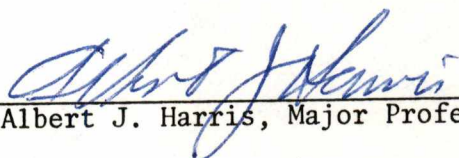
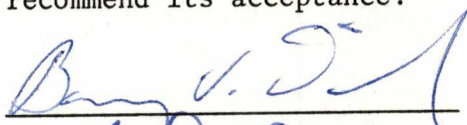
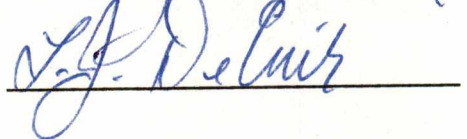


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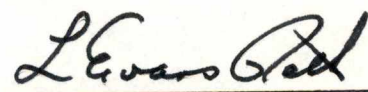
I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Mauna Faye Midgett entitled "The Use of Creative Dramatics With Institutionalized Juvenile Delinquents." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Speech and Theatre.


Albert J. Harris, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Vice Chancellor
Graduate Studies and Research

THE USE OF CREATIVE DRAMATICS
WITH INSTITUTIONALIZED JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Mauna Faye Midgett

August 1980

3044839

DEDICATION

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune,
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
Strong and content I travel the open road.

The earth, that is sufficient,
I do not want the constellations any nearer,
I know they are very well where they are,
I know they suffice for those who belong to them

(Still here I carry my old delicious burdens,
I carry them, men and women, I carry them with me wherever I go,
I swear it is impossible for me to get rid of them,
I am fill'd with them, and I will fill them in return.)

--from Walt Whitman's
"Song of the Open Road"

All my love and thanks to my parents,
who have given me open roads to travel

ABSTRACT

This thesis proposes the use of creative dramatics as an approach to working with juvenile delinquents in the educational, diagnostic, and therapeutic programs within institutions. The values which can be derived from participation in creative dramatics are applied to meeting the needs of the delinquent child through playwriting, acting, storytelling, and technical work. Examples of drama programs which have been conducted in training schools are provided. Emphasis is placed on resources available for the beginning creative dramatics leader in an institution and on planning for special problems within that environment. Practical information is supplied for approaching acting, directing, costumes and makeup, set design and properties, and lighting design. The paper concludes that if creative dramatics is applied to various institutional programs, the juvenile delinquent might have increased motivation for improving his academic skills, and he might experience increased self-confidence and pride in the accomplishment of artistic creation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION - PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The juvenile delinquent is a very special child with very special needs which are often difficult to understand. Even those people who have been specially trained to work with this child may become frustrated with the lack of viable means for approaching the delinquent's problems. This thesis is intended to show creative dramatics as one avenue which those who work with this child, teachers, social workers, psychologists, chaplains, etc., may take. It will serve as an aid to nondrama specialists who would like to try this approach in their work with juvenile delinquents in institutions.

The purposes and values of creative dramatics, the opportunities for creative thought and action, for controlled emotional release, for motivated social interaction, will be defined with emphasis on how these can work for the institutionalized delinquent. The definition and characteristics of the juvenile delinquent, including how society looks at him and how he looks at himself and the institutional environment in which the child has been placed will be examined.

From these definitions some of the basic needs of the juvenile delinquent will become apparent. Where this child is deficient and in greatest need of understanding and help is exactly where creative dramatics is intended to make an impression. The major portion of this thesis will point out and explain applications of creative dramatic methods in fulfilling various needs of the juvenile delinquent.

Examples will be given of drama programs which have been conducted in institutions, including a program which was directed by the former chaplain at the Tennessee Youth Center in Joelton, Tennessee. Specific methods for applying creative dramatics to provide opportunities for creativity among the students, to aid in teaching the basic curricula, to increase both staff and student understanding of the various cultural and ethnical backgrounds of the children, and to enhance diagnostic and therapeutic counseling will be outlined in this paper. While creative dramatics holds seemingly endless possibilities for expression, only the basic methods of acting, playwriting, storytelling, and technical work will be explored within the limited confines of this thesis. From those basics a program may expand into many other areas.

Besides looking at the theoretical aspects of the work, the study will also provide practical resource material for the beginning dramatics leader. Special problems within the institution, environmental factors, the student turnover rate, etc., will be approached to provide the leader with a sort of foresight into the problems which may arise in the program. Along with preparing the leader for his role, a section will be devoted to preparing the students for this strange new world of creative dramatics. How the leader initiates the students to the program could make all the difference in its effectiveness in helping them.

Simple practical suggestions for the creative dramatics leader in acting, directing, costumes and makeup, set design and properties, and lighting design will be offered along with listings of resource materials from which more information may be obtained.

By providing both theoretical and practical information regarding creative dramatics for these workers, perhaps more avenues can be opened for reaching the juvenile delinquent and helping him work through his problems.

Definition and Purposes of Creative Dramatics

Drama is considered the art which encompasses all other arts. In *Creative Expression* Hartman and Shumaker point out that "dramatic activities offer a singularly fruitful synthesis of all the arts, an integration of intellectual, emotional, and physical aspects of experience in an expression that is at once intensely personal and broadly social."¹ Through creative dramatics worlds of expression may be entered which might otherwise remain unexplored by people of all ages. Although most definitions cite children as the participants in creative dramatics, it is important to note that anyone of any age may join in and benefit from such involvement. The Committee on Basic Concepts of the Children's Theatre Conference in 1955 defined creative dramatics as follows:

children with the guidance of an imaginative teacher or leader create scenes or plays and perform them with improvised dialogue and action. Personal development of the players is the goal, rather than the satisfaction of the child audience

The Committee's report divides creative dramatics into four categories:

¹ Gertrude Hartman and Ann Shumaker, ed., *Creative Expression: The Development of Children in Art, Music, Literature and Dramatics* (New York: Day, 1932), p. 256.

the dramatic play of little children; creative dramatization of a story told by a leader who also assists in developing the spontaneous dramatization; creative plays developed to a point where they approach formal plays; and creative dramatics as it is used for tryouts or group scenes in a formal play.²

Founder and administrative coordinator of the Children's Theatre Association, Isabel B. Burger, summarizes that creative dramatics

is the expression of thought and feeling in the child's own terms, through action, the spoken word, or both. Formal drama, on the contrary, is the expression of thought and feeling in the words of the playwright, presented according to his, or the director's suggestions for movement and interpretation.³

Another leading authority on creative dramatics, Winifred Ward, notes that it is unique because, unlike formal drama, it is always improvised. The experience is an immediate one. Its values are for the benefit of the participants, rather than a series of rehearsals leading up to a performance for another audience. Finding avenues of expression for the individual is the primary purpose of creative dramatics. Effects for an audience, if an audience is ever present, may only be of secondary importance. A person may participate in the activities at his own level of skills since talent is not a prerequisite. Ward states:

Because emphasis is not placed upon finished performances, talent is not necessary in creative dramatics. Whereas, for formal plays only children with some dramatic ability can ever hope to be chosen for the desired roles, in creative dramatics,

² Isabel B. Burger, *Creative Play Acting: Learning Through Drama*, 2nd ed. (New York: Ronald, 1966), pp. 5-6.

³ Burger, p. 6.

where there is constant changing of parts, any child may have the joy of being the Sleeping Beauty, or Robin Hood, or Scrooge.⁴

The only requirement in creative dramatics is the natural desire to participate. In *Child Drama in Action* Tyas says: "This drama does not demand a skilled talent for a person to take part in it; everyone possesses the natural gift to participate *Dran*—the ancient Greek work from which the word *drama* is derived—means 'to do'!"⁵

To make theatrical artists or stage commercial-style performances is not the goal of creative dramatics. But using these activities to unlock an innate desire for dramatic play and impersonation and to broaden the means of educating young people is the goal. In *Creative Group Education* S. R. Slavson notes that personality enrichment, enhancement of expression and communication, and development of creative imagination may best be achieved through dramatic work, plots and dialogue, growing out of the participants' own experiences and thoughts. He explains, "Under these conditions, acting is not mere simulation, but rather a deeper and more meaningful process of identification."⁶

Creative dramatics allows an exploration of the thoughts and senses for the individual and gives the opportunity to blend them with the thoughts and senses of other members of a group. In "Drama and the

⁴Winifred Ward, ed., *Stories to Dramatize* (New Orleans: Anchorage, 1969), pp. 1-3.

⁵Billi Tyas, *Child Drama in Action: A Practical Manual for Teachers* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1971), p. xiii.

⁶S. R. Slavson, *Creative Group Education* (n.p.: Association, 1937), pp. 115-116.

Unseen Currents" Irene Lewisohn remarks:

Not in theme only, but dedicated to beauty of form in line, in word, in color, in light, in sound, in movement—in short, an art product of that instinct toward dramatic expression—this has been our goal, an act of creation that might contain in its essence the sum of human searching, just as white contains the colors of the spectrum and in its purity is akin to black. This is drama, the juxtaposition of Yes and No, of light and darkness, of weakness and strength, and of all the opposites that give life its drive.⁷

With the aid of a leader the child may set his own goals for discovery through creative dramatic play. Tyas notes that creative dramatics may nourish a child's two basic needs for fulfillment:

"Am I useful?" (the use of self for society) and "Am I worthwhile?" (the use of self in society). The realized use of self *for* society requires the child to discover and refine his talents so that they can be of value. The realized use of self *in* society requires the child to be aware of his instinct, feeling, and thinking ability and to develop their controlled usage in harmonious proportions.⁸

Learning that one has the ability to concentrate, accept responsibilities, and perform duties in an acceptable manner is a great step toward realizing one's self-worth. Dramatic activities provide the opportunities to develop this awareness, to show a child that he can channel his modes of expression into something positive and creative. It is essential in this age of mechanization and computers to educate children to be aware

⁷ Irene Lewisohn, "Drama and the Unseen Currents," in *Creative Expression: The Development of Children in Art, Music, Literature and Dramatics*, ed. Gertrude Hartman and Ann Shumaker (New York: Day, 1932), p. 335.

⁸ Tyas, p. xiii.

of their creative abilities. Tyas states, "The child gains out of these experiences an improved ability to listen, to think creatively, to concentrate, to express his ideas freely and coherently, and to accept his responsibility to himself and to others."⁹

Robert Alexander of the Living Stage stresses that

what is needed in working with children is to give them the encouragement and create environments that let them discover that their feelings and thoughts are important, that their fantasies and dreams are the stuff that great "works of art" are made of, and that the fearless use of their bodies, voices, and minds in their explorations of their environments is what most adults work very hard to re-attain; to let them know that first comes the dream and then the reality, and that the joy they feel when they paint, draw, dance, sing, and "become other things" is the most important and beautiful feeling in the world.¹⁰

Creative dramatics provides children with alternatives in life. It can project before them the images of what they are and paint vivid pictures of the things which they may become. "'For who,' says Socrates in reference to young people, 'if offered the choice between poorer and better, would choose the poorer and eschew the better?'"¹¹ It gives them the freedom to explore many of childhood's dreams and fantasies without fear of seeming childish. It provides a chance to restore some of the youthful creativity which seems to slip away with age even when one tries to grasp on to it. And for some people creative

⁹Tyas, p. xv.

¹⁰Robert Alexander, "Life, Death, and Creativity," *Simulation and Games*, 8, No. 1 (1977), 112.

¹¹Richard Crosscup, *Children and Dramatics* (New York: Scribner's, 1966), p. 13.

drama supplies a means for releasing creative energies which were stifled in early childhood and never given the chance to grow. Tyas points out that "real life reveals drama when the individual man steps into the mirror, participates in the experience created by his environment, and discovers truths about himself, his society, and his world." No rigid form or script is required.¹²

There are several basic values which children may gain through participating in creative dramatics. Ward briefly summarizes these values:

1. Experience in thinking creatively and independently--needed by future citizens of a democracy;
2. Practice in strongly-motivated social cooperation. Few activities have such strong incentives for social adjustments;
3. Opportunities to grow in understanding people who have a different viewpoint from themselves; (This from the study and enactment of characters in history, literature, or contemporary life.)
4. Controlled emotional release, which every child needs;
5. Experience in thinking on one's feet, and expressing ideas clearly and fearlessly--another need for every citizen of a democracy;
6. Fun--just plain fun! Is there any schoolroom which would not be better off with more of it?¹³

The values which may be enhanced through creative dramatics are, in many instances, areas in which the juvenile delinquent requires much growth to be able to function in a positive manner in society. Though listed last, the aspect of fun should certainly not be considered as

¹²Tyas, p. xiii.

¹³Ward, pp. 1-2.

creative drama's least important value. The chance to have positive, creative fun may well be a new or uncommon experience for many delinquent youths. The major thrust of creative dramatics should be to provide the opportunity for expression of creative thought, social cooperation, human understanding, and emotional release in an atmosphere of freedom and enjoyment.

Definition and Characteristics of the Juvenile Delinquent

Before looking at the characteristics of the juvenile delinquent, it is important to have a clear understanding of the term. The U.S. Department of Justice defines "juvenile" as "a person subject to juvenile court proceedings because a statutorily defined event was alleged to have occurred while his age was below the statutorily specified limit of original jurisdiction of a juvenile court." The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports define juvenile as anyone under eighteen years old.¹⁴ The ages covered by the term "juvenile" range from sixteen to twenty-one in different states with the majority recognizing a person as juvenile if between the ages of six and eighteen.¹⁵

¹⁴U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, National Criminal Justice Information and Statistics Service, *Dictionary of Criminal Justice Data Terminology*, 1st ed. (1976), p. 57.

¹⁵Clyde B. Vedder, *The Juvenile Offender: Perspective and Readings* (New York: Random House, 1954), pp. 1-2.

A delinquent is defined as a "juvenile who has been adjudicated by a judicial officer of a juvenile court, as having committed a delinquent act, which is an act for which an adult could be prosecuted in a criminal court."¹⁶

Dr. Saleem A. Shah, chief of the Center for Studies of Crime and Delinquency at the National Institute of Mental Health, explains the difference between delinquent behavior and juvenile delinquency:

Delinquent behavior may be defined as norm violating behavior which, if detected by an appropriate authority, will expose the individual to legally prescribed sanctions. *Juvenile delinquency* refers to the identification of and official response to delinquent behavior by the police and courts. Thus, while delinquent behavior refers to the entire range of norm-violating behaviors which *could* expose the person to legally prescribed sanctions, juvenile delinquency is defined by the official responses of social agencies and functionaries to the alleged delinquent behavior.¹⁷

To formulate a clearer picture of children in institutions for juvenile delinquents, the term status offender must also be defined. The status offender is a "juvenile who has been adjudicated by a judicial officer of a juvenile court, as having committed a status offense, which is an act or conduct which is an offense only when committed or engaged in by a juvenile." In the oldest juvenile codes no distinction was made between delinquent acts and status offenses, or criminal and noncriminal

¹⁶ U.S. Department of Justice, *Dictionary*, p. 40.

¹⁷ Saleem A. Shah, "Juvenile Delinquency: A National Perspective," in *New Treatment Approaches to Juvenile Delinquency*, ed. J. L. Khanna (Springfield: Thomas, 1975), p. 9.

behavior. However, the legislative trend is now to make the two separate and distinct categories. The Department of Justice lists as typical status offenses violation of curfew, running away from home, truancy, possession of an alcoholic beverage, incorrigibility, having delinquent tendencies, leading an immoral life, and being in need of supervision. It should be noted that in some jurisdictions a status offender who repeatedly commits status offenses may be adjudicated a delinquent.¹⁸ Therefore, a child who has actually committed no criminal act may be found delinquent for repeatedly committing acts which he could not be charged with if he were an adult. That fact is important to this study as juvenile delinquents and status offenders may be found housed together in some institutions despite trends to separate them.

