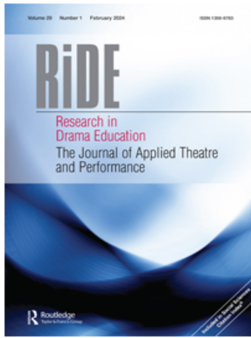

Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/crde20

The inclusive dimensions and interpretive possibilities of working in role

Theo Bryer

To cite this article: Theo Bryer (12 Jan 2024): The inclusive dimensions and interpretive possibilities of working in role, Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance, DOI: 10.1080/13569783.2023.2299370

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2023.2299370

© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

Published online: 12 Jan 2024.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 151

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=crde20

RIDE: THE JOURNAL OF APPLIED THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE
https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2023.2299370

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

OPEN ACCESS Check for updates

The inclusive dimensions and interpretive possibilities of working in role

Theo Bryer

UCL Institute of Education, London, England

ABSTRACT
This article considers the opportunities for learning and inclusive dimensions of role-play based on the reading and interpretation of a canonical text, drawing on a case study involving student-teachers. This exploration of role and learning through drama builds on the foundational work of Bolton and Heathcote. Focusing on students' particular purposes, motivations, and the resources that inform their diverse engagements in drama involves a detailed reflection on the possibilities that role-play offers to support learning in classroom contexts. These findings have implications for a pedagogical approach to teaching texts through drama.

KEYWORDS
Drama; enactment; frame; role; role-play

This article is about how the processes of taking on a role (or roles) offer opportunities for engagement in 'fiction-making' (Bolton 1998, 278) that enables students to make meaning and to learn. The data presented here were collected during a two-day workshop conducted with secondary (high school) student-teachers learning to teach Drama and English on a one-year Postgraduate Certificate of Education or PGCE. This informed my (Bryer 2020) doctoral research into the affordances of role through an approach that involved working in different media, including filmmaking and computer game-making as well as drama. The case study formed part of a larger research project focusing on processes involved in producing transmedia adaptations of a canonical literary text, the Old English poem *Beowulf*. (See https://darecollaborative.net/2015/03/11/playing-beowulf-gaming-the-library/, for more detail). We have written elsewhere about the relevance of these active, interpretative approaches to the processes of reading in secondary English classrooms (Bryer and Coles 2022; Bryer, Pitfield, and Coles 2023; Coles and Bryer 2018).[1] Building on the tradition of Barnes et al. (1969) and my colleagues in English Education at the UCL Institute of Education, including Shah (2014; 2020) and Yandell (2014), we recognise the ways 'that learners bring multiple repertoires of cultural knowledge to the business of reading a text in any classroom, and, furthermore, that meanings of texts are constructed dialogically' (Coles and Bryer 2018, 55).

CONTACT Theo Bryer t.bryer@ucl.ac.uk
This article has been corrected with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

Our (Bryer, Pitfield, and Coles 2023) work is informed by Rosenblatt's (1978) 'transactional' theory, proposing a dynamic relationship between the reader and the text, that recognises the significance of readers' cultural and social contexts. Rosenblatt's (1978, 13) use of the language of drama or performance in describing reading as a 'reenactment of the text' provides a fitting description for the classroom activities that were central to the *Beowulf* project. In Jackson's (2007, 182) theory of the 'creative gaps' generated by participatory theatre he describes the process as a form of 'co-authorship'. Like Rosenblatt, Jackson (2007) recognises that an approach that privileges the role of the reader, audience or student in the processes of receiving and interpreting text has implications for the power dynamic in a classroom or other sites of learning. His emphasis is on:

> the dynamic quality at the heart of real engagement – the possibility that things may change as a result of the encounter: for the performer or artist or facilitator as much as for the participant. Just as Freire argues for programmes of learning in which tutor and pupil can learn from each other rather than reinforcing the hierarchies of traditional styles of knowledge transfer. (Jackson 2007, 269)

Such programmes of learning imply a collaborative engagement, which has, as Jackson suggests, been interpreted as prefiguring action in or on the world beyond the classroom.

In this article I consider the ways that the student-teachers were invited to assume roles in a variety of dramatic and performative modes and identify how this informed their interpretations of aspects of *Beowulf*, that provided the content, stimulus, or 'pre-text' (O'Neill 1995, 20) for the drama. I interrogate the variety of responses that emerged from the different approaches to role-play that we initiated. Although this article provides an account of a coherent drama sequence and we were modelling ways of working with our student-teachers throughout the project, I do not set out to prescribe an approach to drama-in-English (Bryer, Pitfield, and Coles 2023). My specific focus is on how this project developed our understanding of the affordances or possibilities of working in role.

A distinctive aspect of this research is close attention to the participants' multimodal interactions. As Franks (2015) points out, research that attends to the resources of the body to explain the learning potential of classroom drama, is relatively scarce. Franks (2014) explains how bodily responses or 'discourses of the body' (Nicholson 2005, 59), capture emotions that are central to the drama and experienced by those that create and share in it, from their perspective as actors or audience. Franks (2014, 4) relates affect to the motivation or desire that helps to generate creative endeavours, something that can be individually felt and also more broadly expressed and that has a relationship with intense and memorable learning experiences. This quality of engagement emerges as a significant affordance of the role-play that is the subject of this article.

Research design

All twenty-five of the student-teachers involved gave their written consent for us to write about their involvement and to publish photographs and stills that might include them. We recorded the activities on a variety of cameras and conducted semi-structured interviews with participants as they worked individually and in groups, at different stages of the project, including a month later once they had started teaching in their placement schools. Later in their PGCE year several of the student-teachers wrote schemes of

work about *Beowulf* that some went on to teach to 11-to-14-year-old students, in English and Drama classrooms.

