



## Durham E-Theses

---

### *Theatre/drama in education in the United Kingdom, Italy and Poland.*

Lewicki, Tadeusz

#### How to cite:

---

Lewicki, Tadeusz (1995) *Theatre/drama in education in the United Kingdom, Italy and Poland.*, Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/1430/>

#### Use policy

---

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

---

Academic Support Office, Durham University, University Office, Old Elvet, Durham DH1 3HP  
e-mail: [e-theses.admin@dur.ac.uk](mailto:e-theses.admin@dur.ac.uk) Tel: +44 0191 334 6107  
<http://etheses.dur.ac.uk>

"THEATRE/DRAMA IN EDUCATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, ITALY AND POLAND. A historical and comparative analysis", by TADEUSZ LEWICKI

Theatre/drama is present in some measure in each education system. Its role and status depend fundamentally on the philosophical basis of the education in each country. United Kingdom, Italy and Poland have had over the past decades diverse educational orientations. The theatre/drama approaches developed within their systems fully reflected the socio-political premises and conditions of education. The research aimed to reveal the historical developments of the approaches in each country, the recent most popular methodologies and their position in the curriculum and school culture. The comparison between leading approaches aimed at building a platform of understanding, collaboration and possible adaptation in other cultures.

The development of drama in education in the United Kingdom has the longest and richest tradition. Various approaches have been developed and the constant research for improvement meant that drama became an accepted teaching/learning methodology recognised by the National Curriculum.

The relation between theatre and school in Italy had its best example in theatrical animation of the 1970s and 1980s. The socio-political factors limited its educational influence, allowing at the same time the development of the children's theatre and school/community theatres. The recent search and initiatives tended towards the artistic/aesthetic approach.

Theatrical education in Poland was part of the programme of aesthetic education and over the years the approaches emphasising knowledge of theatre developed, although the strong presence of 'mise-en-scene' as a teaching/learning method influenced primary education. The recent adaptation of the British drama enlarged theatrical education and stimulated the work of theatre/drama practitioners.

In order to compare the leading approaches, to demonstrate their basic visions about the role, content and aims of theatre/drama in education I created an interpretative model.

The comparison emphasised the priority in the United Kingdom towards the methodological use of drama; Italy was able to develop theatrical education which evolved in children's theatre, and Poland developed a substantial curriculum of theatrical education based on aesthetic and artistic knowledge of theatre.

Mutual knowledge and understanding of the approaches - one of the aims of this research - could allow closer collaboration between practitioners and adaptation of the approaches developed by others.

**THEATRE/DRAMA IN EDUCATION**  
**IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, ITALY AND POLAND**

**A historical and comparative analysis**

**In Two Volumes**

**Volume One**

**TADEUSZ LEWICKI**

**A Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**  
**in the University of Durham**

**DURHAM**  
**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**1995**



**- 6 DEC 1995**

## Contents

In Memory of my Dad,  
who gave me my first book,  
and to my Mum,  
who introduced me to the magic of drama



## CONTENTS

### Volume One

Dedication	2
CONTENTS	3
LIST OF FIGURES	15
DECLARATION	16
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	16
INTRODUCTION	18
<b>PART A: PRACTICES AND THEORIES OF THEATRE/DRAMA</b>	
IN EDUCATION. A HISTORICAL SURVEY	35
<b>CHAPTER 1: DRAMA IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: SUCCESSIVE DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS AN ACCEPTED TEACHING METHODOLOGY</b>	
1.1. ENGLISH, ARTS AND THE ORIGINS OF DRAMA/THEATRE IN EDUCATION	39 46
1.1.1. 'New Education' issues and the Arts in education	47
1.1.2. Harriet Finlay-Johnson and 'knowledge from drama'	49
1.1.3. Henry Caldwell Cook and 'drama for knowledge'	51
1.1.4. Drama in the official educational documents/publications	55
1.1.5. Theatre FOR children and youth	61

1.2. DRAMA AS CHILD-CENTRED, SUBJECT OR METHOD, MEANS OF PERSONAL REALISATION, BUT REALLY A SOURCE OF INNOVATION IN THE TEACHING/LEARNING PROCESS	66
1.2.1. In the climate of 'speech and movement' drama	67
1.2.2. Peter Slade - a man from/of the theatrical background	69
1.2.3. Peter Slade - drama adviser and a man of associations	74
1.2.4. <u>Child Drama</u> : premises and essence	77
1.2.5. Brian Way and contemporaries of Slade	87
1.2.6. Heirs of Slade in 'Educational Drama Association'	92
1.3. RE-BIRTH OF DRAMA AS A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO THE TEACHING/LEARNING PROCESS IN DOROTHY HEATHCOTE'S PRAXIS	100
1.3.1. Years of transformation: the 1960s	102
1.3.2. Growing interest for 'drama in education'	106
1.3.3. Heathcote's praxis in the 1970s	110
1.4. GAVIN BOLTON'S PRACTICE AND THEORY AND HIS INFLUENCE ON DRAMA IN THE 1970S	122
1.4.1. Bolton's activity and theoretical legitimisation of drama	122
1.4.2. Bolton's historical legacy - the teacher in quest of a methodology	126
1.4.3. Discussing and defining the nature of drama	129
1.4.4. Aims and objectives in drama	132
1.4.5. Problem of emotion in drama	135
1.4.6. Bolton's use of 'dialectics'	136

	Contents
1.4.7. New generation of drama practitioners	138
<b>1.5. THEATRE'S RE-DISCOVERY OF ITS EDUCATIONAL MISSION</b>	<b>147</b>
1.5.1. Inspirations and origins of 'Theatre in Education' (TIE)	148
1.5.2. Beginning of TIE at the Belgrade Theatre	151
1.5.3. Main features of TIE	155
1.5.4. The aims of the TIE within the 'drama in education' dominion	162
1.5.5. Development and state of the 'Theatre in Education' in the 1970s	166
 <b>CHAPTER 2: 'THEATRICAL ANIMATION' ('ANIMAZIONE TEATRALE') AND 'CHILDREN'S THEATRE' ('TEATRO - RAGAZZI') IN ITALY: AN EVER PRESENT AND BLOSSOMING FEATURE OF SCHOOL PRACTICE</b>	 <b>179</b>
<b>2.1. SCHOOL THEATRE AS A SIGNIFICANT MANIFESTATION OF 'ART IN EDUCATION'</b>	<b>181</b>
2.1.1. The Roots in the past: History of the school - college theatres (Oratory, Jesuits, Salesians)	181
2.1.2. Puppet theatre companies in 1920s and 1930s	183
2.1.3. 'Art in Education' movement in Italy	185
2.1.4. Maria Signorelli and her school practice of puppetry theatre	186
2.1.5. D'Alessandro and his practice of dramatising history teaching	187

2.1.6. Signorelli's late stage and puppetry as a means of discovery	188
2.1.7. 'Art Education' in new school programmes and re-discovery of play and game	191
2.2. THE PHENOMENON OF 'THEATRICAL ANIMATION' ('ANIMAZIONE TEATRALE') AND ITS MULTIPLE CHALLENGES IN SOCIAL LIFE	194
2.2.1. Social and cultural phenomenon	196
2.2.2. 'Theatrical animation': its derivation, roots and Italian 'originality'	200
2.2.3. The multiple challenge of 'animation'	206
2.2.4. Pioneers of 'theatrical animation' and their first activities	207
2.3. EVOLUTION OF 'CHILDREN'S THEATRE': FROM ANIMATION EXPERTS INTO PROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL THEATRE (THEATRICAL MOVEMENT OF THE 1970S)	216
2.3.1. Innovations of theatre FOR children and decentralisation	217
2.3.2. First 'theatrical animations' and 'theatre' within them	220
2.3.3. 'Children's theatre' groups	222
2.3.4. First analytic and interpretative theories	232
2.4. DECLINE OF 'THEATRICAL ANIMATION' BUT 'ANIMATION' OMNIPRESENT ('SOCIO-CULTURAL, 'CULTURAL' AND 'EDUCATIONAL')	238
2.4.1. How, through the 'animation' could the new culture	

	Contents
of the big city be created?	239
2.4.2. From 'theatrical animation' into 'socio-cultural animation'	240
CHAPTER 3: HISTORY OF THEATRICAL EDUCATION IN POLISH SCHOOLS. (FROM EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES TOWARDS METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING/LEARNING PROCESS)	245
3.1. SCHOOL THEATRE AND THE CULTURE IN THE SERVICE OF THE STATE'S IDEOLOGY (1944-1960)	255
3.1.1. Political changes and consequent changes of cultural and educational policy	256
3.1.2. The professional theatre within the State's policy	258
3.1.3. Theatre for children and theatre in the service of mass-culture	259
3.1.4. School theatre - its tendencies (principles) and examples	261
3.1.5. Puppetry in teaching and as children's theatre	262
3.1.6. Theatre included in the educational process	264
3.1.7. Studies announcing the beginning of the aesthetic education	269
3.2. 'ART IN EDUCATION' AND THE THEATRE'S EDUCATIONAL VALUES AFTER THE SCHOOL REFORM 1962/1963	271
3.2.1. Aesthetic education and theatre's position/role within it	273
3.2.2. Theory of theatrical education	279
3.2.3. Practice and forms of theatrical education	284

3.2.4. Theatre elements and teaching methodology (didactic)	289
3.2.5. Theatre FOR children	292
3.3. 'MISE-EN-SCENE' ('INSCENIZACJA') AND 'DRAMATIC GAMES' ( 'GRY DRAMATYCZNE') AS 'THEATRICAL EDUCATION' PRACTICES IN THE SCHOOL OF THE 1970S	297
3.3.1. Theatre and its elements and its principle of integration in teaching/learning process	301
3.3.2. 'Mise-en-scene' ('inscenizacja') as an active teaching/learning method	306
3.3.3. 'Dramatic games' ('gry dramatyczne') in the first stage of theatrical education	311
3.3.4. 'Psychodrama' and 'socio-drama' experiences in the school practice	314
3.3.5. Beginning of 'Proscenium' movement	317
3.4. THEATRICAL EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM OF THE COMPULSORY TEN-YEARS COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL	320
3.4.1. Humanistic dimension of education	323
3.4.2. Principle of synthesis and integration in aesthetic education	325
3.4.3. Cultural education as the leading aim in the school	326
3.4.4. Project of 'theatrical education' in the curriculum of the ten-years school and its practical presentations	330
3.4.5. 'Theatrical education' project: 'Gdańsk conception'	334

## VOLUME TWO

PART B: LEADING APPROACHES AND IMPORTANT PHENOMENA OF THE 1980S	8
CHAPTER 4: LEADING CONCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF DRAMA IN THE 1980S AND ITS PLACE IN NATIONAL CURRICULUM	13
4.1. THE TEAM OF HEATHCOTE & BOLTON AND THEIR FOLLOWERS	19
4.1.1. Towards an 'alternative curriculum for living'	22
4.1.2. Drama in education: an 'Art Form' for understanding	35
4.2. EXTENSIVE USE OF DRAMA IN TEACHING; VARIETY OF THE APPROACHES (A SURVEY)	44
4.2.1. Drama teacher within the changing curriculum	46
4.2.2. Demands and projects for a new style of training of drama teachers	49
4.2.3. Fight for the place for drama in the curriculum of the 1980s	51
4.2.4. Variety and diversity of drama methodologies in the 1980s	57
4.3. 'THEATRE IN EDUCATION' ACTIVITY AND SCRIPT PRACTICES; THEIR TRANSFORMATION PROCESS	65

	Contents
4. 3. 1. Political and social choices as a dictate for changes	66
4. 3. 2. TIE's evolution towards theatre groups in community service and a search for artistic identity	71
4. 3. 3. TIE's transformation and the beginning of 'curriculum for living'	76
4. 4. DRAMA AND THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM	79
4. 4. 1. The background for the place for drama in the National Curriculum	80
4. 4. 2. Drama in the documents previous to the National Curriculum	83
4. 4. 3. The place and functions of drama in the National Curriculum	86
4. 4. 4. Hornbrook's critique and proposal of 'dramatic art'	98
CHAPTER 5: AWAKENING OR CULTIVATION OF THE TRADITIONAL WAYS IN ITALY	103
5.1. 'CHILDREN'S THEATRE' GROUPS IN THE SERVICE OF YOUNG AUDIENCE	111
5.1.1. Development of the ideas about the new theatre for children	111
5.1.2. Theatre groups: their practice and projects	125
5.2. YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRES AS A CULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE SOCIETY	135
5.2.1. Post-animation school theatre	137

	Contents
5.2.2. Post-animation young people's theatre	143
5.2.3. New school programmes and successive theatre purposes	151
5.3. THEATRE IN SCHOOL (OR EDUCATION) BETWEEN ANIMATION AND MEDIA	159
5.3.1. Good and bad heritage of animation in school	161
5.3.2. Animation/theatre and the languages in the school	164
5.3.3. Theatre and 'first cultural alphabetisation'	169
CHAPTER 6: DIALECTICAL PRESENCE OF THEATRE/DRAMA IN 'SCHOOL IN CRISIS' OF THE 1980S	174
6.1. THEATRICAL EDUCATION AS A PART OF THEORY OF CULTURAL EDUCATION	181
6.1.1. 'Cultural education' and the 'Polish concept of aesthetic education'	185
6.1.2. Theatre and theatrical education in 'rocking' programmes	189
6.2. PRAXIS OF THEATRICAL EDUCATION	196
6.2.1. Didactic/Methodological use of theatre methods and its elements	198
6.2.2. School and young people's theatre activity	210
6.2.3. Forum of the children's and school theatres	216
6.3. 'GDAŃSK' CONCEPT OF THEATRICAL EDUCATION AND FIRST 'THEATRE IN EDUCATION' GROUPS	220
6.3.1. 'Gdańsk' concept in accordance with the tradition of aesthetic and cultural education	221

	Contents
6.3.2. 'Second edition' 1980-1983	223
6.3.3. 'Centre of Theatrical Education' and enlargement of project	227
6.3.4. Territorial operativeness, structures and publications of 'Gdańsk' Centre	231
6.3.5. 'Scena Centrum' ('Centre Stage') and first 'theatre in education' groups	238
<b>6.4. INTRODUCTION OF 'BRITISH DRAMA', ITS ADAPTATION AND DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>241</b>
6.4.1. Theatre 'Ochota' and ideas about 'theatre in education'	242
6.4.2. Halina Machulska met Dorothy Heathcote	244
6.4.3. Beginning of 'British Drama' in Poland	245
6.4.4. Adaptation and development	247
6.4.5. Growing popularity of drama	251
<b>PART C: SIMILARITIES, DIFFERENCES AND COMMON PROBLEMS</b>	<b>255</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7: A CHRONOLOGICAL COMPARISON EXAMINING SIGNIFICANT STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT AND THE PLACE OF THEATRE/DRAMA IN EDUCATION PROGRAMMES</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>7. 1. A CHRONOLOGICAL COMPARISON BETWEEN THE SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE THEATRE/DRAMA DEVELOPMENTS</b>	<b>260</b>
7. 1. 1. The 1950s	261
7. 1. 2. The 1960s	262

	Contents
7. 1. 3. The 1970s	266
7. 1. 4. The 1980s	272
<b>7. 2. THEATRE/DRAMA IN THE DOCUMENTS PUBLISHED BY THE GOVERNMENTS</b>	<b>281</b>
7. 2. 1. Theatre/drama as a help for the language curricula	281
7. 2. 2. Educational reforms in the 1960s and 1970s	282
7. 2. 3. The Programmes in the 1980s	284
<b>7. 3. THE PUBLISHING POLICY IN THEATRE/DRAMA IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>287</b>
7. 3. 1. Books and Publishing Houses	289
7. 3. 2. Journals and articles	301
 <b>CHAPTER 8: ROLE AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS IN THEATRE/DRAMA IN EDUCATION</b>	 <b>308</b>
<b>8. 1. WHO IS, AND WHO SHOULD BE A THEATRE/DRAMA TEACHER?</b>	<b>312</b>
8. 1. 1. Inspirations, examples and necessity of experiencing	312
8. 1. 2. Theatre/drama teacher & animator and his/her virtues and qualifications	314
8. 1. 3. Idealistic convictions and their critics	318
8. 1. 4. "T" - the teacher of theatre/drama's own view"	321
<b>8. 2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PUPILS AND THE TEACHER</b>	<b>325</b>
8. 2. 1. The climate of dialogue	326

	Contents
8. 2. 2. The work in the group	327
8. 2. 3. The teacher and the pupils working together - 'teacher-in-role' and its development	328
8. 2. 4. The teacher/director of the school theatre	330
8. 2. 5. Teacher/ animator as a deviser of projects	331
8. 3. TRAINING OF TEACHERS	333
8. 3. 1. General similar aspects of the teachers' training	333
8. 3. 2. Awareness of the necessity of different approaches to training and some theoretical projects	335
8. 3. 3. Institutional forms of training of theatre/drama's teacher	338
8. 3. 4. In-service courses, seminars and occasional initiatives of drama/theatre teacher's training	343
8. 4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADULTS (IN DRAMA, THEATRICAL ANIMATION, THEATRICAL EDUCATION)	346
8. 4. 1. 'Professions' and the mutual relationship between them	346
8. 4. 2. Stimuli, inspirations, examples and influence from contemporary theatre	353
CHAPTER 9: RICHNESS OF METHODOLOGIES AND THEIR COMMON FEATURES	359
9. 1. 'TEACHING/LEARNING FROM, IN, THROUGH AND ABOUT THEATRE/DRAMA'	364
9. 1. 1. Teaching/learning FROM theatre/drama	366
9. 1. 2. Teaching/learning IN theatre/drama	367

	Contents
9. 1. 3. Teaching/learning THROUGH theatre/drama	369
9. 1. 4. Teaching/learning ABOUT theatre/drama	371
9. 2. THE AXES: INDIVIDUALITY AND GROUP WORK/ACTIVITY/ LEARNING IN THEATRE/DRAMA	374
9. 2. 1. The axis of individuality	374
9. 2. 2. The axis of group work/activity/learning	375
9. 3. THE DOMAINS OF THE CONTENT	378
9. 3. 1. Domain of theatre/drama as Art	378
9. 3. 2. Domain of theatre and life skills	378
9. 3. 3. Domain of human/interpersonal/community relationships	379
9. 3. 4. Domain of the variety of human attitudes/behaviour	380
9. 4. DOMAINS OF THE AIMS AND EFFECTS	382
CONCLUSION	385
BIBLIOGRAPHY	390
A. UNITED KINGDOM	390
B. ITALY	408
C. POLAND	421

**LIST OF FIGURES (Volume Two)**

Figure 1. Books published in Italy 1950-1990. Distribution per domains	294
Figure 2. Books published in Poland 1955-1990. Distribution per domains	295
Figure 3. Books published in UK, Italy and Poland 1955-1990	296
Figure 4. Books published in UK, Italy and Poland 1955-1990 (distribution per years)	297
Figure 5. Books published in the United Kingdom 1930-1990	298
Figure 6. Books published in Italy 1955-1990	299
Figure 7. Books published in Poland 1950-1990	300
Figure 8. Articles published in Italy and Poland 1955-1990	307
Figure 9. Interpretative model	362
Figure 10. 'Heart' of the model	363
Figure 11. Axes of individuality and group work/activity/learning	373
Figure 12. Domains of the content	377
Figure 13. Domains of the aims and effects	381

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that no part of the thesis was submitted for a degree in this or any other university, and no part was previously published -

The copyright © of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without his prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

During the four years of the research I have met many theatre/drama practitioners, who were kind to listen to me, to help me and to encourage me. For all those signs of friendship I am very grateful and the effort of this work will be a visible symbol of the common educational care which I learned from all pioneers, practitioners and teachers. Your names, activities and writings which I named and quoted, and especially live relationship with many, meant an important part of my life. Thank You!

In a very special kind I am grateful to my fellows - Salesians from ISCOS in Rome, who tolerated my theatrical passion and promised to do and to share it with me in the future. I am also grateful to two Salesian Fathers with whom I shared three years of my life in Esh Winning - Durham, to Austin Malloy and Michael McGovern. They not only showed their care about my work, but based on their huge educational experience they enlightened me in so many topics of the British school.

At last I repeat my thankfulness to Mike Fleming and Peter Millward for their patient, guidance and friendship.

## INTRODUCTION

"How many paths in this wood,  
Tangled, twisted...  
A hundred years must pass  
Before I can escape out of it!"<sup>1</sup>

These were the first words of my first 'performance' at Christmas time in the school year 1964/65. It was of course a Christmas Play, but not the story of the Night in Bethlehem, rather the story of Santa Claus, or even better of 'Dziadek Mróz' (Grandpa Frost), and his friends - animals in the forest waiting for him on the one night of the year. (The play was in accordance with the secular character of the content of education, but for us, pupils that was still the Christmas Play).

Since that time, through so many life experiences, the theatre has been close to me; we walked together during my years of studies, of academic training and often with my friends we performed something which had a deeper meaning for us, although the official title was different. Probably this was the main reason for my

---

<sup>1</sup> The first, initial words of a Christmas Play - A Santa Claus Story, prepared by my primary teacher Janina Michalak in the Elementary School in Łagiewniki by Krotoszyn (Poland) in 1964/65:

"Ile w lesie tym ścieżynek,  
Poplątane, poskręcane...  
Chyba jeszcze sto lat minie  
Nim się z niego wydostanę!"

research: a fascination with the educational possibilities offered by theatre and its elements, the possible interpretation and re-interpretation of its meaning, despite the external appearances, the necessity of exploring the roles, characters and signs in theatre in order to discover their real potential and significance.

How strong was theatrical experience for me at the beginning of my education? Even now I can feel the importance of my 'standing' in front of so many people, children - my companions, and adults... And I know, that they ALL were listening to us, that our message did reach them... But also I can remember the hard work before the final performance, our slow learning of reading, memorising, all our imaginative games of 'being other people', animals from the forest, bushes and trees... And I remember the passion and patience of our teachers, our common battle with unskilful tongue, hands, feet, the whole body. Also I remember the engagement of our Mums in preparing costumes, consulting their shape, colour with us, their help in sewing, sticking, constructing props on an improvised 'stage' in the biggest classroom... Yes, all these I remember as the very strong, important event and experience in my life. How much did I learn from that first theatrical experience? Nobody knows, including me...

And this 'amazement', but uncertainty is the deeper meaning of my research.

### **General premises, origins and reasons of the research**

The relation between theatre and education seems so obvious, that any attempt at study risks falling into superficiality. Another danger is the creation of aesthetic/educational theories far removed from reality, especially that of the school, which traditionally is devoted to the transmission of the cultural heritage. But when

the question about the relation between theatre and education finds its author and context, soon other questions follow: what kind of relation? what kind of theatre? and what kind of education?

The relation between theatre and school is so varied as variable as theatre is itself; it is as complicated as the education and its institutions are; and this relation is as diverse as the culture in which both phenomena, theatre and school exist. My first knowledge of diverse forms of the relation between theatre and education, which were from my own early experiences, pushed me into explorative research: does the relation 'theatre-education' in various culture (i. e. educational systems) have something in common? is it possible to discern similarities? does there exist a platform of mutual understanding and collaboration between practitioners?

During my years of educational studies at the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome I specialised in teacher training in contemporary education praxis commonly named 'enactive styles of teaching'. Theatre was a part of these systems as the context of the children's development and cultural formation. In 1988, when the Institute of Social Communication Sciences was founded and I was proposed as a member of the future staff and responsible for theatre studies, I soon presented my project to study the relation between theatre and education. In 1989 I came across the name of Gavin Bolton (in one of the bookshops in Dublin I bought the first two books about drama written by Bolton) and I discovered drama. I had initiated already my studies in theatrical animation in Italy and in theatre in education in Poland, but more towards their practical knowledge, than research. After reading Bolton's Towards a theory of drama in education<sup>2</sup> and Drama as Education and in accordance with my academic

---

<sup>2</sup> G. BOLTON, Towards drama in education. London, Longman 1979; IDEM, Drama as

authorities I decided to come to Durham and to initiate research in educational drama. Since the beginning I found in Mike Fleming an ally who courageously accepted me and my project. The first design of the research framework already included my intention to conduct a comparative research about theatre/drama in the United Kingdom, Italy and Poland.

The initial reasons for the choice of these three countries were as follows (although over the years the reasons increased):

a) I was educated in Poland with a strong tradition of school theatre and theatrical education activities, and that, together with the knowledge of my mother language, determined the choice;

b) I studied educational sciences in Italy, although university formed an international environment; also my future educational activity in part will be devoted to the school in Italy; and since 1986 I started my exploration of the richness of the theatrical animation tradition, first in practice and later on in a historical/theoretical context;

c) I knew from my previous studies, that theatre (!sic) played an important part in education in the United Kingdom, and further references which I found in education studies only increased this knowledge; finally with the acquisition and reading of Bolton's books, the choice and decision matured.

The first year of the bibliographical research and of a systematic reading of the sources increased my will for the comparative research. The approaches in the three countries had such a fascinating history, so many faces, and were - apparently - so

---

Education. London, Longman 1984.

different, that the challenge to study them under the same criteria became very personal.

It was also conditioned by the character of my future activity; the Pontifical Salesian University is an international centre of studies, devoted especially to the educational sciences and recently to communication issues. The personnel (the teaching body) is international, the students come from various countries (they represent more than hundred nations and cultures) and their preparation, although taking place in Italy, in Rome, must be and is oriented towards activity in their own countries, within their own educational systems. I thought that the large and comparative study of the theatre/drama in education could allow me a solid preparation for intercultural academic work.

The significant reinforcement of my ideas happened during the First Drama-in-Education World Congress in O'Porto, in Portugal (20-25 July 1992), when the IDEA (International Drama in Education Association) was born. I had not only a fantastic opportunity to know the theatre in education and drama practitioners from around forty countries, but first of all I realised that my research was not only possible, but also necessary. Some general meetings, workshops were similar to the market square, where so many merchants tried to sell their products, and in their opinions all were good or more advanced than others. During the seminars, workshops and key-speeches the need for research found its verification and the path for realisation. I realised that so many similarities, and at the same time differences were the effects/results of:

- a) different education philosophies in various countries;

b) strong individual/personal features of the practitioners and often a scientific 'poetry' in which they described their approaches;

c) existence of the linguistic borders/barriers which provoke distance, incomprehension and - without any personal guilt - ignorance about the achievements of others in other countries/cultures.

The whole theatre/drama panorama of which I took part and observed, in my understanding possessed five main poles of aggregation of the practitioners and their activities:

a) the first group of the practitioners orbited around the big and solid star of the British drama (also the majority of the participants were from the United Kingdom and from the Anglo-American speaking countries); their view of drama presented itself as a very practical, effective tool of teaching/learning (I perceived in such manner the key-speech by Gavin Bolton, and after the workshop with John O'Toole reinforced my first sensations);

b) the large galaxy of practitioners and approaches speaking about theatre and its educational values and functions; that group seemed to me like a real galaxy of the 'children's and educational theatre 'stars'; there prevailed practitioners (even if few) from Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy (there was present only Loredana Perissinotto), France; their theatre in education was based on the quality of the artistic production which aimed at the educational problems, but was based on the children's literature, on the imaginative potential of the child, expressing itself in the performance and activity following it; the children's theatrical activity expressed itself in the acquisition of communication/theatre skills and performance/spectacle/theatrical game;

c) the third pole gathered around it the practitioners of the community theatre (it could also be called 'popular' in that its audience comprised the largest social classes); amongst them prominent examples of socially engaged theatre from Philippine revealed the educational commitment of this kind of theatre;

d) the fourth group included practitioners who also could belong to the (a) and (b) categories; although they strongly emphasised the methodological values of theatre/drama in the curriculum activity, in their approaches the aesthetic/artistic values were present; the key-speech by Janek Szatkowski from Denmark represented and characterised that approach; the practitioners from Scandinavian and Dutch/Belgian countries, from Israel, some Australians and Canadians also created this orientation;

e) the last pole was distinctly connected with the aesthetic understanding and knowledge of theatre Art and the theatrical activity of the children meant that they were marked by it and took their own place in art; the practitioners from Poland, Germany, some from France represented that approach.

After my return from O'Porto and during several debates with my supervisor, Mike Fleming, I was able to identify the components of the research: the chronological extent, the areas of theatre/drama's presence in education for the appropriate presentation of the achievements developments in each of the three countries, the methodology of the research and the areas for the possible comparison and analysis of the common features.

### **Chronological frames of the research**

Although I decided to place more emphasis on the recent developments, i. e. in the 1980s, I extended the research to the beginnings of the modern education (i. e. organised, structured and supervised by the State's agencies) in all three countries. In practice for the United Kingdom the are years 1900-1990; for Italy 1920s to 1990; and for Poland 1930s to 1990. For all three cases I recalled also the significant experiences from the earlier periods of education's history.

The main reason for that decision was the lack of sufficient/adequate historical studies in Italy and Poland (there existed the partial historical analysis of e. g. school theatre and theatrical animation). In the case of the United Kingdom there were fundamental studies by Coggin<sup>3</sup> and Bolton<sup>4</sup>, but I felt a personal need to become immersed in drama's history in order to be able to identify the motives, events and features for the further comparative analysis.

### **Sources of the research**

There is a substantial lack of comparative research in theatre/drama in education. The writers in these countries (and in others) tended to debate the internal differences between them and their approaches rather than comparing developments and conceptions across the countries. There were some publications about the approaches in various countries, but these were results of the international meetings of

---

<sup>3</sup> Cf. P. COGGIN, Drama and Education. An Historical Survey from Ancient Greece to the Present Day. London, Thames and Hudson 1956.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. G. BOLTON, Drama and Theatre in Education: a survey, in: D. DAVIS, Ch. LAWRENCE (eds.), Gavin Bolton: Selected Writings. London, Longman 1986, 3-11.

the practitioners and their aim was mainly to present, rather than to compare.<sup>5</sup>

I based the work on published books about theatre/drama, on articles in various journals devoted to the problems of theatre, drama and general education, which I found in the collections of the following libraries, public and private:

- the University Library in Durham;
- Drama Education Archives at the School of Education in Durham;
- Biblioteca Centrale dell'Universita' Pontificia Salesiana in Rome;
- Biblioteca Teatrale di SIAE - Raccolta' del Burcardo in Rome;
- Biblioteka Uniwersytecka in Łódź;
- Biblioteka of the Warsaw Culture Centre;
- private collection of Loredana Perissinotto in Turin;
- private collection of Józefa Sławucka in Gdańsk.

My practical knowledge of theatre/drama in education, although my previous experiences, was enlarged by participation at following events:

- the congress in O'Porto;
- participation (as a consultant) at the 6th 'Forum Teatrów Dzieci i Młodzieży Szkolnej' in Poznań (January 1993);
- the International Conference at Lancaster University "The Work and Influence of Dorothy Heathcote" (26-30th July 1993);
- the annual conference of SCYPT in Bradford (August 1993);

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf. I. WOJNAR (ed.), Wychowanie przez sztukę. Warszawa, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych 1965; Al passo col futuro: Prospettive dei festival internazionali del teatro. Roma, 1988; M. BONGIOANNI, Il teatro giovanile di espressione. Una panoramica sulle esperienze di <<ieri>>. Torino, E. C. S. (n. y.).

- the conference "The Relationship between Drama and Learning" organised by National Drama at the London University (8-11 September 1993).

In collaboration with various centres of theatre/drama and practitioners I also realised my own projects<sup>6</sup>, and I published articles related to some of the topics of the research,<sup>7</sup> but not drawing on the research itself.

### Inspirational Meetings

I had several meetings with theatre/drama practitioners which I could call 'inspirational'. The first one I had with Józefa Sławucka in Gdańsk; she introduced me to the history and activity of the Gdańsk centre of the theatrical education and suggested to meet other Polish practitioners. In January 1992 she and Wiesław

---

<sup>6</sup> There were: a drama workshop for the students of the High School of Theology of Salesians of Don Bosco in Łąd (Poland) together with Józefa Sławucka and Antoni Baniukiewicz (September 1992); drama lessons (eight) at the 'Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. św. Jana Bosko' in Łódź (September 1992); workshop of communication and drama/theatre at the High School of Theology of Salesians of Don Bosco in Łódź (September 1992); drama workshop together with Bogumiła Matusiak-Varley from Birmingham, at the High School of Theology of Salesians of Don Bosco in Łódź (September 1993) and drama workshop for the teacher - students of post-graduate course at the High School of Theatre in Wrocław (September 1993); drama long-term project in Junior School 'G. B. Vico' in Rome (February-April 1993).

<sup>7</sup> I published following articles: Edukacja teatralna i przez teatr w szkole włoskiej. Tradycja teatru szkolnego - Fenomen animacji teatralnej - Współczesne programy szkolne, in "Głos Nauczycielski" February 1992; Nauczyciel Środków Komunikacji Społecznej, in "Głos Nauczycielski" March 1992; Konsekwentny rozwój i dzisiejsza obecność. 'Drama' w angielskim programie szkoły powszechnej, in "Głos Nauczycielski" March 1992; I.D.E.A. - Czyli raz jeszcze o teatrze i wychowaniu, in "Głos Nauczycielski" April 1992; Fenomen animacji we Włoszech - czyli o praktyce i teoriach działalności społecznej, kulturalnej i wychowawczej. Część 1, in "Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze" March 1993 3 132-136; Fenomen animacji we Włoszech - programy, instytucje, projekty, przemiany. Część 2, in "Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze" April 1993 4 180-184; Forum Teatrów Młodzieżowych u salezjanów na Wodnej, in "Niedziela" 21 November 1993 33 6-7; Forum Teatrów Młodzieżowych, in "Ziarna" December 1993 13-15.

Rudzki organised a special meeting of theatre in education practitioners from Poland in the Warsaw Culture Centre. That was an amazing occasion to learn the history, to initiate relations with many of them and to know the contemporary dimensions of their activity. Amongst them was Wanda Renik, a senior lecturer at the High School of Theatre, Film and Television in Łódź, and long-term researcher in school theatre in Poland. She inspired my research in the Polish history.

The next, significant meeting I had in O'Porto with Bogumiła Matusiak-Varley, a drama teacher from Birmingham and David Davis, senior lecturer in drama at the Birmingham Polytechnic at that time. They introduced me to the contemporary state of drama, exposing not only the achievements, but also the problems, especially connected with the place of drama in the National Curriculum and school practice. In 1993 I had two significant meetings. The first one was with Dorothy Heathcote at the Lancaster University and further on at the Bradford SCYPT conference. I was able not only to assist her drama work, but also to speak about the problems I found during my research. She was very patient and helpful. The second meeting occurred during the London ND conference with Richard Courtney. Since the beginning of my research I was inspired by his approach described in Play, Drama and Thought, but the long morning meeting confirmed my choice and Courtney inspired me to a comparison in both areas, historical developments and main aspects of the leading approaches.

### **Aims of the research**

The identification of the aims I based upon the premises, origins and reasons which I described previously.

I formulated the **general aim** as follows:

Through the historical and comparative study obtain/achieve the appropriate knowledge of the approaches of theatre/drama in education in various cultures, in order to identify the common features, the differences and domains of closer collaboration between theatre/drama practitioners.

The **particular aims** consisted in:

a) historical study and analysis of the role, development, place and status of theatre/drama in education in the United Kingdom, Italy and Poland in the same (approximately) periods of their educational history;

b) identification and analysis of the recent, more popular approaches in each country, and their possible adaptation in various educational systems;

c) in the way of a historical/chronological and comparative analysis identify and describe the parallel-in-time dominant approaches, the role of the teacher and his/her educational relationship in theatre/drama activity; in the last part I will try to bring into relief the most important features of the recent approaches in each country and to state which one presents the most advanced stage of development and educational utility/involvement.

### **Methodology of the research and content of the chapters<sup>8</sup>**

The thesis is divided in three Parts A, B, C and in nine chapters. Part A includes the historical survey of theatre/drama developments in the respective countries. Part B describes the recent and leading approaches in the 1980s. Part C consists in chapters of comparison (chronological, about teacher training and status, and interpretative model of the approaches).

The bibliography includes only the archive sources, books and articles consulted and quoted in the thesis. For easier management, I have divided the bibliography in three parts concerned with theatre/drama issues in each country; each national part I divided into three parts:

a) archive sources (i. e. documents, letters and non-published writings given to me by the practitioners);

b) the State's publication and reports about theatre/drama and education in general, and

c) books and articles published in various theatre/drama and education reviews.

For greater clarity I translated the titles of sources from Italy and Poland in bibliography, but I left them in the original languages in the notes. I also translated the names of institutions involved in theatre/drama and education.

In the text of the thesis I translated the sources (corrected by Mike Fleming and Bogumiła Matusiak-Varley). In order to avoid misunderstanding or

---

<sup>8</sup> For the better understanding I wrote also short introduction to each Part, explaining premises, reasons and announcing the content of the chapters.

misrepresentation, I have included the original text of the quotations in the notes, respectively for Italian and Polish sources.

My previous academic training<sup>9</sup> influenced the historical approach which prevailed in the first, Part A of the thesis. In parallel time periods I tried to notice and describe the significant events which occurred in each country. Chapter 1 about the development of drama in education in the United Kingdom (1900-1980) includes the five sub-chapters each devoted to the leading approach in the relative time period and to their protagonists. Chapter 2 describes the Italian experiences of the school theatre and of theatrical animation in 1920-1980. It is divided in four sub-chapters devoted to the origins, causes and pioneers of animation. Chapter 3, which includes four sub-chapters, describes the various periods of theatrical education in Poland (1930-1980) with the emphasis on the large programme of aesthetic education promoted by the State.

Part B of the thesis is also divided into three chapters relative to the three countries and I described in them the leading approaches to theatre/drama in the 1980s and the recent developments of them, especially their place in the curriculum. Besides the historical description I analysed also the significant elements of the approaches. The chapter 4 (divided in four sub-chapters) presents the 'drama as learning medium' approach in the United Kingdom, realised by both groups of protagonists, drama practitioners and Theatre-in-Education groups. The last sub-chapter analysed the place of drama in the National Curriculum and the recent

---

<sup>9</sup> In 1986 I finished my theological studies at the Catholic University in Lublin, specialisation in modern Church history; in 1986-1989 I studied the educational sciences at the Faculty of Educational Science of the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome, specialisation in history and theories of education.

critical voices about the state of drama. The chapter 5, devoted to the situation created by the theatrical animation in Italy of the 1980s, I divided in three sub-chapters. I placed the emphasis on the development of the children's theatre groups and young people's theatres as the main heirs of the animation. In the chapter 6 (divided in four parts) I analysed the theatrical education approaches in the 1980s in Poland. Two phenomena were most significant: the 'Gdańsk' concept of theatrical education and the introduction and adaptation of 'British drama' into the practice of the Polish school.

The third Part C of the thesis includes various attempts at comparison between the history, development and elements of the approaches in the United Kingdom, Italy and Poland. Based on the historical survey in the Part A and information in Part B, in chapter 7 I trace the chronological comparison across the decades, then I compare the Governments' documents about theatre/drama in education, and finally I compare also the publishing policy (books, journals and articles) which allowed the popularisation of theatre/drama in each country. Some diagrams illustrate this sub-chapter.

Chapter 8 I entirely devoted to the place, role and training of the theatre/drama teachers or practitioners (like in the case of Italy - the special new profession called animator). This chapter is divided in four sub-chapters, in which I compare the ideas of the teacher, his/her relationship with the pupils, the projects and the problems of training, and in last sub-chapter I analysed the relationship between adults protagonists of theatre/drama.

For the comparison of the various aspects of the most important approaches I worked out an interpretative model, and in accordance with its elements I tried to expose the similarities and the differences of the approaches. The final comparison

based on the classification of the approaches as 'learning/teaching FROM, IN, THROUGH and ABOUT Theatre/drama' confirms the factors which decided in the history about the diversity between the approaches in the United Kingdom, Italy and Poland. These main factors were:

- a) the philosophical background of education and its systems;
- b) the vision of place of Art in curriculum;
- c) the interest of the Governments in developing the active methods of teaching/learning;
- d) the involvement of drama/theatre in the educational process in the school first of all, and further in other environments of the largely understood education.

\*\*\*\*\*

The approaches to drama in the United Kingdom, their constant development, supported by the educational authorities and their place in the curriculum meant that theatre/drama in this educational system was the most advanced form of involving theatre/drama immediately in the educational process of teaching/learning of other subjects, in the knowledge of the social and important topic/problems and in the individual, psychophysical and moral/ethic development of the child. There was a substantial lack of theatre knowledge approaches. The theatre/drama approaches in Italy and Poland, although they had their history or (as in the Polish case in the 1980s - hopeful inspirations and developments) they did not reach a similar place or role as drama in English education. The Italian theatrical animation revived and significantly reformed the Italian school and culture, but its most important influence was noticed in the domain of the children's theatre groups, which became a vital force of theatre's presence in education. The Polish theatrical education mainly developed its forms of

theatre knowledge, and helped, through 'mise-en-scene' to enrich the teacher's teaching resources. The introduction and adaptation of 'British' drama opened a new chapter in theatrical education in Poland.

Amongst the practitioners around the world there exists a kind of 'legend' about the history, role, status and possibilities of drama in the United Kingdom; they hold it in great esteem and indeed with some degree of envy. Its signs I found in the publications from the past (Wojnar, Renik, Signorelli, Bongioanni), and I experienced its popularity still today. In part this 'legend' has its right to exist.

**PART A**

**PRACTICES AND THEORIES  
OF THEATRE/DRAMA IN EDUCATION.  
A HISTORICAL SURVEY**

The poet Cyprian Kamil Norwid said that the nation which does not consider its own history, is not worthy of its freedom. Paraphrasing his thought I could say that the drama practitioner who refuses to consider the history of theatre/drama in education is not worthy to have an opportunity to be involved in theatre/drama in his/her school/educational activity. Although my commitment to the importance of history was always strong, in the case of this work which is an attempt to compare the approaches in the United Kingdom, Italy and Poland, the study of the developments of theatre/drama in education made it even more important.

Part A, which I have called 'A historical survey', includes three chapters devoted respectively to the developments of theatre/drama in education in each of the three countries. Methodologically I tried to identify the most important approaches, which were not only leading at their times, but which also influenced the most advanced forms. In the case of drama in the United Kingdom there existed several historical studies (Coggin<sup>1</sup>, Bolton<sup>2</sup> and Redington for TIE<sup>3</sup>), but for me, a person outside the British educational culture and history, there was a need to re-collect all data and to re-write the drama history in accordance with my personal understanding

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. COGGIN, Drama and Education.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Drama and Theatre in Education.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Ch. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach? An Historical and Evaluative Analysis of Theatre in Education. Oxford, Pergamon Press 1983.

according to the demands of the research. The chronological frame of Chapter 1, devoted to the development and large acceptance of drama as a part of the educational practice, included the beginning of the twentieth century with the pioneers of drama, Harriet Finlay-Johnson and Henry Caldwell Cook, the child-centred methodologies of drama, and the new approaches of Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton, which influenced the recent developments in drama in education. I devoted a special sub-chapter to the Theatre-in-Education movement which combined the artistic quality of their work and performance with the educational values and needs present and important in today's society.

In the country of 'commedia dell'arte', in Italy the theatre was always considered educational and the examples of the rich school theatre tradition deserve their study and knowledge. However in the literature only short studies (Bongioanni<sup>4</sup>) exist. The phenomenon of theatrical animation changed radically the sort of theatre in education and education itself. Although animation has been practised for more than 35 years, it has not yet found its historian. Short historical surveys appeared in many publications (Fontana-Ottolenghi<sup>5</sup>, Garagnani<sup>6</sup>, Rostagno<sup>7</sup>, Morteo-Perissinotto<sup>8</sup>), but there does not exist a complex historical analysis of theatrical animation. In chapter 2 I tried to describe some significant theatre in school experiences in the pre-animation

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. M. BONGIOANNI, Il teatro giovanile di espressione. Una panoramica sulle esperienze di <<ieri>>. Torino, E.C.S. (1971).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. A. FONTANA, V. OTTOLENGHI, Teatro e' appendere un brutto voto ad una nuvola, in "Biblioteca Teatrale" 2 (1971) 1-57.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. W. GARAGNANI, Un decennio di animazione teatrale, in: G. M. BERTIN (ed.), L'educazione estetica. Firenze, La Nuova Italia Editrice 1978, 124-144.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. R. ROSTAGNO, Animazione e teatro per ragazzi, in: A. ATTISANI (ed.), Enciclopedia del teatro del '900. Milano, Feltrinelli 1980.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. G. R. MORTEO, L. PERISSINOTTO, Animazione e citta'. Torino, Musolini 1980.

period, and successfully to present the origins, forms and development of theatrical animation and reveal its importance for the large movement of children's theatre and theatrical activity in the schools.

A similar situation in literature about theatre in education existed in Poland. The school theatre had its historians (Wroński<sup>9</sup>), but the 'mise-en-scene' or theatrical education was subject only of minor, although important analyses (Renik<sup>10</sup>, Hannowa<sup>11</sup>). In chapter 3 the various forms of theatre's presence in education are described in accordance with the dominant idea of aesthetic education. The sub-chapters include the school theatre, the first projects of theatrical education, 'mise-en-scene' and 'dramatic games' in the curriculum. The last sub-chapter presents the theatrical education in the new project of ten-years compulsory school and 'Gdańsk conception' which initiated a more serious and organised theatre presence in the school curriculum.

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf. J. WRÓŃSKI, Teatr szkolny i jego funkcja wychowawcza. Kraków, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe 1974.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. W. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, in: I. WOJNAR, W. PIELASIŃSKA (eds.), Wychowanie estetyczne młodego pokolenia. Polska koncepcja i doświadczenia. Warszawa, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne 1990, 111-131.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. A. HANNOWA, Młodzież i teatr. Warszawa-Wrocław, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe 1990.

## Chapter 1

# DRAMA IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: SUCCESSIVE DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS AN ACCEPTED TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Contemporary drama practitioners and theoreticians like to go back into the history of 20th century education in order to find their roots, predecessors and pioneers.<sup>1</sup> The same process of historical legitimisation occurred in the case of studies which investigated theatre in education,<sup>2</sup> although the theatre history was regarded as of secondary importance.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. R. COURTNEY, Play, Drama and Thought. The Intellectual Background to Drama in Education. London, Cassel & Collier Macmillan 1968; The Thoughtful Playground. A survey of some pioneers in educational drama, in: J. HODGSON, M. BANHAM (eds.), Drama in Education 1. The Annual Survey. London, Pitman Publishing 1972, 32-42; G. BOLTON, Drama as Education. An Argument for Placing Drama at the Centre of the Curriculum. London, Longman 1984; IDEM, Changes in Thinking. About Drama in Education, in "Theory Into Practice" [special issue: Educating Through Drama] (The Ohio State University), Vol. 24 (Number 3 - June) (1985) 150-157. Also cf. D. HORNBROOK, Education and Dramatic Art. Oxford, Blackwell Education 1989, Part One, although his account was critical about the approaches which coined the educational use of drama.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. O'TOOLE, Theatre in Education. New Objectives for Theatre - New Techniques in Education. London, Hodder and Stoughton 1976; T. JACKSON (ed.), Learning Through Theatre.

In their approaches they analysed of course the praxis and writings of teachers who practised new, active methods of teaching/learning, which were based on child's play (understood and emphasised by the New Education as being 'natural' for the child). The drama pioneers introduced elements of theatre, devised whole projects as 'dramatic play', and used theatre performance as a basis for further school work.

Education in our Century also became more a matter of the State's interest in terms of special educational structures, common programmes, surveys and reports in order to provide institutionalised education as a part of citizenship. It is necessary therefore to study also the published documents of the State.<sup>3</sup>

From my point of view as someone who grew up, studied and worked outside the British context, the place of drama in education in the United Kingdom, was/is the result of an ongoing process of development. In this chapter, which would be a historical account of the events, I would rather emphasise the consequent evolution of praxes, theories and official, administrative decisions which provided an unquestionable place for drama/theatre in education within the National Curriculum.<sup>4</sup>

First of all it seems necessary to describe the context, both philosophical and practical, of 'New Education' which prepared the birth of drama in education. The discovery of the value of child's play and 'child-centredness' in education, allowed the

---

Essays and Casebooks on Theatre in Education. Manchester, Manchester University Press 1980; Ch. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach? An Historical and Evaluative Analysis of Theatre in Education. Oxford, Pergamon Press 1983.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. B. WILKS, The Joyful Game, in: HODGSON, BANHAM, Drama in Education 1, 14-30. This was the first attempt to put together and expose the respective fragments of the State's educational publications.

<sup>4</sup> At least from the point of view outside the British context, the practitioners and theoreticians of drama/theatre in education recognised the leading British example!

rise and popularity of the methodology 'learning by doing'. Education became understood not as the transmission of a certain knowledge, but as a complex process of learning/teaching which changed both the position and relationship between pupil and teacher. The new words and terms became fashionable as educational jargon; education should be progressive, based on active methods using the child's creativity, allowing his/her spontaneity. All these and similar slogans are present up to now in our contemporary educational literature.

In this context - and sharing this opinion with my predecessors - I would emphasise the importance of Henry Caldwell Cook, Harriett Finlay-Johnson and others, for the development and for the contemporary state of drama.<sup>5</sup> Their stimulating and innovative input perhaps was not overwhelmingly accepted in their times (as for example in the case of Cook<sup>6</sup>) - but they have to be studied and seen in the context of actual education at the time, and not measured/scrutinised only from our contemporary point of view, because we know what happened after! We are aware of subsequent developments and we - today - can evaluate the appropriateness and validity of one or other approach, but the whole historically analysed drama was composed of various inputs. It is important not to base evaluations only on today's point of view.

---

<sup>5</sup> Bolton emphasised the importance of the research written by T. COX, The Development of Drama in Education 1902-1944. (M. Ed. thesis, University of Durham 1970).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. The Thoughtful Playground, 36. Maybe this opinion measured Cook's influence and actual possibilities of publication and presentation from a 1972 point of view. Instead Caldwell published his book during the First World War, in 1917. The years after brought several innovative publications inspired by the ideas of New Education and Caldwell's book - however innovative it was - it should be seen as one in a long chain of similar publications.

Bolton in his description of the history of drama attacked also the myth of 'child-centredness' and 'self-expression' as a kind of distortion of the original, pioneering ideas of drama.<sup>7</sup> I would add also the myth of 'creativity' or 'createness'.<sup>8</sup> Everything, every method should be 'creative' or stimulate creativity. As we can observe - and it is enough to be an ordinary observer - in so many life-situations we are imitating, repeating, adopting actions performed by others (and imitation stays as the basis of the child's first 'dramatic play'). The major discussion about creativity<sup>9</sup> and the whole drama development following it, represented also a kind of historically observed distortion of drama.

Drama and theatre found their place very early in the official documents about education. Since the beginning it was connected with the teaching of English and the presence of Art in school. Also the handbooks and forms of teacher training embraced drama and children's theatre, becoming an important factor in drama's development.<sup>10</sup> A chronological review will be helpful in further understanding of the significant and successful battle for drama and could explain the rise of its popularity.

The consistency of drama's development received also one very important source of support: the philosophical discussion about Art in education.<sup>11</sup> The ideas of

---

<sup>7</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Drama as Education, 6-7; 10-11; IDEM, Changes in Thinking, 152.

<sup>8</sup> The 'creativity' fashion was more visible among American pedagogues and especially in the 1950s connected with humanistic psychology. The beginning seemed to be in H. MEARNS, Creative Power. The Education of Youth in the Creative Arts. Second Revised Edition. New York, Dover Publications Inc. 1958. The first edition was published in 1929.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. B. SHUMAN, Educational Drama and the Creative Process, in: B. SHUMAN (ed.), Educational Drama for Today's Schools. New York & London, The Scarecrow Press Inc. Metuchen 1978, 41-61.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. analysis of the respective fragments in The Thoughtful Playground, 37.

<sup>11</sup> Bolton emphasised the research of M. FLEMING, A Philosophical Investigation Into Drama in Education. (Ph. D. thesis, University of Durham 1982).

Herbert Read published in Education Through Art<sup>12</sup> emphasised the educational importance of the relationship with the arts and the educational value of experiencing artistic activity during the educational process.

From the theatrical side instead, the historical roots reached the ideas of the 'Big Reform' of theatre, of 'agit-prop' and other theatrical tendencies, looking for a closer relationship with the audience, for the provocative and stimulative impact between Art and life.<sup>13</sup> New approaches in theatre changed the training of the actor, introduced improvisation, natural forms of acting, research and workshop forms in order to explore character and role.<sup>14</sup> Aesthetics became a value connected with the social mission of theatre, the 'social' includes also the education of both children and community. All those factors created a new type of theatre, theatre for children which evolved towards one entirely dedicated to education. The revolutionary approach of Peter Slade<sup>15</sup> came from his theatrical experiences with the child and became educational, an ordinary theatre form in the class-room, in the school. His activity and the whole stream of drama-practitioners - his followers with Brian Way<sup>16</sup> - initiated polemics about the nature of drama and its place in the curriculum. And this factor also popularised the 'legend' of drama in the English school.

---

<sup>12</sup> Cf. H. READ, Education Through Art. London, Faber 1943.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 20-30.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. The Thoughtful Playground, 33; also several sources concerned about the educational role of theatre in J. HODGSON (ed.), The Uses of Drama. Sources Giving a Background to Acting as a Social and Educational Force. London, Eyre Methuen Ltd. 1972.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. P. SLADE, Child Drama. With a Foreword by Dame Sybil Thorndike. London, University of London Press Ltd. 1954.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. B. WAY, Development Through Drama. London, Longman 1967.

The historical survey of drama, written by Gavin Bolton<sup>17</sup> in a very personal manner, described not only the history of drama, but also gave examples of changes going on in teacher's thinking in the 1960s. The route progressed from the experience of teacher-directed school theatre, through speech, mime, self-expression, creativity and ended in the re-discovery of 'dramatic play' of the child. Bolton re-discovered the drama as a holistic educational approach in the activity (praxis and theory mutually connected) of Dorothy Heathcote.<sup>18</sup> She was with the child, doing the same drama, stimulating the knowledge process and acquiring knowledge at the same time from the uniquely truthful source - the child at her side, working, and not just 'playing' (as the adult used to say about the child's usual activity). In the re-birth of drama there appeared again not only the original ideas of drama-pioneers - as Bolton used to emphasise - but there were the inputs of the drama/theatre practitioners from the non mainstream too (i.e. people who were not conventionally seen as contributing to drama's development).

The 'theatre in education' phenomenon, born in 1965 in Coventry,<sup>19</sup> represented in its development a synthesis of the efforts from both sides: theatre and education. However it was initiated by the theatre practitioners and in order to provide new audiences of young people, TIE reached, in a very rapid way, an important position in the whole drama/theatre in education panorama. That process

---

<sup>17</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Drama as Education, 1-59; IDEM, Changes in Thinking.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. ibidem, 51-58.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. O'TOOLE, Theatre in Education, 13-16; G. VALLINS, The Beginnings of TIE, in: JACKSON (ed.), Learning Through Theatre, 2-15; REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, Chapter 2, 42-83.

was stimulated by all three interested parts: by theatre, by school and by drama in education.

\*\*\*\*\*

Drama/theatre in education is often seen as a dialectic between teacher and child. Instead using the dialectical approach, I prefer to look at the drama - and here there is a place for hermeneutic interpretation - as the further in-carnation of never-ending educational dream for the dialogue between teacher and pupil, dialogue rooted in the well-known Socrates' maieutic partnership for the pupil who discovers his/her own life. I would rather remember, that in drama - or using Richard Courtney's term, in 'Dramatic Education' -

"WE START WITH THE CHILD. We do not commence with the idea of where this form of education is going to lead us because, if we did that, we would impose our ideas on the child; rather, we start with the individual child, see him work dramatically, and attempt to lead him slowly on - at his own pace and in his own time."<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> COURTNEY, Play, Drama and Thought, 2.

## 1. 1. ENGLISH, ARTS AND THE ORIGINS OF DRAMA/THEATRE IN EDUCATION

Theatre and drama in English school was traditionally connected with the study of literature, with the exploration of language skills in order to achieve the best possible means of communication and understanding of what is communicated.<sup>1</sup> The long history of school theatre, which was based on the dramatisation of literature work, contains examples of methods which could be called 'representative': the text of a play was important and subsequently the style of its interpretation, which included ability in speech, grace of movement, and understanding of the message.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, historically, the school theatre represented a kind of privilege, of artistic fashion which belonged rather to the canon of socially useful education. However this linguistic-artistic feature of theatre's presence in education, evolved in our Century. The origins of drama in education merged with the development of English teaching,<sup>3</sup> and drama also was firmly connected with the presence of Arts in

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. COGGIN, Drama and Education, 196-203.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 16. She emphasised the study of plays (content) and the production (stage skills required).

education.<sup>4</sup> The teaching/learning methodologies which used elements of the Arts, or which were based on artistic activity, were commonly seen as pioneering and progressive. This kind of evaluation in the first place was concerned with the understanding of the child and his/her developing nature. The second, subsequent problem emerged from the new kind of fundamental relationship in education between the child and the teacher. The teacher-reformer was more aware of the on-going process of knowledge, and the content of the subjects was in focus as well as the method - the practice. This created a third group of factors concerned with progressive education.

### **1. 1. 1. 'New Education' issues and the Arts in education**

From the philosophical point of view - as John Allen emphasised - the Arts presence in education, including drama in education, created problems because emotion plays such a significant role in each of the Arts.<sup>5</sup> The New Education in its several aspects, tried to avoid the traditional philosophical dichotomies: Plato or Aristotle for the ancient basic philosophy, St Thomas Aquinas or St Augustine respectively for centuries of Christian philosophy and theology; and for Modern Times (Enlightenment), Rene' Descartes or Jean Jacques Rousseau.

"The extraordinary fascination of a human being, as of life itself,  
lies in its unity, our unity"<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Cf. COGGIN, Drama and Education, 201; cf. also WILKS, The Joyful Game, 14-15.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. J. ALLEN, Notes on a Definition of Drama, in: J. HODGSON, M. BANHAM (eds.), Drama in Education 3. The Annual Survey. London, Pitman Publishing 1975, 106-107.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. ibidem, 107.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, 107.

and Pioneers of drama placed themselves in the perspective which recognised the dramatic activity of the child as both the source and method of knowledge.

New Education generally recognised the value of the child's play, as his/her natural activity through which the child makes the first cognitive steps, experiences his/herself and others, the environment. The experiences of Jean Jacques Rousseau, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel stimulated the teachers towards new approaches. The specific studies of play published by Herbert Spencer, Carl Gross and Stanley Hall encouraged them to base educational activity on the child's natural behaviour called by adults 'a play'.<sup>7</sup> The 'playing' child became for the pedagogues the 'normal' child, hard working in the quest for knowledge, making relationships, acquiring his/her place in the world around. The pedagogue observes and - recognising the child's needs and demands - organises education based on experience.

Since John Dewey's revolutionary idea that education should be based on the child's instincts and activities, 'child-centredness' - as Bolton emphasised it - became the main topic and preoccupation of all teachers, including drama.<sup>8</sup> It gained the reputation of the best form of active teaching because it represented a synthesis of the

---

<sup>7</sup> Cf. COURTNEY, Play, Drama and Thought, 23ff.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Changes in Thinking, 152. He quoted J. DEWEY, The School and Society. Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1921, 35:

"The old education (...) may be summed up by stating that the center of gravity is outside the child. It is in the teacher, the textbook, anywhere and everywhere you please except in the immediate instincts and activities of the child himself (...) Now the change which is coming into our education is shifting the center of gravity (...) The child becomes the sun about which the appliances of education revolve; he is the center about which they are organized."

arts.<sup>9</sup> The main features of New Education, like self-expression, creativity, learning-by-doing, play-way found satisfaction in drama activity.

The educational activities of drama pioneers coincided also with the 'Big Reform' in theatre, which embraced the training of the actor too. The practice and theory of Konstantin Semenovich Stanislavsky liberated the actor's creativity.<sup>10</sup> Every-day life became a source for improvisation, for the study of the stage-character in order to create an original role. The plays described the lives of ordinary people and the actor, using observation and improvisation, represented human nature with all its strengths and weaknesses. That converged with tendencies in education. The Arts in school were based on the child's observations and creativity. But the first steps, free and inexperienced, provoked subsequent demand for skills, for artistic rules, for aesthetics.

### **1. 1. 2. Harriet Finlay-Johnson and 'knowledge from drama'**

Recent investigations of the origins of drama in education connected its beginning with the school practice of Harriet Finlay-Johnson,<sup>11</sup> a village school teacher working together with her sister around the turn of the century. Her fundamental merit consisted in the use of drama for the acquisition of knowledge rather than for public performance. Bolton emphasised that

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf. J. HODGSON, E. RICHARDS, Drama as Synthesis, in: HODGSON (ed.), The Uses of Drama, 212-215.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. The Thoughtful Playground, 33; COGGIN, Drama and Education, 245.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. COX, The Development, 205-219; BOLTON, Drama as Education, 11-13; IDEM, Changes in Thinking, 152-153.

"She saw it (drama - TL) as a dynamic way of illuminating knowledge; it was not important in itself as a product. The subject matter or content of drama was all important."<sup>12</sup>

It was class-room drama compatible with the school syllabus, and her methodology embraced knowledge of the subjects.<sup>13</sup> The teaching/learning process required the child's activity, her/his involvement, but in order to acquire knowledge, rather than merely seeking active participation in the lesson.