Whether or not a young person is found to be delinquent depends greatly upon how society perceives the acts which he has committed.

Shah states:

The nature and amount of deviancy in a society depends very much upon and reflects the values, norms, levels of tolerance for deviant behavior, and also the activities and decisions of agencies and functionaries charged with the handling of problems of social deviance. The lower the tolerance levels for deviancy and the greater the inclination to define a wide range of behaviors as troublesome and antisocial, the higher will be the rates of delinquency and crime.¹⁹

The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967, noted that an average of one out of every nine youths

¹⁸U.S. Department of Justice, *Dictionary*, pp. 88-89.

¹⁹Shah, pp. 5-6.

and one of six male youths will probably go to juvenile court concerning a delinquent act before his eighteenth birthday. A study by Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin, 1972, of 10,000 male youths shows "that 35 percent had officially recorded contacts with the police for delinquent acts." Other self-report studies indicate that "about 90 percent of all young people have committed at least one act for which they could have been brought before a juvenile court."²⁰ This high number of instances of delinquent behavior probably stems from the notion in our society that many problems require the concern of justice systems. However, most of the cases in criminal courts deal with violations of moral norms or disturbing behavior rather than serious crimes.²¹

The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) defines three basic categories of offenders in terms of their relationship with society:

Type 1: Those from whom society should be protected: Dangerous to others.

A socially destructive person believed to require secure confinement. This is intended to deter others as well as the one confined from future offenses. Such a person engages in, or is inclined to, unprovoked aggression on the person of others, or unprovoked destructiveness of property, either for its own sake or for personal gain.

Type 2: Those who should be protected by society from themselves: Dangerous to oneself.

A self-destructive person who may be physically or mentally ill and may endanger himself (and/or others) as a result of his illness. He is his own victim, as in drug abuse. He is believed to require supervision, treatment, or therapy to help him.

²⁰Shah, p. 3.

²¹Shah, p. 3.

Type 3: Those who should be protected from some part of society: In danger from others.

A person who is in danger or who offends because of a societal situation beyond his control, or because of others from whom he needs protection. He may be easily pressured, provoked, or influenced into offensive acts by others, or by a personal need deriving from scarcity of a resource essential for survival (whether hunger or need to belong, as to a gang). He is believed to require strengthening to enable him to resist pressures and compensation for mistreatment.²²

These are pure types and may be combined in various ways according to the individual.

One working with juvenile delinquents must be ever mindful of the fact that before all of the definitions, the statistics, the stereotyping, and the categorizing, there is the individual. Kvaraceus and Miller explain in *Delinquent Behavior* that

an individual who acts in conformity with the values and norms of his effective reference system may appear to be engaged in serious and norm-violating behavior to an observer (teacher, police, group worker) whose point of reference represents values of another system. Another observer, seeing the same acts, may take into consideration the implicit definition of the appropriateness of the behavior for the particular area or group.²³

The child may frequently use his behavior

as a means of adapting or adjusting in accordance with his essential frame of reference. Occasionally, he may even be solving a serious problem, which has long been confronting him, in the best and only way he knows how—through his

²²U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, *Planning and Designing for Juvenile Justice* (n.p.: n.p., 1972), p. 31.

²³William C. Kvaraceus and Walter B. Miller, *Delinquent Behavior: Culture and the Individual* (Washington, D.C.: National Education Assoc., 1959), p. 47.

delinquency. Delinquent "malbehavior" is usually "adjustive behavior," and only from the outsider's point of view does the child seem "maladjusted."²⁴

Dr. G. H. Aivazian, chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Tennessee College of Medicine, points out that different classes and different communities handle problems of deviant behavior in varying ways. Often a type of behavior is dealt with or explained in a manner which appears to either favor or be against a group. One factor which may determine the sort of therapeutic-corrective measures taken is the socioeconomic background of the individual, with the lower socioeconomic classes receiving the more severe corrective measures. Partly because middle and upper class children seek private help for their behavior and their records cannot be attained, statistical data usually obtained from juvenile court records, shows a very high incidence of delinquency in lower socioeconomic classes.²⁵

A study by Conger and Miller of all males entering the tenth grade in Denver, Colorado, in 1956, paints a clearer picture of the delinquent personality. The study shows an emergence of personality and behavioral differences between future delinquents and nondelinquent peers even in their early school years even though they were the same age and sex,

²⁴Kvaraceus, p. 33.

²⁵J. L. Khanna, *New Treatment Approaches to Juvenile Delinquency* (Springfield: Thomas, 1975), pp. 125-126.

had grown up together facing the same socioeconomic and discrimination problems, and were comparable in intelligence.²⁶

By the end of the ninth grade the personality patterns of adolescent delinquents could clearly be traced through their school years. Their academic performance was consistently poorer than their nondelinquent peers with their work often below their capabilities. Attendance was also a greater problem for them. The delinquents were much more distractable in school and "showed much less capacity for sustained attention, daydreamed more, and when challenged academically, tended to give up more easily." Overall the juvenile delinquents were "more lacking in self-confidence and self-respect, less cheerful and happy, less well-adjusted to their own and the opposite sex, and more attention-seeking." Most of these youths also came from disturbed home environments which created significant problems in their overall adjustment.²⁷

The delinquents displayed significantly poorer self-images of themselves and expressed an incapability in establishing personal relationships with peers and especially with adults. They saw themselves as lacking enthusiasm and interest in life and expressed less interest in "the dominant ethical values and goals of American middle-class culture than their nondelinquent matches." Adolescent delinquents more frequently

²⁶ John Janeway Conger and Wilbur C. Miller, *Personality, Social Class, and Delinquency* (New York: Wiley, 1966), p. 185.

²⁷ Conger, pp. 187-88.

"acknowledged feelings of depression and discouragement, mood swings, daydreaming, and oversensitivity" and "admitted more often to a variety of somatic and behavioral expressions of anxiety and hypochondriacal preoccupations." They also seemed to respond to environmental pressures with more hostility, rejection, or withdrawal.²⁸

These looks at the delinquent personality are generalizations. But the individual requires a much greater depth of study. Based on her experiences at the Wallkill Cottage of the Children's Aid Society in New York City, Leontine R. Young gives this very humanistic description of the girls there:

Behind the label was a child cheated by society out of her normal birthright. Vaguely she sensed that she had been cheated, but mostly she accepted as right and true society's guilt-twisted defense that she was a bad girl. She was neurotic because she had not had the security and love that would have enabled her to grow straight and healthy. She demanded the impossible of life to compensate for what life had failed to give her. For the most part she saw only two solutions: to fight and rebel, or to withdraw and accept final defeat. Her behavior, whatever its form of expression, was an attempt to adjust her personal demands to the reality of the outside world. In essence she sought either to twist that reality to the shape of her desires or to crush her needs and desires within herself and fit the shell of a personality that remained into the shadow of reality. Whatever she did, whatever happened to her, was viewed through her own emotional astigmatism so that the reality was, like a bad picture, always out of focus.²⁹

²⁸Conger, p. 188.

²⁹Leontine R. Young, *The Treatment of Adolescent Girls in an Institution* (New York: Child Welfare League of America, 1945), pp. 31-32.

Many hypotheses have been formulated in attempts to determine the causes of delinquent behavior. Kvaraceus and Miller discuss several of the commonly given explanations and call them myths. They point out that the negative effects of having a working mother do not provide a simple causal explanation for delinquent behavior. The concept has very different meanings between middle class and lower class homes. The idea that broken homes cause delinquency carries the built-in bias of the judicial system screening process. Children from broken homes are more likely to be sent to an institution, whereas children from an intact home will generally be sent home or to a clinic.³⁰

Of special importance to this paper is Kvaraceus and Miller's look at the playground myth. They point out that although no discernable relationship has been found between delinquency rates and recreation programs still

a particular type of recreation program that is carefully planned and administered under certain auspices, direction, and leadership—if coordinated with other efforts—can effectively redirect or channel energies away from illegal activity into organized athletics and other leisure-time pursuits.³¹

Most researchers are quick to point out all of the things which do not necessarily cause the problem of juvenile delinquency. But determining exactly what those causes are is a much slower process. In *Personality, Social Class, and Delinquency* Conger and Miller note that although

³⁰Kvaraceus, pp. 34-35.

³¹Kvaraceus, pp. 36-37.

delinquency does not simply result from socioeconomic status, cultural deprivation, social disorganization, parent-child relationships, or gang membership, "in particular instances, it may be a function of any of these factors singly and in interaction with one another."³² Dr. Aivazian identifies inadequacies in intrafamily relationships, shortcomings of the community environment, and the content and form of the mass media as major causal factors of delinquency.³³

Dr. Clyde B. Vedder of the University of Houston points out that delinquency is a learned social behavior, not an inborn trait. The personal and social disorganization of the adult world, rather than juvenile delinquency, may be the real problem. Concerning the cause of delinquency, Vedder concludes the following:

Delinquency results . . . when there is a relative absence in the individual of internalized norms and rules governing behavior in conformity with the norms of the social system to which legal penalties are attached. It results from a breakdown in previously established controls, and/or a relative absence of such controls, for example, from the apparent conflicts in the social rules or techniques for enforcing such behavior in the social groups or institutions of which the person is a member. This writer concludes that delinquency may be seen as a functional consequence of the type of relationship established between the personal and social controls.³⁴

The Institutional Environment

Having gone through breakdowns in personal and social controls and the resulting legal process, even further problems are created for a

³²Conger, p. 218.

³³Khanna, p. 126.

³⁴Vedder, pp. 3-4.

youngster if he is placed in an institutional environment. This transfer from one community to another is not necessarily made because conscious deliberation dictates that it is the best solution. But often a child is placed in an institution because other measures have been tried and failed.³⁵ Facilities for housing court-committed juvenile delinquents are usually called training schools or industrial schools. Among institutions for young people with various problems, training schools always seem to have the poorest conditions. They tend to be larger than other facilities with less highly developed programs. There are usually fewer staff members in relation to students and the staffs are usually less highly trained than in other institutions.³⁶

Provisions in training schools vary extensively from "well-staffed and ably run institutions" to conditions "such as would cause a public scandal in most European countries."³⁷ In his article, "Institutional Behavior of Delinquents," James J. Teevan, Jr. classifies institutions according to their basic goals as either custodial or treatment. Marked by pessimism, the custodial institution has as its objective the protection of society from the juvenile offender. Teevan draws this picture of the custodial facility:

³⁵Gordon Rose, *Schools for Young Offenders* (London: Tavistock, 1967), p. 55.

³⁶George H. Weber, *Child-Minders* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979), p. 198.

³⁷Rose, p. 148.

Institutional personnel rely on negative sanctions with few positive incentives offered to the inmates to elicit conformity. The one major positive reward for conformist behavior is release from the institution Obedience is stressed at all times. There is great distance between inmates and staff with reciprocal suspicion and vigilance marking the typical relationship between the two groups. In summary, the demands for order and security overshadow the needs of the inmates to learn self-control and rehabilitation in custodial institutions.³⁸

While still concerned with security, treatment institutions have as their major objective the counseling of delinquents. This approach "emphasizes more heavily the social roots of behavior and thus tries to exert pressure on the group to modify the individual delinquents behavior." Rules are less rigid, and rewards are stressed more heavily than punishment. Inmates and staff are closer, and there are more optimistic attempts made at rehabilitation of the delinquent.³⁹

Institutional life is not normal for a child, just as the events which lead to it are not normal. Because of the process leading to their confinement, "these youngsters bring with them special elements of tension and anxiety that must be taken into account."⁴⁰ As Frank J. Cohen emphasizes in *Children in Trouble*, "No matter how it is administered, institutional living is a punishing experience." This

³⁸James J. Teevan, Jr., "Institutional Behavior of Delinquents," in *Fundamentals of Juvenile Criminal Behavior and Drug Abuse*, ed. Richard E. Hardy and John G. Cull (Springfield: Thomas, 1975), pp. 113-114.

³⁹Teevan, pp. 113-114.

⁴⁰Frank J. Cohen, *Children in Trouble: An Experiment in Institutional Child Care*, ed. Hermine I. Popper (New York: Norton, 1952), p. 5.

confinement "may arouse a feeling of desperation ending in violence" in some youngsters, while "in others, a sense of resignation may take the equally serious form of apathy and withdrawal." Most children fall between these extremes.⁴¹

Considering the needs of adolescents in institutions, there are three basic services which the environment should provide. These are educational, rehabilitational, and vocational. General educational requirements must be met for children while they are away from their regular school environment. However formal education in institutions seems to suffer, because the teachers are often out of touch with the mainstream of the educational system.⁴²

Dr. Jonas Robitscher, professor of Law and Behavioral Sciences at Emory University, sees institutions for delinquents as providing much testing and custodianship but little rehabilitation. He states, "Only one in twenty institutional employees is assigned to rehabilitation."⁴³ Vedder agrees that the rehabilitative purpose of institutions is failing as "there are between 65 and 85 percent rehabilitative failures among the former inmates who have spent time in reformatories and industrial or 'training' schools."⁴⁴

⁴¹Cohen, p. 56.

⁴²Rose, p. 59.

⁴³Khanna, p. 143.

⁴⁴Vedder, p. 393.

Many institutions for delinquents have training departments or work programs in which the students may learn a trade or vocation. Much of the work is domestic, including maintenance, agricultural, and building.⁴⁵ Electrical work, woodworking, and upholstery are examples of trades which young people may learn in a training school.

LEAA stresses the need for all three services, educational, rehabilitational, and vocational, to be provided for training school students:

Rehabilitation entails effecting permanent changes in the outlook, values and social character of the offender. These will not become operative unless his educational level (too often far behind) and his vocational preparation (too often non-existent) are such that he becomes capable of earning a living. Opportunities which enable him to do so are often denied him through stigmatization or prejudice. The education, the training and the vocational opportunities must be made available. Though efforts in these interrelated directions may not succeed beyond a modest limit, the more any of them are omitted the greater the likelihood of failure.⁴⁶

Child care workers should always be aware of the complex needs of the institutionalized delinquent. In their work they may find themselves simultaneously playing the roles of administrator, supervisor, caregiver, advocate, activity leader, counselor, and educator. Teevan describes the staff of custodial institutions as being less educated and less qualified to work with delinquents than the staffs in treatment institutions. The low pay, work shifts, and high turnover rate may result in "apathy,

⁴⁵Rose, p. 59.

⁴⁶U.S. Department of Justice, *Planning*, p. 41.

disenchantment, and hostility." Because of this, the staff in custodial facilities "may be intolerant of delinquents and show a lack of understanding of their behavior." In treatment institutions professionals have greater control than guards, but they are underrepresented in training school staffs.⁴⁷

Those people who work with juvenile delinquents in any capacity have a great responsibility and challenge before them to understand what they can about the individual's situation and continually press forward to help reroute the delinquent's future. As Gordon Rose states in *Schools for Young Offenders*, "It is axiomatic that any method of training offenders is as good as the people who operate it."⁴⁸

The following chapters will study what effects creative dramatics can have on juvenile delinquents in an institution when applied to educational, diagnostic, and therapeutic programs. An examination will also be made of specific methods which a leader may use in applying creative drama to meeting the needs of the delinquent.

