Arts, Pedagogy and Cultural Resistance

New Materialisms

Edited by
Anna Hickey-Moody and Tara Page

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD INTERNATIONAL
London • New York
## Contents

List of Illustrations vii  
Acknowledgements ix  
Introduction: Making, Matter and Pedagogy 1  
*Anna Hickey-Moody and Tara Page*

1 Experimental Philosophy and Experimental Pedagogy:  
   A Single Vision  
   *Aislinn O’ Donnell*  
   21

2 Probeheads of Resistance and the Heterotopic Mirror:  
   Tiffany Chung and Dinh Q. Lê’s Stratigraphic Cartographies  
   *Colin Gardner*  
   41

3 Dorothy Heathcote: Practice as a Pedagogy of Resistance  
   *Anna Hickey-Moody and Amanda Kipling*  
   59

4 Art, Resistance and Demonic Pedagogy: From Parasite  
   Capitalism to Excommunication  
   *Charlie Blake and Jennie Stearns*  
   79

5 A Pedagogy of Possibilities: Drama as Reading Practice  
   *Maggie Pitfield*  
   95

6 ‘Let me change it into my own style’: Cultural Domination and  
   Material Acts of Resistance Within an Inner City Dance Class  
   *Camilla Stanger*  
   113

7 From Art Appreciation to Pedagogies of Dissent:  
   Critical Pedagogy and Equality in the Gallery  
   *Esther Sayers*  
   133
Contents

8 Ethnocinema and Video-as-Resistance
   Anne Harris

9 Manifesto: The Rhizomatics of Practice as Research
   Anna Hickey-Moody

References

Index

Notes on Contributors
Chapter 5

A Pedagogy of Possibilities

Drama as Reading Practice

Maggie Pitfield

In the shifting political landscape of education in England, the discipline of English has been particularly prone to the policy interventions of successive governments. Nevertheless, when pedagogy and critical learning connect with the experiences that learners bring, the classroom can offer a site not only of resistance, but of possibility (Giroux, 2003). Jones (2003) refers to this as the ‘cultural connectedness’ (145) of the English classroom and suggests that it is threatened by officially sponsored discourses of ‘entitlement’, a term which obfuscates ‘the predominance in the curriculum of a single type of authorised knowledge’ (149) and the expectation that a teacher’s role is to provide learners with ‘access’ to it.

In this chapter, my aim is to explore how the pedagogy and practice of one teacher pays heed to cultural connectedness, unleashing the possibilities and potentials for reading in the English lesson through ‘the entanglement of matter and meaning’ (Dolphijn and van der Tuin, 2012, 50) during drama activity. In this classroom, learners, learners and teacher, and texts materially intra-act, demonstrating that effective teaching and learning always has an affective dimension (Lovat, 2010; Mulcahy, 2012), with affect ‘used to refer to intensities or energies that produce new affective and embodied connections’ (Mulcahy, 2012, 11).

The observations of and interview with this one teacher, Shona, an English teacher in a culturally diverse, inner London boys’ secondary school, give an account of the role that drama plays in her lessons and illustrate the integral nature of drama to learners’ engagements with literary texts. Although the term ‘literary text’ is value laden, I am employing it to describe at the most basic level ‘the texts most widely read within secondary English classrooms’ (Yandell, 2014, 1). I am particularly focusing on learners’ exploration and production of the re-creative text. At subject level the re-creative mode brings
together the processes of reading and writing and at the level of the learner, the role of critic with that of text creator (Knights and Thurgar-Dawson, 2008). The productive tension between critical and creative/affective engagement is mirrored in the interpretative position of the practice-led researcher who must consider how the ‘materiality of a creative work impacts on both the content and the reading of that content’ (Haseman and Mafe, 2009, 216) and how this is represented, explained, defined or amplified through arts practices as research. Similar questions to do with reading and representation are apparent in the context of Shona’s English lessons. Whereas the re-creative text in English is usually produced in written form, it is my contention that in the observed lessons, the dramatic representation stands as the text produced. Therefore, the interaction between the source and re-creative texts is intertextual in nature, in that it draws on a ‘network of textual relations’ (Allen, 2011, 1) both within and outside the classroom and from beyond the written mode. In new materialist terms, the texts are not treated as pre-existing entities, but as intra-action, as forces from which other texts come into existence (Dolphins and van der Tuin, 2012, 57). Thus, engaging learners in re-creative activities in response to reading a literary text is a means of supporting them to become active, self-aware readers and is a key part of Shona’s practice as an English teacher.

