



## Reconsidering Brechtian Elements in Process Drama<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT.** It is known that process drama is parallel to non-Aristotelian structure of Brecht's epic theatre in certain ways. Techniques and structure as the elements of these two notions (O'Neill's *process drama* and Brecht's *epic theatre*) resemble to each other not only by the usage and also by the relationship between the process and the participants as well. Brecht intended to engage actively with the audience and makes them engage with the play critically; similarly in process drama structures, participants are actively engaged with the material and the theme of the work. Moreover, in process drama, participants are assigned as meaning-makers throughout the process since they actively shouldered the role of writer, director, actor/actress and the audience. This quality lets them engage with the process in ways that are not only aesthetic but also critical and purposeful. Thus, there are also some elements that Brechtian plays and O'Neill's structures may share but they are included with different intentions. Taking all the similarities and differences that can be referred from texts into consideration, it can be suggested that further discussion is needed to reveal the dichotomy. This paper intends to build a direct link between drama in education and theatre and to explain this link from a structural point of view by comparing and contrasting examples from plays of Brecht and process drama sessions of O'Neill.

**Keywords:** Drama in Education, Process Drama, Epic Dramaturgy

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**ÖZ.** Süreç dramının, Brecht'in epik tiyatrosunun karşı Aristocu yapısıyla belli yönlerden paralel olduğu bilinir. O'Neill'in süreç draması ve Brecht'in epik tiyatrosu sadece kullanımlar açısından değil, süreç ve katılımcılara arası ilişki ile de benzerdir. Brecht, seyirciyle etkin bir şekilde iletişime geçmeyi hedeflerken seyirci de oyunla iletişime geçmeye zorlar. Süreç dramada da katılımcılar, faaliyetler boyunca anlam yapıcı konumundadırlar. Böylelikle süreç sadece estetik değil eleştirel ve amaçsal nitelikler de kazanır. Brecht oyunları ve O'Neill'in süreç drama uygulamaları amaçta farklı ancak uygulamada benzer bir takım özellikler içermektedir. Ancak bu ikiliğin ortaya konması için yorumsal metin çözümlenmeleri yapılmalıdır. Bu çalışma eğitimde drama ve tiyatro arasında Brecht'in tiyatro oyunları ve O'Neill'in süreç drama çalışmaları üzerinden bir ilişki kurmak üzere yazılmıştır.

**Amaç ve Önem:** Brecht'in epik dramaturgisi ve bu dramaturjik yaklaşımın nitelikleri eğitimde dramada bazı yöntemleri açıklarken sıkça başvurulan özelliklerdir. Cecily O'Neill'in süreç drama yaklaşımı da diğer süreçsel drama yaklaşımlarından ayrılarak kendine özgülük kazanmış bir yaklaşımdır. O'Neill'in kendi yaklaşımını oluştururken epik tiyatrodan faydalanmış olduğu bilinmekle birlikte kendi rapor ettiği süreç drama uygulamalarından yola çıkarak henüz bir metin karşılaştırılması yapılmamıştır. Bu çalışma, O'Neill'in kendi raporladığı dersleri inceleyerek, kendisinin uygulamalarının Brecht'in oyunları ile hangi noktada paralellik kazandığı, hangi noktada ayrıştığını bulmaya yöneliktir. Bu çalışma, kültürel eğitimde drama kuramcılarının uygulamalarını incelemede edebi metinleri kullanması açısından önemlidir.

**Yöntem:** Bu çalışma yorumsal/açıklayıcı metinsel çözümleme yöntemiyle yazılmıştır. Bu doğrultuda karşılaştırılan metinlerin derinlemesine bir çözümlemesi yapılmıştır. Süreç drama uygulamalarının da aynı zamanda metin olduğu göz önüne alınarak Brecht'in oyun metinleriyle karşılaştırmalar yapılmış ve bir takım argümanlar öne sürülmüştür.

**Bulgular:** Metin çözümlemesi sonunda süreç drama yönteminin aynı Brecht oyunlarının tiyatro tarihinde yaptığı gibi bir Aristotelyen yaklaşımı yıktığı açıklanmış ve süreç drama ile epik tiyatro arasında hem estetik düzlemde hem de yapısal bağlamda benzer ve ayrışan özellikler olduğu bulunmuştur. Bu benzerlik ve farklılıklar metinlerden örneklerle açıklanmıştır.

