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Experiencing life through theatre
or how can I support my last year high school students in their identity formation
process and personal development?

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Experiencing life through theatre

or

How can I support my last year high school students in their identity
formation process and personal development?

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Poetry is indispensable-if I only knew what for.

Jean Cocteau

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Introduction

During my practice at Sandvika Kulturskole I did ask my students to sit in a circle and do the following exercise. They had to close their eyes and say their name once without saying it at the same time that someone else. In the case that two persons did it, they had to start again until the whole class had done it. To my surprise they did managed to do it at the first attempt and when I was going to stop the exercise I did notice that Marin had not said it yet. I noticed it because she was with her eyes closed gesticulating and struggling to gain the courage to say it. She opened her mouth many times but at the end she would close it. This was a 20 seconds struggling for Marin, she was afraid to say her name. Finally, she did it and her facial expression changed completely, she passed from a tense face to a very relaxed and satisfied expression. This girl experienced something more deep than the other students, and she was so unsecure that she decided to wait to be the last one to do it to be completely sure that she would not crash with nobody. This could have been a strategy adopted by she, but the struggling proved that it was not easy for her. That moment I understood that in my theatre games and theatre can be very helpful for students with lack of confidence but I did not know how could I help them. I repeated this exercise with the same group for the next three sessions and in all of them Marin was always the last one to say her name. Every session she would use less time but the struggling was always the same. The last day of practice with the group, before starting the lesson, I took Marin aside of the other students to speak to with me in the corridor. I said to her: Now, I am going to start the lesson with the same game that we do every week. I would like you to not wait to be the last. Can you try it? For the first time in our experience together with that group, they did not manage to do the game at the first attempt; we did try it three times and in none of them Marin was the last. I saw that not just theatre can help a student, but also a teacher with the right approach could do it.

That day I decided to work with the experience in more levels than the cognitive or intellectual; theatre could be an experience for them on their social, intellectual or moral development and specially achieving their own identity. I decided to write this exercise because I am very interested in how can I use theatre on an instrumental way to help my students on their late puberty on their identity formation process because puberty can be a very difficult moment in the life of a person. The main goal is to understand how can I help them in this process and which is the best way to achieve it, since my background is very professional and my point of view about education was very traditional it is for me a challenge to write this

essay. I divided the essay in three parts; on the first one I explain the theory that is related to the identity formation process of Erikson and Marcia on a very cognitive way. On the second one I explain the difference of drama and theatre and the importance of experience in the learning process that involves both the body and the mind; and on the last part I will try to put on practice the first and second part with practical exercises in order to prove my point that a good teacher can help his student's social development and identity formation process through improvisations.

1. Part one.

In this part I define what is identity and the Theory of social development of Erik Erikson. I pay special attention to the fifth stage, the identity formation process and the possible identity crises described by James Marcia.

1.1 What is identity?

Identity is a series of external and internal traits that describe each person; it is the answer to the question "Who am I?". The answer does not have to be always the same, nobody can be the same person all through his or her life due to the different experiences or changes that may have a strong influence in us. According to Erikson the identity formation process starts during puberty, and it will be successfully accomplished if a person has pass all the previous stages of the Individual Development. His theory emphasized the emergence of the self, the search for identity, the individual's relationship with others, and the role of culture through life (Woolfolk, 1980, p.67)

1.2 Erikson: Stages of Individual Development

I consider necessary to briefly explain all the stages that every person has to deal through his or her lifetime because as a teacher is very important to know them all, as I will show on the third part, to know better our students. Each of this stages have a particular goal to achieve or concerns, accomplishments and dangers if we failed to achieve them properly. Every stage is interdependent what it means that how we resolve the conflicts that we have to face on early stages will affect the accomplishment of the later ones. At each stage every individual must face an individual crisis, what is a conflict between a positive alternative and a potentially unhealthy alternative that the individual may carry all life. If an individual does not resolves a

crisis successfully, he may have a negative view of his own self-image or society (Woolfolk, 1980, p.67).

Let's see the different stages and which case may I find in a high school class.

1. Basic trust against basic mistrust. From birth to 18 months.

We can find students who are not able to trust the teacher or their peers. Students for whom some exercise of trust will be difficult.

2. Autonomy versus shame/doubt. 18 months to 3 years.

We may find students who have doubt on their skills or even shame. We must reinforce them and dedicate free choice exercises and give them freedom on their decisions.