In constructing my analysis, I define and amplify (Haseman and Mafe, 2009) the practices of the classroom by means of a series of illustrative vignettes which are typical of the teaching and learning behaviours on display in Shona’s classroom. Her approach recognizes that drama is an embodied and material practice ‘and that materiality of matter lies at the core of creative practice’ (Bolt, 2013, 5). As drama activity employs the full range of representational and communicational modes, for example, metaphoric, symbolic, semiotic, discursive, evaluative, that are involved in the production of English (Medway, 2003/2004; Kress et al., 2005), it is useful to view the data through a multimodal lens (Kress et al., 2005). Therefore, in addition to my observations and interview, I draw on video recordings of the lessons, considering the spatial arrangement of the classroom setting, the learner-to-learner and learner-to-teacher interactions, gesture, gaze, movement, and so on, to interrogate and deepen my understanding of the practices that occur. While the multimodal perspective of the analysis acknowledges ‘arts’ very materiality’ (Bolt, 2013, 4), it does not deny the importance of inquiring into the meaning of the language of the English lessons (Doecke, 2014). Neither does it make any special claim to researcher objectivity because as an ex-English and drama teacher of some twenty-four years and now a teacher-educator in the field, I construct myself as both insider and outsider in this context. This is a methodological approach not dissimilar to Swain’s (2006) description of the ‘semi-participant’ observer (201). In my case I am both participant and
observer, implicated in the practice through my professional immersion in the field of enquiry, and bringing my insider knowledge to bear. This is how knowledge, ideas and resonances from the past legitimately interact with research in the present to identify new theoretical positions and create new knowledge (Nicholson, 2009; Dolphijn and van der Tuin, 2012). The new materialist scholar, Barad (Dolphijn and van der Tuin, 2012), calls into question the idea that researcher objectivity is achieved through distancing and proposes that ‘Listening for the response of the other and an obligation to be responsive to the other’ (69) is both necessary and ethically sound. Therefore, among the voices of the teacher and learners, my own can be heard, and my engagement with both is duly noted.

Through this approach I want to understand how Shona’s use of drama realizes the aims of re-creation in ‘promoting an exchange between critical and creative practice’ (Knights and Thurgar-Dawson, 2008, 8) that is reciprocal, mutually enhancing, and enables learners’ critical engagement with literary texts through this very particular kind of cultural production. From my experiences of her lessons, I argue that the drama is of itself re-creative and acts as the medium of composition, with the learners using the resources of mind with body to make meaning through their acts of re-creation and in a collaboration that is wider than that of one writer to one reader. It is this wider collaboration which addresses some of the inadequacies of reader-response theory in describing how texts are encountered, discussed and indeed read in the English classroom (Yandell, 2014). The resulting dramatic text stands as the creative, embodied composition that is in dialogue with the source text.

In one of the observed lessons, the learners experiment with dramatic representation to explore a poem, and the other lesson focuses on an event described in the Michael Morpurgo novel Warhorse (2007). Both demonstrate how Shona uses drama in ‘a direct material engagement’ (Dolphijn and van der Tuin, 2012, 52), to encourage learners to position their re-created dramatic text with the original. This engagement ‘is not just a matter of interference but of entanglement’ with the texts, serving to ‘open up and rework the agential conditions of possibility’ (52) in the classroom. Learners’ creative and critical responses are viewed as neither distinct nor hierarchically connected, although the formal curriculum tends to foreground the latter type of response, but instead they exist in a symbiotic relationship. The lessons also demonstrate the ways in which Shona translates into practice her stated beliefs about the nature of English and the nature of drama in English. They show how the interpretation of the learners is encapsulated in their often playful responses to the tasks they are set. This playfulness is entirely in keeping with production through the re-creative mode in English, and demonstrates how Shona is reaching out ‘after a more democratic, participative cultural practice’ (Knights and Thurgar-Dawson, 2008, 33, drawing on Barthes).
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLAY AND DRAMA

Shona, as an English teacher employing drama in her English lessons on a regular basis, emphasizes the importance to her practice of the relationship between play and drama, conceptualizing drama as a powerful extension of play-based learning (Bolton, 1979). She returns to this theme a number of times in her interview, variously identifying the purposes of play: learning English as engagement, motivation and fun; an imaginative stimulus (the what if-ing aspect of play); practice for action in different situations; practice for language use. In the way that she links commitment to the fictitious created and the 'what if' mental stance required in creating it, there are echoes of Heathcote’s thoughts on ‘the implication of “if”’ (Johnson and O’Neill, 1991, 25) in drama practice and of O’Neill’s process drama methodology (O’Neill, 1995; Taylor and Warner, 2006) in which learners are also ‘agents making theatre happen’ (Bolton, 1998, 231). Similarly, Byron (1998) suggests that drama in the English classroom necessarily ‘suspends or modifies the “real” context and social network of the classroom in favour of “as if” context and network’ (125). To facilitate this, Shona’s planning, classroom organization focus on the social and the interactive, indicating a social constructivist perspective on learning is integral to her pedagogical approach. Thus, the activity in her classroom recognizes that our ‘making’ experience of art is always and necessarily culturally and socially mediated (Barrett and Bolt, 2013, 4). However, the embodied nature of the drama practices employed to explore texts ensures that in the meaning-making process ‘art’s very materiality is not subsumed by the ‘the textual, the linguistic, the discursive’ (Barrett and Bolt, 2013, 4). Shona describes the English classroom when learners are engaged in drama:

I think it’s noisier and less pretty to look at, it’s messy, there’s an awful lot of laughing and general kind of ‘carry on’, which I quite like, to some extent although when I get tired sometimes I don’t. But yes, overall I quite like the aspect of it. And then I think the connections that students make are much better. Yeah, I suppose that’s what I think. There’s something about . . . so I think with my Year 9s last year doing Richard III . . . well for one thing they loved it, but also they talked a lot, and some of them were interviewed for the Creative Partnerships work and they talked a lot about how much better they understood it because they played with it. (Interview with Shona, 3 November 2011)