**Sonuç:** Özellikle epizodik yapı bakımından benzer bu iki olgu, seyirci ya da katılımcıda meydana gelen estetik yaşantının özellikleri bakımından da

yakınlık gösterebilir. Bu benzerliklerin tezahürleri olarak anlatıcı ve lider, ön-metin ve pankart gösterilebilir. Ancak bu uygulamaların kendi içlerindeki amaçları, uygulamalar benzeştiği halde farklıdır. Örneğin süreç dramada lider, gerilimi sürdürmek için, dramatik olanı devam ettirmek için tüm süreçte kendini gösterirken, Brecht anlatıcısı, oyunun belli bölümlerini özetlemek, seyirciyi hikayeden yabancılaştırmak gibi farklı amaçlarla kullanabilir. Sonuç olarak benzeşen bu noktaların amaçsal geri planlarının iyi anlaşılması gerekmektedir. Eğitimde dramanın, tiyatronun geçirdiği dönüşüm sürecinden etkilendiği çok açıktır ve Brecht-O'Neill karşılaştırması buna örnek gösterilebilir. Bu noktada şu soruyu sormak da önemlidir: çağdaş eğitimde drama yaklaşımları, tiyatrodaki son dönemde ortaya çıkan post-dramatik metinlerle de bir ilişki içinde midir?

## INTRODUCTION

The use of process drama as a strategy in education has been gaining popularity among teachers. This growing popularity and interest surely makes it important to examine the phenomenon from various angles. O'Neill's process drama is important since the specific term of the strategy is widely attributed to her. In her strategy, the teachers/leaders and the participants engage in a dramatic elsewhere that is created collectively in an episodic structure. They reflect on human situations through a collective, group role and create new understandings on the situation critically in a safe and supportive atmosphere while experiencing additional roles and spectating them/self-spectating themselves (Eriksson, 2011; O'Neill, 1995; O'Neill & Lambert, 1982; O'Toole, 1992; Piazzoli, 2011; Taylor & Warner, 2006; Uştuk, 2014). O'Neill defines process drama as a drama in education strategy having potential to engage participants in a search for dramatic significance through encountering and manipulating the fundamental features of the medium, during which essential dramatic elements are managed by the leader and the participants so that it leads to both an authentic dramatic experience and a greater understanding of the nature of the event (O'Neill, 1995: xiv). Allern states that process drama combines elements from exercises, dramatic play and theatre, creating a new form, where the focus is placed on the events, topic or a problem (2008: 321). According to Eriksson, the process drama concept is closely related to the educational drama of Heathcote, Bolton and O'Neill and should be construed as a form of participation based improvised drama, where various forms of dramatic conventions, including dramatic text, are used to explore, reflect upon and (sometimes) express a social theme

(Eriksson, 2009: 23-24). Even though process drama is pioneered and/or applied at a praxis level by many other drama educators such as Gavin Bolton (1979, 1986), Dorothy Heathcote (Taylor & Warner 2006: 36, Eriksson, 2011)<sup>2</sup>, Cecily O'Neill (1995), John O'Toole (O'Toole & Haseman, 1988), Pamela Howell, Brian Heap (Howell & Heap, 2001), this study focuses on parallel elements between Cecily O'Neill's process drama structures, based on her definition given above, and Brecht's epic dramaturgy or Brechtian elements, which are elements, or tools that were used by Brecht in his plays and productions to fulfil the way of performing he desired such as episodic structure of the text, distancing stage directions and techniques, and manner of acting. Practical similarities and differences between epic dramaturgy and process drama are not unknown to the field but I intend to review the literature and exemplify texts to suggest further arguments. Additionally, I suggest these elements since it is important for teachers to see how the similarities and differences function in examples rather than explaining merely their theoretical background. The artistic background is surely essential to foreknow and grasp. Nonetheless, for teachers and leaders, explaining how process drama strategy is epic by instances would support their understanding towards it.

This study adopts a hermeneutic/interpretive text analysis as methodology. Close reading of the play texts of Brecht and process drama texts of O'Neill may reveal new concepts and arguments considering newest pieces in the literature. In these close readings, key concepts and usages are sought and reconsidered to what extent these can be compared and/or contrasted.

