A Vygotskian Argument for Teaching Drama in Secondary Schools

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Abstract

In this chapter we will argue that Drama provides young people with opportunities for exploring possibilities of ways of being in the world. Our suggestion is that these opportunities of 'being other,' of reflecting on one's identity in the social world, are facilitated by experiences of being in role in the safety of settings that are an important part of drama in education. It is in drama lessons the techniques and practices of being in role are acquired. These techniques and practices constitute tools which enable young people to work on their 'selves.' They mediate social relations in such a way that enables new forms of exploration and understanding of the self and possibilities for 'being other.' The acquisition of these tools requires teaching. This argument becomes all the more important when we consider the fact that drama has been marginalized in the English secondary school thus denying young people access to what can be some of the most formative experiences of their educational careers.

Keywords: Vygotsky, drama ,role, mediation, creativity, imagination

10.1 Context

In this chapter we will outline an argument in support of the teaching of drama in secondary schools. It is our understanding that drama provides young people with opportunities for exploring possibilities of ways of being in the world. Our suggestion is that these opportunities of 'being other,' of reflecting on one's identity in the social world, are facilitated by experiences of being in role in the safety of settings that are an important part of drama in education. It is in drama lessons the techniques and

practices of being in role are acquired. These techniques and practices constitute tools which enable young people to work on their 'selves.' They mediate social relations in such a way that enable new forms of exploration and understanding of the self and possibilities for 'being other.' Importantly, the acquisition of these tools requires teaching.

We make this argument at a time when educational policy in England has eroded the position of drama in the secondary school curriculum. Changes to state schools' funding allocations introduced by the Government in June 2017 have resulted in further restrictions of opportunity for the recruitment and retention of arts based specialisms. The disappearance of specialist drama teaching posts is steadily eroding the pool of expertise and experience in the field.

The provision of drama education in school depends entirely on whether the school has the budget to employ drama teachers. The decisions as to whether such staff are employed with the prospect of drama remaining a feature of the curriculum offered are affected by national curriculum priorities and budgetary constraints that require a sharp focus on what has become the 'core business' of secondary schooling. Radical overhaul of national assessment at 16 has resulted in greater curriculum time being given to what are regarded as traditional subjects. Thus drama as a subject is 'at risk.' We will argue that this transformation of the shape of the curriculum carries particular disadvanteages for young people who are already disadvantaged. Drama is one of the curriculum areas in which many students can enjoy the success that they crave but which is often not available to them in more 'academic' subjects.

We turn to the writings of the Russian social scientist L.S. Vygotsky for theoretical understanding of the ways in which specific forms of social intervention, in this case teaching, can exert an influence on the formation of creativity, imagination and identity. His suggestion was that teaching provides learners with access to ideas and concepts, understood as cultural tools or artefacts that are human products which mediate the acquisition of personal understanding and capability. This move from the social to the individual lies behind the description of his contribution as a theory of the social formation of mind. This is only a partial account of his work. He was also interested in creativity. The theory seeks to make a contribution to our

understanding of meditational processes whereby socially available or socially provided influences are internalized and also the ways in which creative responses are externalized. He argues that human ways of being are shaped by social, cultural and historical circumstances and also that these circumstances are shaped by human action.

10.2 Introduction

We will open our argument with a discussion of the influence of L.S. Vygotsky on theoretical accounts of the place of creativity and imagination in cognitive and affective development and move to a justification for the teaching of drama grounded in his theory of the social formation of mind.

There is a growing interest across the social and applied sciences in what has become known as 'sociocultural theory' and its near relative 'activity theory' (e.g., Derry 2013). Both traditions are historically linked to the work of Vygotsky and both attempt to provide an account of learning and development as mediated processes. In sociocultural theory the emphasis is on semiotic mediation with a particular emphasis on speech. In this account cultural artefacts such as speech serve as tools which both shape possibilities for thought and action and are in turn shaped by those who use them. In activity theory it is activity itself which takes the centre stage in the analysis. Both approaches attempt to theorise and provide methodological tools for investigating the processes by which social, cultural and historical factors shape human functioning. In our case the interest is in the social shaping and making of identity and imagination. Neither account resorts to determinism in that they both acknowledge that in the course of their own development human beings also actively shape the very forces that are active in shaping them. This mediational model, which entails the mutual influence of individual and supra-individual factors, lies at the heart

of many attempts to develop our understanding of the possibilities for intervention in the processes of human learning and development. For many educators it provides important tools for the development of an understanding of pedagogy. Importantly, this body of theoretical work opens up, or rather insists upon, a pedagogic imagination that reflects on the processes of teaching and learning as much more than face-to-face interaction or the simple transmission of prescribed knowledge and skill.

