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REFLECTIONS AND REFRACTIONS OF MEANING: DIALOGIC APPROACHES TO READING WITH CLASSROOM DRAMA

Brian Edmiston and Patricia E. Enciso
Ohio State University

In her groundbreaking research on children's use of popular culture in writing and story performances, Dyson (1998) argued that as young children represent characters, actions, and one another, their texts reflect and refract "the children's professed values, interests, and beliefs about human relations" (p. 152). The terms *reflect* and *refract* are borrowed from Volosinov (1986) and Bakhtin (1981), who were concerned with the social and ideological forces of language in everyday events. When children write about and build performances of their worlds, their words, intonations, and gestures contain and reflect fragments of the relationships, identities, and ideas they value. As their words become increasingly public, they also become contested and transformed—refracted—across the dynamic identities and social relationships in the classroom. Similarly, when students and teachers read and discuss texts in school, their interpretations reflect and refract the students' values, interests, and beliefs about social relations (Beach, 1993; Enciso, 1994; 1997a, 1997b, 1998; Enciso & Edmiston, 1997; Lewis, 1993, 1997; Rogers & O'Neill, 1993). The problem for researchers and teachers is to understand what is reflected and refracted through the public interpretation of texts and to understand how classroom drama, a public art form, can enable all students to persist in finding and exploring the consequences of multiple, often conflicting values, interests, and beliefs.

This chapter focuses on research and teaching practices that show how drama can be used to create forums for text interpretation as it also exposes and mediates students' diverse beliefs about social relations. The first section compares "monologic" and "dialogic" approaches to classroom drama and reading. These terms are drawn from Bakhtin's theory of dialogism (1981, 1984, 1986, 1990, 1993), and the basic understanding that texts and relationships can be considered on a continuum between those that are highly monologic and those that are highly dialogic. Texts and relations that tend toward the monologic are more singular and static, holding authoritative uncontested meanings, whereas more dialogic texts and relations allow for a dynamic interplay of contested, yet interrelated, beliefs and interests with the potential for continual transformation of meaning. A dialogic approach to drama is based on an understanding of drama practice that relies on nonnaturalistic drama conventions to promote an interplay of meaning among teachers and students across the shifting social positions they explore and present through drama. Examples of drama with children will help illustrate this approach.

The second section provides a review of discourse theory and research related to drama as a dialogic practice. The third section offers an overview of promising directions in research and practice for drama and literacy education. We are particularly interested in teacher-practitioner research that highlights teachers' responsiveness to students' specific questions and points of view.

MONOLOGIC AND DIALOGIC CONCEPTIONS OF CLASSROOM DRAMA

Classroom drama is subject to misconstrual and is likely to promote superficial interpretations when practitioners assume that students should interpret texts as though they have only one meaning, when drama is seen as a linear sequence of

TABLE 64.1. Monologic Versus Dialogic Approaches to Classroom Drama

Monologic Approaches	Dialogic Approaches
Confrontations between people	Conflicting interrelated discourses
Linear sequencing	Dialogic sequencing
Naturalistic representations	Nonnaturalistic representations
Explanation	Evaluation
Role	Positioning

students' experiences of confrontation between characters, when naturalism is regarded as the primary or sole mode of representation, and when students and/or teachers are expected through the use of "role" to create fully realized, sustained performances of characters that merely explain events. All of these pitfalls are associated with the misconception that drama is monologic—a product and performance of "the" text rather than a process or tool in children's literacy education through which multiple meanings are evoked and problematized.

We argue that if teachers want to engage students in reading and extend their interpretations, they will do so more effectively by using dialogic approaches to drama. As Table 64.1 shows, such approaches require teachers and students to set multiple meanings in motion in which conflict between discourses (rather than people) are experienced. Rather than a linear attention to plot we advocate dialogic sequencing of experiences. Instead of a reliance on naturalistic drama conventions we illustrate the value of nonnaturalistic conventions. Finally, we extend conceptions of role, to include an attention to social positioning through which students are placed at the crossroads of different discourses, across time, and place and in relation to one another. Through these positionings, which are negotiated and improvised with the teacher and their peers, students are seen as responsible for evaluating (rather than only explaining) meaning.

This is not to say that drama should be all process with no discernible experience of presentation. On the contrary, drama is engaging and significant not only because students imagine themselves in other times, places, and social positions, but also because they are able to put ideas into action in a public space where others can view and consider their meaning. As Bolton (1999) noted, drama has two broad interrelated functions: (a) making meaning, when students are not concerned with being watched; and (b) presenting meaning (whether in classroom performances or as part of ongoing improvised drama work) so that interpretations can be evaluated.

Making and Presenting Meaning

An earlier analysis of classroom drama and literacy education (Wolf, Edmiston, & Enciso, 1997) described two distinct uses of text and drama. The first, "text-centered drama," relies on children's close reading and representations of the author's narrative. However, unlike the making of a teacher-directed class play, the text becomes a shared source for narrative direction around which children are able to improvise on characters' intonations, actions, and interactions by drawing on their knowledge of stories, human emotion, and relationships. As they follow the text, students evaluate the text's *potential* meanings in relation to their own representations. These dramatizations of texts may take the form of readers theater, classroom theater, or story theater. Wolf's research (1994) indicated that children who participate in text performance as a medium for reading instruction, also discuss and improvise on their personal stories and perspectives through their representations of characters. The more students are invited to draw on multiple experiences, knowledge of contexts, and positions of relationship to characters, the more dialogic their presentations of meaning will become.

Readers theater, and chamber theater (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995) in particular, embrace the use of multiple drama conventions insofar as the participants must create a context that is minimal, but also coherent, for the text's narration and dialogue. Participants are also encouraged to interpret beyond literal actions or meanings in order to create their own realization of the narrator and characters' views and attitudes. Given the students' ongoing reference to the text, it is likely that the interpretation will be relatively more chronologically sequenced, scripted, and performed than other dialogic drama practices. However, if the text is fairly "open" and thus ambiguous in its context and referents, students' performances will necessarily be preceded by discussions and improvisations of implied events and viewpoints as they sort through possible meanings, voices, and settings.

