992). *No Contest. The Case against Competition*. 2nd edition. Houghton Mifflin.

Leask, I. (2018). Ideology and the 'Multitude of the Classroom': Spinoza and Althusser at school. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 50(9), pp. 858-867.

McAndrew, S., O'Brien, D., & Taylor, M. (2020). The values of culture? Social closure in the political identities, policy preferences, and social attitudes of cultural and creative workers. *Sociological Review*, 68(1), pp. 33-54.

McCallum, R. and Stephens, J. (2011). Ideology and children's books. In W. Shelby, K. Coats, P. Enciso, & Chr. Jenkins (Eds.), *Handbook of research on children's and young adult literature* (pp. 359-371). Routledge.

McLaren, P. (1988). On ideology and education: Critical pedagogy and the politics of empowerment. *Social Text*, 19, pp. 153-185.

McMillan Cottom, T. (2020). Survival mode. Nearly six decades after the civil rights act, black workers still have to hustle to get ahead. *Time*, March 2nd-9th, pp. 42-45.

Nagan, W. P., & Manausa, S. R. (2018). The Rise of Rightwing Populism in Europe and the United States. *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 6(10), pp. 50-57.

Noury, A., & Roland, G. (2020). Identity Politics and Populism in Europe. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 23, pp. 421-39.

O' Toole, J. (2018). Institutional storytelling and personal narratives: reflecting on the 'value' of narrative inquiry. *Irish Educational Studies*, 37(2), pp. 175-189.

Polkinghorne, D. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. State University of New York Press.

Smith, B. (2011). Who Shall Lead Us? How Cultural Values and Ethical Ideologies Guide Young Marketers' Evaluations of the Transformational Manager-Leader. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 100, pp. 633-645.

Stephens, J. (1992). *Language and ideology in children's fiction*. Longman.

Taylor D. (2015). *Noam Chomsky: bubble tests yield meaningless rankings*. Available at: <http://www.livingindialogue.com/noam-chomsky-bubble-tests-lead-meaningless-rankings/>

Tomasello, M. (2009). *Why we cooperate*. MIT Press.

Vallerand, R. J., Gauvin, L. I., & Halliwell, W. R. (1986). Negative Effects of Competition on Children's Intrinsic Motivation. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 126(5), pp. 649-657.

Zipes, J. (2012). *Fairy tales and the art of subversion*. Routledge Classics.

Chapter 5

The Drama of Theatre-in-Education

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.

Keywords: 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 Edward 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. 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 believed, the dynamic of the personality is drama (see Rubtsova and Daniels, 2016), 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' (2023) and O'Sullivan's (2023) 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 (Belgrade Theatre, 2010), 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 trade 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 (1988) 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.

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). 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 Davis was penning the article cited 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, stressing, 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 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 threatened 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 can be 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, & 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 as 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' by 2025, a Chinese term originating in Confucianism used to describe a society composed of a functional middle class. In a population of around 1.426 billion people (2023), this is no small achievement and amounts to over 400 million middle class 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 (Stanojević, 2022). One part of this is 'internal circulation' (domestic economy), the other is 'external circulation' (China's presence in global markets). 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" (President Xi, 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 suggested 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 was fortunate enough to have two plays in production in Birmingham in 2019. One of them was 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 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 it's 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 thereafter. 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 (2019) 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 they are showing for the audience. Enactment is a process of becoming for the actor 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 US, the 'historical stories' employed in public debates are dangerous myths. Such a view certainly explains the senile fantasies of the European Research Group dragging 'debate' in the British parliament back to the 19th Century during the recent Brexit crisis². Of course, they can only do this because of widespread ignorance, the ideological master narratives perpetuated in the media, and 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 also.

'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, p.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 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:

2 The European Research Group is a far-right influential group that serves those Conservative Members of Parliament who oppose the UK's membership of the European Union. Described as a 'party within the Conservative Party', many prominent Tory MPs are members.

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 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 a 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 (1988, 1993; Davis, 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 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 Gillham, Davis has done more than most to bring the work of 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, have 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, p.). 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” (p. 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 (2007) has called the human imperative, 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 (Bond, 1998). 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 (2007) “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”. 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 (1996) himself 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. Jekyll & 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, and in contrast, the critical notion of enactment demands that the actor or enactor takes account of the total site and situation. This requires revealing the processes at work in the situation that enable or deprive us of our humanness. The enactor has to reveal society in the character in the situation and in themselves and in the audience. Playing the play is empathy for the audience. Enactment opens meaning up and the world becomes an open question. We can achieve this in *Dr Jekyll & 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. Robert Louis 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.

References

- Adriaense, J. E. C., Koski, S. E., Huber, L., & Lamm, C. (2020). Challenges in the comparative study of empathy and related phenomena in animals. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioural Reviews*, 112, pp. 62-82.
- Andress, D. (2018). *Cultural dementia: How the west has lost its history, and risks losing everything else*. Head of Zeus.
- Banda, C. (2020). The privatised self? A theological critique of the commodification of human identity in modern technological age in an African context professing Ubuntu. *HTS Theological Studies*, 75(1), doi.org/10.4102/hts.v75i1.5288.
- Belgrade Theatre (2010). *A History of Theatre in Education at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry*. Available at: <https://www.belgrade.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Theatre-in-Education-at-the-Belgrade.pdf>
- Bess, M. (2015). *Our Grandchildren Redesigned: Life in the Bioengineered Society of the Near Future*. Beacon Press.
- Bess, M. (2016). *Make Way for the Superhumans: How the science of bio enhancement is transforming our world, and how we need to deal with it*. Icon Books.
- Bond, E. (1996). *Personal letter to Chris Cooper*. Unpublished.
- Bond, E. (1998). Rough notes on drama. In C. O'Sullivan and G. Williams (Eds.) *Building Bridges: Laying the Foundations for a Child-Centred Curriculum in Drama and Education*. Birmingham: The National Association for the Teaching of Drama (pp. 1-12).
- Bond, E. (2000). *The Hidden Plot. Notes on Theatre and the State*. Methuen Drama.
- Bond, E. (2007). *Young civilisation*. Unpublished letter to Big Brum.
- Cooper, C. (2018). *The strange case of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Davis, D. (1988). The Education Reform Bill: Tory Class Legislation. *Theatre & Education Journal*, 1, pp. 1-13.
- Davis, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Gavin Bolton: essential writings*. Simon and Schuster Education.
- Davis, D. (Ed.) (2011). *Geoff Gillham: Six Plays for Theatre in Education and Youth Theatre*. Trentham Books.
- Davis, D. (2014). *Imagining the real*. Trentham Books.
- Davis, D. (2019). 'Who am I? Who can tell me who I am?' A Conference Celebrating the Life and Contribution of David Davis to Drama and Theatre in Education. Trinity College Dublin, March 9th-10th, 2019.
- deLisle, J. (2020). Foreign Policy through Other Means: Hard Power, Soft Power, and China's Turn to Political Warfare to Influence the United States. *Orbis*, 64(2), pp. 174-206.
- Gillham, G. (1988/2015). What Life is For: An Analysis of Dorothy Heathcote's 'Levels' of Explanation. *Journal for Drama in Education*, 31(2), Summer.
- Gillham, G. (1993/2013). What is TIE? *SCYPT Journal*, 29(3), Summer.
- Hare, D. (2019). We're feeling the aftershocks of earthquakes that happened years ago. *New Statesman*, 22-28 March, pp. 25-26.

Hou, R. (2020). Maintaining Social Stability without Solving Problems: Emotional Repression in the Chinese Petition System. *The China Quarterly*, 243, pp. 635-654.

Illing, S. (2018). Technology isn't just changing society — it's changing what it means to be human. *Vox*, Feb 23rd. Available at: <https://www.vox.com/technology/2018/2/23/16992816/facebook-twitter-tech-artificial-intelligence-crispr>

Miliband, D. (2019). Brexit is not the solution to the UK's crisis – it is the accelerator of it. *New Statesman*, 22-28 March, p. 28.

Nagan, W. P., & Manuasa, S. R. (2018). The Rise of Rightwing Populism in Europe and the United States. *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 6(10), pp. 50-57.

Nicholson, H. (2009). *Theatre and education*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Olusoga, D. (2017). Empire 2.0 is dangerous nostalgia for something that never existed. *The Guardian newspaper*, March 17th. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/mar/19/empire-20-is-dangerous-nostalgia-for-something-that-never-existed>

O'Sullivan, C. (2019). *The Role of Drama Education in Developing Communication Skills in a Neoliberalized Society*. A Conference Celebrating the Life and Contribution of David Davis to Drama and Theatre in Education. Trinity College Dublin, March 9-10, 2019.

O'Toole, F. (2018). *Heroic Failure: Brexit and the Politics of Pain*. Apollo.

Pan, F., Zhang, F., & Wu, F. (2020). State-led Financialization in China: The Case of the Government-guided Investment Fund. *The China Quarterly*, pp. 1-24.

Rasch, A. (2019). "Keep the Balance": The Politics of Remembering Empire in Postcolonial Britain. *Journal of Commonwealth & Postcolonial Studies*, 7(2), pp. 212-230.

Rubtsova O., & Daniels, H. (2016). The Concept of Drama in Vygotsky's Theory: Application in Research. *Cultural-historical psychology*, 12(3), pp. 189–207.

Shafak, E. (2019). Like everything else in this life, democracies can die. *New Statesman*, 22-28 March, pp. 26-27.

Sheri, B. (2019). Populism is a Symptom Rather than a Cause: Democratic Disconnect, the Decline of the Center-Left, and the Rise of Populism in Western Europe. *Polity*, 51(4), pp. 654-667.

Singer, T., & Lamm, C., 2009. The social neuroscience of empathy. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1156 (1), pp. 81–96.

Spatz, B. (2010). 'This extraordinary power': authority, submission, and freedom in the actor-director relationship. *Ecumenica*, 3(2), pp. 43-61.

Stevenson, R. L. (2004). *The strange case of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde*. Barnes & Noble.

Townsend, C. (2019). *Personal communication*. The Gap Basement Theatre, Birmingham, England.

Xi, Jinping (2020). *Fostering a New Development Paradigm and Pursuing Mutual Benefit and Win-Win Cooperation*. Keynote Address by President of The People's Republic of China. APEC CEO Dialogues. Available at: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-11/19/c_139527192.htm

Zhang, C., Yang, A. Z., won Kim, S., & Fong, V. L. (2020). How Chinese Newlyweds' Experiences as Singletons or Siblings Affect Their Fertility Desires. *The China Quarterly*, 247, pp. 835-854.



Chapter 6

'I Disagree'— Live Through Again, and Again

Cao Xi

Abstract: Drawing on the experience of Drama Rainbow's youth theatre play *The Examination* [written by Chris Cooper], and considering the form and content of drama, this chapter opens a dialogue about a possible way of approaching a living through dimension within an improvised performance. The experience of one young performer's radical change of attitude toward a key moment in the play usefully illustrates the pursuit of a metaxis effect when enacting the scene. Exploring the relationship between the performer, the situation and the role, the chapter attempts to problematise the complexities of taking different kinds of responsibilities during moments of radical change of attitude. The chapter aims to illustrate and discuss an exploratory approach to drama education and suggest new ways of thinking about and enacting 'living through drama' in a Chinese context.

Keywords: Drama in education, social/political contexts, living through drama, metaxis, David Davis and Edward Bond, youth theatre, form and content.

Personal context

The impact of meeting David Davis has been manifold on my personal journey as a creative director and teacher artist, but also on the organisations I work for. David first met Professor Li Yingning in 1996 who subsequently introduced his work to China. David's work as a leading figure in the field of Drama in Education (DiE) has been very significant in the evolution of Drama Rainbow. His writings, his knowledge of Gavin Bolton's work, and his relationship with Edward Bond has played a very important role for the Drama Rainbow Education Centre. As a Consultant to the Centre in the early years of its development, he helped shape and inform its creative direction.

Introduction

The Chinese national education system has been highly praised as an efficient system boasting national standards, a national curriculum, a high-stakes test (the college entrance exam), and a clearly defined set of gateways to mark students' transitions from one stage to the next. Admirers note that every Chinese student has a clear and focused goal to pursue; Chinese teachers and parents know exactly what to do to help their students; and the government knows exactly which schools are doing well. What those admirers ignore is the fact that such an education system, while being an effective machine to instil what the government wants students to learn, is incapable of supporting individual strengths, cultivating a diversity of talents, and fostering the capacity and confidence to create. (Zhao, 2014, p. 9)

China, a perfect incarnation of authoritarian education, has produced the world's best test scores at the cost of diverse, creative, and innovative talents. (Zhao, 2014, p. 9)

China's system [produces] students who excel in a narrow range of subjects. Only 10% of its college graduates are deemed employable by multinational businesses because these students lack the very qualities our new society needs. (Zhao, 2014, p. 9)

The above quotations illustrate the particular social pressures on children aged between six and eighteen living in a system like that of China, which has consequences for their personal, social and emotional development. For twelve years of their lives students in China have one goal: to pass a series of exams in order to pass the Gaokao [National College Entrance Examination] when they are eighteen. The stringent tests require students to focus entirely on what is being tested rather than on the knowledge itself (Gaokao places Mathematics, Chinese and English at its core, alongside a choice of testing in the Sciences or Humanities). What Zhao (2014) described in terms of the lack of "capacity and confidence to create" arguably weakens individual responsibility.

Essentially, children and their classmates are framed as competitors rather than collaborators. In most schools, results are published in rank order for even the smallest of tests. The evidence is mounting that the education system "suffocates creativity and weakens students' social ability" (Zhou, 2017, p. 32). In this chapter, I explore the kind of experiences that Drama Rainbow develops with children who live in a highly pressurised social environment in order to evoke personal political responsibility. I also explore the particular form of drama used, where enacting a situation and living through it as a form of improvised performance, lies at its heart.

Drama Rainbow and the Development of a model of Theatre in Education in China

Drama Rainbow is a private education centre in Beijing working with children and young people, their parents, and wider communities of teachers and educators throughout China. A weekend centre for almost 200 families and three- to eight-year-old children doing year-long courses in DiE, children join our sessions to explore themselves and the world around them. From the age of eight upwards they are invited to work with our youth theatre group. DiE classes stop after eight years of age because children then go to primary school and many parents withdraw them owing to the pressures of school and homework. Nonetheless, there are enough children who want to continue which is why we offer a Youth Theatre option¹. Having had the experience of exploring DiE in their early years provides children with a unique perspective when they later begin to explore the performative dimensions of theatre and drama.

1 As well as the centres for DiE and TiE, Drama Rainbow has a teaching and learning centre, research and development centre (publishing), play centre, community centre, and youth centre (offering a Youth Theatre for groups of 8–14-year-olds, and Facing the GAP Youth Theatre Company for 14-year-olds plus). Drama Rainbow provides teaching training programmes and TiE tours in Beijing and other major cities in China.

Our approach to youth theatre draws from the early TiE movement in the UK in the 1960s and '70s (Wooster, 2016), and is a fusion of drama in education and theatre in education. Informed by the work of Geoff Gillham (1994) and his colleagues at the Standing Conference of Young People's Theatre (SCYPT) Gavin Bolton (Davis & Lawrence, 1986; Davis, 2010), David Davis (2005, 2014), Roger Wooster (2012) and Edward Bond (2000), we are committed to creating a progressive practice in drama and theatre education where participants engage in productive learning about the art form, dramatising their world, imagining and infusing it with their values, whilst making meaning of their lives and the world around them. Although written over thirty years ago, the SCYPT Manifesto resonates with our philosophy at Drama Rainbow:

Children and young people must get to know themselves as natural beings; as social beings; as technological beings; as creative beings; as thinking beings. A curriculum which offers materials and knowledge to young people to explore the diversity and complexity of humankind, would feed the innate capacities and questions that spontaneously emerge out of the experience of living in the world - this is what is needed. It would be a curriculum for living on the planet - not a National Curriculum. It would be a curriculum for living (SCYPT Manifesto, 1992).

Each year our youth theatre selects materials for children to explore, which are then organised as a performance at the end of nine months of weekly sessions. Usually, the content is derived from children's real lives. For example, in December 2015, the teachers gathered the youth theatre members aged between eight and twelve, to explore what they wanted to experience and share the next year. Many children reported experiencing being bullied or witnessing others being bullied, physically and verbally in schools, and expressed that they are either not allowed to or were unwilling to talk about it with teachers and adults around them. They spoke about being very aware and concerned about teachers' preferences for some children over others, and being aware of the consequences of being perceived as a 'rebel' or of showing discontent. We interviewed their parents afterwards who shared the same concerns about bullying and violence in schools (see Meng et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2013), but more specifically the 'silencing' of it. Schools prefer not to acknowledge it and parents collude because they find it hard to challenge the authority of the school (Chen and Chen, 2020).

These views and concerns offered an important angle of exploration for our drama teachers who decided to map out a fiction which would convey the social and cultural site of what the youth theatre company described, but also would open sufficient space for members to stay close to the 'problem'. Unlike former youth theatre performances, which were largely devised and written by children themselves based on their nine-month drama in education sessions, we decided to explore a form of living through drama (Davis, 2014) within an improvised theatre performance².

This approach begged the question of how to structure them into being in the fiction and at the same time being conscious about the process of enactment in such moments. Following several years of experience gained through being members of our drama centre, we realised that these young children were sophisticated thinkers and required a complex story to carry and capture the depth and richness of their experiences. They were well able to handle the art form of drama and understood how they wanted to use it. So, after long discussions we decided, in contrast to previous performances, that we wanted children to have the experience of playing young people rather than being in the roles of adults.

We are fortunate to have a playwright who had been working with us from the beginning of our youth theatre journey. When we shared our discussions with Chris Cooper, our then consultant, now Director of Cultural Change, he immediately agreed to create a structure of a play containing lots of gaps for children to improvise, with two roles for adults on stage. This became *The Examination*. In the writer's notes, Cooper (2018) wrote:

2 In this 'living through' approach to youth theatre which usually extends over a period of 34-38 weeks, the aim is to perform from the outset. Children begin with a series of two-hour sessions which in effect are a form of process drama for the first 18 weeks. They explore the world of the play through teacher and student in role, enactment, and improvisation where 'the lived through' elements are developed. By the time they come to rehearse the actual play - with around 8 weeks to go, they are totally immersed in the world of the play. The remaining 8 weeks are divided between marketing, making publicity, press releases, designing and making costumes, props, set, fund raising etc., and what we call a social project which takes the children out into the community to explore something thematically linked to the content of the play.

I have the children to thank for this. It became very apparent to me that they wanted to explore a situation that was social rather than, say, an individual child and her family. They were using examples from their own lives to illustrate their own experience of being a child. This inevitably brought school to the fore because that is where they spend most of their time outside the family unit. As the story emerged and I prodded and probed it further through writing, however, I realised that it wasn't really a story about schooling in the ordinary sense of the word, but it was a play about a different kind of knowledge.

Cooper is here referring to knowledge of self – identity, home, isolation, fear, sadness, joy, freedom, sharing and solidarity. And knowledge of social structures and institutions, rituals and their origins in children's lives.

The Examination

Set in a non-specific time, *The Examination*³ is a story about a group of young scholars selected for the Royal Study Hall (RSH) in order to attend the examination at the end of ten years of hard study of the *Book of Knowledge*. The book that according to the Emperor himself contains all knowledge, and "to know the book is to know how to become a loyal scholar" (Episode Five, *The Examination*, 2017). Those who pass the final examination would have the opportunity to serve the Emperor. The story opens when a young scholar Chen Xi draws a smiley face on an image on the blackboard that illustrated the relationship between the Emperor and the stars. Xiang Nan, a bully and a volunteer spy told Mr Wan, their teacher, and also said that Chen Xi hit him when he tried to stop her from defacing the great Emperor. When Mr Wan talked to Chen Xi he discovered that she had made a doll out of straw and denied that she hit Xiang Nan:

Wan: I do not like what I see in your eyes Chen Xi. It troubles me. Rule Number One?
Silence
Wan: Rule Number Two?
Silence
Chen Xi: Sorry I -
Wan: Rule Number Three?
Silence
Wan: Why did you strike Xiang Nan?
Silence. Chen Xi stares at her toes. Teacher Wan lifts her chin with her hand.
Wan: Why did you strike Xiang Nan?
Chen Xi: I didn't.
Wan: You are wilful.
Teacher Wan sits. Picks up the dolly.
Wan: Who is she?
Chen Xi: It's a he. Can I have him back please.
Wan: Making dollies is forbidden.
Pause. Teacher Wan pulls the head off the dolly. And drops both head and body to the floor. Silence. Shakes her head.
Wan: I know your game. You are angry. Angry because you do not want to be here.
Chen Xi: Yes.
Wan: But you will learn.

(Episode One, *The Examination*)

3 The Examination is the first play in the Emperor's Children Trilogy (*The Examination* 2017; *The Journey* 2019; *The Soil* 2020) and was first performed in Beijing in 2018.

Mr Wan puts the *Book of Knowledge* on Chen Xi's head and asks her to recite the school rules. Chen Xi couldn't. Later when in the students' dormitory confronting the other scholars, Xiang Nan forces his school mates to side with him by coercing them to agree that they all saw Chen Xi hit him. Most of the class go along with it out of fear. In order to teach Chen Xi a lesson, Mr Wan breaks the neck of the straw doll that she made and punishes her by making her clean the floor of the study hall. He makes Xiang Nan his assistant. This encourages Xiang Nan to report on other scholar's so-called misbehaviours. In the play, Dai Bei, the youngest scholar, is also punished because he developed a stammer and couldn't recite the classical texts. He becomes Xiang Nan's next target who he bullies for being a coward, and he prompts other classmates to physically abuse Dai Bei also. In defence of Dai Bei, Chen Xi hits Xiang Nan, which turns the classroom into chaos. When Mr Wan shows up, the classmates immediately announce that they all saw Chen Xi hit Xiang Nan. As a punishment, everybody is sent to their dormitory in hunger. In the evening, Xiang Nan again forces everybody to isolate Chen Xi and incites them to each hit Chen Xi before going to bed.

This is the first part of Cooper's story structure. Before presenting the next part, I think it's valuable to share how we deconstructed the story over a number of months with the company. The first thing we as teachers identified was the centre of the story. We decided that imagination and its relationship to knowledge connected everything in the story. The Royal Study Hall (RSH) has a doctrine of how knowledge is transferred to scholars. It uses a rote approach to learning inculcating a high-pressure environment where everything is a test. In contrast, the protagonist Chen Xi approaches knowledge in a different way. Her character consistently talks about memories of childhood, seeing reality through her own eyes, and hence she drew a smiley face on the blackboard because she perceived what was beyond the information given. She was beyond the tyranny of the present and expressing her individuality, her values, and creativity through this action. Without imagination, this cannot be done. In the next part of the story Chen Xi and Dai Bei escape from the RSH with the help of the straw man: 'his soul' as members of the youth theatre called him. They also took the Book of Knowledge.

The narrative of the story and the unfolding logic of the situation the protagonist is in relates to the particular era young people in China are living in as presented at the beginning of this chapter. In 'living through' the experience over many months, the youth theatre members encountered questions of how to be you, who are you, or how much can you be you? Through this approach, children were positioned as masters of their own learning and futures. For us in Drama Rainbow, children are not adults in waiting, they are human beings in their own right, who have their own unique and authentic experiences that go right to the heart of what it is to be human. In our work, the imagination and its relationship to knowledge is a useful centre to explore these fundamental questions through. We always aim to identify the centre – what it is really about and how that is reflected in every aspect of the drama structure.

Of course, the story also explores the institutionalisation of violence which through our work with the children, we came to understand as connected with the destructive use of imagination. Edward Bond, a renowned British playwright and collaborator of David Davis (2005), in developing a new form of drama where children's futures depend on the state of their imagination, argues that drama will become increasingly more important as the world changes. Through drama and the imagination, children can come to know themselves:

Imagination is either creative or destructive. There is no passive state in between. We need to [creatively use the imagination] to 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; because nothing else teaches the imagination other than the imagination – the images, language, emotions, stories, records, which are the substance of imagination. Without imagination facts may still have meaning (consequences) but they cannot have value. (Bond, 1996)

Mr Wan places *The Book of Knowledge* on Chen Xi's head, and Chen Xi makes a man out of straw and talks to him. These are two ways of using our imagination but also two approaches to knowledge and facts. So, exploring the relationship between imagination and knowledge became central for the children and drama teachers, and guided every decision made during the nine-month exploratory period. Most of this period was spent not rehearsing but facilitating children to explore the situations and events created around the play. By this I mean that the children were focussing on enacting/improvising situations related to the story and the world of the play, and not necessarily in the play. We hoped this would give useful contexts, confidence and ownership to the children to improvise in a performance at the end of this process. The script contained sections of text in square brackets (see below) which invited the children to devise and improvise during the exploratory stage:

Scholar D: I'm not complaining. Now go to sleep and breakfast will come sooner.

Silence

Scholar F: Why didn't any of us?

Scholar G: Say anything to Teacher Wen? Against Xiang Nan?

[Why didn't they say anything to Teacher Wen exploring the relationship between the rules and the Examination and their relationship to Chen Xi.]

Silence

Scholar A: Still hungry.

Scholar B: Will you just shut it!

Loud 'shushes'. Silence

Scholar H: Soup. Hot steaming soup. I can't stop thinking about soup.

[Some are trying to silence the conversation and shut out thoughts of missing supper. But it leads to talking about memories of eating in their homes, families for some, being homesick for others, and others insisting that their first thoughts should be about the Examination and serving the Emperor and the Kingdom.]

Scholar I: Shush! Someone's coming.

So, the children would improvise these sections which added to the text. They were also encouraged to improvise in performance too which experienced facilitators like Xiao Xue who played Teacher Wan were comfortable responding to. In some performances they improvised quite a lot, building on the structure the play provided.

Creating drama events in *The Examination*: An example

When approaching *The Examination*, having the centre in mind (i.e., the relationship between imagination and knowledge), the teachers created several episodes or drama events in order to let children experience the drama from within. These early sessions aimed at protecting children into the role of young scholars so that when the situations in the play unfolded, they were prepared to improvise and bring their own realities, feelings, thoughts, values, experiences, etc. to those situations. This is at the heart of what we mean by living through drama. For example, during the first few classes we structured the session leading to a central event (coming from the centre) - notably meeting Mr Wan for the first time. The children were initially invited to map out the Emperor's land and they focused on the geography of the ruler and how he approached governing by creating several rituals for each province, including how goods, lands, farms, and clothes were selected and distributed. In small groups, children created depictions of how young talent was found in each province. The Book of Knowledge was given as an object to aid them in creating their depiction(s). Following this, the children collectively made a list of things that were tested in provincial

exams in order to be selected to study in the Royal Study Hall. They were invited to think about how those who passed the provincial test performed and the praise they might receive from families and fellow villagers. They were then asked to create a bundle of things that the scholars selected to bring to the capital with them. They were reminded that these would likely be objects of special meaning or significance to them as the RSH would provide basic necessities such as clothes, food, water and warmth.

In a subsequent session the teacher announced that Mr Wan was waiting at the entrance to greet them. Children were invited to ask questions about Mr Wan before going into the waiting room, which had been marked out on the floor. By now children were safely and willingly entering the role of young scholars meeting Mr Wan. They had certain expectations because they were reminded by the teacher during the initial set-up that previous scholars went through this 'checkpoint' and that they would be asked what was in their bundles. Following the set-up, the group started to improvise when teacher in role as Mr Wan greeted them in the waiting room and asked them to stand in pairs. Using language directly from the play, he announced that "It's important to have friends. Friends look after you and watch your back", while telling them that each pair would be sharing the same blanket in the dormitory. "You have to know your friend", he said and then asked each pair to check each other's bundle, and "take out what you think would distract them from becoming a young successful scholar". This session concluded with the whole group of scholars reciting the preface from the Book of Knowledge (see below). At this stage of the living through process, the formal play had not been introduced and the extract from the Book of Knowledge was introduced as a drama event to support children's living through improvisation.

*We will digest the Book of Knowledge which encodes the rule of law, and our customs.
And all that is known about our Kingdom and the world.
We will overcome all obstacles to learning.
We will pass the examination. This is our purpose.
So that we may serve for the rest of our days and teach the people the right way.*

(Episode One, The Examination)

When the children came out of role and reflected on the culture of the RSH and Mr Wan, they had an opportunity to explore how they felt and what they thought about the above event, particularly about the action of 'taking things out' and their delivery of it. It was hoped that the participation in the drama event led them into a "visceral affective immersion leading to imaginative/reason reflection" (Davis, 2014). Davis encourages meaningful reflection during and after all drama episodes to deepen the experience for participants and increase ownership of the work. The children reported that an offensive and divisive approach to controlling the atmosphere had been introduced by Mr Wan, who as representative of the institution was very difficult to challenge, particularly for those who had striven so much in their lives up to that point to come to study at RSH. They discussed that being the pride of their village, they couldn't possibly imagine failing. Some said they felt deeply violated when something of importance was taken out of their bundle by someone of their own age. They felt as if they were being dragged into a hostile environment. However, others thought it was worth it because Mr Wan wanted to help them be less distracted, which was needed if they were to become successful scholars. Their discussion about the culture of the RSH led to a subsequent exploration of the first night in the dormitory which became the next central event in the unfolding process drama experience.

While there is no space to specify every event that led up to the performing of the play, it is useful to point out that these events were created for the children to be able to share joint responsibility for the form and content of the drama alongside the teachers,. The relationship between students and teachers created a dynamic where students were able to own and create materials that teachers followed, for example, the participants decided that there was a secret place where young scholars gathered but no one else knew about it. Participants sought and found ownership within the constraints of the story. That then became

another drama event through which they could explore the centre of the story during the process drama development phase. An alternative form of knowing was formed in the secret place which empowered the children. This segment wasn't in the final performance or script but created by participants as an important way for them to deepen and immerse themselves in the experience, and it helped the young performers to recognise the site of the drama whereby they were placed inside the event rather than employing reason and criticism outside it (Davis, 2014).

Engaging with key moments in the script

This approach to drama practice impacted on the script in nuanced but significant ways demonstrating the participants' gradual ownership of the text and its performance. Returning to the storyline, on the evening when Xiang Nan asked everyone to hit Chen Xi with a brush wrapped in a blanket, a sequence of actions takes place before this central scene in the play. The scholars are already in the dormitory when Xiang Nan enters the room. Chen Xi at this time is still in Mr Wan's office, possibly being criticised or scolded. Xiang Nan enters the room and delivers a whole speech about how everybody is to isolate Chen Xi: "No one speaks to her unless I say" (Episode 3). Then in the script it says: "He picks up the lantern and moves around the dormitory, shining it on each pair of scholars until they concurred" (Episode 3).

