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Theatre Education – Education through Theatre

Proposals for the development of a
background structure in Hungary

Abstract

The subject of my work is theatre education, its forms and possible structures in the coming period, and my ideas on how to achieve this. In the context of my attachment to the theatre, I would like to contribute, at least in part, to the considerations on possible strategies. For that, I looked at the work of the TIE (Theatre in Education) groups, which operate as a system in the UK with local government funding, and which use theatre as an educational tool, in the form of performances, and also through the use of theatrical procedures and techniques. In Hungary, too, it would be necessary to introduce such forms of performance or drama workshops linked to performances, not just on a one-off, occasional basis, but in an organised form, with a wider scope, and above all age-specifically, since the creation of an understanding audience for future theatre art must be established at an early age.

Keywords: drama education, theatre education, drama, TIE

Introduction

"It is commonly believed that there is a big difference between learning and having fun. The former may be useful, but only the latter is pleasant. Actually, we can only say this much: between learning and having fun the contradiction need not be inherently legitimate, has not always been, and need not always be. Theatre remains theatre, even if it is theatre for teaching purposes, and if it is good theatre, it is entertaining." (Bertolt Brecht, 1936)

In the history of education in the 20th century, the period following the student revolts of 1968, which coincided with the development of domestic drama pedagogy, to the present focuses on the new experiments and achievements of pedagogical reform movements. However, we cannot claim that drama pedagogy has the weight it deserves in our education. So the question arises as to how drama can be effectively integrated into everyday school use.

There is already considerable experience in the UK on the issue. At the turn of the millennium, we can see that the appreciation of childhood is very much linked to a similar trend in the way the individual, the personality, is perceived in society. Looking back over the 20th century, it is worth reflecting on the short periods of time during which young people had to be taught new beliefs. Only a power fearful of the shortness of time designated to it wants to socialise by quick re-education. Seeing that Hungary has finally chosen the path of civic democratic transformation, it would be worthwhile, taking into account European practice, to introduce drama as a method of action, operating at the level of experience, and to disseminate it as widely as possible in practice. Drama education in Hungary is still not well aligned with the known reformist pedagogical trends.

The main reason for this is that drama pedagogy was introduced rather late, in the early seventies, after a conference in Pécs, following Tibor Debreczeni's experiences in Czechoslovakia. Debreczeni hosted a drama pedagogy workshop at the Institute of Popular Education, where he worked. This public education orientation is still misunderstood today. Theatre education, complex drama studies, should be approached as a specific sub-discipline of drama pedagogy. The reformist pedagogical alliance between the Soviet-Russian People's Commissar Lunacharsky and Meyerhold, the famous Moscow avant-garde theatre director, the unified work school, is an interesting precedent not only

historically but also in its thought process and its point of view. Its curriculum, published in 1921, had the following aims (quoted in Trencsényi 1993, 18):

“Children’s dramatic creation must occupy a very important place in the life of the unified work school, but with a content and in forms which are close to the child’s soul and have a definite relationship with the whole complex and multifaceted life of the school. This situation is related to the importance of play in the life of the child and to the characteristics of the child’s psyche, which are often very evident in children’s play. In line with the latest research on children’s play, games are part of the nature of school, necessary for physical, mental and moral development, for real school life. If play in general, and dramatic play in particular, occupies a very large place in children’s lives, if the desire to transform is a fundamental characteristic of children’s nature, then schools and education have no right to ignore this characteristic and to erase from children’s lives and from the educational programme anything that has anything to do with it. On the contrary, the dramatic urge of the child must be used pedagogically, and the children’s dramatic creative work should be put in a situation in the school where such creation is given its own meaning for the child. This is the task of psychology-based pedagogy. Based on this, a modern pedagogical idea replaces the outdated and narrow interpretation of school theatre with a new term that better reflects the essence of the art of drama. Both historically and philologically. If the fundamental essence of dramatic art is action, the recreation of this or that character or plot by a living persona, an actor, then dramatisation or dramatiding in school must include all kinds of reproduction in person, from dramatic play to full artistic stage action, from improvisation to the performance of the finished play. This way, by dramatisation we mean not only what is usually understood in school theatre productions, i.e. a strictly prepared spectacle (with stage, set, props, costumes, masks), but also activities that are created spontaneously, without any preparation, in which the child participants freely perform the given text in a creative way, and which can be created wherever it is convenient, in a corner of the classroom free of desks, in the courtyard, in the corridor, in the grove, in the woods, etc.”

The concept, subject and method of drama pedagogy

There are many different ways of thinking about drama pedagogy. When we deal with drama, we are in an interdisciplinary field. We work for different purposes, so it is useful to define the concept of drama.

"All the essential defining categories of the genre of drama can be derived from the fact that the worldliness inherent in the work is built up exclusively from three linguistic formations (name, dialogue, instruction). Of the three formations, the whole of the dramatic worldliness is determined by the name and the dialogue. We could say that names can only be expressed in dialogues; that is, dialogues build up the whole of the world. In real life, the ontological law of dialogue is that it can only be uttered in a relation between dialogue-exchangers; dialogue always presupposes that there is a relation, or if there was not one before, that a relation is immediately established. Philosophical, artistic, historical, etc. tracts written in dialogue form prove that the relationship existing in dialogue does not in itself constitute drama; in dramatic works, the relationship now changing must appear. The art of drama therefore represents a change in the content and the system of relations between figures, i.e.: the relations that are now changing among the physiological facts of reality are the dramatic physiological facts" (Bécsy 1987a, 9).

As soon as the aforementioned relations change, situations arise, which are always shaped or created by new and new moments of relations. In the context of our question "What is drama?", the approach that seems obvious is to define the criteria that make the text a genre of literature alongside the lyric and the epic.

It raises the question of whether the drama is the same as the written text, or just the theatrical performance, or both. "Theatre belongs to a completely different type of art than drama; one whose works of art are shaped by the presence of the human body and not by verbal signs" (Bécsy 1987b, 8).

However, when seen through the lens of drama pedagogy, drama is not the same as a genre of literature or the knowledge of it. In this approach, drama as an approach (a vision of the teaching-learning process) emerges. So drama and drama work is a form of learning, not a transfer of knowledge, but an activity. In order for our concept building to be adequate, it should be mentioned that behind the term drama there are four different approaches to drama in the drama education literature and in the practical vocabulary of drama teachers.

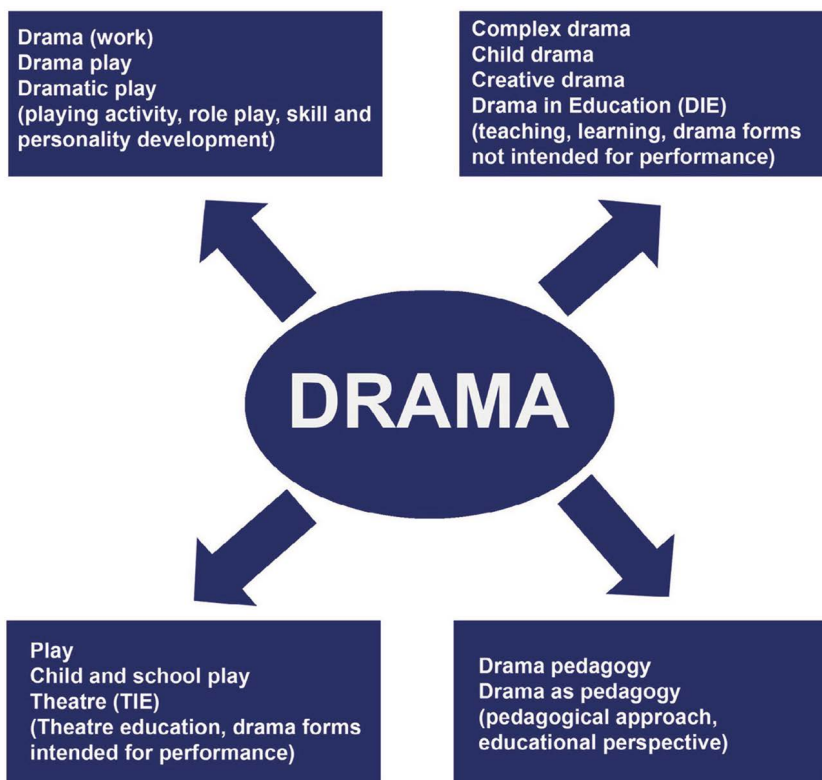


Figure 1. Conceptual approaches to drama (Source: self-drawn figure)

Which term or description we prefer, which one we use to describe our practice, reveals the way we think about drama and drama pedagogy, the 'high ground', if you like, from which we view drama. Do we go towards theoretical foundations or philosophical questions when we talk about drama, and do we approach drama from the point of view of educational theory, as for example those who think about pedagogy, or do we see drama as a tool that is a good method for the development of skills and personality, for learning rules in games, for play activities for children in general?