Research suggests that as children participate in reading and reflecting on texts before, during, and after their performances, they develop more elaborated understanding of reading as an interpretive activity (Wolf, 1998), their attitudes toward reading are more positive (J. T. Jackson, 1993; Wolf, 1998), and in some cases reading comprehension, measured by standardized tests, is significantly greater (Gourgey, Bosseau, & Delgado, 1985; Knudson, 1970). Drama that is "text-centered" and dialogized offers teachers and students the opportunity to read with a sense of audience and purpose, and it also engages children's personal and cultural resources (related life experience, language, music, gesture, and image) as symbol systems for meaning making (Garcia, 1998). Text-centered drama seems to be particularly well suited to students' interpretations of literary excerpts, short stories, and picture books that portray clear action and characterization.

A second approach to drama can be described as "text-edged" (Wolf et al., 1997), because the text creates the basis for a shared context from which multiple *implied* events, characters, and conversations can be imagined, represented, and interpreted. As an illustration we expand a previous example (Wolf et al., 1997).

Dr. *De Soto*: A Dialogic Approach to Drama and Reading

Children might read the opening pages of William Steig's *Dr. De Soto* (1982) and learn that a deceitful fox wants a kindly mouse dentist to repair his aching tooth, but the fox fully intends

to eat the mouse as soon as the procedure is completed. At this point in the story, the teacher might ask the children to imagine themselves as dentists and to discuss their perception of the fox. Although Steig narrated Dr. De Soto's skepticism, the text leaves room for further speculation and interpretation, which the children can provide. The teacher could also ask the children to imagine that they were other animals previously tended by the dentist; in turn, the children, from the position of animal patients, could describe their understanding of "the rules" for behavior and service in a dentist's office, like Dr. De Soto's, which was dedicated to the treatment of all animals in need. Working in small groups, the children could use their bodies to create and then present "photographs" of before and after their treatment, and add the "inner voices" of how their lives had been changed. From the position of receptionists in the dentist's office they could look at potential clients through "surveillance cameras" and then interview them by "phone" in order to screen those who seem to be too dangerous to be treated by the dentist. Finally, from the position of fellow dentists, they could discuss plans for how they could manage to treat the fox, despite his likely sinister intentions.

All of these inventions of dialogue, interactions, presentations, and plans enable children to participate in the authoring of the text. As they invent and elaborate on the text's potential, they generate multiple perspectives based on their knowledge of stories and life. Rather than moving through the text in a linear, literal, and ultimately monologic manner, the text's narrative is reshaped to make room for additional narrative pathways, perspectives, images, and positions. These pathways enable the teacher to actively engage children with the problems of conflicting viewpoints and discourses without taking children directly to enactment of the moment of conflict when Dr. De Soto and his wife begin their repairs on the fox's tooth.

If and when the children do eventually want to face that moment, they will bring a more fully elaborated understanding of the decisions and worries accompanying the action. Indeed, to promote a more dialogic relationship with the text, the teacher could ask the students to view a similar operation from the position of dentists in training who are viewing a "video" of a dentist at work on a potentially dangerous patient. Students could work together in small groups to create and then represent sections from the "video" for everyone to watch. Given the lens which this nonnaturalistic convention provides, the children could watch this tense encounter with a highly critical, evaluative purpose that would make it quite reasonable for the teacher to show the film in slow motion or to repeat sections so that children could view particularly worrisome fox gestures and the doctor's skillful responses. Later, the children might want to talk with the doctor or his assistant (who could be represented by teacher or students) about their perceptions of the procedure and their evaluation of the problems in balancing danger with service.

The *Dr. De Soto* example illustrates the five ways we propose classroom drama can be reconceptualized. Across their conversations and interactions in and around Dr. De Soto's office, the children are focusing not on confrontation between people but rather on *conflicting discourses* (e.g., a discourse of professional service balanced with a discourse that recognizes the need to take individual care in potentially dangerous situations). Rather than create a linear dramatization of the story, teacher and students *sequence events dialogically* to create dialogue in which discourses come into conflict and meanings can be problematized. Instead of attempting to realistically recreate the setting, events, and images in the text, children are invited to use drama conventions to create *nonnaturalistic representations* such as "photographs," "inner thoughts," events on "camera," "telephones," and watching events depicted on "video." These are not performed in a naturalistic way but instead are presented as glimpses of moments and dialogue to be evaluated both from the fictional positions of characters from the text and from the actual positions of students, everyday understandings. The drama work involves movement back and forth in time, and in and out of different spaces, in order to create a cumulative representation and evaluation of beliefs, values, actions, and relations.

This work with Steig's (1982) book also suggests that the reading goals are dialogic in nature. Students are not expected to simply explain the story, rather the students are asked to complicate the apparent perspectives of characters and *evaluate* the consequences of their actions. Finally, in this example, it is evident that the children are not acting or simply taking on static social roles; rather, they are shifting among multiple *positions* that require them to articulate and represent a wide range of viewpoints. By moving across positions, space, and time, rather than establishing roles that each child sustains, students are asked to present multiple views so that one discourse's beliefs and values are located within and across contexts and differing views are heard in relation to one another. As each context and discourse is made visible, its meanings reflect and refract the previous presentations, thus highlighting new tensions and new possibilities for interpretation. As we discuss in the following section, this kind of interplay of meanings creates what Bakhtin (1981) terms "dialogized discourses" (p. 324). It is up to the teacher to recognize the potential discourses emerging in the text and students' ideas and to make these visible through drama conventions so that meanings will be dialogized in subsequent presentations and readings. In the next section, the five dimensions of a dialogic approach to classroom drama, briefly illustrated here, are described and discussed in greater depth through a focus on related theory and practice.

