

THEATRE IN EDUCATION (TIE) IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL DRAMA

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INTRODUCTION

Whatever links between theatre and education may develop, they will most likely ensue from the fact that some significant features are common to both phenomena. Thus, it does not seem far-fetched to acknowledge their reliance upon two basic concepts: those of performance, in the sense of doing, (en)acting, being engaged in a process leading to the production of a meaningful outcome, and communication, entailing as they do the transmission of a (valuable) “message”. Furthermore, they share the aim to achieve a successful rapport between actor/teacher and audience/students. In addition, both of them provide participants with a shared experience that demands their affective and cognitive involvement.

As stated by Gavin Bolton, “drama has a great deal to do with pedagogy *because* it is an art” (Bolton 1993:39). The educational substratum inherent in theatre is likewise suggested by David Pammenter: “What is theatre, who is it for, and what does it say? Theatre, at its best, is the communication and exploration of human experience; it is a forum for our values, political, moral and ethical. It is concerned with the interaction of these values at a philosophical, emotional and intellectual level” (Pammenter 1993: 59). These ideas are expounded by educational theatre scholar Tony Jackson:

Education can take place in an enormous variety of ways —not least through the medium of the arts. Any good theatre will of itself be educational— that is, when it initiates or extends a questioning process in its audience, when it makes us look afresh at the world, its institutions and conventions and at our own place in that world, when it expands our notion of who we are, of the feelings and thoughts of which we are capable, and of our connection with the lives of others (Jackson 1993: 35).

To the above we can add a further parallelism, this time in terms of certain developments occurring within both fields throughout the twentieth century —in the theatrical sphere materialized in the upsurge of some alternative dramatic movements. Such developments, in turn, have favoured the emergence of projects at the interface of both disciplines:

TIE stems from a number of distinct but related developments in theatre and in education [...]: the movements to re-establish the theatre’s root in the community and in so doing broaden its social basis [...]; the theatre’s search for a useful and effective role within society and an exploration especially of its potential both as an educational medium and as a force for social change [...]; and, in education, the recognition during the 1960s and 1970s of the importance of the arts (and drama particularly) in the school curriculum, together with the increasing stress given to the functional role that the arts have to play in helping children to understand, and operate in, the world in which they live” (Jackson 1993: 4).

In this paper I intend to explore the possibilities offered by the relation between educational practice and theatrical art, as manifested in several related phenomena, namely TIE, DIE, and educational drama in general, each of which should be defined before I proceed:

- TIE, or Theatre in Education, is the name given to a particular kind of theatre, practised by professional drama companies, or TIE teams, which work specifically in educational projects to be devised at schools.
- DIE, or Drama in Education, is the term applied to the practise and use of drama in the classroom, as both subject and method. It can be introduced to deliver any aspect of the curriculum, often to explore cross-curricular aspects; in contrast to TIE, it relies upon the work of teachers, not actors.
- Educational drama: In this paper, I shall be using this expression as a rather comprehensive or umbrella term intended to refer to any form derived from the act of using drama in the service of education. It is often used as a synonym to DIE, but it can also encompass educational projects carried out by theatre groups. Thus, the term “educational plays” is usually given to those plays targeted to a specific age-range and exploring particular school issues.

I will start by offering an overview of some parallel trends in the evolution of educational and theatrical practice that laid the foundations for the emergence of DIE and TIE. The second section focuses on the genesis and structure of TIE, a movement originated in Britain in the sixties that became a model for drama projects in many other places. Given the scope of my study, a lot of attention is devoted to the British context. It must be made clear, however, that similar projects worthy of remark are being conducted in different countries.

Next, I will go on to suggest some applications of educational drama in relation to two particular areas: the teaching of theatre and the teaching of a foreign language from the standpoint of an intercultural perspective. The concluding part of this paper is devoted to Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed, a methodology that has exerted an important influence on educational drama. Throughout the work references will be made to some useful web pages.

PARALLEL DEVELOPMENTS IN 20TH CENTURY EDUCATIONAL AND THEATRICAL TRENDS

One the most outstanding occurrences in education —particularly from the fifties onwards— has been the move towards a change in the role of the student, henceforward envisaged as agent of his/her own learning. Such a development has its theoretical underpinnings in the progressive movement, the constructivist model of learning and developmental psychology.