Here, it is important to clarify a point that this study is built on. Surely, O'Neill is successor to Heathcote and even though the process drama structures of O'Neill are used to investigate in this discussion, Heathcote and Bolton's works are also to be included to some extent since O'Neill's agreed that process drama originates from their works: She stressed the discussion made by Bolton (1979) about different modes of dramatic activity and how they combine to provide an aesthetical experience for the participants and Heathcote's work that employs theatre elements in improvised experience and that chooses significant and deep themes were important for her to build a whole new understanding of drama, which she coined as process drama (O'Neill, 1995: xvii). Another inspiration of Heathcote's work on process

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<sup>2</sup>I also reckon that Bolton and Heathcote did not call their practice as process drama simply because the term is ensued their role drama. Nevertheless, they surely have great influence on the approach that is labelled as process drama (Taylor & Warner, 2006: 4-5); their contribution will be clarified in the following parts of the study.

drama can be seen in that a great deal of *mantle of expert* and *teacher in role* is involved as techniques in process drama structures of O'Neill (O'Neill & Lambert 1982). Underlying how much O'Neill owes to these two educators, she also pointed out how she has taken a different direction in that she claimed she focused on the connections of process drama and innovative theatre practices in dramatic literature (O'Neill, 1995: xvii).

This study is not the first one discussing these parallel elements between the dramaturgy of Brecht and drama in education. O'Neill suggested that Heathcote's aspect of taking on a role simultaneously, in an unplanned, non-predetermined way may lead the participant to a new level of consciousness, and the students should take up attitudes and perspectives, which is close to the demonstrative quality of a Brechtian actor (O'Neill, 1995: 80). Bolton also links Heathcote's work to Brecht's by stating that her approach in practice rests on Brecht's distancing (Bolton, 1985: 155). Moreover, O'Toole directly named drama in education a Brechtian medium taking the context in which participants constantly oscillate into consideration (O'Toole, 1992, 114). Another significant work studying the similarities between Brecht and drama in education was authored by Eriksson (2009). He argued that learning plays of Brecht, or *Lehrstücke*, resonate with process drama in various ways; especially, the novel role given to the spectator and participant, distanced style of acting of both the participant and teacher, and episodic structure of both (Eriksson, 2009). On the other hand, O'Neill's work was also directly argued to have similarities with Brecht's: Taylor & Warner (2006) suggested that both in process drama encounters and Brechtian plays, the participants and actors share a similar sense of scrutiny towards important issues of (Taylor and Warner, 2006: 151).

As seen in the literature given above, one can refer to many studies discussing drama-in-education and Brechtian theatre as two lines from time to time going parallel, sometimes approaching to each other. The previous research mainly focused on the parallel issues either of Brechtian dramaturgy and Heathcote's role drama, or between *Lehrstücke* of Brecht and process drama in terms of the quality of distancing experienced in them. However, there is a lack of studies concentrating on Brechtian elements or characteristics in specifically Cecily O'Neill's structures. Such a study is important to see whether the course of progress in drama in education -in this context, from former practices to Cecily O'Neill's process drama structures- preserved the similarity discussed by prior studies. In what ways Brechtian dramaturgy that has been so many times traced in Heathcote's work influenced O'Neill's process drama. This study intends to make clear these points moving from

comparing practical works of Cecily O'Neill's, or *process drama structures* as referred in this study to Brecht's plays.

Here, I feel to remind that the productions may differ from director to director even if the text remains the same. That is why, this study will deal with texts of Brecht's plays. Nevertheless, I do not think that comparing practical works of O'Neill to Brecht's texts would distort the context in two ways: Initially, for comparisons and presumable contrasts, texts of O'Neill's structures are going to be used instead of their applications by her or other drama teachers. Secondly, Brecht's theory of acting and directing that he suggested in his essays will be included into comparison and discussion so that one can see how much O'Neill's structures and her comments overlap with Brecht's theory and expectations from artists. However, I believe that a quick overview on Brechtian dramaturgy from an epistemological point of view would be necessary.

