

## Bob and the tribe

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### AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

This lesson plan was originally written as one part of the final exam of the training by the Hungarian Drama and Theater in Education Association (HUDEA) in 2011. The course prepares teachers to use drama tools in education and conduct whole drama lessons based on a chosen problem, called usually „focus” in the drama vocabulary. Through an imaginary conflict, where students should make their own decisions, this lesson aims to increase awareness of multicultural issues. The power of drama is that instead of „just” intellectual reflexion participants are invited to play simple roles and act in the conflict as if they were someone else. This is an extremely complex process while they are able to acquire social, communicative and cultural knowledge on their own. This process is guided by the drama educator who takes an active part in the „game” but the players are free to experience relevant problems and create their solutions at the same time.

The plan of the lesson *Bob and the tribe* should be adapted to the actual public you work with, some parts might be omitted, especially in the end, and other other ideas can be easily added, so the „original” version should not be the final possibility, I would rather encourage to re-think this lesson every time so that it really fits to your group and reaches the desired educational goals.

The terminology and the structure of the lesson both come mainly from the mentioned training of the HUDEA and can be found in Hungarian in the *Dramapedagogy Reader* edited by László Kaposi<sup>1</sup>. Some short explications are given in footnotes by the author, so I hope that the lesson will be easy to understand for experts and enthusiasts as well.

### GENERAL CONDITIONS OF THE LESSON

**Group:** Around 14 people between 11-12 years, they have no previous experience in drama and they are primary school students in Budapest. They have general knowledge about ancient cultures and the so called „hunting and fishing” lifestyle in a tribe.

**Circumstances:** 60-90 min (the lesson can be made in two parts), rearranged classroom (without desks, chairs, as comfortable as possible)

**Learning areas:** life as a member of a group, intercultural differences in a mixed group, relativity of crime (what we think a crime is) in a culture, integration to a community, structure of a tribal community

**Focus:** Can we forgive the new member of the group who committed a sin because of a cultural misunderstanding?

**Story:** In the beginning of the 1940's a Western, white man arrives to an imaginary tribe in South-America. The tribe accepts him quickly and he becomes an appreciated member of the community.

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<sup>1</sup> Drámapedagógiai Olvasókönyv /Dramapedagogy Reader/, edited by Kaposi László, Színházi Füzetek/VII., Magyar Drámapedagógiai Társaság, Marczibányi Művelődési Központ, Budapest, 1995

One day for the greatest feast of the year he hunts by accident an animal and this is against the community's tribal belief. What will the tribe react and do with the „foreigner“ in this situation?

**Teacher's roles:** Bob, a person from the village

**Support:** role cards, narrations written down, big paper, pencils, pens

### **Narration<sup>2</sup>:**

*We are going to play that we live in a closed, South American tribe (in a village in the middle of Chile), we are called Zapatis. Our village is in the Zapati Valley, where several Zapati tribes live in communities. The villages are separated by very high mountains in the Zapati Valley, so the villages have no contact with each other because of the mountains. The life of the Zapatis is similar to the life of ancient, prehistorical tribes in many aspects (fishing, hunting, gathering, rituals, tribal organization). Around 50 people live in our village, it means that it's made up some large families, we live in a very intensive and close relationship with each other. We are able to make and product everything we need for ourselves, so we don't need at all the help of the outside world. The most important in our life is the community and its power, the ancient beliefs (religion) are part of our everyday life.*

Preparation: Draw together the map of the village.

## **I. CREATING THE CONTEXT, ZAPATI LIFE**

1. **Roles<sup>3</sup>:** everyone is a mature, adult person who have already passed the „rite of initiation to adult life“, this tribe speaks a dialect of Spanish, so we use Spanish names, each imaginary person's name and role should be printed on a small piece of paper, everyone gets a role card

Pablo (tribe's chief), Ximene (wife of the chief), Paola (daughter of the chief, 17 yrs), Juan (uncle of the chief, old, respected person), Juanita (wife of Juan), mature boys: Pedro, Paolo (17 yrs) and mature girls: Jimena (16 yrs), Carla (18 yrs), Rosario (magician, leader of beliefs), adult men: Gonzales, Francis, adult women: Maria, Dolora

2. **Presentations:** everyone introduces him-, herself shortly to the group, we should know who is who and which are the main roles in the community.

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<sup>2</sup> „Narration“ is said by the teacher or read by the students, we need these parts to guide the story, put in pieces of information and to build up the imaginary drama world, it can be accompanied with photos of South-American tribes and villages. This is a crucial part of the drama lesson and all the rest is based on this phase. More players are active and create the imaginary world on their own, more they will act seriously and „truly“ in the further conflict.

