

**Athens Institute for Education and Research
ATINER**



**ATINER's Conference Paper Series
EDU2018-2511**

**Thinking Outside of the Frame:
Using Drama and the Arts to Promote Metacognition**

**Alistair Martin Smith
Mentor
Trinity College
University of Toronto
Canada**

An Introduction to
ATINER's Conference Paper Series

Conference papers are research/policy papers written and presented by academics at one of ATINER's academic events. ATINER's association started to publish this conference paper series in 2012. All published conference papers go through an initial peer review aiming at disseminating and improving the ideas expressed in each work. Authors welcome comments

Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos
President
Athens Institute for Education and Research

This paper should be cited as follows:

Martin Smith, A., (2018). "Thinking Outside of the Frame: Using Drama and the Arts to Promote Metacognition", Athens: ATINER'S Conference Paper Series, No: EDU2018-2511.

Athens Institute for Education and Research
8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece
Tel: + 30 210 3634210 Fax: + 30 210 3634209 Email: info@atiner.gr URL:
www.atiner.gr
URL Conference Papers Series: www.atiner.gr/papers.htm
Printed in Athens, Greece by the Athens Institute for Education and Research. All rights reserved. Reproduction is allowed for non-commercial purposes if the source is fully acknowledged.
ISSN: 2241-2891
29/08/2018

**Thinking Outside of the Frame:
Using Drama and the Arts to Promote Metacognition**

Alistair Martin Smith
Mentor
Trinity College
University of Toronto
Canada

Abstract

In “Thinking Outside of the Frame,” Martin-Smith uses examples of from ancient Greek theatre to contemporary theatre to demonstrate how changing frame transforms the way the audience perceives the characters, and increases metacognitive thinking. He then combines drama educator Dorothy Heathcote’s notion of *frame* with social anthropologist Erving Goffman’s method of *frame analysis* to analyze the drama journals of Canadian children in a fifth-grade French immersion classroom. In their drama, the children and their teacher, Mr. Crispin, explore C.S. Lewis’s Narnia, by travelling through a cardboard wardrobe in their classroom, as in the novel *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*. Employing Johnson’s definition of *metacognition* in drama, Martin-Smith argues that metacognitive thinking in drama is concerned with “multiple viewpoints, problem solving and meaning-making.” He identifies examples of metacognitive thinking by using Brenna’s comprehension keys. His frame analysis demonstrates multiple frame changes in the children’s narratives and with metaphorical analysis he shows how the children’s metaphorical correspondences are transformed. Drama in the classroom encourages metacognitive thinking in children through frame changing. The existence of frame changing in theatre from Ancient Greece to the present lends authenticity to the present study, which connects metacognitive thinking in educational drama to theatre and the arts. The author supports the views of critical pedagogue Peter McLaren, drama theorist Richard Courtney and educational author Sir Kenneth Robinson that drama and the arts can infuse classrooms with authentic meaning-making experiences that help to prevent the roles of teacher and pupil from becoming an empty ritual performance.

Keywords: drama; theatre; education; metacognition; framing

Introduction

In the arts, the notion of framing changes the way we perceive reality. Cézanne maintained that the attitude of the observer was more important than the subject. In visual art, a frame within a frame is sometimes referred to as *fenestration*. In music, changing the frame is referred to as a key change. In dance, it can refer to the tension in the upper body relative to that of the dance partner. In theatre, the frame can refer to a play-within-a-play that changes our perception of the characters in a scene. I have written previously about “double framing” with role in drama and education, where participants create a fictional role that is closer in terms of role distance to real life, and then that role plays a Shakespeare role. An example is when performing *As You Like It*, teenage participants created roles as inmates at “The Arden Correctional Facility for Exceptional Juveniles”:

We were asking the young people to learn, not just about Shakespeare, but to build a bridge between Shakespeare’s play and their own lives. Building the bridge takes time and energy, but once built it makes possible the flow between the two worlds. The paradox is that by investing time, time is saved.¹

In our Looking for Shakespeare performances, the participants enjoyed reframing themselves as delinquent teenagers who performed Shakespeare as part of their prison therapy, and their Shakespeare performances were electrifying, as they spontaneously switched from one frame to another.

Dorothy Heathcote (1984) defines framing in drama in terms of “social encounter,” taking her inspiration about frame in drama from social anthropologist Erving Goffman’s *Frame Analysis*:

In any social encounter, there are two aspects present. One is the action necessary for the event to progress forward towards conclusion. The other is the perspective from which people are coming to enter the event. This is frame, and frame is the main agent providing (a) tension and (b) meaning for the participants.²

In order better to help us understand the subtleties of cultural roleplay, Goffman used theatre terminology such as “role (and role-distance), performance, scene, audience, stage-arrangement, set, dramatization, dramaturgy, and dramaturgical skills and strategies.”³ However, when discussing drama strategies in the classroom, we sometimes neglect to discuss the ways in which our cultural roles overlap with our drama roles and vice versa. Since the cultural context of the classroom is interdependent with the educational and artistic context of the drama, we can use the language of framing to describe the dynamic interweaving of cultural and artistic performances as they occur in the drama. In her paper on framing in drama and theatre education, Kari Heggstad notes, “a suggestion is to combine Goffman’s theories and

¹Martin-Smith 2011, 194.

²Heathcote 1984, 21.

³Heggstad 2011,259-260.

perspectives on performance together with Heathcote's educational perspective into a broader frame concept."⁴ Her suggestion invited me to consider the classroom itself as a cultural frame which preceded the children's entry into their drama frames, and into which they returned when the drama was completed.