Deciding on an appropriate method of transcription was a significant stage in the process of interpreting my video-based evidence. I referred to a checklist of the modes that I thought it important to attend to, derived from my experience as a Drama teacher and of multimodal social semiotic transcription (Bezemer and Mavers 2011; Kress and van Leeuwen 2001). This included gaze, facial expressions, gestures, bodily movements, artefacts, proxemics, use of space and aspects of the environment as they came into focus through the processes of enactment. I tried to account for the influence of different forms of interaction and their relevance to learning, particularly when these involved role-taking or creation. Through detailed accounts of moments of role-play, I attempt to interpret the 'communicational ensemble' of modes that comprise the lived texts of my video evidence (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001, 111). In this article the way that my transcription is woven into my text, so that it appears descriptive, is intentional. I aim to bring the drama to life on the page and have supplemented my record of what happened with reference to the students' reflections and with photographs or stills (Heath, Hindmarsh, and Luff 2010, 124). The inclusion of the image provides a form of anchor, 'a snapshot to show posture, expression and gaze as they were in that split second' (Jewitt, Bezemer, and O'Halloran 2016, 148), opening up the evidence for further interpretation by the reader.

Gray (2003, 17) points out, that unlike ethnographers like Geertz, the cultures that are the focus of cultural studies, are those familiar to the researcher because they already inhabit them. In keeping with a feminist epistemology (Miller 1995; Skeggs 1995) I have written myself into this account recognising the ways that my presence as both teacher-educator and researcher shaped my research outcomes. I am partly the object of this research and present my teacherly motivations as playing their part in the complexities involved in day-to-day classroom interaction. That my interpretations are inevitably partial and situated is a significant aspect of this research tradition (Doecke 2013; Yandell 2019).

A particular ethical concern in relation to video evidence and multimodal research is that the tendency to focus on the body as a whole or in parts, might be construed as a form of objectification. In the kinds of interactions that research involves there is a power differential that is heightened by the intersections of ethnicity, class and gender. And of course, these power relations 'saturate all ways of seeing: producers', images' and audiences', including researchers like us' (Rose 2007, 262). I have endeavoured to be reflexive about this with reference to the participants' voices and perspectives as well as to those bodily movements or actions that may appear more abstracted.

During the workshop the student-teachers were positioned as learners, readers and participants, encouraged to be aware of their responses to the drama processes that they engaged in, as they endeavoured to make sense of a text that was unfamiliar to the majority. In referring to them as students for much of the ensuing analysis I recognise their role as learners at the outset of their course in teacher education. I refer to them as student-teachers when the teacherly aspect of their identities seems most pertinent. We were interested in exploring pedagogies and approaches relevant to teaching in their Drama and English classrooms. Choosing a canonical text as our focus was an acknowledgement of the context that the student-teachers were being inducted into, following

the introduction of the fifth iteration of the National Curriculum in England (DfE 2014, 4) and the injunction that pupils be introduced to so-called 'high-quality works' like *Beowulf*. We were inspired by our research partner, the British Library's project to digitise *Beowulf*; by its likely origins in an oral text; its textual ambiguities; the many adaptations of *Beowulf* in different media and in particular, its long history as a text studied in Drama and English classrooms throughout this and the last century (see Caldwell Cook 1917, 153; Hourd 1949, 28; Neelands 1984, 8).

Role or frame – theoretical understandings

The data cited in this article suggest that assuming a role in different modes is informed by the particularity of students' experience and skills and that working to create drama and to generate collaborative interpretations or readings offers students significant insights, through different points of entry into the fiction.

As a Drama teacher interested in the cross-curricular possibilities of drama in education, I recognise the possibilities for learning offered by the loose conception of role, defined by Heathcote ([1980] 2015) as frame. Heathcote was interested in roles conferred by a fictional context or specific to a particular dramatic scenario, often with historical origins. Wagner (1976, 68) records the way in which Heathcote encouraged 'concentration on one thing – attitude' in reference to the dramatic context, rather than each actor assuming an individual character. According to Wagner (1976, 67), through this process Heathcote set about 'building belief' or 'identification' on the basis that, 'Once a class identifies with the people in a drama, their drive is released, and the situation becomes what Heathcote terms "educationally explosive"' (1976, 70). Barrs (1987, 11), who occasionally worked with Heathcote, picks up on this in her recognition of the power of writing in role: 'Role is another way of focusing – of taking up an attitude to your material.'

As Heathcote's practice shifted away from theatre models in the late 1970s and early 1980s, she looked for other ways of theorising the processes by which she organised children to engage in a make-believe context, to offer them insights into their everyday lives and a range of dramatic contexts, through an experiential process. She ([1980] 2015, 89) referred to the 'syntax of signal and response' that involves a constant negotiation of the roles that people inhabit in social contexts, echoing a sociological perspective that emerged from the work of Mead (1934), Bateson (1972) and particularly, Goffman (1974). This enabled her to conceptualise a way of working in the classroom that involved a nuanced understanding of different degrees of role-taking. Heathcote ([1980] 1984, 105) recognises that a significant affordance of role is its flexibility, ranging from the briefest engagements in the kinds of storytelling and embodiment that Brecht (2015, 176) refers to in 'The Street Scene' (in which roles are assumed and shared between those involved in fluid ways), to rehearsed performances with audiences that are clearly separated from the actors on stage. Although Heathcote does not make links to Brecht explicit, the parallels are recognised by Bolton (1992, 18). Brecht uses the analogy of the repercussions of an accident to consider the possibilities for a form of acting that has a specific purpose – a political orientation – meaning that the actors assume a decided stance towards the material that they are interpreting. It is the role of the witness, for example, that guides the individual in their choices about how to speak and move.

Brecht (2015, 180) analyses the interplay between representation and commentary that is central to the establishment of blame in an accident and to the portrayal of 'something that calls for explanation' and explains his use of audience address, projections, and chorus on this basis. What emerges most clearly from Brecht's (2015, 183) analogy is that both actor / participant or teacher's purposes – their 'social function' or 'social objectives' (Bolton and Heathcote 1999, 183) are what determine the roles that they assume and the ways that they play them; allied with a degree of distance and criticality. Bolton's (1998, 267) suggestion that acting and making drama involve assuming a particular responsibility, exemplified by Heathcote and Carroll's Joseph Lister drama (Carroll 1984; Heathcote [1980] 2015), provides another way of understanding how those involved engage in the activity. In analysing the behaviour of students engaging in classroom drama, Bolton points out that:

> The actor's 'responsibilities' need to be seen as many-layered, variously relating to content, skill, style, audience, attitude and context. At times, it would be appropriate to speak of 'intention' or 'disposition' or 'colour' or even, 'burden' as the defining metaphor, but I hope that my choice of 'focus of responsibilities' covers all these. (Bolton 1998, 270)

Bolton captures the complex responses to the assumption of different roles in fictional contexts, depending on who the audience are for each interaction; how the actors respond to them and to the text that they are working on (the content); their particular skills and the context. In twenty-first-century classrooms this means generating opportunities to 'read against the text' (Janks 2019) and to open up possibilities for different perspectives and stories to emerge or to 'restory' (Thomas and Stornaiuolo 2016).