This is a perspective on learning that connects a certain anarchic ‘messiness’ in the atmosphere and conduct of the lesson with pupils’ playfulness and their making of conceptual connections. Thus, embedded in Shona’s comments is an understanding of the need to establish a classroom context in which learners can identify themselves as agentive, cultural producers.
In this sense, ‘agency is an enactment, a matter of possibilities for reconfiguring entanglements’ (Dolphijn and van der Tuin, 2012, 54). The types of conceptual connections that learners make and how these constitute learning in English are explored further in my account of the observed lessons. Shona’s reference to Creative Partnerships, an intra-action between artists, teachers and learners, is also relevant as her significant involvement in this large-scale arts project is a source of professional pride and achievement. Her commitment over several years to the project points to her genuine interest in working creatively in the classroom with young people and the implications of such an approach for her practice.

THE LEARNING CONTEXT

Shona’s creative approach is apparent in her use of drama to engage learners with literary texts in English, suggesting her understanding of works of literature as ‘creative media that prompt affective responses’ and generate knowledge production through ‘material changes . . . in the consciousness of the body’ (Hickey-Moody, 2009, 274), and that ‘bodily activity’ is ‘intimately connected with both affect and intellect’ (Franks et al., 2014, 172). That drama employed in this way is not perceived by the learners as special or unusual but rather a normal part of what they do when reading poetry and works of fiction in English lessons is highlighted when Shona sets up the freeze frame activity in the lesson on poetry. A pupil asks, ‘is it drama work?’, and Shona replies, ‘yes, it’s your drama work’. Her use of ‘your’ is indicative of the responsibility for the learning that she shares with the class, and suggests that she does not view agency as something that can be possessed but rather as ‘response-ability . . . the possibilities of mutual response’ (Dolphijn and van der Tuin, 2012, 55) through enactment—in a literal sense here, dramatic enactment. There is no ripple of surprise from learners, no discernible change of atmosphere in terms of learners’ reactions or body language to suggest that this way of working is in any way atypical of Shona’s English lessons. This is unlike the reactions of learners in English lessons I observed at a different school, when teachers unused to utilizing drama as a regular part of their practice sought to introduce a drama activity. Shona is able to draw positively on both the classroom culture that she has established and reaffirmed over time and learners’ prior learning through drama, for example, when she reminds them of how impressed she was with their ‘strong, sculptural, statue-like freeze frames’ in a previous lesson.

Nevertheless, the influence of the wider policy context is ever-present, and Shona expresses concerns about the ephemeral nature of the drama work and whether it can stand as evidence of learning in English or add any discernible
value to the writing that learners produce. The complexity of the interaction between social relations and subject knowledge in the classroom ensures that it is no simple matter for the researcher to discern the extent of such external pressures on pedagogical beliefs and practices (Jewitt and Jones, 20). However, both of Shona’s lessons are planned to end with a brief writing task, despite the fact that she has already planned for learners to engage with an extended piece of creative writing at a later point, which will fold in experience gained from their embodied composition into written composition. This suggests the tensions between spending a considerable amount of lesson time on activities related to the drama work and the perceived need for her learners to produce a tangible lesson-by-lesson record, if not of the learning, then at least of the activities that have taken place.

As an experienced and confident teacher of English, she acknowledges potential of drama in terms of deep learning over time and of leaving this embed rather than insisting on an instant verbalization of what learners have learnt:

I don’t think in drama-based lessons I always get them to the point at the end of the lesson where we’ve really teased out that ‘what did we learn?’, but I think sometimes that comes . . . it’s what they bring back to the next lesson from having done all of that is sometimes most powerful. (interview with Shona, 3 November 2011)

Her use of drama suggests a concern for ‘the experience of the whole person, of thinking, feeling “bodies in space” and how active experience “settles in the body”’ (Franks et al., 2014, 177), and this is at odds with the very strong need to log, record and account for, which, as Wrigley (2010) warns, ‘can distort the curriculum’ (19):

How much time can we spend on the fun stuff and how full should the book be of long pieces of writing? (interview with Shona, 3 November 2011)

This somewhat dismissive characterization of drama as ‘the fun stuff’, when elsewhere in the interview Shona subjects the part that drama plays in her English teaching to a much more in-depth analysis, highlights the relationship between classroom practices and imposed discourses. Schools, teachers and learners is not always a comfortable one. Detect here are echoes of the debate around what constitutes ‘rigour’ (Yandell, 2010), particularly in the core subject of English, which is fed at policy level by concerns about England’s ranking in the OECD PISA comparisons: standards of literacy. Thus, teacher and learners cannot remain unaffected by the constraints of policy, with such discourses often being instantiated classroom practice.
However, it would be wrong to assume that the teacher, and indeed the learners, are wholly without agency (Yandell, 2014), even though ‘Teachers are under siege all over the world like they never have been in the past, and schools are assaulted relentlessly by the powerful forces of neo-liberalism’ (Giroux, 2003, 7). Thus, for Shona a concern to justify the time spent on drama in English is translated into a matter for professional inquiry about the efficacy of drama as a way of reading a text and as a precursor to writing about it:

And I think overall the writing on it [the text studied] is better too, they write better about the things they’ve played with. And that was one of the things that I tried to do a little bit last year myself, was trying to make connections between writing and things that we’d done drama work, play-based work with, I suppose satisfying myself that the outcomes on paper justified the time. And I think time is a conflict. Even at key stage 3, I think time is an issue. (interview with Shona, 3 November 2011)

Embedded in this comment is a belief that dramatic play as part of textual study and reading in the English classroom is linked to progress in writing. This is a connection that has been thoroughly explored in research at primary school level (Barrs and Cork, 2001; Cremin et al., 2006; Safford and Barrs, 2005), where in-role drama work has proved to be a powerful stimulus, allowing children to adopt different voices in their writing (Barrs and Cork, 2001). Work in the creative arts, including that around literature texts, has led to ‘improved attitudes to school literacy’ such that children ‘write with more interest and commitment, because their creative arts experiences give them something to think, talk and write about’ (Safford and Barrs, 2005, 192). In addition, the findings of Cremin et al. (2006) demonstrate that the opportunity for “seizing the moment to write” (288) as part of their drama work around fiction texts has a positive impact on children’s writing development, such that ‘imaginative engagement in the tense scenarios of drama appears to help them form and transform experience and create, cultivate and effectively communicate their own and others’ ideas in written text’ (289).

Another powerful discourse, that of assessment requirements, unsurprisingly finds its way into Shona’s classroom and is overtly referenced when she reminds learners of the grading system for their profiles that will be reported to parents/carers on academic review day. Significantly, though, her mention of National Curriculum levels ‘which you’ll be familiar with’ is brief and almost in passing before she spends time explaining the other aspects for which they will receive credit. She focuses on ‘relationships with others, your group work, your cooperation’ and ‘participation in lessons . . . so it’s not just about being quiet and good, although that’s important too, but it’s also about, did you
participate, did you come up with ideas, did you get involved?’ This discourse runs alongside the formal ones to do with curriculum requirements and assessment, and contains more nuanced messages about what Shona believes important in the activities planned and how the learners might approach them.

Remember, my biggest rule with this type of work, if I don’t speak to you in group, you know you’re doing a brilliant job. If I come past and I’m just making notes on you and I don’t actually have to speak to you, you know you’re already doing a great job. (lesson observation)
I might ask you to, I might say stop and show me something, but what I’m not having to do is say, what’s your job, what are you doing, I’m not having to ask you lots of questions about the work because you’re actually getting on. So when you see me come round your tables you need to pretty much ignore me; you just get on with the work and let me listen in, assess and judge what you’re doing. (lesson observation)

While she is reinforcing a view of the English classroom and the work that takes place within it as rule-governed, the rules are to do with cooperation, sharing, exchange and interaction. This is Shona’s pedagogy, but it is more than that. By her explicit statement to ‘pretty much ignore me’, which at first glance might appear simply to refer to operational issues, she is implicitly communicating her belief that the learners must be allowed autonomy if they are to have agency. In sharing with them a degree of responsibility for the progress of the lesson as well as communicating the high value she places on the collaborative process in learning about the text, she is destabilising her role as the affecting body (Hickey-Moody 2009). The time allocated to the development of their drama—50 percent of each lesson is taken up with improvising, presenting and discussing—also communicates its importance to their learning. There is no doubt, however, that Shona remains an influential presence as the listener, the assessor and the judge, but this is not the kind of ‘authoritarianism in the classroom’ which ‘dehumanises and thus shrinks down the “magic” that is always present when individuals are active learners’ (hooks, 2003, 43). Indeed, there is still a powerful sense that knowledge is co-constructed in this classroom through a dialogic intra-action of text, self, group and teacher. Her practice, therefore, does not conform to a ‘banking concept of education’ (Freire, 1993, 53), as she accepts that there must be partnership between teacher and learners to promote critical thinking, and she has trust in their ‘creative power’ (56).

One indicator of the ‘learning community’ (hooks, 2003, 49) being forged here, in which all, including the teacher, must have the opportunity to ‘be here and feel like creative, expert, practising artists’ (Hulson, 2006, 12), is the way in which the classroom setting is physically transformed into ‘a site of social
semiotic activity’ (Yandell, 2008, 48). With just a few exceptions, learners stand, move between desks, approach each other, gesture to each other, make eye contact (or not), make physical contact, and so on, as Shona circulates the room, occasionally engaging in dialogue with learners.

While she is not a totally unobtrusive presence in her work with different groups, she does not dominate the space and her body language is relaxed. She acts as both collaborator and the experienced other who provides ‘adult guidance’ in the dynamic relationship between development and learning which is characterized by Vygotsky’s metaphor of the ‘zone of proximal development’ (Vygotsky, 1978, 1994). Shona’s ‘collaborative instructional practice’ (Daniels, 2001, 55) acknowledges the ability of drama to ‘foster a highly particular zone of proximal development’ enabling learners ‘to move between their actual developmental levels whilst they are both participant and audience’ (Hulson, 2006, 6–7), as well as reflecting the heuristic nature of the re-creative mode in English.

THE ROLE OF PLAY IN THE RE-CREATIVE DRAMA ACTIVITY

The physical adaptations to the classroom context, the movement of the learners and their freedom to engage without constant teacher mediation of their interactions with each other and with the text also signal that an improvisational approach is integral to the process of making meaning. Play, of the type that is regulated by and contextualized in the classroom setting (Baker-Sennett et al., 1992), is an important aspect of this in the lesson on the poem Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening by Robert Frost (www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/171621).