During a drama session to explore this moment rather than simply perform it, we introduced a series of activities designed to protect the children into role (Davis, 2014) before asking them to enact hitting Chen Xi. First, out of role, participants were asked to think of an incident from their own lives where a whole class was punished for someone else's mistake. After sharing these within the group, the dormitory space was marked on the floor, and the scholars reminded that they shared one blanket between themselves and their partner. The class divided into pairs and each pair were asked to make the bed. "I know some of the scholars put something under the pillow", the teacher suggested. When the class was ready, the teacher put one blanket in an empty space saying that's Xiang Nan's place and he slept alone. The class was then asked to think about the food they were missing from their hometown; how their parents would respond on receiving a letter of complaint from Mr Wan; their thoughts about it not being their fault that Chen Xi hit Xiang Nan. These constraints were introduced to the class before asking them to make an individual depiction of the scholars in bed having an inner dialogue with the 'straw man', an exercise that teachers and the children did in previous sessions as a protection into emotion strategy to help them reflect in role when scholars couldn't fully express themselves. During this time a teaching assistant also worked separately with the participant who played Xiang Nan, about his need to get everyone's concurrence because he was afraid of losing Mr Wan's trust and he could not speak up to him (Mr Wan demanded silent self-criticism). Xiang Nan was conflicted as he wanted to gain his peers' trust also, but he felt outnumbered by his silent classmates and knew that some of them were afraid of him, and so on. By this time, the rest of the children were ready and protected to enter role at the moment when the group improvised being bullied by Xiang Nan and where no-one spoke against him.

However, when *The Examination* came to be performed, we thought the children would be very familiar with the scene (by this time they had many months of being in role as young scholars and were aware of the plot). We wanted them to go into the dormitory directly, without experiencing the above protection into role sequence in full (they did make their pair's bed however on stage). During the dress rehearsal, the boy who was playing Xiang Nan went to one of the scholars and shone the lantern on her face to ask her to agree:

Xiang Nan: Correct. We're all in this together. We serve Teacher Wen and the Emperor. We can take care of Dai Bei. But Chen Xi is not one of us. From now on we're giving her the eye. No one speak to her unless I say. Ignore her. She shouldn't be here. She's never fitted in. She can't be trusted and we are going to get rid of her. Understand?

Xiang Nan picks up the lantern and moves around the dormitory. Shining it on each pair until they have concurred. (Episode 3)

She replied 'No, I disagree'. And then another, and another. Discontent towards Xiang Nan spread in the room. They refused to be made complicit in his lies and bullying behaviour. Now we didn't know what to do. We couldn't make them stop because this was their genuine feeling towards that moment. We let it play out watching if the boy who played Xiang Nan would be able to solve it, but no matter how many times he asked and tried, they still said 'No, I disagree'. Finally, the teachers called the rehearsal to a stop and tried to explain the context regarding the plot and story continuing from that moment. Then there was another disastrous go. More scholars said, 'I disagree'. And it was too late to give any directions as the audience were packed outside waiting to come in. Forty minutes later, during the performance, as the boy who played Xiang Nan walked into the dormitory, we thought this was going to be a disaster. However, 'I agree', was uttered by one scholar, and then another, and another. The voices were rather low but the play continued.

Navigating between role, themselves and the situation

The form of drama that we pursued required children and young people to be in role and to enact the situation from within rather than merely commenting on the role or the situation. This was our attempt at putting them in the stream but keeping their head above water, as Bond (2000, cited in Davis 2014) suggests:

In Bond's plays 'The audience are shown their site by being placed in it – not, as in Brecht, outside it' (p. 39): imagination seeking reason with the audience up to their necks in the stream, rather than the audience employing reason and criticism from outside the event.

By being protected into role and operating within the constraints given, the (en)actors were able to navigate between the role, themselves and the situation. They were in many worlds at the same time, therefore experiencing a metaxis effect (Davis, 2014). Referencing Gavin Bolton and the strength of employing process drama work in our efforts to maintain the form, Davis (2014, p. 43) highlights the importance of having "reflection built into the experience without relinquishing the strength and immediacy of that experience". But as Davis points out, "The key thing about metaxis is that the imagined role has to predominate over the actual so they know this scene is in a play for performance. In rehearsing the scene then the constraints in the fiction have to predominate" (Davis, 2019). I contend that this process, when working with children between 8 and 12, relies on a sequence of protection into role (Davis, 2014) to enable participants to live through the moment in a metaxic state, and without which, particularly when the situation is extreme, participants tend to slip into the actual rather than the fiction. The response of the girl, and many who followed, during our dress rehearsal was very close to what their gut feeling was. They hadn't been protected into role and at that moment, they were not operating within a strong sense of the fiction but according to how they themselves would respond in such a situation. The theatre element – performing in front of an audience – emphasised the fiction and served as a useful constraint for the company so that the children were aware of what they wanted to share with an audience, and what experiences they reserved for themselves.

This was a complex process in relation to the form and content of drama. The children's reflections revealed that they were extremely aware of what they wanted to share (most of the audience was made up of their parents) and they needed the fiction in order to share it. The extended exploratory rehearsal period served as a useful protection into what they regarded as a penalty free zone. In this process, they felt able to communicate what they really wanted to say, in a safe social environment within the protection of the fiction. The fiction facilitated a conversation, but did not operate under the same constraints as a performance. This created somewhat of a contradiction as when they expressed their true gut feelings, they also unconsciously abused the responsibility of sharing the stage with fellow (en)actors.

It seems that the constraints within drama and the constraints in the nature of theatre performance help children to navigate a series of personal responsibilities: as a performer, as a participant, and as a member of a social group. It's interesting to examine how each responsibility was carried out. I think they were very genuine about the moral responsibility they felt 'as themselves' when the fiction was not as strongly present, and this is why they didn't conspire with Xiang Nan. It wasn't because they didn't understand the difference between themselves and the role they were playing. I think if anything, they knew and understood more than we did as adults. That was why they picked their moment. For many of them this was one of the few times they could state what they really felt and thought as children living in a very restrictive and controlling social environment. This was an opportunity to stand up to the bullying and express their discontent as an individual. Displaying discontent is forbidden in schools and generally frowned upon in family life. The silence of violence, normally the violence that comes from adults in schools, is ever present in their lives (Zhang and Jiang, 2022). In interviews that we conducted it was evident that students only talk about this amongst themselves: they don't talk about it with school teachers or parents. Participants spoke about it in the youth theatre group, amongst themselves and with the drama teachers. The data suggest that the approach to improvising and living through a script enabled them to confront the culture of silence and conspiracy that normally surrounds them on a daily basis:

If there is no conflict in a play, then it cannot be called a play because there will be conflicts in life, and it is impossible for your world to be happy without conflicts. We must show some real moments then the audience can see the real, if we act falsely, we can only make people happy for a while. The movies are false. Theatre is different from movies and those real things need to be presented in theatre.
(Lailai, aged 8, participant)

Responsibilities of role

They intrinsically understood the nature of performance, and that in order to let the play go on they had to conspire and say 'I agree'. We were keenly aware that encountering a bully in fiction might give rise to complex feelings and thoughts about school experiences, and therefore didn't ask the girl who said 'I disagree' why she said that. In analysing this experience, we therefore recognise that we are missing an important source of data, but participants' other reflections and behaviours provided valuable insight into this very nuanced experience for children living in a complex society.

They seemed to understand the theatre constraints. They tried to delay the pressure and feelings that being forced and bullied to hit other people brings. But when the stage lights were lit, they were able to apply that responsibility without issue. It was both them, but also 'other': suggestive of a metaxic experience. As for the role of the social group they are part of as a youth theatre, it troubled me somewhat to see how they let the boy who played the 'bully', Xiang Nan, suffer from not succeeding in what he, as a performer, set out to do: which is, bully others in fiction. They, as the bullied, have to let him do it. Some of the participants appeared to enjoy feeling the urge well up inside them to challenge back and say 'I disagree', and at that moment buoyed on by the confidence of the first girl who said it, they did not fully realise the pressure this put on their peer (the boy who played the bully) as a performer. This is a fascinating aspect of the critical incident. It is connected to the form of drama. I think it's possible to let participants live through more than once. The practice of being in role and being in the state of 'making it happen, and let it happen to me' is something of a threefold responsibility. It's the navigation between the role, the situation and themselves as actors that demands their responsibility. It's very close to what Bond (2013) defines as the three important things in the process of drama: the space, the actor and the stage. He says in an interview that "The three things must come together: the space, the actor and the stage. When those three things come together we can start questioning reality and creating a new reality. Because reality always has to be created" (Bond, 2013). This is somewhat different when working with children in a process drama as they are both in it and watching themselves at the same time: Heathcote's self-spectator (O'Neill, 2015). I'd like to imagine that there is certain reality, a new reality, being created within the girl who said 'I disagree', even in the final performance, because of the constraint of the content (drama) and the form (theatre) she had to conspire with.

The space in Bond's terms illustrates a unique relationship between the watcher and the performer. In this project, space allowed the youth theatre members to explore themselves in the drama, therefore the discontent, which facilitated meaning making of their own under the freedom that in their daily and school lives is really missing. But they were also operating in the discipline that both the content of drama and the form of theatre provides. This removed them from what they actually "thought or felt, to begin to explore and experience what this situation was really about. Approaching a living through dimension within an improvised performance facilitated a meaning making process where children were beginning to know themselves" (SCYPT, 1992). Or I shall say the process enabled the pursuit of knowing themselves. The experience of 'living through' this extended process-based theatre performance facilitated the centre being connected to participants' imagination and to new domains and layers of epistemic knowledge of self and others.

Conclusion

In this work in progress, we are exploring the living through aspect when enacting a moment during performance. We are grappling with questions such as 'Is it possible to make participants experience something more than once?' 'How to navigate between different responsibilities as an (en)actor (performer) and the role', and more importantly 'how to understand the situation and make sense of our being in it'. *The Examination* brought us closer in some ways to understanding these concerns more deeply, particularly when set against the context outlined at the beginning of this chapter. The children and young people we work with live in a very complex social, political and cultural context, but this is not unique to China, and the rapidly changing world we all live in requires us to pay serious and urgent attention to what kind of drama can prepare young people to face the complicated realities and extreme unknowns of the future? How to navigate their responsibility over a deteriorating social, ecological and cultural environment? David Davis' life-long contribution to drama demands that we reflect on what kind of drama challenges the things we value, and calls on us to re-imagine and re-create other values.

References

- Bond, E. (1996). *Personal letter*. Unpublished.
- Bond, E. (2000). *The Hidden Plot. Notes on Theatre and the State*. Methuen Drama.
- Bond, E. (2013). *Interview*. Unpublished.
- Chen, J. K., & Chen, L. M. (2020). A cross-national examination of school violence and nonattendance due to school violence in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China: A Rasch model approach. *Journal of School Violence*, 19(2), pp. 177–191.
- Cooper, C. (2017). *Drama Rainbow Company Document*. Unpublished.
- Cooper, C. (2019). *The Examination*. Drama Rainbow.
- Davis, D. (Ed.). (2005). *Edward Bond and the Dramatic Child: Edward Bond's Plays for Young People*. Trentham Books Ltd.
- Davis, D. (2010). *Gavin Bolton: The Essential Writings*. Trentham Books Ltd.
- Davis, D. (2014). *Imagining the Real: Towards a new theory of drama in education*. Trentham Books Ltd.
- Davis, D. (2019). *Personal letter to the author*. Unpublished.

- Davis, D., & Lawrence, C. (1986). *Gavin Bolton: Selected Writings on Drama in Education*. Longman.
- Gillham, G. (1994). The Value of Theatre in Education. *SCYPT Journal*, 27.
- Huang, H., Hong, J. S., & Espelage, D. L. (2013). Understanding factors associated with bullying and peer victimization in Chinese schools within ecological contexts. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 22(7), pp. 881–892.
- Liu, W., Qiu, G., Zhang, S. X., & Fan, Q. (2022). Corporal punishment, self-control, parenting style, and school bullying among Chinese adolescents: A conditional process analysis, *Journal of School Violence*, 21(1), pp. 4-18.
- Meng, Y., Yang, Y., Lin, P., Xiao, Y., Sun, Y., Qian, Y., Gu, J., Fei, G., Sun, Q., Jiang, X., Wang, X., Stallones, L., Xiang, H., & Zhang, X. (2023). School Bullying Victimization and Associated Factors Among School-Aged Adolescents in China. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 38(1–2), pp. 1787–1814.
- O’Neill, Cecily (Ed.). (2015). *Dorothy Heathcote on Drama and Education: Essential writings*. Routledge.
- SCYPT (1992). SCYPT Manifesto.
- Wooster, R. (2012). *Contemporary Theatre in Education*. Intellect.
- Wooster, R. (2016). *Theatre in Education in Britain: Origins, Development and Influence*. Bloomsbury.
- Zhao, Y. (2014). *Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Dragon? Why China Has the Best (and Worst) Education System in the World*. Jossey-Bass.
- Zhou, J. (2017). China’s Path to Achieve World-Class Education. *ASIANetwork Exchange: A Journal for Asian Studies in the Liberal Arts*, 2.
- Zhang, H. & Jiang, Y. (2022) A Systematic Review of Research on School Bullying/Violence in Mainland China: Prevalence and Correlates. *Journal of School Violence*, 21(1), pp. 48-59.

Chapter 7

Youth Stake Claim On Their Future Through Drama

Zeki Özen and Ömer Adıgüzel

Abstract: This chapter examines the development and use of drama in education in Turkey and explores the history of drama education's impact on the Turkish educational system. From early pioneers in Turkish education to later international drama experts, the chapter charts the establishment of the Contemporary Drama Association and the role of the first generation of young drama educators in its establishment. Evidence from an oral history study with individuals who witnessed and/or participated in the historic changes to drama education in Turkey are reported. The archives of the Contemporary Drama Association also provided further valuable insights in the mapping of the modernisation process of creative drama education in Turkey. Specifically, drama pioneers such as David Davis and Dorothy Heathcote, and the work they carried out in Turkey is explored in this historical examination.

Keywords: Creative drama education, Drama history in Turkey, Contemporary Drama Association, modernisation, David Davis, Dorothy Heathcote.

Introduction

The recent history of creative drama in education¹ in Turkey can be analysed in terms of the period before 1982 and the period afterwards. This year represents the time when two pioneers of creative drama in Turkey joined forces. Together, they established creative drama use, in its modern sense, within Turkish educational circles. Even though they did not know each other beforehand, the first meeting between Prof. Dr. Inci San from Ankara University, Fine Arts Education Department, and Tamer Levent, a director, writer, and actor from the State Theatre of Turkey, was full of passion and curiosity, and is said to have lasted for many hours involving a lengthy debate about drama and theatre in education. Prior to this, there had been limited applications of drama in education in Turkey, principally involving drama games, actor training and some theatre techniques, but the developments that occurred after 1982 led to the modernisation of creative drama and the forms of practice which exist today.

1 In Turkey, the phrase 'creative drama in education' is used to denote the field of 'drama in education'. This comprises the aspects of being a method, being educational, as well as being artistic.

The chapter is structured into three main sections: the first explores the broader social, political, cultural and educational context during the late Ottoman and early Republic period and the place of drama and arts education in society at that time. The second section discusses the modernisation project in the field of creative drama education in Turkey which led to the establishment of a national drama association in 1990. The final section examines the impact of two of the various influential international experts who supported the development of creative drama in Turkey in recent years, namely David Davis and Dorothy Heathcote.

Educational drama-related activities in Turkey pre-1980s

The concept of school plays features in Turkish educational history as part of the regulations from the Ministry of Education as early as the Ottoman Empire period in 1915. These regulations are presented in two parts, with the first discussing the relationship between the students and the use of drama on an educational and cultural basis, as well as the relationship between theatre works and education, and the second part providing information about how to carry out dramatic works with children and young people in schools (Adıgüzel, 2008, 2010). However, the fact that concepts like performance, dramatisation, acting, improvisation, puppet theatre, village shows, and school plays all began during what we consider the 'Republic Period' (the early decades after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923), should not be confused with creative drama. The activities, methods, and techniques from that time have a connection to creative drama but the modern use of the term is quite different in purpose and function from what was carried out in earlier times. The activities and practices during the so-called republic period (1923-1987), in which the first traces of traditional acting education took place, is not considered in a complete sense to be the creative drama of today (Adıgüzel, 2008, 2010).

The use of dramatisation and/or dramatic activities in education in Turkey dates even further back to the latter years of the Ottoman Empire (or old Turkey as it is known) when there was considerable interest in educational reform (1839-1876) and during the Second Constitutional Period (1908-1923). A leading figure, İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu (1886-1978), best known for his work on education and pedagogy (Cankara, 2018; Gündüz, 2009), developed the concept of 'Authentic Theatre' which encouraged students 'to gain awareness of the other' whilst developing a positive attitude towards the art form. Baltacıoğlu's principal aim was for students to be included in all stages of the work and the educational process, rather than overly emphasising the theatric results (Guner & Guner, 2012). Highlighting the relationship between dramatisation and effective teaching, Baltacıoğlu introduced theatre in schools in Istanbul from 1908, and added courses involving 'Historical Performances' into the curriculum during the Third Constitutional Period of Education. As Minister of National Education in the New Republic, Baltacıoğlu recognised the natural instinct of children to learn through play and improvisation, and harnessed the strong tradition already in Turkish educational ideals of using dramatisation in different school subjects such as History, literature, and social sciences (Korkut, 2018). Evidence of this can be seen in brochures issued during the Constitutional Period that highlighted, 'Using School Plays in Education', in which the relationship between theatre and education was valued (Çoruh, 1950; Özdemir, 1965). Nurullah Ataç and Baltacıoğlu believed that theatre could entertain and educate people if it addressed the needs and desires of local audiences (Adak & Altınay, 2018). Placing little or no emphasis on staging, costumes, set, prop etc., attention was focused on children's understanding of what they were learning, of human relations, the realities and values of a given society historically and geographically (Korkut, 2018). As an early proponent for embodied learning, Baltacıoğlu's belief that "No word can convey a meaning better and more completely than a face, hands or a body" (Adıgüzel, 2010) has persisted through subsequent educational developments in Turkey.

When we review the early years of the modern Turkish state following World War I, we witness the depth of changes that were made to education within the burgeoning Turkish Republic. The innovations and extraordinary reforms that occurred fostered a new era of secularism in society, as well as in education (Gündüz, 2009). The first educational congress of this period was held in Ankara on July 16th 1921. During the congress inauguration speech, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first President of the Republic of Turkey, called for "national education and establishment of principles to improve the efficiency or organisation of education" (Zaim, 2011, p. 500). Through this short statement a new era in education as well as in nationalism, along with western secularism was launched in Turkey (Landau, 2018).

Following the establishment of new ideas regarding education, the first official mention of drama in the Turkish education system was in 1926 with the introduction of a new educational programme whereby all primary school teachers were to be educated in the arts. This recommendation was made a year earlier by the renowned American philosopher and educator John Dewey who had been invited to Turkey by the Ministry of Education in 1925 (Ilhan, 2005). These principles identified and confirmed the fundamental role of dramatic performance in schools both as a means of education and artistic expression. After this initial inclusion of the arts into primary education, the use of drama in primary and secondary school programmes became more commonplace (Çoruh, 1950), but it was not until 1968 that arts education was officially included in teacher education in universities (Ilhan, 2005).

Despite a recognition of the role and value of drama in the late Ottoman/early Republic Periods as part of a broader transformation of the educational landscape occurring at that time, the great leap forward in the field of creative drama took place after 1982.

A fateful meeting for the modern Creative Drama movement in Turkey

As mentioned earlier, the inception of creative drama, in its modern sense, dates to 1982 when Prof. Dr. Inci San and actor Tamer Levent first came together. This meeting turned out to be the beginning of a period of intense discussion and consideration of the issues and opportunities for drama in education in Turkey. Even though previous attempts to improve the use of drama in the Turkish educational system had been made, this new collaboration led to these issues being dealt with on an academic level, and in this sense, the meeting of two senior and well-regarded people in their respective disciplines, constituted the beginning of the creative drama movement in education in Turkey. Tamer Levent has had a distinguished career as an actor, director, writer, and theatre teacher in Turkey and internationally, and his 'Say Yes to Art' project (1994) had a significant impact on Turkish society. Some of its innovative principles included:

- Art is a thinking style! If humans think like an artist, the quality of human life will be better.
- Art is the reason of being human.
- Feelings are the products of the thinking process. The name of this process is Art.
- All human beings have a brain. All brains are different. The important thing is being aware of it and having a chance for education. (Levent, 1994)

Predicated on the basis that art creates "a better and more understandable world" (Levent, 2003), his ideas about drama, acting, and education evolved over the course of his life. Levent emphasised the pedagogical approaches of being an actor as well as the methodical value of improvisation, and also drew inspiration from the concepts posited by John Hodgson (1966, 1977) and Dorothy Heathcote. His profile was complementary to that of Prof. Dr. Inci San, who was the Head of the Department of Fine Arts Education, Faculty of Educational Sciences at Ankara University, and whose research focused on the creativity of children, adults, and artists. Dr. San was examining ways of developing creativity and education through art within the realm of arts education (Adıgüzel, 2008), and her fateful meeting with Levent sparked a new direction and emphasis in drama in education in Turkey.

Following their initial encounter, exploratory workshops were planned and held with university students, and in the following years a majority of these students continued their studies within the embryonic field of creative drama in education. These workshops appear to have provided the impetus for the transformation and development of creative drama in Turkey. Over the following three-year period, a group of students and amateur actors began carrying out creative acting and dramatisation activities at Ankara University, Faculty of Educational Sciences. As the young students and actors began to better apply these new ideas and techniques, Dr. San took on the theoretical responsibility through an academic focus and Levent took responsibility for the application of the ideas through a practitioner perspective. This fusion of theatre practices with creative pedagogy was also informed by developments in the field of drama in education internationally.

International drama congresses

Word about these creative pedagogical practices spread and people involved with creative drama throughout Turkey were interested in learning and doing more. This led to the first international drama seminar in Turkey taking place in the country's capital city, Ankara in 1985. This seminar focused on the place of drama in international education systems, as well as exploring the latest developments and practices in drama in education at that time. Less attention was placed on the traditional understanding of dramatization and dramaturgy as it related to theatre skills and practices, which had been a formative influence and guiding perspective on drama in schools heretofore in Turkey. Over 400 people involved in creative drama in education throughout Turkey attended the first seminar, confirming the extent of interest in learning more about new ideas and developments in the field. This mirrored the appetite for educational reform which characterised the late Ottoman/early Republic era many years before.

Many of the young attendees continued to work in drama over the following two years and shared their own ideas and innovations regarding the direction creative drama should take. This led to innovations both in creative drama practices and a shift away from the traditional way of looking at the education system. These younger voices in the field continued to be innovative and to create new ideas themselves regarding creative drama but they were also interested in learning more about approaches from abroad. As a result, in 1987 a second international seminar was held in Turkey, attracting a similarly large crowd representing a variety of academic fields and disciplines. There were lively debates and exchanges about the future of creative drama practice in Turkey and many observations and suggestions were captured in the archival congress notes:

In order to create creative human beings, prepare the next generation for the future, and raise individuals with high standards, it is necessary to study creative drama throughout the world. The study of creative drama is a requisite in Turkey, and also necessary for other countries that have institutionalised these studies to continue the process. It is recognised that the international perspective gained from intercultural meetings with drama peers from abroad can provide novel and unique ideas and points of view that enrich and enliven the theoretical aspects related to drama, both within Turkey as well as abroad. The ideas stemming from the 1987 congress were that creative drama in education throughout Turkey has progressed greatly but the process of democratising creative drama in education should be urgently institutionalised. As part of this initiative, it is necessary to continue holding international seminars in Turkey as well as train staff who can provide both short and long-term in-service education programmes. In addition, it is deemed important to create cooperative relationships with international partners such as Germany and other European countries in order to foster an enhanced transfer of information through publications and documents. It is noted that the second international congress led to thorough discussions regarding topics related to creative drama such as terminology usage, creative drama educational philosophy, as well as the benefits and practical aspects of creative drama for human beings. (Contemporary Drama Association Archive II. International dramatisation seminar notes, 1987)

After the second seminar, creative drama in education became better known within academic and educational circles, especially in Ankara, and a younger generation of creative drama practitioners and teachers began to take on a greater level of responsibility for spreading drama throughout the country. In the beginning, the seminars (later called congresses) were held about every two years until 2007. As of 2023, over 30 international drama congresses have taken place around the country. Beginning in 1985, these significant events were initially called the 'Dramatisation in Education Seminars', then they became known as the 'Creative Drama Seminar in Education', and finally the 'Creative Drama in Education/Theatre Congress.

Over the years a variety of pioneers and leading exponents in the field of drama in education have led workshops at these congresses such as Dorothy Heathcote, David Davis, Pam Bowell and John Somers. These valued leaders inspired attendees, offering lots of new ideas for consideration. Unequivocally, these congresses were transformational for the development of creative drama in education and led to new perspectives on how drama was viewed in Turkey. These interactions and their resulting transformations

in thought are considered an important impetus for wider cultural and social change in Turkey (Çelebi Erol, 2019). Changes in social and economic policies in the 1980s led to greater urbanisation and society letting go of traditional culture, but not quite ready to understand and embrace modern culture. Changes which had begun in the late Ottoman epoch and into the early Republic period emanated from the agency of state, but also through the processes of secularisation and westernisation (Ersoy, 2019). It is acknowledged that changes in social structure and in cultural values are the main determinants of the extent to which change is possible in Turkey (Çelebi Erol, 2019). Following the stimulus of the seminars, the work of the younger proponents of creative drama in education began to be recognised in wider society, and the people who attended these workshops wanted to become better organised. As a result, they established the Contemporary Drama Association which heralded another milestone in the evolution of the cultural and educational structures in Turkey.

Establishment of the Contemporary Drama Association

Turkey in the 1980s was a complex environment (Yalman, 2009; Tekeli, 1995). There were many competing political groups even within the ruling parties of the time, and as a result, they required a political arena in which to compete. The military generals during this period came to recognise that Turkey's politics had become too unsettled and potentially volatile, so stepped in to restore the power of governance to carefully vetted civilians (Ahmad, 1993). The political tenor of those days with its unsettled political arena (Kaplan, 2002) made it difficult to establish a drama association. On the other hand, however, the timing could be regarded as positive because the drama seminars led to a rapid increase in the number of people interested in creative drama in education in Turkey. As a result, there were enough people with the requisite experience, skills and maturity to establish and lead such an organisation.

Among the attendees in 1985, 1987, and 1989 was a group of educators, educationalists, child development experts, actors, and literature teachers who later went on to establish the first Creative Drama Group in Turkey. This newly formed group met in available schools and cultural centres and ran many small-scale practice-based seminars where they carried out master/apprentice type cooperation meetings disseminating their knowledge and skills. Following a period of coming together for seminar to seminar, they decided to organise even further to transmit their research and practices to a wider audience throughout Turkey. In those days, because of the political climate, students and some state-level officials were banned from being a member of an organised association. The struggles between the politics of military secularism and religious militarism after the 1980 coup resulted in a strong state tradition where the entire citizenry was encouraged to share the same understandings of modernity, social identities and political authority (Kaplan, 2002). In this Turkish-Islamic synthesis, the social and political conditions involved considerable bureaucratic red tape, making the establishment of an association quite challenging. Even the name of the drama association that was ultimately formed, 'Contemporary Drama Association', reflects the struggles that the initial members had in capturing the key principles underpinning the association. Because of the strict conditions they lived under at that time, the founding members wanted to maintain progressivism, a developmental mind-set, and a notion of 'newness', as well as the ideas of being advanced and civilised. This prompted them to use the word 'contemporary' in the name. Thus, the Contemporary Drama Association was formally established as a democratic association on March 5th, 1990, with the aim of using the association for the further development and dissemination of creative drama in theatre and education, and in doing so maintaining its independence in both pedagogy and practice (Adıgüzel, 2008).

Along with our founding teachers, the younger generation of members also took on an active role. Many began to organize festivals and workshops to disseminate information about creative drama in education, not only within academia, teaching and acting circles but also engaging with government agencies, privately run schools, and seeping information into everyday social and cultural life. Once the drama association had gained a foothold as the first democratic organisation of its type in Turkey, it then took on the responsibility of educating creative drama educators and leaders. Over time, the association steadily developed and created a 6 module, 320 hour incremental continuing professional development programme recognised by the Ministry of Education to qualify teachers and practitioners as creative drama specialists. It was the first of its kind to be systematically applied in Turkey from 1998, and is still running today. As a result, the first steps in the process of including the use of creative drama within the Turkish educational system was begun.

Organic Cooperation

Since its foundation, a symbiotic collaboration between the creative drama educators at Ankara University's Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Contemporary Drama Association have firmly established the place of creative drama in Turkey: educationally, socially, culturally and politically. Currently, creative drama in education has become a compulsory course in some teacher education programmes. For example, in primary school teaching, pre-school teaching, and social studies teaching departments, as well as being an elective course in the area of psychological counselling and guidance. As a result, teacher candidates in Turkey are introduced to drama in education before they graduate, and it is also an elective course within the mainstream primary school curriculum.

In 1999, the Department of Fine Arts in the Faculty of Education at Ankara University, began a master's degree without thesis in the study of Creative Drama. The success and interest in the original programme spawned similar masters programmes such as one in the Department of Primary School Education at the same university in 2007, and one at Anadolu University in 2006 in their Department of Creative Drama in Education (Adıgüzel, 2007).

Many of the changes that took place in creative drama education within academia in Turkey were led by a younger generation of instructors who were motivated and inspired by the seminar series. These younger educators engaged with the up-and-coming youth in all parts of Turkey and fostered their interest in creative drama. This constituted a form of cultural transmission of ideas and practices from one generation to the next. The growth of creative drama in education within academia led to a wealth of original research and study in the field (Erdoğan, 2016), as well as leading to continued interest in the approach and ideas of international educators outside of Turkey. The role that international experts played in leading change and helping to grow creative and critical leaders in Turkey was evident across the diversity of experts who were invited to work with Turkish practitioners (Korkut, 2018). In this chapter, we explore the influence of two such experts who encouraged us to address social justice issues and tackle political, ethical, psychological, legal, and aesthetic concerns through creative drama.

David Davis and the process of change

Prof. David Davis visited Turkey on five occasions, once to teach at the Contemporary Drama Association, and the other visits as part of the international drama congresses between 2002 and 2013. Before Davis presented his work and vision through his workshops, the primary focus of drama in Turkey had been on the more performative aspects of drama. Titles such as trust studies, games, basic acting, and so forth made up the content of much of the drama researched and practised. Through his work in Turkey, Davis demonstrated an approach to drama which examined the more social, critical, empathetic and political aspects of people's lives. Examples of his impact can be seen in the increased practice within Turkey of dramatic approaches that create personal, social and collective responsibility for how we work and live in society.



Fig. 1:
Image of David Davis (standing in centre)
at workshop with Contemporary Drama
Association educators. Archive photo from
Contemporary Drama Association.

David's first workshop in Turkey in 2001 was about the prison hunger strikes of 2000 and 2001. Hunger strikes are a form of action where those participating in it do not take food in order to protest against an event or action, or to draw attention to something that the strikers are advocating. They are most commonly used for political purposes (Sevinç, 2008). In 2000, the Turkish government introduced 'F-Type' solitary confinement prisons with small cells to replace older jails with dormitories which the government claimed were run by terrorist groups (Bowcott, 2002). Some prisoners were forcibly removed to these F-Type prisons, particularly political prisoners, such as Lale Colak whose political involvement started when she was just 15 and was arrested for participating in a protest about the education system (Bowcott, 2002). Prisoners began death fasts in November 2000 in protest at this isolation and the denial of their human rights to share a common area and be allowed to interact with other inmates. In December 2000, police and soldiers conducted raids killing 30 prisoners. The first hunger strike death occurred in April 2001, where over 100 died. This was a challenging time for the country, and received international media coverage. Hunger strikes and death fasts in Turkey and worldwide is a human rights issue, pertaining to medical ethics, the right to life, the right to resist, freedom of thought and freedom of expression (Sevinç, 2008). This workshop was a genuine example of David Davis' work, both political and social in orientation when exploring the issues of people's fundamental rights, and abuse of such rights and freedoms from a multi-layered perspective. The workshop provided a very good example of how to explore a politicised issue through drama in education. During that memorable and powerful workshop, Davis explicated the concepts of 'frame distance' and 'dramatic action' particularly well, making quite challenging concepts more accessible to practitioners. During another visit he offered a workshop on Dorothy Heathcote's role conventions. His approach to the subject matter was welcomed and considered very enlightening by participants who explored Heathcote's work which was always on the cusp of the personal and the social, but not necessarily the political.