In the British *mise-en-scene*, the climate of social change which followed the post-war years led to child-centred, ‘progressive’ methods of teaching and learning, mixed ability grouping and topic work (Valerie Halstead 384). The Education Act of 1944 established the foundations for a more egalitarian school system, and paved the way for the introduction at the end of the fifties of Comprehensive Schools. Education is then viewed as the means for personal improvement and social transformation, and its primary aim is the whole development of individuals, who should be provided with meaningful experiences as a way to help them

make sense of the world around. The traditional model involving the mere transmission of information is replaced by a more dynamic teaching practice in which children are exposed to active contexts and situations in order to help them acquire new skills and knowledge as well as explore their personal and social identity.

Drama, fitting as it does in the dynamics of an active pedagogy, makes its way into the educational syllabus, as reflected in the Newsom Report of 1963: "In short, drama along with poetry and other arts is not a frill... It is through creative arts, including the arts of language, that young people can be helped to come to terms with themselves, more surely than by any other route" (Newsom 1963:157, quoted in Pammeter 1993: 57). Nowadays, drama is a significant force as gathered in the legal regulations, placed within English, a core subject, in the National Curriculum; in spite of that, classroom drama is not provided by all schools regularly (Toye and Prendiville 2000:87). Besides, theatre in Secondary Education remains an optional subject.

Nevertheless, there is a tradition of curriculum drama or drama in education (DIE), which tallies with the "learning by doing" principle, and encompasses a wide range of devices and practices, according to the particular learning context, subjects involved and desired outcomes: from the preparation of particular plays to the use of simulation, theatrical games, improvisation and role-plays aimed at developing children's individual and social skills while fostering their creative and expressive capabilities. Students are thereby initiated into the fictional world and conventions of the dramatic art. Rejecting a merely instrumental conception of the dramatic medium, educational drama rests on the premise that the symbolic potential of theatre enables us to go beyond the surface of actions and situations in order to get a deeper understanding of things.

If we turn to theatre, the second half of the 20th century has witnessed the apparition of a wide number of popular, alternative movements leading to the creation of political, community, fringe and children's drama companies. Underlying such phenomena was the need to explore the manners in which theatre could be oriented to achieve social and educational goals. New forms are devised and topics of current interest for particular communities and groups of people introduced in order to produce performances adapted to the demands of a popular audience. Moreover, experiments with traditional dramatic conventions that have resulted in a narrowing of the distance between actors and audience (in a literal as well as a metaphorical sense), and a blurring of the dividing line between the roles of performer and watcher, have been carried out by both mainstream and alternative companies. Thus, the fixed conception of the performing space has been challenged. No longer limited to a performance venue, the stage has become in principle infinitely adaptable, as pointed out by Russell Taylor (1970: 263), referring to instances such as the proposal of the German Bauhaus theorists to get drama out of theatres and perform in the streets or on balconies, the acting all round or in the middle of the audience practised by the Moscow Realist Theatre or the case of Theatres-in-the-round, in which the public sits round the central acting area, adopted by amateur groups and some professional companies.

Furthermore, the deconstruction of the classical divide between actors and audience has gone beyond the category of space to that of function. In a variety of theatre performances, spectators have been engaged in the dramatic action, either brought into the plot or invited to improvise, with (alternately or inclusively) didactic, political, therapeutic or artistic purposes.

An instance of this can be found in the various forms of popular theatre which evolved in Latin America, some of them initially set up as literacy campaigns, engaged in the production of performances addressing the problems of particular groups of people. Examples of this type of community theatre are the early Mexican carpa, the sixties' teatro Chicano, and, above all, Augusto Boal's Forum Theatre.

The theories and work of Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal have played an important role in the democratization of theatre. Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed ("rehearsal for reality" in his own terms) heralded the integration of the audience in the drama performance. His methodology engages the participants in direct control of the action, thus ceasing to be mere spectators to become spect-actors actively implicated in the dramatic production. Influenced by Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, Boal initially employed the techniques of theatre in the service of deprived communities. He worked with groups of peasants and workers, projecting into the fictional world of drama their problems and experiences in order to raise awareness of their own realities and elicit active responses to particular circumstances. Boal's methodology has been applied to educational theatre and inspired many developments in this field, as we shall see in the final section of this paper.