<sup>3</sup> We choose roles by role cards. Every student gets one role, the aim is to individualize the community so that they can act and make decision in the roles. This task raises the awereness of the fact that every community is a social phenomenon and the individuals have their tasks in it.

3. **Making group(s) by still image<sup>4</sup>:** we create a still image which represents our village and on which everyone has a his or her place depending on the gender, age, usual activities. This image should represent one typical moment of the community.

**Narration:**

*We have got the list of the main rules in the Zapatis' life but unfortunately some rules are missing so we should complete it! (In several small groups). Let's also choose a name for the village which describes us the best (altogether).*

1. Respect Mother Earth and the Nature!
2. Take care of all the members and families in the village!
3. Your family is the gift of the Nature so it is invulnerable.
4. The Zapatis live and die in the Zapati land.
- 5.
6. Men give food and shelter, women prepare youngsters for the adult life.
7. Celebrate the two main feasts properly the Sun Feast and the Water Feast!
8. Beware of the animals with bad spirit, keep them away from the village and respect the feasts!
- 9.
10. The Zapatis share both happiness and trouble.
11. A good Zapati is beloved by Mother Earth.
- 12.
13. Beware of strangers!
14. Your life is guided by your work for the village.
- 15.
16. Boys and girls who completed the ritual of initiation act as adult in the village.
17. Respect the magician and his power!

**Narration: Feast**

*The greatest Zapati feast is the Sun Feast, which is celebrated by a big dinner, dance, rituals. The feast has several parts, the magician leads rituals, he purifies the village from the bad spirits. The chief takes part in the celebration as an average inhabitant of the village, the feast takes place in the central field around the fire. All we eat and do should celebrate and glorify the Sun, so Sun elements are welcome and Water elements are not allowed. If we don't respect it the Sun can become angry with our village.*

1. **Still image:** Show one moment of the feast!
2. **Legend production<sup>5</sup>:** In two groups invent and explain why and how the *Sun* becomes angry if the feast is not celebrated in the right way. Group 1: verbal discussion, create a story, Group 2: make a scene about the topic in 2-3min

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<sup>4</sup> Still image: players stay in their roles and create a frozen image, a dumb statue

<sup>5</sup> Legend production: players stay in their roles and create the own legend of the tribe

## II. AN OUTSIDER IN THE ZAPATI LIFE, CONFLICT

### **Narration:**

*Zapatists live like this for thousands of years, the modern world could not change a thing in the Zapati lifestyle. This village (name invented at the beginning) would have never ever changed if one day we hadn't discovered a stranger in a canoe. He was different from us, he had pale skin and clothes torn apart which seemed to be less comfortable than ours. Not only his skin and clothes were strange but also the fact that his body was all covered by bleeding wounds. When we found him he was speaking in a weird language and he was really about to die...we were all extremely frightened. The whole village felt pity for this poor human. Thanks to the power of Rosario and the herbs made by our women this stranger could be saved from death and he recovered step by step. We found him a nice person and we were surprised to realize that he understood and spoke a bit our language. When he was strong enough the old men's council invited him to a general meeting and asked him some questions in order to know who he is and what he wants.*

- **Hot chair<sup>6</sup>:** teacher answers the questions in the hot chair  
/General information to share: Bob Smith is from New York, he is an anthropologist, he came to South America to continue his research about ancient civilizations in the Andes, his plane crashed, he is the only survivor, his wife and little son were on the plane as well, he is grateful for having been rescued by the magician, he wishes to stay because he might have lost everything in his life/

### **Narration:**

*After getting to know Bob better the village decided that he could stay and he was considered as a „honorary“ zapati. Bob knew that he couldn't leave the valley without risking his life again and after just having survived the plane crash he wouldn't do it again. He also knew that the magician cured him so he was grateful for Rosario and he believed in his power. Bob felt good in the zapati village and he wished to stay here longer and help the community as much as he can.*

- Discussion in two groups:
  - 1) What should Bob learn from us in order to become a „useful“ member of the village? Which ritual tests should we put him to? (eg: testing his skills, ability to hunt, climbing on a tree, braveness, etc) Let's make a still image about one of the tests!
  - 2) What Bob can teach to us? What would he tell us about his life in New York, about the modern civilization in 1940? (eg: inventions which changed the world, culture, arts, languages, etc) How would he describe or explain these things? Make a still image about a „presentation“ like this or list around 5 things what he would surely tell to us.