Finlay-Johnson in practice created her own curriculum based on the process of drama, of dramatisation.<sup>14</sup> She based the work on both written literature pieces and children's improvisations. Of course the relationship child - teacher emphasised the child's importance, allowed his/her initiatives, and the child's happiness was a priority.<sup>15</sup>

Although there had been a long tradition of drama/theatre's presence in English schools, Finlay-Johnson's work remains at present the first recorded use of drama as a means of knowledge. Her drama activity - as Bolton evaluated -

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, 153.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. ibidem, 152; Bolton emphasised the clear, educational aim of her approach:

"A closer look at Finlay-Johnson's teaching reveals that she did not allow her pupils to play. Although her approach required pupils to be active (in the literal sense of being involved in actions) in their learning, this was to some extent countered by her immediate purpose of teaching facts connected with nature study, history, scripture and other subjects. The primary focus of attention was not on the child's opportunity for self-expression, but on a body of knowledge dictated by the school curriculum. Dramatic activity was seen as a vehicle for the acquisition of knowledge."

<sup>14</sup> Cf. H. FINLAY-JOHNSON, The Dramatic Method of Teaching. Nisbet (undated).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Drama as Education, 12; Finlay-Johnson was convinced that the school and the whole education process has as the general aim the spiritual preparation of the child for the adult life.

"(...) was towards the objective world of facts."<sup>16</sup>

### 1. 1. 3. Henry Caldwell Cook and 'drama for knowledge'

The English teacher from the Perse School in Cambridge, Henry Caldwell Cook, overwhelmingly is recognised as a man responsible not only for modern development in educational drama,<sup>17</sup> but also for changes in the teaching of English.<sup>18</sup>

In the climate of his times, he was aware of the need for a new atmosphere in teaching. In the book Play Way,<sup>19</sup> published in 1917, he explained that his methodology was based on three propositions:

1. Proficiency and learning come not from reading and learning, but from action; from doing and from experience.
2. Good work is more often the result of spontaneous effort and from interest rather than of compulsion and forced application.
3. The natural means of study in youth is play."<sup>20</sup>

Drama provided all the necessary factors in order to transform the lesson to an attractive and active form of learning. Cook was able to unite

"(...) the feeling for 'play' as an activity method in education with a feeling for 'the play', as a means of enabling young people to express and develop their own resources."<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, 20.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. K. M. LOBB, The Drama in School and Church. A Short Survey. London, George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd. 1955, 80.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Drama as Education, 17.

<sup>19</sup> H. C. COOK, The Play Way. London, Heinemann 1917. Instead in The Thoughtful Playground the book is dated 1914.

<sup>20</sup> The Thoughtful Playground, 34-35.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, 34.

In his practice Cook based his work on the literature works of the English classics (Shakespeare, Chaucer, Spenser, Milton) and well-known foreign writers, on mythological sources (Hindu myths, Krishna, Mahabharata, the Egyptian Book of the Dead), and on biblical stories. However he advised that the drama should not be based on the boys' pure invention in order to avoid low artistic quality. As he said

"They will be too apt to lay the scene in the cellar of London bank, or in a Wild West canon, or in the boarding house of a public school; and to choose for their protagonist a detective or a bushranger, or one of those caricatures of boyhood who strut and fret their hour in magazines written for schoolboys, and then are heard no more."<sup>22</sup>

He didn't neglect the importance of the boy's invention, but he suggested using it rather for preliminary exercises.

Drama or the 'play way' was seen by him as a means for the exploration of artistic values which the artist - the writer - included in the work. Drama basically was 'for knowledge', experience, appreciation and pleasure which the pupils could obtain from English literature. However the 'play way' activity allowed also the development of communication skills.

Cook was a teacher who adopted theatre/drama in his methodology. The long and well structured 'play way' work, developed from the simple play-based explorations, into complicated, literature-based performance. The 'acting' and 'discussion' alternated in order to fulfil all the demands and problems of both pupils and teacher. Although Cook was aware of the possible dangers in drawing up the

---

<sup>22</sup> H. C. COOK, Drama as Playmaking, in: HODGSON (ed.), The Uses of Drama, 146.

scheme which could be a source of limitation for some of his followers, he synthesised his method:

"So a mere list shall be given here of the activities of boys and master which result in a finished play:

- i. Reading and telling of the story.
- ii. Informal discussion.
- iii. Sub-committee stage.
- iv. Preparation of rough notes.
- v. Acting in the rough.
- vi. Master's lesson.
- vii. Discussion of special points.
- viii. Careful fashioning, shaping and writing.
- ix. Careful acting, as in rehearsal.
- x. Final revision of text or speeches.
- xi. Performance with all due ceremony."<sup>23</sup>

His teaching approach showed constant care for the pupils' progress. Cook knew the need for systematic work in the school. 'Play way' procured the opportunity for an active, developing teaching/learning process with mutual satisfaction and enjoyment for both pupils and teacher.

Bolton emphasised also the aesthetic value of Cook's 'play way'. It was connected with the tradition of a spiritual and moral education, so characteristic of the beginning of the Century. Cook's innovation was, that he

"(...) allowed the aesthetic experience to speak for itself. This revealed itself in two ways. One was that he made no attempt to structure experiences with poetic meanings in mind, nor did he

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, 153.

attempt to train the boys in the skills of acting. The boy's responsibility was to show the play's action, TO MAKE THE EVENTS CLEAR TO AN AUDIENCE."<sup>24</sup>

In spite of the early discovered links between Cook and 'drama in education' (Lobb, Coggin, Courtney), in recent accounts of drama's development we can observe two rather different opinions. In the first, the Author of The Thoughtful Playground states

"Yet Cook seems to have remained a pioneer and rather isolated."<sup>25</sup>

The second in contrast, advanced by Bolton, indicates that Finlay-Johnson and Cook live their re-birth, re-discovery,

"(...) as innovators who in their different ways influenced progressive teachers during the early decades, the former introducing a dramatic method of teaching other subjects, the latter revolutionising the teaching of English."<sup>26</sup>

In my opinion, the activities and the publications of both Finlay-Johnson and Cook, must be seen in the context of the whole panorama of modern reform in education. Drama treated as a possible font of knowledge and drama used as a vehicle for knowledge, stimulated the growth of drama's popularity among teachers and the recognition of its educational value by the Government educational authorities. The trend of practice evolved into 'speech-mime-expression' approaches and Government's initiatives brought reports, programmes and handbooks for drama practitioners. I would emphasise also another inception and manifestation of drama/theatre in

---

<sup>24</sup> BOLTON, Drama as Education, 16-17.

<sup>25</sup> The Thoughtful Playground, 36.

<sup>26</sup> BOLTON, Drama as Education, 17.

education, and connected with the theatre as Art. The search for new audience together with discovery of 'education THROUGH Art', mingled and provoked theatre practitioners towards the experience of theatre FOR children, theatre in education.

#### 1. 1. 4. Drama in the official educational documents/publications

Since nearly the beginning of our Century the presence of drama issues can be observed and analysed in the official Government's reports, programmes and resources for teachers. Various historians of drama published quotations from documents, and they emphasised their importance in accordance with the aims of the particular research. In order to show the growth of interest in drama and the potential influence of the educational authorities on its development, I propose to describe them in chronological order, conserving the original tone.

Already in 1905 in Handbook of Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and others concerned in the Work of Public Elementary School<sup>27</sup> we find the suggestion that drama, as a method, could be employed in practising speech, but at the same time the Authors warned about the exaggerated emphasis, declamation and gesture which could harm the real purpose of drama. The Handbook pointed out that

"(...) the pieces chosen are to be read with feeling and intelligence,  
but they are not to be acted."<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Handbook of Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and others concerned in the Work of Public Elementary School. London 1905. Quoted after COX, The Development.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted after BOLTON, Drama as Education, 17.

The union between English and drama was confirmed and strengthened by the report The Teaching of English in England,<sup>29</sup> published around 1919. Drama in school was presented in three possible forms:

a) as something to be written:

"As exercise in writing, the use of dramatic forms was considered more valuable than the use of the essay and it was suggested that, at times, it was possible for the class to create a play with the teacher acting as a scribe."<sup>30</sup>

and there was also a suggestion for collective writing;

b) as something to be read; Shakespeare's works were considered as basic reading and

"The emphasis of the recommendation was upon the lively presentation of the plays, including wherever possible the use of models, reference to the period in which Shakespeare lived and seeing the plays performed."<sup>31</sup>;

c) as something to be acted and here drama activity was sub-divided in three other possibilities:

- the performance of scenes or pieces in class
- the public performance of plays by pupils
- visits by pupils to professional performances of suitable plays.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> BOARD OF EDUCATION, Report on the Teaching of English in England. HMSO 1919. I quoted after WILKS, The Joyful Game, 15.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, 16.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem, 17.

'Good' drama was considered as a necessary part of a general education and the ability of speech and movement, of understanding of character, the value of group work were emphasised.

The 1919 Report in Brian Wilks' opinion, was well ahead of the school reality and its recommendations for drama stimulated further application.<sup>33</sup>

Visits to the theatre in order to attend Shakespeare's plays were recommended in 1915,<sup>34</sup> and in Teaching of English in England (1921)<sup>35</sup> the visits were recognised as a part education and should be free. Following the suggestion about the reading and acting of plays in school, special courses for teachers were established in London in 'Mary Ward Settlement'.<sup>36</sup> Subsequently, in 1924, the Board of Education acknowledged the value of theatre allowing attendance during school hours. The approved expenditure also was paid from a special grant.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Cf. ibidem, 18; Wilks quoted:

"96: That as soon as children are old enough they should attempt to dramatise familiar ballads, stories or fairy tales, or famous historical incidents: and that schools in districts where a genuine dialect survives should make use of any traditional fragments of old folk plays.

97: That the reading and acting of plays should be encouraged in schools of all types and in Training Colleges.

98: That Universities should seriously consider the possibility of granting a Diploma in Dramatic Art...

99: That lectureships on the Art of the Theatre... and also Chairs in Dramatic Literature, might well be established."

<sup>34</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 31; she said that the special matinees were part of the curriculum as educational visits.

<sup>35</sup> BOARD OF EDUCATION, The Teaching of English in England. Chairman: Sir H. Newbolt. HMSO 1921; quoted after REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 31.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 17.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. ibidem, 32.

The special 'Adult Education Committee' was constituted in 1921 in order to investigate the modalities of promotion of education for adults. In 1926 the results were published as a special report The Drama in Adult Education.<sup>38</sup> It emphasised the value of drama:

- a) which through its many forms shared issues of humanity and
- b) drama (or play study) represented stimuli and possibilities for "unlimited imagination."<sup>39</sup>

Drama was called the 'greatest of all arts', a synthesis of all arts and these features made it educational 'par excellence'.

Very strong support for drama was given by The Handbook for Teachers in Elementary Schools,<sup>40</sup> first published in 1929 after re-published in 1937 and 1942 (introducing some changes). The 1929 version emphasised the convergence between the nature of the child and school practice

"The dramatic sense is very strong in most children and the reading and acting of plays should not be omitted."<sup>41</sup>

The 1937 version acknowledged progress in the application of drama in the school and indicates directions towards the refinement of skills. There were also suggestions for using games during the teaching, and the acting of plays was seen as a source of many benefits:

---

<sup>38</sup> ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE, The Drama in Adult Education. A Report by the Adult Education Committee of the Board of Education, being Paper no. 6 of the Committee. London, HMSO 1926.

<sup>39</sup> REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 17.

<sup>40</sup> BOARD OF EDUCATION, Handbook for Teachers in Elementary Schools. HMSO 1929; IDEM, Handbook for Teachers. HMSO 1937.

<sup>41</sup> BOARD OF EDUCATION, The Handbook for Teachers (1929), quoted after The Thoughtful Playground 37.

"(...) drama is a most effective method for improving the clarity and fluency of children's speech. It should be realised, however, that drama is also a good deal more than this. In the school it may perhaps be appropriately defined as a training, a study and an art (...). The mere reading of parts round the class has nothing to recommend it. However simple the play may be, it should always be prepared - an attempt should be made to understand the characters, the movements, the situations; it may be produced in the hall or an empty classroom or even in a clear space in front of the class."<sup>42</sup>

The year 1931 brought another important document dedicated to the primary school situation.<sup>43</sup> In general, the Authors again gave their support for drama in both domains, drama as the subject of study and drama as method of teaching/learning. The emphasis was put again on skills (speech) and there were suggestions about the need for special training for teachers.<sup>44</sup> The method could be adopted, but first teachers must understand it and believe in it.<sup>45</sup> Dramatic activity was represented as a natural benefit for the child's development:

"Drama both of the less and more formal kinds, for which children, owing to their happy lack of self-consciousness, display such remarkable gifts, offers further good opportunities of developing that power of expression in movement which, if the psychologists are right, is so closely correlated with the development of

---

<sup>42</sup> BOARD OF EDUCATION, Handbook for Teachers (1937), 375. Quoted after WILKS, The Joyful Game, 19.

<sup>43</sup> BOARD OF EDUCATION, Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School. Chairman: Sir W. H. Hadow. HMSO 1931.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Drama as Education, 17-18.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 15.

perception and feeling."<sup>46</sup>

The same report advised drama as a possible integrative method for many subjects and skills like literature, music, dance, handicraft. It was in accordance with the tendency towards active teaching based on experience.

The later report about secondary school<sup>47</sup> repeated the claim for active teaching and pointed out the aim of experience rather than acquired knowledge.

The study of the reports and documents of the 1920s and 1930s, even if only fragmentary and concerned with a possible place for drama/theatre in the school, offers rather global and convincing concern, that drama developed from a supportive and occasionally used method in English teaching, into an important and multiform phenomenon, or even better - reality. There was drama as an active study of literature and language in integration with other subjects, drama as a means for the development of particular skills, drama as a possibility for socialisation through the collective work and drama as an experienced preparation for life.<sup>48</sup>

The initiated forms of training for teachers and drama specialists enlarged the popularity of the method. Bolton, following the results of Cox's and Robinson's research, emphasised, that in the history of drama

"There was no outstanding school-based innovator who was doing remarkable work with children. Rather the influence seemed to come from various committees and associations."<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> BOARD OF EDUCATION, Report of the Consultative Committee, 76, quoted after WILKS, The Joyful Game, 19.

<sup>47</sup> BOARD OF EDUCATION, Report on Secondary Education. HMSO 1938, quoted after WILKS, The Joyful Game, 21.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. opinions in WILKS, The Joyful Game, 14. 21;

<sup>49</sup> BOLTON, Drama as Education, 17.

The activity of 'The British Drama League' in the 1920s and subsequently of the 'Association of Teachers of Speech and Drama' in the 1930s offered several opportunities for in-service training. The news about drama spread not only in Great Britain, but thanks to the travelling teachers of English in all the parts of United Kingdom, it became known, used, adopted and improved in order to deal with both English language and culture domain and local demands.<sup>50</sup> Here, in my opinion, was another reason for the popularity of English drama.

### **1. 1. 5. Theatre FOR children and youth**

Although the origins of drama in education were connected with the schools and among drama pioneers the teachers dominated, there were some theatre initiatives worthy of mention. Some of them, because of the educational inclination of their protagonist, became important and influential for the further relationship between the professional theatre and the world of children and young audiences.

History of theatre for children highlighted the company of Frank Benson which operated at the end of nineteenth century. Their performances were based on Shakespeare productions, sometimes adopted for young audiences.<sup>51</sup> The next was Philip Ben Greet who brought productions, also based on Shakespeare, into the schools. Performance was devised with an educational purpose. The beginning was encouraging

"(...) only a few schools competed at first but in a year or two the plan expanded so fast that in Spring of 1902, when I left for

---

<sup>50</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Drama as Education, 18-19; he repeated Tim Cox's conclusion.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 31.

America we had over a hundred scenes acted by pupils from over  
a hundred schools."<sup>52</sup>

In 1916 Greet produced a series of Shakespeare-based plays. This time the London City Council commissioned a project giving financial support. Besides in-school performances, Greet initiated Shakespeare's matinees at the Old Vic Theatre in London.<sup>53</sup> Greet's initiative provoked a lasting relationship between school and theatre and also the recognition of theatre visits as a part of curricular education.<sup>54</sup>

Bertha Waddell started her theatrical activity<sup>55</sup> in 1927, in Glasgow, initiating a different kind of theatre for children, not based only on Shakespeare, but suited to the audience.<sup>56</sup> There were dramatised songs, stories, tales, short plays. The joyful and movable spirit of the performance converged with the children's spontaneous reactions. She devised two forms (for five-nine year old and for nine-twelve year olds) where music, words and vision were combined. In the beginning her work was appreciated only by a few pedagogues and especially by parents, but not by education authorities. Since 1933 she also travelled throughout Scotland.<sup>57</sup> Her work was finally

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem, 31; Redington quoted Greet's words published in "Drama" Vol. 5, No. 8, 1927, p. 114.

<sup>53</sup> Team Greet - Lilian Baylis was responsible at Old Vic until 1937 when the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art succeeded. The performances were produced successfully also during the Second World War. Cf. COGGIN, Drama and Education, 263.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. BOARD OF EDUCATION, The Teaching of English, 317. Recognition occurred in 1921. It was confirmed in 1924 in the revised Elementary Education Code. Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 31-32.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. COGGIN, Drama and Education, 264; O'TOOLE, Theatre in Education, 10.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 32. She based on B. WADDELL, Selfportrait, in "Outlook" vol. 1, 1969 BCTA p. 17.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. COGGIN, Drama and Education, 264:

"In 1933 she performed at Glamis Castle, and the following year received a grant from the Carnegie Trust, which enabled her to travel throughout

approved by the Glasgow Corporation Education Committee and since 1936 many local education authorities commissioned her performances.

The development of skills, suggested by the Government documents about drama, encouraged the interest of teachers towards methods of actor's training. The influence of mime-technique described by the well-known Irene Mawer<sup>58</sup> was significant. For educational use, there was quite an easy explanation of the mime-code and progressive exercises in order to be worked out with children and young people. Isabel Chisman and Gladys Wiles wrote their Mime for Schools mainly for educational purposes.<sup>59</sup> The mime-adventure was described as an aid in order to know Art, to deepen the knowledge of self. The Art, theatre and theatrical activity were presented as sources of aesthetic, ethic and social values.

The major input to drama in education was given by the 'creative dance' movement. It was connected with the German choreographer and dancer Rudolph Laban who emigrated from Nazi Germany to England in the 1930s.<sup>60</sup> With the English collaborator, F. C. Lawrence, he continued his previous research into the nature of movement and the natural basis for dance. Laban and Liz Ullman started their 'movement studio' in Manchester with basically an educational project about children's creativity through dance and movement.<sup>61</sup> In 1940 the initiative found its ground in Steward Street Primary School in Birmingham and also continuator of

---

Scotland."

<sup>58</sup> Cf. I. MAWER, The Art of Mime. Its History and Technique in Education and Theatre. London, Methuen & Co. Ltd 1932. About the popularity testified the successive editions and in 1949 was the fifth published.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. I. CHISMAN, G. WILES, Mime for Schools. London, Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. 1938.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. The Thoughtful Playground 38-39; COURTNEY, Play, Drama and Thought, 48-49.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. R. LABAN, Movement. Dance and Dramatic Expression, in: HODGSON (ed.), The Uses of Drama, 71-83.

Laban's ideas, the headmaster A. L. Stone. Dance and movement were adopted in order to illustrate stories. Thanks to many courses of 'modern educational dance' for teachers, Laban influenced the development of drama's form based on a creative movement.

In order to fulfil the panorama of the origins of 'drama in education', the movement of theatres oriented towards community, must be noticed.<sup>62</sup> Following the leading examples of Bertolt Brecht's socially/politically engaged theatre, in England groups were also born which emphasised the necessity of theatre involved in workers' reality. The protagonists based their work also on the achievements of agit-prop theatre of the 1920s. There were two examples: the Unity Theatre in 1936 included in their productions some educational issues (but for the working class). The second consisted in the activity of the Workers' Theatre Movement which gave life to the Theatre for Action under the guide of Joan Littlewood and Ewan McColl.

\*\*\*\*\*

The progressive development of 'drama in education' before the Second World War, was influenced by the stimulative work of the Pioneers, the encouraging actions effected by the education authorities, the reformer efforts of the theatre. All this happened in the climate of a growing interest in the child's developmental psychology, in a teaching methodology appropriate to the child's nature. The 'century of the child' - as Ellen Key called prophetically the Twentieth Century<sup>63</sup> - produced several issues which inevitably were converging into a kind of united stream. Theatre, drama, 'play way', skills, play, movement, creativity, active teaching/learning, self-expression were

---

<sup>62</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 20-24.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. E. KEY, Stulecie dziecka (The Century of the Child). Translated by Iza Moszczeńska. Warszawa 1903.

melting together, although each of them started in its own time and by its own protagonist.

Peter Slade had already started his theatrical life in the late 1920s, but his long lasting leadership for 'drama in education' began in 1934, when he launched a first training scheme for amateurs, students and professionals connected with some education issues.<sup>64</sup> During the next decades, together with his theatrical experience, his dedication to education and to the child were growing and the results were as innovative as drama itself. Slade began to revolutionise not only drama, but education.

---

<sup>64</sup> Cf. COGGIN, Drama and Education, 263-264.

## **1. 2. DRAMA AS CHILD-CENTRED, SUBJECT OR METHOD, MEANS OF PERSONAL REALISATION, BUT REALLY A SOURCE OF INNOVATION IN THE TEACHING/LEARNING PROCESS**

After the early pioneering stage of drama in education, the three decades - 1930s, 1940s and 1950s - represented a very active and fundamental period focusing on issues which are still of contemporary significance. The field of drama was dominated by speech and movement specialists, by teachers' associations who postulated and introduced changes in education. In this time also - more in an ethical and moral sense - the new generations of children appeared, marked with the experiences of the Second World War. In the British situation it was really global ('world'-large) experience, because of the military involvement in so many war situations and because of the changes in the character of the British influence; less economical and political, but more cultural and linguistic.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The significant development after the Second World War, apart from the political changes within the British Empire, was the expansion of the British Council as the institution which promoted the culture and language. Since 1937 at the British Council a special department of drama also existed, mainly dedicated to the professional theatre, but also spreading publications about

Those three decades in drama, were characterised by the rise, development and influence of Peter Slade, regarded by many drama practitioners and pedagogues, as the corner stone of drama in education.<sup>2</sup> His followers in the 1960s evolved in various directions procuring the unquestionable presence of drama within the curriculum and founding centres of training for drama-teachers. Slade's time was a time of two important debates: 'drama - theatre' and 'subject - method'. Also another issue arose and became a topic of discussion: 'skills - content'. All three issues are still important in today's drama in education.

### 1. 2. 1. In the climate of 'speech and movement' drama

The whole atmosphere around drama in education in the 1930s and later, found its confirmation in The Handbook for Teachers<sup>3</sup> from 1937. The sections regarding drama emphasised not only the actual state of it, but oriented teachers towards drama and - what had been fundamental for the development of drama - drama practitioners and theatre people who dedicated their activity to education at these pioneering stages.

The Authors of the Handbook pointed out two different, main aims:

---

drama in education. Cf. COGGIN, Drama and Education, 276.

<sup>2</sup> Coggin placed Slade in the wide historical panorama, and devoted a large section of his book to him. Cf. COGGIN, Drama and Education, 237-243; 263-264. Lobb, as Slade's contemporary, placed him within the new, free dramatic activity connected with the Educational Drama Association. Cf. LOBB, The Drama, 93. At last Courtney in his book delivered the philosophical, theoretical approaches to the whole stream of 'dramatic activity' and devoted to Slade a part called 'Creative Drama'. Cf. COURTNEY, Play, Drama and Thought, 45-46.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. BOARD OF EDUCATION, Handbook for the Teachers (1937), 361; WILKS, The Joyful Game, 21.

a) dramatic games should provide for the child an overall mode for training of effective expression;

b) effective expression, encouraged, should develop self-confidence.

Between these two main aims in dramatic activity, were opportunities for other, helpful and individual aims. Drama in the infant school was encouraged to start with mime, with movement. It should provide for the child not only confidence with his/her body, but it should demonstrate the communicative/expressive potential of the body, of movement and enable the use of these skills.

The next step in drama included movement and dialogue based on stories familiar to children. The Handbook stated that

"By the time he leaves this stage of his school career the child should have acted frequently in suitable classroom plays."<sup>4</sup>

Also in the secondary school the emphasis was put on the motivation/explanation of the use of particular drama skills in order to deliver possibly the best dramatisation.

In 1944, the 'Education Act' affirmed and postulated the introduction of 'modern' methods of teaching which focused on the personal/individual development of the child. The drama, based on the emotional and expressive child's play, was compatible with the child-centred tendency in education.<sup>5</sup>

Bolton emphasised the role of the government inspectors in the development of drama oriented more towards stage skills and play production.<sup>6</sup> They demanded the precise description of drama aims and content. The child's progress in speech and

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, 361; quoted after WILKS, The Joyful Game, 21.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 18. Also the Report on the Secondary School (1947) underlined the role of play/dramatic activity understood as liberation of impulses and emotions which could allow the individual development.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Changes in Thinking, 153.

movement, at least, could be measured and evaluated. The well-prepared school-play represented something which could be described, evaluated. It was also representative of the school's image in the community. The character of the school's work and teacher's activity were also in favour of something structured, projected, repetitive. Methodology of speech or movement training once experienced, could be easily replicated with other, parallel groups of pupils or even with following generations of children. In consequence - as Bolton pointed out

"This focus on speech switched attention away from content to skill. As years went by, other skills related to the art of acting crept in. Play productions became the teacher's goal; the subject of speech and drama became a vehicle for training children to act."<sup>7</sup>

Generally in comparison with other, traditional subjects, drama really was seen as the realisation of an active methodology.

### **1. 2. 2. Peter Slade - a man from/of the theatrical background**

The 1940s were the time of the first serious and growing interest in drama in education by theatre practitioners. If the companies in the 1930s preferred a repertoire rather compatible with the syllabuses, the new groups were looking more for the educative consequences resulting from the impact 'theatre - children'. The 'Pear Tree Players' was

"(...) the first theatre company entirely devoted to education."<sup>8</sup>

Slade's way until that significant period of activity was marked by his growing interest in education.

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>8</sup> O'TOOLE, Theatre in Education, 12.

Slade had his first experience of theatre for children with the 'Fen Players' in the late 1920s. The next one, in a form of special training, he started in 1934 and as a consequence of a long period of preparation, the 'Parable Players' began to perform in 1936.<sup>9</sup> In spite of their shared interest in children, the main issue consisted in reviving the old morality plays. Those pioneering experiences showed Slade's attempt to

"(...) bring together the 'unconscious drama' and 'the great civilised art of theatre'."<sup>10</sup>

In 1937, David Ellis, secretary of Worcestershire Drama League, invited Slade to collaborate in order to form the 'Playlovers' Guild'. In spite of its short life, the Guild developed several activities including the presentation of plays for schools.<sup>11</sup> All these experiences made Slade popular and in 1943, still during the war, he started a new stage of his life: the training of a group of actors in order to promote a theatre really embracing the educational possibilities of drama. At the same time he was working for the BBC West of England, responsible for 'Children's Hour'.

As the Drama Adviser in Staffordshire, Slade, together with Michael Kent, started the 'Pear Tree Players' in 1945. Kent was a director and Slade the technical adviser, i.e. responsible for the educational image of the group. The long, intensive

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf. COGGIN, Drama and Education, 263-264; also cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 32-33. Redington, following Slade's memories, wrote that the first theatre company was born in 1930/31, and the 'Parable Players' started in 1935.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, 32; Redington quoted Slade's memories in P. SLADE, Forty years of theatre with the BCTA, in "Outlook", vol. 1, BCTA, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. COGGIN, Drama and Education, 267-268; 276; Guild had its seat in

"(...) a simple centre, a small community where people came for poetry reading, gramophone recitals, and dances".

The Guild started also a non-competitive festivals which delivered a pattern for the further popular festivals run by the Service of Youth.

actor's training since 1943, combined with the interest in the possible relationship between an actor and children's audience, ensured that the company was

"(...) able to present any kind of script play or primitive drama in any shape to an audience of any age. They could ask for ideas from the children or grown-ups and act the play at once."<sup>12</sup>

Slade remembered their experience

"They worked so hard and so imaginatively, they could do script or improvisation in any place of any shape to or with an audience. Not only were they good as a team, but they also taught. Not only were they first professional group entirely devoted to education - that is not just playing theatre but concocting feature programmes and other entertainments - but they also taught in schools and clubs (...)."<sup>13</sup>

Although exceptional, the 'Pear Tree Players' was not the only theatre company in the 1940s with educational aims. In 1943 in Birmingham, the group of teachers-amateurs started its own theatre company. They, the cradle of the Educational Drama Association (EDA), as the 'Children's Theatre Players', took an educational route in their school activity.<sup>14</sup> In the same year, in Aberdeen, at the local 'Speech Training Department', a group of students and teachers with Catherine Hollingsworth, launched a project of theatre for the schools. In Essex, the City Drama Adviser, Maisie Cobby, created a group composed from students. Their aim was to provide live contact between children and theatre in the school. Cobby hoped

---

<sup>12</sup> COGGIN, Drama and Education, 267.

<sup>13</sup> REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 33; she quoted SLADE, Forty Years, 8.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. COGGIN, Drama and Education, 268-269.

to deliver in that way a special stimulus to class-room drama and an aid in understanding the theatre as an art.

Redington emphasised the importance of the Education Act for the development of children's theatre.<sup>15</sup> In fact, the year 1944 marked the beginning of the activity of Tom Clarke at the Argyle Theatre in Birkenhead. His project 'Children's Playtime' represented an attempt to diminish the influence of cinema and to make theatre more popular. Also the Compass Players started in 1944 as a touring company with the programme illustrating the history of theatre. In the Publicity Pamphlet for 1950/51 season they emphasised

"(...) if the theatre is to achieve its true function in the educational field it must, above all, be entertaining and imaginative, embodying all the exciting elements."<sup>16</sup>

Besides the 'Pear Tree Players', in 1945 John Allen started his 'Glyndebourne Children's Theatre' and quickly became one of the most influential practitioners of children's theatre. They performed specially written plays for children and their preparation was based on observation of the audience reaction and demands. In 1946 another famous and historical group began its life - the 'Young Vic' directed by George Devine. Their productions were described as

"(...) typical of the sincere, professional approach."<sup>17</sup>

Coggin emphasised the aesthetic aim and seriousness of the commitment:

"George Devine decide to play in theatres because he thought it right to give young people the excitement and attraction of a play

---

<sup>15</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 34.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted after REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 36.

<sup>17</sup> COGGIN, Drama and Education, 268.

performed in a theatre as opposed to a hall; and he felt that they should not offer anything to young people that they would be ashamed to offer to grown-ups."<sup>18</sup>

At last, in 1948 Caryl Jenner initiated the 'Amersham Mobile Theatre'. They performed in schools, in class-rooms, but their performances were followed by special meetings with the teachers in order to obtain stimulative comments.

The work of these companies was based on well-designed scripts and the actors presented the play. Performance was well directed and the children's involvement during the play was not expected. Instead all companies took note of the children's reactions and during the preparation they took account of the audience's demands and teachers' observations.

Slade's understanding of the children's theatre and consequently the work of the 'Pear Tree Players' was different. They included the immediate audience's intervention, demands and suggestions. The actors could be compared to the 'commedia dell'arte' performers, who operated within some kind of structure, but based their work on improvisation, on audience's reactions and suggestions. A similar approach was taken by the 'West Country Children's Theatre' founded in 1944 by Brian Way. From the beginning of the performance, the children were included. Coggin observed that Way and his four actors

"(...) would descend on a classroom, outline a play, and in a matter of minutes the children were reading and improvising with full dramatic force with the professionals."<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, 268-269.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem, 269.

Slade and Way laid the foundation for a new kind of children's theatre. It had a focus on education, on the class-room work with children. The child's development, knowledge, expression became aims for this methodology. In Slade's practice and theory emerged the child's benefit, his/her good.

### 1. 2. 3. Peter Slade - drama adviser and a man of associations

Slade's activity as Drama Adviser in Staffordshire<sup>20</sup> and work with the 'Pear Tree Players' initiated the new 'Educational Drama Training Association' (EDTA). At this time, in Birmingham the 'Educational Drama Association' founded in October 1943, was already active. It was a consequence of the drama course for teachers run by Barry Jackson and Esmé Church. Coggin reported that

"Their aims were to foster an interest in drama in schools, to provide suitable dramatic entertainment for children and to work for the establishment of a Children's Theatre in Birmingham."<sup>21</sup>

Slade knew about the active drama trends in Birmingham, but in the post-war times he became much involved in work of various bodies organising conferences about drama. The first one was promoted by the 'Theatre News Service' - agency founded in London in 1946.<sup>22</sup> At the conference (January 1947) participated Robert G. Newton, Maisie Cobby, John Allen, George Devine, teachers, theatre practitioners, pedagogues and psychologists. As Coggin underlined

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, 238. Coggin emphasised that Slade was the first full-time adviser, after the previous experiences of part-time advisory work in Buckingham and Hereford.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, 237.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. ibidem, 238. The Theatre News Service had two main tasks at the beginning:

- a) the foundation of the new magazine "Theatre in Education", and
- b) the organisation of the conference on educational drama.

"This conference represents the first serious and sincere effort to examine the real issues at stake in educational drama."<sup>23</sup>

Slade took part also at the second conference in August 1947 and organised by Andrew Campbell. This time the gathering were significantly larger and embraced

"(...) the whole field of educational drama."<sup>24</sup>

In spite of the various backgrounds of the participants, for the first time an agreed final statement about the status and role of drama/theatre was issued. As a consequence of these first conferences, the whole movement of drama was taken seriously by the educational authorities and a special meeting of the National Advisory Committee for Drama in Education with the Ministry of Education took place.<sup>25</sup>

Probably in the post-war history of drama the Conference at the Bonington Hotel in January 1948 represented the most important event. Not only that there were gathered together the representatives of all three main streams of drama/theatre in education, but also the fundamental issue

'drama <—> theatre'

was discussed. The practitioners of children's theatre advocated their philosophy of 'acting to an audience', instead the educationists presented the view, that the presence of an audience often procured problems for children in drama activity. They admitted the possibility of a public performance, but as a consequence of the child's demand. Drama principally was understood as the aid for the development of the child's personality. Coggin commented that

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, 238.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>25</sup> The members of the Committee were: John Allen, Peter Slade and Martin E. Browne. It was significant that each of these three represented different view of drama/theatre in education: Allen - children's theatre, Slade - drama and Browne - the traditional British Drama League.

"This clash of interests reflects great credit on those concerned and demonstrates the integrity and sincere desire of everyone to find out the truth. The issues were too big and too important for loose thinking."<sup>26</sup>

Even if the final general position of the British Drama League seemed unchangeable, the individual theatre practitioners (as Martin E. Browne) were convinced about the educational importance of active theatre for children.

Subsequently, after the Bonnington Conference, Slade was asked to form a new organisation. He found out, that among the members of the Educational Drama Association in Birmingham there were similar problems 'drama <--> theatre'. During the several meetings and negotiations he was able to merge the name of the Educational Drama Association with the philosophy of his own Educational Drama Training Association. Slade himself was asked to take the responsibility of the permanent director of the new association. The effect was immediate and full of hope for the future. The new Educational Drama Association quickly opened its branches in London and Manchester and in consequence several local dramatic societies, training centres became affiliated. As a permanent form of teachers' training they established the National Summer School on the Arts in Education.

The successful development in the history of British drama gained for it international recognition and reputation. At the First Conference on Youth and the Theatre in April 1952, organised by UNESCO in Paris, the British representatives were numerous and significant for the whole destiny of the Arts in education. Redington emphasised that

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, 239.

"The Conference affirmed the creative dramatics (or Drama in Education) constituted an important element in the education of children and young people, but they noted the distinction between the techniques of creative dramatics and formal dramatics (or the production and performance of plays before an audience)."<sup>27</sup>

In the British educational reality at this time, at the beginning of the 1950s, Slade's practice and theory became more innovative, significant and influential. Unfortunately, the theatre entered a more commercial stage in its history, even the children's theatre, but theatre in the schools - or better 'drama in education' - entered its blossoming period.

#### **1. 2. 4. Child Drama:<sup>28</sup> premises and essence**

Although Slade wrote some part of his fundamental work in the 1940s, the serious writing began in 1950 and after four years, in 1954, the revolutionary and inspirational Child Drama was published.<sup>29</sup> Several factors created a unique work: the long period in which his ideas matured, the continuous confrontation of his ideas with contemporary practice and finally the Author's experience, both as practitioner and adviser for others. It was fresh in its originality of approach, of language and alternate structure. Way emphasised

"To my mind, the importance of the book lies in its totality - its carefully unfolded theoretical considerations backed by intricate documentation of practical examples."<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 6. She quoted Youth and the Theatre, in "World Theatre", vol. II, No 3, 1952, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. SLADE, Child Drama. I use the ninth edition, published in 1973.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. information about the book's history written by Brian WAY, Introduction, in SLADE, Child Drama, 9.

The secret of its immediate popularity lay also in its non-academic approach, in its variety of sources from which Slade attained inspiration. During the years of experimentation he was able to amalgamate all ingredients in one, coherent practice and theory. His work was not like a mosaic, but rather represented the rich content of one big crucible. Slade did not study at some special department, under somebody's direction, but to improve his work, to gain some theoretical support, he conquered the knowledge of various authors making it his own. As with other, original thinkers in education, in him appeared a true intuition, both educational and artistic-theatrical. He made his own interpretation of the child, of his/her nature, of the whole childhood, of the basic child's activity - i. e. play. This interpretation, guided by educational intuition, came through the theatre, children's theatre, drama-therapy until it has reached 'Child drama'. His work became a source of knowledge, stimuli and solutions for others.

The work of Slade could be considered also as the peak/climax of several, innovative tendencies in education which he saw, experienced. In him, issues like child-centredness, self-expression, spontaneity, found their practitioner, admirer and defender.<sup>31</sup> Today's critics emphasise the importance of the alternative approach invented by Slade, but at the same they blame him for the reinforcement of the myth that in the centre of drama is the notion of child-centredness. Bolton wrote in 1984:

"I shall further argue not that they were wrong to give in to the 'alternative' pull, far from it, but that in over-stating the case for child-centredness they have often inadvertently misled their followers into believing that pure undisciplined self-expression

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, 10.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Changes in Thinking, 153.

should be the basis for dramatic education."<sup>32</sup>

I think that in Slade's practice and theory we find rather a constant opposition against anarchy in education, and in drama particularly. Coggin emphasised

"CHILD DRAMA has rendered another great service by laying a bogey which has hampered the spread of many enlightened movements in education during the last fifty years. Rightly or wrongly many recent experiments have appeared to be based on the principle of 'free-expression' or 'self-expression', ambiguous terms which can easily be interpreted as an invitation to anarchy."<sup>33</sup>

The deviation in drama, the mistakes in education for which drama used to be accused, were the results not of Slade's or his close collaborators practice/teaching.

On the contrary, they emphasised:

"In true creative drama, however, the adult's task is of supreme importance. In providing the right sort of conditions and in giving guidance, the adult has a far subtler and more responsible role to play than in the traditional disciplinary method."<sup>34</sup>

In order to achieve a clear picture of 'Child drama' and its Author it is necessary to look into the source, to see its Author through the lenses of the time of his life, his contemporary events and contemporaries in education and drama.

First of all Slade reached the conclusion and made himself an advocate of the fundamental issue for drama, that the child drama is an art form. His statement was compatible with the contemporary tendency about Art in education.<sup>35</sup> The recognition

---

<sup>32</sup> IDEM, Drama as Education, 6-7.

<sup>33</sup> COGGIN, Drama and Education, 241.

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, 241.

of the importance of the visual arts and their child's artistic form, supported similar trends in drama. Slade emphasised that

"There does exist a Child drama which is of exquisite beauty and is a high ART FORM in its own right. It should be recognised, respected and protected."<sup>36</sup>

This fundamental statement was a consequence of a meticulous observation of the child's play, of its dramatic potentiality, tensions and constant discoveries. Slade's observation represented the confirmation of those exposed by Percy Nunn in the 1920s:

"Imitation is the first stage in the creation of individuality, and the richer the scope for imitation the richer the developed individuality will be."<sup>37</sup>

Play - the real child's work, a form of self-presentation, expression, communication - was a means of the child's development.<sup>38</sup> Imitation, observed in the child's behaviour almost from the beginning of the perceivable communications, is involved in a kind of drama of being in the world.

---

<sup>35</sup> Cf. SLADE, Child Drama, 108; 357. Slade knew Cizek's ideas from W. VIOLA, Child Art. London, University of London Press (1943). He remembered the input of Franz Cizek and of the whole movement Society for Education in Art, which promoted the recognition and appreciation of the child's artistic activity and its educative value. Slade also often was compared to Cizek, as one who added to the Child Art also drama.

<sup>36</sup> SLADE, Child Drama, 7; quoted after REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 18.

<sup>37</sup> P. NUNN, Education: Its Data and First Principles. (London), Arnold 1920. Quoted after COURTNEY, Play, Drama and Thought, 43.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. COURTNEY, Play, Drama and Thought, 43. Courtney emphasised also the idea of E. J. Burton, a contemporary to Slade. Burton underlined that

"(...) dramatic activity was the human being's method of assimilating experience and was, therefore, basic to all education".

The thesis, that the 'Child drama' is an art form, lead to the subsequent conclusion, that like the other Arts (Music, Literature, Visual Art) drama should become a separate subject in the curriculum, with its own content, programme and specialised teacher. Drama or dramatic activity could not be used as a methodology for the teaching of other subjects only. Drama as a subject would be connected with the aesthetic dimension of education. Drama in the child's life represented basically the aesthetic experience. Coggin emphasised this issue

"And because drama is, in itself, all-embracing, it is a most effective medium for procuring the transfer of the aesthetic outlook into all that it touches, not only the other arts and intellectual subjects, but life itself."<sup>39</sup>

The connection of aesthetics with ethic and moral dimension made drama a subject immediately/par excellence 'educative'.

The aesthetic of drama for Slade did not mean 'theatre'. He carefully underlined the play-origins and not theatrical of the child drama. On the contrary, he - in his educational intuition - pointed out, that especially in the early stages, public performance could do more harm than good.<sup>40</sup> The notion of knowledge, of educative

---

<sup>39</sup> COGGIN, Drama and Education, 242; after he reinforced quoting SLADE, Child Drama, 125:

"In watching thousands of young people in different parts of the country, and in being privileged to create things with them, and to share confidences about their earlier years, I would say without hesitation that cleanliness, tidiness, gracefulness, politeness, cheerfulness, confidence, ability to mix, thoughtfulness for others, discrimination, moral discernment, honesty and loyalty, ability to lead companions, reliability, and a readiness to remain steadfast under difficulties, appear to be the result of correct and prolonged Drama training."

<sup>40</sup> Cf. SLADE, Child Drama, 49. Slade emphasised the uniqueness of the child's play:

"The joy of Dramatic Play is that it is the creation of the moment. The

experience could be missed and harmful tensions could arise. Again the central point of the whole 'New Education' found in Slade its defender: the adult cannot impose his/her own aesthetic/artistic rules for his/her realisation of some project; the adult cannot use the child for either self realisation or pleasure. Instead Slade recognised the importance of the atmosphere of friendship, the supportive role of the adult in order to help the growth of the child. Play, dramatic play is the child's way of

"(...) thinking, proving, relaxing, working, remembering, daring, testing, creating and absorbing."<sup>41</sup>

The adult, the teacher who is just beside the child, is responsible for the realisation of this natural way of education.

'Child drama' as a fundamental issue in understanding the child's nature, tends to embrace a large range of 'dramatic activities' derived from play and connected with it. The first revelation of 'Child drama' happened just in the very first joy of physical movement, of the first communication voluntarily sent by the child in order to signal his/her presence or to enter in the relationship with somebody else or something outside. The most mature 'Child drama' consisted in the improvised plays of the juniors and after the 'dramatic activity' of the teenagers which tended towards theatre, as a prepared form of communication.

Slade distinguished, even if the borders are very fluent, several stages of 'Child drama'. The first one, called embryonic and including forms of drama, art and music, characterised the child in babyhood. The baby absorbs from the environment, but not yet imitating. Around the first year the child shows the signs of game and the first

---

energy and imagination CAN be interrupted, and then the 'moment' is gone for ever. Audience is often the enemy of the 'moment'."

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, 42.

forms of impersonation starts - the big adventure of dramatic activity, i.e. imitation, already begun. The play of the toddler takes various forms similar to primitive dance, based on rhythm, on time distinction, music. The usual visual form of the play is the circle. The child, very individual in his/her world, is able to cope with the small group of contemporaries.

In 'Child drama', through all the stages, there is a very slow movement, natural for the child, from the individual play/dramatic activity towards the play/dramatic activity which includes an audience. The child, his/her abilities and skills are in continuous development. The spontaneous speech sound (language flow) - stimulated by various external and internal factors - develops towards improvisation into communicative speech skill.<sup>42</sup> The conquest of the surrounding space starts with rather limited movements, but it develops through the circle-forms, horse-shoe gatherings towards the voluntarily taken and accepted position of domination over the space. This is similar to the child taking a place on the stage.

At last the 'Child drama' could reach the stage of an expressed need for an audience. Coggin emphasised this point of Slade's idea:

"When the child is ready for public performance, the joy of participation in a communal enterprise appears as the antithesis of selfishness or exhibitionism. Team work is, in fact, one of the fundamental aims of Child Drama."<sup>43</sup>

The 'theatrical' skills/qualities could be introduced only when the child (the children) are old enough and ready to absorb them for their merits, because of their needs. The

---

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, 93-104. Slade was particularly attentive to speech development through all the stages of child drama. Although this issue appeared in description of each stage, he summarised and enriched his idea about speech in Chapter VI Language flow.

<sup>43</sup> COGGIN, Drama and Education, 243.

teacher must be careful in gradual introducing 'acting' elements which should serve to develop and to educate.

Another characteristic of Slade's idea was the distinction between 'personal play' and 'projected play'.<sup>44</sup> It was only one true distinction. He refused the more traditional distinction between 'realistic play' and 'imaginative play', because it was connected with the intellect. Again Slade underlined the fluid borders between various forms of child's play, but the dramatic play releases emotions, provides an emotional catharsis and at the same time the child experiences how to control his/her emotion.

Slade emphasised that the experience of life is a cause of the child's development. Subsequently, the 'projected play' represented rather the quality of the early stage of life. It is more mental, imaginative and less physically involving. There is a large use of toys, things ('treasures'). The child uses his/her mind in order to project the dramatic instinct into the used objects. The play happens within an imaginative framework. The consequences are quietness and stillness in the play, emotional control, confidence, ability to observe, tolerate the qualities of the environment. The 'projected play' develops towards art, music, reading and writing, organisational skills.

The 'personal play' depends rather on the development of body-skills. The child is physically active and the whole person is used in an extrovert demonstration with movement, noises. There are moments of imitation, dance, singing, fighting etc. Subsequently the child gains the control of his/her body, the ability of gesture expression. He/she is totally absorbed in chosen and imitated roles in order to make the representation more faithful.

---

<sup>44</sup> This was a fundamental for Slade. Cf. parts dedicated to this distinction in SLADE, Child Drama, 29-36.

Slade's contribution, so rich and deeply experienced, could be characterised by three different statements concerned with three various problems:

- a) 'child drama' for education and not education for 'school play';
- b) education of a well-balanced personality of the child and not a training of a little actor;
- c) teacher-observer, helper, supporter, source of knowledge, but not teacher-director or skills-trainer.

In Slade's practice, and after in his theory, the play for the first time gained its fundamental and appreciated place in the class-room work. The 'Child drama' involved all the children from the group, without exclusion. The 'dramatic play' was seen as the aid-factor in the development, in the education of everybody. Slade introduced the use of every space, especially of these privileged by the playing children. Their 'dramatic activity' was based not on some material previously prepared by the teacher, but on the children's spontaneity. Even if the teacher was present with his/her support, the 'drama play' progressed thanks to the children's creativity and not because of the theatrical, skills training. Bolton underlined that

"Content did not matter for WHAT was expressed was seen to be of less importance than the freedom to express it."<sup>45</sup>

The child's benefit represented for Slade the most important educational aim. Through the drama the child gained his/her self and others awareness, the richness of the language increased and the ability of communication, both verbal and non-verbal, developed. Slade was convinced about the educational values of the theatre, but in education rather than theatre for itself, per se'. The drama could provide knowledge of

---

<sup>45</sup> BOLTON, Changes in Thinking, 153.

theatre, of its components, but first of all the child should be happy doing drama. The teacher should not introduce the traditional theatrical division and atmosphere. Slade emphasised that

"The Child is an actor AND audience in one because of its delicate balance of out-flow and in-flow in the realm of experience and knowledge. This balance is violently upset by any sudden differentiation between actor and audience, and showing off immediately begins."<sup>46</sup>

'Child drama' revolutionised the fundamental relationship in the school: the teacher and the child. The latter is in the process of growing, of education, of development. Beside him/her there is an adult, mature, responsible, prepared for the educational task. But the drama represented changes in the education. Subsequently drama demanded the changes in the teacher's approach to his/her work: drama demanded a new teacher. Drama itself enriched the teacher

"Child Drama tells the teacher who and what the Child is and where it has got to in life. It helps teacher to become a friendly and sensitive person, enriching both the mind and personality enormously."<sup>47</sup>

At last, for the most mature form of 'child drama', i.e. 'children's theatre', Slade predicted the new educational profession: the teacher-actors:

"By this I mean persons who are primarily teachers (not necessarily school teachers) and know how to take work with Children. They come to the school with the freshness of outsiders and may be dressed up. They come for acting. They are trained

---

<sup>46</sup> SLADE, Child Drama, 58.

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem, 105.

actors. Actor-teachers, a new profession."<sup>48</sup>

The activity of Slade was multi-directional, although his principal place remained the Experimental Drama Centre in Rea Street in Birmingham and the Educational Drama Association. The Rea Street Centre was open for all sorts of children willing to experience the drama-adventures in various forms. Slade and his collaborators tried to be 'the sympathetic adults at hand'.<sup>49</sup> The centre was also open for adults for both reasons, as the place for dramatic activity and as the training centre for drama teachers and practitioners. There were also presentations of plays for both children and adults. It became a well-known artistic and educational centre.

The Association started also its own journal "Creative Drama" which became a forum for the exchange of opinions, a vehicle for the popularisation of 'child drama' ideas, especially among teachers of junior schools.

### 1. 2. 5. Brian Way and contemporaries of Slade

The large movement of drama included also other practitioners and theoreticians who in various forms continued the speech and movement, creative, spontaneous and self-expressive methodologies. Significant and influential was J. E. Burton who thanks to the practice and publication of handbooks,<sup>50</sup> became a leading

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem, 272.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. COGGIN, Drama and Education, 240. This definition-description was given by Coggin.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. J. E. BURTON, Teaching Drama Through Self-expression. A Course in Speech, Mime and Drama. London, Evans Brothers Limited 1949 (reprinted in 1950 and 1956); IDEM, Drama in Schools. Approaches, Methods & Activities. London, Herbert Jenkins 1955 (2nd ed. in 1964). His influence emphasised Courtney, pointing out Burton's idea

"(...) that dramatic activity was the human being's method of assimilating experience and was, therefore, basic to all education"

in COURTNEY, Play, Drama and Thought, 43.

authority of speech and movement drama seen as auxiliary in the teaching of English. A similar methodology we find in the work of David Pethybridge in his Directed Drama<sup>51</sup> and later John Wiles and Alan Garrard in their Leap to Life!<sup>52</sup> Rose Bruford, founder of the Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama, wrote Teaching Mime,<sup>53</sup> which together with several courses for drama specialists contributed to the popularity of skills drama.<sup>54</sup>

Among the contemporaries of Slade, but at the same time his collaborator and heir, was Brian Way. He started his significant and innovative career in 'drama in education' already in the 1940s, as a member of the Old Vic Company.<sup>55</sup> The idea of a new kind of theatre for children matured and in 1943 Way, with two other members of the Old Vic, formed a unit which broke the barrier between actors and audience. They performed on the floor, in front of the children trying to involve them. Also they tried to use literature considered more suitable for this particular situation. In 1944 Way founded his own West of England Children's Theatre Company.<sup>56</sup> It was still a

---

<sup>51</sup> Cf. D. C. PETHYBRIDGE, Directed Drama. Practical Methods in Dramatic Activity. London, University of London Press Ltd. 1951.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. J. WILES, A. GARRARD, Leap to Life! An Experiment in School and Youth Drama. In conjunction with Alan Garrard. New and Revised Edition. London, Chatto & Windus 1965; first edition in 1957.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. R. BRUFORD, Teaching Mime. London, Methuen & Co. Ltd. 1958 (reprinted 1960 and 1964).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Bolton's stages of practising drama in the school, which he described as the experience which many teachers passed through during the 1950s and 1960s. Cf. G. BOLTON, Drama and Theatre in Education: a survey, in D. DAVIS, Ch. LAWRENCE (eds.), Gavin Bolton: Selected Writings. London, Longman 1986, 3-11.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 33. Her information is based on her own interview with Way, on 7th May 1976, at the Theatre Centre Offices in London.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. COGGIN, Drama and Education, 269. Coggin used the name the 'West Country Children's Theatre.

theatre, but with short scenes, songs, poems, dance. There were moments of children's participation,<sup>57</sup> but as Way remembered

"(...) their major achievement was the breakthrough in shape, the limit of age group and the limit of audience numbers."<sup>58</sup>

Among the Company's aims there was also the will to assist teachers in their approaches to drama in order to help them methodologically. That became the main field of Way's activity after the closure of the Company. He became the editor of "Theatre in Education" and opened Drama Advisory Service.

The next form of Way's activity was the Theatre Centre at Swiss Cottage in London. He directed many productions and involved other companies in the same kind of theatre work for children. The performances, in a new shape and taking account of the children's world, were designed and presented in order to stimulate the children's own expressive work.<sup>59</sup> The actors' preparation of the performance was based on improvisation, on the predictable, possible audience reaction. The post-performance work of children again was based on improvisation, creative writing, painting, composing music. The actors and teacher were actively present at this stage. Drama often served as the starting point for other artistic, creative works.<sup>60</sup> The theatre, its techniques served to stimulate not only drama, but also other activities in the class-room, but related to the presentation.

---

<sup>57</sup> Cf. opinion given by O'TOOLE, Theatre in Education, 12-13:

"This company was in the forefront of early experiment with children's direct participation in a theatrical experience".

<sup>58</sup> REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 33.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. The Thoughtful Playground, 40-41.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. VALLINS, The Beginnings, 4. Also REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 38.

Way not only adopted Slade's ideas, but added his own innovation, especially creating a new kind of theatre for and with children.<sup>61</sup> The professionals, the actors underwent a special kind of training, both theatrical and educational. The training was based on the improvisation, on the method invented and developed by Konstantin Semenovich Stanislavski. The actor was working not in order to re-play the character, the situation, but in order to create the character, to build the scene. The post-performance work with the children demanded the actors' readiness to cope with the child's input, creativity, stimuli.

Way included his long educational experience in a very successful book Development Through Drama.<sup>62</sup> As a drama practitioner coming from theatre, he emphasised that the two activities of theatre and drama should not be confused. Theatre is largely interested in communication between actors and audience. Drama instead is connected with the experience of the participants and this experience could be independent from the communication. For him, the majority of children and young people are still unable to take part in the process of communication going on during the theatre performance.<sup>63</sup> Drama in education could be seen in a double perspective:

- a) as a method (drama is a very useful means for teaching, but after being experienced as drama);
- b) as an art (it must exist within its own right).

He emphasised

---

<sup>61</sup> Cf. opinion by COURTNEY, Play, Drama and Thought, 47; COGGIN, Drama and Education, 240.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. WAY, Development. Until 1983 there were fifteen editions.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. ibidem, 3.

"We cannot use number to solve interesting problems until we have experienced and to some extent mastered number itself: no more can we use drama to understand or experience history or bible stories or literature until we have experienced and mastered certain basic aspects of drama itself. Ultimately, drama is a valuable tool, but first the tool itself must be fashioned."<sup>64</sup>

Drama for him was not one more subject, because it was like the human personality and it was first of all connected with development.

In order to achieve the effectiveness of drama a similar system of exercises as for actors was devised by Way for class work with children. The aims were: concentration, sensitivity, imagination. The training was important for him; training for life skills. They all served for the development of drama, but also for increasing the child's own creativity, self-awareness, self-expression.

Way's book 'translated' and enriched the practice and theory of Slade in a language easy understandable by both teachers and drama-practitioners. The introduction was compatible with the actual trends of educational psychology,<sup>65</sup> there was understanding of the teacher's work and justification for the differentiated approach,<sup>66</sup> there was - the most important point - a well-structured successive methodology adaptable for the class-work. All these factors made Way's book extremely popular and influential in both areas, 'child drama' and teachers' training.

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibidem, 7.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. opinion expressed in BOLTON, Changes in Thinking, 154. We must remember that the whole 'personal/individual' psychology initiated by Abraham MASLOW'S Motivation and Personality. Harper & Row 1954 actually was born.

<sup>66</sup> Way often addressed the teacher and explaining proposed exercises, he related to his/her experiences.

### 1. 2. 6. Heirs of Slade in Educational Drama Association

The late 1960s and 1970s brought new initiatives in drama in education,<sup>67</sup> however Peter Slade and Birmingham EDA remained very active, on both the national and international stage of drama.<sup>68</sup> He, Brian Way, Sylvia Demmery and Phylis Lutley were involved in the activity of various associations working through drama. They gave several lectures at various universities in order to present 'Child drama' among children's theatre and drama practitioners.<sup>69</sup>

Slade, as an unquestionable authority, participated at works and became a member of the national committee of the British Children's Theatre Association (BACTA), born in 1959.<sup>70</sup> As a historical first, he was active in the National Association of Drama Advisors. The long lasting campaign for a special drama diploma-certificate achieved the support of the National Association of Drama Advisers (NADA) at the conference in October 1964. Every year he took part in the conferences of the Workers for Maladjusted Children Association delivering speeches and standing for the committee. Among the associations were educational, cultural,

---

<sup>67</sup> Cf. in following Part A, chapter 1. 3 and 1. 4 about the activity of Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton and 1. 5 about the beginning of 'Theatre in Education'.

<sup>68</sup> A documentary/chronological picture of his activity is included in Appendix 2: Diary Notes 1958-1968 published in P. SLADE, Experience of Spontaneity. London, Longmans 1968, 267-286. Henceforth SLADE, Diary Notes.

<sup>69</sup> A curious, but prophetic event was the special weekend-course for industry, involving drama in professional, management training. It was organised in October 1963 at High Wycombe. In the late 1980s also Heathcote became involved in similar projects.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. SLADE, Diary Notes, 268. Also REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 39; BCTA Constitution in Aims-Rule 6b referred:

"To further education for children through drama and the arts of the theatre and to encourage the appreciation of dramatic art by and for children."

psychological, and Slade popularised his method through speeches, conferences and workshops.<sup>71</sup>

Government bodies invited him to participate in preparatory works for conferences and reports (Drama Panel of Ministry of Education - 1961, project of Drama Centres, project of the first Conference 'Drama and Education', courses for Home Office, notes to Plowden Committee on Drama in Primary Education - July 1964).

The other important field consisted in teaching at various universities.<sup>72</sup> There were organised term-long courses and occasional lectures or workshops. EDA organised each year a special summer course at Keele University, which during the years transformed into an international meeting (in July 1966 there was the 16th year of this activity!). On 29 November 1962 the Meeting of 'Peter Slade Leaders' discussed policy of Drama and Arts Centres, the relationships with Colleges and Universities and the project of 'certificate' of 'child drama'. For those leaders Slade

---

<sup>71</sup> Only to emphasised the rapid spread of 'child drama' it is worthy to enumerating some of Slade's relationships:

a) associations: University Dramatic Society in Birmingham, Association of Workers for Maladjusted Children, Newman Association in Birmingham, National Playing Fields Association, National Association of Mental Health, Special Schools Association, Midland Association for Teaching of English, Warwickshire County Teachers' Association;

b) Church's educational bodies: Birmingham Diocesan Education Committee (Advisory Committee for Drama), Religious Conference for Bishop of Worcester, Diocesan Course 'Drama and Religion' in Birmingham, Religious Drama Course in Saltley College.

<sup>72</sup> In 1958-1968 Slade collaborated with following universities: Reading University, University of Liverpool, Birmingham University, Leicester University, Cambridge University - annual Psychology Conferences, London University, Salisbury Training College, College of Education in Wimbledon, Leeds University, Bangor University - substituted by Phylis Lutley, Nottingham University - Loughborough College, Hereford College of Education, York University, University of Sussex.

devised and organised a special course in August 1963. There was a tendency to unite various drama associations. During 1966 the proposals were made and a special committee for the Standing Conference of Drama Associations prepared a report.

Collaboration with some universities was directed towards the creation of special drama departments.<sup>73</sup> On 28 March 1962 the first visit of Dorothy Heathcote took place to discuss

"(...) inclusion of Child Drama in a University Diploma course (then at Durham), the first for Drama in Education".<sup>74</sup>

This event was followed by regular visits by Heathcote and her students from Newcastle and Durham. Also at Birmingham University various, regular drama courses were organised. In July 1967 Birmingham Education Committee decided to open a special certificate course and entrusted it to Slade.