#### **Aristotelian vs. Brechtian: Where Does Process Drama Stand in That Discussion**

In order to identify and examine Brechtian elements in play texts, non-Aristotelian, epic, dramaturgy should be explained to some extent, especially by comparing it to Aristotelian, classical dramaturgy. Aristotelian dramaturgy had been the dominant structure followed and used by most dramatists until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its structure seeks a unity between the time and space and requires causality. Apart from its structural features, it has another characteristic: the connection between the audience and the performance. In performances structured in an Aristotelian way, the audience experiences a unique form of identification. That is how, the individual is able to link himself/herself to the performance through a way dominated by emotions. This emotional identification brings about another key element in classical drama: catharsis, which can be defined as emotional purification or cleansing. This last step of purification is comprehensible taking the religious function of tragedian plays into consideration. In early tragedies, the audience is implicitly urged to avoid some attitudes and not to take actions, which are perceived as negative, not acceptable by the society and the rulers so they are provided with some set of rules and knowledge to adopt in their lives. Later, in Brecht's epic dramaturgy, structural unity of classical dramatic plays is mostly neglected as well as the desired final step of them. Instead of identification and catharsis, what he used to seek was to make the audience reflect upon the phenomenon shown on the stage critically. Waters suggested

that the wide-ranging episodic narrative that moves forward through time, often unified through theme rather than dramatic unities, is a keystone of Brecht's dramaturgy (Waters, 2000: 138). Negation of the unity is not the only factor that makes a drama text epic; however, this episodic structure is an important characteristic of Brechtian texts. In order to clarify this aspect in Brechtian drama, Politzer (1962) stated that instead of being a part of the whole, each scene is to be an entity in itself, moving in jerks rather than in the evolutionary necessity by which one follows from the other (1962: 101).

In addition to this, the attitude of actors in epic dramaturgy plays an important role to prevent the identification. Brecht, in his article *A Short Organum for the Theatre* explains how this special attitude functions in epic dramaturgy as follows:

"If we ensure that our characters on the stage are moved by social impulses and that these differ according to the period, then we make it harder for our spectator to identify himself with them. He cannot simply feel: that's how I would act, but at most can say: if I had lived under those circumstances. And if we play works dealing with our own time as though they were historical, then perhaps the circumstances under which he himself acts will strike him as equally odd; and this is where the critical attitude begins" (Brecht 1964: 190).

Taking all these into consideration it is possible to mention a clear difference between classical dramaturgy and epic dramaturgy not only structurally but also functionally. This distinction draws attention of studies on drama in education in a way that how these differences function in terms of the function of audience in producing knowledge. In Allern's study (2008) in which classical dramaturgy and epic dramaturgy are contrasted from an epistemological point of view, it is suggested that classical dramaturgy refers to a special epistemological feature in which the transference of knowledge is hierarchical. It can only present events in a linear-causal way. On the other hand, epic dramaturgy, he infers, is based on a dialectical quality which creates a spiralling motion between fiction and reality. (2008: 323). That is how, a pure emotional identification of the audience is prevented since they are kept away from the illusion and they only observe the fiction consciously; what they watch is only the fictional representation of reality in other words there is a willing suspension of disbelief. As a result of this observation, the spectators are forced to be through a decision-making process. As Politzer

(1962) suggests, the epic theatre arouses the spectators power of action and extorts decisions from them rather than exhausting their power of action as done in classical dramaturgy (1962:101). However, we also keep in mind that being aware of that performance is fictional does not mean that audience directly assumes what is performed is unreal.

Moving from this comparison, one can suggest that traditional, teacher-centred pedagogy can be compared to Aristotelian dramaturgy taking the transfer of knowledge into consideration. As Rasmussen (2010) believes, there is a close relationship between epistemology and classist aesthetics. He states that what is present in the associated education and Aristotelian theatre is both “representational truth” and “hierarchical communication”. He believes that in such an attitude, truth, message or knowledge is represented by the teacher, actor or actress who is believed to be enlightened, to participants, who are less intellectual or less enlightened (2010: 532). This way, participants are passive receivers of knowledge and are prevented from critical thinking and being self-aware.

While classical pedagogical approaches are thought to be linked to classical dramaturgy, I suggest that, Process Drama has a tendency to liken to epic dramaturgy in several ways. These parallel elements are not only structural but also about the quality of aesthetical experience through which the participants actively reach a new understanding. However, these structural resemblances may differ in function, which shows us how process drama is based on epic dramaturgy but also how process drama places itself against Brechtian dramaturgy and overcomes its drawbacks that may occur in a drama class. This way, process drama as an approach in education can be said directly connected to arts and aesthetics.