THEORIZING DRAMA AS A DIALOGIC PRACTICE

In proposing a dialogic approach to classroom drama we rely on the theories of Bakhtin (1981, 1984, 1986, 1990, 1993). Bakhtin's theory of dialogism extends far beyond a concern with verbal exchanges. Bakhtin viewed consciousness, understanding, texts, reading, relationships, and life itself as dialogic and thus fundamentally dynamic, social, and cultural. "To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his [or her] whole life" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 293). In contrast, a monologic approach to classroom drama relies on the prevalent but limited view of dialogue as a

sequence of one-way verbal interactions and of understanding as a largely individual response to the world.

According to Bakhtin and other discourse analysts (Gee, 1990; Hodge & Kress, 1993), the words we use in everyday interactions do more than state our meaning. As "discourse," our words also express our social, cultural, ideological, and ethical positions about social relations, whether those relations are very intimate and close to our lives or distant from our immediate experience. For Bakhtin, discourse is always highly social and contextualized; it must always be understood as being about the social relations among particular people and recognized as uttered by specific people with particular social status or authority relative to those who are being addressed. Thus, we are never alone when we use language, because our language is always addressed to someone. Furthermore, our use of language is informed by all the ways we have heard language in use among others. As Bakhtin (1981) described it, language is "half-ours, half-someone else's" (p. 293). All of "my" understandings have been formed in dialogue with others who have themselves formed understandings in previous dialogues.

In dialogized forms of drama and reading it is crucial that apparently singular or monologic meanings be given social meaning as they are moved into social action. To avoid monologic discourse and static relations with others, discourses must be "dialogized" or "double-voiced" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 199). In other words, we need to place one discourse in dialogue with other discourses. When we experience one discourse "through" another then, for Bakhtin, a discourse is internally dialogized or double-voiced. Ideally, as discourses are experienced in action and in relation to one another, participants recognize the "interillumination" of meaning and their ideas and meanings become more complex or changed. As Bakhtin (1986) argued, "In the act of understanding, a struggle occurs that results in mutual change and enrichment" (p. 143). Thus, a dialogic approach to classroom drama positions students to experience multiple discourses and assumes that there will be resulting struggles for meaning.

Conflicting Interrelated Discourses

A dialogic approach to drama focuses on the conflict between discourses not merely on the conflicts between people. Rather than create or dwell in a monologic experience of conflict from a single position it is critical that students experience discourse from more than one position. When students have opportunities to view one discourse through another then they are likely to dialogize their discourse.

When we used drama to read Karen Hesse's (1997) novel, *Out of the Dust*, with 9- and 10-year olds, and again with 13- and 14-year old students, we did not dramatize any of the confrontations described or implied in the story between bankers and farmers, or between people determined to stay in Oklahoma versus those determined to leave for California (Edmiston, Long, & Enciso, 1998). Nor did we enact scenes from the book. Instead, we examined the emotions and conflicting meanings associated with multiple discourses related to peoples' decisions and dilemmas during the dust bowl of the 1930s. Hesse's free-verse poetry suggests that people held conflicting beliefs about self-sufficiency, financial security, and commitments to the land. Early in our use of drama, many children expressed the assumption that any one of these dilemmas could be easily resolved: "They should just move!" "I'd leave." Students' statements were monological insofar as they were based on the simplistic view that "the right thing to do" was self-evident and not subject to contestation. Using drama conventions, our consideration of different social positionings, along with a selection of photographs showing the desolation of the dust bowl, we worked to place their monologic, self-evident interpretations of Hesse's words into action and in relation to other conflicting ways of thinking about people's relations to one another, to the banks, and to the land.

After students looked at photographs from the period and read several of the poems from the book, we talked about words from the poem "The Path of Our Sorrow" in Hesse's (1997) book. We wondered how we could understand Hesse's poetry that offers a double-voiced history of the region through the *narrator's* reflections on her *teacher's* explanations of the farmers' and bankers' gains and ultimate losses:

> '...
> Such a sorrow doesn't come suddenly,
> there are a thousand steps to take
> before you get there.'
> But now,
> sorrow climbs up our front steps,
> big as Texas, and we didn't even see it coming,
> even through it'd been making its way straight for us
> all along. (Hesse, 1997, p. 84)

To begin our work with this text, we read a letter, invented by the teachers, as if written by Dorothea Lange to journalists at *Life* magazine. The letter asked the journalists to research and write a story on what was happening in Oklahoma. In this letter, a fictionalized Lange enclosed some of her photographs (we photocopied several evocative ones) and some poems she had seen published in a newspaper (they were poems, extracted from the novel). We asked the students if they were interested in imagining what photographs they might have taken if they had been those journalists. They were prepared to go along with the idea that they were photojournalists who were willing to be responsible for documenting a community's experience of the dust bowl.

Students talked about and then carried their ideas into actions by imagining and depicting photographs that could have been taken at the time, showing people in Oklahoma who had "sorrow climbing up their front steps." One group depicted a person receiving a foreclosure notice from the bank, another group showed a family looking at a charred farmhouse, another represented a family on the road headed west. As these depictions were shared, the students talked about why the sorrows had happened, why the people kept struggling, and how journalists, in their writing, might acknowledge the complexity of the story. Now the students were imagining and acting from inside multiple discourses, with a responsibility, as journalists, to reject simple solutions or explanations.

Dialogic Sequencing

A person can experience discourses as dialogized when drama activities are sequenced dialogically (Edmiston, 1994, 1998; Edmiston & Wilhelm, 1998b); that is, discourses are first made visible and then evaluated in a recurring, interrelated practice of presentation and interpretation. In our experiences, discourses become more visible in action. Although talk can be significant, the ideological and ethical assumptions underlying discourse are more likely to become visible in action because those actions are seen to have consequences for others. Talk can easily remain abstract and generalized. What Bakhtin (1981) said of novels applies to fictional enactment in classroom drama: "The action and individual act of a character in a novel are essential in order to expose—as well as to test—his ideological position, his discourse" (p. 334).