This paper will examine the how thinking outside of the frame promotes metacognition. Through a simplified frame analysis of their drama journals, I will examine how the pupils demonstrate metacognitive thinking, generated by their ability to change the frame as their real and fictional narratives demand. In their drama, their cultural and artistic roles overlap as they recognize themselves within each frame, resulting in productive tension and new meaning. But first, I look at one example of frame changing in theatre, the play-within-the play, to see how changing the frame affects our understanding of the narrative.

Changing the Frame in Theatre

The play-within-the play in *Hamlet*, The Murder of Gonzago, is a well-known example of double framing. It is useful to examine how Shakespeare frames and reframes the story to his dramatic purpose. Hamlet asks the Player King to perform the play-within-the play in order to find out if what the ghost of Hamlet's father said about his murder was true:

The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king (II, ii)

He enlists his friend Horatio's help to observe his uncle Claudius' reaction to the play. Hamlet plans to insert a short monologue into the play to make the play more specific to the circumstances of his father's murder. The play-within-the-play is preceded by a dumb show, a mime in which the basic plot is enacted, without any specific references to King Claudius. The King is unprovoked emotionally after witnessing the dumb show. Even though his father's murder is portrayed by pouring poison into the sleeping king's ear, the identity of the murderer is unknown.⁵ But when the Player King announces that the murderer of the King is Lucianus, the *nephew* of the King, King Claudius calls for light and exits the scene, disrupting the performance. Most commentators suggest that Claudius is upset because he recognizes his own guilt. As he admits in a soliloquy after the performance:

O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal curse upon't,
A brother's murder. (III, iii).

But there is another explanation for the audience to consider, which requires changing the frame. Since Hamlet is his nephew, identifying the murderer in the play-within-the-play implies a direct threat on his own life. Indeed, after Hamlet

⁴Hegstaad 2011, 263.

⁵Grinstein 1956, 51.

murders Polonius, thinking that he has killed his uncle (III, iv), Claudius sends him to his certain death in England (IV, iii). The play is poignant precisely because of the ambiguity between what Claudius knows and what Hamlet suspects. This works dramatically because the audience is constantly changing the frame between the perspectives of both characters. So by changing the frame the audience is asked to consider and reflect on both Hamlet's and Claudius' perspectives simultaneously.

We can see how this kind of frame changing affects the consciousness of the audience in the history of classic tragic Greek theatre. In Aeschylus' famous trilogy, *The Oresteia*, the Chorus is framed in the first play, *Agamemnon*, as the Old Men of Argos, giving the audience the distanced perspective of public observers in the murder of King Agamemnon. In the second play, *Libation Bearers*, the Chorus becomes the Serving Women of Clytemnestra, a less distanced perspective, allowing the audience to become more emotionally involved in the suffering of Electra and Orestes at the murder of their father. Finally, in the third play, *Eumenides*, the Chorus is framed as both the Erinyes, or Furies, pursuing Orestes for killing his mother, Clytemnestra, but also as the Athenian Jurors, who consider Orestes' crime and decide, with the Goddess Athena, his guilt or innocence. Framing and re-framing the Chorus allows the audience to consider different perspectives, from traditional revenge for regicide and matricide, to the public justice designed to end it, symbolizing the passage in democratic Athens of the 5th Century B.C. from justice through traditional revenge to justice through trial by jury.

In contemporary theatre as well, using the play-within the play to change the frame has been effectively employed by Tom Stoppard in his play, *The Real Thing* (1984). The play begins with Henry, an elegant Englishman in a silk robe, waiting for his wife Charlotte to return from a business trip. When Charlotte enters, Max confronts her with evidence of adultery. As they contemplate their ruined marriage, they continue to trade witticisms, singing Gershwin's "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off." However in the next scene, the audience realizes that they have been watching a scene from "The House of Cards," the play-within-the play written by Henry. When Charlotte and Henry brunch with Max and his real wife Annie, the audience learns that the real adulterous relationship is between Henry and Annie. When Annie confesses her adultery to her real husband Max, the actor "collapses like a house of cards into miserable sobs,"⁶ quite unlike his stage character. Through this dramatic change of frame, the audience is compelled to consider the gap between theatre and reality. In considering his own views on love, Stoppard the playwright alludes to other playwrights' views of love, from the 17th century John Ford to Strindberg, Wilde and Coward. As Henry considers Charlotte's view that the difference between a play and real life is that in "real life there is more thinking time between the lines," he matures in his understanding of love, becoming less of a "reflex joke machine." By the end of the play, Henry is able to recognize real love as "the bond between two people who fully know each other's private selves, no matter what other identities they present to the world"⁷ By synthesizing the real with the fictional, the heroic journey of Stoppard's character Henry to develop a mature understanding of "the real thing" mirrors the children's heroic journeys in Narnia.

⁶Rich 1984.

⁷Rich 1984.

Stoppard's self-recognition through frame changing demonstrates the kind of high quality thinking that is approached by the children in their Narnia dramas. A brief review of the literature on drama in education and cognition will help us to understand the benefits of frame changing for children's metacognitive development.

