

## Durham E-Theses

---

*The development of drama in education 1902-1944:  
an account of the developing awareness of the  
educational possibilities of drama with particular  
reference to English schools*

Timothy James Cox

---

### How to cite:

Cox, Timothy James (1970) The development of drama in education 1902-1944: an account of the developing awareness of the educational possibilities of drama with particular reference to English schools. Masters thesis, Durham University.

---

### Use policy

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

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a <https://etheses.durham.ac.uk/id/eprint/10061/> is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

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

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

THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
DRAMA IN EDUCATION 1902-1944

An account of the  
developing awareness of the  
educational possibilities of drama  
with particular reference to English schools.

A THESIS  
SUBMITTED FOR THE  
DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF EDUCATION  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

by

Timothy James Cox

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

April, 1970

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DRAMA IN EDUCATION 1902-1944

An account of the developing awareness of  
the educational possibilities of drama  
with particular reference to English Schools

Abstract of An M.Ed. Thesis

by

T. J. COX

The thesis attempts to describe some of the main trends in thought and practice concerning the role of drama in education during the period flanked by the Education Acts of 1902 and 1944.

Chapter I deals with the new movements in education and the theatre which were conducive to the development of drama in English schools during the early decades of the twentieth century. In Chapter II, an account of two conferences on drama and education held during the twenties gives an indication as to how far thinking had progressed by that time.

Chapter III allows for comparisons to be made with developments elsewhere, by giving details of the creative dramatics movement in the United States of America and the following chapter traces the official attitude towards drama's place in English schools as exemplified in Board of Education publications and major Committee Reports.

Chapters V-VII discuss the main aspects of dramatic activity in the schools and Chapter VIII treats in some detail the work of five pioneers in the field of educational drama.



## APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE	- STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES .. .. .	..	290
APPENDIX TWO	- A SOMPTING HISTORY PLAY .. .. .	..	291
APPENDIX THREE	- NATURE-STUDY DRAMATIZED AT SOMPTING .. .. .	..	294
APPENDIX FOUR	- PLAY-MAKING AT THE PERSE .. .. .	..	296
APPENDIX FIVE	- PETER SLADE'S CHILD DRAMA .. .. .	..	300

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

I	- OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS .. .. .	..	301
II	- EDUCATIONAL JOURNALS .. .. .	..	303
III	- BOOKS .. .. .	..	304

P R E F A C E

There is no doubt that during recent years an increasing amount of time has been devoted to dramatic activity in the schools of this country. An obvious indication of the interest shown in this development was the Department of Education and Science's Survey 2 made in 1966 and 1967.

Many people would suggest that the real impetus to present-day developments in school drama came after the Second World War with the wider dissemination of the views and ideas of thinkers and practitioners in the field. The spirit of the Butler Education Act was entirely on the side of those who sought "to ensure a fuller measure of education and opportunity for young people and to provide means for all of developing the various talents with which they are endowed."<sup>1</sup>

One would not deny that great strides have been made in educational drama since the Second World War. But what of the less immediate past? Were there any indications of a developing awareness of the educational possibilities of drama during the earlier decades of this century?

---

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to Board of Education Publication, Educational Reconstruction (1943).

This thesis is an attempt to suggest that there were. The thesis does not purport to be a statistical survey of dramatic activity in schools. Rather, it is a descriptive account of some of the main trends in both thought and practice concerning the role of drama in schools. Initially, at least, these trends are seen against a general educational and social background. The Education Acts of 1902 and 1944 are used conveniently rather than rigidly to give a framework to the period under review. The first marked the beginning of a genuinely national system of education in this country, while the second heralded a new phase in the development of education during which school drama was to grow and prosper.

I am grateful to many people who have been good enough to take time to talk to me about their own experiences in drama. I acknowledge particularly the help and encouragement of my supervisor, Mr. Gavin Dolton.

## CHAPTER I

### A CLIMATE FOR DRAMA IN EDUCATION

#### INTRODUCTION

It is a well-known fact that drama had an important part to play in the curricula of many schools during the second half of the sixteenth century. Indeed, the statutes of certain schools demanded the production of plays.<sup>1</sup> Vail Motter<sup>2</sup> has gone so far as to suggest that during the twenty years which preceded the appearance in London of the first adult professional companies the school drama had become in reality the English drama. It was because of its educational possibilities that drama flourished in Elizabethan schools. In the hands of schoolmasters such as Ashton, Mulcaster and Udall it may have reached particular heights of artistry but for all it

---

<sup>1</sup> For instance, Shrewsbury, Sandwich and Westminster.

<sup>2</sup> T. H. Vail Motter, The School Drama in England.

represented a way of familiarizing the student with good authors, training him in speaking both English and Latin, and teaching him poise and stage presence.

With the advent of the professional theatre, school drama tended to follow rather than set the pace despite a valiant effort to compete with the professionals at the beginning of the seventeenth century. It suffered with the professional theatre during the Commonwealth, and from the Restoration to the last quarter of the nineteenth century led a fitful existence during which it was largely dependent on the adult theatre for plays and methods in stage production.

The twentieth century witnessed a renewal of interest in the educational possibilities of drama and it is the purpose of this section of the present thesis to attempt to give some explanation for the evolving climate which encouraged such a renewal of interest. While it is not the aim of the thesis to argue that a revival of the theatre has always necessarily accompanied an educational revival in this country, this was the case at the turn of the twentieth century. Consequently, the following two chapters will examine some aspects of the new movements in education and the theatre. An account of two educational conferences concerned with drama will, perhaps, demonstrate how far the possible implications of these movements had been realized at the beginning of the twenties.

PART 1

THE NEW EDUCATION

"The New Education treats the human being not so much as a learner but as a doer and creator. The educator no longer fixes his eyes on the object - the knowledge, but on the subject - the being to be educated. The success of the education is not determined by what the educated know, but by what they do and what they are."<sup>1</sup>

It would be a vast over-simplification to consider the New Education movement as one which comprised a group of educationists with unified aims: there were many strands to the movement<sup>2</sup>, and the 1902 viewpoint of R. H. Quick, quoted above, represents just one of those strands. Nor must it be assumed that the New Education movement swept through the classrooms of this country;

---

<sup>1</sup> R. H. Quick, Essays on Educational Reformers, p. 525.

<sup>2</sup> In The New Education 1870-1914, R. J. W. Selleck discusses six such strands: the Practical Educationists, the Social Reformers, the Naturalists, the Herbartians, the Scientific Educationists and the Moral Educationists.

on the whole, the teaching profession is a conservative one and the effects of the New Education may still not have reached every school.

The New Education was, in the narrow sense, a reaction against the instrumentary education of the nineteenth century:

"It is a truism to say that the elementary school system of the nineteenth century was not primarily intended to have any cultural value but was predominantly and unmistakably utilitarian."<sup>1</sup>

In terms of the curriculum this instrumentary education implied the teaching of the three R's; a little factual history, geography and science; and some knowledge of the Bible. The subjects to be taught were prescribed by the Revised Code and any experimental approaches to the curriculum, on the part of the teacher, were inhibited by the iniquitous payment by results system. This was the system whereby the state gave increased financial assistance to schools in connection with results in certain subjects.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> W. A. C. Stewart, quoted in R. F. Dearden, The Philosophy of Primary Education, p. 3. The curricula of the public and grammar schools were primarily orientated towards the classical languages during the same period.

<sup>2</sup> The Three R's were, for a long time, the major grant-earning subjects. Even when other subjects obtained this status, the inspectors were concerned about results rather than methods of teaching when they gave their examinations. Thus rote-learning was very much the order of the day and who can blame the teacher when his livelihood depended on his pupils' successes?

Of course, the type of education given in the elementary school reflected the demands of English society and would be likely to change when the expectations of that society changed. There was little doubt that nineteenth-century society demanded a cheap and socially-useful education for the majority of its children. Also, it wanted conforming children and hence the authoritarian ethos of the school.<sup>1</sup> There was no time for frills such as play, and, in any case, spontaneous impulses were to be distrusted, for children were naturally bad: they stood in need of a redemption to be gained through acquiescence to the adult will.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to discuss the changes in society which prepared the ground for the New Education movement but only to suggest that the dawn of the twentieth century showed signs of a change of educational climate:

"The Revised Code dragged out a continually watered-down existence until 1897, but when, in 1902, the English Educational System was revised, the New Board of Education 'Code for Public Elementary Schools' abandoned supervision altogether. There was no longer any published list of suitable or

---

<sup>1</sup> One of the visible signs of this authoritarian ethos was the teacher on his dais. In theatrical terms he represented the actor and the children a captive audience but there was no question of intimacy in this "Theatre of Authority."

unsuitable subjects, or instructions on method. The only guide issued to teachers has become famous for the liberality of its title, and from the clear and unequivocal way in which it states the anti-supervisionist point of view."<sup>1</sup>

In this new and - relatively speaking - permissive atmosphere there appeared a host of educational doctrines,<sup>2</sup> some of which had implications for the development of drama in education. The quotation by Quick which prefaces this chapter highlights two of the major principles of the new doctrines and of the New Education movement as a whole. Firstly, the educator should pay more attention to the child and secondly, the child should take a more active part in his own education. Here surely there was scope for the dramatic if it could be indicated that the child had a propensity for this sort of 'doing'.<sup>3</sup> Several theories of play showed just this

---

<sup>1</sup> A. D. C. Peterson, A Hundred Years of Education, p. 54. The guide referred to by Peterson was the Handbook of Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and others engaged in the Work of the Public Elementary Schools, the first edition of which was published in 1905. The chapter in this thesis entitled The Official Attitude to Drama in Education discusses the various editions of the Handbook.

<sup>2</sup> In the chapter entitled "Creative Dramatics in the United States" reference is made to the connection of drama with the Project Method and the Dalton Plan.

<sup>3</sup> The certainty that the child was naturally dramatic - and the implications of this for the educator - were well illustrated in the comments of Grace Sloan Overton. Drama in Education, p. 14. [The educator's aim in using dramatic activities is/ "to capture the dramatic impulse and direct it toward life processes. This aim involves a knowledge of two things. First, one must understand the psychological basis and the nature of this dramatic instinct and its expression in different stages of development. Second, one must have a knowledge of the necessary techniques."

propensity, incorporating as they did much of the recent scientific and psychological work on imitation and the dramatic instinct.

The educational implications of play have been discussed by many educationists and philosophers throughout the years. Plato recognized play as the best and most natural way to begin a child's education. By watching a child's spontaneous play an adult could discern the nature of the child. Rousseau urged that the child should be able to develop his natural instincts and that he should not be treated as a mini-adult. Froebel argued that "play ... is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in the child's soul. It is the purest and most spiritual product of the child, and at the same time it is a type and copy of human life at all stages and in all relations .... For to one who has insight into human nature, the trend of the whole future life of the child is revealed in his freely-chosen play."<sup>1</sup>

These theories of play received renewed attention and others were formulated when, in the light of Darwin's work

---

<sup>1</sup> F. Froebel, Chief Writings on Education, pp. 50-51, quoted in M. Lowenfield, Play in Childhood, pp. 30-31.

on evolution, the child was seen as an evolving organism and the period of childhood recognized as having a vital bearing on growth. Thus the activities of childhood had an integral part to play in the full development of the child's faculties.<sup>1</sup> The activities covered by the term 'play' are numerous but, as has been mentioned, many play theories have discussed the nature of imitation and dramatic play. A consideration of the whole field of play would be impossible in the present context but attention will be given to several theories and considerations of play which threw some light on the place of drama in education in the early years of the twentieth century.

An early discussion of the nature of children's dramatic play came in Sully's Studies of Childhood, published just before the turn of the century. Sully's work is interesting because he compared the play of the child with the artist's activity and, in so doing, touched on several points that have assumed importance in Child Drama particularly as postulated by Slade and his followers.

Sully conceived play as essentially the spontaneous activity of the child and he stressed how difficult it was to observe and understand this activity:

---

<sup>1</sup> Because these activities were an integral part of childhood, it was argued that they should be judged in relation to the child's point of development; adult standards and viewpoints were superfluous. This became an important principle of both Child Art and Child Drama.

"We talk ... glibly about their play, their make-believe, their illusions; but how much do we really know of their state of mind when they act out a little scene of domestic life or of the battlefield?"<sup>1</sup>

He thought that the early spontaneous activities of the child had a "quasi-aesthetic character in so far as they follow the rhythmic law of all action."<sup>2</sup> As play progressed so it acquired a greater aesthetic importance and a crucial factor in the child's developing play was his impulse to imitate, a trait which showed itself very early in life. Two important forms of imitation were the "prolonged make-believe" of dramatic play and the "production of semblances in things."

Sully noted the parallelism between the evolution of play-activity and of primitive art in several respects. First of all there was a certain, unconscious selectiveness in the child's early dramatic play when he employed "an artistic tendency to set forth what is characteristic in the things represented."<sup>3</sup> Then, as observation widened and grew finer, "the first bald abstract representation

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Sully, Studies of Childhood, p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 322.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 324.

becomes fuller and more life-like. A larger number of distinctive traits is taken up into the representation."<sup>1</sup>

According to Sully, the movement away from the symbolic to the concrete representation often involved an attempt to reproduce mechanically a scene or events from real life. The bright and imaginative child, however, would not be content with "close unyielding imitation" but would attempt, like the artist, to make use of the idealising impulse in adding life and colour to the representation:

"Fresh individual life is best obtained by the aid of invention; by the intervention of some new scene or situation, some new grouping of personalities is realized. Nothing is aesthetically of more interest in children's play than the first cautious intrusion in the domain of imitative representation of this impulse of invention, this desire for the new and fresh as distinct from the old and customary."<sup>2</sup>

Despite the qualities in children's play shared by the artist - the spontaneity, self-expression and self-realization - Sully did not conceive play as art in the fullest sense. His reasons supplied a hint as to why some later educationists should want to appreciate Child Art and Child Drama as art forms in their own right:

"The scenes he acts out ... are not produced as having objective value, but rather as providing himself with a new environment .... The idea of a

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Sully, op. cit., p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 325

child playing as an actor is said to 'play' in order to delight others is a contradiction in terms ... the pleasure of a child in what we call 'dramatic' make-believe is wholly independent of any appreciating eye."<sup>1</sup>

True art, in Sully's terms, was a social phenomenon and perhaps he was suggesting a distinction between drama as dramatic play and drama as theatre, when he said that "the play-impulse becomes the art-impulse (supposing it is strong enough to survive the play-years) ... when it becomes conscious of itself as a power of shaping semblances which shall have value for other eyes or ears, and shall bring recognition and renown."<sup>2</sup>

The connection between play and art has been an important issue in twentieth century psychology and education. In the Freudian view art was seen as a continuation and substitute for the play of children and a means whereby the artist attempted to relate the idea to reality. In some schools - one thinks particularly of progressive schools in this country and the United States of America during the 1920s and 30s - the qualities of play were channelled to give an education through the arts. In this respect drama was an aspect of the total growth process. Perhaps the most comprehensive exposition of the link between art and play in this sense was given by Herbert Read, writing nearly fifty years after Sully:

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Sully, op. cit., p. 326.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 327

"It will be found that the varieties of children's play are capable of being co-ordinated and developed in four directions, corresponding to the four basic mental functions, and that when so developed, the play activity naturally incorporates all the subjects appropriate to the primary phase of education.

From the aspect of feeling play may be developed by personification and objectivation towards DRAMA.

From the aspect of sensation play may be developed by modes of self-expression towards visual or plastic DESIGN.

From the aspect of intuition play may be developed by rhythmic exercises towards DANCE and MUSIC.

From the aspect of thought play may be developed by constructive activities towards CRAFT.

These four aspects of development, DRAMA, DESIGN DANCE (including MUSIC) and CRAFT, are the four divisions into which a primary system of education naturally falls, but together they form a unity which is the unity of harmoniously developing personality."<sup>1</sup>

Needless to say, Read's concept was a theoretical one but it may well be that parts of it were based on what he had seen going on in some Schools.<sup>2</sup>

In a discussion of the aspects of development, Read admitted that his four categories represented merely a

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Read, Education through Art, pp. 223-224. It is interesting to notice that, in a revised edition of this book, Read paid tribute to the education through arts provided by A. R. Stone's school in Birmingham.

<sup>2</sup> Read pointed out that his classification of aesthetic education corresponded closely with the classification made by Edmond Holmes in What is and What might Be. Moreover, he suggested that Holmes was elaborating on what John Dewey had postulated. What Read failed to mention was that Holmes was basing his classification very closely on the work he had seen at a particular school - that of Harriet Finlay-Johnson.

formal classification and that there was an overlap between some of them; he instanced drama and dance. The inter-relationship of drama, dance and music is receiving increasing attention today, particularly with regard to its implications for emotional development; the obvious manifestation of the inter-relationship is in dance drama. The idea is not a new one: the beneficial effects to be obtained from music and movement were recognized by Plato. He saw that "rhythm and harmony penetrate deeply into the mind and have a most powerful effect on it."<sup>1</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, Stanley Hall gave a deal of consideration to the motor effects of play in his recapitulation theory and he talked of the intuitive effects of rhythmic movement on the adolescent:

"(Dance) is perhaps, not excepting even music, the completest language of the emotions ... Right dancing can cadence the very soul, give nervous poise and control, bring harmony between basal and finer muscles, and also between feeling and intellect, body and mind."<sup>2</sup>

Stanley Hall suggested that dance might be utilized in the education of the mentally sub-normal. Subsequent developments proved him right. In the larger educational field, his ideas added weight to the body of opinion which proposed that the true education of the normal

---

<sup>1</sup> Plato, The Republic, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> G. Stanley Hall, Adolescence Volume 1, p. 214.

individual lay in all-round growth by way of self-expression.

Several theories of play have been formulated in terms of education in its narrower sense: two of these theories, Caldwell Cook's Play Way and Peter Slade's Child Drama, are discussed in another section of this thesis. Both of these theories, while drawing on the work of others, are essentially personal statements. Joseph Lee's Play in Education (1915), however, was very much a reinterpretation, in educational terms, of Karl Groos' theory of play as a preparation for adult life. It contained a detailed consideration of the nature and purpose of drama at various stages of a child's education as well as throwing some light on the question of rhythm and its implications for growth.

In stating the function of play, Lee took up a Froebelian position: growth was seen in terms of gradual unfolding:

"The function of play in growth is, then, to realize the potential body, and to supplement the impulses which the major instincts give in general terms by habits and reflexes making them efficient to specific ends."<sup>1</sup>

Lee concerned himself with the period of development from birth to around fourteen years and he outlined four

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Lee, Play in Education, p. 25.

main stages: the Baby Age (one to three years); the Dramatic Age (three to six years); the Big Injun Age (six to eleven years); and the Age of Loyalty (eleven to fourteen years). There was no question of a rigorous categorization; the ages shaded into one another and overlapped. "The dramatic impulse, for instance, shows itself very early and continues, though in a subordinate capacity, until long after its special period - sometimes even beyond the fourteenth year."<sup>1</sup>

The impersonating impulse which dominated the dramatic age represented the child's attempt to understand his world either directly or through playthings. It was unlike dramatics in the adult sense because the actor was not trying to communicate to other people what was passing in his mind. The dramatic play of a very young child was a kind of study in which he put himself inside the thing he wanted to know, "being it, and seeing how it feels." His impersonation helped his mental processes:

"The child's active bodily presentation of his experience, the necessity he is under of acting out in the flesh his intuitions of the inner nature of his world, is due to the fact that imagination is as yet too weak to stand alone. He does not fully possess his mental image until he has given it a bodily form."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Lee, op. cit., pp. 65-66.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

Lee was of the opinion that the constant practice of impersonating during the impressionable years of early childhood developed sympathetic insight, "the power to see people as they really are, the intuitive sympathy that sees with another's eyes, feels with his nerves, that can realize him not merely as a phenomenon of sense, but also as a feeling, struggling human being, embodying a purpose, commanded by ideals, subject to despair and hope."<sup>1</sup>

Because the child was so impressionable during this age there was great opportunity for the teacher to dramatize the content of lessons; at the same time it was incumbent on the teacher to ascertain whether the characters impersonated and the scenes reproduced by children were "of an edifying sort."<sup>2</sup> A crucial time when the teacher should provide edifying models with whom the child might identify occurred at the end of the dramatic age. At this period Lee sensed that the child was often looking for a personal ideal and there appeared "the first glimmering of a conscious desire for life in the spiritual sense."<sup>3</sup> Two important adjuncts in this process were

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Lee, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 119. There is a certain correspondence, with regard to this period, between the views of Lee and those of Peter Slade. The latter was to talk of a "dawn of a certain seriousness" occurring around the age of six or seven.

rhythm and the ring game.<sup>1</sup> Rhythm was all - pervasive: there was rhythm in nature and in human life; it was apparent in the activities of babies and was an essential element in all the arts. As far as the individual was concerned, rhythm represented "an ultimate fact of our spiritual make-up."<sup>2</sup> At the same time, however, it existed as a powerful force of social fusion:

"Rhythm is the social alchemist, who can fuse individual minds and temperaments into one substance in obedience to his spell."<sup>3</sup>

This alchemy of rhythm was particularly active in children's dramatic ring games where the ring itself symbolized an awareness of others:

"We feel and care about the ring itself ... the ring is now part of us, as we of it ... it is an extension of ourselves, a new personality."<sup>4</sup>

During the Big Injun Age - a period marked by boisterous activity and a concern for the real - the impersonating impulse showed itself in what Lee called "dramatics proper." The aim was no longer "to realize an ideal to your self but to make it visible to others."<sup>5</sup> Lee considered dramatics a very practicable method of reaching the heart of literature. Initially, the informal approach was the most appropriate one and "the form

---

<sup>1</sup> Again, one notices some interesting similarities between the views of Lee and Slade.

<sup>2</sup> J. Lee, op. cit., p. 150

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 298.

should never go beyond the spirit; excellence of method should wait upon the need of an accurate expression." Children should be responsible for producing their own plays with the minimum of guidance; the well-drilled performance was to be eschewed.

Lee was in no doubt that the child's dramatic development should be continuous. This was very important in early adolescence where, if a gap was allowed to exist for any time, a child might easily become self-conscious and lose a valuable means of free expression. During the Age of Loyalty, when the gang represented a real force of social unity, theatricals accorded well with the half-real and half-symbolic quality of a great deal of gang activity. At this age, girls found drama particularly congenial:

"In them especially should be cultivated the habit of acting charades and little dramas, giving dramatic sketches of plays they have seen, stories they have read, historical scenes they are interested in. Interest should be centered upon showing the story to the audience, not on showing off yourself."<sup>1</sup>

Stanley Hall also agreed that pubescent girls were often adept at acting, although his reasons were none too flattering to the female sex. He considered that young girls were able to acquire a considerable repertory of parts because their natures were so nebulous and unformed.

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Lee, op. cit., p. 399.

Thus they tended to throw themselves into a part which might influence their daily life for a while; but just as it appeared that the characteristics of this part were going to have some permanent moulding effect, then they switched roles. Stanley Hall's suggested remedy was that "a large and varied repertory of good parts is needed for due orientation."<sup>1</sup>

The question of identifying with worthwhile models was, for Stanley Hall, an important aspect of drama's part in moral education. He thought that drama at its best "represents moral collisions and their results, and is a kind of solution of ethical problems which often best takes the place of experience, the fees of which are high."<sup>2</sup> He saw great possibilities in a national system of drama which would represent a school of domestic, civic and patriotic virtue for youth. The lack of this national system put the onus on the schools: it was the responsibility of education to develop from the world's drama a canon of the best plays "so edited as to be most effective, not primarily for art and literature but for morality, and giving its various parts such varying degrees of dramatic rendering ... as may be practicable to

---

<sup>1</sup> G. Stanley Hall, Educational Problems, Volume II, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> G. Stanley Hall, Adolescence, Volume II, p. 439.

fit the all-dominant nature and needs of different ages."<sup>1</sup>

Emotional development through dramatic play, especially in the case of young children, received both an impetus and clarification from the work of depth psychologists. The beginning of the international recognition of the psychoanalytic movement has been placed during the first decade of the twentieth century but, in this country, its main influence seems to have been felt in the years following the first World War. The psychoanalysts emphasized the importance of the unconscious in our mental lives<sup>2</sup> and pointed out how our behaviour is constantly being influenced by motives of which we are normally unaware. As the period of infancy was a formative influence in personality development, the dramatic play of a young child was often a reflection of his unconscious in symbolic form. Through his dramatic play a child attempted to relate his unconscious fantasies to the external world and thus adjust to that world and others living in it.

Freud's early work had drawn attention to the cathartic effect of play: the child freely acted out situations and events which were confusing to him. In

---

<sup>1</sup> G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence*, Volume II, p. 442.

<sup>2</sup> For Freud it was a question of repressed emotions; for Adler unverbaliized attitudes; and for Jung unrealized potentialities.

1922 he formulated his idea of repetition compulsion, a means by which children act out passive experiences in order to understand and master them:

"We see that children repeat in their play everything that has made a great impression on them in actual life, that they thereby abreact the strength of the impression and so to speak make themselves masters of the situation. But on the other hand it is clear enough that all their play is influenced by the dominant wish of their time of life: viz to be grown-up and to be able to do what grown-up people do. It is also observable that the unpleasing character of the experience does not always prevent its being utilised as a game ... In the play of children we seem to arrive at the conclusion that the child repeats even the unpleasant experiences because through his own activity he gains a far more thorough mastery of the strong impression than was possible by mere passive experience. Every fresh repetition seems to strengthen the mastery for which the child strives."<sup>1</sup>

Two years before Freud formulated his ideas about the repetition compulsion mechanism, Robinson suggested that make-believe play had a compensatory function for the child in much the same way as the day-dream or fantasy:

"It is hardly necessary to point out the importance of artistic appreciation and production for the compensatory life of children."<sup>2</sup>

This was a point taken up by Reaney in her discussion of the child's dramatic play:

---

<sup>1</sup> S. Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, quoted in M. Lowenfeld, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> E. S. Robinson in The Psychological Review (November 1920), p. 438.

"The fantasy life of the little child is very intense ... Many only children have imaginary play-mates while others gain the experiences they miss in real life by introducing them into their fantasy play."<sup>1</sup>

Reaney recognized that this type of play needed guidance lest it degenerated into aimless day-dreaming and here it was the responsibility of parent and teacher to "see that the imaginative content of every child's mind is enriched by varied experience."<sup>2</sup>

It would be very easy to get bogged down in psychotherapeutic methods which might seem to have a limited connection with drama in schools. Also, it might be argued that the psychoanalysts and psychotherapists were, for the most part, dealing with abnormal subjects. A counter-argument is that the difference between the abnormal and normal subject is one of degree and that the basic mechanisms and motivations are common to both. An understanding of this concept has surely been a key factor in the realization that dramatic play, as well as being therapeutic in the remedial sense for the abnormal child, is therapeutic in the preventive sense for the normal child. This idea is integral to Peter Slade's notion of Child Drama:

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Reaney, The Place of Play in Education, p. 34. Reaney was on the staff of the Perse School for a time and thus had first-hand experience of Caldwell Cook's Play Way.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

"Now what I'm really pleading for then is a very serious, calculated, scientific form of education, based upon - dare I say it now? - something like thirty or forty years of very careful observation. We know a little about the behaviour patterns now, of man; and so many of us go through these patterns. It is the development of the patterns of normality which is necessary, so that abnormality doesn't even begin to creep in."<sup>1</sup>

A therapeutic system having some affinities with the processes of Child Drama generally - and drama-therapy particularly - was Dr. J. L. Moreno's Psychodrama.<sup>2</sup> This was a technique, devised in 1921,<sup>3</sup> whereby a patient acted out his anxieties dramatically; he was helped in this process by other actors who represented absentee persons as they appeared in the private world of the patient. A complete understanding of the nature and rationale of Psychodrama depends on a thorough investigation of Moreno's theory of personality. Such an investigation would be out of place in the present context and it is not made easy by the rather pretentious prose-style adopted by Moreno. Essentially, Moreno's work is based on the role-playing undergone by the individual during his development.

Three important aspects of the psychodramatic process

---

<sup>1</sup> P. Slade, Child Drama and its Value for Education, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that the psychodramatic stage is circular and comprises various levels.

<sup>3</sup> Moreno's early work was done in Austria but he moved to the United States of America in the late twenties.

were catharsis, improvisation and spontaneity. The sort of catharsis advocated by Moreno was one affecting the actors in the drama: it was a primary, active catharsis as contrasted with the secondary, passive catharsis that Aristotle envisaged occurring to the audience at Greek plays:

"The problem has been, therefore, to find a medium which can take care of the disequilibrating phenomena in the most realistic fashion, but still outside of reality; a medium which includes a realization as well as a catharsis for the body; a medium which makes catharsis possible on the level of speech; a medium which prepares the way for catharsis not only within an individual but also between two, three, or as many individuals as are interlocked in a life-situation; a medium which opens up for catharsis the world of phantasies and unreal roles and relationships."<sup>1</sup>

All psychodramatic acting was spontaneous improvisation and it represented an attempt by the subject to respond adequately to new situations:

"Thus the response to a novel situation requires a sense of timing, an imagination for appropriateness, an originality of self-propelling in emergencies, for which a special 's' function must be made responsible. It is a plastic adaptation skill, a mobility and flexibility of the self, which is indispensable to a rapidly growing organism in a rapidly changing environment."<sup>2</sup>

Moreno considered that the 's' factor - spontaneity -

---

<sup>1</sup> J. L. Moreno, Psychodrama Volume I, p. xiv.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., P. 93

could be trained. It was of paramount importance that it should be trained in an age where the individual had to find a "strategy of creation which escapes the treachery of conservatism and the competition of the robot."<sup>1</sup> The training process was twofold: it comprised the liberation of the individual from cliché-ridden responses and the facilitating of new dimensions of personality development in the individual.

In the educational sphere, Moreno recognized the possibilities of spontaneous improvisation for both personality development and subject-learning. In the first, the child might be given the opportunity to identify with ideal character models in his dramatization or he might play through some social situations. The discussions after the performances would range widely:

"The criticisms range from consideration of the sincerity of the emotions displayed in the situations to the mannerisms, the knowledge of the material nature of the situation, the relationships to the persons acting opposite, the characteristics of carriage, speech and facial expression. The social and esthetic effects of the individual performance come to the front and are evaluated. Many traits which indicate personality difficulties are disclosed: anxieties, stagefright, stuttering, fantastic and unreasonable attitudes and so on."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> J. L. Moreno, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

In the subject-area, Moreno instanced spontaneous dramatic work as a means of learning a foreign language:

"The training of language through spontaneity techniques requires that phrases to be learned enter the mind of the pupil when he is in the process of acting, that is, in a spontaneous state. In consequence, when the pupil at a later time is again in a process of acting, for instance, in social situations, these phrases will recur spontaneously. Since the use of them began in a course of a spontaneous activity, he is able to use them again in the manner of spontaneous expression."<sup>1</sup>

Play theories, or any other theories, tend to remain on a speculative plane unless they are put to the practical test. The outcomes of any practical test require a wide dissemination if they are to be of general value. For these reasons, pioneers in the field of educational drama such as Harriet Finlay-Johnson, Miss Gilpin, Caldwell Cook, Peter Slade and A. R. Stone became doubly important. Not only did they put the dramatic instinct to use, as it were, but also they recorded their experiences for the benefit of others. Obviously not all the teachers using drama in schools were able to write of their experiences and thus the writings of national figures such as E. G. A. Holmes, J. J. Findlay and P. Nunn were influential during the early part of the century. These were educationists in close touch with schools, sympathetic to the new movement in education and conscious of the

---

<sup>1</sup> J. L. Moreno, op. cit., p. 134.

place that drama had in this movement.

Edmund Holmes was the Chief Inspector for elementary education throughout the country towards the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1911 he wrote his most important work, What is and What Might Be; this contained an indictment of much of the contemporary educational system and a suggested model for improving it. As we know, Holmes was greatly influenced by Harriet Finlay-Johnson's school in Sussex which made a great use of the dramatic method.

The main points in Holmes' indictment of the current system were that it judged education by its measurable results and repressed the rhythmic self-expression of the child in attempting "to drill his energies into complete quiescence."<sup>1</sup> Holmes saw a true education in Froebelian terms:

"The function of education, then, is to foster the growth of the child's whole nature, or, in a word, of his soul."<sup>2</sup>

According to Holmes, the education in an ideal school was to be based on the six instinctive desires of the child; the communicative instinct, the dramatic instinct, the artistic instinct, the musical instinct, the inquisitive instinct, and the constructive instinct. The first

---

<sup>1</sup> E. G. A. Holmes, What is and What Might Be, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

two were bracketed together as the sympathetic instincts leading to love; the third and fourth as the aesthetic instincts leading to beauty; and the last two as the scientific instincts leading to truth.

Whilst discussing the nature and potential of the dramatic instinct, Holmes gave a general indication of the extent of dramatic activity in the elementary schools of the day:

"In the ordinary elementary school a fair amount of acting goes on in the infant department, and an occasional attempt is made, in one of the higher classes of the upper department, to act a scene from Shakespeare or an episode in English history. But during the five years or so of school life which intervene between the infant department and 'standard VI', the dramatic instinct is as a rule entirely neglected; and the consequent outgrowth of self-consciousness in the children is too often a fatal obstacle to the success of the spasmodic attempts at dramatization which are made in the higher classes."<sup>1</sup>

Holmes was in no doubt that young children were born actors: consequently, any school which took into account the nature of childhood when formulating its scheme of education had to foster the dramatic instinct. In this way the play/work dichotomy no longer existed. Dramatization became a valuable means of vitalizing subjects in the curriculum. History gained particularly from this method but it was not alone: dramatization of travel

---

<sup>1</sup> E. G. A. Holmes, op. cit., p. 174.

stories awakened an interest in geography; playing at shops made arithmetic both practical and stimulating; nature study lent itself to dramatic illustration; whilst an interest in literature was fostered by the acting, with improvised costumes, of scenes and events from Shakespeare, Scott and Dickens.

Holmes realized that a true approach to dramatic work in schools went beyond the vitalization of aspects of the curriculum and had an influence on the growth of personality. It is in this sense that he saw the dramatic instinct as being 'sympathetic'. It was a means of training imaginative sympathy and giving sympathetic insight:

"However rude and simple the histrionic efforts of the children may be, they are doing two things for the actors. They are giving them a living interest in the various subjects that are dramatized; and, by teaching them to identify themselves, if only for a moment, with other human beings, they are leading them into the path of tolerance, of compassion, of charity, of sympathy, - the ever-widening path which makes at last for Nirvanic oneness with the One life."<sup>1</sup>

This last quotation, once again, shows Holmes to have been in the Froebelian tradition. In addition, it indicates a clear recognition of and belief in the emotional process of identification.

---

<sup>1</sup> E. G. A. Holmes, op. cit., pp. 176-177.

The spirit of the new movement in education, so fervently stated by Holmes, found communal expression in a group called the Conference of the New Ideals in Education. Holmes appears to have been the guiding light of the group which met for the first time in 1915<sup>1</sup> and continued to meet for some years after. Commenting on the outlook of the group, Selleck has said:

"They shared a belief that education was a process of growth or development, that it was best conducted with the greatest possible freedom, that the teacher's task was to interfere as little as possible with the activities of the pupil, that the fundamental attitude of the educator was respect for the pupil's individuality."<sup>2</sup>

This was an outlook conducive to drama in education. It is significant, but not particularly surprising, that the Conference of New Ideals in Education should, after a few years, find itself discussing the topic of 'Drama and Education.'

---

<sup>1</sup> The first meeting of the Conference of New Ideals in Education stemmed from a conference of the Montessori Society held at East Runton in 1914. It deliberately set out to include interests wider than those of the Montessorians. (It is interesting to note that Holmes had made a report for the Board of Education on the Montessori system - Board of Education, Education Pamphlet 24, 1912. In an otherwise glowing report of the system, Holmes had regretted its neglect of the dramatic and rhythmical instincts of childhood, which made for unharmonious and one-sided development.) It included Froebelians, Montessorians, Freudians and Dewey supporters; among its committee members were Holmes, Homer Lane of the Little Commonwealth fame, Sir William Mather, Chairman of the Froebel Institute and Albert Mansbridge representing the W.E.A.

<sup>2</sup> R. J. W. Selleck, op. cit., p. 217.

J. J. Findlay was a prominent member of the New Ideals group. Formerly a headmaster of a Cardiff boys' school, he became Professor of Education at Manchester in 1903. He was the chief interpreter, in this country, of John Dewey's work, editing a selection of the latter's essays as early as 1906. Dewey's influence, however, does not appear to have been felt in any marked degree in this country until the second decade of the century. When it was felt, it gave impetus to the idea of 'learning by doing' and provided practical examples of ways in which drama could be made a meaningful and integrative tool in learning.<sup>1</sup> It also suggested that drama was a means of acquiring experience.

Findlay's own writing gave due attention to the place of drama in education. His Principles of Class Teaching, published in 1902, supplements the picture given by Holmes of the extent to which drama occurred in schools at the beginning of the century:

"The drama plays a very small part in modern school life. It survives in the Greek and Latin plays performed in a few schools, and it has been revived in the imitative games of the Kindergarten. The study of Shakespeare as pursued in our schools serves at least one purpose - it enables the pupil to realize what might be done if he were permitted to

---

<sup>1</sup> Further consideration is given to Dewey's influence in the chapter on "Creative Dramatics in the United States."

express in act and speech the drama which he 'gets up' for an examiner."<sup>1</sup>

Despite admitting that imitation was a spontaneous, unconscious delight to young children and a conscious delight to the adult, Findlay was not prepared to put drama in the front rank of school subjects for the post-infant stage. It was one of several activities - comprised in the general range of liberal culture - which existed "both for sheer delight and the practical enrichment of experience."<sup>2</sup> The practical aspect was important, otherwise the activities became mere luxuries which distorted the child's view of life:

"..... It is well, it is even necessary, they should sing and recite and act; they can, still better, be encouraged to construct their own dramas ..... the reform here advocated would not only relegate such pursuits to the second place, but would improve the method by calling at every turn for co-operative activity from the scholars, while the teacher falls into the background and acts merely as a guide."<sup>3</sup>

There is no doubt that the end of the first World War brought with it a changed social climate in this country which consequently, has its effect on educational doctrines and methods. Caldwell Cook talked of a

---

<sup>1</sup> J. J. Findlay, Principles of Class Teaching, p. 79

<sup>2</sup> J. J. Findlay, The School, p. 205

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 213-214.

"spiritual freshening" which would show itself in schools: by this he meant a reform of method which would take into account the pupil's individuality and his active participation in the learning-process. The "spiritual freshening" was evident in Fisher's 1918 Education Act which demanded an all-round education for every child; it was evident too in the personal views of the President of the Board of Education regarding the importance of drama in education.

Perhaps the new spirit in education received its most striking expression in Nunn's Education: Its Data and First Principles. Not only did Nunn encourage the use of drama and movement in schools<sup>1</sup> but, in his insistence that education should secure "for everyone the conditions under which individuality is most completely developed"<sup>2</sup> he was helping to draw attention to an atmosphere in which educational drama might positively flourish.

---

<sup>1</sup> T. P. Nunn, Education: Its Data and First Principles, p. 84. "It leads straight to the idea that the substitution of dancing, eurhythmics and acting for some of the more formal physical exercises may not only help the Briton to take his pleasures less sadly, but may be the best way of securing for him mastery over the body."

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6.

PART 2

THE REVIVAL OF THE THEATRE

"In the years before the war of 1914-18, it had been assumed that the English theatre was at the beginning of an epoch of activity unequalled since the decline of Elizabethan drama."<sup>1</sup>

Considering that drama played such an important part in the school and university system of instruction during the reign of the first Elizabeth, it seems reasonable to assume that the revival of the theatre during the early years of the twentieth century helped to create a general climate sympathetic towards drama in schools. In certain areas it may have had a more particular effect.

It is difficult to be precise about the beginning of the theatre's revival. The breaking of the monopoly of the "patent" theatres in 1843 was an obvious factor in the spread of drama if it had less desirable effects on

---

<sup>1</sup> A. C. Ward, Twentieth Century Literature, p. 126.

the standards maintained. The patronage of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert gave the stage increased status and respectability - symbolized in the knighthood conferred on Irving. Nor must it be forgotten that the royal children were encouraged to act and appreciate the theatre. However, the real fillip to the theatre's cause came with the emergence of a new school of dramatists who brought life and intelligence to the stage at the end of the nineteenth century. Social drama, or the play of ideas as it was sometimes called, reached its apotheosis in the work of Ibsen and Shaw.

Shaw had a great deal to say on the educative role of the theatre, believing implicitly that drama should be used to improve behaviour and morals by destroying stereotyped concepts of life. The contemporary theatre ought to be a "factory of thought, a prompter of conscience, an elucidator of social conduct ..... and a temple of the Ascent of Man."<sup>1</sup>

The emotions played an important part in the aesthetic experience: it was feeling that set a man thinking and not thought that set him feeling. In Shaw's view this concept made drama such an important method for

---

<sup>1</sup> G. B. Shaw, "The Author's Apology," Dramatic Opinions and Essays quoted in L. Simon, Shaw on Education, p. 130.

giving spectators insight:

"I am convinced that fine art is the subtlest, the most effective means of propaganda in the world, excepting only the example of personal conduct; and I waive even this exception in favour of the art of the stage because it works by exhibiting examples of personal conduct made intelligible and moving to crowds of unobservant, unreflecting people to whom real life means nothing."<sup>1</sup>

Shaw was of the opinion that a properly cultivated aesthetic education was a source of growth, creative imagination and religious experience; and art became a means of self-expression and self-discovery. A true education, as distinct from technical instruction, comprised an education of the feeling through the "appeal of actual experiences to the senses." Thus it followed that "in educational institutions appeals to the senses can only take the form of performances of works of art."<sup>2</sup> Amongst other things this meant plenty of performances of the best plays in the school.