The prominent role given to drama in education, together with the exploration of the educational possibilities of the dramatic art as well as the questioning of its role in society, established the basis for the apparition in the fifties of the TIE phenomenon, an alternative dramatic movement born at the juncture of theatre and education practitioners and authorities.

THEATRE IN EDUCATION (TIE)

The origins of the movement —and theatrical method— that has come to be called Theatre in Education can be traced back to some projects of joint work between actors and teachers carried out in Coventry in 1965 which led to the establishment of a permanent TIE unit at the Belgrade Theatre. Soon the initiative spread over the country, and was supported by regional boards and local education authorities. Since then, varieties of TIE have evolved in different parts of the world, opening up an enticing range of possibilities, for indeed the assets of this enriching and fruitful cooperation should not be underestimated.

One of the most outstanding features of TIE is the fact that it involves much more than the presentation of a play, consisting as it does of a whole programme of work. The staging is part of an educational project covering some curricular or cross-curricular topic and including previous and further work at the school. Children's participation in the performance is carefully planned, so as to provide a meaningful learning experience in accordance with specific educational aims. In his introduction to *Learning through Theatre* (an invaluable study about the development of TIE and its practice around the world), Tony Jackson provides the following explanation about the nature of the TIE programme:

[It is] a co-ordinated and carefully structured pattern of activities, usually devised and researched by the company, around a topic of relevance both to the school curriculum and to the children's own lives, presented in the school by the company and involving the children directly in a experience of the situations and the problems that the topic throws up (Jackson 1993: 4).

The companies are usually based at particular theatres, where the programmes are created and the performances rehearsed. The inspiration for their work comes from current

topics of interest and/or aspects pertaining to the school curriculum, often of local relevance. The devising process, central to the TIE project, strongly resembles the didactic programming done at schools in that it abides by pedagogic principles, thereby implying a considerable knowledge of aspects such as the needs of the potential learners/participants, the school curriculum, the definition of aims, method and evaluation. Companies, whose members are specialist in young people theatre —some even former teachers or having some training in education—, are in direct contact with teachers and educational institutions, who are often consulted and asked to assist in the process.

Such is the case of the Rondabout Company in Nottingham, founded in 1973 and still devoted to the production of educational plays. Their web site (www.roundabout.org.uk) is worthwhile consulting to get a grasp of the evolution of TIE and educational theatre over the years in as much as the development of this unit can be regarded as a good exponent of the different stages undergone by the movement in Britain. We learn here about the history, policies, organization, funding and present activities of the company. It is also interesting to find out about aspects such as the preparation of “the teacher’s pack”, aimed at helping teachers with ideas for work in the classroom and devised by people with experience in both the theatrical and educational fields.

In this sense, apart from the performance proper, which takes place in the school, the programme usually involves one or several workshops, training for participating teachers and meetings in which the objectives and method of the project are discussed. Teachers are handed a set of notes (the teacher’s pack) with research material and guidelines to continue the work in class after the performance; the acting, in turn, can be followed by a session to comment on the development of the project.

Nevertheless, there are no fixed rules, since the programme can last from half a day to an entire week or even more than that. It must be noted, however, that TIE tends to work only with one or, at the most, two classes at a time, which allows the active participation of children. This leads us to the role of the students. Usually, there is a significant amount of interaction with the audience; students are involved in problem-solving and decision-making based on the exploration of simulated ‘real-life’ situations. Often, they are brought into the structure of the play, in which some dilemmas are posed, and challenged to decide on the turn of the events, thus interacting with the characters. Many programmes tend to adopt Boal’s techniques, i.e. Forum Theatre and Image Theatre, to which I shall return later.