Shona begins by reading the poem aloud to the class, asking one pupil to briefly explain what is happening in the poem, but her expectation is that learners will go on to demonstrate their understanding of what they have read through the re-creative drama activity. She delineates the form of their dramatic representations by specifying that learners will use a combination of freeze frame, mime and choral speaking or narration, and probes their existing knowledge of these tools for making drama. Learners’ contributions suggest familiarity with the techniques and also an understanding that the ‘language’ they will use to explore the poem reaches beyond speech.

Ricky (on freeze frame): ‘When the actors stop moving in a strong powerful moment.’

Nathaniel (on mime): ‘Do the action in an emotional way. When you do an action you do it in a way of using your whole body.’
Jermaine (on chorus): ‘It’s like a group activity.’

Nathaniel (on chorus): ‘It’s like someone and someone else (indicating this by placing his hands on one side of the desk then the other), it’s like everyone combining each other in action, speak, emotion and um emotion together to make one kind of piece of language.’

Tom (on chorus): ‘It’s not just humans speaking, sometimes it can be like birds and drums.’

Thus, the poem is to be experienced playfully, materially, emotionally and collectively, and all these will combine as learners work towards understanding, interpretation and shared cultural production. The learners’ comment indicate that ‘In thinking about domains of theatre and drama, the concept of physicality, “bodiliness”’ (Franks et al., 2014, 172) is familiar to them and that they are aware that ‘Literary affect’ might become ‘corporeal affect’ (Hickey-Moody, 2009, 275). Shona also draws on another preliminary activity during which learners have considered the differences between a real and visual representations of horses in cartoon and CGI depictions. She asks for an ‘expert’ opinion on the leg movements of a horse when running.

Elias: ‘the front ones go in and the back ones . . . the front ones go forward and it sort of puts them in rhythm . . . ’ (he demonstrates with his arms, and uses his fists as hooves beating out the rhythm on the desk).

This focus on the movement of the horse brings about some playful responses from learners. A group that includes Elias experiment, and he shows the others some hip hop-style dance moves he might include. Erik kneels and Elias sits on his back bouncing up and down until Shona approaches them and encourages all four group members to begin galloping on the spot. Their movements in response are uninhibited and for that reason are effective in representing horses galloping. Encouraged, Elias demonstrates a shimmying movement of his head, arms and upper body to coincide with the line ‘He gives his harness bells a shake,’ and Shona joins in as if she is ‘a student among students’ explicitly seeking to ‘serve the cause of [their] liberation’ (Freire, 1993, 56). This enjoyment in playing with the idea of a horse and movement, encouraged by Shona’s participation, is reminiscent of child play with imitation featuring as part of the learners’ repertoire. There is clearly pleasure, signalled by the laughter, in the uninhibited nature of the playing.

However, a more deliberate move towards choreographed movement takes place as the learners work together to hone their presentation, which signals the ‘change of gear’ that moves the playing towards its ‘dramatic art form’ (Bolton, 1979, 32). This is not easy to achieve (Franks, 1997), as it requires collaboration, negotiation, attention to the poem and a collective desire to
create an imaginatively expressed horse and rider which will elicit recognition from others. However, when they present to the class, it is clear from their choreography and careful synchronization of words with movement that their playing with the text has, over time and without further intervention from Shona, acquired a discipline. The hip hop dance and the shimmy are included in the presentation, and Elias is grinning at other learners, the audience, as he dances. They in turn are smiling and laughing back at him as if in recognition of this shared cultural reference which has imposed itself on a very different type of cultural artefact, the poem chosen by the teacher, in the formal setting of the classroom.

To adapt terms coined by Gillham (1974) and used extensively by Bolton (2010), the learners’ presentation is indicative of how ‘play for the pupil’ has become ‘play for the class’ and this ‘play for them’ is the ‘children’s angle of connection’ (xvii). The ‘play for teacher’, has, however, involved Shona carefully ‘weaving in the components of the art form’ (xvii), which Hulson (2006) describes as the skill of the teacher to bind ‘the formal, the expressive-interpretive and the productive strands’ (12) of learning into their drama practice.

The activity leading to the group’s presentation also has echoes of Bakhtinian ‘carnivalesque’ (Bakhtin, 1984), heightening learners’ awareness of the materiality of their bodies in relation to the other bodies that make up the classroom community, as ‘classrooms are clearly “bodied spaces”’ (Franks et al., 2014, 172). However, for ‘boys in their early adolescence, physical contact between peers tends to be problematic and is often confined to particular modes’ (Franks, 1997, 140), but this activity has enabled a different physicality to emerge through the relationship of horse and rider. Furthermore, the sharing of the experience evokes a sense of belonging, in evidence in the communal laughter. By eschewing more conventional methods of studying a poem in English in favour of play and parody, Shona has provided the opportunity for new connections to be made. Thus, the drama activity and Shona’s earlier encouragement of learners’ playfulness with the text have paved the way for imaginative engagement, what Hulson (2006) refers to as the teacher’s ‘Imagination in conference with experience’ (12). That the learners feel able to engage in this way says much about Shona’s pedagogical approach, which holds with the idea that drama experience is at once aesthetic, empathetic, reflective, entertaining (for others) and pleasurable (Heathcote, 1980). The multifaceted nature of the drama activity therefore makes it integral to her teaching of a literary text.