It can be seen that the performance form, the theatrical form, is important in the drama work that is also done by the users of the other pole, but the fundamental difference is that one of them puts more emphasis on the theatrical side (i.e. the dramatic form for performance) and the other on the teaching-learning process. The latter also uses the means and elements of theatre (I am not only

referring to the external means, i.e. the theatrical machinery—scenery, costumes, props—but also to the building, intensification of dramatic action and tension, etc.), but their aims are different. One side uses drama for the purpose of theatrical education, so it tries to prepare children for the reception of a theatrical performance as spectators, and obviously it also gives them an artistic experience, while the other side does not focus on education through artistic experience, but on understanding and experiencing the content of the drama, i.e. on teaching drama. There, the content comes to the fore, using the theatrical tools to achieve this teaching-learning goal.

The drama as a genre has its own characteristics (a form written in dialogue, depicting a now changing set of relationships, where the characters live in context), and all these characteristics can be found in the drama work. (Only here they take the form of activity, whereas if we treat it as a text, we can speak of drama as a genre.) If we think of drama as an activity, and imagine it as something that is created in a given community or group during a given drama work, and always has a meaning, then we could put our whole school education and education system on a new basis, we could transform it for the benefit of children, and we could think of drama not as a system of tools, as a method, but as a pedagogy. The whole of school education and training could be based on drama, because drama offers the broadest possible framework for thinking about school education and training, an alternative approach to our vision of schooling. Of course, this would require that we do not offer children the basis of education within the current curricular framework and subject areas, but that we develop a curricular system of its own, which focuses on the relationship between man and man. In practice, we could take students through the history of human civilisation in a system in which the exciting questions of humanity, the great leaps forward or backwards, are presented in a personal way, in a system of human relationships and conflicts.

From each major period, we can highlight themes and ideas for which we can design contexts (time, space, people, etc.) specific to that period, and those can be used as a drama in which children can take on roles and adapt all other activities, whether technical, physical, etc. to the dramatic situation we have provided and developed. So the subject system is forgotten, because we think of it as a whole. Educational drama is a version of drama developed for the educational environment. It is not a framework of practical games or rule games, but an activity that teaches the tools of theatre through experience,

using these tools to create. Educational drama is a learning process that frames the learning processes of other subjects and emphasises the links between different learning content. It makes the game suitable for achieving its educational objectives. Drama is therefore also a way of working that we use when and how we need to in order to achieve our educational goals. It is child-centred, based on the child's experience, adapting the previous level of language expression to the child's imagination, capturing his or her interest and motivating him or her to participate. To demonstrate the need to draw on children's earlier sensory-emotional experiences not only in drama but also in simple literature teaching, we turn to Katalin Ladik's poem *Tavas* (Spring):

"the great gardener hoes earrings
oh explode the nightingale in his pocket
but it is so beautiful so charming
as the great gardener
is hoeing gold earrings in the garden"

As adults, we may smile at the above five lines, but let me refer you to the thoughts just mentioned. In a course, a colleague judged the poem to be totally abstract, but I think it is very much connected to reality, only at the level of a child's imagination (earring–cherry, nightingale–radio). It is true that the cherry tree does not need to be hoed, but from the child's point of view this is an indifferent issue. In pristine nature, the pocket radio explodes, incongruously removing an otherwise harmonious state. As the example shows, the interpretation of the poem is obvious for young children, based on their concrete experiences. Drama work builds on and activates children's experiences and offers unusual ways of learning (dramatic activities, drama). It puts the children in a fictitious situation, but by offering them an interesting and exciting situation—almost on its own, without any artificial teacher motivation to get them to cooperate. An interesting example of this work can be seen in Ervin Németh's textbook for 5th graders, *Irodalom Birodalom* (Empire of Literature), in which Simon Kézíró (Simon Handwriter) welcomes the young students (Németh 1996, 4):

"First of all, let me introduce myself: I'm Professor Simon Kézíró, Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Library Studies at the University. In the field of my own discipline, codexology, I can say without modesty that

I am a world-renowned researcher. I have more than one major discovery to my name. Which reminds me: you must have smiled when you first read my name. What a name is Handwriter! Well, I was also interested in the origin of this strange surname, so I looked into it. I found out that one of my medieval ancestors—before the invention of printing—made his living by writing and copying books, so they stuck the name on him in his village of origin. This nickname then accompanied all the members of the family, whether they were involved in copying books or not. In my case—by pure coincidence—the name and my favourite job came together again. Because I have been researching codices, i.e. handwritten, mostly ornate books, for several years now. I am trying to find out where and when the book was written, who commissioned it, and so on. Sometimes even the judiciary calls on my expertise when they need an expert in a case involving the forgery of old books. As the villagers used to say, I've been through a number of tests and challenges—but I've never encountered a case as gaudy as the one I found in the well-guarded manuscript archives of an old medieval monastery. Oh, but why am I boring you, tell me to stop! Or do you want to listen? Because then I'll tell you..."

After this introduction, Simon Kézíró (Handwriter), the author, takes the students on a tour of the monastery in the first lesson, where they try to reconstruct the monastery's forgotten history using an incomplete floor plan. They touch on the architectural and cultural history of the period, from the layout of the castle and the staff it employed to the weaponry of the period, from religious customs to the food industry, etc. The framework for discovery is provided by drama, dramatic activity and play, which aims to influence the experience in an imaginary environment (fictional situation): to shape the group's thinking and attitudes. So drama is always born as action progresses. This is the real learning experience, which can only be gained through social activity.

Drama work itself is an attitude- and mindset-shaper, and this fact imposes a special responsibility on the leader. Drama work—like all collective activities—socialises. It's not a competitive, but a group learning method, there is a trading of ideas, a back-and-forth: thinking together, decision-making, acceptance, partnership, empathy, tolerance—it is in learning and testing these that the real essence and benefit of drama work lies, in fact, this is the real learning area of all drama work. It's a thoughtful, organised activity, not a game,

but a pre-planned, interdependent work, which is created through a learning contract. In this, group members agree on basic rules of the game with each other and the teacher. They accept that the teacher sometimes steps into a role—not a teaching role—; there is nothing unimportant, nothing uninteresting, every moment can be important, so as long as the other is playing, they don't interfere, they listen. This is how drama becomes an exciting, engaging, experiential, personality-centred activity (since the child is present with his or her whole personality), which encourages participation and, in its best moments, can also provide a shared catharsis. The student does not remain passive, as his or her involvement is inevitable sooner or later. Drama as a working method requires and develops creativity, under disciplined conditions, of course, which does not mean letting the imagination run wild: the accepted rules of drama must be respected, because if incoherent elements are used, the effect is destructive (it is interesting to see how the others react in such a case; this is an effective educational moment, because the person is not reprimanded by the teacher alone, but receives the reaction of the whole group, which is truly educational). The approach to drama, the idea of the teaching-learning process.

Learning through drama is a form of learning in which the child learns how to discover new meanings for themselves (learns to learn), as opposed to content-centred education, where unquestionable knowledge is transmitted. Drama is also a form of learning that focuses on the knowledge created in a social context. The central element is the social content of the problem, which takes the form of challenging situations to be explored and resolved. (His problem-centredness always manifests itself in such a situation.) It uses imaginary situations to get to understand the real world and our own selves. It gives immunity because of its fiction, but its mechanism is a model of real situations. The lessons learned can be applied to real-life situations. In our attempt at definition, we still need to define the purpose of the drama work. To achieve this goal, as already mentioned, we can use different tools: drama games, techniques, confidence-building games, training, developing rhythm, speech, fantasy, empathy, memory, perception, etc., as well as concentration, interaction, aggression management, situational, self-awareness and group-awareness games. They are forms of skill and personality development, but they are not what drama consists of, it is not the same as the goal. (So the goal is not the same as practice and personal development.) It is not a short-term objective, because I can hope to achieve a change in personal development

(judgement, sense of responsibility, etc.) in the long-term, at most. Drama is always about something, which means that its central problem points towards problem-solving through concrete situations, as long as the dramatic tension continues. The problem always has some common human content: freedom, subjugation, justice, confrontation, etc. It follows that within the drama, this content is presented in a system of relationships between people, so the focus shifts from the acquisition of material knowledge to the understanding of social processes. (Today's schools do not teach anything about this, even though it is what is really needed to make democracy work in the long term.) Drama is a dramatic activity in which we create new knowledge, which is born in the process of drama work in the group, this new meaning is nothing more than a higher level of understanding of the given topic, idea, and therefore the dilemma at the centre. This understanding, because it takes place through dramatic activity, goes hand in hand with experiencing. This level will be higher than the level before the drama. So the aim of drama is to understand things: to change understanding so that we can create agreement between people. For example, the child hears at school that there are no gypsies in our school, and it's good that they don't go because... The child says that gypsies are bad. If they have such knowledge about a given problem at the primary level, I would like to make their understanding of it more vivid, more lived, more transparent, more multi-faceted, more multi-directional, more nuanced, and on the other hand, to change their already negative attitude, which may even work at the group level, so that they understand the problem in such a way that their approach to the issue changes, which is reflected not only in the individual person, but also in the group's way of thinking. This is the way we should think about drama, and when we talk about theatre education and the role of drama work later on, the aim should be that theatre, through its artistic means, should provide a cathartic experience and bring the child to a state where they can experience and understand the problem emotionally, in a different state.

