



## ARTICLE

### Drama in a philosophy classroom: philosophy and/through drama

Evie Filea, [paraskevi.filea@ucdconnect.ie](mailto:paraskevi.filea@ucdconnect.ie)

University College Dublin, Ireland

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4726-3129>

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## **Drama in a philosophy classroom: philosophy and/through drama**

Evie Filea, [paraskevi.filea@ucdconnect.ie](mailto:paraskevi.filea@ucdconnect.ie)

University College Dublin, Ireland

### **Abstract**

Drama education has demonstrated its potential to enrich teaching across disciplines, yet its application in philosophy education remains largely unexplored. This article aims to highlight the unique advantages of drama in fostering reflection and deep engagement, particularly through the use of fictional contexts that emphasize human interconnectedness within complex relationships. A comparison with more conservative methodologies like Philosophy for Children (P4C) underscores the more radical and vivid nature of drama education. Additionally, I explore the philosophical underpinnings of this practice, drawing on European philosophical perspectives, notably Heidegger's notion of situatedness. Finally, I delve into the details of theoretical dispute within drama education circles regarding the role of conventions and uninterrupted action as reflective practices. This debate, initiated by Edward Bond's critique of Brecht, resonates with Heidegger's critique of traditional philosophical traditions. I conclude that this discussion brings fundamental questions about experience, understanding, and cognition to the forefront, while also inspiring new ways of understanding the dramatic form.

**Keywords:** P4C, philosophy, drama conventions, Edward Bond, Martin Heidegger

## Introduction

Much has been written that provides convincing evidence that drama education pedagogy can enrich the applied teaching of various school subjects, including languages (Maley and Duff, 1982), and sciences (McGregor and Anderson, 2023). Yet, its potential to support the teaching of philosophy remains largely untapped. Nonetheless, we should recognise that drama education practice itself possesses a robust yet often overlooked philosophical foundation, as well as to acknowledge that the core objectives of this pedagogy, such as the cultivation of critical thinking faculties and the encouragement of reflective practices, resonate deeply with the tenets of philosophical inquiry.

Currently the most popular teaching strategy in philosophy education<sup>1</sup>, the Philosophy for Children (P4C) pedagogy, in many ways shares common ground with drama education. Nevertheless, the teaching of philosophy even within the contemporary P4C principles, tends to be rather intellectualized, and the students are not provided the opportunity to connect with their own lived experience first before delving into examining theoretical aspects of human life. In the first part of this article, I claim that in comparison to popular P4C teaching practices, drama education pedagogy appears to be much more *radical* both in its conception as well as in its application. This is because drama aims to create the conditions for reflection and understanding to organically arise in a fictional time and space, which participants co-shape and interact with.

In the second part, I briefly relate the previous argument with certain trends in the 20<sup>th</sup> century history of European philosophy, according to which the human condition can only be understood as situated in place and time, and as such, it should be studied and examined accordingly. I particularly employ some elements from Martin Heidegger's early philosophical work, to highlight that it is simply impossible to isolate oneself from a situation to objectively examine it and gain meaningful understanding about it. I relate Heidegger's insights to drama education practice, arguing that when using drama conventions, practitioners should take into account that our existence is inherently and inseparably immersed in a complex network of relationships, and therefore it should be approached as such.

Following from that, in the third and final part, I explore some of the nuances of using drama conventions from a historical as well as from a philosophical point of view. I particularly analyse Edward Bond's criticism of Brecht, and as an extension of the applied drama conventions as reflective devices, and I explore how some of the principles he introduces as a response to Brecht are relevant to the discipline of philosophy and to the teaching of philosophy in particular.