In his capacity as a theatre critic, Shaw had some caustic remarks to make about Sir Henry Irving's productions of Shakespeare. These were lavishly mounted behind the proscenium arch, smacked of the grand, romantic manner of the nineteenth century and failed to take cognizance of

---

<sup>1</sup> G. B. Shaw, Preface, Mrs. Warrens Profession in Plays Unpleasant, p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> From G. B. Shaw, The Religion of the Pianoforte, quoted in L. Simon, op. cit., p. 179. In 1913 Shaw delivered a lecture to an audience of teachers on "Music and Drama in the Schools."

the style of the period in which they were written. However, there were other productions of Shakespeare starting just before the turn of the century which merited Shaw's approval because they attempted to reinterpret Shakespeare in an Elizabethan manner. In 1895 the Elizabethan Stage Society, under its founder and director, William Poel, began a series of Shakespearian productions in Elizabethan costume and upon a platform stage. Referring to the Society's work, Shaw said:

"The more I see of these performances by the Elizabethan Stage Society the more I am convinced that their method of presenting an Elizabethan play is not only the right method for that particular sort of play, but that any play performed on a platform amidst the audience gets closer home to its hearers than when it is presented as a picture framed by a proscenium."<sup>1</sup>

The work of Poel was symptomatic of two movements within the theatre which had possible implications for school drama. A renewal of British pride in the plays of its greatest dramatist showed in the emergence of numerous Shakespeare associations and societies and the clamour for a Shakespeare National Theatre. The Shakespeare Day Committee hoped that April 23rd might become a culminating point of the year's work in a school's study of Shakespeare. In 1917, ten thousand New York schools joined in a

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in P. A. Coggin, Drama and Education, p. 246. A description of the Elizabethan Stage Society's work was given in Poel's own book: Shakespeare in the Theatre (1913).

commemoration with British schools and some public schools, such as the City of London School, set aside a special day for the presentation of scenes from Shakespeare. Caldwell Cook paid tribute to the work of Poel and others who were producing Shakespeare in a correct style: the "Mummery" at the Perse School indicated that he was not merely paying lip-service.<sup>1</sup> The Report of The Teaching of English in England (1921) talked of the performances of Shakespeare in secondary schools:

"Such performances have their inevitable shortcomings, but their spirit is sound, and we have had abundant testimony to their value as a means of education."<sup>2</sup>

The Report recognized the value that some knowledge of Elizabethan Stage conditions had for classroom study of Shakespeare:

"A very brief sketch of the Elizabethan playhouse and the conditions of performance might well precede the reading of the first play. It would be an additional advantage if a model of the Shakespearian theatre could be exhibited in the school."<sup>3</sup>

A second sense in which Poel's work might be regarded as having been symptomatic of a movement in the theatre was

---

<sup>1</sup> In the 1940s Ronald Watkins argued that only by presenting Shakespearian plays in their original stage conditions could their full effect be realized. Consequently, the speech hall at Harrow was converted into an exact reproduction in structure and measurements of the Globe Theatre.

<sup>2</sup> The Teaching of English in England, paragraph 289.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, paragraph 287.

in its refusal to be hide-bound by the conventions of the Victorian stage with its proscenium arch and box set. An interesting outcome of Poel's creative interpretation of Shakespeare was the general point noticed by Shaw: that the bond between actor and audience was strengthened when the former acted among the audience. Various directors used this concept in their theatres. Nugent Monck's Maddermarket Theatre at Norwich had an apron stage; while, in the twenties, Terence Gray experimented with arena productions at the Festival Theatre, Cambridge. The relationship between arena theatre and Child Drama as postulated by Peter Slade is interesting. It would be going too far to suggest that the development of arena theatre had a profound effect on the development of drama in education except, perhaps, in isolated cases. What does seem to have happened is that there has been a parallel development in both theatrical and educational spheres. The doing-away with the proscenium arch allowed for greater freedom of presentation in the theatre; in education its removal facilitated the natural shape of a young child's acting and prevented possible dangers in a too conscious attempt at acting to an audience by the older child. Coggin has suggested that many schools might have arrived at arena staging quite by chance:

"In schools, the growth of the arena has been partly fortuitous. Few schools are equipped with a regular proscenium stage and by playing in the round many schools soon found there was a virtue in this necessity."<sup>1</sup>

Another area in which there has been an interesting parallel development in both the theatre and education is in the use of improvisation. Improvisation has had a long tradition in the theatre, reaching heights in the Italian Commedia dell' Arte of the sixteenth century. At the beginning of the present century it was, of course, used extensively by Stanislavsky and the Moscow Art Theatre as a way of training young actors and in the creative interpretation of plays. The D.E.S. Survey on Drama (1967) has suggested that the "lines on which educational drama has been developing seem to owe a good deal in their origin to the work of Stanislavsky."<sup>2</sup> However, it must be remembered that translations of the Russian's writings were comparatively late in reaching this country. Although Stanislavsky's influence has had an effect on education drama, it seems likely that early uses of improvisation in schools were merely an extension of the young child's spontaneous dramatic play and were arrived at unilaterally by progressive teachers who

---

<sup>1</sup> P. A. Coggin, op. cit., p. 247.

<sup>2</sup> D.E.S. Education Survey 2, p. 35.

wished to give outlet to their pupils' creative potentialities. Interestingly enough, the first British work which discussed improvisation in any detail came neither from a theatre-person nor an educationist in the strict sense of the terms.<sup>1</sup> Robert Newton found that young children were not the only ones to find the printed play an inhibiting approach to dramatic work. Newton made great use of improvisation in his Social Service work with the unemployed during the dark days of the depression. He found that it taught players to consider their dramatic material in terms of the theatre as well as in terms of everyday life. Improvisation encouraged individual invention and freshness. While enumerating other values of this medium, Newton acknowledged its possibilities for the schools:

"Improvisation is a great help to the actor, because it shows him how to express his latent powers fully and with imagination; it helps him to break down a self-consciousness which the artificialities of a civilized life have forced on him. Once, after a lecture on improvisation, an unemployed miner said to me: 'Have you ever watched children playing? They're the best improvisers in the world.' Today educationists, by realizing the importance of emotional and imaginative education, are beginning to understand the implication contained in his words."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Although Newton did do a little improvised work in a primary school during 1940.

<sup>2</sup> R. G. Newton, Acting Improvised, pp. 41-42.

The quotation prefacing this chapter implies that the hopes held out for the English theatre prior to the first World War were not fulfilled subsequently. In one sense this is true. Before the war serious theatre in the shape of Shaw, Galsworthy and Granville Barker was much in evidence on the London stage while a chain of repertory theatres outside London helped bring about decentralization of the drama.<sup>1</sup> During the war, however, the commercial theatre supplied a diet of light entertainment for a war-weary nation and "much of this fairground atmosphere remained in the West End theatre after the war ended."<sup>2</sup>

If the immediate post-war years saw a decline in the professional commercial theatre, they witnessed, as a counter-balance, a tremendous growth of interest in the amateur and repertory movement and an increasing appreciation of drama's possibilities as an instrument of education. The amateur movement flourished in the twenties and thirties<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Two important repertory theatres in the early years of the century were the Gaiety Theatre in Manchester and the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. The first was noted for the development of regional drama and the second for the presentation of the poetic plays of Yeats, Lady Gregory and Synge. The Irish plays were sometimes suggested as viable alternatives to Shakespeare and the classics for school productions during the twenties and early thirties.

<sup>2</sup> H. Hunt, The Live Theatre, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> Some idea of the extent to which drama flourished might be gauged from the increased response over the years by amateur societies to the Community Drama Festival initiated by the British Drama League in 1927. In that year there were 107 entries while in 1934 there were nearly 900.

and obviously influenced the schools, both in popularizing drama generally and in giving practical dramatic experience to teachers. The cause of drama was considerably enhanced by organizations such as The Arts League of Service founded in 1919 and The British Drama League,<sup>1</sup> also founded in 1919. The financial assistance administered by the Carnegie Trust was another important factor in the growth of drama between the two World Wars.

Such was the interest in drama on the part of educational bodies and other societies after the first World War that the Board of Education had a committee prepare a Report on The Drama in Adult Education. The Report, issued in 1926, had much to say about the educational role of drama. In a summary of the claims made by witnesses and endorsed by the Report, it was stated that:

- (a) "Drama is a composite art, requiring for its full expression and perfection an understanding of, and proficiency in other arts.
- (b) Drama is at once a most vivid and most subtle artistic medium, and is therefore a powerful instrument for the conveyance of ideas.
- (c) In consequence, drama can be under right conditions a most potent instrument of moral, artistic and intellectual progress, and under wrong

---

<sup>1</sup> In its early years, the League seems to have been more closely identified with school and university drama than it is now. At its inception it formed eight sub-committees, one of which dealt with Drama in Education; and, of course, the League organized the 1920 conference which took "National Education in and through the Drama" as its theme.

conditions an equally potent instrument of moral artistic and intellectual degradation."<sup>1</sup>

Some of the individual witnesses made specific references to the position of drama in schools. Miss Marjorie West of the Workers' Educational Association talked of the value of acting in a good play: it had the capacity "to widen the sympathies and elevate the emotional side of life."<sup>2</sup> In addition, it necessitated the training of the whole man:

"It obliges him to learn to speak clearly and rhythmically, to use his voice musically and expressively, to teach his body to move and stand with grace and dignity."<sup>3</sup>

Miss West suggested that "with children the power and value of the dramatic art as an instrument of education is now become a common-place."<sup>4</sup> This assertion received some corroboration from the compilers of the Report who mentioned "the widespread development of drama as an educational activity in elementary, secondary and other schools in recent years."<sup>5</sup> The London County

---

<sup>1</sup> The Drama in Adult Education, paragraph 18

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., paragraph 217.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., paragraph 219.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., paragraph 217.

<sup>5</sup> The Drama in Adult Education, paragraph 248.

Council was instanced as an authority which had done much to encourage the spread of drama in its educational institutions. Mention was made of the special performances at the Old Vic for children from schools, the production of plays at the Council's training colleges and the lectures given to the Authority's teachers by prominent people in the theatre. The integrative quality of drama merited a special reference: the relation between dramatic performances and the teaching of the allied arts such as painting, handicraft, music and dancing was particularly close in the training colleges and secondary schools. This, in turn, drew attention to another benefit conferred by drama: it asked for so much co-operative effort.

A most interesting manifestation of the London County Council's approval of drama in its schools was the training it provided for teachers. The Mary Ward Education Settlement started an experimental course of lectures and practical work for elementary teachers in the Borough of St. Pancras.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The influential nature of the Newbolt Committee Report on The Teaching of English in England (1921) can be seen in the opening words of an account by the Mary Ward Settlement of the reasons why it started training teachers in dramatic work. The Account is quoted in The Drama in Adult Education, paragraph 238: "When the report of the Committee on the Teaching of English in the Schools was published, in which dramatic work became practically compulsory for all teachers of English subjects, it was immediately realized here that there would be very many teachers especially in the elementary schools, who would have next to no knowledge of this subject."

Such was the enthusiasm for this course that special classes were formed for instruction in various aspects of drama:

"Instruction is available in Elocution, Acting, Play-Writing and Dramatization, Play-Producing, Stage Craft, Dancing, Fencing, etc., and there is a series of Demonstration Classes with children. These Classes are arranged at a time specially suited to teachers already engaged in teaching whenever possible and are very largely patronised by teachers from both elementary and secondary schools."<sup>1</sup>

The Report, in congratulating the London County Council, mentioned two other Authorities - Middlesex and Cambridge - who were encouraging drama in education at the time. Of some significance were the Report's suggestions as to the measures that might be taken by all Local Education Authorities in furthering education through drama. The measures had been shown to be practicable by the London Council.

The reading and acting of plays were to be encouraged in all schools and visits to the theatres to be facilitated. Where a local theatre did not provide performances of classical and other plays connected with a particular course of study, then there should be some sponsored co-operation between schools and amateur dramatic societies. When new schools were being built some consideration was to be given to the designing of halls so that the production

---

<sup>1</sup> The Drama in Adult Education, paragraph 240.

of plays could take place in them. Local Education Authorities should provide special courses and summer schools for teachers and an authority "might find it desirable to have on its staff a Director of dramatic studies to give courses in the various subjects ancillary to play production and to supervise the dramatic work in the schools and evening institutes generally." Lastly, Local Authorities should allow teachers secondment to attend full-time at schools of Dramatic Art such as those that had been recently recognized in London for the purposes of the London University Diploma.

It has to be admitted that most authorities were slow to take up the suggestions of the Report; at the same time, the fact that such suggestions could be made indicates that drama had once again achieved respectability and responsibility in addition to popularity.

CHAPTER II

TWO EARLY CONFERENCES

DEALING WITH DRAMA AND EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

The possible part that drama had to play in education had aroused sufficient interest by the early 1920s for two conferences to be devoted to the topic. The first was arranged by the recently formed British Drama League and was held in January 1920 under the auspices of the Annual Conference of Educational Associations.<sup>1</sup> Its general theme was "National Education in and through the Drama." The second conference was the Eighth Annual Conference of

---

<sup>1</sup> In its issue of February, 1920, p. 99, Drama, under an editorial entitled "Signs of the Times," stated that the conference was the "first session on Drama ever held during a conference of educational associations."

the New Ideals in Education group and it was held in April 1922, with the theme of "Drama and Education." An account of each of these two significant meetings will help to give some idea of the then currently held views concerning the possibilities of drama in education.

PART 1

NATIONAL EDUCATION

IN AND THROUGH THE DRAMA

One of the most striking things about this conference, from the school point of view, was that it included Miss Gilpin's paper on 'The Dramatic Sense as a Factor in Education.'<sup>1</sup> This paper, with its mixture of philosophy and practice, is discussed elsewhere in this thesis; suffice to say that Miss Gilpin considered that not enough use was being made of the dramatic instinct in education:

"Two of the biggest things in life are the pleasure of discovery and the pleasure of creating.

---

<sup>1</sup> Miss Gilpin's paper was the only one from the conference to be printed in full in Drama. Drama, *ibid.*, p. 117, said that this was "by general request."

Both are very strong in all living growing things; in fact, this is what it is to be a child. We, still feeling the same vital impulse, desire to discover how best we may give scope to the powers of the children, and I feel that the training of the Dramatic Sense is a possible and useful channel, and one which has not hitherto been adequately tested and explored."<sup>1</sup>

Three other main speakers at the conference attended by Mr. Fisher, the President of the Board of Education, were Sir Sidney Lee, Mr. Ben Greet and Miss Elsie Fogerty.

Lee was anxious that play-acting should once again assume the prominent position at schools and universities that it had held in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. He regretted that "drama as an art could scarcely be said to hold, at the moment, an assured place in the educational curriculum of the country." Although some plays of Shakespeare were studied "in well-nigh all our schools"<sup>2</sup> they were approached, too often, by way of philology. Apart from Shakespeare, the existence of other English dramatists was barely recognized in schools. Thus,

"One aim of the British Drama League was to introduce into our educational system a just conception of dramatic literature, and to promulgate among the younger generation some sort of acquaintance with the art of the theatre by substituting for the construing of drama the acting of drama, which was, after all, the purpose for which drama came into being."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Drama (July 1920), p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> Drama (February 1920), p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

If more specifically educational reasons were needed to justify the place of acted drama in the curriculum, he found himself in broad agreement with Thomas Heywood, the author of "An Apology for Actors" (1612).

"It (performance of plays) teacheth audacity to the bashful. It not only emboldens a scholler to speake, but instructs him to speake well and with judgement; to observe his commas, colons and full poynts; his parenthesis, his breathing spaces and distinctions, to keepe a decorum in his countenance, neither to frowne when he should smile, nor to make unseemly and disguised faces in the delivery of his words; not to stare with his eies, draw awry his mouth, confound his voice in the hollow of his throat or tear his words hastily betwixt his teeth; neither to buffet his deske like a mad man, nor stande in his place like a liveless image, demurely plodding, and without any smooth and formal motion. It instructs him to fit phrases to his action, and his action to his phrase, and his prounciation to them both."<sup>1</sup>

The primacy of the acted play over the studied play was a point taken up by Mr. Ben Greet, the veteran actor and producer, in his paper entitled "Shakespearian Performances for London County Council Scholars." Greet alluded to the system whereby London had been divided into twelve theatre districts and Shakespeare had been taken to children. He called for a popular theatre of cheap prices and high ideals. Although he thought the notion of a National Theatre a splendid idea it was his contention that the Municipal Theatre was best able to

---

<sup>1</sup> Drama, op. cit., p. 114.

cater for the needs of teachers and children "who were going to be the pioneers of the biggest movement yet known in the English-speaking theatre."<sup>1</sup>

In her paper on "The Neglect of Higher Dramatic Education Miss Elsie Fogerty made a plea for the establishment of a faculty of drama in an existing university."<sup>2</sup> The faculty ought to comprise facilities for the study and practice of all aspects of drama, theatre and the allied arts. Only a small percentage of students would become actors: "other students would serve the hundred needs of the state, the need for trainers of the clergy, barristers, public speakers and teachers."<sup>3</sup> A very important aspect of dramatic work and, indeed, of national communication, was the question of diction and here a faculty of drama might well be influential:

"Many problems could be investigated, particularly those which concerned the development of curative work, the setting free of every child from the misery of abnormal or diseased speech."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Drama (February 1920), p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> Elsie Fogerty's wish came true thirty years later when Bristol University inaugurated its drama department with the aid of a 20,000-dollar grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.

<sup>3</sup> Drama (February 1920), p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 117. Miss Fogerty was concerned throughout her life with the improvement of speech and as a pioneer in speech therapy she opened her first clinic in St. Thomas's Hospital in 1912. In 1889, at the age of twenty four, she was appointed lecturer in English and Speech at the Crystal Palace School of Art and Literature and later she taught in south-eastern schools. She founded the Central School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art in 1906. For a long time she tried to obtain university recognition for her speech Therapy School and succeeded in 1923 when it was approved as a training place for the newly-instituted London University Diploma in Dramatic Art.

The most interesting outcome of the Conference on National Education in and through the Drama" was that the Minister of Education consented to receive a deputation from the British Drama League. The views of the deputation were contained in the following memorandum which had a direct bearing on dramatic work in schools:

"M E M O R A N D U M

DRAWN UP BY THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE AT THE REQUEST OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ON STUDY IN DRAMATIC METHOD IN TRAINING COLLEGES.

Seeing that Dramatic Work can be made a focus for the whole artistic and expressive side of Education, it is recommended that its value in relation to the study of English should be formally recognized.

This recognition of the value of the dramatic method in the education of children carries with it the corollary that teachers must in some way be qualified to give such instruction.

As a means of enabling teachers to use dramatic method to the fullest advantage, it is recommended that the following course should be instituted in the Training Colleges of the country:-

COURSE OF 60 HOURS FOR TWO YEARS, TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- (1) Preliminary training in voice and diction which every student should attend.

- (2) Practical dramatic work in relation to the literary curriculum for the year's work.
- (3) Co-ordination of all the artistic activities of the students in the production of good dramatic performances.
- (4) Study of Verse Diction in Lyric and Dramatic Poetry.
- (5) Play-making and study of simple methods of dramatic class teaching.
- (6) Practical work in the production of school plays in experimental schools.

Students who in the first course show themselves deficient in speech through mental or physical causes should be given extra remedial work till they reach an adequate standard of speech in the Mother tongue before going on to the more advanced courses.

In order to carry out this programme, it is evident that it would be necessary to provide in every Training College one teacher who would take in regard to Dramatic Art the same position as is taken by the Art and Music teachers in regard to their special subjects."

PART 2

DRAMA AND EDUCATION

The Newbolt Committee had suggested that the memorandum submitted by the British Drama League to the Minister of Education was having some effect in the training colleges.<sup>1</sup> This might help explain the presence of training college students at the Eighth Annual Conference of the New Ideals in Education held in Stratford during 1922. The President of the Board of Education was not present but there was a glittering array of speakers that included John Masefield, Sir Henry Newbolt and Harley Granville-Barker.

Two of the dominant themes of the conference were touched upon in Sir Henry Newbolt's inaugural address. These were the role that drama had to play nationally and,

---

<sup>1</sup> The Teaching of English in England (1921), paragraph 294.

as a sort of microcosm within the macrocosm, its role in the schools. He considered that the war had united the nation and had witnessed "an extraordinary quickening of the consciousness of all the classes involved"; drama on a national scale was a potent means of maintaining the integration and heightened sensibilities of the populace for "we are a nation capable of extracting the spiritual, passionate essence out of drama and I hope the time will come when this will be used ... wholesale."<sup>1</sup> In the schools, drama was one of several media for the child's creative self-expression, and Newbolt answered the critics who doubted the value of creative activities:

"It is always open to anyone to say 'What do I send my child to school for? Not to go to the theatre and enjoy himself,' or, as I heard the other day 'What is this education which is costing so much? A little Morris dancing, a little brushwork, and a little acting!?' But there must be more in it than that. Wherever it has been sincerely tried it has been an overwhelming success. If the results have not been apparent it is only because the generation has not grown up which has had the experience."<sup>2</sup>

There was certainly no doubt in the minds of the main speakers at the Conference that the child was hungry for self-expression. "If you were to ask me," said Mrs. Weller, nee Finlay-Johnson, "what is the strongest instinct

---

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Eighth Annual Conference of the New Ideals in Education, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

in childhood, I would say the instinct for play-dramatic play."<sup>1</sup> In the opinion of Miss De Reyes from Citizen House, Bath, every boy and girl was a "great potential artist . . . . it is not necessary to show the children how to express themselves in art and drama; it is only necessary to give them that avenue of expression which drama provides."<sup>2</sup> Miss Elsie Fogerty's aim was a refining and, consequently, an enhancement of both the child's expression and appreciation through an awareness of the rhythmic patterns of movement which were at the root of all the arts.<sup>3</sup>

If Newbolt was looking for the results of an arts education in the aesthetically and spiritually aware adult there were others who stressed its more immediate effects on the child at school. The child's emotional development through drama was a key factor and Lena Ashwell echoed the sentiments of many speakers at the conference when she criticised the suppression of emotion in modern life. It is rather more difficult to ascertain whether she was reflecting the majority opinion when she admitted to being tired of Freud's relating all emotions to sex!

---

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Eighth Annual Conference of the New Ideals in Education, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 178. Citizen House was a social settlement founded during the first World War. It became very well-known for its dramatic work and during the twenties ran summer schools on play-study and production methods.

<sup>3</sup> Both Peter Slade and A. R. Stone seem indebted to Miss Fogerty's work on rhythmic movement in the arts.

The influence of depth psychology was felt in the remarks of several contributors. A grammar school teacher admitted his amazement as to what lay in a boy's subconscious mind and saw drama as a means whereby some vision of reality might be achieved:

"I think acting is, or should be, mainly confined to the youth. It is very useful to enable him to get rid of what I call the taboos often fastened on the growing personality of the child by well meaning, but I think mistaken, people."<sup>1</sup>

In a paper on the "Origin of the Drama" F. M. Cornford approached his subject from a psychological standpoint which had an affinity with Jung's view of the personal and collective unconscious. Tradition was to be seen "not only as a horizontal chain spread out in the order of time, but also under the image of a geological deposit, reaching down vertically into the depths of every consciousness."<sup>2</sup> It was this stratum that provided the dramatist with his material and, in a change of metaphor, Cornford suggested:

"It is likely, moreover, that the greater the artist, the further he will plunge into the depths to fetch up his pearls."<sup>3</sup>

Hence it was that the supreme work of art bore "the

---

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Eighth Annual Conference of the New Ideals in Education, pp. 198-199.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 115. It is interesting to notice that Peter Slade several times refers to the way in which the child dramatist delves into the collective unconscious.

clearest marks of its kinship with the primitive, and this quality may move the feelings of a child more than our own, whatever else in it may lie beyond the scope of his intellectual powers."<sup>1</sup>

With reference to the acting of drama, Cornford asserted that the principle and fundamental motive of any mimetic performance was the "discharge of emotion that has been held in suspense and denied an immediate outlet in direct action."<sup>2</sup> This assertion implied a radical distinction between a child's own extemporized dramatic play and his acting of ready-made plays. In the first he achieved an immediate wish fulfilment; in the second he was being asked to project himself into characters shaped by other minds and was being provided with "an embodiment for wishes and fantasies that might not have sought expression in this form."<sup>3</sup> As Plato had done, Cornford suggested that the question of imaginative identification in drama put a considerable responsibility on the educator's shoulders; but whereas Plato reluctantly denied the drama a

---

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Eighth Conference of the New Ideals in Education, p. 115. The "kinship with the primitive" was an important factor in the development of Child Art particularly when analogies were detected between this art and the newly discovered art of primitives. Peter Slade has traced certain connections between primitive drama and Child Drama. See P. Slade, Child Drama, chapter V.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

place in education, Cornford was content to issue a warning in connection with the choice of play.

The fairly detailed reference to emotional development should not be taken to imply that the conference was unaware of other educational possibilities of drama. It might be better understood as a realization on the part of the speakers that a proper education should foster the growth of total personality and that hitherto education had taken too little notice of the emotions.

This idea of total personality growth would help explain why Rudolf Steiner, the anthroposophist, should suggest that, although the twelve-year old child was reaching the time for intellectual education, he was "receptive for the dramatic." It would be charitable to think that total growth was in the mind of one headmaster who saw acting as a controlled means for letting off steam and who thought it would be just possible to fit some drama into the summer term without any undue dislocation of work and cricket!

Various approaches to school dramatic work, with their attendant values, were discussed at the conference. Mrs. Weller's views on impromptu and prepared dramatization as a means of enlivening and consolidating work in literature and history were echoed by other speakers.

One contributor stressed how difficult it was to find teachers with the dramatic sense and apportioned the blame for this state of affairs between the timidity of many teachers and the lack of attention given to drama in the training colleges. Another contributor suggested a varied diet of drama in the school which should include impromptu and formal dramatization, production of the scripted play and the visits of professional companies to the school. As one might expect, in choice of scripted play, the dramatist most often recommended was Shakespeare. If all drama was recognized as a means of inculcating good speech habits, teaching graceful movement and helping character development through the evocation of imaginative sympathy, Shakespeare was granted the laurel in this respect. Other dramatists were not entirely forgotten, however: one of the conference papers was given over to modern drama and in another Mr. Sharwood Smith from Newbury Grammar School told of the performances of French and Greek plays at his school. The first were done in the original and naturally were of tremendous help in language learning; he saw the Greek plays, done in translation, valuable both in character training and community integration:

"I have found the Greek play very valuable in correcting the over-sentimentality so common today. There is something in the austerity, the statueness of the Greek play, and its beautiful convention of the chorus that carries an extraordinary appeal not only to the boys but to the people who come to see us do it. Our audience is drawn from all sorts and condition of people. The poor people in the neighbourhood, for instance, would not miss a Greek play for worlds."<sup>1</sup>

One of the final speakers at the conference was Harley Granville-Barker and what he had to say appeared to militate against much that had been said before in connection with classroom dramatization. He found drama to be educational in an aesthetic sense: presumably he did not doubt that many valuable by-products might emerge from the study and practice of drama but, first and foremost, drama was important for its own sake:

"It is no use exchanging the folly of 'drama more fitted for the study than the stage' for 'drama more fitted for the classroom than the theatre.' I do not say that the professional theatre as it now stands can furnish all that we need to make the drama of educational use. But I do say that first and last the drama is a fine art; and its educational use will ultimately depend upon the cultivation of the art for its own sake in the conditions that are proper and peculiar to it."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Eighth Annual Conference on the New Ideals In Education, p. 196

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 255.

CHAPTER III

CREATIVE DRAMATICS IN THE UNITED STATES

An account of the development of American thought and practice in the field of educational drama during the first thirty years of the century serves a twofold purpose. It allows a comparison to be made with developments in this country, particularly in regard to aims, and it suggests possible areas where English thinking might have been influenced or influential.<sup>1</sup>

The realization that drama had a many-sided part to play in a child's education was inevitably linked in the

---

<sup>1</sup> If one accepts the view that the development of educational drama was bound up with the emergence of the New Education at the beginning of the twentieth century, it seems likely that English thinking about drama was influenced from abroad - particularly the United States. Of the New Education, as a whole, R. J. W. Selleck, The New Education, p. 333, has said: "The English New Education, therefore, was not markedly creative. But neither was it purely imitative: though most of the original thinking was done outside the country, it was interpreted by Englishmen for the English."

United States as it was in England with the emergence of the new or child-centred education. If child-centred education might be said to have had its roots in the teachings of Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel, it certainly found a new impetus to its American growth in the works of John Dewey and other educationists who opposed the traditional mental-discipline-approach to teaching and the mechanical procedures involved.<sup>1</sup> As early as the 1890s Dewey postulated a theory of growth and activity in education. The school curriculum was to be organized around four chief impulses: the social instinct of the children, the instinct of making, the expressive instinct, and the impulse towards inquiry.<sup>2</sup> Later, he was to define education as "that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps a line should be drawn between forward-looking education and Progressive education. Although Dewey was claimed as the guiding light of the Progressive Education movement (The Progressive Education Association was founded in 1919), he was more concerned with determining what constituted a good education rather than with contrasting Progressive Education and traditional education. He criticised those extremists in the new movement who looked for standards of direction in the individual in isolation from his environment. He found this tendency exemplified in Cizek's Teaching of Art and suggested that just as the application of such a principle in art would not produce an artist, so its application in education would not result in worthwhile achievement on the part of the pupil.

<sup>2</sup> J. Dewey, School and Society, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> J. Dewey, Democracy and Education, pp. 89-90.

The name of Dewey has been stressed because he, more than anybody, prepared the ground for a movement in education which found a justifiable role for drama in the school.<sup>1</sup> In this context, the epithet 'justifiable' implied that drama was an activity arising from natural interests, providing first-hand experience along the lines of these natural interests, and guiding both individual and social development:

"The term creative dramatics has grown up to distinguish this original dramatic work from the old formal study of ready-made plays. Educational dramatics is a more general term for what is usually the same type of work. It is dramatic expression which comes from within, rather than the imitative expression which so often characterizes the rehearsing of plays for public exhibition. Instead of memorizing set speeches and acting parts in the way the teacher directs, the children develop plays out of their own thoughts and imaginations and emotions."<sup>2</sup>

The creative role of drama in American schools was being enthusiastically canvassed particularly during the second and third decades of the century. It is difficult to be precise about its practical as against its theoretical application to educational institutions, especially in the vast complex of the American system where education

---

<sup>1</sup> Dewey had much to say about the specific use of drama. In Schools of Tomorrow, pp. 119-131, he discussed dramatization as a means of vitalizing aspects of the curriculum.

<sup>2</sup> W. Ward, Creative Dramatics, p. 3. Winifred Ward is an important name in educational drama in America. Much of her early experimental work was done in the public schools (in our sense of state) of Evanston, Illinois during the 1920s.

is based on local autonomy.

In an article in School Life<sup>1</sup> a writer could mention that during 1921 there were 382 drama courses being offered in 146 institutions in the country with credits amounting to 988 academic hours. In the same year there were 17 colleges with well-equipped theatres. Eight years later, in an address to the Drama League of America, Dr. Henry Curtis alluded to the fact that the dramatic instinct of children was being increasingly utilized in the public elementary school:

"Most of the new elementary schools contain an auditorium and a stage and have at least a weekly assembly. The assembly programme is often a drama, given by one of the grades.<sup>2</sup> Most of the elementary schools now have at least one teacher who has had dramatic training."<sup>3</sup>

In the same article we are told that many of the city high schools and most of the larger universities had theatres and that in the universities a large number of students were training to be dramatic coaches in high schools.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Drama as a recognized College Subject, article in School Life (September 1921).

<sup>2</sup> Appendix 1 shows the structure of American education in diagrammatic form.

<sup>3</sup> The Drama in Education, article in School and Society (June 22nd, 1929).

<sup>4</sup> The Carnegie Institute of Technology offered the first drama course leading to a degree in 1916. There were intending teachers on the course which was concerned primarily with the technical aspects of play production.

However, the foregoing facts and figures hardly give the impression that creative dramatics had invaded the school or college classrooms of America by the end of the 1930s. What did happen was that educational drama sprang up in isolated areas over the United States in connection with progressive, private schools and, thereafter, slowly permeated the public school system. Even in the progressive schools it seems to have been taken up more slowly than the other expressive arts. Two reasons have been given for this relatively slow development: it has been suggested that "the dramatic impulses of children could not be developed in the American schools until the play needs of children received recognition,"<sup>1</sup> and, moreover, creative dramatics lacked a champion of the calibre of Cizek in art and Mearns in creative writing.

If creative dramatics lacked an outstanding champion it could rely on a band of dedicated spokesmen and women who proclaimed its aims and methods. These supporters had, for the most part, gained considerable practical experience in creative dramatics and their written accounts attempted to blend this experience with the theoretical

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Rugg and A. Shumaker, The Child-Centred School, p. 265.

views expressed by Dewey and other educationists sympathetic to the new movement in education.<sup>1</sup> As has been stated earlier, much of the literature in support of creative dramatics came during the second two decades of the century; but there were exceptions.

One exception was the first children's theatre in America, established in 1903.<sup>2</sup> There were other reasons besides its chronological significance that made the founding of 'The Children's Educational Theatre' by Alice Minnie Herts important. It operated under the aegis of an organization in New York called the "Educational Alliance" whose aim was to Americanize Russian and Polish Jewish immigrants. This communalizing power of drama was to be a major factor in the upsurge of the Little Theatre movement in America;<sup>3</sup> it also accounted, in some measure, for the use of festivals and pageants in schools.

Herts realized that before integration between child and society could take place, the child's individual growth

---

<sup>1</sup> The five English writers discussed in the chapter "Five Pioneers" were, on the whole, more concerned with evolving their own general philosophies of education than with tying their practical work to the theories of others.

<sup>2</sup> In the same year a Mrs. Nettie Greenleaf directed a theatre in Boston which Rugg and Shumaker, op. cit. p. 265, have described as "a kind of foretraining school for the children of actors and actresses who were on the road.

<sup>3</sup> Often there was a close liaison between the Little Theatre Movement and University drama; in some cases the university housed the community theatre. See P. A. Coggin, Drama and Education, p. 281.

had to be catered for. In recognizing the value of drama for this purpose, she stated the distinction between the task of the teacher of dramatic art and the educator:

"The teacher of dramatic art is not expected to relate the operation of the dramatic instinct to the character development of the actor ... on the other hand, the educator is in every way concerned with the results obtained in the development of the human being through the stimulation of the dramatic instinct."<sup>1</sup>

Drama afforded the slow child a release from "all sense of control or restriction" and in his powerful identification with a newly-evolved character in dramatization he was able to give "free play to his initiative power."<sup>2</sup> Herts talked of the emotional value of acting in a play: by "a judgment of his own qualities and experience in the safe restriction of an assumed character a boy sensed the dangers of violence or weakness that were part of his own personality."<sup>3</sup> If acting provided for self-awareness, it also acted as a safety-valve:

"Give the boy of 15 his chance to play a thief or murderer on a stage in the costume and environment of the part, he will usually experience all he wants of stealing and killing."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> A. M. Herts, The Children's Educational Theatre, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

Herts considered that these methods of using drama were particularly relevant in the school situation: a tapping and channelling of the dramatic instinct would help stimulate a child who had failed to respond to traditional school methods.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Children's Educational Theatre had to close for financial reasons in 1909, the ideas involved in its approach to creative dramatics were not forgotten.

The distinction made by Herts between the task of the teacher of dramatic art and the task of the educator was taken up often by later writers and it is obvious that the performance/personal development dichotomy, often used in today's discussions concerning theatre and drama,<sup>2</sup> will not adequately describe the feelings of those concerned with creative dramatics. The performing of plays was not necessarily considered uncreative provided it was approached in the correct manner:

---

<sup>1</sup> This approach is not unlike that adopted by A. R. Stone - see "Five Pioneers" - although, of course, Stone used the expressive qualities of all the arts.

<sup>2</sup> Towards the end of 1968 there was a running battle in the columns of the Times Educational Supplement between the "creatives" and the "theatricals." A paragraph from a letter written by a supporter of school plays shows the issue involved. The Times Educational Supplement, November 1st, 1968:

"I was delighted to read Mr. Lloyd-Evans' counterblast in defence of theatrical drama in schools. It should do much to dispel the mystical and pretentious claims made on behalf of what is variously called 'free,' 'educational,' 'creative' or 'therapeutic' drama."

"In educational dramatics, the player, by analysis of the character he is to play, develops the part from within his own heart and mind, and this analysis results in natural gesture and action."<sup>1</sup>

By adopting this Stanislavsky-type approach, a child was expected to bridge the gap between the character he was playing and his own life with beneficial results to each. The same procedure was endorsed by Winifred Ward who, although admitting that "the heart of creative dramatics is dramatization," saw the study and acting of a scripted play as being "creative in a different<sup>2</sup> way."

Creative dramatics can be seen, then, as involving a particular attitude and approach on the part of teacher and pupil. It did not rely solely on the use of one dramatic method. Even dramatization was not always used creatively: early in the century many public schools had harnessed dramatics to subjects of the curriculum without taking account of the suitability of material for dramatization or the pupil's active participation in the play-making process:

"Language and literature were dramatized; history plays were marshalled in order to teach the facts of the founding of our country. There were arithmetic plays, health plays intended to bring home the importance of observing hygienic chores,

---

<sup>1</sup> E. Hilliard, T. McCormich and K. Oglebay, Amateur and Educational Dramatics, p. 3. It is noticeable that this book endorsed by the Educational Dramatic League and others dealing solely with creative dramatics in education go into some detail concerning the choice and production of scripted plays.

<sup>2</sup> W. Ward, op. cit., p. 129.

geography plays dramatizing the home life of peoples of other lands ..... The play was given out; it was the pupil's place to learn his part ..... Consequently pupils were not long in discovering the false trick which had been played them. Instead of memorizing the words of the text, they memorized words of a play."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, creative dramatization had, as Winifred Ward's assertion makes clear, an integral place in the new use of drama in America. It comprised both spontaneous acting of material and the more formal play-making procedures.

Spontaneous drama was considered to be especially appropriate for the child during his first few years at school. Seen as a natural extension of the child's play and games in the kindergarten it might be approached by way of mime or music and movement. Often improvisations were based on known stories; this story playing, as it was called, was invaluable in the way it promoted "quickness of thought and action, and a spontaneous self-expression."<sup>2</sup> Yet, at least one writer acknowledged the value of using material from children's everyday lives in this, their dramatic play. Not only would children be able to find their exact dramatic level in this material and thus

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Rugg and A. Shumaker, op. cit. p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> Hilliard, McCormick and Oglebay, op. cit. P. 21.

be helped in their improvisations, but also the way in which they used the material would give the discerning teacher insight into their development:

[The resulting play] "is as fragmentary and illogical as their own mental and emotional states. It stresses the desires and interests that their environment has built for them."<sup>1</sup>

The same writer, Corinne Brown, had some interesting observations to make on the distinction between this dramatic play and drama proper:

"In dramatic play are found the beginnings for all the parts of drama: dialogue, characterization, costume, properties, settings. There is much difference, however, between drama and dramatic play. Dramatic play has little, if any plot, it may begin anywhere and stop at any time with no loss of form .... With older children it may develop more definite form, but it always may be taken up at any place and terminated at will. Drama, however, has beginning, middle and end, a definite design. In dramatic play speech or dialogue is ad. lib. It is as fragmentary and free from plan as ordinary conversation. Nothing is lost if enunciation is slipshod and construction faulty, for there is no audience. In drama the presence of an audience makes correct speech and clear enunciation a necessity. The setting and properties of dramatic play are its chief incentive. The building and arranging takes so much time and thought that the play often sinks into insignificance when all the preparations are made. In drama, the settings, though carefully chosen to set off the play, are subordinate to it and may even be dispensed with. In dramatic play the players may step out of part at any moment; their places need not necessarily be filled, and the play goes on merrily without them .... Drama is dramatic play grown up and become self-conscious."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> C. Brown, Creative Drama in the Lower School, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-11.

Brown considered that dramatic play should constitute a child's main dramatic activity during at least the first three grades in school. Comparing Brown's ideas on dramatic play with present-day classroom practices it might be suggested that what she describes equates with the sort of activity going on in many infant and lower junior schools. By the age of nine one might expect less concern with setting and properties and a greater concern with the selection and shaping of material. Indeed, Grace Overton, writing some four years before Brown, spoke very much on these lines in regard to the nine-year old child:

"While the dramatic expression of a child of this age must be left free, he should be aided by asking questions and by suggestions to add successive incidents to his plot. Thus he will weave more and more incidents into a plot and tell the story connectedly and with descriptive language. Yet it is important that he begin to relate, to organise and to compose his experience into a whole."<sup>1</sup>

Corinne Brown envisaged dramatic play developing into a more consciously artistic form as the child got older. Although she had suggested that dramatic play might last into the child's twelfth year, it was generally recognized that round about this age formal play-making was an

---

<sup>1</sup> G. S. Overton, Drama in Education, pp. 109-110.

appropriate activity. In this process pupils wrote their own plays from a variety of material; as they became more experienced so their efforts took on more dramatic shape. In this sense, they approached what Brown called 'drama' yet there was not an automatic assumption that they were written for presentation before an audience; and, even if they were performed, the stress was on their educational and not their exhibitional value.

As has been suggested, the material for this sort of dramatization covered many fields of study. It was realized that a proper use of dramatization would help vitalize and crystallize work in history, geography, civics and literature. In addition to this process of curriculum vitalization, however, play-making had wider implications for the development of personality. Literature lent itself very well to dramatization: it contained rounded characters - analysis and interpretation of which aided pupils' understanding of people - and often it was close to dramatic form. Many of the old stories had been "crystallized by folk repetition into an artistic whole that in many cases is practically dramatic as far as the construction is concerned."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Merrill and M. Fleming, Play-making and Plays, p. 74 This view of the dramatic appropriateness of literature is very close to that expressed by Caldwell Cook. Cook is quoted by several of the later American writers on educational drama and there seems a possibility that his ideas on play-making and the active study of the scripted play were influential.

After their own experience of play-making children were ready for the study of scripted plays. Naturally this occasion depended very much on a child's previous dramatic education but fourteen to fifteen appears to have been the normal age for this transition. It should not be assumed that play-making came to an end with the advent of formal play study: both activities were mutually beneficial.

The choice of scripted play depended on three criteria: literary merit, dramatic merit and class interest. Shakespeare certainly satisfied the first two criteria but there was doubt in the minds of some of the writers on creative dramatics as to whether he should be introduced in the Junior High School or left until later. The shorter plays of early twentieth century Irish writers like Lady Gregory and Yeats were particularly recommended.

