It would be a sad waste if, in the foreword to a book on Drama in Education published in AD 2050, Dorothy Heathcote's enormous contribution to the educational development of teachers and children was summarized in a couple of lines, in the same way that Harriet Finlay-Johnson's work has been mentioned in the foreword to this volume, although, to be fair, Finlay-Johnson's achievements cannot really compare with those of the author of the papers in this book. Informed observers of both women have testified to their remarkable teaching styles and to the fact that both seek excellence in the quality of the response drawn from the children lucky enough to have been taught by them. We know from their writings that both regard dramatic activity as a valuable tool for learning across the curriculum, but at this point the comparison must end.

In a fascinating article entitled 'Lessons Made Easy' published in the magazine *Home Chat* in 1908, Harriet Finlay-Johnson's pupils' traversing of the North Pole in their Sussex playground is described enthusiastically by the journalist, who also comments on the fact that the teacher did not seem to be required and spent the lesson watching them from the sidelines. This comment could not possibly be made of Dorothy Heathcote, who throughout this book, and more particularly in B. J. Wagner's *Dorothy Heathcote: Drama as a Learning Medium* appears at the centre of the activity. It is this which is most strikingly visible in her teaching and which sets her apart from other pioneers of drama in education. Her view of herself as an 'intervening' teacher, struggling to set up shared experiences with her pupils through the subtlety, power and challenge of her negotiations can provoke adulatory, bewildered and, at times, hostile reactions from onlookers.

Dorothy Heathcote was born in Yorkshire in 1926, where her formal schooling ended at fourteen, and where she worked for a time in a mill. In 1945 she became a theatre student at the Bradford Civic Playhouse School where she was taught by Esme Church and Rudolph Laban. After several years in theatre in the provinces, in 1950 she was appointed by Professor Brian Stanley to the Institute of Education at Newcastle University. She never trained as a teacher or taught as a full-time member of staff in a school, and accounts for what she calls her 'innocence' of vision and expression by the lack of early exposure to intellectual and academic models. It is partly this which gives her work its unique flavour, as her language and ideas have been shaped by intuitive modes of thought, a powerful sense of community, and exposure to biblical texts, poetry and the theatre.

Harriet Finlay-Johnson, at the turn of the century, was forced to retire after her marriage. Dorothy Heathcote, in a more liberal age and married to a supportive husband, has spent more than thirty years working with children, students in training in Newcastle and teachers throughout the world. Those who watch her at work are sometimes daunted by her unique gifts and the magical quality of her personality and fail to see the powerful educational principles which lie behind her practice. There are many dedicated 'Dorothy Watchers' in this country and abroad, who have attempted through recordings, transcripts, interviews and articles to understand and explain the nature of her teaching. One of the most sensitive and experienced is Dr John Fines, of Bishop Otter College, Chichester. His own work as an historian and a teacher has been deeply influenced by his awareness of the essential elements in Dorothy Heathcote's approach to teaching and learning. This is how he describes her at work in the classroom:

> She is a maker in every sense of the word. There is a struggle for quality – that power to demand what children have not yet the courage or organisation to ask on their own. She takes enormous risks herself and presses children harder than anyone else dares to, with miraculous results. She is hard, but hard with the knowledge that making is hard but also wondrous and a delight to all concerned (the art is to make all concerned, of course). She elicits tiny fragments from everyone and builds with these a magic mountain – but it is still their mountain, not hers, because all the pieces were once theirs before they gave them up in the communal co-operative act of drama. She is also candid in her questioning – she really wants desperately to know. Children are so used to teachers who know already that Dorothy comes as an astounding shock to them: here is someone who doesn't just listen, like some old counsellor, but actually wants to listen. But the most important thing is that she transmits it all back again at double power – making each hesitant offering of a mite seem like a generous donation of a millionaire. And she adds a little something herself. These moments when Dorothy gives (especially, I feel, when she sings) are particularly moving. She arranges, orchestrates the offerings, making tentative whistles turn into symphonies. The time Dorothy spends at a blackboard is most important to her teaching. Whatever one does in the mind, it begins with making a list and ends with an arrangement of that list that focusses on to the significant.
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> Dorothy focusses quickly, for she knows the great truth that no-one can cope with more than about four things at any one time, and one of them has got to win, to gain primacy in the mind. This is why at this stage she spends time in her mind moving towards big questions, challenging questions

> which say primarily 'Which of these is going to be your winner today?' Her questions focus down and lay the responsibility for choice. The question that shocks into deep thought, that searches for powerful symbols, that asks for action, that evokes greater eloquence, this is the Dorothy question. But even with the immense drive for depth, for focus, she is still not determining things, it is the children who do that. She knows with a kind of deep inner conviction that makes the knowledge very special indeed, that all the drama, all the knowledge, all the skills, everything is there in the children already, before she enters the room.