The Rea Street Centre and Slade received many visitors from various countries, who were interested in 'child drama' and became Slade's ambassadors.<sup>75</sup> Slade emphasised in his memories the importance of some of the visits. On 1

---

<sup>73</sup> On 16 February 1962 Slade had a discussion with Professor Hunt about possible development of drama at Manchester University. In his Diary Notes 1958 - 1968 this is the first trace of a serious attempt to establish a permanent drama course.

<sup>74</sup> SLADE, Diary Notes, 272. Cf. A-1-3 about Heathcote and Bolton initiative in Durham and Newcastle.

<sup>75</sup> In Diary Notes 1958 - 1968 there are traces of the following visits: Alan Simpson from New Zealand - 1958, Myra Benson from Canada - 1958, Mrs Azmier for Canada - 1961 and the meeting defined by Slade as 'important', Polly Hill of Canadian Child Drama Association - October 1962, some visitors from USA and Holland, letters exchange with Russian pedagogues - 1963, Chief Representative on Drama of Egyptian Ministry of Education - 1963, visitors from Switzerland - 1964, Leif Kongsrud from Denmark for the second time - November 1964, from Australia - May 1965, at Summer Course 1965 in Keele attended e students from Hawaii, from Brazil - March 1966, Professor Oscar Quero from Mexico and discussion about personality training and dramatherapy - December 1966.

November 1960 he opened a special 'Peter Slade Studio' in London for international relationships.

Contact with drama associations in other countries brought common initiatives (in May 1964 the First International Conference of Children's Theatre at Commonwealth Institute in London took place and Slade was chairman of Creative Drama section), and also parts of Slade's books were translated Introduction to Child Drama in Dutch - 1965<sup>76</sup> and

"(...) some of my work being translated into Russian by the Association for Promotion of Literature and Art for Children."<sup>77</sup>

In Denmark, following the successful implementation of Slade's ideas, the Society for Educational Drama was founded on 26 February 1967 and subsequently leaders from Denmark took part in the Summer Course at Keele University.

Slade was invited to other countries too, but instead he delegated Brian Way (in Canada - 1958 and 1959, in South Africa - 1960) and Sylvia Demmery (Canada - 1963, Germany - 1964, at Rhode Island University in USA - 1967) in order to represent him. Demmery and Lutley often also represented him at various English universities.

In the 1960s also some of his works were filmed and televised (Slade-educationist - 1961, Personality Course - 1962, Social Drama in schools - 1963, Children's Theatre at Rea Street filmed in 1964 and 1965, BBC London interview on radio In Town Today - 24 April 1965). Television producers invited him also to discuss the problem of children's programmes and possibilities of filming children at school, at play.

---

<sup>76</sup> Cf. IDEM, Een Inleidung tot Kindertonecnspl. Translated by J. Van der Ster. Muusses 1965.

<sup>77</sup> IDEM, Diary Notes, 282.

This incredibly intense activity through courses, conferences, lectures, was also followed by new publications. First of all Slade himself prepared a kind of hand-book version of Child Drama and published it as Introduction to Child Drama.<sup>78</sup> It was his response to the teachers' demand, but the new book included a final part devoted to the parents. Several of his courses Slade entitled 'personality training', which included his method of 'child drama', but also his interests in dramatherapy, in the studies and practice of spontaneity in human development. The third book of Slade Experience of Spontaneity<sup>79</sup> seems to be a fruit of his long investigation into the nature of spontaneity. Again the book was substantially based on Slade's personal experience. The theoretical explanations followed descriptions of activities and rather represented Slade's reflection, than scientific interpretation.

Slade developed his 'child drama' especially for the secondary schools (he never stopped his theatrical work with various group of children and youngsters in order to represent plays as a result of the progress of 'child drama'). Traces of this process were in publications after the various conferences. Drama at the Middle School<sup>80</sup> presents the drama methodologies (polished improvisations, social drama, speech) as suitable for juniors. Slade and Demmery wrote Drama with the 13 to 18 Year olds,<sup>81</sup> in which, apart from explanations of imaginative forms and social drama,

---

<sup>78</sup> Cf. IDEM, An Introduction to Child Drama. London, University of London Press 1958; until 1967 the book was re-published six times. In Diary Notes 1958-1968 there is an information about the project to record this book as talking-book for blind people.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. IDEM, Experience.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. IDEM, Drama at the Middle School. Report as from the Educational Drama Association for the Middle Years of Schooling Research Project. (Birmingham), University of Lancaster, A Publication of the Educational Drama Association (1971).

<sup>81</sup> Cf. S. DEMMERY, P. SLADE, Drama with the 13 to 18 Year olds. Birmingham, A Publication of the Educational Drama Association 1972.

they delivered also theatre-orientated suggestions about light, skills-exercises, make-up etc.). Slade developed a similar discourse in Freedom in Education?<sup>82</sup> He emphasised the indisputable factor of the child's freedom and its realisation in dramatic play, but also he pointed out the cathartic benefit from drama for juniors. In the secondary school drama there was also a place for addressing youth problems of sex, relationship, social issues, religion.

He also collaborated with various theatre companies of children's theatre in both forms, as training in 'child drama' and as preparation of plays. And so Children's Theatre and Theatre for Young People<sup>83</sup> reflected the aims and methodology of children's theatre in accordance with Slade's method and understanding of the child's need, educational and artistic.

The collaborators of Slade also published works, in which it is possible to observe the development of 'child drama' within the fields indicated by Slade, but explored by others.<sup>84</sup> The Rea Street Centre was opened for handicapped children and Slade himself was involved in various drama courses concerned with this specific domain. Ian Petrie gave an interpretation of 'child drama' in terms of therapy in both physical and mental directions.<sup>85</sup> Gordon Pidgeon worked on similar lines.<sup>86</sup> Child

<sup>82</sup> Cf. P. SLADE, Freedom in Education? Birmingham, A Publication of the Educational Drama Association (undated).

<sup>83</sup> Cf. IDEM, Children's Theatre and Theatre for Young People. Based on a Talk given at the original Rea Street Centre to the British Children's Theatre Association's Annual Conference Easter 1968. Bromley (Kent), A Publication of the Educational Drama Association 1969.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. P. LUTLEY, Teaching with a Purpose. Using Child Drama with Younger Children. Bromley, A Publication of the Educational Drama Association 1968. She approached theoretically the problem of the educational aims in drama.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. I. PETRIE, Drama and Handicapped Children. Birmingham, A Publication of the Educational Drama Association 1974.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. G. PIDGEON, Towards Creative Play. A Guide to Using Child Drama with those of

drama with the deaf or blind children demanded a special preparation of teacher, knowledge of specific psychology in order to devise adequate rhythms, games, exercises. Often the teacher was exposed to the psychological problems of the children and child drama more evolved into psychodrama. The adaptation of child drama in a multi-racial, multi-cultural education represented a different problem. Demmery and Young<sup>87</sup> emphasised the usefulness of child drama in communication with children from linguistically different family contexts and as an aid in the learning of English. Casey and Pomroy<sup>88</sup> underlined the role of drama in dealing with and appreciation of the culture of others'. They repeated Slade's developmental theory of drama: imaginative drama seen as suitable for everyone and at each age, social drama adequate for most pupils and theatre for some pupils.

\*\*\*\*\*

The activity of Peter Slade was long in time, large in territorial influence, numerous in initiatives, rich in relationships. He is a landmark in the development of 'drama in education' and his main thesis that the 'child drama' is an art form represents an unquestionable turning-point in understanding the Arts educational mission, both as value and as methodology. His developmental theory of 'child drama' reflected the psychological trends of his time; his emphasis on 'spontaneous', 'creative', 'individual', 'imaginative' corresponded with the educational philosophy of 'child-centredness'; his

---

Special Education need. Birmingham, Published by the Educational Drama Association 1980.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. S. DEMMERY, P. YOUNG, Drama in a Multi-cultural Society. The early years: 4 to 12. (Sutton Coldfield), Published by the Educational Drama Association (undated).

<sup>88</sup> Cf. B. CASEY, S. POMROY, Drama in a Multi-cultural Society. The Secondary years: 12 -16. (Sutton Coldfield), Published by the Educational Drama Association (undated).

theatrical inclination in drama-movement, drama-speech, drama-skills realised the postulates of 'education through Art'.

Taking into consideration all Slade's publications and initiatives for training of teachers, and 'child drama' practitioners, the position of drama in British education of the 1960s and 1970s, its international recognition and influence becomes more understandable.

### **1. 3. RE-BIRTH OF DRAMA AS A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO THE TEACHING/LEARNING PROCESS IN DOROTHY HEATHCOTE'S PRAXIS**

Although the drama originated by Slade and his followers dominated the 1960s, the history of those years was marked by the beginning and development of a new significant approach. It was a result of several, interconnected factors. Slade and his followers had a leaning towards the establishment of drama within the curriculum, as an independent, statutory subject, based on the fundamental idea, that 'child drama' is an art form per se. Brian Way inspired the field of drama by his emphasis on intuition and benefit for personal development of the child involved in drama activity. The influence of both, Slade and Way, provoked greater interest in drama from education authorities. Also the world of the professional theatre investigated the educational value of its production. The exchange of ideas and opinions with drama and children's theatre practitioners from other, English speaking countries became significant. But the most important factor consisted in the activity of Dorothy Heathcote, and soon collaborating with her, Gavin Bolton.

Dorothy Heathcote brought into drama not only her previous theatrical experience, but primarily a fresh, genuine idea about the teacher, his/her place and role in drama in order to help the child, to guide him/her, to promote personal development. She provoked a re-birth of drama as a teaching/learning methodology strictly connected with knowledge and not predominantly with various skills. In her practice drama became a context in which the child not only became able to express him/herself, but in which he/she gained knowledge, increased the potential of understanding and learned how to deal with problems in order to reach real solutions. Although she was connected with Slade and Way in her first stage as a university lecturer of drama, quickly enough she reached her own independence and became a leading pioneer of drama and an inspirer for the generation of new teachers and drama practitioners.

Gavin Bolton's personal history represents a very helpful and meaningful example of on-going changes in drama and in teachers' understanding of drama. Observing and analysing his professional development it seems that the phenomenon of Dorothy Heathcote happened just at the time of a growing, increasing demand from teachers for an appropriate methodology of teaching in order to co-respond with both, the children's needs/demands and with the development of education. Both Bolton's subsequent work with Heathcote, including the theorisation of their practice and the persistent, consequent popularisation of drama, stimulated many of their followers and made drama a successful, holistic methodology in education.

The 1970s represented a 'mile stone' for British drama and work at this time formed the basis for its popularity in both domestic and international understanding of drama/theatre's role in education.



### 1. 3. 1. Years of transformation: the 1960s

Besides the leading Birmingham Rea Centre, various drama centres were active usually connected with the local educational authorities (the professional figure of the drama adviser) or pedagogy departments of the universities which included drama in their syllabuses. The majority of them and their practitioners were under the influence of Slade and collaborated with him. Publications represented adaptations of the main tendency in drama. It was due to the personal qualities of individual practitioners and to the specific domains of their work. Issues of 'experiment' in drama, of 'creativity' served as key-words for authors presenting their methods<sup>1</sup> in order to share their own experience with others devoted to drama. Some of the publications delivered a kind of recipe how to do good, effective drama.<sup>2</sup> There was not only a sharing of experience, but also some kind of theoretical explication and - what was characteristic - examples of exercises, solutions, possible sources for drama.<sup>3</sup> This 'practical' feature characterised especially handbooks in which authors emphasised the skills of presenting, of communicating as the main purpose of drama,<sup>4</sup> although the public performance was not a task per se:

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. A. ARMSTRONG (ed.), Experimental Drama. London, G. Bell and Sons Ltd. 1963; G. BARNFIELD, Creative Drama in Schools. London, Macmillan 1968.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. GOODRIDGE, Drama in the Primary School. London, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd. 1970; B. WALKER, Teaching Creative Drama. A group 9 to 15 years. London, B. T. Batsford Limited 1970.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. E. MORGAN, A Practical Guide to Drama in the Primary School. Scarborough-Yorkshire, Ward Lock Educational 1968.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. P. WITTHAM, Teaching Speech and Drama in the Infant School. London, Ward Lock Educational 1977; the structure of the book is compatible with the growing 'difficulty-skill' levels of drama. She began with movement and mime and finished with speech and poetry.

"It should always be remembered that drama in education, more particularly with young children, has nothing to do with the highly sophisticated and technical achievements of drama in theatre. The intention is not to give a dramatic performance on stage with an audience, but to find enjoyment in DOING, so that each child fulfils the potential of his own creative instincts."<sup>5</sup>

Drama or improvised play was seen as a result of trained skill-domains: movement, speech, movement and speech together.<sup>6</sup>

In the late 1960s also the overseas achievements of drama in education appeared on the English scene, especially from America and Canada. The American school knew very early efforts to place theatre and drama in its curriculum.<sup>7</sup> Burnet M. Hobgood in his historical account underlined the functional presence of theatre. There were several examples of successful projects including training of skills (speech and movement) and of using theatre as an aim in the study of literature. Also schemes of professional training included theatre elements of simulation and forms of social-drama. The beginning of drama involved more in education was connected with the theory and practice of Winifred Ward.<sup>8</sup> She, inspired by ideas of Hughes

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. PEMBERTON-BILLING, CLEGG, Teaching Drama, 17.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. B. M. HOBGOOD, In the United States, in: J. HODGSON, M. BANHAM (eds.), Drama in Education 3. The Annual Survey. London, Pitman Publishing 1975, 34-71. However he tried to display the development of drama in a chronological order, he emphasised that

"The movement to bring theatre into education in the US has been characterised more by expediency than purposefulness, more by fortuitous responses to opportunity than the adoption of tested strategies." (35)

<sup>8</sup> Cf. W. WARD, Creative Dramatics. New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc. 1930.

Mearns,<sup>9</sup> coined the name 'creative dramatics' which became a key-word and guidepost for further drama practitioners in the USA.

Ward recognised the developmental character of playmaking and in her division each age has got its own, dominant form of drama:

a) the 5-6-7 years old children have their dramatic experiences on which various forms of playmaking are based;

b) the 8-9-10 years old children experience the dramatic play which involves dance, mime, imagination;

c) for the 11-12-13 years old children the improvisations become more suitable forms of drama and include all previous experiences of theatre skills.<sup>10</sup>

Ward's practice was well-based on literature, on its exploration using theatre means and drama forms. She emphasised the usefulness of playmaking for socialisation, personal growth, recreation, moral and religious education. Ward influenced drama practitioners in her country for a long time.<sup>11</sup>

In Canada in the 1960s the movement of drama was enforced by the input of Richard Courtney. Historically the place for theatre and drama in the schools was similar to that in the USA. Slade's popularity through his book and Way's visits prepared for Courtney a good reception and soon after his establishment/settlement in

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf. MEARNS, Creative Power. The first edition of this influential book was published in 1929.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. W. WARD, Playmaking with Children. From Kindergarten through Junior High School. New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc. 1947.

<sup>11</sup> Her ideas were present in the books of her contemporaries, but also the practitioners in the 1970s based their work on her experience. Cf. F. C. DURLAND, Creative Dramatics for Children. A Practical Manual for Teachers and Leaders. Yellow Springs, Ohio, The Antioch Press 1952; J. CRANSTON, Dramatic Imagination. A Handbook for Teachers. Eureka (California), Interface California Corporation 1975.

Canada, he became a leading academic authority and practitioner of educational drama.<sup>12</sup> Although his ideas in the 1960s were similar to those of Slade, he soon expanded his research to embrace the whole domain of theatre's presence in education. The results of a long investigation about dramatic education were included in his influential book Play, Drama and Thought, published in 1968.<sup>13</sup> He also distinguished stages in human life connected with specific forms of dramatic activity, but in his theory he delivered a large philosophical, psychological, sociological background. Courtney's activity embraced also the problems of youth theatre in both school and extra-school forms. This was understood as the natural, subsequent form of dramatic activity which followed childhood drama, mainly based on play, on natural qualities like spontaneity, creativity, quest for knowledge, experience, adventure. His interest in theatre resulted in several books which basically were manuals for various stages of dramatic education.<sup>14</sup>

Thanks to the publications and visits connected with practical presentation,<sup>15</sup> the English/British drama forms in the 1960s became not only popular in other English speaking countries, but also the input from those countries contributed to the on-going process of changes in drama and its educational position.

---

<sup>12</sup> Courtney left Great Britain after failed attempts to found an academic structure for study of drama at the University of London. In Canada he worked at the University of Victoria, collaborated with several education departments and teachers' training centres. His recent place of work was Ontario Institutes for Studies in Education - Graduate Centre for Drama at the University of Toronto.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. COURTNEY, Play, Drama and Thought.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. R. COURTNEY, Drama for Youth. A Handbook for Young People in Youth Clubs and Schools. London, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons Ltd 1964; IDEM, The School Play. London, Cassell 1966; IDEM, The Drama Studio. Architecture and Equipment for Dramatic Education. London, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons Ltd 1967.

<sup>15</sup> The visits of Brian Way played a large role during which he presented Slade's and his approaches to drama. There were occasions to promote also Slade's books. Cf. 1. 2.

### 1. 3. 2. Growing interest for 'drama in education'

In the climate of on-going changes in education in the 1960s, especially in the training of teachers, the broad interest for drama also increased. The teachers and drama practitioners connected with Slade/Way postulated the necessity of drama in the curriculum as an independent subject. On the other hand the drama intended as a series of practical lessons towards acquisition of certain theatrical skills was still popular. However the panorama of this direction extended from body-mime skills, through speech and movement to improvised games, all these techniques were directed sooner or later towards public performance. Both trends, post-Sladian and play-oriented provoked the foundation of various drama courses, schools and departments.<sup>16</sup>

The Education Survey 2,<sup>17</sup> published in 1967, not only showed the popularity of drama in education, but first of all emphasised the vast amount of problems connected with drama in existing forms. Winifred Hickson judged in 1972 that the survey

"(...) revealed very vividly the confusion existing in the minds of many teachers about the claims made for drama as an integral part of the education of all children."<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Cf. COURTNEY, Play, Thought and Drama, 43-44. Courtney emphasised the existence of numerous drama departments in Britain and their various methodologies. Also Hornbrook indicated that the large number of drama training centres played an important role in the changes in education. Cf. D. HORNBOOK, Education and Dramatic Art. Oxford, Blackwell Education 1989, 12.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE, Education Survey 2: Drama. London, HMSO 1967 (second impression 1968).

<sup>18</sup> W. HICKSON, The Player in Conference, in: HODGSON, BANHAM (eds.), Drama in Education 1, 44.

Drama was seen as something young in education and the name 'drama' served often as a cover for various phenomena which represented 'doubtful value' and 'uncertain aim'.<sup>19</sup>

One of the authors of the survey, John Allen (although admitting certain weakness of the work) remembered that

"We challenged the teaching profession to define what drama is all about, side-stepping the issue ourselves. I have spent an unconscionable amount of time over the last six years criticising other people's attempts at definition and lamenting my own inability even to make a start."<sup>20</sup>

At least Allen himself published Notes on a Definition of Drama where he exposed the difficulties connected with describing the place of drama in education. He emphasised the main problem, that drama is concerned with the emotional domain of the children and that this creates the main problem of expression of feeling, of spontaneous creativity. As a fundamental aspect, he postulated the importance of control, not intended as discipline or limitation, but as an important part of the process of developing emotions. In his opinion

"If one of its (drama - TL) responsibilities is to help young people to come to terms with feeling, it must provide opportunities for them to experience and express emotions under their immediate control, extending the scope as their powers of expression and so of control gradually increase."<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Cf. The Thoughtful Playground, 41.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. ALLEN, Notes on a Definition, 102.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, 106.

In such vision, drama represented a powerful, educational methodology. It involves the imagination, sensitivity, experiences and cannot be limited only to the pure function of description of reality. Allen, convinced of the value of drama, emphasised

"Thus, educationally, the vital importance of artistic creation lies not only in the making of artefacts and in performance but also in the very process of articulating a complete inner activity."<sup>22</sup>

He also warned teachers against the false conviction, that form in drama activity represented something limiting the creative process. Instead form could provide coherence to the released creative impulse of children. Drama activity should have a clear methodology and aim in order to be authentically valid for education.

Allen's ideas were published as a part of an important series exploring the whole problem of drama. The first survey edited by John Hodgson and Martin Banham was published in 1972.<sup>23</sup> It included articles illustrating the history of drama in education, the information about drama in further, university education and description or interviews with some leading practitioners of drama. The last part, Ideas, projects, materials, showed how large the field of drama was. As Allen commented early, under the name 'drama' there were different initiatives at the time. The turn of the 1960s and 1970s was not only a time of changes in drama, but first of all a time of research for clarification, for the legitimisation of what drama really represents for education.

The second annual survey Drama in Education 2,<sup>24</sup> published in 1973, delivered more ideas regarding the philosophy of drama. There were also descriptions

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, 109.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. HODGSON, BANHAM (eds.), Drama in Education 1.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. J. HODGSON, M. BANHAM (eds.), Drama in Education 2. The Annual Survey. London,

of experiences, but again they showed the variety of drama methodologies. A special part was dedicated to the school play, its educational function and current methods. In 1975 the third survey was published<sup>25</sup> in which the emphasis was put on the theatre:

a) theatre in education, intended as the particular relationship between the world of the professional theatre and the world of the school;

b) theatre as education, intended as the specific part of education with still alive discussion about 'drama-subject' or 'drama-method'.

Each of the surveys delivered also information about conferences, seminars dedicated to drama problems. Hodgson-Banham publications noticed the growing interest in drama in education from both sides, school and theatre, although the educational point of view was dominant.

The other, important input to the on-going debate about drama, was the book The Uses of Drama,<sup>26</sup> edited by John Hodgson. He collected contributions of various theatre practitioners, from Aristotle, to Brecht and Moreno. The aim was to explain and legitimise the social and educational functions of theatre from the beginning of the theoretical analysis of the phenomenon of theatre. Hodgson in his introduction argued that drama represented always a very important social and educational force of changes. Drama in education, in both forms, professional theatre for education and drama in the curriculum, needed its own anthropological background. He opted for Brecht's conception of theatre, which represents not only a source of leisure, but also

---

Pitman Publishing 1973.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. J. HODGSON, M. BANHAM (eds.), Drama in Education 3. The Annual Survey. London, Pitman Publishing 1975.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. J. HODGSON (ed.), The Uses of Drama. Sources giving a background to acting as a social and educational force. London, Eyre Methuen Ltd. 1972.

has its social role in the society.<sup>27</sup> For him, the 1960s-1970s characterised by the very intense boom of interests in drama, represented an important time for drama, for its understanding. In such time it is necessary to see and understand the 'common ground' for any kind of dramatic activity. Hodgson claimed the necessity of research and development of theoretical approaches to theatre-drama in education, because

"There are still those who decline to use the word 'drama', because they feel it too associated with work in schools and summer courses, and others who disdain the word 'theatre', because they feel it reeks of artificiality and raised stages."<sup>28</sup>

The persistent research into the nature of drama could allow its further real, unquestionable position in education.

### 1. 3. 3. Heathcote's praxis in the 1970s

The 1970s in the history of educational drama was marked by the activity, both practical and theoretical of Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton. The beginning of their prolific and inspirational collaboration occurred in the early 1960s, when the first attempts to establish an independent, university curriculum of drama in education took place.<sup>29</sup> The personal stories of Heathcote and Bolton were different and they had different backgrounds and influences which lead them to drama. She became a university lecturer in drama after years of theatrical training and activity; he instead

---

<sup>27</sup> Cf. J. HODGSON, Drama as a Social and Educational Force - An Introduction, in: HODGSON (ed.), The Uses of Drama, 15-16.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, 12.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. 1. 2. However Slade tried to found this kind of drama studies in the circles inspired by his idea of drama, the real, practical steps were undertaken first at Durham University and later at Newcastle University.

embraced drama at the university after years of pedagogical studies and school practice as a teacher and educational advisor always interested in active teaching methodologies, especially drama.

Heathcote's 'marriage' with theatre began in 1945, when she became a student at the Bradford Civic Playhouse School. Esmé Church trained the students in theatre skills, but with a distinguished educational orientation.<sup>30</sup> Also the input given by Rudolph Laban, besides its theatrical values, brought educational issues into the life of young actors. The professional theatre career of Heathcote was relatively short, because in 1950 she became a member of the Institute of Education at Newcastle University. Professor Brian Stanley, recognising Heathcote's potential for education, entrusted her the domain of educational drama within the process of teachers' training. It was a courageous decision taken by Stanley, because, as Liz Johnson and Cecily O'Neill wrote

"She (Heathcote - TL) never trained as a teacher or taught as a full-time member of staff in a school, and accounts for what she calls her 'innocence' of vision and expression by the lack of early exposure to intellectual and academic models."<sup>31</sup>

Heathcote's praxis of drama, forged during years of experience and training, could be seen as a web expanded between dialectically opposed features: 'unique' VERSUS 'inspiring for many'; 'original' VERSUS 'eclectic'; 'highly organised' VERSUS 'chaotic' and many others. Undoubtedly, her approach, which was controversial right from the beginning, became the most important and most influential.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Cf. 1. 1; also COGGIN, Drama and Education, 268-269. Bradford and Esmé Church belonged to the large group of theatres for children which cured their educational aspect.

<sup>31</sup> L. JOHNSON, C. O'NEILL, Introduction, in: L. JOHNSON, C. O'NEILL (eds.), Dorothy Heathcote: collected writings on education and drama. London, Hutchinson 1984, 9-10.

The main innovative feature in her drama praxis was the return to knowledge. In this, Heathcote followed the practice of Finlay-Johnson.<sup>33</sup> Drama again became used as the means to explore sciences, literature, history. She recognised the artistic values of drama and its theatrical origins, but theatre was not the goal for her, rather the child's knowledge developing during the teaching/learning process in the drama lesson. The understanding of drama as a structure for education was a rediscovery of the real function of drama. Bolton emphasised that

"Her assumptions about the integrated relationship between art and science are in advance of many of our educational leaders whose understanding does not go beyond little divisions of knowledge competing with each other for space in the curriculum".<sup>34</sup>

The teacher's role in Heathcote's drama became fundamental. He/she achieved the status of organiser, facilitator, a responsible, more mature member of the group.

Heathcote used to describe herself first of all as a teacher and after as a teacher of drama. In her practice she based the work on the previous knowledge already possessed by the child. This knowledge had its own validity. In the process of drama, in the process of continuous discovery, she helped the child to bring his/her

---

<sup>32</sup> Cf. G. BOLTON, Towards a theory of drama in education. London, Longman 1979; IDEM, Drama as Education; IDEM, Changes in thinking; HORN BROOK, Education. Bolton emphasised Heathcote's innovative and influential role not only for drama in England, but for the whole understanding and practice of drama in education. Hornbrook, although critically, also recognised the input given by Heathcote's praxis. The example of both Authors displayed that it is impossible today to write, to speak about drama without mentioning 'Dorothy Heathcote'.

<sup>33</sup> About the similarities between Finlay-Johnson and Heathcote see: BOLTON, Drama as Education, 52; JOHNSON, O'NEILL, Introduction, 9-10.

<sup>34</sup> G. BOLTON, Foreword, in: L. JOHNSON, C. O'NEILL (eds.), Dorothy Heathcote: collected writings on education and drama. London, Hutchinson 1984, 7.

knowledge to the surface of consciousness, to organise it in order to reach a real, practical solution.<sup>35</sup> Heathcote's approach was really child-centered; the child was the main source of information and the protagonist of the drama process. She, Heathcote-teacher, did not abandon the child to his/her own struggle for solution, but she intervened in the learning, and had the child's progress as the aim of intervention.

The originality of Heathcote's drama was due to her intuitive ability to draw on various sources of theatrical and educational knowledge, organising the various factors/components into one, coherent, progressive and teleological process of teaching/learning. Often it seemed similar to the practice of a magpie.<sup>36</sup> She adopted and developed this eclectic methodology for educational reasons to make it compatible with the actual needs of the learning child.

Heathcote in the 1960s used to realise her drama within the lesson, as a part of every-day classroom work. Drama was a tool of work and even if the lesson was called 'drama', the on-going learning/teaching invaded other curriculum disciplines. The drama lesson included elements of literature, of music, of movement, of treasures-properties, of using space/areas. The teacher took various roles. He/she

---

<sup>35</sup> Cf. D. HEATHCOTE, Of These Seeds Becoming, in: B. R. SHUMAN (ed), Educational Drama for Today's Schools. New York & London, The Scarecrow Press, Inc. & Metuchen 1978, 4-5:

"IF I have any teaching wisdom, it is that I have learned to know the struggle IS the learning process; and the skills of teaching lie in making this time slow enough for inquiry; interesting enough for loitering along the way; rigorous enough for being buffeted in the matrix of the ideas; but with sufficient signpost seen for respite, planning, and regathering of energy to fare forward on the way."

<sup>36</sup> During my talks with David Davis I acquired his picturesque description of Heathcote as a very accurate one. When I tried to compare her activity with the children with the other educators' experiences, I had this impression: she was working very carefully, with a clear aim, but aware of the children's potential and ready to invent, to use yet another play, technique, strategy if necessary.

could be a leader of the whole group, a partial leader for the specific purpose, the advocate of the point of view of the average member of the group, the outsider who observes the group and the narrator responsible for the story-line of drama. Heathcote emphasised also the importance of the control which should be executed by the teacher during drama. The aim was not to prevent the activities of children, but to organise them, to include them in the whole learning/teaching process. But the issue 'control' was not only concerned with the pupils. Heathcote insisted on the recognition of personal thresholds by each individual teacher in his/her educational practice. The teacher must control his/her degree of engagement, authority, openness and collaboration with the working children. The drama in the teacher's mind must have a purpose, must include the care for the personal and social development of the child.

Heathcote admitted the possibility of presentation of drama work to an audience. She distinguished between the adult audience and child audience, but in both cases she insisted on the preparation of the audience. Not only the children-actors were to be prepared, but also the audience.<sup>37</sup>

During the 1960s she developed her methodology for training teachers during the lesson with the children working with her, as the class teacher and students or teachers as observers.<sup>38</sup> Although she started soon after her appointment at the

---

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Drama in Education. A Beginner's Guide - Written by Beginners. Conclusion reached by a group of non-specialist teachers while attending the Drama in Education course at the Institute of Education, University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Academic Year 1966-67, under direction of Dorothy Heathcote. Newcastle upon Tyne, University of Newcastle - Institute of Education 1968.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. D. HEATHCOTE, Training needs for the future, in: J. HODGSON, M. BANHAM (eds.), Drama in Education 1: The Annual Survey. London, Pitman Publishing 1972, 81-83; revised edition: IDEM, Training Teachers to use drama as education, in: L. JOHNSON, C. O'NEILL (eds.), Dorothy Heathcote: collected writings on education and drama. London, Hutchinson 1984, 26-40.

Institute of Education, the specific and well-known teachers' training in drama began in 1962, when she initiated a collaboration with Peter Slade. In the course of the next few years the students from Durham and Newcastle often visited the Rea Centre in Birmingham presenting their progress and results of drama studies and school-projects realised under Heathcote's direction.<sup>39</sup> Today, from a historical perspective we could draw parallel lines of development of drama in Brian Way's approach and in Dorothy Heathcote's praxis. Both were drama practitioners coming from the theatrical background; both understood drama activity for educational purposes and both attained from and were connected with Peter Slade. But when Way emphasised the individual growth of the child as the aim and used drama for the training of skills for life, Heathcote emphasised that drama is a 'community work' and employed in the school provides the learning and knowledge for the individual and helps to understand the individual's place within the community/class-group.

The nature of drama in Heathcote's praxis consisted in her basic understanding that

"Drama is no longer considered simply as another branch of art education, but as unique teaching tool, vital for language development and invaluable as a method in the exploration of other subject areas."<sup>40</sup>

Together with the changing face of education in the 1960s, Heathcote's approach also changed drama. Within the new curriculum there appeared needs for the new teaching style which provoked a change in the role of the teacher. Her teaching praxis and drama-tool proposed for teachers seemed to be a concrete answer

---

<sup>39</sup> Cf. SLADE, Diary Notes, 272.

<sup>40</sup> JOHNSON, O'NEILL, Introduction, 42.

to the changes in education. Heathcote observed the importance of communication in education, in gaining knowledge, in learning and drama, growing from theatrical roots, represented for her the best educational, communicative strategy.<sup>41</sup> Some of the elements of Heathcote's philosophy were common with the grand predecessor - Peter Slade. She was convinced about the artistic values of the child's drama and its importance for the individual development of the child. She distanced herself from the Slade/Way trend, because it represented still the old-fashioned method of drama intended as one more subject of the curriculum, with the teacher merely present as an assistant or drama-specialist. The training of skills, the child-centredness with creativity, spontaneity, expressiveness overshadowed the fundamental purpose of education and Heathcote tried to remember and to demonstrate that drama in education is

"(...) pursuing the knowledge."<sup>42</sup>

The role of the teacher in the drama process became a subject of Heathcote's experiments and explorations/research. She wanted not to transfer her personal skills to the students or other teachers, but she was convinced that everybody is able to develop his/her own skills in order to produce an individual methodology. Her aim as a drama practitioner and university lecturer was not to produce other 'Heathcotes', but to show and explain how drama worked and how all teachers could employ drama in their teaching. Heathcote presented herself as a humble, searching and developing teacher, ready to help the others, because

---

<sup>41</sup> Cf. D. HEATHCOTE, Improvisation, in: L. JOHNSON, C. O'NEILL (eds.), Dorothy Heathcote: collected writings on education and drama, 44-48. Previously published in a pamphlet Drama in Education. Published by Bodley Head. National Association for the Teaching of English 1967.

<sup>42</sup> JOHNSON, O'NEILL, Introduction, 42.; also BOLTON, Foreword, 7.

"No one teaches a teacher how to teach. Teachers are made in the classroom during confrontations with their classes, and the product they become is a result of their need to survive and the ways they devise to do this."<sup>43</sup>

The elaborated strategy called 'teacher in role' represented the various possibilities of the teacher's existence within the drama group. It was also entirely connected with the stream of information during the drama process, with communication between teacher - pupils and pupils - pupils. 'Teacher in role' was a facilitator of communication.

Through the 1960s and the 1970s Heathcote developed her praxis and nearly each year brought something new to drama in education. If in the early 1960s she was dedicated to teachers' training in drama, intended as an adequate educational tool, in the late 1960s she also took part in the larger discussion about the theatrical nature of drama. She recognised the importance of improvisation, but this particular theatrical technique she used not for 'building the role', but in order to explore the components of the role, the situation. Improvisation became a way of seeking new solutions.<sup>44</sup> There was possibly a distortion provoked by both sides of the teaching/learning process, the child dramatically playing and the teacher in role. Drama process according to Heathcote was not the representation, the execution of something previously known, designed, but it was similar to the process of play-writing. The children and the teacher together were creating a dramatic situation, a chain of events in order to gain solutions. The dramatic structure was designed by the teacher, but its

---

<sup>43</sup> JOHNSON, O'NEILL, Introduction, 11.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. HEATHCOTE, Improvisation, 44:

"Improvisation in my view means 'discovering by trial, error and testing; using available materials with respect for their nature, and being guided by this appreciation of their potential'. The 'end-product' of improvisation is the EXPERIENCE of it."

elements were produced by all participants through improvisations. Each improvisation was composed from several roles taken by pupils and teacher.

In Heathcote's drama there were no 'warm-up' exercises to improve the improvisation, but quickly there was the division of roles, the start of the story, the building of the tension.<sup>45</sup> The children were not introduced to something which would lead them to performance, but from the beginning they were responsible, authors of the on-going story, drama. Their involvement was not provoked by the trust of the teacher and by the hierarchy of collaboration with him/her, but the involvement was due to the fact that they were asked to help the teacher, to deliver their opinion, solution. The dramatic activity exploded not in the public presentation, but in the conquered new knowledge, new solutions of the problems.

Heathcote expressed her opinion about the place/role of drama within the changing curriculum. She opted for drama as a system able to help, to become involved with other subjects.<sup>46</sup> Drama as a methodology of teaching/learning represented an unquestionable challenge for teachers.<sup>47</sup> It demanded the teacher's conversion from their omnipotent position of the source of knowledge, into the facilitator, enabler for the child who has got the potential for attaining knowledge from various, different sources and often unknown for the teacher.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Cf. observation by Robin Hall, quoted in B. R. SHUMAN, Introduction, in: B. R. SHUMAN (ed.), Educational Drama For Today's Schools, xi-xii:

"There are no preliminaries, no warm-up exercises. There is no watering down... Working with an entire group as a unit, and sometimes taking part herself, she guides the children quickly and surely to the heart of the dramatic problem at hand. The confrontation is real."

<sup>46</sup> Cf. D. HEATHCOTE, Subject or system?, in: JOHNSON, O'NEILL (eds.), Dorothy Heathcote, 61-79.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. IDEM, Drama as challenge, in: JOHNSON, O'NEILL (eds.), Dorothy Heathcote, 80-89.

During the 1970s the activity of Heathcote expanded and embraced also the circles of practitioners from the 'theatre in education' domain.<sup>49</sup> They often took part in Heathcote's seminars and to them she dedicated particular attention. The team of actors represented an important impulse for learning. The carefully devised programme, with the involvement of children and with space for their reflection and intervention often could become a common process of learning and the final product could serve for further class-room work. But Heathcote emphasised the importance of educational purposes within theatre projects. Again what was important was the possibility of obtaining knowledge and experience. Actors became helpers for both children and teachers. Both in the drama project, and in theatre, she underlined the necessity of team work, or careful attention and collaboration between teachers and actors.

Thanks to the earlier established international links between British drama and drama in other countries, also Heathcote was invited by drama practitioners from the United States, Canada, from New Zealand and Australia. Similar as in Slade's history, also Newcastle and Durham became a 'Mecca' for drama practitioners and theoreticians. The flock of 'Heathconians' grew in the 1970s significantly.

In order to spread her drama praxis she adopted also the new tools of communication, film and further video.<sup>50</sup> The BBC produced the documentary Three

---

<sup>48</sup> She emphasised and used as exemplary sources for drama myths, fables, legends, religious traditional literature. She subsequently suggested that the teacher should be open towards those treasures of literature and knowledge.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. IDEM, Signs and portents, in: JOHNSON, O'NEILL (eds.), Dorothy Heathcote, 160-169.

<sup>50</sup> Heathcote has written several articles describing her projects or explaining her point of view, but she never tried to close her richness in a book. Recognising the role of image, of visual-language, she adopted instead visual instruments.

looms waiting as part of the series 'Omnibus'. This first, black and white visual description of Heathcote's teaching methodology of drama, was like her manifesto and coined for a long time the public image of Heathcote. The second film produced in Britain Seeds of a new life (1976) presented her methodology as possible dramatherapy for the mentally handicapped. As a fruit of her visits in the United States two films were produced. The first Building belief showed again her work with children in a structure of one particular drama project. The second film, composed of two parts, Dorothy Heathcote talks to teachers (1974) represented her practice and her philosophy in the larger context of education. It preannounced the long series of video-records produced during the next years and entirely destined for teachers.

Heathcote's visit to the United States in July 1975 and the drama project On These Seeds Becoming realised with the children in Winston-Salem serves as a good example of the complexity of her praxis for both receivers, children and drama practitioners.<sup>51</sup> This project showed also the development which had occurred in her praxis; drama activity was no longer limited to one or two lessons only, but it was the beginning for long, originally devised curriculum projects, which included children's learning of many subjects. The history of preparation of this project and the consequences showed also how the work of Heathcote became inspirational for various researches. In many cases, her drama project provoked investigations in methodology of teaching, in psychology of education, in moral development, in linguistics. Baird Shuman emphasised that

---

<sup>51</sup> The realised project inspired studies about creativity (B. R. Shuman), role-playing and values clarification (Ch. R. Duke), language development in drama (B. J. Wagner), moral development (D. T. Wolfe) and role of drama in development of basic learning skills (J. A. Guffin). Cf. SHUMAN (ed.), Educational Drama.

"Heathcote more than anyone else demonstrated that educational drama, as she defines it, IS A PROCESS IN WHICH PEOPLE AT ANY AGE or LEVEL of development CAN ENGAGE PRODUCTIVELY."<sup>52</sup>

Her educational drama engaged productively many drama practitioners and pedagogues in a quest for a more adequate methodology of teaching/learning and for the theoretical explanations of the subsequent developments and results.

---

<sup>52</sup> SHUMAN, Introduction, xii.

## **1. 4. GAVIN BOLTON'S PRACTICE AND THEORY AND HIS INFLUENCE ON DRAMA IN THE 1970s**

Gavin Bolton occupies a particular place in the history of drama which could be characterised by the term 'a quest':

- \* 'a quest' for the best drama methodology compatible with his own teaching philosophy;
- \* 'a quest' for the historical roots of drama;
- \* 'a quest' for a theoretical explanation of the nature and processes on-going within drama understood as an educational tool;
- \* 'a quest' for the justification of 'drama-in-education' as an art form and as 'theatre'.

### **1. 4. 1. Bolton's activity and theoretical legitimisation of drama**

The radical and courageous review of his own drama activity and drama philosophy guided him towards the legitimisation of drama in both dimensions, historical and theoretical. Because of his own research and re-discovery of 'early pioneers' he deserves to be called 'a historian' of drama. The return to Caldwell Cook

and Harriet Finlay-Johnson served him as a support of his educational understanding and application of drama, but also it inspired the research of others. Under his direction Tim Cox,<sup>1</sup> John Deverall,<sup>2</sup> Cecily O'Neill,<sup>3</sup> Mike Fleming<sup>4</sup> and others<sup>5</sup> conducted their research. Although every one of these investigated a different aspect of drama, together they delivered historical and theoretical materials for Bolton's perspective on drama and created the basis for the dominant approach in the 1970s and 1980s. The School of Education at Durham University became a leading centre of studies of drama and an important institution for training of drama practitioners in the 1970s - the new generation of drama teachers.

The work of Bolton in the 1970s represented a kind of answer to many questions which had arisen around drama. The Author of The Thoughtful Playground insisted that the common ground in the practice of pioneers is more important than the differences, that

"The main points of controversy and uncertainty seem to have arisen from LACK OF CLARITY in UNDERSTANDING the BASIC ELEMENTS."<sup>6</sup>

Bolton's 'quest' for roots in Cook's and Finlay-Johnson's practice validated their fundamental understanding of drama as the best methodology for the teaching/learning process activating both protagonists, the child and the teacher. He criticised subsequent developments in drama (the speech and movement period), but

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. COX, The Development.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. DEVERALL, Public Medium.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. C. O'NEILL, Drama and the Web of Form. (M. A. thesis, University of Durham 1978.)

<sup>4</sup> Cf. FLEMING, A Philosophical.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. BOOTH, An examination; GRIFFITHS, The History.

<sup>6</sup> The Thoughtful Playground, 42.

in his own early teaching he used them too. He also criticised the approach of Slade and Way, although for a long time he was under their influence. His 'quest' brought him closer to Dorothy Heathcote and in her praxis he found the best ally for his own changing approach to drama. As an educator he welcomed and embraced Heathcote's drama because

"The writings and practice of Dorothy Heathcote represented a Herculean attempt to bring dramatic form back to classroom drama, to redefine the relationship between drama and education, and to recast the role of the teacher."<sup>7</sup>

They started in the early 1960s laying foundations for the first diploma course in drama, at Durham University.<sup>8</sup> His previous experiences and the new inspiration taken from Heathcote urged him, already at the School of Education in Durham, towards reflection and research. Bolton's practice and theory was in constant development, in 'quest' for new supports in educational and theatrical theories, for sources of confirmation that 'drama-in-education' has its own rights in education as a dramatic activity.<sup>9</sup>

The book Towards a theory of drama in education,<sup>10</sup> published in 1979, crowned the efforts of two decades. He summarised his practice emphasising his

---

<sup>7</sup> BOLTON, Changes in Thinking, 154.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. SLADE, Diary Notes, 272; 274-275.

<sup>9</sup> The example of such development included Selected Writings, edited by David Davis and Chris Lawrence. The Editors emphasised rather inspirational value of Bolton's works than a kind of recipe:

"Gavin Bolton's own perspective has always been that his writing is based on his own developing experience of drama teaching and should never be regarded as prescriptions hewn on tablets of stone." In DAVIS, LAWRENCE, General Introduction, vii.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Towards.

attempt to avoid the more common views about drama (drama as exercises, as dramatic playing and as theatre). Bolton saw drama as a part of a teaching/learning process, as 'make-believe' play which

"(...) is essentially a mental activity where meaning is created by the symbolic use of actions (...) and objects (...)."11

Davis and Lawrence defined Bolton's understanding of drama as

"(...) a process of cognitive/affective appraisal of the objective world"12

connected inseparably with emotion. Drama serves for understanding and the teacher's role in the drama process is to protect children not from emotion, but into emotion. For Bolton, also painful emotion is not in itself harmful. Lack of emotion represents the real danger in drama, the degradation of the drama process/lesson to the position of one more subject in the school which

"(...) trains children to avoid their feelings."13

Similarly as Heathcote, Bolton was concerned with the necessity for an adequate drama training for teachers. Fundamentally the teacher can not alienate his/her drama activity from the educational process. Drama must be inside the whole lesson structure. Drama can not be a task for itself. The teacher should use drama as the helpful context for learning, for teaching, for knowledge.

Bolton's reflection delivered also an answer to the eternal question about the relationship between drama and theatre. Drama in education represented for him an art form in the service of learning. He emphasised the potential of a dramatic moment

---

<sup>11</sup> BOLTON, Towards, 17.

<sup>12</sup> DAVIS, LAWRENCE, Introduction, 86.

<sup>13</sup> G. BOLTON, Drama and emotion - some uses and abuses, in: D. DAVIS, Ch. LAWRENCE (eds.), Gavin Bolton: Selected Writings. London, Longman 1986, 99.

which could provide the best possibility for teaching/learning.<sup>14</sup> The child can not be limited by the art form, by the awareness of working within a dramatic structure. This awareness should be rather in the teacher's project. The child instead should act in freedom.

The personal reflection upon his own way of drama practice represented the best testimony to reveal how hard and painful his evolution was. At the time of its presentation it was an act of professional humility and courage: he pointed out his own mistakes and ambitions. But the constant 'quest' allowed him to elaborate his own complex theory of drama, to gain the position of the most influential drama practitioner in the 1970s together with Dorothy Heathcote. In the following presentation of Bolton's practice and theory of drama I would emphasise the historical evolution of his approach, the main issues in his reflection in the 1960s and 1970s and his inspirational influence on the research and practice of others.

#### **1. 4. 2. Bolton's historical legacy - the teacher in quest of a methodology**

The conference about drama in education held in Bristol in 1970 became a stage for Gavin Bolton who retrospectively examined his own, thirteen years long career as drama practitioner, first as a teacher, later as drama adviser and finally as a new university lecturer. His purpose was not only to represent his story of drama, but to inspire the conference participants for a kind of individual and group revision of their drama practices.<sup>15</sup> Bolton subdivided his story into three phases. The first one

---

<sup>14</sup> Cf. DAVIS, LAWRENCE, Introduction, 29.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. comment written by DAVIS, LAWRENCE, Introduction, 3; they emphasised also the comic result of Bolton's effort:

"It was Gavin Bolton's intention in the introductory session to get

was characterised by the strong position of the teacher who in fact was a director-producer preparing the play with the best children from the class. The second phase followed the discovery of various necessities for theatrical skills (speech, movement, mime techniques). Again the role of the teacher was fundamental, because he was the wise one, the leader and trainer.<sup>16</sup> The third phase was connected with the influence of the practice and theory of Slade and Way. Bolton discovered 'Child Drama' and - as he imagined - became the defender of the child's rights to freedom of expression, creativity, individual development. He admitted the quick discovery that this kind of drama, featured by the scarce presence of the teacher, was useless for his philosophy of education:

"(...) my faith in child-centred drama failed me as I bit my finger-nails through endless sessions of robbing banks, and cowboys and Indians without any apparent change taking place."<sup>17</sup>

During the last period of his 'third phase' he used various methods of control and became a devoted practitioner of movement-drama.<sup>18</sup> It was also the time of the serious start of his own 'quest' for the methodology in accordance with his mature philosophy of education, and a time of humble recognition of many mistakes in the

---

members of this 200-strong audience to laugh together - and they did!"

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Bolton's description of himself:

"I had seen myself as an interpreter of texts, as a manipulator of children towards artistic standards, as a trainer in speech and mime."

In BOLTON, Drama and Theatre in Education, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. D. SELF, A practical guide to drama in the secondary school. London, Ward Lock Educational 1975. At this time Bolton got in touch with Dorothy Heathcote who in her 1960s methodology invited teachers to use instruments of control. At the University of Durham at this time was active also David Self, who in his practice represented a kind of bridge between post-Sladian/Way drama and Heathcote methodology. He also emphasised movement drama as really the most creative.

past. He took part in a diploma course under the guidance of Dorothy Heathcote, visited with her Peter Slade and also took part of the Summer Course at Keele University organised by Slade.<sup>19</sup>

In 1964/1965 Bolton was appointed as drama lecturer at the School of Education at Durham University and since this moment he became an initiator and inspiration for the large movement of renovation of drama in education. He organised a conference dedicated to the problems of training drama teachers. In his paper delivered to the audience composed of tutors from several education faculties and institutions, Bolton outlined his philosophy of drama. Drama was for him a symbolic play occurring within the group of pupils. The elements of symbolisation could lead drama towards a ritual around the social, universal issues. The basis for drama is a 'make-believe play', but drama itself operates at a concrete level, connected with knowledge. Bolton based his explanation mainly on the ideas of Jean Piaget and Peter Slade, but distancing himself from the only child-centred Sladian view.<sup>20</sup>

His 'quest' in the late 1960s and 1970s underwent other changes, or as I prefer to call them - adaptation of the supportive ideas expressed by others and crystallisation of his own practice and theory of drama. Davis and Lawrence identified the following, four developments:

- \*\* moving away from 'living-through' drama;
- \* replacing make-believe play with game;
- \* being less precise about learning outcomes;

---

<sup>19</sup> Cf. SLADE, Diary Notes, 278.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. G. BOLTON, The nature of children's drama, in: D. DAVIS, Ch. LAWRENCE (eds.), Gavin Bolton: Selected Writings. London, Longman 1986, 29-39.

\* being clearer that the participant must not be focally aware of the learning taking place and adopting more clearly a phenomenological position in relation to claims for knowledge and learning in drama."<sup>21</sup>

Bolton's story of being a drama practitioner, through the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s lead him towards his view of drama in education: drama for understanding. And this represents the next of his 'quests'.

### 1. 4. 3. Discussing and defining the nature of drama

The understanding of the nature of drama by Bolton was in constant evolution. In the late 1960s Bolton distanced himself from post-Sladian (and Way's) understanding of drama. For him it was not a training in life-skills, or realised story-line, nor progressive individual activity towards self-expression of each child. Bolton emphasised the importance of a symbolic experience which children (and not only the child) were living and - as a result - the content or subject of drama itself which became valuable and important as a way/source of knowledge.<sup>22</sup> The 'creative drama'<sup>23</sup> in his approach, was built on make-believe play. It was a common, social activity of the whole class/group of children. They were primarily active in their learning and the teacher's role was not predominant (i.e. drama producer, skills-trainer etc.). Drama for him signified a sequence of mental activities rather than a series of

---

<sup>21</sup> DAVIS, LAWRENCE, General Introduction, ix.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Changes in Thinking, 154.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. G. BOLTON, Creative drama and learning, in: D. DAVIS, Ch. LAWRENCE (eds.), Gavin Bolton: Selected Writings. London, Longman 1986, 201-206. At this stage Bolton used as support for his thinking the theory of Jean Piaget. The adjective 'creative' was used by him also in American context, during his visit in USA (1976).

exercises. He was opposed to any exercise which could be not directly connected to the on-going drama or play. Bolton emphasised also the importance of the drama theme/issue/subject; it should allow the concentration ('focus' in his vocabulary) on universal elements in the drama.<sup>24</sup>

Later on, in the 1970s, Bolton emphasised more the importance of tension between experiencing and reflection which happened during drama. As Davis and Lawrence observed

"In his previous work he was more concerned with total submission to the dramatic experience which involved at its highest level experiencing a moment of awe in a situation of heightened significance brought about by the child's involvement in a symbolisation process in the art form."<sup>25</sup>

In this emphasis on reflection in drama were traces of Heathcote's influence and sign of further change for Bolton, this time in choosing the theory of Lev Semenovich Vygotsky. Differently from Piaget, the Russian psychologist admitted the active/productive/creative participation of the child at any stage. Bolton, together with Heathcote, emphasised that the structure of drama-lessons must allow the conscious reflection at any stage of the drama process and that the children in this way, could become more and more active in their process of learning:

"Both Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton have been keen to ensure that the children do not hang up their brains with their hats on the way into the drama lesson."<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Cf. DAVIS, LAWRENCE, Introduction, 26.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, vii.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, viii.

Drama in the 1970s for Bolton was no longer built solely on make-believe, but also on game; demonstrating was as important as direct experiencing.

The revival of 'drama for knowledge' initiated by Heathcote and embraced by Bolton, met strong opposition among practitioners in the 1960s (and after too).<sup>27</sup> It was connected with the understanding of the nature of knowledge gained during the drama process. It was forged by individuals, but during the interpersonal negotiation. Knowledge in drama has this double feature: the individual input which in turn created a common understanding of drama content. For Bolton drama was a mental state, operating and being an abstraction; only the concreteness of techniques made drama real for their participants.<sup>28</sup> The child (and the children) were in constant active 'thinking' and not only 'doing'; they operated within a symbolic, constructed reality characterised by the dramatic tension of the created situation. The 'dramatic situation' and on-going interpersonal relationships created during the negotiation process, were the crucible of knowledge. Bolton emphasised

"This means going to the dramatic situation, to the created play, for drama is concerned, as I see it, with the refining of those concepts to do with interpersonal relationships. There is no escaping from this. It may be that there are times when, for valid educational reasons, we put the emphasis on speech and movement and so on, but I feel we must aim at using the heart of drama, which is the dramatic situation."<sup>29</sup>

The nature of drama - the drama for understanding, for knowledge - demanded and organised useful techniques taken from the theatrical treasure. For

---

<sup>27</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Changes in Thinking, 153.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, 155.

<sup>29</sup> IDEM, Drama and Theatre in Education, 8.

Bolton they were not for the perfection of experiencing/presenting skills, but they should serve for better demonstration of the dramatic situation, they should become helpful for further interpretation and reflection.

#### 1. 4. 4. Aims and objectives in drama

If the understanding of the nature of drama was in evolution, aims and objectives in drama represented something well-established in Bolton's practice and theory. It was connected with the fundamental notion, that emphasis in drama must be on

"(...) the thing that is created."<sup>30</sup>

That notion exposed fundamental questions about drama-nature, drama-aims, drama-function for all practitioners/teachers. Bolton was aware that

"Common to all pioneers throughout the century has been the ASSUMPTION that when pupils are involved in drama SOME KIND OF LEARNING OCCURS",<sup>31</sup>

but he stressed that

"Our aims are helping children to understand, so that (if I may use some phrases from the Farmington Trust Research in another context), they are helped to face facts and to interpret them without prejudice; so that they develop a range and degree of identification with other people; so that they develop a set of principles, a set of consistent principles, by which they are going to live."<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, 8.

<sup>31</sup> IDEM, Changes in Thinking, 155.

<sup>32</sup> IDEM, Drama and Theatre in Education, 8.

Bolton placed his drama practice clearly within the area of values, of moral issues in both aspects:

a) the majority of drama issues, contests and problems chosen to be explored by drama;

b) the teaching/learning going-on during drama concerned with presentation, experience, acquisition and reflection upon values, principles (in both dimensions, individual and social).<sup>33</sup>

The drama lesson of the Bolton-teacher (and he will be aware of his professional targets) possessed aims/objectives which could be grouped in three areas:

a) the learning/knowledge area (decision-making, learning-organisation, problem-solving, negotiation);

b) the ethics area (drama as means of exploring 'living');

c) the aesthetics area (enjoyment of children, their engagement, satisfaction).<sup>34</sup>

Further on, in the late 1970s, Bolton realised that the learning intention in drama was 'subsidiary' to the main intention of children engaged in drama. Fundamental was rather the exploration of the dramatic situation and the presentation of possible solution/interpretations.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Cf. emphasis by Davis & Lawrence:

"Drama 'is seen as a vehicle for cognitive development giving significance to the learning of those kinds of concepts which... are of central importance to living'." In DAVIS, LAWRENCE, Introduction, 193.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. G. BOLTON, In search of aims and objectives, in: D. DAVIS, Ch. LAWRENCE (eds.), Gavin Bolton: Selected Writings. London, Longman 1986, 197; he subdivided and called them: 'priority top', 'second broad aim' and 'immediate objective'.

<sup>35</sup> More clearly this concept became present in Bolton's theory in the 1980s, connected with the presence of drama in curriculum. He based on research by M. Fleming about 'subsidiary awareness' or 'tacit learning'. Cf. BOLTON, Changes in Thinking, 155 and FLEMING, A philosophical.

As I observed earlier, Bolton's fundamental understanding of 'drama in education' directed it towards knowledge obtained in teaching/learning process in which the child (and the children) ARE active. The learning through drama differs from others for its nature:

"Learning in drama IS ESSENTIALLY a REFRAMING"<sup>36</sup>

and it provokes a detachment from the structure of knowledge already possessed and it allows a realignment of concepts but in relation to the dramatic situation. Drama usually does not add new knowledge, neither does it open a participant for the receiving knowledge. Drama instead helps to organise 'common' or 'natural understanding', it facilitates the engagement of existing knowledge into creative/productive interrelationships with other participants and with the life-situations.

Bolton later recognised that in drama there existed also a kind of phenomenological knowledge; not for reasons, not of quantities/qualities, but just the knowledge of phenomena.<sup>37</sup> In this way the child gained a kind of personal knowledge, which represented a result of fusion between really personal knowledge and the knowledge obtained from other participants of drama. It happened during the process of negotiation. Bolton still was aware of the importance of personal knowledge, but his later view evolved towards the idea, that in drama the personal investment of the individual and the group efforts produced a personal meaning, negotiated, acquired, related to the views of others.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> BOLTON, Changes in Thinking, 156.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. DAVIS, LAWRENCE, Introduction, 192-193; they observed that Bolton preferred for drama the 'knowing this' type of knowledge, in opposition to the prevalent types 'knowing that' and 'knowing how' influenced by positivism.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. DAVIS, LAWRENCE, Introduction, 194. Davis and Lawrence emphasised this change in

#### 1. 4. 5. Problem of emotion in drama

In the 1960s, during the re-birth process of drama in education, the problem of emotion in drama was vivid and by many regarded as the important one.<sup>39</sup> Bolton took a serious position in this discussion and - as it happened in relation to drama as a whole - his views became influential for others. In his predecessor's approach to drama - Slade - emotion was connected with the notion of 'projection' and the 'projection' signified

"(...) the degree to which the medium of the product in an art form is different from the actions involved in the process affecting intensity of emotion likely to be made available (...)."<sup>40</sup>

Instead in drama the situation was different because it itself represented such complex form in which various degrees of projection were possible. In connection with the main purpose of drama - understanding and knowledge - the emotion should be seen not as something which disturbs, but rather something helpful, supportive for the whole process. Bolton added that not only 'dual affect'<sup>41</sup> and intensity but also quality of emotion was important in gaining understanding/knowledge. The understanding of emotion's role also evolved; if in the 1960s Bolton opted for 'living-through'

---

Bolton's position as an important one: from the importance of personal knowledge only into a phenomenological position in relation to a theory of knowledge.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. questions earlier exposed by John Allen about the role and place of emotion in ALLEN, Notes on a Definition.

<sup>40</sup> DAVIS, LAWRENCE, Introduction, 86.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. ibidem, 87. Bolton adopted Vygotsky's category and 'dual affect'

"(...) is the tension which exists between the concrete world and the 'as if' world, sometimes leading to contradictory emotions (...)."

experiences with the high degree of emotional engagement, successively in the 1970s he spoke about the necessity of 'protection into emotion' which became one of the main aims of the teacher in the drama process. Directly he discussed the emotion problem during his visits in America<sup>42</sup> and in Australia.<sup>43</sup>

#### 1.4.6. Bolton's use of 'dialectics'

Through all the writings and theorisations of Bolton weaved the thread of one category characteristically used and understood by him: 'dialectics'. Rarely, and especially in the 1970s, was he taking one, steady, unilateral position in various discussions about the nature of drama, form of knowledge, role of teacher, of emotion or empowerment of the child. He opted rather for - how he called it - a dialectic 'position', 'explanation' or simply as he wrote a dialectic 'tension'. The earlier understanding/meaning of 'dialectics' was explained by Davis and Lawrence. They summarised that

"He often talks about a dialectic being set up between one thing and another."<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Drama and emotion, 89-99. It happened in 1975 and Bolton tried to answer Heathcote's critics. Bolton emphasised the role of drama in learning/knowing the universal and the natural for drama emotional environment/context.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. G. BOLTON, Emotion in the dramatic process - is it an adjective or a verb?, in: D. DAVIS, Ch. LAWRENCE (eds.), Gavin Bolton: Selected Writings. London, Longman 1986, 100-108. Bolton took part of a conference in Adelaide, in 1978, presenting a paper in which he expressed a view that exists a kind of relationship between emotion-verb and emotion-adjective in drama; emotion in a complex form as drama, is a specific emotion 'in motu' - which can not be strictly defined.