3. Initiative versus guilt. 3 to 6 years.

We may find students who do not know what is right or wrong and may feel not any desire to act because they do not want to be point in case they fail. Every of our students may have the chance of experience success in our classes and we must be very tolerant with mistakes or accidents. (Woolfolk, 1980, p.69)

4. Industry versus inferiority. 6 to 12 years.

The student wants to do things and learn new skills perfectly or successfully and if he does not achieve this feeling may feel inferior to those who are better doing some activities than him. The student may compare himself to their peers and act in front of them may be problematic for him or her. In my classes I may have to make sure that all the students have or at least for those who failed may develop a sense of industry making sure that students have opportunities to set and work towards realistic goals and give them a chance to show their independence and responsibility. Those students who may seem discouraged need special attention and extra support.

5. Identity versus role confusion. Adolescent: 12 to 18 Years

Up until this fifth stage, development depends on what is done to a person. At this point, development now depends primarily upon what a person does. An adolescent must struggle to discover and find his or her own identity in occupation, gender roles, politics and religion, while negotiating and struggling with social interactions and "fitting in"; he must also develop a sense

of morality, and what is right from wrong; Some attempt to delay entrance to adulthood and withdraw from responsibilities (moratorium). Those unsuccessful with this stage tend to experience role confusion and upheaval. Adolescents begin to develop a strong affiliation and devotion to ideals, causes, and friends.

I will not expose the other stages dedicated to the adult life because I believe they are not necessary for the purpose of this essay. I want to focus on this last stage. During this period, students have developed their minds and bodies and now they must start to construct their own identity that will help them to face the adulthood years. It is not a easy process and the danger of this period is obviously to do not find your identity and vague through different options and social groups. The image of the self that every student creates is very important and will influence on the decisions, specially about profession, values or ideology. Youngster may start to pay more attention that before they ever did about the way that the others perceive them, that is why in this period the peers are so important in this period for the students. Some students that may not find a true or identity connected their inner self, they may create a false or true identity (Bjerkstrand, 2016 p. 8). But this decision is not done from one day to another, is a very long process that last all the adolescence and those who have not fulfilled all the previous stages described by Erikson may experience much more difficulties to achieve their true identity and fall into a long doubt and insecure period defined by Erikson as *moratorium* what means exploration with a delay in commitment to personal or occupational choices. This delay is very common in modern adolescents and it does not have to be something to be very worried about it as long as sooner or later the student finds his commitment. (Woolfolk, 1980 p.71)

Erikson's theory has been widely criticized, and in my opinion his theory is too mathematic; it looks like very scientific theory in something so unscientific as the human being inner development. Thinking about myself and my own lifespan, I can assure that my identity was not form on the stage that Erikson describes, or at least I can affirm that it had suffered many changes. I think that an adult may change his profession or identity many times in his life, there are plenty of exciting biographies that prove my point of view. I did decide to be an actor at the age of 25, and at the age of 36 to be a teacher and I do not know what I will be in five years. It is not just a question of profession what I am talking about, is also changes in my personality. But despite the critics that Erikson's theory has suffered, it offers a very useful framework for analyzing development. But everybody would agree that at the age of puberty something starts to happen to us. To finish with the identity formation process let's see which are the different identity statues that a young may experience.

1.3 James Marcia Identity status

To complete Erikson theory and extend the identity formation process, James Marcia suggested that there are at least four different identities alternatives for adolescents, depending on whether they have explored options and made commitments. (Woolfolk. 1980, p.71):

Status 1. Identity diffusion: Occurs when students do not explore any actions or commit any action. We may find that in our class some students never do purpose any activity or do not participate actively in the class. Some may do physical exercises mechanical and without any intention. Since they may show some apathy at the school and have no objective at all, may find rebellion as the best way for express themselves and consider everything stupid but unable to purpose any alternative.

Status 2. Identity foreclosure:

A commitment to an identity without a crisis. Foreclosure involves committing to an identity prematurely without exploration or choice. This occurs when parents hand down their traditions and commitments and the adolescent does not make a conscious choice. The negative consequences are that the adolescent may later feel resentment about not being allowed to choose for herself or himself. This stage involves being highly committed to an identity without any exploration.