### **Structural Traces**

The first element that can be believed to occur both in process drama and epic dramaturgy is their episodic structures. O’Neill believes that the structure in process drama develops in units or episodes (O’Neill, 1995: 48). The participants and the leader take on a collective group role, which is generally a group of people examining a situation in episodes. These episodes are non-linear, non-chronological and do not necessarily form a unity in terms of space. They are not supposed to be inter-connected in that term even though they are expected to be connected considering the theme and concerns of the participants. Piazzoli thinks these episodes play with spatial and temporal dimensions in order to explore a theme, within the realm of human emotions and behaviour (2012: 31). Similarly Brechtian drama neglects the linear



structure of Aristotelian dramaturgy and adopts an episodic structure to destroy any illusion in which the audience gets able to identify themselves and connect with the performance merely emotionally.

A clear example of such structure can be seen in the play *Life of Galileo* (Brecht, 1984). When examined, it is obvious that the play is written in episodes that are not connected one after the other chronologically. For example, in the beginning of the first episode, the year is stated to be 1609 but in the third episode, the reader is noted that the story continues on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1610. Similarly in the sixth episode, the story continues in 1616. As a play whose episodes portray different scenes from the famous scholar's life, *Life of Galileo* (1984) can be said to neglect Aristotelian, dramatic structure. This neglecting is not negligence, it is totally intentional to keep the audience out of the details and to let them observe and raise a critical idea about what is shown to them.

In process drama, the same phenomenon occurs when we have a look at Cecily O'Neill's process drama. For example, in her structure, *Leaving Home* (O'Neill & Lambert, 1982: 61), participants take the collective role of social volunteers who wish to help an agency which provides help and advice to young people who run away from their families. While these volunteers examine the situations of the runaways, they act out different scenes in different times and settings in episodes. These episodes bound by the theme form another play: the whole session itself. Clearly, these episodes, in which the participants take on roles as "social workers", help the participants to keep themselves at a distance to the improvisations, in which they take on additional roles as young runaways. This way, they are able to think critically of the situation they handle instead of a deep psychodrama session. O'Neill adopts a dramatic development that does not necessarily rely on linear narration just as Brecht does for his work. However, there is also a point at which these two works do not overlap. In Brechtian texts other than learning plays, the plot is somewhat fixed simply because it is a completed text. Of course, the media in theatre may provide a wide range of possibilities to play with the text to directors but while reading the texts, readers know that it will be the same storyline at the second time. In process drama, though, sequence of episodes may differ in many ways, even though the leader may have planned the series of episodes before the session. It is there and then the next episode is decided collectively. The teacher may try to intercept but that would harm the nature of process drama. In the notes of her structure, *Little Red Riding Hood* (O'Neill, 1995: 49-54), O'Neill stated that every time she applied

this structure, a different sequence of episodes happened at the point while participants are divided into two collective roles as journalists and the wolves. She noted as follows:

"...Some groups are interested in investigation the actual education of the wolves and create scenes of the professor working with these strange students. Others follow the suggestion in the original tale... Others, as the journalists invite the wolves into their homes in an effort to explain the human world to them. Others imagine the possibility of the wolves escaping to the wilds and attempting to share their knowledge with their own species..." (O'Neill, 1995: 53).

Yet in the next phase, O'Neill changed the collective role and continued the dramatic encounter as she finished the structure with an activity that serves as a reflection part of the themes. Thus, it is possible and in a way meaningful to say that O'Neill's structures are not entirely based on the same narrative line as in Brecht's plays, since the plot in process drama allows some distortions out of the main dramatic development. On the other hand, one cannot deny the fact that they both develop in episodes, how these episodes interact in terms of the theme and of course, how the changes in the sequence of episodes creates a specific aesthetic quality that aids the distancing as a factor other than the role.

Another aspect of the episodic structure in Brechtian plays is that, between the episodes, the narrator or another character in the play may directly address the audience and with some questions, he or she may provoke them to focus and reflect on the situation critically. Eriksson suggested that just like Brecht's commentator, the teacher in a Heathcote drama can interact with the material as well as with the participants - and the action can be interrupted, interrogated and discussed (Eriksson, 2009: 136). Moreover, the timeline of the story is interrupted by narrations, songs or discussion dialogues of characters thus the audience is reminded that they are only there to watch and think about a "play", to feel the characters and the situation they are in and decide what they think about what is happening to the characters. This brings us the second Brechtian element in process drama: the resemblance between the narrator role/commentator and the teacher. This parallel aspect also shows itself in examples. To illustrate, the fifth episode (*The Story of the Judge*) of Brecht's play, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1988) can be examined in which the role *The Singer* interrupts the play to tell how *Azduk the Judge* became a judge, how he passed judgment and what manner of judge he is. This narrative episode serves the play as a whole, additionally; it only "shows"

the situation of an important character. *The Singer* directly addresses the audience many times during the whole play just as he does in the beginning of the fifth episode.