<sup>44</sup> DAVIS, LAWRENCE, Introduction, 24.

Almost classic is his example of the child - participant of drama - being both in and yet not in the symbolic situation which drama creates, when the child is still the controller of his/her actual world and at the same time the child lives the fictitious world in which the drama controls him/her. Bolton emphasised

"The relationship is a dialectical one of controlling and being controlled. The experience IS the dialectic."<sup>45</sup>

Later on his understanding and explanation of 'dialectics' changed and he admitted that his use might not be correct.<sup>46</sup> This further understanding in which the seeds of ONE could be present in OTHER was closer to the basic notions of 'Zen' philosophy, than that of classical, Hegelian definition of dialectics. In reality Bolton never - as far as I am aware - used 'dialectics' for an explanation of synthesis as the result of tension between thesis and antithesis. Neither did he use - as Davis and Lawrence observed - 'dialectics' for the explanation of contradictions (as it is in Marx-Engels dialectics).

Davis and Lawrence stated

"Gavin Bolton does not use dialectics in this way but rather uses it where he is able to identify two opposites occurring at the same time."<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> G. BOLTON, The activity of dramatic playing, in: D. DAVIS, Ch. LAWRENCE (eds.), Gavin Bolton: Selected Writings. London, Longman 1986, 57.

<sup>46</sup> IDEM, Unpublished review, 1983; quoted after DAVIS, LAWRENCE, Introduction, 24:

"I know what it means to me - it means (and it may be that I'm not using it correctly) there is a relationship between opposites that allows for the seed of one to be within the other so that if you take two opposites like hot and cold and you wanted to demonstrate that there was a dialectic between them you would have to be able to demonstrate that within the hot is emerging the beginning of cold, that the hot anticipates the cold and the cold anticipates the hot. There is this continual mutual relationship."

<sup>47</sup> DAVIS, LAWRENCE, Introduction, 25.

#### 1. 4. 7. New generation of drama practitioners

Just like Slade and Way in the past, Heathcote and Bolton in the 1970s gained the attention of many young teachers and successively sealed their formation as drama teachers and practitioners. Very significant and prolific for drama's development was the contact of Bolton with the young teachers at Highfield Comprehensive School in Gateshead, not far from Heathcote's home. In the 1970s working there were: David Davis,<sup>48</sup> John O'Toole,<sup>49</sup> Geoff Gillham,<sup>50</sup> Mike Fleming.<sup>51</sup> Although their further drama-paths have taken personal directions, all of them were under the significant influence of Heathcote-Bolton ideas. Together with the other teachers who attended drama courses at Durham University and Newcastle University, they created the beginning of the large movement of Heathcote and Bolton followers.

Contemporary many other drama practitioners attained some inspirations from Heathcote-Bolton achievements. The common feature of the majority of them was the social implication present in drama, instead of aesthetic emphasis. Bolton underlined this characteristic which opposed the traditional opinion about drama represented by Chris Parry and his 'plumb in depths' idea in drama. Bolton wrote:

---

<sup>48</sup> Today David Davis is Senior Lecturer in Drama and director of the International Centre of Drama Studies at the University of Central England in Birmingham and collaborates closely with Heathcote and Bolton.

<sup>49</sup> He emigrated to Australia and now he is Senior Lecturer in Drama at Griffith University.

<sup>50</sup> Gillham is well-known through his workshops, writings and directions of 'Theatre in Education' programmes. He is active member of the Standing Conference of Young People's Theatre (director of 'SCYPT Journal', 'brain' and guide of many SCYPT Annual Conferences).

<sup>51</sup> After his experience in secondary schools and doctorate research in philosophical aspects of drama, Fleming became the successor of Bolton at the School of Education at Durham University. Today he is Lecturer in English and Drama and responsible for PGCE courses.

"Parry is a teacher of English seeking to give spiritual status to his subject, but most of his contemporary writers on drama in education, for instance, John Fines and Ray Verrier, Chris Day, Lynn McGregor (1976), Cecily O'Neill et al. (1976), Peter Chilver (1978) and much of my own writing (1979) were emphasising the social problem-solving characteristics of the subject. They have been part of a trend that has chosen to ignore 'plumbing the depths' in an aesthetic or spiritual sense."<sup>52</sup>

The change of function of drama, from the aesthetic into social-methodological can be seen in works of authors nominated by Bolton. Chilver emphasised the role of improvisation in drama<sup>53</sup> and although he mainly still opted for the structured school play, in choosing the material, the content for drama he shared Heathcote-Bolton interest for socially significant events.<sup>54</sup> Brian Peachment posed questions about the value of drama in learning situations. In his approach, which included Courtney's and Heathcote's influence, he divided educational drama in two categories:

a) drama which was involving research, i.e. the drama process included the use of external sources of learning and knowledge;

b) drama which was using inner sources, i.e. the created dramatic situation itself becomes the main source of learning.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> BOLTON, Drama as Education, 16.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. P. CHILVER, Improvised Drama. London, B.T. Batsford Ltd 1967; IDEM, Teaching Improvised Drama. London, B. T. Batsford 1978.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. P. CHILVER, E. JONES, Designing a School Play. London, B. T. Batsford Ltd 1968; P. CHILVER, Stories of Improvisation in Primary and Secondary Schools. London, B. T. Batsford Ltd 1969.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. B. PEACHMENT, Educational Drama. A Practical Guide for Students and Teachers. Plymouth, Macdonalds and Evans 1976.

An interesting example of on-going changes in drama was represented by the approach of David Self, lecturer in drama at Durham University and predecessor of Bolton.<sup>56</sup> His description of the drama teacher was based on Heathcote's innovative solutions and techniques; instead his understanding of function and place of drama supported the idea of drama-subject. Self emphasised that

"Drama is a tool of other subjects, (...). But it must also exist as a subject on the timetable, whether it comes under the heading of English or not. (...) So while a good drama lesson does not exist in isolation in the drama studio, it may be necessary for it to appear as an isolated period on the timetable."<sup>57</sup>

The 1970s, although primarily significant for the growing importance of the direction shaped by Heathcote-Bolton in drama, were still a stage for other practitioners. Two experiences especially deserve emphasis. One was represented by Veronica Sherbourne.<sup>58</sup> She used movement as the main preparation for drama. Movement for her was a means for exploration of various, different human relationships in order to achieve in drama more sensitivity and creativity. For years Sherbourne influenced several teachers in dance drama and those working with disabled people.

The second experience was conducted by Sue Jennings exploring possibilities of drama as therapeutic methodology.<sup>59</sup> She combined the tradition of psychodrama with the latest achievements of educational drama.

---

<sup>56</sup> Cf. SELF, A Practical Guide.

<sup>57</sup> Ibidem, 18.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. V. SHERBOURNE, Movement as a Preparation for Drama, in: N. DODD, W. HICKSON (eds.), Drama and Theatre in Education. London, Heinemann 1971, 63-72.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. S. JENNINGS, Remedial Drama. A Handbook for Teachers and Therapists. London,

Reports from the 1960s emphasised features of the new school (i.e. the central function of the creative arts).<sup>60</sup> Drama embraced larger dominions than those connected with English or traditional arts in school (i.e. dance first of all and 'cultural' activity of the school for various occasions). This trend was in accordance with the postulate of the Newsom Report (1963)

"Though drama comes, by school tradition, into the English field, it is a creative art embracing much more than English. Perhaps its central element is, or should be, improvisation... (...) 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."<sup>61</sup>

This enlargement of drama was provoked by two fundamental features:

- a) the emphasis on content of drama itself,
- b) the beginning of cross-curricular use of drama as methodology of teaching of various traditional subjects.

Education Survey 2<sup>62</sup> not only displayed a variety of drama approaches, but because of its successive confusion about the contemporary place of drama in education, it enriched the already existing discussion. Winifred Hickson and others prepared a special conference<sup>63</sup> emphasising their attempt:

---

Pitman Publishing 1973.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. J. HODGSON, M. BANHAM Editorial, in: HODGSON, BANHAM (eds.), Drama in Education 1, vi. It was especially emphasised in Newsom Report (1963).

<sup>61</sup> CENTRAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION (ENGLAND), Half of our Future. Chairman J. Newsom, London, HMSO 1963, 157; quoted after REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 19.

<sup>62</sup> DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE, Education Survey 2: Drama. London, HMSO 1967. The main author of the survey was John Allen.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. N. DODD, W. HICKSON (eds.), Drama and Theatre in Education. London, Heinemann

"What needs to be done is not to define the frontiers of a subject where no frontiers exist, but to establish clearly the contribution of dramatic activity to the growth and education of children."<sup>64</sup>

Further Government documents in the 1970s emphasised the growth of drama in the school and the positive influence of 'theatre in education'.<sup>65</sup>

Other common characteristics of the new directions in drama were connected with the critics of mythical 'child-centredness' in education and several demands for renovated forms of teacher's training.

David Clegg occupied an interesting position in drama's development in the 1970s, as one of the few critics and theoreticians asking about the implications which drama brought in the past and could generate in its new forms.<sup>66</sup> He exposed the weak sides of drama dominated by the Slade-Way direction. Clegg criticised the mythology which surrounded drama and the unquestionable authority of the main practitioners. Drama characterised by subjectivist ideology, non-intervention role of teacher and educational idealism, needed - in Clegg's opinion - some fundamental changes. He demanded the improvement of teacher training, the communicability of drama language and the real artistic, social and political commitment in drama realisation.<sup>67</sup>

---

1971. It was the 'Clifton Conference on <<Drama and Theatre in Education>>', Clifton, 31 March - 3 April 1969. There were 330 participants and conference was organised by Bristol Old Vic Theatre Company, Bristol Education Authority and Clifton College.

<sup>64</sup> W. HICKSON, The Players in Conference, in: HODGSON, BANHAM (eds.), Drama in Education 1, 44.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE, Actors in Schools. Education Survey 22. London, HMSO 1976; SCOTTISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, Drama in Scottish Schools. A Discussion Document. Report of the Working Party on Drama appointed by the Secretary of State for Scotland on the recommendation of the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum. Edinburgh, HMSO 1977.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. D. CLEGG, The Dilemma of Drama in Education, in "Theatre Quarterly" 9 (1973).

The problems with drama in the 1970s were summarised in 'The School Council Drama Teaching Project (10-16)' realised in 1974-1977<sup>68</sup> at Goldsmiths' College, University of London and by Lynn McGregor, Maggie Tate and Ken Robinson. The project included a series of various activities (drama lessons, teachers' meetings and discussions, evaluating sessions) and was realised across England, in six chosen local education authorities. As the Authors emphasised in the 'Preface' the project

"(...) was set up to consider the aims and objectives of drama teaching; to find possible ways of assessing outcomes; and to suggest ways in which drama could be organised in the curriculum."<sup>69</sup>

There were included various aspects of education (sociological, linguistic, philosophical and practical drama teaching). The most important achievement of this vast project - and it seems to be still valid - was the practical attempt to answer fundamental problems like:

- a) nature of drama;
- b) role and place of the teacher in drama;
- c) methods and strategies;
- d) assessment and evaluation;
- e) organisation and place of drama in curriculum.

---

<sup>67</sup> Cf. opinion exposed by Tony Graham in The Arts and Educational Drama. Debate, in "London Drama" 4 (1987, Spring), 15.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. L. MCGREGOR, M. TATE, K. ROBINSON, Learning Through Drama. Report of the Schools Council Drama Teaching Project (10-16). Goldsmith's College, University of London. London, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd 1987 (first edn. 1977).

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem, 1.

In Bolton's opinion, the three-years long research and subsequently published book, signalled a fundamental change in drama: it became a medium for learning. The new perspective in drama, understood as methodology of teaching/learning process connected with other subjects, but which has its own dominion, codes and content, was due to the new generation of drama practitioners. Drama became a most valuable means of the continuous process of negotiation of meaning. Bolton, as the evaluator of the project together with Brian Davies, expressed also his critique about

"(...) some conceptual inadequacies in the framework (...)."<sup>70</sup>

He also criticised the lack of references to the praxis of Dorothy Heathcote regarded by him as

"(...) the world's greatest thinker and practitioner of the seventies in drama in education."<sup>71</sup>

and some new forms of drama she had developed recently. Heathcote took part in the project as a speaker for Teacher Training Conference.

Despite his critical view, Bolton recognised the importance of the work conducted by McGregor-Tate-Robinson and - beyond his critiques - he emphasised that

"There is no doubt that it (the book - TL) will give a sense of purpose to a teaching population that has, for a long time, badly needed this kind of direction. The book will be well received."<sup>72</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

---

<sup>70</sup> G. BOLTON, An evaluation of the Schools Council Drama Teaching Project (10-16), in: DAVIS, LAWRENCE (eds.), Gavin Bolton: Selected Writings, 210. He made his polemics with the Authors in three parts: 'Drama orientations', 'Thinking and feeling' and 'Symbolisation'.

<sup>71</sup> BOLTON, An evaluation, 217.

<sup>72</sup> Ibidem.

As Bolton himself observed in his famous Survey in 1971, his practice of drama changed significantly during thirteen years of his career as teacher and drama-adviser. There were also changes in his theoretical explanation of drama elaborated and delivered by Bolton, university lecturer and educator of other drama teachers and practitioners. In the 1960s through his participation at various conferences, drama courses, seminars, through his regular university teaching and through various publications he became an influential and promising drama 'guru' among others. During the vibrant years for drama - as the 1970s were - he forged his well-known, established position within the world of drama in education. What should be recognised as positive throughout these decades were:

- \* his admission of mistakes;
- \* his 'quests' for something better in various dominions of drama;
- \* his tenacious search and studies for uncovering and establishing the best support for drama from other, educational disciplines.

What seems to be key-aspects in his drama-career were:

- \* the lack of 'leitmotiv' in his drama practice (apart of his 'quest' for a better teaching methodology);
- \* he did not originate his own, personal drama praxis, but in his early career searched for existing, forged paths and in consequence embraced them;
- \* among the areas of drama aims the aesthetics was the weakest one; in his methodology he used drama and theatre techniques for other purposes, but there was no place for the theatre as nearly the oldest and most complex Art form with all its consequences.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Cf. G. BOLTON, Opinion. Education and Dramatic Art. Personal Review by Gavin Bolton,

There were a number of factors which ensured a solid foundation for the popularity and further development of drama in education forged by Heathcote, Bolton and their followers: his own vigorous lecturing and teaching activity in England and abroad and satisfactory practical results. In the world of education instead appeared a numerous flock of teachers looking at drama as at effective teaching methodology and in the educational system the on-going changes challenged the traditional teaching methodology. For its protagonists and influential practitioners, drama seemed to be the perfect answer to all those demands and challenges.

---

in "Drama Broadsheet" Spring (1990) Vol. 7.1 2-5; Bolton gave a personal answer to Hornbrook's critics published in his Education and Dramatic Art, and again Bolton explained his basic philosophy, that drama in education represented for him the methodology of teaching/learning process.

There were a number of factors which ensured a solid foundation for the popularity and further development of drama in education forged by Heathcote, Bolton and their followers: his own vigorous lecturing and teaching activity in England and abroad and satisfactory practical results. In the world of education instead appeared a numerous flock of teachers looking at drama as at effective teaching methodology and in the educational system the on-going changes challenged the traditional teaching methodology. For its protagonists and influential practitioners, drama seemed to be the perfect answer to all those demands and challenges.

---

in "Drama Broadsheet" Spring (1990) Vol. 7.1 2-5; Bolton gave a personal answer to Hornbrook's critics published in his Education and Dramatic Art, and again Bolton explained his basic philosophy, that drama in education represented for him the methodology of teaching/learning process.

## 1. 5. THEATRE'S RE-DISCOVERY OF ITS EDUCATIONAL MISSION

The phenomenon of 'Theatre in Education' (TIE)<sup>1</sup> occupies a very significant place in British theatrical and educational contexts. It gained also a largely shared attention in the literature about theatre and drama in education. The first and still today very relevant account of TIE's origins and features, was written by John O'Toole and published in 1976.<sup>2</sup> The subtitle of the book, New Objectives for Theatre - New Techniques in Education, indicated the originality of this art/education approach and also it directed further interpretation of the fruits of the marriage between professional theatre and school.

A series of testimonies about the origins of TIE and accounts about the experiences of some of the early practitioners, was included in the book edited by Tony Jackson in 1980.<sup>3</sup> He tried to cover the fifteen years of TIE's story in order

"a) to help pinpoint and clarify the nature of that achievement and the essentials of its working method;

---

<sup>1</sup> I will use the abbreviation 'TIE', which is commonly used in the literature.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. O'TOOLE, Theatre in Education.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. JACKSON (ed.), Learning Through Theatre.

## 1. 5. THEATRE'S RE-DISCOVERY OF ITS EDUCATIONAL MISSION

The phenomenon of 'Theatre in Education' (TIE)<sup>1</sup> occupies a very significant place in British theatrical and educational contexts. It gained also a largely shared attention in the literature about theatre and drama in education. The first and still today very relevant account of TIE's origins and features, was written by John O'Toole and published in 1976.<sup>2</sup> The subtitle of the book, New Objectives for Theatre - New Techniques in Education, indicated the originality of this art/education approach and also it directed further interpretation of the fruits of the marriage between professional theatre and school.

A series of testimonies about the origins of TIE and accounts about the experiences of some of the early practitioners, was included in the book edited by Tony Jackson in 1980.<sup>3</sup> He tried to cover the fifteen years of TIE's story in order

"a) to help pinpoint and clarify the nature of that achievement and the essentials of its working method;

---

<sup>1</sup> I will use the abbreviation 'TIE', which is commonly used in the literature.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. O'TOOLE, Theatre in Education.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. JACKSON (ed.), Learning Through Theatre.

- b) to make TIE and its potential more widely known and understood in educational and theatrical circles and beyond; and
- c) to help distinguish good TIE from shoddy - and indeed from the substantial amount of 'theatre for young people' that purports to be TIE but is not."<sup>4</sup>

Learning Through Theatre brought also substantial analyses of TIE's contribution into drama in education, written by Gavin Bolton,<sup>5</sup> Ken Robinson<sup>6</sup> and Christine Redington.<sup>7</sup>

Christine Redington's book Can Theatre Teach? brought not only an exhaustive account of the beginning and development of TIE in the 1970s, but also she analysed and evaluated the impact of TIE's programme on the curriculum and possible involvement of children and teachers.

In the following pages I will briefly describe the main inspirations and origins, the historical beginning in Coventry and the most important features of TIE. The educational purpose, present since the beginning of TIE's idea and subsequently developed in its original characteristic, inserted TIE into the world of drama in education. The union was prolific for both parts, although both have conserved their own identities.

### **1. 5. 1. Inspirations and origins of 'Theatre in Education'**

---

<sup>4</sup> T. JACKSON, Introduction, in: JACKSON (ed.), Learning Through Theatre, xv.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. G. BOLTON, Drama in education and TIE: a comparison, in: JACKSON (ed.), Learning Through Theatre, 69-77.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. K. ROBINSON, Evaluating TIE, in: JACKSON (ed.), Learning Through Theatre, 85-101.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Ch. REDINGTON, The effect of a TIE programme in schools, in: JACKSON (ed.), Learning Through Theatre, 102-115.

Although all Authors agreed that TIE was luckily born as a beloved child of both parents, theatre and education, and in very favourable circumstances in theatre and in school, each of the Authors emphasised a different factor as the most influential or important. O'Toole derived TIE from the influence of the children's theatre companies. He indicated the pioneering practice of Berta Waddell, of Young Vic under direction of Esmé Church and of the Unicorn Theatre.<sup>8</sup>

Redington, in her analysis of possible influences, also indicated the children's theatre as the background of TIE, especially the outstanding and pioneering activity of Slade ('Pear Tree Players') and Way ('Old Vic Company' and 'West of England Children's Theatre Company').<sup>9</sup> Unlike the traditional children's theatre, Slade and Way started to use the theatre techniques as stimulation for children's drama and class work inspired by the professionals. They moved also into the schools, becoming more familiar for audiences made up of children and they were more aware of real school problems. TIE took the same route of working within the normal, school structures and environment.

Gordon Vallins, who played a crucial role in the creation of the first TIE team at the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry, also emphasised Way's originality and innovative style of working after performance

"(...) by improvisation, writing, painting, making music and clay modelling with the children."<sup>10</sup>

Joan Littlewood initiated a similar style of professional theatre, but for adult audiences. Her theatre was

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. O'TOOLE, Theatre in Education, 10-12.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 33.

<sup>10</sup> VALLINS, The Beginnings, 4.

"(...) full of creative purpose"<sup>11</sup>

because of the richness of theatre forms, openness and directness of performances towards real life.

Among sources of inspiration for TIE, Redington cited also the political theatre, the 'agit-prop' groups. The common feature of those with further TIE's programmes, was the social awareness and engagement in order to inspire the audience, the participants for the social changes.<sup>12</sup>

Bertolt Brecht, his theatrical praxis and theatre theory was generally recognised as a fundamental source of inspirations in both, technical and contextual dimensions. Redington emphasised the communicative role of theatre in Brecht's approach. The 'communication' demands also a choice of subject which is understandable to the ordinary people. Brecht's involvement in 'agit-prop' provoked a form of theatre followed by debate, by the discussion of issues of the theatre and those provoked by it. The 'alienation effect' (Verfremdungseffekt) has also its importance in TIE praxis because the children are invited to understand the cause and effect of the created believable world of performance, which has its roots in reality.<sup>13</sup>

Vallins, however, recognising the importance of children's theatre, emphasised the changes and challenges which existed in the 1960s in both parental fields of TIE. He observed

"But in the final analysis TIE was also created out of an awareness  
of the limitations of the educational curriculum and the lack of

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, 3.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 22-24.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. ibidem.. Redington indicated also the elements of 'epic theatre' in TIE's productions: the selection of events, the examination of socio-political problems connected with them, the use of realism for the educational aims/purposes.

impact of theatre on ordinary people's life; it was also born out of a fertile environment and a number of particular and local influences."<sup>14</sup>

Mass education, which represented a target of social changes in the 1950s and 1960s, also changed its characteristics. It was no longer a means of social promotion, but rather a preparation process for cultural life, richer and more accessible thanks to the development of cultural institutions and growing presence of media in everyday life. Instead in the theatre world fundamental questions about its real social position and future, about its relationship with the changing society arose.<sup>15</sup>

### **1. 5. 2. Beginning of TIE at the Belgrade Theatre**

The Belgrade Theatre was born together and grew together with the community which arose out of the ruins of Coventry.<sup>16</sup> At least that was the target of its first director, Anthony Richardson and the domain of his activities.<sup>17</sup> He tended towards the closer integration of his theatre with the society through several initiatives in order to find a new audience. In the 1960s society became overloaded with life-facilities, with the cultural institutions promoted for entertainment and consumption.<sup>18</sup> Theatre should represent something compatible with the demands of

---

<sup>14</sup> VALLINS, The Beginnings, 3.

<sup>15</sup> Vallins more emphasised this self-aware questioning of theatre about its identity in both, social dimension and purely theatrical - professional. He quoted the examples of this internal process: C. BARKER, Theatre and society, in: J. R. BROWN (ed.), Drama and Theatre: an Outline for the Student. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul 1971, 144-159.

<sup>16</sup> Coventry was destroyed in effect of the German-Nazis air-raids in 1940 and after the war was re-build, especially the city centre.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. VALLINS, The Beginnings. The following description I based on Vallin's account.

<sup>18</sup> I will emphasised first of all the significant growth of the role of television, but also the

post-war, new society. The new audience should not only be created, but also theatre must undergo changes in order to satisfy, challenge and conquer the new audience. The Belgrade promoted some schemes like theatre open to the school, the position of 'director's assistant' for liaison between schools and theatre, theatre holiday, 'Rock and rhyme', 'Youth and the Theatre'. All those were successful initiatives, but with a short life.

'Theatre as Entertainment' represented a new initiative which was a tour for local schools. Young audiences were created through the 'schools matinee', but also theatre realised that the audience was often unprepared to attend the theatre event. In order to reach largely the young audience, special clubs were created - 'Young Stagers'. All these initiatives, although they promoted theatre, were insufficient for Richardson.

In September 1964 the first meeting between Richardson as chairman of the Belgrade Theatre Trust and the chairman of the education committee took place. Two memoranda were issued as result of this event: one written by Richardson 'Theatre and Education' and one written by Vallins 'Theatre in Education'. Vallins explained his title

"I called it 'Theatre in Education' because it seemed to me that the two should not be separated and it was important to emphasis that the professional practitioners would be working within the educational system. This is how TIE got its name."<sup>19</sup>

Other meetings followed this historical one and the idea became much clearer, that the theatre would promote and

---

beginning of the development of the leisure centres.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem, 9.

"(...) develop the use of drama in schools as an educational medium valid in itself as a vehicle of instruction and as a means of enrichment of life through an understanding of and appreciation of theatre."<sup>20</sup>

The meeting of head teachers exposed their plan of collaboration between Belgrade Theatre and schools. It included also the idea of special courses for teachers.

The final working meeting presented a scheme composed of three interconnected actions:

- "a) the appointment of specialist drama teachers, one for infant, one for juniors, and two for secondary and youth work;
- b) the establishment of a permanent children's theatre company;
- and
- c) the establishment of a centre containing material and providing aid and guidance."<sup>21</sup>

The work of the theatre group should be followed by 'follow-up' activities under the guide of class-teachers. Also for them the scheme planned special training courses.

Although the plans were ambitious and promising a kind of sophisticated institution, the reality took a slightly different shape. The first TIE team started its work on 1 September 1965 - a year after the birth of the idea. They numbered four and their 'centre' was

"(...) a tiny one-room flat over the Belgrade Theatre."<sup>22</sup>

The actors quickly realised that the new work required also new educational skills. Soon the new title 'actor-teacher' became associated with them; this was someone

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem. That was the point of view expressed by the Local Education Authority.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, 10.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, 14.

who mostly was teaching 'in role', was using improvisation and whose attention changed direction: from the familiar acting, performing, towards the process of learning, assisting pupils and enabling communication.

The other feature of TIE work soon to be experienced, was the necessity of collaboration with the teachers of the particular class-groups. Not only the children were involved in the project, but the involvement of the class-teacher became fundamental. The team initiated discussion groups and workshops in order to better equip the teachers for the particular theatrical event, but also for the subsequent follow up work. The actor-teachers obtained educational experience immediately, from the practice, but they felt, that the real educative support and knowledge they could achieve from the teachers. Vallins observed

"We tried to be sufficiently sensitive, aware that our visits could be disruptive and disturbing as well as stimulating."<sup>23</sup>

What the team needed at this initial time and - as it resulted in the future - always during the work in the class-room, was the teacher's confidence, co-operation and advice.

A significant change occurred also in the dominion of aims, in comparison with the previous aims established in the phase of planning. Although the substance of TIE work in the class-room was still of a theatrical nature, what became important was the communication, the information, the knowledge and not the form or the style of the performance.

"The objectives of theatre were subordinate to the objectives of the classroom"<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, 14.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, 13.

- emphasised Vallins. The TIE team, the actor-teachers were using theatrical techniques, professional skills in the service of on going learning/teaching processes with the involvement of audiences until the possibility of changing the theatre project, of distorting the previously planned outcome. They were teaching, they were stimulating the learning, but

"We were not in the business of creating tomorrow's audience."<sup>25</sup>

That conviction signified the radical change in relationship between theatre and education, the birth of the new theatrical form completely dedicated to educational purposes.

### **1. 5. 3. Main features of TIE**

The theatrical origins of TIE influenced the features which characterised it. What is significant for TIE is its 'theatricality'; it is to be seen and it must be shown/performed/represented. TIE since its beginning placed itself in opposition against the usual relationship between theatre and audience, i.e. the relationship from distance. Although the performed dramatic events were gaining attention, in TIE's particular approach the emphasis was put on the involvement, and direct participation of the audience. TIE tried to eliminate the usual distance and to change the image of theatre as a stage with actors, divided from the audience by the proscenium, by the frame of the stage. Theatre becomes not only closer to the audience, but subsequently it is brought into the life of the audience. Through involvement and intervention, the audience could become responsible for the outcomes. Theatre in TIE's form begins to intervene in the life of both audience as a group and individual members.

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem.

TIE since its beginning acquired two fundamental features:

- a) 'in depth' relationship with the participants;
- b) work with a small group.

David Pammenter recognised these two as a cornerstone of TIE's development and originality as a new theatre field.<sup>26</sup>

The writers analysing TIE's phenomena agreed about the following elements:

- a) TIE is a team of actor-teachers;
- b) their product is a 'programme' treated as unit

constructed/devised around one topic;

- c) it is presented for the small group of children who

are not just an audience but participants or even co-authors of a 'programme' in progress (during the process of realisation);

- d) TIE works in the school, in the normal pupils' environment.<sup>27</sup>

Jackson summarised that

"In essence, TIE needs to be seen as a new genre, a form of theatre that has arisen in direct response to the needs of both theatre and schools and which has sought to harness the techniques and imaginative potency of theatre in the service of education."<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> He emphasised this kind of freedom which distinguished TIE from the traditional theatre for children:

"Having avoided a restriction which, usually for reasons of finance, the children's theatre companies were obliged to work under, the TIE teams were able to adopt more specific educational aims and explore new approaches with the licence of the theatre to create new forms."

In D. PAMMENTER, Devising for TIE, in: JACKSON (ed.), Learning through theatre, 38.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. JACKSON, Introduction, viii; O'TOOLE, Theatre in Education, vii; 9; 13-14; REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 1-2;

Each element of this new genre has its own characteristic and role in TIE phenomenon.

The team of actor-teachers is the main factor in TIE's realisation. They should be characterised by the knowledge of their own possibilities as actors, who must communicate first of all to the various groups of children; variety here means social status, age, sex, race. At the same time they must possess the skills of teacher able to enter into educational relationship and to recognise demands or need of the pupils.<sup>29</sup>

The devised programme brings also the necessity of fundamental knowledge in the dominion of engaged subjects. The development of a programme and possible changes provoked by the participating pupils, could impose the need for adaptation. This skill (adaptation, modulation) is connected with the ability of openness towards others' opinions and the ability of absorption. The actor-teacher must also control his/her own energy in order to sustain the primarily devised role, even if there occurred further adaptations. The work within the new form of theatre imposed the need for understanding the potential of the medium. The professional preparation must include the readiness, projection and sensitivity towards both, the participating audience and actors/colleagues involved in the same programme. TIE's actor/teacher must be able to improvise within the original framework including the newness coming from the nature of the programme, i.e. active audience.

The team as a group and every individual member had to possess educational awareness of their possible effect. It must be present during the preliminary, preparatory workshops for teachers.<sup>30</sup> The teacher is the one who knows the

---

<sup>28</sup> JACKSON, *Introduction*, viii.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, *Can Theatre Teach?*, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. O'TOOLE, *Theatre in Education*, vii.

class-group and on his/her observation the team should build their primary approach to the children. The team's educational awareness should also include the follow-up work possible as the result of the stimuli coming out of their programme. The follow-up work does belong to the teacher without the immediate help of the TIE team. The proposal of the follow-up developments should pay attention to those conditions. The TIE represented not only the new genre of theatre, but it generated also the new kind of profession operating in both dominions, theatrical and educational.

The 'programme' was created and was realised as a unit: usually it was presented during one session/visit. The TIE practitioners used to call their work 'programme' in order to avoid any limitation which the traditional names (a play or a lesson) could impose. The 'programme' was devised for the particular group of participants taking into account first of all the age. It took account of the needs of the children and also the technical possibilities of the team.<sup>31</sup> The possible inputs from the pupils imposed the flexibility of the 'programme' structure.<sup>32</sup>

The whole work usually included some preliminary materials for teachers, special resources for children and materials for follow-up work.<sup>33</sup> The 'programme'

---

<sup>31</sup> Cf. ibidem:

"(...) the material is usually specially devised, tailor-made to the needs of the children and the strengths of the team."

<sup>32</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 2: Redington observed that

"The structure of a TIE programme will include a range of educational techniques from complex problem-solving to simple occupational mime. The theatrical elements of a programme are a means and not an end in themselves providing plot, suspense, dramatic climax and characterisation."

<sup>33</sup> Cf. ibidem, 7. The preparatory work of a TIE team usually was called 'research' and the material for teacher did include the documents, sources, bibliography, indications about links with

was a result of a fusion between a search for new educational techniques and theatre forms adaptable for educational communication. Redington emphasises that

"Many TIE teams would claim that their role in schools is far more wide-ranging, and that they offer to the pupils an experience of the world outside the school, or of time past, in a manner that a school would find hard to create."<sup>34</sup>

Some of the programmes were split in many parts (but realised in the same session) in order to help the teacher in building a large project extended in time. The preparatory workshop for teachers not only concerned their preparation, but also enabled actor/teachers to enter into the class-community.

The topic chosen by the TIE team usually was concerned with well-known national or world problems in both, contemporary and historical dimensions.<sup>35</sup> As the TIE practitioners proudly emphasised, there was no taboo in their work.<sup>36</sup> Redington in her analysis observed that

"The subject-matter of a TIE programme has some basis in real life."<sup>37</sup>

Topics were interconnected with school subjects, but they were not offering a kind of remedy, but the 'programme' tended to lean towards the investigation and analysis of a problem. The TIE team was the author of the 'programme' and principally responsible for the topic of it. They devised material to communicate and shared the aim/topic. The programme devisers stressed often the social meaning of the topics and the

---

other subjects.

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, 7.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. ibidem, 2.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. PAMMENTER, Devising for TIE, 45.

<sup>37</sup> REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 2.

chosen problems. David Pammenter emphasised the specific role of theatre as a social art, which becomes a factor of social responsibility in the educational mission of TIE.<sup>38</sup> The vehicle primarily consisted of theatrical skills and elements. What was important in such a device was the moment of commitment, of the active collaboration arisen among the pupils and not the technical aspects of the production. There was the theatre which enabled cognition and education, but not the study or knowledge of the theatre.

The pupils were not just an audience, but the active element of the whole programme. The TIE device signified a new methodology of teaching/learning in which there was not the traditional one-way delivery of knowledge (transmission teaching), but in which the pupil became the active element of the 'programme'. The forms of participation were various and it was up to TIE team to devise the form, place and time of children's involvement or intervention. It could be a simple physical involvement in building up a situation, exercising some skills or first watching the 'stage' (acting) event and after take part in discussion and reflection. The special kind of involvement required follow-up work, often immediately after the performance and guided by the members of TIE's team. O'Toole indicated also the particular form of pupils' participation, called 'endowment', when within the general framework of 'programme' there was or were time and place for a specific role taken by children.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Cf. PAMMENTER, Devising for TIE, 49:

"(...) I am saying that theatre is a social art and therefore the practitioner has a social responsibility for the conception of the material. TIE, because it appears before the child uninvited, must take its social responsibility very seriously."

<sup>39</sup> Cf. O'TOOLE, Theatre in Education, 14:

"In programmes where the children participate actively, if they are given roles involving characterisation this is known as ENDOWMENT."

All these forms of children's participation (learning of skills, decision making, problem solving) required a high level of flexibility in the programme's structure. In order to achieve real participation, the TIE teams stressed the need for work with small groups, one, two classes only. During the 'programme' there were often devised the moments of a work in smaller groups under the guide of members. The actor/teacher confronted pupils in the heat of the programme, exercising his/her managerial skills, but also empowering pupils in their work.

The whole team had to be extremely careful in devising the programme and aware in the phase of presentation in order to avoid the open clash with the educational aims of the school. Pammenter summarised

"TIE's role in the opening up of children's mind to ways of looking at the world, in the explanation of ideas new to them and of concepts of history and the present, as opposed to preaching some or other accepted truth to them IS important, but its impact should not be overestimated and always the deviser must view it in the changing context of the schools system and society at large."<sup>40</sup>

The place/space in which TIE's programme was presented, had its own importance and role; it created the boundaries for the community during the event. The area of the TIE' action required a specific localisation. The best was the class-room of a specific group or at least territory familiar for them. The TIE effort was towards working together in order to create or strengthen the community. It was taking place also when the 'programme' included forms of individual or small group work. The TIE team was working together on the 'stage'-area and their target was to assure the same kind of co-operation within the 'programme'.

---

<sup>40</sup> PAMMENTER, Devising for TIE, 41.

#### 1. 5. 4. The aims of the TIE within the 'drama in education' dominion

The aims of the TIE, like the phenomenon of the TIE itself, reflected a search for the defining of the aim of the children's theatre in the educational climate of the 1960s. For the first TIE companies that search became more sharp and urgent, because of their immediate involvement in the teaching/learning process and close collaboration with the teachers from the school battlefield. John Hodgson analysed this formulative process of the aims.<sup>41</sup> It developed from the calls for the quality of entertainment towards the real discussion about the nature of theatre/drama and its educational mission. The new theatre must abandon the old, bourgeois understanding of theatre and tackle its social/educational dimensions. He postulated, that in education the questions about the nature of the theatre (as phenomenon) should be put.

The TIE, born just in the middle of the 1960s, belonged to the wave of alternative theatre which tended towards decentralisation in cultural life. Consequently, the social and political issues in TIE's educational domain were vivid and emphasised. The repertoire theatres, because of their awareness of the social impact, generated some initiatives towards decentralisation, like short schools' tours, or establishing a special liaison person as link between theatre and schools. But the TIE in formulating their aims went further. O'Toole emphasised

"We do not aim to create the social habit of theatre; it is an imaginative experience in its own right, an extension of the games children play in everyday life."<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Cf. HODGSON, Drama, 11-14.

<sup>42</sup> O'TOOLE, Theatre in Education, 13.

And that was something completely new and refreshing for the relationship theatre - school. Also in Redington's analysis this experiential basis of education through TIE was accented:

"The aim of Theatre in Education (...) is that its presentations in schools should educate, widen pupils' horizons, and lead them to ask questions about the world around them, as well as entertain."<sup>43</sup>

These general definitions of the TIE's aims demanded their further specification, or translation into the aims and targets of the practice.

The aims of the TIE activity generally were similar to those of drama in education.<sup>44</sup> Bolton especially emphasised the 'change in understanding' which is fundamental for drama's presence in the teaching/learning process. It could be a subject of two interpretations:

a) the functional use of drama, i.e. drama helps to understand better some absent context and it provides a methodology of teaching about the objective world;

b) the use of drama oriented artistically, when

---

<sup>43</sup> REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 1.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Drama in education and TIE, 73:

\*Objectives in teaching drama:

A Change in understanding

B Others

1. Social skills, including sensitivity, empathy and listening skills

2. Language skills, including speech, thinking, writing and reading skills

3. Movement skills

4. Skill in doing drama, including working with selectivity, economy and sense of form.\*

within the context some important aspect is to be explored for both personal/subjective and objective meanings.<sup>45</sup>

The 'change in understanding' in the TIE's occurs mainly on the second, artistic employment of drama. What remains important for the TIE is its 'theatricality', i.e. the ability of communication. It takes place when the identification process - so characteristic in theatre - occurs during the TIE's programme.<sup>46</sup>

However TIE, as primarily theatre, preserved its own priorities. O'Toole indicated that the first aim is presentation and subsequently

"The development of educational drama has added a further possibility: the involvement of the audience, to a greater or lesser degree, in the action - their participation."<sup>47</sup>

It was compatible with the changes going on in the drama. Teachers finally found the theatre practitioners interested in education, who either formulated important questions about education, arts and theatre role within it and through their work were delivering new educational solutions.<sup>48</sup>

Among the founders of the TIE, and as O'Toole emphasised

---

<sup>45</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Drama in education and TIE, 74-75; he individualised three levels of meaning:

- a) concrete, 'surface' level of meaning;
- b) a universal level of meaning that is abstracted and shared by the class;
- c) each individual's personal level of meaning.

The relationship between these levels creates the complexity of meanings in the artistic use of drama.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. O'TOOLE, Theatre in Education, 27:

"To achieve communication of the aims of the play or programme, the young members of the audience must be persuaded to identify with it as strongly as possible throughout (even if they are going to be periodically alienated)."

<sup>47</sup> O'TOOLE, Theatre in Education, 17.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. BOLTON, Drama in education and TIE, 69.

"from the beginning",<sup>49</sup>

there existed the clear commitment to an educational mission. Theatre became the means of the continuing development of communication between teacher and pupil in order to create better understanding, cognition, possession of knowledge on both, intuitive-emotional and experiential platforms. The techniques which were well-known in drama,<sup>50</sup> became mixed together in the classroom work of the TIE team and subsequently during the follow-up activities.

Such educational priority of the TIE's aims demanded extreme care and caution in the phase of the devising the 'programme'. It cannot become 'moralistic' or purely indicative, but educational, i.e. provocative towards the search for solutions, individual and independent, firmly grounded on the basis of pupils' experience. The TIE team, as the group of devisers responsible for the programme, cannot project for themselves, but for children, having their good, progress, development as the primary objective. Children must appear as the agents of their own learning and the TIE team as organiser of such process. Pammenter stressed that

"The deviser must focus not just on what he would like to happen but on what ACTUALLY happens."<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> O'TOOLE, Theatre in education, vii:

"From the beginning it maintained that its aim was more than generally to be entertaining and thought-provoking, or to encourage the habit of theatre-going (thus renouncing the traditional aims of children's theatre). It based itself on both an extension of children's play and a combination of theatricality and classroom techniques to provide an experience imaginative in its own right, with the glamour of strangers in dramatic role and costume providing both a stimulus and a context which are not normally available to the teacher."

<sup>50</sup> Cf. ibidem, 16: O'Toole called the TIE 'the blend genuinely new' which used role play, imaginative projection and interaction, surprise and novelty, atmosphere and suspense, spectacle and theatricality.

Otherwise the TIE could become an agent of mystification or dogma and the educational aim could become manipulated.

### 1. 5. 5. Development and state of the Theatre in Education in the 1970s

The success and growing educational influence of Coventry's initiative resulted in the fact that their model became an inspiration for others. It also changed the work of established companies and gave fresh inspiration.<sup>52</sup> In two years time Coventry's TIE achieved large influence, confirmed by the State's official recognition of their work. In Education Survey 2. Drama TIE was mentioned as the most original purpose among the theatre companies working in schools.<sup>53</sup> The professional, theatre world also found TIE as a valuable part of the whole arts policy. TIE together with the Young People's Theatre were included in the official report of the Arts Council in 1966.<sup>54</sup> Those recognitions were important in the story of TIE because of their support and financial problems almost from the beginning. The Arts Council pointed out this problem:

"Lack of time, space and money appear to be the main factors holding back the development of young people's theatre by the adult company. To a large extent the first of two factors can be overcome by adequate provision of the third."<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> PAMMENTER, Devising for TIE, 46.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. C. WEBSTER, Working with Theatre in Schools. With a Foreword by Brian Way. London, Pitman Publishing 1975.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE, Education Survey 2. Drama. London, HMSO 1967 (second impression 1968).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. The Provision of Theatre for Young People in Great Britain. Report of the Young People's Theatre Enquiry. February 1966. London, The Arts Council of Great Britain 1968. In their opinion, the TIE of the Belgrade Theatre was the unique worthy of emphasis.

The solution found in Coventry, i.e. the local funding supporting the educational work of theatre, encouraged foundations of TIE teams by other repertory theatres.

The following years witnessed the birth of various forms of 'theatre's' presence in education. John O'Toole in 1976 posed a question, who does belong to the 'Theatre in Education' dominion? His catalogue included at least eight forms which claimed to belong to TIE. Some of them were entirely dedicated to educational activity within the schools, some instead (like 'fringe' companies) occasionally included 'TIE-like' activity in their programme, some were for instance, like groups of theatre professionals and educators established for the particular project. The whole TIE dominion in ten years became colourful and diversified.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibidem, 22. Quoted after REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 30.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. O'TOOLE, Theatre in Education, 14-16:

\*a) Still in the van are the locally-based companies of full-time professionals, attached to a repertory theatre yet working independently, backed partly at least by education authority grants, providing a regular service in a prescribed area.

b) Some 'fringe' companies, independent of establishment and often politically committed in a narrower or wider sense, undertake TIE as part of their whole scheme of work for the community.

c) A few authorities have set up arts or drama centres where a mainly resident team works on projects with local children sent for a day or half a day, using educational drama and TIE.

d) There is a fluctuating number of established touring companies of different kinds, who visit areas on an occasional basis, giving single performances in as many schools as they can cover.

e) Groups of drama specialists are employed by an educational authority to undertake theatre in education part time; for the rest of the time they teach educational drama, school-based or peripatetic.

f) Many colleges, departments and institutes of education make TIE a voluntary or compulsory part of their Drama or English courses for teachers, for the practical experience it gives the students of meeting and dealing with children in dynamic situations.

g) Secondary schools themselves, even, sometimes encourage their sixth form or C.S.E. drama classes to prepare TIE programmes for their

Jackson's classification made at the end of 1970s, included five different areas and forms of theatrical work in the schools.<sup>57</sup> TIE's activity belonged - in his opinion - to two main areas:

- a) Young People's Theatre;
- b) Children's Theatre.

The other areas, however, inspired by TIE's methodology, represented often educational theatre in the broadest sense,<sup>58</sup> like forms called 'Theatre Education or How Theatre Works' and 'The Examination Play Workshops' or 'Play Days'.

The Belgrade TIE footsteps were followed in 1968-70 by similar teams in Bolton (the Octagon), Leeds (the Playhouse), Edinburgh (the Royal Lyceum) and Greenwich. They belonged to the first phase<sup>59</sup> in TIE's history, when TIE teams were founded from the repertory theatres and their financial fate depended on joint grants of the theatre and the local authorities. These TIEs were also the fruit of the previous educational policies of their mother-theatres.

The second phase started when the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) gave birth to its own company, the Cockpit TIE in 1971. In the 1970s the group of

---

contemporaries or juniors.

h) in addition there are groups of teachers dotted around the country trying to cover in their space time the 95 per cent of schoolchildren at present unexposed to TIE."

<sup>57</sup> Cf. JACKSON, Introduction, x-xi.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. ibidem, xi. Jackson emphasised:

"(...) often they could consist of excellently researched documentary pieces or indeed fine examples of contemporary play-writing on contemporary issues, or lacking the rigorous application of educational criteria in its preparation (...)."

<sup>59</sup> Cf. IDEM, Education or theatre?, in: JACKSON (ed.), Learning Through Theatre, 19-20. I borrowed from him the subdivision of the TIE's history in two phases.

already existing teams, was joined by TIE in Nottingham and Peterborough (1973) and Lancaster (1975). The Local Educational Authorities (LEA) became more aware of the educative potential of TIE's work and subsequently they became more responsible for their finances as well as for their artistic/educational outcomes. The social and local commitment of the TIE's programmes became also more evident:

"TIE companies have throughout the lifespan of TIE been among the most socially conscious of theatre groups, consistently choosing to examine social issues they believe to be of relevance to the lives of the children with whom they work."<sup>60</sup>

That feature marked the history of TIE in the 1970s and foretold the ongoing changes in their philosophy.

Changes in the TIE's approaches in the middle of the 1970s were provoked by three main causes:

- a) the educational studies in the phase of the 'programme' preparation;
- b) the influence of the other study-sources;
- c) the individual, professional specialisation of the team's members.

Redington emphasis that

"It was not just the development of drama as a separate subject, which was important for TIE, but the recognition that drama could be integral to the development of a child's personality."<sup>61</sup>

In consequences, the actor/teachers included in their preparatory work the experiences delivered by the school teachers (and of drama particularly), but also they studied the achievements from the dominion of the child's psychology, especially from

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibidem, 20.

<sup>61</sup> REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 19.

the works of Piaget, Bruner and later Vygotsky.<sup>62</sup>

The TIE teams included also the sort of games and strategies invented for industrial training or games becoming popular among the children. That feature showed the TIE's sensibility towards the contemporary needs, interests and entertainment of their audience/participants.

The professional specialisation of the TIE members has developed into two interconnected directions:

a) the amalgamated educative-artistic which became the basis for a real new profession within the theatre world: an actor/teacher;

b) the philosophical-political which mostly characterised the work-options and content-choices for the 'programmes' and evolved into the organisation which became the unifying factor for TIE: the Standing Conference of Young People's Theatre (SCYPT).

Romy Baskerville expressed the call for a specific organisation in 1973 at the conference in Bolton, at the Octagon Theatre/TIE.<sup>63</sup> She was concerned about the political character of the TIE and of its work. In her opinion, thanks to the political commitment of the TIE members, the educational-artistic activity is important. She wrote:

"The value of TIE at the moment, is that actors believe in what they're doing, and consequently are prepared to break down a few

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibidem:

"Background reading of this kind is considered important by some of the most thoughtful and innovative TIE teams."

<sup>63</sup> Cf. R. BASKERVILLE, Theatre in Education, in "SCYPT Journal" September 13 (1984), 7. The conference gathered together the TIE members from Coventry, Bolton, Leeds and London and its task was

"(...) to share and define their thinking about TIE and its place in society."

norms and take up a fight for ideas, and in so doing are, very self-consciously, reflecting, as artists if you like, the changes which are going on around and through them."<sup>64</sup>

The foundation of an organisation became necessary in order to organise and support TIE's activity.

In 1975, as the consequence of the national discussion among TIE teams, SCYPT was founded with the aim

"(...) to represent the interests of TIE and young people's theatre to founding bodies and at major national and international conferences, and also, perhaps more important, to promote debate, the sharing of ideas and experiences and the furthering of the general aims of the movement."<sup>65</sup>

Since the beginning they established the annual conference as the most important, informative and training meeting for all companies and individual members. The special committee became the inter-year organiser of SCYPT activity and also the "SCYPT Journal" was founded as the forum for publishing and sharing opinions, training publications, experiences.

Ten years after the first TIE started in Coventry and in the year of the SCYPT's foundation, there were at least 22 TIE and TIE-scheme based teams and they covered all the country (national territory):<sup>66</sup> Octagon (Bolton), Marlowe (Canterbury), Belgrade (Coventry), Dundee, Royal Lyceum (Edinburgh), Northcott (Exeter), Citizens (Glasgow), Bowsprit Company (Greenwich), Arts (Ipswich),

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibidem, 10.

<sup>65</sup> JACKSON, Introduction, xiii.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. H. BALL, Mapping its Growth in Britain, in: J. HODGSON, M. BANHAM (eds.), Drama in Education 3. The Annual Survey. London, Pitman Publishing 1975, 17-20.

Century (Lancaster), Playhouse (Leeds), Phoenix (Leicester), Theatre Royal (Lincoln), Everyman - Young People's Theatre (Liverpool), Playhouse (Liverpool), Tyneside Theatre (Newcastle), Playhouse (Nottingham), Playhouse (Sheffield), Theatre Centre (London), Palace (Watford), Connaught (Worthing), Theatre Royal (York). Hilary Ball gathered them under the name 'Learning through the Theatre'. These groups - in the majority of cases - were composed of actors specially destined for this particular kind of artistic-theatrical mission. Also in the majority of cases, their performance and work was based on the materials written by themselves and explored through improvisation. Usually the performance was followed by the special devised follow-up programme. All of them were involved in touring service for the schools from their area.

Ball called the second group 'Learning about the Theatre' and it contained thirteen groups: Old Vic (Bristol), Civic (Chesterfield, Crewe, Mercury (Colchester), Playhouse (Derby), Castle (Farnham), Yvonne Arnaud (Guildford), Thorndike (Leatherhead), Playhouse (Oxford), Perth, Salisbury, Victoria (Stoke-on-Trent), R.S.C. Theaterground (Stratford-on-Avon). In all these cases the operating teams were composed of actors taken from the main company and the team was not stable. They also specialised in the presentation of the pieces or extracts from the drama repertoire connected with the curriculum of the English language and literature. Although they also were on tour visiting the schools from their territory, their performances were treated as matinee programmes and without specific follow-up activities.

The problem of TIE in the middle of the 1970s was also vivid among the educators and drama practitioners. They - generally speaking - saw it as the ally in

their educational work through the Arts. Ken Robinson emphasised the factors on which the TIE depended:

"The growth of Theatre in Education depends on the opinions of the schools and Drama Departments that see it. Such opinion depends in turn on the quantity of TIE work that the schools get to see as much as on its quality".<sup>67</sup>

The TIE practitioners in both cases, individually and as a team, must search for their further professional progress, defining precisely the educational and artistic identity of their activity. He noticed that

"Although both historically and obviously there are strong links between the work of TIE teams and the Drama teacher, there are a number of fundamental differences in what they can do for children."<sup>68</sup>

The drama teacher, because of his/her longer work with children, was effective (in the long term) for their benefit in the acquisition and formation of both general and specific skills of feeling and communication abilities. The TIE instead represented more a potential, able to stimulate and provoke both children and teachers.

The number of TIE teams operating nationally, their commitment to the educational and community mission, their will for professional improvement and the unification of their social and artistic policies, strengthened the TIE's position, but - as Robinson urged - there were still areas of misunderstanding about their aims and roles in both school and theatre worlds.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> K. ROBINSON, Looking for Theatre in Education, in: J. HODGSON, M. BANHAM (eds.), Drama in Education 3. The Annual Survey. London, Pitman Publishing 1975, 25.

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem, 29.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. ibidem, 32-33:

\*As TIE teams do represent a new departure in Educational practice it is

Although the TIE brought a ferment in the world of drama/theatre in education, at the end of the 1970s a significant enlargement of the TIE's dominion occurred. In accordance with the dates of the British Alternative Theatre Directory, in 1979 there were twenty one companies as area-based TIE teams or groups fully realising educational programmes. At the same time there were about sixty other theatre groups which included TIE-like projects or performances for young people. The 1970s decade brought not only the expansion of TIE, but also the diversification of group statuses and approaches.<sup>70</sup> Jackson summarised in 1979 that

"Moreover, taking the country as a whole, it can be said that the TIE companies now cover the complete educational spectrum: from infant schools to further education colleges, from youth clubs to special schools for the 'educationally sub-normal', from summer play schemes to work on A level examination texts."<sup>71</sup>

Their work impacted not only on the schools, but, regarded as broadly educative theatre, on the cultural life of the community within which they operated.

Like the drama practitioners, the TIE teams also brought their ideas to other countries. Redington accentuated the originality and British-roots of TIE, although she compared its phenomenon to similar developments elsewhere.<sup>72</sup> The teams' visits to the United States made known the TIE form at least among the American community theatres. More successful - in terms of cloning the form - were the contacts with Australia, Canada and New Zealand.<sup>73</sup>

---

expected of them that they be somehow that much clearer about their aims so as to explain why it is they are going to be different."

<sup>70</sup> Cf. JACKSON, Introduction, xii.

<sup>71</sup> Ibidem, xiii.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. REDINGTON, Can Theatre Teach?, 8.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. ibidem, 8-9. She named the Magpie TIE visit in Adelaide (Australia) in 1977 and the visit

The decade of the 1960s, with all its ferments, was favourable for the TIE:

"In some way we had it easy in the sixties. It was a generously expansive time even if the initial beginning of TIE was a very small scale operation. However, the idea was launched. Here was theatre focusing attention, concentrating ideas with imagination and immediacy, encouraging thought and understanding within the community."<sup>74</sup>

At the end of the 1970s, after fifteen years of activity and development, TIE became permanently present on the theatrical and educational stage. Together with the community theatre, with still operating children's theatre companies and some experimental theatre groups, they enforced the presence of drama in education. It coincided with the increase of drama in education approaches, with the activity of drama teachers.

The TIE phenomenon was not isolated; it was generated within the large movement of re-vitalisation of the theatre in the community and within the ferment creating new forms of theatre (alternative, fringe, children's, young people's). The TIE happened just in time to fulfil the needs of both parts, theatrical and educational. The school lived through the recognition of the importance of the arts in education, in the personal growth and development. In the school, where became present

"(...) the increasing stress now given to the functional role that the arts have to play in helping children to understand, and operate in,

---

of 'La Marmaille Theatre' of Quebec from Canada in Britain. Cf. La Marmaille Theatre of Quebec. An interview with the Company by members of Ludus Dance in Education team, translated by Chris Thompson, in "SCYPT Journal" 4 (1979). Also Jackson emphasised the diffusion of TIE ideas in various parallel forms existing in other countries. Cf. also JACKSON, Introduction, xiii.

<sup>74</sup> VALLINS, The Beginnings, 14.

the world in which they live (...)”,<sup>75</sup>

the TIE undertook the challenge.

\*\*\*\*\*

The British/English domain of drama and theatre in education through the decades is really impressive in various aspects: there were a number of different approaches; there was much discussion about the nature and mission of drama/theatre in education; there were small and great changes and finally there was a multitude of studies and publications. These developments are particularly impressive to somebody who approaches the history and development of drama from the outside, coming from another culture and educational tradition. It could be also 'impressive' at least at the same level for British practitioners and theoreticians if they could take an overall, impartial, panoramic view.

The early pioneers marked two fundamental directions for drama in education:

a) drama as doing, as knowledge and training of skills, finally as acting for educational and cultural purposes;

b) drama as method of teaching/learning, as search, reflection, discussion and negotiation for the better knowledge of life.

The activity of Peter Slade and his successors overshadowed the very practical period of drama in which both human components of education, the teacher and the pupil, were subordinated to the Big Brother, the professional theatre. The child drama achieved not only its right recognition as Art, but also it started to develop an independent place in the curriculum. The new discussion was born about drama:

---

<sup>75</sup> JACKSON, Introduction, viii.

a) it should be an independent subject;

b) it has to be an advanced but servile methodology for the other, well established subjects in curriculum.

In the 1970s there were examples of both directions in the schools. The adherents of drama-subject were running drama classes, introducing special curricula and exams. The practitioners of drama-methodology, although recognising the needs of independence for drama among other school subjects, were teaching through drama and stimulating the learning through drama in several, complex drama-projects, TIE's programmes. At the same time the vivid and realised 'old' approaches to drama still existed: 'the school play' however combined with the new approaches and enriched by preliminary research and improvisations.

All these directions/approaches/currents had their founders, followers and opponents (sometimes enemies or 'undertakers'). They all gave birth to various drama associations which gathered followers in order to exchange experiences, improve abilities and feel better, supported especially during the periods of intense discussion.

Slade initiated the drama advisors movement and association (National Association of Drama Advisors and Educational Drama Association) with their own annual conferences, publication and journal. They had their blossoming time, but also their decline at the end of the 1970s. The practitioners from London area established their own centre and association 'The London Drama' which evolved through the decades. They tried to unite various approaches. Their magazine, "Drama" mirrored drama's history. Finally, in the 1970s SCYPT was born as an organisation for TIE's companies.

In the 1960s and 1970s there existed the National Council of Theatre for Young People (NCTYP) which gathered various, specific associations.<sup>76</sup> Within it operated also the British Centre of ASSITEJ (the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People).<sup>77</sup> The NCTYP edited its own "Bulletin" open for any kind of intervention, presentation and discussion<sup>78</sup> and published quarterly. At the end of 1970s the number of the members enlarged to twelve including the Laban Art of Movement Guild and the Standing Conference for Young People's Theatre.

The domain of drama/theatre in education at the end of the 1970s was really impressive, because of its multiform presence which stimulated changes in education; education in which Arts were helping and stimulating the development of the child.

---

<sup>76</sup> In 1975 the members of NCTYP were ten: Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education - Drama Section, British Children's Theatre Association, Council of Regional Theatres, Educational Drama Association, National Association of Drama Advisers, Puppet Theatre Centre Trust, National Youth Theatre, Society of Authors, Society of Teachers of Speech and Drama, Young Theatre Association. It was also a group of observers: the Arts Council of Great Britain, the British Centre of the International Theatre Institute, the British Council and the Department of Education and Science. Cf. "Bulletin of the National Council of Theatre for Young People" Autumn 1975 35.

<sup>77</sup> ASSITEJ was founded in 1965 as a world-wide organisation, connected with UNESCO; its largely promoted aim expressed the activity for peace and the role of theatre in the education of younger generation. The foundation group consisted in more than 20 countries. The British Centre of ASSITEJ was founded also in 1965.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. "Bulletin of the National Council of Theatre for Young People" Spring 1978 45, 1, the editorial declaration of the NCTYP committee:

"Contributors to the BULLETIN are free to express their own opinions for which they remain responsible. This freedom and this responsibility extends to the writers of editorial materials."

## Chapter 2

# **'THEATRICAL ANIMATION' ('ANIMAZIONE TEATRALE') AND 'CHILDREN'S THEATRE' ('TEATRO RAGAZZI') IN ITALY: AN EVER PRESENT AND BLOSSOMING FEATURE OF SCHOOL PRACTICE**

Despite the common belief amongst practitioners and theoreticians of 'theatrical animation' in their 'revolutionary' mission in 'theatre in education' in Italy, I prefer to emphasise the importance of historical roots and the undoubted influence of earlier experiences and theories. Theatre, in fact, was always present in schools, educational projects and institutions involved in education as school or youth theatre. In the late 1960s the name 'theatrical animation' appeared as a label, a slogan for the new presence of theatre in education.

Whereas, before, theatre had been used in the service of established education, this growing movement of 'theatrical animation' was rebellious against tradition (post-war situation of the society) and against modern, welfare-state, capitalistic

divisions of society. It was also of course rebellious against any traditional pattern of teaching and learning, against educational structures oppressing the real nature of children.

For the next fifteen years 'theatrical animation' enjoyed its most expansive time because it became a huge movement with several outcomes, further developments and different forms which are present today.