Status 3 - Identity Moratorium

In the midst of a crisis, searching for an identity to adopt. Marcia describes identity moratorium as a stage of active exploration and a low commitment to a particular identity. This is an interesting, exciting, and potentially dangerous stage for an adolescent since they are able to try many things as they seek to discover their identities. This stage occurs at any point during early to late adolescence and is one of the most typical identity statuses for adolescents. During this particular status, adolescents may come into conflict with parents and other authority figures as they explore their identity. Adolescents need to be free to safely explore their identities but also need guidance and support to proceed safely through this status.

Status 4 - Identity Achievement

Identity is said to be achieved when the adolescent has undergone a crisis (exploration) and now made a commitment to a particular identity. Marcia conceptualized the achieved status as the completion of the moratorium status. This means that the individual has explored aspects

of a particular identity before adopting it. During the achieved status, the individual has a high degree of commitment and an equally high degree of exploration with regard to that identity.

2. Second part

In this part I will expose the function of drama and the importance of Experience during the learning process. First I will define the function of drama and I will expose the vision of Brian Way on using drama as a tool to support the personal development and the importance of training our student intuition.

2.1 The function of drama

There are two different Drama definitions, the one that is called Drama in process is widely used in the Norwegian system school (Sæbø,1998) but is more used as a complement to a certain subject like history. The other one is creative drama and is used to support the development of a student, according to Gokcen Ozbek (2014, p.48) this form of drama has to be understood as a rehearsal for life. As he points out the concept of play as a learning tool was already introduced by Piaget and Vygotsky. They already proposed play as an adaptive organized means by which students learn to make sense of their physical and social environment, they gain a feeling of control over the complex life issues they confront; they learn how to struggle with difficulties and to solve problems. Piaget justified dramatic playing as important in a child's social, creative, cognitive, moral and affective development. Vygotsky point of view was that play enables children to create meanings for themselves. (Ozbek 2014, p.50)

If I want to support my students in their identity formation process, as theatre teacher, I must first and foremost change my point of view to the subject theatre in question. I will not teach theatre, I must teach drama. The difference between both is mostly to who is it destined to; theatre is about the communication between the actors and the public; while drama is about the experience that those who take part experience independently of the relation with the public in the case that there is (Way, 1967. pg12). Drama is about handling the development of a whole person through theatre, benefiting the student physical, intellectual, social and emotional welfare. Way affirms that drama can develop the individuality of the individual (p.13), what it means that we can help each student unique individuality. Drama cares about the cognitive and emotional aspects of the individual and the process of learning where participants can be taught

through structured experiences which includes plays, re-organized plays and a dramatic context. (Ozbek 2014, p.50)

If I want to help our students to develop or to find their identity we must have this very clear: we are not going to teach theatre acting skills or similar; I am not going to develop a play, I must not focus on the result but on the process of my students. It is much more important to give life to these marionettes that sometimes become students with a very traditional teacher, and let them express themselves freely both on a creative and personal way. We work with the individualities of each individual, and we must know what each of them needs to develop and progress, but evaluating this process is complicated because we do not do test or written exams. To develop these individual qualities we must work with this fictional reality that drama can create. Every student has a creator inside, and this is why art is so necessary to release this creating necessity and we as teachers must adapt to their level and not expect much more that they can offer. To develop our own personality and do not copy others way of thinking or behaving we must work and improve the originality of our students to make them able to decide by themselves. But what is the most important tool that we can offer to our students? What is that they need to learn in order to manage life and their own identity? How can we manage real life situations where we must take important decisions in question of seconds?

2.2 Brian Way and Viola Spolin's intuition concept

According to Brian Way the most important tool that drama can teach to a student is intuition:

“Hvis man vil forsøke å hjelpe unge mennesker til positiv personlig utfoldelse, må man legge vekten på intuisjonen og ikke på intellekt. En vil mislykkes hvis en forsøker å gjøre det via en forstands-og tankeprosses. (Way, 1968, p.15)

Way's philosophy is of the particularity of the individual, directed him to emphasize personal and social “life skills” (p.15) Intuition is the most important value that we have in us and it is completely personal and unique, but there is not any criterion about how to evaluate our student intuition; there is no right or wrong. Intuition can be trained and this is our major goal as drama teachers, to give our students the possibility to develop a great sense of intuition that will help them on their everyday life.