Davis' contributions to drama in Turkey have taken young drama facilitators from the inquiry stage to the questioning level. Davis' advocacy to create dramas where young people come to an understanding of the nature of society, their relationship to it and their own value system, and to its potentially manipulative effects on them, still remains strong in those who worked with him. Encouraging them to question the values inherent in social contexts appears to have created willingness within the new generation of drama facilitators to continue with their endeavours into the future.

In recognition of David Davis' contribution to creative drama in education both in Turkey and internationally, the Contemporary Drama Association awarded him its lifetime achievement award in 2013. This prestigious honour acknowledged his selfless devotion to sharing, collaborating and working with drama practitioners in Turkey and beyond.

Dorothy Heathcote and real-life interactions

The theme of the 12th International Drama Congress in Turkey (April, 2008) was titled 'Mosaic', and David Davis attended to act as one of its facilitators.



Fig. 2: Poster for the 12th International Drama Congress. Archive image from Contemporary Drama Association.

In his workshop, Davis presented practical activities that related to Heathcote's (Heathcote and Bolton, 1995) 'Mantle of the Expert' approach. The participant group for this workshop was made up of highly experienced Turkish drama educators. Davis framed the mantle by creating a hotel. As part of the 'hotel' workshop tasks, participants attempted to explore a variety of issues regarding the drama curriculum. This approach was new for the Turkish educators regardless of their level of experience. The results of the workshop activities proved shocking, for example, although participants did establish a fictional hotel, no one thought of considering the needs of disabled customers. The experience was a sort of 'snap into reality' for many participants who finished the workshop activity but found themselves feeling like they had just started. Through the process of working in this unique and challenging way, participants engaged in discussing themes such as, what it means to 'be in a fiction', 'taking responsibility', and 'where the role begins and ends' in Mantle of the Expert work. As a result, the next goal of the Contemporary Drama Association was to invite Dorothy Heathcote to Turkey.

In her first visit to Turkey (Nov. 2008), Heathcote, worked with three different groups over a three-day period focused on exploring Mantle of the Expert. When drama educators heard that Dorothy Heathcote was coming to the 13th International Drama Congress, the interest in attending her workshop was intense. Over 150 people applied but the quota was limited to just 30 attendees. To remedy the problem of excluding so many interested parties, Heathcote offered to begin the workshop with one group, continue the next day with a new group, and complete the final day with another group. Following the completion of all three workshop days, all attendees were invited to come together. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity to work with the world leader and one of the greatest pioneers in drama in education.

During the workshop, Heathcote presented many of the practical aspects of her work by demonstrating them to everyone attending, which included the students and teachers from the school where the lesson took place as well as the numerous observers there to witness her 'praxis'. Heathcote is unique in that she usually works with children and young people directly, and no other practitioner has taught on such a regular basis to such a wide and diverse audience from a variety of fields in education as she has (Hesten, 1993).

During her second visit to Turkey Heathcote worked primarily with teenage students where she conducted a 12-hour 'Mantle of the Expert' workshop which took place on a theatre stage and was observed by approximately 90 teachers.



Fig. 3: Dorothy Heathcote in her second visit to Turkey. Working with the students on a "Mantle of the Expert" activity. Archive photo from Contemporary Drama Association

According to Heathcote, drama is a social art form that involves goal-oriented interaction. In her opinion, a teacher needs to assist students in various ways to achieve a consensus among classes (Heathcote, 2010a). Within these interactions Heathcote seeks to build a sense of real responsibility amongst students when they are working in drama, as well as impart the idea of sharing responsibility in our real lives. When Heathcote's writings are examined, it appears that the claims of being transformative in real life are present in each of her approaches (Özen, 2018). Her commission model, which is the most recent of her approaches, moves away from the fictional environment to realise these transformative claims within a real-life environment. For some in the drama world, this step from fictional to real life may be deemed too risky, but it appears that Heathcote's goal is to create greater opportunities for participants to interact with and take on real life responsibilities (Özen, 2018). In this, her work and philosophy aligns with David Davis. As Heathcote mentioned during her workshop, "working for another and being a reliable worker" is related to the concept of empathy. To think and to act for another as well as to like somebody requires the accumulation of real-life experience.



Fig. 4: University students involved in "Mantle of the Expert" activity as part of the Ankara University, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Drama Society.

Dorothy Heathcote visited Turkey on two occasions to disseminate her ideas about creative drama in education, as well as to share her wealth of experiences as a teacher. Her 'Mantle of the Expert' approach introduced a unique paradigm within the understanding of drama in Turkey. Her description of herself as a co-worker, journeying alongside her students left a lasting impression on Turkish drama practitioners and on our understanding of modern concepts of education:

This range of challenges makes me consider myself to be a journey-man teacher, not the 'guru' title I am increasingly given which embarrasses me. The dictionary definition suits me, 'a qualified mechanic or artisan who works for another. A reliable worker'. Sometimes, I earn that gift word which you cannot give to yourself, teacher. Only the young people I worked with these past days can decide if I have earned that name, but I shall not forget them and the power I tried to share with them to consider their lives and the conditions in which some communities cope with disempowerment. I am radical. (Heathcote, 2010b)

Conclusion

Since the 1980s, our continued work on expanding and improving the use of creative drama in education throughout Turkey has led to the growth of not only the field of creative drama but also increased creative and critical interest and attention to society, and amongst the younger generations of learners who will be the citizens of the future, increased attention to their own lives. The efforts of pioneers during the late Ottoman and early Republic period to reform and reimagine education, and its relationship to culture and the arts referred to at the beginning of this chapter, has come full circle in Turkey today. Despite an evolution in the nature and form of the drama practices advocated over the years and enhanced by exposure to international practices and experts, the philosophical and pedagogical intent remains similar. Baltacıoğlu's work on the concept of 'Authentic Theatre' which encouraged students to gain awareness of the other whilst developing a positive attitude towards the art form (Cankara, 2018; Gündüz, 2009), is echoed in the writings of both Davis and Heathcote, and the many enthusiastic drama educators and theorists who are playing a large part in the success of drama in Turkey today, and ensuring its future success in the Turkey of tomorrow.

The role of creative drama in education is more relevant now than ever before. There remains a continued need to incorporate instruction and use of creative drama into the social and political fabric of Turkey. Creative drama within the Turkish educational system should ultimately be at the forefront of inclusiveness in education, as well as safeguarding against any discrimination that may occur between individuals and/or groups in society. One phrase sums up the importance of creative drama in education in Turkey, not only for students but also for educators and the public at large, 'If you are aware, then you're responsible'. Inspired by Davis and Heathcote, students, young drama educators, experts within the drama field, and the dedicated members of the Creative Drama Association need to heed the continued call to face real life through creative drama and ultimately work to create a better world for all, locally as well as globally.

References

- Adak, H., & Altınay, R. E. (2018). Introduction: Theatre and Politics in Turkey and Its Diasporas. *Comparative Drama*, 52(3/4), pp. 185-214.
- Adıgüzel, Ö. (2007). Comparison of drama in education in England and Turkey with David Davis and John Somers. *Creative Drama Journal*, 1(3/4), pp. 213-220.
- Adıgüzel, Ö. (2008). The recent history of creative drama in education in Turkey. *Creative Drama Journal*, 1(5), pp. 7-50.
- Adıgüzel, Ö. (2010). *Eğitimde Yaratıcı Drama* [Creative drama in education]. Naturel.
- Ahmad, F. (1993). *The making of modern Turkey*. Routledge.
- Bowcott, O. (2002). Hope dies in Turkish prison hunger strike. *The Guardian Newspaper*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/jan/19/owenbowcott>
- Cankara, M. (2018). "May a Wasp Sting Your Tongue!": The Armenian Stereotype in Ottoman Popular Performances from the Empire to the Nation-State. *Comparative Drama*, 52(3/4), pp. 215-241.
- Çelebi Erol, C. (2019). Experienced Social Change in Turkey in the 1980s, Reflections of the Art Works. *Ulakbilge: Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 7(43), pp. 976-982.
- Contemporary Drama Association (1987). *International dramatisation seminar notes 1987*. Contemporary Drama Association Archive.
- Çoruh, S. (1950). *Dramatisation in schools*. Işıl matbaası.

- Erdoğan, T. (Ed.) (2016). *Okul öncesinden ilköğretime, kuramdan uygulamaya drama* [Drama from pre-school to primary school, from theory to application]. Eğiten Kitap.
- Ersoy, E. (2019). Micro Level Analysis of Social Change: Value Changes and Turkey. *International Journal of Turcologia*, 14(27), pp. 40-49.
- Gündüz, M. (2009). Sociocultural origins of Turkish educational reforms and ideological origins of late Ottoman intellectuals (1908–1930). *History of Education*, 38(2), pp. 191-216.
- Guner, H., & Guner, H. N. (2012). Theatre for Education. The World Conference on Design, Arts and Education (DAE-2012), May 1-3, Antalya, Turkey. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 51, pp. 328-332.
- Heathcote, D. (2010a). Opening address at the 13th international drama/theatre in education Congress. *Creative Drama Journal*, 5(9/10), pp. 29-36.
- Heathcote, D. (2010b). Memorable encounters with power givers and takers. *Creative Drama Journal*, 5(9/10), pp. 215-230.
- Heathcote, D., & Bolton, G. (1995). *Drama for Learning. Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert Approach to Education*. Heinemann.
- Hesten, S. (1993). *The Dorothy Heathcote Archive* (Doctoral Dissertation). Metropolitan University, Manchester, England.
- Hodgson, J., & Richards, E. (1966). *Improvisation: Discovery and Creativity in Drama*. Methuen Young Books.
- Hodgson, J. (1977). *The Uses of Drama: Acting as a Social and Educational Force*. Methuen.
- Ilhan, A. C. (2005). Educating Turkish Primary School Teachers in Visual Arts: The Past and the Future. *International Journal of Art & Design Education*, 24(3), pp. 254-260.
- Kaplan, S. (2002). Din-U Devlet all over again? The politics of military secularism and religious militarism in Turkey following the 1980 coup. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 34(1), pp. 113-127.
- Korkut, P. (2018). "Creative Drama" in Turkey. *Scenario*, XII(1), doi:10.33178/scenario.12.1.5.
- Landau, D. (2018). Populist Constitutions. *University of Chicago Law Review*, 85(2), pp. 521-544.
- Levent, T. (1994). *Say Yes to Art*. Available at: <https://tamerlevent.com/#why>
- Levent, T. (2003). *Tamer Levent*. Available at: <https://tamerlevent.com>
- Özdemir, E. (1965). *Uygulamalı Dramatizasyon. MEB Öğretmen Okulları Genel Müdürlüğü Öğretmeni İş Başında Yetiştirme Bürosu* [Applied dramatization. Ministry of Education Schools Bureau of In-Service Teacher Education]. Güzel İstanbul Matbaası.
- Özen, Z. (2018). *Using Heathcote's Commission Model from Drama Approaches to Promote Teacher Candidates' Schools - Real Life Relationship Skills* (Doctoral Dissertation). Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey.
- Sevinç, M. (2008). Hunger Strikes in Turkey. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 30(3), pp. 655-679.
- Tekeli, S. (Ed.) (1995). *Women in modern Turkish society: a reader*. Zed Books.
- Yalman, G. L. (2009). *Transition to Neoliberalism: The Case of Turkey in the 1980s*. Istanbul Bilgi University Press.
- Zaim, S. (2011). The development of the educational system in Turkey [The impact of westernization on education]. *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, 45 (1-4).

Chapter 8

Making it Real: On the Relationship of Living Through Drama and Bondian Theatre

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 country¹. 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, as 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.

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 compelled 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.

More than a decade later he had another important impact on my life. I was intrigued by the particular approach Davis (2005) suggested would be important to explore in the 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 as well 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 of 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 (Bethlenfalvy, 2020), some of which I share with you in this chapter. 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, performing and making. 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 the Miller 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 alongside 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” (Davis, 2014, 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 (see 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” (Bolton, 1998, 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, p. 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 explore some key tenets of Bond's work, and how these 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 argues

that when we are socialised into a culture, we accept its interpretation of the social and material world as reality itself (Bond, 2006). 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, p. 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 situations in his drama where we "are confronted with our radical innocence", the human imperative to be at home in a just world (Bond, 2009, p. 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, p. 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, p. 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, p. 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, p. 3). DEs should be "extreme situations which impose choice" (Bond, 2006, p. 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, p. xxxiii). By dramatising 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, p. 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.



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

The Man does two contrasting actions with the brick, and this offers the possibility of a Dramatic Event. 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 Cathexis³. 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" (Tuailon, 2015, p. 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 fatherhood. This is not only there in the 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, p. 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 to 10 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 the first cycle. To discuss the findings, I will principally focus on one of the three series here.

3 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).

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, p. 174)

Although Bond views 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.

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.



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

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 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. 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 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 (see Fig. 3). The latter suggesting more of a cognitive engagement than an embodied lived through experience. On 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 was to solve the problems presented, as is the case usually in school settings.



Fig 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.

As a result, 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 over 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 school settings, while sessions with the other four groups were held in informal education settings. This allowed me to reflect on how the settings of the drama lessons impacted on the participants. The findings from the first cycle made it clear that underlying concepts and dramaturgical structures needed to be offered explicitly to participants. Therefore, I decided to work with secondary school students in this second cycle to make sure that participants' age did 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 which Davis quotes from Jeffrey Masson's (1990) book titled *Against Therapy* which describes fathers leaving their daughters who have been labelled morally insane at the "Bellevue clinic in Kreuzlingen, Switzerland" in the late nineteenth century (Davis, 2014, p. 69). 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 attempt he asks the group to develop their scenes further, and offers Heathcote's five layers of meaning (Davis, 2014, p. 69), as 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?' These might include '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 next 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, 1998), and they are doing all this from within fiction. So, it seemed logical that they need to have access to the 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 below 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 being 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, p. 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 earlier:

(1) Unexpected/extreme action

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

The Mother asks her son (Joe) to burn a house down and explains why it is in the interest of Joe to do this.

(3) Creating gap in time or space or meaning

The Man says "hgn" after smothering one of the children with a towel and hitting her on the head with a brick.

(4) Everyday objects

The brick which is used in the first scene by Joe to smack 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 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 present the remainder of the description of the *Wild Child* drama lesson which will help to explicate the findings.

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 objects 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 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 participants' reflections 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.



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

The 'staff member' (student in role) 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 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 she actually taught, 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 worked as a Drama Event or not for those observing the improvisation, there is some evidence that there was simultaneously deep engagement with the fictional situation during the improvisation and a powerful reflection on the situation. The duality of felt bodily response connected to imaginative reasoning reflected in the participant's description is exactly what Bond (2000a) aims to achieve through his Drama Events.

Conclusion

This research set out 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 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 extremeness 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 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 artform itself offers immense possibilities for creating new understandings. It also became absolutely clear that without experimenting, making mistakes and taking risks, it is very difficult to bring back life, excitement and imagination into drama.

References

- Allen, D. & Handley, A. (2017). "Being Human": Edward Bond's Theories of Drama. *Text Matters*, 7(7), pp. 307-329.
- Bethlenfalvy, Á. (2020). *Living Through Extremes in Process Drama*. Károli Református Egyetem - L'Harmattan kiadó.
- Billingham, P. (2007). Drama and the Human: Reflections at the Start of a Millennium No Access Edward Bond, in conversation with Peter Billingham. *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, 29(3), pp. 1–14.
- Billingham, P. (2014). *Edward Bond: A Critical Study*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bond, E. (1991). Commentary on The War Plays. In: *The War Plays* (Revised edition, pp. 245–363). Methuen.
- Bond, E. (1996). *Edward Bond's Letters 3*. Harwood Academic Publishers.

- Bond, E. (2000a). *The Hidden Plot*. Methuen.
- Bond, E. (2000b). *The Children & Have I None*. Methuen.
- Bond, E. (2003). *The Cap*. In *Plays: Seven*. Methuen.
- Bond, E. (2006). *Freedom and Drama*. In *Plays: Eight*. Methuen Drama.
- Bond, E. (2009). Foreword (Theatre and Education). In: *Theatre & Education*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bond, E. (2013). *Unpublished letter to David Davis*. 29th January, 2013.
- Bolton, G. (1998). *Acting in Classroom Drama*. Trentham Books.
- Chen, C. (2018). *The Later Edward Bond: Subjectivity, Dramaturgy, and Performance* (PhD Thesis, Royal Holloway). Available at: [https://pure.royalholloway.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/the-later-edward-bond-subjectivity-dramaturgy-and-performance\(e7b812f4-2be6-43ee-9114-91363a2bf00e\).html](https://pure.royalholloway.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/the-later-edward-bond-subjectivity-dramaturgy-and-performance(e7b812f4-2be6-43ee-9114-91363a2bf00e).html)
- Cooper, C. (2010). *Making a World of difference; A DICE resource for practitioners on educational theatre and drama*. Budapest: DICE Consortium.
- Cziboly, A., Bøe Lyngstad, M., & Zheng, S. (2021). Influence of the 'conventions approach' on higher education in drama. *NJ*, 45(2), pp. 128-143.
- Davis, D. (2005). Edward Bond and Drama in Education. In: *Edward Bond and the Dramatic Child*. Trentham Books.
- Davis, D. (2014). *Imagining the Real: towards a new theory of drama in education*. Trentham Books.
- Debreczeni, T. (1991). Egy angol drámatanárról este magyar pedagógusokkal. *Drámapedagógiai Magazin*, 1(1).
- Előd, N. (1991). David Davis tanítása. *Drámapedagógiai Magazin*, 1(2).
- Freire, P. (2000/1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum.
- Heathcote, D. (1984). *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected writings on education and drama*. L. Johnson, & C. O'Neill (Eds.). Hutchinson.
- Mączyńska, M. (2020). Welcome to the Post-Anthropos: Urban Space and Climate Change in Nathaniel Rich's *Odds Against Tomorrow*, Lev Rosen's *Depth*, and Kim Stanley Robinson's *New York 2140*. *Journal of Modern Literature*, 43(2), pp. 165-181.
- Masson, J. (1990). *Against Therapy: Emotional tyranny and the myth of psychological healing*. Fontana.
- Neelands, J. (2010). *Creating Democratic Citizenship through Drama Education: The Writings of Jonathan Neelands*. P. O'Connor (Ed.). Trentham Books Ltd.
- Neelands, J., & Goode, T. (1990). *Structuring drama work*. Cambridge University Press.
- O'Neill, C. (2011). *Unpublished interview with Cecily O'Neill, 27th August, 2011*. (Á. Bethlenfalvy, Interviewer.)
- Szakall, J. (2019). Reflection on David Davis' impact in Hungary. Personal email correspondence with Adam Bethlenfalvy. 7th March, 2019.

Chapter 9

Teaching Ethically in the Marketplace or Babysitting the Trauma

Guy Williams

Abstract: This chapter presents an account of my personal development as a drama teacher from the 1980s to the present day. The context is the continuing impact of neoliberalism as it has been experienced within education. My role as a practitioner in NATD and in a number of different schools within the UK provides an insight into the wider social and political implications of working within such a context. The chapter concludes by focussing on the effects of a neoliberal agenda on a marginalised young person and asks whether the work that I am doing with my students is anything more than babysitting the trauma that individuals experience. Student names have been changed to protect their identity in this chapter.

Keywords: Drama-in-Education, NATD; ethics, The Education Reform Act; Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), trauma.

Personal context

My personal journey as a teacher started when I qualified as a Special Needs teacher in 1982 with a degree in Cultural Studies. I fell into teaching Drama in 1983 when the school burned down and we needed to find activities for the students to do while temporary classrooms were delivered. I discovered Gavin Bolton and Dorothy Heathcote in 1984 when I read '*Towards a theory of drama in education*' (Bolton, 1979). I encountered David Davis' work in 1987 when we employed one of his PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate of Education) students, Gill Brooks. Joining the National Association for the Teaching of Drama (NATD) in 1988, I went on to study for an MA full time with David in 1991 - realising that I needed to have my brain relocated by him. On David's prompting, I was Chair of NATD from 1997 to 2003 and have been on the Journal Committee from 2004 to the present. Having taught mainstream Drama from 1983 until 2016, I now work in a Pupil Referral Unit focussed on students aged fifteen to sixteen.

Very early in my career, the Education Reform Act [ERA] (1988) was passed and since then, alongside my colleagues in the UK, I have been teaching within a culture defined by the market forces of the neo-liberal agenda. Proposed by the Conservative Party, the ERA resulted in over a quarter of schools in the UK becoming autonomous and grant maintained. Not surprisingly, this major policy shift evoked considerable concern in education. Molnar (2005) described it as 'school commercialisation', while Gunter (2015) criticised the reculturing of education through neoliberalism, and more significantly, its depoliticisation process:

1 PRUs are a type of school that cater for students who aren't able to attend a mainstream school. Students are often referred there if they need greater care and support than their existing school can provide.

What I mean here is a shift of decisions about and for education away from arenas of debate (Parliament, Local Councils), political decision-making (Ministers, Local Officials), and experts, experience and evidence (Teachers, Researchers) towards corporatised solution packages designed and enacted by consultants within and external to government. (p. 4)

David Davis has been the driving force and the intellectual analyst of resistance for NATD and drama teachers struggling to prioritise students, learning, and high-quality practices in the face of decisions made across the political spectrum which saw both Conservative and New Labour governments pursue a series of marketisation policies since the ERA to date (Fan & Liang, 2020). The experiences of NATD and my own describe the nature of the socio-political context and the struggle that continues to this day.

The key question for me is how do I as an individual teacher and a member of NATD, now working in a Pupil Referral Unit, continue to teach ethically whilst being marginalised? The attack comes in many forms, notably, the Drama Association is withering; our pedagogy is being denigrated and ignored; and I was driven from my workplace. These personal experiences frame and permeate the discussion in this chapter which attempts to identify the impact of a marketisation agenda on teachers in the UK trying to work ethically with the needs of their students at the centre of their practices.

The Ethics of the National Association for the Teaching of Drama (NATD)

NATD is an incredibly significant part of my life. Established in 1979, it is a significant part of Drama in the UK and therefore of young people in the UK. As I came into the Association, I was aware that Davis and other members were trying to unite the six Drama Associations that existed in the 1980s into one coherent voice. Ultimately it stumbled and there are now two drama associations in the UK. However, the drive to unite led NATD and Davis to seek the establishment of an international drama in education association, which ultimately became IDEA (International, Drama, Theatre and Education Association) founded in 1992. In the 1990s, NATD produced a strong Policy Document which is still relevant today (see natd.co.uk/foundations). It is the bedrock of what NATD stands for, and by association what I stand for. It argues for a "broader, richer, more human curriculum. To this end NATD continues to call for the repeal of ERA" (NATD, 2012). To understand where we are now, we have to understand where this started. As mentioned above, it was driven by Margaret Thatcher (UK Prime Minister 1979 – 1990), Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Education 1981 – 1986) and Kenneth Baker, Secretary of State for Education 1986 – 1989) and it dramatically altered education:

Conservative reforms were designed to bring market forces into the school-based education system and to make it more consumer-oriented. The emphasis on consumer choice was anchored in an overarching belief in the superiority of market forces as a means of organising education and society in general. (Fan and Liang, 2020)

I contend that it ripped apart local education authorities, ripped apart teachers and is continuing to do so to this day through operating within a consensual political culture where the original tenets of the ERA: parental choice, school autonomy, public accountability, central government determination of curriculum, and government regulation have been taken much further by successive Governments, including New Labour who increased the elements of competition and central control, bringing education closer to a culture of school commercialisation (Whitty, 2008; Molnar, 2005).

Drama attempted to fight back, as did other subject areas, with researchers in disciplines such as Physical Education, and those working with children in need reporting a disconnect between the ERA rhetoric and the reality of their working environment several years after its introduction (Evans, Penney & Bryant, 1993; Sinclair & Grimshaw, 1994; Sharp, 2002). Citing inadequate resources, de-professionalisation of teachers, overly bureaucratic and reductionist assessment structures and a move away in practice from child-centred pedagogy to more structured and formal teaching methods (Evans & Penney, 1996), the impact of the

ERA had a long reach. Indeed, the introduction of quasi-market forces in the UK, spilled over into many other parts of the world such as the US (Hoxby, 2003), New Zealand (Harrison and Rouse, 2014), Asia (Fan and Liang, 2020), and more recently Italy (Lopez-Torres et al., 2021). Under the stewardship of NATD and Davis' influence, the association organised many events to support drama teachers in fighting to reclaim their professional autonomy as experts in learning, teaching and assessment. At this time, NATD's Policy Document attempted to articulate a child-centred, critical inquiry-based approach to education through drama:

Drama in Education, as a method of artistic enquiry into the social world, stands in direct opposition to attempts to use education as a way of processing young people to meet the demands of the economy ... An educational system needs to give all young people access to the full range of human culture. It is the totality of what humanity, the major learning species, has learnt to know and to do ... [It enables us to] interrogate and make sense of the world and our experience in it ... [It] harnesses feeling and thinking in an enquiry into the social world ... and gives [young people] an opportunity to formulate the values by which they wish to live ... The needs of the child must be placed at the centre of the educational process ... Therefore, we must continue to oppose ERA and to build a humanising curriculum which develops all young people to their full potential. (NATD, 2012)

As schools, departments and individual teachers became increasingly isolated, the need to articulate our core intentions became progressively important. Pedagogy became increasingly marginalised and more and more teachers were subtly and not so subtly edged into a survival mode. The Policy Document is a rich and complex statement of values and approach and provided a solid, coherent platform from which teachers could defend themselves.

NATD's fight for survival against the damaging effects of the ERA, and for the continuance of drama in schools, led to an increased focus on internationalism in the work. Learning from and sharing experiences with other drama educators throughout the world, greatly enriched our practices, and in the mid to late 1990s, this coalesced in NATD's work particularly in Bosnia, Serbia and Kosovo. At this time, Davis' work through his international Summer School and master's programme in University of Central England, which he later transferred to Trinity College Dublin, led to a raft of international students brushing up against, influencing and becoming part of NATD. They were vibrant and exciting times with as many as four hundred delegates from across the world at our conferences. It was a place where people talked, where people listened, where they struggled with ideas, argued, debated and named things, where people collaborated and resisted. Those qualities were the ones that sustained me through some exciting times when I needed to keep my focus on what I was doing in the classroom, and through some very difficult times. Increasingly, teaching was becoming formulaic. Initially, it was teachers of the core curriculum subjects (English, Maths and Science) who bore the brunt of the changes. The diversity of examination syllabi was narrowed; training was focussed on 'delivery' of the package (like the postal service); each lesson needed to look the same as the lesson taking place in the neighbouring classroom; all work needed to be marked in the same way, in the same coloured pen; each lesson had to be built around a PowerPoint presentation identifying the learning aims and the three (or five or seven) elements as required and each lesson had to conclude with a plenary during which the learners parroted what they had learned by repeating the aims. All students had to demonstrate progress every fifteen minutes. All students were ranked in what came to be known as 'data-rich' systems. All teachers were frequently observed and judged on their ability to conform. Ultimately, all that could be taught was what could be measured and teaching Drama became virtually impossible. Bullying, hectoring and intimidation became the norm.

The erosion of teacher professionalism and dismantling of values which underpin ethical practice in our drama classrooms is unfortunately not unique to education. In a recent article in *The Journal for Drama in Education*, Davis (2018) refers to one of John Berger's (2006) essays. As an art critic, novelist, painter and poet, Berger (2003, 2016) is concerned about the erasure and disabling of historical memory and the virulent spread of neoliberal global capitalism which for him lead to repression, exclusion and neglect:

[...] it is not only animal and plant species which are being destroyed or made extinct today but also set after set of our human priorities. The latter are systematically sprayed not with pesticides but with ethicides. Agents that kill ethics and therefore any notion of history and justice ... particularly targeted are those of our priorities which have evolved from the human need for sharing, bequeathing, consoling, mourning and hoping. And the ethicides are sprayed day and night by the mass news media. The ethicides are perhaps less effective less speedy than the controllers hoped but they have succeeded in burying and covering up the imaginative space that any central public forum represents and requires. Our forums are everywhere but for the moment they are marginal. (Berger, 2006)

This is clearly what is happening to NATD at the moment. We have been marginalised - we are being 'sprayed'. Membership of NATD currently stands at less than twenty. From a mass membership to such a tiny cohort - things are indeed difficult.

But as Berger's work is threaded with hope, so there is also hope in NATD. The Journal keeps going, and something began to happen recently through Matthew Milburn (a long-standing member and a headteacher) who has driven lots of very interesting work from a position of influence from within the school system. In February 2019, we ran a series of workshops at Leeds University with Primary PGCE students exploring what a different kind of learning, what a different kind of teaching, what a different kind of assessment could look like. Out of this the seeds of new growth have emerged and there may be a future. But these are undoubtedly difficult times.

Trying to Teach Ethically

In 2010, against my better judgement, I took a job in an Academy. Thirty million pounds was spent on it - an architect's dream. It felt like I was working in a German car showroom at times. It certainly wasn't designed with teaching in mind. Intended to take over from failing State schools, Academies were initiated by the Labour Government in the early 2000s and are similar to the Charter School model in the US (Frostock et al., 2018). Academies and Free Schools continued the huge transformation initiated by the ERA to the education system in the UK. Academies are funded directly from central government and many receive additional funding from private trusts, businesses, charitable organisations, and church groups. Free schools operate in much the same way as Academies but are entirely new schools rather than replacing existing ones. Operating on the premise of raising standards and improving educational attainment for all, new providers are offered considerable incentives to compete for students in a model where the funding is attached to the student. In such an approach, people and labour are reduced to commodities (Polanyi, 1944).

Despite claims of considerable school improvement and effectiveness in Academies and Free Schools, the reality can differ, and the challenge for principals is that:

... school leaders can feel obliged to put the market position of their school above all else even if this means making decisions that contradict their professional values. (Greany & Higham, 2018)

Robertson (2007) has argued that these 'choice' policies have tended to favour the middle and ruling classes who use their social, economic and cultural capital to enrol in the highest performing schools, whilst Academies and Free Schools for low-income households and people experiencing disadvantage are consistently underperforming and having a negative impact on their students (Gorard, 2014; Hutchings et al., 2016; Frostock et al., 2018).