Turning once more to TIE on the web, Peter Wynne-Willson (writer, director and performer of educational theatre) offers practical information on the subject (www.pwynne.hostinguk.com). His account of the production in Manchester of a TIE programme about the Peterloo Massacre¹ is a good example of the kind of involvement required of students in this type of performance: The children were first informed of the visit of a manager of a local textile mill who would be recruiting new workers. Peter Wynne-Willson himself played the part of the manager (“a Dickensian villain with a tall hat and a big stick”), whose task was that of recruiting the class to his mill. The class was led to the “mill” (set in the school hall)

(1) Name given, by analogy with the battle of Waterloo, to the unfortunate events which took place in St. Peter’s Field, Manchester, England, on August 16th, 1819. A crowd of some 60,000 men, women and children gathered peaceably under the leadership of Henry Hunt to demand parliamentary reform. The magistrates became nervous and called in the military to disperse the crowd, but the Manchester Yeomanry, an ill-trained militia, arrived first and charged into the crowd. As a result, eleven people were killed and four hundred wounded.

where the rest of the company members, dressed up as workers, were engaged in different tasks. The pupils questioned the characters about their jobs and personal lives, thereby obtaining information about nineteenth century life. They had the chance to observe the harsh conditions of the people and the manner in which they were treated by the manager. Then a messenger arrived and a meeting was planned for the following week for all the mill workers of the region. The meeting was to take place a week later (when the company would again visit the school). In the meantime, the students were to prepare banners and placards. In the next session the members of the class set off towards the meeting place, but they were stopped by a worker, who described how the crowd had been charged by the hussars; people had died and a woman was under arrest, to which a trial ensued. Peter Wynne-Willson exemplifies the impact of the experience by referring to the response of a child, who, in the middle of the trial, kept raising his hand. When allowed to speak, he asked the magistrate whether he had ever worked in a mill. At the negative answer of the magistrate, he replied: "No. I thought you hadn't. Because if you had, you see, you would understand". Beyond the exploration of the historical event, there was the deep, meaningful involvement and personal experiencing of the facts. As Wynne-Willson himself states, "some real understanding was there". He further highlights the basic theatrical and educational requirements of a TIE programme:

For programmes like the Peterloo one to work, the theatre element of the TIE needs to be right. Good costumes and props, thorough accurate research, well-chosen and believable characters, a strong plot. The actors must be very strong - even more so in order to sustain their roles in improvisation, in working with pupils. All the usual elements that drive a play are essential, pacing, images, powerful moments, jokes that are funny, speeches that are vivid, people that we care about. For it to work well, all this needs to spring from the educational thrust - the key questions that the programme is asking. When the two elements come together properly there is a potential for making really significant contributions to the lives of the people involved. That is what is precious, that is what must not be allowed to disappear.

Produced in 1979, this is one of the many TIE programmes based on historical facts devised in the 70s and 80s, often with a political bias or focused on injustice and the precarious circumstances of depressed communities. Outstanding examples are *Brand of Freedom*, a programme devised in 1984 by the Pit Prop Theatre dealing with the Lancashire cotton famine of the 1860s as well as the American Civil War and the question of the black slaves; and *Marches*, produced for 16 to 19 year-olds by the Cockpit TIE in London, centering on the topics of unemployment and the rise of Fascism in London in the 1930s. Other instances are *Pow Wow*, about the American Indians, conducted in 1973 in Coventry, and *Poverty Knocks*, a programme about the Bolton cotton operatives in the 1830s produced by Bolton Octagon. In turn, the trilogy *Rare Earth* (Belgrade TIE 1973) dealt with environmental topics, namely pollution and the relation between humans and nature. This programme, closer to a traditional theatrical representation, involved audience participation to a lesser extent, centering in the acting out of a play which was influenced by the Japanese Noh stylized techniques.

Together with ecological themes, health aspects such as AIDS, drugs or old age have been the focus of many programmes, e.g. *Sex, Lies and Tricky Bits*, written in 1991 by Stuart Blackburn for the Tyne and Wear TIE company and addressed to adolescent students aged

16 to 18. In this respect, one of the current areas of TIE —and applied drama in general— is health education (see Ball 1993). Some projects related to health and the relationship between the young and the elderly are those devised by Age Exchange, a professional theatre company performing plays based on the memories of older people, the main aim of which is to improve their quality of life through the articulation of their voices, thus promoting young people's understanding of their own cultural roots and building bridges between generations (see www.age-exchange.org.uk).

Another topic of educational relevance has been that of violence, addressed in *Show of Force* (1990) by Jim Mirrione, writer of TIE plays for the Creative Arts Team (CAT), the professional Theatre in Education company in residence at New York University. This particular work raises an issue of current concern, i.e. violence amongst young people.