⁴⁷Teevan, pp. 121-22.

⁴⁸Rose, p. 91.

CHAPTER II

APPLICATIONS OF CREATIVE DRAMATICS TO THE NEEDS OF THE JUVENILE DELINQUENT

Children who have been ushered through the juvenile justice system and placed in institutions need leaders to help them evaluate their attitudes toward life. The high rate of recidivism among delinquents points to the idea that traditional educational and therapeutic measures are not adequate in meeting their needs and helping them develop new standards of living. A seminar report on "Institutional Requirements of Social Therapy in Penal Settings" given in 1973, in Bonn-Venusberg, Germany, determined that the success of social therapy in penal settings may depend on the following:

(a) the selection and modification of appropriate therapeutic techniques, (b) viewing the institutions as a therapeutic setting, and (c) accepting new ideas concerning personnel functions in the light of the therapeutic goals.¹

Several methods of utilizing creative dramatics as a therapeutic and educational technique will be explained in this chapter. The leader should realize that not all techniques will work with all groups. Instead the leader should choose to work with those methods which might most logically meet the needs of a particular group of students and which could be worked into the institution's program at some level.

¹Lothar Nellessen, "Institutional Requirements of Social Therapy in Penal Settings: An Attempt to Simulate Models and Methods in Sociodrama," *Psychological Abstracts*, 55 (1975), 1201.

It is important that institutionalized adolescents be provided with meaningful activities to help overcome the boredom and feelings of uselessness which so many of them feel. Merely presenting them with obvious busy work "touches only surface symptoms and overlooks underlying factors known to generate norm-violating behaviors."² Eichmann explains in her article, "Drama in Juvenile Delinquency Prevention," that although numerous recreation activities of all sorts, including athletics and handcrafts, are provided for young people, still "too little opportunity is given the child to exercise his imagination in spite of the fact that he wants to imitate, to dramatize, before he wants to make things, or to swim and compete in games."³

Participation in creative dramatics should not be expected to drastically modify the behavior of a juvenile delinquent student. Such a program cannot force the student to improve his academic skills, nor can it suddenly change his outlook on life. But creative dramatics can provide motivation for self improvement. Participation in the program can instill in the child a sense of self worth through creative accomplishment and provide a reason to practice and improve those basic academic skills in which juvenile delinquents are generally lagging.

Since the worker in an institution must adapt to serving numerous roles, to expand to creative dramatics leader may not be as difficult

²Kvaraceus, p. 39.

³Grace Shull Eichmann, "Drama in Juvenile Delinquency Prevention," *Recreation*, 37 (1944), 563-64, 586.

a task as one might think. The basic idea is to use this technique as another means of achieving those educational, rehabilitational, and vocational goals which have been established for the students. Creative dramatics may be incorporated into the classroom—not only in English, but in many other subjects as well. Its effects may be seen in the school shop, in home economics rooms, and in religious studies with the youngsters. The means for involving students and child guidance workers in such a creative dramatics program are only as limited as the leader's ideas and willingness to experiment. As Slavson stresses in *Re-Educating the Delinquent Through Group and Community Participation*:

Intellect can at best deal with facts and occurrences. Only through instinct and the unconscious can man discover truth and essence. Art is a form of expression; it is also a medium of communication which the worker in orthopedagogy [corrective education] and the psychotherapist must learn to appreciate.⁴

Program Examples

One of the best ways to explain some of the methods in which creative dramatics may be used with juvenile delinquents is to examine representative programs. Although very little has been written on such work, following are several examples of the problems encountered in specific institutions and how creative dramatics was employed to deal with them.

⁴S. R. Slavson, *Re-Educating the Delinquent Through Group and Community Participation* (New York: Harper, 1954), p. 123.

At the Red Wing State Training School for Boys in Minnesota, Rudolph Lassner served as the only psychologist for an average student population of 400. He was faced with the problem of how to work toward the rehabilitation of a large group of boys through more constructive means than merely providing the required intelligence, vocational aptitude, and educational data. So Lassner sent out a call for playwrights and actors at the school. The playwrights who assembled were told that they could work in groups to pool their ideas, and they were given complete freedom in their choice of subject matter. The students grouped by age into units of three to six boys each. The eleven to fifteen year old groups wrote two plays "replete with occurrences in a 'typical' American family." The fifteen to seventeen year olds "in an obvious attempt to shock the administration" wrote a gangster play called *The Hold Up*. One other sixteen year old student wrote a play called *The Opportunity*, which "portrayed the experiences of a neglected, delinquent child, who through adoption by a minister and the interest of a scout master, makes good." Students were also given freedom in their choice of actors. Playwrights who wished to act chose their roles and nominated the rest of the cast from a list of volunteers. Lassner supervised the rehearsals and performances, delegating technical responsibilities to willing group members. Following performances informal parties were held to provide a time for discussion and evaluation

of their work. Lassner did case studies on several students who were involved in the dramatic work.⁵

One such student was K.M., a seventeen and a half year old boy of average intelligence with no prior record of delinquency. Since being sent to Red Wing for engaging with other boys in car thefts and robbery of a filling station, he had adjusted excellently to the school and his cottage. As a co-author of *The Hold-Up*, he chose the role of a bandit. But at the second rehearsal this usually compliant student refused to be in the play because he "did not want to be connected in any way with crime." K.M. asked that his name be stricken from the program as an author of the play. In his evaluation of this student, Lassner concluded that "the drama technique had value in that it precipitated insight and resulted in complete revulsion from the type of crime which had brought him to his present pass."⁶

Another case study was L.K., a sixteen year old with low average intelligence who had to be returned to training school for leaving his home town with a stolen revolver. He had been abused by his parents at an early age and was miserable in school. In *The Opportunity* L.K. chose the role of Sergeant Smith, a previous runaway who is wounded in World War II and loses the use of a leg. After the play the topic of running away was brought up. L.K. opened up and told the story of his early

⁵Rudolph Lassner, "Playwriting and Acting as Diagnostic-Therapeutic Techniques with Delinquents," *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 3 (1947), 350-351.

⁶Lassner, p. 351-52.

family life. After this, a more positive attitude toward his stay at school was noticed. He modified his plans for the future and hoped "to obtain further education, the need for which he himself had only realized when encountering the 'big words' in the role" Lassner saw the dramatic work as having positive effects on the student:

His participation in the drama obviously was helpful to him as an outlet for pent-up feelings in many ways. Impersonating the suffering, wounded, "beaten" marine, he was given an opportunity to reenact masochistically the sufferings endured from ruthless parents in childhood and from various 'enemies' later on. The immediate satisfaction gained by such an identification was so great that Lawrence was one of the most cooperative boys during the rehearsals and the performance itself Further treatment appeared more hopeful through the loosening up which was effected by the drama technique.⁷

In evaluating his program Lassner commented that, of group treatment methods available, playwriting and acting have an advantage with adolescents because participation in them is considered and remembered as a pleasure and a privilege. Besides providing a pleasant break in institutional regimentation, the technique works positively while disguising its diagnostic-therapeutic purpose. Through his choice of plot and role, a boy could exhibit his projections and identifications. Lassner found that this sort of participation could provide catharsis resulting in noticeable attitude changes. He observed, "Group discussions following the play productions tend to be less inhibited and more revealing than office interviews." The therapist may then exploit this new information about the student in their interviews.⁸

⁷Lassner, p. 354-55.

⁸Lassner, p. 355-56.

Helen C. Shank, superintendent of the Maple Lane School in Grand Mound, Washington, developed a model school of its kind. The training school housed about 140 girls between the ages of ten and eighteen years. Concerning the drama program, which began in 1953, Shank observed:

In addition to being many wonderful things, creative dramatics is democratic. When it is part of a recreational program, girls learn to cooperate as they play together. Each one is given responsibility for her part in the total effort of creating a play that will be successful. Creative dramatics can be just as exciting and satisfying an outlet for pent-up rebellious attitudes as a baseball game. Since we have had the classes we are convinced creative dramatics should be a part of every recreational program in a boys' and girls' training school.⁹

The description of the Maple Lane child is very reminiscent of Young's description of the Wallkill Cottage girl. These girls had

lost the ability to communicate in the normal world because the world in which they live is so different, bounded on the one side by institutional living, and hedged in on the others by trouble, courts and judges, parental problems, and a thousand related factors.¹⁰

But it is stressed that these girls are "simply children." Through the Maple Lane creative dramatics program, Shanks sought to find for the girls a positive method of escape from the routine of institutional life. She explored these questions: "How does it feel never to be really alone? Never to be able to explore where childish curiosity

⁹Werdna Finley, "Survey of Creative Dramatics in Correctional Institutions," in *Children's Theatre and Creative Dramatics*, ed. Geraldine Brain Siks and Hazel Brain Dunnington (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1961), p. 172.

¹⁰Finley, p. 170.

leads? If each person has some innate creativeness, how does it flourish in day after day of regimentation?"¹¹

In applying the values of creative dramatics to the needs of the girls, it was found that the true feelings of a child could be brought out in drama that a social worker might never have been able to uncover. The children were able to visualize their dreams, those things they wished were true:

The deprivation always shrinks to a core of sadness, loss, hostility which loses or eases its tension in the "playing out." Dreams are always of the good (or what we classify as normal, average, everyday): a high school diploma; a small, neat house with a neat, loving mother and a father who works at some honest job every day; marriage to a nice young man; good clothes; parties. Not often do they stretch toward such unrealities as wealth, fame, and prestige.¹²

At Maple Lane the creative drama class served as a school barometer. Hostilities against society appeared when the students were restless. But when they were happy, the girls would show their appreciation, even at times by indulging in prayer as a part of the "play." Shanks observed that "after a session on restless or upset days, the participants in the class are relieved of tension. They are often relaxed and amiable after a creative dramatics class which they entered sullenly." The same material was used with the Maple Lane girls as that used with children in the normal world. However, it was noticed that these girls had varying interpretations of the material "according to their individual experiences. For instance, a *window* to the average group may hold many

¹¹Finley, pp. 170-71.

¹²Finley, p. 172.

a delightful thought; to the institutional child, it usually is reminiscent of running or escaping."¹³

In 1975, Raymond C. Council, former chaplain at the Tennessee Youth Center (TYC) in Joelton, began a Bible class for boys at the training school into which he incorporated improvisations of Biblical characters. He received very positive response from the students. So he wrote a skit on Cain and Able and began a drama group, the Prodigal Players, to perform the work. The boys produced the skit using no costumes and very primitive props. Encouraged by their continuing enthusiasm, Council wrote a play about Jonah incorporating a filmstrip which represented Jonah's alter ego. The character of Jonah would interact with the alter-ego Jonah of the filmstrip. Council also began to use music performed by students in this production. The show proved to be such a success when performed for a TYC audience, that Council planned a sort of tour to other institutions in the state and to two churches.

The chaplain initiated the dramas as a means of providing religious education for TYC students. Council said that through the dramas he sought "to show that Biblical characters were real people with real feelings, frustrations, failures, joys, triumphs, conflicts and greatness." He also noted the importance of the creative aspect in the dramatic work:

An equally significant effect of the plays is that students are given the opportunity to express themselves creatively A lot of work has gone into each production and the students have felt justly proud of their efforts. Hopefully, by their

¹³Finley, pp. 172-73.

involvement in the plays they will have an occasion to creatively display their wares, enjoy the experience and gain the desire to have other occasions as well.¹⁴

With all of the enthusiasm and positive effects, Council points out that the TYC program was not without problems. Most of the boys were lagging in their cultural backgrounds. Many had never seen a play. So he made proper arrangements and took the group to rehearsals at the Circle Theatre, a community theatre group in Nashville. This gave the boys a better idea of what was expected of them. Trying to instill a sense of self-discipline in the boys, convincing them that they needed to memorize their parts, was another problem for Council. He would call the cast together two or three times a week just to read through the play and to help them settle down to learn. He found that without this aid, if the boys had six weeks to do the work, they would wait until the fifth week to start learning their parts. The boys lacked motivation and always seemed to be looking further down the road for answers in their lives.

Council observed that his casts always "got a lot of heat" from their peers when performing at TYC. The TYC performance was always the first and most difficult as other boys would often try to interrupt the show. But after the performances audience members would express their surprise at the good job the others had done. A great deal of jealousy was evident toward the boys in the play. One audience at another

¹⁴Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, "Prodigal Players Untangle 'The Web,'" *Spectrum*, Oct. 1976, p. 6.

institution on their tour proved to be very hostile and aggressive, but the actors continued and completed the performance. From members within the group and from others at the show, the boys received much positive feedback for their ability to concentrate and continue performing despite hostile audience members.

Council discerned that a sense of comraderie, which is usually found among groups of this kind, did not build up among his actors. As typical with juvenile offenders, they did not work well as a group, but preferred to remain autonomous. But he discovered that even the boys who were considered very disorderly and those who had trouble with the discipline board could perform extremely well in dramatics. Through this technique a boy could reinforce the strong points in his character and work through his lethargic qualities.

The chaplain saw the Prodigal Players' work as an enriching process rather than a form of behavior modification. The therapeutic value was in the positive feedback which the boys received. Just doing the play, performing it before a group, proved to have the greatest value for the students.

One TYC student, a slow learner with a fourth grade reading level, wanted to be in a play, but was afraid he couldn't read the script well enough to learn his lines. Council cast the boy in their Christmas play and the student worked so hard that he had soon learned not only his part, but every part in the entire play. After the final scheduled performance of the play, the boy approached the chaplain insisting that they do the show one more time. Council could not understand this

persistence until the boy finally admitted, "I've never been before people when they have applauded me." Touched by this need for approval, Council arranged one more performance. The Prodigal Players was a success in that boys, who had everything to disqualify them from participation in this program, did incredibly good work and experienced a sense of achievement that they had never before known.¹⁵

A "Survey of Creative Dramatics in Correctional Institutions" was done in 1958-59, by the Children's Theatre Conference and the American Educational Theatre Association. Of the 250 institutions contacted, 130 returned their questionnaires. Eighty-five institutions indicated an interest in developing creative dramatics programs. Thirteen institutions already had such programs and seven others were conducting related programs. Reasons given on the surveys for using creative dramatics with institutionalized juvenile delinquents were:

"therapeutic," "builds self confidence," "teaches meaning of good entertainment," "develops poise," "self-control," "teaches to work in groups," "prepares them to go back into the community and accept responsibilities," "rehabilitates," "allows for individual expression," "releases tension," "gives enjoyment," "allows the child to vocalize," "gives sense of belonging," "builds up individual ego," "gives joy of production of something worthwhile," "shows that the experience of helping and serving others in a wholesome way is means to true happiness," "means of teaching self-discipline," "moral booster."¹⁶

This section has shown some of the ways and reasons for which creative dramatics have been used with juvenile offenders in institutional

¹⁵ Personal interview with Raymond Council, 12 Sept. 1979.

¹⁶ Finley, pp. 173-74.

settings. The following sections will look further at how this technique may be used to help meet educational needs of the students, to increase their understanding of other cultural and ethnical backgrounds, to enhance diagnostic and therapeutic methods, and to provide students with opportunities for creativity.