Literature Review

Johnson maintains in her article, "Drama and Metacognition," that thinking in drama involves three main qualities: multiple viewpoints, problem solving and meaning-making. "Drama explores through role, the same situation from the viewpoints of different characters." Thinking in drama involves "problem solving and the resolution of dilemmas both within the drama and in the process of making the drama." Thinking in drama results in meaning-making, "drama is all about finding, making and communicating meanings."⁸

Since teacher questioning builds metacognitive awareness, their teacher asked key questions throughout the drama, as well as encouraging the children to ask their own questions and reflect on them in their drama journals. Questioning in drama, both in and out of role, allows pupils to reflect on their experiences. As Bolton points out, "Experience itself is neither productive or unproductive; it is how you reflect on it that makes it significant."⁹ However, reflecting on their drama experiences does not in itself demonstrate metacognitive awareness.

Brenna (2012) identifies three key strategies associated with metacognitive reading comprehension, which can be applied to the pupils' explorations in drama: those based on awareness of self; those based on awareness of task; and those based on awareness of text. Those strategies identified include:

- Making connections to self, other texts and the world
- Responding through drama
- Monitoring meaning by self-questioning
- Previewing and predicting
- Summarising
- Making inferences based on content
- Synthesizing through drama¹⁰

Analyzing their drama journals, I identified all these strategies, leading me to believe that the extended drama did help the children raise their metacognitive awareness. What I did not understand was what qualities or dynamics in the drama encouraged the children towards metacognitive thinking.

Their teacher had been responsible for planning and seeding the initial drama by reading Lewis's novel, setting up the cardboard box as the wardrobe through which the children entered Narnia, and encouraging them to go on independent

⁸Johnson 2002, 597.

⁹Heathcote and Bolton 1995, 164.

¹⁰Brenna 2012, 91.

adventures and write about them in their drama journals and storyboards. However, it was not until the children took ownership of the drama and started thinking about it and discussing it outside of their drama lessons that the Narnia drama took root in their classroom, generating new ideas and adventures. Making time during the school day for them to share their collective drama experiences became important; it encouraged them to think empathetically about their classmates' involvement in their drama experiences, which can be seen in the emotional interconnectedness of their writing in their drama journals. Suddenly, the pupils were thinking, talking to each other and imagining new shared adventures in Narnia, and the role of their teacher changed from planner to chronicler, and perhaps even gardener. Their teacher had planted a seed by reading Lewis's novel that was nourished by drama and started growing and flowering with their stories, channelling their enthusiasm and creative energy. Yet, again, I kept trying to understand what it was that generated the metacognitive thinking I was witnessing.

Perhaps the children's use of metaphor could shed light on the constantly-shifting contexts of their stories. In his book, *I is an Other*, James Geary links context-shifting with metaphorical thinking: "In psychology, this shift of context is called 'framing'... The correspondences conjured by metaphor are not fixed. They advance and recede based on context. When the frame changes, so to the associated commonplaces."¹¹ If, as Geary suggests, "our ability to swiftly swap frames increases with age", then as drama teachers, we have within our power and responsibility to set frame-changing challenges for our pupils.

Changing the frame in drama encourages children to become aware that the classroom itself is a constructed cultural frame that has boundaries and metaphors that are intended to enhance learning. In *Schooling as a Ritual Performance* (1993), critical pedagogue Peter McLaren has identified examples of how classroom ritual can become empty:

I like to pretend I'm working ... move my pencil...that kind of thing. But I'm really outside [of the class] in my head... I'm not movin', but my body can still feel the muscles workin'... The teacher sometimes catches you... then she screams... 'Eyes on your work!'¹²

As teachers are aware, classrooms can become sites for empty ritual, where pupils are simply going through the motions. Instead, classroom rituals can be infused with new meaning through drama and the arts. Drama theorist Richard Courtney explains what can go wrong in terms of role theory, and how it can be remedied:

Under certain conditions identification can degenerate into pseudo-roles: the individual who surrenders to a role acts according to the image he would like to maintain. He is guided by role expectations rather than the demands of the situation and his own Being. He 'pretends' to be a teacher or a student; he gestures and postures. The student pretends to pay attention. The teacher pretends to teach. The schooling becomes an elaborate game and dramatization has got out of hand. Neither

¹¹Geary 2011, 163.

¹²McLaren 1993, xvi.

must submit to their roles. Their authentic pedagogic relationship is an encounter where they *acknowledge* each other. That is genuine drama.¹³

This authentic relationship between teacher and pupil is what drama strategies can assist teachers in creating. It requires an ability to change the frame and think outside of it. This is one main reason why standardized testing is so wrong: instead of encouraging an authentic relationship between teacher and pupil, education author Sir Ken Robinson argues that standardized testing is contributing to pupil's disengagement in the educational process by ignoring their creativity:

A lot of the problems in schools come about because we ignore the interior world of kids. We've got disengagement, anxiety, stress, appallingly high suicide levels among teenagers in schools. It's not all the fault of schools, obviously. The kids are living in a pretty toxic environment at the moment, culturally. But schools shouldn't be contributing to it. And one of the contributing factors is this insane pressure of testing... The way to raise standards is to get kids motivated, curious, engaged and interested.¹⁴

School creates a ritual framing of events, yet as McLaren points out it is essentially a cultural fiction: "it claims that the world is as it seems instead of invented or made up."¹⁵ Ritual within a school is seen as a *framing device*, enabling students to interpret what occurs within it.¹⁶ When teachers create drama in the classroom, they are offering students a new possibility, the possibility of going on a fictional journey, with tasks designed to enhance the embodiment of specific knowledge. Careful planning is essential, in order to ensure that learning objectives can be met; yet to embark on a journey with the students within the classroom, re-frames the teacher as a *liminal servant*, and the pupils as *liminal travelers*.