Another teacher who has wrote many books about both drama and theatre training for actors, Viola Spolin, agrees also with Brian Ways point of view about the importance of

intuition in the learning process. She, a devotee of John Dewey's theory of doing by learning, believes that experiencing is the best way of learning. According to her, nobody can teach us anything unless we desire to learn and this will be possible if the environment permits it (Spolin 1963, p.5). I assume that by environment Spolin means the role of the teacher in the class, and the atmosphere that he or she has created. If the teacher does not create the right atmosphere and does not let the students experience freely, the students will not be trying to experience on their own and they can be more worried about pleasing the teacher. When we evaluate our students on a traditional way, we might set a kind of division between talented or untalented students. She does not believe in talented students or untalented, unless we understand a talented behavior as "simply a greater capacity for experiencing" (p.5). Spolin affirms that we must let our students experience by themselves and not tell them what they have to learn, if we allow them to experience, they will get completely involved with the environment, an organic involvement with it. She means an intellectual, physical and intuitive involvement, and of these three aspects of experience the intuitive is the less promoted in education. If we manage to let our students resolve situations beyond a defined intellectual plane, the student is ready to learn. There is no plan in intuition, it happens right here and now and we have to respond immediately to certain situations fast and spontaneously to face them. Spontaneity is completely personal, nobody reacts spontaneously on the same level, it is our own and is completely private; it is the moment of personal freedom when we are faced with a reality and see it, explore it and act accordingly. (Spolin, 1967. p.4)

Both Way and Spolin described many games and exercises to train intuition, but for my purpose this would be impossible to apply all of them. From all of them, the most helpful to my purpose of supporting my students' identity formation and personal development, and that I will explore on the third part, is improvisation scenes as the most effective technique to experience on stage. But if I do not train my students' intuition and let them experience by themselves, it can be difficult for them to experience life as I will expose on the next point.

2.3 The art of experiencing life

We have seen the importance of seeing drama as a progressive pedagogical tool. This idea is founded in a socio-constructivist concept of knowledge and learning that grew out of phenomenology (Sæbø, 2011, p.23). The traditional point of view of knowledge was that it was given in an objective world, but phenomenology argues that it is the subject who constructs the knowledge in a subjective process of meaning-making to understand the world. It is the "creative subjective" or in our case the creative students who construct knowledge, and this

interaction between the subject and the subjects social and cultural lifeworld that is the basis for meaning making. (p. 23) In other words, we must let our students experience and make their own conclusions and focus on their own experience in order to increase their learning process. Using experience in theatre, as Dewey defined the aesthetical experience, can be very meaningful for our everyday life because it is very intense and deep since it is something that happens right here and now and this can change our beliefs and perception of life (Sælthun, 2008). Since I am a drama teacher and my subject is drama, and drama I understand drama as a rehearsal of life, then my goal in my classes is to let my students experience the life that is waiting for them once they finish the high school. Kids at the kindergarten play that they are adults in a fictional world; and actor play exactly the same game in theatres. Can I ask my students to do the same under certain circumstances? Can I help them to jump on the fifth stage of Erik Erikson social development through the art of experiencing or playing adults dilemmas that they will probably face soon?

What I want to ask my students is neither to make theatre, nor to play it; I want them to experience theatre. I want them to experience theatre/life in a controlled and safe arena that will be my class. That is why my intention in future exercises will be to train them to manage certain situations- phenomena in a more philosophical language- that life will force them to go through, both pleasant and unpleasant. In phenomenology it's the bodily experience is the basis of all understanding, and is the direct experience with phenomena that is the premise for understanding. (Sæbø, 2011 p.25) But as Erikson pointed, is the world around us who makes this understanding, the social environment and culture decides the frames of understanding. In drama, according to Sæbø, this means that each students individual potential in the learning process is depending on his or her own abilities to create or construct his or her own experiences while working with the subject matter content.