In another group, Sammy and Fariq create a horse and rider combination that sees Sammy engaging in an animated set of horse movements. Unlike in the previous example, these two are in a group that appears to find it difficult to arrive at a way of operating collectively, with all four members of the
group communicating only sporadically. Their interactions are characterised by a lack of whole group decision making. This is emphasized by the physical distance between them, particularly Joel and Duane, who remain apart from the other two. However, jointly deciding on the horse movements allows them to briefly come together to play with and explore the idea of 'horse'.

In any group pursuing drama work, there are likely to be inequalities in terms of input, and the power relationships may adversely affect interactions and the formation of ideas. Alternatively, the tensions may lead to creative energy and it is not a simple matter for the observer to discern whether the former or the latter is occurring (Franks, 1997). However, Joel's mockery of Sammy does not seem to deter him, and he becomes increasingly goal directed; repeatedly practising his choreography. Sammy adds further recognition to movements to communicate 'horse', although his human facial expression add an anthropomorphic slant.

Sammy is keen to inform me, as I observe the group practising, that Fariq is both horse and rider, his legs being the back legs of the horse and his torso arms and head the rider, while Sammy is the front legs, torso and head of the horse. It is unclear as to whether this is his own or a jointly agreed representation of their horse/rider combination, but its shared embodiment is suggestive of a pantomime horse as well as of horse and rider games in the school playground, perhaps played at a younger age but nevertheless a reference point. It might also be influenced by the puppetry in the stage adaptation of Warhorse, the novel that the learners have been studying. These are cultural referents for 'horse' that he can share with his peers. Sammy's commitment to and pleasure he clearly gains from repeatedly practising his choreography indicates his deep involvement in this 'play for the pupil' in which his 'desire' acts as 'the force or drive towards expression and creativity' (Franks, 1997, 13).

This is somewhat different to his attitude in other English lessons where I've observed his quiet disengagement from discussions and written work. However, when Shona begins to call the class back to work, he excitedly indicates to Fariq that he wants to practise their routine one more time.

In both of these vignettes the learners' play is in alignment with the 'play for the teacher' which has been determined by her pedagogical goals as set by the components of drama she has chosen for shaping and structuring presentations. The literary study is approached with recourse to the affective, sensory and at times sensual nature of anthropomorphic tropes in literature and the idea of searching for the humanity in the (ultimately unknowable) animal as a way of reflecting on the human condition. At the outset of the lesson, Shona has explained that learners will be working on ways to think like an animal, trying to get inside its head, to consider what it is like to be one linking to their recent reading of Warhorse. To do so, she encourages them to try out evoking a horse through physical embodiment, for as Eagleton (2001),
suggests, 'our bodies are materially geared to culture—because meaning, symbolism, interpretation and the like are essential to what we are' (159). Having a body is 'like having a language' and 'is a way of being in the midst of a world' (166). In the lesson on Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening, the activity that Shona has instigated draws on the cultural reference points in the world of the young people, and it is largely through the body that these learners discover and signify a horse. This, in embryonic form, seems to be what Nathaniel is suggesting in his comments quoted above about the emotional nature of action, particularly collaborative action, and in his assertion that a type of language is created by combining action, speech and emotion.

RE-CREATION AND RE-ENACTMENT

Within the constraints of the dramatic form specified by Shona, the playfully re-creative relationship between the learners and the poem is demonstrated in different ways by the various groups in the class. The group comprised of Joel, Sammy, Fariq and Duane choose to adapt the narrative to satisfy their own desire to compose and to create character, making the shadowy owner of the woods an embodied presence, inventing dialogue for him and resolving the journey of the horse and rider in a way that is absent from the poem. Rather than viewing this sequence as a misinterpretation, Shona acknowledges it as an act of remaking, a challenge to the notion of sole authorship which is encouraged by the way in which she has actualized the study of the poem through affect as well as intellect. Playing physically with the text has engaged the learners with it, and has enabled re-reading and interpretation. This is demonstrated in both Joel's drive to create context through character and Sammy's blurring of animal and human gestures in a way that is entirely in keeping with the poem narrator's anthropomorphic attribution of particular thoughts to his horse.

However, in dealing with the different anthropomorphic approach of the novel Warhorse, in which the horse is the central character providing the voice of the narrator, Shona effects another way into the drama work. She focuses on an episode in which Joey, the horse, is trapped on his own in no man's land during a scene of trench warfare in World War I. Both sides raise the white flag to allow one soldier from each army to rescue him. A flip of a coin determines that the Welsh soldier will claim him. As her entry point into this scene, Shona asks for an affective response and does not mention re-enactment when she sets up the drama activity. Instead, she encourages learners to engage with the emotions that Joey would be feeling in this situation and asks them to create a freeze frame to represent these emotions from a list they generate.
This move to a more symbolic still image representation—of emotion rather than events—might suggest her concerns about the value of retelling simply to animate narrative (Byron, 1986). However, it is arguably retelling can ever merely replicate (Bruner, 1986). This is illustrated by the response of Elias, Erik, Rudy and William. They immediately become engaged with the scene as depicted in the novel, settling into the physicality of their roles. Erik folds a piece of paper with concentration, and holds it in the air as a white flag. He sinks to his knees then all the way to the ground in a very controlled manner, almost in slow motion, while holding the flag and staring at it. As he is sinking, he allows the paper to flutter downward in his hand. He immediately jumps upright and holds the flag high in the air again. He is very precise in practising these positions.