To exemplify the professional values of the headteacher at the Academy where I worked, I remember at my interview I was observed teaching a piece about the war in Bosnia. The interview panel didn't question me about it at all. The children weren't particularly responsive to what I was doing and I thought I'd completely blown the interview. But they gave me the job. It transpired that the whole process was a sham. The other two candidates on the day dropped out so I was given the job as the last person standing. Within a month,

when I tried to start doing the things I had said I was going to do at interview, the Head called me into her office and shouted at me telling me that I was useless, that I had lied to her, that I was doing none of the things I had said I was going to do. Ofsted Inspectors (The Office for Standards in Education) came at the beginning of the following year and, not surprisingly we went into special measures.

Once a school is in special measures lots of parents take their children out and so the numbers decline. In the UK every child carries a price on their head. If they go somewhere else, they take that money with them, so school funding diminishes. In a wholly economic model, savings have to be made, and savings are made first of all through reducing resources (like books, photocopying and school lunches) but this quickly shifts to the support staff and then teaching assistants and finally the teachers. The downward spiral is self-perpetuating because the quality of work being done with the young people deteriorates, and so more leave, and the funding diminishes further ... it's a vicious circle.

So that was the kind of place in which I found myself. I was desperately trying to understand what was happening to us as a school community, and to me throughout this process. There were three different Headteachers over the first three years I was there, and each brought in a new raft of deputy heads and introduced new initiatives. For example, in one year we were instructed that it is absolutely essential that you mark with a green pen. This was accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation on the philosophy of marking with a green pen. The following year with equal vehemence someone new came in and announced: 'You have got to mark with a purple pen, you can't possibly mark with a green pen'. And the following year it was a red pen. But no one said anything. Everyone was living in a climate of fear.

Richard Hatcher (2000), a professor of education at Birmingham City University, wrote a powerful article entitled 'Profiting from Schools' in which he charts the trajectory through which the Labour government of the day was taking education. He highlighted the risks of deprofessionalising teaching in British schools:

The second strand to Labour education thinking which paves the way for the corporate agenda is its tendency to reduce teaching to technique. This technicist, reductionism is exemplified most clearly by David Reynolds ...expanding his thesis of 'the highly reliable school' in which teachers would be technicians working to exacting methodologies. (Hatcher, 2000, p. 19)

And that is what happened to us. We all had to teach in the same way: we all had to use PowerPoints; we all had to start with a 'Do Now'; we all had to set out learning objectives which the students had to write out in their books. But I tried to make it work. In part, I was attempting to model a different, more human approach. In part, I went along out of fear. So, how could I make this work for me? Below is the first lesson in the Bosnian scheme of work I referred to above.

Learning Objectives

- I understand that the premature, violent death of another human being affects me.
- I am able to create Drama that shows my understanding of the tragedy of war
- I use Dramatic action to focus on a particular tragedy in order to understand what we need to do in order to make the world a better place.

Figure 1 The learning objectives from my scheme of work.

Of course, it wasn't acceptable. For Ofsted, and so with my school, the central concern was - how do you measure progress? In particular, how do you measure progress every fifteen minutes in a lesson? Based on the principle that a) Ofsted might at some point turn up, and b) might only attend for fifteen minutes, and c) they have to see progress in those fifteen minutes. So, everything was predicated on having to show that progress is made every fifteen minutes.

The scheme of work to which the above objectives refer was based on the story of the couple who became known as the Romeo and Juliet of Sarajevo (Eckardt and Banic, 2007). Admira Ismić was a young Bosnian Muslim woman aged 24 and Bosko Brkić was a Bosnian Serb (Christian) Orthodox young man aged 25. They fell in love at school before the war - before the horrific, cultural, religious and ethnic divides ripped the country apart. The war started in 1992. By 1993 they couldn't bear to live in Sarajevo any longer. He was expecting to be called up to fight for the Serbian army. So, they planned to leave. They bribed a local gangster to arrange a cease-fire at three o'clock in the afternoon on the 18th of May 1993. The guns fell silent and the two of them started to walk across the dried-out river bed. An unknown sniper shot them both - he died instantly, she lived just long enough to crawl and die in his arms. Their bodies lay in no man's land for over a week. They became symbols of enduring love caught in a senseless war.



Figure 2 Admira and Bosko lying dead on the dried out river bed in Sarajevo, May 1993. (Photo taken by Mark H. Milstein)

So that was the piece of work I was exploring with the students. However, the senior management team were unhappy and had tried all sorts of things up to this point to get me to leave. A lesson observation was arranged with the deputy head. It was a good lesson. Children were engaged. Children were excited. Children were sad. Children were disturbed. Children were thinking.

At a particular moment in the lesson, I placed an image of Admira and Bosko in the centre of the studio. I asked the students to take up the position of snipers (not the *sniper*, not the sniper who shot Admira and Bosko) who would have been there looking down the barrels of their guns. Looking at the bodies of these two young people at the moment they died. The students were in a shadow role, looking down, thinking of the implications of what had just happened. I asked the question,

==> **How do you kill a young person?**

And left it hanging there.

At the end of the day, I went to the deputy head for my debriefing and he was smiling, he was laughing, and I was momentarily heartened. But it quickly transpired that he was just delighted because he had got me and he was relishing what was about to happen. "Do you know Guy I went up to 'R' and I asked him what he was learning?" He told me that 'R' had replied: "We're learning how to kill children". I said, "Gosh that is interesting, isn't it?" I wanted to go back to the class and explore things with the students. The deputy exploded. "What! How can you possibly say that?" I had an hour with him, after that he never spoke to me again.

I was put on a Personal Improvement Plan. I was given a mentor who was my head of department. She was a lovely person who I got on with really well with but she hated Drama in Education, hated Dorothy Heathcote. She was completely committed to theatre skills. She had to observe me three times over a twelve-week period. Before the whole process started, I told her that she was being set up as my executioner. She had convinced herself that they genuinely wanted me 'to get better' and she believed that if the worst came to the worst, she could make sure it didn't happen. The twelve weeks dragged out - they didn't appear to know what they were doing. They kept checking with Human Resources to find out what procedures they needed to use. The end of the summer term came and went as did the summer holidays. Ofsted was coming and they didn't want to muddy the waters so Christmas came. So, it was at the end of the first week in January, six months after the observation, my colleague came to me in tears and handed me a letter. Her name was at the bottom of the letter - she had signed it but she hadn't written it. I was put on notice that I had a further twelve weeks in which to improve and if I didn't, I would be sacked. Give or take twenty-four hours later, I resigned. And that was the end of it. I felt so good. I felt free.

It is enormously difficult to maintain your ethics in the face of what is a ruthless marketplace. I spent six years trying to find allies. The fight has to be engaged with others. When you are struggling within the system it can be a very lonely place. Trying to change things from within is just not possible on your own. My mistake was to fail to realise that the fear was already so deeply rooted when I arrived that all of my interventions and actions were seen as faintly ridiculous by those who might have stood alongside me. The moment I started to teach things I didn't believe in was the moment I should have left.

A Different Kind of Teaching

Background to where I currently teach

I am now working in a PRU (Pupil Referral Unit). It is a place for young people who don't fit in anywhere else. We specialise in students who are in their last year of compulsory education. They are fifteen or sixteen years old. They have been expelled from school, some of them from four or five different secondary schools. Some of the students haven't been to school for two or three years. They are de-socialised, they are de-skilled, they have been demonised by the system.

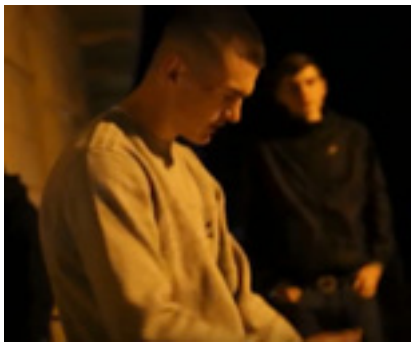


Figure 3 Still from YouTube video: Flipz x SJ x AJ - HSG - 1time tv

The video above, including both the images and the music, made by one of the local gangs is a piece of Grime² and it's made by young people in the area. These videos are an expression of gang identity and being seen in one confers kudos on the individual. Most of the figures in the background are young people I am currently teaching or I have taught in the last couple of years (Flipz x SJ x AJ - HSG - 1time tv). As a note of caution - the language is misogynistic, materialistic, at times it's racist, it's very, very violent. The lines I want to look at here are:

Mm, Listen
Couple weeks left
Fresh out of pen
Fresh out again
Then I'll be looking for death
I back out my chef [Weapon – knife or gun]
I dip in his head
I dip and I dip and I left
I go to the mosque I do my wadu [Muslim prayer of washing]
Then I get down and feel blessed
I never pray for my mess

There is no attempt to self-censor. There is no sense in which these young artists are seeking to accommodate society or to fit in to it. It has its own morality, a code that exists at the margins. There are, of course, echoes of American rap, which articulates a different view of the world from the mainstream, but which has been absorbed by the market and sanitised for global consumption. There is a strain of British Grime (which echoes American rap) that aspires to wealth and fame and the trappings of that material 'success' but here it is an articulation of how some young people are feeling and what they are thinking.

2 Grime is a genre of music that emerged in London in the early 2000s. It developed out of earlier UK electronic music styles, including UK garage and jungle, and also draws influence from dancehall, hip hop, and ragga. The style is typified by rapid, syncopated breakbeats, generally around 130 or 140 bpm, and often features an aggressive or jagged electronic sound. Rapping is also a significant element of the style, and lyrics often revolve around gritty depictions of urban life. The videos are frequently created and can easily be found on a variety of social media platforms.



Figure 4 Jaden Moodie (The Guardian, 2019)

On the one hand you might think this is bravado - this is the talk of rappers and grime artists. But this is the same world in which a fourteen-year-old boy, Jaden Moodie (see Fig. 4), was knocked off his scooter and stabbed to death nine times by four youths who damaged bone and punctured his lung and liver. (*The Guardian*, 2019). At the time of writing, ten young people died from stabbings in eighteen days in the UK. And nearly all of it appeared to be drug related. In the town in which I teach the gangs are all based around the supply of drugs – supplied by HSG in this case, quaintly named the Hillside Gang. Most of the sales are of cannabis but other drugs are creeping in as well. Xanax is a significant concern at the moment - a prescription anxiety drug that you can get on the internet from the US for a pound a tab. On their own they are quite effective in the treatment of anxiety but mixed with alcohol they can be lethal. Xanax is a powerful benzodiazepine and extremely addictive when used long term. There is some evidence that the use of Xanax might dull young people's feelings, slowing down nerve cell activity in the brain, and its use has been implicated in many reported stabbings in the media (Reynolds, 2020). It's undeniable that substance abuse, particularly of prescription opioids, constitutes a contemporary world health epidemic (Jha & Singh, 2020). Rapid onset opioid dependence affects 'extra-medical users' of prescription drugs who use it 'to get high', with comorbidity to alcohol use, sexual abuse and crime (Parker & Anthony, 2015, 2019; Netemeyer et al., 2015).

A lot of the students in my school are vulnerable to sexual exploitation, sometimes in association with the gangs. This correlates with research which suggests that illicit drug users have a higher likelihood of experiencing sexual abuse, particularly females (Khan et al., 2015). In addition, there is a very high incidence of domestic violence. There are pockets of the town that are incredibly deprived. And they drink excessive amounts of alcohol, particularly during weekend binges and all but two of the young people in my classes smoke.

So, this is part of the background of where I teach. I now want to tell you about a fifteen-year-old girl who I will call Amber for the purposes of this paper.

Introducing Amber

Amber arrived at the school in 2019. She had been diagnosed as autistic and having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The school was informed that something significant happened to her when she was six years old. We don't know what it was. It hasn't been treated. It's sufficient to know that she has nightmares about it every night and has done for the last ten years. She doesn't want to sleep. She drinks vast quantities of energy drinks to stay awake. After she goes to sleep and has the dreams, she wakes up and voices in her head tell her to harm herself and to kill herself. She cuts her left arm. She gets a blade and scrapes off the skin. Before she came to us, she hadn't been to school for two years. In the classroom she will come in for a minute. She will throw things on the floor and tear them up. She will climb on the tables and kick over the chairs. She will get a marker pen and write on the walls. She will pick up anything available and throw it out of the window. She will get scissors, start attacking other people, kick in the doors and run around the building.

How was I going to engage this girl and prepare her for her GCSEs (the public examinations typically taken at age sixteen in the UK)? My job is to teach English and Mathematics to her and she just wouldn't do anything at all. She is immaculately turned out every day and her makeup is a big part of her sense of self. Her friend (who I will call Jade) is similarly interested in hair. So, we talked about what was going to happen in the future. They both want to study hair and beauty at college – Jade is going to do hair and Amber is going to do makeup. In discussion with my highly supportive Headteacher, I approached them with a plan: "OK let's create a portfolio, shall we? If you're going to go to college, they're going to want to know what you can do. What we'll need to do is lots of practical work. Then we'll need to take photos of it and then we can write about it. Then when you go to college for interview you can take it along with you". Amber said: "OK as long as you are my first client".



Figure 5 Guy Williams in a lesson with Amber

The picture above is me after three hours work. I wasn't allowed to talk for three hours and I had to walk around the school and show everyone how amazing the make-up was. That was the beginning of a change. She spent hours on the portfolio. After a month she said, "Guy, this isn't going to get me a GCSE. I need to write something". We talked about what she could write. She told me, "I'm going to come back and I'm going to be a teacher. I'm going to get you the sack and I'm going to be an even better teacher than you are".

I created a writing frame, (a resource that teachers normally use in order to show children how to set out their writing and to prompt them to include certain features) which focussed on Amber's narrative and was structured to enable her to process her trauma. The content was about her doing her teacher training and then coming back to school on the first day of her job. It took her two or three days to get going. Then one day she took a piece of paper and lay down on the floor in the reception area. There was all kinds of chaos going on around her but she lay there for three hours writing the story in her own bubble.

We have a therapist in the school who is an exceptional woman (who I will call Julie). She doesn't take students out and interview them. She builds up relationships by being in lessons with them. One lesson a week she is with Amber. On two occasions there was a moment when I said to Amber, "Do you want to have a chat with Julie and me". And she said, "All right then". The first time we went into a room she just sat there grinning, uncertain of what she was to encounter, defensive but also enjoying her story being told. I decided that I would speak for her and I spoke as Amber in a shadow role. Amber sat and watched us and laughed and stopped me a couple of times and corrected the discussion. These moments only lasted for four or five minutes at a time, but another shift occurred. Just before Christmas she came in and dropped a piece of paper on my desk and said, "There, it's for you. I don't want you to read it while I'm here". And she left. This is what Amber wrote:

To Guy

Thank you so so much for helping me with everything like for example my dreams. It's been hard. You talking to me and listening to me has actually helped me so much like before we started talking about it I was self-harming so much and now I can't even remember the last time I did it. Thank you for believing in me and my stories and my work. It means loads.

From Amber

In the Pupil Referral Unit, I am not teaching Drama but I am guided by the thinking that I have developed over the past thirty years as a drama teacher. Drama has offered me a way of teaching, of thinking, of building relationships that places the child at the centre and seeks to build a humanising curriculum around them. For Amber, the starting point, the way in, the lure was the commodified world of beauty therapy. But it brought about a shift for her – her sense of self as someone with self-respect, at home in the world and seen by others as belonging – and she is beginning to address the damage. I am teaching in a place that offers a different model – small class sizes, personalised learning largely beyond the National Curriculum, and unconditional positive regard for young people.

Babysitting the Trauma

However, I have to ask myself, is babysitting the trauma all that we are doing? In reflecting on the title of the Conference, 'Who am I? Who can tell me who I am?' I find myself caught in an endless cycle of self-doubt and questioning, followed by moments of elation and delight. Forces that originate far beyond my classroom come crashing through the doors on a daily basis. The more subtle asphyxiation that slowly drains the lifeblood from those who would resist, from those who struggle to place the human at the centre of our world and resist the erosion of the hopes and aspirations of its victims, can be seen in the panic in the eyes of everyone who seeks to do more than simply contain the problems. And so, I retreat into my classroom and work with the individual, human manifestations of the trauma – with Amber and Jade and all of the other young people who pass through. I have stepped away from the nakedly market-driven world of the Academies and embraced the 'unconditional positive regard' at the heart of my new school. But I cannot delude myself that we are immune. We do a good job with the damaged children who come to us but act as a pressure valve for the mainstream schools in the area in which I teach that are desperately trying to keep the Ofsted wolf from their doors. Every child that we work with improves the results of the schools that rejected them in the first place. The better the results, the more the school will attract the children of parents who have the wherewithal to support their children and the less likely they are to attract the negative attention of the inspectors. This is to say nothing of those children in mainstream education who are corralled into states of being that are alien to their true nature in order to comply with Ofsted and an inflexible National Curriculum. We prop up a system that is driven by market forces. My own children, both in the UK and Australia feel the dead hand of boredom. A boredom that arises from an education system that processes them into the marketplace, that side-steps independent thinking, discourages difference and dissent and celebrates compliance and conformity.

In February 2019, thousands of Headteachers across the country wrote to the parents of the children in their care. As a parent of children in mainstream education, I received a copy. The letter identified that since 2010 school budgets had been reduced in real terms by 8% and by 20% at post-16 years of age; that class sizes were rising and the curricular offering was being restricted; that schools were increasingly being asked to support children's emotional health and well-being and that it was often, the most vulnerable in our schools who were bearing the brunt of cuts.

In the same month, an online petition calling for increased funding for schools was debated in the House of Commons [Feb 2019]. Members of Parliament from both sides of the house cited examples of funding cuts that only create further trauma. The following is an extract from Hansard (the official record of debates in the British parliament), 4th March 2019 Volume 655. The MP for Blaydon, Liz Twist, is speaking:

With increasing numbers of pupils, and decreasing funding in real terms, schools have had to make cuts that have resulted in 5,400 fewer teachers, 2,800 fewer teaching assistants, 1,400 fewer support staff and 1,200 fewer auxiliary staff.

And the situation is getting even worse, with 90% of Head Teachers reporting that their schools will have completely run out of money and be in deficit by Sept 2023 (Fazackerley, 2022), with support for vulnerable students and those with special educational needs being hardest hit (Weale, 2022). It is a national scandal that is being replicated in many corners of the world as a neo-liberal agenda drives ever deeper (Carr & Porfilio, 2011; Forsberg, 2019). In the UK, it has become transparently clear that it is no longer austerity that is the justification for such cuts and changes, and the ideological motivation has been revealed (Hayward, 2012). Brexit, of course, distracts. Just as it does from the climate catastrophe. And the crisis in the NHS (National Health Service) (Exworthy, Mannion & Powell, 2016). And in Social Services. And in the prison system. And the ever-widening gap between rich and poor (Cowell, Karagiannaki & McKnight, 2018). And the proliferation of food banks (May et al., 2020). And the homeless begging on the streets (Brimblecombe, Dorling & Green, 2020). In fact, the horror can be seen in every aspect of our country that was re-structured after the second world war to provide a decent society for all of its members (Mommson, 2018). The Welfare State is being rapidly dismantled (Taylor-Gooby, 2016). Every one of these actions leads to more and more young people like Amber, and more and more schools and Academies that ruthlessly pursue policies that feed the system and discard anyone who doesn't fit (McCafferty, 2010; Troschitz, 2017).

I contend that we cannot stand alone. To babysit the trauma is to lie to yourself and to those you are attempting to help. In NATD we continue to nurture and develop an understanding of the world and of the needs of the young. The Drama Association is growing again. It was almost dead but it is stirring. I was alone in the Academy but now I am surrounded by colleagues and friends who recognise the need for a different approach. We are modelling a different kind of teaching and learning, one with deep roots in socio-constructivism, inquiry based learning and critical pedagogy, which challenges the neoliberal educational agenda, and creates a space of "pure potentiality for growth" where new forms of meaning can arise (d'Agnese, 2020). And I look into the eyes of young people every day and know that I am making a difference because I stand alongside others who know that we must continue to struggle for change. Amber arrived in September 2018 desperate to know who she was. Mainstream education had left her not knowing. From the age of four she had been made to feel that she didn't belong, that she didn't fit in. The current dominant ideology requires that young people *be told who they are* and who they should be. It is a desperately de-humanising process. I can't tell her who she is, but I have been able to enable her to discover part of the answer for herself.

We must continue to work for a humanising, child-centred curriculum with an internationalist perspective. There is hope for NATD. There is hope for us as individuals. And there is hope for the world. As long as we collaborate. As long as we work together. As long as we fight together. As long as we name what it is that needs to be fought against. And we have to love the children.

References

- Berger, J. (2003). *The Shape of a Pocket*. Random House Inc.
- Berger, J. (2006). Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Vertigo*, 3(3), Available at: https://www.closeupfilmcentre.com/vertigo_magazine/volume-3-issue-3-autumn-2006/pier-paolo-pasolini/
- Berger, J. (2016). *Hold Everything Dear: Dispatches on Survival and Resistance*. Verso Books.
- Bolton, G. M. (1979). *Towards a theory of drama in education*. Longman.
- Brimblecombe, N., Dorling, D., & Green, M. (2020). Who still dies young in a rich city? Revisiting the case of Oxford. *The Geographical Journal*, 186, pp. 247-258.
- Carr, P. R., & Porfilio, B. J. (2011). The Obama Education Files: Is There Hope to Stop the Neoliberal Agenda in Education? *Journal of Inquiry and Action in Education*, 4(1), pp. 1-30.
- Cowell, F., Karagiannaki, E., & McKnight, A. (2018). The changing distribution of wealth in the pre-crisis US and UK: the role of socio-economic factors. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 71(1), pp. 1-24.
- d'Agnese, V. (2018). Newness and human disclosure in Dewey and Arendt: Challenging neoliberal educational agenda. *Policy Futures in Education*, 18(1), pp. 179-192.
- Davis, D. (2018). Acts of resistance. *The Journal for Drama in Education*, 33(2), pp. 24-29.
- Eckardt, A., & Banic, V. (2007). *Bosnian War Anniversary 'Sarajevo's 'Romeo and Juliet' Still Resonate*. Available at: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/bosnian-war-anniversary-sarajevo-s-romeo-juliet-still-resonate-n723681>
- Education Reform Act (1988). Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/40/contents>
- Exworthy, M., Mannion, R., & Powell, M. (Eds.). (2016) *Dismantling the NHS?: Evaluating the impact of health reforms*. Polity Press.
- Evans, J., & Penney, D. (1996). All things bright and beautiful? PE in primary schools post the 1988 Education Reform Act. *Educational Review*, 48(1), pp. 29-41.
- Evans, J., Penney, D. & Bryant, A. (1993). Improving the Quality of Physical Education? The Education Reform Act, 1988, and Physical Education in England and Wales. *Quest*, 45(3), pp. 321-338.
- Fan, W., & Liang, Y. (2020). The impact of school autonomy and education marketization in the United Kingdom. *Journal of Policy Modelling*, 42, pp. 1038-1048.
- Fazackerley, A. (2022). 90% of schools in England will run out of money next year, heads warn. *The Guardian*, 22nd October. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/oct/22/exclusive-90-of-uk-schools-will-go-bust-next-year-heads-warn>
- Forsberg, S. (2019). Setting a global agenda of education: Cooperation and tension within the global education policy field. *Geoforum*, 100, pp. 32-40.
- Frostick, C., Tong, J., Moore, D., Renton, A., & Netuveli, G. (2018). The impact of academies on school connectedness, future aspirations and mental health in adolescents from areas of deprivation in London. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 36(4), pp. 325-342.

Greany, T., & Higham, R. (2018). *The Guardian*. A market-led school system has put finances before the needs of pupils. June 30th. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/jun/30/market-led-education-system-puts-finances-before-pupils>

Gorard, S. (2014). The link between academies in England, pupil outcomes and local patterns of socio-economic segregation between schools. *Research Papers in Education*, 29(3), pp. 268–284.

Gunter, H. M. (2015). The politics of education policy in England. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2015.1044206>

Hansard (2019) 4th March, Volume 655. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-03-%2004/debates/2EB33517-190D-4882-8682-4953D09C5CB0/SchoolFunding>

Harrison, J., & Rouse, P. (2014). Competition and public high school performance. *Socio-Economic Planning Sciences*, 48(1), pp. 10-19.

Hatcher, R. (2000). Profiting from schools. Broadsheet – *The Journal for Drama in Education* 16(2), pp. 7-22.

Hayward, B. (2012). *Children, citizenship, and environment: nurturing a democratic imagination in a changing world*. Routledge.

Hutchings, M., Francis, B., & De Vries., R. (2016). Chain effects: the impact of academy chains on low income students. Available at: https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Chain-Effects_08.08.2016_With-front-cover-1.pdf

Jha, D., & Singh, R. (2020). Analysis of associations between emotions and activities of drug users and their addiction recovery tendencies from social media posts using structural equation modelling. *BMC Bioinformatics*, Supplement 18, 21(18), pp. 1-38.

Khan, S. R., Striley, C. W., Copeland, J., Kurtz, S. P., & Cottler, L. (2015). Risk of sexual abuse among ecstasy users differs by gender and other drug use. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 156, p. 110.

Levacic, R. (2004). Competition and the performance of English secondary schools: further evidence. *Educ. Econ.*, 12(2), pp. 177-193.

López-Torres, L., Johnes, J., Elliott, C., & Polo, C. (2021). The effects of competition and collaboration on efficiency in the UK independent school sector. *Economic Modelling*, 96, pp. 40-53.

Lubienski, C. (2009). Do Quasi-markets Foster Innovation in Education? A Comparative Perspective. OECD Education Working Papers No. 25, doi.org/10.1787/221583463325. Available at: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/221583463325.pdf?expires=1677425489&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=FD75BFEB9341E2DA8017AE6B3196234E>

May, J., Williams, A., Cloke, P., & Cherry, L. (2020). Still bleeding: The variegated geographies of austerity and food banking in rural England and Wales. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 79, pp. 409-424.

McCafferty, P. (2010). Forging a Neoliberal Pedagogy: The Enterprising Education Agenda in Schools. *Critical Social Policy*, 30(4), pp. 541-563.

Molnar, A. (2005). *School commercialism: From democratic ideal to market commodity*. Routledge.

Mommsen, W. (Ed.). (2018). *The emergence of the welfare state in Britain and Germany: 1850-1950*. Routledge.

NATD. (n.d.). *The Policy Document*. Available at: <https://www.natd.co.uk/foundations/>

Netemeyer, R., Burton, S., Delaney, B., & Hijjawi, G. (2015). The Legal High: Factors Affecting Young Consumers' Risk Perceptions and Abuse of Prescription Drugs. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 34(1), pp. 103-118.

Parker, M. A., & Anthony, J. C. (2015). Epidemiological evidence on extra-medical opioid prescription use: Rapid transitions from newly incident use to dependence among 12–21 year olds in the United States using meta-analysis, 2002–2013. *PeerJ*, 3, e1340.

Parker, M. A., & Anthony, J. C. (2019). Underage Drinking, Alcohol Dependence, and Young People Starting to Use Prescription Pain Relievers Extra-Medically: A Zero-Inflated Poisson Regression Model. *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology*, 27(1), pp. 87-95.

Polanyi, K. (1944). *The great transformation: The political and economic origins of our time*. Beacon Press.

Reynolds, E. (2020). Dubliner accused of stabbing man 183 times does not have mental disorder, court told. *The Irish Times*, October 23rd. Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/courts/criminal-court/dubliner-accused-of-stabbing-man-183-times-does-not-have-mental-disorder-court-told-1.4389646>

Robertson, S. L. (2007). 'Remaking the World': Neo-liberalism and the transformation of education and teachers' labour'. Bristol: The Centre for Globalisation, Education and Societies, University of Bristol. Available at: <http://www.bris.ac.uk/education/people/academicStaff/edslr/publications/17slr/>

Sharp, P. (2002). Surviving, not Thriving: LEAs since the Education Reform Act of 1988. *Oxford Review of Education*, 28(2-3), pp. 197-215.

Sinclair, R., & Grimshaw, R. (1994). The education of children in need: The impact of the Education Reform Act 1988, the Education Act 1993 and the Children Act 1989. *Oxford Review of Education*, 20(3), pp. 281-292.

Taylor-Gooby, P. (2016). The Divisive Welfare State. *Social Policy & Administration*, 50(6), pp. 712-733.

The Guardian (2019). (Editorial) *The Guardian view on Jaden Moodie's murder: criminals targeting children*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/15/the-guardian-view-on-jaden-moodies-murder-criminals-targeting-children>

Troschitz, R. (2017). *Higher education and the student: from welfare state to neoliberalism*. Routledge.

Weale, S. (2022). Thousands of English schools in grip of funding crisis plan redundancies. *The Guardian*, 8th November. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/nov/08/thousands-of-english-schools-in-grip-of-funding-crisis-plan-redundancies>

Whitty, G. (2008). Twenty years of progress? English education policy 1988 to the present. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 36(2), pp. 165–184.

YouTube. (2016). Flipz x SJ x AJ - HSG - 1time tv 2'30" – 3'01" October 13th.

Chapter 10

Drama, education and society: Narrating a drama practice of social concern

Chan, Yuk-Lan Phoebe

Abstract: This reflective account presents a personal narrative of the author's practices of addressing the social and political in and through drama. Drawing upon a critical reflection on this practice that lasted for twenty years, the author discusses how drama educators' identities, beliefs and past experiences influence their practice. She also interrogates the 'usefulness' of drama in bringing about real social changes in a highly political social environment.

Keywords: narrative inquiry, personal to social, political actions in Hong Kong, approaches to acting in TIE.

Personal context: A Person is Never an Individual

Summer 1999. University of Central England (UCE) in Birmingham.

I was studying for a master's degree in drama in education. During one of the workshops, my teacher David Davis gave us a play excerpt and asked us to interpret it employing a social rather than psychological approach. Holding the image of caged beast which I chose to represent in the play, I climbed onto a desk and used highly stylised movements to portray the character's state of being. After my presentation, David asked me, politely yet critically, 'But Phoebe, is it really a social approach?' Many years later, when I looked back at this experience, I realised that I had misunderstood my stylised, non-realist approach to acting as a social approach merely because it contrasted with psychological realism. Little did I know that I was simply amplifying the psychological state of the character instead of showing the social circumstances leading to the character's behaviour. I was focusing on the beast, but indeed, what was the cage?

When I was asked to contribute to this collection on the social/political in drama and theatre education, stories like the above came to mind. I decided to craft this paper through the sharing of personal narratives related to my drama practice which address the social and the political. In doing so, I take the stance of a narrative inquirer who believes that knowledge is embedded in lived experiences, and storytelling is a useful way for sharing such embodied knowledge. My personal narratives help articulate my understanding of the role of the social/political in drama and theatre education, and how this understanding has developed through the years. My stories are personal, but through the personal reveal the social. As Ferrarotti (2003) asserts, "A person is never an individual. It would be better to call them a *singular universe*. They [sic] are 'totalised' and at the same time universalised by their epoch..." (p. 35). The stories I share in this chapter are as much about 'Who I am' as 'What is happening in a drastically changing society like Hong Kong?' They portray my experiences and viewpoints in early 2019 before the most recent large-scale protest broke out in Hong Kong. Through my personal narratives from the specific cultural and societal environment of Hong Kong, I hope these stories resonate with readers to generate shared and sociological understandings.

The vignette I presented in the beginning of this paper marked a moment in my formative years in drama and theatre education when I started to ponder on the relationship between the personal and the social in drama and theatre education. Studying at the UCE enlightened me on the notion of drama as social intervention. That programme sparked over twenty years of exploration into the social and political role of drama. For instance, investigating notions of change by Dorothy Heathcote and Augusto Boal led to reflections on whether participants' changes within drama would/could extrapolate to real life circumstances. At that time I concluded that drama may change people's perceptions of social issues and empower individuals within the context of the drama activities, but real change after the drama may have to look after itself. Part of the challenge is a lack of instruments to measure the effects beyond the dramatic event.