In a similar way, the episodes are often interrupted by such reflective parts in O'Neill's process drama. In these parts, the role of the narrator is taken by the teacher either in role or out of role, which may serve different causes. For example in *Leaving Home*, after group improvisations, the teacher addresses the whole group in role as the head of the agency, which helps the "agency volunteers" keep their distance to their roles through which they just have acted a scene about problematic parent-teenager issues. Keeping in mind that the participants are also teenagers and they are also probable to be through such problematic situations, it is very important not to let them lose themselves in the excitement of the improvisation and keep their collective role as social workers. This way, the participants are kept away from pure emotional identification. Eriksson(2011) indicated when he explained Heathcote's work that in her classrooms, she did not work through the role identification, instead, what she intended to work through was role representation in which attitudes, not characters had the main focus. On the other hand, during the reflection parts, the teacher can also address the participants out of his/her role, which may serve in a way that the students can realize they are just in a process, examining a situation. It is just a representation of a situation through roles. This is a situation which the leader may adopt both kind of attitude (in-role and out-of-role) according to group dynamics there and then.

O'Neill stated that leader in process drama may acquire some functions of the director, designer, stage manager and audience so the leaders' tasks may vary from managing the action to operating the structure; his/her purpose is similar to that of the dramatist (O'Neill, 1995). We can say that both the narrator and/or commentator in Brecht's plays may use narration to tell participants what is next or what has become so far and such interferences to dramatic structure may create a sense of alienation. Leader in process drama can use narration as a technique; however, we should not neglect an important difference between the teacher-in-role or out-of-role and commentator/narrator: For instance *Azduk the Judge* in *Caucasian Chalk Circle* tells himself in the text since all the performers are at the stage to show a situation, an incident so he narrates himself but the teacher serves for an entirely different purpose in process drama. Taylor & Warner suggested that the teachers' main focus is to structure a learning experience for pupils,

through which they may achieve a change in understanding about themselves and about the world around them (Taylor and Warner, 2006: 56) unlike actors/actresses. In other words, whereas the purpose of the narrator in Brechtian plays is to tell audience a part of the story economically, to interrupt the illusion and/or to alienate, the purpose of the teacher in process drama the teacher narrates to structure the dramatic encounter, to set the rules and boundaries of it. In summary, we can suggest about the issue of leader resembling to commentator that they serve for different purposes even though they both use similar techniques; both narrate to sustain the dramatic encounter but commentator does so to tell the story serving the dynamics of Brechtian dramaturgy while leader narrates to form the structure, in which the participants can experience the theme(s) so that they can tell a story -through their actions-.

Another significant trace that can be found in process drama is based on an important notion in Brecht's epic theatre: placard (Willett, 1959). Placards are performance devices used in epic theatre in order to remind the audience that they are actually observing a performance. What they observe is only a representation of the reality. This technique maintains estrangement affect by interrupting the flow of action (Franks & Jones, 1999). They tell the audience what is going to happen throughout the scene in advance in an informative tone. A clear example can be found in Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* (1986). In the beginning of Act 2, Scene 2, the following placard is shown to the audience:

“The coronation bells have not yet rung out and Mackie the knife is already among his whores at Wapping. The girls betray him.”

This placard provides the audience with enough information so that the audience is able to form a dramatic framework to create the situation in which they will observe and reflect on a situation and make a decision about it. Similarly, in process drama, pre-texts are widely used with similar intentions. O'Neill (1995) states that the pre-text functions as a tool to define the limits of the dramatic world and to imply roles for the participants. Moreover, pre-text switches on the expectation and binds the group together in anticipation (1995: 20) by framing the participants effectively and economically in a firm relationship to the potential action (O'Neill, 1995: 22). This function can be seen in the example given below:

"Moving quietly about the hall, the teacher begins a piece of narration:

'It was Christmas Eve, in the year 1850, during the reign of Queen Victoria. The streets of London were cold, dark and silent. A figure was making its way homeward through the empty streets'"(O'Neill & Lambert, 1982: 111).