Confronted by so many examples of 'theatre in education' it is necessary to present the methodological premises I have used in looking at the rich Italian tradition. Some authors in my opinion (like Fontana and Ottolenghi) in their evaluations committed the methodological mistake of approaching historical examples from a strongly conditioned political position in their research. In that way their opinions concerned only one side of the reality, and failed to present accurately the ideological position of all presented and analysed educators from the past.<sup>1</sup> In order to avoid similar mistakes, it will be necessary to present the various cases of school theatre or education through theatre, or theatrical education, in their historical order of appearance emphasising their fundamental preoccupation with the personal growth and development of the child.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> In the 1960s arose in Italy, together with the research from Marxist background the opinion that:

"The school theatre, of which the first manifestation historically documented is found in Humanism, is offering only classic amateur representations (especially in Jesuits Colleges) and staging of moralistic plays."

in A. FONTANA, V. OTTOLENGHI, Teatro e' appendere un brutto voto a una nuvola, in "Biblioteca Teatrale" 2 (1971) 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ibidem, 2. Personally for me as for an educator the position of the kind this expressed above is inadmissible. In my opinion and according with the principle of 'free choice' in the research, I cannot start from any ideological position.

## **2. 1. SCHOOL THEATRE AS A SIGNIFICANT MANIFESTATION OF 'ART IN EDUCATION'**

The term 'school theatre' is the best way of describing the historical experiences and those from the 20th century and it includes any theatrical activity made in school by children, under the guidance of the teacher, for some audience as an extra-curricular activity. It was a substantial part of aesthetic education and it realised the postulates of 'Art Education' common in post-war Europe.

### **2. 1. 1. The Roots in the past: History of the school - college theatres (Oratory, Jesuits, Salesians)**

When Italian practitioners and historians of education write about the Renaissance, they find in the experiences of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri and the Jesuits Colleges, the first beginnings of the school theatre.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. D'ANCONA, Origini del teatro in Italia, Vol. I. Firenze, Successori Le Monnier 1877. The conditions of the Oratory allowed to St. Philip the original transformation of the traditional 'lauda' or 'Sacra Rappresentazione' to the theatrical possibilities of young members of Oratory. They were the actors, the musicians and the first audience of their own performances. He emphasised also the performances from medieval 'Representations' where the young actors declaimed the proper parts of plays. Even in the court of Lorenzo il Magnifico in Florence and in the other courts of renaissance

The first college theatre of Jesuits was founded in Rome, in 1551 and at this time it had the educational function of supporting the literary, classical and moral education of pupils. Jesuits emphasised the role of the educational theatre to the extent that they introduced particular rules about theatre even into Ratio studiorum (1599) indicating the sort of play which could be acted and its educative and moral content. Meanwhile the rules of the 13th article of Ratio underwent different changes according to the literary currents and social needs (for example instead of latin, local languages were introduced).<sup>2</sup>

The third important stage in the Italian history of boys-theatre is associated with John Bosco,<sup>3</sup> who already at the beginning of his educational activity which included teaching and organising schools, noticed the pedagogical value and usefulness of theatre.<sup>4</sup> In the course of his educational and pastoral activity, he

---

Italy, the presence of boys was admissible. Also cf. M. SIGNORELLI, Il bambino e il teatro. Bologna, Edizioni Giuseppe Malipiero 1957, 11; G. R. MORTEO, L. PERISSINOTTO, L'animazione: storia, antefatti, problemi, in: G. R. MORTEO, L. PERISSINOTTO (eds.), Animazione e città. Torino, Musolini Editore 1980.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. BOYSSE, Le Théâtre des Jésuites. Paris, Henry Vaton 1880.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. M. BONGIOANNI, Don Bosco e teatro. Torino, Elle Di Ci 1990.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. SIGNORELLI, Il bambino, 16. He, in accordance with the popular character of his educational ideas, introduced such kind of theatre: with the incontestable moral role of theatre he underlined its entertaining and socialising influence on the lives of boys. The beginning of the Salesian theatre had an original feature to be invented for entertainment, for common play, game activity, completely 'ludicus' and alternative to the normal, daily heavy style of the boys' life. Cf. J. B. LEMOYNE, The Biographical Memoirs of Saint John Bosco, vol. III. New Rochelle, New York, Salesiana Publishers, Inc. 1966, 417-418.

The next step was a foundation of a normal puppet theatre with the engagement of the boys and finally the real and proper theatre of the Turin Oratory. John Bosco noticed quickly the utility of the theatre in and as education, and at the same time he warned about the evil influences of the theatre non controlled, without moral and educational assistance. So, in his providential care, he prepared the entire regulations for the oratory theatre. Cf. LEMOYNE, The Biographical, vol. VI. Salesiana Publishers, New Rochelle, New York 1971, 646-648.

explained the role of theatre in the education of boys from the 'poor'<sup>5</sup> social stratum.<sup>6</sup>

Another stream of educational theatre arose after the unification of Italy and it had, together with the old religious-moral aspect a new one, directed towards the social and political aspects of society. The authors and educators wished to educate both Christians and Italians and to create a sense of belonging to a nation without being especially preoccupied with the artistic purposes of theatre or the real educational needs of pupils.<sup>7</sup>

### 2. 1. 2. Puppet theatre companies in 1920s and 1930s

---

<sup>5</sup> 'Poor' indicates here both city and rural poorest social classes. John Bosco (1815-1888) was born among the poor peasants in Piedmont and, after huge personal challenge and partially self-educated he became a secular priest in Turin Archdiocese. Like many similar boys, he left his own countryside environment in search of a better life, first to the bigger and richer village, and after to the capitol of the region, Chieri. In his experience he observed people leaving Piedmont for immigration, both overseas and inner, to the big, growing industrial cities in the North Italy, especially Turin. In 1841 he started his educational work for boys, who shared a similar background to his own, who arrived in Turin looking for a better life and employment. They were coming from the 'poor' stratum from the Piedmont villages and they were creating the 'poor' stratum in the city: the proletariat. In the terminology of Bosco's writings and of the Don Bosco's Salesians, as his followers in the educational work, this preference exists in their pastoral and educational mission:

"With Don Bosco we reaffirm our preference for the young who are 'poor, abandoned and in danger".

Cf. Constitutions of the Society of St Francis de Sales. Roma, Editrice SDB 1984, article 26th.

<sup>6</sup> E. CERIA, The Biographical Memoirs of Saint John Bosco, vol. XII. Salesiana Publishers, New Rochelle, New York 1980, 108. For him, as a catholic priest and educator, the most important value of theatrical activity consisted in the formative utility of the personalities of boys and theatre was even the instrument of the deep penetrations in the souls. in the spirits such actors as audience. He emphasised the importance of the education through theatre also for the future of Salesian, educational work. Some of his indications were very precise and all they presented a mature methodology. Cf. also A. AMADEI, The Biographical Memoirs of Saint John Bosco, vol. X. Salesiana Publishers, New Rochelle, New York 1977, 461-462.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. SIGNORELLI, Il bambino, 22-23 and I. MARCHETTO, Il teatro per ragazzi, in Problemi della letteratura per l'infanzia in Europa. Firenze, Centro Didattico Nazionale 1954, 168.

Together with a variety of ideas brought by the revolutionary movement of 'New Education' in Italy, a new epoch began in the relationship between theatre and education, theatre and school, theatre and child. First of all at this time the theatre FOR children started. With the development of new educational thinking, the role of the theatre in education also changed. It passed from 'educational theatre' to 'theatre-educator'. Signorelli underlined the revolutionary character of the new vision of modern aesthetics in which art is no more the instrument of predisposed moral identification, but of the life of spirit and in this way it (art) becomes an educator, a liberator.<sup>8</sup> The intention of the new purposes was to study, to observe the theatre, its event, its components and thereby to acquire knowledge of theatrical art. The pupil, according to this pedagogy, becomes the 'lover' of the theatre, the conscious member of the audience.

New school programs (Riforma del '23) gave direction to this theatrical education and it was a real beginning of the theatre FOR children in Italy. At this time not only teachers and pedagogues were interested in the theatre, but the same theatre with its personalities began to look at the child as a potential receiver of theatrical art. In accordance with the new pedagogical issues, the main stream of theatre for children was composed of companies of puppet theatre.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> SIGNORELLI, Il bambino, 24:

"Si tratta, come e' ovvio, di una rivoluzione che riflette quella operata dall'estetica moderna, per la quale l'arte non e' strumento ad una preordinata identificazione morale, sibbene vita dello spirito e percio', di per se stessa, educatrice e liberatrice."

<sup>9</sup> In her study, Signorelli named more than 20 companies in all Italy producing the performances for children. This new movement begun around '20 and was important at the time of her activity as a teacher and her research in early '50.

### 2. 1. 3. 'Art in Education' movement in Italy

In post-war Europe there existed a large movement of 'Art in Education' as the common, philosophical, cultural and educational answer to the challenge of ethic and moral catastrophe; it was the basis for new ideas, experiences and research about theatre in education in Italy.<sup>10</sup> Besides there were few professional theatre companies (especially puppet theatres) working for education.<sup>11</sup>

Research conducted at this time and based on experience, emphasised the emotional growth of children as a principal benefit from 'Education through Art' which happens first of all during the direct contact between the child and the theatrical event.

From her observation of children in theatre, Signorelli postulated fundamental changes for Italian theatres suggesting that theatre experience should involve real educative tasks and there should be new approaches to the audience.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> After the birth of theatre for children in '20 and '30 and its considerable development after the II W.W., the first research about the characteristic of this theatre followed in early '50. That was connected with all the posting of art in education in these years not only in Italy, but in whole Europe. The basic issues that ART is an educator par excellence, and so is theatre, indicated a double approach to pedagogical research:

1. how to adapt the repertoire of theatres to the spiritual and intellectual phases of age, and
2. what is the relationship theatre-youth in this conception 'educative art'.

Cf. L. VOLPICELLI, Dall'infanzia all'adolescenza. Brescia, La Scuola Editrice 1952. Besides his theoretical studies about education and youth and school theatre, it is necessary to indicate the increasing of handbooks how to found and to do the school theatre or puppetry.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. SIGNORELLI, Il bambino, 26. Signorelli, enumerating the historical Italian companies of theatre for children active in the 1950s, made a division in groups which were using puppetry as a main instrument of performance, in groups composed of children-actors performing for child audience and in professional companies for children. They operated not only in the biggest cities of Italy, but some of them travelling across the country became popular and they confirmed that the

"(...) problem of child and youth theatre is present as an absolute necessity."

The leading university lecturer of 'Art in Education', Luigi Volpicelli, emphasised the necessity for the sensitive preparation of teachers so that they could make an appropriate choice of play and adequate explanation before making a visit to the theatre.<sup>13</sup>

#### **2. 1. 4. Signorelli and her school practice of puppetry theatre**

Maria Signorelli was one of the first teachers to introduce puppetry into pedagogy in Italy and, based on her own experiences, to give theoretical explanations.<sup>14</sup> Her first trials were directed towards using puppets to explain theatre to pupils by asking questions such as

'what's going on during the performance? what's happened on the stage? how could they repeat this kind of mystery?'

---

<sup>12</sup> The first responsible person for the theatre FOR children is the author. He must be aware of the unity between school - educational tasks and educative theatre which becomes a real school of life with examples of behaviour for children.

<sup>13</sup> Italian authors, Volpicelli as a pedagogue and Signorelli as a theatrical educator, working together, gave us the picture of the Italian situation in the 1950s. In these cases we noticed the prevalent adult's point of view 'how could the theatre FOR children be realised' and, starting from the contemporary psychopedagogical researches, 'how ARE children reacting or interacting with the stage purposes'. The Italian theatre for children at this time was made by adult people and dominated by them. Only as a novelty and possibility, Signorelli tried to indicate the adolescent as a potential author of play for youngsters. She based her view on the previous experiences from USA, Russia and Poland.

<sup>14</sup> In Signorelli's analysis and theory, for the reasons named above, puppet theatre with its magic world of convention which takes part of the normal child play and game represents the best kind of theatre for children. The main goal of such conceived educative theatre was corresponding to the demands of education through art, especially through theatre in general. She quoted French experiences as an example from L. CHANCEREL, Théâtre... Jeunesse, in Le Théâtre dans le monde. Vol. II, N. 3, 3.

Children, being so familiar with dolls in their own childhood, seemed to be able to manage with the puppets in a more realistic way, suited to their level of understanding rather than having to participate in a passive way during the puppet performance made by adults. Signorelli supposed that puppet theatre could have at least the same impact as telling fables to children, but that using puppets could evoke a stronger moment of reflection. In addition, the possibility of creating theatre for friends and companions seemed to be a source of gratitude, excitement and joy. Doing puppetry, the child was able to become familiar with a process of acting and at the same way became more aware as a spectator of professional performances. Signorelli emphasised puppetry more than the normal declamation or recitation, because puppetry does not create tension in children; it is not creating young actors, but is making children themselves responsible for the performance.<sup>15</sup>

Puppet school theatre elaborated by Signorelli in the 1950s was an extra curricular activity and not so much connected with the contents of any subject. She developed a methodology for such theatre which admitted the possibility of class-work with children.<sup>16</sup>

### **2. 1. 5. D'Alessandro and his practice of dramatising history teaching**

Vittorio D'Alessandro presented a different use of theatre with the purpose of involving the methodology of dramatisation in the teaching of history.<sup>17</sup> He saw

---

<sup>15</sup> Cf. SIGNORELLI, Il bambino, chapters V and VI.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. ibidem, 108-110. The presented experience used theatre as a special kind of entertainment and play, but without any research about the psychological or cognitive influences. Signorelli was speaking mostly about the satisfaction and joy of children after the experience of puppetry.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. V. D'ALESSANDRO, Esperienze di drammatizzazione della storia. Firenze, La Nuova Italia Editrice 1964.

theatre as a help in education. Perceiving the inadequate methodology of verbal explanation in history teaching, he tried to adapt dramatisation as an effective and interesting method for developing in children knowledge of historical events. The teacher with his own knowledge of history played the central organising role and he dramatised historical events as an actor and later as a director. The first performances were followed by inventive, improvised dialogue with children. In this way he thought he could give the child new solutions to historical problems, to involve children in historical events and to awaken the 'sensus' of time. His own experiences in this field showed that it was possible to get positive results not only in knowledge of history, but in the child's sensitivity to the importance of past events.<sup>18</sup>

So, in 1950s-1960s both of the analysed authors, Signorelli and D'Alessandro, were the first among the Italian educators attempting to do not only 'educative theatre' according to the theories of 'education through art', but looking for the real values of theatre or its methodologies as possible instruments of education - i.e. they used theatre AS education in various subjects of the curriculum.

### **2. 1. 6. Signorelli's late stage and puppetry as a means of discovery**

In her later book dedicated to puppetry in education,<sup>19</sup> Signorelli added a new element to those analysed above: the socialisation of the child. Children at this age

---

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, 127ff. The psychopedagogical base of D'Alessandro's method was a conviction about the importance of play in childhood. Dramatic play, according to Piaget's theory of development, was completely adequate to the needs of the child. He conducted research, which was able to prove that dramatic play was different from other child's play and in this the child was able to make scientific progress.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. M. SIGNORELLI, *L'esperienza scolastica del teatro*. Roma, Armando Armando Editore 1963. At this time she was collaborating with Luigi Volpicelli and the Centro Didattico Nazionale in

(4-6 years) are working/playing alone even when the work/play seems to be common in the group, and working/playing also in the presence of adults, without being bothered by the adult's presence. Based on her own experiences, Signorelli affirmed the basic function of theatre and declamation in the whole process of socialisation. Through the close collaboration between teacher and child and other children, the level of socialisation increases and step by step, the child is more able to work together with others.

Especially in the first years of elementary school, Signorelli underlined the role of puppetry as a multidimensional instrument of mediation between the familiar experiences of the child and the new, scholastic life and developed social life.<sup>20</sup>

Signorelli's methodology includes the creation of the puppet by the child, from the beginning until the performance. During this work, the teacher should provide several exercises of animation and recitation together. There were four great advantages:

- a) the use of personal imagination in the creation of the puppet;
- b) the giving of individual responsibility for the character of the puppet in the individual play;

---

Florence (National Centre of Didactic Research) and became the incontestable authority in school puppetry, well known in Europe for her participation at various conferences.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. ibidem, 9:

"It is considerable, that theatre, recitation, could be, in completely spontaneous and natural mode, a way important enough to put the child in a certain formative and social order making proper use of the child's interests."

and it was a base to pursue the introduction of puppetry with a goal to help the linguistic development of children.

c) behind the puppet the child is protected from the potential negative aspects (such as vanity) of becoming an actor;

d) the child is hidden from the observers, from the potential audience, and is authentic and unconditioned as in a play.

Moreover theatre for children, with its repertoire of fables and legends, becomes a helpful collaborator in education. It fulfils the role of translating the literary product into the reality on the stage which could be compared with the way the child does so in his/her imagination.<sup>21</sup>

The next step for the child is a discovery of the human world, of moral and social life. Thanks to the positive role of the engaged teacher or actor or parent, the child is able to perceive messages and to understand situations. Just as in play at home, the child during the puppet theatre, actively participates in conventional, imaginative transformations of subjects, puppets, space and time. For those obvious reasons she emphasised:

"Puppets will educate children for that kind of process (of the deeper knowledge of human, moral and social life - TL), because instead of approaching first, the child's intelligence, they will be directed to his/her sensibility."<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> In spite of the lack of examples of Italian research on this field, Signorelli in her book analysed the opinions of various authors: from France - Léon Chancerel, from Belgium - Marie Dienesch, from England - Peter Slade and E. M. Langdom and others. Signorelli emphasised the double progress by the child: first from its own understanding and imagination of fable to the stage representation (it means a confrontation in the special environment which is the theatre) and secondly, from the sensations and understanding of theatrical event to the deeper perception of literary work and its acceptance.

<sup>22</sup> SIGNORELLI, *Il bambino*, 96:

"E saranno proprio i burattini ad educare a questo i fanciulli, giacché prima che alla sua intelligenza si rivolgeranno alla sua sensibilità."

### 2. 1. 7. 'Art Education' in new school programmes and re-discovery of play and game

During the year 1962-1963 a new law for Italian elementary and secondary school was devised which included the innovative recognition of the importance of art in education.<sup>23</sup> But as usual, the law presents something between the ideal and the reality.<sup>24</sup>

So, in the years after the new law, the process of introducing aesthetic activities in the form of child play, games or dramatisation began. In accordance with the psychoeducational directions, the creativity of the child started to be underlined.<sup>25</sup> The question was, how could theatre be used in education? Unfortunately, the relation between theatre and school was rare with only a few active companies of theatre for

---

<sup>23</sup> On July 24, 1962 a special Commission began a research about the directions of development of public instruction and the results have been presented a year after, in 1963 as Legge istitutiva della scuola media unica, n. 1859 del 31 dicembre 1962 e i relativi programmi emanati nel marzo 1963. Cf. A. SANTONI RUGIU, E. FAGNI, Insegnamento come animazione. Guida per gli insegnanti della scuola dell'obbligo. Firenze, La Nuova Italia Editrice 1976: Appendice: La normativa vigente, 207-212. For elementary school the programmes were published in 1955.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. A. SANTONI RUGIU, Attività artistica e creativa (1970), in: L. BORGHI (ed.), Prospettive dell'educazione elementare in Europa. Firenze, La Nuova Italia Editrice 1980, 229. He recognised that the school in Italy has its pioneers of the educational innovation. In the majority of cases aesthetic activities have been comprehended and experienced as a play, game with elements of creativity, but in whole teaching process art occupies a marginal role. Another important factor was that on the timetable art or practical artistic education, has been put out into the extra-school activities. Even the law from '63 indicated the necessity of this kind of work in the elementary school (already somewhere existing), but it was not the integrative part of school and it belonged to the social-cultural work units and the people who were doing it, were generally insufficiently prepared. The execution of this purpose has been left to the individual initiative of teachers and conditioned by the social-economic background.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. P. GIACCHE', Diario scolastico del sussidiario teatrale, in "Scena Scuola" 1 (1984) 42.

children. Also their purposes were inadequate to the growing influence of new media communications. In the school meanwhile, there remained traditional forms of puppetry or school theatre even with valuable modifications. The new experiences indicated, in accordance with the '63 law, several examples of the educative usefulness of theatre:

1. the possibility of meeting the developmental needs of child;
2. the motivational role for new interests;
3. the possibility of showing the vital and social problems of humanity;
4. an aid to discovering the potential capacities of the child;
5. the possibility of common, socializable collaboration;
6. the development of free-expression;
7. the child becomes creative when confronting real problems.

Those positive changes came about both as a result of indisputable and successful experiences and as an effect of the international exchanges of ideas and the influences of foreign authors.

Piaget's well known theory about the child as the real creator of common culture<sup>26</sup> in the 1960s was combined with the theory of psychodrama of Jacob Moreno<sup>27</sup> and Carl Gustav Jung's interpretation of 'being an actor in life'. This helped writers expand their thinking about the role of drama/theatre to look at the whole personality.

---

<sup>26</sup> Cf. E. ROMANELLI, Teatro ed educazione. Problemi, prospettive didattiche, aspetti di una esperienza. Torino, Marietti 1973.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. analysis of Moreno's theory in E. MANTOVANI, Il giuoco dramma. Esperimenti di dialogo spontaneo tra i fanciulli. Brescia, La Scuola Editrice 1968. Especially the process of creation of social usable 'me' in whole its falsity of interpretation of social role, has been indicated as a base for the 'social mask', for being the 'person actor' and as a result to live in personal tension.

The same problems were present in published research from educational psychology which displayed the familiar, environmental context of child growth as a main factor in the creation of child personality.<sup>28</sup> The use of theatre/drama could be helpful in the construction or re-construction of the true personality. This methodology has been called by Mantovani 'constructive dramatic'.

The new approach to theatre in education as drama-play manifested itself as sufficiently different from the traditional school theatre or puppetry to be seen as a new movement. The main features were:

a) its origin were in play activities in childhood and in the slow process of becoming a 'social actor';

b) the presence and use of imitation leads towards the ritualization of life, towards the spiritual, magic dimension of being;

c) through imitation it is possible to repeat the majority of normal situations and processes of socialisation and thereby to explain human behaviour;

d) the imitation must be controlled and gives the possibility of becoming aware of the specific social deviation of personality and to cure through the spontaneous dialogue;

e) drama-play is distinct from recitation from script because it allows more spontaneity and a direct kind of dialogue without requiring previous preparation or memorisation;

f) drama-play has a common characteristic with psychodrama, but is first of all directed to normal subjects in the process of growing.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Piaget's theory about the parents' influence and next, about the school role in the creation of social useful attitudes, in J. PIAGET, La représentation du monde chez l'enfant. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France 1947, and reported by MANTOVANI, Il giuoco, 21-24.

We could observe in Italy, as in the whole of Europe, at the end of 1960s, the large interest of teachers in active forms of education. It was the result of new legislation from 1962-1963, and of the new theories of school understood as an interdisciplinary period of growth and socialisation of the child. The trend was to be creative and to eliminate some of the distance between teacher and taught and finally, to adopt a teaching methodology based on 'research' in order to meet the children's needs.

The whole process of modernisation and growing awareness of teachers happened even in the area of theatre/drama in education: from theatre FOR children and theatre OF children, through theatre WITH children developing methodologies of 'theatrical education', recitation, child puppetry, dramatisation and drama-play. All those elements were present in the Italian school, despite the critical attitude of theoreticians of 'theatrical animation'. They were present, maybe not in each school, in each part of Italy, but their presence and results established a good base for further development.

---

<sup>29</sup> Such Mantovani as Signorelli were analysing the methodology of Peter Slade as possibly successful example for Italian teachers too.

## 2. 2. THE PHENOMENON OF 'THEATRICAL ANIMATION'<sup>1</sup> (*'ANIMAZIONE TEATRALE'*) AND ITS MULTIPLE CHALLENGES IN SOCIAL LIFE

The situation in the late 1960s in Italian cultural life changed radically. In many places, especially in North Italy, several cultural innovations began. Besides the educative movements in education, cultural needs were identified amongst the working classes of the big cities and in the small country towns.

The political changes in 1960s in Italy, were connected with the growth of the influence of the Communist Party of Italy (*Partito Comunista Italiano*) and the Italian Socialist Party (*Partito Socialista Italiano*) as a main force of opposition.<sup>2</sup> Among their

---

<sup>1</sup> In Italian theatrical and educational literature several minor attempts of description and analysis of 'theatrical animation' exist, but, even if some amongst them are worthwhile, the whole complex phenomenon is still waiting for its historian. The majority of information about the beginning of 'theatrical animation' I took from following sources: FONTANA, OTTOLENGHI, *Teatro e'*; G. BARTOLUCCI (ed.), *Il teatro dei ragazzi*. Rimini-Firenze, Guaraldi Editore 1972; G. SCABIA, E. CASINI-ROPA, *L'animazione teatrale*. Rimini-Firenze, Guaraldi Editore 1978; "*Sipario*" - Speciale: *Il Teatro dei Ragazzi*, in "*Sipario*" 289-290 (1970) (maggio-giugno); MORTEO, PERISSINOTTO (eds.), *Animazione: Torino: la capitale dell'animazione (Dibattito)*, in "*Scena*" 2 (1977) 48-54.

<sup>2</sup> It provoked the spread of Marxist ideology and especially, among the intellectuals and university students, the new, social direction of cultural activities. They were no longer connected

members were university intellectuals, students and workers from the new social stratum of industrialised cities. The new culture, postulated and created by both the intellectual and working classes, should be independent, real, original, creative, spontaneous, free, different, alternative and not bourgeois, but of the people.

The rapid process of industrialisation going on in the big cities of North Italy provoked internal emigration from the South and rural provinces. This was the basis of the creation of a new working class in the big cities, still having roots in their original culture, but at the same time being involved in the process of amalgamation with other cultures. The main equaliser in this process was the school and educational projects based upon new programmes.

### **2. 2. 1. Social and cultural phenomenon**

There is no one, singular source which explains the beginning of 'animation', but it was generated from several different sources.<sup>3</sup> Many authors indicated the slow process of collaboration between theatre practitioners and educationists, especially those from the 'Movimento Cooperazione Educativa', like Fiorenzo Alfieri, for many

---

with the bourgeois class, but in the name of class struggle, they should be given, offered to the working class, to the basic class of society. Only this kind of culture was indicated as original, real, and worthwhile. From the universities which were leading the ideological discussion and battle, it could be described as a frenetic, spontaneous, impulsive search for the identity in the folk culture of both, town and countryside traditions. From inside the working class movements, it could be analysed as a search for easier, speedier ways of cultural advance, recompensation, and alternatives to the bourgeois culture which - accordingly to the ideology - belonged only to the oppressive class of society and was used as an instrument of oppression.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. MORTEO, PERISSINOTTO, *L'animazione*, 7; *Torino: la capitale*, 49; R. ROSTAGNO, B. PELLEGRINI, *Un teatro-scuola dentro di quartiere. Esperienza di animazione teatrale tra i ragazzi*. Con un saggio di P. Pupa. Venezia, Marsilio 1975, 7.

years a member of the city council in Turin, responsible for the 'animation' department. This process of collaboration was growing as the main form of intervention both in theatrical and educational contexts and overall in the big city culture.

First of all the activists of this new form of 'theatre in education' emphasised the lack of theatre in the life of the majority of society and especially the lack of theatre for children in both provincial and suburban areas. Even in the bigger cities theatre for children only took place occasionally and it was only for entertainment.<sup>4</sup> From a point of view of the theatre world and practice, this kind of theatre was treated as a secondary activity, a source of financial support and the timid trial towards the education of the future public for the adult theatre.

But even here changes appeared in the adult theatre for children. Some of them discovered the fundamental meaning of the relationship between the stage world, often full of imagination, and the real life of children. This relationship, thanks to the way the child reacted, established a new kind of duty for theatre, for actors and directors: their work must be conscious of educational responsibility and be compatible with the needs and expectations of children.<sup>5</sup> Tonino Conte, director of theatre for children, emphasised the gradual introduction of the child into the theatrical explanation and demonstration of human life exactly through fable and its political content, realistic beginning or ur-topic and variety of theatrical techniques (from the simple manifesto or cartoons supported by recitation, towards full stage performance). Theatre must listen to the childrens' voice and the best way for

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. G. SCABIA, Un teatro dentro del quartiere, in "Sipario" 289-290 (1970) 39.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. T. CONTE, Gradualita' di una regia. Una nota del regista-autore dello spettacolo, in "Sipario" 289-290 (1970) 81.

realization of such theatre-child relationship would be fable. Using observation, the theatre practitioners must discover the educative importance of their job.<sup>6</sup> The observation of children's behaviour in front of the adventures on the stage suggested the practice of 'open structure' of the play for the eventual intervention of the public. Step by step, in the actors and in the directors was growing a basic conviction about the fundamental truth of theatre events, that the essence of theatre as phenomenon is in the relationship between stage and audience, even if the audience is composed of children.

In general theatre with such a limited presence in the life of the child was completely dependent on the school timetable (according to the stated curriculum, theatre had to take place but only in extra-school activities). Theatrical activity had one of the two possible forms:

- a) the occasional prepared performance (theatre 'to do') or
- b) the rare visit to the theatre connected with the canon of literature study (theatre 'to see').<sup>7</sup>

Obviously, this activity was educative, but only as an illustration of the fundamental methodology of teaching and its content or as the main manifestation of outward cultural activity of a particular school.

Another source of 'animation' consisted in the innovative research in education about new methodologies and the role of the media. The biggest achievements in this field were represented by the members of the 'Movimento Cooperazione Educativa'<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Cf. E. GARI, Un'esperienza nuova ed emozionante, in "Sipario" 289-290 (1970) 82.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. GIACCHE', Diario, 42.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. history of the MCE reported by FONTANA, OTTOLENGHI, Teatro e', 1-57; E. CASINI-ROPA, L'animazione teatrale e la rivista <<Cooperazione Educativa>>, in "Biblioteca Teatrale"

and their successive experiments in introducing new methodologies of teaching. Although they started as Celestin Freinet's followers, in the course of years they developed their own practices, compatible with contemporary developments in Italian research and practice.<sup>9</sup> The MCE in this revolutionary time of 1968 formulated in a stronger way the necessity of the 'alternative' education, school, 'alternative' in confront of the state structure of education. In this particular time the theatre practitioners, with their own problems, confronted the school and child when the school itself was looking for something new. For the further development of problems connected with 'free expression', 'communication' and 'active teaching' inside the MCE, the meeting with the theatre practitioners was a decisive stimulus. The possibility of further development of extra-school activities allowed a return to renewed theories of the educational values of child play. As an activity for spare time, it must be planned as recreation time with all the possibilities of involvement for the liberty and creativity of child. From the methodological point of view it was important to design times and spaces, types and techniques of game and modes of assessment.<sup>10</sup>

---

10-11 (1974) 139-183. The MCE was founded in 1955 from the 'Cooperativa Tipografia e Scuola' (founded in 1951). The first period they dedicated to the study and diffusion of Freinet's theory and practice. Around 1964 new problems were studied, concerned with the place of sciences and maths in the curriculum. The next step in the researches and experimental practice was connected with the role of teacher and the social mission of the school. By this occasion exploded the whole range of problems with the 'free expression', new relationships between teachers and pupils. The contact with the new growing theatre movement of renovation stimulated further discussions about the teacher's place in education. In Summer 1969 the MCE took the first official relationship with Franco Passatore and Silvio Destefanis, following almost existing unofficial contacts since the beginning of the year.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. CASINI-ROPA, L'animazione, 139, 146.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. M. LUDOVICA, R. VARVELLI, Manuale del tempo libero. Brescia, La Scuola Editrice 1964, 13. For the same purpose was founded a special review called "Tempo sereno" (Serene time) which is existing even today with expanded name "Animazione ed Espressione. Tempo sereno"

The most interesting among the developments was the discovery of 'drama game' connected fundamentally with the theory of psychodrama of Jacob Moreno.<sup>11</sup>

### 2. 2. 2. 'Theatrical animation': its derivation, roots and Italian 'originality'

The new vision of education (i.e. organised use of spare time) included the purposes of extra school education, a total antithesis of the previously established bourgeois school, which in its turn brought about new techniques and methodologies in education. Among the educational innovations and characteristics of the new postulated culture (applied to the new education), there appeared one new term which became the focus of all new movements which explained the new techniques, methodologies, visions, activities etc. This new word was 'animation'.<sup>12</sup>

Fiorenzo Alfieri pointed to the theatre practitioners living their professional and artistic crisis as the stimulus and source of new ideas in the education world. Also Eugenia Casini-Ropa emphasised the decisive moment for 'animation' when the first practitioners understood the need to get in touch with the child in his/her school context.

The pioneers followed the fine example given by the French experience of 'houses of culture' ('maison de la culture') popular in the 1950s. The word 'animation' there was used to describe the whole style of work. 'Animation' has been understood as:

---

(Animation and expressivity. Serene time).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. MANTOVANI, Il giuoco, and the MCE confrontation with the problems of 'free expression'. Cf. FONTANA, OTTOLENGHI, Teatro e', 9.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Torino: la capitale, 48; also cf. CASINI ROPA, L'animazione, 139.

a) Anything which enables the meeting, the understanding, communication-relationship between the audience and any event cultural and/or artistic (the classic 'animation');

b) The relationship arising during the preparation of any cultural event, between the producer and the potential audience (research 'animation');

c) Any stimulating action, which happens inside the group/collective and enables spontaneity and creativity both for the whole group, and for single members (creative 'animation').<sup>13</sup> The last form was particularly close to the protagonists of Italian 'theatrical animation'.<sup>14</sup>

Since the beginning of its history, 'animation' has had its predominant expression as 'theatrical animation'; firstly and mainly, 'animation' has been realised as theatre activity, theatrical education, as involvement in a large gamut of theatrical techniques and theatrical language in the new educational movements.<sup>15</sup> The real, national career of 'theatrical animation' started during 6th International Festival of Theatre for Children in Venice (1968), where the workshop and results of 'animation' in Beinasco was presented. The group of children under the guidance of Remo Rostagno and Sergio Liberovici became famous.

In the first attempts to describe the theoretical background of 'theatrical animation' events, authors returned to some of the theories and practices from the

---

<sup>13</sup> Cf. R. ROSTAGNO, B. PELLEGRINI, Guida all'animazione. Milano, Fabbri Editori 1978, 234.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. L. PERISSINOTTO, Percorsi di formazione in Italia: Teatro/Scuola/Teatro... (part of unpublished manuscript Il teatro) (Archive TL).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. MORTEO, PERISSINOTTO, L'animazione, 18.

past.<sup>16</sup> It is possible to observe four historical and theoretical roots of 'theatrical animation'.

The first one was the theory of proletarian theatre of children presented by philosopher and theatre researcher Walter Benjamin.<sup>17</sup> In Benjamin's theory there was no place for the adult theatre for children, because only children's play made by children could be truly communicative for another child. So, theatre of children became useful as a stimulus for the imagination and education process of child audiences, already active during the performance and active in many types of collaboration with their colleagues-actors. The final statement from Program for a proletarian theatre of children

"When adults are performing for children, what is coming out is stupid."<sup>18</sup>

became for Italian activists the main and fundamental proof of the validity of their 'theatrical animation' in forms of children's theatre for children and adults.

The second root derived from the educational, theatrical practice of Asya Lacis realised during and in the years after the October Revolution.<sup>19</sup> Authoress,

---

<sup>16</sup> First of all was published W. BENJAMIN, Programma per un teatro proletario di bambini, in "Quaderni Piacentini" 38 (1969) (July) 147-151 and in A. LACIS, Professione: rivoluzionaria. Milano, Feltrinelli 1976, 83-89. Antonio Santoni Rugiu prepared and published J. MORENO, Il teatro della spontaneità. Rimini-Firenze, Guarnaldi Editore 1973.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. W. BENJAMIN, Contro un teatro autoritario, in "Sipario" 289-290 (1970) 11 and: SCABIA, CASINI-ROPA, L'animazione, 42. Walter Benjamin's notes came from the Program for proletarian theatre of children written in 1927 and based on the Marxist theory of education as a liberation of the child for a new, fully conscious and responsible social life. The notes presented a corner stone for Italian theatrical animation and were called 'testo sacro' (holy text) for the philosophical explanation of the possible extension of class struggle into the child world oppressed by adults and by the capitalist and bourgeois educational system.

<sup>18</sup> BENJAMIN, Contro, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. memories in LACIS, Professione.

working in the experimental school in Orel, in post-revolution situation, she involved theatre games in the educational process, starting from the basic conviction that theatre could awake and form the children, for the development of their aesthetic education, cultural activities and morality. In improvisation children could experience various adventures and be happy at the end of successful work. But - according to the principles of socialist education both, moral and political - this should be done in a group (collective). Meanwhile the spirit of revolution should stimulate in children the desire to demonstrate their work for other people, first children and then adults. This kind of activity must be free of adults' influence:

"There wasn't imposed or inculcated any ideology; they (children) appropriated only those elements which were compatible with and confirmed by their own experience."<sup>20</sup>

For Lacis, the most important value of that particular children's activity, was the true children's theatre FOR other children, made with the same language and communicative in all its aspects. Her main worry was about the ideologically correct moral, aesthetic and cultural development of the child and she favoured the practice of improvised children's theatre over the traditional, bourgeois school theatre, because

"When - for example - the bourgeois children are playing the theatre, they have every time the result as a target: the presentation, the appearance in front of the public. In such way, the joy of doing through playing is going to be lost."<sup>21</sup>

The third root of 'theatrical animation' included the 'free theatre' of children in the educational experience of Céléstin Freinet.<sup>22</sup> The idea of 'free theatre' of children

---

<sup>20</sup> A. LACIS, Giocare al teatro improvvisando, in "La Ribalta" 4 (1979) 5.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. FONTANA, OTTOLENGHI, Teatro e', 2-11 and CASINI-ROPA, L'animazione, 140-142.

could be describe in terms of three successive stages:<sup>23</sup>

a) the group of children (class) is able to invent and to produce (thanks to their natural creativity) all elements of a future and possible performance;

b) the basic material for this process could be play-project including the individual efforts of children; the leading technique of execution (performance) should be improvisation, in which children could feel free to act, to express their needs and sensations. The improvisation and well-constructed play project could ensure the possible changes for further performances;

c) the children's theatre - according to the ideological and philosophical principles of Freinet - should be an expression of social context in which the school (class) is operating; the fruit of the community work on theatre performance should provoke further ideological discussion and stimulate the growth of the collective conscious.

The first manifestations of 'theatrical animation' were strongly inspired by the educational ideas of Freinet about the social, environmental involvement of the school. The activities should be and were far from the laboratory situations of theoreticians, but were rooted in the real life of children and - where there was an audience - of the public.

Maybe the direct suggestions of Freinet about the children's theatre were few, but 'theatrical animation' in its whole complexity, used the most popular and common techniques proposed by Freinet (e. g. print, school or class journal, graphics). Also the role of teacher, as a stimulator of the child's own creativity and spontaneity, was

---

<sup>23</sup> Cf. F. ALFIERI, Il 'teatro libero' di Freinet, in "La Ribalta" 4 (1979) 5 and IDEM, Le tecniche del teatro nella pedagogia di Freinet, in "Cooperazione Educativa" 20 (1971) 11-12.

inspired by Freinet's own example of a teacher, politically and social involved and immersed with his ideas and projects in the real life of children and their families.

The fourth root was the 'theatre of spontaneity' and psychology of Jacob Moreno.<sup>24</sup> His psychodrama became the psychological basic theory for all kinds of actions which were presented in the large movement towards the new education. His theory gave answers to fundamental questions: how is it possible to pass from spontaneity to creativity? how could we train, teach, learn creativity? what are the inner tensions during the spontaneous group work?<sup>25</sup>

The vocabulary of 'theatrical animation' contained many new words with their own educational meaning. They adopted definitions from the psychology and theory of psychodrama by Moreno.<sup>26</sup> Among them, one fundamental new structure was to combine 'spontaneity and training' and 'spontaneity and technique'. As Moreno explained, this was not contradictory (as it seems at the beginning), but between those two structure does exist a long process which should happen in education or - more precisely for Moreno's therapeutic activity - in psycho- or social-therapy. Human creativity has its own starting-point in spontaneity; but more interesting for Moreno was to investigate and to experience, how it could be possible to get to a systematic vision of training to be spontaneous, to have spontaneity.

---

<sup>24</sup> Cf. MANTOVANI, Il giuoco, 111ff. The theory and practice of psychodrama by Moreno, have been used just in the theorisation of drama-play by Elsa Mantovani. But the real Italian knowledge and success of Moreno's statements happened with the 'theatrical animation' activities and the publication of his works. Cf. E. RUSSO (ed.), Walter Benjamin, Asya Lacis, Jacob L. Moreno e Freinet: un contributo al "teatro dei ragazzi", in "La Ribalta" 4 (1979) 4 and J. L. MORENO, L'addestramento alla spontaneita', in "La Ribalta" 4 (1979) 5.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. the questions analysed by G. BARTOLUCCI, Per un gesto "teatrale" dei ragazzi, in BARTOLUCCI (ed.), Il teatro, 11-12.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. MORENO, L'addestramento.

The ideas and guidelines of those authors became a moral and theoretical base for the attempt to create in the way of 'theatrical animation' the real THEATRE OF CHILDREN and FOR CHILDREN, fully educative, artistic and involved in the social life. Just as at the time of publication in the latest 1960s, those texts were directed to the educators, cultural activists who were interested in the authentic search for the independent, child culture, search for genuine children's theatre, free of commercialisation, of adults' interests and positively creative.

### **2. 2. 3. The multiple challenge of 'animation'.**

The main thrust of the cultural activity of this new culture was in education. The existing traditional and state education system had been interpreted as an instrument of reproduction of bourgeois society with the traditional class oppression. That situation was favourable for the struggle of classes. It continued to promote the pragmatic style of education, useful for this kind of capitalistic society and state which Italy of the 1960s had become.<sup>27</sup> Teachers who were politically and culturally active, faced the challenge of educating the children from the new society of mixed cultural derivation. It seemed that 'animation' could be a total project able to resolve all the educational problems and many teachers adopted it as the way of working.

The professional theatre was closed within its own structures, formal in activity and it was a product of the cultural elite'. In practice theatre was distant from the large popular society and it could not offer anything for the new inhabitants of the cities.<sup>28</sup> The real challenge which the 'theatrical animation' faced was to reach the new

---

<sup>27</sup> Cf. MORTEO, PERISSINOTTO, *L'animazione*. There were very popular the ideas of Paolo Freire' and of Frankfurt School about the radical changes of school structure.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *I Quaderni del Teatro Stabile della Citta' di Torino*. Milano, Ed. Mursia 1972. The whole

audience, both in the way of renovated structure, and through the new theatrical languages.<sup>29</sup>

Theatrical language allowed the new audience to be reached and to be involved in the activity. Theatre done in the classroom, in the corridor, in the school yard was presenting itself as 'manifestation', multivoice speech, invitation to a common game; it was the invitation to take part in it and not to watch it as a product. In 'theatrical animation' the base was 'theatre', but accompanied by pictures, music, photography, newspaper, radio it became a whole complex of techniques.

'Theatrical animation' born as a result of the aspiration of both theatre and school, and existing in child communities of popular quarters and small, rural-industrial towns, became the main instrument of battle on the cultural field guided by Italian left-wing parties. It had to be the alternative culture against bourgeois, consumptive and mass culture.<sup>30</sup> Funding was available and so were venues, especially where the left-wing opposition was winning local elections. City councils created special departments for education, culture, sport, tourism and all those were proclaiming 'animation' as the main form of their activity. 'Animation' slowly was evolving into an institutionalised form of cultural activity and the new professional group of 'animators' emerged.

#### **2. 2. 4. Pioneers of 'theatrical animation' and their first activities.**

---

publication has been dedicated to the first attempts of 'theatrical animation' and to the 'decentralisation' of theatre activity.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. BARTOLUCCI, *Per un gesto*, 12-13.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. F. PASSATORE, *Storie di animazione. Un animatore che viene dal teatro*, in "Scena" 3-4 (1978) 91-93 and SCABIA, *Un teatro*, 39-41.

In the first, historical period (1967-1975), 'theatrical animation' presented itself as a movement with several aspects and methodologies, as diverse and as rich as the imagination and creativity of its participants. However, the majority of artistic - educative activities in this period could be systemised in five lines of development<sup>31</sup> and each of those has its own founding 'fathers' - practitioners and usually first theoreticians. Loredana Perissinotto enumerated them as follows:

1. Stories and problems of children presented by adult animators or theatre groups;
2. Spectacles organised with children as theatre - festival (Franco Passatore and his group 'Theatre-Game-Life');
3. 'Empty schemes' for further theatre actions with the leading role of director (Giuliano Scabia);
4. Theatre created by children (Remo Rostagno and several teachers-animators);
5. Dramatised meetings (various forms of psychodrama, sociodrama, concentration exercises).

In a short time 'theatrical animation' as a cultural, educational and social phenomenon, became the subject of research, university courses, and publications. In the following years several meetings, congresses, seminars took place and many local and community 'animation' schools were founded.

The majority of historians of 'theatrical animation' recognised the work of Remo Rostagno and Sergio Liberovici in a small town near Turin, called Beinasco, in

---

<sup>31</sup> Cf. L. PERISSINOTTO, Note per una storia, in: G. R. MORTEO, L. PERISSINOTTO, L. MAMPRIN, Tre Dialoghi sull'Animazione. Roma, Bulzoni 1977, 125.

1967 as its first mature form.<sup>32</sup> They, both teachers from the elementary school together with pupils from one class, investigated the history of their town, of their individual families and of their factories. The theme was proposed by an all boys class and the methodology was negotiated in the class group. Rostagno, being a member of 'Movimento di Cooperazione Educativa',<sup>33</sup> used his knowledge and experience of the techniques of Freinet.

The whole activity was divided into three stages:

a) use of photography to record the most important elements of town life, to investigate the changes; at this stage the basics of photography were introduced;

b) first collation of the results, including discussions of how they could be used, what techniques were used to take pictures, and of the content of the photographs; the first draft of 'didascalia' (stage direction) explaining the photos. The teacher by recording meetings, gathered material confirming the boys' interest in this kind of activity;

c) from the chosen photos which were enlarged, an exhibition showing as faithfully as possible, the past and present of Beinasco, was composed.

During the third stage, the desire for a written scenario for the exhibition emerged in discussion and at one moment the proposal to devise and present an

---

<sup>32</sup> Cf. description written by R. ROSTAGNO, Beinasco (To) e Collegno (To): Scuole elementari, in "Sipario" 289-290 (1970) 48-62; R. ROSTAGNO, S. LIBEROVICI, "Un Paese..." (Fotospettacolo a staffetta pensato, fatto, scritto e detto dai bambini della 5a elementare maschile di Beinasco), in "Sipario" 289-290 (1970) 50-61. In 1972 they published a book a description of the whole experience, with documents of the local education authority and the introduction by Gianni Rodari about the educative value of the Beinasco experiment. Cf. S. LIBEROVICI, R. ROSTAGNO, Un paese. Esperienze di drammaturgia infantile. Firenze, La Nuova Italia 1972.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. history of the Movement presented by FONTANA, OTTOLENGHI, Teatro e' and CASINI-ROPA, L'animazione.

exhibition using short scenes to illustrate the photos was born. It resulted in the extension of the aim of the activity into the fourth stage: theatrical.

Rostagno, the class teacher and Liberovici, the teacher of music, using dialogues, poetry and comments written by the boys, dramatised them and together with the pupils they prepared the 'spectacle - comment - relay' composed of 21 photos and scenes. It was presented during the patron festival of Beinasco and soon was well known in Piedmont and after the Festival in Venice it became the model for several similar activities.<sup>34</sup>

Rostagno and Liberovici used theatrical elements to improve their teaching methodology, but even they discovered the value of interdisciplinary work of teachers which became the dream of other teacher-animators and the main objective of theatrical animation. Their successive works were based on data from the child's life, from their environment and the usual games. The new methodology presented an alternative to the omnipresent book culture in the school life.

Franco Passatore and Silvio Destefanis devised in 1969 a 'spectacle' for children from junior school about understanding history.<sup>35</sup> Even though it was a kind of theatre for children, the style of quiz and stimulated discussion after the performance, announced a new approach to the child audience. During one of the several runs of the play, they faced a different class, who were very spontaneous and

---

<sup>34</sup> Cf. R. ROSTAGNO, Da Beinasco a Collegno, in "Sipario" 289-290 (1970) 62; R. ROSTAGNO, Storie di animazione. Interrogativi come tappe, in "Scena" 3-4 (1978) 93-94.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. F. PASSATORE, S. DESTEFANIS, Torino: Scuole elementari e medie. Assessorato all'Istruzione (1969-70), in "Sipario" 289-290 (1970) 12-37. It included descriptions and scenarios of their three productions: Ma che storia e' questa?, Ippopotami e cocodrilli and Un mattino che si chiama teatro.

critical during the discussion which followed the performance. Amongst the first comments was this, announced by Claudio, boy from the class of Alfieri and Ridolfi:

"This play shouldn't be presented entirely by actors. There should be improvisations made by us, children instead of them."<sup>36</sup>

The close collaboration between actors and teachers (Fiorenzo Alfieri and Daria Ridolfi from 'Nino Costa' School) started after Ma che storia e' questa?.

Also two teachers of this class explained to Passatore and Destefanis the basics of their innovative and experimental methodology of teaching.<sup>37</sup> Both parts of the events, theatre group and the class (with the teachers, Alfieri and Ridolfi) proposed the next meeting about the play and teaching-learning through theatre. Children showed themselves very interested in how the theatre worked and how they could 'show something', and since this moment Passatore and Destefanis realised that their style of theatre must change: no longer theatre for children but theatre with them. In the next performances, in different schools and classes, actors eliminated the quiz-form with prizes, giving larger space to the children's interventions, questions and improvisations based on any possible stimulus coming out of the play. The Ma che storia e' questa? changed radically and signalled the new style of children's theatre.<sup>38</sup>

In the course of the next two years, Passatore and Destefanis, joined by Ave Fontana and Flavia De Lucis, founded a group of teacher-animators called

---

<sup>36</sup> FONTANA, OTTOLENGHI, Teatro e', 10:

"Questo spettacolo non dovrebbe essere fatto tutto dagli attori.  
Dovrebbero esserci improvvisate di noi bambini, sul posto li', farle li'."

<sup>37</sup> Cf. CASINI-ROPA, L'animazione, 146; also FONTANA, OTTOLENGHI, Teatro e', 10.

<sup>38</sup> The first experiences were described and published in Il lavoro teatrale nella scuola. Quaderni di "Cooperazione Educativa" 5-6. Firenze, La Nuova Italia 1970.

'Teatro-Gioco-Vita' (Theatre-Game-Life) and they guided various 'theatrical animations' in 50 schools of Turin.<sup>39</sup> In their methodology were two main goals:

1. to realise the chosen theme in accordance with the needs of pupils,
2. to present their 'theatrical animation' style to other teachers.

They used the following techniques:

- a. contact technique with the class group;
- b. socialisation techniques in class group;
- c. liberation of spontaneity;
- d. logical succession in educative games;
- e. liberation from stereotypes and conditions;
- f. transformation of objects and use of fantasy;
- g. techniques of environmental research;
- h. concentration techniques through rhythm, sound and pantomime exercises;
- i. techniques of involvement and collective work,
- j. techniques of interpersonal, social communication.

The last one was considered as the main task of all activities based on free expression of the child. The Group 'Teatro-Gioco-Vita', despite the usual work for the schools, prepared also workshops for teachers.

This model, although it demanded the voluntary presence of the child at all times, was used even during the extra-school activities. However, Passatore, supported by his colleagues and teachers from the 'Movimento Cooperazione Educativa', desired a change of the whole image of school: from the oppressive, 'non-loved' structure into a place of joy, games and willing study in accordance with

---

<sup>39</sup> Cf. CASINI-ROPA, L'animazione, 149-155.

the natural inclination of the child for group play. At the same time, school - teachers and pupils - could become a community centre of culture, open for consultation about local problems and looking for their solutions through communicative forms.<sup>40</sup>

From a different origin, not theatre for school, but adult theatre world, Giuliano Scabia,<sup>41</sup> director and actor of City Theatre in Turin (Teatro Stabile), started his longlife and significant activities. He, together with Pierantonio Barbieri and Loredana Perissinotto, formed a group called 'Gruppo di Ricerca' (Research Group) and they began their activities in November 1970.<sup>42</sup>

This project followed 'Teatro Stabile' from 1969-1970,<sup>43</sup> had actively sought new audiences instead of waiting for the public to come into the theatre building. The activity was called 'Operazione Decentramento' ('Operation Decentralisation') and was based on many European examples of 'open-theatre', 'experimental theatre' and the task was: to reach the new, working class community in its own environment and after that, to find, and design a theatre corresponding to real city life.<sup>44</sup> The whole city has been divided in four districts of cultural and theatrical animation with the

---

<sup>40</sup> Cf. PASSATORE, Storie, 91-93; FONTANA, OTTOLENGHI, Teatro e', 15. Passatore declared his theatrical derivation and connected with this the motive of deeper theatrical research for children's theatre. But, as it happened, they, Passatore and Destefanis, actors, became a living stimulus for educational researches about the relationship in the school, in the human group.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. his earlier publication indicated his theatrical background in G. SCABIA, Nello spazio del teatro, in "Teatro" 2 (1967) 35ff and article about his career by M. DE MARINIS, Teatro, pratica e scrittura: itinerario di Giuliano Scabia, in "Rivista Italiana di Drammatizzazione" 5 (1977) 61-95.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. description written by SCABIA, Un teatro, 39-41 and G. SCABIA, L. PERISSINOTTO, P. BARBIERI, Torino. Scuola Elementare Novaro: Decentramento - Teatro Stabile (1970), in "Sipario" 289-290 (1970) 38-43.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. I Quaderni del Teatro Stabile della Città di Torino. In 1967 was the first Italian meeting of theatre avant-garde groups in Ivrea followed by the first conference dedicated to the modern theatre.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. MORTEO, PERISSINOTTO, L'animazione, 19.

particular attention to the popular, new created quarters. The task was to introduce the inhabitants into the project, to get them involved and through the theatre, doing now, in their presence, provoke discussions about their problems taking real consciousness of several problems in such big city. Theatre was coming to the potential audience with help and this met full understanding and support of the receivers. But, unfortunately, and despite such positive response, the initiative seemed to be alarming and disturbing the city authorities and was interrupted.

Scabia and his group made contact with some schools from one of the poorest quarter, Corso Taranto (the inhabitants used to call it 'dormitory and prison'). They planned and guided workshops in extra-school time. During the first stage they established relationships with children, and in the second stage, the work became more theatrical with the purpose of making puppets - giants, in order to transform popular fables. Those 'empty schemes' were filled by children's imagination and life observation. The prepared spectacle was a caricature of many problems in the quarter and as happened in previous cases of 'theatrical animation', the performance stimulated further debate.

Although Scabia created an alternative form of education, he remained faithful to the theatre. His style of 'theatrical animation' was more 'theatrical' than others. He, together with his collaborators, lead several courses and workshops for teachers.<sup>45</sup>

In 1973 Scabia worked in a psychiatric hospital and there, in a very different environment, he emphasised the humble, servant function of 'theatrical animation'.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Cf. G. SCABIA, Quattordici azioni per quattordici giorni. Laboratorio. Descrizione di un esperimento, in "Biblioteca Teatrale" 2 (1971) 58-84 and IDEM, Teatro in tempo pieno. Laboratorio aperto con gli adulti, in "Biblioteca Teatrale" 5 (1972) 153-167.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. IDEM, Il gran teatro di Marco Cavallo, in "Sipario" 4(323) (1973) 13-16.

The form of theatre elaborated in the close collaboration with children, became a pattern for many theatre groups in the next years. He underlined the values of liberated imagination, the capacity to create the world of dreams and fable, and in this way to show everyday life.

## 2. 3. EVOLUTION OF 'CHILDREN'S THEATRE': FROM ANIMATION EXPERTS INTO PROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL THEATRE (THEATRICAL MOVEMENT OF THE 1970S)

When theatrical animation was born, as the common child of both theatrical and educational parents, it started to grow up very rapidly and to be known especially through its major manifestations, performances, actions which really changed the face of children's theatre in Italy.<sup>1</sup> All the pioneers of theatrical animation were realising successive activities based on previous experiences, observations and inputs given by children and teachers. Animation took the road of its own evolution.

Soon, after the first theatrical animation events, theatre experts began to raise questions about its impact on traditional theatre FOR children and - as it progressed - about the nature of this new theatre FOR, WITH or OF children.<sup>2</sup> Gianni Rodari, analysing the experience made by the team of Rostagno and Liberovici, raised

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. opinion of ROSTAGNO, PELLEGRINI, Un teatro-scuola, 1975 7-8; cf. relative descriptions of the activities in bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. G. RODARI, Scuola, teatro e societa', in LIBEROVICI, ROSTAGNO, Un paese, x-xi. The questions about the child place within the new theatre models exposed G. R. MORTEO, Teatro dei e per ragazzi, in: MORTEO, PERISSINOTTO, MAMPRIN, Tre Dialoghi, 83-89, but first presented at the congress "Convegno Teatro e Ragazzi" in June 1973, in Milan.

questions about the uniqueness of such theatrical actions, about its immediate influence on the theatre for children and about the validity of other possible new or renewed methods of children's theatre, like fable, adventure, puppets. It was obvious that the children's theatre in the diversity of theatrical animation would be in opposition against the traditional theatre FOR children offered by the adult theatre, or - as it became common to call it - by the bourgeois theatre.<sup>3</sup> The new theatre would be based on progress, on democracy, on a revolution both in education and in culture. Walter Garagnani in his analysis of theatrical animation emphasised the ideological and political character of children's theatre at this time.<sup>4</sup>

### 2. 3. 1. Innovations of theatre FOR children and decentralisation

Within their established structures, some amongst the city theatres (*teatri stabili*)<sup>5</sup> were introducing new educational policies based on observations of the child audience and supported by the local educational authorities.<sup>6</sup> Obviously, the

---

<sup>3</sup> Cf. observation about the new theatre in general written by M. BONGIOANNI, Giochiamo al teatro. Dalla invenzione drammatica al teatro espressivo. Leumann (Torino), Elle Di Ci 1977, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. W. GARAGNANI, Un decennio di animazione teatrale, in G. M. BERTIN (ed.), L'educazione estetica. Firenze, La Nuova Italia Editrice 1978, 124-144.

<sup>5</sup> 'Teatro Stabile' usually was a city theatre, with its own building, own theatre personnel, subsidised by the city council funding. The majority of performances were prepared and presented by its own theatre company with the possibility of spectacles offered by the touring groups.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Lo spot dei ragazzi (Teatro Nuovo Mondo, Teatro Stabile di Genova, Teatro Stabile di Torino per i ragazzi nel 1970), in "Sipario" - Speciale: Il Teatro dei Ragazzi, in "Sipario" 289-290 (1970) (maggio-giugno) 6-7. 'Teatro Nuovo Mondo' in Rome presented itself as the 'research group for dramaturgy for children and theatrical expression of the 'New World'. They began their new activity in November 1969 looking at the

"(...) children's theatrical instinct included in their games as pure as the primitive theatre (...)"

"I bambini hanno istinto teatrale, i loro giochi hanno tutta la purezza del

successive step was towards closer collaboration with 'theatrical animation' and the creation of specialised theatre groups for education.

The 1969/1970 theatrical season especially in two city theatres, in Genua and Turin, was full of proposals and initiatives.<sup>7</sup> 'Teatro Stabile' in Genua offered six different plays with the possibility of visiting backstage in the theatre. The theatre authorities were well aware of the importance of close collaboration with the educational authorities and with the innovative forces within the schools. They made suggestions to devise more special plays for children based on teachers' input and proposals. As post-performance activity they proposed further class work (letters, drawings, discussions, essays etc.) as the child's response to the spectacle.

The 'Teatro Stabile' in Turin presented a more mature and richer proposal. Since its foundation in 1955 it was operated in the city with a particular interest in the young audience and schools.<sup>8</sup> The beginning was well in line with the conception of 'Art in Education'; theatre as a complex arts form revealed its educational values for culture and society. Theatre was interested in offering the several possibilities of cultural and artistic immersion for children and youngsters with the goal of new entertainment and participation in an cultural and community 'adventure of spectacle'. A special, mixed committee 'theatre - school' existed in order to promote better organisation of theatre presence among the schools.<sup>9</sup> 'Comitato Teatro - Scuola' was

---

teatro primitivo (...)"

and with refusal of the spectacle form in the favour of 'open performance' with dialogue with the child.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. information published in quoted presentation Lo spot dei ragazzi, 6-7.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Teatro Stabile di Torino. 13a stagione di attivita' per le scuole, in "Sipario" 289-290 (1970) 99.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. ibidem.

composed of the representatives of the theatre, of the local educational authorities and some of the schools. Their work consisted in: discussing the programmes, presenting the special demands, organising course for teachers, special performances for school and young audience. In 1969, based on the committee's suggestions and previous experiences of the teacher Franco Santofilippo, 'Teatro Stabile' entrusted the writing of a special play for children to the children of one class. During the next season, 1970, the special theatre group, collaborated with the whole class to give theatrical life to the written proposal. The team was composed of the director, the actor and the prop-designer. They used written text, recorded observations and indications for the final scenario and drawings as a base for scenery/props. All this work gave life to the play La citta' degli animali (Animals' city) and to the first, theatrical group devoted to education, still belonging to the city theatre, 'Teatro del Sole' (Theatre of the Sun). It was the part of the 'Operazione Decentramento' ('Operation Decentralisation'), devised by Gian Renzo Morteo and Edda Fagni. But as the 'Gruppo di Ricerca' (Scabia, Perissinotto, Barbieri) was working in the schools, in the city quarters, the second group, under the leadership of Carlo Formigoni, was preparing the theatrical performance within the established theatre structure.