Teacher as Liminal Servant

The drama teacher has multiple roles to play.¹⁷ She must function as the one who sets boundaries in the classroom, yet one who is also able to negotiate new boundaries within the fictional frame. Having briefly considered different metaphors for drama teaching, such as planner, chronicler and gardener, I would like consider another one suggested by Richard Courtney, that of drama teacher as *liminal servant*. Applying cultural anthropologist Victor Turner's (1982) notion of the liminal (from the Latin *limen*, meaning "threshold"), Courtney points out how the drama teacher can guide the process of transition in a pupil's rite of passage:

The liminal servant understands teaching to be essentially an improvised drama. To fully understand the subtext of the student, the liminal servant must 'become'

¹³Courtney 1982, 151.

¹⁴Peritz, 2017.

¹⁵McLaren 1993, 126.

¹⁶McLaren 1993, 48.

¹⁷Heathcote 1984.

the student as part of the dramatic encounter. While in the thrall of such a drama, the liminal servant knows that the results will be unpredictable; that understanding, like a play, has a spirit of its own. Feelings and attitude become the matrix of learning for the liminal servant; thus the rational processes of her students must be placed in an emotive context.¹⁸

The drama teacher as liminal servant is thus empowered to assist pupils to discover alternate metaphors, and generate new meanings as they explore their fictional worlds. What happened in our classroom is that the pupils kept going beyond the frame of the drama we had begun together, changing their frame to reflect new metaphorical correspondences between the world of their classroom and the fictional world of Narnia.

Challenges of Changing the Frame in the Classroom

One challenge of framing in drama is to encourage pupils to change their frame. You can think of a frame as a mindset. If it is fixed, it is difficult to encourage a participant to perceive an alternate frame. However, with the narrative distance, which drama and the arts can provide, it is possible to encourage participants to enter a new frame. In drama, we negotiate a safe entry into a new frame by setting boundaries, choosing roles, and agreeing on signals that communicate when the new frame begins and ends. Secure in their willingness to enter the frame, participants are more willing to explore within it, and also to change the frame when the fictional context demands.

Being in the classroom is already a frame separate from the security of the home. Entering the classroom is, in itself, a performative event. Parents and teachers educate children early on about entering the classroom frame and what will be expected of them. I like to think of drama in the classroom as a portal, through which children can be encouraged to pass, during their rite of passage into a fictional frame. Both these frames, the real and the fictional must be given clear boundaries in order to be successfully entered and exited. Yet, as we will observe in the pupils' writing, these frames overlap, their classroom personas mingling with their fictional characters, generating new meaning.

Marnia: Narnia in the Classroom

Five years ago, in a fifth grade French immersion teacher in a public school in a prosperous Canadian city, their teacher Mr. Crispin¹⁹ decided to read aloud to the class the popular C.S. Lewis novel set in the fictional land of Narnia, *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*. His own teacher had read the same story to the class when he was in elementary school, and he remembered being fascinated. He wanted to bring the story to life using drama and to understand what it meant to these children.

¹⁸Courtney quoted in McLaren 1993, 117.

¹⁹The teacher's name is a pseudonym throughout the text to protect his identity.

Since he wanted the children to take ownership of the drama, and to extend it in their own ways for several weeks, he encouraged them to continue their explorations on their own, outside of our drama periods, and to write about their adventures in their drama journals.

He asked the caretaker if they could adopt the empty refrigerator box that sat in the hallway about to be recycled. He cut two doors in opposite sides, so it became the wardrobe through which the children could enter from the classroom and exit through the back wall of the wardrobe into Narnia. He reinforced it with tape and bamboo to make it stronger and painted it to make it look like a magic wardrobe. He made a rule that you could enter Narnia outside their drama period, but only if their assignments for the day were completed.

They spent several drama lessons entering, exploring and exiting Narnia. Then the children began exploring Narnia on their own, continuing the adventures they shared as a class. Though he read to the pupils during English period, their dramas were conducted in French, so the children learned a new vocabulary for the characters and places encountered in Narnia. He encouraged them to write stories in French in their journals about their encounters in Narnia, which Mr Crispin renamed Marnia to compare and contrast the children's experiences with Lewis's fictional world. They were excited about being given the opportunity to improvise around the theme of Lewis' novel and, would often come up to their teacher breathless during a break, to fill him in on the latest chapter in their adventures. While in the beginning of the year, it was a struggle to get them to write a full page in their journals, once they started travelling to Marnia, many of the pupils wrote chapters in French, each documenting their fictional adventures within in the dramatic frame. All of the stories describe the rescue of their teacher, following his kidnapping by the White Queen. We have referred to Lewis' Queen of Jadis throughout as the White Queen, rather than the pejorative White Witch, in order to allow for her transformation in our dramas. The King refers to Aslan, the Christ-like Lion, who comes to overthrow the White Queen and save Narnia. Instead of the Pevensies, Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy, the children in this classroom drama play themselves, though their adventures in Marnia seem no less real to this reader. Their role is a continuation of their cultural role as grade five pupils in Mr. Crispin's French immersion classroom.

Since the refrigerator box was clearly a portal into another fictional world, I decided to use Goffman's frame analysis to decode their stories, while giving an account of the metaphors they employed within each frame. Creating a portal within the classroom empowered the children to create their own frames inside their fictional experiences in Marnia. Their frame-making ability, and their use of metaphor demonstrate their developing metacognitive skills as they continue to explore multiple fictional worlds in their classroom.