More important, in the context of the present thesis, than the choice of scripted play was the method of study. The teacher's role was "to stimulate, feed and direct the imagination of his students, to make conditions right for free expression and then to leave the players unhampered to express themselves through the medium of the character

interpreted."<sup>1</sup> Some understanding of how study of the scripted play, ideally, through its blending of appreciation and expression, resolved the personal development/performance dichotomy can be gained from the aims that Winifred Ward associated with her ninth grade dramatic course:

"Aims

The aims of this year's work will be to gain:

1. A knowledge of the structure of well-made plays.
2. An appreciation of the way characters are drawn in plays, and a deeper appreciation of people and their points of view.
3. Some skill in playing before an audience. The exhibitional aspect of this work is still secondary, but the pupils should now have consciousness of getting over to an audience the ideas of their plays.
4. A definitely better use of voice and diction, with a growing appreciation of style in the dialogue of plays."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Merrill and M. Fleming, op. cit., p. 110. Both Merrill and Ward suggested that the first reading of a play should be a one-man(woman) performance on behalf of the teacher. They were aware of the dangers of limiting the pupil's imagination by the teacher's interpretation but argued that a good reading would, in fact, stimulate the pupil's imagination and show the possibilities inherent in the play. This initial teacher performance as an approach to the scripted play has recently been recommended by Mr. Stanley Evernden.

Ward also acknowledged the use of improvisation in the study of the scripted play as a means of getting inside a character. W. Ward, op. cit., p. 139. "The reason for starting with the pupils' own version of the dialogue is that it forces him to think, to know his character, to imagine how he feels and what he does."

<sup>2</sup> W. Ward, Ibid., p. 130.

Although the dramatic play - play-making - study of the scripted play progression illustrated the main outline of the child's dramatic development as envisaged by American writers on creative dramatics, this development often took into consideration other dramatic activities such as puppets, dance drama and children's theatre. The last two were particularly stressed but all three will receive consideration in an account of the wide-ranging benefits that supporters of creative dramatics saw emerging from a wise application of the dramatic impulse in education. The benefits might be classified under three main headings: the dramatic method, drama as a socializing force and personal growth through drama. The three categories serve as a rough and ready means of classification only and often they merge. It is difficult, for example, given the influence of Dewey, to conceive of personal growth as being independent of social relationships.

Something has been said of the utilization of the dramatic impulse as a method in enlivening the individual subjects of the curriculum.<sup>1</sup> Mention has also been made

---

<sup>1</sup> Dalton schools made particular use of dramatic method, as the words of the Headmistress of the Dalton School, New York, indicate: "Much of the learning which goes on in the school reaches its final summary in some form of dramatic presentation." (Quoted in F. A. Coggin, op. cit., p. 203).

of the barren use of dramatization in the transmission of facts when it was conveniently forgotten that "emotion, not logic, is the stuff out of which drama is made."<sup>1</sup>

One of the incidental benefits to be gained from dramatic work was speech-training. Where creative dramatics scored over formal speech-training was in the spontaneity and naturalness of the oral work and in the resulting unification of speech and thought content. The use of puppets was seen as a valuable asset in the oral development of shy children and one writer suggested dramatics as a possible means of helping stutterers who, it was alleged, did not, as normal talkers, see pictures of their imaginations in their minds. The same principle lay behind the suggestion of another writer that the dramatic medium was a valuable help in foreign language learning because "it first connects by action the new form of expression with an idea already in the mind."<sup>2</sup>

If drama was a means of presenting individual subjects of the curriculum, people became aware of its integrative powers. Dramatization was seen as a perfect embodiment of the project method advocated by Dewey and Kilpatrick:<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> G. S. Overton, op. cit., p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> J. Merrill and M. Fleming, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> W. H. Kilpatrick's monograph, The Project Method, was published in 1918.

"The project method is much more than a method: it is a principle of living, and can perhaps be defined .... as working for a purpose which is consciously appreciated and held as an ideal by the individual himself. The project method must, then, necessarily be part of the educative process if the latter is life and if the schools are to be related to life. Therefore, no form of education should be neglected that involves this mode of procedure so fully as does play-making. Now the development of purposeful action and initiative in the individual is education's most significant function. This function play-making fulfills, because in it purpose and initiative are bound to be constantly stimulated and developed, for the process always begins with an idea which develops into an idea. This in turn calls forth constant purpose in action and initiative in working out ways of expressing the idea.

Play-making, furthermore, is essentially a socialized project, yet one in which individual motives necessarily operate at the same time and in perfect harmony with the social. Thus it reproduces perfectly the complex that obtains in the activities of real life."<sup>1</sup>

One of the writers of the above passage, John Merrill, was Head of the Department of Oral Expression at the Francis W. Parker School, Chicago. The school, named after one of the great pioneers of child-centred education in the United States, opened in 1901 and became a base for experiments in progressive education. Significantly, Dewey quoted an example of the dramatically inspired project from this school:

"The fourth grade studies Greek history ... They play sculptor and make clay statuettes of their

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Merrill and M. Fleming, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

favourite gods and mould figures to illustrate a story. They model Mycenae in sand-pans, ruin it, cover it, and become the excavators who bring its treasure to light again. They write prayers to Dionysius and stories such as they think Orpheus might have sung. They plan Greek games and wear Greek costumes, and are continually acting out stories or incidents which please them .... In class time, with prayers and dances and extempore song, they hold a Dionysiac festival."<sup>1</sup>

Drama first arose from the community spirit. In both Britain and America during the early decades of the twentieth century drama was seen as a means of kindling the sense of community. There was a particular need of this in America with its influx of emigrants from the countries of Europe and this surely is a main contributory reason for the numerous dramatic organizations which sprouted during this period.<sup>2</sup> Obviously the school became a major integrative unit of society and drama was one way in which the school could express its civic and national pride.

The dramatically inspired festival, with its blend of spontaneity and conscious direction and its linking of all the arts, was an early manifestation of creative dramatics. In Schools of To-morrow Dewey spoke of the value of a festival based on the discovery of America and

---

<sup>1</sup> J. and E. Dewey, Schools of To-morrow, pp. 124-125.

<sup>2</sup> Amongst the organizations were: The Little Theatre Movement, The Drama League of America, The Community Drama League, The Theatre Guild and various Social Settlements.

performed by the whole of a school situated in a foreign district of Chicago:

"Its value as a unifying influence in a foreign community was considerable, for besides teaching the children something of the history of their new country, it gave the parents, who made up the audience, an opportunity to see what the school could do for their children and the neighbourhood. The patriotic value of such exercises is greater than the daily flag salute or patriotic poem, for the children understand what they are supposed to be enthusiastic about, as they see before them the things which naturally arouse patriotic emotions."<sup>1</sup>

School assembly programmes often made use of dramatization or the presentation of formal plays. Naturally these programmes were small-scale compared with the festivals but they shared the same unifying and socializing purposes.

Personal growth was a key concept of those connected with creative dramatics and this growth implied the all-round development of the individual child. For too long education had been concerned solely with the intellect; now it found a place for the emotions. Creative dramatics provided a means for coming to terms with one's own feelings and an opportunity to appreciate the feelings of others.

Early in the century Herts had alluded to the playing

---

<sup>1</sup> J. and E. Dewey, op. cit., pp. 129-130.

out of emotions. This concept was taken up by the later writers. It was suggested that with young children a vicarious experience of fear "may take the place in a measure of a real apprehension and is easily overcome without the dire results of reality."<sup>1</sup> Merrill and Fleming associated the child's intuitive delight in terror and blood with the appeal of tragic literature for adults and suggested that the child's was a natural delight which had to "work both ethically and artistically toward the cleansing, beautifying and fortifying of the individual life."<sup>2</sup> Ward also assumed a primary catharsis through drama: she found creative dramatics valuable during the emotional period of adolescence. Through acting in a play a pupil was able to direct his feelings into legitimate channels and prevent any morbid accumulation of unhealthy thoughts. A dogmatic approach to emotional training was contained in the assertion of Hilliard, McCormick and Oglebay that it was the business of the director in educational dramatics "to use emotions and feelings of the characters portrayed in the play as to lower or raise the player's 'threshold or susceptibility

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Merrill and M. Fleming, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

to such emotions as may seem best for his permanent development and growth in life."<sup>1</sup>

Besides giving the child opportunity to play out emotions, drama presented a means whereby he could extend his horizons through a sympathetic and imaginative understanding of the lives of others. In the early grades, dramatic play encouraged the child's developing social consciousness. Structured dramatic play had an advantage over ordinary playground play in this respect because it could be adjusted to provide a variety of social situations. In making social adaptations to new and created environment the child "develops a sympathetic understanding. He is placed in another's place. He gets experience by proxy, so to speak."<sup>2</sup> Additionally, structured dramatic play allowed the teacher to devise specific exercises in leadership for particular children.

Character training might appear to be an aim more in keeping with the formal education of the late nineteenth century and its efforts to mould children into habits of obedience; yet, there is no doubt that the advocates of creative dramatics paid considerable attention to a

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Hilliard, T. McCormick and K. Oglebay, op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> G. S. Overton, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

different sort of character training. This entailed the inculcation of worthy ideals and standards through a process in which the child was the main agent. With older children stress was laid on the analysis of character prior to play-making or performance of the scripted play - "actions are traced back to motives and are seen in the light of cause and effect; we know what happens and why it happens."<sup>1</sup> The important thing, however, was the crystallization of ideals in dramatic expression:

"Situations that are vividly imagined become in effect real situations. Actual adjustment to them is often initiated .... Ideas that are absorbed at this time will tend to become emotionalized - to become ideals. Courage, perseverance, magnanimity, courtesy, charity and a host of other virtues may, in this way, be endowed with sufficient emotional force to carry them through life as effective controls of conduct."<sup>2</sup>

It might be suggested that the process described by Bagley could equally well turn unworthy ideas into ideals. This point was not overlooked by Overton who recognized the value of drama in moral and religious education - "definitely raised problems may be presented in which principles governing right conduct may be actually employed"<sup>3</sup>-

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Merrill and M. Fleming, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> W. C. Bagley, Educational Values, p. 170, quoted in G. S. Overton, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> G. S. Overton, op. cit., p. 90. This appears to be an attempt to resolve the distinction between what Dewey called "ideas about Morality" and "moral ideas." J. Dewey, Moral Principles in Education, p. 1. "The distinction between moral ideas, ideas of any sort whatsoever that have become a part of character and hence a part of the working motives of behaviour, and ideas about moral action that may remain as inert and ineffective as if they were so much knowledge about Egyptian Archaeology, is fundamental to the discussion of moral education."

and who suggested that concentration on evil characters in plays could only be condoned when a child was mature enough to see these characters "in their true relation to the whole of life."<sup>1</sup> Lest it might be suggested that Overton was using drama merely as a tool for inculcating religious beliefs, it is interesting to note the warnings she expressed on this very matter:

"Plays that contain a lesson are too didactic. There seems to be a tendency to confuse dramatic art and didactic morality. Dramatic propaganda ceases to be effective when it ceases to be dramatic."<sup>2</sup>

It would be wrong to assume, just because adherents of creative dramatics saw in drama great possibilities for emotional training, that they ignored its place in mental development. The link between drama and the project has already been mentioned; here was one way of developing the individual's powers of initiative, resourcefulness and ingenuity within a social framework. Dramatization was akin to a problem-solving situation because "through the process of dramatization, the children think, imagine, and test results, and by building a play of their own, learn more about structure than if they had acted a dozen ready-made plays."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> G. S. Overton, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 113-114.

<sup>3</sup> W. Ward, op. cit., p. 31.

Dramatic play was acknowledged to be a valuable instrument in a child's conceptual development. Merrill and Fleming saw drama as fundamentally "a mode of thinking based upon the power of each individual to enter into another personality."<sup>1</sup> Purposeful imitation was an attempt to experiment and learn by the child and, because the child was taken with the idea of an action he had witnessed, his attention was centred on the conception of which the act was an expression. Thus the outward similarities between this conception and the act were of secondary importance and hence the use of symbols and make-believe objects. Here Merrill and Fleming were close to Piaget's ideas and the parallel was continued in a description of a process not unlike the assimilation/accommodation balance:

"We may see then that the child is constantly 'reading back' from the signs put forth by those about him to the idea symbolized. He enlarges on this idea, puts his own personality into it, and then expresses it in his own way, thus creating a new idea and a new form of expression - both educative acts."<sup>2</sup>

One of the great advantages of creative dramatics in speech development was that it achieved spontaneous and

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Merrill and M. Fleming, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

natural results. The same sorts of result were observed in its effect on physical development where it led to a freedom of bodily movement and a subsequent poise. Merrill and Fleming suggested that taking a part in a play did more for an awkward child than months of formal gymnastics."<sup>1</sup>

Rhythmic movement and dance, often associated with some larger dramatic enterprise, were particularly important aspects of bodily development. A number of progressive schools employed teachers who were trained in the Dalcroze system of eurhythmics; other schools employed a less formal system of rhythmic training which was dramatically orientated. If rhythmic training was aimed initially at physical liberation, there was a feeling that subsequently it had implications for wider personality development especially in the relation to creative self-expression in the arts.

"Into festivals, pageants of Greek life, and plays are woven the skills developed in the rhythmic exercises. It is the observation of teachers in this school (Francis W. Parker School, Chicago) that this form of rhythmic training also enhances art expression in drawing and painting in a notable way."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Merrill and M. Fleming, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> H. Rugg and A. Shumaker, op. cit., p. 173. This approach is similar to that adopted by A. R. Stone - see *Five Pioneers* - although Stone based his movement work on the Laban system and not the Dalcroze system which was used at the Francis W. Parker School.

Aesthetic development was inevitably bound up with a pupil's creative self-expression in the arts and it did not exist in isolation from the other strands of personality:

"Viewed both psychologically and socially, the arts represent not luxuries or superfluities, but fundamental forces of development."<sup>1</sup>

Dewey saw the arts as a perfected expression of basic human activity and appreciation of the arts as a means whereby the spectator gained experience; drama consummated "the range of fine arts, because in dramatic form we have the highest ideal of self, personality displaying itself in form of personality."<sup>2</sup>

The writers on creative dramatics were unanimous in advocating many and varied experiences of drama in schools as a means of developing the artistic taste of their pupils and thus educating them for leisure; it appeared that the cinema was an insidious influence that had to be combatted.<sup>3</sup> Merrill and Fleming considered that every high school student should participate in the production of at least one play "prepared as carefully as young

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Dewey, quoted in S. J. Curtis and M. E. A. Boulton, A Short History of Educational Ideas, p. 490.

<sup>2</sup> J. Dewey, *Psychology*, p. 232, quoted in G. S. Overton, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> This view was similar to the opinion held by Caldwell Cook. Merrill and Fleming, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51, saw school dramatics as a corrective to the moving pictures where there was harm in the "results of dissociation of a mental impression from the motor reaction by which it should be accompanied." One is reminded of Slade's concept of 'inflow and outflow.' Merrill and Fleming went on to suggest that, at the moving pictures, ideas become perverted and fixed because there was a lack of the "normal functioning of the individual expression."

people are capable of doing, and presented with beautiful settings, wisely chosen properties, harmonious costumes and adequate lighting."<sup>1</sup> This would help counteract the narrow cultivation of the intellect and the tendency to stress the utilitarian aspects of life which occurred at this stage of a pupil's career.

Children's theatre has been a particularly notable feature of the American educational scene. Generally it has been conducive to aesthetic development but this has not always been the primary aim:

"By 1930, the major patterns of Children's theatre activity in the United States were crystallized, though organizations varied widely as to purposes and methods. Some stressed the recreational or social cultural broadening of the performers through participation in plays. Others stressed both the artistic growth of the participants and the enjoyment of the child audiences who attended the performances. Still others stressed the educational value students of the drama received from working with child actors, observing child audiences and performing in plays for children. Some were set up to utilize adult actors exclusively; others used only children in the casts."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Merrill and M. Fleming, op. cit., p. 34. The senior year of the Francis W. Parker High School included a five period-per-week drama course in which all students participated. The course comprised literary appreciation and practical dramatics - the latter including not merely acting but the allied theatre arts.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Davis and M. J. Watkins, Children's Theatre, pp. 9-10. Davis and Watkins, op. cit. pp. 3-14 instance some important landmarks in the history of Children's theatre in America; these include:

1903: Alice Minnie Herts and The Children's Educational Theatre.

1915-19: Stuart Walker's "Portmanteau Theatre" toured the country introducing progressive staging methods.

1919: The first college programme of children's theatre activities - on both curricular and extra-curricular levels - was established at Emerson College, Boston.

1921: The Association of Junior Leagues of America inaugurated its programme of children's theatre.

1928: By this year more than fifty leagues were engaged in children's theatre activities.

Winifred Ward, referred to as the children's theatre movement's "prophet and guide,"<sup>1</sup> had some initial doubts as to whether children's theatre should comprise children or adults acting for children. She recognized that there was a danger that child performers might develop a superficial sophistication and lose spontaneity especially during repeated public performances. In her opinion the ideal solution was an education in drama that included the complementary aspects of creative dramatics and children's theatre. Her view was certainly shared by Merrill and Fleming who saw in children's theatre and the values it inculcated a safeguard for the future of the theatre as a whole. They had some interesting comments to make on the nature and setting of plays performed by children:

"The child's play requires a small hall, an intimate stage, with no abrupt line to separate actors from audience; it needs significant color schemes, beautiful proportions and decorations, simple settings, few performers, short productions, superior music and reasonable prices. Such a theater should be managed by people who know the child's point of view and his necessities, and who will wisely choose the play and adapt the settings, music, color schemes, size of stage, and size of audience to him."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Davies and M. J. Watkins, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> J. Merrill and M. Fleming, op. cit., p. 47.

In considering the possible spread of creative dramatics within the American educational system one must not over-estimate the number of devotees during the first few decades of the century; Rugg and Shumaker have suggested that the child-centred movement as a whole had probably only affected five per cent of American schools in any great measure by the end of the 1930s. Yet, few though the supporters of creative dramatics might have been, there is a certain forceful quality about the words of those who committed themselves to paper. Despite minor differences of approach they were of one mind in asserting the strength and naturalness of the dramatic impulse in children and in stating that the route to educational salvation was through creative self-expression. By suggesting how drama might contribute to total personality growth they offered practical encouragement to their sympathizers in Britain.

CHAPTER IV

THE OFFICIAL VIEWPOINT OF  
DRAMA'S PLACE IN EDUCATION

The development of what might be called the "official" viewpoint of drama's place in education can be gleaned from the considerable number of Board of Education documents published during the first four decades of this century. Some of these will be discussed in this chapter; others will be referred to in different contexts. A distinction should be made between those reports or pamphlets commissioned by the Board but not necessarily carrying the views of the Board and the documents bearing, as it were, the Board's signature.

In the second category come the Handbooks of Suggestions or, to give them their formal title, the Handbooks of Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others concerned in the Work of Public Elementary Schools. From the first edition in 1905 to that of 1937 (reprinted

in 1942) they give an indication of what ideally should have occurred in all schools, this presumably being a reflection of what was happening in some schools. H. M. Inspectors have been concerned in the compilation of the Handbooks and G. S. Osborne has suggested that the Inspector's role changed sharply with the abandonment of the pay-by-results system of education in England towards the turn of the century:

"Relieved of their inquisitorial function, H. M. Inspectors have been cast in the role of advisors. Their collective wisdom has gone into the writing of the 'Handbooks.' Apart from that they have been seen as individuals whose words of advice have carried as much weight in the schools as the prestige of each inspector and the value of his advice have merited."<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps one of the factors conducive to the relatively slow development of drama in schools during the early years of this century, as compared with art and music, was the lack of dramatic expertise among the inspectorate.<sup>2</sup> Thus in the early days it was incumbent on the teacher to impress the inspector concerning the educational value of drama rather than the other way round.<sup>3</sup>

An important aspect of the 1905 Handbook was its

---

<sup>1</sup> G. S. Osborne, *Scottish and English Schools*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>2</sup> Aspects of music and art were included in the school curriculum of the late nineteenth-century elementary schools.

<sup>3</sup> As Harriet Finlay-Johnson did with E. G. A. Holmes.

assertion that education was more than the transmission of utilitarian facts:

"To awaken the imagination and widen the capacity for emotion, while subjecting its expression to artistic restraint, is one of the higher educational aims."<sup>1</sup>

Here was possible scope for drama one might think. But not to the compilers of the Handbook who went on to say that the "use of lyrical poetry, the practice of music and of rhythmic, physical movements are alike valuable for this purpose."<sup>2</sup> They laid particular stress on the harmonious and rhythmic qualities of music and its natural appeal to humans as philosophers from Plato to Goethe had done.

The 1905 Handbook did, however, find a possible use for drama in the elementary classroom. It could be employed as a method in practising speech with infants. Initially "games of a dramatic cast" might be played and then for older infants there was a possibility of the spontaneous dramatization of nursery rhymes or fairy stories.

Few though the references to drama were in the 1905 Handbook, one senses an ambivalent attitude towards it by the compilers. It seems as if they recognized that

---

<sup>1</sup> Handbook of Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and others Concerned in the Work of Public Elementary Schools (1905), p. 70 (hereinafter called Handbook of Suggestions.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

that dramatic activities were in tune with the spontaneity of very young children, but were a trifle suspicious of some of the theatre's trappings. For instance, when encouraging reading aloud in the classroom, they warned that "exaggerated emphasis, declamation and gesture are quite unnecessary; the pieces chosen are to be read with feeling and intelligence, but they are not to be acted."<sup>1</sup>

During the next ten years the Board of Education seems to have consolidated its views on dramatization as a means of speech training: and now that the dramatic instinct could be firmly spoken of as an observed characteristic of young children, there was opportunity for its extended use in the classroom. The 1915 edition of the Handbook encouraged the "natural and educative" representation by infants of the characters in their stories and suggested that the "newer and better method of furnishing infant schools gives scope for this and other forms of movement."<sup>2</sup> History was seen as a subject that might gain from the vivid, crystallizing powers of drama:

"There are schools in which history is made more vivid and picturesque by the dramatization of suitable

---

<sup>1</sup> Handbook of Suggestions, (1905) p. 36. The warning represents a pertinent comment on the early twentieth century style of acting.

<sup>2</sup> Handbook of Suggestions (1915), p. 23. These comments had in fact appeared in a Board of Education circular No. 808 (1912).

stories. The younger children act their history stories just as infants act fairy tales. The older pupils are allowed to make their own arrangements and preparations under some guidance from the teacher. With the help of suitable books including sections from original sources which reproduce the ideas and the language of the time, and with the further aid of illustrations showing armour and dress, the older pupils may compose their own parts. In this way they may learn much of the life and colour, speech and habits of the periods from which the scenes are taken."<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, however, the Handbook warned against any indiscriminate use of drama as a method of teaching history: a careful choice of subject matter and adequate preparation were imperative.

Twelve years and three Handbooks later, there appeared a warning concerning teaching methods in general. This was to the effect that means were often obscuring aims in education. Osborne has commented:

"The 1927 edition represents a period of reaction, or at least of caution, in England."<sup>2</sup>

Caution perhaps but certainly not reaction for the 1927 Handbook was liberal in outlook and much concerned with the needs of the child. It stressed the different facets of the human personality that education had to cater for:

---

<sup>1</sup> Handbook of Suggestions (1915), p. 88. These comments too had appeared previously in a Board of Education circular.

<sup>2</sup> G. S. Osborne, op. cit., p. 104.

"Character has been too narrowly interpreted; its intellectual and emotional sides have been insufficiently recognized."<sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere it talked of the development of moral character through team-work. People were wrong, continued the Handbook, to consider as "superfluous accessories" those departures from the conventional school routine which aimed at character training. Play performances were probably counted among the departures; the Handbook saw in them the opportunity of giving "immediate purpose" to children's work. The aesthetic value of good literature was not forgotten among the 1927 suggestions. If the teacher felt that an older class would enjoy reading and acting a play, there was no reason why considerable time should not be spent on this project. There were many modern plays, suggested the Handbook, in addition to the usual fare of Shakespeare, Sheridan and Goldsmith, that might be acted in the elementary school.

In a special appendix on backward children, the Handbook compilers recognized the therapeutic aspects of both drama and music. Spontaneous dramatization was to be encouraged and it was considered that rhythmic exercises to music might "do something to strengthen and co-ordinate mind and character as well as body."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Handbook of Suggestions (1927), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 425. In P. Slade, Child Drama, p. 119, Slade refers to an article in School Hygiene (1916) by Sir Cyril Burt in which the latter suggested that dramatic exercises might be treated as an active means of emotional training, particularly in the case of backward children.

Between 1921 and 1933 there appeared four major reports which had implications for the development of drama in education. These were the three Hadow Reports on adolescent, primary and infant education and the Newbolt Committee Report on The Teaching of English in England.

The latter document, published in 1921, was an authoritative report and according to one author, writing in 1943, "had a profound effect on English teaching in all types of school and continues to be a best-seller to this day."<sup>1</sup>

The Newbolt Committee discussed school drama under three headings: as something to be written; as something to be read; and as something to be acted.

The writing of plays was encouraged as a very valuable and practical form of composition whether it be an individual or collective exercise. Younger children might take themes from myth or poetry whilst older students could frame their own plots.

Children who had composed and acted their own plays were in a much better position to read and appreciate the work of professional dramatists, thought the Committee.

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Graves, Policy and Progress in Secondary Education 1902-42, p. 134.

This was a Caldwell Cook line (and he gave evidence to the committee, of course) but the Committee remained less sure than Cook about using Shakespeare in the classroom. As far as the pupil's appreciation was concerned, verbal difficulties in the plays were balanced against the advantages of Shakespeare's technique in characterisation and story telling and the word-music of his plays. The Committee's approval of Shakespeare in schools was qualified with warnings about choice of play and adequate care in presentation by the teacher. As the compilers of the 1927 Handbook of Suggestions were to do, the Newbolt Committee recommended a widening range of suitable plays for study with older students.

In defending the acting of plays, the Newbolt Committee appealed to tradition, citing the esteem given to drama as an art from earliest times and the aesthetic enjoyment it had afforded throughout the ages:

"If it considered necessary to offer a defence of dramatic performances as a part of education, we may say that drama is an ancient and honoured form of literature that has enlisted the powers of the greatest poets, and afforded rational delight to a hundred generations of civilised beings."<sup>1</sup>

This was not merely a rhetorical flourish on the part of the committee. In its introduction to drama there had been an acknowledgement of the important part played by drama in Tudor and early Stuart education and

---

<sup>1</sup> The Teaching of English in England, paragraph 289.

regret expressed regarding the diverging paths of dramatic art and national education from the middle of the seventeenth century to the close of the nineteenth.

With the re-emergence of drama in schools there was a new optimism:

"It is a legitimate hope that a rational use of the drama in schools may bring back to England an unashamed joy in pleasures of the imagination and in the purposed expressing of wholesome and natural feeling."<sup>1</sup>

What drama could do for the nation was a natural extension of what it could do for the individual. The individual's enjoyment of drama was the pre-requisite for any of its other values in education: thus, the Newbolt Committee talked of classroom plays being "joyous and instructive adventures,"<sup>2</sup> ranging in scope from "happy improvisations" to more formal presentations.

The more specific values that the Newbolt Report saw in the acting of plays can be grouped in three categories: speech training, aesthetic understanding and personality development.

Speech training was given important emphasis in the Report as a whole, so it is little wonder that drama was

---

<sup>1</sup> The teaching of English in England., op. cit., paragraph 291.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., paragraph 289.

recommended as a means of inculcating the habits of clarity and expressiveness in articulation.<sup>1</sup> Training Colleges as well as schools might well gain from this type of speech work commented the Report and, in alluding to the recent appointment of a lecturer to deal with reading and recitation at one London Training College, it went on to suggest the consequences of the possible appointments to Colleges of lecturers "who would take in regard to dramatic art the same position as is held by teachers of music or pictorial art in regard to their special subjects. The effect upon the work of Elementary Schools of teachers trained under these lecturers might be very far reaching."<sup>2</sup>

In the context of aesthetic understanding, one of the particular strengths of drama was "the immediate sense of a completed thing, of an artistic whole with beginning, middle and end."<sup>3</sup> Not only was it valuable for children to take part in dramatic performances, but it was important that they should have the opportunity of seeing good productions. This latter point constituted part of an education for leisure and the Newbolt Committee

---

<sup>1</sup> The Committee had an interesting recommendation to make in connection with local dialect. It suggested that educational institutions had a responsibility in cherishing fragments of old folk plays.

<sup>2</sup> The Teaching of English in England, paragraph 294.

<sup>3</sup> The Teaching of English in England, paragraph 289.

suggested that the authorities should set money apart for the provision of such activities.<sup>1</sup> Yet, it was imperative that children should see only the best and not be presented with Shakespeare productions in which "time is broke and no proportion kept."<sup>2</sup>

Both the appreciative and expressive sides to aesthetic understanding would assist in character formation. "It is unnecessary," suggested the Newbolt Report in an emotive reference to the cathartic worth of drama, "to dwell upon the educative value of a spectacle that shows, in a spirit of poetry and magnanimity, character in action, developing to greatness or lapsing to disaster, triumphing

---

<sup>1</sup> Sir Ben Greet started touring schools with Shakespeare productions in 1918. These productions were financed by the London County Council as were the special school performances at the Old Vic. In 1920 there was the first public admission by a Cabinet Minister that the status of drama might justify state recognition in the form of money grants. In answer to a deputation from the Annual Conference of Educational Associations, Mr. Fisher, President of the Board of Education, had said "It would be consonant with the English Political tradition that any step which the Government might take in the way of helping the theatre should be in aid of schemes initiated by local enterprise and assisted by local contributions."

<sup>2</sup> The Department of Education and Science Education Survey 2. Drama suggests that the Newbolt Committee's warning was not always heeded. Drama, p. 91. "In the twenties and thirties, when the main roles were often played by understudies 'to give them a break,' the ribaldry with which classics were habitually received has struck in the mind of many actors and created a lasting antipathy towards audiences of children which is now only being broken down in the younger actors."

in apparent failure or failing in apparent success."<sup>1</sup>

However, the onlooker was bound to miss some of the special advantages that active participation in plays brought. Acting provided a safe outlet for the emotions and promoted self-confidence and resourcefulness. In regard to self-confidence, the Report noted the effect of acting on children generally considered to be intellectually weak; it often gave them a "new interest in themselves and their possibilities."<sup>2</sup> Above all, acting in plays was a team effort and part of an individual's own development was an awareness of his responsibility towards others.

The first of the Hadow Reports, The Education of the Adolescent (1926), made little direct reference to drama. It encouraged dramatic work as a means towards appreciation of good literature and recognized the value of eurhythmics "which not only cultivates brain and muscle but develops new possibilities of rhythmic movement."<sup>3</sup>

The Report's main concern was with the reorganization of secondary education to provide all normal children between the ages of 11 and 14 with some appropriate form

---

<sup>1</sup> The Teaching of English in England, paragraph 289.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., paragraph 289.

<sup>3</sup> The Education of the Adolescent, page 242.

of post-primary schooling. In the modern schools, appropriate education implied an emphasis on practical work and interests which would continue after a pupil's school-days. The Board of Education generally welcomed the Hadow Report and in 1928 circulated its own pamphlet, The New Prospect in Education, which contained a detailed statement of the grounds for reorganization and problems involved; in addition it gave an account of some of the schemes already in operation.

Whilst discussing the sort of accommodation needed in a hypothetical senior school for some 400 pupils, the pamphlet made no particular mention of space for dramatic work. It was probably assumed that any large scale productions would take place on an improvised stage in the school assembly hall. Yet there was an obvious intention that drama had a part to play in the new schools. Not only did the pamphlet talk about a type of education which suited the child, it also advocated "those out of school activities which mean so much for the growth of a corporate spirit;"<sup>1</sup> and, in a special appendix outlining the reorganization happening in an industrial county borough, it mentioned the dramatic societies in the schools

---

<sup>1</sup> The New Prospect in Education, p. 14.

and spoke of one particular school which "had made a special feature of Drama"<sup>1</sup> in its English syllabus.

A key statement of the Hadow Report on the Primary School (1931) was: "... the curriculum is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored."<sup>2</sup>

In such a concept of the curriculum there were obvious implications for drama. Children of primary school age delighted in movement and tangible achievement. They had no time for inert ideas but desired to explore their environment and were "at once absorbed in creating their own miniature world of imagination and emotion."<sup>3</sup> Drama was an activity that supplied a natural medium for these creations.

The Report on the Primary School took up and developed the ideas expressed in the 1905 Handbook of Suggestions concerning the relationship between movement and personality development:

"It involves that kind of sensitiveness which Plato spoke of as eurhythmia and valued highly because, though expressed in bodily bearing and movement, spiritual elements of deep importance were implicated in it and it was likely to run out into many expressions of a man's nature in his work."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The New Prospect in Education, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> The Primary School, paragraph 75. The statement was still accepted as valid thirty six years later. See Plowden Report, paragraph 529.

<sup>3</sup> The Primary School, paragraph xvi.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., paragraph 76.

Dancing was an important way of cultivating this "kind of sensitiveness" and so was acting:

"Drama, both of the less and more formal kinds, for which children, owing to their happy lack of self-consciousness, display such remarkable gifts, offers further good opportunities of developing that power of expression in movement which, if the psychologists are right, is so closely correlated with the development of perception and feeling."<sup>1</sup>

A significant point about the foregoing quotation is its position in the Report as a whole. It occurred not merely as one aspect of the teaching of English but as part of the Committee's general approach to the primary school curriculum. Although dramatization and play production still had a position under the English banner as a means to enjoyment and interpretation of literature, there was an awareness that it did not owe allegiance merely to English. In fact, the inter-relationship among primary school subjects was an important issue in the Report. There were obvious affinities between drama, physical training and music particularly in relation to movement; handicraft, history and play acting might be connected; and even speech-training - for which drama was an occasion - was not considered the sole prerogative of the English Department.

Yet, aware as the Hadow Committee was of the

---

<sup>1</sup> The Primary School, paragraph 76.

artificiality of rigid subject boundaries between aspects of the curriculum, it also saw the dangers of any arbitrary yoking - together of subjects. Thus, in welcoming the project method, the Committee warned against any unnatural inclusion of aesthetic activities.

"While, for instance, music and drama may at times be brought in naturally and usefully in the working out of a project, it is too likely that in many instances they will merely be 'dragged in' obediently to the supposed claims of a principle. The teacher in his enthusiasm forgets that both music and drama are activities which contain their own self-sufficient motives: that one may learn a song simply because the song is delightful; and act a play because acting is such good fun."<sup>1</sup>

The last of the trilogy of Hadow Reports - that on Infant and Nursery Schools - appeared in 1933. If its recommendations appear less exciting than those of the Primary School Report, it is because there had been a continuity of tradition in the teaching of infants for some 40 years. The Committee felt able to endorse principles on which early education should be based propounded in an Education Department Circular (1893)<sup>2</sup> and incorporated in the first Handbook of Suggestions. The principles drew attention to the spontaneous activities of the child, its love of movement and its natural curiosity and responsiveness to sense experience. Many of the

---

<sup>1</sup> The Primary School, op. cit., paragraph 84.

<sup>2</sup> Education Department Circular (No. 322) to H. M. Inspectors on the Training and Teaching of Infants (February 6th, 1893).

methods suggested by the Hadow Committee were similar to those expressed in its previous report. Acting was loved by young children and dramatization was seen as performing two specific tasks: it helped to develop expressive movement so closely allied to a development of perception and feeling and secondly, it was a means of speech practice.

The 1937 Handbook of Suggestions and its 1942 reprint serve to show just how far "official" opinion of drama's place in education had developed towards the end of the period considered in this study.

In its introduction, the Handbook alluded to the rapid development in educational thought over the previous eight years. There had been "a shift of emphasis in teaching from the subject to the child"<sup>1</sup> and there was a growing concern for the individual child and his progressive and many-sided development.

The Handbook had much more to say than previously concerning the role of drama in the new educational atmosphere:

"In the school it may perhaps be appropriately defined as a training, a study, and an art. It is an excellent discipline in speech, poise and self-confidence. It affords remarkable opportunities for active literary study: and it is a natural and

---

<sup>1</sup> Handbook of Suggestions (1937), p. 7.

effective mode of artistic expression for children."<sup>1</sup>

The infant teacher was encouraged to take note of the natural dramatic play of small children and endeavour to provide a stimulating environment for this activity for there was "no doubt that children learn a great deal naturally through spontaneous and undirected play."<sup>2</sup> Conscious drama should progress from occupational mimes through simple dramatization of stories to the more formal presentation of classroom plays. The latter, generally written by the teacher, might be based on well known children's stories and were to be carefully prepared before being acted in front of the rest of the class. As one of the main purposes of these plays was an unconscious training "in all the virtues of effective expression," it was important that the language should be vivid and straightforward and that the children should know something of the motivation of the characters they were portraying.

---

<sup>1</sup> Handbook of Suggestions (1937), p. 375. The Spens Report on Secondary Education (1938), p. 226, contained similar sentiments.

"It is worth adding a note on the value of dramatic performances as an aid to appreciation. The drama has now a sure footing in all schools and its usefulness in cultivating self-confidence and good speech and developing initiative need not be stressed here. But it also has its place as one of the best means of revealing the strength and beauty of great literature."

<sup>2</sup> Handbook of Suggestions (1937), p. 82. The Handbook also made the point that spontaneous activity could also tell the observant teacher much about the child.

In its introductory discussion of junior school education the 1937 Handbook gave an excellent resume of many of the values of improvised work:

"Young children are naturally inclined to put their conception of other modes of life into dramatic play, and so it is important that children in the junior school shall have ample space, as, for example, in a commodious school hall, in which they can give free rein to their dramatic propensities. Through a free expression of these, children find their way to maturer forms of speech, feeling and behaviour, and when their conceptions of life are thus openly expressed in dramatic action, faulty ideas are exposed and can more easily be set right."<sup>1</sup>

When it came to discussing junior school drama in the context of English language and literature, the Handbook was rather more conventional in outlook and there was a heavy emphasis on theatrical preparation and presentation. The handbook encouraged the continuation of the miming and dramatization used with infants and suggested that juniors might attempt productions of suitable printed plays. In addition, children enjoyed original play-making and this was seen as a valuable exercise in oral and written composition under the guidance of the teacher.

According to the 1937 Handbook, vigorous and varied dramatic activity should be continued in the senior school. School productions were socially beneficial because they allowed children with widely different talents (to) contribute something to a common end that calls for and justifies their best efforts."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Handbook of Suggestions, (1937)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 139.

CHAPTER V

ASPECTS OF SCHOOL DRAMA

"The number of schools of every kind, both elementary and secondary, where play acting has become a normal feature of the school's life, must now run into the thousands. For the value of drama as a cultural exercise is almost universally admitted, and it is no secret that H. M. Board of Education has given its official sanction and blessing to the good work."<sup>1</sup>

These words, written in 1938, serve as a useful introduction to a survey of drama in schools during the first four decades or so of the twentieth century: written towards the end of the period under review in the present thesis, they highlight certain significant points.

Perhaps one should not take the estimate of schools doing drama too literally but accept it as an indication of a definite trend in thought and practice.<sup>2</sup> There were

---

<sup>1</sup> Edt. G. Boas and H. Hayden, School Drama, p. V.

<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to refute the figures with any hard evidence. Only comparatively recently have any statistical surveys been carried out to determine the extent of current dramatic activity in various localities.

still thousands of schools which had been left untouched by this thought and practice. Also, the phrase "normal feature" is open to various interpretations. In some schools it implied the employment of drama as both a classroom and extra-curricular pursuit; in others it probably meant - as it still does mean in some schools - nothing more than the annual or biennial performance of a school play.

Naturally, the type of dramatic activity in the classroom varied with different age-groups. Spontaneous dramatization - either in the shape of mime or accompanied by speech - of nursery rhymes, fairy stories and events from the daily routine of life occurred in infant departments from the early years of the century and gradually spread to post-infant age-groups. This dramatic play, often blending elements of realism and fantasy, became a more regular feature in schools when play was recognized as having an important bearing on the child's educational development. "Only by acting it out can a child fully grasp an idea,"<sup>1</sup> said Murray and Brown Smith in 1920. The Hadow Report on The Primary School stated that drama was a pleasurable means whereby children were able to develop imaginatively, emotionally and orally. They were

---

<sup>1</sup> E. R. Murray and H. Brown Smith, The Child under Eight.  
p. 60.

"absorbed in creating their own miniature world of imagination and emotion, and were keen observers who take pleasure in reproducing their observations by speech and dramatic action."<sup>1</sup>

Jeannette Hennessy elaborated further on the values of a child's dramatic play. There were the physical advantages of a body which was more expressive and rhythmically conscious; the mind was better able to understand and delight in the world around the child. Not only was the child achieving expression through the body and speech but he was receiving "the knowledge and the intellectual stimulus which enable him to make sense of the spoken and written word alike, for he is developing the brain behind the tongue."<sup>2</sup>

The role of the teacher came in for considerable discussion. There was never any doubt, in theory at least, that it was the teacher's responsibility to provide a stimulating environment for the child's drama:

"The teacher must provide life in miniature; that is, she must provide abundant raw material and opportunities for experience."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Primary School, p. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> J. Hennessy, The Dramatic Play of Young Children, in G. Boas and H. Hayden, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> E. R. Murray and H. Brown Smith, op. cit., p. 149.

As far as guidance of dramatic play was concerned there were two schools of thought. One advocated that a child be left to play out his dramatic experiences; the other opined that the teacher should help the child to a fuller realization and progression in his activities by suggestion and stimulation. There were dangers in both approaches. The first might lead to sterile repetition and the second to teacher domination. The Chesterfield Education Authority was well aware of the second danger:

"In creative play great care is necessary if the main centre of interest is to be the child and not the teacher. For example, much dramatic work is termed creative play when it is nothing of the sort, but merely illustrates the child's ability to imitate. It is fatally easy for the teacher to do all the work and for the child merely to imitate - but that is not the direction of development for the child."<sup>1</sup>

The compromise between teacher-guidance and pupil-activity was well stated by A. R. Stone:

"I think a teacher should lead. By that I mean lead in the search for knowledge rather than dictate instruction. In this search the teacher must be alive to the stage of development of each child at any moment. The teacher must see with the eyes of a child but direct him towards being an adult."<sup>2</sup>

Towards the end of the twenties, and particularly during the thirties, the dramatic play of young children

---

<sup>1</sup> Chesterfield Education (1932), p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> Story of a School, p. 34.

received attention in certain experimental establishments and from certain educational associations. A feature of much of this work was the connection between the young child's drama and his emotional development; the Froebel Society and Junior Schools Association's magazine Child Life featured school drama in its issue of December, 1935 and in one article Rosalind Vallance wrote of the psychological values in dramatic work for young children.