Opportunities for Creativity

The methods which may be used for enhancing creative expression through dramatics are seemingly limitless. But it is important that the door to creativity be opened especially wide for juvenile delinquents, as perhaps the realities in their lives have begun to block out or distort their fantasies. Sarah Putnam explains in "Working at Play and Playing at Work":

By nature, adolescents play-act as much as do younger children, but their stage has now changed. It is no longer the merry puppet stage of the story book; it is instead a confusing shifting stage, sometimes painful in its reality of grown responsibilities thrust close, sometimes bombastically unreal in rebellious flights of imagination. Because of this, an adolescent never is more grateful, more amenable, than when a teacher invites him to let loose this play instinct in a grown-up drama, powerful in expression.¹⁷

The creative dramatics leader should survey his students to learn what creative talents they possess, so that they may be incorporated into the program. This will also provide a basis for deciding what areas would be most beneficial in which for the students to work. For example,

¹⁷ Sarah. A. Putnam, "Working at Play and Playing at Work," in *Creative Expression: The Development of Children in Art, Music, Literature and Dramatics*, ed. Gertrude Hartman and Ann Shumaker (New York: Day, 1932), pp. 312-313.

Chaplain Council at TYC learned that some of his students were involved in a music class learning to play various instruments. He incorporated their music into his dramatics program, thereby providing the boys with opportunities to practice and display their talents. The dramatics leader must develop a keen eye toward his students' abilities to uncover talents which may be hidden or repressed.

Four of the basic methods employed in dramatics to help students find keys to creative expression are playwriting, acting, storytelling, and technical work.

Playwriting. In and of itself, playwriting may prove to be a very difficult task for a student. Never is a helpful leader needed more than to guide youngsters in this assignment. Views among creative dramatics authorities may slightly conflict on the values of using playwriting as a mode of expression. In *Children and Dramatics* Richard Crosscup notes:

an original play may be self-defeating precisely because of straining for originality it sacrifices creative integrity. For the relationship between creativity and "originality," in the most usual sense of the word, is that between a circle and a line—they go their own ways, though there are important points at which they come tangent to each other.¹⁸

He goes further to explain, "This is not to say that inventiveness is in itself an impediment to creative expression, but rather that it is more or less irrelevant."¹⁹

¹⁸Crosscup, p. 119.

¹⁹Crosscup, p. 119.

Slavson, on the other hand, points out the merits of playwriting in creative expression:

The value of playwriting, in addition to many other obvious advantages, is that it involves a process of selecting material out of the vortex of life that interests the writers, and that they consider as suitable for a play. These situations are dramatic and meaningful to the young authors. By combining these situations, adding characters and indication relations between them, the writers learn not only play writing but also life itself. The suitable plot and action for a play is a situation that is directly related to the life of those who project it.²⁰

Helping the student dissect his experiences to find a complete, meaningful story basis for a play is one of the drama leader's assignments. The students need to be reminded of the limitations imposed on the production of their work. The types of costumes, properties, lighting facilities, and setting provisions must all be taken into account by the student playwright who wants to have his work performed by the group. Keeping all of these limitations in mind while progressing the story line in a proper logical manner is a difficult task. The leader should overcome temptations to govern this process. He should, however, provide careful supervision and advice in the students' work. As Ward explains:

It requires much concentrated thought to choose one dramatic line of action and cut away everything that is not necessary for its development. The children should by all means think this through with the teacher, for it is strongly motivated thinking which is valuable experience in concentration. It would be a great pity for the teacher to do the planning for them, though they need much guidance in the developing of a well-made play.²¹

²⁰ Slavson, *Creative Group*, pp. 119-20.

²¹ Ward, p. 365.

There are means for developing plays other than those which come out of a single original plot. Students may adapt stories or books to the dramatic form or they may develop plays through improvisational work done within the group. Ward cautions that in adapting a book there is usually much more material than can be unified to fit into the proper time limits for a stage presentation. She also points out that "the scenes of a play cannot jump from one place to another as does a book, and some scenes which are described cannot be put upon the stage at all if the play is to be done realistically for an audience."²² In *History on the Stage: Children Make Plays from Historical Novels*, Edna Conrad and Mary Van Dyke suggest that leaders have students ask themselves these questions to keep them on the right track in their writing:

- (a) Does it seem like *that* person talking?
- (b) Does it move the story along, or is it "just talk"?
- (c) Does it sound like the time in which the story happens? (O.K. just won't do for 1770 in Boston.)²³

They also recommend that the leader begin by letting students improvise in their own language as "the most important thing is the dynamics of conflict between people and forces." As the actual dialogue of the play is written, the students may then work on adding the flavor of the time.²⁴

²²Ward, pp. 364-65.

²³Edna Conrad and Mary Van Dyke, *History on the Stage: Children Make Plays from Historical Novels* (New York: Reinhold, 1971), p. 35.

²⁴Conrad, p. 35.

History on the Stage is a very good resource for leaders who want to direct their students in adapting books to play form. Although it deals specifically with historical novels, much of the information it provides is relevant to adapting other books and stories and to the dramatic presentation in general. The resource book also supplies a list of suggested novels and reference books for use in historical dramatization.

Winifred Ward's *Stories to Dramatize* is also a good reference tool for creative dramatics leaders. The book includes twenty-one stories which children twelve to fourteen years old may enjoy adapting for dramatization and a list of other stories not included in the book which are also suitable for this purpose.

Whatever method of developing a play script is employed, it should be the children who accept the ultimate responsibility for making it a viable, workable dramatic piece. The leader's duty is to guide them steadily so that they may explore their words and actions through this medium of expression and communication.

Acting. Another method through which students may express their creativity is acting. The leader's major concern in the process of choosing actors for a dramatization are fairness and opportunity. Who is good and who is better than someone else is irrelevant in informal presentations. Casting may come through a "natural selection" process. Enthusiasm and inclination for certain roles should be the determining factors in selecting a cast. Roles may also be interchanged among actors working on a play together. The goal of creative dramatics through acting is to encourage each child by providing him with the

chance to do things he wants to do and to try new and different things. Only if a more serious production is planned should more indepth consideration be given to casting.²⁵

Crosscup points out that one of the most deceptive aspects in allowing children to choose parts or audition pieces is that they may not admit that they want to try for the role they most want to play. He finds that "this is especially true of parts which demand the expression of what is aesthetically beautiful."²⁶ He explains:

it is often the very thing that children most yearn for in the secrecy of their hearts that fills them with the profoundest diffidence. The adult must be particularly sensitive to this phenomenon, for it is terribly important that a child dare take the responsibility for beauty upon himself.²⁷

By aiding a child in the interpretation of a part it may help him to overcome his hesitation of performing it. Crosscup notes that "our assumption is still that make-believe is the essence of children's acting, and if a young person understands what he is to be, he will be that thing."²⁸ In Chapter III of this paper practical ideas will be offered for the creative dramatics leader to use in helping students to learn more about characterization and expression through acting.

Storytelling. In storytelling and related activities students have the opportunity to explore their own voice and other sounds. Children

²⁵Crosscup, pp. 154-56.

²⁶Crosscup, p. 169.

²⁷Crosscup, p. 170.

²⁸Crosscup, p. 145.

are free in creative drama sessions to experiment with their voice sounds without being "judged in terms of academic coherence." In *Move!* Bronwen Nicholls says, "The inability to communicate fluently with words is often the result of bodily tension due to verbal dominance and impatience of the teacher."²⁹ Such difficulty in communication can be seen in juvenile delinquents in their relationships with peers and especially with adults.

Certain techniques or games may be used to help the children loosen up and become more secure in their ability to communicate. One such technique, described by Nicholls as a "most bewildering, beautiful and hilarious theatre-workshop" exercise, is "the Garbling Game." Students are divided into groups of four or five and each group is given a different story. Examples are:

- . You are a car salesman trying to sell a sports car to a family . . .
- . You are tourists being shown over an old castle (or through underground caves) by a very talkative guide . . .
- . Sailors on board a sinking ship. There is only one lifeboat . . .
- . A politician campaigning in a park; a few people have gathered to listen to your policy speech. They don't listen very quietly . . .³⁰

The students are then instructed to enact their stories by using very accute, exaggerated movements and sounds, but "the sounds must not be those of any actual language." The leader might have the students think about a cat or dog trying to express something to them through the

²⁹ Bronwen Nicholls, *Move!* (Boston: Plays, 1975), p. 80.

³⁰ Nicholls, p. 82.

limitations of a meow or a bark. To further explain the technique the leader should break off into garble. Nicholls suggests that the leader use "overemphasized hand movements, screw up [his] face a lot and make up as many different sorts of noises" as possible. The entire group should be allowed about ten minutes of rehearsal time to practice their sounds in the overall noise "which will rise like an invasion of a thousand turkey gobblers." Then groups may take turns in watching the performances.³¹ In *Remedial Drama* Jennings also recommends these voice games: having a conversation using the letters of the alphabet or the numbers one through one hundred, letting conversation begin in whispers and become louder, or reciting tongue-twisters.³²

After exercises such as these, students might feel comfortable and secure enough with their ability to communicate to begin interpreting stories and poems. Jennings suggests using well known stories, such as those from the Bible or from other religions—the Ramayana, the Koran, etc.; myths and folklore; or historical or geographical themes. Stories may also be improvised on selected subjects or perhaps on the students' dreams.³³ In storytelling, as in all other creative techniques, several methods of expression may also be combined to achieve a desired effect. A child may read a story or a poem while the other group members dance it, enact it using mime, or supply sound effects. Students may also like

³¹Nicholls, p. 82-83.

³²Sue Jennings, *Remedial Drama: A Handbook for Teachers and Therapists* (New York: Theatre Arts, 1974), p. 102.

³³Jennings, p. 103.

to try writing stories or poems to present in an oral interpretation session. By mixing and matching the various methods of creative expression—writing, acting, oral interpretation, mime, music, singing, dance—the leader may guide the group to producing many beautiful and varied types of presentations.

Technical work. While authorities usually deemphasize technical work, the scope of this activity in creative drama depends mainly on the type presentation which is being planned. This may range from little or no technical planning for in-class improvisations to skillfully accomplished technical presentations for large-scale stage productions. Little money and poor existing facilities should not hamper, but greatly enhance, the students' use of imagination in producing a dramatization. Odds and ends which are usually overlooked or discarded at the school may suddenly be discovered as just the perfect thing with which to create a prop or set piece. Again, the drama is the artistic medium in which all other arts are joined together. Technical crews for a production may call for electricians, carpenters, seamstresses, and especially people who are willing to "just swing a paint brush." When there are backdrops to be drawn, chairs to be painted, or capes to be cut out and hemmed, no hand should be left idle. In this area of work the students have something solid, material to look at and be proud of. Even if a child is not an actor in a presentation, one may see him lean to his neighbor during the show and proudly whisper, "I hung that lighting instrument," or "I recorded that sound," or "I designed that prop."

"Techies" are as justified in their pride over a successful production as is the leading actor. This feeling of pride in positive accomplishments is greatly needed in the juvenile delinquent, who usually finds challenges difficult to meet.

In tech work the leader should also draw from the innate talents of the students. Almost any aptitude can be reinforced through this activity. If a student has a project in an electrical, woodworking, or sewing class, suggest that they make something which can be put to use in an upcoming presentation. Students with artistic abilities may design programs and posters to let others at the institution know when they may view a show. If the institution has a school newspaper, let a student from the group serve as a creative dramatics reporter to keep the paper abreast of work being done. Ushers are needed to hand out programs and help audience members find seats. And, just as important as any other task, a clean up crew is needed to pick up those programs and other audience and actor memorabilia left behind. Even with performances for select in-school groups, using ushers and having simple programs available adds a nice flavor of a real theatrical production. Seeing their names in the program will give all of the students involved a positive feeling of reinforcement and recognition. However, the leader should be cautious in not letting properties, settings, and costumes outshine the quality of the acting. Let the audience see that the production is simple. It will make them appreciate the overall content more highly. But the leader should never lose sight of the fact that creative dramatics is first and foremost for the enrichment of those

students involved at the moment that they are working. Having an audience at some point in the development of a dramatic presentation should just be considered the icing on a well-baked cake. The practical aspects of costumes and makeup, set design and properties, and lighting design will be discussed in Chapter III.

Educational Needs—Teaching the Basic Curricula

Standing before his class, the teacher in an institution for juvenile delinquents faces students from many different backgrounds with many varying emotional problems and reasons for being involved in the justice system. He may be charged with trying to educate everything from runaways to rapists.. He may find that the intelligence level of his students in a single class ranges from very high to very low. But most of these youngsters will have one thing in common, a consistently poor record for academic performance. The challenge for the teacher is to find ways to approach and relate academic subject matter that will capture the attention and maintain the interest of all types of delinquent offenders.

H. Caldwell Cook explains in *The Play Way* that not teaching children to act, but teaching them the value of action is the purpose for using dramatics in the classroom. He suggests, "Proficiency and learning come not from reading and listening but from action, from *doing*, and from experience."³⁴ Easily distracted in a practical "reading and listening"

³⁴ Philip A. Coggin, *The Uses of Drama: A Historical Survey of Drama and Education from Ancient Greece to the Present Day* (New York: Braziller, 1956), p. 233.

situation, the delinquent student needs active involvement in the learning process. The student's attention will be sustained for a much longer time if he is a living part of the learning experience. Hearing the names and dates involved in Columbus' explorations and discoveries may be meaningless to the student. But put him on the Nina, set him at sea, and let him be a part of discovering a new world, and the teacher will find the student not only attentive in his studies but grasping the material as well.

Cook notes, "Good work is more often the result of spontaneous effort and free interest than of compulsion and forced application."³⁵ It is characteristic of the juvenile delinquent to give up easily when faced with an academic challenge. Forcing an education on such a child may only accomplish further alienation from the process. Students see themselves as being *forced* to learn but as being *allowed* to participate in creative dramatics. As Lassner pointed out, involvement in drama is considered an honor. Jennings observes a "tendency among educationalists and drama leaders to emphasize the use of drama for exploring and experiencing new feelings, dimensions and ideas." But she believes "that the ritual part of drama, the expression of the known, the familiar and the 'safe' is equally important."³⁶

Creative drama presents a different type of challenge for the juvenile delinquent. It gives him the opportunity to be a part of

³⁵Coggin, p. 233.

³⁶Jennings, p. 4.

something substantial and to create something tangible. In a forward for the first volume of *The Perse Playbooks*, published in 1911, Dr. W. H. D. Rouse of the Perse School, Cambridge, explains the learning process which takes place through the use of dramatics in the classroom:

Acting is one of the most potent means of learning. Thought, word, and act all linked together make an impression such as nothing else can make. In this direction lies the salvation of our schools. We all know how dull a textbook is; a history of English, a manual of Grammar, even chemistry books are sometimes dull. But if the teacher uses his book as a suggestion, makes his history a story, sets his pupils to act it, in make-believe, before they know what they are doing, they are practising English composition and English grammar and learning English history.³⁷

Besides maintaining the attention of a juvenile delinquent student, creative dramatics also provides strong incentives for further research in areas which may often be excluded from the regular classroom setting. Costumes, architecture, customs, religious beliefs, occupations, and games of other cultures all become very important to the students' understanding when they are responsible for presenting a dramatization set in other time periods and/or geographical locations.³⁸ Usually a great problem for the delinquent, his attendance becomes a pleasure rather than a burden. When strong interest develops for a particular topic, if field trips are permitted, the teacher should plan outings which allow the students to pursue their search for information. Ward comments, "Excursions to museums, trips to see industries or to visit

³⁷Coggin, p. 232.