This pre-text is a narrative link that starts the dramatic action in O'Neill's process drama session, *Victorians* by name. Before giving this link, the students are asked to hide somewhere around the hall thinking that this is the place that they spent the night on the streets yesterday. As seen, this piece of narration that the teacher utters in role, draws the participants into the dramatic world by giving them a set of information. Apart from this, it unites the whole group in anticipation without getting them into an undisturbed flow of action. In addition, such pre-texts as narrative links serve the epic structure by replacing the plot with the narration. Pre-texts, as widely used aspects in process drama structures, thus, can be said to be similar to Brecht's placards considering their function of telling what is up into consideration. On the other hand, Brecht used placard to eliminate any surprise effect while pre-texts are not used with the same intention but to create a dramatic tension as well as providing sufficient information about the dramatic elsewhere and (sometimes) collective and other roles. Here, we can point out a limited resemblance considering Brecht's and O'Neill's intentions even though both placards and pre-texts give the audience specific information to catch up with the performance. Placards give information to omit dramatic tension whereas pre-texts inform the participants to maintain dramatic tension. Plus, placards generally contain plainly written texts whereas pre-texts are not to be necessarily a text and can vary. Thus, it is possible to trace pre-texts to some extent back to placards in terms of function but not in terms of intention.

### **Traces related to the aesthetical experience**

Thirdly, another Brechtian element in process drama can be discussed: the aesthetical experience which the audience in a Brecht's play and the audience in O'Neill's process drama session go through. Aesthetical attitude in an epic, Brechtian play is unique in some certain ways. As told before, the audience does not link themselves emotionally to the play. Brecht wanted the audience to remain detached and critical, and to resist the seduction of illusion so by alienation effect, they can become conscious of themselves as spectators, observe, and judge (O'Neill, 1995: 120). Moreover, in epic dramaturgy, no roles are to be impersonated by actors but they are just

presented by them. For Instance, in his play, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (1987), a situation of a gangster becoming a beloved dictator is shown; in a way it is just demonstrated. That's how; no identification is possible which means catharsis is desired by neither the author nor the director at the end of the play. This way, the audience is just saved from the attraction just to feel with the characters or just to watch the story of events so that they can also focus on what idea or theme the presentation of events try to express and they can develop their own critical attitude towards it. Politzer regards estrangements as tools which propel the spectator from a merely passive - or in Brecht's terms culinary attitude into one of genuine participation (1962: 101).

In process drama, it is possible to mention a similar notion. By distancing effects and estrangements, the participants are not meant only to handle how the situation feels but they also add what the situation tells them alongside sympathetic attitude. Here, we need to clarify Brecht's use of distancing and O'Neill's understanding of this technique. Eriksson stated that epic theatre is not against the emotions but it tries to examine them and intends to do more than just stimulating them (Eriksson: 2009: 48), and to make the audience take one step forward: to act. Moreover, Eriksson translated from Brecht as follows: "*The rejection of empathy does not come from a rejection of the emotions and does not lead to one*"<sup>3</sup> (Eriksson: 2009: 48). This clearly shows that Brecht's distancing does not try to ignore, suspend or oppress emotions. It is possible to say that there is no critical attitude totally exempt from emotions. However, Brecht used to think differently in terms of empathy with characters. That is why, a Brechtian actor was distanced from the role and demonstrated rather than impersonated the characters and their words, in order to provide objectivity (O'Neill, 1995: 77). This estrangement effect is maintained both by its structure and by the attitude of the role-taking process.

In a structural point of view, the teacher interrupting the episodes by reflective parts can create distancing and estrangement. Eriksson suggested that there is a resemblance between Heathcote's use of commenting narrator in a *Parable Minamata* (One of her drama sessions) and Brecht's use of a commenting narrator chorus in his play, *The Measures Taken* (2011: 113). Here, it can be stated that Heathcote's commenting narrator is parallel to O'Neill's teacher in the reflective episodes he or she appears either in role or out of role. This way, the students are also estranged to the whole story and they acquire the opportunity to evaluate the whole process and that is where

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<sup>3</sup>from "Kleine Liste der beliebsten, landläufigen und banalsten Irrtümer über das epische Theater" [1937, 1938].

another unique situation happens: what they observe and eventually obtain an aesthetical attitude towards is actually themselves, taking on roles in different improvisations throughout the whole process. O'Neill stated where the participants' sense of being both actors and audience is actively promoted, the dramatic world will be built on a powerful and effective combination of dramatic actions and active contemplation (Winston, 1998: 130 as cited in Terret, 2013: 194). O'Neill importantly stated as follows:

"If spectators in the theatre can become performers without losing detachment, participants in process drama can be changed into observers without abandoning involvement. The traditional lines of engagement are redrawn. Spectators act, and actors look on. Both functions are capable of coexistence" (O'Neill: 1995: 120).