Years afterwards, I realised that the relationship between drama and change in real life remains a key question I to this day ponder in my drama practice, and I am eternally grateful to David Davis for that critical stance. In the following narratives, I present my thoughts on how drama educators' identities, beliefs and past experiences influence their drama practice. I discuss the relationship between drama works and the real social context in which such works are situated.

Who Am I / Who Are We?

Our narrative identities are the stories we live by.
(McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006, p. 4)

An understanding of the narrator of the stories shared in this chapter may help readers contextualise their understanding of these stories. Narrating significant events in my professional life enables me to expound how I came to be a socially concerned drama educator and how my social concerns manifest in my drama practice. The life stories I share below are a subjective account of past events that I render meaningful in making sense of my identity and defining my personal beliefs and values.

My concerns towards social affairs developed as a result of engaging in social activism since I was an undergraduate student. The June Fourth Incident in Tiananmen Square in Beijing 1989¹, was a political awakening for many Hong Kong people of my generation, and I was no exception. I was a first year university student back then, and the incident urged me to ask an important question: 'If those young people in Beijing, most of them of a similar age as I, are ready to sacrifice their lives for social justice, what am I ready to give?' I graduated from university to take up a career in drama, and throughout my career, I kept asking myself what can I do for society as a drama practitioner. As such, my drama practice has always had a social aspect to it – be that in teaching English through drama, putting together a production with young people, or in practices more directly related to social, civic or community education.

In 2003, I started collaborating with Oxfam Hong Kong to develop a drama practice focused on global citizenship education. As a non-governmental organisation (NGO) concerned with poverty, Oxfam adopts a critical rather than soft approach to citizenship education. It regards social injustice as the cause of poverty and asserts that global citizenship education is not simply related to celebrating global diversity, but essentially dealing with justice, human rights and inequality. The drama programmes I developed with Oxfam call for critical interrogation about unequal power relations and structural causes of poverty. They also emphasise the commitment and capacity for taking actions to combat poverty. Over a decade of continual practice at Oxfam Hong Kong gave me the opportunity to experiment with and reflect upon how drama might become an effective social change agent within the circumstances of Hong Kong.

1 The June Fourth Incident was a student-led social movement in Beijing in 1989 demanding social reform, democracy and the rule of law. The movement resulted in a brutal crackdown of an untold number of unarmed civilians around the area of Tiananmen Square. Large scale protests and demonstrations were held in 1989 in Hong Kong in support of the movement. Until it was banned in 2020, a candlelight vigil was held every year in Hong Kong – the only place on Chinese soil that could openly stage mass commemorations of the event; in other places in China, memorials are forbidden.

Alongside my collaboration with Oxfam, I was also engaged in the professional development of drama educators. I took up the challenging job of convening and teaching the first award bearing programme in applied theatre and drama education in Hong Kong in 2004. Co-presented by Hong Kong Art School and Griffith University in Australia, the programme aimed at developing a critical mass of drama educators in Hong Kong – much needed at the time when the field of drama and theatre education was beginning to take shape in the city. As a consequence of strong collaboration between the academic staff from both institutions the programme was run for ten years with successful outcomes. Unfortunately, one day the university administration decided the programme was no longer financially viable and closed it. The Hong Kong teaching team quickly decided to launch a new programme; this time a one-year professional diploma which we deemed relevant to the ever-growing quest for professional knowledge and skills in the field. As our team were designing the new programme, I asked my colleagues, 'If there is one thing that we must keep from the old programme what should it be?' The answer was unequivocally the module entitled 'Drama, Education and Society' which prioritised the relationship between those concepts.

Our team regarded the social orientation of this programme as its unique feature. Lots of drama training in Hong Kong focused on (and many still do) individual competence, personal development and a narrow set of techniques. Our programme, however, emphasised the social role of drama and the impact drama brings to society. Students in our programmes acquired drama knowledge and skills alongside ideas such as critical pedagogy and concepts related to empowerment, social change and social development. Critical examination of the social causes of human behaviours were deemed as important as personal capacity and agency building. A graduate of our master's programme shared what she had acquired through her studies:

I gained a higher-ordered understanding of drama, seeing its relationship with the socio-political dimensions of our lives... This is important to me as a schoolteacher. We should not be bounded by the school systems 'like a frog in the well'². Besides our day-to-day teaching duties we should also consider our social responsibilities. (Cited in Chan & Dunn, 2016, p. 19, original in Chinese)

Another commented:

Many people used to think of drama only as a way of developing individual competence like communication skills, self-confidence, looking good on stage... etc. But our programme emphasised the impact of drama on a more social level, looking at drama's role other than dealing with the individual, psychological aspects of human life... The changing societal circumstances in Hong Kong is calling for stronger reconsiderations on what drama can do for society. (Cited in Chan & Dunn, 2016, p. 19, original in Chinese)

These graduates' remarks about the societal circumstances in Hong Kong specifically highlighted that socially oriented drama was relevant to the changing socio-political circumstances in Hong Kong. This includes the increased youth participation in social movements, the higher political maturity of the youth (Partaken, 2019), and the rise of a local Hong Kong identity amongst the younger generation (Wong et al., 2021).

2

A Chinese idiom used to describe someone with a narrow view of the world: A frog in the well is confined by the walls of the well and they can only see a tiny patch of the sky.

Against this background, there was growing recognition around the need for this kind of drama, and as a result our programmes were well-attended by social workers, NGO workers and teachers of social and liberal studies, amongst other participants. Together our students joined forces to devise drama projects to reach out to a range of participants and communities, dealing with diverse topics and social issues. Figure 1 shows a list of keywords about the purposes, contexts, participants and topics of our students' projects throughout the years.



Figure 1: Purposes, contexts, participants and topics explored in student projects of the two professional development programmes.

My work with Oxfam and the experience of teaching the master's and professional diploma programmes gave me solid opportunities for exploring the relationship between drama and social change. The experiences also urged me to consider several critical questions, ultimately inspired by the question raised in my youth referred to above: 'What am I ready to give for social justice?' This recurring question relates to the demands made on drama facilitators as they deal explicitly with the social aspects of drama. Another concerns the impact of our work on society: Is our work 'useful' or 'effective' within the larger context of our social and political lives?

What Demands does this Work make on Drama Facilitators?

My own experience of facilitating drama to unveil the social/political in our everyday lives, acknowledges that this work places multiple demands on the facilitator: artistically, pedagogically and in terms of their understanding of the social/political issues explored. In pursuit of deeper understanding about such practices, I embarked on doctoral research exploring two Theatre-in-Education (TIE) programmes conducted at Oxfam (Chan, 2017a). Through the research I endeavoured to make sense of how nine TIE actor-teachers, including myself, devised, performed and facilitated the interactive, issue-based TIE works. I identified a range of demands required of the TIE actor-teacher, including their capacity for:

1. Devising play text and designing TIE programme structures;
2. Performing in a play;
3. Facilitating processes of learning in and out of character;
4. Researching and understanding the subject matter of the TIE works;
5. Understanding and handling heuristic rather than transmissive approaches to teaching;
6. Managing content and form effectively to achieve the purpose and function of their works;
7. Understanding and adopting theatrical approaches that operate on the notion of distancing and non-naturalistic, presentational acting styles. (Chan, 2017a, p. 47)

Some participants in my research reported that they found dealing with the social issues extremely challenging. This was particularly the case for those who had come from an actor training background. They described that the conventional actor training they received in Hong Kong fell short in equipping them with the requisite knowledge and skills to conduct socially oriented drama programmes. For instance, one commented that during her undergraduate studies in acting, she was never asked to care about anything besides how to be an actor. She reported developing very little understanding about social affairs during her formative years. Another talked about how he and his classmates, when studying acting as students, were superficial and only cared about how they looked on stage rather than cultivating inner qualities. He also highlighted that they were taught to believe the job of interpreting a play was that of the director alone. As such, he struggled when devising TIE programmes, finding himself poorly equipped for managing content and artistic form effectively and choosing suitable theatrical approaches. Although not generalisable, it points towards an emphasis on psychological realism in actor training programmes in Hong Kong. Despite recent scholarship highlighting the value of intramedia, creativity and pedagogy for example, in areas such as language learning and theatre for young children (Tsang, Lam and Cheng, 2022), good acting in Hong Kong is typically seen as being totally immersed in character. Many people, including drama practitioners themselves, believe that good actors should just do and not think. I found these notions of acting unhelpful in developing a discourse for understanding acting in TIE in which actors mediate audience response in and out of character, between and betwixt. The conventional discourse about acting in Hong Kong tends to marginalise the artistry required in practising TIE and other forms of applied theatre (Chan, 2017b).

The situation motivated me to examine a body of literature on acting in my PhD study to understand how the relationship between the actor and the character has been discussed. The literature I drew on includes the works of Diderot, Stanislavski, Brecht, Schechner, Kirby, Grotowski, Barba, Brook and Gao Xin-Jian. The ideas of double consciousness, transparency, liminality, an actor being a character and an onlooker of the character at the same time, and the neutral actor that exists between the self and character, are variously addressed by these authors. These notions of acting helped me develop a discourse about the multiple existences of self and character that are at play in the TIE actor's practice, which typically explores social and/or political issues. As far as the TIE programmes at Oxfam were concerned, I found the complexity of the actor's artistry was heightened when a social justice agenda was in place. For example, one of the actors, who identified as a middle-class person benefiting from economic development, found herself struggling with playing the character of a person in poverty who suffered from the injustice brought about by economic development. 'Standing' in the shoes of another which typically defines the actor-teacher role, and not fully immersing oneself inside the protective veil of a character, resulted in this actor having a metaxic experience where both her real and fictional self were held in tension and demanded that she reflect on the social, political, and economic realities that had shaped both her life and that of the person she was presenting in the TIE play. Another actor reported that four selves were simultaneously in play as she was facilitating one of the TIE works, namely:

- I am a drama educator who believes in heuristic approaches to teaching;
- I am a staff member of an NGO and I feel pressured in adopting an advocacy (rather than educational) approach;
- I am the daughter of a business person who is benefiting from neo-liberal economics;
- I play the character of a girl in poverty, and I feel obliged to portray the character responsibly because this person exists in real life.

The research helped me develop a more articulate understanding about the actor's practice in interactive, issue-based TIE works and its importance in presenting a social rather than psychological approach as David Davis urged many years ago. I deem this task important because I believe that culture is reconstituted through our actions, reflections and our language. How we behave, speak about and reflect on our practices shapes and influences how we understand and talk about them. By developing a practice and accompanying language acknowledging the complexity and multiple layers of our artistry as socially and politically aware drama practitioners who mediate the fiction and the real, we move closer to what Davis (2014) exhorts us to do: to confront the social and political forces operating within and around us. In that way, evoking "the opportunity to find one's relationship to those social forces thus providing an opening for us each to create our own humanness" (Davis, 2014, p. 10).

Is our Work 'Useful' or 'Effective' beyond the Drama Space?

As promised at the outset of this chapter, the interplay of key questions emanating from my early experiences of studying with Davis, has shaped this narrative reflection on my life journey so far as a drama teacher. The final question I keep asking myself through the years is concerned with how our work impacts on society: Is it useful in bringing about social change? If so, to what extent? Indeed, prompted by Davis' work, I am encouraged to ask: Is drama necessary to impact social change? Arguably, these are questions many Hong Kong drama practitioners find ever more pressing in view of the changing political climate in Hong Kong referred to earlier.

I will recall an incident that happened one evening in September 2012. At that time, a large-scale student-initiated anti-government protest was taking place. I was working on a book on drama and global citizenship education. One evening, as I was proofreading the manuscripts, some secondary school students started a hunger strike. I read it from the news and felt obliged to answer their call for more people to take to the streets. However, I could not, since it was the final day to meet the printing deadline. As I was proofreading the manuscripts, in tears, I questioned myself: 'What is the use of publishing this book when there is real social action taking place out there and a real battle to fight?' At that moment, I considered the drama work we do too soft within the big picture of people's real lives.

A softer approach used to be relevant, however. The young people I had worked with over the preceding 10 years were more prone to adopting a softer approach to social action – donating money for charity, sharing views or spreading messages about the news, and so on. Villanueva and O'Sullivan (2020a, 2020b) have conceptualised this 'softer' approach as a necessary first step towards realising a critical pedagogical stance in the classroom with teachers and students. In Hong Kong, protests, or even signing petitions used to be seen by many as 'unnecessarily radical' (Chan, 2013). However, this student-initiated movement in 2012 was different from previous actions. Never had I heard so many of the young people I was working with say, 'I can do something to make a difference'. These were the words I received directly from nearly ten thousand young students who participated in a 'wear black in protest' campaign that my friends and I initiated.

The campaign originally aimed to involve only our immediate circle of friends and was ad hoc in nature. We called for a dress in black action on the first day of the school year to take a stand against the government's proposal of a new education policy. Then we decided to start a Facebook group to ask more people to join, suggesting that people post their black dress photos onto the group to make our voice stronger. We were soon contacted by many secondary students who told us that they wished to join the campaign too, but they could not wear black at school. So an option of wearing black ribbons was provided. Students used to be invited to hang a black ribbon with the words 'no brainwashing' on their school bags on the first school day. A template for making the ribbon was provided, and the template was soon modified by young students who actively considered more facilitating designs to call for participation – from one strap to six, then eleven (so one can give them out to others); from Chinese to bilingual (so students of different backgrounds could join).

Someone even put together a full instruction sheet (see Figure 2). In just a few days, the number of members in the group rose to over twelve thousand. Photos of black dress and black ribbons kept pouring in. As an administrator of the group I witnessed a hopefulness and active social participation I had never come across in over a decade's drama practice in global citizenship education work with young people. This left me with further questions about the role of drama in social action, and what constitutes action.

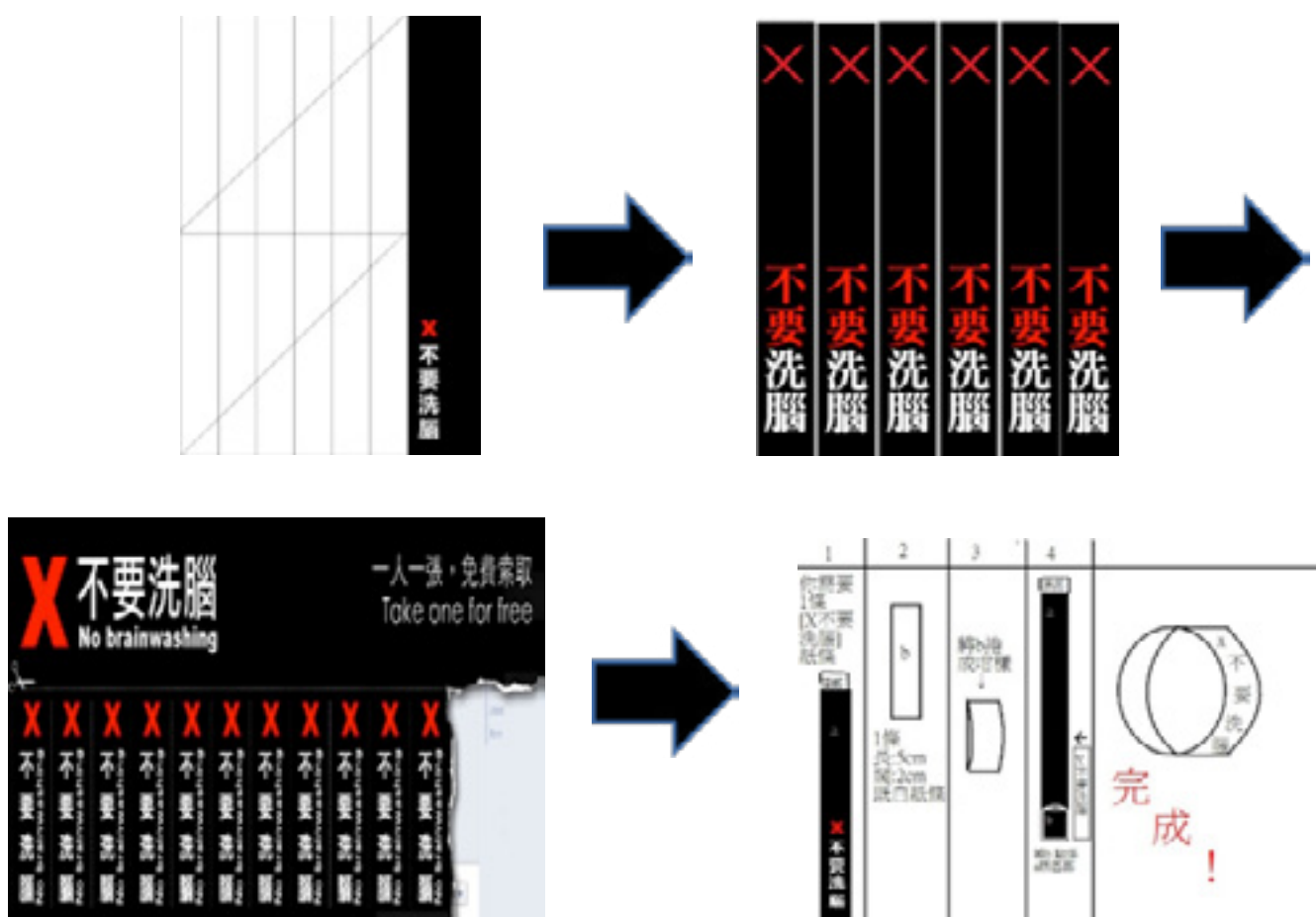


Figure 2: The evolution of the black ribbon template

Clearly drama work about the social/political and direct social action operate on different planes. I am not suggesting that the usefulness of our drama work should be determined by whether direct social action must come about as a result. I am, however, conscious of how the socio-political climate in a society influences drama educators' attitudes, the stances they take and the way they see the usefulness of their work. As discussed in the previous sections, 'who we are' influences what and how we practise. What we experience in the real world contributes to the multiple existences we bring into our work.

At the time when these stories were first presented in March 2019, Hong Kong people were facing a dark political climate. We saw ourselves participating in more protests and social activities, yet the results seemed futile. The Umbrella Movement in 2014 failed to yield the electoral rights China originally promised. In turn, it brought about serious protester-fatigue and intense divide between the pro-Movement and anti-Movement camps. Five years into the Umbrella Movement, we were witnessing how the ever-strengthening totalitarian rule of China was causing rapid erosion of our democratic rights, legal rights, freedom and human rights. There was a general sense of powerlessness in the city and amongst the younger generation. To talk about the social/political in drama works had become more challenging than ever because of the acute polarisation in political opinions and the general sense of hopelessness. A related challenge was: Do we as educators see hope in this situation? How do we move on with our work when we, like our participants, can be overwhelmed with a strong sense of powerlessness and futility? Some educators are more optimistic. Partaken (2019) applies a Deweyian (1944) perspective of the public and sees political participation and citizenship as necessary for self-realisation. His research gave voice to 100 student protagonists in the Umbrella Movement (UM) in 2014, who shared their views during or shortly after the movement. These students found a sense of agency and empowerment like those participating in the aforementioned 'wear black ribbon' campaign, but demonstrated much stronger political maturity and self-determination. Partake conceptualizes that whilst there was understandably a post action weariness after the extended protests, for the UM students, with their problems unresolved, 'The seeds of the UM were never destroyed; they were dispersed and are now growing from within' (Partaken, 2019, p. 221). He finds hope in seeing the future of Hong Kong in these young people's hands.

A Story of Hope... To Be Continued

Working in drama from a socially and politically aware stance, valorises the importance of empathetic, collective and engaged practices in laying the seeds for 'thinking anew' and differently, and fostering the practice of criticality. (Villanueva and O'Sullivan, 2023)

The last story I would like to share with you came from a conversation with my friends in 2019. We were members of a play-reading group preparing for a staged reading of Edward Bond's playscript *Chair*. In planning for a reflective activity for the audience after the reading of the play, my friend and I discussed the meaning of the story. Alice, the protagonist in the story, insisted on doing acts of kindness and humanness despite those acts no longer being permitted in the 2077 society the play portrays. My friend and I discussed whether it is a hopeful story. I tended to disagree, as I thought that Alice, despite her good deeds, had not moved the system or changed how people around her deal with the system. As such, I did not see the story leading to any hope. My friend disagreed. She saw that holding onto humanness despite a dehumanising system is a hopeful outcome whether it brings visible changes or not.

I pondered her words and thought: Perhaps that is where Hong Kong people should stand during the low tides of social movements - holding our faith and conscience no matter how difficult the situation is and regardless of the 'usefulness' of what we do. Perhaps, like a little plant growing out of cracked soil, all we can do is to persist even when the odds are not in our favour, fighting even when the battle seems futile. This way, at least, we live our humanness despite an unknown future.

My narrative for this article originally ended here. However, while writing this speech for publication sometime after I delivered it, an anti-extradition protest broke out in Hong Kong. The key players in this movement, a new generation of young people, demonstrated a courage and determination hardly noticeable over previous years. Their innovative, leaderless and fluid approach to protest, the use of online platforms for communication and decision making, and the deployment of evolutionised protest forms (Chan & Pun, 2020; Urman et al., 2021) had left experienced activists in awe. Perhaps extreme hopelessness breeds hopes. Perhaps under the cracked soil strong roots of the little plant quietly take hold. But with rigorous resistance also came brutal repression. The aftermath of the protests saw the mass arrest of protesters, erosion of civil society and suppression of dissent, resulting in a vastly different social landscape in Hong Kong: a landscape which has made it unsafe for me to continue living there and I have since relocated to the United Kingdom. What implications these changes have on my drama practice is too soon to be discussed. Perhaps, after all, we manage our multiple identities differently at different times. There are times when it is more important to focus on our role as active citizens first. What the experience might bring to our role as drama educators is something we can only make sense of in the time to come. And my questions continue to come, but with an optimism and openness inspired by fellow drama practitioners, my students, and the critically encouraging voice and inspiration of David Davis.

References

- Chan, D. S. W., & Pun, N. (2020). Economic power of the politically powerless in the 2019 Hong Kong pro-democracy movement. *Critical Asian Studies*, 52(1), pp. 33-43.
- Chan, Y. L. P. (2013). Drama and global citizenship education: Planting seeds of social conscience and action. In M. Anderson and J. Dunn (Eds.), *How drama activates learning* (pp. 76-91). Bloomsbury.
- Chan, Y. L. P. (2017a). *Making Sense of a Complex Artistry: A Narrative Inquiry of TIE Actors' Practice in Two Issue-based, Interactive Theatre-in-Education Works*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Griffith University.
- Chan, Y. L. P. (2017b). Considering the actor's artistry at a time of political change in Hong Kong. *Research in Drama Education*, 22(4), pp. 515-518.
- Chan, Y. L. P., & Dunn, J. (2016). Passion, partnership, power and persistence: The rise and fall of a transnational drama programme. *The Journal of Drama and Theatre Education in Asia*, 6(1), pp. 9-26.
- Dewey, J. (1944). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. The Free Press.
- Ferrarotti, F. (2003). *On the science of uncertainty: The biographical method in social research*. Lexington Books.
- McAdams, D. P., Josselson, R., & Lieblich, A. (Eds.). (2006). *Identity and story: Creating self in narrative*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Partaken, J. [pseudonym] (2019). Listening to students about the Umbrella Movement of Hong Kong. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 51(2), pp. 212-222.
- Tsang, S. C. S., Lam, C. Y., & Cheng, L. (2022). Intermedia and interculturalism: practitioners' perspectives on an interactive theatre for young ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 22(2), pp. 141-154.
- Urman, A., Ho, J. C-t., & Katz, S. (2021). Analyzing protest mobilization on Telegram: The case of 2019 Anti-Extradition Bill movement in Hong Kong. *PLoS ONE* 16(10), e0256675. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0256675
- Villanueva, C., & O'Sullivan, C. (2020a). Drama in education as a form of critical pedagogy: Democratising classrooms in Chile. *ArtsPraxis*, 7 (2b), pp. 92-115.
- Villanueva, C., & O'Sullivan, C. (2020b). Dramatic codifications: possibilities and roadblocks for promoting critical reflection through drama in Chile. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, DOI: 10.1080/13569783.2020.1783994
- Villanueva, C., & O'Sullivan, C. (2023, forthcoming). On the pathway to critical consciousness: fostering critical thinking through drama in a Chilean 'vulnerable' school. In Ware, V. (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Arts and Global Development*. Routledge.
- Wong, K. T. W., Zheng, V., & Wan, P. S. (2021). Local versus national identity in Hong Kong, 1998-2017. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 51(5), pp. 803-827.

Chapter 11

Introducing Drama in Education to Mainland China

Li Yingning

Abstract: A personal story exploring practices of drama in education which informed the early development of the art form in mainland China. LI Yingning's story is both personal and professional and reflects the complication of exploring an essentially open and democratic way of teaching in a socially and educationally quite rigid modern society.

Keywords: drama in education in China, Li Yingning, Drama Rainbow, Shanghai Theatre Academy, theatre in education in China.

It is acknowledged that the origin of mainland China's involvement in 'drama in education' begins from my visit to IDEA¹ in 1995 as the only Chinese delegate. I was not familiar with the forms of drama which were shared during the conference, particularly the forms shared by Augusto Boal. With the help of the Hong Kong delegates, I interviewed him for two hours and this became the very first article which illustrates the kind of community theatre that we talk about today in China (Li, 1995). In the next year, I received an invitation from David Davis to attend the summer school he ran in Birmingham and from there began my journey over the past 27 years of studying Drama in Education (DIE) and Theatre in Education (TIE), and which continues to this day. This also opened a window for mainland China to the world of educational drama.

Between 1996 and 2000, I wrote a series of articles and essays to introduce the art form of drama in the classroom. I struggled to absorb what was being taught in the summer school and my limited English made this process quite difficult. It took me another ten years to master English while learning the essence of Drama in Education. During this time, I also invited experienced teachers and tutors from all over the world to Shanghai. David Davis was one of them. Connecting and collaborating with others forms the basis of our present mechanism for research and practice in the field. This involves institutions such as the Shanghai Theatre Academy, East China Normal University, the University of Bergen, and so on. All three institutions still collaborate on excellent student exchange programmes.

1 The International Drama, Theatre and Education Association (IDEA) was founded in 1992 in Porto, Portugal and held its second world congress in Brisbane, Australia in 1995 which attracted almost 1,500 delegates from all over the world. IDEA provides an international forum for communicating about, promoting and advocating for drama, theatre and education in schools, colleges, communities and all fields of endeavour.

In 2005 I founded Jing An Workshop which is an organisation that works with elderly pensioners. In the same year Shanghai Theatre Academy established a drama education course which engaged with the performative aspect only and did not contain any theory on learning or the hybrid nature of theatre and learning. The problem of understanding the relationship between drama, theatre and learning has also brought ambiguity in the language we use. Up to this time we didn't have linguistic unity between simplified Chinese and traditional Chinese in the use of terms in our field. So, I engaged with colleagues from Hong Kong, Taiwan and other Chinese speaking communities in unifying the uses of relevant DiE and TiE terms in Chinese. In 2007 IDEA held its 6th triennial congress in Hong Kong. Our efforts to make Mandarin one of its official languages failed. Our frustration and confusion brought several more engaged organisations to the practice. We realised that we had to have our voice heard through practice and it is practice only that can take us to the next level. The practice at that time in mainland China came almost entirely from the private sector. Our efforts in advocacy had not been acknowledged by any officials nor public schools. Universities only recognised drama's commercial value, that of offering them more opportunities for recruiting more students. Apart from a few notable exceptions, the quality of their teaching has been poor in this area. There has been however, a glimmer of light during this evolving period which is that of the student exchange programme between Shanghai Theatre Academy and the University of Bergen, Norway.

Up to about 2008, apart from my non-profit TiE company in Shanghai, which wasn't very active nationally, and very few other project-based companies there haven't been many organisations that systematically researched and practiced DiE in mainland China. A few of those mentioned above were exploring their own ways of working which was mainly influenced by improvisational practice in Taiwan and Hong Kong particularly through their publications. Some years later Cao Xi gave me his translation of David Davis' *Imagining the Real* (2017) and I realised the need to develop a new practice that is not 'conventions'² driven, but at the time conventions were almost the only tools we had. Most drama facilitators relied on a limited range of drama and theatre games and activities which had involved little or no investment from participants, little depth or belief in the drama work being undertaken, and were regarded by children, parents and teachers alike as 'fun' enjoyable activities but not a form of serious education and experiential learning. Moreover, education in mainland China suffers greatly from a low national budget, considerable gaps between the resources, levels of teacher education and class sizes in schools in the cities and those in the countryside, and an elitist approach towards education which marginalises the majority. Intense competition for a limited number of university places, particularly courses in high-ranking institutions further compounds the challenge of introducing drama in schools. For many years, Drama or any art form was entirely missing in the curriculum.

When Drama Rainbow, a privately supported arts centre was founded in 2008 by Wei Wang in Beijing and supported by me, mainlanders had struggled up to this point to maintain a relatively consistent practice in DiE. Drama Rainbow had a vision for developing such a practice. Since then, it has developed a thorough understanding of the historical and contemporaneous understanding of drama in education in the UK and elsewhere in the world, hugely supported by David Davis in the early days, and subsequently by Chris Cooper and Carmel O'Sullivan on David's recommendation. This realisation, if not achievement, has created for the first time in mainland China and arguably in other Chinese speaking communities, many practices and theories through its weekly drama based lessons, TiE programmes, public forums and presentations, media exposure, website and online resources, conferences and translated documents and materials, and since 2014 its partnership scheme with schools and other educational organisations based on a devised Creative Curriculum. Along with Drama Rainbow and Marphy's Playhouse in Chengdu which is influenced and supported by Joe Winston, there are several drama centres that claim to apply DiE methods whose assertions require validation.

2 Conventions here refers to a form of practice which relies on drama strategies and techniques often drawn from Neelands and Goode (2000).

However, one noticeable feature of these centres is that they are all developed in the private sector which, in my opinion, is the distinctive feature of this period. Why is this so? As alluded to above, the State has a systematic and thorough control over the outcomes of education, which are extremely academically driven and contain a very limited range of subjects. The private sector offers centres like Drama Rainbow with no inspections or interference. Until at least the time this article is being written, progressive child-centred approaches are only evident in the private sector and I regret the lack of DIE's presence in State schools.

In this context, I founded the Li Yingning Drama and Education Development Centre which began to explore models for teacher training. The influence of Hong Kong and Taiwan have massively decreased because of their decline in innovations due to a lack of support from local authorities following the worldwide economic and political crisis which has also eroded DIE's influence in the UK and elsewhere. This global and regional backdrop significantly reduced the dominant influence of IDEA and other international organisations and the field is extremely lacking globally in financial support and resources. Connecting with teachers and educators directly proved to be the only way to impact classroom practices in China. Following the success, albeit on a relatively small scale of my work, Drama Rainbow and a few other similar organisations began to offer teacher training courses and programmes to build interest and capacity in DIE in Chinese mainstream classrooms. Interest is definitely building and increasingly teachers and educators travel to places such as Trinity College Dublin and the University of Warwick to deepen their knowledge and expertise in DIE and TIE.