With the 'Operazione Decentramento', 'Gruppo di Ricerca' and further theatrical investments in education, 'Teatro Stabile' in Turin became one of the most important institutions of children's theatre and young people's theatre in Italy.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Cf. FONTANA, OTTOLENGHI, Teatro e', 24; ROSTAGNO, PELLEGRINI, Guida, 235; "Teatro" (Numero speciale), Un'esperienza di decentramento torinese in una grande citta' industriale, in "Teatro" 2 (1970); TEATRO STABILE DI TORINO - Settore Ragazzi, Educazione attraverso il teatro. Atti del convegno. Milano, Emme Edizioni 1979. They organised many courses and seminars for teachers, published books dedicated to the 'children theatre' and organised congresses.

### 2. 3. 2. First 'theatrical animations' and 'theatre' within them.

Although Rostagno and Liberovici started with an innovative methodology of teaching, soon in the course of their activity, the necessity to communicate the accumulated knowledge emerged. Subsequently theatre was born, as a possible form of presentation, of communication.<sup>11</sup> The children suggested the theatrical form as the most adequate to their needs which were provoked by the active teaching/learning method. Theatre in its basic form - improvisation - became during the work and due to the establishing of structure and content, dramatisation. Theatrical resources served as a vehicle for the transmission of information and knowledge, for the denunciation of problems, for stimulating reflection and discussion. The particular form of theatrical animation - children's theatre - devised by Rostagno and Liberovici was a 'theatre of document' based on contestation: challenging the traditional school, traditional methodology of teaching and learning and contesting the social reality in which this particular children's theatre happened.<sup>12</sup> What happened at this time, and later became popular as a methodology, was a theatrical intervention in the reality. It was made by children in accordance with their observation, their understanding but without their acceptance of this reality. This gave birth to a children's theatre of protest and contestation. Passatore and Destefanis, both theatre practitioners, felt and payed attention to the existing split between actors and audience, to the passivity of the audience.<sup>13</sup> It was even present in the traditional theatre FOR children. They, the

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf. LIBEROVICI, ROSTAGNO, Un paese, 14-29.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. analysis and opinion written by RODARI, Scuola, teatro e societa', ix.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. suggestion about Passatore's reasons of the new way of doing theatre for children, written by GARAGNANI, Un decennio, 136.

actors, wanted to defeat this negative distance and wanted theatre to become a co-operative event. It was their intention to get away from the adult audience, so accustomed to the non-participant role. As practitioners they desired to explore new possibilities of theatre as a communicative instrument, involved in social change, creating new interpersonal relationships.<sup>14</sup>

In this way, Passatore and Destefanis, having conserved their theatrical background, transformed themselves into educators, and theatre co-created by them with children became the occasion for the child's self-manifestation of his/her personality. The use of theatrical techniques was subordinated to the child's natural needs and demands as they became evident and to the political-ideological convictions of the practitioners.

Next after the first Ma che storia e' questa? new, completely improvised theatrical events, were born. These were *ad hoc* dramatisations, taking inspiration from the child's personal stories. That was a real 'life-theatre', unique, unrepeatable, made with children and about their lived life. Passatore emphasised:

"The moments in which we were reaching the interchange and the realisation of our relationship, were provided by the dramatisations improvised on a historical theme proposed from the little story told by the child."<sup>15</sup>

Both Passatore and Destefanis enlarged the conception of children's theatre. It ceased to be FOR them and became OF them, became a unique moment of total human

---

<sup>14</sup> Cf. PASSATORE, Storie, 91.

<sup>15</sup> F. PASSATORE, S. DESTEFANIS, Ma che storia e' questa?, in "Sipario" 289-290 (1970) 17:  
"Le drammatizzazioni improvvisate sul tema storico proposto dalla storiella del ragazzo erano i momenti in cui piu' che in ogni altro raggiungevamo lo scambio e la realizzazione del nostro rapporto."

expression, a part of their life. Theatre as theatrical animation would give back to the child the possibility of expression, of self-manifestation in the reality dominated by adults.<sup>16</sup> Theatre with its richness of resources, could become the biggest help in this self-presentation of the child.

Scabia with the 'Gruppo di Ricerca' was emphasising that the children were the real authors of the theatrical event, they were writing, designing, projecting using the schemes provided by practitioners, learning the necessary skills.<sup>17</sup> The methodology of big 'empty schemes' (structures) was invented by Scabia, adopted to the first theatrical animation with children and developed in course of his activity. The theatre people knew theatre, its forms, techniques and possibilities; to the child was left the freedom of realisation, of presentation of his/her own affairs, of his/her world. The theatrical way in which child is doing this, is the best one, the most real.<sup>18</sup>

Theatrical animation realised by children with Scabia and his companions, was no longer a 'text - play' created by adults for children, in schools, but it was the theatre born within the school, within the city quarter and it was the theatre of children.

### **2. 3. 3. 'Children's theatre' groups**

Theatrical animation started a real revolution within the two environments - educational and theatrical - which created it. In the latter sector the subsequent changes were more significant, provocative and stimulative for the other children's theatre practitioners. During the next few years first attempts developed and grew

---

<sup>16</sup> Cf. PASSATORE, DESTEFANIS, *Il lavoro teatrale*, 48; CASINI-ROPA, *L'animazione*, 148.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. description written by GARAGNANI, *Un decennio*, 140-143.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. SCABIA, *Un teatro*, 41.

through successive performances to become mature, well-known phenomena not only within the children's theatre but in the Italian new theatre in general.

The whole process could be called 'the passage from theatre to theatricality'.<sup>19</sup> from theatre FOR children, still working within the 'theatre - institution', through the whole adaptation process of theatrical elements made by innovative teaching-learning methodologies. First attempts were tentative. Later on with the incredible impetus of theatrical animation, specialised, full-professional groups, of actors, and directors, mature forms were developed. The theatre practitioners were sensitive to the personal needs of children and worked only for them, for schools, for education. It was no longer only 'theatre' spectacles, but it was the 'theatricality' of the whole activity. The atmosphere of 'theatricality' was important. There the child and the education were central. The forms were different, changing, evolving in accordance with the needs, demands and situation, but the language was the same: theatrical. Through this main characteristic - language - the whole gamut of children's theatre presented a real challenge to the cultural world. All this movement was in the service of education.

An important role in this evolution 'theatre - theatricality', was played by courses for animators<sup>20</sup> and meetings and conferences,<sup>21</sup> but first of all by the formation and exceptional activity of theatre groups.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Cf. name/expression used by ROSTAGNO, PELLEGRINI, Un teatro-scuola, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. FONTANA, OTTOLENGHI, Teatro e', 21-24; the courses organised by 'Teatro Stabile' in Turin composed from the theory and practice (lessons given by Giuseppe Bartolucci, Marco Bongioanni and workshops by Loredana Perissinotto, Carlo Formigoni).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. FONTANA, OTTOLENGHI, Teatro e', 23-24. Earlier I mentioned the conferences organised in Turin and in Venice. The very big national conference was organised in Aquila (31 May - 2 June 1971) as the 3rd Convegno <Scuola e Teatro> with the presence of some historic figure (i.e. Luigi Volpicelli) and several key-speeches and communications about the relationship 'theatre - school' in four-five years since the 'theatrical animation' boom.

\* **'Compagnia dei Burattini'**<sup>23</sup> ('Company of Puppets') from Turin was active since 1967 and performed plays for various audience (even for adults). In Summer 1970 it took part in a large project called 'Parchi Robinson' (Robinson Park) launched by the city council as a holiday scheme for the children from the poor stratum of Turin.<sup>24</sup> After a few performances the actors realised that the audience was paying full attention, but that they were somewhat reserved, they were merely tolerating the adult on stage. The spectacle was prepared for presentation to the children, but without previous confrontation with the audience. It was the main reason that there was no visible emotional contact between stage and audience. Joy appeared when the curtain was pulled down and the curious children could touch the puppets on the back-stage and play with them. The Company faced two alternatives: to continue the same style of performance, or to abandon the play and to give the puppets into the children's hands. The second possibility was chosen and radical change happened. From this moment the old spectacle was transformed into a kind of lesson and thanks to the child's imagination and the help of actors in the improvisations, the long lessons often finished with a new play, devised and performed by children - actors. In this way a

---

<sup>22</sup> I would rather present a few of them, these historical and methodologically most important for the further development and state of children's theatre today.

<sup>23</sup> The founder and director for many years was G. Moretti, one of the leading practitioners of puppetry in Italy.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Teatro dei burattini, in "Sipario" 289-290 (1970) 68-75; M. SERENELLINI, Per una nuova drammaturgia dei burattini, in "Sipario" 289-290 (1970) 70-75; G. R. MORTEO, Scuola e teatro, Scuola e teatro a Torino, in: F. ALFIERI, A. CANEVARO, F. De BIASE, G. SCABIA, L'attore culturale. L'animazione nella città alla prova dell'esperienza. Firenze, La Nuova Italia 1990, 119-121.

fundamental renewal occurred: performance, rather than being the starting point for the relationship with the audience, became the goal of this relationship.

For the theatre group the most important achievement was the awareness of the intensity of audience participation and that became the motive of the co-operative 'doing theatre': the attentive observation of the child, noticing the child's interest and further creation in accordance with the child's imagination and ideas<sup>25</sup>.

'Compagnia dei Burattini' started a new chapter in its history: drawing on the imagination and inventiveness of the children - who formed an active audience - and developing a puppet form of 'theatrical animation'. It was connected with the child's life and the Company in its activities was stimulating in the child a critical consciousness about the political and social reality.<sup>26</sup> The particular theatrical language of puppets was close to the child's play and was becoming a part of teaching methodology. In 1971 the Company was established in Turin under the new name 'Teatro dell'Angolo' ('Theatre on the Corner') and was completely involved in theatrical animation presenting performances based on fable and on stories invented by children.<sup>27</sup>

\* **'Gruppo Teatro-Gioco-Vita'** emerged from the pioneering activity of the duet Passatore - Destefanis.<sup>28</sup> After the initial Ma che storia e' questa and based on previous

---

<sup>25</sup> Cf. SERENELLINI, Per una nuova, 74.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. GARAGNANI, Un decennio, 130-131.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. ROSTAGNO, PELLEGRINI, Guida, 235.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. description of their first 'theatrical animation' in F. PASSATORE, S. DESTEFANIS, Centri di ricerca espressiva alle scuole Casati e Costa, in "Sipario" 289-290 (1970) 32-37 and in GRUPPO TEATRO-GIOCO-VITA, Io ero l'albero (tu il cavallo). Esperienze di gioco teatrale nella scuola condotte da Franco Passatore, Silvio Destefanis, Ave Fontana, Flavia De Lucis.

achievements, they prepared the Ippopotami e Cocodrilli as a part of holiday 'Parchi Robinson' (July - September 1969) in Turin. It was a theatrical space (a structure made from elements of scaffolding) within which on the various levels the child could move and create anything in accordance with the adopted principle of free expression. This model of theatrical animation full of play, fun and imagination was more evident as the re-discovery of the 'doing theatre' as playing, in Un mattino che si chiama teatro, using free interpretation, first individually, then as a group.<sup>29</sup>

In consequence, Passatore and his collaborators formulated the conception of 'spettacolazione' (doing spectacle) as the description of their form of 'theatrical animation'.<sup>30</sup> They produced a special definition:

'Spettacolazione': a theatrical action, improvised on a theme prepared by the animator, in which was provided a succession of logical moments of the whole action; rather than a preoccupation about technical problems, there was the idea of 'spettacolazione' as a stimulus to restore the creative possibilities of the child protected against inhibitions and stereotypes; 'spettacolazione' presented a different kind of adult presenting himself in front of the child.

During the Summer meeting of the MCE in Champorcher (June-July 1971) the group working on the free expression issues prepared a special document.<sup>31</sup> Passatore and Destefanis presented for the whole assembly their previous characteristic activities. There emerged a necessity to create their own, MCE's group

---

Rimini-Firenze, Guaraldi Editore 1972, 7-14.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. GRUPPO TEATRO-GIOCO-VITA, Io ero l'albero, 20-21.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. ibidem, 23.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. ibidem, 15-30. This kind of annual meeting called 'stage' was composed from theoretical and practical activities devised for teachers - members of the MCE.

of theatre or free expression. Passatore and his companions took the name composed from three words characterising their kind of theatrical animation: 'Teatro' (theatre) because the style comes from theatre and uses the theatrical language as the main vehicle of communication; 'Gioco' (play) for the natural child's activity which improvised and stimulated by the animator becomes the stimulus of creativity; 'Vita' (life) because this activity must be connected with the real life, must give the basis for a better transformed life.<sup>32</sup> Passatore gave the following definition of Gruppo:

"(...) Teatro - Gioco - Vita, a proposal made for people to play permanently and spontaneously their own theatre of life in one continuous possibility of exchange of roles, of situations, where each individual is an author and interpreter of himself and interlocutor of the other, where everybody is doing theatre (...)."<sup>33</sup>

In Autumn 1971 'Gruppo Teatro-Gioco-Vita' stopped working on a freelance basis<sup>34</sup> and signed a contract with the 'Piccolo Teatro' (Little Theatre) in Milan.<sup>35</sup> Passatore motivated this choice as the 'socialisation' of the work after the first, adventurous phase of activity. The group was composed of four members dealing with the same kind of ideology and willing to work within the same framework. The

---

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, 43.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, 11.

"(...) soltanto teatro, Teatro-Gioco-Vita, una proposta fatta alla gente di giocare permanentemente e spontaneamente il proprio teatro di vita in una possibilita' continua di interscambio dei ruoli, delle situazioni, dove ogni individuo e' attore e interprete di se stesso e interlocutore dell'altro, dove ognuno FA teatro (...)."

The group was dissolved in 1973 and Passatore started as a freelancer and closed collaborator of the MCE.

<sup>34</sup> Mainly they were connected with Turin, but in consequence of the growing popularity of 'theatrical animation' they were touring through all the country.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, 76.

main focus of their work was in the training of teachers, in their everyday school work. The way to do this included two stages: the first consisted in the theatrical animation made in the class and thought of as the stimulus for further class-work. The second stage followed the first and was a response to the teacher's demand for closer collaboration through animation.

The last and the most famous was the project called Botteghe di fantasia (Shops of imagination)<sup>36</sup> and it included several stimuli for each possible free expression activity.

Through all these animation projects and activities, Passatore and his group became a synonym for a feast (festival), leaving in schools memories of a joyful atmosphere, of liberation from traditional schemes, of the joy of creation and collaboration together to engage in activities which were different from everyday events, to experience

"(...) a theatre played in the school for the life played as theatre."<sup>37</sup>

#### \* 'Teatro del Sole' (Theatre of the Sun)

---

<sup>36</sup> Cf. ibidem, 127. There were the following 'botteghe':

- Bottega della stamperia (of printing);
- Bottega della drammatizzazione (of dramatisation);
- Bottega del canto libero (of free sing);
- Bottega della pubblicita' (of advertisement);
- Bottega della lanterna magica (of the magic lamp);
- Bottega della fotografia (of photography);
- Bottega del cantastorie (of storytelling-singing);
- Bottega dei monumenti (of monuments);
- Bottega dei pupari (of marionettes).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. GRUPPO TEATRO-GIOCO-VITA, Io ero l'albero, 12:

"(...) un teatro giocato a scuola per una vita giocata come teatro."

Also cf. GARAGNANI, Un decennio, 136;

Following the theatrical adaptation of the results of the theatrical animation effected by Franco Santofilippo with his class, 'Teatro del Sole' was formed in 1971.<sup>38</sup> Carlo Formigoni gathered around himself a group of students of two theatrical professional courses (schools): one run by 'Teatro Stabile' in Turin, and the second from the 'Piccolo Teatro' from Milan.<sup>39</sup> During 1971 they developed and presented the performance La citta' degli animali as an example of a completely new style of theatre for children, based on their ideas and texts. As Cornacchia called this performance:

"the break performance in the miserable (squalid) panorama of children's theatre."<sup>40</sup>

She enumerated the following features of the new children's theatre:

- \* the use of the poor structures on the stage and for costumes
- \* the use of the children's language (but not imitation - infantile but not infantilised, because of falseness)
- \* the use of grotesque and of characteristic features, which are going to assume the symbolic value

---

<sup>38</sup> The long activity of the 'Teatro del Sole' was presented in *TEATRO DEL SOLE, I linguaggi perduti del gioco. Dieci anni di esperienza di un teatro di gioco e improvvisazione*. Firenze, La Casa Usher 1981. Maya Cornacchia, once member of the group, analysed the first period of the activity in M. CORNACCHIA, "Giochiamo che io ero il Teatro del Sole", in "Scena" 2 (1977) 27-29.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *TEATRO DEL SOLE, I linguaggi perduti*, 16. 59-60. The two school were: 'la Scuola Sperimentale del Teatro Stabile di Torino' (the Experimental School) and 'la Scuola del Piccolo Teatro di Milano' (the School of the 'Piccolo Teatro' in Milan). Iva Hutchinson Formigoni, Formigoni's wife, was for many years a teacher at the Milano school. She had a previous experience (one of the first in Italy) of work with Bertolt Brecht in 'Berliner Ensemble'. Also Carlo Formigoni in his theatrical work was inspired by Brecht's theory and practice.

<sup>40</sup> CORNACCHIA, "Giochiamo", 27.

"lo spettacolo di rottura nello squallido panorama del teatro per ragazzi (...)"

\* the use of improvisation both for the preparation, and during the performance if the child's reaction suggests it.<sup>41</sup>

The members of the group were well aware of these features, but for their professional, theatrical formation, they were not able to introduce all these aspects from the beginning of the activity. Within the structure of the 'Teatro Stabile', the new group was still working in accordance with the 'logic of service', looking at the audience, at its reaction, but without entering into creative contact with them during the performance. The next months brought productions for youth<sup>42</sup> and for children,<sup>43</sup> but the members of the group themselves were fighting for a clearer image as children's theatre ensemble. It was the conflict between on the one hand personal engagement in research for the new style and - on the other hand - the aesthetic-theatrical requirements of the professional actors. Improvisation was inserted into the work of the group, but only during the preparatory stage.

The following years consolidated the group and in 1976/1977 they revised the style of their work. In 1973 they produced Gli Orazi e i Curiazi, again by Bertolt Brecht for young people, but without active participation and in 1974 they presented Vieni nel mio Sogno (Come into my Dream) in collaboration with the psychologist Loris Rosenholz. These were the years of the strong professional formation and of various activities for teachers about the use of improvisation. The real problem was to

---

<sup>41</sup> Cf. ibidem, 27.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Teatro del Sole. Biografia, in: TEATRO DEL SOLE, I linguaggi perduti, 9. In Autumn 1971 'Teatro del Sole' presented La vera vita di Jakob Geherda (The real life of Jakob Geherda) by Bertolt Brecht; at the same time they presented La citta' degli animali at the 'Biennale di Venezia' (Festival del Teatro per Ragazzi' - Festival of Children's Theatre in Venice).

<sup>43</sup> Cf. ibidem. In 1972 they prepared and presented Ra-ta-ta-ta-ta. Sinfonia in nero (Ra-ta-ta-ta-ta. Symphony in black).

introduce animation into the whole process of performance, both in the preparation and in the presentation. The main achievement of theatrical animation was the spontaneous, creative participation of the audience, but the animation events usually had a short life, were unique and mostly performed as a big festival.<sup>44</sup> 'Teatro del Sole' was looking for the use of animation as a unique possibility of giving the relations with children a continuity and as an awakening consciousness. They would evoke active participation based on the messages from the performance. The two performances prepared in 1977, Felice and Carlina and Giochiamo che io ero? (Let's play that I was...?), embodied a change in the relationship with the audience.<sup>45</sup> Both of the performances were based on the principle to write/prepare the spectacle for children starting from their expressed experiences, but - as Cornacchia supposed - without the approach characteristic for the theatrical animation - it means without the place for children's intervention.

The radical change happened during the one performance of Giochiamo che io ero? and was stimulated by the real demand of the children to have their own opportunity for intervention. 'Teatro del Sole' invented for this reason a new character, the adult 'Signor Mannaro' to whom it was possible to speak during the performance interrupting it at any moment.<sup>46</sup> The actors sacrificed their professional

---

<sup>44</sup> Cf. GARAGNANI, Un decennio, 133; ROSTAGNO, PELLEGRINI, Guida, 235. The good example of this kind of 'transformation' in theatrical animation was the group called 'Gruppo del Sole' ('Group of the Sun'), founded by R. Galve in Rome, in 1971. The theatrical animation became 'doposcuola' (after-school) activity composed from several free activities organised for children. Further, as the centre of expression for children, they emphasised their 'ludicus' aspect by adopting the term 'gioco drammatico' (dramatic game).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. CORNACCHIA, "Giochiamo", 28.

<sup>46</sup> 'Signor Mannaro' could be translated as 'Mister Bogey' or 'Bogeyman' and it was a symbolic adult figure on which was possible to discharge (get rid of) all the anxiousness against the adults.

ambitions and skills, giving the space for children's activity, but at the same time creating a completely new relationship with the audience. Instead the performance became a unique opportunity to analyse their own experience together with that of the children, presented and related to the characters on stage.

During this last period of change, 'Teatro del Sole' confirmed its pioneering position and role amongst the theatre groups of children's theatre.<sup>47</sup> Since the beginning, being the first, fully professional theatre-in-education group, they were making progress, looking for a better style of theatre facing up to the reality of children's life and helping them to take their right, real and appropriate place in society.

### **2. 3. 4. First analytic and interpretative theories**

The first and fundamental definition of 'animation' included the adjective 'theatrical'; although it initiated changes in children's theatre, it also inspired the first analysis and interpretation made by theatre practitioners and theoreticians. Because of the growing popularity of animation it seemed necessary to emphasise its 'theatricality', especially in those cases where the theatre was involved in the first instance too: in the new style of children's theatre.<sup>48</sup>

The initiator of decentralisation, Gian Renzo Morteo, who was one of the directors of 'Teatro Stabile' in Turin at this time, was probably the most competent

---

<sup>47</sup> Cf. TEATRO DEL SOLE, I linguaggi perduti, 9-10. It was even the end of Formigoni's epoch in the group history. He left the 'Teatro del Sole' in May 1978, but - despite of all the predictions - the theatre still existed and embraced the renovated methodology of children's theatre and was organising several workshops and seminars in collaboration with the education bodies.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. FONTANA, OTTOLENGHI, Teatro e', 23-24; MORTEO, Teatro dei e per ragazzi, 83-89.

person to initiate the long-life series of analysis and interpretations. During the 'Convegno Teatro e Ragazzi' in 1973, in Milan,<sup>49</sup> he analysed new forms of children's theatre and their connections with the larger phenomenon of theatrical animation. Also his voice was authoritative at this time in discussion:

'IS the theatrical animation the new form (or forms) 'theatre FOR',  
'theatre OF' or 'theatre WITH' children'.

Despite other further perspectives and polemical researches, his interpretation seems to be still valid. He compared 'theatre FOR' and 'theatre OF' children to the 'contratto' (contract) and 'contrattazione' (agreeing the contract). Every time when the contract has to be renewed, it must happen through new negotiation ('contrattazione'). The same process must occur in the case of children's theatre: every time the new form of 'theatre FOR' is taking life, it must be done through the new style of 'theatre OF' children, played by them, understood by them and so often devised by them for their own needs and pleasure. He concluded, that if it could be necessary, the new form of theatre FOR children must be achieved through the struggle. That was in full accordance with the language in the alternative, left-wing culture movement after 1968.

The principle for him that guided his further teaching career about animation, theatrical animation and children's theatre, was as follows: good theatre FOR children only makes sense when it is based on theatre OF children.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> The 'Convegno Teatro e Ragazzi' (Meeting Theatre - Children) was hold in Milan, June 1973. The Morteo's text was re-published in F. ALFIERI, A. CANEVARO, F. DE BIASE, G. SCABIA, L'attore culturale. L'animazione nella citta', alla prova dell'esperienza. Firenze, La Nuova Italia 1990, 121-124, together with other significant texts of Morteo. Here I am using this version of Morteo's article.

<sup>50</sup> After his career as the director of the 'Teatro Stabile' in Turin, Morteo became a lecturer at the Turin University.

Theatre OF children he understood as the discovery of the theatrical dimension of every day life, especially in the child's life. A theatrical component is present in every form of human existence, starting from the child play/game, through bodily activities, rituals, religion, social and political forms of life.<sup>51</sup> Morteo was against the amateur kind of theatre OF children, because of its passivity and imitation of the adult theatre.

Theatre OF children, thanks to their curiosity for knowledge and spontaneous creativity, presented itself as the mirror of every day life seen and perceived by the child. The child in a game/play EXPRESSES himself/herself. In the theatre OF children the active moment consists in the EXPRESSION, and so, in the theatre FOR children realises itself in the moment of RELATION. For the child, the theatre OF children means creative experience, and the theatre FOR children means cultural experience. In Morteo's opinion:

"The active moment in children's theatre takes a life (realises itself) in expression, the active moment in children's theatre takes a life (realises itself) in a moment of the relationship. In this sense the children's theatre is a creative experience and the children's theatre is a cultural experience (...)."<sup>52</sup>

The theatre FOR children represents a powerful instrument of education, but with it the knowledge of the nature of theatre must be connected. The child, through careful 'theatrical animation' must be introduced into the theatrical language for a better

---

<sup>51</sup> Cf. MORTEO, Teatro dei e per ragazzi, 123.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. MORTEO, Teatro dei e per ragazzi, 123:

"Il momento attivo nel teatro dei ragazzi si realizza nell'espressione, il momento attivo nel teatro per ragazzi si realizza nel momento della relazione. In questo senso il teatro dei ragazzi e' una esperienza creativa e il teatro per ragazzi e' un esperienza culturale (...)."

understanding of the theatre included in his own activity and in the form of the theatre FOR him. The cultural experience for Morteo was connected not only with the teaching-learning process through the theatre, but also about the theatre. He was against 'spontaneismo', but not against 'spontaneita'. 'Spontaneismo' means for him the real danger of instrumentalisation and of surface knowledge without the deep understanding of our (and child) 'immersion' in the history.

The analysis presented by Maya Cornacchia in 1976<sup>53</sup> summarised the first period of activity of various new companies of theatre FOR children who were realising the principles of theatrical animation mainly as their preparatory work for the performances. She emphasised the ideological and political background and character of this new theatre:

"And only in 1971 the first self-managed companies in the theatre for children appeared. They were characterised by the will to break with the squalid tradition of this sector."<sup>54</sup>

The new theatre must be aware of the child, of his/her needs and demands, of his/her real place in the society. The child was a centre, a pivot, a hinge around which and from which the performance should be created. The child is the protagonist and the subject of his/her own growing and that conviction must be the starting point for the

---

<sup>53</sup> The leading group of practitioners and theoreticians of 'animation' founded in 1976 a special journal "Scena" dedicated to the problems of culture, arts, theatre, animation, cinema. Maya Cornacchia belonged to the journal committee. Her article Dal bambino al teatro e ritorno. Introduzione a un dibattito sul teatro per ragazzi (From child to theatre and comeback. Introduction into a debate about the theatre for children), was published in "Scena" 2 (1976) 31-35.

<sup>54</sup> CORNACCHIA, Dal bambino, 31:

"E' solo nel '71 che fanno la loro apparizione nel teatro per ragazzi le prime compagnie autogestite caratterizzate dalla volonta' di rompere con la squallida tradizione del settore."

renewed theatre FOR children. Cornacchia suggested that inside the theatre group must be the constant awareness and will of change:

"(...) the discussion about the theatre FOR children was been enriched (made richer) by knowledge, by confrontation (challenge), by discussion about the common problems and first of all by the its (theatre) growth and by the self-critics of experienced (registered) limits."<sup>55</sup>

The whole discussion about the relationship between animation (theatrical)<sup>56</sup> and theatre FOR children, produced two main groups: one proclaiming the separation between them, and the second talking about complementariness. The second point of view was taken by the majority amongst the practitioners and theoreticians. The understanding of animation as the preparatory activity for the theatre, belongs almost to the past. Cornacchia insisted that the new, most interesting experience could only emerge from the collaboration between animators and practitioners. The theatrical performance has its own function: it is a cultural event. It could be, but not necessarily should be, the stimulus for the animation. The theatre FOR children has its own goals, aiming to influence the taste and the consciousness of the child. Here, in this point, it converges with the animation. Cornacchia placed one of the main goals of animation in offering/giving to the child the possibility to conquer his/her autonomy from the adult's world, and here, the child audience could conquer own autonomy.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibidem, 32:

"(...) il discorso sul teatro per ragazzi venga arricchito dalla conoscenza, dal confronto, dalla discussione dei problemi comuni e soprattutto dalla crescita e dall'autocritica dei limiti registrati."

<sup>56</sup> The spread of the 'theatrical animation' into the other fields of cultural activity, produced very different forms calling themselves or being called 'animation'. For such reason I prefer to put the adjective 'theatrical' in brackets.

In her analysis, Cornacchia divided the performances in three groupings:

- a) those based on presenting problems ('spettacolo problematico'),
- b) those with didactic aim ('spettacolo didattico'), and
- c) those which main purpose was entertainment ('spettacolo di trattenimento').

The nature of the division depended on the methodology used for the creation of the performance. Her further considerations raised the questions: what kind of performance is most useful, which one is more open and participating, and which kind of language is most suitable for the theatre FOR children?

\*\*\*\*\*

Morteo eliminated the misunderstanding existing between theatre OF children and theatre FOR children; Cornacchia, three years later, eliminated the misunderstanding and barriers between the animation (theatrical) and the theatre FOR children.<sup>58</sup> Both of them were concerned about the importance of knowledge of the theatre, of its language developed through the history and both were concerned with the important value of theatre in the teaching-learning process. The theatre FOR children must be known for the quality and enhancement of better knowing...

---

<sup>57</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, 33.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. ROSTAGNO, PELLEGRINI, *Guida*, 225. Rostagno and Pellegrini presented their own opinion, that

"Theatre for children, theatre with children theatre of children are not the synonyms of theatrical animation."

"Teatro per i ragazzi, teatro con i ragazzi, teatro dei ragazzi non sono sinonimi di animazione teatrale."

## **2. 4. DECLINE OF 'THEATRICAL ANIMATION' BUT 'ANIMATION' OMNIPRESENT (CULTURAL, SOCIO-CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL)**

After the pioneering years of animation, in the middle of the 1970s the process of institutionalisation of animation started, with academic research about its forms, and methodologies, and about its capacity in so many fields where animation was mentioned as the leading style of work. Animation intended as a methodology, was seen as a common good, involved in diverse projects and programmes of cities, regions or - local and national institutions and associations.

The section which follows presents in summary form the extent to which animation was 'omnipresent' (for example in Turin 1975-1985) and after some of the successive leading forms of animation, going further and further from its roots ('ur-animation', mainly theatrical).

**2. 4. 1. How, through the 'animation' could the new culture of the big city be created?**

After the victory in the city elections in 1975, the coalition between the Italian Communist Party and the Italian Socialist Party designed a whole project of cultural work using all the previous experiences of animation.<sup>1</sup> With the foundation of a special administration,<sup>2</sup> animation became an institution of culture and education embracing both general and particular fields of activity. The project underlined two directions of activity:

1. the culture in large sense, as the common good (the accessibility and operativeness of cultural institutions as theatres, museums, galleries);

2. the culture understood as the basic need which gives the possibility of the conscious involvement in the creation of the culture, enables the socialisation and aggregation of community (theatre in search of audience, the net of public libraries, the community cultural centres, popular festivals, etc.).

The main fields of institutional animation was the school:

1. schools open and working all the day;

2. integrative schools with extra-school activities;

3. 'summer in city' for children and youth;

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. F. DE BIASE, Attore culturale. Riflessioni su un'esperienza di animazione nella città, in: ALFIERI, CANEVARO, DE BIASE, SCABIA, L'attore culturale, 1-58. Author described the whole project and its realisation in 1975-1984.

<sup>2</sup> There were: the special department at the city council with many branches in the districts; the whole city has been divided in 23 regions and each has got its own group of animators (for various purposes of cultural activity); it means that each year in the city there were working 120-140 different animators.

4. special devised programmes of city knowledge (visit-tours, workshops in museums, arts workshops and all those under the guide of a special animators);
5. foundation of a special animator teams only for education request of schools.

The first five years were full of different activities, of fundamental cultural work. Some of the historians described these years as the passing-stage in the profession of the 'animator': from the 'happy island of free creativity' towards 'institutionalised, programmed cultural work'. 'Animator' has achieved the formal recognition as profession (it included both, social and cultural worker both in community and in education). Among them were animators: of theatre, of dance, of play and game, of museum and gallery, of body expression; even they specialised for the particular part of community (animators of children, of youth, elderly people, handicapped). But since the beginning of the 1980s the crisis inside the left-wing coalition started and ideological distinctions and divisions among the animators began. With the end of coalition in 1985, animation as an institution suffered its decline. For many years Turin was called 'the capital of animation' and was an example for many Italian cities how to organise the cultural activities in the whole community.<sup>3</sup>

#### **2. 4. 2. From 'theatrical animation' into 'socio-cultural animation'**

Theatrical animation was the first well defined form, with its own techniques and languages coming from theatre. Theatrical animation usually culminated in pure theatre performance or at least in para-theatrical spectacles. It had evolved over the years in two distinctive forms: one, which leads to the theatre, educates how to

---

<sup>3</sup> Cf. debate entitled Torino: la capitale, 48-54.

receive the theatre's message and helps its followers in aesthetic growth,<sup>4</sup> and the other, which presents a form elaborated for school needs, for educational purposes, for teaching-learning processes and as a form of cultural presence of the school in the community.<sup>5</sup>

In a larger sense, as we could see in the Turin example, animation became the main instrument of cultural creativity and of the class struggle for the new, working class culture. Besides the Turin example there was another one, very complex and fruitful. Rita M. Parsi and Sabina Manes guided the animation project in the roman district called San Basilio (built without permission!), engaging all possible social forces (shops, bars, police, local Roman-Catholic, party cells).<sup>6</sup> The protagonists of cultural animation were talking and writing about it, as 'cultural' intending as its subject 'the new culture' and its centre was the animator himself, operating in a specific environment or social group, ideologically conscious about his mission. In this case the importance of creativity has been emphasised; it should happen inside the social group and the single member was only taking part in a more complex educational-cultural process. Even here it is possible to observe the shifting accent in cultural animation: from the social class to the territory (equal sometimes to the environment or territory of big city as the field of animation).<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. G. R. MORTEO, Introduzione, in: C. ALASSIA, F. PONCHIONE, Manuale aperto di animazione teatrale. Torino, Musolini Editore 1977, VII.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. ROSTAGNO, PELLEGRINI, Guida, 223; 225.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. M. R. PARSI, Animazione in borgata. Roma, Savelli 1976.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. G. BARTOLUCCI, Introduzione, in: F. PASSATORE, Animazione dopo. Le esperienze di animazione dal territorio alla scuola, dalla scuola al sociale. Rimini-Firenze, Guaraldi Editore 1976,

7.

After nearly ten years experience, Passatore began to call his form of animation 'animazione dopo ...' (post-animation), based on the observation that the school which, producing and realising animation programmes, became the real centre of cultural life in its community. The main issues of animation touched the children's lives, often blaming the adult world and revealing hidden problems.<sup>8</sup> But at the same time Passatore realised that animation could become the instrument of political manipulation and he raised the question: how far could the teacher- animator go in the socio-political initiation of children objectively, without indoctrination, but with a raising of awareness of socio-political issues. For him, in this later stage, animation should be more socio-cultural and it should lay the basis for the alternative culture and self-realisation of the individual, intended as the main subject of socio-political life.<sup>9</sup>

Similarly Passatore's concerns about socio-cultural animation were realised and spread in significant publications by Gottardo Blasich<sup>10</sup> in a huge and important sector of Roman-Catholic educational institutions (schools of all types and youth clubs called 'oratory').<sup>11</sup> Animation intended as an active teaching methodology gave

---

<sup>8</sup> Passatore used, together with other 'animation' practitioners, an expression, that 'theatrical animation' realised by the children in fact 'denounced' social problems and deviations.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. PASSATORE, *Animazione dopo*, 15; 30-32.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. G. BLASICH, *...e con i tavoli facciamo il monte. L'animazione nella proposta del messaggio cristiano*. Leumann (Torino), Elle Di Ci 1978; IDEM, *Drammatizzazione nella scuola. Proposte e interventi per la creativita' di gruppo*. Leumann (Torino), Elle Di Ci 1981; IDEM, *Animazione nella scuola e nel territorio. Problemi, esperienze e proposte*. Leumann (Torino), Elle Di Ci 1983. He used to work in schools run by Salesians of Don Bosco in Milan. In his books he emphasised the educational importance of animation (first theatrical, after socio-cultural including theatrical as basic form).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. A. ELLENA (ed.), *Animatori del tempo libero*. Napoli, SEN 1979; A. ELLENA, G. CONTESSA (eds.), *Animatori di quartiere. Un'esperienza di formazione*. Napoli, SEN 1980. In these communities 'animation' serves as methodology of activity in spare time or as base for voluntary social services.

importance to the process in teaching, which meant the introduction of the child to new spheres of knowledge, the real education composed from both intellectual instruction and personal formation. It was brought about through active research, games, creativity. Both, pupil and teacher are communicating with each other and both are discovering the new significance of things, thoughts and words. Especially valuable for Blasich was the theatrical animation with its whole range of techniques like improvisation and dramatisation which allows socialisation and integration in the class group, but at the same time emphasising the personal input of each member of the class.

Finally, let us consider the analysis of animation from the educational and academic point of view, but quite far from the ideological (or political) premises present in the pioneer animations. More than ten years since its beginning, publications emphasised the values of animation for personal growth and engagement in the creation of a more dignified life. Culture and animation can not be seen as the instrument of struggle, but as a help for humanity, help in the process of acquiring knowledge of others lives and cultures.<sup>12</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

Although animation or theatrical animation in their primitive forms do not exist any more, they evolved in the course of years in many successive forms, becoming the common methodology of cultural, educational activity. They evolved from being innovative to becoming the natural didactic form in school work; from

---

<sup>12</sup> Cf. G. MASSARO (ed.), Per un impegno di animazione socio-culturale. Bari, Cacucci Editore 1978.

singular into complex cultural activities; from an instrument of class struggle into a style of education, respecting human rights and educating the responsible social life.

But at all times in all places, where animation existed and took place, it became both awakening and provocative, both liberating and creative, both accusation and defence, both event and process. What was important, was that animation through the activities of its protagonists never forgot its fundamental function: education IN, THROUGH and FOR culture.

### Chapter 3

## HISTORY OF 'THEATRICAL EDUCATION' ('EDUKACJA TEATRALNA') IN POLISH SCHOOLS. (FROM EXTRA- CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES TOWARDS METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING/LEARNING PROCESS)

In order to consider the development of theatre in education in Poland and its position in the changing school of the 1980s, it is necessary to examine the history of the use of theatre and its forms in the Polish school. The period of restored independence 1918-1939 must be recognised as a significant epoch. During this time the educational system was rebuilt after 123 years during which the State was non-existent. Polish culture had systematically been destroyed in accordance with the cultural politics of Austria, Russia and Prussia, in order to convert young people into their citizens.

The professional theatre was involved in the process of reconstruction of the culture of the Nation and many of the companies presented several performances for young audiences drawn from a classic repertoire as a part of the school's curriculum

of literature study.<sup>1</sup> The theatrical education in the school found its main expression in the different forms of school theatre. In this period some interesting studies of the history of school theatre were published<sup>2</sup> and the concept of 'theatre in education' received its integrative<sup>3</sup> and aesthetic characteristic.<sup>4</sup> Jerzy Cierniak emphasised that

"(...) theatre in the life of young people has several functions like the sublimation of the spiritual life, therapeutic and healing functions for inhibiting personalities and relaxation from routine and every-day activities."<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 115-116.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. HOMA, Znaczenie teatru w wychowaniu młodzieży szkół średnich. Z badań w województwie koszalińskim. Koszalin, Wojewódzki Ośrodek Naukowo-Badawczy (WSP w Słupsku) 1974, 25.

<sup>3</sup> Cierniak wrote that theatre integrates different domains of creativity as well as the different spheres of the personality. Cf. J. CIERNIAK, Cele i zadania teatru młodzieży szkolnej, in "Teatr w Szkole" 1934/35 n°1; cf. J. GÓRNIWICZ, Funkcja teatru w rozwoju psychospołecznym dziecka, in "Nowa Szkoła" 5 (1988) 292-298; he emphasised the originality and innovativeness of Cierniak's practice and idea about the school theatre as activity linking many school subjects and required skills.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. CIERNIAK, Cele i zadania teatru młodzieży, 3-5; J. CIERNIAK, Wychowawcze wartości teatru szkolnego, in "Przyjaciel Szkoły" 9 (1929); S. PAPEE, Drogi i cele teatru szkolnego. Poznań 1930 (quoted by RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 112). Both, integrative and aesthetic features were present in the school programmes and in the theoretic, philosophic writings about the Art place and role in the education. Cf. Program wychowania estetycznego młodego pokolenia. Warszawa 1984/85 (published by Łódzki Dom Kultury 1987), 9-10; 27-30; I. WOJNAR, Podstawowe problemy wychowania estetycznego (teoria i praktyka), in: WOJNAR, PIELASIŃSKA (eds.), Wychowanie estetyczne, 24-28; I. WOJNAR, Tendencje integracyjne w wychowaniu estetycznym, in: WOJNAR, PIELASIŃSKA (eds.), Wychowanie estetyczne, 161-177.

<sup>5</sup> CIERNIAK, Cele i zadania teatru młodzieży, quoted after GÓRNIWICZ, Funkcje teatru, 294:

"wg J. Cierniak: teatr w życiu młodzieży pełni także funkcje sublimacji życia duchowego, terapeutyczną i leczniczą w stosunku do osób zahamowanych, odprężenie od rutyny, codziennych czynności."

The school theatre largely existed as an instrument of cultural renovation to promote knowledge of literature and as a social activity within schools and of the school in the local community. In this considerably wide movement<sup>6</sup> one interesting current which saw school theatre as a mission in the context of education, was represented by Lucjusz Komarnicki.<sup>7</sup> His practice and writings had been an inspiration for many teachers. He underlined that every attempt at founding amateur theatre in the school should have an educational dimension and never be purely commercial, imitating the professional theatre. In school the work of the group should be self-educative like a seminary, a laboratory (a workshop). In the theatre-group there should be no division in the roles of the participants and the activity should be two-way:

a) towards knowledge of drama as the first concern, and

b) towards knowledge of theatrical means of expression (language, light, music, scenery/props, etc.).

In this Komarnicki and his contemporaries were inspired by the contemporary theories of the Big Reform in the European theatre and of the New Education. Together with him were like-minded educators and school theatre practitioners as Z. Kwieciński, J. Cierniak, S. Papée, J. Popłatek. The main stream of the school theatre

---

<sup>6</sup> Its representatives were: Z. KWIECIŃSKI, Samorodny teatr w szkole. Rzecz o instynkcie dramatycznym dzieci i młodzieży. Warszawa 1933; K. ŁADOSZ, Znaczenie pierwiastków teatralnych w wychowaniu i w szkole, in "Praca Szkolna" 13 March 1929; Z. KOZŁOWSKA, Wychowawcze wartości teatru szkolnego. Poznań 1937; H. TYRANKIEWICZOWA, Teatralizacja jako jeden ze środków dydaktycznych, in "Teatr w Szkole" 1 (1934); K. ZBIERSKI, Teatr w szkole średniej, in "Przegląd Pedagogiczny" 9 (1926).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. L. KOMARNICKI, Teatr szkolny, in "Muzeum" 1-2 (1925); L. KOMARNICKI, Teatr szkolny. Ogólne założenia. Z praktyki teatru szkolnego. Teoria teatru szkolnego. Warszawa 1926.

had its own journal "Teatr w Szkole" (Theatre in the school)<sup>8</sup> which included repertoire and practical articles.<sup>9</sup>

The educative function of the school theatre was in conformity with the theoreticians of the theatre and their concepts about the functions of theatre in society.<sup>10</sup> It was particularly emphasised without neglecting those political, propagandist and entertainment functions.<sup>11</sup>

The time of the Second World War, referred to in Poland as 'the night of occupation', was an attempt at destruction not only of the Nation and its people, but especially of its culture, education included. The educational structures were devastated, the schools closed and the majority of the teaching forces (i.e. teachers, who were considered the potential organisers of the resistance) were submitted to the process of extermination. The Polish school in practice did not exist for more than five years. The underground school was very active during the war, but it was obviously inadequate to provide for all and could only fulfil a partial need of education. Even then, the underground amateur theatre of children and youngsters existed and played an important role in the cultural resistance against the destructive

---

<sup>8</sup> "Teatr w Szkole" was a monthly review published by J. Cierniak and K. Ładosz during the years 1934-1939.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. information in L. GRZEGOREK, Szkolne kółka dramatyczno-teatralne, in "Nowa Szkoła" 4 (1967) 40-42.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. KOZŁOWSKA, Wychowawcze wartości, 7-8. She was concerned that theatre has a similar functions in human life as the art in general, it means cathartic (as in Ancient Greece), modifying for the citizenship (Caesar's Rome), educative and religious function (as in Middle Ages), formative function for the intellectual, aesthetic and ethic development (in Renaissance). Cf. comparison of theatre functions written by GÓRNIEWICZ, Funkcja teatru, 293-294.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 20. In his research Homa presented ideas of many authors about the theatre's functions; it was a kind of historic survey of opinions.

Nazis policy.<sup>12</sup> The slow process of reconstruction started in the school year 1944/45 involving a large army of children and students late in their education.

In this first period (1945-1948) theatre had its main illustrative function for the school curriculum, as the means of presenting literature, but at the same time theatre was considered as the instrument of moral, ethical and civic education after the tragedy of the war. Theatre had its own educative mission in the rebuilding of a society which would be educative for its youngest members.<sup>13</sup> Renik emphasised the spontaneous participation of the young people in the amateur theatre and a special role of the educators and theatre practitioners who were aware of its educational value. In some places where a professional theatre still did not exist, the school theatre with its missionary zeal was a centre of real theatrical and cultural life.

The years 1948-1952 were a time of change not only for the educational and cultural policy, but for the State itself which became strongly ideological, connected with the official cultural ideology and patterns known as 'sorealizm' (sorealism). The strong state control lasted until 1956, but the socialist ideology was already implemented and especially within the education structures and programmes.

The common, compulsory 7-years school was introduced in 1950.<sup>14</sup> At this time there were many singular, specialised programmes for the subjects. In 1962 the

---

<sup>12</sup> Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 116. She emphasised the use of valuable repertoire from the classic literature and the adaptation of the plays to the contemporary life situation.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. S. FIRLIT, Wychowawcze i dydaktyczne wartości teatru szkolnego (próba sondażu), in "Życie Szkoły" 2 (1978) 7; Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 117.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Program nauki w 11-letniej szkole ogólnokształcącej. Projekt. Język polski. Warszawa 1950. This school was called '11-years' and 'comprehensive', but only 7-years school was compulsory and after followed different types of schools (professionals, technical institutes, teachers seminars and - regarded as the main preparation school for the university - 4-years lyceum).

8-years compulsory 'elementary school' ('szkoła podstawowa')<sup>15</sup> was introduced with the complete curriculum and this structure lasted until the introduction of the new programmes for the 10-years comprehensive school in 1977 (but the pioneering programmes were introduced in 1974).<sup>16</sup> The school in the 1950s and 1960s, realised the common, State cultural and educational policy, although some political and social changes were happening in Poland.<sup>17</sup> The schools in connection with the other State cultural and educational structures,<sup>18</sup> were responsible for the cultural and artistic life of the children and young people.<sup>19</sup> During that period of change and evolution the

---

<sup>15</sup> The 8-years compulsory school was proclaimed in 1962, but the introduction of the reformed curriculum was gradual until 1966/67. In the same time the State effected a large restructuring plan of the school estates.

<sup>16</sup> MINISTERSTWO OŚWIATY I WYCHOWANIA, Program dziesięcioletniej szkoły średniej. Warszawa 1977. The introduced reform marked a significant progress in education. Also from the historical point of view the education in the 1960s-1970s represented its important position in the State social policy. Cf. N. DAVIES, God's Playground. A History of Poland. In Two Volumes. Volume II: 1795 to the Present. Oxford, Clarendon Press 1981, 603:

"The educational system receives high priority; and quantitative statistics are impressive. The over-all percentages of children, students, and adults attending courses of learning is higher than in Western countries. On the other hand, material conditions are often rudimentary, and teaching methods are authoritarian. Progressive education in the Western sense is unknown. Pupils frequently alienated by the exhortatory tone of their teachers, by compulsory Russian lessons, and by excessive doses of political propaganda. There are now some 88 institutions of higher learning compared with 32 in 1937/38."

<sup>17</sup> In the October 1956 was the first large social and democratic movement against the wrong socialist State policy in the 1950s; the second wave of demonstrations was connected with the March 1968 and students/intellectuals protest against the socialist State; after in the December 1970 the working class upraised and this movement had shaken the State's structures.

<sup>18</sup> In the 1952-1953 the State liquidated the majority of the private schools. Some of them 'survived' until 1962 reform and only a few were 'conserved' by the socialist State as the sign of its tolerance and democracy. Other educational structures were: the orphanages, the school boards, the 'houses of culture', the 'houses of culture for young people', ideological associations based on the communist and socialist ideology and operating within the school reality.

role of Art in education became more clear and the discussion about aesthetic education in the Polish school was very active.<sup>20</sup>

Especially in the late 1960s the passage from the 'education to Art' concept towards 'education through Art' was visible in order to reach the understanding of 'Art in education'.<sup>21</sup> The research and ideas of Bogdan Suchodolski and Irena Wojnar became a theoretical basis and framework for the Polish conception of aesthetic education.

Wanda Renik, the historian of the school theatre in Poland, divided the development of theatrical education into the following stages:

a) 1944-1954: continuation of the traditional methods and forms and the first new experiences connected with the idea 'education to Art';

b) 1954-1974: almost twenty years of interesting and creative experiences realising the idea 'education through Art';

c) 1974-1988; the years of crisis, but at the same time full of new initiatives and important experiences.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Cf. P. SARNA, Kierowanie życiem kulturalnym i kontaktem ze sztuką (z cyklu: "Zakres wychowawczego kierowania"), in "Życie Szkoły" 6 (1977) 3-7. The Author described the leading role of the school in the organising the cultural life of children. The school management (headmaster and teachers) were responsible for this dominion of the school work. The article concerned the new, 10-years comprehensive school, but in practice the idea was well-known.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. the writings by B. SUCHODOLSKI, I. WOJNAR about the philosophy of the aesthetic education.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. WOJNAR, Podstawowe problemy, 18-22; She analysed the idea of 'education to Art' and launched the need of 'education through Art' in today's school.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 116-117.

In my opinion the two first stages, between 1944 and 1974 included at least four main currents/phenomena which could be recognised because of their particular achievements:

a) the traditional school theatre considered as a teaching aid and a form of cultural and social activity;

b) theatre in education - its cultural, aesthetic and educative role and 'theatre lovers' movement;

c) 'inscenizacja' (mise-en-scene) and 'dramatic games' as the main form of the theatre in the school;

d) 'theatrical education' within the ten-years school curriculum and first comprehensive projects.

Among the educators and practitioners of children's and young people's theatre the common belief was dominating and opinion was expressed about the importance of the theatre both for the knowledge of the art, literature and life-problems, and for the personal growth and learning of the children. Wiesława Pielasińska, a leading practitioner and researcher of the school theatre, has written, that

"Theatre, using the language of facts, of the authenticity of the human existence, using the relativity of the presented situations and events, sometimes a la' grotesque, is compatible with the juvenile quest for the objective and verifiable truth".<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Cf. idea expressed by Pielasińska and quoted by HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 32, quotation 68:

"Teatr, operując wymową faktu, autentyzmem ludzkiej egzystencji, względnością nieraz groteskowo przedstawionych sytuacji i wydarzeń, odpowiada młodzieżczym poszukiwaniom prawdy obiektywnej i sprawdzalnej."

The school during those years (and I will consider for this chapter the period 1944-1980<sup>24</sup>) presented itself as an environment for many forms of the school theatre, ranging from practice of aesthetic education through to theatrical education which included:

- \* the traditional school theatre;
- \* the puppets in the classroom and as the school theatre;
- \* the professional theatre's network of collaboration with the schools;
- \* the socio- and psychodrama forms;
- \* the theatre of poetry and the poetic theatre;
- \* the declamation/recitation movement and the theatre of 'little forms';
- \* the 'theatre lovers circles' and their theatre;
- \* the 'dramatic games' and the 'mise-en-scene' as the means of teaching/learning process.

All those forms had their own pioneers, practitioners and theoreticians and all those sometimes were well mixed together in the same reality, in the same school or educational experience.

Although the professional theatre, as an institution was completely dependent of the state, the art and culture environment presented a richness of ideas against the State's cultural and political hegemony.<sup>25</sup> Besides the well-established, classic theatre,

---

<sup>24</sup> Cf. S. BORTNOWSKI, *Wychowanie literackie*, in: WOJNAR, PIELASIŃSKA (eds.), *Wychowanie estetyczne*, 34-35. The uprising of the large social movement of 'Solidarność' and its consequences, the 1980 and after the martial law of 13 December 1981, can't be consider as the border date in the Polish school history. Nevertheless the changes introduced into the school programmes (especially in literature and history teaching) enriched the curriculum projected in 1977.

there arose in those years innovative currents of 'modern' contemporary theatre both in the professional circles<sup>26</sup> and in the university theatres.<sup>27</sup>

All of them had their own input in the theatrical education in the Polish school and all of them stimulated changes and growth of the understanding of theatre in education both in the sphere of art's enhancing pupils' understanding of knowledge through art and in the domain of theatre as a teaching/learning medium.

---

<sup>25</sup> Cf. F. TAVIANI, Polonia: l'eretico e' attore, in "Scena" 5 (1980) 23-25. The rebellious and democratic features of the Polish theatre in the 1960s and 1970s were largely known. The Italian historian of the theatre, Ferdinando Taviani called the actor in the Polish theatre a 'heretic' in all the meanings possible of the word: social, political, cultural and religious.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. practice and theory of Jerzy Grotowski, who started in the State Theatre in Opole, Jerzy Szajna and his 'Theatre Studio' in Warsaw, Tadeusz Kantor and 'Cricot 2' Theatre in Kraków.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. W. PIELASIŃSKA, Pedagogiczna problematyka ekspresji. Na przykładzie amatorskiego teatru studenckiego. Wrocław, Ossolineum 1970; M. GRZEŚCZAK, Trzeci wiersz. Przypadki teatru poezji. Warszawa, Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza 1973; J. KOENIG (ed.), Teatry studenckie w Polsce. Warszawa, Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe 1968. The university theatre lived in the 1960s and in 1970s its boom. It was a phenomenon of the cultural protest against the official State cultural policy.

### 3. 1. SCHOOL THEATRE AND THE CULTURE IN THE SERVICE OF THE STATE'S IDEOLOGY (1944 - 1960)

After the Second World War, the school and amateur theatre continued their methodology which had been well-known before the war and tried to find again their own place as a part of the large project of artistic education in the new context.<sup>1</sup> Among several instructive guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education were some directives about the type of theatre required in the school, but they were connected only with the extra-curricular activities of school life. The idea of the 'teatr samorodny' ('inborn theatre') emphasised the natural educational value of theatrical activity, which should have a style of continuous work connected with the children's interests. This kind of work should be accessible for any child, a source of stimulation for his/her invention and creativity. The guidelines warned against imitating the professional theatre.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. publication by Z. KWIECIŃSKI, Z praktyki wychowania artystycznego (przez teatr szkolny), in "Życie Szkoły" 6/7 (1948) 281-283.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. evaluation written by RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 117.

Even in the first years after the war a main concern of the educational policy of the State was the battle with illiteracy (it was a result of the inadequate school system before the war, of the five years of the non-existence of the educational system during the war and of the massive compulsory displacements of the Polish population from the east part of Poland aggregated to the Soviet Union in consequence of the Jalta Conference). The theatre was included in this battle as a main instrument and ally of the school. In this way, and based on administrative grounds, the theatres often presented performances only for the schools, with special repertoires and bargain rates.

### **3. 1. 1. Political changes and consequent changes of cultural and educational policy**

In 1948, when socialist policy started to drift slowly but significantly towards the dictatorship of communist materialism,<sup>3</sup> the cultural policy had been changing and those radical changes were visible especially in culture and in education.<sup>4</sup> Theatre, both professional and amateur-school, became one of the main instruments of ideological indoctrination in the school, in the educational institutions, in the cultural

---

<sup>3</sup> The unification of the two leading political parties (Polish Socialist Party and Polish Worker's Party in the Polish United Worker's Party) and series of State's decisions connected with the common policy in all the East-European countries where the influence of the Soviet Union was dictating similar solutions.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. BORTNOWSKI, Wychowanie literackie, 35; He described the stages of the polish language and literature teaching (and theatre as a part of it), calling the years 1948/49 - 1955/6

"ideological offensive in the Stalinist version; the creation of a new model of the literature teaching and of education through literature."

work in factories, even in villages. The social role of the school theatre was absolutely explicit: to create a new socialist society, aware of its historic role.<sup>5</sup>

However, in spite of the massive ideological background, the activities were very schematic, and usually submitted to the social realism of art. It seemed, that the exceptional experiences achieved before the war, became only a part of the history. Again the amateur and school theatre followed the methodologies of the professional theatre and the non-educative concept of 'stardom' among the members, already criticised in the past and in the further analysis.<sup>6</sup> The repertoire included plays from classic Polish literature and from the soc-realistic, especially Russian. Mostly they were performances with the same themes about productivity, communist values, reminiscences from the war, from the revolution or critical plays about Western countries and their anti-communism policy. The school theatre had a definite task to glorify the new structures of the State, the role of the Soviet Union in the world, and the value of friendship among the communist countries.<sup>7</sup>

In accordance with the ideological slogan of popular mass-culture, the Ministry of Education launched several national contests and festivals of children's artistic activity which included theatrical performances and recitation.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf. GRZEGOREK, Szkolne kółka, 42.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. K. SOŁONOWICZ-OLBRYCHSKA, Teatr radości. Teatr szkolny, doświadczenia, uwagi, myśli. Warszawa, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych 1961. Cf. also HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 26 and GRZEGOREK, Szkolne kółka, 41-42. Homa and Grzegorek criticised her tendency towards 'stardom' and also 'professionalism' present in the methodology of the leading school theatre of S. Potoczek, 'Teatr Międzyszkolny' in 5th 'Liceum Ogólnokształcące' in Kraków, active since 1955.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Program nauki w 11-letniej, 4-5; also cf. BORTNOWSKI, Wychowanie literackie, 39-40. Bortnowski emphasised the ideological interpretation of the literature works and the tendency to create a new literature in accordance with the ideology, presenting so called 'positive hero' as a pattern to be followed in collective and self - education.

### 3. 1. 2. The professional theatre within the State's policy

In a situation when active forms of theatrical education became schematic and limited mostly to the occasional and socially requested productions, for the first time and according to the ideological tendency of mass-culture, passive forms of theatrical education appeared in the form of a massive participation at plays which were recommended.

The larger access to the professional theatre was a result of the cultural policy. The majority of the traditional theatres, renovated after the war, were nationalised and theatrical troops were created like a State institution depending on the Ministry of Culture and Art. Even staff and repertoire policy were dependent on the official decision taken by the State's administration. The repertoire chosen and presented was in accordance with the ideological directives of the Ministry of Culture and Art and of the special cultural offices within the local authorities. Mostly they consisted of plays from classic Polish literature and from the new wave of soc-realistic literature from all the East countries. Theatre became the instrument of the 'soc-realistic' culture. That was the official definition and understanding of the social and political mission of the theatre.

In practice throughout all the geographical shires (voivodeship cities) of Poland (and in some traditional cultural centres of the province) the theatres were

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. RENIK, *Wychowanie teatralne*, 118. Renik indicated the years 1952-1955 as the intensive time of those initiatives. It presented not only a form of challenge for children, but especially for the ideological correctness and engagement of the schools and teachers. The national contests ceased in 1956, but some of them survived as regional enterprises becoming in the 1960s and 1970s the real arenas of the exchange of experiences and a kind of in-formal training for teachers and practitioners.

opened to the working class audience and to the educational institutions. Theatre's duty was to organise the tours and visit the small urban centres, to contract the big factories and schools. Even in the administrative structures of the enterprises the special cultural-educational offices were founded with the professional figure of the cultural-educational worker too. In the factories' budgets there were special funds to assure the participation in the theatrical life. In the same city it was possible to organise performances even in the factory. If not, there were mass-excursions to the bigger cities connected with theatrical evenings.<sup>9</sup> In this way the theatrical buildings were always full, but the artistic level also was dependent on the preparation of the audiences. The same pattern of the administrative activity was applied in the new towns where new huge industrial warehouses and factories were created.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. 1. 3. Theatre for children and theatre in the service of mass-culture

During the years after the war the professional theatres took part of the national effort to rebuild the devastated culture and education. Kraków became a very active centre with its 'Stary Teatr', with the company of Juliusz Osterwa,<sup>11</sup> but also the

---

<sup>9</sup> This kind of activity was mostly adapted for the workers and the people from the countryside, from the State agricultural combines.

