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Journal of Artistic & Creative Education.

SPECIAL EDITION – PERFORMED RESEARCH

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JACE is a peer-reviewed journal published twice each year that explores issues of artistry and creativity in contemporary research and teaching, and the interface between them. The journal seeks to promote praxis, to provide an evidence-based bridge between arts and artistic practice, creative practices in educational contexts, and learning research and theory in all these areas.

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JACE EDITORIAL

Welcome to this JACE Special Edition on Performed Research. This edition heralds not only a new topic for consideration amongst the JACE readership – the methodological uses of performance within a research framework – but it also marks the transition from one editorial team to another. Since JACE was first published in 2007, Dr Wesley Imms has been at the helm as Editor. He has successfully nurtured JACE through many editions, thoughtfully crafting the disparate and diverse areas of scholarship that sit under the broad and expanding umbrella of 'Artistic and Creative Education', into a series of rich discussions of practice, research and inevitably, praxis. The new editorial team would like to thank Wes and acknowledge his leadership and scholarship as the founding editor of JACE.

This Special Edition on Performed Research comes to you at a time when there is burgeoning interest in this particular field and growing excitement about its possibilities. In July 2014, researchers and practitioners with an interest in the place of performance as a means of gathering, analysing or presenting research are meeting at the very first Artistry, Performance and Scholarly Inquiry Symposium hosted here at The University of Melbourne. The Special Edition has been prepared in anticipation of this event, with two-fold intent: as a contribution to the dialogue which will take place at the Symposium, and as a way of drawing attention to this field of research practice to the wider arts research community who is the readership of JACE. The co-editors of this Special Edition on Performed Research are also the co-convenors of the Symposium. We see this as an exciting opportunity to align a live event with a JACE publication.

Central to the symposium is the recognition that 'performed research' challenges singular definition. The field now includes an array of methodological practices and discourses including: performance/performed ethnography, ethnodrama, research-based theatre, performance *in* and *as* qualitative research/inquiry, as well as autoethnography, verbatim and documentary theatre. In recent times, researchers from a range of traditions of inquiry and artistic

practices have brought the aesthetic and performative into their investigations of the social, cultural, and political world; in so doing they highlight the potential for giving voice to the marginalised, the silenced and the personal - those less visible and less heard through more traditional academic research methods.

These issues are canvassed in this Special Edition in a number of very particular ways. Rather than attempting to capture the sweep and scope of research practices that could be described as performed research, we have chosen to present a snapshot of the current community engaging in performative forms of research. However, even to suggest that there is a performed research community is aspirational rather than completely accurate at present. There are many clusters of serious and sustained practice across the world, spanning many different disciplines and artistic orientations, and, as this Special Edition will reveal more fully, many traditions from which this current work has sprung. By publishing this snapshot of current and historical practices, it is our aim to invite further discussion, further questioning, problematising and problem solving, on the page and on the many stages in which performed research appears. It's our hope in advocating for and contributing to this discourse, that more discussion follows and that the community of shared interest and disparate practice which we celebrate here, grows in strength and commitment to artistic and scholarly inquiry.

This edition contains four key articles which bookend each other in a number of ways: two voices of experience and two newer voices; two from Australia and two from Canada – countries where significant activity in performed research has taken place over time; and, two articles which step back and consider questions related to some of the 'conditions' of performed research, and two which take the reader in close, into the personal experiences of practitioners as they consider and reflect on how they have come to understand their own practice of research in which performance is pivotal.

In the first article Graham W. Lea presents ways of critically responding to performed research, suggesting approaches to reflect

on both the content (research) and form (art-making). His thinking builds on current scholarship within arts-based research assessment, and he offers key examples from his research-based play *Homa Bay Memories* to support his argument. Building on the earlier work of leading qualitative researchers, Lea argues for a framework 'qualitative touchstones' appropriate to the evaluation of the conditions of performed or performative research. He discusses touchstones relating to Content, Form and Impact and proposes two additional principles particular to qualitative research which is embodied and performed: cohesion and gifting. Christine Sinclair's article closely analyses how two key U.S. theatre movements– Living Newspaper (1930s-1940s) and EcoTheatre (1950s-1970s) – inform many of the current debates and practices of performed research. In her looking back, looking forward, Sinclair presents central tensions and methodological considerations for engaging with research and community inspired theatre. Sinclair draws on the seminal work of Dwight Conquergood who proposes a research paradigm which is fundamentally inclusive and dialogic; as a site of inquiry the dialogic space has been an aspiration of theatre makers and performed research practitioners, alike, Sinclair argues. These two articles provide background understanding to this expanding, evolving field, as well as lenses to read and view Performed Research.