In action, discourse becomes "an object to be perceived, reflected upon, or related to" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 286). This is the case whether action is actual or imagined. Drama allows students the opportunity to experience the consequences of actions which are enacted in an imagined context. The sort of action and reflection that Bakhtin thought was largely only possible for artists, especially novelists, is made possible for students in classrooms. As an "author" of the fiction being created, students "step back and objectify" the "quarrels between characters." Rather than being trapped inside one single viewpoint, students begin to present and interrelate competing discourses and their consequences in action.

Having presented discourses and moved "outside" them, as students began to do when they took up the positions of both Oklahomans and journalists, they might then be able to evaluate discourses (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 7). Discourses, then, become double-voiced and multilayered as one position, made visible in action, illuminates another.

For example, the students reading *Out of the Dust* (Hesse, 1997) depicted the discourses and consequences related to peoples' beliefs about financial responsibility. Students composed a foreclosure letter from the bank; then they presented its meaning through drama conventions including a frozen moment when the letter was received, an overheard dialogue between the banker and an assistant, and a dream depicting the farm family's hopes for their land and future. When students returned to their letter and reflected on its implications, the abstract words illuminated different discourses about life on the land: "We regret to inform you that... because you failed to make payment on... [y]ou must vacate the property on..." The students felt the letter was not only ending a way of life, it was also questioning people's previous judgments, their future ability to earn money, and undermining a family's belief in the American dream. The financial trap created by federal farming policies, described in Hesse's "The Path of Our Sorrow" were no longer someone else's words. In Bakhtin's (1981) terms, they were half the students' and half the diverse people's and positions' coexisting in Oklahoma during the dust bowl. Two broad discourses of the American dream and the paths of sorrow were interilluminated through a spiraling sequence of presentation and evaluation of discourses.

Nonnaturalistic Representations

The aim of naturalistic conventions, like role playing, is to represent people interacting as "rounded characters" and to simulate actions and events as if they were actually happening. Role playing is most often used to represent life-rate talk, the linear passage of time and naturalistic contexts. However, as in everyday interactions, when all of our surroundings are equally "real" and when time moves along without interruption, it is difficult to highlight specific aspects of discourses or their implications.

In contrast, use of nonnaturalistic conventions makes it easier to focus on the particularities of discourses and their consequences for other people. Time can be slowed down, speeded up, repeated, or even reversed. In one space, different events can be represented concurrently or in a variety of sequences. Language and meanings are also made more significant when particular words and related gestures can be thoughtfully selected and presented in multiple ways instead of "played" to give the appearance of naturally flowing dialogue.

Heathcote (1980) provided the first and most complete classification of the range of drama conventions. Her comprehensive list has been further adapted and extended by a number of drama educators across the world (Ball & Ayers, 1995; Neelands, 1990; O'Neill, 1995; Owens & Barber, 1997). Heathcote's 33 nonnaturalistic drama conventions are forms of representation that offer variations on "still image," "tableau," or "depiction." Table 64.2 provides an overview of modes of communication often used in film and drama to make relations, language, attitude, and selected information both more visible and significant.

The students reading *Out of the Dust* (Hesse, 1997) used several nonnaturalistic conventions. The farming families were seen in full-size "photographs" and overheard speaking their inner hopes and fears; they also interacted and spoke out of their surreal nightmares and hopeful dreams for the future. In

TABLE 64.2. Modes of Communication Used in Film and Drama

Nonnaturalistic Convention	Examples
People seen...	in photographs in dreams in paintings in statues in video clips through binoculars through a two-way mirror
People heard...	on the telephone recorded on audio or video tape speaking inner thoughts when paintings or statues are brought to life overheard talking to others
People represented abstractly...	in writing in drawings by clothing by personal possessions

addition, the people were represented in letters and drawings and by possessions people left behind when they began their journeys to California. The banker was overheard talking on the phone then viewed as if in a portrait; the portrait was then brought to life and asked specific questions. All these conventions were presented and interpreted in relation to Hesse's poetry, which presents the dust bowl's effects through the diary of a 13-year-old girl whose family barely survived drought, dust, and devastation.

Evaluation

Bakhtin (1986) made clear that explanation is limited in its meaning-making potential, whereas evaluations are dialogic as they place one possible interpretation in relation with another: "With explanation there is only one consciousness, one subject. With comprehension [and evaluation] there are two consciousnesses and two subjects . . . Understanding is always dialogic to some degree. . . . Understanding is impossible without evaluation" (pp. 111, 143). Reflections that lead to literal, factual, and uncontested explanations of actions tend to be monologic. Through this kind of reflection, students are likely either to avoid ethical evaluations or offer opinions and finalizing comments which are not themselves tested in action.

In contrast, when students create depictions of actions and consequences using drama conventions they witness and participate in discourses as they carry differing, conflicting beliefs into action and relationships. They make value judgments as they choose what to represent and they evaluate those choices when they wonder whether or not a character should have taken a particular action. Bolton's (1999) classification of drama activities into two broad categories of students' relationship to meaning are useful for recognizing moments of evaluation in drama. He argued that when activities focus on "*making* meaning," students are not concerned with being watched. In contrast, if students are aware of being watched then they are "*presenting* meaning" for others to evaluate.

Students might make meaning through any number of drama conventions described above, through whole group, small group, and pair participation in ongoing activities. However, if drama work only involves enactments there will be little opportunity for reflection and no chance for teacher and students to step outside the action to consider the consequences of meanings and actions. To dialogize the discourses which students explore as they make meaning there must be both a presentation of meaning and a concurrent or subsequent evaluation.

Critical to evaluation is teacher questioning. Evaluation will not occur if teachers focus on students' literal and factual explanations and on uncontested opinions rather than ongoing dialogue. Morgan and Saxton (1994) wrote an invaluable resource that lays out in detail different types, styles, and considerations of many aspects of teacher questioning. Lewis (1999) analyzed how the quality of a teacher's questions can promote students' awareness of the constructed nature of texts, their resistance to accepting without question authors' assumptions about what is "natural," their critical awareness of a text's social, cultural, and historical complexity, and an examination of why people might hold certain beliefs.