## P4C and drama methodologies in the teaching of philosophy

The discipline of philosophy is historically associated with excessively intellectualized communication methods. Consequently, philosophy teaching as a practice is vastly relied on reading, text analysis, group discussion, and written reflection. In the past decades, philosophy education has been positively changed by the principles of the 'Philosophy for Children' (P4C) pedagogy, a methodology initially

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<sup>1</sup> I am referring to philosophy education both as a knowledge-based subject with learning objectives, as well as a method for embracing a critical thoughtful attitude (*aporein*) towards life experiences (Murriss, 2000).

developed by Matthew Lipman and Ann Sharp in the 1970s (Lipman, 2003; Lipman and Sharp, 1978; Vansieleghem and Kennedy, 2011). In essence, P4C pedagogy seeks to equip young learners with the tools to think critically, participate in meaningful and democratic dialogue, and actively engage in philosophical exploration. It aims to cultivate critical thinking abilities, prompt students to assess and critique situations, formulate informed judgments, and articulate their thoughts in a logical manner. Discussions within this framework often centre on thought experiments or other thought-provoking inquiries which aim to challenge students' preconceptions, encourage exploration of diverse perspectives, and prompt reflection. Moreover, P4C pedagogy underscores the importance of fostering metacognitive awareness through self-reflection and through activities which are designed to reflect on one's thinking processes. Additionally, it places significant emphasis on ethical and moral development, as students often engage in examining ethical dilemmas and pondering moral principles and deepening comprehension of ethical complexities within society (Gregory, Haynes and Murriss, 2017).

Nigel Toye (1994) first noticed that the P4C practice is in many ways parallel with drama education pedagogy. He pointed out that there are several common principles and strategies between them, from a strong emphasis on classroom community, validation of both cognitive and emotional responses, and a mutual recognition of the pivotal role educators play within these learning environments, to the utilisation of fiction to initiate meaningful discussion, slowing down to facilitate reflection, and the employment of distancing effects within fictional contexts to accommodate different perspectives. In a later article, Toye (2003) further argued that between the two strategies, drama provides more opportunities for reflection within a certain context as well as "more possibilities for action related to thinking because they [the students] are not discussing a story they have read, but are involved in the story that they are creating" (p.19). In the same paper, Toye highlighted how the use of role-playing in drama, in particular the key strategy of *teacher-in-role*, creates the context, helps the students to engage with it, creates challenges from within and eventually provides a variety of viewpoints about the situation. He provided several examples from his own practice to conclude that "it would be unusual to achieve this level of depth [...] using P4C" (ibid., p.18), which, he notices, is usually centered around reading and discussion.

Toye emphasized that what truly stands between P4C teaching strategies, and drama is the use of *teacher-in-role* which unlocks great potential in students engaging with the subtle nuances of a problem in a fictional situation. In my view, the power of drama as a teaching strategy fundamentally lies in its overall potential to achieve a much higher level of engagement with the material and encourage identification with a particular situation. In my classroom, I have noticed that it is the condition of *caring* for the details of the fictional world as well as for the fate of a fictional situation, that can create the circumstances for relating to philosophical questions and organically engage in meaningful philosophical discussions.

This empirical conclusion resonates with David Best's observations in *Rationality of Feeling* (1992), according to which emotional investment is crucial for rational thinking. Best emphasized the idea that emotions provide essential information and motivations that are necessary for making rational decisions. Overall, his perspective challenges the notion of rationality as understood in antithesis to

emotion. On the contrary, Best claims, emotions serve as a sort of compass that helps us navigate complex situations and arrive at reasoned conclusions. This emotional investment enhances our capacity for critical thinking and decision-making by providing valuable insights and driving us to engage more deeply with the subject matter. In a recent study, Evi Mamali and Simos Papadopoulos (2021) also claimed that drama can enrich the teaching of philosophy, as it encourages emotional investment in a philosophical inquiry; “taking into account emotions in the process of thinking logically during inquiry leads to a kind of thinking that puts empathy in the service of reasonableness, a fundamental demand, especially when it comes to ethical issues” (p.16). They add that “it is the experiential that attributes form to the idea in an embodied version of philosophizing, making the person acquire consciousness of the mental but also, mutually, transforming the mental into an experience. The new experience generates new ideas, which are incorporated in an equally new, intensive dialogue” (p.17).