In process drama, we see the participants both as aesthetical subjects and aesthetical objects. They happen to be at the both sides of an aesthetical experience, they are both the "observed" and the observers, both senders and receivers, which enables us to put forward that process drama also carries an aesthetical potential which is unique to performing arts including drama in education. It is this very qualification of drama in education that let participants think about their feelings and thoughts at the same time without extracting them from each other so that they begin their way of reflection that includes thinking and feeling at first about themselves. This aesthetical quality of one being able to make a symbolic, representative meaning out of oneself makes drama in education, and O'Neill's process drama as an approach, a rich and engaging way to learn.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is possible to state that some elements that we see in Brechtian, epic dramaturgy also occur in O'Neill's process drama to some extent. These elements are both structural and related to the quality of aesthetic attitude the participants in the classroom and the audience in the theatre. An important structural resemblance is episodic structure on which both majority of Brechtian plays and O'Neill's sessions are built. In order to stress the importance of this structure in process drama, O'Neill states that once she had grasped the idea that the drama could develop in an episodic or panoramic way, it became clear that a number of formal aesthetic and dramatic features were involved in the creation and development of the imagined world (1995, 48). Alongside with and related to the main resemblance mentioned

above, it is possible to mention many other traces that partly exists in process drama. For instance, the notion of the narrator in epic dramaturgy and the teacher in process drama and the resemblance between placards and pre-texts can be considered. In addition to their comparison, Brechtian dramaturgy and process drama can also be contrasted. We need to be aware of the fact that why Brecht and O'Neill used/uses these may vary even though how they used/uses can be likened. For instance, commentator/narrator and teacher both use narration but the first to create distancing and the other to let participants engage to the dramatic world. Similarly, both placards and pre-texts give clues about the aspects of dramatic elsewhere but placard does so to eliminate any prospective tension so that the spectators do not focus on what is about to happen while pre-texts seek to create a dramatic tension.

These structural characteristics lead to an aesthetical uniqueness, too. It is clear that Brechtian plays and process drama sessions are alike taking the attitude of the audience and the participants into consideration. That is also important to mention a drawback of Brechtian plays and how this drawback is overcome thanks to the nature of drama in education: reflection. After watching a Brechtian performance, the audience is assumed to build the intended critical attitude towards the theme of the play but it was not for sure whether desired attitude actually occurred. O'Neill, basing her approach on Heathcote, paid the importance of reflection part not only at the very end of her structure but also at some important steps throughout the process. So that learning and awareness is initiated by the critical attitude of participants themselves, not from a secondary resource. Since the participants go through different roles during different role-plays, they see the same situation from different perspectives and they raise their own awareness from an objective point of view. They spectate their own creation in which they also act out. This internal, self-spectator is also unique in a way that it evokes the aesthetical experience in process drama. In O'Neill's words "there is no external audience to the event, but participants are audience to their own acts" (O'Neill: 1995:13).

This comparison is important to introduce a contemporary educational approach: education is supposed to prepare the individuals for life, for which artists have been trying to express through arts throughout millennia. Life, to which the individuals are getting estranged, has always been a matter of discussion. Education cannot be isolated from the estrangement that the students are going through as well. Education and arts, as two main domains targeting the same issue: life itself, had better be integrated more and more by investigating aesthetical footprints in education and pedagogical outcome of arts..



Based on the comparison, I suggest that O'Neill's structures preserved the effect of Brechtian dramaturgy to some extent and they gradually differ in some ways. In sum, as key characteristics, building up from a series of episodes and analysing a theme over a time span are clear points they share. The resemblance can be traced considering some structural characteristics such as commentator-leader and/or placard-pretext. But how two applications adopted these characteristics clearly differs since commentator and leader may both use narration technique with different intentions. Similarly placards and pretexts may differ in intention as clarified above. As a point Brechtian plays and O'Neill's structures do not share at all, the opportunity of reflection within the dramatic encounter during process drama can be stated.

As can be seen, there are some specific Brechtian traces or elements in O'Neill's structures and some points O'Neill differs. At the end of this study, I would like to ask a question for further discussion: can there be any post-dramatic traces in the most contemporary strategies and approaches in drama in education following O'Neill's.

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