As the second largest economy in the world, over the last six years China appears to be starting to play a more active role in this new period of growth. The founding of the International Drama and Education Congress (IDEC)³ and China Theatre Literature Association's (CTLA) Conference on Drama and Education have marked its success in organising international and regional gatherings, though the ethos and level of knowledge of drama in education at both conferences needs to be further developed. Publications have emerged in simplified Chinese with O'Sullivan's series (2016, 2017) and Davis' book (2017) being translated. O'Sullivan's three books for early years teachers were written especially for teachers in China who are new to DIE and they incorporate a cross-curricular approach to introducing DIE to mainstream Chinese classrooms built around on the content and skills required in the Chinese curriculum.

China has begun to explore and find its own identity in educational drama/theatre. The major challenge in this context is that of form and content. Many schools still regard drama in education as something of a performance driven product. Under an extremely rigid education system this is a very welcomed form, because it doesn't really challenge the teacher centred environment. The control is still there. Yet what Drama Rainbow advocates and what is captured in O'Sullivan's books is a totally different approach, which acknowledges the demands and realities of classroom life for busy teachers but shows them a different way to engage with their students. The challenge though seems to be in encouraging teachers, parents and students to take time to invest in the rigour of DIE's practice which sometimes seems too much for our existing consumerist buy one get one free culture. I am aware from speaking with other DIE teachers and advocates that a similar context exists in their countries. This runs the risk of de-professionalising our hard working and committed teachers who are in danger of becoming passive 'deliverers of the curriculum' rather than active critical enablers and facilitators of 'a mediated curriculum' to meet the needs locally of their learners. We need to be mindful of placing too many demands on our teachers and find creative ways to support them incrementally as they start to explore other ways of being and teaching in their classrooms.

3 IDEC (International Drama Education Congress) was officially authorized by the Ministry of Education of PRC as an international platform to conduct drama education in 2016, directed by Beijing Foreign Studies University and hosted by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. In 2017, IDEC officially became a member of IDEA and is the only partner on the mainland. IDEC explores the important role of drama education in the aesthetic education of primary and secondary schools, and from 2018 has been working on key projects supported by the Ministry of Education on 'Chinese Ideology and Culture Terminology Dramatic Classroom' and 'Practical Study on the Dramatic Teaching of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture' to further explore the teaching of traditional culture by means of innovative drama education.

In 2015 drama was mentioned as part of 'Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Enhancing and Improving Aesthetic Education'. Wang Guodong (2021) refers to its emphasis on both students' artistic abilities but also as importantly, the concepts of interdisciplinarity and daily-life aesthetics where students are encouraged to think about their own lives as well as other lives in nature. The challenge is that the practice is still largely neglected in most schools. There is no national funding to support the field, no guidelines for developing the pedagogical and methodological aspects associated with the practice. It has been almost 30 years since DIE was introduced to mainland China and the development of our own practice is still largely carried by small companies in the private sector. What Drama Rainbow has been doing and continues to do is at least the equivalent of a social enterprise with no funding support.

In the summer of 2015, we decided not to wait any longer and founded a training centre now called the Jian Xue International Culture and Education Institute. Up to date, there have been almost 4000 participants from more than 13 provinces who have been part of this new vision. Our vision is to create a Chinese speaking Asian centre of creativity that offers artistic and educational experience to children and young people, and training and research for artists and educationalists, in order to develop creativity and independence of thought and action in the next generation in 21st century China. Our work in this Institute is to prepare the citizens of the future, mainly through play, drama and theatre.

Closing reflection

I see educational drama and theatre as a development of the art of dialogue. Drama has not been part of our education for a long period although we used to have a great tradition in the early 1920s and 1930s of using dramatic art in classrooms. There is a great amount for us to do and create. The new generation of Chinese youth will break the shameful of the label 'made in China'. They are moving towards 'created in China'. But they can only achieve this by being given enough space for them to take shared ownership and responsibility for their own learning and lives. It is both physical and mental space. What drama faces is merely a reflection of a much bigger crisis where that mental and material space is heavily virtualized if not almost disappeared. This is not pessimistic but it certainly makes all of our personal decisions more important than ever.

References

- Davis, D. (2017). *Imagining the Real*. Renmin University Press.
- Li, Y. (1995). 'Community theatre and the worlds'. *The Journal of Dramatic Art*, April.
- Neelands, J., & Goode, T. (2000). *Structuring Drama Work*. 2nd edition. Cambridge University Press.
- O'Sullivan, C., & Price, N. (2016). Practical Guide to Planning Drama in Education. *Creative Learning for 3-5 year old children*. Renmin University Press.
- O'Sullivan, C., & Price, N. (2016). *Practical Guide to Planning Drama in Education. Creative Learning for 5-7 year old children*. Renmin University Press.
- O'Sullivan, C. (2017). *Practical Guide to Planning Drama in Education. Creative Learning for 7-8 year old children*. Renmin University Press.
- Wang Guodong (2021). Schools should enhance aesthetic education. *Chinese Social Sciences Today*, 1st June. Available at: <http://www.csstoday.com/Item/8601.aspx>

Chapter 12

David Davis' Legacy: Friend and Mentor to Drama in Education in Turkey

Selen Korad Birkiye

Abstract: In its centenary year, having been established in 1923, this chapter presents a brief socio-political history of education in Republican Turkey in order to contextualise the impact of the drama in education workshops offered by David Davis on the professionals and students he worked with. Adopting a largely descriptive approach, the aim is not to provide easy answers to difficult questions but rather to raise questions which require consideration. In the first part of this paper, three thresholds of social engineering methods using education for forming Turkish society and other super structure apparatuses are described chronologically. The second part focuses on Davis' distinctive role in shaping the political standing of drama facilitators in a determined political and ideological structure underpinning education in Turkey. Although secondary resources are used in the first part of the chapter, the second is written mostly from primary resources and personal experience to review Davis' workshops in Turkey and their impact on teachers, DIE facilitators and students.

Keywords: social engineering, education, ideological state apparatuses, neoliberalism, critical thinking, David Davis.

Personal context

Education and especially drama in education have been problematic concepts in Turkey for some time. But it is not possible to talk about either the current education system or drama in education without discussing three thresholds in the history of the Turkish Republic. Governments worldwide use the educational system as a form of social engineering, a tool for shaping society (see Kumar, 2021; Hove and Matashu, 2021; Chiang, 2001). But ideology is not a fixed phenomenon, it can change depending on the dynamics, needs, and social, political and economic climate influencing the ruling elite. Increasingly, social engineering can also be found online through social media platforms and is attributed to manipulation and considerable interference in young people's lives (Al-Thani, 2022). Some commentators describe it as creating a battleground for young people's character formation and cultural identities (Miladi, 2016). In Turkey, the major influencers of state ideology and reshaping projects can be presented as follows:

1. **Foundation ideology of the Republic (1923-1940)**
2. **Turkish-Islam synthesis of the military coup and neoliberalism (1980-2001)**
3. **Conservative democracy (2001-2013) and then authoritarian conservatism of AKP, Justice and Welfare Party (2013-2023).**

Before discussing DIE and Davis' impact in Turkey, it is important to focus on what I describe as social engineering politics in operation in Turkey's education system.

Education and Ideology

'Who am I?' and 'Who can tell me who I am?' These words are not only poetic, but existential for modern people. After the enlightenment and rise of individualism identity became one of the most important problems for human beings. Once upon a time one's tribe, then religion, social class or cast, then ethnicity or nation state, then different social groups etc., all tried to give answers to people about their identity. In time, the answers got more and more complicated. But something remained unchanged: the existence of the other's labelling of one's own identity. Research suggests that the development of individual identity is linked to (a) personal factors, (b) interaction in family, education and work settings, and (c) socio-structural levels connected to the social, political, cultural and economic systems that make up the structure of a society (Shanahan, 2009). However, where people have control and agency over their actions, and engage in their own growth and development to develop direction and meaning in their lives, they are better equipped to negotiate life's trajectories (Côté & Schwartz, 2002; Côté 1997, 2018). Garzón-Rojas et al. (2022) found that active agentic responses better support the process of identity development rather than passive responses.

I contend that Turkish society never got past the evolution of enlightenment, industrialisation and the rise of the modern person as an independent autonomous subject (see Korad Birkiye, 2009). In the Ottoman Empire, the answer to the existential question of 'Who am I?', was clear for its public. Independent of ethnic, religious or language differences amongst people, all were regarded as subjects of the Sultan. But with the foundation of the Turkish Republic different notions were laden onto citizens' shoulders, depending on the ideological direction of the State at any given time. So, often bearing little or no relationship to the reality of the identity of individuals, the State tried to reshape society and the characteristics of the people in a common pool, not in a gradual process but enacted through short term policies and politics. It is therefore quite difficult for many Turkish people to respond to the existential question of 'Who am I?' From this point of view, the changing ideology and social engineering designs of Turkish politics on the people can be summarized as follows.

The foundation ideology of the Turkish Republic is called Kemalism, and its first aim was to rebuild a nation based on republican and secular values (Saylan and Özdikmenli Çelikoğlu, 2020). In order to abandon the old lifestyle and conservative perspective of the Ottoman Empire, a modern secular state with a positivist mentality and jurisprudence was put into practice (Al-Kissimi, 2021). Positivism here referring to knowledge of human reason, science, social progress and culture to explain, dominate and order society (Comte, 1844). Social and cultural reforms were executed from the superstructure to the infrastructure of society. So, while the acceptance of the Swiss Civil Code, western dress codes, calendar, metric system and Latin alphabet were accepted (see Fig. 1), religious sects and their converts were prohibited (Korad Birkiye, 2009). Education and the performing arts were the most important state apparatuses of the new Republic. For Althusser, the ruling class controls the superstructure with two apparatuses: repressive and ideological. Ideological apparatuses are the shields behind the ethics and morality of the state and are always dominated by the ruling ideology. Education is at the core of these state apparatuses (Althusser, 2019).



Fig 1.
Mustafa Kemal Atatürk introducing the
Latin alphabet.

So Kemalist ideology considered education as a new state apparatus (in neo-Marxist terms) as opposed to the religion of the Ottoman Empire, in order to reshape modern Turkey and its subjects. In order to do this several steps were introduced to society: unification of the education law; abolition of theological schools (madrassahs); abolition of the Arabic alphabet and introduction of the Latin alphabet; increasing the number of primary schools; opening public schools for teaching reading and writing; opening public buildings in cities for arts and all kinds of life long education; increasing the numbers of secondary and high schools; modernising university laws and opening several universities and conservatoria (Doğramaci, 1985). All these changes were enacted in less than a decade. Political direction and support were given to teachers who were to instruct in the new republican ideology. The opening of village institutes focusing on training teachers familiar with scientific agriculture methods, as well as equipped with a wide range of scientific and cultural information to educate farmers, was one of the most prominent developments in the 1940s. It was a radical practice for reducing inequality between rural and urban areas in terms of education (Uygun, 2016). However, due to rising reactions of big landlords, as well as opposition from the conservative wing of government? The Kemalist inspired education model was abolished. This may be the threshold of Turkish society losing an important opportunity for a mass education revolution in the country.

In the first 20 years of the Republic, theatre studies in schools were very popular. Especially in the Village Institutes, western classical plays as well as student plays were performed. Hundreds of new plays were written both in Western and traditional Turkish theatre forms and performed in the public buildings in the cities (Baltacıoğlu, 1950). On the other hand, some theatre professionals were invited to the public buildings from Europe to give seminars on topics such as Shakespeare, playwriting and principles of dramaturgy (Karadağ, 1982). In an emerging literate society performing arts and especially theatre was considered as one of the most powerful tools for educating people (Korad Birkiye, 2009).

Following the one-party period (1923-1945), Turkey entered a new stage called multi-party democracy. In the first three decades of the Republic, the CHP (Republican Public Party) was the only party and tried to fulfil its position as founder of the Republic's mission. In that period the Turkish Republic was ruled by military ex-commanders of the Independence War; firstly M. Kemal Atatürk and then İsmet İnönü. The winner of the first multi-party elections in 1950 was the Democrat Party whose supporters were mostly big landlords and conservatives. After this period the only consistent tendency of Turkey has been towards public support for right wing parties despite some military interventions (a coup in 1960 and 1971) and short coalition periods of the so called 'social democrat' CHP. The foundation phase involving social engineering in the Turkish Republic has been gradually eroded by right wing parties since the 1950s.

Second threshold: Turkish-Islam synthesis of the military coup and neoliberalism (1980-2001)

The second social engineering attempt in Turkish society arguably began in the 1980s. The military coup in 1980 (see Fig. 2) and neoliberal wave later introduced by the Motherland Party (ANAP) and its leader Turgut Özal changed the path of Turkey radically. The military coup prepared a new official ideology: a sort of Turkish-Islam synthesis. In that period a new interpretation of Kemalism came into existence: "Atatürkçülük" which was a strange combination of Islam and Kemalist ideology.



Fig 2.
12 September 1980, Turkish military coup and its results.

During the military governance (1980-'83), the education system was badly damaged in terms of linking all universities to a state agency, the Higher Education Council, responsible for controlling all kinds of social and academic activities and programmes as well as for organising the dismissal or force resignation of many university professors because of their perceived leftist or different world views¹. Obligatory lessons such as Islam religion, national security and Kemalist reforms were added to the secondary and high schools' curricula during this period. Until the 1980 coup religion and morality lessons were separate from mainstream education, but after that time both were combined in the same lesson. Another fundamental part of the reforms was that Kemalism became a critical point of reference and Atatürk's name and doctrines were present in every subject on the curriculum by order of the military government (Inal, 2008).

With the transition to the leadership of Turgut Özal in the 1980s, swift economic changes resulted from his neoliberalist and reformist agenda where radical economic transformation was enacted within broadly democratic organisations (Öniş, 2004). In the post-military coup period, Turkey began to practice a neoliberal system. However, neoliberalism is now recognised as posing one of the biggest dangers in the world for humanity. As the last phase of capitalism its basic principles are; narrowing financial activities of national and international regulations; desisting from all social welfare practices of the state for the wellbeing of the public; liberation of capital creating a spontaneous rule of market mechanism and globalisation of the system (Acar, 2017). As it is understood from this definition, neoliberalism imposes a world view in which the only ethic is the self-interest of individuals, companies or nations and money. In such a system all the humanitarian values which typify Turkish culture, from caring for others, to preserving nature; from providing honourable living conditions for every human being, to evoking the potential of intellectual and emotional capacity of children were ignored or destroyed. In this system, the government's education, health and arts policies reflected an approach of withdrawing from the welfare state's norms.

The third threshold: Conservative democracy (2001-2013) and then authoritarian conservatism of AKP, Justice and Welfare Party (2013-2023)

In failing to develop strong institutional and legal infrastructure necessary for the transparent and effective operation of a market-oriented economy, Özal, like his Latin American predecessors, tried to lead from the top down and this opened the door to corruption. Neoliberalism is an innately conservative system and to preserve the status quo, it advances conservative values - from restricting the rights of women to secular or liberal ways of thinking. By the time Özal, a moderate Islamist, stepped aside in 1989, political instability and corruption were rife in Turkish society. The rise of religious conservatism and fascist nationalism quickly deepened (Inal, 2008) in the 1990s. By the time the Islamist right wing party AKP (Justice and Improvement Party) won the elections in Turkey in 2002, conservative Islam ideology was already well rooted in all government branches. AKP call their political line 'conservative democracy' (Öztürk, 2014). And in the first

1 Martial law number 1402 was the legal base for dismissing them.

decade of its governance, the power and influence of the military over Turkish society was destroyed by two big discrediting operations: 'Ergenekon' and 'Balyoz' (Tisdall, 2012). Over a period of several years (2007-2013), military personnel were imprisoned under allegations of plotting a coup. These cases focusing on alleged anti-government plots, profoundly changed Turkish politics by significantly reducing the possibility of military interference in politics, and removing potential opponents to Prime Minister Erdoğan and his current government (Yildez, 2013). A perception of the government as largely progressive shifted at this time to one of authoritarianism (Cook, 2016). After that, AKP began to discredit and annihilate its opponents, from the Gezi Park protests which began "as a demonstration to save green spaces, but became an outpouring of anger over police brutality, crony capitalism, and the arrogance of power" (Cook, 2016) to the dispute with the Gülenists (former powerful political partners until 2013) over Prime Minister Erdoğan's closure of their prep schools which funded the movement (Aydıntaşbaş, 2016).

When reviewed between 2002 and 2019, the AKP had changed Turkey's education system 15 times by seven ministers, destabilising education, and steering away from Atatürk's secularist approach (Kadioğlu, 2021). In this process, the quality of compulsory education has decreased gradually, significantly reflected in the results of international examinations such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), where Turkey ranks well below the OECD average (OECD report, 2018). While most of the public schools have been transformed to religious schools (Imam Hatip schools), the number of secular public schools decreased drastically. As a result, the principle of egalitarianism in education has been eroded. People who don't want to send their children to religious schools have to send them to expensive private schools or underfunded vocational or science schools (funding for Imam Hatip schools was 15 times that of funding allocated for the construction of science high schools, Kadioğlu, 2021). In May 2019, a new curriculum was introduced, and maths, philosophy and history courses became electives after 12th grade, but Islam religion courses are compulsory for secondary and high school education.

... higher education, as well as middle and high school education, have evolved significantly under the rule of Erdogan and the AKP, who have, evidently, been engineering the educational system of Turkey based on their long-term political agenda. With an educational system engineered solely through political desires, it will eventually be challenging for Turkey to find the qualified, competent cadres that it desperately requires in the midst of the economic and social crises that loom over the nation.
(Kadioğlu, 2021)

Encompassed within the third threshold of Turkey's recent history is the coup attempt on 15 July 2016. Authoritarianism, antidemocratic practices and the judicial system's loss of independence subsequently led to tremendous insecurity and fear in society. One of the targets of these antidemocratic practices was the dismissal of thousands of teachers from compulsory educational institutions and universities. 23,427 academics lost their jobs in only one year after the failed coup (Öztürk, 2017). Criticising the government is one of the most punished 'crimes' in Turkey (Shaheen, 2018). As a consequence of the AKP's methodology to use education to 'raise a pious generation' (Kadioğlu, 2021), the ideal citizen of the Turkish Republic is Muslim, obedient, uncritical, conservative, an indistinctive member of the crowd, but a good consumer of the neoliberal market. Ironically, this new form of government (reflecting the same ideological perspectives of the Ottoman Empire) is completely different from the founding ideology of the Turkish Republic one hundred years earlier. Built on secularism, tolerance and guided by the teachings of science:

The formation of Turkey's original education system is important for understanding how the current state of education in Turkey has evolved under the AKP. According to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founding father of Turkey, the only possible path forward for education was to follow the guidance of science, with a special emphasis on the idea that neither Turkey nor its educational system could be brought under the influence of "sheikhs, dervishes, or disciples". (Kadioğlu, 2021).

This historical outlook in terms of social engineering of the Turkish individual is needed to understand the mission of drama in education and the impact of David Davis in the Turkish educational landscape.



Fig 3.
Post failed coup protests in the universities: "Don't touch my professor!"²



Fig 4.
Police forces restrict access to Bogazici's campus as students gather to protest the appointment of Melih Bulu as President of the University. Photo by Hilmi Hacıoğlu, Public Domain, accessed via Wikimedia Commons.

DIE and David Davis' legacy

Early studies on drama in education began in the 1980s. Offering international drama seminars, congresses and workshops from 1985 onwards started the process of training DIE facilitators and teachers which is still ongoing. In Ankara University, the Contemporary Drama Association started to provide DIE courses to teachers, volunteers and students in the 1990s, and in 2005 the Ministry of National Education accepted DIE lessons in formal education (Adıgüzel, 2008). Beginning in 2001 David Davis came to Turkey six times to give lead workshops and seminars, and his legacy, especially in terms of unpacking the socio-political underpinnings of drama, continues to lead the field for Turkish teachers and facilitators.

David's first workshop took place at the 8th International Drama in Education Seminar in 2001. His keynote was entitled 'Howard Gardner and Swiss Army Knives'. He espoused a critical approach to Gardner's methods on the pragmatic skill development of students. It was very surprising for us because Gardner's thinking was very popular in reformist schools in Turkey. But he cautioned pedagogues about the potential disadvantages of this method such as not allowing children to use their maximum capacity. Then he did his

2 After 15th July, academics asking for peace were accused of terrorism and lost their jobs and freedom. (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/dec/11/erdogan-turkey-academics-terrorism-violence-kurdish-people>)

workshop on the stages of planning, and techniques of a workshop process. Focusing on action, motivation, modelling and universal meaning in the work, he emphasised transferring the actions in life to a drama in education process by using pre-texts and artistic imagination (Adigüzel, 2005). Today when I re-read those workshop notes, I understand why and how he was sensitive to the social problems implicit in our work, and his work predicted the refugee crisis that would explode in the longer term. He was not so much giving the tools for drama planning but preparing us to be able to handle major crises in society by using drama. The number of the refugees is 7% of the population, more than any other country (Petillo, 2022), and increasingly owing to an economic crisis, is leading to anti-refugee sentiment (Tahiroğlu, 2022). Following the focus of Davis' workshop, many drama teachers have been and continue to work in this area, especially with Syrian refugees and more recently Ukrainian refugees to support inclusion of the newcomers with the Turkish population.

Davis' second presentation and workshop was at the 11th International Seminar in 2007. He did a comparative study on Stanislavskian, Brechtian and Bondian dramatic approaches and connections between these approaches and drama in education. Both Bond's and Davis' belief in the 'impossibility of changing people by only preaching' resonated with many attendees. He highlighted that the role of art in society is not propaganda making but understanding the connections in the social system and its relationship with our daily lives and inner worlds. Raising the problem and motivating young participants to connect their lives with the issue under exploration by triggering the imagination should be the main focus for art and drama in education. For Davis, finding the social meaning in the personal world is the key question. He says that 'we are all victims of our time and culture. And the most important thing is raising awareness of our bonds and connections' (Davis, 2007, course notes). After this experience, this approach became my main philosophy as a dramaturg and drama in education facilitator.

Davis' third workshop was during the 12th International Seminar in Hatay in 2008. On this occasion he did a very intensive workshop on Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert by using an international rescue organization example. We didn't work only on the Mantle of the Expert techniques and ways to use this approach across the whole curriculum, but on questioning who is the drama facilitator, exploring concepts of democracy and success, employing versatile thinking, trusting in the potential of your students, and freeing them in creativity and their decision making on what they like or dislike. After the workshops he held long discussions with the board of Creative Drama Association on its structure, mission, activities and projects.

His final workshop was held in Ankara on the theme of 'Being a Woman'. Gender inequality and violence is a major issue in Turkey (Zonp et al., 2022). Research reports between 40-80% of women experiencing gender-based violence (Sen and Bolsoy, 2017; Yanik et al., 2015; Bulucu & Aymelek-Çakıl, 2013), with socio-cultural, policy and structural barriers leading to poor support and stigma (Zonp et al., 2022). It was a very emotional and challenging workshop not only because of the subject matter, but because it was David's final time working with us. Trying to capture and internalise his words on the nature of our profession as drama pedagogues, on the subject matter, and his extraordinary skill in focusing on the free will of the individual again and again, and knowing that this would be the final opportunity to work together made the process very emotional.



Fig 5.
David Davis workshop on
'Being A Woman'.

Ideological formal education versus critical thinking

Ideology has always been one of the main problems in history (Harris, 1968). After the nineteenth century we began to better understand its role in society, and now have greater tools for recognising its implications (Azevedo et al., 2019). The contested nature of ideology and its role in public opinion is hotly debated, ranging from a belief that most people are blissfully unaware and unconcerned about political matters and thus 'innocent' of ideological ways of thinking (Bishop, 2005; Kinder & Kalmoe, 2017). Others reach the completely opposite conclusion that people are deeply partisan and divided along racial, ideological and cultural lines (Abramowitz, 2015; Grossman & Hopkins, 2016). The issue seems to be that in the former, ideology is equated with political knowledge, expertise and sophistication, and in the latter, the argument is that ideology is entwined in many aspects of ordinary people's lives and in our social systems, "including the global capitalist system, with its high levels of social and economic inequality, even if that ideology promotes false, confused, or mistaken beliefs" (Azevedo et al., 2019, p. 52). In this understanding, ideology is closer to the social dimension where it can be considered an "attempt to mask, explain away or justify the greater unfreedom and inequality" (Larrain, 1991, p. 26). Guided by Davis' influence, our role as drama educators is to raise awareness of the ideology or hegemony pervasive in neoliberal society, which is everywhere from hospitals to children's books, and at every level of our personal relationships with our parents, partners, work colleagues and students. Therefore, Davis' encouragement to ask the right questions rather than provide stock answers is a highly effective way to raise this awareness.

As discussed above, Kemalism characterised the first 20 years of our Republic, with educated bureaucratic elites trying to impose modern, Westernised values on society by using ideological apparatuses as well as repressive apparatuses of the State. In time the equilibrium changed and another ideology began to emerge under conservatism that in the early days took its power from largely uneducated, rural classes. Arguably, there is only one component of State ideology which hasn't changed over time, and that is the authoritarian consideration of the State over individuals. Now in Turkey, since the new millennium, ideological polarisation is leading to the breaking of all kinds of relationships from the most intimate to professional ones. Turkey is deeply polarised between secular and religious people, Turks and Kurds, left and right, social democrats and leftists, Alevi and Sünni sects, educated and uneducated, rural/small town origins and urban origins, Kemalists and AKP wing, nationalists and internationalists, feminists, LBGT+ and male chauvinists, individualists and Statists, environmentalists and neo-liberalists, etc. But the deepest break down appears to be between secularism and conservatism, because the impact of religious conservatism seeps into all institutions in society and begins to threaten lifestyles.

In this negative analysis of Turkey, the positive impact of David Davis among DIE facilitators was transformational. We perceived this danger and over a decade shared it with Prof Davis, asking his opinion during workshops, keynote speeches and personal conversations. His belief and respect for free will, personal choice and rights, opening different perspectives to the young people while rejecting hegemonic enculturation, critical questioning of the manipulation of educators and all kinds of ideological state apparatuses, has shown many of us a pathway to follow in our own workshops. As citizens of modern Turkey we were seeing and experiencing the danger of deviance from the modern democratic path and trying to struggle with it. Once upon a time, teachers were considered as the ideological soldiers of Kemalism, and as educators their first duty was to posit Kemalist values at every opportunity. But in time instead of modern, positivist Kemalist values, different kinds of demands were made on teachers and their role in society.

So, we were confusing our teaching as part of the formal curriculum with manipulating the students although we were criticising the conservative wing for their systematic manipulation of young people in formal and informal education institutions as well as in the mass media. Discussion with David opened a new perspective of empathy to us. By using drama in education, he led us to understand the dilemma of young people in their primary social milieu and when working with us, which may lead to leaving the school and raising more tension in their lives. This tiny border between manipulation and raising the right questions to question our own reality is crucial. If we believe in the freewill of the individual and are aware that the opposite side is using all the ways of manipulation against us, how can we go on as an educator? We begin to question ourselves and our methods. Maybe we are still searching for alternative ways. We don't have any formulae. We are aware that every situation, every student is different and trying to get them to connect with us as a person is the beginning of the change in terms of respecting each other.

I usually work with young people and adult groups and give DIE courses to drama facilitator candidates. Although the attendees typically come from the urban, secular wing of society, there is an increasing number of attendees from the conservative wing. There is a very sensitive equilibrium in these workshops to gain the attendees' attention while opening the doors to critical thinking. So, without touching overtly sensitive subjects such as religion and politics, we try to demonstrate alternative ways of thinking and being, as well as questioning all kinds of knowledge and belief. We put human rights as a reference point of being 'political' in the first instance, but not 'Political' in terms of an ideological point of view of a certain wing or political party. But even human rights can have exceptions related to individual cases. In order to find out who we are, firstly we have to deconstruct everything that we accept a priori, then reconstruct our value system with a critical state of mind. Our starting point is very basic.

One of the most important problems of the Turkish Republic has always been freedom of thought and speech. In all attempts at social engineering, oppositional political voices have been limited or punished by the state³. Although the degree of these 'borders on the freedom of speech' has changed from time to time, there has never been total freedom. My generation saw the harshest bans and punishments on freedom of expression in the 1980s and after 2013. Such a negative atmosphere directly influences classroom ambiance also. Teachers fear saying something politically incorrect and see their colleagues and students as potential informers who'll report their 'inconvenient' speech to the authorities. This is particularly heightened after 15th July 2016 when thousands of teachers and university professors were dismissed from their schools, because of suspected opposition to the government. However, despite the fact that declaring opinions which are different from the formal ideology is not allowed, opening ways of reaching different opinions, perspectives and experiences of the students is becoming more and more important. So as a DIE facilitator, my colleagues and I try to introduce this way of working to our facilitator candidates, youth and adult groups, in order to help them find their own ways of defending human rights and exercising a critical state of mind. This is the most urgent objective of our society currently.

3 No. 141, 142 (propaganda of an offense) and 163 (protecting the State from Islamist fundamentalism) Turkish penal codes (TCK) were removed, but instead counter terrorism code was accepted in the 1990s, because of the adaptation to EU standards. After 2010 new codes entered my life including TCK 312 (crimes against the State) and TCK 220 (helping illegal organisation without being member of it). As is evident, all these codes restrict freedom of expression (Zeyrek, 2017).

I hope we can give our students this democratic way of thinking about neoliberal, fundamentalist, dehumanized value systems which ignore the value of the individual. We know that if we can explore these core values without manipulating, humiliating, oppressing our students in the education system, we'll connect with a critical, analytical and creative generation who will try to do their best to reach a level of humanness together rather than being 'polarised others'.

Finally, the answer of 'Who can tell me who I am' is very clear for me. No one can. There will be plenty of organisations, institutions and people who will try to impose on me who I am. But after all, each individual will find their own identity after considering all options if given the chance. Who am I? I am an enthusiastic theatre worker and educator who tries to show the options of reaching our humanness to the next generation, that's all. So, I would like to thank David Davis for his generosity in sharing his professional knowledge, his world view, and his wisdom with us, and with me, to help us find our own way.

References

Acar, E. (2017). The Third Way approach on the axis of neoliberalism and social welfare state. *Kastamonu University Journal of Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, 18(1), pp. 248-263.

Adıgüzel, Ö. (2005). David Davis and Swiss army knives. *Process Drama, Theatre Sport and Time in Drama*, 20-70, Naturel Publications, Ankara.

Adıgüzel, Ö. (2008). Recent history of DIE in Turkey. *Creative Drama Journal*, 1(5).

Al-Kassimi, K. (2021). De-Historicizing (Mainstream) Ottoman Historiography on *Tanzimat and Tahdith: Jus Gentium and Pax Britannica* Violate Osmanli Sovereignty. *Arabia. Histories*, 1, pp. 218-255.

Al-Thani, N. A. (2022). Adolescents' and social engineering: The role of psychometrics factors in determining vulnerability and designing interventions. *9th International Conference on Behavioural and Social Computing (BESC)*, Matsuyama, Japan, 2022, pp. 1-5, doi: 10.1109/BESC57393.2022.9995705.

Althusser, L. (2019). *Ideology and ideological state apparatuses*. (Trans by Alp Tümertekin), 8-25, İthaki publications, İstanbul.