Tom's Drama Journal

Tom is an 11 year-old boy who excels in mathematics and problem solving.²⁰ He has earned a position of leadership within the class. Tom's story focuses on the negotiation required for twenty-seven pupils to go through the wardrobe together and embark on an adventure in Marnia. His story opens, as the others do, with the discovery that their teacher, Mr. Crispin, is missing. After wondering where he is, the class concludes that their teacher must be in Marnia, and they decide to go through the wardrobe into the wintry forest to rescue him. The first frame in his story is the negotiation in the classroom, followed by the entry of the children into the wardrobe, and then discovering they are in the freezing cold of the forest with nothing to eat. Sam uses his classmates' real names in his story. While they have not taken individual roles in the story, they are in a collective role of searching for their teacher in a fictional realm, which affords them the security of maintaining the personalities that they have developed in their fifth grade classroom. This is in accordance with Courtney's Group Drama Stage: The Child as Planner (7-12 years) in developmental drama: "The major dramatic change is towards group drama. Play becomes a genuine social activity where children learn to share ideas and actions productively."²¹

I identified three frames in Tom's story: discussing the problem in the classroom; deciding to enter Marnia through the wardrobe; and encountering the White Queen in Marnia. Here is an example of how the class delightedly negotiated their entry into Marnia, taken from Tom's story:

"Let's go!" and he jumps into the wardrobe. "Wait for me!" Jim jumps inside as well. Then the rest of the class runs inside the wardrobe. "Ow!" says Charles, "Melody stepped on my foot!" "Brr, it's cold," said Claire. "Cold???" asked Tom. Alice said, "What is the temp...?" "Minus 30 degrees Celsius," replied Ken quickly. "Wow!" said Athena. "Look, it's a forest!" said Charlotte. "After me," she continued. "No, after me!" said Alan, and pushed his way to the front of the line.

Tom's story continues with the appearance of the White Queen, who proclaims herself Queen of Marnia. She demands to know what they are doing in Marnia, and informs them that they will never see their teacher again. This, the class will not accept, and instead launch into a critique of her choice of wardrobe:

"Excuse YOU?!" said Questa. Suddenly, a woman all dressed in white came out of the bushes. Her face was pale, and she wore an all-white robe. "EW! I love green, not white!!" said Helen. "I prefer the colour purple," said Elizabeth. "Really?" said Aaron.

Their banter befuddles the White Queen, who forgets she is the Queen of Marnia. Clearly, the class has won their first encounter, and appears likely to succeed in their mission to free their teacher. In Tom's story, their willingness in the drama to

²⁰The children's names are pseudonyms throughout the text to protect their identities.

²¹Courtney 1980, 53.

endure the hardship of the cold in the forest, and stand up to the unfair authority of White Queen demonstrates their ability to work together to achieve a common purpose; not a bad goal for a fifth grade class.

Alison's Drama Journal

Alison is an 11 year-old girl who has above average verbal skills. I have identified three frames in her story: when the story opens, the White Queen is planning to capture their teacher, Mr.Crispin; then the frame shifts to the classroom, where the pupils are having a science lesson. The next day their teacher does not return. However, the following week one pupil finds a note from the White Queen explaining everything; the third frame shifts to Marnia, where Alison recounts the negotiations leading to Mr. Crispin's successful release from the White Queen.

Alison's remarkable story begins in the middle, with the White Queen plotting to kidnap Mr. Crispin. The wicked queen plans to kidnap their teacher from his home, so that he cannot teach the children anymore. There is no explanation of the motive behind her mischievous plan. Alison weaves a compelling narrative that keeps the reader engaged. The note that Aaron finds provides an explanation :

Aaron found a note with the White Queen's signature. "It's not fair," Aaron read. "If I can't have a good teacher, you can't have one either." "This isn't *fair*?" repeated the class. "She means that we have to go rescue Mr.Crispin. He has been captured by the White Queen," Jenna explained.

From Claire's inference about the Queen's unfair treatment, we understand that the White Queen's motive for kidnapping Mr Crispin is jealousy; if she can't have a good teacher, why should the children? However, the class's decision to travel to Marnia and liberate their teacher doesn't end there. Claire asks herself, reasonably : "What would happen if he is kidnapped again?" After finding the White Queen's castle on a map, they enter Marnia, cross the forest and see Mr Crispin imprisoned in the castle tower. Instead of simply rescuing their teacher and returning home, they decide to send three girls to talk to the White Queen to "teach her a lesson" about what she had done wrong:

"Ok, but it still isn't fair," continued the White Queen. "Maybe ..." thought Ellen. "You can learn with us," suggested Jenna. "Are you serious?" the Queen asked. "What, you don't want to?" asked Questa. "Of course I do!" cried the Queen.

The class, Mr. Crispin and the Queen gathered near the forest. Ellen explained what had happened. "I have an idea," said the Queen. "Maybe our school could be this castle." "Yes!" cried the class. The Queen became very good at mathematics and social studies, and she never again kidnapped anyone else.