2.4 The re-constructor and constructor experiences

If I am going to make my students live new experiences then I must first be sure that I do not force them to experience something out of their developmental zone, following the principles of Piaget; at the same time, since I want to force them to experience something completely new I must find the right balance between Piaget and Vygotsky. I must first and foremost find out what a eighteen years old have previously experienced, and start working on what the psychologist Gardener described as re-constructor experiences. This kind of experiences are those that we already experienced -what we already know. We work in re-constructor experiences to construct new experiences, or what he called constructor experiences

-what we still do not know. These experiences are not confirmed as part of our life and they may stand as a protest, objection or contrast to our previous experiences. This new experienced constructed by the subject will be included in the person's lifeworld of experiences. (Sæbø, 2011 p.25)

3. Third part

Drama as "rehearsal of life" is my starting point for this last part. According to Ozbek (2014) Drama employs three different techniques and connected between them: games, role play and improvisation. I will expose what kind of games can be useful to my purpose of experiencing life and your identity and I will present the improvisation as the most useful method for the student for experience life and who is he using the Stanislavsky improvisation scenes.

3.1 Games based on Erikson's theory

At the beginning I explained the case of Marin and her difficulties to find the right moment and space to say her name without disturbing the others. It is not the intention of this exercise to describe all the kind of games that one can use in a theatre lesson, but to increase the sense of identity or to support our student we should use the 4 previous stages of Erikson theory as a basis. I believe that a teacher should be able to invent or adapt games to every goal that he or she purposes to reach. As an example I will expose a game that I did observe during one of my observation at a Kulturskole; a game that the teacher that I was observing described as a "trust game". Erikson would have said: a trust- mistrust game.

A student must run as fast as possible from one wall of the room to another until the teacher shouts him to stop. Between the walls there is not any kind of object that could make the student fall. The teacher asks for a volunteer. Nobody stands. The teacher waits because this kind of games that involve you as whole, requires an existential decision from the student, we can't force nobody to run against a wall unless he wants to do try it.

The first student tried the exercise. And then all tried too. None of the students managed to run even close to the wall, so the teacher could not shout stop. Nobody. And then they did try another game. When I did ask the teacher which was the objective of the game he said that it was to increase the trust of the students on him. Even though is completely accurate what he

believed, this is a well-known game of trust used in many schools, I had to disagree with him. Once a student has taken the decision to try the game he was already trusting the teacher. This game is much more deep because once you started running at some point you experience fear and doubt, and then you stop. This is a game that should encourage the students to manage their fear, this is a game that Erikson would define as: Industry versus inferiority. I have experienced this game both as a teacher and as an actor and if at the end of the game the teacher does not do a reflection it may be, despite of funny, a bit frustrating. The teacher should allow the students to explain their feelings about this game and what they experienced. Then he should ask one student to play the role teacher and he himself should try to do the game in front of the students. It is not important if he manages to run against the wall, the important is that he should guide the conversation with them about how much we do believe in ourselves and our capacities. Once they have experienced on a very holistic way this concept that will help them to manage their future life, he should ask them to try it again and in different sessions.

The games that we use must be joyful and easy to establish trust and confidence. The function of the game is destined to simplify a complex concept or idea that may be difficult to understand on a cognitive level for the student. Every game has to have a hidden intention. (Ozbek, 2014, p.56)

3.2 Improvisation and his forms

Improvisation is both an art form and a training technique (Veine, 2006, p.156). It was Konstantin Stanislavski the first one to use it as a training for his actors before working with role and text (p. 157) and is his improvisations the one that are more useful to help the student to experience life as it is or may be on scene since they are highly structured. The improvisation as an art form are not so useful for us unless we want to help our student to increase his creativity or spontaneity and they are low structured, what it means that the student improvises from zero and does not know where he is going to end. It is based on the tradition of the *Commedia dell'arte*.

Commedia dell arte was the first kind of art based exclusively on the art of improvisation where some actors with masks would improvise based on some fixed themes and roles. They acting was based on the relationship between the actors and the public as they would often speak to the crowd and integrate them in the plot asking for advice to solve some situations of for help (Oliva, 2005, p. 256). Today is Keith Johnstone and his improvisation vision which the most employed. In their process some trained actors come to the scene and “spontaneously”

improvise a plot on the scene from the beginning to the end. Nothing can be foreseen or anticipated, it is a process of spontaneous creation. In improvisation none of the risks of communication and behavior in the real world are present. The activity is enjoyable and meaningful and also does not threaten the participating student's personality because they are playing that they are someone else on a certain situation. This role playing improvisation will build up self-confidence rather than damage it (Ozbek, 2014, p.56). Despite I believe that this kind of improvisations can be interesting to use with students that are starting to learn theatre, I do not consider that Improvisation as an art form can be useful for our purpose to support the student's identity formation process. Because since it is an art form, it has his focus on the relation between actors and the public which may mean that the students as Johnstone points may fall in the desire to please the audience and act for them, instead on focusing on their own process (Veine, 2006, p.164). it requires a lot of time to teach students to improvise and in Nissen vgs, they have a subject purely dedicated to it, but as I could observe, students do not experience much, they just want to make their peers laugh.