The focus on responsibility, purpose or motivation is relevant to thinking about the possibilities for learning brought into play through specific moments of role-play or enactment in our project. The flexibility identified by Heathcote ([1980] 1984) emerged as key to students' individual engagements in the range of activities that we offered them.

Violent action – dimensions of role-play

The *Beowulf* narrative centres on three fights that Beowulf has with the monsters Grendel and Grendel's Mother and a dragon. Beowulf might be characterised as a 'heavy' or monumental figure because he resolves the issues that he faces through action or combat (Ong 1982, 68). The way that these fights play out is integral to this epic tale of heroism. Throughout my career teaching Drama I tried to offer students possibilities to develop engaging dramatic action by steering clear of violent interaction or conflict. I was influenced by Bolton's (1992, 56) insights about the significance of constraints that generate narrative tension, including 'the meaningful tension between the spoken and unspoken.' When teaching a scheme of work about Craig and Bentley (the young people convicted of the murder of a policeman in 1952), students were asked to mime putting their guns into an imaginary box at the start of each lesson so that they could focus on attitudes and feelings in the buildup to and aftermath of the gun fight at the climax of this narrative. I have since become increasingly interested in the appeal of stories about monsters or wild creatures, including *Frankenstein* (Shelley 1818); *Dracula* (Stoker 1897); *Little Red Riding Hood* and an *Ananse* story about a monster (Makhanlall 1992). In relation to Beowulf, I recognised that if I were to sidestep the combat, I would

be in danger of bowdlerising an aspect of the poem that was not only one of its defining features but that was also part of its attraction to different audiences throughout the centuries. Tolkien ([1936] 2002, 115) famously champions the monsters, identifying the way that they come into view in the intense moments of conflict. The battles are described in ways that offer the reader or listener, a sense of the monsters' anger and pain (Chance [1980] 2002). The *Beowulf* poet also dwells on the points of view of both the protagonist and his adversaries so that as readers we are brought closer to the emotional impact of the violence. When Grendel's Mother arrives to wreak vengeance for her son's death, her reaction is described in what appears to be a momentarily sympathetic way in Heaney's powerful interpretation / translation that we offered the students:

> The hell-dam was in a panic, desperate to get out,
> in mortal terror the moment she was found.
> (Heaney 2000, lines 1292-1293)

As both teacher and researcher questioning what we might learn from using role to explore the violence represented a departure in terms of my practice. We identified opportunities to reflect on what makes *Beowulf* particularly compelling to those like Tolkien ([1936] 2002) who celebrated it and those that are drawn to it still, and how we view, play out, accommodate, and are entertained by violent acts. The question of the characters' gender and the difference that this makes to our conceptions of the violence in the poem was integral to this exploration. We observed how students found space and to reflect on these questions as they responded to the perspectives and responsibilities offered by the assumption of a range of roles. I consider some of the issues related to the representation of violence that involved white, male, heterosexual protagonists like the hero, Beowulf and how we mediated this, partly through our focus on the oft-neglected character of the female monster, Grendel's Mother (Chance [1980] 2002).

Initial activities – performance mode

We start the first day with storytelling, followed by a brief activity in which the students create moving images of moments from the text, designed to familiarise the students with the narrative and tone of Heaney's (2000) text. This involves dividing the class of twenty-five up into ten small groups and giving each group a different quotation from the text, as a stimulus. We ask each group to share their moving image, accompanied by a voicing of their quotation, one after the other. I sign that I anticipate some theatricality in the students' responses with a dramatic announcement at the start that we are creating, 'The story of *Beowulf!*' flinging out my arm expansively as a signal for the first group to start. I bang my tambourine to introduce each action, with three beats to cue each group, recalling 'les trois coups' used to attract the audience's attention before the curtain rises, in French tradition. My camera (on for the purposes of research) presumably heightens this categorisation of the activity as in performance mode (Bolton 1984, 128), rather than exploratory role-play or dramatic playing. Since much of the dramatic action that the students represent is violent, there is inevitably some emphasis on what Bolton (1998, 262) might distinguish as a responsibility to exercise some physical skill. I am concerned that a student should not feel self-conscious as they try to work out what and how they want to make meaning with their bodies, yet not sharing work can feel incomplete as if the

ideas developed through what might be termed the rehearsal process remain untested. Bolton (1984, 128) also argues that 'Performance mode has its own kind of built-in protection' through the abstraction or stylised form of a still or moving image. Recognising that the function of the bodies in a classroom space is to communicate or depict meaning signals a shift into dialogue informed by 'rich, full and highly selective' sign-making with all the resources at our disposal (Heathcote [1980] 2015, 71).

Analysis of the students' responses

In recognising the possibilities opened up by role-play and analysing how the students co-constructed their learning, it became clear that I needed to consider the different experiences and perspectives that emerged in students' responses to the invitation to engage. I focus on the dramatic responses of individual students in this analysis.

We titled the third quotation, The defeat of Grendel and it included this:

> The monster's whole
> body was in pain; a tremendous wound
> appeared on his shoulder. Sinews split
> and the bone-lappings burst.
> (Heaney 2000, lines 814-817).

Sumaya accompanies 'Sinews split / and the bone-lappings burst' with a slashing sword action and there is a pained response from her partner, Tayo, who tucks her arm under her jumper so that it seems to disappear. Sumaya smiles slightly, as she makes a swinging motion with a wooden 'play' sword that I had offered as a prop. The extreme violence suggested by splitting and bursting and anticipated by the prop, is not quite captured in their brief physical interaction. In discussion about the process Sumaya reflects on the frustrations that she felt working in this medium; 'you've got to use your body to kind of create the story. Lying down, getting up. It was just, I found that really difficult.' She considers the pair's responsibility to the audience as performers, as Bolton (1998, 270) identifies, and her recognition that their expectations of such powerful words were not necessarily being met. It is clear that her social objective or urge to make meaning is constrained through the process.