The students reading *Out of the Dust* (Hesse, 1997) both made meaning and presented meaning for evaluation. Their depictions of people at the time of the dust bowl came to life as the students imagined their actions, their thoughts, their hopes and fears, and their reactions to events like foreclosure and the actions of other people like bankers. As the students observed one another's depictions they evaluated. We asked open-ended, though pointed, questions such as "I wonder how the people lived with such sorrow and yet continued to help each other?" Some of the students' evaluations were initially detached and prescriptive, as when they argued, "They should have paid their bills." However, as students became more engaged and discourses were dialogized, evaluations became more double-voiced: "I don't trust those flyers about California, but if we stay we might not all survive another summer." With these words, this student expresses an evaluation of meaning that refers to yet another text, and she also assesses the tensions in her own and an Oklahoman's troubled situation. She and other students could begin to understand the discourses and dilemmas that led to the enormous weight of Hesse's (1997) words, "[S]orrow climbs our front steps . . . and we didn't even see it coming" (p. 84).

Positioning

For Bakhtin (1981), the struggle for understanding occurs not only among people but also within each of us. "He imagines the self as a conversation, often a struggle, of discrepant voices with each other, voices (and words) speaking from different positions and invested with different degrees and kinds of authority" (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 218). Drama can make internal and external struggles more visible and more productive through students' experience of internally competing meanings, represented through different social positions in relation to others. In contrast, the term *role* connotes the presentation of a singular voice that does not shift across beliefs or values within itself or across relations with others. A role is "in place" to be stood up and propelled forward in relation to another role. In contrast, a social position is in dynamic relationship to others as multiple discourses, expressed both internally and externally, compete for significance.

For example, a mother living during the dust bowl might have had to struggle with the competing, internal positions of a dutiful and doubtful partner who wants to support the farm business and her children's future. Neither of these positions can be simply ignored; they must be brought into dialogue and action through her relations with others across numerous different contexts. Students role-playing the dust bowl period might imagine and enact only one of these positions, yet it is crucial to the experience of that time to appreciate the struggle among competing discourses embedded in different social positions.

According to the theory of positioning, we position ourselves and others and are, in turn, positioned by them as we move in and out of social situations (Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré & Langehove, 1998). Across these situations, we encounter and

express varying degrees of social status and authority in our relative positions. For example, a banker might use his status to question a farmer's integrity. Because status differentials restrict the range of discourses we anticipate and express, and because our positions *appear* to be "fixed" it is difficult for the banker or the farmer to reject their status and related ways of seeing one another. However, when these positions become visible and made more dynamic, as they can be through drama, it is possible to imagine and enact new terms for interpreting oneself and others—and our mutual dilemmas.

When students position themselves and others in drama they do not "become" someone else. As Warner (1995) discovered, students' engagement in drama is marked by movement across social positions, personal experiences, and anticipation of responsibilities. Much like the findings in Enciso's (1990) research on engagement in reading, students' drama engagement is highly active, visual, and social. As Arnold (1998) insisted, drama is as much about affective response as it is about cognitive understanding. However, students do not empathize to the extent that they stop thinking as themselves; instead, they use their own value systems to understand their temporary positions while they simultaneously evaluate actions from the conflicting positions of others who must interpret their particular circumstances and social relations. Drama allows students to experience what Bakhtin (1993) called "aesthetic emphathizing" (p. 17). In dialogized drama work, students "bring into interaction both perspectives simultaneously and create a . . . vision reduceable to neither" (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 54).

The students reading *Out of the Dust* (Hesse, 1997) did not simply play out the roles of family farmers and bankers; instead, they positioned one another using discourses from the novel. In doing so, the students engaged in struggles for understanding. When students imagined that they were people who lived during the time of the dust bowl, they drew on their own knowledge and values ("We should help each other"). They also made social, cultural, and ethical assumptions about the period based on their own life experiences and their interpretation of Hesse's novel, photographs, and other sources. Discourses became more double-voiced when they came into conflict as students positioned themselves and each another. What at first seemed straightforward for some students gradually became more complex. The "sorrow" that "climbed their front steps" was no longer seen as simply caused by a letter from an individual banker. Students began to understand how the sorrow of events were the result of many social, political, and cultural beliefs implied in the discourses and decisions of journalists, historians, and politicians.

PROMISING DIRECTIONS IN DRAMA RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

As a field of study classroom drama (also known as drama in education, educational drama, drama education, creative drama, process drama, teaching and learning with drama, or just drama) encompasses a worldwide network of researchers and practitioners whose concerns range from community development through drama to the analysis of teachers' involvement in young children's spontaneous play (see in particular O'Toole & Donelan, 1996; Saxton & Miller, 1998; P. Taylor & Hoepper, 1995). All of these researchers and practitioners use texts to interrogate and represent meanings, whether the texts are generated from participants' lives or selected from canonical or other literature. For an extensive and detailed review of research in drama and the language arts, we direct readers to Wagner's (1998) edited volume, *Educational Drama and Language Arts: What Research Shows*.

A review of drama research and analyses of practice from the past 5 years indicates that many scholars and practitioners of drama have been influenced by research methods that allow them to examine their own participation and decision making as they also document the contexts of and participants' responses to planning and implementing drama work. In particular, teacher researchers using drama in classrooms and communities have been encouraged to use the stance of reflective practitioner to describe and analyze their work with children, adults, and texts (P. Taylor, 1996). Rather than provide an exhaustive overview of research and practice, we choose instead to focus selectively on those teacher-researcher and ethnographic studies that we believe present researchers with new "dialogic" directions for the analysis and practice of classroom drama.