At the same time, the dramatic work that accompanies the theatrical performance makes them aware of this artistic experience, and in this state of grace, this particular way of thinking about the problem can change. (At the moment, the school system is unable to accommodate this because it thinks in terms of immediately measurable outcomes.) The question is, then, where is the place of drama in schools? In the camp of the opponents of this approach, three typical counter-arguments are formulated. On the one hand, they do not think it

conveys knowledge. (Yes, it does, but it doesn't teach the knowledge system that is taught in some traditional subjects, it helps to understand social processes, it gives experiences that can be used in cooperation between people). On the other hand, they argue that material knowledge is lost and does not constitute knowledge in the long term. (They are not lost, because it is precisely in order to solve the problem that different knowledge can be integrated in the process of drama work, and participants experience that this material knowledge is necessary to move in a situation. More simply: I learn the physical knowledge of the pulley as a simple machine not because I get the lowest mark if I don't know it, but because if we play the game that I am a playwright in the Greek era and I want to present my play, in order to operate the theatrical technique, I have to know the resultant of the force in a *deus et machina* scene, i.e. I have to operate the pulley system.) Finally, they say, and this is actually the most common counterargument, that it is really only good for skill development and is an end in itself. (Not so, because in the process of solving the problem, i.e. operating the drama, the child realises that certain skills—rhythm, concentration, etc.—are important because they can be used to achieve certain goals). All the material knowledge and skills are necessary for a child to participate in play, so he or she is willing to do anything, even to learn material knowledge. This is the biggest motivating force. Drama as a form of work carries this motivation.

Combining theatre, education and education in traditions

We must approach theatre as an art form, as an institution and as an educational field for children and adults. So the question is how the theatre as an educational field can be run profitably. Theatre and drama have long been present in the education of children's groups. We must distinguish between the systematic education and upbringing of children and young people in a planned school form, and the more cultured, so-called elite culture available to the educated classes. This division goes back to the 1700s, when the distinction between civic education and education in a traditional community, or, if you like, a folk archaic community, was first made. Even before that, in the Renaissance, the plays of a very narrow elite were separated from the popular comedies and

plays at the fair, but if we go back to the beginning of the separation of secular and non-secular types of plays, to the beginning of the Middle Ages, we see that plays are practically for all people. The Passion Play takes place within the church, within the walls of the church, and then, with the addition of profane elements, it spreads to the front of the church and then to the fairground. It is also worth noting that in the beginning the church actually fought against the theatre, citing the authority of the church fathers: "For I disobeyed, not from a better choice, but from love of play, loving the pride of victory in my contests, and to have my ears tickled with lying fables, that they might itch the more; the same curiosity flashing from my eyes more and more, for the shows and games of my elders" (Augustinus 1987, 27).

So the ancient traditions could not live on. With the emergence of religious theatre, we have a new creation, which means that European theatre has been reborn for the second time. The religious games of the early Middle Ages first appeared in the Eastern Church, whose liturgy was already permeated by elements of dialogue (in the singing of the priest and the faithful).

In the Western Church, liturgical development within the church building has led to the development of oratorio-style games. Their starting point was the Easter holiday. The centre was the scene in which the three Marys visit the tomb of Christ. The scene is described by Bishop Ethelwood of Winchester (quoted in Shimhandl 1998, 58):

"During the reading, [...] four brothers are to change; one of them enter dressed in his alb, approach the tomb, and with a palm branch in his hands, sit down next to him in silence. He should be followed by [...] the other three, dressed in capes, incense burner in hand, and approach slowly towards the grave, as if looking for something. They depict the three women who bring ointments to oil the body of Jesus. When the brother sitting at the tomb, depicting the angel, notices the women approaching, he starts quietly singing, 'Who are you looking for in the grave, Christian women?' And they respond at the same time, 'Jesus of Nazareth, crucified, a heavenly being.' Again, 'He is not here, for he has risen as he said he would. Go and tell everyone that he has risen from the dead.' Then the

three women address the choir with the following words:
 'Hallelujah, the Lord is risen!' Then, sitting next to the tomb
 the angel calls the women back with this call, 'Come, see the
 the place where the Lord lay.'"

Around this core, earlier scenes have been grouped over time, and the Christmas liturgy, like the Easter celebration, has developed in this way. As the material grew, the interior of the church was finally abandoned. From then on, the faithful went in procession around the church, and with the spatial change came a linguistic change (Latin was increasingly infiltrated by elements of languages of various people). The social and economic changes that began at the end of the 13th century led to the emergence of new professions: craftsmen and merchants. In the booming cities, a new class emerged: the civic class. With the growth and development of civic life, the theatre space also opened up and grew, and the playing space was moved to the marketplace, the centre of life. Soon teachers, town clerks and artists took over the tasks of the Passion Play from the priests. The actors were no longer the priests, but the inhabitants of the town, who on one occasion took part in the festive performance in their hundreds. From the 16th century onwards, in the spirit of the demand for realism, women and girls also appear on the stage of market plays. The tradition of Passion Play, especially in the German-speaking world, is deep, sometimes surviving into the 20th century.

Of course, from this point onwards, we see that drama (which, by the way, is already present in Comenius) is systematically introduced in schools. Traditional school drama takes the form of religious school dramas (the Paulines were particularly active in this, but the Reformed colleges also have them in their repertoire). They see drama as a pedagogical method to support education, with the basic aim of translating the curriculum into a comprehensible and entertaining form. It is characterised by a strict "trained-learned" approach. (Drama as an activity has nothing to do with this, of course. Unfortunately, this kind of tradition continues to exist in the activities of children's theatre groups today without criticism, and the theoretical and practical knowledge of drama as a form of activity is still poorly applied by the leaders of children's theatre groups.)

If we look at folk, archaic traditions—which are mostly linked to calendar festivals—we see that in dramatic forms of play, the kind of acting and playing prevails longer that is closer to the early forms of play, when drama was a syncretic art combining visual arts, dance, etc. An overview of dramatic folk customs,

masked and unmasked folk games can be done by custom. The tradition that can be heard extends to the whole of people's lives. Habitual practices are often intertwined, and sometimes the same game is linked to calendar practices, work practices or the customary tradition of social life (Ujváry 1989, 5):

"In some of the dramatic customs, the ritual action is in the foreground, and thus we can observe games in which the ritual, the background of the belief is still known, but the function of the game is already manifested. The customs of the calendar days are largely dramatic and theatrical. There are different aspects to the study of calendar tradition. Depending on which of these the researcher directs his attention to, they will, in essence, consciously and involuntarily, highlight primarily those details and motifs that help to overview and analyse the topic in a broader context. The most important of the calendar holidays in terms of dramatic games and masks is undoubtedly the winter holiday, the period before and after Christmas, which ends with the carnival.

In addition to the occasions of the calendar year and weddings, the scenes of folk dramatic plays also include work festivals, which are closely linked to the customs of the former. In the analysis of dramatic folk customs and folk plays, less attention was paid to the structure of the plot, the preparation and organisation of the play, the various props, the setting, the relationship between the players and the audience, etc.