Making the students meaningfully engage with the dramatic situation of course requires a level of practical experience with drama both as an art and as a pedagogical form, familiarity with the available strategies that facilitate context and narrative building, as well as a level of confidence to respond to the needs of each group at each point as the drama unfolds. There are many resources available to drama practitioners which give practical ideas regarding structuring, achieving, and maintaining a high level of engagement with the context (such as *Bowell and Heap, 2013; Neelands and Goode, 2015; Morgan and Saxton, 1989*). However, it must be noted that planning and devising a well-crafted drama is a complex and skillful task which requires experience, careful design, and adaptability. In that sense, drama pedagogy requires much more skill in comparison to P4C practice. The latter, even when it employs a variety of interactive teaching strategies, such as storytelling and role-playing (*D’Olimpio and Teschers, 2017; D’Olimpio and Teschers, 2016*), does not attempt to frame them within a life-like dramatic context which is suitable to generate action.

On the other hand, it is exactly this element of establishing a relatable dramatic context which makes drama such a suitable platform for a first-hand embodied exploration of philosophical themes, and the answer to a long tradition of primarily intellectually encountering with them. Carefully finding a context that is removed in time and place but at the same time relative and relatable to a real-life situation of a particular group, has the potential to provide the circumstances where learning and understanding emerge from lived-through situations. Reflection, in this context, can be initiated in the immediacy of experience, and become the outcome of embodied action, rather than a third person observation.

*Bowell and Heap* have mentioned that “The dramatic context will provide the particular fictional circumstances in which the theme will be explored. Essentially, as fiction, the dramatic context stands for the real-life human experience that will be explored in the drama. In other words, the dramatic context is the theatrical element of metaphor” (*Bowell and Heap, 2013, p.9*). In my own practice, I have noticed that it is not just the element of fiction which enhances the level of engagement, but also that the students actively participate in defining the particular features of it. When I use drama in my classroom, I invite my students to contribute and project their own interpretation of the particular imaginary space and time, often encouraging them to employ actual objects such as pieces of furniture found in the room, masking tape to define imaginary walls or other structures, post-it notes, and

improvised drawings to depict details within the fictional space, such as old marks, dirt, and scratches from everyday use.

When employing drama in my classroom, my primary goal is always providing my students with the opportunity to interact and collectively construct a fragment of a fictional world that mirrors our own, yet with specific limitations. I encourage playful projections, which may draw from their age, culture, background, popular references, and individual perspectives but at the same time I aim for the fictional world to remain coherent and realistic. Carefully co-creating the dramatic context with the group, not only cultivates the participants' enthusiasm and excitement but also facilitates an uninterrupted and dynamic flow of engagement, which will frame the embodied action that is going to take place within it.

For example, during an ethics through drama workshop for adults I presented in Prague in 2024, in which we explored the concept of ethical impossibility through a story about motherhood, the participants were asked to visualize a nursery room. I encouraged participants to actively imagine and add items to the space—either physical objects they could find in the room we were or imaginary ones they could draw on post-it notes. They were asked to think about what a mother would carefully place around for her baby to use, justify what made them decide what and where to place each object they chose, how the expecting mother would treat these objects looking forward to having her baby, etc. I placed considerable emphasis on ensuring the clarity and solidity of the space in which the action would take place, taking the time to make it as vivid as possible while respecting its emerging physicality (e.g. windows, doors, chairs that the participants could 'use' in the drama). My goal was for the participants not only to shape the space in a meaningful way but also to ensure they had enough time to feel connected to it. In other words, I wanted them to 'see' what was not previously there and to begin *caring* for it.

### **Philosophy and drama pedagogy**

In the second part of this paper, I would like to draw some arguments from the history of philosophy, to highlight the importance of not only framing knowledge but also aiming for creating the circumstances for reflection to emerge as a bottom-up experience. During the 19th century, European philosophy responded to the increasing influence of technocracy, and the looming threat of totalitarian control over human intelligence with what we now categorize as Continental philosophy movements. Unlike certain approaches found in Anglo-American thought, particularly positivism, these movements criticized the neutral analysis of logic and fact as reductionist and one-dimensional, expanding the scope of their methodologies to explore the relations concealed behind the empirical manifestations of phenomena (Kearney, 1986). Despite the different paths taken by their representatives, philosophy movements in Continental Europe during the previous century fundamentally asserted that truth, along with human knowledge and understanding, cannot be pursued in a vacuum, nor prior to or independently of its connection to other beings. Rather, they understood truth as always situated within a specific time and space, constituted in, and shaped through its relationship to beings, or systems of meaning. For pedagogy, that meant also a shift towards strategies of teaching and learning which would foster understanding that occur through concrete lived experience, and less from a third-person observation

of the world which was associated with the rather impersonal 'objectivism' of a narrow scientific/positivistic attitude.