The studies we review are divided into three sections according to the ways texts are made and read: (a) *emergent texts*, evolved from a briefly stated premise that is negotiated and moved into action by all participants; (b) pre-texts, including extensive historical documents and other narratives already partially known and presented by teachers (or "drama leaders") then extended into action and reflection by participants; and (c) *extant texts*, usually novels or poetry, read and retrospectively interrogated through drama by participants, with the direction of a drama leader.

Research and Practice With Emergent Texts

Heathcote's pioneering work in classroom drama provides a complex and detailed exposition of the use of drama to generate and transform events based on the multiple, interrelated texts of participants' lives (Bolton & Heathcote, 1999; Johnson & O'Neill, 1984; Heathcote & Bolton, 1995; Wagner, 1999b). In a sense, Heathcote's practice is comparable to the work of a novelist, or, in her terms, a playwright, who is able to construct interactions and reflective moments with children as she negotiates who is speaking to whom, from what social positions, in what times and places, from what frame of reference, and under what constraints. In this respect, Heathcote's work is very much an enactment of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. The texts, and the associated discourses, that emerge through drama are presented by people who are socially situated as they face the dilemmas of their particular crossroads. All of these social positions and crossroads are infused with beliefs, interests, and values; in short, social ideologies that become reflected and refracted back to the participants as their interpretations are presented and evaluated.

The use of drama to situate social relations and dilemmas, without the support of a written text can be the most complex

form of drama work to plan and implement. However, it is important to recognize that even without a written text, the drama evolves in response to participants' personal, popular, and cultural knowledge—all texts (and all discourses) of one sort or another that have the potential to be presented as related meaning in the unfolding drama.

Many drama educators have been influenced by the vision of Freire (1970) and Boal (1979), who urge community leaders to assist participants toward representations and critiques of the realities and oppression of their worlds. For example, the South African community activist Doësebs (1998) argued that among people living during a period of extreme violence in KwaZulu-Natal, it was crucial that "events and past experiences" (p. 179) become the texts for teaching. Indeed, through the telling of a community-based story, members of a village not only participated in representing the people of the story but also transforming its relationships and consequences so that their own divided relationships could begin to heal. Arguing that this work with emerging beliefs and events requires that teachers build their own capacity for personal change, Doësebs (1998) wrote:

> We need to question our own motives and the methodologies we use in facilitating [community] development and be open to new ideas that instigate real change. . . . The ghost of apartheid still haunts—within institutions, communities and classrooms, in our churches, our kitchens, our bedrooms and in our boardrooms and more importantly, *in our minds* [italics added]. (p. 179)

Community work, like Heathcote's early explorations of classroom drama (see Wagner, 1999b), requires teachers to listen carefully to how participants bring their social positions, knowledge, and experience into public forums. In this and all educational work, it is essential that teachers become aware of their own socially situated perspectives, biases, and beliefs so that these can also be made a part of the group's explorations and presentations of meaning. For example, Edmiston (1993) analyzed his teaching with third-graders and described the range of structures he used to facilitate his and the children's reflections on their contributions to the drama's emerging text and discourses. Similarly, Gonzalez (1999) described and analyzed her viewpoints and expectations of power relations as she and her students improvised on the meanings in a script and rehearsed for a play.

In her consideration of the teacher's function in developing drama texts with students, O'Neill (1995) stressed the artistic nature of drama in arguing that drama teachers should use "creative structure" to shape experiences. However, she cautioned:

> Any creative structure will contain unknown variables, which must be accommodated. The artist works in a kind of open possibility, as does the leader in process drama. . . . The craftsperson uses skills to achieve a predetermined end, but the artist uses skills to discover ends through action. (O'Neill, 1995, p. 65)

As discussed throughout this chapter, "Each of the participants in process drama will be not just an actor, but also both playwright and spectator" (O'Neill, 1995, p. 65).

This characterization of drama as equivalent to the work of actors, playwrights, and spectators is applicable to Dyson's (1998) descriptions of young children making new texts and dramatizations of the multiple, intersecting texts they encounter through television, music, home relations, and school relations. Although their forums for presentation of meaning are only minimally guided by an adult leader or teacher, they are quite heavily directed by the children themselves. What emerges, in Dyson's view, are transformations of texts that reflect and refract the discourses children use to position their own and others' identities in a complex classroom and society. The children's group-generated texts are based on what Dyson calls the "ideological gaps" (p. 149) in classroom life. Her research highlighted the tensions in belief systems among children as they transform popular cultural images and narratives in their classroom writing and dramatizations. Dyson (1998) argued:

> "These ideological gaps reveal larger societal fault lines, including those related to gender, class, and race. Children struggle to use written signs to bring order to their inner thoughts and simultaneously to reach out to address others, but their signs are themselves symbols of societal order. . . . Through the dramatic enactment of texts on a community stage, those tensions [between signs and social relations] may be revealed and, moreover they may become the basis for public deliberation." (p. 149)

Dyson's analytic lenses and careful documentation of children's talk during play and text development offer important directions for further research in classroom drama.

Research and Practice With Pre-Texts

Although a pre-text can be understood to be a premise or beginning point, O'Neill (1995) argued that a pre-text is much more than the stimulus for an idea:

> The function of the pre-text is to activate the weaving of the text of the process drama. . . . [T]he pre-text operates, first of all, to define the nature and limits of the dramatic world, and second, to imply roles for the participants. Next, it switches on expectation and binds the group together in anticipation." (1995, p. 20)

She continued, "An effective pre-text . . . suggests a will to be read, a task to be undertaken, a decision to be made, a puzzle to be solved, a wrong-doer to be discovered, a haunted house to be explored" (p. 20). In O'Neill's analysis of her own and others' drama work, she made clear that a pre-text is quite different from the emergent text of the drama: "The pre-text that is the source of the work . . . remains as an outline, a trace, in the memories of the participants after the event. The [text generated by the process] is an outcome, a product" (p. 20).