These aspects have been attempted to be validated mainly through research on nativity and carnival games. The structure of dramatic folklore and folk plays cannot be examined from the point of view of drama. In folk theatre there is no theatre building, it is the setting of everyday life: street, courtyard, room, outbuildings, pub, etc. There are no sets, sometimes incidental, and the props are not decisive. The spectators are often actors, but they are definitely participants in the game. These games are closely linked to their environment. A role is associated with the actor, the actor plays the role. The characters in folk games have no—or rarely any—written and well-defined roles. Primarily because it operates within a framework governed by tradition. It is not the role book that determines the action, but the tradition into which the player is born, and thus adapts the acting to the spectators, the audience, which is also the community that maintains and regulates the tradition."

It was also important whether the play took place in an enclosed or open space, and whether the actor had to produce a dialogue, a monologue or just a silent scene. Interestingly, the actors were men, and they also played the female roles (still!). "In the manifestations of folk plays according to dramatic conventions, the actors and the spectators are bearers of the same culture, together keep the tradition alive, and from a functional point of view it is completely irrelevant who the actors are and who the spectators are. The actors fulfil the needs of the spectators, and the spectators expect the actors to fulfil the rules of tradition. Their prevalence ensures the harmonious relationship between the two poles and the functioning of customs" (Ujváry 1989, 7).

As mentioned above, the setting of the games is important: they did not require a stage, since the game is animated by tradition and can therefore be performed in the right milieu (when staged, contact with the animating audience is broken—the game is performed with the need for drama).

In popular life, the 'stage' is the same as the stage of everyday life, the environment. No two scenes are the same where the play can be presented in the same way, so the actors express themselves more strongly and contouredly to suit the circumstances. There are many variations in costume, in the use of masks or props, but the aim is always the same: to imitate and caricature. "Some of the folk dramatic customs, plays, and various masked scenes have a characteristic opening formula, which is called a summons or summoning, or in pantomime masked plays, a masquerade summons or masquerade salutation. In folk plays and play-like scenes, as well as in some plays performed by fair-ground comedians or professional actors, a person is the production, catching the audience's attention, giving brief information about the actor and the performer. Their function is the same as that of the prologue of antique plays, in which the spectator is also informed about the play to be performed and the characters" (Ujváry 1989, 10).

"The opinions on the genre agree on one thing: folk theatre can only be studied as a whole, in terms of the different genres, rites, scenes, masks, etc. The whole repertoire should be analysed as drama, comedy, mystery, ritual drama, various ritual acts, etc. It is not possible to generalise, define and outline the versatility of folk theatre when examined in isolation. It is necessary to bring together the entire folk tradition, to reveal the interrelationship of genres in order to understand their historical development and their specificity" (Ujváry 1989, 14).

Linda Dégh was the first to attempt to define the genre and the concept: "The theatre of our people is nothing more than a transition between the cultic games of primitive peoples and urban drama. It has grown beyond the primitive rituals of pagan Hungary, but it is not yet an urban play. It can be changed, taken away and added to. Ethnography collects our folk plays together under the name of play-like folk customs. However, we must note that there are folk customs and there are folk plays. Almost all traditional actions and customs have a dramatic element. The New Year's Eve border crossing, the various crop spells to keep evil away and help the good, are minor dramas. Acting is also the act on Luca day, carolling, clucking, spinster mockery, whipping. It would be an exaggeration, however, to call all manifestations where a dramatic element is present a drama" (quoted in Ujváry 1989, 22).

According to Tibor Kardos, the concept of folk theatre includes the performances of the common people and the activities of folk entertainers, while popular theatre is the theatre that developed from it, which was closely connected with humanist drama through the student acting at the end of the Middle Ages. In essence, what separates us is what unites us. And this problem is particularly relevant when it comes to medieval theatre. The basic distinction between the two (school and folk) is mainly in the relationship between the performers and the audience. The tradition of school drama focuses on outward expression, using, of course, acting techniques, where the actor and the audience are separated, the basic task of the actor is to make some kind of connection with the audience, which is a problem. Therefore, either the mastery of acting techniques is not given enough attention, or the educational content is not given enough attention, one or the other is overlooked, and the form and content of the education is usually the priority. This makes it a difficult theatrical experience (even today). This problem is not a dilemma at all in traditional folk forms of play, since the relationship between the player and the spectator is close, even the same.

The audience can be part of the game created by the regulating power of ritual forms; in practice, if not today, they can be the player next carnival if they learn the traditions that animate this form of play. In this way, children are educated into the acting tradition in a subtle and organic way. The audience can have a say and shape the flow of the game, within the limits allowed by the traditions of the particular type of game. Not all types of theatre aim to be didactic, but their very existence is an educational factor. From a Greek point

of view, theatre education is not part of the education system, but in Greek democracies everywhere, the political leadership placed great emphasis on theatre as a means of bringing all free and adult citizens into contact with it, as it is one of the most important tools for educating people to use democracy. Educating prepared people who have the democratic traits that enable individuals to become cooperative, to understand the goals and tasks of the community, to find their place and role in society, to understand, experience and accept the values of the community—well, the artistic experience provided by the theatre is extremely important and fundamental to the development of these democratic traits. Theatre is used by democracy to change people's minds through its cathartic potential as an art form. This is the point of Greek theatre that is almost eerily similar to what we have already thought about drama and dramatic activity today. It should be mentioned here that in the churches of Asclepius, which were actually hospitals, theatre was used as a means of personal development and even healing. Patients referred to them saw performances on the problems they faces, which helped them to solve them in their own lives.

Overview of the development and evolution of drama pedagogy in international and national contexts

Drama is present in the curricula of the Anglo-Saxon world. There were lengthy debates about its role, but these were based on living, working knowledge, not just theoretical arguments. For drama teachers, Peter Slade's work is the starting point (even if many do not share his approach). At the heart of his pedagogical thinking, he placed equal emphasis on respect for the child's personality and the importance of a play-based approach to education. In his book on his ideas and methodology (*Child Drama*, 1954), play is used as a synonym for free and informal forms of activity, which he himself refers to as 'natural expression' (cf. Szauder 1993, 197).

All this is in line with the liberal philosophy and progressive psychology of the time, and—as a consequence—with the reformist pedagogical aspirations of the time, which sought to renew schooling. An important task for the teacher is to use his ideas to encourage pupils to try out activities that stimulate their

imagination. "It is all right as long as we give children advice on the action itself, not on how to solve it" (Szauder 1993, 199).

Slade's thinking was influenced by two authors of major importance in Anglo-Saxon pedagogy: E. Holmes' *What Is and What Might Be* (1911) and C. Cook's *The Play Way* (1917) focus on the sense of responsibility in the learning process. Their methodology is characterised by spontaneous sequences of actions (mimetic dramatic plays), which follow each other in time, mimicking the child's free play. They are guided by the idea that in this type of play, the child mobilises their whole personality to represent the character in the way they see fit, rather than conforming to an external expectation.

Winifred Ward is considered by American drama educators to be the mother of creative drama, who pioneered the dramatic approach to help children better understand the essence of dramatic action and thus themselves (*Creative Dramatics*, 1930). "The children taught us this free, informal drama. We just had to work out how to use it and how to convince the administration of its value" (quoted by Szauder 1993, 205). Ward's pedagogical approach stems from the educational theories of the time, the ideal of education for the whole person and the emphasis on the development of social consciousness. Drama is the most advanced tool for personal development, in which collective action simultaneously influences self-awareness and the recognition of group functioning, she says. She sees drama as an art form, with process and product as its two main elements. In this process, the participants acquire internal skills (concentration, sensitivity) and external behaviours (pantomime, dialogue, characterisation), which are always presented in the form of a story. Brian Way (English actor, director, writer, drama teacher) edited his book (*Development Through Drama*, 1967) based on Peter Slade's basic work, mentioned above.

His approach is influenced by the humanist educational ideal of the early 20th century, the in-depth knowledge of the theatre and Slade's intellectual legacy (that drama is an extension of children's play). Participants work in pairs or simultaneously, which makes the intervention of the leader unnecessary, so the aim is personal experience. He believes that the process of drama and the theatrical product are contrary to each other, and therefore theatricality can work against creativity.

In England, Dorothy Heathcote became a highly influential drama teacher in the 1970s with her sociologically sensitive method.

At the heart of her method is the teacher in the role. According to her, drama functions as a medium for learning (social, verbal, emotional, etc.), through which vital skills are developed and improved. The other meaning of the term is that the teacher, by becoming a mediator, makes things distant in time and space present by bringing them to life in the minds of the participants. Drama is therefore the learning process itself, and the teacher is the catalyst. Viola Spolin's approach focuses on playing and improvisation. Although her work was primarily intended to promote theatrical endeavours, she also had a great influence on drama teachers in schools because of the similarities in method. Her methodology is based on the educational, psychological and social benefits for the participants in the theatre games. Geraldine Siks developed her methodology at the University of Seattle. According to her, drama can be approached in three ways:

- drama as an art form,
- drama as a linguistic art,
- a process-oriented approach.