'Let's Pretend' proved an emotional safety-valve through which instinctive passions might be released:

"Only when this release has been effected can the imagination fulfil its functions on the higher planes with which its name is generally associated."<sup>1</sup>

The plays associated with the school concert represented only a small aspect of a child's education through dramatic activity. Classroom drama was one means by which education allowed for self-expression within a social framework. Through drama a masterful child learned that he could not always be master and a shy child might be helped to overcome his diffidence. Spontaneous dramatization allowed a child to act his secret self and a perceptive teacher could well learn of a child's personal or social difficulties through observing this dramatization.

---

<sup>1</sup> Child Life (December 1935), p. 181.

Vallance suggested that if one important side of the value of dramatic work was its release quality, there was another side:

"There is something that comes to life during a sincere production of a play by corporate effort which is unique; an atmosphere is created which, by some indefinable means, acts like magic upon all the individuals concerned, and enables them, if only for a brief while, to feel they have, somehow, escaped into reality. This is an unforgettable experience."<sup>1</sup>

Susan Isaacs' Malting House School was an early example of an experimental school for young children. The school opened in Cambridge in 1924 and during its three-year existence never had more than twenty pupils. Isaacs was thus able to observe the play of children at close quarters.<sup>2</sup> She found that young children's dramatic play allowed for the co-operative expression of fantasy which in turn led from anxieties to real satisfactions in social play. She also indicated that dramatic play was linked with the learning process as well as being therapeutic:

"In particular, observation made it clear that spontaneous make-believe play creates and fosters the first forms of "as if" thinking. In such play, the child recreates selectively those elements in past situations which can embody his emotional or intellectual needs of the present, and adapts the details moment by moment, to the present play situation. This ability to evoke the past in

---

<sup>1</sup> Child Life (December, 1935), p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> The results of her observations provided material for her two books: Intellectual Growth in Young Children (1930) and Social Development in Young Children (1933).

imaginative play seems to be closely connected with the growth of the power to evoke the future in constructive hypothesis, and to develop the consequences of 'ifs'."1

Several teachers wrote of their experiences with young children during the nineteen-thirties. E. R. Boyce was headmistress of an infants school in East London during the three years from 1933-36.<sup>2</sup> She experimented with a curriculum which was child-centred and which afforded a great deal of time for free play in a stimulating environment. She admitted that she had been influenced in her ideas by the work of Dewey, Kilpatrick and Susan Isaacs. It was her contention that,

"Learning necessarily involves feelings and proceeds by way of the experiences of life."<sup>3</sup>

Dramatic activity was encouraged from the beginning but the construction of a small school theatre gave an impetus to dramatic play and play-making throughout the school. Boyce found that drama work had a very beneficial, socializing effect on children, particularly on the more retiring ones. Those children who preferred not to act were given responsible jobs in front of house or behind stage. Painting and craft work were closely linked with the plays. Special periods were laid aside when classes

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in R. Courtney, Play, Drama and Thought, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> The activities of the school were witnessed by many students from local Training Colleges.

<sup>3</sup> E. R. Boyce, Play in the Infants' School, p. 3.

could rehearse plays or dramatize spontaneously. At these times the teachers acted as guides, helping with particular difficulties, telling stories or suggesting other material that might be dramatized. There were other periods, however, when children could dress up and rehearse privately.

Many of the dramatizations based on fantasy were of a compensatory nature because some of the children lived in squalid homes. At other times the children played out more realistic experiences thereby coming to terms with them. Commenting on a play of five-year olds centered round a hospital, Boyce said:

"We felt that the whole episode had been valuable both for its emotional and its social bearings."<sup>1</sup>

Music went hand in hand with much of the dramatic work and aided the therapeutic process:

"We found rhythmic work and dramatic sense were often allied and that their most responsive and creative efforts in music were in the nature of emotional release and expression. We were able to supply music for some plots which involved much violence and which because of their verbal inadequacies they could not easily act in the theatre. A class of five-year-olds dictated the story of a terrible fire which burnt up everyone concerned in spite of the efforts of the firemen. The teacher composed the music and the children supplied the movements, which were extremely vivid. There were firemen, engines, water from the hose, burning children, and falling houses. Several times we suggested a happier ending but they would not hear of it."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> E. R. Boyce, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 136-137.

There is little doubt that the influence of Freud and the psychoanalytic movement gave an additional impetus to considerations of ways in which the child's emotional development might be fostered.<sup>1</sup> This influence was probably felt in the progressive schools established during the twenties as a protest against the orthodoxy of the established system. Drama was an integral aspect of school life in many of these establishments.

W. A. C. Stewart has said of the progressive schools:

".... the three points of emphasis were the importance of freedom rather than restraint in infancy; the importance of spontaneity and expressiveness with the consequence that play and exploration and the child's initiative, especially in the arts, were stressed; the importance of positive attitudes and the primacy of emotion rather than intellect in education."<sup>2</sup>

At Beacon Hill, founded in 1927 by Bertrand and Dora Russell, the children wrote their own plays and, owing to the freedom of speech and thought encouraged in the school, showed a "sureness of emotional touch."<sup>3</sup> At St. Christopher School, Hertfordshire a "stress on art and crafts, combined with an equal stress on music and dramatic

---

<sup>1</sup> As early as 1920 Alice Woods, Educational Experiments In England, p. 71, could say: "Some schools in England are realizing the duty of providing for natural emotional outlet more than ever before, and introducing their scholars to music, dancing, poetry and acting, as helps to the emotional life."

<sup>2</sup> W. A. C. Stewart, The Educational Inovators, Volume II, p. 347.

<sup>3</sup> Edt. T. Blewitt, The Modern Schools Handbook, p. 34.

art, including voice-production and elocution, (formed) part of the definite plan for the training of the emotions."<sup>1</sup> In this scheme a special watch was kept for those children whose emotional development might be helped by their being cast for particular parts in a play. Many other examples could be given of progressive schools using drama in this way. However, just one more will be instanced. Since its foundation in 1921, A. S. Neill's Summerhill School has based its system on the idea that education should be concerned primarily with the instinctive side of childhood. Creative dramatic work has always been an important feature of the school:

"Spontaneous acting is the creative side of a school theatre - is the vital side. Our theatre has done more for creativity than anything else in Summerhill."<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the most important manifestation of dramatization during the period covered in the thesis was the dramatic method of leaning. This was an attempt to harness activity and desire for expression to a specific educational purpose.<sup>3</sup> At its best the dramatic method satisfied the child by giving him a creative outlet; did justice to the material being dramatized by making it come alive; and honoured the artistic demands of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Edt. T. Blewitt, The Modern Schools Handbook, op. cit., p.106

<sup>2</sup> A. S. Neill, Summerhill, p. 70.

<sup>3</sup> In this way epitomizing the spirit of the play way approach in education which received both its title and most eloquent expression from Caldwell Cook.

medium. At its worse it probably became a mechanical exercise which bored the child, distorted the material and made a travesty of the medium.

The dramatic method has been given extensive coverage in the present thesis because it was such an important aspect of drama in education. It was not without interesting possibilities both as regards the dramatic activities it might employ and the far-reaching effects it might have. There was no doubt that in sensitive hands it did a great deal for the child dramatizing as well as for the subject being dramatized.

Harley Granville-Barker drew attention to another aspect of the dramatic method in schools when lecturing at Cambridge in 1934. While it might "be a help to teaching in general," it was "without doubt the best approach to the study of drama itself."<sup>1</sup> Here, Granville-Barker was alluding to one of the major developments in school drama during the first forty years of the century: the gradual

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Granville-Barker, The Study of Drama, p. 12. Granville-Barker appears to have mellowed in his attitude towards the dramatic method of subject-learning since his speech to the Conference on 'Drama and Education' in 1922. In connection with the study of drama, Granville-Barker made an interesting distinction between the approach of the school child and that of the University student. There was a "danger of contracting one's vision of an art to the measure of one's own capacities." (Ibid., p. 16) So, while acting was a way to appreciation of the drama by the child, a more impersonal approach was needed for the serious student. The suggested method was one where by a play was studied in a way which involved "all the preparations for a performance which we know from the beginning we shall never have to give." (Ibid., p. 19) In this method the student remained critical and did not, as the actor did, lose himself in the play. At the same time the critical study was theatrically orientated.

awareness that a play was for acting.<sup>1</sup> Even if drama in the form of the printed play did not manage to shake itself free from the domain of English<sup>2</sup> there was an assertion in some quarters that literature should "be experienced in the way it ought to be, that is through the living voice and by actual impersonation."<sup>3</sup>

The assertion was endorsed in many schools by an increase in the performance of plays both in and outside the classroom.<sup>4</sup> One of His Majesty's Inspectors, in a review of school drama in 1934<sup>5</sup> traced the general growth of school drama to a growth in public taste in entertainment and to the interpretive freedom given teachers. He considered that some of the more specific factors conducive to the use of drama in schools were the wider treatment of the English syllabus, the organization of smaller classes, particularly in senior schools, and the new type

---

<sup>1</sup> Again, Caldwell Cook was a major influence.

<sup>2</sup> In 1938 Mr. Guy Boas, writing in the Times Educational Supplement (February 26) as chairman of the Schools Committee of the British Drama League, made a case for drama's being offered as a School Certificate subject on the ground that it was "consuming a considerable amount of school energy without showing in return a justifiable examination profit." Nothing came of the suggestion.

<sup>3</sup> The Teaching of English in England, p. 150.

<sup>4</sup> Although it is still not uncommon for plays to be taught with reading round the class as the sole concession to dramatic activity. The exigencies of the examination system are much to blame and the point can justifiably be made that Caldwell Cook's pupils were not threatened by an impending examination.

<sup>5</sup> The Schoolmaster (September 6th, 1934).

of school building which included easily-moveable furniture and the provision in some schools of a hall with a stage.

Looking through the available evidence of dramatic work in schools during the first forty-four years of the century it is rare to find detailed attempts at an explanation of the rationale and practice of school drama. It is for this reason, as has been mentioned previously, that the work of those people discussed in the chapter on "Five Pioneers" assumes such significance. Official publications gave encouragement to drama in education but the Handbooks, as their name implied, gave suggestions only and the major Committee Reports, with the exception of the Teaching of English in England, had little space to expand their remarks. Certainly, several books dealing with school drama appeared during the period, especially in the thirties, but the onus lay, for the most part, on the technical aspects of staging the school play. The book from which the opening quotation to the present chapter was taken purported to be the first publication in this country which dealt with every aspect of school drama. Yet, significantly enough, two thirds of the book concerned the school play. The school play will receive consideration in a separate chapter but before continuing with a discussion of some rather more routine aspects of classroom drama it might be interesting to take note of a comprehensive approach to elementary-school

---

drama suggested in 1921.

C. T. Smith made some successful correlative experiments involving drama, music and the other arts at an elementary school in the Isle of Dogs during the second decade of the century. In his book The School of Life, subtitled A Theatre of Education, Smith requested that "dramatic methods be encouraged and developed till the whole school curriculum is presented as a staging of life, and till the hall of every department of every school becomes a national theatre."<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to do justice to the complexity of Smith's scheme in a brief description, but fundamentally it represented an attempt to achieve living unity in the curriculum and to produce cultured citizens. Smith's idea of a cultured person was one who had a knowledge of the interrelated activities of his own epoch and of those epochs preceding his own. Thus the school curriculum was to be based on the representation of consecutive epochs or world cultures and would become "a practical exemplification in miniature of the evolution of civilisation itself."<sup>2</sup>

The school hall or theatre would be the focal point

---

<sup>1</sup> C. T. Smith, The School of Life, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

of the school's activities and a permanent repertory would be gradually built up "consisting of all types of ceremonials, literary and historical dramatizations, spectacular scientific demonstrations and exhibitions, plays and operas."<sup>1</sup> In this way, the effort and expense put into productions would not be to a great extent wasted as was the case with the staging of plays in isolation.

Smith envisaged an extension to his scheme whereby the school theatre would serve as a cultural community-centre. Parents and children would be given the opportunity not only of watching plays but also of participating in them. Smith admitted that plays produced by the people might be crudely performed at first but he felt that the actual participation in something with intellectual or emotional content conferred its own special benefits:

"Actual participation in a presentment, however technically imperfect, might provide a more pleasurable insight into the inherent beauty and meaning of what is presented, and the knowledge thus gained may ever afterwards supply a wealth of happy associations and lasting memories of delightful experiences. In these matters, felt knowledge is pleasure however that knowledge is acquired, and its possession may be enjoyed in giving it expression."<sup>2</sup>

Needless to say, Smith's scheme was not adopted but its very conception shows that there were people aware not

---

<sup>1</sup> C. T. Smith, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 49-50.

only of drama's possibilities for education in its narrower sense but also of drama's role in the education and fusion of society.

Among the more routine classroom dramatic activities frequently referred to during the first four decades of the century were: puppetry, movement and mime, choral speaking, composition exercises in dialogue form, the dramatization of stories, ballads and narrative passages, the study and performance of printed plays and the application of these methods to material in other lessons.

Several of these activities lay on the margin of dramatic experience and were concerned primarily with the encouragement of oral and written expression. They require little comment. Others are taken up in more detail elsewhere in the thesis. It might be worthwhile giving some immediate consideration to puppetry and movement.

In fact, puppetry does not appear to have played a large part in education in this country during the period in question.<sup>1</sup> Certainly not in comparison with its use made in east European countries such as Russia and Czechoslovakia. This is not to deny that certain

---

<sup>1</sup> The D. E. S. Survey on Drama (1967) suggests that the same is true for the period since the Second World War: "Puppetry has never fully established itself in this country and it has tended to remain in a kind of no man's land inadequately supported by drama, craft or art." (p. 62)

teachers in this country recognized its possibilities.

The sign of this recognition was the foundation in 1943 of The Educational Puppetry Association whose aims were:

- (1) "To present and develop the full educational possibilities of puppetry as a creative and dramatic activity with important emotional and social values.
- (2) To encourage experimental work in puppetry for the education of retarded and sub-normal children and the medical treatment of maladjusted children.
- (3) To assist adult rehabilitation."<sup>1</sup>

In schools the main uses of puppetry were as a project<sup>2</sup> which integrated art, craft, and music with drama and as a dramatic method of teaching. It offered scope for speech-training and self-expression:

"Puppets can be used in any lesson where it is desirable for children to express themselves in speech - in the speech-training lesson proper, in the dramatizing of nursery rhymes and stories of all kinds, including history, and in the hygiene and safety-first lesson."<sup>3</sup>

There was an opportunity for improvised speech and several teachers saw in puppetry-work a means by which self-conscious children might gain self-confidence.

An early account of the puppet-show as an aid in

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in P. A. Coggin, op. cit., p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance, E. Warr, The Puppet Theatre, in Child Life (December 1935).

<sup>3</sup> D. P. Harding, Glove Puppetry for Young Children, p. 9.

history teaching occurred in a letter to the Times Educational Supplement during the early twenties.<sup>1</sup> There had obviously been some discussion of the use of puppets in education round about this time because the letter was inspired by a suggestion in The Times Educational Supplement concerning their use in the teaching of English and modern languages. The letter described how a girls' school in London had used a puppet-play with great success in depicting the life of a London apprentice in the Middle Ages. The correspondent suggested that puppetry gained over ordinary play-acting in that it required less space and involved far less expenditure of time and money.

It would be true to say, however, that several writers, while recognizing values in puppetry, have seen it as a small part of total drama work in schools and not as an alternative to normal acting. A. R. Stone found its supposed values were not realized in practice. The shy child found a little confidence in speaking behind a curtain but there was no evidence of a transfer of this confidence to other situations. Peter Slade made the reasonable criticism that puppetry was a projected activity which denied use of the whole body. Both Stone and Slade pointed out that puppetry was an uneconomical, restrictive

---

<sup>1</sup> Times Educational Supplement (May 12th, 1923) quoted in V. Davis, The Matter and Method of Modern Teaching, p. 363.

exercise that involved only a few children and created a semi-passive audience of the rest of the class.

A child's experience in movement takes various forms at school and one of the interesting developments in the curriculum has concerned the increasing awareness over the years of the importance that this experience has for the child. The awareness involves a realization that the physical aspect of movement is often linked with intellectual and emotional qualities. Perhaps this link is most clearly illustrated in drama and dance or in the hybrid: dance-drama. Yet, it shows in physical training even if a fairly-recent letter to the Times Educational Supplement talked cynically of educational gymnastics as "the sickly child of the liaison between Rudolph Laban and child-centred education."

It was the example of physical training - "activity at once joyous and disciplined" - which led the Hadow Report on the Primary School (1931) to talk of the "spiritual elements of deep importance."<sup>1</sup> involved in children's self-expression through movement and to advocate dancing and drama as means whereby these elements might be encouraged in the school. In fact, the Report was suggesting that eurhythmia - Plato's idea of musical education -

---

<sup>1</sup> The Primary School, p. 95.

should be a definite part of the curriculum.

The first chapter of the present thesis has indicated that G. Stanley Hall was an early twentieth century believer in the possibilities of dancing for all-round personality development. In those same very early days, when physical training usually meant drill, Margaret McMillan saw some physical training in a northern girls' school where a form of dancing was included that gave grace and balance. In remarking on the connection between expressive movement and states of mind she made the prophecy that "there is no doubt that dancing will one day play a great part in education."<sup>1</sup>

Dancing of a sort was playing a fairly substantial role in infant departments and girls' schools of all ages from the second decade of the century and really The Hadow Report on the Primary School, in its remarks on music and movement, was endorsing the eurythmics activity already occurring in many schools.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> M. McMillan, Education Through the Imagination, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> One should also mention its use in many of the mixed progressive schools. Rudolf Steiner developed his own art of movement which he called eurhythmy. "It is related to gesture, to rhythm, to harmony of mood or idea, and movement. Ballet, mime, drama, dance are all parts of this body language .... It is intended to have the expressiveness, freedom, discipline, and restraint which many modern schools of movement have built upon and it was conceived to encourage creativeness and personal therapy while being another means of presenting archetypal themes in a stylized form." (Quoted in W. A. C. Stewart, op. cit., p. 165.)

Eurhythmics was originally devised by Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, a teacher of music in Switzerland, as a system of rhythmic bodily training aimed at developing the physical, mental and emotional capacities of his music students. Only in this way did Dalcroze feel they would be creative musicians in the sense of bringing a fully integrated response to music.

As has been implied, the claims made for eurhythmics were far-reaching. The primary one concerned physical development where it was suggested that control of the body and a naturalness and poise of bodily movement were attained. This physical liberation in turn led to a state of mind freed of inhibitions and alive to the individual's creative potentialities:

"Whatever the child's natural artistic proclivities, a conscientious study of the phenomena of movement, both in himself and in nature, cannot fail to produce a more vivid comprehension of art as a whole. .... For my part I am convinced that education by and in rhythm is capable of awakening a feeling for art in all those who undertake it."<sup>1</sup>

It is doubtful whether many schools realized - in both its meanings - the full possibilities of eurhythmics. Its value for deportment and its refining influence are often referred to in the reports of inspectors on

---

<sup>1</sup> E. Jaques-Dalcroze, Rhythm, Music and Education, pp. 136-137.

particular schools. Perhaps in many schools it amounted to nothing more than a state where "physical jerks have become a little less jerky," and where they "may be accompanied by a forced mechanical rhythm beaten out on an old piano."<sup>1</sup> Yet, in establishments like the Hall School, Weybridge, eurhythmics was used sensitively and in close relationship with dramatic work."<sup>2</sup>

While eurhythmics was essentially an approach to music, there were certain aspects of Dalcroze's theorizing which had definite implications for any comprehensive approach to education through drama. According to Dalcroze, the key factor in education was that it should develop the child's rhythmic consciousness for "the study of rhythm conduces to the formation of an individuality for all purposes of life."<sup>3</sup> Music was an essential part of the educative process because only in music and life itself were the two fundamental elements of rhythm, space and time, inseparable.<sup>4</sup>

The development of the child's rhythmic consciousness lay behind much of the movement work in the thirties.

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Read, op . cit., p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that several theatrical producers, including Granville-Barker, advocated rhythmic bodily training for actors during the early years of the century.

<sup>3</sup> E. Jaques-Dalcroze, op. cit., p. 130.

<sup>4</sup> The question of individual rhythm and the value of music in dramatic work are important factors in Slade's philosophy of Child Drama.

Ann Driver did a great deal of demonstration work for teachers and training college students and also wrote of her methods. Her scheme for young children aimed first at discovering the child's own natural rhythm through spontaneous activities like walking, running and jumping. Then, when a child's own rhythm was "released, strengthened or restored,"<sup>1</sup> he attempted to express dramatically the shapes and movements of things he saw round about him in his daily life. These life-rhythms, as Driver called them, led on to movements accompanied by folk-songs. After this stage a child was ready to learn more about how his body worked and thus he was given exercises in which he could explore space and timing and experience tension and relaxation. Driver's ultimate aim was to "free the child in the world of music."<sup>2</sup> This would enable him to interpret music through dance-drama or to base dance-dramas on religious or historical themes with music as an accompaniment. As Dalcroze, she too found broader educational values accruing in the music and movement work:

"Above all, she has found that children, whose habit of movement is thus established in the rhythm and harmony for which their bodies are designed by nature, at once begin to develop mental and character qualities to correspond, such as poise, balance, self-control, evenness of temper, and power of concentration."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> A. Driver, Music and Movement, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. v-vi.

Undoubtedly, one of the greatest influences on modern educational movement has been the work of Rudolf Laban. Laban came to this country in the thirties and his methods were beginning to have some effect in schools during the war years. One area in which his influence has been particularly pervasive is in women's physical education. One reason for this connection with women's physical education rather than men's is perhaps the traditional prejudice of the male towards dance but another is the result of an historical accident: when Laban's philosophy was being taken up in the training colleges many of the male teachers of physical education were away on active service and thus missed the formative years of the new discipline.

If the approach of Dalcroze and Driver to movement was considered from a musical standpoint, that of Laban stemmed initially from a reaction against the artificiality of classical ballet technique. This reaction was shared by others including the legendary Isadora Duncan. Less flamboyant and more systematic than Duncan, Laban analysed the quality and nature of human movement and examined its dynamic and spatial attitudes. He suggested that education must foster the urge for movement because it was at the root of human existence:

"The flow of movement fills all our functions and actions; it discharges us of detrimental inner tensions; it is a means of communication between people, because all our forms of expression, such as speaking, writing, and singing are carried by the flow of movement."<sup>1</sup>

Laban's analysis of movement showed that it comprised effort sequences involving the factors of time, weight and space. An understanding of bodily movement in these terms leads pupils by way of discipline to creativity and they achieve a "richer movement experience which does not only serve them well in the everyday needs of life, but which might help to bring a greater harmony of personality and a rich language for expression in the arts of dance and dance-drama."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> R. Laban, Modern Educational Dance, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> V. Bruce, Dance and Dance Drama in Education, p. 13.

THE DRAMATIC METHOD

"There is no danger of the Dramatic Method being over-looked in present-day practice. It has become part of the law in most schools."<sup>1</sup>

Tomkinson's claim in 1921 might have been exaggerated but it does draw attention to a very significant manifestation of drama in education during the early decades of the twentieth century.

It is not difficult to account for the increasing use of the dramatic method in the learning-process. Not only was it sanctioned by a national climate more sympathetic to drama as a whole but it also satisfied the paidocentric movement in education which advocated learning by doing and which sought to appeal to the child's natural impulses.

There was another reason why the dramatic method should receive a favourable reception in educational circles. While the child's creative self-expression might have been the slogan of a progressive minority, there was no doubt that expression in its narrower sense of speech was an important concern of education in general. The need for oral communication was essential in a nation slowly freeing itself from a rigid class system and in which the inventions of new speech media such as the

---

<sup>1</sup> W. S. Tomkinson, The Teaching of English, p. 45.

telephone, radio and talking-film were assailing the supremacy of the written word. At the same time psychology was revealing the importance of speech in the development of the individual: the relationships between speech and thought, emotion and movement were receiving increased attention. A key factor in twentieth century British education has been the attempt to eradicate the Victorian idea that children should be seen and not heard. The importance of speech and speech-training was emphasized in the official Handbooks of Suggestions and in the major Education Reports. "Plainly, then the first and chief duty of the Elementary School is to give its pupils speech,"<sup>1</sup> said the Newbolt Committee in 1921; while the Hadow Report on The Primary School, talking of the habits of good speech and writing, asserted that "of the two habits, that of speaking correctly remains throughout the period the more important."<sup>2</sup>

From the early years of the century drama in education was linked with speech-training. Indeed, one of the few mentions that the 1905 Handbook of Suggestions made of dramatic activity was in connection with the practice of speaking English. In later Handbooks and Reports

---

<sup>1</sup> The Teaching of English in England, paragraph 61.

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School, p. 156.

the possibilities of drama in oral-training received recurring emphasis. The Newbolt Report quoted the statement of a witness who said that "dramatization by children had a marvellous effect on their speech, producing clear articulation."<sup>1</sup> The Report itself pointed out how speech went beyond the matter of mechanical correctness and at its best had an aesthetic quality. This quality might be approached through dramatic work:

"Few children are going to become actors; but all will gain by learning how to speak: and no performance can take place in a school without showing how many children are at first incapable of making themselves heard in a room of moderate size. But the school drama is an opportunity for teaching something more than voice production. It is an opportunity for showing how prose, and especially verse, should be spoken .... perfect reading can only be attained through complete intellectual and emotional identification with the meaning and mood of the writing."<sup>2</sup>

The sort of writing the Newbolt Report had in mind was epitomized by the plays of Shakespeare. The Newbolt Committee was not alone in suggesting how children's speech might benefit from a prolonged acquaintance with the best dramatic literature. The choice of scripted play was of the utmost concern to bodies such as the Association of Assistant Mistresses who, while recognizing that drama was a means of teaching correct and audible

---

<sup>1</sup> The Teaching of English in England, paragraph 289.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., paragraph 298.

speech, deprecated "the slangy school play or dialogue, a kind which children sometimes select if their choice is unsupervised."<sup>1</sup>

Although drama was in itself an indirect method of speech-training, the foregoing quotation suggests that some uses of the dramatic method were of a formal nature. It suggests also that correctness was often prized above naturalness. Perhaps the most effective speech work was done in the infant schools where spontaneous dramatic play allowed a child to love sound and language for their own sake and where a stimulating environment helped to encourage a natural relationship between speech and movement.

The advantages of a freer approach to dramatic work in terms of speech-training were not entirely forgotten with the child of post-infant age. An article in The New Teaching (1919) suggested how the imaginative element present in the dramatization of history aided the child's expression:

"But when he is set to find words for himself to express the emotions suitable to a given set of circumstances, the pupil makes a distinct advance on merely delivering his lines .... the new teaching exercises the pupils by setting them to act a scene from history supplying for themselves the words they think suitable to the persons they represent ... the

---

<sup>1</sup> Education (July 1932), p. 58.

attention is concentrated upon the circumstances of the case, the pupil throws himself into the character he is personating, forgets all about mere composition and lets himself go."<sup>1</sup>

The cause of speech work in schools was done a service by establishments like the Perse School, Newbury Grammar School, Liverpool Collegiate School and the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth. These were schools in which a real attempt was made to foster a wide range of oral expression in a meaningful context. By a frequent use of improvised dialogues and dramatic scenes speech work was related to the practical business of talking.

Nor must one forget the work of the various speech societies<sup>2</sup> which seemed to mushroom in the early decades of the twentieth century. With their sponsorship of the many poetry festivals held during the late twenties and throughout the thirties they might be accused of engendering what the Department of Education and Science Survey on Drama called the "less desirable aspects of elocution." Yet, at all times, they strove to make teachers and pupils aware of their expressive potentialities. The Speech Fellowship, founded in 1927, correlated the work of teachers and others in various fields of

---

<sup>1</sup> Edt. J. Adams, The New Teaching, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to the societies mentioned in the text, there were among others: L.A.M.D.A. Teachers Association (founded 1941), The English Association (1906), The Poetry Society and The Society for Pure English (1913).

speech. It organized special classes for school teachers in speech-training and poetry speaking for children, rhythmic movement, acted ballads and the use of puppets in speech education. Every year from 1927 onwards the London Speech Festival was run by the Fellowship. As many as twelve hundred children from secondary and elementary schools took part in these festivals. The Association of Teachers of Speech and Drama was an offshoot of an earlier organization formed from teachers trained at the Central School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art. The Association held frequent courses and conferences after its inauguration in 1934. It sought a better recognition of speech training in schools and attempted, without success, to have a speech test incorporated in the School Certificate Examination. The concern of the British Drama League with speech work - and the role drama had in this work - was well illustrated in its 1920 memorandum to the President of the Board of Education.

Before leaving the question of speech work, it is perhaps worthwhile drawing particular attention to the importance of dramatic activity and puppetry when this work is done with backward and retarded children. Not only does drama give purpose and scope to speech but with its allied arts and crafts it prevents speech work from existing in isolation. These points were very much in

evidence in the pre-Second-World-War courses held annually at Goldsmiths' College for teachers of backward and retarded children.

To the enthusiasts most aspects of the curriculum were ripe for dramatization of some kind. The views of E. G. A. Holmes have been discussed in a previous chapter and Harriet Finlay-Johnson's use of the dramatic method receives consideration a little later. The comprehensive scope of the dramatic method is well illustrated in an extract from Cole's The Method and Technique of Teaching, published in 1933:

"Although dramatic representation is usually associated with the English lesson, it should be employed in connection with other subjects also. A lesson on the post office, or on the railway station should be treated in part dramatically; first aid should be taught in connection with the imitation of an accident, a patient and a rescuer; geography may involve the impersonation of towns, rivers, mountains and even elements of a ship's cargo by pupils; or in nature-study a pupil may become the mouthpiece of a bird, an insect or a plant. Nothing prevents that a child should project himself into any observed manifestation of nature. Unless self-consciousness intervenes, the child is ready for anything, to erupt like a volcano, or to run a race round the sun with mother earth."<sup>1</sup>

The dramatic method took several forms, ranging from movement and mime to the scripted play. Two important vehicles were improvisation and play-making. The first

---

<sup>1</sup> P. D. Cole, The Method and Technique of Teaching, p. 108.

often referred to as impromptu or extempore dramatization, was considered to be especially appropriate for young children. During the infant and primary stages of school-life the dramatic impulse was powerful and because of his lack of self-consciousness, the child was able to throw himself wholeheartedly into spontaneous activities. Cole saw the chief purposes of impromptu dramatization as giving an outlet to instinctive activity, illustrating meaning and providing incentive:

"The enactment of an episode is a more complete expression of the self than the mere hearing or reading of the same episode. It is also a clearer revelation of meaning. Moreover, dramatization is so congenial to childhood that children will work to master a scene which they are to be privileged to imitate."<sup>1</sup>

With older children the more formal procedure of play-making came into its own. What was lost in spontaneity could be balanced by a gain in written composition, group discussion and a greater concern for artistic craftsmanship:

"As the child develops, play-making should not be forsaken for the production of printed plays, for it will be found that play writing, both collectively and individually, is a most valuable exercise. English composition will develop in breadth of outlook, in facility of expression and in vivacity."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> P. D. Cole, op. cit., p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> G. H. Holroyd, Drama in School, pp. 15-16.

The play-making process was carefully described by Caldwell Cook and this process, discussed elsewhere in the present thesis, proved a model for later teachers.

Cole enumerated several subjects that lent themselves to the dramatic method. In addition, he might have instanced foreign languages, history and religious education. It was a short step from the direct method of language teaching to the use of dramatic situations as Findlay saw:

".... but the need for dramatic expression from the outset had seldom been realized, although it is still more obvious when one admits that the child can only express himself in conversation as far as he engages in real converse. Hence, therefore, our themes are presented, right from the start in dialogue form."<sup>1</sup>

Other dramatic aids to language learning were the performance of scripted plays in the original language or even the use of puppets. Newbury Grammar School was one of several schools which made use of the first method and the Hall School, Weybridge employed the second.

An interesting experimental approach to the dramatic method<sup>2</sup> was undertaken at the Central Girls' School, Exeter

---

<sup>1</sup> J. J. Findlay, Modern Language Learning, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> As early as 1909 an application had been made to the Board of Education for a grant in connection with a special experiment concerning the dramatization of English literature and history. Unfortunately, the application was refused. One says unfortunately because one of the conditions of these grants was that the school in question should submit a full report to the Board of Education. The Board had the right to publish any such report.

from 1926-1927. The two Junior standards in the school were divided into an experimental and a control group and for a year the experimental group dramatized all its class subjects as far as was feasible, while the control group was formally taught. The mistress who conducted the experiment was prompted to attempt it by a consideration of the educative value of eurhythmics and her feeling that all expression was "closely allied with, and best realized by physical sensation."<sup>1</sup>

She concluded that the experimental pupils gained in various ways from the year's activity. They were more fully informed concerning the class subjects than the control group. They showed real and personal interest in the events and people they had come across in their study and were eager to discuss what they were doing or had learnt. The dramatic work they did had good effects on their conversation and written composition. Also, she noticed what she called the moral effect on the experimental group:

"(they were) more obliging, more willing to work, more responsive, more honest, and readier to help one another and her. They were also noticeably tidier and cleaner, and generally happier and more animated in appearance and demeanour than were the members of the control group."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Forum of Education, (1928), p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

The approach to the experiment does not appear to have been very scientifically rigorous but, nevertheless, it says much for the conviction of the individual mistress and for the atmosphere of the school that such an experiment should have been possible.<sup>1</sup>

One knows all too well that the dramatic method often achieves an unfortunate compromise between drama in a general sense of doing and drama in its specific sense of theatrical conflict. One has the feeling that a great deal of the dramatization used in the geography or nature-study lessons during the period covered in this thesis

---

<sup>1</sup> It is rare - perhaps too rare - for such experiments to be undertaken. However, something of a comparable nature but infinitely more complex, was Greene's Comparative study of the Efficiency of Dramatic and Non Dramatic Methods in Teaching Science to Fifth-Grade Children! This American study was reported in the Review of Educational Research Volume XII, No. 4. Greene placed 405 fifth-grade children under 40 teachers in three pairs of groups. Each teacher taught first a 'non-dramatic' unit by conventional methods and then taught a 'dramatic' unit with which a play was the major activity. Of the six plays used with the 'dramatic' units, four were written by teachers and two by the children who filled in outlines supplied by the teachers. Two of the six plays were written for child actors, two for marionettes, and two for both child actors and marionettes.

Greene found little difference in the amount of factual information learned by the two methods. He concluded that if only a gain in factual information were wanted, the dramatic method would not justify the expenditure of time in its preparation and presentation. However, the greater interest aroused by the dramatic method did justify the expenditure of time. Better results were secured when the pupils wrote their own plays than when the teachers wrote them. More desirable traits and attitudes were fostered by the dramatic than by the conventional methods, and the dramatic method lent itself readily to the correlation of science with other subjects.

employed a dramatic framework to discuss essentially non-dramatic material. The dramatic approach to nature-study in Appendix iii is a fair example of this process.

Yet, some subjects do contain a great deal of fundamental dramatic material. Literature, history and religious education are full of conflict situations - moments of conversion, decision, doubt etc. For this reason these three subjects have become closely identified with the dramatic method and are given separate treatment in the present chapter. Literature and history were very early candidates for dramatization in the schools during the twentieth century. Religious education had to wait a little longer for general acceptance: perhaps, one might say, until the puritan conscience was assured of drama's respectability.

PART 2

THE DRAMATIC APPROACH TO LITERATURE

In the classroom this approach covered two main areas. First, there was the dramatization - impromptu or formal - of literature originally in non-dramatic form and secondly, there was the acting of the published play.

The variety of relevant material in the first area was considerable. Taking literature in a wide sense there were mythology, poetry, stories and novels which might be dramatized. Mythology provided excellent dramatic material. Originally chosen for its artistic appropriateness, it became even more significant when the depth psychologists showed that what once had seemed superstitious fancy was now revealed as the symbolic expression of inner human truths.

From the early years of the century young children were encouraged to act out nursery rhymes and fairy-stories spontaneously. There was a gradual development among older children in the use of drama as a means of making literature study vital and memorable. One finds constant reference to this fact in school log-books or inspectors' reports. Occasionally one catches some idea of the novelty of the occasion when a school tried dramatization for the first time. Thus, the Allendale Catton

Board School log-book reads:

"May 23rd, 1913

This afternoon a 1st attempt at dramatization was made by the upper children based on a scene from Kingsley's 'Westward Ho.'

June 6th, 1913

A 2nd attempt at dramatization was made this afternoon - again from 'Westward Ho.'"

One trusts there was no connection between these dramatizations and the fact that the headmaster left the school at the end of that summer term!

Of novelists, Dickens appears to have been a favourite for dramatization and his name occurs in several references. As one writer put it, "Dickens is particularly easy to adapt since he himself was a dramatist and perhaps wrote with the feeling that his characters were speaking and moving in his presence."<sup>1</sup>

Not all attempts at the dramatization of literature were initially encouraging. Perhaps many teachers found themselves in the position of a senior school master who suggested that part of Tennyson's 'Morte d'Arthur' which the class was reading at the time might be dramatized:"

"Two boys offered themselves as King Arthur and Sir Bedivere. The former lay down on the floor and the other bent over him. Sir Bedivere said, 'I'm

---

<sup>1</sup> R. Finch, Drama in the Classroom and in the School, in The Teachers' Guide, p. 195.

afraid you're going to die.' Arthur replied, 'I'm afraid I am.' Then the two boys stood up and looked at the class, not knowing how to go on."<sup>1</sup>

The obvious remedy to this situation, particularly with a class inexperienced in improvisation, was an attempt to build up a play as a result of class discussion and thorough preparation. Indeed, throughout the early decades of the century, there appeared to be a general recognition of the need for thorough planning in connection with dramatization with older children. This even applied in the case of what was called impromptu work. There was an insistence on marking out stage areas and organizing properties and settings otherwise "dramatic work tends to become either a disorganized rout or a perfunctory practice which accomplishes nothing."<sup>2</sup>

Caldwell Cook was well aware of the pitfalls involved in dramatization<sup>3</sup> and it seems highly likely that his book 'The Play Way' became a practical aid to many teachers. In fact, most teachers who used the dramatic approach to literature in the secondary school or in the upper forms of the elementary school followed basically the approaches laid down by Caldwell Cook. Similarly,

---

<sup>1</sup> R. Finch, op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> H. Hayden, Drama in the Classroom, in School Drama, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix iv illustrates some of the pitfalls and shows how Cook overcame them.

the material used by Cook in his dramatic work served many later teachers. Cook was among the first to recognize the dramatic potential of the ballad and to stress how its elemental qualities made it so appropriate for both miming and other forms of dramatic activity. The spirit of Cook's Play Way surely permeated the attitude of a London secondary school teacher writing in the Times Educational Supplement during the early twenties:

"We went through that ballad without explanation or stop: everyone understood, for everyone was living the tale in his own body and mind .... At the end the master .... felt strangely humble, realizing how much, with a little guidance, the natural genius of childhood can teach itself. At the end, they wanted to do the whole play again on the spot."<sup>1</sup>

The second area of the classroom approach to dramatic literature concerned the acting of the published play. To all intents and purposes, during the early years, the published play was synonymous with Shakespeare. Yet again, Caldwell Cook was a key figure: according to him, the only thing to do with a Shakespeare play was to act it. In this way the play became real and alive. Once more Cook's example was widely followed.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the

---

<sup>1</sup> Article in Times Educational Supplement of November 22nd, 1924 quoted in V. Davis, Matter and Method of Modern Teaching, p. 362.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, Caldwell Cook was very lucky in having a special place for acting Shakespeare. See G. H. Bracken, Teaching English in Secondary Schools for Girls, p. 22. "Many of us envy Mr. C. Cook his Mummery where crowds may shout and tyrants rant without disturbing the rest of the school. Otherwise we can do much in a form-room without stage accessories."

City of Bradford Education Committee, in stressing the educational and recreative value of drama, could state in a 1923 Report:

"From the age of 10 or 11, a place may be given to the reading and acting of Shakespeare's plays. In the earlier stages, the methods adopted may follow the lines suggested in Mr. Caldwell Cook's 'The Play Way.' The pupils should be expected not merely to read the parts but also to accompany the words with appropriate gestures and action."<sup>1</sup>

Forty two years later an educationist could still say that "as to method, Caldwell Cook is still the basis for the teaching of Shakespeare though, of course, individual teachers develop their own methods from those of Cook."<sup>2</sup>

Although Cook was the first teacher to discuss classroom approaches to Shakespeare in any great detail, we know that others before him had believed that the practical approach was the correct one. Harriet Finlay-Johnson's pupils were acting Shakespeare during the first decade of the century and we know from E. G. A. Holmes that other elementary schools were adopting this approach. An early official influence might have been the Report of a Conference on the Teaching of English in London Elementary Schools. This was in fact a report of a

---

<sup>1</sup> Part of recommendation 9 in the Reports of the Advisory Curriculum Committees to the City of Bradford Education Committee (1923).

<sup>2</sup> R. Courtney, Teaching Drama, p. 85.

series of meetings held between 1906 and 1908. The Report argued for a broadening of the English syllabus in elementary schools and the inclusion of adequate time for literature. It felt that children should be introduced to Shakespeare in their elementary school days and talked of Shakespeare as being part of our national heritage and as containing an "element which makes eternal appeal to children."<sup>1</sup> The Report thought that the study of Shakespeare should start with the twelve-year old child and in "studying a play interest should be concentrated, as far as possible, on the dramatic movement of the story, on the principal characters, and on the appreciation of certain choice passages of the poetry."<sup>2</sup> While the Report did not suggest that acting was to be the major approach to Shakespeare in the classroom, it drew attention to the plays as drama rather than as merely passages for analysis<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Report of a Conference on the Teaching of English in London Elementary Schools, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 56-57.

<sup>3</sup> What this analysis sometimes entailed, in secondary schools at least, is well illustrated in the following extract from Notes on the Teaching of English in the Lower Middles, at Rugby, published in 1914. A fuller version is quoted in H. Caldwell Cook, The Play Way, p. 195.