The above examples answer to Lowell Swortzell's description of the nature of TIE: "It is a learning theatre through which audiences, young and old, may comprehend problems related to their social environment and possible solutions to such problems. Scripts are usually based on school curriculum or relevant social or historical issues" (Swortzell 1990: 4). In this sense, another important area in TIE is that engaged with curricular issues. A visit to CAT's web page (www.nyu.edu/gallatin/creativearts) will give us a close idea of the procedures of a company working in support of the local learning standards, hence their provision of workshops for early childhood, elementary, junior high schools and students with special needs. For instance, The Early Learning Through the Arts Program focuses on literacy and early preparation for reading and writing:

CAT actors/teachers collaborate with the classroom teachers in order to best meet the developmental needs of each class and age level. The content of each session is carefully designed to build such skills as observation, sequencing, the recognition of symbols, and visual imagery. Each session also exercises listening and speaking skills, while the interactive style encourages group problem-solving skills, cooperation and concentration.

Issues such as identification of feelings, communication, respect for self and others, anger management and conflict resolution are explored in the context of interactive drama activities and development of stories in which the decisions of children influence the outcome of events. Such procedures rest on the theoretical principles which inform the current trend of drama in education (DIE), in which drama is seen as an extension of play in the early stages: a) children learn best through direct experience, b) drama "allows our students to explore the foundations of surface reality" (Wessels 1987:8). However, whereas DIE takes place in the classroom without any external support, the specificity of TIE derives from the fact that students can benefit from the interaction with real actors who bring into the school all the magic and power of theatre, providing children with a first-hand experience of the performing arts.

It is not my aim in this paper to give a detailed account of the major instances of TIE; rather, I would like to highlight the possibilities offered by this flexible form, which can be adapted to many educational contexts and used to serve different purposes. In my estimation, an aspect that should be explored is that of metatheatres or metadrama, since TIE programmes could provide a wonderful opportunity to explore drama from an "inside perspective", through the presentation of performances drawing attention to their fictional conventions. In this way, TIE companies could teach about the thing they know best: the theatrical medium,

and TIE projects could be devised to show how plays work and mean. To this end, a most appropriate form is that of theatre which comments upon itself, metadrama or “drama about drama” (Hornby 1986:31), a theatrical form which self-consciously reflects on the theatrical process, and on the relation between theatre and life. Characters may be aware of their own fictionality, of their being constrained to act in accordance with a fixed pattern, ensuing from the role assigned to them. This, in turn, can be used to draw an analogy between dramatic roles and the different roles adopted in real life, depending on conventions, cultural and educational background, reactions to particular situations, etc., as pointed out in the well known Shakespearian lines: “All the world is a stage / And all the men and women merely players”. Thus, this form can reveal the exploration of human self-perception, an aim inherent in the use of drama in educational contexts.

Besides, metatheatrical devices can help students understand the differences between fact and fiction. In this sense, Andrew Stibbs stresses the need to emphasize the constructed nature of literary narratives, the fact that the signs of literature are signs —signs which constitute fictions (Stibbs 1991:133). Children, as (developing) readers of literary texts and consumers of media productions, should be enabled to apprehend the fictional nature of these works, so as to keep a critical look upon the meanings conveyed by the material they may read/watch:

Literary narratives [...] have purposes and messages to which entirely enchanted readers are vulnerable. ‘Lost’ in texts, they confuse ‘as’ with ‘is’. Enchanted readers may not recognize, evaluate and resist the messages. This is a special danger with texts which do nothing to draw attention to their own artefactuality and textuality, especially realist films and novels (Stibbs 1991:136).

Metafictional, parodic, self-reflexive texts, in turn, can help deconstruct and estrange fiction, opening up many possibilities to analyze its rules and devices. As Stibbs points out, children are familiar with these experimental modes, since they find instances of them in comics, pop videos, television adverts and other popular forms. Metadrama also allows the exploration of theatrical elements such as setting, costume design, music, the construction of characters, action and dialogues.

SOME APPLICATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL DRAMA

a) The teaching of theatre and the performing arts

Educational drama and theatre-in-education projects can concentrate on their own artistic form and aid the study of theatre by bridging the gap between the written page —be it the theoretical study of the processes of drama creation and representation or the text of a particular play— and the actual performance. In this sense, there is a good number of companies devoted to the staging of plays included in particular educational programmes.