It should be mentioned that the English educators did not create children's drama out of the void of reform pedagogy, since its different trends have been organically present in bourgeois societies since the turn of the century—unlike in our country. In America, Dewey wants to create the perfect model of civil society, teaching what the child sees as useful, by doing. The child is treated as an autonomous being by the Swiss Claparède, who combines pedagogy with psychology, and who argues that school life should be organised in such a way that the pupil can live his own life, becoming a developed, democratic citizen of the future by practising the dominant psychological functions of each stage of life. He also gives a playful form to learning by doing. In the Italian Montessori reform kindergarten, the child is given all the conditions for playful activity, with which they can freely learn, create, etc. All reformist educational movements, responding to the social needs of parliamentary civic democracies, have built on the work of developmental psychology, sociology, etc. 20th century achievements. The history of drama pedagogy in Hungary, as I mentioned at the beginning of my thesis, began to take off in the seventies, in the field of children's drama and experimental school education (Tibor Debreczeni, Éva Mezei, Emmy Nielson). "Speaking about the establishment in Hungary of drama pedagogy, it cannot be stressed enough that this trend, this methodology, was discovered

by professionals who were also involved in theatre directing, and who spread it among them were themselves directors and teachers who were involved in children's theatre, like Éva Mezei, who used drama pedagogy with primary school children in Bogáncs Street, who only came here for a few hours a week, being a theatre director herself. Yet it is her writings and workshop studies that first reported the potential and benefits of drama education in schools in the mid-1970s. It was probably these publications that drew József Zsolnai's attention to Éva Mezei and drama pedagogy, and it was after these that he involved her in the development of his experimental programme of language-communication, and as a result, the exercises referring to Mezei-inspired drama pedagogy were introduced into the Zsolnai primary school programme. However, this did not affect the essence of Zsolnai's concept of education. The initiative of Éva Mezei is continued by Katalin Gabnai, who opens up to the treatment of ethical problems, followed by László Kaposi in the 1990s with a new approach. Hunor Bucz develops a dramaturgy that departs from Mezei's idea, using more complex means than the previous ones, calling it dramatic playhouse. The initial impetus for the spread of drama pedagogy was slowed down by the coolness or reticence of the official pedagogical authorities. They obviously did not believe that the transformation was imminent, and that a civic society would require a pedagogical approach and method such as drama pedagogy. A major change came on the eve of the change of regime, when it was already possible to form an association. In December 1988 the Hungarian Drama Education Association was founded. The aim of the association is to help democratise educational and teaching practice in schools and out-of-school time in children's, youth and adult communities, in classrooms and workshops, groups, clubs, camps, associations and institutions. The aim of the association is to ensure that drama education is included in the curriculum of higher education institutions. The members of the company wanted to fight against something and for something. For a pedagogy based on the development of personality, creativity, and what may follow from this, for the future democratic and thinking citizen, against the petrified Prussian type of pedagogy. Drama education, like other reform pedagogies, was born and kept alive by civic democracy. Here in Hungary, what else can we hope for when we consider the future of drama pedagogy than that we too will have a lasting civil democracy" (Debreczeni 1993, 214–215).

Theatre in education

A recurring question is what should be the space for theatre work and what we mean by it.

TIE and theatre education

What is a TIE?

The acronym TIE is widely known in the UK and many other countries around the world (*Theatre in Education*). In terms of content, it is about the work of companies working with children and young people, educating and training through theatre and drama. The TIE programmes include theatre—not only in the form of performance, but also in the application of theatrical processes and techniques. Theatre is a tool, subordinated to the subject, the understanding of which the companies want to change. “The distinguishing feature of TIE is that its overall, primary aim is always educational” (O’Toole 1976, 48).

The sessions are designed for different age groups by the TIE companies, mostly for new and unknown communities. In England, a systemised public education service is provided by them with local authority funding. (The child never pays.) The programmes vary in duration from two to three hours to two school days, where schools have no problem integrating these theatre days into their curriculum. (The first TIE company—which is still running today—started in 1965 at the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry. Today, there are such companies in more than twenty countries around the world.)

The history of TIE in England up to the present day

Before expanding on the present topic, let’s take a brief look at the history of TIE development in England, whose positive and negative experiences can guide us both in looking for ways forward at home and in learning from mistakes there. TIE emerged out of the new type of thinking, experiential material and intellectual climate that characterised British theatre in the mid-1960s, and was also greatly influenced by the increasingly widespread school drama of the time. As we’ve already mentioned, the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry’s TIE project in 1965 laid the foundation stone. A working group of four actor-teachers, funded by the city and the theatre, visited schools in the region and provided a model for theatres in Bolton, Leeds, Glasgow and Nottingham. In a short

time, TIE clusters were established throughout the country, taking on an effective share of the content of education. Their activities were distinctly different from traditional theatre for children. It received its funding initially from the Arts Council, more recently from the Regional Arts Commission, and from local authorities, possibly local education authorities. TIE was part of the theatre, so it used its resources (equipment, costumes, sets, workshops) and was not entirely dependent on the educational authorities, but it was able to maintain close contact with schools. The Arts Council of the UK is funded by central government to develop and support the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts and to ensure access to the arts throughout Britain. In 1965, the Arts Council set up a committee to explore a broad system of theatrical services for children and young people and to make recommendations for its specific role with a view to its further development. The study of the Coventry experience has led to the allocation of funds to enable larger companies to set up groups specifically for children and to provide support for new companies. This budget support also provided a basis for repertory theatres to run permanent youth companies. Until the early 1990s, Local Education Authorities (LEAs) were responsible for the provision of education services across the country. (After the 1990s, the financial framework was largely transferred to the competence of the school management.) Initially, the level of funding was uneven in some places, and it was unclear how parents, schools and the authorities should share the costs. Then, enlightened and imaginative solutions emerged: separate forms of support were created for companies operating within or independently of theatres, or they set up their own TIE and DIE (*Drama in Education*) working groups. The development of the TIE from the 1970s onwards can perhaps be linked to the formation of the Cockpit TIE Society, set up by the London LEA in 1971. TIE has evolved considerably, becoming a definable movement, a vehicle for new aspirations, increasingly supported by LEAs, and by the 1980s it had become a service available throughout the country. Some groups chose to become independent, becoming non-profit organisations, receiving funding from local authorities and the Arts Council in the form of earmarked grants. The TIE teams covered the whole spectrum of public education, from nursery schools and small schools to vocational colleges, from youth clubs to special schools for the disabled, from summer camps to graduation programmes. TIE has moved towards educational theatre open to the whole community. Along with progress, goals and ambitions have also become confused in places.

For some theatre directors, the TIE target grant has provided a new source of funding for their traditional theatre productions. (The production has been declared a programme linked to certain elements of the curriculum.) Tensions and disputes have developed between TIE groups and the inherently conservative school administrators and boards. One analyst pointed out that schools are not giving positive signs that theatre education is being considered as a tool when rethinking the organisation and content of the institution. By the early 1980s, higher-than-usual inflation led to a significant reduction in the amount of central and local funding available. There was a decrease in the number of new projects and a move away from programmes that treated children as participants. In 1988, the first National Curriculum, which did not include drama or dance, transformed the form and content of British education. And the TIE companies were unable to respond adequately. They had to lay off their administrative staff and struggled to survive. There is little energy left to develop new programmes. Decadence was on the increase, with many TIE actors converting or returning to traditional acting, and programmes becoming increasingly *ex cathedra*. In the eyes of many, TIE did not provide enough artistic experience for children. During that time, it became increasingly clear that the differences between the work of a drama teacher and that of a TIE actor were not as great as previously thought. The dividing line between companies representing participatory work and performance-oriented projects began to be increasingly drawn. The role of the national curriculum and local school boards has been growing since the early 1990s. Thus, the TIE companies have had to look increasingly for new funding, which may be sufficient to carry out specific work, but not enough to keep them on a constant level. The funding controversy has raised the question of what TIE is, education or theatre. (The two concepts need not be mutually exclusive, but in practice, for politicians, civil servants and even educational theorists or theatre professionals—even in England—the situation is different.) The best TIE performances are proof that theatre and learning can excellently go hand in hand. Simply put: it is not impossible to learn through theatre.