"When he (the master) has read twenty or thirty lines the work begins. The meaning is examined: dug out of the words, torn out of the idioms, enticed out of the allusions. Every bush is beaten, and hares that start up, whether historical, mythological, moral, geographical, political, etymological, architectural, or ecclesiastical, are pursued, and, if possible, caught."

Cook had some caustic comments to make on this sort of approach.

and it did encourage the occasional appeal to the children's dramatic instinct by way of acting.

If Caldwell Cook was the great emancipator of classroom Shakespeare, two publications in 1921 added to the cause. One was the Newbolt Committee Report on the Teaching of English in England<sup>1</sup> and the other was a Board of Education Pamphlet prepared by John Dover Wilson, himself a member of the Newbolt Committee.

Dover Wilson's pamphlet was entitled Humanism in the Continuation School but its breadth of outlook made it applicable to all education. Dover Wilson considered drama to be the most suitable literature for classroom purposes because it was story in action. Shakespeare was indispensable<sup>2</sup> but he was to be approached in the right spirit. First and foremost Shakespeare was an entertainer and nothing - and here Dover Wilson was thinking of the text-book commentator - should check the flow of the verse and story. The teacher's aim was "to introduce his students to a source of future pleasure, not to

---

<sup>1</sup> Some of the views of the Committee are discussed in the chapter on 'the Official Viewpoint.'

<sup>2</sup> Dover Wilson made only brief references to other dramatists. In some continuation schools for girls Sheridan had proved popular. Girls enjoyed dressing up as titled ladies. Dover Wilson suggested that in the later years of the continuation school pupils might study more modern dramatists than Shakespeare but he was no more specific than this.

prepare them for an examination on the minutiae of a particular drama."<sup>1</sup> This aim would be accomplished by pupils living the lives of Shakespeare's characters and not by remembering the notes of Shakespearian commentators.

In concluding this particular section it is perhaps worthwhile quoting what Dover Wilson had to say about the benefits conferred by an immersion in the greatest drama. His has been one of the most eloquent tributes to the influence of Shakespeare in the school:

"We are very far at present from realizing the full possibilities of the school-theatre and the classroom stage. The effect upon young people of reciting a heroic passage from a great drama is something more than merely aesthetic, important as that side of the matter is. It is directly and immediately moral. Tragedy deals with the ultimate issues of life; comedy, especially of the Shakespearian type, puts one in good humour with all mankind. The very discussion as to how this or that character should be represented teaches one to understand human nature better, while from the conflict of character which is the theme of drama, one learns the lesson of tolerance. 'To see true love glorified and made ideal and triumphant; to see hate, rage and jealousy overwhelmingly defeated; to hear taught in song what great lives have learned by suffering; to feel the influence of great personalities that pay with what they are, and of smaller ones that pay with what they do; to thrill with the triumphs of moral and even physical heroes; to criticise and compare characters and plots'; and to do all this not as passive spectators or silent readers, but in action, with gestures appropriate to kings and conquerors and heroes, uttering oneself their mighty and 'high astounding terms' - that is to gain a moral education which no direct instruction in ethics can ever give."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Dover Wilson, Humanism in the Continuation School, p. 74

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 76-77.

THE DRAMATIC METHOD IN HISTORY

In its Education Reports for the years 1910-1911 the Board of Education mentioned the "employment of dramatization" in history teaching as one of the "noteworthy experiments of recent years."<sup>1</sup> Just how widespread this employment was and how widespread it became is open to conjecture: a London Conference in 1911 "regretted that comparatively few teachers had made full use of the dramatic instinct;"<sup>2</sup> five years later it was conceded that "finally dramatization is now becoming a usual adjunct of history teacher;"<sup>3</sup> and in 1926 Hasluck stated that "at the present time there is little use made of dramatized history in our schools."<sup>4</sup>

Whatever the extent of the dramatic method in history teaching there is no doubt that its possibilities were recognized very early in the century. There are several likely reasons for this recognition, the first being connected with the changing conception of history as a school subject.

---

<sup>1</sup> Board of Education, Education Reports, 1910-11, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> London County Council. Report of a Conference on the Teaching of History in London Elementary Schools, 1911, quoted in R. D. Bramwill, Elementary School Work, 1900-1925, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> R. L. Archer, L. V. D. Owen and A. E. Chapman, The Teaching of History in Elementary Schools, p. 106.

<sup>4</sup> E. L. Hasluck, The Teaching of History, p. 60.

In fact, history was not a regular feature of the curriculum of the public elementary schools until the beginning of the twentieth century. Previously, it had been a class subject for the upper standards of the elementary school and seems to have been regarded as a means by which children trained their memories through the recollection of facts. During the early years of the twentieth century a reaction was set up against this conception of history and an attempt was made to vitalize the subject by an increasing amount of attention given to local history, social history and the lives of great people who were not necessarily statesmen or kings. Methods were sought which would aid this process of vitalization and thus dramatization found itself in company with pictures, model-making, documents and school visits.

Naturally, the mere consideration of dramatization as a possible method implies that there was an awareness of the possibilities of drama in education at the beginning of the century. This awareness may be attributed, as has been suggested previously, to the revival of the theatre and an increasing feeling, in many educational quarters, that the child should take a more active part in his own education. In the chapter on drama and religious education it is suggested that dramatized religious teaching

received an impetus from the revival of religious drama in the theatre. One cannot suggest that there was a resurgence of historical drama during the first decade of the twentieth century. One can realize, however, that some teachers might think of their Shakespeare, particularly Henry V, - and consequently connect drama and history teaching - when confronted with the following exhortation from an extract on the teaching of history:

"Love of home and love of country, sometimes called patriotism, are noble sentiments, and the human race is the better, happier, and nobler by their cultivation .... Patriotism causes the heart to beat high at our country's glorious past and the priceless nature of our inheritance. This should teach us never to bring disgrace upon it."<sup>1</sup>

If the link appears too tenuous, there were, from 1905 onwards, some historical activities of a dramatic nature which, if not directly connected with schools, had broadly educational effects which might easily be seen in the school context. These activities were the pageants which illustrated, through spectacle, the history of a town or locality. The pageants involved an enormous band of actors and helpers:

"The first of a series of civic pageants took place in 1905 in the ruins of Sherborne castle to celebrate the 12th centenary of the founding of the

---

<sup>1</sup> T. A. Cox and R. F. Macdonald, The Suggestive Handbook of Practical School Method, p. 358.

Dorsetshire market town. The author and highly successful director of that pageant was Louis N. Parker. Thereafter, Parker's name was associated with the succession of similar pageants which became very numerous in 1907 and 1908. Clearly, the historical bias of Parker's pageants was social and local."<sup>1</sup>

There is often a difference between realizing the implications of a method and putting it into practice. This is often the juncture where the mass of teachers need the inspiration of a practically-minded innovator. During the first decade of the twentieth century Harriet Finlay-Johnson stepped into the breach as far as the dramatic method of history teaching was concerned. Today, her contribution to drama in education might appear lightweight and some of her approaches quaint but there is no doubt - if references in books on history teaching are an indication - that her influence was widely felt some fifty to sixty years ago.

Miss Finlay-Johnson's work is discussed in some detail in the section on "Five Pioneers." We know that E. G. A. Holmes, at one time a Chief Inspector of Schools, was particularly impressed with her school at Sompting, Sussex and there seems little doubt that, when Holmes visualised his Utopian school, Utopia and Egeria were based on Sompting and Harriet Finlay-Johnson. In Utopia

---

<sup>1</sup> R. D. Bramwell, op. cit., p. 45.

acting was an integral aspect of the curriculum and any subject which admitted of dramatic treatment was systematically dramatized:

"In history, for example, when the course of their study brings them to a suitable episode, the children set to work to dramatize it .... they consult some advanced text-book or historical novel or other book of reference, and having studied with care the particular chapter in which they are interested, and having decided among themselves who are to play what parts, they proceed to make up their own dialogues, and their own costumes and other accessories. They then act the scene, putting their own interpretation on the various parts, and receiving the stimulus and guidance of Egeria's sympathetic criticism."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile their class-mates acted as an audience, ready to applaud and check historical accuracy. While watching they both half-unconsciously qualified themselves to act as understudies and also absorbed a great deal of historical detail. Holmes saw the dramatization of history as conducive to personal development as a whole; within the confines of the subject he thought that the "child who has once acted history will always be interested in it and being interested in it will be able, without making a formal study of it, to absorb its spirit, its atmosphere, and the more significant of its facts."<sup>2</sup>

The dramatic teaching of Harriet Finlay-Johnson was praised in the book by Archer and others on The Teaching

---

<sup>1</sup> E. G. A. Holmes, op. cit., pp. 174-5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 175.

of History in Elementary Schools (1916) and readers were referred to her written account of the dramatic method. Rather sensibly, Archer and his colleagues suggested that the method did not contain its own built-in guarantee of success but depended so much on time, circumstances and, above all, the personality of the teacher operating it. A variation on the dramatic approach, suggested in their book, was a semi-dramatic procedure whereby the class role-played some of the big issues in history. An example was the Feudal System in which individuals took on the roles of the king and the barons. The advantages of such an approach were that it encouraged independent reading and the abstracting of significant material; in addition, it was a vital means of consolidating lessons.

In warning readers not to expect automatic success of the dramatic method in teaching history, Archer and his colleagues were echoing the sentiments of the Board of Education:

"On the other hand, experience shows that the indiscriminate use of the method, without careful choice of subject and adequate preparation by teacher and children, may do more harm than good."<sup>1</sup>

If the Board's attitude towards historical dramatization might be termed cautious, there were some views which were definitely hostile. W. S. Tomkinson's objections

---

<sup>1</sup> Handbook of Suggestions (1915), p. 88

to the dramatic method were interesting because they took into consideration not only the nature of history as a subject but also the nature of children's acting.

According to Tomkinson, the historian used the arts of the poet in presenting the past to the present:

"To understand how this is done is to understand the nature of Art, which can make the symbol more real for us than the actual."<sup>1</sup>

Tomkinson elaborated on this point by suggesting that a "good and emotional" reading of a poem dealing with an historical event could bring sensitive children near to tears. Yet, if such an event were presented dramatically, it would merely provoke "undisguised amusement" on the part of actors and audience. "The atmosphere - and good history teaching is largely the presentment of correct atmosphere - would be falsified and debased. Imagination by which alone we possess the past, would be overpowered by the crude realism of history in action. In grasping at the substance you have lost even the shadow."<sup>2</sup> The emotional response

---

<sup>1</sup> W. S. Tomkinson, The Teaching of English, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 46. Almost thirty years later, the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools made the same sort of comment in its document The Teaching of History. Talking of history teaching as evoking a "sensitiveness to atmosphere (p. 104), the Association considered it very difficult for this sensitiveness to be achieved through class-room dramatics. The document was, however, very much in favour of students absorbing the atmosphere of the historical school play or the professionally-performed history play.

evoked through the presentation of material was, then, the main criteria by which Tomkinson judged the dramatic method in history teaching. Here, he found it wanting and to say that it stimulated the memory was, in his opinion, poor consolation.

When talking of the evoked emotional response, it seems clear that Tomkinson had in mind the response of an audience. In his consideration of the nature of children's acting he was apparently more concerned with the effect on the spectators than on the individual actors. A child was, for the most part, imitative not creative in his acting and, in dealing with facts outside his experience, his acting was likely to be "wooden and his dialogue scanty." The scantiness of improvised dialogue had unfortunately led some publishers to devise a remedy worse than the disease: the publication of ready-made historical dialogues which were too often bad drama and worse history. It was much better that children should write their own plays. Yet, even if children had this dramatic flair, they just did not have enough historical background to "present anything but a caricature of character and incident."<sup>1</sup>

Not all writers would have agreed with Tomkinson's view that the child was not a creative actor; indeed,

---

<sup>1</sup> W. S. Tomkinson, op. cit., p. 47.

some writers such as Findlay considered dramatic activity to be a vital means for the child's creative expression - "it hangs close to the texture of intimate experiences, to the waking dreams, the unuttered desires of the growing youth."<sup>1</sup> The dramatic method in history teaching was an ideal way of blending the child's desire for expression and exploration with the vitalization of historical narrative. The child, particularly the young child, was not ripe for argument and the relations of cause and effect in history: his history was the story - "the movement of events conjoined with the lives of men and women who played a notable part therein."<sup>2</sup> Findlay recognized the aesthetic value of the historical story presented as drama but he was less concerned with effects on an audience than with the absorption and sincerity of the actors:

"In acting their whole energies can be easily stirred to get at the meaning of a narrative and to use all their powers, speech, song, gesture, costume, to give a better and better rendering of their ideas and sentiments: under such conditions the audience remains where it should remain, in the margin or in the background of consciousness."<sup>3</sup>

By the 1920s the influence of Caldwell Cook was being felt in educational writings. In The Teaching of

---

<sup>1</sup> J. J. Findlay, History and its place in Education, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

History, Hasluck aimed his comments at specialists teachers of history whom he wished to acquaint with recent methods. He thought "the best historical school plays are those which are more or less extemporised,"<sup>1</sup> and his readers were referred to Caldwell Cook for more assistance in the pupil-centred, play-making process.

Hasluck suggested that the dramatic method was not a magic elixir. It needed careful organization and management and might present discipline problems to some teachers. Yet, in good hands, it provided interest and pleasure for children; was a means of consolidating knowledge; and it stimulated pupils to extend their awareness of history.

Hasluck was unsure about the value of the scripted play in history. The poetic dramatist rarely adhered to historical accuracy and, certainly in the case of Shakespeare, genuine appreciation came only from a "highly developed and imaginative mind."<sup>2</sup> However, if the study and acting of the scripted play might not seem worthwhile as a historical pursuit in the classroom, teachers were recommended to take their pupils to the performances of good historical plays in the professional theatre.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> E. L. Hasluck, The Teaching of History, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> E. L. Hasluck, Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Shaw's St. Joan was published in 1924 and between 1918-1923 John Drinkwater had written Abraham Lincoln, Cromwell, Mary Stuart and Robert E. Lee.

Someone who had been influenced more directly by Caldwell Cook was F. C. Happold, the author of The Approach to History, a book first published in 1928. Happold taught history at the Perse School for some years and later became headmaster of Bishop Wordsworth's School, Salisbury. He agreed with Tomkinson about the power of the imagination in realizing the past but had more faith in the creative powers of children than Tomkinson had. With 12-14 year old boys he found dramatization a useful means of acquiring historical insight.

Pindlay had made the point that for children history was concerned with people and events and that dramatization served as a means of enlivening historical narrative and giving children's creative powers a natural outlet. These points were elaborated on in a book - The Learning of History - published in 1929. C. B. Firth, the author, was a lecturer at Furzedown Training College. It seems a reasonable assumption that some of the approaches she advocated were in current use for in a foreward to the book she acknowledged the help of schools and the History Section of the Training College Association.

Firth did not see history as an isolated academic discipline in the elementary school: it gave an opportunity for the "development and integration of personality"<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> C. B. Firth, The Learning of History, p. 7.

through a child's identification with persons and events. The arts were a valuable means of achieving this identification and of the arts drama was particularly important in that the dramatist, like the historian, was fundamentally concerned with men and women:

"It (drama) represents in a particular setting of time and space one or another aspect of the never-ending attempt at the adventure of living, portraying in a particular example some part of the conflict in which we are all engaged.... Historian and dramatist alike, while each must be true to the laws of his own approach to the study of life, attempt to set out a story of individual lives which has more than individual significance."<sup>1</sup>

In her practical suggestions regarding dramatic work Firth laid more stress on dramatization of scenes than she did on the presentation of the complete historical play. There was a danger that means might be regarded as ends and in the case of the whole play this could well imply a sacrifice of historical accuracy to artistic shaping. In addition, the presentation of a scripted play was a time-consuming process. Spontaneous dramatization was a useful activity with the lower standards of the elementary school; the holding of a Manor Court or the Knighting Ceremony provided examples of suitable material. The older standards could do spontaneous work but at times they might be asked to prepare group

---

<sup>1</sup> C. B. Firth, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

presentations of various scenes from history they had studied. These presentations would be an interesting and novel way of revising and consolidating work.

During the period concerned in this thesis there seems to have been a particularly enthusiastic awareness of drama's link with history in the second two decades of the century. A probable reason was the one already mentioned: that a new approach to history coincided with the growth of the child-centred movement in education and thus supporters of each were eagerly looking for activity methods that blended the two. It is significant, however, that the Hadow report on the 'Primary School (1931)' made no mention of dramatization as a method of presenting history. A possible reason for this would seem to lie in a growing suspicion that historical fact too often became dramatic fiction. The report did not actually refer to drama in this context but it did say:

"We would, however, point out here that in the primary school much of what is commonly taught as history may better be read as literature."<sup>1</sup>

Another factor which has probably had a limiting effect on the use of drama in history teaching - particularly in the secondary sphere - is the increasing stress placed on the economic and institutional approach to history and the decreasing emphasis placed on personalities.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Primary School, paragraph 80.

PART 4

DRAMA AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

"Drama was in the beginning man's chosen medium for the expression of his religion, and modern experience has shown that its unique value has not diminished."<sup>1</sup>

These words formed part of a foreward to a book, published in 1942, which was concerned with religious drama for children. Lobb has suggested that the true revival of religious drama in this country "coincided with the return of verse to the theatre;"<sup>2</sup> this revival was encouraged by Masefield's "Good Friday" written in 1915 and it received impetus from the presentation of his "The Coming of Christ" in Canterbury Cathedral during 1928. Two years later the annual Canterbury Festival was officially inaugurated. It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that this firm alliance between the Anglican church and drama brought about a renewed interest in the possibilities of religious drama in schools during the 1930s and the years following.

Reference will be made to this interest later but first some consideration must be given to the earlier awareness of the scope of drama in religious teaching. One of the early types of dramatic activity in the church schools during the first twenty years of the century was

---

<sup>1</sup> E. Martin Browne's preface in F. Collins, Children in the Market Place.

<sup>2</sup> K. M. Lobb, The Drama in School and Church, p. 111.

the annual Nativity Play. The best of these Nativity Plays presumably provided for a communal expression of faith but one suspects that the majority allowed teachers to manipulate children into situations whereby the glory of parents was rather more enhanced than the glory of God.

Biblical material was used for dramatization in some schools during the early years of the century but, if Caldwell Cook's use of it is a reliable guide, its value may have often lay rather more in its artistic than religious aspects:

"The Bible has always been one of the great sources of inspiration in English literature, and many of the stories in the Old Testament make excellent material for playmaking. In the style of the Bible narrative the boys would have before them the very purest and most beautiful of English prose."<sup>1</sup>

The Catholic church was quick to see the possibilities of religious drama and in 1917 the Catholic Play Society was formed. One of the aims of the society was to "encourage by every means in its power the development of an adequate and convincing representation through the medium of drama of the truths of the Christian Faith and the history of the Church."<sup>2</sup> To this end, the Society produced plays, usually in London, and also gave

---

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Cook, The Play Way, p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> Adult Education Committee Paper No. 6, The Drama in Adult Education, p. 122.

advice and practical help to other bodies. The influence of the Catholic Play Society spread through its thrice-yearly magazine and presumably it touched the schools for the Adult Education Committee spoke in its paper No. 6 (1926) of the encouragement given to drama in Catholic Schools, particularly in the larger secondary schools. The same paper referred to the dramatic activities of the Free Churches, noting in one instance two plays performed in a church for an audience of children:

"They consisted of a told story, Saint Bride and Ithar, followed by dumb show representations of the stories with appropriate music. Each story included a Holy Family tableau with the adoration of Shepherds and wise men. There were eight or nine players in the first, and between twenty and thirty in the second, including a crowd of village people."<sup>1</sup>

These may have been small beginnings but they were an indication that the Churches were beginning, once more, to realise the teaching value of drama; it is significant that the Adult Education Committee should assert that "if the drama is again to take its full place in English life, it must again find allies in the Church and in the schools, such as it was happy in possessing earlier in our history."<sup>2</sup>

An important event in the reconciliation of drama

---

<sup>1</sup> Adult Education Committee Paper No. 6, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

and the Church was the foundation of the interdenominational Religious Drama Society in 1930. A further fillip to the cause of religious drama in schools came with the launching of the magazine "Religion in Education" in 1934. Several of its 1935 issues dealt with the utilization of drama in religious education.

There was a concern, continually referred to in these issues, lest religious drama should become debased drama. One editorial raised the question of the interpretation of Biblical themes and alluded to the dangers of exploitation and sensationalism. The point was well expressed by Moira Swann, a school mistress:

"It must be, therefore, not a mediocre play with a religious flavour that gives some sort of an emotional stimulus, but a play, however simple, in which a fine literary quality worthy of the genuine religious impulse that it enshrines, is dedicated to the glory of God."<sup>1</sup>

Swann encouraged both scripted religious plays - she wrote several - and plays made by pupils. The life-histories of characters such as Joseph and Moses provided material for longer plays whilst many Biblical scenes lent themselves to shorter dramatizations. She found that if children used the actual words of the Bible in their plays, they grew familiar with these words in their

---

<sup>1</sup> Religion in Education (April 1935), p. 105.

acting and turned to the Bible with "a new interest and a new intimacy."<sup>1</sup> This, in turn, enhanced the spiritual value they received from entering into the lives of persons from the Bible.

Writing later in 1935, Phyllis Potter, the Director of Religious Drama for the Diocese of Chelmsford, postulated a new approach to religious drama in which the child had an important place. She foresaw a reforging of the link between actor and onlooker which had been lost in secular drama:

"The significance and the future of religious drama lie not in a return to the old; nor in a separation of drama as a means of expression from drama as a means of teaching, but in a binding of the two, and restoring by the power of imagination, that lost link between actor and onlooker which will deepen and enrich the worship of both."<sup>2</sup>

Children were important instruments for conveying truth because of the "virtue of their almost cold personality."<sup>3</sup> Here, it seems, Potter was implying that children were less likely than the adult actor was to distort the religious message through egotistical interpretation.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Religion in Education (April 1935), p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Religion in Education (July 1935), p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

<sup>4</sup> In an address to the Annual Meeting of the Dalcroze Society in 1932 (quoted in F. Collins, Children in the Market Place, p. 90) Potter had explained: (Children) "have that cold impersonality which, even in the dramatization of intense emotion, remains impersonal, so that they become symbols rather than individuals, pure vessels for the expression of emotion."

Yet, she emphasized that children were not, on the other hand, to be used as puppets in religious drama: a training was needed whereby a child might become accustomed to working on a stage but, more importantly, whereby he might "develop and free his whole personality and quicken his susceptibilities."<sup>1</sup> Such training was to be found in eurythmics, which allowed a child to "reveal unguessed depths of soul."<sup>2</sup>

It is obvious that in Potter's approach the freeing of personality allowed a child to lose himself in communal worship;<sup>3</sup> she was less concerned with his individualism as such. Not all approaches were as mystically orientated as hers, however. Margaret Steppat, a Training College lecturer, advocated what might be considered a more routine dramatic approach to scripture teaching.

Drama gave children emotional release and, by means of imaginative sympathy, insight into human life, conduct and morals. They were particularly attracted to drama because it employed as "its medium of expression the

---

<sup>1</sup> Religion in Education (April 1935), p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> Indeed, in the address to the Dalcroze Society mentioned previously, she talked of her approach to religious drama achieving the "greatest of all arts - that art which reaches its supreme height in the celebration of the mass, when priest and worshipper unite in one great Act and are lifted beyond time and space into the limitless and the eternal."

common setting of human life, human figures engaged in human undertakings and employing their own speech."<sup>1</sup>

Stepat acknowledged that an adaptation of the dramatic method to scripture teaching implied a "re-realizing the material from a totally fresh point of view."<sup>2</sup> She considered that free drama, from which so much had been hoped twenty years previously, had not really justified itself; the reasons for this concerned the difficulties of its practical implementation in the classroom. "But if it could be applied without loss of atmosphere and break-up of classroom integration, many more teachers would attempt it."<sup>3</sup> She outlined three possible approaches: the tableau, the mime and play-making.

The tableau was appropriate for junior forms but might in certain circumstances be useful with older children. Its primary appeal was to the imagination and the spirit but it also encouraged discussion, criticism and research, particularly when a group had to defend the accuracy of its tableau interpretation before the rest of the class.

---

<sup>1</sup> Religion in Education (October, 1941), p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

In her discussion of mime and play-making Steppat appears to have had some difficulty in resolving means and ends. A rather ponderous approach to mime - "to expect children to mime spontaneously is mere waste of time"<sup>1</sup> - stressed detailed planning of gestures and moves without suggesting how spiritual insight might be achieved. In her description of the play-making process she was more explicit: if a Bible story was enacted, the story was more significant than the embodiment. Thus, detailed accessories and properties were to be eschewed because they were likely to inhibit "imaginative reality" and the consideration of motives in a story. A more significant point made was that Biblical stories should be dramatized in the everyday speech of the children. Despite the fact that, for many adults, the appeal of Biblical passages was inevitably linked with their traditional expression, "the archaic language .... produces mistiness in the meaning for young people."<sup>2</sup>

Steppat never seemed quite able to dispense with the idea of performance before an audience and, even in the classroom situation, she envisaged sections of the class

---

<sup>1</sup> Religion in Education (October, 1941), p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

acting in front of the rest. She conceded that there might be several members of a class who were unwilling to act and she thought these pupils ought not to be forced. In fact they might become a regular audience trained in criticism. It is in enumerating the criteria by which they judged a play that Steppat appears to deny the primacy of content over embodiment:

"They would consider clear enunciation and correct pronunciation; right intonation, phrasing and interpretation; deportment, gesture, bearing."<sup>1</sup>

The 1940s saw a proliferation of works dealing with drama in religious education. Of course, many of these appeared after the 1944 Act had given statutory force to the provision of religious instruction in schools. A reference to one book,<sup>2</sup> published two years previous to the Butler Act, will evidence an extension to, rather than any radical departure from, the thinking about religious drama of the mid-thirties.

Freda Collins regarded religious drama as a means by which children achieved personal growth in a spiritually uplifting atmosphere.

"Acting, with its necessary team-work, encourages voluntary discipline: it also creates sympathy with other people as a result of the players living the thoughts and emotions of the characters which are being acted. The backward child and the very poor

---

<sup>1</sup> Religion in Education (October, 1941), p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> F. Collins, Children in the Market Place.

child have a chance of developing their personalities ... Throughout the whole of religious drama the children are unconsciously ordering their thoughts in a background of beauty, goodness and truth."<sup>1</sup>

In many ways she found play-making by children to be a more profitable exercise than the presentation of published plays. Play-making could be better adapted to a particular class. In addition, it encouraged spontaneous dialogue and a close analysis of character and incident. In both exercises, however, the creative expression of the child was much more important than the imposition of adult thoughts and feelings.

Because Collins envisaged a child's spiritual development as being so closely associated with his overall growth it is not surprising to hear her say that "play material does not only come from the Bible, and this is as it should be, for a watertight-compartment view of life is a strangle-hold upon religious drama."<sup>2</sup> She was adamant in her condemnation of bad didactic plays which hid their deficiencies of plot, character and tone under the label of religious drama. As far as tone was concerned santimonious was not the same as saintly.

It might reasonably be argued that the approaches to drama in religious education discussed so far represented the views of a few specialists alone and were not likely to be very influential. Was there any indication that

---

<sup>1</sup> F. Collins, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

drama as an adjunct to religious education was being advocated on any appreciable scale prior to 1944? The revised Cambridge Syllabus of Religious Teaching for Schools (1939) suggests there was. The use of dramatization was particularly recommended as an aid in teaching infants and juniors.

As far as infants were concerned, the Syllabus suggested that certain religious festivals such as the Harvest Festival might be given a dramatic structure; also, there was scope within religious teaching for centres of interest which integrated all the arts. The Syllabus considered that many of the stories of Jesus lent themselves either to spontaneous dramatization or to mime:

"The Good Samaritan is told with a wealth of detail by St. Luke, and children who find it difficult to act and speak according to plan will be better able to lose themselves in the drama if the teacher tells the story while they act. If 20 children can take part in these little plays so much the better - the crowd of robbers, the friends and neighbours are as important to the stories and give as much scope for realistic action as the priest, the innkeeper, the shepherd or the housewife."<sup>1</sup>

According to the Syllabus, juniors would show a

---

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge Syllabus of Religious Teaching for Schools (Revised Edition 1939), p. 25. The Syllabus, devised by a body of theologians, teachers and educationalists under the Chairmanship of Sir Will Spens, was an influential document. Many of the Syllabuses formulated after the 1944 Act were considerably indebted to it.

similar zest in their dramatizations. The parables presented particularly good material both because of their intrinsic dramatic quality and because plenty of realistic detail was implied in the text:

"The telling of the stories will occupy a comparatively short time but they can be acted again and again with increasing use of detail."<sup>1</sup>

The Syllabus made no specific reference to drama with senior children although it did suggest that the teacher should use his own discretion as far as methods were concerned. It seems probable, however, that the Syllabus thought dramatization too self-conscious a medium for seniors, because in a reference to methods with backward children it said they "do not usually become self-conscious as early as the more normal ones, and so they enjoy for a longer time the active participation which dramatization of the Bible stories affords."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge Syllabus of Religious Teaching for Schools, (1939)  
op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

CHAPTER VII

THE SCHOOL PLAY

The school play as a public performance has a long tradition behind it and, not surprisingly, when school drama came into its own again during the twentieth century, the school play was in the van. During the period covered in the present thesis it grew rapidly in popularity and, from being the province of the public and old-established grammar schools, it spread to the new secondary schools formed as a result of the 1902 Act and also to other sectors of the educational system.

The growth of popularity was particularly marked in the twenties and thirties. Reasons for this have been implied elsewhere in the thesis: an obvious one was the general rise of drama in public esteem and two other specific reasons were the influence of Caldwell

Cook and the Newbolt Report. However, as has been stated previously, many schools were left untouched by this growth and its development in others went by fits and starts. So much depended on the enthusiasm of particular individuals and the sympathy of the school authorities. In 1934 an expression of disapproval by the Bishop of Exeter at boys dressing as females in 'Electra' was enough to stop drama at the Naval College, Dartmouth for a decade.

The staple diet during the early years of the century consisted of Shakespeare and classical plays often in the original language; this was a diet not too detached from the menu of the curriculum in the public and grammar schools. Several schools had already established reputations in specific areas. Bradfield College acquired fame from its performances of Greek plays. The first production was in 1881 and from 1888 the plays were presented every three years in an open-air theatre modelled out of a disused chalk-pit. The Latin Play at Westminster has the longest tradition of all school plays. Inaugurated during the reign of the first Elizabeth it has continued ever since despite some enforced interruptions. Other schools such as Shrewsbury, St. Paul's and Merchant Taylors made a point

of producing Latin and Greek plays during the early years of the century.

Evidence of a wider interest in these plays and an official awareness of their possibilities is instanced by an Education Report in the series of Special Reports on Educational Subjects. In 1898, an article was written on School Plays in Latin and Greek. Much of the article was concerned with an historical survey but, significantly enough, the author made some observations on the educational value of acting in light of the recent revival of Greek drama in the schools.

Commenting on the strength and extent of the dramatic instinct in children, he suggested that school plays might be a formative influence in education. In the case of Greek plays there were definite academic values to be gained. At the same time, however, the author recognized the wider possibilities of these plays for the developing personality:

"I have written of the vitalization of language, the direct improvement in scholarship, and the indirect gain in the spheres of history, mythology, archaeology, and art, which may be looked for from renderings like these. Something has been said also of the unique opportunities they afford for quickening the perceptive and expressive faculties of boyhood, and of the rational and healthy interest they introduce into school life."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Special Reports on Educational Subjects (1898), Volume 2.

Some mention of performance of French plays in the original has been made in the chapter 'The Dramatic Method.' Newbury Grammar School was spoken of in that context but other institutions such as St. Paul's and Merchant Taylors had set an early example in this field.

Shakespeare always has been, and presumably always will be, the most popular material for the school play. K. M. Lobb, in describing the thirties as the "High Noon of School Drama," has stated that their "Sun was Shakespeare."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, many well-known school productions of Shakespeare occurred during this period when some schools began to experiment in their approach. However, there had been Shakespearian productions from the beginning of the century and, in the case of public schools like Hurstpierpoint and Winchester, from the middle of the previous century. It was by way of Shakespeare that some of the less-established schools came to the school play. Several broke themselves in gently by the presentation of scenes from Shakespeare at Speech Days or School Concerts but others were more ambitious. The Sheffield Central Secondary Boys' School gave annual productions of Shakespeare from 1907 and the Forest School, Epping had an even longer tradition.

---

<sup>1</sup> K. M. Lobb, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

The Newbolt Report described a performance of Richard II in an elementary school to support its contention that school plays, despite limitations of resources, were both enjoyable and educationally profitable.<sup>1</sup>

In citing examples of school productions of Shakespeare during the thirties one is conscious of treading well-worn ground and doing an injustice to numerous uncited examples. A possible defence is that well-worn ground was only reached that state because numerous people have considered it worth treading.

Raynes Park County School received national acclaim for its productions when John Garrett was headmaster as Bristol Grammar School was to do when he moved there in the early forties.<sup>2</sup> At Cranleigh School, Michael Redgrave produced a notable series of Shakespeare plays. His production of "As You Like It" in 1932 was recognized as "an exhilarating break in the tradition of school dramatics"<sup>3</sup> in its use of an apron stage and entrances

---

<sup>1</sup> The Teaching of English in England, paragraph 289.

<sup>2</sup> Garrett moves to Bristol in 1942. The next year 'Julius Caesar' was performed. This was the first full-length play presented at the Grammar School for 23 years. This is proof of the point made earlier about so much depending on the enthusiasm of individuals.

<sup>3</sup> The Times Educational Supplement (July 9, 1932) quoted in K. M. Lobb, op. cit., p. 87. It is interesting to note that, at the present time, Cranleigh is doing lively and progressive drama. It is probably one of the few public schools for boys where improvisation and dance-drama are part of the normal curriculum.

through the auditorium. Gresham's School and Stowe put on open-air productions while Bedales and The Sloane School experimented with modern-dress versions of Shakespeare. Obviously, experiments can so easily degenerate into gimmickry, but a more likely explanation of this experimental approach to school plays during the thirties is that, in several establishments at least, the school play had reached a level of real aesthetic worth and endeavour.<sup>1</sup>

This level was certainly attained in the productions by Guy Boas at The Sloane School if the contemporary newspaper criticisms are reliable evidence. Sir Walter Raleigh had written in 1907 that "with the disappearance of the boy players the poetic drama died in England and it has had no second life."<sup>2</sup> The Sloane School performances might be seen as a conscious attempt to prove that the boy players still existed - in the schools - and that their unaffected simplicity showed them "to be the most suitable medium through which to hear the poet-dramatist."<sup>3</sup> The effect of the poet-dramatist on the

---

<sup>1</sup>As E. F. Dyer, *Producing School Plays*, p. 12 said:  
"Our job is to make our performances artistically sincere and theatrically intelligent. .... The place of the drama in schools is already established: let us establish in them the art of the theatre."

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in R. A. Coggin, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

<sup>3</sup>G. Boas, *Shakespeare and the Young Actor*, p. 7.

actors themselves was an enlargement and enrichment of personality:

"They will have experienced the true joy of living, the being integrated into something greater than oneself, an experience which, unless they are darlings of fortune, they may never have again, and in that sense it may prove true that a man's school-days are the best days of his life."<sup>1</sup>

Schools such as The Sloane and others already referred to were fortunate in that they had stages on which to perform plays. Many publicly provided schools were less fortunate. The 1902 edition of Modern School Buildings made no reference to a stage although it did suggest that there should be an entrance close to the platform in the school hall thus preventing important people having to squeeze their way through the audience on Speech Days. Perhaps there was a hint at school plays in its remark, "it is however, open to question as to how far it is a good plan to make any allowance for functions which occur only a few times a year, when there is probably a Town Hall or some convenient place that can be hired for the purpose."<sup>2</sup>

The 1929 edition of Modern School Buildings was much more specific in its comments on the school hall and its use for drama:

---

<sup>1</sup> G. Doas, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in D.E.S. Building Bulletin No. 30, p. 1.

"The hall should have a small platform at one end for ordinary use, with an additional piece that can be added when required to turn it into a stage."<sup>1</sup>

The first point to make, of course, is that the change of emphasis in the two editions points to the growing awareness of drama's importance in education over the twenty-seven years that separated them. It might be uncharitable to suggest, in the same breath, that the 1929 edition gave support to the idea of the multi-purpose hall that did no one job satisfactorily and in the case of drama supplied a restricting imitation of the professional proscenium stage.

Although Shakespeare was a major item in the school-play programme during the thirties, there was, nevertheless, a growing realization that there were viable alternatives.<sup>2</sup> A list of some of the items performed by two dramatically progressive schools, Bryanston and Neaton Grammar School, will perhaps give an indication of the variety of viable material. Among the plays performed at Bryanston in the thirties were 'Dear Brutus,'

---

<sup>1</sup> D.S.S. Building Bulletin No. 30, op. cit., p. 1. All was not lost if a platform was unavailable as the following comment from an article in the Scottish Educational Journal (November 25th, 1927) p. 1186 makes clear: "Have a raised platform if you can, at least 9 ft. deep, 18 ft. wide and 2 ft. high with steps running down into the auditorium. Should this be impossible then play on the floor level, making most of the available space. Dismiss the thought of elaborate scenery from your mind; it is unnecessary, cramping and quite unsuitable for school playing."

<sup>2</sup> In a way, one might suggest that the Nativity Play had been an alternative for a long time. This seasonal offering has not been considered in the present context.

'The Cherry Orchard,' 'Caesar and Cleopatra,' 'Pillars of Society' and 'Murder in the Cathedral.' During the same period Beaton Grammar School presented 'St. Patrick's Day,' 'The Mikado,' 'R.U.R.' 'Androcles and the Lion' and 'Judgment Day.'

There is little evidence of original material being performed publicly during the period under review. Two notable exceptions to the general trend were the Perse School and the Hall School, Weybridge. It is rather interesting that the Perse School, which did so much to put classroom Shakespeare on a practical basis, relied on home-made material for its early, public performances.

An institution which often did write its own plays was Citizen House, Bath. Though not primarily an educational institute, it was a possible model for schools in the way it demonstrated the educational possibilities of play-production. This, at least, was the opinion of Horace Shipp, writing in the Educational Times in 1922. The plays at Citizen House satisfied the two criteria laid down by Shipp as being necessary in theatrical-educational work. The first was that the work should be approached in real earnestness and the second, that it should be a development from the

children rather than an imposition of the ideas of others upon them. The first criterion implied productions of real aesthetic worth. The second meant that the young people were involved not merely in writing plays, but also in planning the choreography of any dances needed, designing costumes and sets and organizing other items in connection with the production:

"Always the ideal striven for is that the young people should express themselves, and work out their own ideas; always they are encouraged to mastery of the craft and technique of the various arts of the theatre by fact that mastery is recognized by opportunity. Alongside of this training in self-expression is the training of the team-spirit which is inherent in good theatre work."<sup>1</sup>

Although it is unlikely that many schools adopted such an emancipated approach to their plays as Citizen House did, Shipp's remarks on the educational possibilities of play-production do raise the question as to how others assessed the values of the school play during the first few decades of the century. How did people justify an activity that involved a considerable amount of time, labour and money? In an interesting comment on this issue, Coggin has suggested "that the real reason for drama in schools has been the realization, more or less subconsciously, of its value as pure drama, as a means of fertilizing the spirit."<sup>2</sup> However, because this reason is difficult to explain to philistines and

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Shipp, Education by Mime and Make Believe in Educational Times (March 1922), p. 117.  
<sup>2</sup> P. A. Coggin, op. cit., p. 191.

and because it smacks of an Arts-for-Arts-sake argument, he considers that drama has usually been practised and justified on account of its by-products.

The by-product justification has taken several forms. We have seen that some of the early school plays were, from one point of view, utilitarian: they were closely related to the curriculum and aided language study or the appreciation of Shakespeare. The performance of an examination set text was a probable way that some schools came to the school play. If the production was artistically successful, then it might start a self-perpetuating dramatic tradition which gave added status to the school. A novel example of the aesthetic and utilitarian approach to the school play going hand-in-hand occurred at the City School, Lincoln in 1935. There, a play set as an examination text was given the usual public performances but after this run was over, the play was repeated in front of the examination candidates. This time, however, it was accompanied by a critical commentary and at times key speeches were repeated.

Certain schools used the school play as a fund-raising exercise.<sup>1</sup> As many an impoverished amateur

---

<sup>1</sup> As was suggested in the remarks of a secondary school Head, quoted in The Forum of Education (1925): "All teachers should have some knowledge of stage management and the producing of simple plays. This not from the point of getting up "shows" to raise money, but because of the real educational value of dramatic work."

dramatic society knows there is, in this event, a temptation for the box-office to dictate the choice of play, often to the detriment of the latter. The efforts of the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Penrith were wholly worthy both in choice of play and the nature of their fund-raising activities. It is chosen as an example because it also illustrates an earlier point in connection with the availability of a stage. In fact, in the early twenties the school was not equipped with a stage and its plays were performed in a local theatre. There one of its "most memorable performances was staged"<sup>1</sup> - a presentation of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.' The proceeds from this production were donated to Dr. Barnardo's Homes. A later production, Barrie's 'Quality Street,' helped pay for a portable stage installed in the school hall. By the end of the thirties the school had a permanent stage. Perhaps the most widely-canvassed values of the school play were those mentioned by Shipp: what it did for the individual and what it did for the group. In another section of his article, Shipp suggested that theatrical-educational work should provide, as any true educational scheme ought, "cultivation grounds of individ-

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Jackson , The History of the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Penrith, p. 126.

uality consecrated to group purpose."<sup>1</sup>

Numerous people wrote of the effects of play-acting on the individual and Granville-Barker was not alone in suggesting it taught children "to move well and speak well" and that it gave them "that old-fashioned and underrated thing called deportment and that newer-fashioned, and perhaps for the moment overrated, thing called self-expression."<sup>2</sup> Lest it be thought that all this was wishful thinking on the part of adults, there was the tribute from the pupil himself, exemplified in an extract from a schoolboy editorial in the Eton College chronicle (1921):

"If only acting were a part of everybody's education .... for there is nothing like it to take one out of oneself, or to cure shyness or selfishness."<sup>3</sup>

The value of the play in providing a child with an emotional outlet and in leading him to an appreciation of character has been dealt with fully elsewhere in the thesis, as indeed have many of the other values for the child as an individual. Indeed, the school play was only linking in a master sentiment values to be gained from much of a child's ordinary classroom drama, were he

---

<sup>1</sup> E. Shipp, op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> H. Granville-Barker, op. cit., ; p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in T. H. Vail Motter, op. cit., preface.

fortunate enough to be having this activity in his ordinary lessons. A special virtue of the school play, however, was the point mentioned by Shipp in connection with team-spirit. Margaret Phillips went so far as to suggest that the school stage had a greater socializing effect than the playing-field:

"Another practical need supplied by the drama is the need for membership of the small society. For adolescence this is ... satisfied to perfection by membership of a dramatic cast. Advocates of the team spirit have, according to my material, a more powerful weapon to their hand than organized games."<sup>1</sup>

So much for the by-products of the school play. Of course, there was no reason why these by-products should not co-exist with the "fertilizing of the spirit." It is the coming-together and interaction of individual, group and text that gives life to the printed page and a larger life to the actor:

"Drama .... enriches the experience of all, and is itself enriched by the personality of all who participate in it. Small wonder, then, that drama being of so fundamental and comprehensive a nature should exercise so potent an influence in the field of education."<sup>2</sup>

If the by-products of the school play were emphasized during the period under review, the rather more intangible aspect - aesthetic appeal - was not forgotten.