This is not necessarily the slipping into role associated with the narrative and its context that I am used to facilitating, although it feels appropriate to the tone of Heaney's (2000) powerful rendering of the text. For some students, there is clearly a degree of satisfaction in being able to draw on their physical awareness and expertise. One pair produce a startling bit of stage combat to accompany the lines that describe Grendel's Mother's revenge attack in Heorot:

> Then, with sudden despatch,
> the vehement mother avenged her son
> and wrought destruction.
> (Heaney 2000, lines 2117 - 2119)

Smashing someone's head on the table is not necessarily Grendel's Mother's mode of attack – nor is the specificity of the action reflective of the description in the text – but the swiftness and effectiveness of this dynamic piece of movement produces audible gasps from the audience. The accompanying crashing noise makes it seem as if Sarah

has slammed Gary's head on the surface and although he speaks the last half of the line as he falls backwards, his collapse to the floor implies that he is in pain. This is a visceral moment relying on a stage combat trick that the pair are happy to reproduce it when asked, with a similar shock effect each time. As one student comments, to Gary's satisfaction, 'classic wrestling.' The pair have succeeded in mobilising a form of illusion that Murray and Keefe (2016, 216) refer to as 'illustrative mime … a representational physicality in which the audience completes the picture being created by the body and words.' Although we know that Gary is not hurt every time his head appears to hit the table, 'the initial shock of the image' (2016, 217) makes the audience gasp and laugh, so that when Gary and Sarah hear this affective response, they know that they have succeeded in meeting their performance responsibilities.

Sophie's response to the invitation to work with her body is different. When I review the video of the groups rehearsing, I can see her execute a series of circular movements, that are arresting in their combination of flow and control. She lifts her partner's arm and twists underneath it and while her partner looks a bit uncertain, as if focusing on not losing her balance, Sophie keeps moving, testing her partner's weight and trying things out (Figure 1).

Later she tells me that she has had many years of dance experience and that she feels comfortable using her body as 'a tool.' She resists my suggestion that she has a collection of tropes or motifs that she is able to draw on as if they are a kind of palette of options.

Figure 1. Sophie's dance-like response (photograph).

Although she agrees that dance is a form of language, she says that for her it comes 'naturally.' In talking to her about dance, I realise that underlying my questions is an assumption that this form of physicalisation involves an intellectual process akin to translation and that this is at odds with her experience. It is as if I am suggesting to someone who is bilingual that one of their languages must always be mediated through another. Sophie's flexible response to the tasks that we set also suggest a familiarity with these kinds of demands. She has exercised her muscles in these kinds of contexts before.

My purpose in reflecting on these responses is not necessarily to introduce a value judgment about the ways that the students are able to use their bodies for expressive purposes. These are activities primarily designed for the English classroom and the focus is not on an assessment of drama skills. I am interested in the differences in the ways that Sumaya, Sarah, Gary and Sophie assume these momentary roles in the moving images that we ask them to make, how this brief transformation into role addresses them and what impact it has. It becomes clear that the difference is to do with a recognition of the possibilities that the task offers to make meaning, to do with purpose and control and an understanding of the ways that the narrative might be played out in different modes and in relation to a particular audience. I recognise that the students' conceptions of the task are different because of their prior experiences, their identities and the 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et al. 1992) that they bring to the activity. In this instance, they assume the roles with a sense of purpose that is tempered or shaped by their practice at using their bodies for these ends.

Although Sumaya is very expressive, the sword prop proves too limiting or leading in its connotations and she does not necessarily identify with the roles on offer, neither the role of the white, male hero, Beowulf, nor more significantly, that of the performer at ease with using their body for these culturally specific, dramatic purposes. At this stage, striking a pose in a theatrical frame proves too exposing. However, in the nightmare sequences that we create later it is notable that Sumaya chooses to sing, hauntingly, to powerful effect as the others in her group enact a brief scene of someone arrested by an invisible force. She cups her hands around her mouth directing notes in a minor key towards the players. Fortunately, the parameters of the small group task enable Sumaya to find a significant role for herself. In all these instances she is driven to express her insights and understandings of the text and its tone through the creative choices that she makes. Our teacherly role is to create the context in which all learners are able to engage with the text through drama with the kind of spontaneity and ease that characterises Sophie's initial reactions to the task. Dream sequences have the advantage of opening up expressive or symbolic explorations of the text that do not rely on a naturalistic representation of the characters. The inclusive dimensions of role-play are more in evidence in aspects of the students' ready engagement and the diversity of their responses as the work develops. A recognition of this range of multimodal possibilities is one that is rarely acknowledged in English classrooms, despite offering students ways of interpreting and understanding texts that play to their strengths and interests, rather than denying aspects of their identities (Bryer, Pitfield, and Coles 2023).

Presentation or performance – the role of the audience

Through these processes of meaning-making involving combinations of body shapes, gestures, movement, and words, we aim to demonstrate to the student-teachers that

they are generating readings of the text that draws on all the signs they can make with their bodies (Heathcote [1980] 2015). This interplay between action and reflection is an economical way of processing and making sense of a text's narrative arc and tone, a sequence in which 'words *precede* action, *accompany* action and *proceed* from action' (Franks 1997, 140, his italics). The distinction between the presentational rather than performative aspects of the role-play, is a subtle one. Shifting the emphasis so that the acting '**is not highly relevant *in itself*'** (Bolton 1998, 263, his italics and bold) depends on how we, as teachers, frame the activities. As teacher-educators our emphasis is on the possibilities of engagement with dramatic episodes from the poem in manageable ways; to help all pupils to 'pry open' the text (O'Neill and Rogers 1994, 48).

We do not offer the students a secondary role in their position as audience, as Neelands (1984, 12) did in framing those watching as 'historians, archaeologists and art-historians' directed to interpret tapestries (i.e. still images) of the story in his drama about *Beowulf*. But the sharing of the small group work provides a platform for reflection on the language, epic tone and structure of the Old English text. With this focus we endeavour to recognise each dramatic moment as an act of interpretation and a contribution to the ongoing dialogue about the text, rather than as a display of skill or skills. Asking the students what they see, how they understand it and what it reminds them of, rather than the more generic, 'what went well and even better if' signals that the actor's primary role or responsibility is that of dramatic interpreter of the text. In a classroom context our collective objective is to open up a range of interpretive possibilities and plurality of meanings, rather than underlining the narrowness of a canonical text that does not reflect students' identities or experiences.