<sup>10</sup> Exemplary here could be the history of the theatre in Nowa Huta near Kraków, which was built together with the block-flats, shops and schools of the new-town infrastructure.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. J. SZCZUBLEWSKI, *Żywot Osterwy*. Warszawa, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy 1971; RENIK, *Wychowanie teatralne*, 117. Juliusz Osterwa and his controversial, but very active and popular company 'Reduta Theatre', were well-known before the war through their artistic commitment about educational values of theatre and through their popularising tour's activity. In Kraków, after the war, Mieczysław Kotlarczyk founded 'Teatr Rapsodyczny' ('Rhapsodic Theatre'), which productions were strictly connected with the art of live word and directed especially to the young audience. Their uncompromising activity for the promotion of the classic Polish literature and the traditional values were largely criticised by the State's authorities and in the 1953 the theatre was

other cities started with special educational programmes presenting a very high artistic level of productions.<sup>12</sup> Some of them were not only suitable for the young audience, but were frequently requested by both educators and youth as a part of their education. The year 1946-1947 saw the start of five professional puppet theatres for children and one special adult actors' company for young audiences.<sup>13</sup> There were puppets' theatres in Warsaw, Toruń, Łódź, Wałbrzych and Bielsko-Biała and the company 'Wesoła Gromadka' ('Joyful Group') in Kraków. These centres became well-known and significant through all the after-war theatre's history in Poland.

The new cultural policy allowed the real development of the theatre for children and for young audiences even if it was a theatre imprinted with ideological features. In practice during the 1950s the puppet theatres were founded in nearly all provincial towns and cities. All of them were required to undertake theatrical activity in collaboration with the province council for education (the local educational authority called 'Kuratorium') and with individual schools. They organised some special programs for children connected with the contents of teaching, even leading the extra-curricular activities in special clubs or circles. At the beginning of 1960s there were about 20 puppet theatres. From the educational point of view the educators and children's theatre practitioners described the visits to the puppet theatre as 'unforgettable impressions' for children<sup>14</sup> or the stimulating impact of professional puppetry on the creativity of children.<sup>15</sup>

---

closed.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. RENIK, *Wychowanie teatralne*, 117. Renik wrote about the importance of the activity of Leon Schiller, Edmund Wierciński, Erwin Axer in Łódź, Iwo Gall in Gdańsk, Wilam Horzyca in Toruń and the first productions of the 'Teatr Polski' in still full of ruins Warsaw.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, 117;

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Z. LINKE, *Niezapomniane wrażenia (teatr lalek)*, in "Życie Szkoły" 4 (1955) 193.

The children visited these theatres for the most part as school classes. Each theatre had special bargain rates for schools, especially on Sunday morning (It was connected with the official lay and secular policy against the educational and pastoral work of the Catholic Church).<sup>16</sup>

In the main stream of the official cultural policy there was even a place for the amateur theatre as a significant expression of cultural needs and activities in various spheres of society. Really the school amateur theatre was the basic form, but alongside existed both the environmental amateur theatre<sup>17</sup> and, mainly, an ideological movement of the young workers theatre in the factories.

### 3. 1. 4. School theatre - its tendencies (principles) and examples

In contrast to the theoretical situation before the war, in the educational literature till 1960 it is impossible to establish a homogeneous opinion about the methodology of theatrical education through the school forms of theatre. Leopold

---

<sup>15</sup> Cf. T. LUBICZ-MAJEWSKI, Teatr lalek, in "Życie Szkoły" 12 (1957) 719-722.

<sup>16</sup> After the imprisonment of the cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, the primate of the R.C. Church in Poland and after the liquidation of the Church school structure, the State began a very strong ideological offensive against the Church and the R.C. tradition. In the 1956 the Church launched a special nine-years long preparation for the 'Millennium' - a Jubilee of a 1000 years since the beginning of the Church in Poland. It was not only an action for the renovation of the faith, but even for the defence and development of the traditional education based on the Nation's history. The State ignored those efforts and began a long and culturally devastating campaign against the traditional values using the schools as the main field for this experiment. Cf. N. DAVIES, God's Playground. A History of Poland. In Two Volumes. Volume II: 1795 to the Present. Oxford, Clarendon Press 1981 579-580; 609-617.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. B. SZYMULSKA, Rola amatorskiego zespołu teatralnego w aktywizacji życia kulturalnego wsi, in "Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny" 3 (1960) 191-194; she described her own experiences in the rural community where the long experience of the amateur theatre was helpful not only for the school work, but for the cultural life of a small country village.

Grzegorek in his evaluation of this period, emphasised the tendency to use the school theatre as a means of environmental influence in the ideological sense and described the inappropriately chosen repertoire for this kind of theatre. The majority of cases limited their activity to the non-educational imitation of the professional theatre.<sup>18</sup> The handbooks for the school and amateur theatre followed also the examples of the professional theatre in the presented solutions and were concerned about the technical part rather than the really educational.<sup>19</sup> After the war the movement of the amateur theatre founded its own review "Scena" (Stage), but the theatrical review for schools "Teatr w szkole" (Theatre in school) was not founded again.<sup>20</sup>

From the educational point of view, at this time, the writers considered the amateur theatre as a continuation of the child's play-activities and of the first contacts with the professional theatre in childhood. It was however necessary to find a favourable situation both in the school and in other educational institutions. Also of basic importance was the figure of the teacher, especially of the teacher of Polish language, who would dedicate personal time to this form of cultural activity even out of school time.<sup>21</sup>

### 3. 1. 5. Puppetry in teaching and as children's theatre

---

<sup>18</sup> Cf. GRZEGOREK, *Szkolne kółka*, 40.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. S. IŁOWSKI, *Budowa i urządzenie sceny w teatrze szkolnym i świetlicowym*. Warszawa 1953; S. POWOŁOCKI, J. HAWRYŁKIEWICZ (eds.), *Poradnik techniczny dla teatrów świetlicowych*. Warszawa 1955.

<sup>20</sup> Some of the earlier authors were still active after the war, like Kwieciński, Papée.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. S. FIRLIT, *Wychowawcze i dydaktyczne wartości teatru szkolnego (próba sondażu)*, in "Życie Szkoły" 2 (1978) 7-12.

In elementary school the most popular form of theatre was puppetry. It was connected with the official cultural policy and with the national curriculum of teaching. The educational reviews published descriptions of individual experiences, but there was a lack of an adequate uniform model.<sup>22</sup> The majority of the productions based upon popular children's literature, included tales and fables adapted to the cognitive conditions of the child.<sup>23</sup> The puppet theatre should be perceived in its dual role: as the theatre FOR children and as the theatre OF children.

The puppet school theatre was considered a normal child activity. The natural tendency of children towards the world of fantasy, even stimulated by professional productions and school lectures, had a creative outlet in elementary school in the various forms of puppet theatre both in the school and in the classroom. It was connected strictly with the representations of extracts from children's literature from the handbooks in current use.

There were also the various forms of puppetry, mostly connected with the tuition of the Polish language and with the methodology of the work. For many schools their own puppet theatre was considered as a reason for pride, as a special sign of the cultural activity not only for pupils, but also for the local community.

In the majority of cases, the main role in the organisation of the theatre belonged to the teacher-protectors who were made responsible by the administration or were willing because they were passionately fond of the theatrical world. The

---

<sup>22</sup> Cf. an experience of the shadow theatre by A. BARŁOWSKA, Teatr cieni pomaga mi w realizowaniu programu języka polskiego, in "Życie Szkoły" 6 (1953) 312-313; the puppets in the classroom by L. POLASZEK, Jak zorganizowałem teatr lalek w klasie IV, in "Życie Szkoły" 4 (1955) 192-193; T. LUBICZ-MAJEWSKI, Nasz teatr lalek, in "Życie Szkoły" 6 (1958) 335-338.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. L. BANDURA, Baśń w życiu dziecka i w literaturze (jako środek wychowawczy), in "Życie Szkoły" 10 (1954) 512-516.

school puppetry was even the main field of manual activity of children in the preparation of puppets and props.

Sabina Wasiuk, in describing her long experience<sup>24</sup>, emphasised also the difficulties with the preparation of full-time theatre in the school. The teacher must be aware of the children's conditions and skills and also must take as a principal norm the educational motivations of the school puppetry.

### 3. 1. 6. Theatre included in the educational process

At the turn of the 1950s and 1960s among the school theatre practitioners three main trends were present:

a) a leaning towards the genuine young people's theatre which could liberate the creative energies of youngsters only when it was in its original forms, distanced from the professional theatre patterns;

b) an emphasis towards the full productions of plays from the classic repertoire, based on the methodology similar to the work of the professional theatres;

c) an emergence of 'inscenizacja' ('mise-en-scene' or simply 'staging') as a term which covered these forms of theatrical activity based on youth's initiatives, involved in the teaching/learning process.

The first stream opted for so called 'small forms' ('małe formy') like theatre of poetry, dramatisation of a fragments taken from the literature. The teacher was seen in this method only as a helper and inspirer, an enabler or facilitator, but leaving the initiatives and solutions to the youngsters. Homa emphasised that this kind of theatre

---

<sup>24</sup> Cf. WASIUK, Zespoły żywego, 38-41. Wasiuk made this point clear in her description of the experiences began in 1947.

would be really educative both in a social and a professional meaning.<sup>25</sup> Theatre attracted the young people for its artistic characteristics which allowed the possibility of giving shape to their own ideas, to perform on the stage, to enter into characterisation in considerable depth. Some Authors first underlined this kind of self-presenting motives adding that even group work offers the possibility of realising common passions, interests and hobbies.<sup>26</sup> Others preferred to use the category of 'expressivity' as the main stimulus for the youth's theatrical activity.<sup>27</sup> Pielasińska made a point that the young people's theatre allowed the co-existence of two attitudes towards theatre: a contemplative and analytic view of theatre as an Art form and a creative, expressive view which permits experience of personal and existential problems of identity.

The second direction achieved at this time greater recognition as the activity compatible with the political and cultural tendency. Its practitioners opted for the quasi-professional methodology and the social involvement of the school theatre. Obviously the main task of this activity pointed towards the social recognition and the promotion of the cultural life especially in the rural and provincial environment.

Władysław Słodkowski presented many examples of this culturally 'missionary' school theatre in 1960 publishing a collection of articles Praca w teatrze szkolnym (The Work in the school theatre),<sup>28</sup> written by teachers of the 'Polish language and literature', who were active protectors of the school theatre. They were descriptions of

---

<sup>25</sup> Cf. HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 26.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. I. SŁOŃSKA (ed.), Teatr młodzieży. Warszawa 1970.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. PIELASIŃSKA, Pedagogiczna problematyka.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. W. SŁODKOWSKI (ed.), Praca w teatrze szkolnym. Odczyty pedagogiczne. Warszawa, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych 1960.

the play's preparation in grammar schools thought as a 'stage show' for the extra-school audience. The methods proposed had been good enough in their time, but in the changing school they were already old-fashioned proposals.<sup>29</sup>

In the next year, 1961, Klementyna Sołnowicz-Olbrychska, edited her personal experiences from the preparation of the full-time plays with the theatre in grammar school in a book 'Teatr radości' ('Theatre of joy').<sup>30</sup> She considered the aim of the activity as a public show, as an imitation of the professional theatre with a special, environmental cultural mission to complete.

Finally, in 1965, the founder of the 'Teatr Międzyszkolny' ('Inter-school Theatre') in Kraków, Stanisław Potoczek, published the theory and practice of school theatre as an institution in the school.<sup>31</sup> Potoczek presented a very ambitious cultural project of full-time plays and with the possibilities of the all-round theatrical development of youngsters (he even introduced the term 'teatralisation'), which included the active participation in the work of the school theatre:

"(...) teatralisation of the youngsters is a certain process of in-rooting into the theatre's values, it is a creating the habit/custom to frequent the theatre and to understand deeply the theatre's role as a factor creating the national culture. Teatralisation is one of the factors contributing to the general process of assimilation of the culture by the youth."<sup>32</sup>

His theatre was based on the selection of pupils from different schools. He was convinced that:

---

<sup>29</sup> Cf. critics exposed by HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 25-26.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. SOŁNOWICZ-OLBRYCHSKA, Teatr radości.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. S. POTOCZEK, Krakowski Teatr Międzyszkolny 1955-1965. Kraków 1965.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem, quoted after HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 28-29.

"The major forms in the school theatre allowed the all-round theatricalisation of the young people and they are an excellent educative means which stimulates the artistic, intellectual and ideological-political interests (...)." <sup>33</sup>

Many of Potoczek's experiences presented a valuable stimuli for other teachers. <sup>34</sup>

In the conceptions described here the characteristic features were:

- a) the spirit of 'being an actor';
- b) to be involved in their own environment with the cultural presence;
- c) the right of selection among the students, and
- d) the principal role of the protector/practitioner or responsible teacher.

All of these practices - in accordance with further critics - were often against the real educational aims of the theatre in the school. <sup>35</sup>

The teachers representing the third tendency of 'dramatisation/mise-en-scene' considered the school theatre and theatrical methodologies as an aid to the normal process of teaching/learning and especially of the 'Polish language and literature'. For this reason the repertoire was again taken from the Polish poetry or drama. <sup>36</sup> The word 'inscenizacja' appeared rather early but first it covered the methodology of dramatising the novels and fragments of romances. <sup>37</sup> Stanisław Hłowski was one

---

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, quoted by HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 26. Homa accused critically the concepts presented by Sołonowicz-Olbrychska, Słodkowski and Potoczek of the sin of dilettantism, amateurishness.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. GRZEGOREK, Szkolne kółka, 42; the opinion represented by Grzegorek emphasised the influence, but he also criticised the 'professional' ambitions of Potoczek.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, 41; HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 26.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. H. KOPIEC, Wychowawcze możliwości teatru szkolnego, in "Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze" 3 (1982) 124-128. He described a long, since 1952, history of experiences with the theatre of poetry at the beginning.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. A. NABOROWSKA, Inszenizacja opowiadań i fragmentów powieści współczesnych

among many others who experimented with a form of dramatised trial of the novel's hero and of the social events which required from the pupils their active analysis and creative acting of the situations. For those teachers dramatisation ('inscenizacja') presented a possible method unifying the teaching contents and the child's experience.<sup>38</sup>

The work of Stanisław Wróbel which involved theatrical resources in the history lessons as a demonstrative form of teaching represented a significant example of dramatisation.<sup>39</sup> He emphasised the active involvement of pupils and the advantages of the process of identification for the understanding of historical issues.

This third tendency, organically connected with the classroom work, re-proposed the experiences of a laboratory (workshop) as an activating teaching methodology. For ideological reasons, this kind of activity was regarded as 'before the war' and not suitable for the actual needs of the cultural campaign. But still the practitioners, concerned about its unquestionable and experienced values, indicated the laboratory as the most educational use of theatre:

"The work of the school theatre I imagine only as theatre laboratory and the performance should be only a test of the advisability, of the usefulness of our work, should be a joyful crowning of the efforts. Through the laboratory we learn how to understand and love theatre, through the laboratory we develop

---

pisarzy polskich. Uwagi inscenizacyjne opracowała Aleksandra Naborowska. Warszawa, "Czytelnik" 1955; S. IŁOWSKI, Sądy inscenizowane. Sąd nad "Latarnikiem", "Rycerze Krain Polarnych", "Oskarżam". Warszawa, Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza 1958.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. also L. TURKOWSKI, Inscenizacja w klasie I (a formy łączenia nauczania z doświadczeniem), in "Życie Szkoły" 4 (1959) 266-269.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. S. WRÓBEL, Uwagi o dramatyzacji na lekcjach historii, in "Życie Szkoły" 5 (1959) 346-349.

likings/predilections and talents of pupils (...)." <sup>40</sup>

### 3. 1. 7. Studies announcing the beginning of the aesthetic education

The whole period after the Second World War until the end of the 1950s failed to bring a substantial and significant theory of the school theatre. Also there was a lack of serious research. The practitioners of the school theatre presented rather numerous and various experiences but without a real philosophical background. The tendency connected with the heritage of "Teatr w Szkole" circle represented exceptional phenomena. Unfortunately, the heirs were not sufficiently strong to renew both the review (journal) and the movement. During the years after the war, Stefan Szuman was a real exception with his publications about aesthetic issues in education and in the amateur cultural activity.<sup>41</sup>

The new political climate after 1956 brought also some new trends into education. In 1959 the first theoretical approaches to the vast problem of aesthetic education in the contemporary school were published.<sup>42</sup>

Nawroczyński's O wychowaniu estetycznym ('Aesthetic education')<sup>43</sup> presented a historical survey of the various problems. Instead Suchodolski's

---

<sup>40</sup> Cf. S. PAPEE, Rola teatru szkolnego w wychowaniu młodzieży, in "Teatr Ludowy" 1/2 (1965); quoted after GRZEGOREK, Szkolne kółka, 42.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. S. SZUMAN, Pochwała dyletantów. Rzecz o znaczeniu samorodnej twórczości w wychowaniu estetycznym społeczeństwa. Warszawa, Instytut Wydawniczy "Sztuka" 1947; IDEM, Ilustracja w książkach dla dzieci i młodzieży. Zagadnienia estetyczne i wychowawcze. Kraków, "Wiedza, Zawód, Kultura" 1951.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. J. SZAMBELAN, Wychowanie przez sztukę. Przegląd publikacji, in "Życie Szkoły" 4 (1975) 58-61.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. B. NAWROCZYŃSKI, O wychowaniu estetycznym, in "Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny" 1 (1959).

Współczesne problemy wychowania estetycznego ('Contemporary problems of aesthetic education')<sup>44</sup> emphasised the educational values of Art and its knowledge. As Wojnar observed, they were pioneering reflections but they opened a long series of research and publications about aesthetics and Art's place in education.<sup>45</sup> The new point of view announced also radical changes in education itself: the less emphasis on the importance of ideological factors in education and the opening towards 'humanistic' dimensions of education. It was still in the same mainstream of the marxist-socialist philosophy as a background of education, but which allowed the presence and help of the educational sciences. In this first publication, Suchodolski emphasised the special role of theatre in the larger context of the aesthetic education. It became in the following years a much studied issue.

---

<sup>44</sup> Cf. B. SUCHODOLSKI, Współczesne problemy wychowania estetycznego, in "Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny" 1 (1959).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. I. WOJNAR, Teoria wychowania estetycznego, in: Rozwój pedagogiki w PRL. Wrocław, Ossolineum 1965, 239-265.

### 3. 2. 'ART IN EDUCATION' AND THE THEATRE'S EDUCATIONAL VALUES AFTER THE SCHOOL REFORM 1962/63

The changed political situation after 1956 and the abandonment of ideology as a leading factor in education, and the slow, but significant process of the acquisition and confrontation with the educational sciences from other countries, expanded knowledge of the Art's importance in education.

The introduction in 1962 of the 8-years elementary school was the real turning point in the context of a wider historical perspective and in relation to theatre and theatrical education. The next step was the reform of the grammar school.<sup>1</sup> It was a result of the broad thinking and planning reform of the whole educational system and cultural education in Poland.<sup>2</sup> In the new national curriculum at both educational levels, art education was given a very special place.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. TUŁODZIECKI, Wychowanie artystyczne w szkole ogólnokształcącej w świetle reformy szkolnej (cz. 1), in "Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze" 7 (1962) 1-8. A special act about development of instruction and education, initiating the reform process, was issued on 15 July 1961 and brought a full design of the education for both, elementary and post-elementary. In the year 1966/67, after the full implementation of the renovated elementary school, even the programmes for the technical colleges and grammar schools were renovated.

In the reformed programmes aesthetic education was present as a priority and it was a reason for the organised search for practical projects, for philosophical discussion about the nature of aesthetic education and for research in the singular dominions of the Arts in educational practices. Theatre was seen as the object of studies (connected with literature as a subject) and the theatrical activities ('lovers of theatre', school theatre, recitation movement, class-room theatre) were seen as an aid to and practical realisation of aesthetic education. 'Theatrical education' found its theoreticians and practitioners, but as a subject was placed between theatre-Art (both for children and for adults) and theatre-activity.

Among the theatre practitioners and teatrologists the 1960s were years of increased interest and research. Theatre FOR children was looking for new forms of performances and new relationships with schools. The active theatre, where the children could be involved in the performance, became the aim in theory, but rather rare in reality.<sup>3</sup>

The practical aspect of cultural education was connected with the growing role of mass-media in the process of teaching in accordance with the new curriculum. The published opinions and projects underlined the positive features of mass-media,

---

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibidem*. Together with the changing philosophic and aesthetic base of cultural education new approaches to the emerging problems connected or involved in the new curriculum arose. The change was even structural: instead of seven classes in the basic school, there were now eight. The subjects expanded and new content was introduced. Also where possible, there the preparatory kindergarten classes were founded. The last class, the eighth, mostly became a preparation for further studies (grammar school, professional or technical school). The examination system connected with entry into higher education was reformed. Especially the grammar school became divided in various types of profile - classes: mathematics-natural sciences and humanistic. In this last kind, cultural education became the main subject.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. M. SEMIL, *Teatr bez dzieci*, in "Dialog" 7 (1967) 107-118.

their values and dangers for the culture and for education. Researchers claimed the necessity of the new social education, the recognition of the correlational character in cultural/artistic education. In the school practice the question about media education arose and it was connected with the educational proposals for so called 'spare time' activity.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. 2. 1. Aesthetic education and theatre's position/role within it

Basic to the reform were new ideas about culture and its place in the contemporary human world. The work of Bogdan Suchodolski, philosopher and educator, embodies the central ideas. After the years of ideological dictatorship in education and in culture, he expressed the new point of view, that the

"(...) culture is a 'man's kingdom' (regnum homini), it is 'man's world', it is a reality in which and through which the man becomes 'human'."<sup>5</sup>

Suchodolski indicated the need to separate cultural education from politics and to return to the cultural and natural values in human life. That was the way to the rebirth

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. R. WROCZYŃSKI, Środki masowej komunikacji i wychowanie. (Próba postawienia zagadnień), in "Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny" 2 (1966) 59-73. He emphasised the real need for research about the usefulness of media in teaching, especially in reference to the subject 'literature' and Polish language. Although the boom of media education (film, radio and television) happened in the 1970s, in the 1960s some pioneer projects were published: E. FLEMING, Przeźrocza, film, telewizja w szkole. Warszawa, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych 1961; J. KOBLEWSKA-WRÓBŁOWA, Film fabularny w szkole. Warszawa, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych 1964; J. KUBIN, Radio i wychowanie. Warszawa, Nasza Księgarnia 1964.

<sup>5</sup> B. SUCHODOLSKI, Edukacja kulturalna a egzystencja człowieka, in "Nowa Szkoła" 3 (1983) 98-102. The Author summoned his earlier ideas about the importance of the cultural education for the full human existence. The culture in this new approach, with all the poetic mood included in its multiform appearance, was of whole human world a hope and the more authentic world as so called 'real life'. Suchodolski presented the modernising trends in the marxist-leninist ideology.

of man, of the new kind of citizen, even of the State. The main hope, emerging from the cultural education, should stay at the base of individual human existence and not of the whole of mankind, which is impersonal, without individual identity. Cultural education should involve the process of the person's formation in various human groups, but the most important became the individual man and his value for ever.

Cultural education in the 1960s was based on a definition of culture from marxist/humanistic perspective. In this approach the culture had been treated as a manifold 'deal' of human work and creativity. Culture was also philosophy of life and factor-style of coexistence (community life) determined by the inherited, produced and accepted values.<sup>6</sup> The introduction of cultural education should be against the degradation of culture:

a) by subordinating it to the interests of the various social groups or to those in political power;

b) in practice to limit it only to the level of entertainment in free time.

Each project of cultural education should discern the actual aim from the relative values.<sup>7</sup>

In his aesthetic writings, Suchodolski repeated the message of Herbert Read<sup>8</sup> about the authenticity of the human culture, free from rebellion, from compromise

---

<sup>6</sup> Cf. ibidem, 98.

<sup>7</sup> Suchodolski followed the idea of R. Oppenheimer, that the last criterion of human virtue could be wisdom and the proof of it could be our choice of life of work and beauty. This general statement about the philosophical base became very popular among the theoreticians and teachers of cultural education.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. H. READ, Sens sztuki. Warszawa, Polskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe 1966; IDEM, Wychowanie przez sztukę. Przekł. z ang. Anna Trojanowska-Kaczmarek. Wstęp Irena Wojnar. Wrocław, Ossolineum 1976. Polish translation of Education through Art was published in 1976, but his ideas were presented in several publications written by Suchodolski and Wojnar.

and from ideological service. The new cultural education should build on the basis of history, but it should create a new culture for the human person.

Suchodolski's philosophy gave not only the main directions but also put a new question about the principles of realization of a new curriculum. He and his successors, as the theoreticians of cultural education, postulated 'education through Art' as a social and educational program against culture concerned as an exclusive good for one class only. Art and culture can and should be active in the whole society as a main factor in the enrichment of all personalities, as a content and value of the general educational orientation.<sup>9</sup>

The Philosophers gave their directions for aesthetic education: Art should be close to real life, close to human nature, close to human work, because beauty is connected with human activity.<sup>10</sup> Aesthetic education should be interpreted in accordance with the inner harmony of human psychical power, with the liberation of the need for creativity and free activity towards the perspective of human renovation and with the chance of social renewal. Irena Wojnar defined:

"Aesthetic education in its new and large significance - is a process of the permeation of the multiplied and rich values of art into life and into human activity. The result of this process was both the increase of emotional ability, the valuation of the aesthetic phenomena, the formation of aesthetic human culture, and the enrichment of the integral, indivisible personality."<sup>11</sup>

In this way, 'education through Art' should be realised in two ways:

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf. WOJNAR, Wychowanie, 25.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. I. WOJNAR, Sztuka i różne jej dziedziny w kształtowaniu współczesnego człowieka, in "Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny" 1 (1967) 31-47.

<sup>11</sup> WOJNAR, Wychowanie, 22.

- a) through contact with various kinds and phenomena of art, and
- b) through individual artistic activity, organised and inspired in the educational process.

The principle of anthropocentrism should go before the art-centrism.<sup>12</sup>

Both the educational function of the various types of art and the leading and integrative role of teachers of the 'Polish language and literature', required a renovated program of teacher training and the creation of a new one for the 'teacher of aesthetic education'.<sup>13</sup>

The complexity of the methodological approaches has been guided by the 'Katedra Pedagogiki Ogólnej Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego' (The Department of General Pedagogy of Warsaw University) and 'Zakład Wychowania Estetycznego' (Institute of Aesthetic Education). Both of them collaborated since 1964 with 'Podkomisja Wychowania Estetycznego Zarządu Głównego Związku Nauczycielstwa Polskiego' (Committee of Aesthetic Education of Headquarters of the Union of Polish Teachers). They developed the particular division of subjects in the curriculum and prepared analysis and evaluations of the proposals from other scientific centres. Those were, in summary, the methodological conditions:

- a) the social usefulness and functions of art;

---

<sup>12</sup> Cf. I. WOJNAR (ed.), Wychowanie przez sztukę (Education through art). Wybór, wstęp, red. I. Wojnar. Warszawa, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych 1965; IDEM, Estetyka i wychowaniu. Warszawa, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe 1964; IDEM, Perspektywy wychowawcze sztuki. Warszawa, Nasza Księgarnia 1966. As a continuation of the earlier publications about the cultural education (cf. B. Nawroczyński and B. Suchodolski) the new theoretical works were published about the aesthetic education according to the new curriculum. Among them was one of the first works of I. Wojnar.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. I. WOJNAR, Nauczyciel a sztuka, in "Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny" 1 (1968) 11-26.

- b) the causes of human questions about art and the knowledge of art;
- c) the philosophy of art;
- d) the various aspects of the knowledge of art;
- e) the various points of view in art;
- f) the classification according to the method of demonstration (specialistic, directional, individualistic, synthetic, integrative, scientific, philosophic, artistic, stylistic, chronological);
- g) the classification according to the method of communication (book, television, movie, theatre...);
- h) the basic level of the knowledge of art.<sup>14</sup>

In relation to the arts, the curriculum stipulated the following subjects to be taught: fine arts, music and technical activity in the elementary school, and a choice between fine arts and music in the grammar school. The curriculum emphasised the choir's activity in the school but the school theatre was not mentioned. Only in the renewed curriculum of the 'Polish language and literature' the study of drama works was included but with the aim to educate the reader of poetry and literature and spectator of theatre, film and listener of radio.<sup>15</sup> The author of the curriculum presented mainly the broader participation in the cultural life as a task of 'cultural education'.

The interdisciplinary approach to aesthetic education proved to be very valuable through the discovery of the different world of the child's life. Some of the

---

<sup>14</sup> Cf. I. WOJNAR, Źródła współczesnego zainteresowania wiedzą o sztuce, in "Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny" 4 (1969) 81-82.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. W. TUŁODZIECKI, Wychowanie artystyczne w szkole ogólnokształcącej w świetle reformy szkolnej (dokończenie), in "Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze" 9 (1962) 1-5.

authors used as the basis for their ideas the theories of Jean Piaget about the development of child's cognitive capacities and creativity.<sup>16</sup> Generally, after the 1950s, the educational sciences in Poland opened towards the world's experiences. The preparation of the new curriculum used the existing patterns in Europe, especially in 'education through Art' (curriculum of music education provides an example). All those effects were realisable thanks to the major participation of Polish educators within the work of the international organisations (International Society for Education through Art) and as a result - the exchange of experiences. Even the activities of the International Institute of Theatre with the International Day of Theatre were a source of stimulation especially for the school's activities.<sup>17</sup>

In Polish educational literature analysis and surveys from West-European and American research about the creativity and expression of the child and about the theories of New Education have been published.<sup>18</sup> Again in the reviews were present the theories of Maria Montessori (the spontaneous child's expression), of R. Stinner, of E. J. Dalcroze, of Carl Orff (the 'pedagogy' of rhythm and the musical expression), of Celestin Freinet (the active techniques),<sup>19</sup> of many researches about the artistic

---

<sup>16</sup> Cf. WOJNAR, Źródła, 75-76; A. TROJANOWSKA, Problem ekspresji i twórczości dziecka, in "Nowa Szkoła" 3 (1971) 33-37.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 30: he emphasised the efforts made in the 1969 and 1970, when the actions of the International Institute of Theatre took special, educational direction (1969: Theatre and youth, 1970: Theatre and education).

<sup>18</sup> The first materials had been edited already before the Second World War, but after it, the official ideological trends in education left this heritage in advantage of the experiences with marxist-communist ideology as the background.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. H. SEMENOWICZ, Nowoczesna szkoła francuska technik Freineta. Warszawa, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych 1969; T. MARCINIAK, Artystyczna ekspresja dziecka, in "Życie Szkoły" 7/8 (1969) 61-67; Z. TWORKOWSKA, Z doświadczeń wychowania przez sztukę w grupie dzieci najmłodszych w szkole podstawowej w Ciechanowcu, in "Życie Szkoły" 7/8 (1969)

expression (the fine arts of children)<sup>20</sup> and finally the Authors of the new curriculum remembered the theory of Herbert Read as a milestone in the valuation of children's art. With him, in practice, has been mostly connected the methodology for teachers.<sup>21</sup>

The authors emphasised the creative role of the imagination and the stimulative and encouraging role of the teacher or of the school's subjects. Also they spoke about the integrity of the educational methods with the child's nature and about the values of the creative techniques both for individual and social development.<sup>22</sup>

At last, Wojnar in her works addressed to teachers, insisted on personal search into the new educational proposals and theories. According to the program from 1962, the teachers in the new curriculum should be creative, active and like an animator of the cultural life, responsible for the cultural image of their own school.<sup>23</sup>

### 3. 2. 2. Theory of theatrical education

In spite of a lack of explicit curricular suggestions about the position and role of the theatre or theatrical education in school (both elementary and post-elementary),

---

67-71.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. A. TROJANOWSKA, *Dziecko i twórczość*. Wrocław, Ossolineum 1971. She presented authors, their theories and practice about the child's creativity.

<sup>21</sup> There was obvious sign of Wojnar's and Suchodolski's philosophy influence in the teachers' training.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. P. BĄBOL, A. PARZYSZEK, *Metoda inscenizacji w nauczaniu*. Warszawa, Wojskowa Akademia Polityczna im. Feliksa Dzierżyńskiego 1969. The introduction of active techniques into the military education was very interesting. Piotr Bąbol and Antoni Parzyszek described all these problems in their work about the mise-en-scene in the army. They based their work on the earlier publications by Tadeusz Nowacki, Jan Zborowski and mostly by Włodzimierz Okoń who presented largely the active pedagogy in the contemporary school as more suitable in accordance with the psychology and sociology of the school today.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. WOJNAR, *Wychowanie*, 24.

in the 1960's, we observe an increase in publishing activity<sup>24</sup> and serious theoretical approaches to the problems.<sup>25</sup> In published handbooks for teachers the theatre has been indicated as an effective form of introduction into the culture and the best expression of the synthetic, cultural education. Even it allowed the individual approach to the child during the lesson. In the normal school work through the theatre, this methodology became the important factor of the personal growth of pupils and their social and cultural activity. Wojnar and Suchodolski, in their theoretical approaches to the cultural/aesthetic education in general, published first and (as it happened) for many years provided fundamental ideas about theatre in the reformed school. They underlined the educational values of participation in theatrical life and the preparatory role of the theatrical activity for the pupils to become aware 'consumers' of art, of the theatre. They postulated the necessity of research about the reception of theatre among children and youngsters. In 1965 Wojnar published the interesting and inspirational collection of issues about cultural education, which included one article by Maria Signorelli about the use of the theatre in the school in Italy as the example of theatre placed in the curriculum.<sup>26</sup>

Dramatic art has been considered as an educational instrument par excellence aimed at the formation of the personality and qualities of an 'open mind'. The main

---

<sup>24</sup> Cf. T. WRÓBEL (ed.), Nauczanie języka polskiego w kl. I-IV. Warszawa, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych 1959; I. JARZYNOWA, Moja praca w teatrze szkolnym, in: A. SZLAZAKOWA (ed.), Elementy wychowania estetycznego w nauczaniu języka polskiego w szkole średniej. Warszawa, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych 1965.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 120: She emphasised the fundamental role of research by Suchodolski, Szuman, Wojnar and Miller.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. M. SIGNORELLI-VOLPICELLI, Wychowujące znaczenie teatru, in: WOJNAR (ed.), Wychowanie przez, 365-375.

values of drama are the dynamic character of performance coupled with the psychological depth of the stage's situation. In that way theatrical education should be a 'big synthesis' of the educational dilemma about theatre: should it be intended and taught as a 'performance' or as a 'creative participation'. Its aims could be: the enrichment of personal, individual culture by theatrical art, the presentation of the wealth of the literary work, of the beauty of the languages, of the value of the word.<sup>27</sup>

Unfortunately, all of those theoretical premises of theatrical education assumed that the essence of the matter stays in the penetrating, formative and refining role of beauty in the life of the young individual, that the theatre should lead towards deep artistic emotion and experience, towards the increase in aesthetic value of the personality. Theatrical education should lead to the perception of the theatre as an Art and it should help towards the better understanding of the nature, the meaning, functions and means of the theatre.<sup>28</sup> This aesthetic definition of the theatrical education did not assume that through the active 'making theatre' the pupil becomes the real 'man of culture' too. Here still the theatre was considered as an external factor in the personal growth with the active role of the teacher who was responsible for the creation in the pupil of the cultural accepted attitudes of the social useful personality.

The 'teatralizacja' (theatralisation) - once introduced by Potoczek and still alive and popular in the 1960s - has been understood as one of the factors of the general process of the assimilation of culture, thanks to the theatrical education

"(...) the man becomes more complete, more sensitive to the human lot and situation, more engaged in the creation of the

---

<sup>27</sup> Cf. HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 28; Author referred to the ideas of Wojnar and required them as the basis for the further development of theatrical education.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 121.

reality in which he/she lives and which is conditioning his activity."<sup>29</sup>

The first research about the implications of experienced theatre for education was initiated by Romana Miller, in the Department of Pedagogy at Gdansk University in 1965 with the entire team of her students and teachers from the collaborating schools. She, as the first researcher in the post-war history of education in Poland, asked about the beginnings of the theatrical education in the child's life, about the relationships in school-time, about the child's emotions both in the puppet theatre and in the theatre for adult people. It was research rather from a psychological and sociological point of view.<sup>30</sup>

Her observations and research were connected with the activities of the Puppet Theatre from Gdańsk, 'Miniatura', but the field of investigations included the children from many schools in the north area of Poland. The large project of the research indicated explicitly the aims and focused on the conditions of the contact between child and theatre, the methodology of the initial preparation of children and the educational tasks both of the school and the theatre.

Miller in her publications,<sup>31</sup> apart from the scrupulous analysis of the results of the researches, designed a complete project of theatrical education from the beginning

---

<sup>29</sup> Cf. HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 30; he presented opinion of Suchodolski:

"(...) dzięki edukacji teatralnej człowiek staje się pełniejszy, bardziej wrażliwy na sytuacje i losy ludzkie, głębiej zaangażowany jest w tworzenie rzeczywistości, w której żyje i która warunkuje jego działalność."

<sup>30</sup> Cf. ibidem, 33. He reported Miller's and her collaborators research, which concerned the character, composition of the audience and the reasons for their visits in theatre.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. R. MILLER, Dziecko i jego teatr, in "Psychologia Wychowawcza" 5 (1966) 489-511; IDEM, Z rozważań nad edukacją teatralną, in "Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny" 3 (1968) 129-147; IDEM, Z badań nad edukacją teatralną, in "Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny" 3 (1968) 191-208.

of kindergarten to the last classes of school education, introducing at the same time the term 'theatrical education' for good into the Polish educational literature. She observed mainly the children watching puppet theatre and analysed their behaviour and emphasised the 5-6, as an age of the first understanding of the theatrical illusion and the emotional engagement into the action through the process of the identification.

She postulated the need for a project of theatrical education in which the spectator would be able to collaborate with the stage, to understand theatrical language. The new form of relationship between theatre and school was needed and for teachers she projected a new activity based upon awareness of the theatre's values and possession of knowledge about the theatrical activity available for the pupils.<sup>32</sup> The best way to realise theatrical education were the 'Circles of Theatre Lovers' ('Szkolne Koła Przyjaciół Teatru').

Miller divided theatrical education into three stages:

a) between 3 and 7 years: a naive spectator who is still not able to distinguish fiction from reality and is active in his/her play; theatrical education should exploit the child's creativity revealing the first secrets of theatre, guiding the first initiation into the Art's language; Miller emphasised that puppetry represents the best form of theatre for children at this age;

b) between 7 and 10 years: a spectator in search of adventures who is still identifying him/herself with the stage heroes, but is already able to imitate the heroes'

---

<sup>32</sup> Cf. HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 33-34. Miller addressed the teachers during the special training meeting i 1968, in Koszalin.

adventures; Miller emphasised the difference between boys' preference of mysterious adventures from girls' world of princesses and fairies;

c) around the 12th year: a collaborative spectator, aware of fiction, with his/her own choice and able to reflect on the play; the knowledge of the theatrical language progressed and a spectator presents the need to make an experience of theatre by him/herself.<sup>33</sup>

Miller's theory and her long university activity in teacher training, was directed towards the formation (education) of the knowledgeable and active spectator, capable of co-operating with the stage (the mood of the play) and with other members of the audience.

"The vulnerable and engaged audience"<sup>34</sup>

could receive, understand the theatrical language and adopt it to its own theatrical creativity/activity. Very similar researches were guided by Maria Tyszkowa at Poznań University and collaborated with the Puppet Theatre 'Marcinek'. She, apart from research about the child as a spectator, studied also the psychological and educational values of the fables and the tales as the possible repertoire of the theatre for children.<sup>35</sup>

### 3. 2. 3. Practice and forms of 'theatrical education'

The most significant and generally accepted form of theatrical education in the 1960s was embodied in the movement of circles (clubs) of theatre lovers.<sup>36</sup> There

---

<sup>33</sup> Cf. MILLER, Z rozważań, 136; HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 31-32. Miller referred her opinions to the J. Piaget's theory about the child's growing stages and to P. Slade's theory and practice of children theatre.

<sup>34</sup> HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 32.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. M. TYSZKOWA, Baśń i jej recepcja z punktu widzenia psychologii rozwojowej, in "Psychologia Wychowawcza" 4 (1978) 374-384.

were two different forms of clubs/circles widespread in Poland: the circles of theatre's lovers and the clubs of television theatre's lovers. Both of them had a support of the 'Society for the Popularisation of Culture and Science' ('Towarzystwo Wiedzy Powszechnej') and for the latter clubs a special review "Informator o spektaklach telewizji" was published.

It is difficult to say where the first circles started, but the pioneering initiative of the longest experience known as 'experiment of Wrocław' ('Eksperyment wrocławski') was the competition 'Young people towards the knowledge of theatre' ('Młodzież poznaje teatr') started in Wrocław as a common action of 'Teatr Polski' ('Polish Theatre') and the local educational authority (Kuratorium Okręgu Szkolnego). In July 1966, the troupe of 'Polski Teatr' opted for the authentic relationship with the young people in Wrocław and they, people of theatre, found an ally in the students of the 3rd 'Liceum Ogólnokształcące' who founded the first 'circle of theatre lovers'. Krystyna Skuszanka, director of 'Teatr Polski', became the honorary member of the circle. She and Anna Hannowa, the teacher responsible for the circle's activity, initiated the competition.<sup>37</sup>

The idea of 'circles' became popular. Since the beginning of their activity in schools and in other educational institutions, voices arose about the need for concepts, for the clarification of nature and aims to be consequently popularised.<sup>38</sup> In fact, these postulates became realised in practice. The general aim took a direction of allowing for young people a closer relationship with theatre, literature and Art in general, the

---

<sup>36</sup> Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 121.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. A. HANNOWA, Młodzież i teatr. Warszawa-Wrocław, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe 1990, 25-27.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. GRZEGOREK, Szkolne kółka, 42.

awakening of the aesthetic sensibility and the main help in education through Art.<sup>39</sup> Artistic activity (both through study and through creativity) achieved a special dimension for the post-elementary technical schools as a supplement to their less humanistic but more science oriented curriculum.<sup>40</sup>

The development of the circles was popular especially among the post-elementary schools, but even so there were initiatives to bring this form into the elementary school, starting with the 12 years-old pupils. Papée, university lecturer and enthusiast of the school theatre, postulated this early start in his project of theatrical education.<sup>41</sup> He emphasised the need for closer relationship between circles and teaching/learning of the literature (and language too). His projects were widely supported by other theoreticians<sup>42</sup> and generally circles became a major help and supplement to the literature and language curriculum.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Z. MORDYŃSKA-NOWAKOWA, Koła miłośników teatru, in "Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze" 5 (1971) 28:

"Celem kół dramatycznych jest zbliżenie młodzieży do teatru, do literatury pięknej i sztuki, wyrobienie wrażliwości estetycznej oraz wszechstronnie pojęte wychowanie przez sztukę."

<sup>40</sup> Cf. A. SZNAJDESKI, W przyjaźni z teatrem, in "Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze" 10 (1974) 11:

"Teatr powinien być dla niego 'odskocznią od szarzyzny dnia codziennego' i 'trudem zadany widzowi' - wg Krystyny Skuszanki."  
 "Theatre for young people should be like a 'spring board' away from the boring routine of everyday life and the 'challenge for the audience' - opinion by Krystyna Skuszanka"

The Author was responsible for the circle of theatre's lovers and for the school theatre in the technical college.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. S. PAPEE, Teatr bez młodzieży, in "Nowa Szkoła" 3 (1967) 47.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. R. MILLER, Szkolne koła przyjaciół teatru jako jedna z form wychowania widza teatralnego, in "Nowa Szkoła" 3 (1968) 39.

<sup>43</sup> Also in majority of cases the teachers of the Polish literature and language have taken care of the circles and school theatres.

The several forms of circles activity were manifested in two main ways:

- a) study and knowledge of the theatre;
- b) theatrical activity in the school and community theatre groups.<sup>44</sup>

The first consisted in reading theatrical reviews and books, meetings and discussions with the theatre practitioners (directors, actors, technicians etc.), the study of the actors' work and other theatre personnel, the writing of critical reviews of plays, the theatrical olympics and competitions. The experiences produced a variety of contests: history of theatre, critic writing, theatre posters, theatre photography, scenery/props projects. The second took the form of workshops with practitioners, the acquisition of stage skills and - following the explicit request of the members - the preparation of their own theatre productions.<sup>45</sup> In the course of the growing experience, the practitioners emphasised the laboratory (workshop) as the most suitable form of work for the school theatre.<sup>46</sup>

In the first research the circles achieved a very positive evaluation which was encouraging for the further development. Miller observed:

a) the circles allowed the knowledge of theatre language, both as literature and as stage-craft (theatre art)

b) the theatre experiences changed the emotional expectations of the spectators;

---

<sup>44</sup> Cf. HANNOWA, *Młodość i teatr*, 24-50. Even if the beginning was a one-year contest, during its time two streams became clearly visible.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. MILLER, *Szkolne*, 40; HANNOWA, *Młodość i teatr*, 39-41.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. GRZEGOREK, *Szkolne kółka*, 42. He remembered the theory and practice of Komarnicki and Papée.

c) the approach to the play and to the spectator's position in the theatre, became more critical; the understanding that not all plays were for the young audience, but that all could bring some values;

d) the growth of theatre knowledge and the appreciation of the hard work of theatre people;

e) the circles' members became more friendly towards each other and collaborative with the rest of the theatre audience.<sup>47</sup> These were the hypothesis for her research and all of them were confirmed in course of the research.

Although the circles were popular through Poland, a few centres became more important and around them the networks of common initiatives consequently were created. The centres in Gdańsk,<sup>48</sup> Wrocław<sup>49</sup> and Kraków<sup>50</sup> achieved a high level of activity. In 1964 in Gdańsk area there were 32 active circles and connected with many theatres from Gdańsk and Gdynia. Miller has done her research among them and published the results in 1968. In 1966 the initiative involved only 40 schools from Wrocław and voivodeship (province), but during the next years the centre spread its influence in the whole South-West region of Poland. The circles were active also in smaller, provincial cities, where they became real possibilities of live contact with the

---

<sup>47</sup> Cf. MILLER, Szkolne, 40-41.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. ibidem.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. HANNOWA, Młodzież i teatr.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. PAPEE, Teatr. Cf. SZNAJDESKI, W przyjaźni; MORDYŃSKA-NOWAKOWA, Koła; GRZEGOREK, Szkolne kółka. Sznajderski described the activity in a technical college in Brzeg Dolny (Wrocław influence), Mordyńska-Nowakowa in Lublin (there was the professional theatre and many university theatres), Grzegorek was active in Płock (there was also the professional theatre company especially active among the schools).

theatre and Art. Also the clubs of television theatre lovers were more popular in small centres.

### 3. 2. 4. Theatre elements and teaching methodology (didactic)

The aesthetic education project allowed further development of teaching methodology which included some theatre elements and forms. The number of publications (teacher's handbooks and experiences reports) significantly increased. In the kindergarten and first years of elementary school (7-11 years) the most popular form was puppetry. Teachers based their work on the children's imagination and creativity especially in the preparation of puppets. Puppetry was appreciated for its educational value for group work. It was both a source of stimulation with the child having to use behind the puppet the best expression, but being protected from the vanity of being an actor.<sup>51</sup> Some practitioners emphasised the stimulating influence of professional puppet theatre<sup>52</sup> and as a consequence the child's will to re-create theatre and to perform scenes from their own plays and experiences. Puppetry was used to stimulate the acquisition and study of literature for children and to illustrate it.<sup>53</sup> The main aim was teaching, but the public performance (for other children or for parents audience) became a form of gratitude and reward for children.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. A. MIODUSZEWSKA, Teatr w świetlicy, in "Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze" 8 (1966) 36-38.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. TWORKOWSKA, Z doświadczeń, 67-71.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. J. KRYŃSKA, Teatr w naszym domu, in "Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze" 8 (1965) 38; M. KOWNACKA, Zabawa w teatr, in "Życie Szkoły" 12 (1968) 34-36.

The use of the child's own voice, was connected with puppet theatre and often the recitation presented the next stage of didactic use of theatre,<sup>54</sup> giving at the same time a good base for the theatre group. Teachers emphasised the interpretation of poetry as an important aim for the understanding of literature and further knowledge of theatre.

Poetry theatre became the most popular form of theatrical activity among the students from the post-elementary schools and colleges. Their creativity was expressed in the 'small forms' theatre ('teatr małych form').<sup>55</sup> This style was characterised by some features like:

- a) the forms generally based on poetry;
- b) stage-props solutions were simple and symbolic;
- c) the work was collective even if the recitation of poetry was individual.<sup>56</sup>

The productions of the poetry theatre took various forms:

- a) 'montaż poetycki' ('poetic montage') composed of poems by the same poet;
- b) 'montaż tematyczny' ('thematic montage') composed of works of various poets but in accordance with the main theme/topic/idea;

---

<sup>54</sup> Cf. WASIUK, Zespoły żywego, 38-41; SZNAJDESKI, W przyjaźni. He emphasised the usefulness of theatre for the better understanding of literature.

<sup>55</sup> The adjective 'small' concerned with the length of the productions first of all, but also the professional theatre used the same name to define a productions in accordance with the administrative evaluation (payment and wages of the actors and producers). The term belonged to the official theatrical terminology in the Polish theatre; it could be comparable with the 'short form' term.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. J. GOŁĘBIEWSKA, Z doświadczeń opiekuna żywego słowa, in "Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze" 1 (1969) 28-29.

c) 'montaż słowno-muzyczny' ('music-verbal montage') where poetry was connected with suitable music and often this form became a 'poetry-song theatre' ('teatr poezji śpiewanej');

d) various cabaret forms (based on poetry and on youth's own creativity).<sup>57</sup>

Almost all practitioners emphasised the same values of the 'poetry theatre':

a) an aid in the development of the aesthetic taste and experience;

b) the development of emotions and therapeutic effectiveness;

c) the development of the capacity to give moral evaluation/judgment;

d) the stimulating and liberating aid for creativity (especially for writing poetry);

e) it stimulated the knowledge and passion for studying the human characters and emotions;

f) the immediate aid to speech and communication skills.<sup>58</sup>

School theatre was an extra-timetable activity, but already required by theatrical education schemes. The teacher's role was very important and not only because of his/her good-will to do this activity, but also because the local educational authorities and the aesthetic education demanded it.<sup>59</sup>

The competitions, launched and stimulated by the educational authority, sometimes provoked the existence of activities oriented only towards performance. In these cases the methodology imitating professional theatre was adopted.<sup>60</sup> The

---

<sup>57</sup> Cf. MIODUSZEWSKA, *Teatr*, 38; SZNAJDESKI, *W przyjaźni*, 11.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. GOŁĘBIEWSKA, *Z doświadczeń*, 30.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. GOŁĘBIEWSKA, *Z doświadczeń*, 26-30. She presented a profile of the socially and culturally engaged teacher. Cf. also WASIUK, *Zespoły żywego*, 41 about the importance of good relationships between pupils and teacher in this kind of activity.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. MORDYŃSKA-NOWAKOWA, *Koła*, 28; R. CHOJNICKA, *Jak poprzez pracę zespołu*

ideological 'spirit' of the cultural mission in the community was still alive among many teachers, but also the (it seems to be) eternal conflict between class-teacher and demanding headmasters played a significant role in several cases of children's theatre.

One of the important features of 'aesthetic education' was the integrative model of teaching (the principle of integration). Theatre involved in pedagogy, in the teaching methods, realised fully this kind of demand. In several experiences the theatrical activity was connected with the plastic and visual-arts education,<sup>61</sup> with music education<sup>62</sup> and with the physical education.<sup>63</sup> The school theatre required collaboration between the teachers responsible for different subjects, but involved in the common production.

### 3. 2. 5. Theatre FOR children

The professional theatre for children in the 1960s represented a part of the cultural State's policy and was a subject of very particular attention<sup>64</sup> in both artistic and financial dimensions. Also the improvement in quality and quantity of the theatres for young audiences was noticed.<sup>65</sup> It was connected with the reform movement in

---

recytatorsko-dramatycznego wiąże młodzież z życiem środowiska, in "Problemy Opickuńczo-Wychowawcze" 1 (1969) 41.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. M. PRZYCHODZIŃSKA, A. TROJANOWSKA, Wielka sztuka i małe dzieci, in "Życie Szkoły" 5 (1966) 12-21; A. TROJANOWSKA, Miejsce sztuki w wychowaniu i kształceniu dzieci klas I-IV, in "Życie Szkoły" 1 (1968) 7-12.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. MARCINIAK, Artystyczna, 61-67; H. ŁUBIŃSKA, Edukacja kulturalna, in "Problemy Opickuńczo-Wychowawcze" 3 (1971) 30-33.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. GNIEWKOWSKI, Korelacja, 34-40.

<sup>64</sup> This achievement ( a network of special theatres for children) in all East-european countries was a remarkable and its educational value was underlined by authors from West Europe. Cf. M. SIGNORELLI, Il bambino e il teatro. Bologna, Edizioni Giuseppe Malipieri 1957.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 120.

Polish theatre<sup>66</sup> and in theatrical sciences, especially in semiotics of theatre.<sup>67</sup>

Each year the professional puppet theatres showed about 90 various plays in their own theatres and on a touring programme in collaboration with the schools and various venues (clubs and 'houses of culture'). As Renik and other authors noticed, the 'Teatr Dzieci Zagłębia' from Będzin in Silesia and the 'Teatr Lalki i Aktora \*Marcinek\*' ('Puppet and Actor's Theatre \*Marcinek\*') from Poznań reached an outstanding artistic level.<sup>68</sup> The first involved children in its productions and presented plays embracing the psychological and educational postulates of children's language and game.<sup>69</sup> In these years there were 25 active professional puppet theatres for children.

Also the adult theatres included in their repertoire plays specially prepared for young and child audiences. It was their aim to reach a larger public and to fulfil the demands of the authorities.<sup>70</sup> Renik estimated that in 1960 the dramatic theatres produced 38 plays for children, in 1962 - 41 and in 1964 - 45 and performances were running a long-time stage life because of a consequent collaboration with the schools.

Theatre FOR children, despite its development, was, in the first place, an object of very serious criticism by the teatrologists. Małgorzata Semil, in her short but substantial analysis,<sup>71</sup> criticised the schematic productions, the superficiality of

---

<sup>66</sup> The 1960s were the years of theatrical experiments by Tadeusz Kantor, Józef Szajna and in 1962 his revolutionary in modern theatre work started Jerzy Grotowski in Opole with 'Teatr 13 Rzędów' (Theatre of 13 Rows).

<sup>67</sup> Cf. researches of Stefania Skwarczyńska, Irena Sławińska and Tadeusz Kowzan which in the 1960s became known in Europe and stimulated the contemporary teatrology.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 122; SEMIL, Teatr bez dzieci, 109.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. A. FALKIEWICZ, Kilka myśli o teatrze dla najmłodszych, in "Dialog" 11 (1968) 101-105.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 122.

problems presented in the plays and the old pattern of the fable as the prevailing one. Theatre apparently was in the service of education, but it was not educational in the real, actual situation of the changing modern school. Andrzej Falkiewicz presented a similar opinion emphasising the bureaucratic and insufficient relationship between theatre and school. Also the theatre for young audiences produced too many performances as a duty and that influenced the artistic quality.<sup>72</sup>

Authors presented not only a criticism, but formulated several postulates about the future form and content of the theatre for children. Semil emphasised the need for creation of the real hero of the play, compatible with the child's reality and free from the adult's imposed view. Falkiewicz demanded from the theatre preparatory research about the child's life. Theatre should become an aid to the child in his/her creative activity. He recognised the stimulative importance of theatre as an Art, because it could exist only with the active participation of a spectator. In his postulate

"Theatre should become the second side of the educative process  
- that active, contradictory and perverse (in a positive sense)."<sup>73</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

'Theatrical education' did not become an autonomous subject in the newly reformed school of the 1960s, but in accordance with the directions of the aesthetic

---

<sup>71</sup> Cf. SEMIL, Teatr bez dzieci, 107-118.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 122:

"(...) widowiska dedykowane dzieciom nie zawsze jednak odznaczały się wysokim poziomem literackim i artystycznym i dlatego zagadnienie jakości i wartości przedstawień dla dzieci budziło wiele emocji i niepokoiło tych wszystkich, którym leży na sercu sprawa właściwie pojmowanej edukacji teatralnej."

<sup>73</sup> FALKIEWICZ, Kilka myśli, 103.

education, theatre together with other artistic subjects, should be involved in the process of teaching/learning of literature, history and culture. The outstanding theoretical production of the aesthetic education was not followed in the same measure either by the school practice or by the theatres.

After ten years of the realization of the national curriculum from 1962, Wojnar, in 1973, wrote a critical article about the methodology, indicating at the same time deficiencies and problems with education through art. In her opinion, many of the theoretical proposals were still waiting to be introduced or realised.<sup>74</sup>

In 1970, during the 'Ogólnopolskie Spotkanie Działaczy Ruchu Teatralnego' (National Meeting of the Animators of the Theatrical Movement) in Konin, the theatre practitioners and educators, analysed the situation of the theatre FOR and OF children. As a conclusion they proclaimed a long list of suggestions for the theatrical animation of the 1970s:

a) more knowledge about theatre in the national curriculum; television theatre in the school; relationships theatre - school; theatrical committee by the regional council of education; lectures from the theatrical literature;

b) foundation of the special institutes for the animators of the theatrical life by the theatrical schools;

c) in the curriculum of the educational departments: teatrology and research about the educational theatre and its perception;

d) the movement of the 'lovers' of the theatre should be directed towards the youngsters and their environment;

e) the involvement of mass-media in the theatrical education.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> Cf. WOJNAR, Wychowanie przez sztukę, in "Nowa Szkoła" 2 (1973) 25.

The call for theatrical education came from both sides: from the school and from the theatre and the aim - commonly projected - presented a real challenge for both, school and theatre.

---

<sup>75</sup> Cf. HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 29-30.

### **3. 3. 'MISE-EN-SCENE' (INSCENIZACJA) AND 'DRAMATIC GAMES' ('GRY DRAMATYCZNE') AS 'THEATRICAL EDUCATION' PRACTICES IN THE SCHOOL OF THE 1970S**

During the 1970s the reformed school programmes and the aesthetic education project were confronted not only by ongoing school practice, but also by political-social changes. After March 1968<sup>1</sup> and December 1970<sup>2</sup> there arose new demands for changes, and the philosophical/theoretical direction for education became more humanistic and less ideological. Issues like 'culture', 'humanism', 'aesthetic-cultural' education occupied the privileged places in the introductions of books, articles, projects. Also in the school context there was an increase in cultural activity in the community life, but it depended on official cultural programmes.<sup>3</sup> In the

---

<sup>1</sup> The socio-political protest in March 1968 had mainly a university-intellectual background (as all the Movement in 1968 in Europe). In Poland it became an expression of the intellectual opposition against the socialist State. The protest started after the censorship intervention against the theatre performance of 'Dziady' (Forefathers' Eve) by Adam Mickiewicz, directed by Kazimierz Dejmek in Warsaw. The public demands were connected with the culture and education.

<sup>2</sup> The protest in December 1970, which started in the shipyard in Gdańsk, had a working-class character and the demands were concerned mainly about the economic conditions. After these two waves of protest, the education policy changed. It became more apparently pro-humanistic, individually oriented instead of State-oriented and ideological.

early 1970s the official cultural policy allowed the first, international appearances of some leading professional companies.<sup>4</sup>

The Philosophers emphasised that the education must be an education of the human being and ART should become an aid in the education process, an instrument rich and original offering a variety of examples and solutions for ethical (sic!) and aesthetic formation. As Wojnar wrote:

"art for education and not only education for art"<sup>5</sup>

and in practice it should take a double direction:

a) as education through art, through the live contact between art-works and pupil, through the study of various Art's currents and manifestations and

b) as organised possibility of the individual, artistic activity.

As the representative of the official philosophy of education, Wojnar declared the independence of the postulated 'education through Art' from the professional-exclusive type of culture. The Art - and that presented the basic idea -

"(...) could and should be active in the whole society as a factor of

the enrichment for the all personalities, as a content of the general

---

<sup>3</sup> Special social-cultural cells in the local authorities organised, in collaboration with schools and other educational-cultural institutions, the whole calendar of festivals including competitions, exhibitions, shows. The individual days were dedicated to the particular professions (i.e. the Day of the Health Service, the Day of Militia-man, the Day of the Polish Army, the Day of the Pilot, etc.) or to the historical events (i.e. the Feast of the October Revolution, the Feast of Work - 1st May, the local, liberation days from the Second World War, etc.). During my studies I experienced all these events, because of my activity in the school and young people's theatre.

<sup>4</sup> The first West-European performance of the Theatre 'Laboratorium' of Jerzy Grotowski took place at the Edinburgh Festival in 1968 and in the next years became an international success; also 'Cricot 2' of Tadeusz Kantor presented first the East-European performance at the Edinburgh Festival in 1973. But they were not signs of cultural freedom in Poland; in accordance with the cultural policy, they were - first of all - the ambassadors of the Polish culture.

<sup>5</sup> WOJNAR, Wychowanie, 22-23.

orientation (in) of education".<sup>6</sup>

'Education through Art', involved in the school programme, was thought of as the 'process of democratisation' of Art in terms of easier access to Art, and involvement in the whole range of artistic activities. The aim consisted in the formation of the socially and culturally engaged citizen.