Vygotsky's emphasis on the self construction through and with those tools which are socially available brings two crucial issues to the foreground. Firstly, it speaks of the individual as an active agent in development. Secondly, it affirms the importance of contextual effects in that development takes place through the use of those tools which are available at a particular time in a particular place. He distinguished between psychological and other tools and suggested that psychological tools can be used to direct the mind and behaviour. In contrast, technical tools are used to bring about changes in other objects. Rather than changing objects in the environment, psychological tools are devices for influencing the mind and behaviour of oneself or another.

Vygotsky not only wrote about creativity and imagination (e.g., Vygotsky 2004), he was also an active participant in debates about contemporary theatre in early 20th century Moscow (Sobkin 2016). In the so-called 'silver period' in post revolutionary Moscow he was an associate of the likes of Stanislavsky and Mandlestam. He wrote many reviews of theatrical productions and his doctoral dissertation, entitled "The Psychology of Art," contained detailed analyses of novels and plays such as *Hamlet* (Yaroshevsky 1989). Although a reading of some 21st century accounts of his work may give the impression that he was concerned solely

with cognitive development, this conclusion is far from the case. Partially under the influence of Spinoza he was trying to develop a non-dualist account of the cognitive and affective features of development in which the notion of creativity was a significant feature (Derry 2013).

We suggest that what drama education provides pupils with is an opportunity to experience 'being other' through the safety of the classroom and the guidance of the teacher (see Tawell et al. 2015 for an extended discussion). Pedagogic differences with traditional subjects emerge at the very beginning of many drama lessons, when pupils and teacher negotiate anew the roles to be played each time the lesson begins. Pupils may be asked to sit in a circle, a physical demarcation denoting that traditional teacher/pupil roles will be temporarily suspended during the lesson. Mediation through difference in social relationships is at play throughout the drama lesson, be it through the social roles (leader/negotiator) that pupils may take in small group work, to the various 'roles' that may be created as a result of either improvised or script based work. Through drama, pupils learn how to mediate not only their fictional roles (their role in the drama) but also their social roles. The context of the drama classroom provides the unique environment in which pupils are able to negotiate role.

In this chapter, we will explore how as children progress through primary school and transistion to secondary the opportunities to play decrease and are replaced with a gradually more sophisticated language of drama. This new language, thought of as a tool in Vygotskian terms, may offer the pupil not just the immediacy of the role, but the opportunity to reflect, analyse and evaluate. These deeper

learning moments enrich the pupils' experience of not only drama, but their ability to develop critical thought.

The introduction of this new language of drama begins at the start of the academic cycle in Year 7 (the youngest age group in the English secondary school system) when pupils may have some limited knowledge of the drama from their primary schooling. This early experience of drama may take the form of class assemblies or an end of year 6 play as they prepare to leave their primary schools. Pupils have some understanding of what a 'play' is. This understanding and introductory knowledge is formed through experiences gained from watching others, through the 'playing' of roles in early childhood. Younger children are adept at immersing themselves in the 'act' of play – this is how they learn and make sense of not only the world around them, but their 'self' as well (Tawell et al. 2015).

What happens in one drama classroom is unique to that context. Whilst pupils may explore the same text, the dramatic approaches to how that text is used and interpreted may be highly situation specific. Theoretical frameworks and polemic opinion on how drama should or could be taught in school continue to exert influence, either through teacher training courses or via the culture of the school. What is meant by 'drama' in school is varied and the definition unique to the institution. While in some respect, this variation may mean that drama is vulnerable and its existence precarious, it does also afford unique opportunities. A drama classroom affords pupils the space to experience pedagogic imagination, to determine that experience through negotiation not just on their own but with their peers in their classroom.