Many people confuse education with schooling, i.e. institutionalised and public schooling, although they do not necessarily coincide. There are many ways to educate, and arts play an important part in them. (Good acting is an education in itself.) In the nineties, the Arts Council favoured educational theatre over theatre education, which it carefully steered itself clear of. (Educational theatre

is linked to the activities of repertory theatres, raising awareness of theatre as a form and establishing relationships with its future audiences. They try to achieve their goals through theoretical lectures, presenting theatre backstage scenes, open rehearsals, etc.) In 1993, the British government stopped funding TIE companies functioning as part of city theatres, and all theatres except Belgrade-TIE laid off TIE actors or transferred them to the main theatre department. In December 1995 Coventry City Council told the theatre that it had to let go of the TIE company. The theatre management protested and the local authority threatened to close the theatre. The local newspapers reported that the existence of the city theatre was threatened by the TIE company. On 31 March 1996 the redundancies took effect. The members of the company were forced to look for new solutions (tenders, sponsors, etc.).

At present, it is up to the discretion of more enlightened local and government agencies, schools and regional arts commissions to fund TIE programmes.

Specificities of TIE groups, theatrical and dramatic dimensions

The primary aim of TIE, as with all other forms of theatre, is to present a performance to an audience, which can be diverse in its theatrical approach; some of these programmes are designed specifically for a passive audience: they use dramatic content and theatrical effects for educational purposes. The way forward from this situation was the development of educational drama, which focused on audience involvement and participation.

By audience involvement, we mean verbal expressions of audience participation or their active involvement in what is happening; often both are necessary. This method allows children to become part of the process, to play roles that are crucial in the dramatic conflict, to react to what is happening and to actively influence it. When children's active participation shapes the course of the play, the nature of children's experience also changes, it can reach unprecedented depths of discovery and identification (the situation is fictional, but the action and the happening are real).

This activity is closer to educational drama than to theatre, with the players working through stories and exploring different worlds. In the process, they control the fate of the game, creating their own conventions while unconsciously developing their ability to live together and cooperate, expanding the boundaries of mutually acceptable behaviours, learning different role models, etc. The function of educational drama is precisely to make this learning pro-

cess effective. We must therefore be able to distinguish between drama and theatre. Drama is the internal process, theatre is the external manifestation of it.

"Drama can be defined primarily as a structured, symbolic representation of human relations. The process is dynamic (by no means static!) and necessarily involves a certain tension created by conflicts of interest, emotional and intellectual conflicts. Although the experience is directly lived, symbolisation distances the process from reality. There lies the security of experience, which can be defined as drama: one can step out of it at any time and without consequences, one can express one's detachment" (Bolton 1986, 180).

This can be particularly problematic in theatre work for children, as the younger the child, the less able they are to distinguish between reality and imagination. It is therefore possible to present a drama to which the child reacts as if it were reality itself. In a play where children are involved, it is always a challenge for the actor-teachers, but it is also a great power. In a programme that builds on children's reactions, using their ideas, much of the dialogue should be improvisational. There is thus a high risk that the role is replaced by the superior behaviour of the adult, or that condescending helpfulness leads to stereotypical behaviours. Particular attention must be paid to this: the actor's task is to give their presence an individual character, otherwise the experience becomes a group teaching, which is not part of the TIE's task. The expectations of children in the audience are always more specific than those of adults. Their primary need is for the nature of the experience to be clear. The hardest thing for them is to be bored. And they start to get bored if they don't understand what they are seeing; if they don't understand the cause and effect of what is happening; if the stage reference is outside the scope of their own experience; or if the performance is simply monotonous. For a drama to be sufficiently clear, it is important to have a strong storyline and a clear problem statement. Fortunately, children still want to know why things happen. Therefore, we need to choose and set them a goal that they can appreciate the value of, that they can relate to their own emotions and experiences. "In drama, all crises and moral problems must be concrete and, at the same time, meaningful." (Bolton 1986, 184).

We must therefore make the thematic target specific and concrete through action. In summary, the function of the structure in a TIE programme is to focus children's attention on the programme material, to deepen their understanding and to direct their attention. Those who see theatre for children as just 'fun'

or 'gig' trivialise it. It is far from obligatory or necessary that children's theatre productions should be based on increasingly boring adaptations of well-known stories. The magic is not created by the content, it is the artistic motivation that gives the activity its power. The ability and desire of children to develop their knowledge and gain new experiences should not be underestimated. I think those who see it differently are patronising children. We should also mention the problem of the verbliness of language, which is the main determinant of the dramatic nature and theatrical impact of programmes. The language used should be as clear as the characterisation: the use of words with a strong emotional connotation is also an educational experience.

The TIE programmes are based on shared ideas, mostly improvised by the groups, so that the dialogue is left to the end. There is a risk that the resulting text will not be literary. The language of the play must be intrinsically linked to the period, situations and characters. (I can't take King Stephen for a character speaking in a 'Szeged' dialect.) Linguistic 'laxity' can reflect badly on the groups carrying out TIE activities: their commitment to quality development of language use in schools and on the stage should be unquestionable. (The real danger of this situation becomes apparent in practice, or in the working method without a pre-written text, when we encounter this problem in the stages that require working with children.) The precious moments of improvisation must be transformed and refined into theatrical moments. All this is possible if they are derived from an experience that can be called 'true', i.e. if they flow directly from dramatic necessity. These words are dramatic in themselves, because they express the basic idea of the drama. "This work requires a proper context, prior information, knowledge of the children, good scripts, decent rehearsals, a director of high professional standards, and a clear programme with clearly thought-out aims" (Bolton 1986, 189).

Comparison of TIE and educational drama

"In this paper, I intend to provide a theoretical framework and terminological basis for *Drama in Education* (DIE) and then apply the same framework to the *Theatre in Education* (TIE) approach, in the hope of capturing the differences and identities of the two concepts. I have never worked professionally in TIE, but I have been involved in its development almost from its inception. Understanding it was important for two reasons. One obvious reason is that

TIE has a significant educational value. I have always been impressed by the pioneers of TIE as educational thinkers. At a time when we drama teachers were awkwardly careful to be vague about what we were doing in schools—when asked, we would give rhetoric answers like character development, confidence building, sensitivity development—it was both refreshing and threatening to see groups of actors coming into schools not only asking basic questions about education and the role of theatre in it, but also providing ready answers. I was therefore in a position to start learning about my own field from people outside the circle of drama teachers” (Bolton, *ibid.*). Gavin Bolton explores the nature of experience. He analyses by mode, structure, purpose and content. In terms of method, there are three types of school drama:

- process-oriented, which can be traced back to children’s play,
- performance-centric, based on theatre,
- and skills-oriented.

For workshops working in the spirit of TIE, neither performance-oriented nor goal-oriented skill development is relevant, as they do not expect students to rehearse and perform. The emphasis is on the experience. When children play alone within an ‘as if’ game, they are acting in ‘experience’ mode. For example, if they are playing the siege of Eger Castle, or Hungarian and Turkish warriors, they are having a real experience, but one that is different from real life, as they are coming together to create a fictional situation. The experience is thus both created and lived. They create and accept the rules of the context. We can therefore separate the three components of dramatic play: the creator, the receiver and the set of rules.

We are therefore dealing with a dramatic activity that requires a very high level of autonomy in order to create an experiential mode. However, TIE, while seemingly denying a significant amount of autonomy, since the set of rules must be accepted by all, expects learners to experience through experience; it does not aim to make learners act out the experience. This paradox is resolved by the teacher’s taking on the role of teacher, which brings us to the structural aspects. When the teacher takes on the role, they join the group at the level of fictional action, yet at the psychological, educational level, they precede them. The two plays are different because the teacher and the student have different intentions, and therefore the structure of the play is different. (For while the child in the town siege is looking for adventure play, the teacher wants to talk

about patriotism, heroism, perhaps historical facts; they are thinking at different levels of meaning. The teacher's job is to find the right balance between the two. And at the structural level, the child plays in a 'what next' mood, but the teacher edits the events to suit the situation.) The teacher can deepen the experiencing mode by taking the fictional context towards the theatrical form. (What a playwright uses, what a director builds on—focus, tension, contrast, symbolism.) So the teacher in the role consciously shapes the direction and degree of tension in order to create and deliver an experience. TIE does not just offer a play to children—as traditional children's theatre does—but they design a play specifically for children, where they can explore within their own interpretive framework while maintaining their own dynamics.

Within the teaching of drama, depending on the circumstances, different objectives can be set, the most important of which is to change understanding. Other important goals are of course

- social skills (sensitivity, empathy, listening skills),
- language skills (speaking, thinking, writing and reading),
- motoric skills,
- operational skills in drama (choice of subject, ability to act, sensitivity to form).