---

<sup>1</sup> M. Phillips, The Education of the Emotions, p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> Extract from an article in The Scottish Educational Journal (May 13th, 1927), p. 520.

Many writers and reports referred to the humanizing effects of bringing children into contact with great works of art and to the way in which this contact prepared children for life and not merely for a livelihood. Perhaps, one could do no better than cite an extract from a letter by G. Bernard Shaw after he had witnessed a performance of 'The Magic Flute' at an elementary school in 1920:

"What you have proved is that children are susceptible to the finest and greatest art when it is addressed to their imagination, their sense of beauty, kindness, and rectitude, their curiosity and love of ingenuities and artificialities, of disguise and mysteries, and of pretending."<sup>1</sup>

It has been suggested previously that the school play comprised the sole dramatic activity in many establishments during the early decades of the century. Ideally, of course, the school play should be the highlight of a dramatic continuum both inside and outside the classroom and should be vitalized by other dramatic activities in a school. One suspects that in so many of the school plays during the period in question dramatically-inexperienced

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in C. T. Smith, op. cit., p. 14. The letter invites several comments. It is very rare to find Shaw speaking well of teachers. In fact at the end of the same letter, Shaw contrasted the education being given at Smith's school with "the monstrous fraud of child schooling" which was the general lot of children. The producer of 'The Magic Flute' was the C. T. Smith whose ideas of a dramatically-orientated curriculum were discussed in the previous chapter.

children were puppets in the hands of the producer. One suspects also that because dramatic opportunities came so seldom to so few, there must have been a temptation for the few to show-off thus invalidating many of the educational claims made on behalf of the school play. In this light one can appreciate the comments made by an Oxford headmistress just before the turn of the century:

"It may be urged that theatricals teach unselfconsciousness, but this form of unselfconsciousness is worth very little and costs very much; for successful acting eats out the deeper part of a child's nature, as nothing else does. I am not speaking of the 'endless imitation' of the unconscious little actor, playing his mimic part in the nursery, but of the conscious acting to an audience later on - it is the audience that does the harm."<sup>1</sup>

However, the picture was not entirely gloomy and various associations and individuals would have agreed with Dyer that "it would be tragic if emphasis on the more ambitious form of school entertainment were to weaken the springs of simple, spontaneous endeavour."<sup>2</sup>

In Dyer's own school, as in several others, the 'big' play existed among a miscellany of other extra-curricular activities including dramatic society play-readings, house plays and form plays. An appendix in Dyer's book Producing School Plays gave a detailed account

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in P. A. Coggin, op. cit., p. 194.

<sup>2</sup> E. F. Dyer, op. cit., p. 12.

of the wide-ranging activities of a Surrey Grammar School dramatic society in the twenties.

To conclude the present chapter, brief consideration will be given to another aspect of extra-curricular dramatic activity for school children. The chapter on creative dramatics in the United States pointed out that children's theatres were a special feature of the American educational scene.<sup>1</sup> In this country the main impetus to the children's theatre movement came just after the end of the period considered in the thesis although several schemes were in operation earlier. The movement has owed much to the energy and enthusiasm of particular individuals and if this might be said of educational drama as a whole, children's theatre has often had to face the additional burden of poor financial support.

Children's theatre has taken several forms both as regards the nature of the participants and the place of production. The more notable ventures in this country during the early years comprised adults acting to children both in the schools and in theatres.

Reference has been made elsewhere in the thesis to

---

<sup>1</sup> And, one might add, of the Russian educational scene. In 1941 there were 70 children's theatres in Russia excluding puppet theatres. These theatres were state-supported and the authorities recognized their possibilities for mass education and propaganda.

the Shakespearian productions by Sir Ben Greet's company which played to London County Council schoolchildren both in schools and at the Old Vic from 1918. These productions were subsidized by the L.C.C. Greet was also concerned with the English Schools Theatre, an organization formed in 1936 and doing similar work to his original company. Several local authorities paid for children to attend the English Schools Theatre's West End performances of Shakespeare and the classics. Although most of the children were from schools in the Home Counties it was not unknown for parties to come from so far afield as South Wales. During the war the company took its productions to children in evacuation.

An early pioneer of children's theatre in England was Miss Joan Luxton. She started her experiment in 1926, using a small theatre in London. She was helped by professional actors and actresses who gave their services voluntarily. The productions for children usually started at 5.30 p.m. thus allowing the cast to fulfil their normal professional commitments of matinee and evening performances. Miss Luxton's experiment did not last long, the main contributory factors being lack of financial support and the tremendous strain on the cast. Interestingly enough, a member of Miss Luxton's cast, Jean

Sterling Mackinlay, did herself organize a great deal of theatre for children between 1914 and 1939. Each year, over the Christmas period, she ran a matinees-only season of plays.

Of several other ventures, two must be singled out because they were early experiments which managed to exist unscathed through the years. Both the Osiris Players and the Scottish Children's Theatre were formed in 1927. The Osiris Players did not limit their activities to children; when they did perform in school halls, they usually presented Shakespeare and the classics. As the Osiris Players did, Bertha Waddell's company toured with its own equipment. After several lean years her work was accorded official recognition and support and during the late thirties her company toured widely. The Scottish Children's Theatre catered for two age groups: the five to nines and the nines to fourteens. Its repertoire was interesting in that programmes blended music, dance and drama. Instead of presenting adult plays to young children, Miss Waddell's company tried to adapt its material to the level of its audiences.

## CHAPTER VIII

### FIVE PIONEERS

#### INTRODUCTION

The term "pioneers" is used with a certain amount of trepidation because in the field of educational innovations one always suspects "full many a flower is born to blush unseen." Known pioneers would then be a better description of the five persons discussed in the following chapter.<sup>1</sup> That they are and were known results, in a way, from the fact that records existed of their work;<sup>2</sup> that they deserved

---

<sup>1</sup> Obviously, it is easier to become known if one has freedom in which to innovate. Three of the pioneers - Finlay-Johnson, Gilpin and Stone - were Heads of their particular schools; Cook worked for a long time under a sympathetic and progressive Head; and Slade was not a teacher but before 1943 approached education in a freelance capacity.

<sup>2</sup> Caldwell Cook's The Play Way went through eight impressions between 1918 and 1928. But it was not only through their writings that the early pioneers were well known. Harriet Finlay-Johnson was an active member of the New Ideals in Education group; Miss Gilpin was associated with international gatherings of children; and by 1920 Caldwell Cook's work was so well known that he was asked to give evidence to the Newbolt Committee which was considering the Teaching of English in England.

to be widely known stems from the manner in which each put into practice certain sincerely-held convictions concerning education. It is important to emphasize that each was concerned with what constituted a true education for children and that, although drama was an important element in this education, it was not a unique elixir. Too often Cook's Play Way has been taken as meaning merely the dramatic method and even Slade's Child Drama ought to be understood as comprising more than what is ordinarily thought of as drama.

Yet, the obvious reason why these five educationists have been chosen for detailed discussion is their individual approach to dramatic work with children - it is an added bonus that their work spans the period in question and is not restricted either to one type of school or one age-range. The main emphasis in their work is indicative of a general developmental trend in thinking about drama in education that occurred during the first half of the century. Harriet Finlay-Johnson saw drama as a natural and vivid method of presenting the subjects of the curriculum; Miss Gilpin and Caldwell Cook placed a great deal of emphasis on aesthetic appreciation through drama; while Peter Slade and A. R. Stone gave increasing attention to its therapeutic qualities.

It must be said, however, that whilst these pioneers approached drama from a particular angle they were not blind to the fact that dramatic education was many-sided. This awareness arose from their belief that the children they were educating must develop as whole persons. Whole development implied that the child should take an active role in his education; drama provided a natural useful and enjoyable medium for activity.

Harriet Finlay-Johnson

The work of Harriet Finlay-Johnson deserves to be better known to those interested in educational drama specifically and to those interested in progressive education generally. Fortunately there is available a detailed record of her experiences as Headmistress of a village elementary school at Sompting, Sussex during the first decade of the twentieth century. During these years she was able to put to the test her ideas concerning the nature of childhood and the methods by which the child's education might be best achieved. Miss Finlay-Johnson taught a mixed class of approximately 85 children with ages up to 14 whilst her sister looked after the forty-or-so infants.

In her book describing this work Miss Finlay-Johnson does not present us with a comprehensive philosophy of education based on detailed observation and practice as, for instance, Mr. Slade does in his Child Drama. Certainly she shared with him a distaste of much that was done in the name of education, had like him the needs of the child at heart but lacked the detailed, theoretical underpinning that he gives his practical work. Indeed, Miss Finlay-Johnson maintained that it was her intention to write a practical account of the way she taught her

school children by the Dramatic Method. The account is an interesting blend of the gushingly-quaint and the refreshingly-straightforward.

When Miss Finlay-Johnson was appointed to Sompting towards the end of the nineteenth century, she was appalled by the lack of initiative and originality on the part of the children - a direct result of the prevailing atmosphere of the school - and was determined to remedy the situation by some drastic step. Her first move towards encouraging the child's expression rather than suppression of himself was one approved by Rousseau in *Emile*: the first-hand study of Nature. Because Nature was the inspiration of poet and artist alike, it became the link between and subject matter for many aspects of the Sompting curriculum. Miss Finlay-Johnson initiated a four-stage procedure in her pupils' approach to Nature. Firstly they were trained to see the world of Nature around them, then urged to speak of what they saw. Afterwards they were shown how to find their impressions confirmed and crystallized by reference to literature and lastly they were encouraged to suggest reasons and causes in free discussion.

The emergence of the dramatic method came about in rather an unusual way. History was one subject which

could not be linked with nature study in meaningful terms and the play was seen as the ideal approach to history because, if handled properly, it would inspire the same kind of immediacy and self-reliance that direct observation of Nature did.

It was essential that the play was of the child's making and in defending the result against the imposition of adult critical standards, Miss Finlay-Johnson came close to Peter Slade's concept of In-flow and Out-flow:<sup>1</sup>

"However crude the action or dialogue from the adult's point of view, it would fitly express the stage of development arrived at by the child's mind and would, therefore, be valuable to him as a vehicle of expression and assimilation rather than a finished product pleasing to the more cultivated mind of an adult, and, perhaps, boring to a child."<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, to Miss Finlay-Johnson, the child was always more important than the method, for

"It was my endeavour to treat with children rather than with methods and theories."<sup>3</sup>

and any method had to go beyond the mere imposition of utilitarian facts by an authoritarian teacher.

It is logical, considering the emphasis placed by Miss Finlay-Johnson on direct observation of the natural

---

<sup>1</sup> P. Slade, Child Drama, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> M. Finlay-Johnson, The Dramatic Method of Teaching, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

world, that she should see the child's development in terms of natural growth and drama as a natural aid to this growth. R. F. Dearden, in talking of the vagueness of the growth concept, suggests "it functions as a symbolic image, pregnant with meaning and rich in emotional appeal."<sup>1</sup> Miss Finlay-Johnson aptly illustrated this point:

"Am I quite wrong when I say that childhood should be a time for merely absorbing big stores of sunshine for possible future dark times? And what do I mean by sunshine but just the things for which Nature implanted (in the best and highest part of us) an innate desire - the joy in knowing the beauties of the living world around us and in probing its mysteries; the delights of finding sympathetic thoughts in the best of our Literature; the gradual appreciation of the beautiful in Art; the desire which all these bring to burning youth to be up and 'doing like wise;' the awakening of the young enthusiasm, even of merely evanescent youthful dreams instead of the soul-deadening monotony and limitation of technical instruction."<sup>2</sup>

Mention has already been made of Miss Finlay-Johnson's anxiety less the child be subservient to the method and by following another tenet of the child-centred theorists - an appeal to the child's natural interests - she was able to allay any doubts in using dramatization, for "we were using for educational purposes one of the strongest

---

<sup>1</sup> R. F. Dearden, The Philosophy of Primary Education, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> H. Finlay-Johnson, op. cit., p. 27.

instincts of childhood - I might almost say of human nature. We were harnessing another 'Niagara Falls!'"<sup>1</sup>

Miss Finlay-Johnson's faith in the strength of the dramatic instinct and corresponding belief in its educational value for the individual personality were vitally important aspects of her work and showed her to be aware of the distinction between theatre and drama.<sup>2</sup>

For instance, in the first Sompting plays, historical plays based on the historical novel, she was insistent that the child identify with real people:

"I desired that the children should act real characters, and not at first, mythical or fairy creations. This did away with the idea of acting for display in the usual school entertainment way, which would considerably detract from the educational value, in that it would foster self-consciousness or nervousness."<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately she did not go into greater detail at this point nor do we hear whether the younger children taught by her sister were receiving an education through drama. This is a pity because one might well comment that until the child has had an opportunity to explore

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Finlay-Johnson, op. cit., ; p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> See B. Way, Development through Drama, p. 2. "The major difference between the two activities can be stated as follows: 'theatre' is largely concerned with communications between actors and an audience; 'drama' is largely concerned with experience by the participants, irrespective of any function of communication to an audience."

<sup>3</sup> H. Finlay-Johnson, op. cit., p. 25.

his own personality in drama and has been able in the early stages to reveal his imaginative life through fantasy it is asking a great deal to expect him, as part of a first dramatic venture, to explore the personalities of other people.

However it is easy to be wise in retrospect and any such criticisms are really a tribute to the progressive nature of Miss Finlay-Johnson's work. She wanted the right attitudes to be engendered in her pupils. Like Peter Slade, she was conscious of the qualities of sincerity and absorption and she shared his concept of Happiness-Development:<sup>1</sup>

"And, one other plea for the dramatic method of teaching in school: it makes for greater happiness of both scholars and teachers .... hardened and deadened indeed must be the teacher who could resist the happiness radiated by children anxious to play well."<sup>2</sup>

Although much of Miss Finlay-Johnson's classroom drama seems to have been theatrically orientated in the sense of using a stage area, there must have been a wonderful spilling-over, as Mr. Slade calls it, when the plays were done outside - particularly in the impromptu history plays done on the side of the downs. Even in the

---

<sup>1</sup> F. Slade, op. cit., p. 13. "Happiness-Development - a stage in creative expression aimed at by the teacher. First signs of joy dependent on out-flow."

<sup>2</sup> H. Finlay-Johnson, op. cit., p. 28.

classroom, however, Miss Finlay-Johnson saw no reason for an audience in the accepted sense: those children without specific parts acted as a chorus:

"This all did away with the idea of 'audience' and consequently with 'acting' for display, self-consciousness, nerves and possible jealousy and heart-burnings of which, of course, we desired to steer clear."<sup>1</sup>

She only too clearly recalled the pain of 'artificial' acting and subsequent lack of correspondence between gesture and emotion:

"One remembers the 'actions' taught in lessons set apart for 'recitation' and 'action songs.' How little they expressed what the child itself felt."<sup>2</sup>

As stated previously, the first plays at Sompting were linked with the teaching of history and were adapted from historical novels. Nevertheless, Miss Finlay-Johnson stressed the beneficial effects this drama was having on the personal development of her pupils quite apart from the way it made history more vivid:

"Each subsequent performance showed a marvellous improvement in knowledge and intelligence of the right kind. The Scholars themselves even while inventing probable conversations not recorded verbatim in the book, either consciously or unconsciously kept up the style and 'period' in their own diction. They showed the greatest resourcefulness

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Finlay-Johnson, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

in getting over difficulties."<sup>1</sup>

More and more Miss Finlay-Johnson saw resourcefulness, self-reliance and individual habits of research being developed as a result of these basic attempts at improvised play-making. Accordingly she realised that the balance of teacher-pupil participation in a lesson needed adjustment:

"I begin to see how it might be possible to throw more of the actual lessons, including their preparation and arrangement, on to the scholars themselves .... for the best notes, prepared by the teacher with laborious care overnight presuppose an attitude of mind which may, in the morning, be missing from the class, as a whole or from individual children."<sup>2</sup>

She recognized also the facility that children have for teaching other children and learning from them, a facility that could have disruptive effects if it were not channelled in the right direction.

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Finlay-Johnson, op. cit., p. 38. Appendix two might suggest that the attempt to reproduce the style and diction of a given period often led to what the Department of Education and Science Survey 2 (1967) calls the "verbal cliché." Yet in making this sort of criticism one might be accused of paying too much attention to the thing done rather than the doing of the thing. Obviously compensatory gains arose from the exercise.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 43. Compare one of the conclusions reached by the Department of Education and Science Survey 2 (1967), p. 107. "Drama in many schools fails in development through excessive domination by the teacher. No real exploration of any area of human experience can be achieved by children or young people when the area to be explored, and in many cases the manner in which it is to be explored, have been arbitrarily imposed."

Costumes and properties were used extensively in the Sompthing history plays and were for the most part made by the pupils; costume design varied between the crudely symbolic and the realistically detailed. Miss Finlay-Johnson spoke of the value of this related art and handicraft work and contrasted it with the set, formal lesson of many elementary schools:

"I fancy this brought forth their ingenuity more and had a better educational value, than set formal lessons on handicrafts - that is, for Elementary School children. It set them experimenting at any rate and by it they found out their own weakness of method and technical ignorances. It seems, indeed as if dramatizing lessons touched human interest which would express itself in every possible form of art."<sup>1</sup>

A subsequent dramatic approach to history adopted by the Sompthing School was what Miss Finlay-Johnson called the 'original' play. Even more reliance was placed on the resourcefulness and ingenuity of the pupils in this approach. Instead of relying on historical novels for much of their dialogue, they had to construct this themselves from the bare bones of historical fact culled from

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Finlay-Johnson, op. cit., p. 120. Compare the views expressed by Sir Herbert Read and quoted in P. Slade, Child Drama, p. 122. "Drama is absolutely essential in all stages of education. Indeed I regard it as that form of activity which best co-ordinates all other forms of education through art. Since, in my view, education through art should be the basic method in all education whatsoever, it will be seen that too high a value cannot be placed upon Child Drama."

various sources; again Miss Finlay-Johnson was very conscious of the wider educational implications of such an approach:

"It may not be the facts themselves which are so valuable. It is the habit of mind formed while learning them which makes their worth."<sup>1</sup>

The procedure whereby the children researched individually - using library books wisely rather than slavishly - and then discussed their findings among the group is one used widely today. Indeed Miss Finlay-Johnson's abhorrence of the "stand and deliver" method of teaching to which this procedure was an antidote appears very modern. Also, like some progressive teachers of today, she might have slightly underestimated the role of the teacher in the conceptual development of the child when she advocated that "we should confront him with what he may be expected to be able to assimilate and throw the whole responsibility of assimilation on to himself - in other words, it is useless to eat his food for him, he must eat it for himself."<sup>2</sup> This approach comes close to what Sir Karl Popper has aptly called the bucket theory of mind.

A controversial issue in contemporary discussions of

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Finlay-Johnson, op. cit. p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

educational drama is the dichotomy between improvised drama and study of the written play.<sup>1</sup> No such difficulties presented themselves at Sompting and it was accepted as part of a natural process that the pupils should, after toying with their own apprentice efforts at drama, arrive at a master of the dramatic craft: Shakespeare. Initially they took those plays of Shakespeare which gave the atmosphere of a particular period. Henry V was abridged and adapted; an improvising crowd was introduced in certain scenes and they "just expressed themselves as they felt at the moment" for "no true educational expert will need to be told that this 'self expression' is the very thing we need most to aim at in order to exercise and train the children's faculties and get the best results."<sup>2</sup> Battles were fought and wars waged and in order to avoid any ensuing chaos a bell would be rung whereupon everybody had to freeze into a tableau.

Later the pupils of Sompting explored Shakespeare's comic world and **created** Arden in Sussex. Miss Finlay-Johnson spoke fervently of the qualities imbued in her scholars by their study of Shakespeare and saw him as

---

<sup>1</sup> See D.E.S. Education Survey 2, p. 46. "There is a grave danger that recent emphasis on improvised drama will detract from the importance of studying plays."

<sup>2</sup> H. Finlay-Johnson *op. cit.*, 109-110.

representing the apotheosis of dramatic beneficence:

"What a splendid harvest of lasting results in the wider outlook, the closer study of humanity, the enriched and strengthened memory, the greater knowledge of the beauties of our language."<sup>1</sup>

That drama was to be seen as an education for life, and the leisure of life, is splendidly exemplified in her comment on Rebecca who left school after a dramatic education for service in a clergyman's house - "how fitted she was!" - and in her strictures on the working-man's day out:

"The working man of England need not necessarily - because he is a working-man - blow hideous noises and rowdy songs on a cornet and generally make an exhibition of himself while on his annual 'outing.'"<sup>2</sup>

It seemed that there was self-expression and self-expression!

Prior to discussing Miss Finlay-Johnson's views on drama as a method of teaching in the narrower sense, it is interesting to touch upon three other aspects of drama in relation to the developing personality of the Sompington pupils.

The first two stem from the frequent dramatization of poetry and fiction, other than historical novels, that the pupils engaged in. Miss Finlay-Johnson realised how valuable a medium drama was in that it allowed a child

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Finlay-Johnson, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 112-113.

to find himself and to discover his own powers. At the same time, she saw drama as a powerful agent in the training of the emotions:

"So, too, good literature can stir human emotions and guide and school human passions - can prevent us from excess of introspection, from dwelling on self."<sup>1</sup>

The socializing values of drama are an important factor in much of today's classroom drama. Almost seventy years ago an elementary form of role-play training was going on at Sompting using the mock interview. Miss Finlay-Johnson was well aware that one life comprises a series of roles:

"What is our own every-day demeanour but the part which we play ourselves, or the reverse, according as our humour dictates."<sup>2</sup>

If undue emphasis has been placed on drama as it affected history and literature at Sompting, it is because in these areas much of what Miss Finlay-Johnson was doing has particular relevance today.

Yet drama permeated the whole of the curriculum at this Sussex School. In fact permeated hardly seems a strong enough word for the way in which dramatic method was yoked to the subject cart. At its worst it reached heights of preciosity as exemplified in the dramatic nature-study lesson quoted in appendix three; at its most

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Finlay-Johnson, op. cit., p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

effective it added a vivid dimension to the Geography lesson:

"The best result in my opinion, of this method of studying geography was the way in which the scholars - left to themselves - connected geography and history - places with real persons and real deeds."<sup>1</sup>

In the arithmetic lesson the business of adding and subtraction was made to seem relevant in the dramatic milieu of playing at shops. This, of course, was not a particularly novel approach: Plato had advocated it in the 'Republic.'<sup>2</sup> However, there was something novel in the pre-Piaget experiments on the conservation of matter but perhaps these were more practical than dramatic:

"We all know how, as children, we were delighted in playing with dough or putty. Acting on this knowledge, I always taught the earliest lessons with the aid of some flour and water dough. With this children can play at making little loaves. It is not difficult for a child to master the fact 'that ten units equal one ten' when he has made the little dough loaves out of a piece of dough the same size as one big loaf. He soon learns addition and subtraction on sums if he collects 'little loaves' and makes one big loaf out of every ten small ones, for he sees the answer in the concrete before him."<sup>3</sup>

Any assessment of Harriet Finlay-Johnson's work must recognize the strength of her allegiance to drama. Many teachers have taught dramatics but few have taught so dramatically as she did. What there is of theorising may appear tenuous and inconsistent and her love of the child

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Finlay-Johnson, op. cit., p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, The Republic, p. 306.

<sup>3</sup> H. Finlay-Johnson, op. cit., p. 227.

may not always mark an adherence to a rigid, hierarchical view of society. Yet there can be no doubt of her commitment and enthusiasm or indeed of the progressive nature of her methods. It is difficult to speak in exact terms of her influence but the fact that two H.M.I.'s - Messrs. Burrows and Holmes - were in sympathy with the sort of education going on at Sompting might suggest that the gospel would have spread to other parts of the county. Holmes was, of course, an educationalist of national repute and this indicates a wider dissemination of the ideas and practices of the dramatic method. Also there is considerable significance in the fact that Miss Finlay-Johnson should find a publisher for her ideas in 1911.<sup>1</sup> What one can be sure of is that these ideas did not go unnoticed. In 1921 Miss Finlay-Johnson, or Mrs. Weller as she had now become, proclaimed victory over her doubters:

"One of the results of the Sompting experiment was a crop of criticism, some carping and cavilling, some actually hostile - a crop of weeds .... Their criticisms have been answered by time, and they have become proselytes unwares. The harvest has choked the weeds."<sup>2</sup>

To be impartial, though, it must be conceded that she was preaching to a conference of the converted.

---

<sup>1</sup> Even in 1969 a leading writer on educational drama may have difficulty with the publication of a book containing personal and novel opinions. See Peter Slade's comments in Creative Drama (Volume 4, No. 1) p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Report of Eighth Conference of the New Ideals in Education, p. 194.

Caldwell Cook and The Play Way

"Acting is one of the most potent means of learning. Thought, word, and act linked together make an impression such as nothing else can make. In this direction lies the salvation of our schools."<sup>1</sup>

Educational innovations naturally occur when an enthusiast is given a free hand; they will positively flourish when an enthusiast finds a kindred soul. The fusion of kindred souls occurred in 1911 at the Perse School, Cambridge, when Dr. Rouse, the Headmaster, invited a young Oxford graduate, Henry Caldwell Cook, to join his English Staff. Rouse was a teacher of individual talents and advanced ideas: his direct method of teaching the Classics were, according to a report by the Inspectors of the Board of Education, "likely to revolutionize the character of teaching of the Classics." Caldwell Cook was to do for English teaching what Rouse did for other languages and their partnership lasted until Rouse's retirement in 1928. Caldwell Cook continued his work into the 1930s but against the mounting opposition of the new regime and in a world increasingly demanding examination results. He resigned in 1933 and passed the remaining four years of his life in an excess of sorrow and alcohol.

The best known of Caldwell Cook's published writings -

---

<sup>1</sup> Perse Playbook No. 1 (1911). Foreword by Dr. Rouse.

The Play Way - gave its name to one branch of that progressive movement in education which advocated activity rather than passivity in the pupil and which encouraged self-discipline through meaningful activity rather than compulsion and forced application. Presumably Cook coined the slightly ambiguous title "Play Way" with the intention of including the specific notion of the play in its dramatic sense within the larger concept of Play. It is perhaps significant that in one of his attempts at a definition of Play he used a metaphor from the theatre:

"But it is possible to hold rehearsals, to try our strength in a make-believe big world. And that is play."<sup>1</sup>

However, Cook did not maintain that all boys were natural play-actors but that they were naturally active. In a sense, then, Dr. Rouse's comments which introduce this section are a little misleading in their use of the word 'acting.' Drama was only one item, albeit an important one, among a range of play-activities within Cook's repertoire that included song, poetry, debate, painting, and modelling.<sup>2</sup>

To see Cook's dramatic work in a correct perspective thus entails an understanding of the overall framework of Play and the Play Way. This is not as easy as it might

---

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Cook,  
The Play Way , p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 17. "By Definition Play includes the practice of all the arts."

appear because, despite Cook's eloquence, there is a certain imprecision in his eulogies of the Play Way. Even he admitted to bafflement when discussing the Play Way in the context of ends and means:

"For the Play Way is not a bunch of contrivances for making scholarly pursuits pleasurable, but the active philosophy of making pleasurable pursuits valuable. But the claim here put forward is not for the destination, but chiefly for the journey. Any means that becomes in this way an end in its self I call the Play Way. Play is the one means that is an end in itself, for 'that we would do, we should do when we would.' It is of no use to seek further for a definition of Play. Play is one of the fundamentals of life, capable of anything but a further explanation. The refinements of the learned may lay bare the simple but they can never solve it."<sup>1</sup>

The "refinements of the learned" have certainly laid bare the illogicality of one aspect of Cook's thinking in the shape of a comment by R. F. Dearden:

"Here, in Caldwell Cook's the Play Way, can be found the source of a persisting confusion of terms, for it is clear by 'Play' all he means is doing something with enjoyment and interest .... But to assume that because play is enjoyable and interesting, therefore everything enjoyable and interesting is play, is to commit almost the first fallacy learned by a student of elementary logic, that of illicit conversion."<sup>2</sup>

Dearden's point concerning illogicality is clearly taken and it is true that enjoyment and interest were, in Cook's view, important facets of Play.<sup>3</sup> Yet,

---

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Cook, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> R. F. Dearden, op. cit., p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> H. C. Cook, op.cit., p. 15.

Dearden does scant justice to the fervour of Cook's belief in the Play Way as an approach to life. Cook saw the Play Way as the right approach because it was a natural approach and because it concerned itself with the whole man:

"The play Way is an endeavour to achieve right conduct in a true blend of the functioning of all man's powers."<sup>1</sup>

Cook likened the procedure by which man's mental and spiritual life remained healthy to that undergone by the physical body. In a reference to metabolism he hinted at the romantic concept of the duality of the life process:

"So must our mental and spiritual life go on by performing equally its twoside function of creation and distruction, of going forward and leaving behind."<sup>2</sup>

In its immediate classroom application this procedure implied a balance between storing up and using up, a concept which was to find more precise psychological definition in Peter Slade's 'Inflow and Outflow.' Cook as Slade found Creative Play necessary in maintaining the balance.

Concerned as he was with the development of the whole man, or boy, Cook was particularly anxious that the spiritual development of the individual should flourish.

---

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Cook, op. cit. p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

Poetry had a significant part to play in this process.

It needed to have more than just an aesthetic appeal:

"Poetry, the work of a maker, must itself be creative; must not stop short at impression, but originate expression."<sup>1</sup>

Through a sort of empathy with the spirit of the best poetry the boy was able to feel, express, and develop his own spirituality. Now, Cook was a believer in the basic goodness of the boy and it followed that Play, at its height, should consist of the "ideal in action and reality."<sup>2</sup> The reality implied not the actualities of life but its noble aspirations as realized in the creative outpourings inspired by the best poetry.

One's thoughts about this pinnacle of Play vary from admiration for the worthiness of the concept if one has been able to pierce the cloud of mysticism surrounding it, to sheer doubt concerning its practicability in the classroom. Unfortunately when Cook was in his evangelical mood the trivia of classroom procedures were not his main concern. Yet this yearning for the "Ideal" does explain,

---

<sup>1</sup> N. C. Cook, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 16. This view has a marked affinity to Froebel's idea that by outward activities the inner nature of man was revealed and perfected. See Froebel F., 'The Education of Man' quoted in R. J. W. Selleck, op. cit., p. 193.

"We become truly godlike in diligence and industry, in working and doing, which are accompanied by the clear perception or even by the vaguest feeling that thereby we represent the inner in the outer; that we give body to spirit, and form to thought; that we render visible the invisible; that we impart an outward, finite, transient being to life in the spirit."

to a certain extent, why Cook shunned everyday experiences as material for his pupils' playmaking activities and stated that "the plays of boys should be romances and the style poetic."<sup>1</sup>

Lest it might be suspected that Cook was solely concerned with the fact that the boy should express himself rather than with the manner of his expression, it is useful to bear in mind what he had to say about form. In his view, form and content were interdependent and consequently certain forms of Play were able to kindle the spirit of what they expressed. At one stage he called the form of Play a "spiritual rite" and it is significant that he used religious observance as an example of the possibility of form stimulating spiritual feeling:

"If the spiritual feeling which should initiate devotional exercise be weak or apparently lacking, it may be, and often is, stimulated and even created by the trustful observance of the rites and ceremonies and of traditional and conventional forms in which the spirit has been known to reside."<sup>2</sup>

There are obvious implications for drama in this concept and it helps explain Cook's predilection for Shakespeare and the ballads as important elements in any course of miming and acting. Also it might help explain Cook's obvious distaste for the Cinema which, to his mind, was not an artistic medium.

---

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Cook, op. cit., p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

An approach such as the Play Way was bound to encounter hostility in the predominately authoritarian ethos of the early twentieth century educational scene. Even in the liberal atmosphere of the Perse School, Caldwell Cook was conscious that some of his colleagues, whilst admitting the need for physical activity in performing plays, were less sure about its employment for other curricular pursuits. In order to counter criticism of his child-centred approaches, Cook was eager to lay low the bogy that pupil activity necessarily led to chaos or implied a denial of responsibility on the part of the teacher. He queried the existence of an absolute standard of discipline, maintaining that correct behaviour was a relative condition depending on its appropriateness to the occasion. In any case, Play Way methods demanded their own sort of discipline, a discipline which was an integral part of their systematic implementation and not one imposed by the dead conditions of pedantic rule. In the new classroom atmosphere thus created, the role of the teacher acquired a different emphasis; he became in Caldwell Cook's terms a "true blend of genial uncle and exacting academic teacher."

"Exacting" was a key word because another objection likely to be voiced by detractors of the Play Way approach

was the idea that it smacked of trivial time-wasting in the sense of 'playing around.'<sup>1</sup> Cook sought to dispel any such suspicions by equating true play with work as Froebel had done and suggesting that "when work and play are separated, the one becomes mere drudgery, the other mere pastime."<sup>2</sup> He conceded, however, that classroom play - "play with a purpose" - was distinct from out of school play in the sense that the latter enjoyed a relaxation of the teacher's authority.

The practical approaches at the Perse School included extra-curricular and classroom drama. Two aspects of the extra-curricular drama can be instanced. First there were the informal occasions when drama seemed very much a social affair:

"Once a week we went to Cook's flat to write a play. There was always a ritual tea first with cream buns that we had to be careful with in case they wetted our ears. After this we wrote and mouthed and argued and acted. Cook presided and, I am sure, did far more 'moulding' than we realized."<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, there were the exploits of the Perse Players, an exclusive dramatic society, constituted with high ideals in 1911:

---

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that in a recent article in The Bulletin (1965) a former pupil of Cook is able to take play in just this sense and this is an article written by an admirer! "Long afterwards, when I read The Play Way, I realized that by that time (1921), although he stuck to his basic principles, he had abandoned most of his fanciful practices. We acted a lot but we definitely did not play." C. W. B. Peckett, Caldwell Cook, Dr. Rouse and The Perse in The Bulletin (1965), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> H. C. Cook, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> The Bulletin: Caldwell Cook, Dr. Rouse and the Perse - C. W. B. Peckett, p. 12.

"Their art, though simple and near to the interests of ordinary people, will be so far removed from the aimless vulgarity of present-day diversions as to seem in keeping with another more lovely age ... It is said that they intend themselves to put together in conspiracy the plays they will perform so ceremoniously ....."<sup>1</sup>

Both instances of extra-curricular drama really subscribe to the impressions one has received of Cook. It is not difficult to imagine his presiding at ritual teas - one might wonder if teas could be anything but ritual for him - and there is in the dedication to the Perse Players a turning away from life as it is to life as it ought to be. Play-Land was surely Cook's Byzantium.

Several of the early productions of the Perse Players were original works based on Norse mythology, a subject dear to Cook's heart. The productions made a tremendous impact, not least on dramatic critics, who saw in them hope for the British Theatre. One reviewer looked on the Perse Players as "one of the most hopeful spurs that has pricked the flank of English Drama in the present century" while another, speaking of the inaugural performance in 1912, prophesied "a Cambridge cult that will resemble that of Stratford-on-Avon."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> D. A. Beacock, Play Way English for To-day, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 79. Beacock, pp. 72-77 gives an account of the Perse Players' productions from 1912-1935.

As Beacock remarks, these were "brave words that were unfulfilled."<sup>1</sup> Yet they obviously recognized qualities which were, at the time, outstanding in school drama and perhaps even in drama as a whole. These Play Way qualities comprised freshness and spontaneity in acting and writing, training in self-reliance and team work and a recognition of the poetic treasures of folk-lore.

For the first two years the Perse Players had to make use of a temporary stage in the School Hall. Since his arrival at the School, Cook sought a permanent theatre, not just for the Players but also for the various other dramatic activities of the School. He had ambitions for a playhouse which would combine a miniature reproduction of an Elizabethan theatre stage with workshops for various crafts. An appeal, supported by famous names in the theatre world, brought in the meagre sum of thirteen pounds out of a required two thousand. Thus Cook had to scale down his ambitions and be satisfied with the Mummery completed in 1914, and made of two downstairs rooms in a house next to the school:

"The floor of one room was higher than the other, thus making a stage, which was fitted with curtains and an 'arras,' It had adequate but elementary lighting. The stage had a small apron with

---

<sup>1</sup> D. A. Beacock, op. cit., p. 79.

steps leading down into the auditorium; this was in fact the other room and it was equipped with benches. Down below was a cellar well filled with costumes more or less Elizabethan."<sup>1</sup>

The construction of the Mummery was an important event in that it represented a practical recognition by an educational establishment of drama's worth. Not only was the Mummery to be a base for the Perse Players but it was also to be the place where Cook's classes could act Shakespeare in congenial surroundings. In Cook's opinion, acting Shakespeare was the key to the study and practice of drama for the young adolescent:

"However young the boys may be, provided they are over ten, a Shakespeare play is the most useful beginning."<sup>2</sup>

The dramatic education of the under tens at the Perse School began with mime. Cook saw the value of expressive movement as communication and realized that it demanded the seriousness and care given to music and speaking. Care was certainly given to the cataloguing of gestures to be used in the Perse mimes but one wonders whether the Play Way virtues of resourcefulness and creativity were not mis-applied when one comes across the idiosyncracies of:

"Day is indicated by making a circle on the right with the finger, then carrying the line over in a curve to the left and making another circle there. This figure, not unlike a pair of spectacles

---

<sup>1</sup> C. W. E. Peckett, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> H. C. Cook, op. cit. p. 186.

with an exaggerated bridge, is designed to represent the sun in the east going over, and in the west - hence a day.

Yesterday is indicated as 'Day-back-one.' 'Day' is done first, the thumb is pointed over the shoulder for 'back' and then the forefinger is held up for 'one.'<sup>1</sup>

The dramatic characteristics which differentiated mime from charade and elevated mere pastime to the level of true Play were the content of the mime and its artistic representation. Thus, after a short initiation stage in which pupils were allowed to dabble in their own semi-realistic material, they were led by the way of the nursery rhyme to the miming of ballads. Traditional ballads with their strong, unadorned narrative threads provided the valuable subject matter necessary and their strict form meant that the words, phrasing, rhymes and rhythms would constantly be running in the heads of the young mimers. Consequently, it was a short step from miming the ballads to extemporising them verbally. The emphasis Cook gave to the worthwhile content and artistic representation of the mimes and their effect on the pupil were implied in his retort when taken to task for introducing the methods of the silent cinema into the classroom:

"The representation of a story without the use of spoken words is all that is common between the two .... the cinema method of representation ignores all the literary quality of a tale, and treats it as

---

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Cook, op. cit. p. 233.

a mere string of incidents .... The present cinema method of telling a story is nothing but external show; it is a hollow sham, a mere travesty of art."<sup>1</sup>

After his miming of ballads, the pupil was ready for the important stage in his dramatic education: an experience of Shakespeare. This experience was doubly important in the sense that it was both a means and an end.

It was a means to the future play-making activities of Cook's pupils for "after having performed but one play they will be more at ease in moving about the classroom and consequently more able to devise play-methods of studying matters which are not in themselves dramatic."<sup>2</sup> From their acting of Shakespeare they would acquire a direct appreciation of the bard's craftsmanship and would be better able to apply to their own dramatic efforts points such as the evocation of scene through poetry, the introduction and development of character, the heightening of tension and the build-up of dramatic climax. Furthermore, Cook insisted that the acting of Shakespeare should take place in conditions approximating to those of the Elizabethan theatre.<sup>3</sup> Thus the Mummery became an invaluable asset to his Shakespeare work and, on account

---

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Cook, pp. 228-229.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>3</sup> Caldwell Cook acknowledged the researches of E. K. Chambers, William Poel and K. J. Lawrence in this area.

of any hypothetical accusations that he was being pedantic in his demands, Cook stressed once again his belief in the interdependence of form and content:

"For the Shakespeare plays were wrought with such care to fit the Elizabethan conditions of stage production that to leave this fact out of account is to produce nothing but a travesty of the plays."<sup>1</sup>

Cook extended his argument to show that the artistic shaping of Shakespeare's plays was bound up with their poetic qualities. A parallel might be drawn with Robert Frost's opinion that free verse was like playing tennis without a net or with Laurence Binyon's view that the conventions of metre helped stimulate and fortify the poet's creations.

Besides having a bearing on the pupil's future play-making activities, the plays of Shakespeare were immediately influential because of their "unapproachable literary value." Cook would most certainly have agreed with Dryden's estimate of Shakespeare as the man "who, of all modern and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul." By acting in the plays the boys were able to maintain the important balance between "Storing up" and "using up" and were better able to appreciate the poetic, dramatic and the human aspects of the Work, through a satisfaction of their own creative instinct. Cook saw acting as a valuable outlet to the emotions of the young adolescent and the identification

---

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Cook, op. cit., p. 190.

with Shakespearian characters allowed for emotional outlet under the control of artistic form.