In line with Vygotsky's views on externalisation and creativity (see below) we suggest that drama can facilitate the development of the capacity for self authoring in pupils. Rather than following preordained routes and trajectories they may become active agents in the creation of their own identities and ways of being. Drama may support the development of creative responses to challenging situations. Traditional western theatrical approaches to 'drama' focus on script and the production of a play. Pupils are given scripted lines, which they must learn off by heart. Rehearsals prepare pupils for the performance of the lines – and pupils are directed as to how they might interpret their role by the teacher. Pupils learn the hierarchy of drama, reflected not just in the play but in their social and school roles. If productions involve the whole school, pupils can experience the unique opportunity to collaborate with others from differing year groups, thus encountering a way of learning from each other that is not restricted by age.

This experience of 'drama' can be both rewarding and enjoyable for pupils – yet it is not without its limitations. Scripted plays require the pupil actor to 'speak' only the lines given by the playwright. Furthermore, only a small minority of pupils may have the opportunity to speak any lines at all. Popular school productions include West End musicals--plays that entertain yet are light on in-depth exploration. The mediation of meaning does not operate beyond a surface level of limited plot and stereotypical characterisation.

If pupils are to learn how to create their own dramatic responses they must be given access and opportunity to develop an understanding of the language and grammar of the strategies that build upon the foundations laid in primary school.

Pupils need to be given opportunities to internalise these dramatic structures and to learn to manipulate the grammar in order to exert due influence on the exploration of content. From the earliest preparatory lessons in Year 7 to the final preparations at the end of secondary school, pupils are gradually immersed into the culture and shifting dynamic of the drama classroom.

Year 7 drama lessons begin with introduction to play games and warm up activities. This methodology enables pupils who are new to drama lessons to engage with complex social rules through simple game playing. Pupils learn to listen, negotiate and have fun through participation in the activity. This learning is oblique – pupils are not necessarily aware of the distinction between 'playing' and 'drama' at this stage. Game playing, the act of participation and everything that these activities entail (collaboration, commitment, control, concentration, etc.) equips the younger pupil with the skills needed to operate in the adult world. Yet, just as this vital developmental stage of growing awareness of the difference between play and drama begins, social influence from beyond the drama classroom intervenes. Indeed, as the pupils mature in age, the willingness to engage in 'play' diminishes. The drama classroom provides an open space in which that 'play' can safely resume and, through negotiation with others, form the foundation upon which creativity is nurtured.

Pupil confidence and ability to engage in drama as a mode of learning are crucial in the early years of secondary schooling. Those pupils who have the opportunity to participate in drama from the age of 11 have the depth and breadth of experience by the time that they reach the age of 14 to use the structures to formally

assemble not only a dramatic response to challenges, but to appreciate and understand the difference between playing 'self' and 'other.' This difference lies at the heart of the reasons why so many pupils struggle with the thought of performing or acting, as they are thrust into a role in which the distinguishing line between who they are as pupils and who they are in role is indistinguishable to them. Drama is not about the expression of self – it is the opportunity to express and experience 'other.' As older pupils become gradually more confident and assured of their ability to negotiate the social roles within their small group, so too their ability to imagine what it must be like to be 'other,' to take up another identity, and thus engage in improvisation is enhanced. This work is informed by play undertaken as a younger child, but now it is structured and shaped through the grammar of drama.

Pupils who have experience in exploring content using drama structures have the additional benefit of participating and finding value in drama that is not necessarily performance orientated. 'Improvisation' - the name given to unrehearsed or unprepared practical work - enables pupils to explore not only a wide range of characters but also ideas, to work through different viewpoints and to seek different interpretations. These exploratory moments offer vital opportunities for pupils as they jointly create shared understandings of characters and situations. Moreover, pupils are removed from the confines of perfecting an individual character to alternatively finding different outcomes, different resolutions. These drama structures allow the pupils to explore different perspectives on issues both within and outside the drama. But to operate within these structures requires the drama teacher to provide pupils with content that has sufficient scope for meaningful investigation. The content of drama curricula is too vast to cover in this chapter; however, the importance of

introducing/selecting relevant, meaningful and thought provoking material for practical exploration is a significant pedagogic challenge. For it is within how the content is presented and negotiated between the teacher – pupil and pupil--pupil that some sense of shared meaning is born out of the shared experience.