In his study about the teaching of drama, Graham Atkins refers to the tension between the play as a text and the play as enacted, for, in order to fully comprehend theatre, students must think of it in terms of “a medium through which the dormant play-text can come to life” (Atkins 1995: 176). Only when the acting out takes place can the multimedial aspects and non-verbal dimensions of theatre be properly appreciated, i.e. sound, lighting, costume, mask, make-up, music, set-design, gesture and facial expression, painting, dance... Working in a drama project in schools will provide the chance to experience “the essential aspect of

drama, that which distinguishes drama from all other types of literature, [...] the aspect of enactment of performance”, since “the play-text is a blueprint for action but until enacted it does not live as theatre” (Atkin 1995: 193).

Likewise, drama in education can entail a combination of artistic forms, thus involving cross-curricular work and integrated skills. In this sense, performers working for children are nowadays exploring the possibilities of this cooperation between theatre and education practitioners. In his web page, young people’s theatre writer Peter Wynne-Wilson gives an account of some of the projects in which he is currently involved, related to drama, art in schools and puppetry. One of the experiences described is that of his direction of a community version of Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville* in an East London school, produced with the East London Metropolitan Opera Company. Children from the school and the local community were involved in the production, as singers and actors. Besides, the students decided which approach the production should take in accordance with the particular audience to which it would be addressed and explored the possibilities offered by particular characters. Meetings with school staff and parents were likewise conducted throughout the project, which went on for seven weeks.

b) Foreign language teaching and intercultural awareness

A particular curricular area in which drama and theatre have an effective role to play is that of language teaching, both introduced into everyday lessons and used as extra-curricular activities, in as much as students are exposed to communicative situations in which the messages exchanged are fully contextualized. Language is thus learned in a meaningful context, in which the communicative skills are practised and the pronunciation and prosodic features properly appreciated and acquired. To the latter purpose, Charlyn Wessels (1987) suggests transferring to foreign language teaching the techniques used by actors to prepare their voices for the stage, namely vocal warm-ups, chants, singing, tongue-twisters, and choral reading. Wessel puts forward a dual model for introducing drama in the EFL classroom:

- drama as a supplementary technique of communicative language teaching in the following areas: spoken communication skills; improving coursebook presentation; improving pronunciation and other prosodic features; the teaching of literature - improving students’ understanding of text;
- the drama project leading to the staging of a play, aimed at developing confidence and ability in the use of the target language.

Given the current approach to language teaching, the FL classroom has become a space in which tasks and activities involving fictional episodes are gaining increasing protagonism, so as to foster the active participation of students in simulated instances of communication. Drama techniques such as improvisation, role-play, mime, character analysis and interpretation fit well into the dynamics of the didactic process. Drama brings to focus those elements inherent in communication that are often neglected in classroom practice and textbook dialogues, namely paralinguistic features such as gestures, facial expression, pauses, fillers or interruptions; the dependence of interactions on emotions, particular intentions and other psychological factors and the variations in the language used according to social factors and the environment in which the meanings are exchanged.

The drama project, in turn, which concentrates on the production of particular plays, favours the students’ approach to the literary and cultural realms of the FL, while propitiating

their acquisition of the language in context, provided that parts are learnt “not through ‘parrot-fashion’ memorization’ but through rehearsals, that should “concentrate intensively on small, coherent passages from the play. The lines are thus assimilated through constant repetition, which is assisted by the use of gesture, facial expressions, movement, emotions, and background knowledge” (Wessels 1987: 111).

When considering the advantages of drama in FLT, it is worth reminding ourselves that it can offer more than the mere simulation of authentic situations. This is the rationale underpinning the proposals advanced by drama educationalists such as Dorothy Heathcote, Gavin Bolton and Michael Fleming. According to Fleming: “Alternative possibilities open up if we appreciate that drama like all art operates in the realm of the ‘unreal’. A fruitful way of thinking about dramatic art is not to see it as merely replicating experience but to be aware of its potential to explore and examine experience in ways which would otherwise be denied to us in real life” (Fleming 1998: 149). He goes on to highlight its potential to raise cultural awareness and foster intercultural communication. In the context of a FLT model aimed at developing ‘intercultural speakers’ (Byram 1998: 6), drama can play an important role in the understanding and acceptance of the other, by virtue of its distancing techniques. The exploration of cultural values can be conducted through a wide variety of theatrical devices; for instance, slowing down or freezing the action, voicing inner thoughts, acting out particular scenes from different perspectives, etc.