The actual procedures adopted by Cook in relation to the acting and studying of Shakespeare were interesting both in their methodology and novelty. It has already been shown that Cook regarded Shakespeare as pre-eminent in catering for the spiritual, emotional and aesthetic needs of the pupil. Could he be equally sure that eleven or twelve-year olds would take to Shakespeare? For example, what about the difficulties in language and allusion? Cook countered this argument by claiming that many of the so-called difficulties were created by the narrow and unnecessarily-pedantic approach of much current teaching. In any case, he found the alternative to Shakespeare a depressing thought:

"Since the 'dramatic method of teaching' first came into notice, publishers have turned out numerous books of 'Plays for Schools' not so much as to meet a demand as in the hope of creating one. The playlets thus offered to us are generally written by inexperienced schoolmistresses, and have no spark of literary value nor any dramatic power whatever. To shun Shakespeare for his difficulty and fall into the accommodating lap of these dear ladies would indeed be a sorry descent."<sup>1</sup>

In more positive vein, he considered that boys responded well to the knockabout and sensational elements in Shakespeare's plays and were perceptive to the bold,

---

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Cook, op. cit. p. 188.

definite touches of Shakespeare's characterization.

Indeed, Cook went as far as to say:

"Under right guidance, I think a company of boys might well find that Shakespeare belongs more to them than to some of their learned elders."<sup>1</sup>

The type of guidance given by Cook was compatible with the developing self-reliance and resourcefulness of the pupil and a firm belief, on Cook's part, that the first thing to do with a play was to act it; and "while this acting is going on all matters which do not forward the acting must be held in suspension."<sup>2</sup>

A former pupil describes a typical lesson in the Mummery:

"Cook did little by way of production. He sorted us out if we got into an impossible tangle, but experience taught us how to group ourselves and get out of one another's way. What is important, he never interrupted us to explain a word or a phrase: that would have spoilt our pleasure in the story and the characters with which, being young and unsophisticated, we were most concerned. Most problems of meaning were solved through our acting: the rest Cook explained to us afterwards in the meeting held after each act. At this meeting he also asked context questions and anybody could make any criticisms he liked of the play and the way it was acted. This stopped us being conceited."<sup>3</sup>

This was the procedure, subject to minor modifications, that Cook followed in his Shakespeare work with the second,

---

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Cook, op. cit., p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> C. W. E. Peckett, op. cit., p. 13.

third and fourth forms at the Perse School.<sup>1</sup> Each form would act and study one play per term, there generally being time for two renderings of the play with a different cast on each occasion; those pupils not involved in the acting would often be given the office of stage managers or tiring-men with real responsibility.

Many people have attested to the effectiveness of Cook's methods in arousing a love of Shakespeare in his pupils.<sup>2</sup> These methods may not seem so strikingly novel today. Yet, on reflection, how many teachers would or could achieve the balance between pupil and teacher responsibility which seems to have served the Perse School so well?

Mr. Parry, a member of the present English Department at the Perse, is one who can. There is little radical difference between his methods of teaching Shakespeare and those of Cook. The present Mummery is of course a new building but its basic layout is similar to Cook's original even to the extent of having technically unsophisticated equipment which is easily handled by the pupils. The reverence for Shakespeare is still apparent but the reasons for the reverence are not quite the same. The differences are indicative of the changes in attitude

---

<sup>1</sup> If anything, the account by Mr. Peckett underestimates the contribution by Caldwell Cook in the way of information regarding Shakespeare's dramatic technique.

<sup>2</sup> D. A. Beacock, *op. cit.*, includes four tributes to Cook's work from former pupils at the Perse School.

towards educational drama that have occurred between 1917 and 1967. Cook was concerned with the artist in the boy; perhaps he strived after the ideal. Parry seems more aware of the boy's relation to other individuals and to the world in which he lives:

"But whatever the extent of our pupils' abilities, we might find common cause in trying to nourish in them, to the full extent of our ability, kinds of awareness and sensitiveness that Shakespeare, supremely, can nourish in us. Some of the results of such nourishment are - extensions of insight and extension of human sympathy; an enlarged sense of life's potentialities; a more acute understanding of character and its social predicament; a finer appreciation of moral issues and their intricacies and their inevitability."<sup>1</sup>

After some experience of Shakespeare, Cook considered his pupils were ready to attempt the making of original plays. Play-making continued alongside further Shakespeare study and mime and gained added enrichment from both. Ideally it incorporated many of the Play Way virtues, particularly those of enjoyment, resourcefulness, self-discipline and creative expression. In its practical implications, it had much that is relevant to drama in schools at the present time.

Cook's approach to play-making was predominately literary and artistic and this affected the type of material used in the plays and the shaping of this material. Phrases such as "high standard of literary taste" and

---

<sup>1</sup> C. Parry, The Mummery, Use of English Pamphlet number Four, pp. 6-7.

"literary workmanship" continually appear in his discussion of the subject. Appendix four clearly indicates the point. Here Cook was showing how the relative inexperience of playmakers could make them unaware of the dramatic possibilities in the Beowulf legend. Obviously he was concerned that the pupil should learn to express himself artistically; it was not enough that the pupil should merely express himself. The Appendix also shows Cook's high regard for Shakespeare as an inspiration in the play-making process.

Perhaps the views expressed concerning Cook's attitude towards the pupil's expression need some slight qualification. Cook recognized that in playmaking, as in most activities, there was an initial trying-out phase. This "preliminary paddling on the margin," as Cook called it, was not hindered by literary standards or artistic shape. It consisted of rough improvisations based on the adventures of magazine heroes or improvisations set in boarding-houses of public schools or in the wild west.

Eventually, however, according to Cook, these crude expressions of youthful taste no longer satisfied his pupils and he began to encourage them to be more careful in choice and shaping of material:

"They were then easily persuaded to use craft in selection and condensation. They began with some feeling to say things with an artistic intention,

and to express where before they had been content to describe."<sup>1</sup>

One might suspect that at this stage there occurred a slight conflict between the boys' natural interests and Cook's ideals. Perhaps Cook saw it as the priority of one Play Way virtue over another. Be that as it may, Cook eschewed the incidents of every day life as dramatic material for young boys. He did not consider that his pupils were capable of applying the process of refinement or sifting that these incidents would need before they became dramatically viable. But there were three other factors involved in his rejection of realism. One was the inexperience of the boy: it was too much to expect a boy to go beyond impressions and appearances while realism implied a representation of things as they were. So far Cook's reasons for rejecting realistic material were centred on the capabilities of his pupils and certainly, many people would question his assertions. The two remaining reasons were very much concerned with Cook's educational aims, and, besides supplementing the picture one has gained of him, they set his work apart from much of the original drama going on in classrooms today:

"A conscious pursuit of realism is inadvisable for boys .... because it would be outside the scope of our educational purpose, since true realism implies a certain sacrifice of conventions and avoidance of types of character and situation, while our purpose as teachers is to ensure that by the exercise of playmaking the boys shall become familiar

---

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Cook, op. cit. p. 268.

with these very artistic conventions and with the dramatic situations and characters which have become typical from their frequent occurrence in the literature we are taking as our model; and the pursuit of realism by boys is inadvisable because it implies the abandonment of the tower of their artistic strength, the ready comprehension of a romantic theme, and a fitly imaginative treatment of it."<sup>1</sup>

Once a "romantic theme" had been found, the play-making machinery was put into operation. There were definite procedural steps to be followed and Cook considered that the play-making process should be in hand for at least a term.

The first step was for the borrowed story to be told and retold until it was thoroughly familiar to the class involved. Then followed class discussion, during which the boys naturally divided into small groups "according as their chief interest lies in the adaptation of the story, or the working out of the characters, or the allotment of the parts, or the staging, or the provision of makeshift costume and properties, or the actual writing of provisional parts in the form of notes giving cues and a rough suggestion of the dialogue."<sup>2</sup> Obviously so many groups in the same room implied a great deal of

---

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Cook, op. cit., pp. 271-272.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 301. It perhaps ought to be mentioned that Cook viewed the staging of the boys' original plays in terms of Elizabethan conventions as exemplified in the design of the Mummery. This gives added significance to his use of words such as "shaping" and "fashioning" in relation to the making of plays.

noise; but, insisted Cook, if one were to listen carefully one would understand that the noise was in fact "articulate."

The work of the small groups was continued either during further lessons or for homework and each group committed its ideas to paper. There then followed a most interesting stage in playmaking, a sort of semi-improvisation stage.<sup>1</sup> This entailed a trying-out of the play so far and speeches were partly read from notes and partly improvised. There was constant interruption to allow for discussion of speeches, suggestions for alteration and rejection of material. The boys playing the parts in the "amorphous" play were not necessarily those who would play the same parts in the final version. However, Cook did consider it worthwhile settling on parts as soon as possible in order that the "characters in the making [might] be modified, shaped, and influenced by reference and approximation to a living model."<sup>2</sup>

Acting and discussion continued alongside one another until the play assumed its final artistic shape.

---

<sup>1</sup> A note of qualification is needed. Cook found he had to dispense with this stage when dealing with boys in the 16-18 age-range because of their self-consciousness. This is probably explained by the fact that most of Cook's teaching was concerned with younger boys and there was presumably a relative dearth of classroom drama in the upper forms.

<sup>2</sup> E. C. Cook, op. cit., p. 304.

Discussion in the form of an interchange of ideas among the boys was augmented by Cook's lessons on the "rules and proprieties of the art of dramatic poetry." He found that the playmaking process afforded him practical practical reference points from which he could develop this aspect of his teaching. All the time, however, he was conscious that these formal lessons should not dominate the adolescent's education in drama:

"At the very most the lessons on the art of dramatic poetry should never take more than a third part of the acting and play-making time; the study and acting of Shakespeare should take another third, and the making and acting of the boys' original plays should fill the remaining part."<sup>1</sup>

The final stages of play-making consisted of further shaping, a last revision of speeches, intense rehearsal and performance "with all due ceremony." The last implied certain qualities in the boy-actors such as "their sublime sincerity, their realizations of the emotions, the manner proper to their divine parts [and] their utter earnestness;"<sup>2</sup> it also spotlighted the teacher's responsibility:

"I would .... say that as teachers of literature we should resolutely decline to countenance in our presence any show upon a school stage which is not sound in art and unimpeachable in taste."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>H. C. Cook, op. cit., p. 305.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 324.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 340.

There can be no doubt that throughout his drama work Caldwell Cook remembered that he was a teacher of literature. This fact will no doubt colour any present day estimates of his achievements. It may appear that his allegiance to literature and artistic form had a restricting influence: perhaps he paid too little attention to the therapeutic aspects of drama, particularly in his dismissal of everyday incidents as suitable dramatic material. Yet, at the same time, it must be admitted that he was able to avoid the state of affairs prevailing in much of today's classroom drama: the imbalance of drama as personal growth and drama as an art form. By maintaining the equilibrium between expression and appreciation in his pupil's approach to drama, Cook was able to prevent self-indulgent, purposeless wallowing on the one hand and dry pedantry on the other.

Whatever the merits or defects of Caldwell Cook's dramatic work as judged in the light of present trends, it can not be denied that he did drama a tremendous service in his repeated assertions that plays were to be acted. This entailed the active involvement of the pupil, one of the main tenets of the Play Way philosophy. It is worthwhile repeating that drama was only one of a series of Play Way activities and any attempt to assess Cook's contribution to educational theory and practice on the strength of his drama work alone would be a misreading of his philosophy as a whole.

Miss Gilpin and The Hall School

The work of Miss Gilpin seems to have been particularly well known during the 1920s. The School drama received acclaim in the national newspapers and in 1928 the play based on the story of Orpheus was given a public performance at the Arts Theatre Club. That her work was highly thought of in educational circles is evidenced by the fact that she was invited to read a paper on "The Dramatic Sense as a Factor in Education" to the Conference of Educational Associations at University College, London on January 6th 1920; and even as early as 1908 the curriculum of the Hall School served as an example of progressive education for the students attached to Manchester University's Department of Education. It is interesting to correlate some of the more general views she expressed at the Education Conference with the activities of the small, mixed, private preparatory school in Weybridge where she was Headmistress from 1898-1934.

Her conference paper began by stressing the strength of the 'pretend stage' in very young children and asserting that "this make-believe is the basis of the dramatic sense in children" a sense possessed in some degree by all children. She conceded that acting was sometimes allowed for on the timetable of what we would now call

Infant Schools but asked what became of it when the child got a little older. She hoped that the dramatic sense might be catered for in the same way as was the child's natural desire to paint and draw:

"The day of emancipation of the teaching of drawing has come, that of the teaching of music has dawned, and I hope that of the teaching of Drama in Schools is at hand."<sup>1</sup>

The three main reasons cited by Miss Gilpin for the dearth of dramatic work in schools around the year 1920 were ones which have bedevilled the emergence of drama in education for many years and, to a certain extent, still do. The first concerned the question of space for drama: school desks in those days were "uncompromising things and unwieldy," not easily piled on top of one another.

The two other reasons concerned the status of drama. The strength of drama; the fact that it was a composite and social art, ironically militated against its status for many schools because it did not lend itself easily to the examination system. Also, it rarely had the status of a curriculum "subject" and yet said Miss Gilpin "may it not be more than any one subject - a synthesis of many?"<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>"The Dramatic Sense as a Factor in Education" reproduced in The British Drama League Magazine 'Drama' July 1920, p.177

<sup>2</sup>Drama (July 1920), p. 178.

The synthetic and social possibilities of drama were, in Miss Gilpin's view, two important factors for education. Drama depended on group effort, combined varying activities and talents, was a striving after perfection and "at its best it is a great power in bringing within the reach of all, the best things: it can touch the imagination and give appreciation of beauty, and train the critical faculty."<sup>1</sup>

The activities of the Hall School during the period when Miss Gilpin was Headmistress certainly show that the school had the courage of its Headmistress's convictions and it might be seen as one of the very first to use rather than pay lip service to an integrated curriculum with drama as the binding force. Geoffrey Whitworth, one time Director of the British Drama League, put it in these words:

"It emerged from Miss Gilpin's pioneer experience, and her personal discovery through many tentative experiments, that there is - or should be - an interaction between all forms of knowledge, of which the play can become at once the form and the imaginative expression."<sup>2</sup>

A parallel may be drawn between the approach to the curriculum adopted by Miss Gilpin and that adopted by

---

<sup>1</sup> Drama (July 1920), p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Gilpin and the Hall School, p. 10.

Mr. Stone, another pioneer, in his Birmingham primary school of the 1940s, although it must be stressed they were working in vastly different conditions. In the way that the Hall School curriculum was infused by the plan and often expressed itself through the play, so Mr. Stone, in his desire to foster the creative urge expressed in all the arts, went to the common source of all arts and found movement.

Miss Gilpin herself was quite aware of the value of movement. She had been impressed with Dalcroze's work on rhythm and gesture in music and drama when she visited his institute near Dresden at the beginning of 1912 and the Hall School was one of the first to teach eurhythmics. Yet, Miss Gilpin was eager that eurhythmics should not become a restricted and restricting discipline: it was to be applied to and blended with other aspects of the curriculum. Mrs. Lloyd, who was a young single teacher taught Music at the Hall School from 1918-1926, gives an account of a typical lesson:

"In the Eurhythmic classes, of course, was always the background of the definite Dalcroze Teaching; exercise in bar time, note values, phrasing, nuance and so on, but there was also opportunity for free musical work and the children were encouraged to interpret music by their own group movement. For those who have not seen a Dalcroze class, let me give a brief description of one at work. A short piece of music would be played over two or three times to the children, who would be sitting on the floor and listening intently, noting mentally the chief

characteristics of the music, the division into two or three sections, the main rhythms etc. When they had absorbed as much as possible, three or four leaders would be chosen, and the class broken up into small groups which would go to the different corners of the room to work out their own ideas of movement. Then each group would, in turn, show its own musical pattern, and it was extraordinarily interesting to see how varied those different interpretations would be."<sup>1</sup>

This method was often used during the drama rehearsals at the School for music and movement were an integral part of the plays. Group interpretation of song and music was given priority over individual interpretation and very often interesting ideas from groups were blended.

The play-making activities of the Hall School can be classed under two main headings: the day-to-day drama and the more elaborate School Plays.

In the first category came dramatizations of scenes from history or literature and an interesting use of puppets in the French lesson. The vigorous influence of the French mademoiselle is vividly conveyed in the words of a former pupil who attended the School from 1929-1934:

"Under her guidance a marionette theatre was built. Then we paired off, made about five quaint puppet figures between each two of us, with hand-sewn bodies, grotesque plaster heads and all gaily dressed. Resulting scenes between puppets with squeaky voices varied from the sweetness of 'au clair de la Lune' to the most bloodthirsty French version of Punch and Judy ever seen on any stage."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Miss Gilpin and the Hall School, op. cit., pp. 53-54.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

In her conference paper Miss Gilpin described a typical Weybridge approach to extempore work:

"The ages of the children who have taken part in the work range from nine to fourteen - boys and girls, but with a large preponderance of girls. They have often worked in two groups, with from fifteen to eighteen in each. They have sometimes written their subject, have arranged it, have dramatized it, have assigned the roles and adapted it as occasion required. If there have not been sufficient characters in the story, they have introduced others, and have always arranged their own scenes. They have never, as yet, chosen a ready-made 'play.' The preparation of the work is done in the large hall of the School where there is one piano and one stage. There by turns the two groups use the stage or the body of the hall; both use the piano as they can. Those who have a good deal to learn, sit aside learning their parts and the rest contrive, arrange, dance, or declaim all together and one of the most interesting things is to see how they manage to concentrate; also I have never once heard them quarrel. Of course, there are no visitors present, only the children and members of the staff."<sup>1</sup>

Several points arise in discussion of this approach. It was initiated as a process by which children might assume more responsibility in the educational process in the sense that they would have to "collect, correct and adapt for themselves." The vertical grouping enriched the imaginative environment and helped to underline the importance of combined effort in the dramatic process. Indeed, for Miss Gilpin, the development of the individual was inevitably bound up with the expression of the group; and as the aesthetic side of the developing

---

<sup>1</sup> Drama (July 1920), pp. 178-179.

personality was so vital, it was imperative that the individual should both share in and appreciate the beauty and truth of expression. Thus emphasis was laid on the finished production and standard became a key word in Miss Gilpin's dramatic vocabulary:

"I think that perhaps the main way in which they achieve standard, mostly quite unconsciously, is from the fact that we all, from time to time - teachers and children together - have worked at the finished production of some play, and much of the school work has been focussed for the term or two terms upon this one object. Music and Singing, painting and drawing, literature, recitation, elocution etc., have all been worked in and connected."<sup>1</sup>

Hence the emergence of the School plays. These plays generally occurred at intervals of one and a half years and were evolved from a piece of history or literature. Miss Gilpin eschewed the ready-made text for, as she rather quaintly put it, "it is more sporting sometimes to start off without every signpost fixed and labelled."<sup>2</sup> Miss Gilpin seems to have done most of the actual script writing, often taking ideas from pupils and staff. Most primary Heads would be envious of the time that the Hall School was able to devote to the plays. They did become the focal point of the School's activities for weeks on end, although Miss Gilpin was careful to point out - and

---

<sup>1</sup> Drama (July, 1920), p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

surely a 1920 audience even of drama devotees would be anxious on this point - "The Time Table was adhered to all the term, and the Maths were but two hours short on the whole term's count."<sup>1</sup> However, a cynic might exclaim, "Some Time Table!"

Often the plays were followed by a book. In the case of the Wakefield Second Nativity Play acted in 1917, the words were written out and decorated by the children and illustrations were lino-cuts printed in the school and coloured by hand. Later on the school acquired its own litho-press and printed all its own writings and music for the books and most of the illustrations.

There is a deal of evidence of the overwhelming effect of the Hall School plays on those who saw them or acted in them. A former member of staff speaks of contribution they made to the aesthetically stimulating atmosphere of the school:

"I had a good High School education, and yet when I saw the Hall School I feel that I had been aesthetically starved! What then must have been the effect of the plays on the plastic minds of children? The love of beauty fount from which the creative impulse springs - in how many schools could one say that it is engendered, except spasmodically or by chance?"<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Drama (July 1920), p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Gilpin and the Hall School, p. 68.

A former pupil remembers the emotional intensity of participation:

"In 'The Ancient Mariner' we plumbed depths of experience which are not within the supposed range of children of 12 and 13. The production, with its inexorable hold upon a night-mare reality, went beyond the bounds of comfortable entertainment; several mothers felt, I believe, that we were better without it; but none of us would have missed it. We were alive, impassioned creatures capable of an emotional and intellectual range perhaps then as never since. Miss Gilpin treated us as the equals we were or that she demanded us to become."<sup>1</sup>

An impartial view of the plays is given in the 1926 report on the Inspection of the Hall School, Weybridge; talking of the arts of Music, dancing and acting, the Report goes on to say:

"These three, each cultivated for itself, are brought together from time to time for representations in which beauty of sound and grace of movement guided by signal dramatic skill give wings to great poetry. Natural but elaborate, solemn but gay, touched with humour and governed by a dramatic, a spiritual tensivity - one such performance remains in the memory of those who witnessed it. And it was - that was clear - not done for a spectacle, but an inevitable, a spontaneous (though, of course, a careful and studied) evidence of the temper in which a poem which had seemed to defy such rendering had been learnt and loved."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Miss Gilpin and the Hall School, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 127-128.

Peter Slade and Child Drama

Although Peter Slade's first book - Child Drama - did not appear until 1954, we know that parts of it had been written ten years before publication. More significantly we know that the philosophy expounded in it had been formulating in Slade's mind for some thirty years:

"Yes, it would be true to say that the ideas and philosophy formulated in my 1954 book were brewing during the 1930s. They were also brewing in the 1920s from my own experience at school and then at University abroad, then in the theatre, and then walking about the streets of London. There were other things which affected them, such as the listening groups of children for Radio 1 founded, and my work with backward children in Worcestershire, in about 1937."<sup>1</sup>

A love of theatre and a love of children have been important factors in Slade's life but he has not allowed an unnatural compromise to develop between the two. From the early thirties onwards, he became increasingly convinced that theatre in the accepted sense was an adult concept that could not be watered down for the young child's consumption, because it assumed certain aspects not yet arrived at in the child's natural development. Instead he postulated the existence of "a very wonderful thing which .... can be found in any place on earth where there are children. It is a creation, a skill.

---

<sup>1</sup> Contained in a letter from Peter Slade to T. J. Cox, January 16th, 1969.

It is born of Play and is nurtured, guided and provided for by the wise parent and the able teacher."<sup>1</sup> This "wonderful thing" was Child Drama, an art form existing in its own right.

The term Child Drama has tremendously wide points of reference; Slade equates drama with "doing" and in this sense Child Drama covers a whole host of the child's activities, from the baby's joy in sound and movement to the dancing and improvisations of the teenager. At times there occur sweeping generalisations, full of emotive force, a little reminiscent of Caldwell Cook's eulogies of the Play way.

"Drama means 'doing' and 'struggling.' It is the great activity; it never ceases where there is life; it is eternally bound up with mental health. It is the Art of Living."<sup>2</sup>

As the child gets older, so Child Drama contains more drama "of the obvious kind" and by this Slade means an activity involving impersonation. An unmistakable manifestation would involve the whole person bodily assuming the character of someone else; on the other hand, it would be perfectly possible for impersonation to take place not by use of the whole body but through a process of mental projection.

---

<sup>1</sup> P. Slade, Child Drama, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

Here lies the key to one of the major aspects of Slade's philosophy, the idea that man's activity is divided into two main parts:

- "(a) The passive form where he infuses his mind into objects, symbols and cyphers outside himself and brings them to life. I have called this elsewhere Projected Activity.
- (b) The active form where man takes on the personal responsibility of doing something, of being someone, indulging in accurate communication, playing a role in special situations of authority and generally using the whole body in an active, physical sense. It is discovered in acting and in dance. I have called this Personal Activity."<sup>1</sup>

Slade considers that Personal Play and Projected Play constitute the valid distinction in Play.<sup>2</sup> Play is too fluid, particularly in the early stages of life, to lend itself to the realistic and imaginative distinction suggested by some child observers.<sup>3</sup> Slade's two concepts of

---

<sup>1</sup> P. Slade, Experience of Spontaneity, p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> Slade uses the words Play and Activity as synonyms. It is not always easy to comprehend exactly what he means by Play or the relationship of Play to Drama. For instance we are told that Drama is "born of Play" and yet Drama contains both Personal and Projected Play.

<sup>3</sup> In 'Experience of Spontaneity', p. 30, Slade analyses one of his own childhood experiences in terms of Personal and Projected Play but does not suggest when the distinction first occurred to him.

Play supposedly develop different qualities in the individual. "In Personal Play the tendency is towards noise and physical exertion on the part of the person involved; and if noise is not employed exertion is. In Projected Play the tendency is towards quietness and physical stillness; and if there is not quiet some physical stillness is there."<sup>1</sup> Ideally a human will find the correct admixture for his life of these two manners of using energy. In this context Child Drama assumes great importance as a means of balancing the personality needs of the individual and aiding his natural development for it, among all the arts, is the only one to contain both Personal and Projected Play.

It is impossible to be sure just when Slade conceived his concept of Personal and Projected Play nor does one know definitely of particular influences on his thinking. There is however some superficial similarity acknowledged by Slade, between his Personal and Projected Play types and Jung's extroverts and introverts but this seems to be mainly a matter of symptoms rather than causes.<sup>2</sup> Also,

---

<sup>1</sup> P. Slade, Child Drama, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Although both extroverts and Personal Play types might appear outgoing in contrast with introverts and Projected Play types, it would be true to say that for both of Slade's types the energy is directed outwards, whilst in the case of Jung's introvert the energy (libido) flows inwards.

the distinction between Personal and Projected Play, as it concerned the very young child, had been noticed by Joseph Lee, albeit in general terms.

"Much of the child's life at this age consists of impersonation, directly or through playthings to which the various parts are assigned, and there is no understanding him without knowing what this sort of drama means."<sup>1</sup>

A particularly interesting aspect of this part of Slade's philosophy is the link it has with Piaget's views concerning the role of symbolic play and imitation in the child's mental development. According to Piaget symbolic play allows a child the pleasure of evoking past experiences through a process of assimilation: this type of play which helps a child to master its own experiences may comprise both Projected and Personal Play in the Slade sense. Eventually it develops into conscious dramatization. Imitation proper, on the other hand, does not depend on the assimilation of the new to the old but on the accommodation of the old to the new. It is a sign of adoptive intelligence and involves a new kind of effort and a concern for realism; yet again it may show itself in both Slade's Personal and Projected types of play. Imitation develops into structural play.

Ideally, of course, a synthesis of assimilation and

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Lee, Play in Education, p. 107.

accommodation, making for adaptation, will occur in the child's developing relationship with his environment. Thus the make-believe play of the junior school child should have lost its egocentricity, and drama at this stage might reasonably be expected to offer scope for further development of inter-personal relationships and the child's powers of perception and understanding.

At this point, the discussion may appear to have veered some way from Peter Slade's philosophy; but not so, if one considers the significance of his concept of Personal Play in the context of symbolic thought:

"All thinking is a symbolic process: when a child begins to control his environment by make-believe behaviour, he is employing the most primitive form of symbolism; when he uses his own body in order to be someone else, he is working at the most concrete level that symbols can operate ... it is the lowest level of abstraction in thinking, and as such it nourishes and revitalises the more abstract thought processes that multiply as the child matures."<sup>1</sup>

It would be untrue to say that this significance has been unnoticed by Slade, yet his main concern through the years has been with the value of Drama for the emotions rather than for the intellect.

The emotional training of the individual through Drama begins soon after birth, even before Personal and

---

<sup>1</sup> G. M. Bolton, The Nature of Children's Drama - Paper read at a Drama Conference organized by the Durham University Institute of Education, St. Chad's College, Durham, July, 1966.

and Projected Play have really manifested themselves. Slade has observed and charted the process in some detail.<sup>1</sup> An account of some of the main ideas involved in the process will follow and, where possible, reference will be made to significant events in Slade's career or possible influences on his thinking.

Throughout the four phases of Child Drama Slade is very concerned with the shape of children's acting and their use of space. The circle is a recurring symbol to which Slade ascribes internal and external significance. In the first phase,<sup>2</sup> lasting from birth to about five years, many of the child's actions take on a circular shape, whether they be movements of the whole body or individual limbs. In psychological terms Slade sees the circle as the individual's life-space;<sup>3</sup> in both a physical and emotional sense drama allows the child to come to

---

<sup>1</sup> Appendix five shows the process in diagrammatic form.

<sup>2</sup> Slade views this phase very much as a child psychologist might. He lays particular stress on its importance in what Hadfield has called the "organization of the personality" (J. A. Hadfield, Childhood and Adolescence, p. 115) and notes the emergence of certain characteristics such as personal rhythm and an elementary experience of art and music which will have a vital role to play in the child's development.

<sup>3</sup> Slade refers to the remarks of William Stern at the third congress for experimental psychology at Frankfurt-on-Main in 1908. (Quoted in W. Viola, Child Art, p13) "Every man experiences himself as the centre of the space surrounding himself, but this space is only conquered by steps."

terms with his own life-space and that of others. This development of social awareness occurs in the next two phases of Child Drama, the period of Dramatic Play from five to seven years, and the phase from seven to twelve years. It is interesting to compare Slade's ideas about developing social awareness with Lee's comments on the significance of the ring game in the social play of the dramatic age (three to six years):

"There is in the ring game the sense of belonging to a social whole .... We feel and care about the ring itself. There is a sense of personal loss if it gets broken - to have it squashed in on one side gives a sense of impaired personality .... and we hasten in such case with much squealing, to mend or round it out again. The ring is now a part of us, as we of it .... It is an extension of ourselves, a new personality we act now not as individuals, but as the ring; its success is our success, and what hits it hits us. The ring, like the family, is a social whole."<sup>1</sup>

Slade's views on the shape of Child Drama were based primarily on his observation of children at play during the early thirties. These observations had a marked effect on the sort of theatre work he was doing at the time, particularly in relation to his Theatre for Children companies. During 1931 he started touring schools and community halls in London with a company of students from the Polytechnic. By 1935 he had founded the Parable

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Lee, op. cit., p. 139.

Players companies which went to schools all over the Home Counties with the purpose of reviving interest in the old Morality plays.<sup>1</sup>

The first touring companies organized by Slade had presented plays in proscenium form but it was the observation of child play while wandering in the streets of London that made him see other possibilities or, one might say, other necessities:

"They (children) showed me now, with a first fully conscious blast, how their world ticked, though their acting was largely unconscious as mine had once been.<sup>2</sup> They formed circles and acted in-the-round outwards from the centre of themselves all round their bodies, they used the upper and lower level of the pavement (which first caused me to recommend rostrum blocks in London schools where we performed)."<sup>3</sup>

Mention has been made already of one psychological interpretation of the circle shape in children's acting but there are other possibilities:

"The constant repetitions and use of symbols in the realm of child behaviour, also the acting out of situations sometimes before they can have been experienced, is entirely in line with the Jungian conception of the collective unconscious."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that Caryl Jenner worked with Slade in one of his early Parable Players companies.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Overture and Beginners, The Public and Kings and Chemists in P. Slade, Experience of Spontaneity.

<sup>3</sup> P. Slade, Children's Theatre - Past and Future - an article in Education, June 9th, 1967, p. 1092.

<sup>4</sup> P. Slade, Child Drama, p. 48.

Thus the circle may be seen as part of the mandala system of symbolism. In visions, according to the Jungian interpretation, it represents the emergence of a new centre of personality: the self.<sup>1</sup>

"The drawing of a spell binding circle is the ancient magic means that everyone resorts to who has a singular and secret purpose. He protects himself with it against the perils of the soul that threaten from without and befall everyone who is isolated by a secret. On the other hand, men from old have resorted to this means in order to demark a place as holy and inviolable. That the dreamer stands rooted in the middle is a compensation for his almost insuperable urge to run away from the unconscious. After the vision he has a pleasant feeling of relief; rightly so, for he has succeeded in forming a protected enclosure, a region of taboo in which it becomes possible for him to experience the unconscious."<sup>2</sup>

A Jungian would obviously see mandala symbolism in folk dances where there is a circling round a central point and an advance towards the centre. Slade certainly notes a connection between the circular form of child acting and that of the traditional dances but sees its significance in the idea of the hunt and chase epitomized in the dances.

---

<sup>1</sup> P. Fordham, An Introduction to Jung's Psychology, pp.61-62.  
"But if the ego can relinquish some of the belief in its own omnipotence, a position can be found somewhere between that of consciousness with its hardly-won values, and unconsciousness with its vitality and power, and a new centre of personality can emerge, differing in its nature from the ego-centre. Jung calls this new centre of personality 'the self.'"

<sup>2</sup> C. G. Jung, The Integration of the Personality, pp. 106-107.

Whatever the nuances of psychological interpretation attached to it in children's acting, Slade sees the circle, and variations upon it, as the natural form of Child Drama until between the ages of twelve and fifteen. Even during this phase the circle is not entirely absent, for it shows itself in the tongue and bulge shapes around the proscenium stage. The important point is, however, that by this age the child has generally acquired certain spatial concepts which make the idea of the proscenium stage more meaningful. In earlier years, though, when these concepts have not been formed, the proscenium stage is quite alien to the child's dramatic and mental development and it can have harmful effects. By forcing the child to act in one direction, it cuts across his natural acting in-the-round and presents him with a particularly adult concept of theatre - acting at an audience.<sup>1</sup> This in turn encourages showing-off and destroys two of the great qualities of Child Drama: absorption and sincerity.

While warning of the dangers of introducing the proscenium stage too early, Slade has put forward the interesting suggestion that drama might be instrumental in the child's developing awareness of depth and space

---

<sup>1</sup> F. Slade, Child Drama, p. 58. "The child is actor and audience in one because of its delicate balance of out-flow and in-flow in the realm of experience and knowledge." In Experience of Spontaneity, pp. 16-18, Slade gives a personal account of the dangerous effects of adult proscenium theatre on a six-year old.

relationships:

"And perhaps their first appreciation of the third dimension comes through the slow process of the integration of self into the society of others whilst acting-in-the-round. The first experience is clearly unconscious but later on (nearer ten years) we see children beginning to look across the hall full of companions, and clearly taking in 'depth' - taking in not only their immediate neighbour but the companion beyond and beyond that one - and it is after this that perspective of a simple kind may creep into their pictures."<sup>1</sup>

When something like proscenium theatre is introduced to a child too early in life Slade is apt to talk in terms of a disturbance of "personal rhythm." Rhythm is an important word in the vocabulary of Child Drama. It appears in the baby's first experiments in sound and comprises "creative moments" accompanied by joy of accomplishment. We are told that "although rhythm contains time beat it is not the same thing but is animated by something else as well, which contains also forms of repetition."<sup>2</sup> The "something else" is rather intangible but it seems to represent some inner, spiritual quality which at times has a harmonizing and fusing effect. Thus Slade is able

---

<sup>1</sup> P. Slade, Child Drama, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

to talk of the rhythm of a good theatrical production<sup>1</sup> or the child's personal rhythm of development. Rhythm appears naturally in the child's activity after the age of six and, according to Slade, it is a quality that the child shares with the great artist and Mother Earth:

"Civilisation is an imposed time beat, which does not always fit in with, and never equals in excellence or purity, the rhythmic breathing of Mother Earth."<sup>2</sup>

Slade's concept of rhythm has some affinity with the Platonic approach and is very similar to Lee's ideas on the subject:

"Rhythm is an ultimate fact of our spiritual make-up. It is one of the motives that formed us and still persist and act throughout our being ... very possibly Nature made our spirits rhythmic in order that we might fit in with the rhythm of all her other works, including our own physical make-up."<sup>3</sup>

By his use of the terms "personal rhythm" Slade is able to highlight the uniqueness of the individual child and to invest him with an aura of genuineness,

---

<sup>1</sup> In Stanislavski, Building a Character, p. 197, Tortsov speaks of tempo-rhythm: "In a word tempo-rhythm carries with itself not only external qualities which directly affect our natures, but also our inner content which nourishes our feelings. In this guise tempo-rhythm remains in our memories and may be used for creative purposes." Both Stanislavski and Slade used improvisation as a means of getting at the "inner content," see P. Slade Experience of Spontaneity, pp. 61-64, in which he describes spontaneous exercises with a group of professional actors in central London during the years 1933-34.

<sup>2</sup> P. Slade, Child Drama, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> J. Lee, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-151.

naturalness and creativeness in much the same way as Pestalozzi and Froebel did in the eighteenth century and Cizek was doing in the twentieth.<sup>1</sup>

Providing a child's personal rhythms of development is encouraged along natural lines there will be a balance between In-Flow and Out-Flow. In-Flow is "the taking-in of ideas and experiences" and Out-Flow "the pouring out of creative forms of expression."<sup>2</sup> Both processes are vital for the developing person and because Child Drama is the main medium for out-flow it again assumes great educational significance. The balance of in-flow and out-flow starts with the baby<sup>3</sup> and lasts through life; an important period

---

<sup>1</sup> "The task is to let the child grow naturally, but not arbitrarily ... To let children grow means to let them grow according to their eternal innate laws" Cizek quoted by W. Viola, Child Art, p. 45. Cizek has been chosen from a host of twentieth century child-centred theorists because Slade was an obvious admirer of his work and saw a tremendous similarity between Cizek's approach to Child Art and his own approach to Child Drama. Slade was an early member of the Society for Education in Art.

<sup>2</sup> P. Slade, Child Drama, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 93. As an example Slade gives the obvious delight of a baby at its recognition of an adult's effort to repeat one of the baby's sound attempts. The recognition represents in-flow and the delight leads on to more attempts at out-flow (further sounds). Slade suggests that the first approach of the child to language is primarily an emotional one involving themusical qualities of sound. He feels that a stress by the adult on the intellectual side of speech (in the sense of meaning) too early in the child's life "prevents emotional and aesthetic development and hinders the growth of love of sound. Throughout a child's drama Slade recognizes the value of music in relation to the emotions.

occurs round about the age of six or seven - at the "dawn of seriousness" - when the child more consciously wishes to draw in knowledge. Child Drama allows for the emotional and physical experiencing of in-flow as well as putting the child into the right frame of mind for learning. In Slade's view there has too often been a stifling of out-flow in education, causing frustration to teacher and pupil alike. Where there is plentiful opportunity for out-flow, Slade observes two important phenomena. The first is Language Flow and by this he means not merely a growing confidence in speaking articulately and spontaneously but also a sensitivity towards the poetic and philosophic quality of language. A second phenomenon of out-flow, first noticed by Slade in the street-play of children, is Running Play. This is a physical embodiment of extreme joy and usually comprises a "form of fleet running, generally with bent knees and arms outstretched."<sup>1</sup>

It is a sure sign to the teacher that out-flow has been achieved.

"Drama-therapy" is a term coined by Slade to describe deliberate therapy through drama. In a sense, though, the whole process of Child Drama might be seen as

---

<sup>1</sup> P. Slade, Child Drama, pp. 13-14. An interesting manifestation of Running Play can often be observed at the end of a televised football match (or during it) when youthful spectators invade the pitch and indulge in improvised dance.

therapeutic; the aim being the development of a well-balanced, emotionally-stable personality. These different notions of therapy are well conveyed in a lecture given by Slade to The Guild of Pastoral Psychology in 1958.

"The drama falls into three main divisions for the purpose of this discussion: (a) conscious and intended therapy, (b) constructive education and (c) prevention. By conscious and intended therapy is meant all forms of carefully applied drama, such as psychodrama, and what I have called dramatherapy; by constructive education a wide and wise educational system, which includes not only the three R's, but which allows time and opportunity for aesthetic discovery and practice, for training of the elimination of unnecessary suffering by more thoughtful and knowledgeable behaviour on the part of parents to children, teachers to children, children to children, and adults to each other. Drama has a part to play in all of these as an aid to confidence, hope, feeling of security, discovery of sympathy, and to concentration."<sup>1</sup>

Slade began to develop the therapeutic implications of drama during his own schooldays in the late twenties. He claims that members of his public school "who indulged in my drama-athletic movement began to pass their exams and finally wanted to live again."<sup>2</sup> An impetus to his

---

<sup>1</sup> P. Slade, Dramatherapy as an aid to becoming a person, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> P. Slade, Experience of Spontaneity, p. 46. Slade distinguishes between the more rigid discipline of drama-athletic movement which "had its origin in the use of body weight and the soring of energy" (Ibid., p. 69) and improvised dance which brought about sensitivity and spontaneity. He used both types of dance in the training of his companies of actors in the thirties and later advocated the use of both in schools.

thinking occurred during his time at Bonn University and it is reasonable to assume that around this time he became acquainted with Freud's ideas on catharsis and repetition compulsion and Moreno's early psychodramatic experiments.<sup>1</sup> Slade had the opportunity to try out his therapeutic methods when he was attached to the Arts Centre in Worcestershire during 1937 for he dealt with backward and disturbed children both in and out of the classroom. During the next few years he worked in close co-operation with members of the medical profession.

The constructive education mentioned by Slade in the Guild Lecture comprises the balance of Personal and Projected Play discussed already in this account. Although this balance represents in a large sense the developing, emotional training of the child, it also contains opportunities for more precise, therapeutic activities. Thus the infant should be allowed to work out love and hate on treasures<sup>2</sup> and the young adolescent to play out evil "in

---

<sup>1</sup> Slade sees two important differences between psychodrama and dramatherapy. The first deals with a consciously-imposed problem and is concerned with present or past difficulties. Dramatherapy, on the other hand, involves children who may only be dimly aware of the nature of their problem. What these children need is not so much a resolution of past or present difficulties but hope for the future - a hope that may come through "the almost dream process of imaginative creative drama."