The Vygotskian notion of mediation carries with it a number of significant implications concerning pedagogic control. The idea is that we as humans create what Vygotsky called tools, such as forms of speech, which shape the way we understand the world and which we in turn shape as we use them. In that the concept denies the possibility of total determinism through external forces it is associated with an intellectual baggage which is potentially highly charged, especially in the political context in which these ideas were originally promulgated. Vygotsky (1978) argued that humans master themselves through external symbolic, cultural systems rather than being subjugated by and in them. His understanding of mediation through and by socially available tools opens the door to accounts of a liberationist account of development--of human beings creatively going beyond the scripts of their immediate circumstances.

So much effort has been expended attempting to clarify the movement from the social to the individual and yet relatively little attention has been paid to the reverse direction. Bruner's (1997) reminder about Vygotsky's liberationist version of marxism serves to reinforce the view that his was a psychology which posited the active role of the person in their own cognitive and emotional creation. Whether the emphasis was directly on creativity itself or through the use of expressions such as 'mastering themselves from the outside' in his early work, Vygotsky discussed at some length externalisation, the way in which an individual's creative response to the

world enters into the flow of cultural life. Engeström (1999) reports that there has been a reawakening of interest in the topic in Russia which under Stalin was preoccupied with theories which emphasized internalisation and social determinism at the expense of externalisation and creativity.

Vygotsky's writings that deal with creation and externalisation, especially *The Psychology of Art* (1971), received very little attention in the years that followed his death in 1934. The early studies led by Vygotsky, Leont'ev, and Luria were discussed in terms of how given cultural tools mediated, or at times determined, cognitive development. However these studies of development not only examined the role of given artefacts as mediators of cognition but were also interested in how children created artifacts of their own in order to facilitate their engagement with challenges in the social world (see Luria 1976).

Engeström and Miettinen (1999) relate internalisation to the reproduction of culture and externalisation to the creation of artefacts that may be used to transform culture. In its simplistic form, this process lies at the heart of the drama lesson – the opportunity for pupils (and teacher) to review and transform both the culture of the classroom and the content explored. The rediscovered emphasis on externalisation is important because it brings a perspective to concept formation which affirms the notion of active agency in learning and development. Thus, externalisation is not the end product of drama (i.e., performance) but a part of the process of drama. "Like Ilyenkov after him, Vygotsky recognises that as much as culture creates individuals, culture itself remains a human creation" (Bakhurst and Sypnowich 1995, p.11).

Leontiev views externalisation as the process that “produces artefacts... that enter into and channel subsequent streams of activity” (Prior 1997). Ways of thinking and feeling may be influenced and shaped by the availability of cultural artefacts which may themselves be the products of mediated activity. An example of this issue drawn from a practical drama lesson would be the creation of a piece of ‘writing in role’ work, derived from paired improvisation which is subsequently interpreted / shaped by the group. In his discussion of Leontiev's work, Glassman (1996, p. 94) characterised this process as expansion originating in the “development of symbols in a joint community.” Leontiev also argues that there are two layers of thinking and consciousness, one of which is “objective reality in consciousness” and the second being “consciousness of consciousness,” or reflection (Zinchenko 1985, p. 114). This reflection points to the need to develop pedagogies which are informed by what may be crudely termed some form of metacognitive perspective. In the act of improvisation, a pupil may have some ‘sense’ of how a role could be interpreted from their own experience of ‘other.’ At any given moment during the exchange the child is operating on multifaceted multidimensional strata, simultaneously the self, the other and the other yet to be. Leontiev was thus directing attention to the production of cultural artefacts some of which may act to inform self reflection. The creation of such artefacts (a drama, for instance) provides the pupils with opportunity for both shared and individual reflection. The ‘development of symbols through collaborative activity in a joint community’ -- assumes a particular pedagogic significance. The production of cultural artefacts through collaborative activity may enhance self reflection and metacognitive development. This theoretical position extends Vygotsky’s (1978) argument of the *general genetic law of cultural development*. The general genetic law argues the case for the primacy of interpersonal exchange in

development. Collaborative activity is seen as the site of production of tools for promoting reflection as well other forms of development. This form of collaboration is both creative and intellectually stimulating, but also potentially subversive. Critical thinking and reflection are powerful tools; opportunities to engage with these facets in other curriculum areas are limited by the motive of some curriculum planners that seeks to place value on a pupil's ability to retain, recall and regurgitate learning, in other words, to maintain the status quo. Drama creates the collective ability to question–to reconstruct the now into something that might be different in the future. This very reason is why drama has such profound and powerful pedagogic potential.