³⁸Ward, p. 363.

certain people have much meaning when the children expect to use the information they get."³⁹ This period of research is an excellent time to introduce students to the library. Usually considered an academic roadblock, the students may now look at the library as a road map to the information they need for a successful presentation. If the institution's library does not have adequate material to handle the students' inquiries, the teacher should plan a working field trip to the city library, if there is one nearby. There the students may obtain information on their subject matter while learning to use, rather than fear, the library. The teacher should explain to the students that most cities do have libraries, free and open to the public, which they may use when they need information. If such a trip cannot be planned, perhaps the teacher could bring in extra books from a larger library for the students to use in their research.

In his article, "Theatre as a Teaching Tool," Victor E. D'Amico cites practical applications of drama in teaching the school curriculum:

A command of mathematics as well as manual and household arts are essential to building sets and props. Physics and chemistry are needed for effective painting and lighting; the creative arts for designing. Literature and creative writing contribute their share in selecting or writing the play, the speech arts in the speaking parts, the dance in rhythmic control of the body, and, last but not least, history and social studies in the research needed in writing or preparing a play built on the past.⁴⁰

³⁹Ward, p. 363.

⁴⁰Victor E. D'Amico, "Theatre as a Teaching Tool," *Theatre Arts*, 28 (1944), 406-09.

Thelma Layton Pate conducted "An Investigation of the Effects of Creative Drama Upon Reading Ability, Verbal Growth, Vocabulary Development, and Self Concept of Secondary School Students." The subjects were 210 students from suburban middle class families in two AAAA secondary schools near Dallas, Texas. The experimental group subjects in both schools took Drama I classes. Control group subjects took choir class at one school and sophomore English classes at the other. Data was obtained from these instruments: *The Nelson-Denny Reading Test*, *Sequential Tests of Educational Progress Steps II English Expression*, *National Achievement Series: Vocabulary Test*, and the *Tennessee Self Concept Scale*. From the investigation Pate concluded that participation in creative dramatics appeared to have positively influenced the students' reading abilities while not affecting verbal growth. Creative dramatics appeared to positively influence vocabulary development, but did not appear to influence self concept development. Pate notes:

Enthusiasm for creative drama was evidenced in favorable comments made by the students, their requests to repeat activities, a lack of discipline problems, a low absentee rate, and a growth in enrollment. Creative drama appeared to have certain inherent motivational values.⁴¹

Programs which provide these results among adolescents are greatly needed in institutions with delinquents who are characterized by poor school attendance records and a lack of self-motivating values. Teachers

⁴¹Thelma Layton Pate, "An Investigation of the Effects of Creative Drama Upon Reading Ability, Verbal Growth, Vocabulary Development, and Self Concept of Secondary School Students," *DAI*, 38 (1978), 6506A (East Texas).

in institutions often face the problem of having to further the educational levels of students who have not had the necessary academic groundwork laid to prepare them for more advanced work. But through creative dramatics course subject matter may be presented to the students while enhancing the basics of reading, writing, and vocabulary development.

Understanding Various Cultural and Ethnical Backgrounds

A large percentage of juvenile delinquents come from moderately and severely socioeconomically deprived environments and from culturally isolated and disadvantaged ethnic minority groups.⁴² Some of the hostility which these children display toward society, themselves, or other individuals may come from a lack of understanding and respect for their own cultural and ethnical backgrounds as well as a lack of respect for cultures other than their own. With the cross-cultural population represented in an institution, the students may begin to examine their own backgrounds and other environments in which they must learn to function in this society.

The Conger and Miller study found that delinquents showed much less respect and consideration for teachers and peers in school than did their nondelinquent counterparts. The study notes:

Relations with peers remained significantly poorer among the delinquents during adolescence, in the opinion of their teachers. They manifested less friendliness toward their classmates, and, in turn, were less well-liked and accepted by them.⁴³

⁴²Conger, p. 189.

⁴³Conger, p. 187.

The delinquents themselves felt "less capable of establishing close personal relationships with either peers or adults, especially the latter."⁴⁴

Creative dramatics may be used to familiarize the students with different cultures and religions. A greater understanding of one's own culture and other cultures may breed greater sensitivity toward all people as members of the society. Students may give dramatic presentations or do improvisations based on the customs of their own nationality or religion. Or a student may try to present conventions of a fellow student's culture. Jennings states, "This gives each nationality a chance to have status in its own right, as well as having cross feedback between different cultures." By researching and presenting the dramas, students have the opportunity to examine social problems, such as prejudice, brought about by a lack of intercultural communication and understanding.⁴⁵

For delinquent immigrants in institutions the improvisations and dramatizations will provide the opportunity for them to become more acquainted with American customs and norms "without implying an obligation that they must accept these." They may learn about the country's government and laws, welfare services, and job possibilities. At the same time, they will be strengthening their communication abilities in a language which is perhaps different from their own.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Conger, p. 187.

⁴⁵Jennings, p. 29.

⁴⁶Jennings, p. 29.

Jennings suggests using the songs, stories, and dances of different nationalities in presentations. Playmaking around social themes, including the history, economy, and politics of a nation, will give greater insight into the people of that nationality. The newspaper may be used as a text from which to draw materials for improvisations and debates on current social themes.⁴⁷

Juvenile delinquents who have been subjects of prejudice need to understand their backgrounds so that they may develop a sense of self respect and value in their culture or religion. They need to be shown that this prejudice can best be fought with intellect rather than violence. A United Nations session may be improvised with students as the representatives to show that disagreements among very different peoples may be settled intelligently and without hostility and violence. "Walking a mile in another man's shoes" will help the delinquents grow in the realization that all men are equal and deserve to be treated with equal respect. Opening the door to understanding may also open the door to friendships and mutual acceptance among classmates of different backgrounds. By believing in his worth as an individual, whatever his cultural or ethnical background, the juvenile delinquent may gain confidence in his ability to form positive personal relationships with peers and adults while in the institutional setting and after his return to society.

⁴⁷Jennings, pp. 30-31.

Diagnostic and Therapeutic Effects

Understanding the real problems of a delinquent is central to prescribing the proper therapy to meet his needs. Getting past the surface symptoms of delinquency and discovering the underlying problems may prove to be a difficult task for the child guidance worker or psychologist in an institution. Burger points out that whereas a small child may relieve himself through "occasional temper tantrums or joyful physical outbursts," a teenager, "seeking to surround his approach to the threshold of maturity with an aura of adult dignity, endeavors to repress his feelings."⁴⁸ In an institutional setting the problem is multiplied as the psychologist must work with large groups of children with little time reserved for individual sessions. Concerning the use of dramatics in such an environment, Dr. Frank J. Curran of the Psychiatric Department at Bellvue Hospital states:

This particular technique is not only of help in diagnosing and treating behavior problems of many children at one time, but it adds material which individual psychotherapeutic conferences might not bring forward. The point is stressed that it is not a method of occupying children or giving them superficial amusement, but it is a method of group catharsis by play acting.⁴⁹

With the material uncovered in group creative drama sessions, the psychologist may make better use of the limited time he has for individual consultations with the students.

⁴⁸ Burger, p. 8.

⁴⁹ Frank J. Curran, "The Drama as a Therapeutic Measure in Adolescents," *The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 9 (1939), 230.

The Conger and Miller study found that "delinquents displayed significantly fewer mental health assets and significantly *more* liabilities" than did their nondelinquent peers. The testing showed the delinquents to be more "egocentric, childishly demanding, inconsiderate, thoughtless, and given to petty expression of pique."⁵⁰ Burger sees such behavior as possibly resulting from a "constant suppression of strong emotional urges." She states:

If legitimate outlets are not provided, illegitimate avenues may be the choice. The turbulent feelings of the adolescent rebel against being bottled up over too long a period. If the supply is not tapped now and then, through some healthy release, undue pressure will pop the cork and the heedless spill in every direction will appear in terms of actions labeled as delinquent behavior.⁵¹

The children in institutions have already been caught in their attempts at expression through illegal outlets. The psychologist may work through creative dramatics to provide other means of emotional release which are acceptable in society.

In dramatics work with boys twelve to sixteen years old referred for conduct disorders to the Psychiatric Department of Bellvue Hospital, Curran saw identifications and projections in the plays which the boys wrote and in the roles which they chose to act. He observed that effeminate boys or those with homosexual tendencies usually asked for female roles in shows with women characters. The more aggressive boys sought to play the masculine roles, and schizoid boys pursued the parts

⁵⁰ Conger, p. 188.

⁵¹ Burger, pp. 8-9.

of teachers, nurses, judges, attorneys, and physicians. Curran would sometimes require submissive or effeminate boys to play aggressive characters in the productions. In many of these cases he noticed behavioral changes in the boys in that they "felt more capable of handling themselves, no longer permitted the other boys to bully them, and began to mix better with the other children."⁵²

In acting students have the opportunity to be other people. They can experience many different lifestyles, some better and some worse than their own. They may portray characters who are very different from their own personality, or they may represent someone with problems and feelings very similar to their own. By acting out a role the student may come to understand his problems more clearly and find a legitimate outlet for his emotions. Through improvisations various solutions to conflicts may be explored. The students may see that there are acceptable ways to vent their emotions and cope with their problems. In playwriting the students may present a conflict and write various endings for the situation showing the implications of both legal and illegal solutions. Burger explains:

Becoming another character in a dramatic situation involves feeling deeply the emotions of someone else. Through this very use of the complex emotional mechanism, a boy or girl may get a healthy release from his tensions. He will have 'played them out' through the emotional pattern of another individual. No psychologist advocates the free unleashing of emotions, nor does he advise suppression. There must be both release and control. This directed outlet, provided through experiencing the emotions of another character, implies control.⁵³

⁵²Curran, p. 217.

⁵³Burger, p. 9.

Through creative dramatics a child has the opportunity to openly explore his problems, emotions, and dreams without the fear of embarrassment by giving away his innermost thoughts and secrets to the group. He is protected under the guise of acting.

By portraying various characters a student may discover positive qualities which he wants to incorporate into his life, and he may see more clearly those negative qualities which he should eliminate from his personality. The delinquent may work toward building a positive character for himself, one which can overcome his tendency toward an unhealthy self-concept. Alexander sees this process as active creation rather than therapeutic release. He notes that the Living Stage applies "improvisational theatre training to the task of enabling children and adults to make of their lives an act of creation, a passionate giving birth to their own soul and vision. We want them to experience the joy of acting in their own lives without fear."⁵⁴

By observing the students' explorations of characters, a psychologist or other child guidance worker may get a clearer picture of the basic problems and insecurities which the individual juvenile delinquent faces. This information may then be utilized by the psychologist to enhance further psychotherapeutic work with both the individual and the group.

In institutions for juvenile delinquents there is room to incorporate various aspects of creative dramatics to enhance existing programs. While providing opportunities for creative expression should be the major

⁵⁴ Alexander, p. 113.

purpose of such a program, the leader may also use these techniques to their greatest advantage in other areas of achievement for the students. By experimenting with various aspects of dramatics the leader may find group projects which are capable of helping the students' individual needs and skills in working with others. With limited time and facilities for meeting the individual's educational, rehabilitational, and therapeutic needs, group dramatic work with individual benefits may prove a valuable addition to an institution's program.

CHAPTER III

RESOURCES FOR THE BEGINNING CREATIVE DRAMATICS LEADER IN AN INSTITUTION

Lack of knowledge in the practical aspects of creative dramatics may intimidate teachers and other child guidance workers who would like to try this approach in working with juvenile delinquents. However, the major prerequisite for leading creative dramatics is not practical knowledge, but sensitivity to the abilities and needs of the students. Slavson notes:

The great need, therefore, is the proper choice of teachers and directors whose responsiveness to the creative drives of the pupils is of greater consideration than their information and subject-knowledge. The latter can be easily acquired; the former is largely an innate attribute found only among persons who have themselves experienced the revelations of a creative urge expressed and translated into palpable forms.¹

A responsiveness to the student in an institution for juvenile delinquents is of double importance. The teacher must be aware of all of the special problems of the delinquent before he can hope to effectively teach them. The same holds true for creative dramatics. This leader must help the students find a positive creative nature where they think none exists. The leader should look into his own creative nature to find the primary resources for guiding the children. Books and magazines on the subject are only of secondary importance. This is not a question of whether or not the leader has an innate creative well from which to

¹ Slavson, *Creative Group*, pp. 116-17.

draw. Everyone does. The question is, "How sensitive can you, as a leader, be to your own creative instincts and those of your students?"

Alexander explains:

We who do work with the young must be very cognizant of our own creative process so that we can become more aware of the creative processes of the children. No one can help or suggest to children anything that has to do with revealing their feelings in writing unless they have gone through that complicated process themselves. The same holds true for any creative act.²

In "Developing Dramatics in the Public School" Frances Presler notes that the extremes of possibilities in the outcome of dramatic work in a school may cause the insecurity with which most teachers approach the technique. She says: "There's nothing so good for children as a good dramatic experience, and nothing so bad as a bad one. For the difference between these extremes is no less than the difference . . . between self-assumed social control and bedlam."³ Adequate planning for creative dramatics in an institution may make the difference between an effective program and a meaningless program. The leader should first look at the facilities provided at the institution before deciding how expansive the program should be. Positive results may be obtained in a regular classroom setting just as well as in a fully equipped theatre. When the leader has clearly in mind what sort of approach he would like to take in using creative dramatics (will the program be limited to the

²Alexander, p. 113.

³Frances Presler, "Developing Dramatics in the Public School," in *Creative Expression: The Development of Children in Art, Music, Literature and Dramatics*, ed. Gertrude Hartman and Ann Shumaker (New York: Day, 1932), p. 293.

classroom with no settings and no costumes or will extensive use be made of technical facilities?), he should then present the plan to the institution's administration and faculty. Proper communication with these people will make the planning and administration of the program go much more smoothly. Teachers in other areas may be willing to provide assistance if the plan and its purposes are explained to them. Home economics teachers may want to provide meaningful projects for their classes by having them design and build costumes for a dramatic presentation. The creative dramatics program may hold such opportunities for teachers in many technical areas. Staff should also be included in the planning. Cafeteria and maintenance personnel may be asked to save cans, boxes, and other such objects from which props and set pieces may be fashioned. Even if no one else expresses interest in the program, keeping the communication lines open will leave room for fewer complaints and problems.

Special Problems within the Institution

Even in carefully planned creative dramatics programs, problems may arise for which the leader needs to be prepared. One of the major concerns of the leader introducing an atmosphere for creative activity in an institution is discipline. Of course, the institution will have its own rules and procedures regarding discipline. But the creative dramatics leader must work out a balance of control within the group which allows for openness and creative expression while maintaining an overall sense of order. Nicholls suggests an approach which the leader may take in acquiring this balance:

it's obvious that military-type discipline is unrelated to this kind of activity. By not acknowledging the old teacher-directed system, by coming into the job with the attitude that discipline is going to be a non-issue, you take the kids by surprise. So while they're off balance you have a chance to implant a new concept: that this is going to be for *them*—that only they can wreck it and that you don't give a damn whether they do or not. (This is a real foil, especially to those children who are only interested in disturbing the teacher's equilibrium.) Of course you won't walk in and make a statement about your equilibrium. The simple fact is that you have to be real about it all—about your confidence, your preplanning, your adaptability, your expectations, your interest in them. This reality is the only basis for a trust relationship between each other. Then the power game becomes irrelevant and problems have a fair chance of resolving themselves within the structure of the activity.⁴

Kvaraceus notes that in disciplinary matters juvenile delinquents need fair but firm treatment. They must begin to assume the responsibilities for their actions. He points out that even with the various effective punishment techniques which may be used with the delinquent "to overlook causative factors and to capitulate to the punishment routine will never prevent nor control further expressions of norm-violating behavior."⁵ Improvisations may be used in the creative dramatics class to present the type problem which the student has encountered and different endings may be played to examine how the student might have solved the problem through some positive means for which disciplinary action would not have been required. This procedure will allow the analysis of the causative factors which Kvaraceus calls for in a disciplinary situation. Proper presentation of the creative

⁴Nicholls, pp. 11-12.