On the opposite, during a Stanislavski improvisation the student is very focused on his progress because it is a very highly structured improvisation; he does not need to create or invent a plot, he just must follow the plot that the teacher has told him. This is the kind of exercise that can give the student the possibility to experience something new, and test his or her own identity.

3.3 The Stanislavski improvisations

The Stanislavski system is without doubt the basis of all the theatre form that have appeared during the last 100 years, some as a continuation or evolution of it and others as a protest to it, but the idea and technique developed by Konstantin Stanislavski at the beginning of the XX century are still present all over the world. His system is a consequence of the realism movement; his main purpose it to make the actors act realistic or natural on stage. According to his psychological-realistic method, the actor must reflect the feelings which, in a given circumstance, his characters can experiment based on their knowledge and commitment binding them to such situation. (Oliva,2005, p.302) The Stanislavski system main purpose was to show life on stage, that is why all his exercises and trainings are meant to teach the actor to live on stage as he does at home, and try to act as natural as possible despite the fact there is people watching him on the theatre. He was very worried about the experiencing on stage.

The "system" cultivates what Stanislavski calls the "art of experiencing" vs. "the art of representation" that had been present for centuries. To achieve his goal, he invented many exercises and games but what gave him best results to teach the actor to live on stage was the highly structured improvisations. Another of the particularity of these improvisation is that the actor who take part on them do not have to play any role, they have to behave themselves on stage as they do on their real life; they have to be themselves on stage. (Stanislavski, 1936)

In the Norwegian school, the system the Stanislavski method is taught in the High school at the Music, drama and dance specialization. The results are not very optimistic according to Jorid Bakken Steigum, who observed a production process based on the Stanislavski system of both acting and directing of the play *Nokon kjem til å komme* of Jon Fosse. During this process she and the students tried to follow the Stanislavski's rules so truly as possible, and at the end the result was a "dødt snakketeateret" (Aune, 2013, p.64).

This system is not easy to teach at schools. This is a highly professional system that requires four years of everyday training in a Russian University in a very traditional educational system, where the student is a merely marionette of his teachers. This may be the reason of the unsuccessful attempts to teach the Stanislavski method in Norway, a country with a very progressive view of education. It is also important to remember that the book that Stanislavski wrote describing his system is called *An actor prepares*, and not for instance: *How to be an actor*. This system is dedicated to actors or to people that has decide to become an actor. But I believe that I can use his improvisation exercises from a drama perspective.

3.4 A Stanislavski improvisation as a constructor experience.

If I am going to use this technique I must adapt it to a creative drama purpose where the student personal development is the most important. I am not going to evaluate the students acting skills, not even their progress, I am just going to make them experience during an improvisation a situation that they can experience in real life. And this may be controversial, because this must be a very prepared improvisation from my part. I can't improvise if I am going to ask my students to be themselves. According to Ozbek (2014), if a student does not hide his identity under a role, this may threaten his personality as I mentioned above. I believe that he means in the case that we use it in school, and not with "almost" grown-ups on the last year previous to university. Anyway this is very important to not forget it since I do not wish to threaten nobody's identity. My intention is to create improvisations for the students where they are going to experience something new that can confront their previous experiences or

beliefs. I want to get the student out of his comfort zone and face himself with a constructed experience; a new and probably difficult situation where he may have to use his intuition to get out of it, as we do in real life. In some circumstance where we have to improvise in real life we discovered new attitudes or unexpected skills in ourselves that we had never experienced before, because we had never been in such situation. Improvising on stage is so intense that it may seem real.