This emphasis on self construction through using those tools which are available brings two crucial issues to the foreground. First, it speaks of the individual as an active agent in development. Second, it affirms the importance of contextual effects, the argument being that development takes place through the use of those tools which are available at a particular time in a particular place. Vygotsky (1978) distinguished between psychological and other tools and suggested that psychological tools can be used to direct the mind and behaviour. In contrast, technical tools are used to bring about changes in other objects. Rather than changing objects in the environment, psychological tools are devices for influencing the mind and behaviour of oneself or another.

Vygotsky understood artefacts or tools as human products, with ideal as well as material qualities, that are taken up, developed and transformed in the course of human activity. By the time in which pupils in England are entered for public drama assessments between the ages of 15 and 16, the overarching aim must be to equip

them with the ability to transform artefacts / tools independently of a teacher's guidance. The place and importance of drama in education is far more than the preparation for assessment. It is the preparation for a life in which individuals are equipped with the means of transforming themselves in the often rapidly changing social situations of adulthood.

Pupils can then use the tools of drama for personal and social development--and ultimate change. Vygotsky's cultural historical perspective on creativity has been summarised by Glăveanu:

> The new artefact (material or conceptual) is seen as emerging within the relation between self (creator) and others (broadly understood as a community), all three being immersed into and in dialogue with an existing body of cultural artifacts, symbols and established norms. This model is not structural but dynamic since it is in the "tensions" between all four elements that creativity takes shape with the "new artifact" becoming part of "existing culture" (for self and/or community) and constantly alimenting the creative cycle (Glăveanu 2010a, p. 12).

Furthermore these artefacts are understood in the historical context of their creation and their subsequent use through time.

Social and cultural tools are historical products, and creativity involves their deployment in the cultural context of the here-and-now. Vygotsky (2004) started with a conception of creativity as "a historical, cumulative process" (p. 30). This sense of creativity capitalizing on the past is exemplified in the following, more recent statement with respect to adult creative artists: "the most eminent are those creators who best utilize the social and cultural tools and best fit with the social and cultural expectations of their time" (Moran and John-Steiner 2003, p. 80).

The concern of writers such as Moran and John-Steiner (2003) has been to develop an account in which humans were seen as "making themselves from the outside" through their active use of cultural tools rather than being dominated and controlled from the outside. Through acting on things in the world, they engage with the meanings that those things assumed within social activity. By acting in the classroom, the pupils engage with the assumed conventional meanings associated with topics raised in lessons and reinvent them for the purpose of the lesson. In this way they become more active in the processes of their own self creation.

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10.3 Creativity and Education

Given his emphasis on the creation of artefacts that function as mediators it is hardly surprising that Vygotsky (2004) emphasised the psychological importance of the development of creativity through schooling. From the perspective of learners who are deemed 'vulnerable' or whatever term is used to suggest low attainment, the question is whether they have access to the kind of interpersonal relations in the classroom that facilitate the intrapersonal dynamics of creative processes. Traditional classroom based subjects operate within an agreed set of conventions – pupils sit behind desks in allocated places, speaking when the teacher permits. Opportunity for dynamic creative processes are limited to paired discussion work. In the traditional classroom an individual's knowledge is valued above knowledge which the collective are capable of achieving.

Thompson and Tawell (2017) argue that recent studies have made a strong case for the teaching of the creative arts particularly when students are understood as being 'vulnerable.' By participating in drama, pupils are given the opportunity to experience roles that offer them a voice different from their own. Drama gives the pupils time to engage in shape shifting their own identity – from pupil to member of a group, Year 7 to leader. But these opportunities are in the minority. This chapter is a call to action to envigourate drama pedagogy to play a central role in school education, for reasons outlined below:

> There is a growing recognition that emotion and imagination are central aspects in the development of young people's ability to self-regulate, empathise with others and work collaboratively (e.g. Fleer and Hammer, 2013; Hughes and Wilson, 2004). Other research has highlighted the need for strong peer relationships and the ability to collaborate within social environments (e.g. Lynch, Lerner, and Leventhal, 2013; Moran and John-Steiner, 2004). The creative arts can offer some young people who are at very high risk of becoming disaffected a powerful set of tools for creating imaginary contexts that may provide them with the opportunity to renegotiate identities and hence re-engage with school (Daniels and Downes 2014; Wallace-DiGarbo and Hill 2006) (Thompson and Tawell 2017, p. 19).