⁵Kvaraceus, pp. 40-41.

dramatics program to the students should eliminate many problems with discipline. This will be discussed in the next section.

Another special problem within the institution is the size of the population, which usually necessitates group action rather than individual work. The juvenile delinquent is never alone. He faces a loss of identity in the mass regimentation in which he has been placed. The creative dramatics leader has the ability to give the institutionalized child some time to be alone, perhaps not in terms of physical space, but in his thoughts and dreams. Quiet moments in the dramatics class may be used quite effectively especially on tense days in the school. A time for introspection, a time of not being forced to perform may help ease the tensions of the individual and thus the group as a whole. Cohen points out that while privacy is needed in an institutional setting, group movement is also desirable:

to encourage them to move and play and function easily together, without regimentation, is to develop an orderly process of living which is in healthy contrast, on one hand, to arbitrary disciplinarian tactics, and on the other, to the kind of dissipated activity that develops from lack of planning and eventuates in lack of control.⁶

Planning a day's activities is essential in a creative dramatics program. But allowing these plans to be modified on a given day according to strong group mood will provide the opportunity for the students to openly express extreme feelings of happiness or anger which might otherwise be repressed causing undue tension to build.

⁶Cohen, p. 11.

At some point in the creative dramatics program the leader will probably be faced with the problem of a slump in student interest. Juvenile delinquents are characterized by a general lack of enthusiasm and feelings of depression and discouragement. They have little capacity for sustained attention and give up easily when challenged academically.⁷ Providing new challenges for the students and guiding them through to the completion of a project should prove challenging for the creative dramatics leader. Most importantly, the students should always see their progress. When a scene is particularly slow, a speed rehearsal may help to give it life. The students should have a run through of the scene speaking their lines as quickly as possible with no breaks while keeping the action real. If costumes and props are to be used, the students may begin rehearsing with them as soon as they are available. This will add a new dimension to a scene which might otherwise be dragging. The same is true of lights and set pieces which are to be used. Each time another scene is memorized or a new set or costume piece is added, the students will be able to see progress and improvement being made in their dramatic work. At the beginning of each session the leader should point out any new physical elements which have been added for the day's work. At the end of the session he may discuss with the students any progress which has been made. This will help to overcome feelings of discouragement which juvenile delinquents develop so easily.

⁷ Conger, pp. 187-88.

When a presentation has been developed for performance before an audience, the procedure of using understudies, especially for large roles, is advisable. For whatever reason, whether sickness or refusal to perform, losing an actor before a public performance can ruin the show unless provisions have been made for a replacement. If several performances are scheduled, understudies might be allowed to perform in at least one even if the original performers do not have to be replaced. This will make the job of understudy seem not to have been accepted in vain. Release dates for the students should be checked before casting a play for public performances. It would be very disconcerting for a student to work diligently on a presentation only to find that he would not be there to enjoy and take part in the performance. The same theory applies also to technical people involved with the presentation. With all bases covered, there will be less likelihood of the entire group being disappointed by one student's inability or failure to perform.

With the high student turnover rate in an institution, the creative dramatics leader will find that his program will have no beginning and ending points, but will be a continuing process as new faces enter the program. Veterans of the sessions may be utilized by the teacher as aides or assistant leaders to introduce new students to the program and help them overcome their inhibitions. This will give the juvenile delinquent an opportunity to show that he is capable of accepting responsibility and working with other people.

The high turnover rate among faculty and staff in institutions may also create problems for the creative dramatics leader. The program needs

to be explained to new associates just as it was originally presented to the group. The loss of a fellow teacher who provided assistance in some manner for the program will need to be considered. If his replacement is not willing to continue the support, new provisions will need to be made for whatever the program will lack, whether costumes or an extra bus driver.

Before beginning the program, the creative dramatics leader should also consider the possibility that he may also leave his position at the institution some day. It would be very beneficial to the replacement or to other faculty members who might wish to continue the program if the leader would document all of the procedures used. Knowing what practical resources have been utilized and what creative dramatic techniques seem to work best in the institution will help others who wish to preserve a meaningful program. If provisions for continuity are not made, the program will probably cease. All of the work put into its development will be forgotten and anyone wishing to provide such a program in the future would have to start all over again. Documenting goals, techniques, accomplishments, and problems encountered will give the next creative dramatics leader a basis from which to start or maintain an important program for the delinquents.

Preparation of Students for the Program

Initial presentation of creative dramatics to students can be a very important factor in the ultimate effectiveness of the program. First and foremost, the leader must be confident. He must have a general

scheme of activities and ideas for exercises and improvisations from which to draw. The atmosphere must be kept free-flowing and open to change. But underneath there must be a structure designed by the leader to help the group develop their manners of expression. An LEAA study on *Planning and Designing for Juvenile Justice* states that "the provision of activities that are structured will reduce the stress arising from being forced to meet a number of new people."⁸ The challenge for the leader is to maintain an underlying structure in an atmosphere which the children see as unstructured. The framework used will greatly depend on the overall definition of the program. A movement class may be designed much more loosely than a dramatics program in a history class. But whatever the design, positive creative expression should always be the principal goal. Nicholls suggests the following as one approach which may be taken in the opening discussion of a program:

I have found in school that there is nowhere to be alone.
People are always making demands--there is continual noise--it's
sometimes very hard to concentrate. Have you noticed this?
This time each week is to be for yourself. A time when
no one need communicate with you unless you want them to--when
you can "drift away" or totally involve yourself--as you want
...⁹

Her description of the school atmosphere aptly expresses the feelings which many institutionalized juvenile delinquents must experience. The type of project in which the students will participate should be explained to them. It must be made clear that no one will be forced to

⁸U.S. Department of Justice, *Planning*, p. 91.

⁹Nicholls, p. 13.

participate in the program. To force a child to participate in itself would be very stifling for the student and perhaps breakdown the loose structure of the overall program. When everyone understands what is expected in the dramatics sessions, then the actual work may begin.

Jennings suggests that a flexible framework should be established with built-in control factors. The first instruction that the children should learn is to "freeze." This instruction should be used rather than "stop," as that instruction might result in students breaking character or concentration. When the leader instructs students to freeze, they should hold action staying in character and maintaining concentration. Once this control is built in the leader should have little difficulty in calming the students to give them new instructions in movement or improvisation.¹⁰

Music may be used quite effectively as a background for movement or improvisations. The mood being sought can be expressed through music and it may help to break through the inhibitions of some students. Besides using records and tapes, the rhythm or mood may be established by the use of drums, cymbals, tamborines, and other instruments in the classroom. The students should experiment with various rhythms of the music. When it is at normal speed the movement or the improvisation should be at a normal pace. If the music's speed is slowed down, the

¹⁰Jennings, p. 74.

action should become slow motion. If the speed is increased, the speed of the action should become faster.¹¹

Nicholls points out that if the students seem embarrassed or giggly, there is probably something wrong with the set up of the program. She offers this checklist for the leader:

You could be making it all too serious. Or too stupid. The floor space could be too large and bare—as inhibiting as too little space. Other people passing and peeping—especially children from other classes. Never have interested adults standing, watching. They must always join in or sit well out of the way *on the floor*. Never have anybody watching, anyway, until you're really confident of your rapport with your class (usually several weeks).¹²

Some moments are just psychologically bad for introducing movement, such as those times when students have just come from another class in a state of tension because of an unresolved conflict with that teacher. Nicholls adds, "Unless they already know and trust you, they'll probably take their resentment out on you. (They probably will, anyway . . .) ."¹³

Every creative drama session should begin with warm up exercises to loosen up the students physically and mentally before going on to other work. Jennings says that warm ups "tone up the whole body and encourage awareness of its many parts." She suggests exercises with "plenty of variety and contrast of speed, rhythm and texture," such as running, walking, jumping, and leaping sequences.¹⁴

¹¹Jennings, p. 75.

¹²Nicholls, p. 12.

¹³Nicholls, p. 12.

¹⁴Jennings, p. 17.

If group concentration seems lax, relaxation exercises should be used to draw the students into the activities. Concentration is a problem for many juvenile delinquents, so exercises such as these might be used to a great advantage in making them feel a part of the group situation. For example, the students may play a cat curled up in front of a fire awakening to drink milk or humans in bed waking up in the morning. Tension and release exercises may also be used to help students work through stress and anxiety on uneasy days. One such exercise involves improvising blowing up a balloon. The students should work in pairs with everyone serving as a balloon and as a blower. The blower will blow up the balloon, tie the end, and burst it. The "balloon" will improvise the proper movements of being blown up and burst. The movement of the leader during such exercises is very important. His voice must express tension and relaxation as he narrates the exercises for the students.¹⁵

After strong stimuli or during periods of distress, Jennings recommends trust exercises "for inducing calm and group communications." For example, working in pairs, one person stands behind the other. The person in front falls backwards keeping his knees and hips straight and is caught by the partner. The pair should begin close together and gradually increase their distance. If a student has become distressed,

¹⁵Jennings, pp. 15-16.

Jennings suggests letting the group hold that person horizontally on their shoulders, gently rocking him to soft singing.¹⁶ Such exercises may be very important with delinquents who are characterized by dark moods and depression. And since delinquents generally have difficulty in relationships with peers, this type of work out may also help them feel safer and more comfortable with other group members.

When students seem lacking in self-confidence or when there is a need for physical release of tension, aggression exercises should be performed. Partners may hold hands and try to pull each other across the room with no jerking. Or in pairs the students may shout conversations using "Ah" and "Oh." The drama room might also include "an 'aggression corner' where things can be destroyed—paper for tearing, plastic bottles for jumping on, old pottery for hammering."¹⁷

Jennings' *Remedial Drama: A Handbook for Teachers and Therapists* is filled with ideas for warm ups and mood exercises. The book would prove a valuable resource for the beginning creative dramatics leader. Nicholls' *Move!* also provides many lively ideas for preparing students for dramatic activity.

Since juvenile delinquents usually choose to work autonomously, the sculptures exercise used by the Living Stage might aid in joining the

¹⁶Jennings, pp. 99-100.

¹⁷Jennings, pp. 100-01.

students together as a working unit. Alexander explains that a theme word is elicited from a group member:

That person runs into the center of the room, throws his/her body into a position which expresses their artistic point of view on the theme, and "freezes" that position . . . Others join, one at a time, running out, throwing their bodies into their expression of the theme, freezing, touching the previous bodies, and making eye contact, until there is a configuration of faces and bodies linked together that expresses each of their individual feelings, yet creates one large looming work of art.¹⁸

The sculptures exercise sharpens the individual's "ability to concentrate physically, emotionally, and imaginatively for long periods of time. As a part of the sculpture the students' sensory capabilities function at optimum capacity."¹⁹ Again, concentration is one of the areas in which juvenile delinquents are usually weakest and require the greatest amount of strengthening. Some possible sculpture themes are death, terror, joy, rape, prison, marriage, loneliness, sexism, ecstasy, racism, justice, oppression, children, violence, love, sex, conformity, poverty, and freedom.²⁰ The child guidance worker can see how these themes could evoke very strong reactions from juvenile delinquents. An exercise such as this provides the student with the opportunity to express himself both individually and as a working member of a group. The leader might take photographs of the sculptures so that the students may further study the form of expression which they chose.

¹⁸Alexander, p. 115.

¹⁹Alexander, p. 116.

²⁰Alexander, p. 118.

All of these warm ups and exercises are aimed at helping students become more aware of their abilities to express themselves in positive manners. The leader may use these techniques to ease the students into creative drama activities by helping them overcome the initial inhibitions which they may have. When the students are more comfortable with their surroundings and their abilities to concentrate and move, then the leader may try introducing more advanced activities for students. At any time slackness develops in the session or new students enter the program, these types of exercises should be remembered and utilized by the leader.

Practical Aspects

After all of the planning is complete and the program is ready to begin, the leader must be prepared to handle the practical or technical aspects of creative dramatics. This section will explain briefly the major practical areas of directing, acting, costumes and makeup, set design and properties, and lighting design. Resources to which the leader may refer for more detailed information will also be provided. But the greatest resource in these areas are the students themselves. The leader should provide them with general ideas, but allow their own imaginations to do the real work. Milton Smith explains in "Equipment for a Progressive-School Theater":

Students must be given the opportunity to *create* a production. They should design and build their own scenery and costumes; they should experiment with that most wonderful of all dramatic mediums, light; they should try out their ideas of stage and business management. Actors are not more important in the great design than stage hands or ushers. Even the player of

the most important character must feel his own subordination to the central idea. Play production of this sort is a synthesis of all the arts and crafts; it involves group activity of a peculiarly socialized sort; it is educational in the truest sense.²¹

The leader always needs to be prepared to guide the students when they need encouragement. But the students must take the major responsibility for the creation of the dramatic work. Tyas reminds the leader, "Child Drama is a voyage of self discovery. The child is the captain, the adult is merely the navigator."²²

Directing. Although the creative dramatics leader should understand some of the basics of directing, he should not actually serve as a director. A director is the person who interprets a dramatic piece and sets it on stage to relate his interpretation. The children will provide their own interpretations for their productions. The leader must, however, make the children aware of the possible ways which they can project these interpretations. Crosscup notes that the adult has a double role:

he will help the children to raise their sense of the acting area to a higher level of consciousness and to establish the line of the watchers' vision as the line on which their desire to communicate is oriented; and he will help them break down the walls of the acting area and restore their birthright of the whole outdoors.²³

²¹Milton Smith, "Equipment for a Progressive-School Theater," in *Creative Expression: The Development of Children in Art, Music, Literature and Dramatics*, ed. Gertrude Hartman and Ann Shumaker (New York: Day, 1932), p. 314.

²²Tyas, p. xv.

²³Crosscup, p. 173.

There is a fine line which the leader must draw between imposing sanctions on staging and lending a guiding hand. The children must have the opportunity to make ultimate decisions.

The initial step in actually staging a play is called blocking. This is "the control of arrangement—usually a transshifting arrangement—of people on a stage, and the positioning of the objects these people are to use. But the arrangement is hollow except as it flows from or contributes to meaning."²⁴ Burger says that in giving young actors suggestions for movement, stage terminology should be employed. The leader should have the students learn the terminology also as a practical time saver. An extensive vocabulary is not necessary, but usage of the more common words will enhance the communication among group members:

Downstage means toward the audience, and *upstage*, away from it; *right* and *left* refer to the actors' right and left. *Offstage* is the portion of the stage out of sight of the audience; the *apron* is the part between the front curtain line and the auditorium *Properties*, more commonly labeled *props*, refer to small moveable parts of the setting, such as furniture, lamps, books, flowers, rugs. The words *cross*, *entrance*, and *exit* have literal meanings. A *cross* signifies any move across the stage. The director may say, "Don't you think Johnny would *cross* to the desk *down right* when he remembers about the letter?"²⁵

Through blocking the students must try to express what they have uncovered in their interpretive process. Even in improvisations, the movement should have meaning.