In Alison's story, the White Queen is transformed through the children's negotiations from an isolated, jealous queen to one who herself becomes a fellow

student in Mr. Crispin's class, is successful in math and social studies, and renounces her desire to kidnap anyone ever again. A credible inference? Certainly one that is the result of listening to the queen's problem, understanding her motives and negotiating a compromise to prevent future jealousy. Claire's inference prompts impressive negotiation skills for a fifth-grade pupil. As Courtney observes:

... spontaneous drama is important for inference – what a child concludes about another person. Inference is a cornerstone of logic. This ability increases considerably at this age stage, and ... much is due to role-taking processes such as modelling and learning social actions through others.²²

At the end of Alison's story, Mr. Crispin's class enthusiastically decides to stay with the White Queen in Marnia, after she suggests that her castle could become their new classroom. This ending suggests a willingness, having achieved a successful outcome to their problem, to move on with their lives in a new context. Possibly they wish to stay long enough to teach the White Queen some emotional warmth. The challenge in the next classroom drama might be finding out how long the pupils had planned on studying in the White Queen's castle, and possibly negotiating their return through the wardrobe to their own classroom.

Claire's Drama Journal

Claire is an eleven-year-old girl who excels at writing stories, and has a superior knowledge of botany. She has written a five-chapter story about the class's journey which focuses more on King Aslan than on the White Queen. The story has four frames: the classroom; a forest of flowers; the battle for Mr. Crispin; and a journey to Mount Olympus.

In the first frame, the wardrobe is delivered one day to their classroom. The moment Mr. Crispin opened the wardrobe, he disappeared. In his place was a note, explaining that they had to go to Marnia to rescue him. The class waited five minutes while Melissaidied her hair (she didn't want to go on a journey to meet the White Queen with messy hair). Suddenly, the classroom became dark, and then brilliant as King Aslan appeared, and explained that there was no time to lose since they had to cross the entire kingdom to find the White Witch's castle.

In the second frame, King Aslan gives the children a map of the Forest of Flowers to indicate where she would find each of the flowers. In the midst of winter, Claire has imagined a forest of magic flowers within which the battle for Mr. Crispin takes place:

Aslan gave us a map of the Forest of Flowers. He told us what we had to find : the rose, the tulip, the sunflower, the daisy and the dahlia. These flowers are magic. They can help us to rescue Mr. Crispin. But to possess these flowers, you must win the Battle of the Flowers.

²²Courtney 1980, 54.

Claire imagines the battle for Mr. Crispin in the third frame as a contest to possess the magic flowers. If the children win, they get the flowers and can free Mr. Crispin. If they lose, they have to stay in Marnia forever. King Aslan will ask three questions; the children choose Elena to answer. If she can answer two out of three questions, the children win. The first question: “How many different kinds of flowers are there in the world?” Elena easily answers that one. Two hundred and thirty thousand, she says. “Correct,” says Aslan. Second question: “What is my favorite flower?” No one knows the answer to that one. Third question: “Are some flowers dangerous?” After hesitating, Elena answers “Yes.” The children have won the Battle of the Flowers.

In the fourth frame, having rescued Mr. Crispin, the class decides, with the help of King Aslan, to continue their adventures in Marnia. Suddenly, Alison sees a tall mountain in the distance. Aslan asks if anyone recognizes the mountain. He reminds the children that each morning their teacher had been reading Greek myths to them. That mountain, he explains, is none other than Mount Olympus, home of the Greek Gods, and renowned for its flora. Their teacher had been reading a different Ancient Greek myth to the class each morning as part of their theme on Greek mythology. That Claire chose to include Greek myth in their exploration of C.S. Lewis’ Narnia, suggests that she is able to synthesize stories about religion and the place magic or miracles have in them. In *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, after Lucy goes through the wardrobe and discovers Narnia, her older brother Peter asks the Professor, in whose old and famous house the children are staying, if there could be other worlds – all over the place, just around the corner – like that?” The Professor replies, “Nothing is more probable... I wonder what they *do* teach them at these schools.”

Jenna’s Drama Journal

Jenna is an eleven-year-old girl who demonstrates her maturity by taking more leadership roles than most of her fellow students. She is an avid reader, who devoured books and enjoyed sharing them in class. Her journal begins with a summary of the events in Marnia she will recount in her journal. There are six frames in Jenna’s drama journal: Mr. Crispin’s Classroom; inside the Wardrobe; in the Forest of Marnia; a river with a River Spirit; the Field of Battle; the Classroom on the weekend. There is also a frame-within-a-frame, which consists of a story told by one pupil to bring the others up to date. This ability to summarize the frames at the beginning suggests that she is in charge of the frame, selecting the frame which best serves her narrative. Jenna mentions every one of her classmates by name in her story, and the children were delighted in hearing their real first names in a fictional context. Jenna’s ability to include her classmates helps to create community in our classroom, a sense of belonging in which everyone has a place.

In the first frame, the caretaker delivers a giant wardrobe, which belonged to the actor who played Draco Malfoy in the Harry Potter novels. This ability to invent details which link the story of Marnia with similar magic stories that Claire

has previously encountered represents synthesis, a metacognitive skill. Suddenly, a “hand as pale as a sheet of paper” seizes Mr. Crispin and pulls him inside the wardrobe. Michaela decides to go inside the wardrobe to rescue him.

From inside the wardrobe, the second frame, the class hears Michaela scream, and they all decide to enter the wardrobe, but instead of finding her in the wardrobe, they find her unconscious and blue in the snow in the middle of a forest, beside a lamppost. Athena suddenly remembers that she has forgotten her lipstick in the classroom, whereupon Petra knocks her over in anger, saying “Michaela has died and you are crying because you forgot your lipstick!” Claire’s ability to inject comedy into a terrifying scene, suggests that she is manipulating the reader’s response, demonstrating that she is firmly in charge of her narrative. Lipstick, which in French is “rouge à lèvres” is clearly a symbol of adolescent awakening, and with it a growing ability to assert the strength of their desire to liberate their teacher from the White Queen in the land of eternal winter. Michaela’s heart still beats, so they dig her out of the snow and fetch hot water to warm her. When she comes round she tells her story, which is framed as a story within a story, so the others can understand the danger they all face. As in their classroom, where they sit in a circle on the carpet during storytime, the children in Marnia sit in a circle on the snow to hear her story.