For the purposes of this article, I will briefly draw on some details from the early work of German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976) who, inspired by Edmund Husserl's conception of *phenomenology* as a theoretical enterprise that takes ordinary experience as its point of departure (Heidegger, 1982) attempted to develop an account in which the enacted element of the lived experience would be embraced even more (Dahlstrom, 2018). A key element in his early work was the idea that human existence can only be comprehended as existing 'in' the world, not only in terms of space and time, but also in the sense of belonging, relating, manipulating, and caring about its surroundings. For Heidegger, we can only understand ourselves as always embedded within a world that is inseparable from us. As we are already intertwined with the existence of "those entities which it [one] encounters within its [their] own world" (Heidegger, 2008, p.330), in order to uncover the fundamental meaning of our being, we must direct our attention to the concrete concerns, moods and projects of our everyday lived experience. I believe Heidegger's account is relevant to current debates in drama education practice, especially those related to the usefulness and implications of using drama conventions, because it extensively describes the conditions of our existence as inherently and inseparably immersed in a complex network of relationships. His philosophical views can be translated in drama pedagogy as highlighting the importance of establishing a fictional condition that will allow the participants unreflectively to immerse themselves in a fictional context, before starting to question it and deconstruct it.

Heidegger argued that we should "return in a new and genuine way to the primal sources of the problems, and [to] take them deeper" (Heidegger, 1982, p.5). He fundamentally suggested that only by commencing the analysis from the concrete, particular contexts of human ordinary activity, which is always situated within shared historical and cultural context that we are born into, we will only be able to explore the possibilities for self-understanding and action. Any attempt to understand the world from what has traditionally been considered an ideal objective point of view is fated to lead to '*inauthentic*' understanding, because it essentially denies that humans can only associate with the world as understanding themselves being an intrinsic part of it – both in the sense of relating to their surrounding environment as well as to others. In other words, according to Heidegger, knowledge and understanding are always situated in a socio-historical context, and any attempt to examine it in a vacuum, creates what he would call '*ontic knowledge*', a term which he uses to refer to knowledge that is not deeply examined, but passed on.

Another element in Heidegger's work which I find relevant to contemporary drama teaching practice especially when one is directly or indirectly dealing with philosophical material, is his views on how one becomes 'authentic'. Heidegger had pointed out that we all have an innate tendency to get immersed in our everyday lives and environments, which means that our firsthand experience of the world tends to get distorted by automatic behaviours, and societal norms. He characterized this mode of existence as *inauthentic* and *irresolute*, yet he considered it to be the most fundamental way for humans to live. For Heidegger, the task of philosophy and of the philosopher, is to help us acknowledge the context in

which we find ourselves “thrown” first, as this will enable us to deconstruct it accessing the source of our existence. In *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 2008), readers are guided to understand that a certain self-violence is necessary to acknowledge one's intimate connection with the everyday world before delving into a deeper realization of our capacity to alter it (Ehrmantraut, 2010). According to Heidegger, a disruption to our habitual way of living can reveal the distortions created by cultural standards, and serve as a means to achieve an original, authentic engagement with what it means to be human. This detachment from the everyday, inauthentic, and irresolute existence—referred to as the “moment of vision” (*Augenblick*)—emerges when confronting the full complexity and depth of one's finitude. According to Heidegger, it is in these moments that we can truly see how we currently lead our lives, which might empower us to reconnect with our true selves and realize our full potential. Key requisites for achieving this shift include recognizing one's past as an indelible part of their present life and adopting an orientation toward their own lived experience characterized by curiosity, openness, and freedom from conditioned perceptions and reactions regarding their past and future. I believe that similar descriptions of the purpose of drama as a means of guiding individuals towards a path of self-discovery and existential confrontation, have been advocated by several contemporary drama practitioners as well, as I explain below.