²⁴ Crosscup, p. 175.

²⁵ Burger, pp. 106-07.

The leader should also guide the students in their interpretative processes. They must be allowed to open the discussion following the reading of a play or an improvisational work through. If silence pervades, the leader should be prepared to ask open-ended questions, such as, "Which character appealed to you most? Which least? Which event in the play was most exciting for you?"²⁶ The initial interpretation should not be rigidly adhered to. But through rehearsals and work on the play, the theme should deepen and intensify for the students and the stage pictures should become clearer.

Burger's *Creative Play Acting* has excellent chapters on "Techniques for the Director" and "Staging the Play," which cover suggestive directing, stage terminology, and creating the stage picture. Crosscup's *Children and Dramatics* also has good resource material on interpretation and staging for the creative dramatics leader. For anyone interested in much more indepth and technical information, John E. Dietrich's *Play Direction* provides a detailed guide on the principles, procedures and problems involved in staging a play.

Acting. Directing and acting overlap a great deal as the individual interpretation of each character is combined and juxtaposed with each of the others to create the overall directorial interpretation. Therefore, the interpretive process becomes more selective and personal for each

²⁶William Wolpert, "Theatre as a Guidance Technique," *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 52 (1973), 32.

actor portraying a role. The students must take the general interpretation of the play and determine how to act it out in a meaningful way.

Children should always wear old clothing, such as jeans and T-shirts, for acting or movement sessions. The clothes should be easy to wash and loose enough that the child has freedom of movement in them. If the floor has debris on it or if the boards are splintery, the children should be required to wear shoes.²⁷

There are many methods of introducing acting to students without merely putting scripts in their hands and saying, "Learn your parts." That tactic could frighten off even academically advanced students. For juvenile delinquents with generally poor academic backgrounds, the leader should begin with very short scripted pieces or with improvisations. This will help prevent students with poor reading or speaking skills from becoming depressed with work too advanced for them. The students may begin with role playing. The class suggests roles and situations or plots which the teacher writes on the board. The students choose a plot and pick the actors to portray the characters involved. The plot may be improvised several times with students changing roles so that they may view the situation from more than one angle. With each change of actor the "play" itself will change also. Students should be given the opportunity to study characters and character types. The leader may hand out various props or costume pieces to the students. Then each

²⁷Nicholls, pp. 233-34.

person should pantomime the character suggested to him by the article which he was given.²⁷ Projects such as these can provide insight for the child guidance worker into the ways in which juvenile delinquents perceive themselves and others.

When the students are ready to begin work with scripts, the leader should perhaps "think small" in the beginning, again to avoid overwhelming the students. Comic strips provide short, concise often real life situations which they may stage and enact. Such a "script" is short enough that the children can memorize it more easily than a long, involved play. Through improvisations the situations in some comic strips may be expanded into very meaningful themes for the juvenile delinquents. This type of work will give students practice and help them gain confidence in their abilities to read and memorize their parts.

In pantomime and movement Nicholls advises that leaders never show the children how to do something:

And if you move with them, keep your movements simple and make sure you are at ease. Nothing looks funnier than a drama teacher trying to move with children and looking and feeling embarrassed. It will break up your rapport quicker than anything I know . . .²⁸

As in directing, the leader needs to be prepared to guide the children in working through movement problems rather than merely telling them how to do it.

²⁷Nicholls, pp. 233-34.

²⁸Nicholls, p. 10.

Crosscup notes that assuming "that pantomime is one-third, then verbal expression is two-thirds of what a play is all about."²⁹ His *Children and Dramatics* provides helpful information for the creative dramatics leader in both movement and speech. He explains that the adult may sometimes need "to call a child's attention to the possibilities which an examination of phrasing may unfold for expanded expression in a passage from a play."³⁰ The students should always speak loud enough to be heard, usually a level "somewhat louder than the demands of audibility require."³¹ The actors should be careful not to run words together. They should vary the delivery of their lines to add interest and meaning to their speeches. They may cut in on a line, pause after their cue, or overlap lines to help achieve the desired emphasis.³² Crosscup states that leaders should use this type work to help students develop their speaking skills:

The adult who is not specifically trained in speech may be able to do little about localisms, less about personal idiosyncracies, and still less about actual speech defects, but he can and should correct correctable errors.³³

The leader should help the actors develop the type of speech which their characters would use under the conditions in the plot and

²⁹Crosscup, p. 184.

³⁰Crosscup, p. 190.

³¹Crosscup, p. 188.

³²Crosscup, p. 190.

³³Crosscup, p. 186.

"articulate it in tone, pitch, inflection, modulation, rhythm, phrasing, timing and stress of voice."³⁴

In evaluating a creative dramatics performance, Ward believes that evaluations should be positive: "'Now how can we make it better?' (Not what was wrong with it!)." To avoid embarrassing a student all criticisms, good and bad, from the leader or the students should be kept impersonal by using the character names rather than the actors' names.³⁵ Ward suggests the following as significant evaluation points for children to use in their examination of a presentation: "The story. Was the part of it which was to be played in this scene made clear?"; the characters (interpretation, believability); the action (enough to move the plot, true to story); the dialogue (true to characters, carries story); the timing (moves at natural pace); the teamwork (reaction to each other, listening, responding); enunciation and projection (hearing and understanding what's said).³⁶

Let's Create by Fritz Bell is an excellent resource book for the creative dramatics leader introducing movement and acting to students. The book is a compilation of exercises and ideas to use in voice and beginning speech, movement, senses and pantomime, and role playing and story dramatization.³⁷

³⁴Crosscup, p. 185.

³⁵Ward, p. 14.

³⁶Ward, p. 13.

³⁷For information on obtaining *Let's Create*, the leader should write to Creative Classrooms, RFD #2, Box 86, Raymond, New Hampshire 03077.

With some initial navigation from the adult, the students should be able to explore many uncharted courses in their imaginations through movement and verbal expression. The child will have the opportunity to unashamedly become someone else. He may see more clearly the person he is and have the chance to find the person he really wants to be.

Costumes and makeup. If costumes are used in a creative dramatics presentation, they should be very informal or only suggested through costumes pieces or accessories. The most imaginative costumes are those which the children make or improvise.

Fabric for costumes "should be purchased with regard to its low price, its serviceability, its facility or manipulation, its color, and its adaptability to the purpose for which it is used."³⁸ Polyester/cotton blends are usually good choices for costumes as they are machine washable, often permanent press, and take dyes well. The cloth is light weight, yet crisp.

With the new iron-on seam bindings available at fabric shops, many costume pieces may be constructed without the use of a sewing machine. All that is necessary is the fabric, a pair of shears, a tape measure, an iron, a pencil, and the iron-on seam binding. Several basic costume pieces may be built and stored for use many times with different characters. Following are several basic pattern ideas which make convenient costumes to have in stock.

³⁸Corinne Brown, *Creative Drama in the Lower School* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1929), p. 152.

Worn by the Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians, the rectangle (Fig. 1) is a simple draped costume which requires no sewing. To make this costume, measure the actor from shoulder to floor. Double the measurement for the length. With his arms outstretched, measure the student from wrist to wrist. This is the width. If the fabric being used is not wide enough, an extra strip may be added with the iron-on binding. Fold the fabric in half lengthwise and then in half widthwise. From the corner which is the center of the folds measure and mark three inches in several places. Join the marks and cut the quarter circle through all fabric layers to make the neckline.³⁹

Basic T-tunics (Fig. 2) may be used for many periods and made in any length with long or short sleeves. The procedure is the same as for the rectangle, except when the fabric is folded, sleeves should be cut out also (Fig. 3). The fabric is then unfolded and the sides joined together with iron-on seam binding.

Capes and ponchos are very useful costume pieces which may enhance many character types. A poncho (Fig. 4) may be made from a large square piece of cloth with a diagonal slit or hole cut in the center for the neckline (Fig. 5). A cape (Fig. 6) may be made by folding a large square of cloth into quarters then cutting a circular neckline and a circular base (Fig. 7). One slit is then cut from the base to the

³⁹Lynn Edelman Schnurnberger, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture Make-Your-Own Costume Book* (New York: Pocket Books, 1979), 6-9.

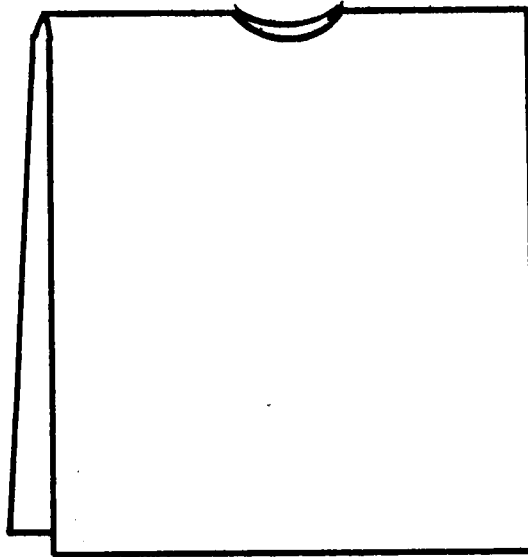


Fig. 1. The Rectangle.

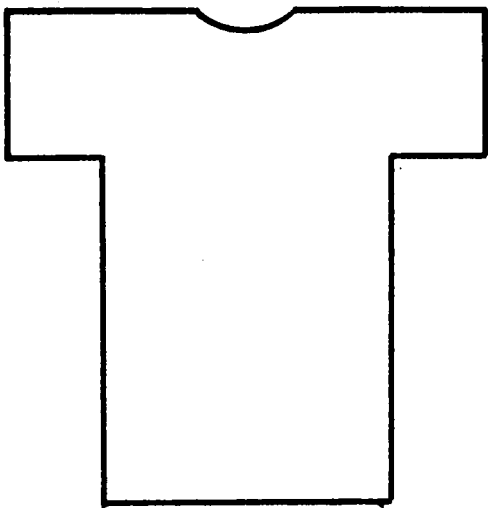


Fig. 2. The T-Tunic.

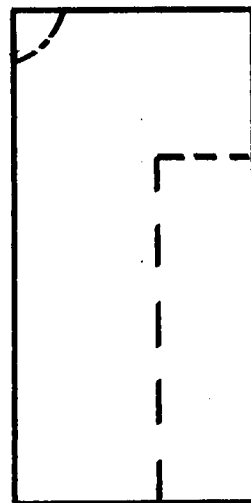


Fig. 3. Cutting Guide
for the T-Tunic.

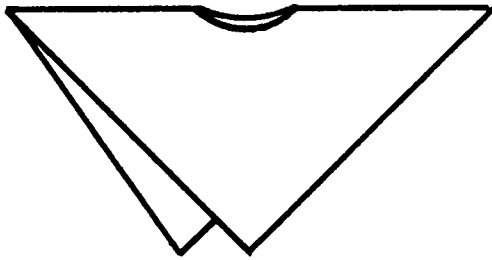


Fig. 4. The Poncho.

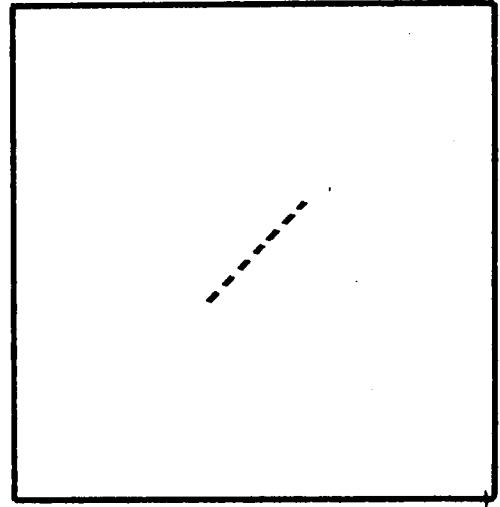


Fig. 5. Cutting Guide for the Poncho.

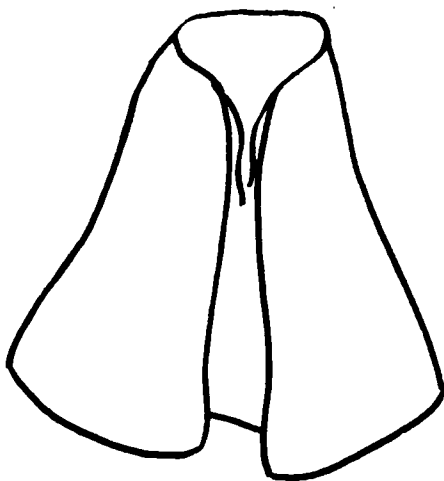


Fig. 6. The Cape.

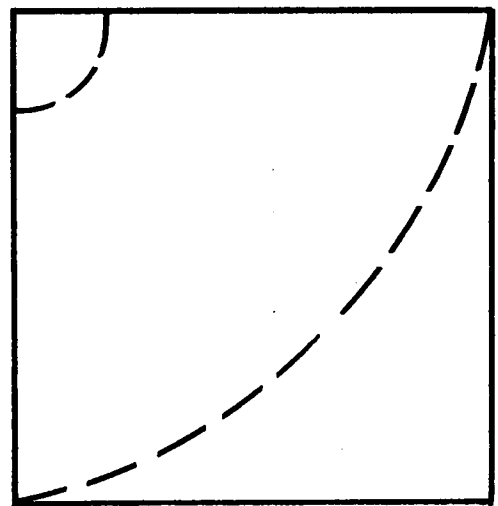


Fig. 7. Cutting Guide for the Cape.

neckline to make the cape opening. Ribbon should be attached at each side of the neckline for tying on the cape.

Rectangles, T-tunics, capes, and ponchos may be worn very effectively over any type costume base, including jeans and T-shirts. Different belts, trims, buttons, or ribbons may be added to them to help distinguish certain character types. Basic dress and shirt designs may also have additional trims, collars, and cuffs added to make them suitable for many periods. Light cardboard or heavy white paper may be used to create varying collar and cuff designs.⁴⁰ Crowns, jewelry, armor, belt and shoe buckles may also be made from cardboard and decorated with colored foil, sequins, spray paints, or numerous other trims. The possibilities are limitless for youthful imaginations.

Boots or period shoes can be built with felt or leather scraps using regular shoes as the base. If the material is attached with rubber cement, it will peel off without damaging the shoes.

Helmets, breast plates, and masks may be fashioned from papier-mache and cardboard bases. Papier-mache can be made by dipping torn strips of newspaper into a thin paste or a flour and water mixture. Layers of the paper strips are smoothed out on the surface being covered and allowed to dry forming a firm mold. Masks must be comfortable. People must be able to breathe and see where they are going. Jennings notes that leaders should be careful to allow the children time after removing their masks to come back to their present

⁴⁰Crosscup, p. 218.

selves. Masks have been criticized for provoking aggressive behavior, but actually they give the person another identity through which he can express less acceptable sides of himself.⁴¹

Chris Hoggett's *Stage Crafts* has a chapter on "Arms and Armour" and on "Costume Accessories." These sections are filled with imaginative, inexpensive methods to create jewelry, crowns, shoes, helmets, and many other articles out of simple materials. The book also contains an excellent section on "Makeup and Masks," which includes information on materials, character creation, aging, and racial types.

Star Trek: The Motion Picture Make-Your-Own Costume Book by Lynn Edelman Schnurnberger provides many basic patterns for costumes, masks, and jewelry. While the patterns are specifically designed for Star Trek characters, by adding various trims the basic designs can serve for many other character portrayals from many different periods.