TIE and DIE share the same goals, but it is far from being true to say that the material they handle would be the same. This brings us to the substantive issues. "To change understanding as a goal suggests that what is involved here is the modification (or awareness, perception, thoughtfulness or knowledge) of something. However, this objective is interpreted in two different ways in schools. The first, quite obvious application might be when some non-present medium is evoked in order for children to learn from it. This type of use of drama could be when the play is about a farmer's day, and explores the theme of farming; it could also be when interviews are conducted within the play to give children practice in this form of work. In other words, this use of drama is functional, i.e. it is an effective means of teaching the facts of the objective world. And the meaning is contextual. The other approach is artistic; its aim is not to evoke a context that is not present, but to select a general perspective within an objective context and then examine it from a personal, subjective and objective point of view. The drama may therefore be about the exiles contextually, but the meaning of the experience, or more precisely, its multiple levels of meaning, is related to what it feels like not to return home (universal

meaning), and to all the personal, subjective and objective contents that the participants take from the experience as their own.

The power of drama as an artistic activity in schools stems from the ambivalent dependent and independent relationship between personal and general meaning and objective content. For some of the dramas performed in schools, the important meanings emerge in the least targeted contexts. Sometimes TIE can evoke a multi-level experience that the drama teacher does not have the resources for. This is the theatre in education" (O'Toole 1976, 47).

The role of the teacher allows for an existential mode of experience, in which the participants gain a certain autonomy over the experience, while at the same time the theatrical mode of working is implemented, which amplifies the experience through tension, context and symbolism. "DIE and TIE are the same in that their primary aim is to change understanding. The important difference between the two approaches, however, is that while in drama the learning area is linked to the subject matter, the context is only an exploration of the subject, the TIE group has to deal with it in a different way. Their gifts as actors enable them to create a context of usually unrealizable richness in the work of the drama teacher, and thus their work becomes significant in terms of both context and subject matter" (O'Toole 1976, 55).

DIE is perhaps the most important dramatic movement today. It gives the participants a play experience similar to a child's 'as if' play, while using the tools of the playwright, director and actor to make the play educational. Drama can be traced back to children's play. It presupposes the same imaginative capacity and self-control as children's play, and children's activity in drama is of course influenced by theatrical conventions (formal elements necessary for play, different play styles, dramatic forms, conventions).

Drama, like children's play, makes the player act 'as if' something were different, 'as if' they were in a different situation, 'as if' the objects were different. The participants are aware that they are acting in an imaginary situation. They have ways of entering and exiting the game, in progress evaluation, etc. However, drama does not perform its engaging activity at story level, but always operates in the spirit of the here and now. Use existing experience to acquire new knowledge. A big question for TIE companies is what theatrical language they can use to speak to children. Realism is the usual theatrical style. A child is most likely to be part of the performance if it happens inside them, not if they are physically brought to action (running on stage, shouting in the chorus).

“‘You have to activate the viewer, especially the child.’ And out of this elementary psychological error, forced and boring five to ten minutes, slightly ‘embarrassing’ fifteen minutes, were born. The loss of external activity, of becoming only a spectator, creates an internal freedom: I am in it if it grabs me; and I am watching from the outside” (O’Toole 1976, 59).

Theatre in school, school in theatre

Two trends can be distinguished in the history (operation, management, organisation) of TIE groups. One is the extent to which the education system, the school itself, allows theatre into the work of the school, or encourages the school to go into the theatre or to flow into the work of the theatre. Basically, it is the scene that separates these two approaches.

One is the school square, the other is the theatre square. If we think of the latter, we can say that this is the field we want to introduce the child to. So, education for the theatre can be achieved by education with the theatre: the child, class, school is taken to the theatre and learns its workings, its language of theatre, in that place. But this is only one side of the story. The other side is that what we are doing in the theatre, the performance itself, the problem that is being addressed, does not always necessarily require that children encounter it in the theatre. It could also be said that if we consider the problem situation we want to introduce to children and raise their level of understanding more important, it is possible to have them encounter the theatre performance in another space, in the more familiar space of the children, the school space. The examples from England show that these two directions coexist and even conflict with each other.

The issue of theatre is particularly important for the coming period of theatre education in Hungary. Although it seems to be a simple spatial problem, there are philosophical and educational considerations behind it. The question is how willing or able a school is to change its own closed, rigid structure to meet the curricular requirements imposed on it. I am thinking here of theatre education. After all, dance and drama, and within that drama theatre education, are included in all regular school curricula (including the NAT) as separate fields of education. In fact, the general curricular requirements also state that theatre as an educational field is an important part of children’s education. So the problem is that the school is such a rigorous system that it prefers to go to

the theatre, to the familiar, traditional theatre setting, to show the traditional theatre performance to its students, to familiarise them with the basics of general rules of behaviour (suits etc.), i.e. to introduce them to a form.

Unfortunately, many people believe that the best way to achieve the greatest results under the heading of 'theatre education' is to teach children how to appear in the theatre, but this only serves to sanctify the very bad conventions that see the theatre as a social event. (According to this conception, we do not go to the theatre to get closer to understanding a dilemma, or even to have a cathartic experience through the performance, so we do not go to the theatre for something, but because it is appropriate to go there, because we attend the theatre performance as a social event, validating a completely external social aspect; we consider the theatre as a not very important part of our social life, where we mainly relax and have fun. As a result, the theatre is one of society's entertainment mechanisms.) Most schools do not prepare for internal events at all, even though this is very much part of the curriculum requirements. They fail to do so, because what happens in the best case (which depends entirely on the person and the teacher) is that the well-meaning Hungarian teacher talks to the students about what they have seen after the lecture. In most cases, however, where children may be admitted to the season ticketed performances, even those spontaneous conversations are not held. There is no awareness or understanding of the theatrical experience, no analysis of the underlying problem raised by the play. It is sad to say that this part of our education today is completely ineffective. In the other case, if theatre and drama as such is admitted into the school, and efforts have been made to do so, in the sense that drama pedagogy as a tool and method has become more or less conscious in schools, it is not even treated as a tool, but as 'a kind of methodological update and play technique'. So all that is happening in the field of drama education in schools is that the children are doing a series of dramas (which is more than nothing). The fact that the drama is about something, that it is centred on a dilemma that is an important (moral or sociological) issue for children at that age, is not very well revealed, and fragmentary elements may be present in the work. Educational drama, which could really function as a drama work and a real educational forum, using theatrical-dramatic means, is only very peripherally present in today's schools: mainly in Budapest, very rarely in larger rural towns, less in small towns, and barely in villages. Today, there are a few TIE groups operating in Hungary, just one or two of which are truly professional. They invite the

school groups to their background institution, where they can host, in studio theatre conditions, the thirty people who will be spectators and participants in their programme. So these are occasions that today's school rarely meets, and in addition, it is very Budapest-centric, so it is impossible to bring groups from the countryside. In this respect, school education in Hungary is not at all able to take advantage of the opportunities offered by TIE.

Dimensions of theatre education

What should the optimal theatre education look like?

I have already raised the distinction between educational theatre and theatre education. The problem of our question also stems from the significant difference between the two concepts. There are several forms, one of which is the so-called *introductory theatre*, which has recently been favoured by the Ministry of Culture (there are substantial grants to be won in this area, especially for traditional theatres). Theatrical literature lessons, held in a large theatre setting, occasionally interrupted by the director's interventions and illustrated with elaborate scenes, are typical, and this kind of production practically explains why they did not do the theatre production. A partial behind-the-scenes look does not bring the viewer any closer to the theatre or the drama. The use of the word 'initiation' in the title is therefore a conceptual error. The theorists who make a living out of this should reflect on what they really want: what, if any, real benefit the various programmes they are calling for will have in the field of theatre education. It is completely unnecessary to produce pseudo-programmes.

Another trend is the *post-performance (sometimes pre-performance) discussion*. I have participated in some of these 'experiments', where the director and the actors take questions from the audience. Young audiences are still less able to ask questions about the drama, and such gatherings are relegated to the bottom of the tabloid conversation: for example, how many parrots does actor X.Y. have and what are their names. Meanwhile, I am sad to find that the actors know absolutely nothing and the director very little about the play they are presenting.

I cannot, of course, say that the experiments I have just mentioned and not mentioned make no sense. There are many ways to make children aware of the theatre experience or to help them understand it. But while these in a state of

grace contribute to understanding, TIE, on the other hand, leads to experiencing, an incomparable qualitative difference and change of perspective.