Aydıntaşbaş, A. (2016). *The good, the bad and the Gülenists*. European Council on Foreign Relations. Available at: https://ecfr.eu/publication/the_good_the_bad_and_the_gulenists7131/

Azevedo, F., Jost, J. T., Rothmund, T. and Sterling, J. (2019), Neoliberal Ideology and the Justification of Inequality in Capitalist Societies: Why Social and Economic Dimensions of Ideology Are Intertwined. *Journal of Social Issues*, 75, pp. 49-88.

Baltacıoğlu, İ. H. (1950) *Building of public*, 12-13. CHP Halkevleri Bürosu Kılavuz Kitaplar, Ankara.

Bulucu, G. D., & Aymelek-Çakıl, N. (2013). Kırşehir ilinde Bağbaşı ma- hallesinde yaşayan kadınların cinsel şiddete uğrama durumlarının belirlenmesi. *Turkish Journal of Research & Development in Nursing*, 15(2), 35-44.

Chiang, Y-c. (2001). *Social engineering and the social sciences in China, 1919-1949*. Cambridge University Press.

Comte, A. (1844/1903). *A Discourse on the Positive Spirit*. Translated by Spencer Beesly. Reeves.

Cook, S. A. (2016). How Erdogan Made Turkey Authoritarian Again. *The Atlantic*. Available at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/07/how-erdogan-made-turkey-authoritarian-again/492374/>

- Côté, J. E. (1997). An empirical test of the identity capital model. *Journal of Adolescence*, 20(5), pp. 577–597.
- Côté, J. E. (2018). The enduring usefulness of Erikson's concept of the identity crisis in the 21st century: An analysis of student mental health concerns. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 18(4), pp. 251–263.
- Côté, J. E., & Schwartz, S. J. (2002). Comparing psychological and sociological approaches to identity: Identity status, identity capital, and the individualization process. *Journal of Adolescence*, 25(6), pp. 571–586.
- Doğramacı, İ. (1985) Atatürk and education. *Atatürk Research Center Journal*, 1(3).
- Garzón-Rojas, M. C., Zuluaga-Rendón, Z., & Corredor, J. (2022). The Immaterial Reparation: Identity, Agency, and Restorative Justice. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 28(4), pp. 500-509.
- Harris, N. (1968). *Beliefs in society: the problem of ideology*. The University of Michigan, Watts.
- Hove, M., & Matashu, M. (Eds.) (2021). Quality Education: *The nexus of human capital development, economic growth and social justice in a South African context*. AOSIS. Available at: <https://directory.doabooks.org/handle/20.500.12854/80764>
- İnal, K. (2008, Sept 14) 12 September and education. *Evrensel*. Available at: <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/218104/12-eylul-ve-egitim>
- Karadağ, N. (1982), *Theatre studies in the public houses:1932-51*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Ankara University DTCF Faculty, Ankara.
- Kadioğlu, U. (2021). The State of Education in Turkey and Bogazici Protests. *Harvard International Review*. Available at: <https://hir.harvard.edu/the-state-of-education-in-turkey-and-bogazici-protests/>
- Korad Birkiye, S. (2007) *Interculturality in modern theatre: Peter Brook, Eugenio Barba and Robert Wilson*. DeKi Publications, Ankara.
- Korad Birkiye, S. (2009). Changes in the cultural policies of Turkey and the AKP's impact on social engineering and theatre. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 15(3), pp. 261-274.
- Korad Birkiye, S. (2013). To manage and not to manage: That's the question. *A guide for performing arts management*. Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Publications, Istanbul.
- Kumar, K. (Ed.) (2021). *Routledge handbook of education in India: debates, practices, and policies*. 2nd edition. Routledge.
- Miladi, N. (2016). Social Media as New Identity Battleground. In N. Mellor and K. Rinnawi (Eds.) *Political Islam and Global Media*. Routledge.
- Öniş, Z. (2004). Turgut Özal and His Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-Liberalism in Critical Perspective. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40(4), pp. 113-134.
- Öztürk, A. T. (2014) Arts and culture policies in conservatism ideology. *International Social Researches Journal*, 7(34).

Oztürk, F. (2017, July 17) How did the State of Emergency Law of post-failed coup affect universities? *BBC News, Turkish*. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-40567898>

Petillo, K. (2022). Turkey's open door closes: How Europe can better support Syrian refugees. *European Council on Foreign Relations*. Available at: <https://ecfr.eu/article/turkeys-open-door-closes-how-europe-can-better-support-syrian-refugees>

Shaheen, K. (2018, July 19) 'Suffocating Climate of Fear' in Turkey despite end of state of emergency. *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/18/turkeys-state-of-emergency-ends-but-crackdown-continues>

Shanahan, M. (2009). Identity in science learning: Exploring the attention given to agency and structure in studies of identity. *Studies in Science Education*, 45(1), pp. 43–64.

Saylan, İ., & Özdikmenli Çelikoğlu, İ. (2021). The significance of the Kemalist modernization for modernization theory. *Uludağ University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Journal of Social Sciences*, 22(40), pp. 663-703.

Sen, S., & Bolsoy, N. (2017). Violence against women: Prevalence and risk factors in Turkish sample. *BMC Women's Health*, 17(1), 100.

Tahiroğlu, M. (2022). Immigration Politics: Refugees in Turkey and the 2023 Elections. *HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG*, WASHINGTON, DC. Available at: <https://us.boell.org/en/2022/08/17/immigration-politics-refugees-turkey-and-2023-elections#3B>

Tisdall, S. (2012). Turkey's Sledgehammer Coup verdict: justice or Soviet-style show trial? *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/25/turkey-sledgehammer-coup-trial-verdict>

Uygun, S. (2016, February 8), Village Institutes as an Alternative School Model in Turkey. No.10, Available at: <http://politeknik.de/p6401/>

Yanik, A., Hanbaba, Z., Soygür, S., Ayalti, B., & Doğan, M. (2015). Kadına yönelik şiddet davranışlarının değerlendirilmesi: Türkiye'den kanıt. *Ejovoc*, 4(4). <https://doi.org/10.17339/ejovoc.49520>

Yildez, G. (2013). Ergenekon: The court case that changed Turkey. *BBC News*. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-23581891>

Zeyrek, D. (2017, July 29). Restricting freedom of expression. *Hürriyet*. Available at: [www.hurriyet.com.tr-141-142-163-8-301-220-4053462](http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/141-142-163-8-301-220-4053462)

Zonp, Z., Ozturk, B., Guler, A., & Arnault, D. S. (2022). Coping strategies among women exposed to Gender-Based violence in Turkey. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 78, pp. 4236–4245.



Exit pursued
by a bear ...

Chapter 13

Countering the Insistence of Neoliberal Consciousness and Mentality Materialist Approaches to the Intensive Practices of Speaking and Acting: Lacanian Analysis and Drama in Education

Bill Roper (W. J. Roper)

Abstract: The heart of this response to David's keynote is a framework for approaching living through drama and metaxis, and what is immanent to them, working within a set of social psychological categories derived from the work of Jacques Lacan, that can give a determination to the subjective purpose of that keynote: we are part natural and part denatured beings; signifiers in chains criss-cross us unevenly, consciousness and body plus the unconscious; our selves are split between these, though we increasingly deny that split (Jekyll) and are prey to jouissance, narcissism and toxic positivity; this can lead to a psychotic self without an unconscious (Hyde). Living through drama can, whilst shielding us from jouissance, mobilise the subjects and the signifiers of role and reality, of metaxis, particularly as knotted in situated emotion and conscious and unconscious meanings, through speech and action. Drama as art form has its own way with this active-side, where the signifiers of acts and emotions mobilise the split subject and reposition us in a non-determined, partly free relationship to our inadequate present symbolic co-ordinates and open paths of new signifiers and chains to a changing world.

Keywords: metaxis, signifier, imaginary, symbolic, jouissance, Lacan.

Personal context

David,

Some 41 years after we first met at Birmingham Polytechnic and became co-workers and friends, on writing a response to your keynote, I can't but reflect on the gratitude I owe to you for the challenges, events and experiences that you initiated, and which have been so formative for me. There are countless instances I could recount, but if I can cut straight to the title of your keynote address and place it in the middle of the four fields – drama/theatre, education, politics and philosophy/psychology - that have been the area of our work together, I can immediately start to map what I owe to you starting from the enunciation: Who am I? Who can tell me who I am?

Though formally it was a small percentage of my teaching time, the thread of reading, writing, discussion and events in Drama in Education, was central to the course of my thinking about psychology. And, I feel as though it wasn't just in drama/theatre, education and politics that you were my guide, but also in psychology and philosophy: Bruner, Vygotsky, Hegel, Marx, Lenin, met up with what I brought: Skinner, Neisser, Locke, Wittgenstein, Goffman.

So now, I want to say some more from the standpoint of what I first tried to contribute to the PGCE Drama in Education in the early 1980s: to bring psychology and more than a bit of philosophy to thinking about that project in teacher education that was to prove so successful. My inexperience and naivety at that point are what I recall, but very quickly we were into productive fields and projects, and the path of those, around the Who am I? and Drama, where we are both subject and object, leads me again to try to say a few words about bringing psychology to the field that you have been so important in helping to open up.

That combination of influences of forty years ago have seeded a path beyond those I had then, though still with your input in the intervening years, towards what I think of as an adequate materialistic social psychology. Adequate in the sense of meeting the unique situation of the human species, coming out of nature, both determined and free, but being in many ways more than natural; and that also, in particular, provided a social psychology that built upon and was adequate to the arts, theatre and drama in education. Surprisingly to the me of the 1980s the best source that I have found, surpassing Vygotsky in many ways, comes from the work of Jacques Lacan in psychoanalysis and those that have developed that work since his death in 1981 (Roper, 2007).

So, I've been thinking about and writing bits of this response to your keynote for a fair while now, but putting it together and finding a path to give an outline hasn't been easy. The two titles above give an indication of the content I want to cover, but writing it as a paper wouldn't do justice to your spoken keynote, its level and scope, and the fact of our long-time relationship of friendship and engagement. I think we both know the other's areas of expertise and affinity and we can explore the detail of those if we want, but the need here on my side is to put it together in a coherent outline. In a Hegelian sense I don't aim to refute but sublimate your concept of drama; analysing that which is immanent in several moments of your account and hence negating it whilst preserving the content at a higher level. I'm not convinced that I'm correct in all of what I'm about to say, but I think it is a distinct alternative articulation, and a fuller discourse, to the one you offer of the place of self and process drama in neoliberal capitalism and that this has consequences for practice and research. The covid-19 pandemic may be a pause and an opportunity for change in that headlong 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, even more urgently, if possible. So here goes.

I want to begin, by placing self and Drama in Education in a set of what could be called intensive practices of speaking and acting. From the indication above I want to include Lacanian psychoanalysis as a talking cure in this category. I think there are other practices in this category particularly within the arts but these are the two with which I am familiar and can begin. The precise definition isn't important at this stage, some of the themes to be introduced will allow that to be clearer, but we can surmise that from a social psychological standpoint we're looking at practices that have distinctive patterns of social interaction, within defined formal relationships and are aimed at the realisation of particular purposes. These intensive practices of speaking and acting also share a concern with the limits or boundaries that our bodies and ordinary life seem to generate: specifically, they aim to go beyond those limits or boundaries through speaking and/or acting.

Immanence

In your address to a conference of practitioners of Drama in Education (Davis, 2021), you talk from the insider's standpoint about living through, or process drama and provide examples of how it might work and the changes it can bring about for the participants in the drama classroom. From an outsider's standpoint the immense skill, know-how, sophistication and complexity of what goes on everyday in the planning, delivery and evaluation of the work of drama in education, can seem to be taken for granted by those on the inside. What features in the discussion and may differ between approaches appears to the fore against the unseen background of all that is tacitly assumed. I want to begin by returning to this content that is shared and try, as a social psychologist, to find some of the features, and use the examples that you give to bring out the complexity of the moments involved: we are in the realm of group-work, a teacher with a class or part of a class of children; and the moments are numerous: a child feels a particular emotion or sees things from a different perspective in the course of the drama involvement, or just as significantly, does not feel or see those particulars.

For the social psychologist, here we have something to be given a description in all its complexity: several people, co-present, working together, talking, acting, being themselves and then being in role, seeing, hearing, feeling, thinking. In introducing Lacan here, I want to mainly examine the relationship of two of the three registers or orders as they are present in the drama class: the imaginary and the symbolic, not a great deal different from Bruner's (1974, Ch. 18) modes of knowing through image and symbol, but given a more incisive and far-reaching import by Lacan. But in due course I also want to place the third order, the real, in particular insofar as it has effects on the first two.

Derek Hook (2018, p. 12) explains Lacan's imaginary as, "the domain of inter-subjectivity that serves the ego...and functions to support the images that subjects use to substantiate themselves" and, in contrast, the symbolic as, "far more disturbing and unpredictable... It links the subject to a trans-subjective order of truth, it provides them with a set of socio-symbolic co-ordinates, and it ties them into a variety of roles and social contracts". In practice the symbolic order is the order of signifiers, a somewhat broader term than just words, that Lacan takes from Saussure's (1983, p. 67, and particularly when talking about linguistic value, p. 118) account of the sign, being the part that is a sound or a mark on paper, or symptom, and not the meaning part of the sign that is called the signified.

Hook in explaining the two types of other in these two registers, quotes Lacan, "there is the other as imaginary. It's here in the imaginary relation with the other that traditional...self-consciousness is instituted. There's also the Other who speaks from my place, apparently this Other who is within me. This is an Other of a totally different nature from my other, my counterpart" (Hook, 2018, p. 14). The other is in the imaginary, here and now, their face: my rival or what I misrecognise as me; the Other is in the symbolic, somewhere inside or outside: authority, witness, validator, regulator. A peer group member is often an other; a parent,

a teacher or a dictionary, university, social media or government may be where we locate the supposed Other. The Other can also be purely abstract, without personification, then it becomes the equivalent of society¹.

The implications of the trans-subjective symbolic order and this trans-subjective Other, at times called the Big Other, is pivotal both in Lacan's career and in the implications for all aspects of human psychology and social life. Lacan moved from phenomenology and existentialism towards structuralism in the late 1940s to the early 1950s. The symbolic order as Lacan conceives it changes the nature of psychology, in fact it goes beyond psychology to open up a radically changed set of horizons (Hook, 2018, Introduction and Ch. 6). The human opens on to a new world of possibilities and risks; now finding out about yourself, others and the world involves new dimensions of ambiguity and uncertainty: in the symbolic order, how do I know what the other's words mean? what designs they have on me? and how to deal with living in a bath of arbitrary and conventional signifiers? But on the positive side, thinking and acting collectively, and even perhaps as a species becomes a possibility.

David, this is the point that we've been at numerous times before and the difficulties begin. Lacan is so hard to understand and he makes it so difficult; because it is; effectively in asking us to think through the effects of the symbolic order he is asking us to metaphorically pick ourselves up by our own bootlaces.

Such a conceptual development changes the way we need to think about the drama class. You mention groups working with Little Red Riding Hood and this gives some excellent illustrations: role play where one person is giving dependent and fearful behaviour and gestures to the other who is giving caring and guiding ones in return, is the inter-subjective, working in the imaginary of the daughter-mother relationship; but if then there is the symbolic of, 'Mummy, I'm afraid the wolf will eat me', or, 'But Daddy says you'll be safe if you keep to the main path darling,' the signifiers don't just add to, but overwrite and change the communication, relationship and situation, so that instead of the immediacy of the imaginary we now have the structure of the trans-subjective and with their chains of signifiers a wholly different expanded realm of dimensions opens up. An initial view that drama is dominated by the imaginary and inter-subjective is not right; it's not that the inter-subjective comes first and then the trans-subjective adds to it, the symbolic was there right from the start: "the imaginary is built on the symbolic" (Hook, 2018, p. 130). Speaking sets in motion the creation of roles and dramatic context, the intersubjective is tested out within it, and this imaginary can be modified through symbolically based procedures. As participants and audience our identifications may begin in the imaginary, but even with emotional dimensions the symbolic is close at hand providing the structure of the drama, with roles, actions and its connectedness witnessed and vouched for by the supposed Big Other, who in turn can seem to both be outside and inside of the inter-subjectively orienting and speaking actors. The act of speaking and its relationship to the signifier, complicates matters, and opens up the third order, the real: when we speak there is the enunciated, as the particular signifiers themselves, their order, a statement, a performative, part of our cultural resources and the symbolic order, and at the same time there is the enunciation, as bodily, as voice, as part of our natural being and the real order. This real order will be encountered again when the question of gratification is raised, and Lacan introduces the idea of jouissance. However, the symbolic is the level at which the unconscious operates, but interestingly the subject of the unconscious is linked to the voice, enunciation and the real rather than signifiers like 'I' in the symbolic (Lacan, 2006, p. 677).

1 It is in these previous two paragraphs, respectively, that I conjecture the strengths and the limits of Lacan's work are to be found. The classified index to Lacan's *Écrits* begins with the symbolic order (Lacan, 2006, pp. 853-854), the largest of the five parts, this divides into three: the supremacy of the signifier, the defiles of the signifier, the signifying chain. That his work begins with the signifier and that there can be a materialist social psychology based on the signifier are crucial. The Other, is much more marginal, entering under "intersubjective communication" and "analytic experience" in parts II and III (Lacan, 2006, pp. 855, 856). Even here it is not a fundamental concept; more a creative ambiguity or place holder to allow other parts of the work to be developed. Compared to the concrete and material signifier, the Other is abstract and ideal, if not an unpardonable reification. The test of applying Lacan's work to the drama in education of your keynote, reveals its strength as regards the signifier and its limits as regards the Other.

Broadly, in practice I'd think of the teacher, also as person and not just the role, needing to find a small cluster of the central signifiers of the Little Red Riding Hood drama that they want to do. Their attention, working with the class is then, in part, an even and suspended hearing, in the main, of these hollow signifiers in their associations, chains and structures, but also listening for the dimension of the real: vocal non-verbal hesitations, intonation, stresses and even looking for the non-vocal non-verbal bungled actions [see Freud (1901), *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*] and the like that accompany signifiers: together these will begin to mark the children's ways in to the drama, bits of their unconscious, the knowledge involved, the emotions and values, and provide an extending structure of signifiers and some indications of where it is marked by the real. The novel and surprising, and gaps and hesitations in signifiers are attended to more than their meaning.

What I want to do now is have a look at the implications of these immanent structures; and say some more about the third of Lacan's registers, the real, and work them into the aspects of your keynote. Broadly, that is, under the headings of: consciousness, the self, naturalism, affect, the unconscious, the act, politics.

Consciousness

Lacan suggests that to be at the level of consciousness and self-consciousness is to be in the register of the imaginary, with the ego and inter-subjective communication and relationships with others; that philosophically we are in the existential or phenomenological. This is the level at which you propose:

This is the existential dilemma. Drama provides the opportunity to try to see more clearly the reality in which they are enmeshed. This is for me the central aim of drama in education: the chance for young people to try to locate themselves and decide who they want to become. (Davis, 2023, p.1)

Consciousness, and seeing in particular, are the default level in your keynote: for better or worse seeing is dominant, if learning occurs it is 'a coming to see', but there's a bit of a warning that, 'we tend to see what we want to see'. This predominance of consciousness is not adequate to our situation, it is beset by illusion, it leaves parts out, and if Lacan is right, it is an ally of the ego and tied up with narcissism, toxic positivity and other features of our psychology under neoliberalism. Not unsurprisingly our apparent psychologies are tied to the immediacies of our lives as workers and consumers, and to some extent the prospect, as well as the reality of such, for children. As Verhaeghe (2012, p. 114) asks, "how have 30-or-so-years of neo-liberal ideology affected our identity? And how has this system colonised the way we think, given that it goes against all our private and collective interests?" Though Freud (1925) wasn't the first to downplay the conscious, several times he returns to say the "psychoanalytic view of the relation of the conscious ego to an overpowering unconscious...was the psychological blow to men's narcissism" (p. 272) that compared to the biological and cosmological blows delivered by the work of Darwin and Copernicus. Since then, numerous strands of the life sciences and psychoanalysis now broadly converge on such a view centred around ideas of the unconscious, where psychoanalytic mechanisms of defence such as repression, disavowal and foreclosure are at work, and the more general nonconscious of cognitive science, where processes operate in the brain below the level of consciousness. So, the teacher in our Riding Hood drama needs to be educationally sensitive to the signifier chains stretching towards less accessed regions of family, community and heritage.

To elucidate further, in the spirit of Nørretranders (1998) book *The User Illusion*, I want to go along with his description of the Silicon Valley computer scientists who from the 1970s talked about the user illusion as, "the picture the user has of the machine" (p. 291), such that users had troubling views of their machines, and that the problem wasn't with "whether this picture was accurate or complete... but with the creation of a myth that is coherent and appropriate – and is based on the user, not the computer" (p. 291).

These three stages are worth going through one by one, especially as Nørretranders (1998) uses this computer example as the basis to assert “that the user illusion is a good metaphor for consciousness. Our consciousness is our user illusion for ourselves and the world” (p. 292).

By implication he is stating:

Consciousness is not accurate or complete;
is the creation of a myth that is coherent and appropriate;
is based on the user of the user (subject), not the user (object).

Nørretranders (1998), in the case of consciousness, points out that this creates a profound problem, “the user illusion operates with a user by the name of I... The I experiences that it is the I that acts... that senses... and that thinks. But it is the *Me* that does so. *I am my user illusion of myself...the Me* contains loads of bits the I is not interested in” (p. 292, italics in the original). The third statement is therefore difficult: are we using ourselves? Nørretranders says the I has the illusion, but the me is the user. But he disqualifies the I from being the user of the user, who is me! (p. 256). The I is just illusion, epiphenomenon without causal agency. So, the user of the user is left empty, and going beyond Nørretranders I'm tempted to use this impasse to imply: the user illusion of ourselves is an illusion amplified by an engineering of us by the neoliberal capitalism that uses us as producers and consumers. In effect this empty space can be opened up to other claims in drama; we can both hold our capture by the signifiers of the market in juxtaposition with signifiers of other social bonds, the symbolic ideals of family and community.

The Self

This concern with accounts of the self that focus on consciousness, the imaginary and the ego and leave out or diminish such things as the symbolic order and the biological, signals another aspect of this worry about your keynote: the predominance of experience, perception and contemplation over speaking and acting. I think the latter are there, but they are the taken for granted, the tacitly assumed; and this feels to me to be in need of correction, as we are both clear in our commitment to materialism, and the importance of active connections between subject and object have often been stressed and discussed by us with reference to Marx's (1968) *Theses on Feurbach*, in particular where he says,

the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object or of contemplation, but not as human sensuous activity, practice, not subjectively. (p. 28)

In our Red Riding Hood drama, suspended attention may well lead us to note unexpected signifier links in the children's speaking and acting both in and out role, that is in their activity, their sensuous practice in the make believe: these illogical, tangential, unexpected signifiers, but also any signifiers that are marked by the real, are our resource more than what the child may go on to say under the auspices of reflection. One of the refrains of Lacan's work was the distrust of understanding, closely associated with his proposals for the end of analysis – cases of analysands who understand very well but their symptoms persist are often cited. Bruce Fink (2014), translator of Lacan's *Écrits, in Against Understanding*, discussing this, quotes Lacan as saying, “What is at stake is not, in fact, a move to consciousness but rather to speech...and that speech must be heard by someone” (Fink, 2014, p. 6).

This is also concretely what we are listening and looking for in the links that connect the child's practice with aspects of the broader horizons of the historical and social context in which we live: the capitalist and global heating crises are immanent to education itself, and the role of activity and subjectivity are the crucial connectors, especially when your keynote comes to a serious point of impasse:

It may seem a very strange way to start setting out my approach to drama teaching by dealing with climate change and economics but there is nothing more important for any of us than these two areas. You will be familiar with what I am going to say but I want to spell it out in some detail anyway. Rather, we think we are familiar with it but I would suggest most of us are in denial – or we would be out on the streets demonstrating every day. (Davis, 2023, p. 2)

What features of self do we need to articulate to begin to understand ourselves with regard to this typical predicament, and how do we act to counter this resistance or shield ourselves from what causes it? Are we both familiar with it and in denial? If so, this may be close to the notion of the barred or split subject that Lacan (in part this is linked to the idea of signifiers being repressed from the conscious to the unconscious, and in part, the enunciated / enunciation split, see Hook, 2016, pp. 28-43 for a fuller discussion) was to develop and one of those mechanisms of defence: disavowal, which Freud also saw as the beginning of a psychosis (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1973, p. 118). Or are we, not familiar with it, and is 'spelling it out' going to be enough? Obviously, this is important in a world where money is used to spread misinformation and confusion. But if we're both familiar with it and in denial, is at least part of the problem within us and the structure of our selves, 'our mentality' (Harvey, 2012, 0:20), under neoliberal capitalism?

The notions of the trans-subjective and the symbolic order are a way of articulating the core of this connection between the subject, ourselves and the object, the capitalist and global heating crises. In developing this Lacan (2007) defined in formal terms a series of social bonds provided by certain discourses, like the Master-Slave discourse that he took from Hegel and made the first of four social bonds that we act within in our social and educational lives (see Roper 2003). In the early 1970s Lacan added a fifth discourse or what in Lacan's formalisation is a corrupted social bond, the capitalist discourse, and this is his attempt to show the mediation of our current mentality by the trans-subjective structure of capitalism. We are all familiar with the constant nudges and notifications that bombard us through tweets, posts, emails to our phones and other gadgets; offers, things to be enjoyed, to like and share with our friends, not to miss out on, but to enhance our life and social media image. The detail of this discourse reveals at its core the inundation of the split subject by an element of the third register, the real, which Lacan (2007) names object-a, surplus satisfaction or surplus jouissance in Lacan's French. This is a direct parallel of Marx's (1976, Ch. 11) concept of surplus value in his analysis of capital and profit.

Vanheule (2016) gives an exemplary presentation of the detail of Lacan's capitalist discourse, using the butcher's wife's dream from Freud's (1900) *The Interpretation of Dreams* as an example, where her denial of her own gratification, by forbidding her husband to buy her the caviar that she craves, allows her to have the dream in the first place. The self-denial of gratification allows an unconscious complex of signifiers (the dream) which, in Freud's analysis, contains a wish or desire that relates to her asking in the dream what makes a woman attractive and about her husband's desire:

Questions of this type can only be articulated to the extent that instant satisfaction is rejected ... When everything is gratification of demands, something at the root of the social bond gets lost ... The search associated with living with questions of existence ("who am I?" "what do you want from me?") is replaced by a search for solutions in dealing with corporeal tension, and for experiences of fulfillment. (Vanheule, 2016, p. 8)

In 2020 the transition of such processes into the domains of politics and global environment have occurred, but the same sort of logic of objects of gratification, and the way satisfaction is inimical to signification, applies, and is the predicament of most of us in our personal and public lives.

What model of the self and practices are adequate to placing and countering it? Certainly, our selves are not independent of capitalism and global heating, and able to contemplate them objectively; instead, our mentalities are part of the problem, and key aspects of the self are involved in that, in Nørretranders' terms, are in parts of the Me that the conscious ego wants to know nothing about. So, we could say the overemphasis on the conscious, the ego and the imaginary is also an effect of capitalism; we are narcissistic, preoccupied with images and in denial about any other parts of the self especially the unconscious. Like the story of Jekyll and Hyde: one, denying, and the other, not having, an unconscious, these are the poles of the crisis of ego-mania and psychosis occurring within us (see Bruno, 2020, p. 38-43) alongside the crisis of the planet and its climate. One effect of this is we neglect the negative: we like to entertain and post images of ourselves as happy and successful; anything unsightly, difficult, problematic or negative we leave out and ignore or deny; anything negative won't be the way to sell ourselves [see Colin Wright (2020) on what he calls Toxic Positivity, and John Naughton in *The Guardian* (5th December 2020) on how even online AI and algorithmic assessment of us is increasingly based on the positivity of our "textual sentiment and audio emotion"]].

The inundation by gratification, the dominance of the conscious ego and the exclusion of the negative are all distortions of self. All of these are inimical to the signifier and the subject, the barred or split subject of the unconscious. Activity rather than contemplation is needed; protection from demands for gratification, ego and positivity, but the nub: only through the signifier, the subject of the unconscious and the symbolic order do logic, truth, art, science and values become possible. Another of the refrains of psychoanalysis is that even since Freud's day the father is diminished, is in decline. In Lacan's (2013) metaphorical account of the Oedipus in the symbolic order, it becomes the name or names of the father, and by implication the symbolic order itself that is in decline. With the rise of the ego and the ubiquity of targeted jouissance, of less religion and more advertising, the word has less effect in structuring our world. Education and drama are part of this; the Ich-ideal (translated as ego ideal) of Freud (1921, Ch. XI) interpreted as the 'birth of possibility', and "I(A)", (read as the Ideal of the Other), the ultimate end of the main trajectory in the graph of desire in Lacan (2006, pp. 684-5), is diminished and secondary, as we construct ourselves as a skill-set for the market, as workers and consumers in a society where it feels as though there is no alternative to capitalism. The effective deployment of Davis' (2023) values and Lacan's ideals as signifiers of the symbolic order makes possible a thread for the trans-subjective order of truth, and social bonds built thereon, which are vital for urgently needed projects of transformation, and hence the intensive practices of speaking and acting, like drama in education, which are their purposive means.

Naturalism

It is here, somewhere between the body and mind, unconscious and conscious, jouissance and signifier that, rather than the question of materialism versus idealism, it is I think the pivotal question of philosophical naturalism that needs to be faced. It is the point of divergence of pathways in science, philosophy and other endeavours, as it shapes the type of materialism that we are working towards.

As well as downright wrong responses, such as those that equate naturalism with reductive science: all is reducible to physics or genetics, and thus adopt anti-naturalism, there are also a lot of well-intentioned but confusing, inadequate and diverting answers around, such as the various neo-Spinozists extolling organicism and the One-All Wholeness of Nature (see Johnston, 2014, Chs. 2-4). Or perhaps the problem can be more broadly stated philosophically: between capitalism and nature, where does the human stand? a natural or denatured being, or somewhere between?

To foreshorten a great deal of exposition and argument (see Johnston, 2019; Johnston and Malabou, 2013) the path that led us to encountering the inadequacy of consciousness, the role of trans-subjectivity, and of the problems of our neoliberal mentality, also points to the human as arising from nature, but unevenly denatured, in particular by the symbolic register, viz., the signifier. Lacan, from his 1955 re-reading of Freud, where the neurotic's symptom is regarded as a signifier addressed to an Other, "the symptom is through

and through, signification... truth taking shape" (Lacan, 1988, p. 320), to his 1966 *Responses to Students of Philosophy* where, "the signifier is matter transcending itself in language" (Lacan, 1990, p. 112), points to the active self-denaturalising nature of the speaking being. Johnston's (2019) call is thus for an account of, "the emergence of human subjects with their spontaneous and self-determining capacities" which refuses the naturalism or anti-naturalism forced-choice, in favour of, "'dialectical naturalism', namely, a materialism of a self-denaturalising nature that radically alters itself in and through its human offspring" (xx).

We can say that this question of naturalism is all important for the intensive practices of speaking and acting, no more so than when affect, feeling and emotion are being dealt with.

