

Response by Mira Sack

Dear Adam,

It is so interesting to read this clear description from a completely different theatre pedagogical tradition and to see how you pursue it. Please take my response as a kind of thought log documenting my critical curiosity. This is where my search overlaps with yours. In the best-case scenario, I hope that this could create a helpful basis for processes of understanding, unlearning and development.

Narratives play an essential role in your practice. They are charged with explicit or implicit ideology, aren't they? Following your conviction that the transmission of culture, education and becoming human runs along fictional narratives leads me to a thought by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. She also sees aesthetic education as an opportunity to develop other narratives and to critically undermine the existing principles of belief, the usual ethical imperatives. Imagination makes it possible to supplement seemingly valid ideas about the world, social relationships and their logic with other possible perspectives. In this way, one's own value standards and judgment of situations can be recognized as no longer tenable and changed. This in turn can lead to more complexity, a more differentiated perception and categorization, and different actions in our life together. By incorporating the power of imagination, we thus create a relational relationship between aesthetics, ethics and politics and have the play of imagination as a potential partner at our side. It entangles us in this dynamic system and can make connections conscious and comprehensible. It initiates our emancipation from

outdated beliefs. Dorothy Heathcote and process drama are excellent instruments for a reflective, emancipative theatre pedagogical practice. In the recapitulation of behavioral patterns as they relate to everyday actions, as you so vividly demonstrate with examples, subjective dispositions can certainly become clear and socially desirable. Successful actions can be questioned, while contradictions and paradoxes show that justice is a fiction. There is no escape from this ambivalence. To what extent can this constitution of human action with process drama not only make social and personal convictions comprehensible and tangible, but also focus on outstanding, future narratives?

You make a comparison between fictional and biographical approaches. I agree with you that fictional narratives can open up other spaces. In the context of contemporary culture as a culture of contingency, I'm interested in how social and fictional realities are currently juxtaposed. What this tells us about ourselves. What imaginative spaces we can and should develop in order to advance social transformation and emancipation processes.

Processes in which everyday motifs are used symbolically come to mind. Metaphors that express more than what is analytically accessible. Interruption and surprising changes in levels of attention become the key to aesthetic perception processes and dialogue intelligence. These focusses are not superficially directed towards adaptation versus rebellion. They do, however, create free spaces in perception, they can refuse to fixate on dramatic plots. Perhaps it is this dimension that could combine a different way of recognizing, an aesthetic and political rationality. At this point I realize that my thoughts are becoming more and more clouded and so is my answer...

Heathcote with the *Man in the Mess* and *Mantel of the Expert* approaches are excellent learning arrangements and are too little known or integrated in the German-speaking context. What would result from these concepts if they had less than a serving function for existing curricula and instead could make playing with narratives fruitful for the further development of teaching content and perhaps even for the establishment of new curricula and transdisciplinary practices? Does the critique you mentioned (Davis) go far enough to be able to respond

to the current processes of social crisis and transformation? Further in-depth work at the interface of artistic and content-related narration under the signs and challenges of our time could point the way for the transformation of theatre mediation. That would be an exciting project for a transnational collaboration!

Best wishes,

Mira