Michaela tells a tale of witnessing Mr. Crispin being kidnapped by the White Queen in her sleigh:

I came to this place just in time to see Mr. Crispin (unconscious) lying in a white sleigh. I was startled, and a woman came out of the sleigh. She touched my mouth with her wand, and the next thing I know, Petra was screaming at me to wake up!!!

In Michaela’s story, Tom recognizes the character of the White Queen and realizes that this is like Narnia. After seeing a sign saying they are in Marnia in the Forest of the Wargs, Rachelle observes that Marnia is a bit like The Lord of the Rings. An astute observation, since in real life, C.S. Lewis was friends with J.R.R. Tolkien. Suddenly a character like Pippin, from the eponymous American musical, runs in from the woods to sing them all a song. The song is a bit of comic relief, since they are about to be attacked by Wargs, the evil wolves from Lord of the Rings. When the Wargs arrive, everyone climbs a tall tree to escape, except Shafiq, the true outlier in our real classroom. Shafiq was the pupil in every classroom who tries the patience of the teacher nearly every moment of the day. In Jenna’s narrative however, Shafiq has the extraordinary idea of starting a giant snowball fight to defeat the Wargs, and everyone joins in. By giving Shafiq a lead role in the narrative, she rescues him from being a marginalized youngster and makes him a hero. This demonstrates her compassion as an observer within the classroom; through her writing Jenna encourages other students to see Shafiq in a new light.

In the fourth frame, after walking and walking the children encounter a River Spirit, who explains that when the Red Queen is vanquished, he will be freed. Instead of a White Queen, Claire changes the frame by introducing the character of the Red Queen. I wondered if the White Queen might have been too formidable an adversary for the children, symbolizing death, the complete absence of warmth and life.

How does one negotiate with death at that age? Perhaps not by playing a game of chess. Instead, Jenna creates the Red Queen, a figure symbolizing passion, who must be angry about something. Unlike the White Queen, her mind can be changed; she may be persuaded to overcome her anger. This change of frame is another indication that Jenna is in charge of her narrative, changing the frame to accommodate the needs of her characters. One by one, the brave children jump into a vortex in the river, disappearing into a portal that will transport them to the castle of the Red Queen :

One by one, the whole class jumped into the vortex and disappeared. The hole was a portal, and the whole class was transported to the Red Queen's palace, who was there waiting for us, with her prisoner, Mr. Crispin. The children were in a palace of made of gold and precious stones, and there, in front of them, was the Red Queen (smiling) with Mr. Crispin. He was tied to a chair with ropes, and could not believe his eyes when the children appeared before him. "My dears, what kept you? I have been waiting so long for you..." said the Queen. "Free Mr. Crispin!!!!" cried Athena. "Let me think... NO!!" said the Queen.

It appears that the Red Queen was longing for the children to come and rescue Mr. Crispin. With this impasse, it is time for King Aslan to appear as *deus ex machina* to sort things out. However, instead of subduing the Red Queen, he tells the children that he can't fight their battle for them. Instead, in Jenna's narrative, for one hour he gives the children the powers of the Olympian Heroes, Percy Jackson and Leo Valdez, in the Rick Riordan novel, *The Mark of Athena*. In another example of synthesis, Jenna uses her knowledge of contemporary literature to counter the power of the Red Queen's magic wand.

In the fifth frame of Jenna's narrative, the Red Queen's palace disappears, and the children find themselves armed with new powers on a battlefield facing their adversary. The rules of combat in Marnia prevent the Red Queen from using her magic wand against the children, so she is easily overcome. She screams and disappears. Mr. Crispin breaks the Red Queen's magic wand in two, so she can never use it again. The River Spirit is grateful to the children, so he uses his magic to transport the children and their teacher back to their classroom, and their English test, bringing Jenna's narrative full circle.

Jenna's final frame, is the most transformative, however. In the sixth frame, we are back in the classroom, but on a weekend when no one is there. In the empty classroom, King Aslan suddenly appears from the Marnia Wardrobe and roars, before leaving again through the Wardrobe. When the children arrive back in their classroom on Monday morning, the Wardrobe has been transformed back into cardboard box. Framing her narrative in this way brings a satisfying conclusion to the children's adventures in Marnia, and having rescued their teacher from the clutches of the Red Queen, Jenna has ensured that hopefully they will all be safe from the Red Queen forever.

Conclusion

If we see framing as an important aspect of human development, it is vital that drama teachers find strategies for enhancing framing in the classroom. Creating a portal, as Mr. Crispin did with the cardboard wardrobe, or by some other means, offers children new metaphors to play with within their classroom. When teachers offer such imaginative drama and arts experiences, they encourage children to change the frame, to use different metaphors and find a new set of correspondences in their meaning-making. In their drama journals, the children employed multiple frames to illuminate different perspectives and different characters in their stories. In their fictional world of Marnia, pupils demonstrated metacognitive skills as they changed their drama frames.