The volume *Language Learning in Intercultural Perspective* (1998), edited by Michael Byram and Michael Fleming, gathers a collection of proposals to enhance cultural awareness through drama in FLT, exemplified in a variety of drama and theatre projects developed and implemented by the contributors in different educational contexts. The approaches adopted include drama sessions designed to explore some of the problems encountered by young people when visiting other countries (Fleming); projects devised to provide students with the conceptual tools to analyze cultural contexts and particular culture-bound situations through the use of fictional contexts (Heathcote and Bolton); exercises intended to promote a full sensory, physical and emotional appreciation of the target language (Jensen and Hermer); a theatre project in which the participants produced a play in a foreign language (Schmidt); and a drama project that seeks to introduce students of German to aspects of German culture through the study of a novel (Schewe). In particular, Fleming’s approach—to which I shall return later when examining some drama techniques—has provided the basis for a project soon to be initiated by myself and a group of student teachers within the context of the Erasmus mobility programme. We will work in the development of two types of presentations. A group of participants will devise performances reflecting their own cultural experiences as foreign students in Granada. A second group will engage in the production of dramatic pieces showing some relevant aspect of different cultural backgrounds. Both groups will be integrated by foreign and Spanish students, as a means to help participants identify with the perspectives of others.

Intercultural awareness can indeed be the centre of programmes in both the fields of DIE and TIE. Turning once more to TIE and educational theatre (involving the work of theatrical companies in curriculum-based projects), these programmes can provide FL students with a communicative, artistic and cultural experience of a highly enjoyable nature. One of the TIE teams specialized in EFL is that of Big Wheel Theatre in Education (see www.bigwheel.org.uk), which conducts workshops throughout Europe. Whereas their language workshops parody television and other media genres, *Introduction to Shakespeare*,

Wheel of Fire and *The Big Book Show* focus on literature from a perspective very much in accordance with current reading, literary and educational theories. Their teacher's pack provides a set of structured lessons relating the shows to specific curriculum targets.

Particularly interesting for us is the work of the English Theatre Company and The Lingua-Arts Theatre Company. Lingua-Arts is an international theatre group that performs educational plays for Spanish school children studying English between the ages of 5 and 18, whose plays are aimed at "motivating young audiences in the study of English and at stimulating their interest in other worlds and cultures" (www.lingua-arts.com). Although the company is based in Madrid, they perform all over Spain, offering plays specially devised for three different age groups and abilities as well as a wide range of teacher's material.

Likewise, The English Theatre Company, based in Spain but performing in other countries as well, offers plays in English adapted to the needs of different groups of students. They intend to involve participants "verbally, emotionally and physically", conducting performances of a highly visual nature (www.teatre-educatiu.com/ingles).

THE THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED: A MODEL FOR EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS

The Theatre of the Oppressed has had a great impact on educational drama, by virtue of the protagonism it confers on participants, in harmony with the "learning by doing" principle and the prevailing pedagogic models (process-oriented, activity-based and focused on the learner as main agent of her/his own development). Boal contemplates theatre as a dialectical process, involving "change and not simple presentation of what exists" (Boal 1979:28). The idea that dramatic performance can be a vehicle for transformation insofar as human conflicts can be enacted and possible solutions tried out lies behind Boal's approach, which encompasses a number of drama techniques - such as Forum theatre and Image theatre, in all of which participants acquire an active protagonism, thus becoming spect-actors. As he himself puts it:

The Theatre of the Oppressed is theatre in this most archaic application of the word. In this usage, all human beings are Actors (they act!) and Spectators (they observe!). They are Spect-Actors... Everything that actors do, we do throughout our lives, always and everywhere. Actors talk, move, dress to suit the setting, express ideas, reveal passions -just as we do in our everyday lives. The only difference is that actors are conscious that they are using the language of theatre, and are thus better able to turn it to their advantage, whereas the woman and man in the street do not know that they are speaking theatre (Boal 1992: xxx).