The approach to teaching which John Fines describes has sometimes been misunderstood and misapplied. Non-specialist teachers and those working with the handicapped seem to recognize more readily the validity of Dorothy Heathcote's work, but some specialist drama teachers are suspicious or critical of what they see as teacher domination or manipulation, or the non-transferable skills of one charismatic practitioner. It is ironic that excellent practice should have this effect. This collection of her writings will help to provide a much needed balance in the response to this gifted woman, and help teachers to see behind the dazzling surface of her work. Like her writing, the real Dorothy Heathcote is complex, diverse, practical, poetic, inspirational and demanding. She herself does not see this collection as the final exposition of a doctrine to be handed on to others. She regards her writings as attempts to clarify her immediate concerns, using the ideas, experience and language which is available to her at that moment. She happily borrows ideas and terminology from other writers and disciplines, and transforms them for her own use. These papers indicate her achievements but do not sum them up – they are 'pause buttons' in John Fines' phrase. Readers will not find here a magic formula which will enable then to teach in Heathcote's style, nor will they read endless narrative and description of past successes. This is not what occupies her thinking time. Her concerns lie not with her own skills but with the need to develop the skills of others. She does not hope for or work towards a race of drama teachers who are merely mass-produced replicas of herself.

> No one teaches a teacher how to teach. Teachers are made in the classroom during confrontations with their classes, and the product they become is a result of their need to survive and the ways they devise to do this.

Primarily Dorothy Heathcote sees herself as a teacher, and only secondarily as a teacher of drama. In her struggle to use this powerful tool for learning, a number of central concerns remain constant. Above all, she recognizes the validity of the knowledge and experience which her pupils already possess. She is dedicated to helping her pupils discover what they already know – to bringing this knowledge into consciousness in order to build a path for change. In other words, she is truly child-centred in her approach. But unlike the kind of 'progressive' teacher who abandons the child to its own resources, she accepts that teaching is an act of benign interference in the lives of the children. For Dorothy Heathcote, as for John Dewey, whose doctrines of education through experience are often distorted, the teacher, as the most mature member of the group, has not merely a right but a responsibility to intervene, since learning is the product of intervention.

It is this which sets Heathcote apart from other pioneers of drama in education. In fact, her stance as enabler and challenger within the action is more subtle and effective than that of teacher/instructor or teacher/director which is typical of the kind of drama based on exercise and small group improvisation. In the last ten years, the power of this approach is beginning to be understood. As early as 1972, Robert Witkin, in the *Intelligence of Feeling*, insisted that for the arts to operate successfully in education the teacher must be part of the creative process. Gavin Bolton, in his recent writings, has done much to clarify the teacher's function in structuring experience and reflection for learning.

The chief method by which Dorothy Heathcote intervenes, and the one most closely identified with her teaching, is by taking a role in the drama. In her hands this becomes an extraordinarily subtle, flexible and effective means of promoting learning. It allows her to refrain from burdening her pupils with her own knowledge, to pay attention to their needs but to withhold judgement, and through the role to negotiate an exchange of power with the class. The work operates at the level of subjective meaning, but serves the development of intellect as well as emotion, and enables her to raise ordinary experience to significance. The encounter with the role may be intense and absorbing for her pupils, but it will also be objective and reflective, since experience alone without reflection will not lead to learning.

Heathcote goes far beyond the objectives of personal development and social adjustment which satisfied drama teachers in the past. Her aim is to build on her pupils' past experience and give them a deeper knowledge not just of themselves but of what it is to be human, as well as an understanding of the society they live in and its past, present and future.

In these papers, she offers teachers the means of creating security for themselves and their pupils in the encounter which is classroom drama. She outlines the kind of knowledge which will support them in their task of creating and sharing significant learning experiences – not just the academic subject knowledge contained in most teacher training courses, but a more important kind of knowing. This will include a deep understanding of the basic elements which drama and theatre share, a grasp of how time, tension, sign and symbol operate in drama, an ability to find focus, to distort productively, and to negotiate with honesty and subtlety. She urges teachers to have the courage to come to terms with themselves and to rely on what they are in their struggle for authenticity. She releases teachers from the burden of being instructors – people who must know everything – and allows them to become something much more complex: sharers in learning experiences with their children, enablers, and seekers after excellence. Underlying all her writing, whether she is discussing method, curriculum or teachers' training, she displays a deep, urgent, political concern that society should value and reward good teaching.

Dorothy Heathcote's work has been described as magical, but really Dorothy is far too earthy and practical a person to be thought of as a witch. Her approach has all the appearance and characteristics of a midwife, and this is an image of drama and the drama teacher with which she seems comfortable. The patient – teacher, student or child – struggles to produce the infant – creative knowing. Dorothy is there, sleeves rolled up in charge of the event, alternately urging, cajoling and comforting the patient. When the moment of knowing is born, Dorothy weighs and measures it, pronounces it fit, and then, most difficult and important of all, gives it back to the person who made and fought for it. The product is not the property of the teacher/midwife but of the student/mother. How the prized possession survives and thrives from that point on is the concern of the person to whom the treasure belongs while the midwife moves on to the next case. Such skilled women are being replaced by larger organizations, impersonal machine-orientated hospitals, and the midwife is no longer a valued member of the community. It is possible that the teacher/technician threatens to replace the teacher/artist and that society, which already undervalues good teachers and creativity in teaching will allow the pursuit of excellence and high quality endeavour in teaching to become extinct.

Such a possibility leads us to the main purpose of Dorothy Heathcote's writing, which like her teaching should 'challenge, shatter and reform ideas'. It may not be possible to imitate with the same success her style of teaching, but it is possible to learn from her skills and experience and to join her in the demand for better and more rigorous and relevant teacher training, which will produce committed young teachers capable of pursuing excellence and authenticity in our schools.