### **A philosophical exploration of drama conventions and their place in a philosophy classroom**

To address the topic of this journal's issue, in this section I would like to explore some of the nuances of using drama conventions in a philosophy classroom from a historical as well as from a philosophical point of view. As I mentioned earlier, I believe that what makes drama a most suitable teaching practice to approach philosophical themes in comparison to existing practices, is that it can provide the platform for reflection which stems directly from immediate experience and embodied action, rather than from a third-person perspective and a scientific-like abstraction. Understanding that is firmly rooted in first-hand experience, also aligns with the principles of the phenomenology tradition in philosophy, which sees the origins of meaning in concrete lived experience rather than in the impersonal 'objectivism' of a narrow scientific/positivistic attitude.

In the drama education literature, there currently seems to be a very relevant theoretical disagreement between drama practitioners who primarily rely on drama conventions and strategies to structure their lesson, to slow down action, and to facilitate reflection (Neelands and Goode, 2015), with those who advocate for a return to the very root of the dramatic process, which is uninterrupted action (Davis, 2014; Bethlenfalvy, 2020). In the second category, belong those practitioners who claim that drama conventions are primarily used as reflection generative tools, moving further and further away from the spontaneity and originality of what Bolton and Heathcote had introduced as ‘living-through’ practice (Bolton, 1999; Bolton and Heathcote, 1999). I find this dispute very philosophically rich, and I believe the arguments against the use of drama conventions, share elements with Heidegger's own critique of the previous traditions in philosophy that promoted an ideal of a disembodied, and un-situated observer who he thought as simply non-existent - far more being able to have access to true understanding of the meaning of existence.



To begin with, this dispute appears to be centred around the implications of the German term *Verfremdung*, usually translated in English as ‘alienation’, which was introduced by the emblematic German dramatist Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) to signify the mechanisms at work when engaging with the aesthetic forms of his theatre (Brecht, 1986). Edward Bond (1934-2024), the British dramatist whose influence enriched the longstanding British tradition of using drama in the classroom, had passionately and repeatedly advocated that his own work can only be understood in opposition to Brecht’s, going as far as stating that Brechtian theatre is the ‘Theatre of Auschwitz’. This comparison between two of most apparently contradictory forces of the 20th century; fascism and the communist dramaturgy of Brecht, reads at first as a shocking remark from Bond which “seems grossly unfair” (Katafiasz, 2005, p.25). Several scholars have attempted to articulate the complex reasons for Bond’s harsh critique to Brecht’s theatre and indirectly to the use of theatre conventions that foster distancing and reflection in drama pedagogy, such as Katafiasz (2005), Cooper (2014) and Bethlenfalvy (2020). The underlying argument against the use of theatre conventions, seems to be that by betraying the drama’s own pretense displaying the dramatic world’s own fictionality, any psychological immersion and identification with the fictional world is impossible. Indeed, Brecht endorsed the view that one should appeal not to the emotion in the spectator which “would permit him to abreact aesthetically, but to his rationality” (Brecht, 2003, p.88) and that the “plays and production style should turn the spectator into a statesman”(ibid.).

Similarly to other theorists and artists who had been influenced by Marxist thought, such as Walter Benjamin, Hannah Arendt and György Lukács (Kearney, 1986), Brecht viewed traditional forms of theatre as remnants of a bourgeois culture legacy that merely produces consumable products and “wear[s] down the audience’s capacity for action” (Brecht, 1974, p.37). For Brecht, revolutionary art could be only achieved by disrupting traditional literary and theatrical apparatuses. For this reason, the orientation of his dramaturgy, was not towards reproducing existing social conditions, but rather towards *understanding* them, in a process where the actor and the audience find themselves “beside the philosopher” (Benjamin, 1998, p.12). Brecht insisted the audience required an emotional *distance* to reflect in an objective manner on what was being presented on stage. In theory, by being emotionally alienated from the action, the audience would be given the mental space to understand the characters’ dilemmas, a process that Brecht thought would empower them on an intellectual level both to analyse and perhaps even to try to change the circumstances caused by these experiences. He therefore invented several strategies that would break the dramatic action and narrative to induce reflection and discussion, some of which inspired contemporary tools in structuring and reflecting drama education practices (most notable Neelands and Goode, 2015). But given the fact that such devices to achieve dramatic alienation and distancing were developed by Brecht out of a desperate need for clarity in the face of the ideological obfuscations of the First World War, it is not very clear why Bond, whose theatre also aimed to expose ideology, found them so deeply problematic. I claim that Bond’s critique, which deeply influenced certain contemporary strands in drama education practice, is essentially a critique of Brecht’s *rationalism*.