<sup>2</sup> P. Slade, Child Drama, p. 23. "By treasures is meant dolls, bricks, old paper, etc. - in fact any object upon which love is momentarily poured or upon which affection which is somewhat difficult to understand is lavished for long periods."

a legal framework"<sup>1</sup> of Child Drama. A particularly important cathartic stage is the period between seven and nine years when "the themes chosen during Child Drama, which we can endure, share and guide to other more constructive channels (help contribute) to the 'hope' process, so necessary for balancing the psychic banking account."<sup>2</sup> If the adult has a particularly skilful role to play in the context of conscious therapeutic drama he does not act as a passive bystander in normal Child Drama. Not that he acts like the authority figure in the traditional, disciplinary way; instead he takes on the more subtle part of guide."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> P. Slade, Child Drama, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> P. Slade, Experience of Spontaneity, pp. 290-291

<sup>3</sup> The adult, whether he be teacher or parent, assumes a great responsibility in his role as guide. Interestingly enough, Slade uses the same sort of metaphor as naturalistic philosophers like Pestalozzi and Froebel in describing this role: the adult is seen as a gardener tending the growing plant or tree. A comparison between the words of Pestalozzi and those of Slade will show, however, that the gardener in Slade's metaphor should be less passive than the one in Pestalozzi's image:

J. Pestalozzi, Address to My House, quoted in R. J. L. Selleck, op. cit., p. 182. "It (true education) is like the art of the gardener under whose care a thousand trees blossom and grow; the principle of growth lies in the trees themselves .... So with the educator: he imparts no single power to men. He gives neither life nor breath."

P. Slade, Child Drama, p. 45. "The adult is vital to the best in this form of activity (Child Dramatic Play), which should be nurtured and cared for much as a gardener cultivates a flower. Like the flower, if it is left untended, it goes back to a wild state, and the weeds that come - fighting, getting hurt, cruelty, rudeness - will promote unhappiness and lack of confidence. These weeds are found often in the streets and playground, whereas in the happy school and fortunate home they can be plucked out."

He must create the right sort of environment in which children, through their drama, can learn self-discipline and respect for the other's point of view.

The predominant manner in Slade's concept of Child Drama is improvisation and this improvisation may work through the medium of drama, dance, art or music. Despite the fact Slade has not been a classroom teacher in the strictest sense of the term, he has probably been more influential than anyone else in bringing improvised drama into the school-room. Improvised drama has a long tradition and other people besides Slade were using it in education and the theatre during the first three decades of the present century. However, nobody has seen such a close link between the essence of improvisation and the essence of the child's natural development than Slade. Improvisation allows the child a vital means of out-flow and gives opportunity for spontaneity, "this dynamic phenomenon in human nature."<sup>1</sup>

"What is the value of spontaneity? Many people still think it unnecessary or a waste of time. Apart from developing the ability to speak (and incidentally to write with more imagination), other qualities become evident - a growing absorption in the task and a sincerity about the way of doing it, particularly in children, useful for all learning and general attitudes to life; also a mounting confidence and ultimately a mounting happiness."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> P. Slade, Experience of Spontaneity, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

Slade thinks that spontaneity can be developed and guided.<sup>1</sup> For more than thirty years he has been using his 'Ideas Game,'<sup>2</sup> for the release of inner creation through improvised drama. He feels that the emotional intensity arising from this inner creation is lacking when the young child is introduced to the scripted play too early.<sup>3</sup> Similarly in the field of dance he feels that the strictly imitative dance often leads to a superficiality of expression; yet the improvised dance can help with the discovery of personal rhythm and the fostering of group awareness.

Peter Slade has made a great contribution to the understanding of drama in education and his influence has been felt in many classrooms all over the world. He is the first person to present a comprehensive view of the

---

<sup>1</sup> As did J. L. Moreno, of course.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 3. "This is where you ask for ideas or select some, and out of several quite separate suggestions weave a story which can be acted. Often, the very incongruity of the ideas forces one, almost, to invent." See also Child Drama, p. 145. "The ideas Game improves upon the imposed story, as it invites cooperation, and by that shared creation one finds a tendency to eager participation."

<sup>3</sup> P. Slade, Child Drama, p. 66. "The development towards play-writing is something like this: Play; Dramatic Play; improvisations; polished improvisations; some words written down; stories and dialogues copied from films, radio and life experiences; improved expression (coming from Language Flow) and improved writing ability mix with improvisation and begin to equal it. Out of this last stage comes a tolerably good written play. The age-not in the junior school, but circa thirteen years upwards."

place of Child Drama in education, a view based on detailed observation over many years and sustained by a faith in the truth of his methods. For a long time he had to struggle against convention, particularly in his own profession, the theatre. Some idea of how he succeeded in the struggle is given in the remark of a famous theatrical director at the beginning of a conference sometime in the early fifties:

"Mr. Slade is a prophet, who even in his own life time, has achieved a considerable following."<sup>1</sup>

Those who do not follow Slade, or those who follow hesitantly, might voice several main reservations. Despite his acute observations of children's activities, there does seem a tendency on his part to indulge in what Hadfield has called the "Psychologist's fallacy:"<sup>2</sup> interpreting children's behaviour in such a way as to make it fit with certain theories.

Then, there is his stress on the therapeutic aspects of drama. Despite his insistence that Child Drama is an art form existing in its own right, he pays less attention to its intrinsic, aesthetic value than to a psychological justification of its role in the child's development.

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in R. Slade, Child Drama, p. 11

<sup>2</sup> J. A. Hadfield, Childhood and Adolescence, p. 12.

Of course the last point is a characteristic of the thinking of many child-centred theorists in relation to the child and the arts. It often leads to a blurring of the distinctive ways in which the various arts have their effect, because the stress is on the child rather than the medium. It leads also to what one critic has called a "propensity to the employment of inflated abstractions." Certainly Slade does not escape either of the two faults. He often yokes Child Drama and Child Art together when generalising about aims<sup>1</sup> and is certainly prone to using imprecise, emotive terms when discussing the child's activities.

A last reservation might be that Slade sees the effects of Child Drama in disproportionate terms to the other influences on the developing personality. Thus he can be led to the extravagancies of:

"I would say without hesitation that cleanliness; tidiness, gracefulness, politeness, cheerfulness, confidence, ability to mix, thoughtfulness for others, discrimination, moral discernment, honesty and loyalty, ability to lead companions, reliability, and a readiness to remain steadfast under difficulties, appear to be the results of correct and prolonged Drama training."<sup>2</sup>

The contradiction of "without hesitation" in the first line and "appear" in the last-but-one might suggest that even Mr. Slade had second feelings about his claims.

---

<sup>1</sup> See P. Slade, Child Drama, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

A. R. Stone

The following account is mainly concerned with the first four years of Mr. Stone's five-year tenure as Headmaster of the Steward Street Primary School in Birmingham for during these years he was able to implement a philosophy of education, first approached intuitively but clarified later by specific influences. It may, however, be worthwhile to dwell briefly on some of his earlier dramatic experiences for, while generalization is often dangerous, it does seem reasonable to assume that there were in the Birmingham area during the decade and a half before 1940 other sensitive teachers who were becoming aware of drama's possibilities in education and who experimented as Stone did.

Stone remembers his own intuitive ideas being confirmed by the emphasis of the three Hadow Reports on the need to gear education to the child's spontaneous activities. Initially, at least, his own application of spontaneity to classroom dramatic work met with little success. Dramatization required constant prodding and, while understanding the relationship between play and dramatic play, he found it difficult to induce children to play

---

dramatically. With practice, however, his pupils gained confidence in their drama and were able to act their own dramatized versions of fiction and also to interpret the scripted play.<sup>1</sup> Stone realized that this activity was having beneficial effects on the imagination, speech and aesthetic appreciation of his junior-school-age children but yet, at the same time, he felt that they were still inhibited in their approach and were not developing as fully as they might.

Ways of breaking down inhibitions were approached in another phase of Stone's career. Towards the end of the twenties he became involved in a local dramatic society almost by accident. The society required two children for a production of "As You Like It." Stone took two pupils from his own school and found himself with a role in the production. An offshoot of this dramatic society was a theatre club formed by Stone and his friends, one of the main activities being children's theatre.<sup>2</sup> At first the children's theatre comprised children playing

---

<sup>1</sup> An anthology of 11 one-act plays, edited by J. G. Harriott, for performance in or out of school was on the market in 1925. According to the Forum of Education (1925) it was the "first of its kind to be published in England."

<sup>2</sup> Some of the other activities were make-up classes, puppets, scenery making, costume designing and property production.

to children but, as this led to exhibitionism and slickness on the part of the actors, gradually the performances developed towards adults playing to children.

One of the most popular activities at the theatre club was dancing and it was now that Stone began to see the possibilities of movement work as a means to freeing the child from inhibitions. Country dancing improved movement but was too limited to be the real answer. At the same time, the "Greek" dance style, founded by Margaret Morris and inspired by Isadora Duncan, lacked the imaginative quality needed. Thus Stone and his friends began to experiment with rhythmic exercises to help sustain the occasional brilliant flashes of movement they observed in the massed mimes and immature dramatic dances performed by the children at the theatre club.

The club was an out-of-school venture but obviously there was an interchange of ideas and practices between this and Stone's classroom work - by the late thirties he was headmaster of a Birmingham primary school - and in 1939 there was to be a tremendous stimulus to his concept of movement. Two of Stone's staff attended a course on Laban movement organized by the Birmingham Educational Authority. Stone "gatecrashed" a later course and realized that through the discipline of the Laban notation

his pupils might find the freedom of movement so important to their whole development.

Stone's ideas as to what whole development implied - and as to how expression through the arts assisted development in this - were finding confirmation in the writings of Cizek, interpreted by Viola, and in the work of Marion Richardson. The Birmingham School Drama Festivals were not, he realized, always conducive to this whole development, particularly in the early competitive days.<sup>1</sup> Too often the children were puppets in the teacher's hands. But there were the occasional improvisations in which children were free to create and some of the courses organized by the British Drama League and Citizen House, Bath, showed that the interpretation of a script was at its best a creative exercise. Stanislavsky's work was particularly relevant in this context as Stone found.

It was with this kind of dramatic background that

---

<sup>1</sup> In P. Slade, Child Drama, p. 359, Slade talks of the inhibiting nature of the competitive festival and blames the prevalence of the school festival in the thirties on the inability of most people to distinguish between educational drama and theatre. Thus school drama often followed the lead of the theatre and "amongst amateurs, the philosophy of the competitive festival raged like a disease in the 1930s, and this is no premise for a wide philosophy on Drama and Life."

Stone came to Steward Street. The school was situated in an old part of Birmingham and was surrounded by factories and back-to-back houses. Most of the 240 children who attended the school lived a culturally-deprived existence but yet, despite the fact that there was no beauty in their immediate environment, "they created something which was beautiful"<sup>1</sup> when they were allowed unhampered expression in certain artistic media.

Stone believed that this unhampered expression would allow a child to come to terms both with himself and his environment and would lead towards the full development of personality necessary in any true education. In terms of curriculum Stone saw creation through the arts taking precedence over the three R's, yet making their eventual inculcation much more smooth. The use of the arts as expressive media was doubly important in that they allowed for the creation of beauty through which the "True development of the individual emerges"<sup>2</sup> and also because on account of their artistic-discipline they prevented free expression from becoming anarchy.

The use of particular art media depended on the point

---

<sup>1</sup> Story of a School, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

children had reached in their development through the arts. Stone postulated three stages in this development. There was initially a 'repetitive' stage in which the child's approach to material was predominately rhythmic. This might entail rhythmical strokes in his painting, the repetition of movement patterns in dramatic play or the "pounding and pulling" of material in modelling. This stage shaded into an 'expressive' period when the child was more concerned with the self-satisfaction to be gained from artistic efforts than their effect on others. Later, however, came the communicative 'stage' when the child wished his efforts to be comprehensible to other people.

From this analysis Stone was able to formulate certain theories relevant to the child's development through the arts:

- "(a) During the 'repetitive' stage , ... we can teach best by providing plenty of material, such as material for modelling, for making sounds for colour and so on.
- (b) During the 'expressive' stage the function of the teacher is to help children to become exploratory, and as they succeed their own work will develop form. In this stage it is more important to assess the child's development through experience gained in any medium rather than to do so from results.
- (c) In the 'communicative' stage the child asks for help in order to express himself more clearly to other people. It is essential to wait till the child has reached this communicative stage before we offer him exercises or

other kinds of help in order to increase his skill, otherwise his desire for expression may be stifled."<sup>1</sup>

Looking at dramatic work in terms of these theories one can envisage a progression from mime and movement to music through simple improvisation to more formal dramatization and the interpretation of the scripted play.

In order that his pupils should approach their work in the arts with spontaneity and sincerity, Stone wanted them to feel free and "for a child to be free, the first essential is that he should move easily."<sup>2</sup> Here Stone was concerned with the relationship between bodily movement and spiritual make-up stressed in the 1931 Madow Report.<sup>3</sup> Later he was to perceive an apparent connection between movement and thought and the development of what he calls the kinaesthetic image. What made movement so very important was the fact that not only did it have relevance for the development of the individual personality but also that it formed the common beginning for the creative urge in all the arts:

"That common beginning is movement-movement, something primitive and fundamental, so it seems to me; not movement for expressing emotion or ideas, which becomes Dance: not movement which makes us feel we want to say something, which is Drama: not

---

<sup>1</sup> Story of a School, pp. 33-34.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> The Primary School, paragraph 76.

movement for developing bodily strength or skills, which is Physical Training: but movement for movement's sake, the starting-point of all the arts."<sup>1</sup>

Therefore in the 'repetitive' stage children approached the arts expansively, using large spaces and copious quantities of material. The individual child's freedom was helped by the use made in the school of Laban's analysis of movement.<sup>2</sup> At first Laban's principles of effort in movement seemed to be having little effect but gradually the child was freed from his inhibitions and began to express himself in movement without any fear of embarrassment.

The newly acquired "resources in movement"<sup>3</sup> were particularly evident in the dramatic work at Steward Street. In comparing two versions of the same Nativity mime - one performed before much movement training had been accomplished and one performed after - Stone was able to feel the heightened intensity of the second:

---

<sup>1</sup> Story of a School, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Stone was fortunate in having the practical assistance of Hoving, a member of the Ballet Joos, who visited Steward Street on occasions.

<sup>3</sup> The D.B.S. Education Survey 2, p. 29, talks of "Resources in movement (as involving) an awareness of the body and how it works, its potentialities and capabilities, the limbs and joints that make up the body and how they function, and what they will do."

"The body easily responded to the emotional stimulus aroused by the part the children were portraying. The body was responding easily and fearlessly to the thoughts within. There was a oneness between the emotional self and the physical body."<sup>1</sup>

In the newly-developed harmony between the emotional and the physical, Stone and his colleagues at first thought there might lie dangers. Was there not the possibility that the more violent passions might find an easy outlet and make for social disharmony within the school? In fact the converse occurred and the school developed a "certain social unity" through the sublimation of the children's energies in the "joyous doing of activities based on inherent interest."<sup>2</sup> With an increased confidence in the therapeutic value of drama, Stone felt able to introduce mimes which included episodes of physical conflict. Formerly he had omitted these episodes or skimmed over them with the result that they were often

---

<sup>1</sup> Story of a School, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 17. As the school's methods became more well known, Stone found that "difficult" children were being sent to benefit from his guidance and the whole development they received from the arts-orientated curriculum at Steward Street. Another aspect of the school's developing social harmony was the greater interest being shown by parents in their children's school activities. A small but significant manifestation of this interest was the increase in the school's collection of dramatic "odds and ends."

enacted in the playground "sometimes to the detriment of order." But now, channelled into an artistic discipline within the school, they satisfied the children and "aroused no personal antagonism between individuals or sets of individuals."<sup>1</sup>

Much of the mime and movement work was connected with other subjects. In the lower classes historical scenes were often dramatized and, if appropriate, model making was incorporated. Music was used in different ways: sometimes it acted as a stimulus for dance; occasionally a particular mime led to the composition of an original tune;<sup>2</sup> and many mimes used music to create atmosphere. Children's painting was often influenced by mimes they had watched or performed and Stone found, as Harriet Finlay-Johnson had done at the beginning of the century, that children painted imaginary locations for the mimes and

---

<sup>1</sup> Story of a School, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Music was one artistic medium in which the Steward Street pupils failed to find complete absorption; in fact, the composition of tunes, or rhymes for dramatic work was the only occasion on which there was a genuine creative spark. Stone suggests that the blame lies in the fact that music in schools was approached as an interpretative art before children had had time to create musically. The D.E.S. Survey 2 discusses this point, p. 43. "As with drama, so it is with music. It is of fundamental importance in schools, primary and secondary, for its own sake and for what it can bring to a child. But how much talent runs to waste in schools when the young people are not given the least opportunity for creative musical experiences!"

imaginary costumes for characters. The last point is particularly interesting because Stone did actually use costuming in the mimes for it allowed scope for the child's natural delight in dressing up and helped the child to identify with the character he was portraying.

At a certain stage in the pupil's dramatic development, Stone and his colleagues encouraged spontaneous speech. These moments, when the children wished to supplement their movement and gesture with speech, were easily recognized. The ensuing improvisations were not seen as an end in themselves, however, but were used as part of a play-making process. Children were invited to write down the thoughts they had had during the dramatization and the written efforts were pieced together to form a play. Only the older pupils were able to shape this material so that it was ready for presentation before an audience and even these children were apt to give spontaneous reinterpretations of episodes based on material from their immediate environment. Subsequently, Stone suggested that many of the episodes from literature that the children had previously mimed would provide suitable conversation for their plays. Strangely enough he seems to have considered it a positive step forward in his pupils' development when they searched for somebody else's

words in order to express their feelings more adequately.

Now drama had become an interpretive art and children were ready to give life to the scripted play. Yet Stone was doubtful, even at this, the "communicative" stage, as to the desirability of an audience. He was certain that the presence of an audience during the "expressive" stage of the child's creative miming militated against the child's absorption and sincerity; at this final stage, when perhaps the child felt a psychological need for an audience, Stone still had fears that a fatal exhibitionism might result.

Formal speech-training was not pursued at Stone's school but naturally a great deal of speech practice occurred in connection with the drama. One aspect of dramatic work particularly helpful in this context was the pupils' skill at and delight in mimicry:

"By training the child's ear to listen to the variety of speech sounds and to reproduce them ... the child can of his own volition develop his speech to certain standards."<sup>1</sup>

Stone felt that too little notice was taken of the child's ability to mimic and the relevance this had for linguistic development. It was an aspect of dramatic

---

<sup>1</sup> Story of a School, p. 22.

work he could give more attention to during his time as an organizer in the West Riding from 1947 onwards.

However, in accounting for the impressive nature of Stone's work at Steward Street School, it would be wrong to single out items in any art medium or, indeed, to concentrate on any particular medium. Drama did have an important part to play in the curriculum but it was not a solo part. Essentially, Stone's approach was through the arts in general. He was probably a little surprised at the stir this approach created, not least in official educational circles, for it "had nothing revolutionary in its nature. It was based on two elementary facts reiterated by educationalists throughout the ages. "We tried to give the Children opportunities to move and to express themselves. We believed that the qualities which are developed in this way are of tremendous importance to all activities, since expression in the arts gives not only a natural approach to academic subjects but also a more confident basis for tackling the difficulties of social relationships."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Story of a School, p. 36.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to prove that during the first forty or so years of the twentieth century there was a developing awareness on the part of an increasing number of people, that drama once again had an important role to play in the schools of England.

It would be misleading to suggest that all the ideas put forward concerning the nature of the role received widespread, practical implementation or that official encouragement of drama always achieved tangible results. For instance, it was very rare for a drama teacher or specialist to be appointed to a school staff during the period under review and the first appointment of a drama organizer under a Local Education Authority was not made until 1944. Even if many training colleges were producing annual plays by the nineteen twenties there was little evidence of attention being given in their curricula to the educational implications of drama in schools. Of the universities, Liverpool was exceptional in its establishment of a lectureship on the art of the theatre as early as 1921.

Nevertheless, it is hoped that enough evidence has been given to show that there were those who took advantage of the new climate of opinion in this country to

implement their dramatic ideas. These ideas varied as the thesis has shown. For some, drama was a teaching-aid; for others, it remained primarily an art form. Perhaps the most interesting development lay in the fact that there were those who, while recognizing these two roles, also saw that drama provided, or might provide, a means by which a person could develop his uniqueness as an individual within a social framework. It may seem rather ironical that the emphasis placed on personal development through drama by Peter Slade tended to call in question that alliance between education and the theatre which had been approved hitherto.

APPENDIX ONE

STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

YEARS IN SCHOOL			YEARS OF AGE
20			25
19			24
18	Graduate and Professional Schools	Adult Education	
17			
16	Four-Year College	Adult Education	
15			
14		Junior College	Technical Institutes Community Colleges
13			
12	Four-Year High School	Senior High School	Six-Year or Junior-Senior High School
11			
10			
9		Junior High School	
8	Elementary School		
7			
6			11
5			10
4			9
3			8
2			7
1			6
			5
			4
			3
			2

APPENDIX TWO

A SOMPTING HISTORY PLAY

Enter two Market Woman with baskets of wares.

Apprentices cry, "What d'ye lack?"

FIRST MARKET WOMAN                   Hast heard the news that Phillip hath sent a large fleet of ships to England against us?

SECOND MARKET WOMAN               Odds, woman! thou doest surprise me.

FIRST MARKET WOMAN               There are hundreds and hundreds of them, and I did hear that a man named Drake and some of his friends were playing at bowls down at Plymouth Hoe, when another man came riding up to them and told them that the Spanish were in the Channel. The good Queen, God bless her! went down to see the army, riding on her grey pony.

Enter Third Market Woman, while a Man draws near to listen, eating a large apple.

THIRD WOMAN                        Do you know that the English are sending out fire-ships?

SECOND WOMAN                       Lawk-a-mussey-me! what are they?

THIRD WOMAN                        Why, they are old vessels filled with tar, and gunpowder, and things that will burn easily. They turn these adrift among the enemy's ships and they either set fire to the other ships or blow them up.

SECOND WOMAN                       They say the Spanish ships sail in a half-moon shape?

MAN with apple                    Ah, it wants stout English hearts like mine to fight they Spaniards!

FIRST WOMAN                        Methinks your stomach is greater than your heart.

SECOND  
WOMAN                    Yes, judging by the size of his apple -  
but hark! here comes the Queen. We must  
be off to our stalls.

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, Court Ladies, and Courtiers.

MARKET  
WOMEN                    What d'ye lack.    What d'ye lack?

MARKET  
WOMAN                    (curtsies)    Ribbons and laces for sweet  
pretty faces your Majesty!

COURT  
LADY                    I will have a yard of sarcenet to deck  
my bodice for this evening's Morris dance.

MARKET  
WOMAN                    Nice, fresh arum (?) roots to stiffen  
the ladies' ruffles, your Majesty!

QUEEN                    Yes, my ruffles are exceedingly limp.  
I will have a pound sent to the palace.

MARKET  
WOMAN                    Woundwort, to cure cuts and bruises,  
your Majesty!

COURT  
LADY                    Oh, your Majesty, do you not remember  
that poor soldier who was wounded in a bout  
at quarter-staff last night?

QUEEN                    Indeed, poor fellow! then see that he  
has some woundwort made into poultices and  
applied to his sore pate.

MARKET  
WOMAN                    Stitchwort, to cure stitch in the side,  
your Majesty!

ANOTHER                    Rosemary and thyme to scent the floors  
with, your Majesty!

COURT  
LADY                    See, your Majesty, the new flower  
called wallflower, brought from America!

QUEEN                    Methinks I should like to smell that  
sweet flower. (Market Woman presents a  
bunch, which the QUEEN sniffs daintily.  
They pass along until they reach tobacco  
stall). See, my ladies, the new stuff  
called tobacco, brought from Virginia!

(Courtiers stop and purchase cigars and awkwardly light them, the QUEEN meanwhile passes slightly on). Oh, this muddy pool - what shall we do, my ladies? And my feet are so lightly shod! (WALTER RALEIGH steps forward and gracefully places the cloak which he has worn lightly on his shoulders over the muddy spot - remaining kneeling on one knee while the Ladies headed by the QUEEN, pass over dryshod) Who is that young lack-cloak?

COURT LADY

He is one WALTER RALEIGH, your Majesty, who sailed the oceans wide, and brought back the tobacco, and the batata, and the wallflower from Virginia.

SECOND COURT  
LADY

And called it Virginia after the Virgin Queen, your Majesty.

QUEEN

Well, bring him to the palace, and we shall maybe find him a post there. Now to the barge my ladies. (Exit all slowly.)

APPENDIX THREE

NATURE-STUDY DRAMATIZED AT SOMPTING

- SCHOLAR                    Oh, here is a pretty Sweetpea hanging over this garden fence!
- SWEETPEA                   He is wrong. I am not hanging over it at all! I climbed up here on purpose to look over at the sun. If he tries to pull me down he will find I am holding on quite firmly.
- SECOND SCHOLAR            Good-morning, pretty flower! We want to know more about you. Can you tell us anything?
- SCHOOLMASTER            Look well and carefully at the flower and it will tell you its secrets.
- SWEETPEA                   (in a high-pitched, weak voice) I belong to a very large family. There are over four thousand seven hundred of us!
- CHILDREN                   (in chorus) Just fancy!
- SWEETPEA                   My family were always rather helpless, for they never grew a strong, upright stem amongst them. Years ago Queen Flora took pity on them and sent her Court Physician to examine their poor weak backs. He invented a way to hold their heads up by fitting them out some little ropes to twine round a firm support - just as poor cripples have crutches. Now they are able to hold themselves up and climb much higher than most garden flowers.
- THIRD SCHOLAR            I know one reason why you want to climb so high.
- SWEETPEA                   You may guess, and I will tell you if you are right.

THIRD  
SCHOLAR

You want to shoot your seeds as far as possible in all directions. I remember you twist your pods in two spirals, giving a little jerk and twist at each turn, and so shoot your seeds out. If you are higher up, the seeds, of course, shoot away farther.

SWEETPEA

Very good guess, little boy! I believe you are right. But now, little visitors, look at my tendrils. Can you guess what they are and where they came from?

FOURTH  
SCHOLAR

I expect I can guess. They grow where leaves ought to be, and they look like "leaf-bones" without the "flesh." Were they once leaves?

SWEETPEA

Clever boy! Yes, they are the remains of leaves. But instead of doing the work of leaves, they now work at clinging and holding on tightly.

APPENDIX FOUR

PLAY-MAKING AT THE PERSE

What is meant by planning the play will be seen best in an actual illustration. In dramatizing the story of Beowulf, the boys would be quite likely to begin with the coming of Beowulf to the land of Hrothgar. But as Beowulf is coming to help Hrothgar against the demon Grendel, who has been carrying off his men, it is obvious that earlier scenes must show Hrothgar in his difficulty. Accordingly one would take as the first scene the building of the hall Heorot, and the holding of a beer-drinking there as a celebration. The building of the hall presents no difficulties in the classroom, as it may be thought, although it is best (if you have to avoid making a noise, out of consideration for the neighbouring classes) to repair to the gymnasium or some empty place afar off. Of course you do not dwell in the hall you build! We simply stood a few benches on end to represent the trees of the forest. Then the king entered and, after announcing in a fine speech his intention of building a great hall, directed his men to hew down the trees. This they soon accomplished, and then two men to each log bore away the timber, chanting a song as they went. If you wish to

show the actual building operations they are easily represented by going through the motions of sawing, planing, and so on, but as there is but small opportunity for anything of purpose to be said at this point it is best to set your second scene as the interior of the finished hall. But note in passing that when your playboys become expert in acting and play-making they will, at such a juncture as this, interpolate a comic scene in which the builders rag one another and make comments upon life in general. This interpolated comic scene is of course borrowed from Shakespeare as instanced in the porter in "Macbeth," and the gravedigger in "Hamlet." But the tradition goes back to the Miracle Plays, and further.

During this second scene Hrothgar, the king, makes a great speech, inaugurating the hall and foretelling many a feast therein and the prospect of long and happy days. Then the minstrel comes forward and chants a lay in praise of Hrothgar and the new dwelling, tells of other noble kings and other fine halls, and praises Hrothgar and Heorot above them all. A touch of irony may fitly be introduced here. It would be well in keeping with the spirit of a minstrel's lay, if he should refer to the troubles and disasters which had overcome

those kings and those castles. This touch will actually be found in the epic, where it is foretold that Heorot would end by fire.

Now, of course, the boys prepare to sleep upon the benches, and Grendel draws on his huge fur gloves (his claws) in view of a predatory onslaught. But the master intervenes. This is not the way to tell a story dramatically. They are in too much of a hurry to reach the climax. But how are we to delay the coming of Grendel and give Hrothgar and his men at least a few days of peace in their new hall? Obviously by interpolating a scene in some other place, and introducing some other characters of the story. It might be well to show Beowulf at home in the court of Hygelac; or even to have a scene of the mumbling and grumbling of Grendel and his dam over a few well-gnawed bones, which would prepare us for the coming raid upon Heorot.

Some such planning and direction of the dramatized story is essential. But, as I have said, it may be that the master has not a previous knowledge of this craft nor a ready knack of invention. In that case the affair will be a fiasco, or at best a muddle-through on the part of the boys.

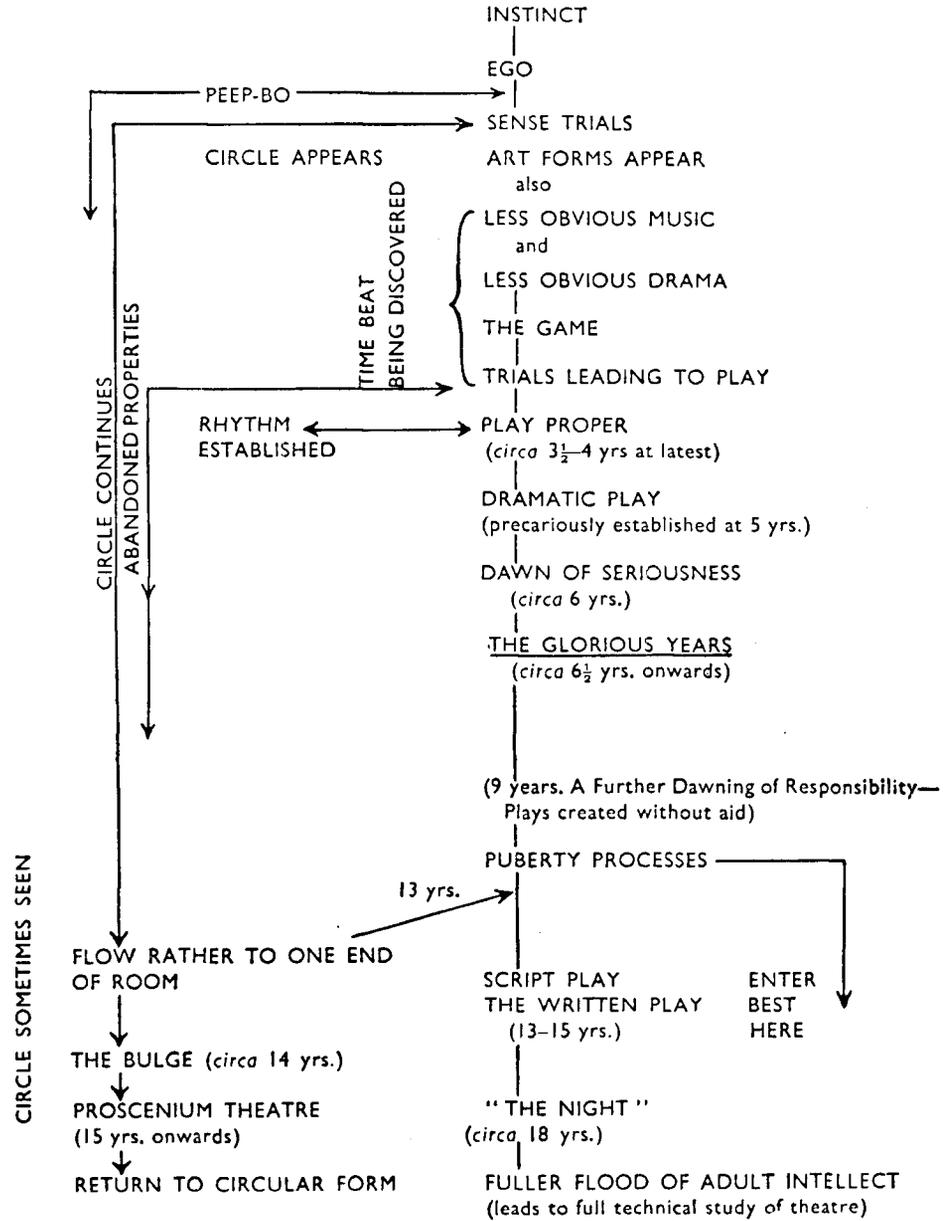
Well, these things can be learnt. One is not born with a working knowledge of playmaking and dramatic conventions. We have learnt all we know in this kind from Shakespeare. The best way to make a start in the classroom acting is to take a play of Shakespeare and act it. The boys will there find that everything is set down for them in the book.

After having performed but one play they will be more at ease in moving about the classroom, and consequently more able to devise play-methods of studying matters which are not in themselves dramatic.

APPENDIX FIVE

PETER SLADE'S CHILD DRAMA

AN INDICATION OF NATURAL DRAMA DEVELOPMENT



BIBLIOGRAPHY

I - OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

Board of Education, Educational Pamphlets, Nos. 24, 43, 55, 60.

Board of Education, Education Reports, 1910-11.

Board of Education, Handbook of Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others concerned in the Work of Public Elementary Schools, 1905, 1915, 1927, 1937.

Board of Education, Report of the Adult Education Committee on the Drama in Adult Education, 1926.

Board of Education, Report of the Consultative Committee on the Education of the Adolescent, 1926.

Board of Education, Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School, 1931.

Board of Education, Report of the Consultative Committee on Infant and Nursery Schools, 1933.

Board of Education, Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education, 1938.

Board of Education, Special Reports on Educational Subjects Volume II, 1898.

Board of Education, The Teaching of English in England, 1921.

Cambridge Syllabus of Religious Teaching for Schools, 1939.

Chesterfield Education (The Acme Press, 1932.)

City of Bradford, Reports of the Advisory Curriculum Committees, 1923.

Department of Education and Science, Education Survey II, 1967.

Department of Education and Science, Building Bulletin 30, 1966.

London County Council Education Department, Report of a Conference on the Teaching of English in London Elementary Schools, 1911.

Ministry of Education, Pamphlet No. 14, Story of a School, 1949.

Report of the Eighth Annual Conference of the New Ideals in Education, 1922.

II - EDUCATIONAL JOURNALS

Child Life, December, 1935.

Drama, (British Drama League) February, 1920, and July, 1920.

Education, July, 1932.

Educational Times, March, 1922.

Forum of Education, 1928-1929.

Religion in Education, April and July, 1935, and October, 1941.

School and Society, June, 1929.

School Life, September, 1921 (Washington D.C.).

Scottish Educational Journal, May 13th and November 11th, 1927.

The Psychological Review, November, 1920.

The Schoolmaster, September, 1934.

Times Educational Supplement, March 31st, 1934 and November 1st, 1968.

Use of English, Pamphlet No. 4,

III - BOOKS

- Adams, J. (ed.). The New Teaching (Rodder and Stoughton, 1919).
- Archer, R. L., Owen, L. V. D., and Chapman, A.E. The Teaching of History in Elementary Schools (A. and C. Black Limited, 1916).
- Beacock, D. A. Play Way English for Today (Thomas Nelson and Sons Limited, 1943).
- Blewitt, T. (ed.) The Modern Schools Handbook (Victor Gollancz Limited, 1943).
- Boas, G. Shakespeare and The Young Actor (Rockliff, 1955).
- Boas, G. and Hayden, H. (ed.) School Drama (Methuen, 1938).
- Boyce, E. R. Play in the Infants' School (Methuen, 1938).
- Bracken, G. H. Teaching of English in Secondary Schools for Girls (University of London Press Limited, 1924).
- Bramwell, R. D. Elementary School Work 1900-1925 (University of Durham Institute of Education, 1961).
- Bruce, V. Dance and Dance-Drama in Education (Pergamon Press, 1965).
- Coggin, P. A. Drama and Education (Thomas and Hudson, 1956).
- Cole, I. D. The Method and Technique of Teaching (Oxford University Press, 1933).
- Collins, F. Children in the Market Place (University of London Press Limited, 1942).
- Courtney, R. Play, Drama and Thought (Cassell and Company Limited, 1968).
- Courtney, R. Teaching Drama (Cassell and Company Limited, 1965).

Cox, F. A. and Macdonald, R. F. The suggestive handbook of practical school method (Blackie 1896).

Cook, H. C. The Play Way (Heinemann, 1917).

Curtis, S. J. and Boulwood, M. E. A. (ed.) A Short History of Educational Ideas (University Tutorial Press Limited, 1956).

Dalcroze, E. J. Rhythm, Music and Education (translated Rubinstein, H. F.) (Chatto and Windus, 1921).

Davis, J. H. and Watkins, H. J. Children's Theatre (Harper and Brothers, 1960).

Davis, V. The Matter and Method of Modern Teaching (Cartwright and Rattray Limited, 1928).

Dearden, R. F. The Philosophy of Primary Education (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968).

Dewey, J. Moral Principles in Education (Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1909).

Dewey, J. School and Society (University of Chicago Press, 1899).

Dewey, J. Democracy and Education (The Macmillan Company, 1916).

Dewey, J. and E. Schools of Tomorrow (E. P. Dutton and Company, 1915).

Driver, A. Music and Movement (Oxford University Press, 1936).

Dyer, E. F. Producing School Plays (Thomas Nelson and Sons Limited, 1935).

Findlay, J. J. Modern Language Learning (Gregg Publishing Company Limited, 1929).

Findlay, J. J. Principles of Class Teaching (Macmillan, 1902).

Findlay, J. J. The School (Thornton Butterworth Limited, 1911).

Findlay, J. J. History and its place in Education (University of London Press Limited, 1923).

- Firth, C. B. The Learning of History (Kegan Paul, Trench, Truber and Company Limited, 1929).
- Finlay-Johnson, H. The Dramatic Method of Teaching (Nisbet, n.d.).
- Garforth, F. W. (ed.) John Dewey Selected Writings (Heinemann, 1966).
- Granville-Barker, H. The Study of Drama (Cambridge University Press, 1934).
- Graves, J. Policy and Progress in Secondary Education 1902-42 (Thomas Nelson and Sons Limited)(1943).
- Hall, G. S. Adolescence (Appleton, 1905).
- Hall, G. S. Educational Problems (Appleton, 1920).
- Hadfield, J. A. Childhood and Adolescence (Pelican, 1962).
- Happold, F. C. The Approach to History (Christophers, 1928).
- Harding, D. P. GlovePuppetry for Young Children (Basil Blackwell, 1938).
- Hasluck, E. L. The Teaching of History (Cambridge University Press, 1926).
- Herts, A. H. The Children's Educational Theatre (Harper and Brothers, 1911).
- Hilliard, E., McCormick, T., and Oglebay, K. Amateur and Educational Dramatics (The MacMillan Company, 1917).
- Holroyd, G. H. Drama in School (Allman and Son Limited, 1935).
- Holmes, E. G. A. What is and What Might Be (Constable, 1911).
- Hunt, H. The Live Theatre (Oxford University Press, 1962).
- Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools, The Teaching of History (1949).
- Jackson, J. The History of the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Penrith (Reeds Limited, Penrith, 1963).
- Jung, S. G. The Integration of Personality (K. Paul, 1940).

- Mawer, I. The Art of Mime (Methuen, 1932).
- McMillan, M. Education through the Imagination (Swan Sonnenschein and Company Limited, 1904).
- Laban, R. Modern Educational Dance (McDonald and Evans, 1948).
- Lee, J. Play in Education (The MacMillan Company, 1915).
- Lobb, K. M. The Drama in School and Church (George G. Harrap and Company Limited, 1955).
- Lowenfield, M. Play in Childhood (Victor Gollancz Limited, 1935).
- Murray, E. R. and Brown Smith, H. The Child Under Eight (Edware Arnold, 1920).
- Merril, J. and Fleming, M. Play-Making and Plays (The Macmillan Company, 1930).
- Miss Gilpin and The Hall School (The Bannisdale Press, 1949).
- Moreno, J. L. Psychodrama (Beacon House Inc., 1964).
- Neill, A. S. Summerhill (Victor Gollancz, 1964).
- Newton, R. G. Acting Improvised (Nelson, 1937).
- Kunn, T. P. Education: its data and first principles, (Arnold, 1920).
- Overton, G. S. Drama in Education (The Century Company, 1926).
- Osborne, G. S. Scottish and English Schools (Longmans, 1966).
- Peterson, A. D. C. A Hundred Years of Education (Duckworth, 1952).
- Phillips, M. The Education of the Emotions (George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1937).
- Plato, The Republic, translated Lee, E. D. P. (Penguin Classics, 1965).
- Poel, W. Shakespeare in the Theatre (Sidgwick and Jackson Limited, 1913).

- Quick, H. S. Essays on Educational Reformers (Longmans, Green, 1902).
- Read, H. Education through Art (Faber and Faber, 1943).
- Reaney, J. H. The Place of Play in Education (Methuen, 1927).
- Rugg, H. and Shumaker, A. The Child-Centred School (George G. Harrap and Company Limited, 1929).
- Sansom, C. (ed.) Speech of Our Time (Hinrichsen, n.d.)
- Selleck, R. J. W. The New Education (Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons Limited, 1968).
- Shaw, G. B. Plays Unpleasant (Penguin, 1946).
- Simon, L. Shaw on Education (Columbia University Press, 1958).
- Simpson, J. H. Same Schooling (Faber and Faber, 1936).
- Slade, P. Child Drama (University of London Press Limited, 1954).
- Slade, P. Child Drama and its Value for Education (Education Drama Association, 1966).
- Slade, P. Dramatherapy as an Aid to Becoming a Person (Guild Lecture No. 103, 1959).
- Slade, P. Experience of Spontaneity (Longmans, 1968).
- Smith, C. T. The School of Life (Grant Richards Limited, 1921).
- Stanislavsky, Building a Character (translated by E. R. Hapgood). (Max Reinhard, 1950)
- Stewart, W. A. C. The Educational Innovators - Volume II (McMillan, 1968).
- Sully, J. Studies of Childhood (Longmans, Green, 1896).
- The Teacher's Guide (The Gresham Publishing Company Limited, 1930).
- Tomkinson, W. S. The Teaching of English (Oxford University Press, 1921).

Vail Motter, T. E. The School Drama in England  
(Longmans, 1929).

Ward, A. C. Twentieth Century Literature (Methuen, 1951).

Ward, W. Creative Dramatics (D. Appleton and Company,  
1930).

Way, D. Development through Drama (Longmans, 1967).

Woods, A. Educational Experiments in England (Methuen,  
1920).