3.5 Preparing an improvisation to experience life

First and foremost, if we are going to prepare a Stanislavski improvisation we must always remember this: the improvisation goal is to create constructor experience based on the re-constructed experiences that a teenager may have had experience. We must give a context to the students and let them deal with their own impulses to construct their new experiences while playing in a fictional context based on real life. It is very important to adapt every improvisation to each student and this is the reason why we must have a deep knowledge of our student personality- as much as possible-, and we should tag them according to James Marcia identity statuses in case they are in an identity crisis, and choose each student to a series of improvisations that we had previously wrote down. As an example I will expose a case with two students suffering of identity crises; a) a girl in an identity foreclosure status, and b) a boy in the middle of an identity diffusion crisis, according to Marcia's theory.

Before explaining the circumstances to a and b, we must remember that there are their fellows partners watching them and we have to include them in the process. We are going to ask them to react as less as possible to the interpretation of the those who are going to act, this way we can make sure that the "actors" will not try to please the public as it happens in the improvisations as an art form. The "public" has to understand that they are going to watch not just a play, they have to forget that their friends are on the stage and try to watch what is happening there not just with the eyes, but as Rachel Fensham proposes as an embodied activity, where she applies a visceral, sensorial and critical mode of watching in order to enter "imaginatively into the performative labour of each performance. (Fensham, 2009, p. 20) To watch theatre implies a responsibility to the observance of what matters in the human subject. If we manage to control the public, then the "actors" will be focused on the process that they experience on the stage.

Now that the public is ready to experience theatre, let's focus on the actors. We are going to ask them to be themselves on stage, to try to react to what is going to happen as they

believe they would do it and the only thing that they have to imagine is that they are a couple who has been together for some years. They are on their final course at Nissen and they both have arranged to meet today at the class where they are now because they wanted to talk about their idea of taking one year off once the high school is over to travel all around the world. The one that came with this project first was A, she had been trying to convince B for long time but he has still not decided. Now following the Stanislavski improvisation procedure, we will ask a) to leave because we are going to explain to B his goal. Once A has left we will tell him that yesterday night, he had an impulse to do it, to take one year off from studies and following his impulse he bought already two plane tickets that allow them to travel all around the world for one year, and they are very expensive and to pay them he had used all the money that he still had left from his Confirmation day. It is going to be a great surprise for her, she is going to be very happy because she had been talking about it for one year. Once we make sure that he has understood the goal, to explain her that he had bought the tickets we ask them to leave the classroom and to ask B to come in. Once B is inside and we make sure that A can't hear us, we explain to B the following: Yesterday your parents gave you a tremendous surprise, they had bought you a small flat in Grunnerlokka so you can go to live with your boyfriend right now if you want and start the university next year as they had been asking you to do repeatedly; so you want to ask him to come to live with you right now. Once she has understood everything and she is ready, we ask to A to come in the room and start the improvisation.

What is going to happen? How is going to react A? I do not know, this is an improvisation exercise but the only that is for sure, is that in some moment when both communicate their great news, they will experience something very intense, something new for them, something that may confront their previous experiences and beliefs. The possibilities are infinite and the only important is that once the exercise is over, to let them explain what they experienced and once they are done, let the public give their opinions. If this improvisation is well done, from a drama point of view not focusing on the result; if the process has been intense the students will be a bit different than when they started the improvisation because even though they were on a fictional world, the experience may have been so intense that they may be a bit on shock in the positive way of the word. Nothing traumatic may happen to them if we prepare a good scene, there must not be deaths involved in this improvisation or nothing tragic, just let's put the student in a situation where he has to deal with a moral dilemma that is not very far from his or her everyday life. This could happen, there is nothing theatrical on it as it could

be on the role play improvisation where students may play that they are someone else with a fictional life and alien reactions far from their reality.

This kind of improvisations I believe that may be extremely useful to the high school students to support them on their personal development.

Conclusion

In this paper, while presenting the identity formation process, I have explained that the best way to support my students identity formation process and their personal development, is to have a very progressive view on drama; focusing on the process of the students instead of the result. I have described the function of drama in education as a creative tool to develop the personal development of the student; and how the aesthetical experience can be the best way to learn. With the help of games and improvisation exercises, the student can develop Intuition as a tool to manage life and learn social skills. On the last part, I put on practice the art of experiencing life on stage with the use of the highly professional Stanislavski improvisation scenes, adapting them to my students possibilities and acting level. I have described how drama can be a rehearsal of life, where I can make my students to experience future experiences that they make experience in real life, but in the safe arena that can be a drama lesson. Confronting these controlled and staged new experiences can be very helpful for their personal development.

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