Rudy also wants to raise a flag, and so takes a piece of paper from his pocket. He and Erik position themselves equidistant from Elias as Joey. The picture created is of the different sides in the war, with Elias trapped in no man’s land between them. Rudy and Erik hold their flags aloft, taking great care of their positioning in terms of the exact distance between them and mirroring the way in which they hold the flags. Shona calls the class to attention, and they quickly practise the holding of their flags aloft one last time—the streak of their arms is very exaggerated as if indicating that the flag needs to be big enough to be seen from a long distance away and the tension in their arms and bodies suggests the importance they attach to the action. When they have present the freeze frame to the class, William is positioned watching the scene and apparently recording it in a notebook.

This exploration of a scene from the novel through drama activity suggests the link between an affective and analytical response to literature in reaching an understanding of the power of narrative. Indeed, for these learners the image is clearly something very powerful—symbolic rather than simply representational—in the act of holding the white flag aloft. The action, and the way in which it is meticulously reproduced and then presented, shifts the perspective from the horse (always present in the first person narrative of the novel) to two soldiers holding the flags. Bruner (1986) notes the reader’s psychological capacity to identify with the characters and relate them to characters who ‘carry unconsciously within us’ (4). Thus, when the other learners offer the readings of the freeze frame during whole-class feedback on the presentation they imbue the characters with feelings and concerns that might be taken from the novel but also from their wider knowledge, for example, by suggesting that William could be an eye witness and that he is saddened, scared and wanting to get away from the anticipated violence.

The compelling nature of the narrative that has so engaged Rudy and Erik demonstrates that the text is not inert; it has materiality and agency, and ‘a relationship of co-responsibility’ (Bolt, 2013, 6) with the learners.
cultural producers. The narrative not only enables them to interpret ‘the landscape of action’ but also brings them to an understanding of ‘the landscape of consciousness: what those involved in the action know, think, or feel, or do not know, think, or feel’ (Bruner, 1986, 14). Thus, texts are only fully realized in the moment of reading, and reading is therefore a dynamic act (Bruner, 1986, referencing Iser). The learners’ ‘telling back’ (6) of the story melds the act of reading with the act of improvising as they develop their constantly shifting ‘virtual text’ (7). What emerges is a dynamic group reading rather than any one individual’s intra-action with the text. The ideas of the different members of the group may jostle for dominance at different times (Franks, 1997), but eventually they converge and cohere.

CONCLUSION

The pedagogical approach apparent in these lessons suggests that Shona regards the classroom as an uncertain and dialogic space, in which art making is a ‘socially and culturally mediated’ (Barrett and Bolt, 2013, 4) act produced not just as a result of the linguistic turn but through practices, which ‘engage the matter of bodies’ (5). Here ‘the formal curriculum’ can encounter and even negotiate with ‘the cultures of learners’ (Jones, 2003, 145), resisting those aspects of policy which seek ‘to redefine “culture” itself’ and control ‘from above’ (145–6). Through drama, the learners in Shona’s English lessons are able to draw on their own cultures in their engagements with character, linguistic effects, and the use of literary tropes such as metaphor, and in the case of the lessons I observed, anthropomorphism. These encounters ‘evoke zestful imaginative play’ (Bruner, 1986, 4) as the wellspring of cultural production. Thus, drama is at the very heart of the learning that takes place, and as such has a fundamental place in Shona’s understanding of the epistemological scope of her subject. Her realization of this has emerged over time through the praxis of her developing pedagogy. Although, she admits, she did not fully appreciate the importance of dramatic practices during her initial teacher education, what she has learnt since has subsequently become embedded in her practice. As Neelands (1992) has suggested, it speaks to the value system of the teacher who decides ‘to adopt drama into her repertoire of teaching styles’ (9) as an integral part of the shared creative and cultural resources of the classroom and as a way of enhancing language and literary learning.

The drama activity in the observed lessons indicates Shona’s understanding of the complexities of literary learning and of ‘the processes of reading and entering a story’ (Bruner, 1986, 4), as there are multiple ways of reading a literary text. Her methods are suggestive of Barad’s (Dolphijn and
van der Tuin, 2012) notion of diffractive reading, whereby such reading ‘bring inventive provocations; they are good to think with’ (50). The re-creation serves to stimulate the readers’ interpretative processes. through their imaginative responses to fiction, here externalized in the dramatic mode, the learners also have a means of expressing their rich fictional lives (Vygotsky, 1994). Dramatic activity lends an immediacy to imaginative experience of fictional texts and is well placed to meet the aspects of the re-creative mode to do with ‘restoring and licensing sensor pleasure in engagement with text’ (Knights and Thurgar-Dawson, 2008, 7). Pleasure and the role of desire in learners’ dramatic engagements with texts (Franks, 1997) are explicitly linked to the Vygotskian formulation of imagination in adolescence (Vygotsky, 1994). Franks (1997) suggests that drama in schools, by legitimizing adolescent play, externalizes and gives embodiment to inner desires which are dynamic, socially orientated and responsive to context. In these circumstances, the dramatic activity is simultaneous immersive and self-aware. The learners are emotionally engaged in the act of fiction making and as audience to their own creation are also critically engaged (Bolton, 2010) in a ‘respectful, detailed, ethical’ manner (Dolphy and van der Tuin, 2012, 50). Immersion and self-awareness are both necessary components of the re-creative activity in Shona’s lessons, and her practice encompasses the playful qualities of the learners’ dramatic responses employing these to pedagogical effect.