The main, most important environment for aesthetic education remained the school, as a place of study and activity. Whereas the educational-cultural institutions (like 'houses of culture', both community and environmental, i.e. for young people or for the State factories) should become more active as places of cultural creativity and not only - as it was in the previous projects - places of access to culture, the school programmes, with all the practical experiences of aesthetic education, again took the path of reforms towards the comprehensive secondary school of ten years.<sup>7</sup>

Wojnar delivered a general criticism of aesthetic education's past. In her opinion, it depended mostly on the good will of teachers and their intuition in the devising and realising of projects. A common feature was the lack of a good methodology of teaching; there were several individual experiences, but they

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, 25:

"Postulując wychowanie przez sztukę, jako program ogólnospołeczny i ogólnowychowawczy, świadomie odcinamy się od koncepcji zawodowo-elitarnej, wedle której efekty sztuki dają się zauważyć wyłącznie w kręgu artystów. Przypomniane powyżej założenia naszej koncepcji oparte są na przekonaniu, że sztuka może i powinna działać w skali ogólnospołecznej jako czynnik wzbogacania wszystkich osobowości, jako treść ogólnej orientacji wychowawczej."

<sup>7</sup> Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 121. The special ministerial committee began the preparatory works in 1973. For the aesthetic and cultural education programmes and for their modernisation was responsible the Laboratory of Theory of Aesthetic Education, Institute of Pedagogy, University of Warsaw (Zakład Teorii Wychowania Estetycznego Instytutu Pedagogiki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego).

represented a very different scale of commitment. The historical approach to Art was taken by the majority of schools as the easiest way. The ambitious, general, theoretical programme was well ahead of practice in both cases, the specific curricula for the Art's subjects and the teachers' appropriate training. Wojnar postulated several changes in the school's organisation and in the teachers' preparation as fundamental factors for proper aesthetic education ('education through Art').<sup>8</sup>

The hitherto existing experiences showed, that aesthetic education needed special, integrative and collaborative activities. This pattern should be fundamental to 'education through Art' in the school of the 1970s too. The whole process of 'education through Art' must present a synthesis between the traditional Arts, like painting, literature, music, theatre and the new Arts, like cinema. Wojnar postulated the need for integrative programmes and the 'integration of activity' as the main principle of the teaching/learning process.

The school (and extra-school) practice embraced theatre and theatrical methods as the most popular and suitable in re-designed aesthetic education (or as in the 1970s became popular: 'education through Art'). The old and well-known forms from the 1960s were developed (especially the recitation-movement and 'theatre

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. WOJNAR, *Wychowanie*, 25:

a) integrative curriculum for the subjects which are including the elements of art and aesthetics (in the elementary school);

b) collaboration between schools (both elementary and secondary) and cultural institutions (museums, cinema, theatre);

c) a new curriculum of aesthetic-art education in the post-elementary school, instead of until alternative subjects (or music or figurative Arts);

d) necessity of a special programme for the professional school;

e) a renovated programme of teachers' training and possible introduction of the new 'art-in-education' course at the educational faculties;

f) realisation of a special post-graduate courses and 'teachers-in-school' training projects.

lovers circles'), but the increase was noticed in the theatrical teaching methodology. A very popular form of teaching (especially in the elementary school) became the 'dramatic games' and 'mise-en-scene', which also found their place in the methodology of school theatre activity. Besides these forms the discovery of the value of psychodrama and its school-implementation in various form of socio-drama also took place.

The theoretical publications and the experiences from the early 1970s represented a tendency towards 'theatrical education' in the new-coming programmes of the comprehensive, ten-years compulsory school.

### **3. 3. 1. Theatre and its elements and the principle of integration in teaching/learning process**

In accordance with aesthetic education, the teaching/learning process involving Arts should allow the enrichment of the integral human personality. The artistic activity of pupils, expressive and free, should meanwhile create the possibilities of live contact with the Art, the 'living through' approach and the ability to make an assessment of a work of Art.<sup>9</sup> The experience in artistic creativity seemed the best way towards the appreciation of Art and of the artists' work.

Although the theatre did not find its own place in the curriculum, its involvement in other subjects created a special privileged function for it: integration of efforts to study the theatre as the Art (composed from the elements of several Arts) and integration of artistic, different activities in one, and creative children's

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, 22.

production. The theatrical education in global terms, did embrace three kinds of activity:

- a) to assist and to watch theatrical performances as Art work;
- b) to create class or school theatre and to experience the theatrical language known from live contact with theatre-Art;
- c) to study the phenomenon of theatre, its components, language, history and contemporary forms.<sup>10</sup>

The theatrical education in school could become a synthesis of the knowledge of the 'big theatre' and the experience of the 'creative participation'. As Homa emphasised:

"Generally interpreting theatrical education means the enrichment of culture in terms of dramatic Art, the continuous 'openness' of the art world, the demonstration of the richness of the literature works, of the charm of the real theatre, of the beauty of mother language, of the value of the word."<sup>11</sup>

The principle of integration indicated the connections between the various subjects in both elementary and post-elementary school. The child's good and his/her integrative education and development demanded the integration of the contents of education. This principle should be applied from the beginning, from nursery and kindergarten education. Especially in these two stages integration was necessary and possible because the same teachers were responsible for the whole teaching/learning process. In the later stages of the elementary school the integration principles demanded the collaboration between teachers, not only during the programming stage, but especially

---

<sup>10</sup> Cf. RENIK, *Wychowanie teatralne*, 120-121.

<sup>11</sup> HOMA, *Znaczenie teatru*, 28. He summarised the Wojnar's understanding of the theatrical education.

during the teaching. Wojnar, aware of the possible difficulties, indicated the possible connection between music education and plastic education with the awareness that music was connected with rhythm, with body-expression from the physical education domain. In the post-elementary school (and she emphasised the grammar school situation), the principle of integration should be applied in the last year optional courses.<sup>12</sup>

Studied dramatic art and experienced theatre were seen as the platform of the most fruitful integration not only for the knowledge of Arts, but for the desired and postulated 'open mind' of pupils.<sup>13</sup>

Following the theoretical and curricular ideas, the educational experience in the early 1970s also applied the principle of integration. The theatrical forms, based on children's creativity, were used to integrate literature and music. This methodology involved a special creativity of the teacher in devising the individual units. The children were involved in specific situations, partially devised by teacher. The development of theatrical activity depended on the children's creativity. The teacher assisted their work and could help only as a source of stimulation.<sup>14</sup> The integration of music and literature/language creativity of children lead towards the original poetry

---

<sup>12</sup> In the 1970s were introduced in the last year different optional courses, as a kind of preparation for the A-level exams and for the university admission exams. There were: maths-physics course, biology-chemistry and humanistic (literature, culture and history). The last one included the Arts (music, visual arts, cinema, theatre, media).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. HOMA, Znaczenie teatru, 30:

"Edukacja teatralna kształci życie uczuciowe i wyobraźnię, ułatwia poznanie świata i zrozumienie otoczenia."

<sup>14</sup> Cf. E. STARORYPIŃSKA, Zintegrowane zajęcia literacko-muzyczne w klasach I-III, in "Życie Szkoły" 9 (1976) 24-24. She presented her experience from the first classes of the elementary school. The principle of integration was used also for the contents and for activities of both sides of the teaching: teacher and children.

theatre created and presented by children.<sup>15</sup>

Another integrative experience was represented by the class or school theatre involving the visual arts. The children were responsible for the creation of their own puppets and this work became personalised. The manual skills were based on the study of puppetry and on actual experience.<sup>16</sup> Again the collaboration between the various teachers became necessary, especially in the late years of the elementary school.

Very interesting results of integration were produced from the collaboration between the physical education and music.<sup>17</sup> The outcome was often theatrical in both possible forms: as class short improvisations or body-expression performances. Gniewkowski, based on his long experience, emphasised the effectiveness of integration between music, physical education, dance and elements of literature, visual arts and maths. He regarded this kind of integrated activity as suitable for all kinds of school and for various stages of education.<sup>18</sup>

The work of the school theatre became marked, as well, by the principle of integration. Recitations or, the more developed poetry theatre, often presented a

---

<sup>15</sup> Cf. E. HOFFMAN-LIPSKA, L. JANKOWSKA, Główne założenia programowe muzyki w klasach I-III, in "Życie Szkoły" 9 (1976) 18-20.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. WASIUK, Zespoły żywego, 38-41; B. STANKIEWICZ, Zabawy twórcze i widowiska lalkowe w wychowaniu przedszkolnym. Warszawa, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych 1972. She presented the long-lasting experience and invited other teachers to involve children into the creative process of class-made puppetry.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. J. LENARTOWSKA, Ćwiczenia muzyczno-ruchowe w klasach początkowych, in "Życie Szkoły" 9 (1976) 20-24.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. W. GNIEWKOWSKI, Nowoczesny taniec wychowawczy w ramach zajęć wychowania fizycznego z dziećmi klas I-IV, in "Życie Szkoły" 7/ 8 (1969) 71-79; IDEM, Korelacja, 34-40. He used the term 'korelacja' (co-relation) instead of 'integracja' (integration), but the idea remained the same in practice.

common result of literature knowledge, music and body expression activity.<sup>19</sup> The group work of the school theatre required the creative involvement in props preparation and, stage and costumes design. Members of the group became responsible for every aspect of the play. In this way the theatre provided the opportunity to experience different stage-crafts. The principle of integration again was confirmed.<sup>20</sup>

The school theatre in the post-elementary school often played a complementary role to the class activities involving some theatre elements. The theatre experienced in the group provoked the enrichment of the knowledge acquired, and stimulated further investigation in order to better prepare the stage character or the play itself. The creative preparation was crossing the well-known school barriers of the handbooks and the students became familiar with other sources of knowledge. Theatre allowed especially the use of observation, of historic and psychological investigations about the play's heroes and about the possible stage-presentation.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Cf. W. ZAKRZEWSKI, W Kole Miłośników Żywego Słowa, in "Nowa Szkoła" 1 (1971) 45. He regarded as an ideal of his methodology the connection between the recitation and rhythm-expression exercises using singing and dance skills.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. experiences described by A. GRZYMSKA, Karnawałowe zabawy teatralne, in "Problemy Opickuńczo-Wychowawcze" 1 (1972) 37-39; J. CICHOWICZ, Przygotowujemy przedstawienie, in "Problemy Opickuńczo-Wychowawcze" 9 (1972) 42-43.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. D. SZERLA, Wychowawcza funkcja teatru w świetle badań młodzieży licealnej, in "Przegląd Oświatowo-Wychowawczy" 2 (1976) 55-59. She reported her research from 1969/1970. The young people emphasised the knowledge values of the theatrical education and activity done by themselves.

### 3. 3. 2. 'Mise-en-scene' ('inscenizacja') as an active teaching/learning method

In the late 1960s and the early 1970s in the theatrical and pedagogical literature the term 'inscenizacja' (mise-en-scene)<sup>22</sup> gained its very specific meaning and position. It became familiar especially in the world of active teaching methodology and class-room theatre. Although the word itself was well-known among the professional theatre practitioners,<sup>23</sup> its educational career started in the 1950s with the first publications using the term 'inscenizacja' for describing the use of theatre in teaching,<sup>24</sup> but rather similar to dramatisation.

Since the first appearance of 'inscenizacja' in the Polish pedagogical literature, the term was connected with the progressive, active techniques employed by the teacher. It was understood as the link between the explanation in words and pure experience in teaching/learning.<sup>25</sup> Further it was classified as the exposition-method. Meanwhile for the pupils assisting the 'inscenizacja' made by others, it was a

---

<sup>22</sup> The Polish term 'inscenizacja' derives from French 'mise- en -scene', which is even used in English. Also in Italian exists the term 'messa in scena'.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Autor czy inscenizator (Rozmowy o dramacie. Stenogram dyskusji odbytej w redakcji "Dialogu" dn. 14 X 1957 r. z udziałem: Tadeusza Kantora, Bohdana Korzeniewskiego, Konstantego Puzyny, i Adama Tarna), in "Dialog" 11 (1957) 106-113: the discussion presented the various points of view about the role of 'inscenizator' in reference to the author of play. 'Inscenizator' here meant something more than 'director'; 'inscenizator' not only directs the play, but before he completed the work of transformation or adaptation of a play, which became different from the original work of the author.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. NABOROWSKA, Inscenizacja opowiadań; TURKOWSKI, Inscenizacja; IŁOWSKI, Sądy inscenizowane.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. W. OKOŃ, Zarys dydaktyki ogólnej. Warszawa, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych 1965 134; IDEM, Podstawy wykształcenia ogólnego. Warszawa, Nasza Księgarnia 1967 13ff. In both manuals of pedagogy the Author emphasised the pupils' engagement in 'inscenizacja' method.

performance, a source of information to be analysed. In this way it was understood and applied during theatrical activities in the class-room and school theatre.<sup>26</sup>

Together with the development of theatrical education and its search for school practice employing theatre techniques, the 'mise-en-scene' became the leading class-room theatrical method corresponding to the demands of the aesthetic education and integration. It could be applied at various levels of education, from the nursery to the adult's professional training. In the school the 'mise-en-scene' could take place during the normal class-room work as:

a) help in the learning of reading, speech and writing skills;

b) preparation of a small play based on literature work, in order to develop the skills of critical, independent thinking and creative, imaginative activity.

The 'mise-en-scene' presented a powerful method for the extra-school activity in the school or young people's theatre. In the adult's training it became the occasion to explore different solutions in a fictitious, but realistic, job-life situation, in the 'as if world'.<sup>27</sup> In all possible places of use, the 'mise-en-scene' was seen as a means of correction and therapy, especially in the case when the child demonstrated some delay in the development of some natural skill one would expect for his/her age.

In theatrical terms 'inscenizacja' meant the whole preparation process of a literary work in becoming a stage production. In educational terms it meant the creation of a whole range of situations and conditions similar to the lived reality of pupils both now and in the possible future.<sup>28</sup> The educational value gained especially

---

<sup>26</sup> Cf. F. CZECH, Inscenizacja jako forma uaktywnienia procesu dydaktyczno-wychowawczego, in "Życie Szkoły" (1965) 62-65.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. BĄBOL, PARZYSZEK, Metoda inscenizacji. Bąbol-Parzyszek emphasised the usefulness of 'mise-en-scene' in military training on an imaginative battle-field for example.

the non-literature, creative, improvised 'inscenizacja' because it implicated the full engagement of pupils both as authors of the situation and as producers of the action. The action of 'mise-en-scene ('akcja inscenizacyjna') was compatible with the natural, spontaneous and creative behaviour of children in their reality of play (at this time it is a real job for them).<sup>29</sup> The 'mise-en-scene' aim consisted in the possibility of exploring various points of view and solutions of one particular situation. The good, effective 'mise-en-scene' should be as close as possible to the real conditions or activity in real life. The imitation principle was valid and requested especially in adults education. In children's activity the most important value of 'mise-en-scene' was the possibility of the emotional engagement, the real 'living-through' during the negotiated play or imitation of a real life situation. When 'mise-en-scene' was based on the children's literature, the importance was given to the possibility of exploring the characters, the ethic-moral features of their behaviour.<sup>30</sup>

The method of 'mise-en-scene' used in the class-room, in the opinion of Awgulowa and Świętek, would be successful in the following spheres of education:

- a) formation of emotions and the acquisition of a suitable attitude;
- b) formation of the aesthetic susceptibility/sensitivity;
- c) formation of a serious attitude to study;

---

<sup>28</sup> Cf. ibidem, 15. The research was done by two students of the military academy, but in the theoretical part they embraced the large educational meaning of 'inscenizacja'.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. J. AWGULOWA, W. ŚWIĘTEK, Inscenizacje w klasach I-IV. Wydanie drugie, zmienione i rozszerzone. Warszawa, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne 1974, 2nd edn., 7. The book was a handbook for teachers with the significant theoretical introduction explaining the nature, aims and methodology of 'inscenizacja'. The first, shorter edition, was published in 1968.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. G. BUDZICZ, Inscenizacja bajki, in "Życie Szkoły" 10 (1965) 524-527; AWGULOWA, ŚWIĘTEK, Inscenizacje, 11.

- d) development of speech/speaking skills;
- e) development of imagination;
- f) training of memory;
- g) development of reading (lecture) and theatrical interests.<sup>31</sup>

Bąbol and Parzyszek defined three types of 'mise-en-scene':

- a) verbal, which was based on the proper interpretation of a text (both, taken from the literature and invented); the important role consist in use of voice;
- b) visual, in which the gesture, mimic and body expression accompany the voice;
- c) stage, when the verbal and visual, joined together becomes a stage character involved in a plot together with other invented or interpreted characters.<sup>32</sup>

The last kind of 'mise-en-scene' could use props and represents all features of theatrical improvisation. They distinguished also two types of 'mise-en-scene' in connection with the level of participation:

- a) 'mise-en-scene' observed, in which only pupils playing concrete roles and others were active, usually the majority, were observers; the activity prolonged into a discussion, evaluation and search for possible different solutions, but expressed in verbal terms;
- b) 'mise-en-scene' multiple, in which every member of the class (or group) could take a part; the same theme becomes a subject of activity of various groups created by the pupils; each group has the right to present the result and then undergo common discussion and reflection.

---

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, 8.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. BĄBOL, PARZYSZEK, *Metoda inscenizacji*, 26.

For Awgulowa and Świątek whole class participation and the evaluation-reflection moment, represented the important values of 'mise-en-scene' understood as the educational methodology in which the teacher should be only a

"discreetly guiding director".<sup>33</sup>

The effectiveness of 'mise-en-scene' depended on several conditions, such as: well-defined aim for the activity, resources prepared in advance, space, conditions etc. The teacher or the leader should present him/herself well-prepared and open to the initiatives and inputs of pupils.<sup>34</sup> The teacher's and pupils' individual activities should be synchronised in order to find the best solutions. Teacher and pupil are both active members of the teaching/learning process. The pupil could reach the knowledge by him/herself and could experience the ability of taking decisions, using specific skills and taking responsibility for individual and common group actions.

Several proposals of 'mise-en-scene' activities published by Awgulowa and Świątek was presented as a result of their collaborators' work. The principle of integration was largely present in them, in both, contextual and organisational meanings. Their university activity and several training courses organised for teachers, provoked the large spread of 'inscenizacja' especially among the teachers of primary school. Through the 1970s the 'mise-en-scene' became the leading form of active, theatrical education in the first years of the elementary school.

---

<sup>33</sup> AWGULOWA, ŚWIĘTEK, Inscenizacje, 23.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. OKOŃ, Zarys, 134:

"Od tego jakie są czynności nauczyciela i odpowiadające im czynności uczniów, zależy charakter i wartość metody."

Bąbol-Parzyszek emphasised the on-going connections and relationships between teacher's and pupils' activities, as the basic conditions for the effectiveness of the method. Cf. BĄBOL, PARZYSZEK, Metoda inscenizacji, 21-22.

### 3. 3. 3. 'Dramatic games' ('gry dramatyczne') in the first stage of theatrical education

The practised, experiential side of the theatrical education generated in the late 1970s a new methodology called 'dramatic games'. In school it was the practical adaptation of the 'mise-en-scene' principles to the very first steps in the way of using theatre resources in education. 'Dramatic games' evolved and became useful as the introductory stage into something more complex, bigger... It could be an improvised scene, a starting point to the school theatre or it could stimulate good school work, discussion or provoke a funny situation, or a game. Historically the 'dramatic games' derived from the 'jeux dramatiques' invented and experienced by Leon Chancerel in his long career of theatre practitioner FOR and WITH children in France.<sup>35</sup>

Into the Polish educational terminology the term 'dramatic games' was introduced by Ludmiła Rybotycka<sup>36</sup> and through her activity this method became very popular especially in the earlier stage of education (kindergarten and the first years of the elementary 8-years school and after of the comprehensive, 10-years compulsory school).

---

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Z. OLEK-REDLARSKA, Rola inscenizacji w procesie kształtowania kultury uczuć, in "Życie Szkoły" 3/4 (1982) 166-169; M. TYSZKOWA (ed.), Sztuka dla dzieci szkolnych. Teoria - Recepcja - Oddziaływanie. Warszawa-Poznań, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe 1979. In this publication was presented the practice of Leon Chancerel, but his activity and methods were already known from the publications by Wojnar in the 1960s.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. L. RYBOTYCKA, Gry dramatyczne. Teatr młodzieży. Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne 1976. Her earlier publication was IDEM, Teatr młodzieży. Warszawa, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne 1970 and pre-announced the later and started the stimulative influence of her theory and experience.

She insisted that the school, children's theatre should not adopt the pattern of the adults' theatre neither try to reach similar results. Theatre of children, often performed only in the class-room or for the familiar school audience, should emerge from the developmental needs of children. The teacher, with all his/her knowledge of the child's psychological conditions, must adopt theatre which comes from the natural child's activity - play. The school theatre must also be adequate to the children's possibilities and skills.<sup>37</sup> The child presented his/her dramatic skills in a very early stage of life. The 'dramatic game' used in the school could be only an educational answer to the imitative skills of the child, to the theatrical character present in many games. Rybotycka emphasised this dramatic naturalness of the child's life. She insisted that active participation could help, especially for the ethical, moral development of the child.

Rybotycka's definition of 'dramatic games' emphasised the spontaneity of the child's activity and their compatibility with the child's needs and demands.<sup>38</sup> 'Dramatic game' is a short, simple game, which happens here and now, and in which the child becomes somebody or something else, in which he/she is imitating.<sup>39</sup> The base of the

---

<sup>37</sup> Cf. RYBOTYCKA, Gry dramatyczne, 13:

"Teatr wieku szkolnego nie powinien wychodzić od wzorów teatru zawodowego 'dorosłego' i na nich się opierać, lecz ma wynikać z potrzeb rozwojowych i możliwości wieku szkolnego."

<sup>38</sup> Cf. ibidem, 12: 'dramatic games' (gry dramatyczne)

"(...) mają charakter aktywności spontanicznej i stanowią odpowiedź na psychiczne potrzeby dzieci i młodzieży. Są zabawami, w których wyraża się działanie, dzieje czegoś, jakieś zdarzenie lub przebieg wydarzeń."

<sup>39</sup> Cf. A. DZIEDZIC, Drama w kształceniu i wychowaniu młodzieży: materiały szkoleniowe. Warszawa, Centralny Ośrodek Upowszechniania Kultury 1988 10-11. Also G. MASZCZYŃSKA-GÓRA, Baśnie, to nie tylko radość czytania..., in "Przegląd Oświatowo-Wychowawczy" 1/2 (1982) 77. She emphasised the temporary character of the child's 'dramatic game'. In her theoretical comparison she underlined the similarity between the idea of

'dramatic game' could consist in some observed situation, in children's poetry, in a fragment of a fairy-tale. The important thing was, that the child could use it as a subject of his/her game and transformation or imitation, as a stimulus for further learning activity.

The common term 'dramatic games' covered several particular techniques/activities. It could take the form of sound/voice game, of a body-expression, imitation of some animal or human being or even an object. The game could be individual or made in group, simple (one short action) or multiple, leading towards a short improvised scene. The most complicated games consisted in 'live pictures', 'freeze scenes', 'living sculptures or photos'.<sup>40</sup> All these activities began with some idea, often suggested by the teacher. The game should not finish only with its execution/performance, but it should be followed by group analysis and reflection. The use of the 'dramatic games' was unlimited: during the lessons of various school subjects as the illustrative, explanation activity or as a part of theatrical activity within the school theatre group.

Practitioners observed several advantages of using the 'dramatic games' and they could be grouped in:

- a) sphere of perception and learning/knowledge;
- b) sphere of relaxation and therapy;
- c) sphere of body-skills and expression;
- d) sphere of verbal and non-verbal communication.

---

'inborn theatre' of Z. Kwieciński and the 'dramatic games' and 'mise-en-scene' in the child's activity.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. RYBOTYCKA, Gry dramatyczne, also further adaptations of her ideas in MASZCZYŃSKA-GÓRA, Baśnie, 77ff; DZIEDZIC, Drama, 10-11.

In the course of experiences which followed the example of Rybotycka, 'dramatic games' became the very first stage of theatrical education for children and for young people; they served as a help and as preparatory steps in various forms of theatrical activity.<sup>41</sup>

### 3. 3. 4. 'Psychodrama' and 'socio-drama' experiences in the school practice

In spite of its limited consequences, the influence of psychodrama on the practical image of theatrical education must be noticed, especially socio-drama, a less therapeutic and more educational form of psychodrama, which was adopted and popularised by some educators. The pioneering works were published by Czesław and Gabriela Czapów in the late 1960s.<sup>42</sup> They described the educational experiences of using socio-drama mostly as a correctional/therapeutic strategy. It was presented as a result, and concrete manifestation, of the therapeutic function of theatre. The growth of the group-activity was emphasised as the consequence of socio-drama methodology applied in real conditions, where this growth was needed.

---

<sup>41</sup> Cf. experiences described by Anna Dziedzic, Grażyna Maszczyńska-Góra, Bożena Kamińska and Zofia Olck-Redlarska. In all these cases the 'dramatic games' stimulated the child's activity towards the conscious and serious involvement in the school or young people's theatre.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. G. CZAPÓW, Cz. CZAPÓW, Psychodrama. Warszawa, (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe) 1963; IDEM, Psychodrama w psychoterapii i w wychowaniu. Część pierwsza, in "Psychologia Wychowawcza" 3 (1967) 298-312; IDEM, Psychodrama w psychoterapii i w nauczaniu. Część druga, in "Psychologia Wychowawcza" 1 (1968) 51-68; IDEM, Psychodrama w psychoterapii i w wychowaniu. Część trzecia, in "Psychologia Wychowawcza" 2 (1968) 201-214; IDEM, Teatr i psychodrama. Psychodrama jako procedura kształcenia i doskonalenia aktora, in "Dialog" 1 (1970) 101-114. The first book was published in 1963 and presented the whole problematic of psychodrama. The educational and theatrical aspects were presented in further published articles.

Theoretical suggestions found the practical, school resonance in experiences presented by Mieczysław Łobocki. He applied the method to his class-educational work.<sup>43</sup> The base for socio-drama was the spontaneously dramatised episode or event, familiar or actual/contemporary to the pupils. The second part consisted in the class-discussion and hypothetical project of solutions. Also the solutions were subjects of the further dramatisation in order to explore all possibilities 'pro - contra' (different or contrary opinions) exposed by the class-community. Łobocki was aware of some difficulties and dangers in using socio-drama, but he invited teachers to experience the potentiality of the methodology. He, apart from the presented theory, delivered also some examples of - as he called them - 'sociodramatic mise-en-scene' (inscenizacja socjodramatyczna). It was obvious connection with the popular 'inscenizacja' (mise-en-scene) methodology of teaching and doing the school theatre. The growth of a group and individual responsibility represented the indisputable value for such an experiment.

His article provoked a significant interest and prompted publication of other, similar experiences. Andrzej Janowski, recognising Łobocki's positive input, emphasised the usefulness of socio-drama in the solving of group, class problems. It could be fruitful not only for pupils, for their growth, but also it could help in the teachers'/educators' training. Socio-drama presented, in his opinion, only one among other active methods, but it demanded the participation of all members of the group. He suggested the initial discussion as a start-point, which further developed into

---

<sup>43</sup> Cf. M. ŁOBOCKI, Techniki socjodramatyczne, in "Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze" 5 (1967) 34-37. He suggested the use of socio-drama especially for the 'educational hours' - a special, weekly units dedicated to the various, social problems. They were similar to the 'pastoral care' in English school.

'inscenizacja' (mise-en-scene). The subsequent discussion must be organised in accordance with certain rules in order to provide the desired resources. He was concerned about the necessary attention and mutual respect during the discussion. The particular role should be taken in this methodology by the teacher, who must avoid any authoritarian style of exercising his/her role. Janowski proposed socio-drama as a successful methodology for various situations implicating the search for optimal solutions. He underlined the usefulness of socio-drama in the training of pedagogy students as the imitation of the possible real situation in their future work. Also he suggested socio-drama as the stimulation for the teachers' discussions about their and school problems.<sup>44</sup> The other possible field which he named, was the 'harcerstwo' - the Polish form of Scouting and the training of Scout-educators.

Łobocki, based on his growing experience<sup>45</sup>, presented the indubitable benefits of socio-drama:

a) pupils have the opportunity to be convinced that the difficulties of group-life could be effectively resolved by rational search and not by accidental actions;

b) socio-drama allowed the teacher to gain a better understanding of pupils and teacher him/herself;

c) socio-drama allowed better mutual knowledge among the group members and knowledge of themselves;

d) socio-drama activated the autoeducative processes of children (in children).

---

<sup>44</sup> Cf. A. JANOWSKI, W sprawie technik socjodramatycznych, in "Problemy Opiekuńczo Wychowawcze" 9 (1967) 33-37.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. M. ŁOBOCKI, Zastosowanie socjodramy w wychowaniu, in "Ruch Pedagogiczny" 5 (1971) 575-588.

Besides the positive results, the socio-drama could create several problems in the educational process. Among the possible dangers, Łobocki described foremost two conditioned by teacher:

a) the teacher's routine in adopting the socio-drama and during its development;

b) the abuse of his/her leader's role during the socio-drama.<sup>46</sup>

Łobocki's experience and influence<sup>47</sup> together with the clearer theatrical use of psycho and socio-drama<sup>48</sup> introduced both of them into the panorama of theatrical education in the 1970s.

### 3. 3. 5. Beginning of 'Proscenium' movement

What happened in February-March 1969 in the 'Aleksander Fredro' Theatre in Gniezno deserves a special emphasis although its initial influence was restricted. Milan Kwiatkowski, the literary consultant of the theatre, launched the idea of special meetings for the teachers of 'Polish language and literature' in order to fulfil the evident lack in their theatrical knowledge and to offer them a professional support in theatrical education.<sup>49</sup> The first meeting concerned the general problem 'theatre and

---

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, 585-586. The other possible dangers consisted in unsuitable content of socio-drama and the unprepared group or also aggressive behaviour presented by some pupils.

<sup>47</sup> After his teaching experience, he became a lecturer at the Pedagogy Faculty at the 'Maria Skłodowska-Curie' University of Lublin.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. HOMA, *Znaczenie teatru*, 22-23. He presented psychodrama in connection with its cathartic function and influence into the broader understanding of the educative importance of theatre in general.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. K. GRAJEWSKA, M. KWIATKOWSKI (eds.), *Dwadzieścia lat Proscenium 1972-1992*. Poznań, Oddział Wojewódzki Towarzystwa Kultury Teatralnej 1992. The idea came from the theatre-side, but it received the full support of the local educational authorities and of the local methodological research centre.

school' and offered an open debate/discussion about the possible relationship between schools and professional theatre active not only for the town inhabitants, but giving tour performances in several venues of small towns and villages.<sup>50</sup> The next conferences were attended by a growing number of teachers and in 1971 Kwiatkowski was able to present the 'theatrical lessons' and organise the whole conference on the methodology of teaching.

The initiated movement enlarged significantly on 27th March 1972, when, in the Gniezno theatre (which founded the 'Proscenium' movement) a meeting took place for the first time.<sup>51</sup> The successive activity was a special course about theatre during the theatrical season 1973/73 and composed of three parts:

- a) How the theatre performance is created;
- b) Actor in theatre;
- c) Polish theatre and drama in history.

Each part consisted in several, thematically organised meetings connected with the theatre performance, assisted and discussed after. Usually Kwiatkowski invited theatre practitioners (his colleagues) as special guests and speakers. The meetings were regular, monthly and attended by young people from the post-elementary schools where the local clubs 'Proscenium' existed.

---

<sup>50</sup> Gniezno - historically the first capital of Poland (IX-X a.C.), but today a small, rich in cultural tradition town with the theatre well-known for its educational initiatives and collaboration with the schools.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. M. KWIATKOWSKI, Teatry dla ruchu 'Proscenium', in "Życie Szkoły" 7/8 (1975) 71-72; GRAJEWSKA, KWIATKOWSKI (eds.), Dwadziestcia, 15. The initiative followed a similar one dedicated to the music education and called 'Pro Sinfonika'. It started in 1968 in Poznań and was organised by 'Poznań Philharmonic'. Cf. A. A. ŁUCZAK, Pro Sinfonika - Sztuka wśród ludzi. Warszawa 1982; E. MAJCHERT, W. PIELASIŃSKA, Wybrane instytucje i działania upowszechniające kulturę, in: WOJNAR, PIELASIŃSKA (eds.), Wychowanie estetyczne, 192.

At the beginning of the 1973/74 theatre season, Kwiatkowski moved to Poznań and the centre of 'Proscenium' became the 'Teatr Nowy' (New Theatre).<sup>52</sup> The movement was very active until the 1976/77 season and realised the renovated programme composed of three parts:

- a) How the spectacle is taking shape from the theatrical elements;
- b) Theatre and drama in their historical development;
- c) Models of contemporary theatre.<sup>53</sup>

'Proscenium' activity embraced not only the post-elementary schools in Poznań and Gniezno, but also in other cities of Wielkopolska-region and the network of clubs included more than 30 schools.<sup>54</sup>

The movement initiated by Kwiatkowski realised its activity in two main directions: training of teachers and theatrical education of young people and in both cases 'Proscenium' became a significant factor of the theatrical life and aesthetic education in the 1970s.

---

<sup>52</sup> Cf. MAJCHERT, PIELASIŃSKA, Wybrane, 191. Already in the 1960s Poznań was a scene of several initiatives for the aesthetic and theatrical education. The lovers of theatre founded a special society called 'Towarzystwo Kultury Teatralnej' (Society of Theatrical Culture) which supported the existing theatre companies (Teatr Polski, Teatr Nowy, Teatr Muzyczny, Teatr Wielki, Teatr 'Marcinck').

<sup>53</sup> Cf. GRAJEWSKA, KWIATKOWSKI (eds.), Dwadzieścia, 71. The programme was enriched by several meetings with actors, directors and by special prepared performances which would illustrated the issue of individual meeting.

<sup>54</sup> The Society of Theatre Culture ("Towarzystwo Kultury Teatralnej") was also open for the young members and in these few years the number reached nearly 2000.

### 3. 4. THEATRICAL EDUCATION IN CURRICULUM OF THE COMPULSORY TEN-YEARS COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Since 1973 the Polish educational system had been undergoing several changes towards the introduction of the compulsory, comprehensive ten-years school.<sup>1</sup> The changes were planned within the structures, programmes and ideological (philosophical) background of education. The structural reform was revoked with the collapse of the whole social-political and economical State system in 1980.<sup>2</sup> The initiated and in some cases finished curricular reform was implemented in those years and was continuing. The ideological changes lost their credibility with the crack in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Raport o stanie oświaty. This long, analytic document-publication showed the achievements and results of the reform in 1963 and called for the new, reformed school, compatible with the contemporary world. It became the base for the successive works for the ten-years school. A popular name was given to the project 'dziesięciolatka' - 'ten-years school'.

<sup>2</sup> After the 'Solidarity' protest in August 1980, and as a result of on-going social and political changes within the next months, the project of the compulsory ten-years comprehensive school was withdrawn by the special decision of the Minister of Education. As a political joke, the saying was popular among teachers, that for the start of project it was necessary to have a big national debate (using the language of State propaganda) and a very special decree of Parliament. Instead for the end of project only the Minister's decision was enough. This popular statement is more confirmation that the structural reform was far away from the projects on the paper.

system, but further, within the new situation after 13 December of 1981, they were submitted to corrections in order to reinforce the State supremacy over education.

In accordance with the premises, schooling should be ten-years long, compulsory and comprehensive. The schools' network should be compatible with the administrative structures reformed at the same time.<sup>3</sup> The successive professional or pre-university education was provided in several specialist institutes within the next two or three years. The ongoing reform of the programmes pointed towards the effectiveness of the teaching process, using the slogans of 'modernisation' and 'social utility'. The radical cuts were present especially within the curricula of the humanities subjects and on the other hand the curricula of sciences, physics and maths showed a tendency to increase. The philosophy of education (rather its ideological background) proclaimed the idea of a 'progressive socialism' with a human image. It emphasised the values of education for the individual and the immediate connection with the society, with the State. There was no place for the family or religious congregation. Instead the programme emphasised the lay character of education and social life, introducing even a kind of social and State ceremonial (rites). A special 'Code of Pupil' (Kodeks Ucznia) was proclaimed to underline the child-centred character of education, and the works for 'Chart of Teacher' were initiated.

Several special committees were working for the programmes, structures and ideological reform, but all these initiatives were centralised and governed by the Ministry of Education.<sup>4</sup> Also the large and diversified programme of teachers' training

---

<sup>3</sup> There were established community schools as centres and the filial schools were connected with them. In small villages remained only filial schools of the initial education (first four years). The school network in the cities remained in the majority of cases unchanged. The school were big, overcrowded and often working on two shifts.

started in collaboration with television and radio. NURT (Nauczycielski Uniwersytet Radiowo-Telewizyjny = Radio-Television University for Teachers) was the best and largest form of in-service training.<sup>5</sup>

All these reform steps were accompanied by an avalanche of slogans, parliamentary and ministerial decrees and propaganda, but all initiatives were strongly centralised and incorporated into the State's policy to cover the reality of a growing crisis in the economy and social life. The reformed curricula did not reflect several socio-political changes which had happened in the past.<sup>6</sup>

In fact, the project of ten-years school was largely criticised, both as the centralised, State's project without social support and as individual subject curricula. The critics emphasised the utilitarian character of programmed education and its lack of continuity with the tradition (favouring instead ideology and the State). Also the proclaimed reform was well distanced from the reality of its introduction. This problem was common for the new publication of handbooks, for the construction of new estates and for adequate teachers' training, in spite of the ambitious programme of NURT.

---

<sup>4</sup> At this time its name was 'Ministerstwo Oświaty i Wychowania' which distinguished 'instruction' (oświata) and 'education' (wychowanie). In 1990 the name was changed as 'Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej' (Ministry of National Education).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. WOJNAR, Tendencje integracyjne, 174. The high level of quality and the effort of this form of teachers' training was recognised largely in Europe as an example. Cf. A. W. BATHES, Broadcasting in Education. An evaluation. London, Constable 1984, 28. The National Radio-Television University for Teachers' followed the reform in 1974 and offered the four-year degree courses. The radio and television programmes were accompanied by publications in "Oświata i Wychowanie" and by seasonal work-sessions organised by the local educational authorities. In effect of the first four years c.a. 75 000 teachers improved their professional preparation.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. BORTNOWSKI, Wychowanie literackie, 34. He emphasised the weakness of the curriculum of the literature, without any references to the events in 1968, 1970 for example.

The 'aesthetic education' and the 'education through Art' were both involved in that ideological aspect of the reform and the ten-years school. Also the theatre and the 'theatrical education' did not avoid the marks of effectiveness and utilitarianism as educational targets.

### 3. 4. 1. Humanistic dimension of education

The previous idea and practice of aesthetic education developed and called in the new programme as 'Polish concept of education through Art' or in a large sense 'cultural education'. It consisted of two directions of theory and practice:

- a) the aesthetic education of a culture receiver/consumer;
- b) the education/formation of a full personality of individual.<sup>7</sup>

Wojnar, as a member of the preparatory team, insisted on the necessity for a pluralistic approach to the problems of contemporary culture in order to project real solutions, involving experiments and several pilot-projects of the practitioners.

The Art was still seen as

"the integrated educational instrument - a means of human education, because in the Art work the various aesthetic, intellectual and moral values are included."<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Cf. I. WOJNAR, Humanistyczne wymiary kształcenia, in "Nowa Szkoła" 1 (1979) 4. The whole project was devised by the Laboratory of Aesthetic Education at the University of Warsaw.

<sup>8</sup> GÓRNIEWICZ, Funkcja teatru, 292. He quoted M. GOŁASZEWSKA, Zarys estetyki. Kraków, (Wydawnictwo Literackie) 1973 286. Also Górniewicz reported the ideas of Suchodolski and Wojnar about the educational importance of Art. Cf. Suchodolski's opinion:

"sztuka potwierdza rzeczywistość, gdyż ją odzwierciedla, bywa jednak, że jest apelem do walki z rzeczywistością"

"the art confirms reality, because it mirrors it, but it could be that it is also a call for the fight against reality"

and Wojnar's idea, that art serves to embellish the human soul, when Art is understood as a

In Maria Gołaszewska's opinion, there were various motives for the individual's relationship with Art:

- a) it allows the fulfilment of spare time;
- b) in the Art work it is possible to seek out stimuli and the resulting emotions;
- c) Art as a source of joy and comfort for psychic needs;
- d) Art presents a source of knowledge of the world and life;
- e) Art could be a mirror for a self-evaluation.<sup>9</sup>

Cultural education should be central within the whole educational project, for the immediate benefits emerging from the culture and from the relationship between pupil and Art work in its plurality of manifestations. This relationship not only provides personal growth, but also stimulates the individual towards his/her own artistic expression, towards the creation of the next stage of culture.<sup>10</sup> Suchodolski emphasised the evolution aspect of culture, which means not only a heritage, but which 'becomes' being enriched by the new creativity.<sup>11</sup>

Based on these philosophical premises, the new programme of 'education through Art' was involved in the whole education process, and should become central

---

life-style, when it exercises its cathartic role, when the individual, in a relationship with the Art work, projects his/her psychic/emotional states.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. ibidem, 293-294.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. WOJNAR, Humanistyczne, 3. As the basic for this theoretical approach, served the definition of culture produced by Suchodolski and Wojnar:

"Culture is a totality of the civilisation events, including science, technique etc. It means that the culture interpreted more traditionally as a totality of the humanistic values: literary-artistic, presents only a part of that big totality. In this way described the contents of 'cultural education' Prof. B. Suchodolski, who is proposing a large, full-aspects program of education which includes various dominions of the contemporary civilisation as intellectual, technical, social, political, artistic."

<sup>11</sup> Cf. SUCHODOLSKI, Edukacja kulturalna, 102.

in the ten-years comprehensive school.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. 4. 2. Principles of synthesis and integration in aesthetic education

Similarly as with the basic theoretical suggestions in the early 1970s, now the principles of integration and synthesis dominated the teaching/learning process of aesthetic education which included many subjects, which were compatible with the individual Arts. It happened because the reform project started with the curricula for the first years of the new ten-years school. Over the years the programmes of plastic, music and physical education were realised and the successful experiences were better known through publications.

The results showed clearly, that those principles were successfully adopted in order to ensure the totality of the child's growth and formation. The variety of stimuli which the child receives during every-day life, and to which he/she reacts especially in the early stage of formal education, provokes activity through play. It is often imitative, creative but always includes the emotional engagement of the child. The early teaching (i.e. first years of organised school education) should be based on this natural child's ability. In this way, the subjects belonging to the artistic-aesthetic especially, must evoke in the child a large gamut of sensations and emotions. Possibly all the Arts, also in a form close to the child's reality, should provide a range of stimuli for his/her activity and creativity. The aim should be the personal acceptance of the child's own behaviour, of his/her created and presented opinion when he/she is in role, identifying him/herself with the hero of any possible expressive form.<sup>13</sup> The integration

---

<sup>12</sup> Cf. WOJNAR, *Wychowanie*, 23. She published these suggestions right at the beginning of the whole long process of devising the new curriculum.

principle could be accepted in subject like 'plastic' (fine arts education), when various expressive forms could be included besides the traditionally intended (drawing, painting, sculpture). Integration does mean light, rhythm, body expression, space. The creative activity of the child can not be limited because of a lack of compatibility with the traditional view, but the new possibilities should be explored in order to allow his/her development and better understanding.<sup>14</sup>

The forms of integrated/synthesised teaching which were most efficient educationally and the most qualitative belonged to the broadly understood 'theatrical education'.

### **3. 4. 3. Cultural education as the leading aim in the school**

In spite of the theoretical and philosophical projects of aesthetic education which had the ambition to include all possible cultural traditional and recent phenomena, the real relationship between school and the world of culture was diversified and lost touch with its theoretical base. Milan Kwiatkowski, the theatre practitioner, presented the practical side of the problem. He associated the culture problems in the ten-years school programme with two basic and observable problems:

a) on one side there still does exist a strong division between the elite culture and the mass culture; the fruition of the first exposed tendency to create a socially

---

<sup>13</sup> Cf. H. GAWROŃSKA, Integracja różnych form ekspresji artystycznej a stymulowanie własnej twórczej aktywności dziecka (propozycja materiału z 'plastyki' dla kl. I), in "Życie Szkoły" 7/8 (1981) 46-47.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. MINISTERSTWO OŚWIATY I WYCHOWANIA, Program nauczania początkowego. Kl. I-III. Warszawa, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne 1979. The introduction part and the theoretical suggestions presented integration as the leading factor of teacher's work.

small group of participants and in the second case the role of media became not only significant, but fundamental;

b) on the other side the school did not prepare enough for an active participation in the culture; the school practice had not created a successful project of cultural education and the literary-philological model of education dominated both, post-elementary and university education.<sup>15</sup>

Kwiatkowski opted for the active and participant cultural life within the school which should be taught with the introduction into the contemporary culture (a special introductory course of 'culturology').

His evaluation which was based on the experience of working in the small, provincial cultural centres,<sup>16</sup> exposed the real problem. The relationship between the culture institutions and schools was very weak in the late 1970s. In the big cities, the real cultural centres, the relations showed a tendency to fossilisation and only occasional events took place. In the small towns in the provinces only rare visits of theatre or classical music ensembles fulfilled the cultural needs. Where the teachers were sufficiently active, the school became a frequent visitor to the cultural centres in the bigger cities. But all these attempts were still far enough from the aim of the programmes.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Cf. M. KWIATKOWSKI, Problemy kultury współczesnej w programie 10-letniej szkoły średniej, in "Życie Szkoły" 1 (1977) 13-16.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Kwiatkowski's experiences from Gniczno - foundation of the 'Proscenium' movement and after his activity in Poznań, in Part A, chapter 3. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. K. ATAMAŃCZUK, Współpraca szkół z placówkami kulturalno-oświatowymi, in "Nowa Szkoła" 4 (1979) 19-20. She, as a practising teacher, expressed a common blame of the lack of contacts and the call for the real, concrete project.

The realisation of the ten-years school programme produced certain initiatives in two directions: firstly a larger participation in the culture and secondly, the transformation of the school into a real culturally educational environment. At the base of such attempts lay the recognition of the importance of a class-group as the basic formation within the school and for the pupil him/herself. This issue was compatible with the idea of socialist education (within and for the social-group, collective life). Among several group-class activities there were also the cultural (theatre, cinema) but seen rather as the possibility of participation and only afterwards, as socially recognisable activity.<sup>18</sup>

Piotr Sarna in his project presented directions for the management of the cultural life in the school. In the child's life the school was a fundamental place of his/her cultural life and education. The school, as an institution mainly responsible for socialist education, should become both the mediator in relations between pupil and culture, and the possible environment of pupil's cultural activity in accordance with the ideological profile. He was speaking explicitly about the

"management of the cultural life and of the relationship with culture."<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Cf. A. STOPIŃSKA-PAJAŁ, Atrakcyjność celów grupowych warunkiem uczestnictwa w ich realizacji, in "Życie Szkoły" 9 (1978) 6-8. She emphasised the importance of class-group aims, common to be realised and fundamental for both, group and individual life.

<sup>19</sup> SARNA, Kierowanie życiem kulturalnym, 3-7. The main directions of cultural education should be:

- a) the formation of the personal culture;
- b) the initiation into the culture of social relationship;
- c) the acquisition of the cultural models of the society-environment-community;
- d) the formation of the need of the relationship-contact with Art;
- e) the liberating (release) of the creative expression;
- f) the initiation into the participation in a mass (community) forms of cultural life. As it could

Sarna's project included also in its realisation in different years the elements of theatre or school theatre itself:

- a) theatre means used for the class-group discussions;
- b) organised visits in theatre and literary meetings (with writers and poets);
- c) school events (i.e. connected with the official State's calendar), school theatre, the competitions on artistic purposes;
- d) organised theatre events, the preparation of special theatre evenings, meetings for other school-companions.<sup>20</sup>

The character and climate of Sarna's model was reminiscent of the old, strongly ideological and State-oriented education of the 1950s.

His further project, compatible with the State's official educational ideology, emphasised the need for special, lay school ceremonies.<sup>21</sup> In the late 1970s the Polish school became a scene of very specific, 'school-liturgy' like a school-initiation ceremony, the special meetings at the beginning and at the end of the school year with ceremonies of promotion, awards, nominations. In all these forced ritualisations there were elements of theatre, of dramatisation.<sup>22</sup>

---

be seen, even the style and language were full of ideological slogans and gender. The school authority - in this project - had a special designed list of aims.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, 7.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. P. SARNA, *Zadaniowe kierowanie życiem kulturalnym uczniów w szkole*, in "Życie Szkoły" 2 (1978) 15-20.

<sup>22</sup> From my own experience I remembered the ridiculousness of some school events, which for us, students, were simply unacceptable and unattractive, but they were included in general, school calendar for all schools in Poland. It was a very forced attempt to create the lay ceremonial, initiated already in the school, in the early years of social life.

### 3. 4. 4. Project of 'theatrical education' in the curriculum of the ten-years school and its practical presentations

Also in the new curriculum, the main emphasis in the realisation of theatrical education was placed on the theatre as Art and its aesthetic, artistic influence which it is exercising (or could) on young people's lives.<sup>23</sup> Theatrical education was connected in the first place with the subject 'Polish language and literature' through all the ten years of education. For this reason the new handbooks were published<sup>24</sup> in which prevailed the study of theatre as a part of literature. The elements of theatrical education were included in other subjects like history, plastic and music.

Wanda Renik tried to summarise all these elements in the manner of a project composed from the three stages:

a) the first three school years (years 1,2 and 3), called the 'nauczanie początkowe' (initial education); it included the attendance at the theatre performances (also in television), further discussions-analysis and the creative expression of children in dramatic games, role-reading, recitation and small mise-en-scene of various texts from the literature for children;

---

<sup>23</sup> Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 122: opinion expressed by Renik about the emphasis given to the theatre as an essential (substantial) factor in formation of the human personality. She quoted the statements from the Raport o stanie oświaty w PRL.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. M. KNOTHE, Dramaturgia w szkole. Od modernizmu do współczesności. Warszawa, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne 1976; S. JANICKI, Teatr na lekcjach współczesnego życia literackiego. Szczecin, Instytut Kształcenia Nauczycieli i Badań Oświatowych 1978. The first one was for students, instead the second mainly for teachers, as resource book. Unfortunately, it was published by the local teacher training centre and its influence was limited. The other currently published literature handbooks were enlarged by some information about theatre history and literature.

b) the second stage (years 4,5 and 6); the theatrical education took the form of the propaedeutic (preparatory) character towards knowledge of the basic problems of theatre as Art (various forms of theatre, creators of theatre event, drama and its staging process, actor in theatre, famous Polish actors); the knowledge of theatre should be enriched by performances of theatre FOR children and by the attempts at theatrical activity in school;

c) the third stage (years 7,8,9 and 10) was compatible with the curriculum of 'Polish language and literature' in its chronological distribution; theatre should become a subject of study in its historical forms and streams until the contemporary theatre; the project included the participation in the theatre performances (especially connected with the studied plays), but also emphasised the importance of theatrical activity both written and staged.<sup>25</sup>

The ten-years school and the theatrical education within it was the scene for well-known practical forms from the long-lasting theatrical activity in both, school and class-room practice. The contact with theatre-Art was seen as a preliminary stage for further young people's or children's own theatrical activity. The school theatre presented the best solution for the extension of the theatrical interest stimulated (or awakened) by the theatre FOR children or professional theatre performance.<sup>26</sup> The school should teach the understanding of theatre as Art in the same way as it is teaching writing and reading and the school theatre (understood as the amateur, young people's theatre) could be the practical coronation of the study.<sup>27</sup> The theatre

---

<sup>25</sup> Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 122-123.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. FIRLIT, Wychowawcze i dydaktyczne, 7-12.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. S. FIRLIT, Rozwijanie zainteresowań teatralnych w środowisku uczniowskim, in "Życie Szkoły" 2 (1978) 38-40.

activity presented a complementary input to the whole teaching/learning process. The close links between the school theatre activity and the 'Polish language and literature' lessons was intended as a necessary collaboration and the results were satisfying for both, for the better achievements in study and for artistic quality of performance.<sup>28</sup> The school theatre experienced in the small urban centres and in the rural areas became a means of cultural promotion and the best way of development and enrichment of language.<sup>29</sup> Usually the school theatre became a part of the local 'theatre lovers circle'.

The children's theatrical activity - as in the early decades - was a subject of several competitions, local and national championships and festivals. They were occasions for recognition of the artistic results of aesthetic education in the school, but also they became a platform for mutual exchange of experience especially among the teachers active in school theatre. A very popular and broadly accepted example was the Scout Festival of School Youth Culture (Harcerski Festiwal Kultury Młodzieży Szkolnej) in Kielce.<sup>30</sup> There various forms of artistic activity were presented and theatre competition created the most significant event. In 1979, as a part of the International Year of the Child, in Wałbrzych, the First National Festival of Art for Children took place and for a couple of years it became a main presentation of theatres FOR children and young audiences. In addition there took place a special event which included the presentation of children's theatre.

---

<sup>28</sup> Cf. KOPIEC, Wychowawcze możliwości, 124-128.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. A. KAPTURSKA, Moje dzieci i teatr, in "Życie Szkoły" 12 (1978) 44-46; M. WILK, Teatr szkolny jako forma rozwijania i ubogacania języka dziecka wiejskiego, in "Życie Szkoły" 12 (1980) 29-31. Both Authoresses emphasised the aid of theatre in the teaching/learning in the schools far away from the big cultural centres.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 121. The first festival took place in 1974.

Still the most attended forms of theatrical activity were the local and regional competitions of recitation. Although the major part of them were based on the individual forms of performance (recitation of poetry and usually a chosen epic fragment), in some cases, the reviews of poetry theatre or theatre of small form took place. Wiesława Kaczmarkiewicz, theatre practitioner and organiser of several school theatre confrontations, emphasised the observed tendency towards the original forms of children's and young people's theatre; all these examples presented the phenomenon of escaping from the traditional, often limiting canon 'school theatre'.<sup>31</sup>

In everyday class-room work there were present well-known theatre elements and techniques invented and adopted in the late 1960s. Also they were used in connection with classical texts taken from tales<sup>32</sup> and school-canon of the literature for children. Theatrical resources were used mainly in order to allow the better understanding of content and to improve the skill of reading.<sup>33</sup> The same trend included the published handbooks for teachers.<sup>34</sup>

The usual order of the theatrical class-room activity was:

a) the dramatic games as the first explorative approach to the literary text with a special attention to correctness of reading, pronunciation and understanding;

---

<sup>31</sup> Cf. W. KACZMARKIEWICZ, Szkolne konfrontacje teatralne, in "Życie Szkoły" 2 (1978) 20-24. The 'school theatrical confrontations' were connected with the activity of 'Proscenium' movement in Poznań. She emphasised the creativity and search for new forms, as basic and vital factor for the good of theatre activity in the schools.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. TYSZKOWA, Baśni, 374-384; MASZCZYŃSKA-GÓRA, Baśnie, 75-86.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. H. MYSTKOWSKA, Dobór metod i form pracy w rozwijaniu języka ucznia I klasy, in "Oświata i Wychowanie" 5 (1978); IDEM, Metody stosowane w pracy nad opracowaniem z uczniami lektury, in "Oświata i Wychowanie" 20 (1978).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. P. BAŃK, Nauka czytania i recytacji w wyższych klasach szkoły podstawowej. Warszawa, (Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne) 1972 141ff. He suggested various form of 'mise-en-scene' like 'shadow theatre', puppets, trial (court) theatre, animation theatre, short improvisation.

b) the dramatic games in order to re-vitalise the text and use of improvisation based on known text;

c) the 'mise-en-scene' as the aim for long-period, planned work in order to be presented publicly (first of all the school audience and families for a special occasion). In accordance with the common, ideological suggestions, the final 'mise-en-scene' performances were often connected with the compulsory State feasts.

Among the teachers (especially those from the first years of the school) the popularity of active forms of teaching increased and also their published experiences presented the influence of theories and practices of a team Awgulowa & Świętek<sup>35</sup> (mise-en-scene), Rybotycka and Mystkowska (dramatic games).

### 3. 4. 5. 'Theatrical education' project: 'Gdańsk conception'

In 1977 the movement 'Proscenium', so active in the early 1970s in Poznań and Gniezno, lived its year of crisis due to several factors.<sup>36</sup> Many local, school clubs expired, although in 'Teatr Nowy' there were still seasonal meetings.<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless the same year, 1977, saw the birth of the new initiative in Gdańsk. Józefa Sławucka, pedagogue and young people's theatre practitioner, started

---

<sup>35</sup> Cf. J. AWGULOVA, Dziecko widzem i aktorem: inscenizacje dla klas przedszkolnych, świetlic, domów dziecka. Warszawa, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne (Bydgoszcz WSiP) 1979.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. M. KWIATKOWSKI, Poznać smak teatru, in: GRAJEWSKA, KWIATKOWSKI (eds.), Dwadzieścia, 20; 24-25. He named the organisational difficulties among the professional theatres and the crisis within the Society of Theatre Culture; these problems happened in the time of social and political fervour of the end of 1970s, and also this factor made the Proscenium movement very weak at this time.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. GRAJEWSKA, KWIATKOWSKI (eds.), Dwadzieścia, 73-72. There were still meetings with the actors, directors and theatre practitioners, taking place especially in connection with performances for the Proscenium members.

a special devised project of theatrical education in four elementary schools involving the pupils from the last three years (12-14 years old). It was the initiative of the Arts and Culture Department of the City Council, but - as Sławucka emphasised - she put into the project common experience and ideas of the representatives of the three environments/circles: theatre practitioners, teachers and instructors from the culture houses and clubs.<sup>38</sup>

Since the beginning the project was accurately observed and developed taking on the way of experience the form of a cycle called 'Poznajemy teatr' (Getting to know theatre) consisting of three years with eight hours during each year:

a) the sixth class/year: actor in theatre, outstanding Polish actors, theatre peoples and their importance, school and amateur theatre;

b) the seventh class/year: ancient theatre, medieval theatre, Polish minstrel comedy, Renaissance theatre, Shakespeare theatre, Baroque theatre, Moliere's importance in theatre history;

c) the eight class/year: the foundation of the national theatre - Wojciech Bogusławski, Romantic authors works in theatre - in the past and today, Stanisław Wyspiański and theatre reform, contemporary search for new theatre forms, television theatre, radio theatre.<sup>39</sup>

In accordance with the original ideas of the Authoresses, the project was realised on three, inter-connected and parallel strands: the preparatory lesson realised

---

<sup>38</sup> Cf. MINISTERSTWO OŚWIATY I WYCHOWANIA, Poznajemy teatr - trzyletni cykl edukacji teatralnej uczniów kl. VI-VIII. Opracowała Józefa Sławucka. Warszawa, Ministerstwo Oświaty i Wychowania 1982. Wanda Renik in her historical account emphasised the very first beginning of Sławucka's activity in 1975. She worked at this time in the 'Wojewódzki Ośrodek Kultury' (Provincial Culture Centre) in Gdańsk. Cf. RENIK, Wychowanie teatralne, 129.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. MINISTERSTWO OŚWIATY I WYCHOWANIA, Poznajemy teatr, 3-4.

by the teacher, the special project-lesson realised by member of Gdańsk Centre and the theatre support - performance in accordance with the written scenario as illustration of the project-lesson. The team consisted in pedagogues-theatre teacher and actor or actors involved in performance. The units included a special time for discussion, pupils' initiative or - in some cases - for their own theatre creativity in accordance with the designed scenario.<sup>40</sup>

The 'Gdańsk conception' - as it was in the pioneering idea of Sławucka - was fully compatible with the actual curriculum of 'Polish language and literature' and elements of theatrical education within it. At the base of her educational philosophy lay the heritage and directions of aesthetic education. In this way the project shortly became very popular in the whole Gdańsk region. The local cultural and education authorities gave life to a special institution called 'Methodology Centre of Theatrical Education' ('Ośrodek Metodyczny Edukacji Teatralnej') under the leadership of its originator, Sławucka. In her creative activity she organised not only the network of schools involved in the project, the special teams in many professional theatres, but she also started the first seminars and courses for teachers in both directions: knowledge of the project and theatrical activity in school and class-room.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the long history of theatre FOR children, of the school theatre and of theatrical education incorporated into aesthetic education in the Polish school, there were so many experiences and theoretical attempts at creating a real curriculum OF and FOR theatre. In post-war history the ideological approach dominated the school

---

<sup>40</sup> The Authors and the Organisers started very early with a special booklets for teachers and pupils in order to provide lasting resources and material for further study.

practice and in time the theory of aesthetics in education became over-enlarged. This seemed to diminish the importance of practice, although there were several extremely successful outcomes. The school theatre, the class-room theatrical activity and the theatrical activity were often suffocated by philosophy, aesthetics and ideological demands. The school reforms emphasised the role of theatre in education and although theatre did not become an independent subject of education - it obtained its own important place in cultural education of which the school was the main factor.

In the 1970s there appeared new initiatives, based on the rich heritage, but looking for a new, independent status; theatre involved in the teaching/learning process became quite a common methodology for teachers and theatrical education - in several schools in Poland - found its firm place in the school-timetable.

With the slow decline of the whole social and political system the school also started to suffer the crisis of philosophy, social-utility and human investment. At the end of 1970s the theatrical education shared the same destiny.