Chinese orphanage essay

The stimuli I had to respond to, were two articles about a Chinese orphanage, in which it was reported babies suffered terrible treatment, due to a lack of staff, and a lack of funding, and " Examination Day" by Henry Sleasar. The first stimulus told us that Parents were forced to abandon their children for a number of reasons. In China having a baby boy is prized far beyond having a baby girl. This led to parents abandoning their baby girls. Many parents simply can't afford to have children due to outright poverty, or the One Child Rule, which makes life hard for parents of more than one child to make ends meet.

The second Stimuli was about a child who lives in a future time, when the government had made a law decreeing that when all children reach a certain age must take an IQ test. If they are found to be too intelligent, then the child is murdered. This futuristic piece clearly aims to make us think about government control, and the idea of a Police State. The first explorative strategies we used were thoughts aloud and hot seating.

We used Hot-Seating to explore the feelings and emotions of the child character, a parent of the child, and a member of the establishment who plays a part in the IQ test process. This helped us generate ideas. We found that the child did not really know what was happening to him, and he was confused and anxious more than upset or afraid. The parent was distraught at the fact his child's life was at risk.

He didn't want to show this in front of his child, and he felt incredibly helpless. He also felt hate and anger towards the government. We thought we could play on these facts by playing on the audience's emotions. We

could have a scene for example, where the parents are saying bye to their child when they know he may not come back, but he is not aware of this. The parents don't want to give any sign that he is In danger, so as not to scare him, yet they desperately want to tell him how much they love him, and the mother in particular wants to hold him and never let go.

Hot seating also gave us the idea of revenge, where the parents set out on an anti-government campaign to oust the regime, and are prepared to die to avenge their son's life. We thought this could be very poignant. Although this stimulus had potential, and did raise some important questions, we felt that the stimulus about the Chinese orphanages was more relevant and topical to the world we live in, and it also had sub-issues such as poverty. This is why we decided to choose The Chinese Orphanage Article as out stimulus.

I was extremely happy with this stimulus, as I thought it had amazing potential, for a moving, controversial and highly entertaining piece of theatre. Topical, and heart rending, this article gave us amazing scope and a wide variety of approaches to explore. Our group first decided to do some research on the One Child Rule, as we thought it vital to portray this piece of theatre, which is of course based on truth, entirely accurately, so as to highlight the plight of these children, and because the truth in this case can be the key to a highly emotive piece of theatre. Our group discovered that the One Child Rule meant that if a family has more than one child, then they receive less state benefits such as free education.

After discussing this, we decided not to make the One Child Rule an issue, partly because of the casting problems where, we did not have enough

people to cater for that scenario, and partly because we felt that the fact that a family couldn't afford to have any children at all was an extremely important issue, which could be communicated to the audience to create an equally poignant piece of theatre as a case where the family couldn't afford a second child due to the One Child Rule. After brainstorming ideas about how to increase empathy and the understanding of characters in this situation, we decided it would be useful for each member of the group to go for 5 minutes and think up a character who live in poverty do desperate they can't have a child. To help us understand how we would feel in this situation, we used hot seating to help us be able to think like our chosen character automatically when asking questions. It also helped me when I was asking the questions, as I could understand new points about living in poverty I had overlooked before from the person in the hot seat.

We hot seated several characters, including the father and mother of the baby. We found that the father of the baby was more in favour of abandoning their baby, than the mother was. He wanted to protect what (few) assets they had. The mother on the other hand, was more reluctant to give up the baby, although she did accept that they wouldn't be able to care for her properly.

This gave us the idea that later on in life the baby's family could come into some money, and the mother, seeing as how now they could afford to keep the child, would set to find her child and bring her back into her life. After hot seating we decided that we had enough character ideas to begin casting for our idea. Our idea was that a poor couple in China hadn't the money to start a family, so they abandoned their baby. The baby was taken to an

orphanage, where another Chinese family who later moved to England adopted her. The poor Chinese couple then came into some money when a distant relative left them money in their will.

The mother of the child was then determined to find her daughter and bring her " home," as they could now afford to bring her up. The father was more sceptical and pointed out the difficulties in finding her. His views were more balanced and practical, where as the mothers will was clouded by maternal instincts and stubborn determination. The mother (Annabel) then makes it clear to the father (Charles) that she is going to find her daughter with or without his help, and subsequently gets a job in the orphanage where Annie (the abandoned baby) was found, in order to acquire information about her whereabouts. As there were many different climaxes and emotions in our piece of theatre, we decided to use role-play, freeze frame and thoughts aloud in unison.

We would have a role-play going between some of the characters. For example, one group member would give a scenario, e. g. " You have just abandoned your baby and are arguing about whether it was the right decision. " The characters cast as the biological mother and father would then start the role-play. At one point a group member would say: " stop.

This would usually happen at a climax or poignant moment. Then, the actors would freeze in a still image. This would allow the rest of the group to analyse both language and facial expressions Role-play also allowed us to generate and explore ideas. The actors would then give a thoughts-aloud, which would help them to perfect their characters mindset and views. One of

the scenarios we had was a possible scene after the family had abandoned the baby.

This produced many new ideas, such as the fact that the mother accused the father of not really wanting the baby, and the father claiming that the mother had become deranged and obsessed with having a child. The thoughts aloud revealed the character's inner feelings well, telling us that there were problems in that relationship, as there were two very different opinions about what to do, the father wanting to move on and forget, while the mother already making mental plans about how to get her baby back, and not accepting that she'll probably never see her child again.