The educational situation of drama pedagogy, its adult education and development opportunities

Drama education offers a colourful palette of options for students, whether they are studying for a bachelor's degree or building on an existing degree. A course on the subject is also available. However, there is no TIE-actor training of the kind needed to create an in-depth, theoretically based programme with strong practical and methodological skills. (Not even abroad!)

It would be worthwhile to develop a methodology for this, for which the appropriate professional (e.g. specialist) conditions are available in Hungary, but no such request or idea has been put forward. The most useful way of launching a nationwide theatre education programme would be to form as many TIEs or similar groups as possible, for example in regional structures, and to train appropriate TIE actors. During their training period, TIE actors would acquire the principles of reform pedagogy, the theory and methodology of drama pedagogy, which would enable them to lead educational dramas, and they would also need to acquire acting techniques and skills; but above all, and most importantly, in addition to the craft of acting, they would need to be teachers. This course could even be a stand-alone course, linked to one of the art or pedagogical universities, and could meet national needs, while at the same time providing a base for further training and research. The student would be able to plan, manage and participate in TIE activities, etc. The actor-director-teachers, who are widely read (including children's and youth literature!), could develop a range of ideas and experiential problems as a result of their literacy, and their long-term success would result in theatre productions for children, which would be truly relevant to their interests. Such leaders would be able to develop a partnership between teacher and child, i.e. a reciprocal process of back-and-forth.

In the context of the principle of education for independence, the teacher must often act as 'I am just another opinion leader among you' in front of the children and think together with their students. It is fortunate if the teacher sets a pattern of behaviour that is accepting of other opinions and is an open-minded person. A good TIE and drama teacher:

- is willing to take risks to broaden their own teaching experience and encourage children to do the same to broaden their horizons;
- gives the class the opportunity to participate in organising their own learning process;
- prefers to be seen as an interested listener rather than a lecturer;
- helps children to see their current worldview as a valuable and useful source of further learning;
- helps children to find their own way of expressing themselves and to apply it;
- takes into account the fact that all learning in the classroom is linked to a concrete, topical and powerful situation, and gives space in his/her teaching to the personal emotions that are relevant to the children.

Theatre for children

Theatre for children is not the same as children's theatre play. At present, in Hungary, children's theatre programmes are characterised by an expressive lack of quality, with a few excellent exceptions. The reason for this is twofold. One of them is that some producers of children's theatre programmes and performances consider communicating with children as a 'babbling hip-hop'. And many professional theatres (traditional theatres) ignore the fact that theatre is an educational institution, especially for children. Often it is fortunate that the children cannot be 'switched on' by the performance, because if they understood the performance, they would drift into deep scepticism. It should be mentioned that theatres spend insufficient funds on children's theatre productions, which often do not meet any aesthetic standards. Another related problem is that, in addition to the quality problems already mentioned, the traditional theatres are unable to meet the needs of children's theatre in terms of quantity, which is why 'children's gig' groups have sprung up. The latter flood the rural community centres with productions of a level of undemandingness that is difficult to express.

The other problem is precisely the misunderstanding of the representatives of the client side. They are the teachers. Unfortunately, as a result of diploma courses without a profession, there are countless colleagues in the educational, teaching and nursery care professions who are not dealing with children in the right way. Most of them know little or nothing about their students and have

no intention of getting to know them better, so they do not represent children's interests in theatre performances properly or at all. In fact, one of my personal experiences has shown me that in the case of children's theatre based on a dramatic conflict that is interestingly posed to children, the organizer received cries of 'let nothing happen' from the large audience of small spectators. So the situation in Hungary is, without exaggeration, catastrophic. However, there has been a qualitative improvement in professional puppet theatres over the last decade. If theatre is to be an experience, it has to adapt to children's level of thinking: it has to be ahead of the curve if it is to educate. "Theatre should have an educational effect through an artistic, i.e. cathartic experience, and should avoid direct didaxis. Since all three levels of thinking are present in children's minds, a play or a fairy tale can and should contain elements of magic, mythology and rationality. However, they should not be mixed and should not replace each other. The situation or conflict exposed on a magical or mythological level must be resolved on a magical-mythological level, but the drama may also have rational elements consistently carried through. Pedagogical narrow-mindedness and sentimentalism, which is still willing to think in terms of the 'innocent' child's soul and to lie and present a pink and creamy worldview accordingly, is nowadays starting to rework the millennia-old folkloristic wisdom and worldview, and out of it is born Süsü, a large, kind, helpful and dopey sheepdog like dragon whose main function is to replace a digger or an excavator... The helpful, sweet dragon is just as cosmic nonsense as the well-meaning, kind witch.

The two perceptions can be plastically separated:

- Folklore says: there are evil forces and dark powers in the world, and they must be fought because they can be defeated.
- The didactic theatre goes like this: there are only kind and helpful powers in the world, nice dragons, cute witches and charming devils—and you think they still have time to find out that this is a lie.

One tells the truth, the other lies; one strengthens, the other weakens. This refusal to accept irrationality is also reflected in the acting style. The fairy-tale characters, talking animals, are voiced in an unbearable, manic babble of grotesque growls and idiotic beeps. I don't think this is due to acting inertia, but rather to the director's concept that the irrationality of the talking animal should be resolved through caricature, and in this way the stage is virtually

talked out of the fact that this philosophical bear or curious chicken should not be taken seriously, 'it's just a game'. And in doing so, they also kill the potential cathartic effect and create confusion in the minds of children. The child wants to experience the reality of the game, while the style constantly warns them that it is a lie" (Popper 1995, 65–66).

A typical counterargument to the above is that the programme is a great success. The children's public has a high critical sense, but only of boredom. Children can be distracted by a busy, flashy, pretentious solution, precisely because of its loudness. The educational function of the theatre is to educate in theatrical experience, taste and style. "Masked and stylized play can be closer to the child than the grimaces and gestures and costumes from their life. Without any technique, the children's imagination must be used to visualise the miracles (but with human faith and great personal presence—with unrelenting precision in the movements and rhythms!). Quality in theatre means the quality and intensity of the performance, the total participation of the actor's personality in the play. This is what children should get in children's performances to have a real theatrical experience. The child understands stylization—a fact that is often forgotten by those who produce theatre performances for children" (Vekerdy 1987, 9).

Summary

In order to imagine a democratic society for our future generations, we must not forget what the Greek polis democracies invented long ago: the theatre as a social institution plays a very important role in the education of a democratic citizen. The theatre should not be left out today—but starting education in adulthood seems a little too late. Therefore, there is a need to develop a theatre education structure that is really effective and actually works for children. The innovative, well-grounded methodological culture of well-prepared teachers could also be used to further develop the theoretical foundations, which could effectively support each other. All this would necessarily require the creation of an educational base in Hungary, the natural setting for which would be an arts or teacher training institution, which could function as a training base for further education, TIE actor training and drama teacher training. In order for our children to be able to 'use' theatre, to understand its language and to learn to decode theatre performances of the most diverse genres and

forms, it is absolutely necessary that in primary school not only drama lessons are taught, fixed in the curriculum and currently still in a limited time frame. It is also necessary that these drama lessons should be more organised, more accessible in a higher number of lessons, and that they should be in the hands of qualified leaders and drama teachers, from the smallest village schools to the reputable schools in the capital. It would be essential that children should not only be exposed to one or two performances a year, prepared as a compulsory curriculum for adult theatres, in a completely random form, and that this should also pass without any effect, since these are not prepared or followed up by any kind of school activity or discussion. It is very rare that a play performed by a professional theatre is understood and further developed by the teacher in a dramatic activity, by building on the play's problems, by filling in the gaps, by elaborating it, i.e. by drama work. This is why it would be necessary to develop forms of performances or drama workshops linked to the work of the TIE groups, which could be run not only on a one-off basis, but could also be extended in an organised way.

It would be essential to have a suitable background structure and, to plan these activities, we would need drama teachers who can plan, and people who are at home in the world of theatre, who know how it works and who understand the spiritual world of children—always appropriate to the target age group. To build a theatre-loving and theatre-understanding audience for the theatre of the future, the ammunition must be acquired and given from childhood. The gap is not insurmountable, because if an adult viewer can watch a good performance, it can make them aware of their cathartic experience, may deepen it and perhaps even bring about the change of attitude that we have set as our goal in our work with children in drama. A discussion led by a trained drama teacher who knows the performance and its problems very well is very useful help for the theatre and contributes significantly to theatre education. The most effective way to involve young audiences in the theatre process is currently through the TIE concept, which can be a life-changing experience for those actively involved.

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