One of Brecht’s inspirations for the development a methodology that defamiliarizes routinized social phenomena within the space of the theatre and transforms the ordinary into something unfamiliar and

extraordinary through observation, reflects the traces of his interest in the rational behaviour of the sciences (Sarantopoulos, 2019). Brecht describes the inquisitive attitude necessary to achieve detachment from the dramatic situation, making a phenomenon more comprehensible as below;

“One essential element of the street scene lies in the natural attitude adopted by the demonstrator, which is two-fold; he is always taking two situations into account. He behaves naturally as a demonstrator, and he lets the subject of the demonstration behave naturally too. He never forgets, nor does he allow it to be forgotten, that he is not the subject but the demonstrator. That is to say that what the audience sees is not a fusion between demonstrator and subject, not some third, independent, uncontradictory entity with isolated features of a) demonstrator and b) subject, such as the orthodox theatre puts before us in its productions (most clearly worked out by Stanislavski). The feelings and opinions of demonstrator and demonstrated are not merged into one.” (Brecht, 1986, p.125)

Brecht ultimately attempted to establish a scientific model of theatre that would enable the audience to intellectually engage with the character's dilemmas and empower them to potentially change the circumstances resulting from these experiences. However, as it was the case for the movement of phenomenology in Europe, for Bond one of the main reasons behind retracing drama in lived experience and action, is because he believed that any other form that prioritises disengaged reflection, *falsifies experience*. In his words ; “We need a new dramatic form not simply because we want a bright new package in which to sell what we have to say; or because we want to start a new fashion that will catch the public's eye. We need a new form because the old form falsifies experience (Bond, 2000b, p.49). He distanced himself from Brecht's aim to achieve a scientific-like onstage objectivity, because he assigned to the dramatic form an epistemology dimension, viewing it as a medium to experience “things and events as they are in themselves”. He writes; “I have to describe things and events as they are in themselves [...] I must capture ‘the dance of things in themselves’, [...] I write them, here, as what they are to themselves” (Billingham, 2013, p.30). The latter is of course a direct reference to how Husserl's and Heidegger's famously envisioned the project of phenomenology in philosophy as being able to access ‘the things themselves’.

It must be noted that although in the Anglophone literature, the most common translation for Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* is ‘alienation effect’ or ‘a-effect’, after John Willett's 1964 translation of Brecht's essays many scholars have pointed out that this is not a very fitting translation of the word ‘Verfremdung’. According to Mumford (2018, p.60), in more recent bibliography, the term is also translated as ‘estrangement’, ‘de-alienation’, ‘disillusion’, ‘dislocation’, ‘distanciation’, and ‘defamiliarization’. Sometimes, the German term even remains untranslated, or it is mentioned simply as the ‘V-effect’. Mumford points out that given Brecht's familiarity with the significance of *Entfremdung* (‘alienation’) in Marx, we should be careful when translating *Verfremdung* as ‘alienation’, for Brecht envisioned an art form that would be capable of challenging this very condition of alienation under capitalism. In my view, Bond treated the theatrical term ‘alienation effects’, as a synonym for self-alienation, which I believe was unfair to Brecht's intention and legacy. It is very characteristic, that for Bondian scholar Kate Katafiasz (2005), the translation of *Verfremdung* as alienation is very fitting because it works as an ironic reminder that Brecht's performance strategy does not permit the

interpenetration of opposites which eventually leads to alienation from one's original emotional reaction to a theatre play, and thus alienation from meaning. Gritzner accurately pointed out that;

“Brecht's rationalist theatre rejects the idea of seducing the audience with a theatrical display of emotions; rather, it seeks to educate the critical faculties of the audience who are no longer expected to empathise with stage characters and actions but are encouraged to reflect objectively and rationally on what they see. In Bond on the other hand, the concept of rational reflection involves emotions and the work of the imagination.” (Gritzner, 2015, p.79).