Affect

Here the question of naturalism cannot be avoided: what are affects, feelings and emotions and how do they work? Numerous answers either reduce affect along with subjectivity to the bodily and claim it doesn't exist and/or eliminate it or cast it into the realm of epiphenomenon where it has no causal efficacy (for example, cognitive science and a computational view of emotion (see Deacon, 2012, p. 525). This is similar to the problem Nørretranders faced. It's a strangely unconfirmable speculation but the intense practices of speaking and acting and their immediate antecedents were impossible, due to the nature of human selves until very recently in phylogenetic time. It is only with the co-development of trans-subjectivity and the human self, where affect that is more than natural, is caused by and reciprocally causes change, that these practices become possible. Perhaps only with Socratic dialectic and Athenian drama do we see their beginnings in human history (Burgoyne, 2007; Vernant, 1988; Dunker, 2011). Hesitation, doubt, surprise and the role of the negative seem to enter the written record here, where lacks and absences become causes, also known as privative causes (see Johnston, 2019, pp. 188-190).

That understanding of the affective is central to your discussion and account of living through drama is clear. Shakespeare's *King Lear* provides the first of several examples that are drawn on:

Rather than looking out on the world, he had to be shocked into awareness and go naked into a storm to begin to re-make himself. He had to experience it directly. It was visceral for him, emotional, affective, immediate. It stripped him of his supposed identity so he could more clearly find out who he was. (Davis 2023, p. 12)

In a reading of this more on the active side, Lear, as always already a self of the symbolic order, had to find shelter in the storm; talk to his fellow refugees; respond to the others' kindness, violence, indifference; deal with much that was new, belittling and difficult: his subjectivity arose anew from these:

These are some of the dimensions that living through drama can bring with an internal engagement with role. There can be real emotion at play. Not raw emotion which is too close to the personal but nevertheless there can be a feeling of anger, shame, despair and so on... With metaxis the person in role would feel it as the person and as the role. The decisions and actions made in role would also resonate with the actual value system of the student. It would have the added impact of feeling as well as thinking: feeling thoughtfully. (Davis 2023, p. 13)

The signifier and the trans-subjective is absolutely vital here and in setting up and making drama within the art form: space, time, role, event, action and so on are negotiated through the medium of signifiers. This is the condition of possibility for metaxis; what others have called a dual consciousness or guest subjectivity, affect and experience, alongside a host subjectivity, in which the (different) signifiers of the situations of self and role create two realities. There is a parallelism of, a) the situations and events of the role and of real life and, b) the subjectivity and actions of the role and of real life, which allows a working to and fro, from self to role, both in terms of situations and events but also subjectivity, actions and affect. Lines can be drawn across to equivalent places from one to the other, and questions arise about patterns of situations, subjectivities and actions.

But the parallelism is only partial: one body and one unconscious / nonconscious underlies the dual situations, subjectivities and actions, within which consonances, differences and resonances may come to be located and open the possibility of 'feeling thoughtfully'. The affects, feelings, and emotions are composed in part by these signifiers combined with the bodies' reactions, energies and expressions, which may well issue in other signifiers, as a broader category than words. The apparatus of this feeling thoughtfully is the signifier; images and signifiers emerge or are found which lead to others in chains in the role play, in reflection, in discussing. The playwright in the teacher will find imaginisations of key signifiers or will open images up to dialecticisation and signifierisation (I associate these three terms with the translations of Lacan by, and the work of, Bruce Fink, especially Lacan, 1953, 2006), but the first two terms may well be more general, and work between and within the registers of the Imaginary and the Symbolic; the student will similarly follow chains of images and signifiers of their person somewhat more chaotically, touching areas of the unconscious / nonconscious and bringing that to role play, reflection and discussion and thus creating new content for the group and teacher to work with. But the register of the Real is there also, particularly in moments of hesitation, anxiety or impulse where actions, words and images don't come or they rush out unbidden and things could become overwhelming. Here we can look to the imaginisation and signifierisation of the Real and in turn the Real-isation of the imaginary and the symbolic. Lacan's (1953) early paper is helpful here in using the terms for the concrete course of events of an analysis, and we can use to suggest the sort of structures of process and event that drama teachers might work on in a lesson. Later, Lacan went on to give a much more developed view of the Real, but that takes us beyond what can be covered here (see Vanheule, 2011, Ch. 6).

Within this view, weaving between Lacan's registers, what are affects, feelings and emotions? In common with the contention that they are "not ground-zero, rock-bottom experiences incapable of additional decomposition: they are not Gestalt-like, indissolubly unified mental states of an irreducible sort" (Johnston, 2014, p. 172) we seem to have affect as the rich interweavings of the imaginary, the symbolic and the real. Some emotions, perhaps most, are open to change and being re-felt as situations are re-acted or redescribed, some are relatively constant. This speaks to the partial denaturalisation of archaic phylogenetic patterns of emotion in the human. In this signifiers woven into and integral to emotion interconnect with the body, the personal history, the social heritage of the student but also with what Lacan calls the Big Other: the treasury of signifiers that we draw on in our participation in the social world.

The Unconscious

Some of the emotions built around signifiers will take us towards the unconscious and this may feel as though it transgresses into the world of therapy. But that would be only if the aim of the drama was therapeutic. In the previous quotation about metaxis from your keynote, safety, danger and trust were signifiers of that emotional neighbourhood, and were important for the educational aims of the drama. You continue,

the student playing Little Red Riding Hood pushes her mother to tell her if she is really going to be in danger or not. She might get a real sense of her mother prevaricating. Her mother has to get to work. She does not have time to go to grandma's. She needs her daughter to be grown up and go for her. She tells her daughter she will be safe. Parents do manipulate us. They are not to be trusted. Played from inside the role both can actually get a real sense of the life pressures that interfere and damage the relationship they would ideally want between mother and child. So 'living through' drama became a key part of my drama. (Davis, 2023, p. 13)

Here, as well as safety, danger and trust, family relationship signifiers are nodal – mother, daughter, grandmother; personal affective charged chains of signifiers, images and the real will be drawn on by the students, trying to work what they feel and think about it. In trying to explain a Lacanian view of the Other, Vanheule (2011) states something very similar;

Lacan gives a quite specific interpretation ... defining it as 'the locus from which the question of his (the subject's) existence may arise' ... At the level of the unconscious each speaking subject ... is confronted with a basic question concerning its own identity as a subject. Who am I? is the question all humans are unconsciously confronted with, and for which no answer is readily available.

More precisely this question relates to three issues: one's 'sex'; one's contingency in being, and the relational signifiers of love and procreation. (p. 64)

The second (contingency of being – safety, danger and trust) and third (relational signifiers – mother, daughter and grandmother) of these categories of unconscious question, are what the drama material and work involve, and this is, as in analysis, from the locus of the Other, but here we are using it with the aim of exploring values.

Like analysis the same set of resonances is being used; here, “the decisions and actions made in role” bring to the fore, “the actual value system of the student”: so that, “the central aim of drama in education: the chance for young people to try to locate themselves and decide who they want to become” (Davis, 2023, p. 1) can be worked on. In analysis the analysand's speech (Lacan, 2006, pp. 213-215) is used to bring to the fore ... what generally they are unable to express in words ... their symptoms. The drama teacher looks for values, the analyst for symptoms, both to be worked on. The arc that we could place going over both of these, is a common arc: the unconscious is politics. This we will work towards in the rest of this paper.

To try and recap: if the ego arises, as our user illusion, when the human uses itself in, for most, a life of selling its labour living in neoliberal capitalism, then the subject arises when the human accesses the expanded 'itself' or Me, through intensive practices, but certainly in one of the sheltered enclaves, like education can be, from neoliberal capitalism, to answer the questions of the Other. A far reaching point to note here is the implication that the Other is an enormous source of creativity in human affairs – for Lacan, the locus of the Other draws on the treasury of signifiers – and as Lacan says 'linguistics began with Humboldt' (Lacan, 1971), one of whose claims, made in the 1830s is that language “creates of its own accord” and allows human beings to break the “quasi-mechanical advancement of human activity” (Humboldt, 1999, p. xii). Speech and thought are asserted to be “from the locus of the Other”, “the unconscious is the discourse of the Other”, and we have a relationship of inner and outer that is a Mobius strip, a surface with one edge and one surface that can be traversed to the other side. This concept of the Other is paradoxical (see Hook, 2018, Ch. 1) but pivotal in Lacan's analysis². Inside and outside lose their bearings, extimacy, to use Lacan's (1992, p. 139) portmanteau word combining external and intimate; “something strange to me, although it is at the heart of me, something...on the level of the unconscious” (1992, p. 71); this is what is being accessed in analysis and drama and the logic of the space involved is quite strange. Creatively in this space questions and demands are being made, and from those the subject arises:

The subject is not defined as a reflective entity that asks questions, but as an entity that is created because of the fact that questions are articulated via the symptom. The question produces the subject and not the other way around. (Vanheule, 2011, p. 64)

2

It is here with the Other that a plethora of considerations and questions are raised with regard to Lacan's theorisations and their use to articulate drama in education. We could say here the most colossal crossroads in Lacan's work occurs.

So, in this situation of metaxis, living through, the questions of the Other can also create the subject: in the role we find ourself, in ourself we find the role. The extimate Other's drama? But note this is not easy or reassuring, the unconscious is not pacifying like the ego:

Far from creating a feeling of unity, these questions constitute the very reason the subject is divided. They are questions that can never be solved definitively. (Vanheule, 2011, p. 64)

The Act

As a psychologist taking up a range of teaching in the Polytechnic in the early 1980s I had a stock of theory, experiment and application that I thought I could work into something useful for students on the courses I taught. You unsettled a lot of this for being idealist and returned many times to the need to begin from practice, the importance of practice leading theory, of practice being richer than theory. I struggled with this: an abiding visual memory I retain is seeing myself at the end of a 3-hour session in the drama room asking myself, was something that came up relevant to this theory and practice, thought and action, matter? In this composite visual memory, I thought it was. Bruner and Vygotsky gave me some help, the myriad examples of the drama students gave glimpses, but never enough. That type of question goes right through to today, and even with Lacan to help I'm still unsure in what I want to add here about the act.

In broadly philosophical terms Freud and Lacan's psychoanalysis contains work that supposes that the subject is to some degree free, against the material and backdrop of the unconscious. Free association is the rule in analysis; the material of dreams, jokes, slips of tongue or pen and so on are taken up and spoken about and are there to be interpreted. To simplify, for Lacan (1977) the analyst is the "subject who is supposed to know" (p. 233) for the analysand, they are also the personified Other, the Other, who desires that the analysand talk and work, but doesn't know (and certainly doesn't use their knowledge to tell the analysand); basically, the analyst provides the setting and some interruptions and emphases of things the analysand says, and ends the session at key points. But it is the analysand who interprets, and constructs, and often comes back to interpret again, as further materials arise, and between sessions and sometimes in sessions there are instances of the act. There are different types of act but their general focus is on how the subject of the unconscious comes in to being:

the subject only comes to birth through the relation of a signifier to another signifier and that this requires of them - I mean of these signifiers - the material. To perform an act, is to introduce this relation of signifiers through which the conjuncture is consecrated as significant, namely, as an opportunity to think. (Lacan, 1967, p. 206)

We could spend time on elaborating this; it seems abstract and counter-intuitive. But rather than follow this path now, I will risk a suggestion like: the analyst curates from the analysand a set of signifiers: dreams, slips, jokes, ejaculations, free associations and things which have caught the analyst's ear and asks the analysand to talk some more about them, and ends the session at a point to be worked on. Acts can occur in and between sessions, they can be spoken and they can be performed, intersubjectively, in the imaginary that is built on the symbolic. I take it that they involve a first signifier, S1, that stands for the speaker or actor and a second signifier, S2, that stands for the knowledge and the object. In the movement from the first to the second signifier the subject emerges. But it's not enough to just do things, say things, Lacan says the act involves 'consecration'. Perhaps this involves ideas of owning the act, assuming a symbolic mandate, and something external, the Big Other, hearing, recognising, validating or even being confronted, sidelined, by the act and the material. And thereby perhaps, a bit of freedom.

There is much that Lacan did to develop these ideas in Seminar XIV and XV, concerning how the act is different from the phantasy and may constitute a new path for the subject (see Pluth, 2007) and is of interest in this context³.

And to end the suggestion: is this so far away from the drama classroom at its best, from living through drama and metaxis? Just as the analyst is the personified Other in analysis, the drama teacher may well be the personified Other in the drama lesson, supposed to know. But this might be unhelpful to the class, they need to think beyond the teacher, and what the teacher aims for is to keep the work going, not provide the answers. But the drama teacher seems to have more flexibility, more roles, they can become another student in the class, or a teacher in role position: where they don't know and aren't expected to know the answer or how to do it, and get one of the class to be a personification of the Other. If they take this route, Lacan would have it that they are still up against the supposed Other, but now this Other is way beyond the persons in the classroom, it's the Other of Society, or Human Culture, with upper case letters. I think it's this scenario that is important and a lot of work along these lines could be done and constitute a practice in drama in education involving acts that are richer than theory, and action richer than thought, because it uses unconscious material, especially in the context of our currently distorted selves.

Politics

In quick order in the Seminar of 10th May 1967 Lacan (1966-1967) discusses neurosis, masochism and the fact that the desire to be rejected involved having offered yourself in the first place; that is, the act; he goes on to define the act as above, names Marx as the discoverer of the symptom, and announces:

the unconscious is politics. I mean that what binds men together, or what opposes them, is precisely to be justified by that whose logic we are trying for the moment to articulate ... (Lacan, 1966-1967, p. 205)

Namely, unconscious material, which is of the order of the social bond⁴.

In the Little Red Riding Hood work, unconscious material from our social heritage may well emerge in the role play, particularly values that come from parents, grandparents, contexts of our childhood, or, way beyond, in history, literature and the arts. In role we will be dealing with what we feel is right and wrong, good and bad, what is involved in being a mother, daughter, grandmother. You don't so much find your values just from the intersubjective events of the living through drama but also through the symbolic conditions that make the drama possible – signifiers: responsibility, caring, trust, courage, honesty ... the web of values that are there in our social heritage. And this allows us to probe these values, compare them, particularly with the values of the neoliberal workplace and marketplace, and find our place in these values and the things that bring us together and divide us ... politics. Unlike the images of the ego which are *constituted* and thus set, the signifiers of the unconscious subject are *constitutive*, they produce things: meanings and subjects; they are dynamic, changing the field around them back and forward in time. The last word of a sentence can change the meaning of what went before, and the first word change the meaning of all that comes after.

3 Again this needs to be explored much more fully and concerns the relationship with, and the nature of, the Other. Is the Other an authority we have been, or want to be, recognised by, if so for Lacan the phantasy is how we are recognised; or is the Other, as Lacan increasingly implies as the 1960s go on, lacking, barred or split? (Lacan's Graph of Desire incorporates these two possibilities, 2006, p. 692). The Other can't give the necessary response: there is no Other of the Other that would underwrite our relationship with it. There is no signifier that would answer our reply or act in response to the Other's question; it is in relationship to this barred Other that the act becomes important in the view of Pluth (2007, Ch. 8). And it is this, the new signifier of the act, or the signifier marked by the strange, the surprising enunciation or bungled action, that I'm encouraging the drama teacher to be open to, and work from. Pluth (2007) says Lacan calls these signifiers that would "be like the real" (p. 157). They would be strange signifiers, but in drama built on them, or that returns to them, like Hamlet's hesitation and eventual act and resolution, we have, another way of Imagining the Real.

4 It is here that we meet the limits of Lacan's Other, and pick up Lacan's ideas of discourse and the social bond. Discourse has the merit of concretely being close to signifiers and signifying structure, and the notion of social bonds, allied to the four discourses plus the capitalist discourse, becomes important to Lacan through the period up to Paris of May 1968 and beyond, and it points the unconscious into politics, beyond practices where the analyst or teacher is the Other, and this parallels your keynote taking drama in education into the crises of capitalism and climate.

However, we are in an era of the ego, of images, of leaders and others who try to engage us in the imaginary, divide us from others, corrode what might bind us together, eclipse truth and values and deregulate the Big Other; but all is not yet lost. The human is an animal who by virtue of being possessed by language, can have the purpose of seeking to preserve itself as a species and the planet on which it emerged. Along with many other initiatives, how do we, in Hegelian terms, get a subjective concept of living through drama that is adequate to this object, an object that contains the social bond of the capitalist discourse that “run(s) as it were on wheels, it can’t run better, but it actually runs too fast, it runs out, it runs out such that it burns itself out”? (Lacan in Vanheule, 2016, p. 7).

References

- Bruner, J. S. (1974). *Beyond the Information Given*. Allen & Unwin.
- Bruno, P. (2020). *Lacan and Marx: The Invention of the Symptom* (Trans. by John Holland). Routledge.
- Burgoyne, B. (2007). Socratic History. *Journal of the Centre for Freudian Analysis and Research*, 17, pp.108-133.
- Davis, D. (2019). 'Who am I? Who can tell me who I am?' A Conference Celebrating the Life and Contribution of David Davis to Drama and Theatre in Education. Trinity College Dublin, March 9th-10th, 2019.
- Davis, D. (2023). Who am I? Who can tell me who I am? In: C. O'Sullivan, S. Colleary & D. Davis (Eds.), 'Who am I? Who can tell me who I am?' The Importance of the Social and Political in Children's and Young People's Drama. *Trinity Education Papers*, 3(1).
- Deacon, T. W. (2013). *Incomplete Nature: How Mind Emerged from Matter*. W. W. Norton & Co.
- Dunker, C. I. L. (2011). *The Constitution of the Psychoanalytic Clinic: A History of its Structure and Power*. Karnac.
- Fink, B. (2014). *Against Understanding, Volume 1: Cases and Commentary in a Lacanian Key*. Routledge.
- Freud, S. (1900). *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Trans. by James Strachey). Volume 4 Penguin Freud Library. Penguin Books.
- Freud, S. (1901). *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. (Trans. by James Strachey). Volume 5 Penguin Freud Library. Penguin Books.
- Freud, S. (1921). *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. In S. Freud (1985) *Civilisation, Society and Religion* (Trans. by James Strachey). Volume 12 Penguin Freud Library. Penguin Books.
- Freud, S. (1925). *The Resistances to Psychoanalysis*. In S. Freud (1986) *Historical and Expository Works on Psychoanalysis* (Trans. by James Strachey). Volume 15 Penguin Freud Library. Penguin Books.
- Harvey, D. (2012). *Spaces of Transformation: The Vast Space-Time of Revolutions Becoming*. Tate podcast. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/audio/spaces-transformation-vast-space-time-revolutions-becoming>
- Hook, D. (2018). *Six Moments in Lacan: Communication and Identification in Psychology and Psychoanalysis*. Routledge.
- Humboldt, W. von (1999). *On Language: On the Diversity of Human Language Construction and its influence on the development of the human species* (Trans. by Peter Heath). Cambridge University Press.

Johnston, A., & Malabou, C. (2013). *Self and Emotional Life: Philosophy, Psychoanalysis and Neuroscience*. Columbia University Press.

Johnson, A. (2014). *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism: Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers*. Edinburgh University Press.

Johnston, A. (2019). *Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism: Volume Two, A Weak Nature Alone*. Northwestern University Press.

Lacan, J. (1953). The Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real. In J. Lacan (2013) *On the Names of the Father*. Polity.

Lacan, J. (1966-1967). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Logic of Phantasy, Book XIV* (Trans. by Cormac Gallagher from unedited manuscripts). Unpublished. Available at: <http://www.lacanireland.com>

Lacan, J. (1971). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: On a Discourse that Might Not Be a Semblant, Book XVIII* (Trans. by Cormac Gallagher from unedited manuscripts). Unpublished. Available at: <http://www.lacanireland.com>

Lacan, J. (1977). *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI* (Trans. by Alan Sheridan). Penguin Books.

Lacan, J. (1988a). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-1954* (Trans by John Forrester). Norton.

Lacan, J. (1988b). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-5* (Trans. by Sylvana Tomaselli). Cambridge University Press.

Lacan, J. (1990). *Television: A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment* (Trans. by Jeffrey Mehlmann). W. W. Norton.

Lacan, J. (1992). *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan* (Trans. by Dennis Porter). Book VII. Routledge.

Lacan, J. (2006). *Écrits* (Trans. by Bruce Fink). W. W. Norton.

Lacan, J. (2007). *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XVI* (Trans. by Russell Grigg). W. W. Norton.

Lacan, J. (2013). *On the Names-of-the-Father* (Trans. by Bruce Fink). Polity Press.

Laplanche, J., & Pontalis, J.-B. (1973). *The Language of Psychoanalysis*. Karnac Books.

Marx, K. & Engels, F. (1968). *Selected Works*. Lawrence and Wishart.

Marx, K. (1976). *Capital, Volume I* (Trans. by Ben Fowkes). Penguin Classics.

Naughton, J. (2020). Companies Are Now Writing Reports Tailored For AI Readers And It Should Worry Us. *The Guardian*, 5.12.20. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/dec/05/companies-are-now-writing-reports-tailored-for-ai-readers-and-it-should-worry-us>

Nørretranders, T. (1998). *The User Illusion: Cutting Consciousness Down to Size*. Viking Penguin.

Pluth, E. (2007). *Signifiers and Acts: Freedom in Lacan's Theory of the Subject*. State University of New York Press.

Roper, W. J. (2003). Lacan's 'Four Discourses' in Drama in Education. *Journal for Drama in Education*, 19(1), pp. 25-38.

Roper, W. J. (2007). Psychological Approaches to Drama and its uses. In V. Van Deventer et al. (Eds.), *Citizen City: Between Constructing Agent and Constructed Agency*. Captus Press. (pp.11-20)

Saussure, F. de (1915/1983). *Course in General Linguistics* (Trans. by Roy Harris). Duckworth.

Tomsic, S. (2015). *The Capitalist Unconscious: Marx and Lacan*. Verso.

Vanheule, S. (2011). *The Subject of Psychosis: A Lacanian Perspective*. Palgrave.

Vanheule, S. (2016). Capitalist Discourse, Subjectivity and Lacanian Psychoanalysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7:1948, doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01948.

Verhaeghe, P. (2014). *What About Me? The Struggle for Identity in a Market Based Society*. (Trans. by J. Hedley-Prole). Scribe.

Vernant, J-P., & Vidal-Naquet, P. (1988). *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (Trans. by Janet Lloyd). Zone Books.

Wright, C. (2020). *Toxic Positivity in the Context of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*. Interview. Available at: <https://www.sapereaudemagazine.com/post/toxic-positivity-in-the-context-of-lacanian-psychoanalysis>.

Chapter 14

Response to Bill Roper

Preliminary remarks

Bill Roper's chapter is in essence written to all drama teachers and, in fact, in its essential content, to all teachers. He embraces and endorses the attempts of drama teachers where they approach drama in education as a way of partially opening a door on the child's own self-consciousness. He endorses general aspects of my approach to drama teaching but then so usefully critiques its weaknesses and gaps from his Lacanian perspective and as a social psychologist. He sets out his whole argument for why we need to have a much more complex view of the psychology of the children we teach (and of ourselves of course). And in particular he critiques my own approach and pinpoints its inadequacies. I am so grateful for his intervention here and attempt a response below. In attempting a response to Bill's chapter I am lost, of course, in not being able to discuss it with him anymore. I found his chapter very dense on the first few readings and somehow thought I had all the time in the world to crack it open and discuss it with him. My responses and questions and his answers went to and fro between us as soon as I first read it. But my slowness in moving forward was totally inadequate given the speed at which his illness accelerated. I live to regret it.

I am breaking the academic protocol here by calling him by his first name. His careful responses to my keynote over a period when he was suffering from cancer led up to his final version in this publication, only finished a few months before he died. In his response he goes in and out of addressing me personally as 'David' and then returns to his dense academic prose style. The overall effect is that it is written partly as a letter, so caringly written; taking into consideration our long friendship; writing alongside me even though critiquing my thinking; conscious that he is commenting in a publication arising from a conference celebrating my life's work; in places tender and then straightforward; it leads me at times to want to refer to him occasionally as Bill, jumping outside the academic style. I ask indulgence for this. And I pay homage to his use of semi-colons and colons.

Response

My first response is a mea culpa. In my chapter I take an easy way out and avoid doing all the hard work that Bill has done. This is apparent when I write:

Now I am taking an enormous short-cut here. I am leaving aside, for the sake of brevity, all the complex philosophical and psychological questions. What is a self? Can we ever know who is the I who is speaking? What theory of knowing are we claiming? What is truth? You will have your own answers to these questions. (Davis, 2023, p.2)

And Bill Roper certainly had his own answers to these questions! In no way could I have approached the areas in his chapter in the depth and range that he was able to.

Roper begins his critique with his statement:

An initial view that drama is dominated by the imaginary and inter-subjective is not right; it's not that the inter-subjective comes first and then the trans-subjective adds to it, the symbolic was there right from the start: "the imaginary is built on the symbolic" (Hook, 2018, p.130). (Roper, 2023, p. 165)

My initial response when I read this was to agree but did not recognise it in what I had written. I use Bakhtin's 'voices' to describe the multitude of influences coming from the social, political and general cultural order into any individual. I wrote:

Bakhtin was consumed with a search for a self and the role language plays in that process. Wherever we are born we are subject to a cacophony of voices: all competing for our attention. He termed this polyphony. But not in a musical sense which might indicate tending to harmony. These different voices are all ideologically saturated, made up of different speech genres. He called this heteroglossia. A car thief can be a joy rider or a perpetrator of crimes against motor vehicles. These different voices tend to combine in order to make meaning and where this is taken over by a dominant voice, such as a political party, then you can have a monologue. This monologism, the language of dictators, needs constantly to be opened out again to create a dialogic process. The problem then is always how can I know if it is I who is talking or another. Bakhtin as an aphorism could be 'I is other.' (Davis, 2023, p. 13)

I thought I was clear that as social individuals soaking in a multitude of 'voices' meant that we were not isolated individuals in charge of our own destiny but that we could become so through the *metaxis* involvement in a carefully constructed drama process. But, following Roper's critique I can see I have fudged the issue.

I think the centre of his critique is focused on where I state:

All the time the young person is seemingly making up her or his own mind but all the time these forces are at work. This is the existential dilemma. Drama provides the opportunity to try to see more clearly the reality in which they are enmeshed. This is for me the central aim of drama in education: the chance for young people to try to locate themselves and decide who they want to become. (Davis, 2023, p. 1)

Bill picks up on this and comments:

This predominance of consciousness is not adequate to our situation, it is beset by illusion, it leaves parts out, and if Lacan is right it is an ally of the ego and tied up with narcissism, toxic positivity and other features of our psychology under neoliberalism. (Roper, 2023, p. 166)

To summarise, leading up to the section above I acknowledge the plethora of the symbolic (in a Lacanian sense) entering young people from the Big Other and all the others but call it 'voices' following Bakhtin's terminology. But then I argue that this is 'the chance for young people to try to locate themselves and decide who they want to become'. I am arguing that the young person, through the drama experience, can come to recognise the tenants who have taken up residence in the ego, a sort of occupy movement, and can decide unilaterally which tenants to eject, which to embrace and which to encourage to bring in more like-minded friends. I think this is the step far too far for Bill. It hints at existentialism – of the possibility of the free individual making up his or her 'own' mind, implying a coherent ego or subject whereas this leaves out the complexity that Lacan finds in Freud's approach to this area. I now agree with Bill's critique here. I end up putting the children in what is really an existentialist position where the individuals can be in charge of their own identity and destination in life despite the fact that my argument leading up to this has denied it. In agreeing now with Bill's critique here I am still working at fully grasping it. Perhaps I should have re-worked Bakhtin as an aphorism into 'I is Other 'as well as 'I is other' and 'me is Other'. And so on. And then there is the body. I still have not got there yet but am trying. I am, for example, still working on fully understanding Lacan's L-Schema (see Hook, 2018, p. 36).

Roper, usefully, calls on Norretranders' (1998) book *The User Illusion* to argue that the *I* of consciousness is an illusion:

the user illusion operates with a user by the name of I... The *I* experiences that it is the *I* that acts... that senses... and that thinks. But it is the *Me* that does so. *I am my user illusion of myself...the Me contains loads of bits the I is not interested in.* (p. 292) [emphasis in the original]

Just as the user of the computer does not need to know of all the millions of bits of information inside the machine and the user seems to be in control but the machine is deciding so much, so the *I* is not conscious of all the bits of *Me* that exist inside my mind.

Roper continues his concern with my focus on consciousness with a worry about not giving enough attention to the minutiae of practice. He states:

This concern with accounts of the self that focus on consciousness, the imaginary and the ego and leave out or diminish such things as the symbolic order and the biological, signals another aspect of this worry about your keynote: the predominance of experience, perception and contemplation over speaking and acting. I think the latter are there, but they are the taken for granted; the tacitly assumed; and this feels to me to be in need of correction ... (Roper, 2023, p. 167)

I agree with this. In my teaching in fact it is a priority for me to notice the practice of the participants, to notice all the small actions that might appear as the *metaxis* state begins to emerge and take over. I find it is possible at a glance to see those participants who are in (that is those who are engaging with the role internally in some sort of *metaxis* state) and those who are *out*, (that is still acting the role from outside without that internal engagement). It is this state of *being*, simultaneously inside the role and oneself at the same time that can lead to the unconscious of the role player being accessed in some way. Thinking of the person playing the mother in the Little Red Riding Hood example as an adult role player and an actual mother she might find herself getting *really* angry with the child in the role play and having a momentary sense of accessing unacknowledged regret at ever having had children herself. They are such hard work and have taken over so much of her own life. The caring is interfering with her 'freedom'; with the image of herself influenced by the toxic positivity of neoliberalism that she should be out having a 'good time'. The signs might be her smashing a plate when she is hurrying to wash up and finding herself saying to the child 'Just look what you've made me do!' These are some of the masses of the *Me* that Norretranders argues are not available immediately to the *I*. Here we have the personal psychology. But we also have the situation where she can't go with her daughter because she has been called in to serve in the kitchen because the boss has decided to have a last minute meal for his friends. She is a single parent. She needs the money and she daren't say no to the boss. Here we have the social. We now have available to access the dominance of the social in the personal and how it affects all aspects of our lives. (If I am following Roper's critique accurately. Others will have to judge now.)

Bill continues to elaborate key dimensions involved in our work in drama teaching. I found it all extremely enlightening and he offers many routes for further exploration and elaboration. For example, regarding the affective dimension of the mother role playing the Little Red Riding Hood scene above he suggests "...we seem to have affect as the rich interweaving of the imaginary, the symbolic and the real" (Roper, 2023, p. 17). This in itself seems such a rewarding area to pursue.

Rather than attempt to paraphrase any more of Bill's critique and elaboration of my chapter I leave those rich pickings to future readers. I found all his contributions extremely enlightening and will be for the rest of my life grateful to Bill for so gently but firmly pursuing his line of argument. His chapter should be key reading for all those entering education and especially for drama teachers.

References

Hook, D. (2018). *Six Moments in Lacan: Communication and Identification in Psychology and Psychoanalysis*. Routledge.

Norretranders, T. (1998) *The User Illusion*. Trans. by Jonathan Sydenham. Penguin Books.



Extract from
Phoebe Chan's
piece where she
describes freeing a
frog from a well.

A frog in the well is
confined by the walls
of the well and they
can only see a tiny
patch of the sky.