Any number of pre-texts have been used to establish drama world parameters and participants' social positions. Often, the pre-text is taken from literary sources as in many of the examples of drama work described in *Dreamseekers: Creative approaches to the African American Heritage* (Manley & O'Neill, 1997). This same edited collection also includes examples of historical documents used as pre-texts. For example,

Tyson (1997) described her use of the persona "Hattie," a time traveler from the 1860s, as both a pre-text herself and as a vehicle for introducing children to stories from the history of enslavement in the United States. In other descriptions, teachers used photographs or song (Douglas, 1997; Manley, 1997) to establish a time period and students' relationship to events. Books by Swartz (1996) and Saldaña (1995) present stories or excerpts from folktales, picture books, and novels along with outlines of drama strategies that enable students and their teachers to present and interpret meanings from multiple perspectives. Montgomerie and Ferguson (1999) read stories with 4–8 year old children and then used the stories as pre-texts for drama work that explored possible meanings.

P. Taylor (1998) conducted a detailed teacher researcher study of the use of drama to enliven and deepen his middle school students' engagement with history. His students investigated primary source materials, created and transformed historically based episodes, and wrote extensively in journals as they were placed in the roles of Revolutionary War era patriots, traitors, and politicians. Alongside his descriptions of his plans and actions in the classroom, Taylor analyzed his authority and students' rights to negotiate the curriculum through drama. Similarly, the historian Fines (Fines, 1997; Fines & Verrier, 1974) described in eloquent prose his understanding of the role of selective signing for and positioning with students so that they would have a fuller range of authority over the materials they read and interpreted through dramatic structures and conventions. Fines' work is marked by his use of drama to present students with multiple social positions, besides the singular authority of the teacher, in order to provoke and facilitiate students' multifaceted and often provocative inquiry.

Booth (1998) described the work of Nancy Steele, who used a letter of invitation to establish the context and relationship of her eighth-grade students to their study of the Holocaust. The letter invites the students to become "filmmakers" who will create a documentary showing people's willingness to forget the past and move on. Through this letter, the teacher not only established a purpose for and relationship to their study but also conflicting discourses (stances that advocate forgetting the past or remembering horrors) that would soon be interrogated as students discovered what it might mean if people were to forget the Holocaust. Booth's adamance about the importance of evaluation and critique in drama work is evident in his contention that "[w]e need to direct the attention of students not just to the subject of discussion, but to the very language they are using in drama" (p. 69). Booth's own teaching, which used an extract from a history textbook as a pre-text, was analyzed by Hume and Wells (1999). They emphasized that the students explored multiple perspectives on the topic of "Westward expansion" in 19th-century Canada (from railroad managers to Chinese immigrant laborers to their families in China), perspectives that were experienced affectively as well as intellectually.

Another form of drama, named "mantle of the expert," uses pre-texts to establish a relationship to and purpose for learning, but it is carefully sequenced to engage students in close readings of and reflections on an ongoing presentation of documents, events, tasks, and perspectives that can be directly tied to an academic course of study. According to Heathcote (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995) who originated this use of text and relationship to the world through drama, the term *mantle* is used because people "wear their 'mantle' (i.e., express their interests, habits, and style) ... [and t]hey use their expertise and knowledge to move along different highways" (p. 194). Heathcote and Bolton discussed the overlap between theatre and mantle-of-the-expert. They wrote that this work grew out of the intersection of two ideas:

1. Actors need a vast amount of knowledge in creating their roles and interpreting the life-style and period of the plays they interpret and perform.
2. Students come to school to learn; drama and theater provide contextual parameters that invite and require research. (p. 194)

Thus, mantle-of-the-expert work requires teachers to establish contextual parameters so that students might find both intellectual and emotional links with the worlds and texts they study.

This work is extraordinary when planned and developed with a clear understanding of the domains of knowledge and skill children will be expected to present. Texts must be carefully selected for children's use so that information is made available in highly significant forms, causing students to reach for possibilities and imagine relations and connections as they solve problems. The coauthored text *Drama for Learning: Dorothy Heathcote's mantle of the expert approach to education* (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995) and *Interactive Research in Drama in Education*, edited by Davies (1997), are invaluable sources for beginning inquiry into this approach to teaching and learning. Towler-Evans (1997) provided a usable succinct analysis of some of Heathcote's guiding principles. Edmiston and Wilhelm (1998a) provided a description and analysis of how mantle-of-the-expert work was begun with sixth-grade students studying history, using documentary and historical material as pre-texts.

Several exemplars of teacher-researcher studies also provide useful descriptions and analyses of structures and pre-texts used to endow students with the authority to investigate, report on, and present their understanding. Maine educator, Housum-Stevens (1998), initiating mantle-of-the-expert work for the first time, invited her middle school students to create a museum focusing on ancient peoples around the world. She wrote:

> I simultaneously used smaller dramas [i.e., drama strategies and conventions] to open kids to different viewpoints, and introduced them to the extended drama framework that would ultimately allow us to get the big museum work done. Both gave us structure and purpose, the *context*, for everything else that came after—the month of research, the weeks of planning and creating exhibits, the efforts to understand other cultures and to connect with the people who created them, the public presentation of the learning. (p. 21)

Sylvia Jackson (1997) described similar structures and movement across drama episodes as she engaged her younger students in a study of African Americans' participation in the science and ethics associated with inventions and patent laws.

Edmiston (1998) also described work with middle school students who needed to complete social studies reports related to famous people and events. Working with students in

small groups, Edmiston shifted the students away from the usual "student doing a report" monologic relation to their subjects. As he heard their key questions, he gave students tasks and positions *within* the situations they were exploring so they would experience and imagine the interrelated ethical dilemmas people faced in their particular circumstances. As a result of their brief drama work, students' thinking became far more dialogic. One young man stated, for example, "I'm kind of more open to that there are other opinions that are strong and stuff even though you might disagree [with those other opinions]" (1998, p. 103).