Cole and Griffin (1984) argue that different settings and activities that give rise to 'spaces' for creative exploration rather than pedagogic domination are at the heart of their position. In so doing they point to the fallacy of externally determined progession. "Adult wisdom does not provide a teleology for child development. Social organization and leading activities provide a gap within which the child can develop novel creative analyses" (Griffin and Cole 1984, p. 62).

Vygotsky (2004) recognised the importance of the development of creativity through schooling and also rejected the notion of creativity as the product of sudden inspiration. He argued that the active promotion of creativity was a central function of schooling.

> We should emphasize the particular importance of cultivating creativity in school-age children. The entire future of humanity will be attained through the creative imagination; orientation to the future, behavior based on the future and derived from this future, is the most important function of the imagination. To the extent that the main educational objective of teaching is guidance of school children's behavior so as to prepare them for the future, development and exercise of the imagination should be one of the main forces enlisted for the attainment of this goal (Vygotsky 2004, pp. 87-88).

His analysis of the development of creativity is that children are not necessarily more creative than adults rather that they have less control and critical judgement over the products of their imagination. He suggests that as rational thought develops so does critical judgement and that the tendency is for adolescents to become increasingly dissatisfied with the products of their imagination if they do not acquire appropriate 'cultural and technical factors' or tools with which to engage in creative activity. Adults dismiss adolescents' creative output if they are not given the tools to do this sort of work.

Vygotsky also argues that creativity is a social process which requires appropriate tools, artefacts and cultures in which to thrive. He extends this analysis to social class with a comment on creativity which will doubtless cause a little discomfort when read by 21st century western eyes. Here he suggests that there are class

differentials in the availability of tools and artefacts for creativity and the time for their deployment.

> Every inventor, even a genius, is also a product of his time and his environment. His creations arise from needs that were created before him and rest on capacities that also exist outside of him. This is why we emphasize that there is a strict sequence in the historical development of science and technology. No invention or scientific discovery can occur before the material and psychological conditions necessary for it to occur have appeared. Creation is a historical, cumulative process where every succeeding manifestation was determined by the preceding one. This explains the disproportionate distribution of innovators and creators among different classes. The privileged classes supply an incomparably greater percent of scientific, technical, and artistic creators, because it is in these classes that all the conditions needed for creation are present (Vygotsky 2004, pp. 30-31).

This position on the availability of tools, artefacts and time has been adapted by Wertsch and Tulviste, who talk of creativity as “transformation of an existing pattern of action, a new use for an old tool” (Wertsch and Tulviste 1996, p. 72). Wertsch (1991) also reminds us that individuals’ histories with regard to cultural tools are an important element in the development of mediated action. He argues that when Vygotsky uses the term ‘mental function’ he does so with reference to social interaction and to individual processes. In this sense mental functions may be seen to be carried by groups as well as individuals. He sees ability as the capacity to function with the tool and, citing Middleton, Bartlett, Resnick and Salomon, he also

talks of mind being socially distributed, belonging to dyads and larger groups who can think, attend and remember together (Wertsch 1991).

Thus, a Vygotskian understanding of creativity: acknowledges its pervasiveness; understands the centrality of tools for creativity; and recognizes the importance of the social organization of pedagogy that promotes creativity. That is, Vygotsky is tacitly promoting the argument that education for creativity requires careful consideration of the means by which the tools and artefacts that facilitate creativity may acquired. When brought together these elements of practices that promote creativity have important implications for learning that transforms identities.

10.4 Vygotsky and Drama

There are two foci of attention for Vygotsky's thinking about drama. On the one hand he was concerned about the psychological drama of development and on the other he discussed the importance of dramatic events in the social world. As one would predict from his general sociogenetic theoretical orientation these two considerations were inextricably linked.

Yaroshevsky (1993) claims that there are strong grounds to believe that Vygotsky's early engagement with people with a theatrical background or a direct engagement in theatre such as Stanislavsky, or film making such as Eisenstein, had a life-long influence on his ideas and on the theory he created. Yaroshevsky (1993) writes of Vygotsky as "creating psychology in terms of drama" employing terms like "the drama of development" or the "drama of self-development." Here drama was thought of in a particular way:

> Drama meant collision, counteraction, conflict of characters. Not an

> impersonal setting of external circumstances, but a dynamic system of mutual orientations, motives and actions, having their own “plot” — this is what the social environment is like, in which personality is formed as a participant of drama (Yaroshevsky 1993, p. 273).