Roles within process drama

The next section of the drama involves a more immersive, process drama approach (O'Neill 1995), with which I feel more comfortable. My priority is to establish what is at stake in terms of the dramatic action that the students are to engage in – to frame the participants into a position of concern and influence (Heathcote [1980] 2015) through various stages of the narrative. I focus on creating an atmosphere through narration, storytelling and dimmed lights, hinting at a fear of the unknown and the supernatural as captured in Hrothgar's description of the Grendelkin's lair:

> A few miles from here
> a frost-stiffened wood waits and keeps watch
> above a mere; the overhanging bank
> is a maze of tree-roots mirrored in its surface.
> At night there, something uncanny happens:
> The water burns.
>
> … …
>
> That is no good place.
> (Heaney 2000, lines 1361–1366 / 1372)

I plan my narration to echo Heaney's words and end by asking everyone what they have seen or sensed, heard, or smelt on the moorland and the misty crags.

The questioning serves to situate the group in an imagined time and place, with a reference to how 'we' as a community feel about our harrowing by the monster, Grendel, and the anticipation of future violence at the hands of Grendel's Mother. This shared history and threat is intended to define our communal roles in an inclusive way. I emphasise a sense of embattled togetherness by leaning in and using my gaze and gestures to draw everyone into a tight circle on the floor and then prompt a response from each one, in turn. Throughout the process I position the students in ways that give them some scope to make their own choices about what they imagine they have been witness to, an economical way of inducting them into the make-believe or edging them into role (Wagner 1976, 34). By defining the situation I sketch out roles implying a particular attitude (rather than individual characters), to frame the participants' interactions – an approach that Heathcote ([1975] 1984) allied with the potential for learning through drama. Although there is an expectation on individuals to respond appropriately when speaking in role for an audience of their peers, the orientation is towards the summoning up of an immersive fiction for the whole group, rather than on bursts of performance with a defined start and finish. The sequence of responses is intended to generate a heightened awareness of the choices of words, tone and register that play their part in defining the parameters and distinguishing features of an imagined cultural context. There is mention of 'feeling cold eyes watching', 'a sickening stench', 'silhouettes in the fog', 'howling and whispers on the wind' and 'the tip of a sword on the back of my neck.' One student says that he hasn't the 'word hoard' to describe what he feels, echoing a kenning from Heaney's (2000) translation. In this case no one endeavours to disrupt, as happens occasionally at the start of classroom dramas. In our reflection we suggest to the student-teachers that taking all offers seriously can serve to remind pupils of their responsibilities in role.

When we had done this drama as part of the pilot project, I had offered a different form of communal problem by assuming a character who declared that they were sceptical about Beowulf's plan. I took inspiration from O'Neill's ([1996] 2006, 144) use of dramatic irony, involving the teacher playing characters that appear suspicious, so that the class are prompted to question and probe, as in 'The Haunted House' (O'Neill and Lambert 1982, 166). Following this prompt, some of the students recognised that they might question Beowulf's heroism, generating conflict rather than consensus within our imagined community. In the second iteration of the project, I make different teacherly and creative choices, arguably more constricting but with a view to the facilitation of further independent work. We are careful to model safe and engaging ways of initiating whole class work in-role that the student-teachers may be able to adapt in their own classrooms.

Throughout this section of the drama, I am conscious of slipping between a 'shadowy', narrator role (Moore 2013; Wagner 1976, 132) and that of a warrior character, so that I can outline expectations for each activity without interrupting the flow of the narrative. Following the whole group work, I explain that the warriors sleep in threes and fours, as I indicate groupings through my gestures. I suggest that their sleep is fitful and interrupted by images that come to them in the form of nightmares. Modelling through my tone of voice, heightened gestures, and slow movement in the space, provides a platform for the development of the narrative that students go on to develop in multimodal ways through the creation of small group nightmare scenes. This particularly economical way of working serves to maintain the atmosphere and to give purpose to activities within the narrative frame or imagined context.

Role, play and meaning-making

Sumaya's mention of 'lying down and getting up' intrigues me. We are in a carpeted room and some of the students obviously feel comfortable being in contact with the floor. For me this phrase evokes the enthusiastic way that a group of male students roll around and grasp on to each other, in the subsequent section of small group work about the reactions to Grendel's Mother's surprise appearance, the night after Grendel's death. This group of students' making is marked by an enthusiastic physical engagement, as they mime together a sequence involving brandishing imaginary swords and shields. During the rehearsal Arthur suddenly twirls and rolls across the floor and into the position of a body about to be dragged off by the monster. His movement is dance-like and graceful, but it also recalls that of a soldier crawling into combat.

There is the danger that categorising the students' reactions as playful, summons up the kind of hierarchy that emerges from Slade's (1995, 138) distinctions between children's play and theatrical forms. Bolton ([1981] 2010, 112) uses a diagram to show a continuum of acting behaviour with dramatic playing on the left and performing on the right, arguing that 'although both are "pretending" there is a difference in terms of *quality* or *mode* of action' (his italics). Significantly this was a distinction that he later qualified (Bolton 1998, 265), recognising that even within playful interaction a child that is engaged in making up an imaginary context, is assuming the role of a dramatist.

One of the qualities that Bolton ([1981] 2010, 112) identifies as distinguishing dramatic playing, is the absorption that Slade so admires – a 'spontaneous responding … a sense of "nowness" … ME in the experience' (his capitals). This is dependent on an awareness of relevant things happening as the child plays, so that the experience is about imagining themselves in a very particular context through their actions rather than the specificities of the role or character. The students playing at being warriors seem to have tapped into an activity that they could readily engage with physically because this kind of battle play comes easily to them; not because of their lived experience of combat, presumably, but because they have had experiences of responding to this kind of imagining, pretending or making, before. I note that after an initial discussion, they don't talk that much, as they create their short scene (despite Arthur and Adam's usual garrulousness). Individuals in other groups give each other directions as they sketch out their actions, 'And then, we do this and then we move to here', for example. This group seems to have established their sequence within a couple of minutes of starting to rehearse and then they enact it with a commitment to each action that causes others to turn and look, particularly when their bodies stray into other groups' acting areas. The four settle down on the floor in a kind of fetal position, facing each other and then close their eyes, expressing the vulnerability of the warriors that are not necessarily expecting an attack (Figure 2).