In their fictional world of Marnia, the pupils employed self-questioning to find out what they knew and why a character acted the way they did. “What are we going to find in Marnia?” was a common concern. The children were often engaged in predicting the outcomes of their actions. “What will happen when we go through the wardrobe?” The children made inferences about what would happen next, according to their understanding of the characters. Questioning whether the White Queen was good or evil prompted Alison to make the inference that, if they did not understand why she kidnapped Mr. Crispin, the White Queen would continue in her evil ways. Her inference, “We must teach the White Queen a lesson,” led to their understanding that the White Queen felt that it was unfair for the children to rescue their teacher, and to her suggestion that the Queen could learn new things in the classroom together with Mr. Crispin and the children.

Changing frames empowered pupils to control the narrative distance in their stories. Whether it was negotiating their entry into Marnia through the wardrobe (long distance), discussing the upcoming battle with Aslan (middle distance) or battling the *wargs* or the White Queen in a snowball fight (close up), the children changed their narrative frame to suit the needs of their stories. Synthesizing other familiar heroic narratives with their Marnia adventures allowed the children to affirm their adventures as hero journeys. Gisele employed storyboarding to create their own graphic novels to illustrate their hero journeys and depict the passage of time. In her graphics, she depicts the children encountering Harry Potter, Batman and the Avengers before finally arriving in Marnia and saving their teacher. In Claire’s story, after the children had won the Battle of Flowers, they journeyed with Aslan to Mount Olympus, the site of many of the Greek myths that their teacher had been reading to them. As Booth and Lundy point out, the power of drama allowed pupils to “burst the bubble,”²³ taking characters out of the text and into dramatized real-life contexts.

In conclusion, using drama to think outside of the cultural and fictional frames of the classroom, gave the children an opportunity to develop their metacognitive thinking. In their drama journals, they demonstrated questioning, predicting, making inferences, distancing, summarizing, and synthesizing.²⁴ By thinking simultaneously about the relationships between the cultural frame of their classroom and the fictional frame of Marnia, they created and constantly changed their own drama frames using

²³Booth and Lundy 2007.

²⁴Brenna 2012, 91.

executive functioning. Their explorations of the Narnia world generated new insights into their own inner worlds, and in time will empower them to take charge of their own social and academic roles in the classroom.

The limitations of the study are the small number of subjects (n=27) and the limited socioeconomic composition of the class. Further research is needed to examine whether metaphorical thinking in drama is correlated with child development and second language learning, or with individual teacher practice. Nonetheless, by creating fictional portals in their classrooms with drama and the arts, teachers are encouraging pupils not to see their classrooms as sites of empty ritual, but instead as opportunities for frame-changing and metacognitive thinking.

References

- Aeschylus 2011. *The Complete Aeschylus: The Oresteia*, v. 1, ed. Peter Burian and Alan Shapiro. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Booth, David and Lundy, Kathy 2007. *In Graphic Detail: Using Graphic Novels in the Classroom*. Markham, ON: Rubicon.
- Brenna, Beverley 2012. "How graphic novels support reading comprehension strategy development in children," *UKLA* 47, 2, July 2013, 88-94.
- Courtney, Richard 1982. *Re-Play: Studies of human drama in education*. Toronto: OISE, 21.
- Courtney, Richard 1980. *The Dramatic Curriculum*. New York: Drama Book Specialists.
- Geary, James 2011. *I is an Other: The Secret Life of Metaphor and How it Shapes the Way we see the World*. New York, NY: Harper Publications.
- Goffman, Erving 1974. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Chicago: Northeastern.
- Grinstein, A. 1956. "The Dramatic Device: A Play Within A Play," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, February 1956, 4, 1, 49-52.
- Heathcote, Dorothy 1984. *Drama and Education*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Heathcote, Dorothy and Gavin Bolton 1995. *Drama for Learning: An Account of Dorothy Heathcote's 'Mantle of the Expert' Approach to Education*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Hegstaad, Kari M. 2011. "Frame and Framing," *Key Concepts in Theatre/Drama Education*, ed. Shifra Schonmann, 259-264. Sense Publishers.
- Johnson, Colleen 2002. "Drama and Metacognition," *Early Child Development and Care*, 2002, 172, 595-602.
- Lawrence, W. 2013. "The Play Scene in Hamlet," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 18, 1 January 1919. Retrieved from *Shakespeare Online*, 20 August, 2013, <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/plays/hamlet/dumbshow.html>, accessed 9 April, 2018.
- Lewis, C.S. 1950. *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*. London: C.S. Lewis Pte. Ltd.
- Martin-Smith, Alistair 2011. "Looking for Shakespeare: Transformation through Double Framing," *Key Concepts in Theatre/Drama Education*, ed. Shifra Schonmann, 191-195. Boston: Sense Publishers.
- McLaren, Peter 1993. *Schooling as a ritual performance*, 2nd edition. London: Routledge.
- Peritz, Ingrid 2017. "Sir Ken Robinson on how schools are stifling students' creativity," *The Globe and Mail*, September 7, 2017.
- Rich, Frank 1984. "Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing*," *The New York Times*, January 6, 1984.
- Riordan, Rick 2012. *The Mark of Athena*. New York: Disney-Hyperion.
- Shakespeare, William 1998. *As You Like It*. New York: Dover Publications.

Shakespeare, William 2017. *Hamlet*. London: The Arden Shakespeare.

Stoppard, Tom 1984. *The Real Thing: A play*. London: Faber & Faber.

Turner, Victor 1982. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York: PAJ Publications.