Bond eventually advocated for a dramatic form in which knowledge and understanding are achieved in a visceral manner, and in which life is practiced first before it gets conceptualized. Putting emphasis on the situation-ness, and immediacy of responses, very similarly to Heidegger, he underscored the importance of beginning the exploration with how we usually find ourselves existing – this is in a condition of being absorbed by our environment, a situation which ultimately distorts our first-hand experience of the world. Drama practitioners who have been inspired by his work, like myself, instead of distancing effects, they therefore often employ banal everyday objects, whose everydayness and familiarity at first make them “invisible”, to the participants and audience's eyes, initially treating them as merely belonging to the background or to the world building. Then, they suddenly displace them from their ordinary, inconspicuous place in the world placing them in a new context, in which they are perceived as if seen for the first time. Davis (2014) emphasizes that intentionally these objects lack symbolic significance; “because they do not have significance attached to them as they would if they were symbols, they can be invested with significance” (p.148).

Bond argues that when ‘invisible’ objects get dislocated from their habitual place in the world, the mechanics of everyday living are instantly revealed in a process which enables us to see things in a new way. This is the moment of the *Drama Event*, which stands for a significant action, a crucial incident or a crisis point that disturbs the characters' condition of immersion in an everyday environment. Katafiasz (2005) argues that what Bond calls as ‘invisible object’, gets partially ‘deconstructed’, in terms of getting re-evaluated and what was previously concealed is being revealed to us. The agent becomes aware of the materiality and strangeness of the object which might either be destroyed or persist in its functioning. Meanwhile, a ‘gap’ in space and time emerges, inviting reflection and creative interpretation. In my own teaching practice, I also often employ objects with insignificant initial use that, at some point in the drama, become charged with significant meaning. For example, in the philosophy-through-drama workshop I mentioned earlier, a baby stroller, initially part of an everyday happy routine between a mother and an infant in the park, by the end of the session, transformed into a powerful symbol of despair and initiated a discussion about what is morally impossible. It was ‘seen’ with new eyes.

In my view, Bond conceptualised drama as a philosophical exercise and a medium for philosophical inquiry. Placing great importance on the importance of the surrounding environment, he proposed that the environment's relationship with ourselves is best revealed when deconstructed, not intellectually from a third person perspective, but from within. As Billingham (2013) pointed out, Bond developed “a complex ontological model and site of drama in relation to human existence” which can be best

understood in the process of rehearsal and production (p.18). For this reason, I believe it can be very effective in exploring philosophical concepts through improvised drama.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, I overall argued that understanding the human condition requires always situating it within specific places and times. For this reason, I believe drama education, due to its methodological nature to vividly recreate life situations and invite the participants to take action within them, is a very suitable pedagogy for teaching philosophy. To further illustrate this position, I related it to the history of philosophy, according to which at least in the work of important philosophers who lived in continental Europe in the previous century, such as Martin Heidegger, understanding is never purely intellectual, but it organically emerges from a first level engagement with the world.

In the final section of this article, I delved into the intricacies of a significant theoretical disagreement which emerges between practitioners who mostly rely on drama conventions to structure lessons, slow down action, and facilitate reflection, and those advocating for a return to uninterrupted action. This debate roughly divides practitioners into two camps: those who view drama conventions as tools for reflection and those who prioritize spontaneity and originality, departing from what Bolton and Heathcote termed 'living-through' practice. This dispute holds rich philosophical implications, paralleling Heidegger's critique of traditional philosophical traditions that posit an idealized, disembodied observer. Heidegger argued that such an observer, divorced from situatedness, lacks access to genuine understanding of existence. This philosophical resonance underscores the broader significance of the debate within drama education, highlighting fundamental questions about the nature of experience, understanding, and the role of conventions in shaping reflective practices.

As a philosophy teacher and drama practitioner, I emphasize the importance of establishing fictional contexts that participants co-create and feel deeply connected to. I have personally found Edward Bond's methodology, which involves structuring drama sessions around moments of unexpected usage or dislocation of banal or 'invisible objects' from their usual, insignificant, habitual place in the world, to be very effective for provoking philosophical discussions grounded in first-level experience. However, one could argue that this strategy might be considered another drama convention.

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