There is a sudden shout of, 'Swords!' and 'Shields!' and all four strike similar poses, on their knees, ready for the attack (Figure 3).

Arthur then motions an exaggerated falling backwards that the other three copy, in an elegant canon. He signs that he has become the monster by roaring, as he pulls Adam's legs and the other two reach out, across the space (Figure 4).

Throughout the actors' gaze is on each other; their mouths are open as they shout and roar and their eyes wide but they also manage to convey a sense of enjoyment with half-smiles that give each other license to throw themselves into the action. After their first

Figure 2. The warriors asleep (photograph).

run-through, they jump up and laugh at each other and make gestures with their hands (palms outstretched and fingers splayed with tension), that convey a sense of affective intensity and power. Arthur roars again in a way that makes them laugh, with a kind of release of energy. They shout ‘hwæt!’, the first (Anglo Saxon) word of the poem that

Figure 3. The warriors awake (photograph).

Figure 4. The capture (photograph).

we had introduced them to and laugh some more. Adam shouts it, as Arthur, now playing Grendel, pulls him off.

The collaborative aspect of the group's work is striking and while obviously playful the sequence is particularly powerful in performance, in part because of the apparent lack of inhibition that characterises the actors' commitment to each action. After watching this piece, someone notes that the group's focus is on the warriors' reactions of confusion and fear, compared with other groups that use their bodies to create the monster. This is sometimes identified as a distinction between dramatic, corporeal mime, that employs exaggerated actions and reactions with theatrical origins in Decroux's 'mime grammar' (Murray and Keefe 2016, 190) and physical theatre, that often involves people using their bodies to create the illusion of objects, together. The former, involving an individual response, might be regarded in this context as closer to play than to performance in terms of the 'ME in the experience' (Bolton [1981] 2010, 112, his capitals), compared with the level of abstraction required to work out how bodies arranged in particular ways might summon up a monstrous being. Sophie's group, for example, have earlier created a nightmarish three-headed monster, lifting their heads in unison and baring their teeth as they wrap their arms under their legs, defensively. As they do so they face outwards, their gaze in this instance clearly focused on us, the audience, (with the aim of unsettling us) and not on each other.

The significance of Arthur and Adam's creative and affective engagement lies partly in their enthusiasm for different versions of the text and its associations (reportedly, from a young age). This does not necessarily explain why role-playing a violent moment seems so vivid an experience for all four of them. Franks (1997, 135) identification of 'the source of energy which gives rise to movement', in his analysis of an analogous moment of group work in a secondary school drama lesson, is relevant to this exploration. Franks (1997)

allies the impulse with a need rather than a motivation, derived from Vygotsky's (1978, 92) formulation of needs as a prompt to action that is orientated towards others; a desire to make, create and to enjoy doing so, together. In Franks' (1997) example, a group of boys make a Harley-Davison with their bodies; an activity that is clearly permeated with the same enjoyment of physical contact entailed in the realisation in bodily form of something that for them is a shared object of desire. In the student-teachers' case the role of warrior itself may represent something of an object of desire, particularly on their PGCE course, where most of the lecturers and their fellow students are female. A significant aspect of their role-play is a sense of irony. The performance might be interpreted as childlike, but it is also very knowing. The irony protects the men from ridicule, but it offers them a kind of release as well so that they can lie on the floor, jump and roll in their legitimate execution of this task. Bolton ([1983] 1986, 57) explains the way that the 'act of both contriving and submitting to a *metaphorical* context' (his italics) engenders awareness of 'being an audience to *oneself*' (Bolton 1998, 266, his italics). Significantly it is this group's version of a narrative that they love that they are able to write across the room with their bodies – generating a powerful transaction with the text to which they and we, their audience, are witness. The student-teachers involved respond enthusiastically to our endorsing of such physical interactions. Franks' (1997) appreciation of a similarly joyful dramatic interaction and Bolton's (1998) recognition that play invokes a dramatist function provides a rationale for offering opportunities for students to engage in such forms of dynamic, physical embodiment.

Conclusion

Motivations, intentions, and resources

My experimentation with this enactment of a violent moment from the poem is eagerly received by some students, despite my uncertainties. For these students, even those tasks that involve a clearly defined performance to an audience do not deny them a degree of spontaneity and absorption. My analysis suggests that this is to do with their social orientation and the ways that this inflects the conceptions of their roles. The men's enthusiastic identifications with the role of warrior (or possibly the role of playing at being a warrior), seems to enable them to access the role of dramatist (Bolton 1998, 265). They devise their sequence of synchronised movement remarkably quickly and it is dynamic and expressive. The players have an orientation towards their audience but more significant, in terms of their gaze and the way their bodies echo each other's movements in both the rehearsal and performance, their focus is on each other. Through their playful interactions in and out of role it seems that establishing an attitude of shared enjoyment in assuming a warrior role and enacting a fight, together, provides significant impetus for an outburst of creativity.

There is a further dimension to add to Bolton's (1998, 270) understanding of the 'focus of responsibilities' that role-play entails, to do with the ways that students bring their repertoires of cultural knowledge to this active reading of texts, using their 'cultural resources, to make meaning with all the means at their disposal' as Yandell (2008, 54) describes it. In these examples, I have identified that bodily experience matters, whether of dance, wrestling, singing or of play, and that this experience shapes students'

physical and vocal responses. Shared enthusiasms and interests and social relationships matter very much too, informing students' intentions, motivations, or desires, in more subtle ways than Brecht's (2015, 183) 'social function' or Bolton and Heathcote's (1999, 183) 'social objectives' necessarily embrace.

Of course, the students in this instance have another role, as beginning teachers, which is where this sense of their social functions comes into play more vividly. After a month in school, the student-teachers' reflections on the activities change, so that they are commenting on how their pupils, for whom in some ways they are proxies in these activities, might respond to these ways of working. It is notable though that at this relatively early stage in their PGCE course, for the duration of the two-day project most of the discussion is about their personal engagements, their pride in their creations, their frustrations and their insights about the experience of reading a text through drama (Pitfield 2020).