Boal endeavoured to re-define the classical relationship between actor and audience, as evidenced in the following lines: "In order to understand the poetics of the oppressed one must keep in mind its main objective: to change the people —'spectators'— passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon - into subjects, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action" (Boal 1979:122). He next proceeds to set up his dramatic theory against Aristotle's poetics, according to which the spectator delegates power to the dramatic character so that the latter may act and think for him, to which a catharsis ensues. Closer to Boal, Brecht's model involves the awakening of critical consciousness, since "the spectator reserves the right to think for himself"; in other words, the alienation effect allows the audience to take a detached view of

the dilemma posed. But the poetics of the oppressed goes further in the reversal of the traditional paradigm: the spectator “assumes the protagonic role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions[...]. The liberated spectator, as a whole person, launches into action” (Boal 1979:122).

The Forum theatre technique, originally devised by Boal while working with community-based companies in Brazil, has had a wide currency in educational contexts. Here a scene is presented, usually posing a particular problem or dealing with a specific issue. The spectactors are invited to reflect upon the issue and suggest solutions. Then, the piece is replayed and the audience invited to stop the performance and enact their suggestions, acting out in the place of the characters. The figure of the Joker acts as mediator and orchestrates the process, teaching the participants the rules of this theatre game. Forum made its way into TIE as a format that fully implicates students and enables their reflection upon the chances of their own proposals throughout the problem-solving process. Two early instances of programmes based on Forum are *A Land Fit for Heroes* and *No Going Back*, performed by the Greenwich Young People’s Theatre (GYPT). Chris Vine (1993) offers a detailed account of the company’s adaptation of Boal’s methodology, soon assumed by other companies. However, he diverges from Boal’s theories in a particular aspect, since a problem arises when adopting Forum in an educational context. Whereas Boal insists that this technique is about acting, not talking, and about participants drawing their own conclusions, TIE plays do have an educational bias. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse the results and comment on the implications of the different interventions. Not all positions are valid. Drama is a valuable educational tool precisely because it enables us to reflect upon the actions enacted in order to achieve a deeper understanding of our own behaviour and that of others.

With regard to DIE, there is a clear similarity between the figure of the Teacher-in-Role (TiR) and that of the Joker in Forum. This is a strategy by means of which the teacher assumes a role in order to engage students in a drama experience. It is important to make clear to students that this is a pretend situation. The teacher slips out of role from time to time to check out understanding and invite students to think about the input, that is, to keep the ‘spectator in the children’s head’ working effectively. Thus, children are both participants and percipient - they watch themselves as they create (Bolton 1993). In this way, reflection does not only take place after the dramatic experience, but also during it. An interesting proposal for the introduction of this technique in Infant Education can be found in *Drama and Traditional Story for the Early Years* (2000) by Nigel Toye and Francis Prendiville. This study corroborates the fact that Boal’s methodology has permeated DIE, since it makes use of both Forum and Image Theatre, adapted by the authors to suit the needs of infant classrooms.

Image Theatre makes use of human sculpting and tableaux (still pictures) in order to convey a message in a non-verbal fashion, through images made with the bodies of the participants. It seeks to capture particular events frozen in time, as a way to achieve a deep understanding of the elements involved. This technique is widely used in educational drama. TIE programmes employ Image Theatre for a variety of purposes. For instance, the participants may convey a particular image based on their perceptions of a specific phenomenon, or, alternatively, suggest an ideal way of solving a problem. Michael Fleming’s project in relation to attitudes to other cultures (mentioned earlier) includes the Image technique: the participants were asked to produce tableaux depicting situations in which foreign visitors had been made to feel uncomfortable. Through this exercise, generalised situations were translated into concrete instances involving attitudes, stances and facial expressions.

In addition to these techniques, Boal has devised a wide amount of warm up games and exercises that can be used as introductory activities in the drama classroom, alongside the DIE models proposed by many authors after the pioneering work of Dorothy Heathcote and David Bolton. A satisfactory DIE practice, in turn, will pave the way for subsequent approaches to theatre. In order to achieve this, not only teachers, but especially educational authorities, must be aware of the importance of drama and theatre in education, which in turn will have implications for teacher training. Likewise, this interdisciplinary collaboration demands the training of actors-teachers, that is, professionals specialised in both fields, which means that degrees in educational drama and theatre must be promoted, as the basis of a most promising work.

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