

# Educational Drama and Radical Theatre Practice

by Stephen Lacey and Brian Woolland

## Abstract

In the early issues of *New Theatre Quarterly*, David Hornbrook initiated a debate on the role and techniques of drama-in-education to which several other notable practitioners subsequently contributed. Since then, the continuing need to defend the very existence of drama within a curriculum-oriented system has perhaps disinclined drama-in-education workers from a theoretical exploration of their methods and purposes. But the argument that the subject should be concerned with theatre practice has, suggest Stephen Lacey and Brian Woolland, overlooked the reality that drama-in-education, in important and fundamental ways, already reflects at its own level certain kinds of innovative theatre practice – and they illustrate their arguments from the work of Brecht, Boal, and Paulo Freire, comparing the models they offer with a drama-in-education project as realized by a class of twelve-year-olds in a typical comprehensive. The article concludes with the authors' own analysis of the approaches to character and to dramatic structure employed, and how these reflect a 'radical theatre practice' with which practitioners in present-day 'mainstream' theatre might profitably engage.

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The article develops an argument first made in an earlier article which appeared in the journal *2D*, sadly no longer published.

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