Learning about the text

Running alongside all of this is the ways that the students learn through this creative endeavour, through their summoning up of different readings of the text. In reflecting on the way that Grendel's Mother is represented they reflect on the gendered nature of her 'quite personal', 'opportune', 'predatory' and 'desperate' revenge attack, compared to the violence wreaked by her monstrous son. The recognition of how these forms of violence relate to her motivations and identity, provide further insight into the ways she is presented in the poem as a maternal, female monster. Much of this is to with how the students choose to choreograph and shape the dramatic action and the modes that they draw on to do this: the way that Sophie creeps towards her prey, that Sumaya sings and that the men move in unison, for example. My sense is that by offering the students roles that are not limited in their conception by cultural expectations of particular characters or performance styles, or too overly prescribed in terms of their outcomes, a repertoire of resources can be brought into play. Assuming a pose to describe a dramatic moment feels exposing for some but framing or enrolling students into a position of shared concern and influence, legitimises a playful response (Vygotsky 2016) initiating a further range of productive engagements with this canonical text. Through a variety of responses, some more consciously performative than others, students are able to generate readings that are pertinent to their own experiences, and enthusiasms, their cultural insights and criticality. Constraints and modelling support the creative process but there also needs to be space for students to make choices in order for them to realise their particular intentions through role-play. Assuming a role becomes an inclusive endeavour when students are offered a range of modes to express their engagements with the processes of fiction-making.

In this project, offering space for a diverse range of students to engage and to assume responsibility for developing the dramatic fiction in different ways prompted them to draw on individual interests, insights and skills that enhanced the learning of the whole group, involving distinctive embodiments of the text and of the violence that distinguishes it. A particular focus on the multimodal, social, and cultural resources that the students drew on to interpret the text suggests that the dimensions and possibilities of role-play can be as various as the role-players that engage in it and potentially, learn from it.

Note

1. We have written about some of the drama activities that are the subject of this article in Bryer, Pitfield, and Coles (2023).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Ethical approval

UCL gave ethical approval for this case study and the wider research project that it was a part of.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to my colleague, Jane Coles and to the student-teachers, now teachers, that made this project happen. Also, to Morlette Lindsay, who so inspired me and whom I miss very much. Thank you to Andrew Burn for his enthusiasm and support.

ORCID

Theo Bryer http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9697-9409

References

Barnes, Douglas, James Britton, Harold Rosen, and the London Association for the Teaching of English. 1969. *Language, the Learner and the School*. London: Penguin Education.

Barrs, Myra. 1987. "Voice and Role in Reading and Writing." *Language Arts* 64 (2): 8–11.

Bateson, Gregory. 1972. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bezemer, Jeff, and Diane. Mavers. 2011. "Multimodal Transcription as Academic Practice: A Social Semiotic Perspective." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 14: 191–206. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2011.563616.

Bolton, Gavin. [1981] 2010. "Drama in Education: A Re-Appraisal." In *Gavin Bolton: Essential Writings*, edited by David Davis, 103–117. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Bolton, Gavin. 1984. *Drama as Education*. Harlow: Longman.

Bolton, Gavin. [1983] 1986. "The Activity of Dramatic Playing." In *Gavin Bolton: Selected Writings Edited, by David Davis and Chris Lawrence, 52-70*. London: Longman.

Bolton, Gavin. 1992. *New Perspectives on Classroom Drama*. Hemel Hempstead: Simon and Schuster Education.

Bolton, Gavin. 1998. *Acting in Classroom Drama: A Critical Analysis*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books, in Association with the University of Central England.

Bolton, Gavin, and Dorothy. Heathcote. 1999. *So You Want to Use Role-Play? A New Approach in How to Plan*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Brecht, Bertolt. 2015. "The Street Scene: A Basic Model for an Epic Theatre." in Brecht on Theatre, edited by Marc Silberman, Steve Giles and Tom Kuhn, translated by Jack Davis, Romy Fursland, Steve Giles, Victoria Hill, Kristopher Imbrigotta, Marc Silberman and John Willett, 176-183. London: Methuen. (Original work 1940).

Bryer, Theo. 2020. *What are the Affordances of Role in Learning Through Transmedia Forms of Pedagogy? PhD*. London: Institute of Education, UCL.

Bryer, Theodora, and Jane. Coles. 2022. "Re-Animation: Multimodal Discourse Around Text." *Literacy* 56 (2): 150–159. https://doi.org/10.1111/lit.12275.

Bryer, Theo, Maggie Pitfield, and Jane Coles. 2023. *Drama at the Heart of English: Transforming Practice in Secondary Classrooms*. London: Routledge.

Caldwell Cook, Henry. 1917. *The Play Way: An Essay in Educational Method*. London: William Heinemann.

Carroll, John. 1984. *The Treatment of Dr Lister: A Language Functions Approach to Learning Areas in Drama in Education*. Bathurst, New South Wales: Mitchell College of Advanced Education.

Chance, Jane. [1980] 2002. "The Structural Unity of *Beowulf*: The Problem of Grendel's Mother." In *Beowulf: A Verse Translation*, edited by Daniel Donoghue, 152–167. London: W. W. Norton and Company Ltd.

Coles, Jane, and Theo. Bryer. 2018. "Reading as Enactment: Transforming *Beowulf* Through Drama, Film and Computer Game." *English in Education* 52 (1): 54–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/04250494.2018.1414419.

Department for Education. 2014. *The National Curriculum in England: English Programmes of Study*. London: Crown Copyright. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study#key-stage-3 (accessed 30.8.23).

Doecke, Brenton. 2013. "Storytelling and Professional Learning." *English in Australia* 48 (2): 11–21.

Franks, Anton. 1997. "Drama, Desire and Schooling. Drives to Learning in Creative and Expressive School Subjects." *Changing English* 4 (1): 131–147. https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684970040109.

Franks, Anton. 2014. "Drama and the Representation of Affect - Structures of Feeling and Signs of Learning." *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 19 (2): 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2014.895614.

Franks, Anton. 2015. "What Have We Done with the Bodies? Bodyliness in Drama Education Research." *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 20 (3): 312–315. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2015.1059266.