Vygotsky also wrote about the place of drama in the social world in which young people develop. In his now well known essay on creativity and imagination he argued that:

> Drama, more than any other form of creation, is closely and directly linked to play, which is the root of all creativity in children. Thus, drama is the most syncretic mode of creation, that is, it contains elements of the most diverse forms of creativity (Vygotsky 2004, p. 71).

The task of Vygotsky in 1930-1931 was to create his own theory of psychology in terms of drama. Here we can see the difference between Vygotsky’s use of the concept stage and the more familiar ladder like concept deployed in much developmental theory. The stage is the place the dramatic development takes place. The stage (theatre) has two planes – the social plane and individual plane. The planes only make sense relative to the stage, thought of as the social situation of development, and they are connected as two projections on the stage where the child is not a spectator but a participant. This argument is reframed by Smagorinsky (2011) who directs attention to the role of dramatic tensions in the formation of personality.

> Vygotsky’s sense of drama concerns people in relation to both others and themselves, with drama emerging relationally through transactions with other people in social settings. Dramatic tensions are also present within the

> individual, indicating that the development of personality is a consequence of the internal and external dramatic conflicts a person experiences in everyday life (Smagorinsky 2011, p. 335).

This issue is also explored from the perspective of identity by Holland et al. who deploy the Bakhtinian concept of the 'space of authoring' to capture an understanding of the mutual shaping of figured worlds, the term they use to capture and understand spaces of possibility, and identities in social practice. Holland et al. also argue that multiple identities are developed within figured worlds and that these are "historical developments, grown through continued participation in the positions defined by the social organization of those worlds' activity" (Holland et al. 1998, p. 41). Identity formation is a social activity that may take place in the unseen minutiae of interaction. It is as much a collective activity in the here and now as it has been through history.

> Just as electricity is equally present in a storm with deafening thunder and blinding lightning and in the operation of a pocket flashlight, in the same way, creativity is present, in actuality, not only when great historical works are born but also whenever a person imagines, combines, alters, and creates something new, no matter how small a drop in the bucket this new thing appears compared to the works of geniuses. When we consider the phenomenon of collective creativity, which combines all these drops of individual creativity that frequently are insignificant in themselves, we readily understand what an enormous percentage of what has been created by humanity is a product of the anonymous collective creative work of unknown inventors (Vygotsky 2004, pp. 10-11).

This understanding points to the importance of the cultures of the school which form the setting for collective creative activity, and the importance of the individual, the collective and the social in arriving at an understanding of the underlying processes and structures. The drama classroom provides a space for experimental refiguring of

the landscape of the social world of the young person. Arguably this possibility of change is particularly important for someone who has been positioned in the institutions of schooling as vulnerable, disadvantaged or unacceptable. In many traditional classrooms marginalized youth do not have the opportunity to exert positive change on their social position. If this idea is reframed in terms of pedagogic control, it is often the case that the more marginal is the position that a student occupies, then the more likely it is that they are subject to more stringent relations of social and pedagogic control. Drama lessons are often one of the very few pedagogic encounters in which disadvantaged and vulnerable students are given the experience of a relatively dialogic form of pedagogy. In this sense drama subverts the orthodoxy of pedagogy as enacted in many of our schools.

The drama lesson may offer significant opportunities for the experience of pedagogic alternatives; additionally the ‘figured’ world of the drama lesson may impact on the ‘real’ everyday world. Participants in drama lessons may be offered experiences in which they may renegotiate themselves and the relation of others to them in the world beyond the drama classroom. They may take up new social positions and ways of being.

The experience of adopting a new role in drama creates the possibility for such reorientations to meaning and understanding of the self. This experience of working in role in drama lessons helps participants to develop capacities able to dissect, analyse and discuss social roles. This reflection on role has implications for all to extend their own maps of the world. Children are natural experts in this practice; from the moment they enter the school, they are shaped and formed by the

social and cultural activities modelled by those already operating in that context. As Smagorinsky (2011) argues, this experience of cultural modeling raises questions about the kinds of mediation that are most beneficial. He points to the importance of gaining control of one's own trajectory through life.