Thus, in playing with and re-creating the source text through intra-activity between self and text, learners are able to create a physical palimpsest, positioning themselves with the author in an authoritative way, as well as authorizing (Jones, 2003) their own shared knowledge and interpretation. The drama work encourages ‘critical awareness and engagement’ such that the learner is ‘an active participant, not a passive consumer’ (hooks, 1994, 1) and ensures that the reading of literary texts in this English classroom is not an act of cultural transmission but of cultural production, as learners are able to entangle their own experiences with those of the classroom to unlock the possibilities of reading.

NOTES

1. Name changed to protect identity.
2. The Creative Partnerships programme was designed to bring creative work such as artists, architects and scientists into schools to work with teachers. It worked with over 2,700 schools across England from 2002 to 2011, at which point the Arts Council England withdrew funding.
3. Also known as still image or tableau.
6. Key stage 3 refers to 11- to 14-year-olds.
7. Protests in Tahir Square in the revolt against the government in Egypt were being reported daily at this time.
References


References


References


B. A. Trentham, 19–44.


References


References


References


References


Gambian Foundation.


York: VI(2) Fall. John Gray Archive.

A. (2014a). Ethnocinema and the impossibility of culture. International Jour-


(2011). Slowly by slowly: Ethnocinema, media and the young women of the


L. (1977). Prometheus as performer: Toward a posthumanist culture, 205. In

Arnas and C. Caramello (Eds.), Performance in Postmodern Culture. Mail-

Coda Books, 201–217.

B. (2007). Rupture and recognition: Identifying the performative research

nym. In E. Barrett and B. Bolt (Eds.), Practice as Research: Approaches to


Practice-led Researchers. In H. Smith and R. T. Dean (Eds.), Practice-led

Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts (211–28). Edinburgh:

University Press.

K. and Hadfield, M. (2011). Video in Social Science Research: Functions and

uses. Abingdon: Routledge.

K. (1997). The posthuman body: Inscription and incorporation in Galatea 2.2


C., Hindmarsh, J. and Luff, P. (2010). Video in Qualitative Research:


D. (1980). Drama as Context: The National Association for the Teaching

English. Sheffield: National Association for Teaching English.


Case of the Expert Approach to Education. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.


E. (1991). The museum and the needs of people. International Committee of


Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.


(2013). Youth, Arts and Education: Reassembling Subjectivity Through

Abingdon: Routledge.


Crossroad publishing.
References


References


References


References


cical Education, 10, 211–23.


-.on: Centre for Literacy in Primary Education.


London: Oxford University Press.
Chicago: Chicago University Press.
Psychology: Theory, Practice and Research from Japan. New York: Information
Age Publishing (IAP).
Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Television.
Springgay, S. (2008). An ethics of embodiment, civic engagement and artography:
Ways of becoming nomadic in art, research and teaching. Educational Insights,
12(2), 1–11.
Sense Publishers.
in challenging gendered media imagery? International Journal of Art and Design
Stearns, J. and Blake, C. (2013). It’s been getting under my skin: Paranoia, parasit-
osis, and the pedagogical imperative. Cultural Formations, 2. Available at http://
culturalformations.org/its-been-getting-under-my-skin-paranoia-parasitosis-and-
the-pedagogical-imperative/.
of Minnesota Press.
———. (2000). The Invention of Modern Science. Minneapolis: University of
Minnesota Press.
Stewart, R. (2010). Creating New Stories for Praxis: Navigations, Narrations, Neo-
———. (2000). The Invention of Modern Science. Minneapolis: University of
Minnesota Press.
References


Ceily O’Neill. Stoke on Trent, UK and Sterling, USA: Trentham Books.

toolkit @Teachertoolkit.me (accessed 12 August 2014).


References

Maggie Pitfield
Goldsmiths University of London


Maggie was the deputy head of the Department of Educational Studies for six years and contributes to the English PGCE, MA ECL and MA Writer programmes. Prior to joining the Department of Educational Studies in 2002, she taught Drama and English, and latterly Media Studies, in London secondary schools, a career spanning some 24 years and was a member of the GCSE English Education Consultative Group.

Camilla Stanger
Goldsmiths University of London

Camilla has taught English and Dance in post-16 inner-London colleges since 2007, and having completed an MA at Goldsmiths University of London, she is now studying for her PhD in the area of dance, movement and feminist theory. She has presented papers at the IOE, Brunel University and Goldsmiths College, and published on the Gender and Education Association website, and in 2013 was the winner of the SAGE BERA Student of the Year Award 2013 for research-based practice in an under-18 setting.