### **Narration:**

*Both Bob and the inhabitants of the village have learnt a lot from each other and together, it has been a very exciting period for ..... (name of the village given by the students). Bob has totally recovered from his illness and he has started to participate in every work. He is responsible for guarding the fire every second night with Pedro, he wakes up the whole village in the morning, he attends the general meetings where he takes notes. In his free time, he is with the children who like him a lot and learn many new things from him. He is kind and we all find him a good person, we trust him more and more.*

- **Improvisation in small groups** (3 groups): Show in mini-scenes how Bob is becoming more and more useful in the village and how he is getting emotionally closer to us.

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<sup>6</sup> Hot chair: form of an interview, players stay in their roles, one is asked by all the others

**Narration:**

*Little by little Bob is getting integrated to our zapati village, he takes part both in male and female works, his calculations and ideas improve a lot the agriculture. The community, where no stranger could ever stay for a single day, is happy about Bob. Some months have passed and the big Sun Feast is pretty soon. Bob knows that it's one of the two most important days for the Zapatis so he thinks that it's a great moment to prove his ability and merits to become a Zapati. He helped in all the preparation and the day before the feast he went to the forest to hunt something special for the village. He was all alone in the dark forest and become exhausted after couple of hours without any success. He spent the night in the forest without sleeping. He realized that he won't be able to hunt any animal and he became really desperate. He decided to return to the village with the feeling that he failed and would probably never be a good zapati. On the way home he saw a tiny crocodile on the riverbank, so without thinking at all he immediately shot it with a bow and arrow. He regained all his enthusiasm, he hoped and thought that the crocodile meat would be perfect for the great Sun Feast. He arrived to the village and he was extremely tired but showed happily the body of the crocodile and put it in front of the chief's bungalow. The chief and all the people gathered there and no one said anything but turned their back on Bob and the crocodile and stayed totally silent.*

3 groups:

1. **Still image:** Bob arrives with the animal, he is in front of the chief's bungalow who comes out and sees the animal. Then all the people abandons him. **Inner thoughts**<sup>7</sup>: one by one tell one sentence about what the people think about this situation.
2. **Bob's journal:** Write down what Bob wrote about this last day in his journal.
3. **Discussion:** Let's remember what our legend says about the Sun Feast and its celebration.

**Narration:**

*On this day no one speaks to Bob any more, he doesn't understand at all what the problem is. When the Sun Feast starts he can not go and sit down with us. No one tells again his name in the village.*

Several activities follow which treat the conflict from different points of view, they can be realized in smaller groups or modified according to the actual educational goals.

1. **Still image** (not the whole group): Bob is alone, the community is eating and celebrating the feast. **Inner thoughts:** the players who are not in the image tell the thoughts, emotions of Bob.
2. **Discussion in small groups in the roles:** The groups created at the beginning speak about Bob and about what happened. (It shouldn't be shown in front of the whole group.)
3. **Forum theater**<sup>8</sup>: The chief speaks with Bob about what happened. (At first the teacher is Bob, one student is the chief, roles are changing.)

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<sup>7</sup> Inner thoughts: player(s) in a still image are asked to tell their emotions and thoughts, it's also possible that other players tell it.

<sup>8</sup> Forum theater: a dynamic form of theater where the players can change, they can take the role of the others if they feel to interfere in the scene. This form should be explained to the group.

4. **Assembly/I.:** All the mature people gather in order to decide about Bob's future. (Should he leave or can he stay? How can he change his mistake?) Different opinions and arguments should come and be discussed in the roles.
5. **Role changing:** Play the scene when Bob comes with the crocodile body as if Paolo came with it.
6. **Re-play in 2 groups:** Group 1: Improvization: scene how Bob killed the crocodile. Group 2: tell the inner thoughts during the improvization
7. **„One sentence history”<sup>9</sup>:** In 3 groups tell what the inhabitants (group 1), Rosario (group 2) and Bob (group 3) think about what happened.
8. **Assembly/II.:** Has the village decided? What is Bob's future?
9. **Ceremony:** Show the village's decision in a ritual, traditional zapati form.

### III. CONCLUSION(S), REFLEXIVE PART

1. **Group discussion out of roles:** How this problem could have been avoided? Will there be more similar problems like that between the Zapatis and Bob? What is the basis of this conflict, what can be the prevention? How can they live together? Will Bob ever go back to New York?
2. **Point the moment** (still images, mini-scenes, etc): Which was the moment with the most tension? When was Bob the most integrated? When was Bob the less integrated?

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<sup>9</sup> One sentence history: explanation of what happened in one sentence.