Actors will enjoy experimenting with makeup in developing their characters. The leader should take certain precautions before allowing the students to use makeup. They should wear old shirts to cover their clothes as collars get particularly dirty. The shirts should button down the front as pullovers might ruin the makeup when they are taken off. The leader should check on whether anyone has sensitive skin or allergies which would deter them from wearing the makeup. Ample tissues

⁴¹Jennings, p. 85.

and cleansing cream should be available for removal, and the skin should always be covered in a thin layer of cream before applying the makeup.⁴²

Burger describes the three types of makeup which an actor may use as straight makeup, "used solely to enhance the actor's best features"; character makeup, used to change "the actor's appearance to suit the role he is playing"; and fantastic makeup, used to suggest "the dominant traits of an unreal character."⁴³ The minimum supply of articles which are essential for a makeup kit are grease paint for foundation color, liners for shadows and wrinkles, face powders, rouge, power puffs, cold cream, cleansing tissues, applicators, crepe hair, spirit gum (for applying crepe hair), scissors, comb, and hair pins.⁴⁴ In *Creative Play Acting* Burger describes what types and colors of makeup should be included in a makeup kit. She also explains in detail how to apply the makeup to achieve the three basic types listed. By using costume pieces, masks, or makeup a student may get a firmer grasp on a character he is portraying. These additions may enhance the child's imagination and help him to overcome inhibitions which he may feel in role playing. Costume articles may help the child to really experience being someone else, a task he may find difficult if he is merely placed on stage and told to enact a character. This technical aspect is

⁴² Jennings, p. 86.

⁴³ Burger, p. 125.

⁴⁴ Burger, pp. 125-26.

important for juvenile delinquent students as it may help to maintain their interest in the program. They may also experience working together in a group by helping each other with makeup or costume fittings. Costuming provides an excellent outlet for the imagination. Juvenile delinquents, who tend to give up easily when challenged, can design and build their own articles, seeing their project through from beginning to end. This will give them a feeling of pride and accomplishment in their work and help them in developing more positive self concepts which juvenile delinquents greatly need.

Set design and properties. A creative drama program may be housed anywhere from a classroom to a gymnasium. The space should be explored by the students to determine how to best create an appropriate setting for a presentation. A fully equipped theatre with bought set pieces and backdrops would be expensive and unimaginative. Crosscup explains, "A more sophisticated approach is when a scene is created, not by elaboration, but by suggestion. In its simplest form, a scene consists of lighting plus one or two symbolic elements." For example, an Indian village can be established by a totem pole or a Greek column can set the stage for dramatizing Greek myths.⁴⁵

Many set pieces may be fashioned from simple materials, such as brown wrapping paper, which may be purchased in large roles, or cardboard mounted on sticks and wooden bases. Ocean waves, trees,

⁴⁵Crosscup, pp. 203-04.

fireplaces, or other pieces may well suggest a setting with the dialogue and action painting a clearer picture.⁴⁶

If the students wish to use a backdrop to establish the setting for a presentation, one may be made inexpensively from wrapping paper. Extend the wrapping paper the full length of the stage. Join the strips together horizontally with four to six inch gummed tape to achieve the proper width for the stage area. Lay the paper on the floor to sketch the scene in pencil. Paint the drawing with tempera paints. The backdrop can be hung on a batten, a length of timber extended along the top of the drop, and hoisted into place. Another batten should be attached at the bottom to keep the paper from curling.⁴⁷

If the institution has a woodworking shop, the leader might work with the shop teacher on a project to make a set of three dimensional scenery for the creative drama program. Flats, rectangular wooden frames covered with canvas, cardboard, or other materials, are the units of which most scenery is composed.⁴⁸ If the money and skill are available for building flats, it is best to set up an essembly line method of production, as making one at a time can be a long process. Flats are lightweight and easy to move yet rigid enough to withstand much use. A good general set of all-purpose scenery might be composed of the following: "6 flats-1' wide; 2 flats-1'6" wide; 2 flats-2' wide;

⁴⁶Crosscup, p. 216-17.

⁴⁷Crosscup, p. 201.

⁴⁸Chris Hoggett, *Stage Crafts* (London: Black, 1975), p. 271.

2 flats—2' 6" wide; 6 flats—3' wide; 6 flats—4' wide; 2 door-flats—4'6" wide; 2 window-flats—4'6" wide."⁴⁹ Although the initial cost for a set of flats is rather expensive, they can be stored and reused. The cover material can be painted over, or if paper is used, it can be completely replaced for each new production. Flats may also be used in nonrepresentational settings, "that is, they will have aesthetic content through their color and their positioning, without looking like anything in particular."⁵⁰ Hoggett's *Stage Crafts* gives detailed instructions on how to build flats, step units, and other pieces of three dimensional scenery. There is also a chapter of ideas on building set pieces and properties. Crosscup's *Children and Dramatics* gives how-to ideas for inexpensive backdrops and set pieces for creative dramatics programs.

Natural settings which the institution's campus may supply should not be overlooked as possible backdrops for outdoor dramas. If the weather permits, woods, the lawn, or a body of water can make excellent settings for working on dramas and for their actual presentation. An alternative indoor facility must be available in case of rain.⁵¹

Productions do not need elaborate settings and set pieces to be successful. The most effective presentations often leave much to the audience's imagination. Props which the actors can carry on and off can create more impressive visions for viewers than can having everything

⁴⁹Gabriel Barnfield, *Creative Drama in Schools* (New York: Hart, 1968), pp. 236-37.

⁵⁰Crosscup, p. 205.

⁵¹Crosscup, p. 199-200.

painted out clearly before them. Crosscup notes that the only way he knows "for acquiring major properties is scrounging."⁵² Designing, building, or improvising props can really put the student's creative imagination to work. A student will put extra work into making sure the design is properly carried out especially if he knows that he will have to use the article on stage. No one wants a horn that won't blow or a basket with a handle that falls off when he is on stage. The work needs to be done well out of both pride and necessity.

One simple and inexpensive way to make many props is by molding bread dough into the desired shapes and baking it. The bread dough recipe may be used for creating anything that would usually be made out of clay and it is more versatile and faster to use. The baking time is also more flexible. An object may be put in the oven to bake; then additional dough may be added and the object rebaked. The only limitation on objects being made is the size of the oven available. In "Detailing with Dough" Susan Fitzpatrick provides the bread dough recipe and instructions for preparing it. The recipe ingredients are four cups of flour, one cup of salt, one and a half cups of water, and one to two tablespoons of vegetable oil. Following are the instructions:

In a large mixing bowl, mix the flour and salt with a large spoon or rubber spatula. Add 1 1/4 cups of water while mixing the dry ingredients. Add the remaining 1/4 cup of water as needed while kneading the dough Knead the dough for

⁵²Crosscup, p. 215.

seven to ten minutes. Add the vegetable oil while you knead. Work your design onto a greased cookie sheet Bake the design in the oven. Baking time depends on how quickly you have to complete the project. You will get the best results and least warping by baking the dough at 150° for eight hours If time is short cook at 200° for two hours, or 350° for one hour. Pieces should be hard throughout before removing from the oven

Dough expands slightly as it bakes. To reduce expansion, poke each area with a pin to allow any trapped air to escape. If the piece does puff while cooking, poke it again, and reduce the heat by 25°. ⁵³

Uncooked pieces of dough may be joined with a dab of water or egg white.

Coffee or spices may be added to the dough before cooking as colorants.

After cooking the object may be highlighted with color ink washes. ⁵⁴

All cooked dough should be protected from humidity by coating it with polyurethane or Liquid Plastic (manufactured by Varathane). ⁵⁵ Unused

dough should be placed in a plastic bag to prevent drying. If the dough does become stiff, adding small amounts of water and kneading will make it pliable again. Bread dough may be used for making a variety of prop pieces or for adding decorative touches to set pieces or props.

Props may also be constructed from many other everyday articles. The students' ingenuity is the greatest resource for creating effective, imaginative settings and properties from inexpensive materials.

Lighting design. More effectively than costumes, settings, and properties combined, lighting can be used to establish mood for creative

⁵³ Susan Fitzpatrick, "Detailing with Dough," *Theatre Crafts*, Jan./Feb. 1980, p. 64.

⁵⁴ Fitzpatrick, p. 64.

⁵⁵ Fitzpatrick, p. 66.

dramatics sessions and presentations. In psychodrama sessions at Washington's St. Elizabeth Hospital, psychologist James Enneis found that, whereas "a director uses lights in a conventional theatre to harmonize with the mood of the scene, . . . he could control or even create emotions with different colored lights. Following is Enneis' most vivid example of the effect of lighting in his work:

. . . a staff assistant was acting under the emotionally charged red lights when a woman patient (going through a transference relationship) attacked her. Onstage, Enneis tried vainly to separate them, but an alert observer flicked the lights from red to blue. The assault stopped at once.⁵⁶

In color usage on stage, white lights represent harsh reality; under green a ghost may enter; lights blackened indicate passage of time; grey lights represent purgatory; hell, flickering red lights; and blue, heaven.⁵⁷

The environment in a classroom may be altered by varying the lighting to better accommodate creative drama sessions. Jennings explains:

If it is possible to black out windows, simple effects may be created by hanging brightly coloured material over "cold" flourescent lights; using coloured light bulbs; or using a single light, leaving the rest of the space in shadow and darkness (withdrawn children in particular respond to a dimly lit room, feeling perhaps that they cannot be seen).⁵⁸

The leader may use lighting variations to help prepare children for participation in warm ups and exercises. Darkening a room might help

⁵⁶"Psychodrama," *Time*, 24 Jan. 1955, p. 63.

⁵⁷"Psychodrama," p. 63.

⁵⁸Jennings, p. 12.

free youngsters from inhibitions and promote group intimacy. Colored lights may arouse different emotions which may support the students' reactions in exercises.

According to the setting being used for creative drama sessions various kinds of lighting may be used. There is daylight, out of doors and in camp recreation halls; campfire; kerosene, gasoline and sportsmen's type battery lanterns; outdoor floodlights or strings of bulbs; ordinary indoor electric lighting; improvised spotlights made from number 10 cans attached to poles; similar improvised spots made portable by mounting them on stands and running them on a couple of hundred feet of cable; and theatrical lighting from a good switchboard.⁵⁹ Hoggett offers very important advice for amateurs experimenting with electrics: "When equipping a stage, ensure that you get expert advice from local electricity boards and fire inspectors who are familiar with stage lighting and practice."⁶⁰ Lighting designers and technical directors from area university or community theatres may also provide practical and technical advice for drama leaders experimenting with lighting in a classroom or in a theatre.

If a theatrical switchboard and lighting instruments are available, the visual images which can be created on stage are greatly expanded. If no equipment is available and there is no money to purchase any, it is possible to make some lighting instruments relatively inexpensively.

⁵⁹Crosscup, p. 210.

⁶⁰Hoggett, p. 173.

The Complete Acted Play by Crafton and Royer has a good section on "Lighting: Functions and Equipment" which explains how to make flood lights, spotlights, footlights and borders, and dimmers. Another chapter, "Lighting the Play," covers color usage in lighting and preparation of the light plot.

A cyclorama or backcloth of unbleached muslin hung from a batten at the rear of the stage or acting area can be used with lighting in numerous ways to enhance creative drama sessions:

The muslin cyc is more sensitive to lighting than a solid wall. It can be lighted from behind so that shadowgraph and silhouettes can be used or a scene can be back-lighted; slides and projections of all kinds can be cast on the cyc⁶¹

As with settings and costumes, elaborate lighting facilities should not determine the effectiveness of a drama program. Colored cloths over lights, colored bulbs, or a simple rheostat for dimming lights can have dramatic effects on group mood.

In all technical areas the important things for the leader to remember is that lack of equipment and money can only enkindle a student's imagination. The program is for him, the student, so he will work to help prepare the materials necessary to support his work. The student will see that the most effective way to prepare a presentation through acting or technical work is by cooperating the working in harmony with the group. A creative dramatics presentation is a group effort and each member is affected by the performance of all the others.

⁶¹Crosscup, p. 206.

Not only should the students learn how to work together, but they should learn how to have fun together. Through creative dramatics, children may experience developing a concept, whether it be for enacting a character or designing a set, and seeing it through, step by step, to its completion. The feeling of satisfaction derived from the accomplishment of a creative challenge could prove to be one of the most encouraging and esteem-building motivations for future success that a juvenile delinquent could experience while in an institution.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

The juvenile delinquent is a child who has been stereotyped by society as "bad." When society fails to find a means to help this child, it sends him away to a strange environment filled with other children who, for many different reasons, have also been labeled as "bad." On pretense of training or rehabilitating him to be a functioning part of society, he is inducted into an institution which facts show is usually inadequately staffed to accomplish these goals.¹ The high recidivism rate among juvenile delinquents points to the idea that institutions are not adequately prepared to meet the urgent needs of their wards. There is a crucial demand among teachers and child guidance workers in institutions for group education and treatment methods which can positively affect the individual child. Because of the values which can be derived from such a program, this paper has suggested creative dramatics as one possible technique for group work with individual benefits.

Program examples, such as those cited in Chapter II, indicate that a creative drama program can be an asset when used in various aspects of correctional work. Its benefits can be seen in educational, diagnostic, and therapeutic work. Whereas the child may achieve such tangible

¹Weber, p. 198.

results as learning how to use a library or how to write dialogue, he may also realize such internal results as increased self confidence and pride in the accomplishment of artistic creation. He may learn how to work with others and how to play. This child, who has been stereotyped and systematized, can have positive, wholesome fun, purely for the sake of having fun.

This paper has examined several levels on which a creative dramatics program may be established. A program may exist within a classroom setting with no theatrical equipment whatsoever, or it may be carried out in a modern, fully-equipped theatre. The leader might have years of dramatic training or nothing more than the desire to serve the children. But the point is always the same, the children need outlets for their creative abilities, and it is the adults who work with them who must be willing to make these outlets available. Money and facilities are not requirements for establishment of a creative dramatics program. A leader with an open mind and sensitivity to creative energies is required.

No studies could be found which follow the progress of juvenile delinquents who have been involved in institutional creative drama programs. If done with juvenile delinquents as the subjects, a study such as Pate's examination of the effects which creative drama can have on reading ability, verbal growth, vocabulary development, and self concept of secondary school students, covered in Chapter II, might prove a valuable resource for institutional workers interested in using drama to its greatest advantages with delinquents. Follow up studies

of recidivism rates among juvenile delinquents involved in creative dramatics in institutions could be worthwhile in evaluating the values of such programs.

The most meaningful trait which an adult can help open up in a child is his ability to think. Encouraging and expanding natural creative thought processes is the purpose of creative dramatics. Society should cast aside the stereotypical brands which it stamps on children who, through unfortunate circumstances, are caught up in the justice system. Just as Rousseau sought to do in the Eighteenth Century, the juvenile justice system of today should seek to "replace repression by encouraging the development of natural instincts":

Love childhood; promote its games, its pleasures, its delightful instincts Humanity has its place in the order of things, childhood has its own in the order of human life; you must consider the man in the man and the child in the child. Assign to each its place Nature desires children to be children before being men. If we try to pervert the order, we shall produce precocious fruits which will have neither ripeness nor taste, and will soon go bad; we shall have young doctors and old children. Childhood has its own ways of seeing, of thinking, and of feeling, which are suitable to it; nothing is less reasonable than to substitute our own.²

²Coggin, p. 222.

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