Goffman, Erving. 1974. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York: Harper and Row.

Gray, Ann. 2003. *Research Practice for Cultural Studies: Ethnographic Methods and Lived Cultures*. London: Sage.

Heaney, Seamus. 2000. *Beowulf: A New Translation*. London: Faber and Faber.

Heath, Christian, Jon Hindmarsh, and Paul. Luff. 2010. *Video in Qualitative Research: Analysing Social Interaction in Everyday Life*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Heathcote, Dorothy. 1980 (1984). "From the Particular to the Universal." In *in Dorothy Heathcote: Collected Writings on Education and Drama*, edited by Liz Johnson, and Cecily O'Neill, 103–110. London: Hutchinson.

Heathcote, Dorothy. [1975] 1984. "Drama and Learning." In *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected Writings on Education and Drama*, edited by Liz Johnson, and Cecily O'Neill, 90–102. London: Hutchinson.

Heathcote, Dorothy. [1980] 2015. "Meeting Doctor Lister." In *Dorothy Heathcote on Education and Drama: Essential Writings*, edited by Cecily O'Neill, 88–93. Abingdon: Routledge.

Heathcote, Dorothy. [1980] 2015. "Signs and Portents." In *Dorothy Heathcote on Education and Drama: Essential Writings*, edited by Cecily O'Neill, 70–78. Abingdon: Routledge.

Hourd, Marjorie. 1949. *The Education of the Poetic Spirit: A Study of Children's Expression in the English Lesson*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Jackson, Anthony. 2007. *Theatre, Education and the Making of Meanings: Art or Instrument?* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Janks, Hilary. 2019. "Critical Literacy and the Importance of Reading With and Against a Text." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 62 (5): 561–564. https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.941.

Jewitt, Carey, Jeff Bezemer, and Kay. O'Halloran. 2016. *Introducing Multimodality*. London: Routledge.

Kress, Gunther, and Theo van Leeuwen. 2001. *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*. London: Arnold, Oxford University Press.

Makhanlall, David. 1992. *Brer Anansi's Joy Ride*. London: Penguin Books.

Mead George, H. 1934. *Mind, Self and Society, from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Miller, Jane. 1995. "Trick or Treat, the Autobiography of the Question." *English Quarterly* 27 (3): 22–26.

Moll, Luis C., Cathy Amanti, Deborah Neff, and Norma. Gonzalez. 1992. "Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative Approach to Connect Homes and Classrooms." *Theory Into Practice* 31 (2): 132–141. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849209543534.

Moore, Tiina. 2013. "Revisiting Dorothy Heathcote's 'Twilight Role'." *NJ Drama Australia Journal* 37 (1): 14–24.

Murray, Simon and Keefe, John. 2016. *Physical Theatres: A Critical Introduction.* (2nd edition). London: Routledge.

Neelands, Jonothan. 1984. *Making Sense of Drama: A Guide to Classroom Practice*. London: Heinemann Educational Books. published in association with 2D Magazine.

Nicholson, Helen. 2005. *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

O'Neill, Cecily. 1995. *Drama Worlds: A Framework for Process Drama*. London: Heinemann.

O'Neill, Cecily. [1996] 2006. "Alienation and Empowerment." In *in Structure and Spontaneity: The Process Drama of Cecily O'Neill*, edited by Philip Taylor, and Christine Warner, 141–149. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

O'Neill, Cecily, and Alan. Lambert. 1982. *Drama Structures: A Practical Handbook for Teachers*. London: Hutchinson, Heinemann Educational Books.

O'Neill, Cecily,, and Theresa. Rogers. 1994. "Drama and Literary Response: Prying Open the Text." *English in Australia* 108: 47–51.

Ong, Walter. 1982. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London: New Accents, Routledge.

Pitfield, Maggie. 2020. *Reading Through Drama: The Contribution That Drama Makes to Teaching and Learning in English. PhD*. Nottingham: University of Nottingham.

Rose, Gillian. 2007. *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. 2nd ed. London: SAGE.

Rosenblatt, Louise. 1978. *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Shah, Mehrunissa. 2014. "Solitary Reapers: Reading Cultural Interjections in a London School." *Changing English* 21 (3): 214–221.

Shah, Mehrunissa. 2020. "'It Was a Pleasure to Read with Them': Reflecting on *Jane Eyre* as a Class Reader." *Changing English* 27 (4): 393–407. https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684X.2020.1807312.

Shelley, Mary. [1818] 2010. *Frankenstein*. London: HarperCollins.

Skeggs, Beverley, ed. 1995. *Feminist Cultural Theory: Process and Production.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Slade, Peter. 1995. *Child Play: Its Importance for Human Development*. London: J. Kingsley Publishers.

Stoker, Bram. 1897. *Dracula*. London: Archibald Constable and Company.

Thomas, Ebony E., and Amy. Stornaiuolo. 2016. "Restorying the Self: Bending Toward Textual Justice." *Harvard Educational Review* 86 (3): 313–338. https://doi.org/10.17763/1943-5045-86.3.313.

Tolkien, John, and R. R. [1936] 2002. "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics." In *Beowulf: A Verse Translation*, edited by Daniel Donoghue, 103–130. London: W. W. Norton and Company Ltd.

Vygotsky, Lev. (1930)1978. *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes.* Edited by Michael Cole, Vera John-Steiner, Sylvia Scribner and Ellen Souberman. Translated by Alexander Luria, Martin Lopez-Morillas, Michael Cole with James Wertsch. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, Lev. 2016. "Play and its Role in the Mental Development of the Child." Translated by Nikolai Veresov and Myra Barrs. *International Research in Early Childhood Education* 7 (2): 3–25. Original lecture 1933, published 1966.

Wagner, Barbara Jane. 1976. *Dorothy Heathcote: Drama as a Learning Medium*. London: Hutchinson and company.

Yandell, John. 2008. "Embodied Readings: Exploring the Multimodal Semiotic Resources of the English Classroom." *English Teaching: Practice and Critique* 7: 36–56.

Yandell, John. 2014. *The Social Construction of Meaning: Reading Literature in Urban English Classrooms*. London: Routledge.

Yandell, John. 2019. "English Teachers and Research: Becoming our own Experts." *Changing English* 26 (4): 430–441. https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684X.2019.1649087.