Research and Practice With Extant Texts: Plays and Literature

Many educators and researchers have considered the problem of "slowing down" reading so that students will critically reflect on the meanings and implications of both the author's form and the dilemmas described in a text. Certainly, theater teachers, who direct students in script reading and performance, must be able to draw on a wide range of conventions and strategies to assist students in their interpretations and presentations of meaning. An award-winning teacher-researcher study by Gonzalez (1999) highlighted the importance of students' investment in the interpretation of a play; at the same time, Gonzalez recognized and explored the politics of negotiating students' versus the director's vision of a play's meaning. Her work reveals the high degree of skepticism students often hold when the teacher professes a commitment to democratic negotiations among a community of players. Studies such as Gonzalez's are especially valuable for their insights into both the teacher's complex goals and the students' desire to understand plays as a text and as a dramatic artform.

Heathcote and Bolton (1995, pp. 213–217) developed an approach to the reading and dramatization of texts based on Robert Breen's (1987) "chamber theatre." The appeal of chamber theater, according to Heathcote and Bolton (1995), lies in the possibility of *showing* a story: "The *narrator* tells and holds the form [of the story], while the showing involves the actors [students] in the demonstration of action" (p. 213). Although this may seem a very simplistic approach to dramatization, it actually requires a high degree of inference and imagination so that each action, stillness, and sign carries significance. Furthermore, because the narrator *tells* the feelings and motivations of the characters, the actors do not have to invent or "enact" an emotional response: "All they are required to do is give a crude "sign" of what the feelings might be" (p. 213). Heathcote and Bolton explained that chamber theater achieves goals for reading and interpretation that are often very difficult to access or sustain through other approaches to drama:

> T]he primary value of chamber theater lies in the way participants must scrutinize the written text in order to clarify what parts represent action and talk and attitude. Because the action part of the narrative will be demonstrated by people moving in space and immediate time, it is essential that they decide by careful reading of the text *who is the narrator* and what is that person's *investment in telling the account*. (p. 214)

These two key questions asked of the narrator, call attention to the dialogic potential of drama in education. Heathcote and Bolton (1995) recognized the dramatic and educational possibilities in situating people in very specific relationships with an account, or "telling." The narrator's investment is crucial to the creation of a context, which, in turn, is linked with implied and explicit discourses, actions, and interactions that actors/students will invent and present while holding firmly to the written text. Although this approach to text through drama is only briefly described in *Drama for Learning* (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995), it is a practice that warrants considerable attention and development among educators and researchers.

Salvio (1999) used drama conventions similar to chamber theater to mediate and represent and also to complicate the meaning of some of "the unspeakable" facets of response to "testimonial" literature, in this case accounts of massacre and terrorism. With student teachers taking a Foundations of Reading Instruction class she read ***Krik? Krak!*** a collection of nonnaturalistic "magic realism" short stories written by Edwidge Danticat (1991), a Haitian American writer. Together they considered which different perspectives in and on the narrative would be privileged (and which would be silenced). She introduced the students to the nonverbal aspects of several drama conventions (e.g., relationships among people represented abstractly by objects in a collage). The class began to take up positions of witnesses to the events as they used these conventions, which became integral to performative readings of extracts. In doing so, the students explored the gaps in words and validated responses that had been previously composed from their half-perceived ideas.

Teacher researchers, working outside of theater programs, have described their use of drama with novels and poetry (for multiple examples, see Manley & O'Neill, 1997). Typically, their descriptions focus on a series of drama conventions that enable students to visualize and elaborate on characters' perspectives (Swartz, 1996; Wilhelm, 1998). Other teachers use drama, discussion, and writing to support students' review and analysis of an entire text, as was the case in Warner's (1997) work with ***Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*** (M. D. Taylor, 1977). Warner's sequence of drama conventions and discussions enabled students to build their understanding of the characters' integrity as they faced multiple injustices. Furthermore, she described a highly abstract yet affecting sequence of structures that connect the novel's events to the author's and characters' deep relationship with the land. In the same volume, Thomas (1997) described her use of several poems and music to both evoke students' empathy and provide multiple shifts in their perspectives as they represented and reflected on the terror and loss associated with lynchings in the United States.

Enciso and Edmiston (1997) described the structures and nonnaturalistic conventions they used to engage students in a careful reading and rereading of *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* (Sciezcka, 1989). The students, in the role of police officers, were asked to view a "video" of A. Wolf delivering his sworn testimony, which was the full text of the book. Children were also given typewritten copies of the testimony, which they read and underlined as they prepared for the actions and questioning they would need to pursue to gather evidence that

would confirm or disconfirm the wolf's story. Through drama conventions, they not only encountered witnesses but also took up the perspectives of those witnesses; and as they encountered evidence, they had to first stop and reenact the steps leading to the making and placing of the evidence. In effect, the children read the text multiple times, in and out of sequence, from numerous social positions, with different purposes and critical concerns in mind. As their reading and drama work concluded, children were keenly aware that "the truth" is not a simple statement of facts; the truth can be hidden or distorted by language, social status, and institutionalized procedures.

CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a theoretical frame for interpreting drama as a practice for dialogizing discourses. We described drama practices that dialogize the discourses of literary texts, community texts, students' lives, and teachers' curricular goals. Although many resources exist for understanding the practice of drama in relation to reading, we believe that this chapter opens up new directions for studying and planning for drama that is explicitly interested in the problem of developing students' insights about themselves and others in the world. Our work, then, is informed by and aligned with the teaching Dorothy Heathcote has been developing for 3 decades. We close with one of her extraordinary insights about the purpose of education:

> We have to set up a situation in our schools where all the time, every time, we introduce a new element to children, it has the effect of cracking all the previous understanding into new awareness, new understanding. This is what growing older is about. This is what being more mature is about. This is what being educated is about. The moment whereby all the understanding you had before is sharpened into a new juxtaposition. Drama is about shattering the human experience into new understanding. (Heathcote, 1976, p. 122)

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