> Vygotsky's brief consideration of imagination has great implications for the trajectories of social groups and their individuals. His relation of imagination, emotion, and cognition suggests that people's capacity to project a trajectory for themselves is culturally mediated. It is important to understand, then, the kinds of mediation that provide both the emotional foundation and cultural sense of propriety for their trajectories, and the sorts of mediation that potentially limit conceptions of trajectory (Smagorinsky 2011, p. 339).

Here Smagorinsky (2011) points to the delicacy of the work of the teacher of drama. The teacher's task is to provide the means of self determination and self control rather than leading students through tasks that offer little by way of agency. This perspective has also been brought to the analysis of change and transformation in the workplaces that adults inhabit.

> Rather than being wholly subject to change, individuals are actively engaged in remaking cultural practices, such as those required for effective work practice. Individual experiences in social practices, such as workplaces, will incrementally, and at times, transformationally contribute to changes in their ways of knowing and sense of self (identity). Individuals' subjectivity both shapes the kinds of changes that occur and is itself shaped by events, particularly singularly dramatic events, because it shapes their response to those events (Billet and Sommerville 2004, p. 321).

Elliott and Dingwall (2017) draw on Wright and Rasmussen (2001) who describe drama as "linguistic intelligence, embodied knowing and personal intelligence," a form of knowing that "encourages and celebrates lived and imagined

experience, emotions, intuition and creativity in their various forms of representation, and recognises and makes sense of those experiences" (2001, p. 219). They also identify dramatic pedagogy as one which is able to give young people an "authentic voice" (ibid.); a pedagogy which hands control over to young people could be an unusual experience for marginalised and at-risk youth, and potentially a significant and life-changing one.

> There was clear evidence of the 'social imagination' (Greene 1995) which enables young people to envisage the world as different, both in their interview responses and in their improvisation and other activities we observed. Richard Courtney has theorised the way in which drama enables us to do this: by creating a fictional imitation of the world, we are able to compare the actual one with our fictional counterpart and to see the world as it might be (1990, 1995). "In this way, young people can compare the actual with the fictional, and it is the 'as if' of drama in particular that allows us to project and transform what we know, and potentially who we are (Wright and Rasmussen 2001, 222)" (Elliott and Dingwall 2017, p. 75).

Yaroshevsky (1989) also points to the importance of understanding the complex inseparable relationship between situation, motive, emotion and understanding in Vygotsky's cultural-historical work. As he argues in the quote given below, he suggests that Vygotsky turned to Stanislavsky's concept of subtext or 'understatement,' or clarification of his use of the term 'sense' understood as the local interpretation of more general societal meanings.

> As Stanislavsky teaches us, underlying each line of a character's text in a drama is volition directed at achievement of certain volitional tasks –that is what understatement is – each line conceals volition or volitional task. It cannot be grasped from the meanings of these words themselves. It glimmers through the words, and can be understood if the motives of the behaviour of the speakers of those lines are known – Sense denoted the individual's

> emotional experience of the tense motivational attitude to the world, created by the volitional task. The hidden meaning of an action, including the generation of a word, can only be grasped if one knows the context out of which this task grows and the purpose for which it is solved (Yaroshevsky 1989, pp. 314–315).

It is suggested that, in this way, motives make actions meaningful in social situations. The motives that guide social action in situations are formative in the generation of meaning for the actor and the observer. Changing the social situation of action can bring change in motive, that in turn transforms the meaning of actions that may, on first observation, appear identical. Taken alongside Vygotsky's desire to understand affect and cognition in a non-dualist account, there is a need to understand action, emotions and motive in human activity.

Thus Vygotsky presents us with a complex amalgam of ideas concerning the psychological drama of development and the importance of dramatic events in the social world. From his perspective there is a need to acquire tools or cultural artefacts which can promote creativity and imagination. In Daniels and Downes (2014) we considered the implications in terms of identity formation, following Smagorinksy's (2011) note about the kinds of mediation that are required and Vygotsky's (2004) assertion that creativity requires time, place and tools if it is to be enacted. The teaching of drama in schools can provide young people with this time, place and tools in which they may become more active in the creative shaping of their identities and ways of being. Through drama they become more active as creators of their own selves.

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