The next two articles are more self-reflective in nature. First, Linden Wilkinson explores the rich development of her script *Today We're Alive*, which looks at the Myall Creek massacre of 1838 and the Memorial erected to commemorate it. This cross-cultural exploration examines her engagement with the community while creating her verbatim theatre script. Wilkinson proposes a rethinking of the place of 'anxiety' in the researcher's lexicon, suggesting that experiencing anxiety can awaken *quieter inner voices* which can prompt the researcher to reconsider key research and artistic decisions, ultimately for a sounder and more ethical outcome. In the final article, George Belliveau traces his involvement in five performed research projects, exploring the tensions of what it means to be an artist and researcher. As a researcher whose first training was in the theatre, he teases out the threads of his own aesthetic

decision making processes, balanced against an evolving professional involvement with the world of more formal research. He points to the spectrum of approaches artist/scholars might confront in the development and sharing of performed research.

Complementing these four articles is a series of 'Reflective Interludes'. In recognising and celebrating the emerging voices in the field, the editors invited current and recently completed doctoral students to provide a brief, artistically informed reflection on some aspect of their personal experience of performed research during their doctoral studies. With this open brief, we have been able to include two poems (Rajabali; Valdez), a dramatic scene accompanied by a retrospective metacommentary (Ludecke), and a photo montage with commentary (Migdalek) – with each piece taking the reader to a consideration of the challenges and the revelations of conducting research which privileges the deterritorialised knowledges (Conquergood, 1985) of the body.

In this Special Issue, we wanted to provide articles and interludes that showed some of the performed research work through excerpts of scripts and creative responses, counterbalanced with the interrogation of theoretical, epistemological and ethical questions which all researchers encounter but are especially resonant for those working on the edges of new methodological territories. At the same time, our goal was to stimulate further questions surrounding the tensions and possibilities confronting researchers who seek to employ the complex aesthetic and technical practical vocabularies of theatre and performance in their pursuit of new research understandings framed within the broad banner of Performed Research.

Christine Sinclair
George Belliveau

June, 2014

CONDITIONS OF EVALUATION:

Graham W. Lea

University of Prince Edward Island, Canada

University of British Columbia, Canada

Graham W. Lea is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Prince Edward Island. In his dissertation research he developed a research-based theatre script exploring experiences of he and his mother teaching in Kenya 40 years apart and the narrative inheritances influencing their personal and professional identities. His research has been recognized with awards including the Vanier Canada Doctoral Research Scholarship. He has presented and published widely on research-based theatre, theatre and additional language learning, Prince Edward Island theatre history, and Shakespeare in elementary classrooms as well as having been involved in the creation and production of several research-based theatre productions.

EVOLVING ENTRY POINTS FOR RESEARCH-BASED THEATRE

ABSTRACT

An ongoing challenge in arts-based research, including research-based theatre, is that traditional methods of evaluation become problematic when applied to research conducted using arts-based practices. I address this challenge by suggesting evaluative entry-points for reviewers, using my research-based theatre script *Homa Bay Memories* as an example. The evaluative touchstones are based on the work of experienced reviewers (including Richardson, Ellis, and Bochner) as well as the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the research (including Bakhtin, Stanislavski, Eisner, and Saldaña). I situate each touchstone within existing literature and then provide specific examples of how each may be applied to *Homa Bay Memories*. Through this discussion I provide possibilities and examples that practitioners and academics may draw from and expand when envisioning how to evaluate research-based theatre projects.

Theatre's primary goal is to entertain –
to *entertain ideas*
as it *entertains its spectators.*
With ethnographic performance, then, comes the
responsibility to create an
entertainingly informative
experience for an audience,"
one that is
aesthetically sound,
intellectually rich, and
emotionally evocative.

(Saldaña, 2005, p. 14)

An ongoing challenge in arts-based research, including research-based theatre (Belliveau & Lea, 2011; Lea, 2012), is that traditional methods of evaluating research, such as validity, trustworthiness, and rigour, become problematic when applied to research conducted using arts-based practices (Leavy, 2009). However, as Goldstein (2012) reminds us, arts-based or not, "all research studies need to be evaluated" (p. 88). As "there is no 'one-size-fits-all' model of evaluation" (Leavy, 2009, p. 16) in qualitative and arts-based research, a consensus has emerged that projects include possible evaluative entry points (Prendergast & Belliveau, 2013) to guide reviewers into and through an assessment of the work (Ellis, 2000; Goldstein, 2012; Kontos & Naglie, 2007; Richardson, 2000; Saldaña, 2011; Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gouzouasis, & Grauer, 2006, among others).

My research-based script *Homa Bay Memories*[1] (2013) uses research-based theatre to explore my and my mother's[2] experiences teaching

[1] The script is part of my doctoral dissertation *Homa Bay Memories: Using Research-based Theatre to Explore a Narrative Inheritance* (2013).

[2] I use June to refer to my mother during her time in Kenya, while I use mother to refer to her direct role in my life.

in Kenya forty years apart. Throughout the script I weave my personal journey of coming to re-know my mother after her death and the resulting growth of our relationship despite the borders of time, place, and mortality. The exploration is based on letters, photos, and audio recordings left behind by my mother as well as artifacts and memories from my Kenyan experiences. The script is complemented by a critical commentary which, rather than explaining the understandings expressed in the script, examines key methodological, epistemological, and personal questions, understandings, and decisions I encountered while developing the script.

To sustain and develop research-based theatre as a methodology it seems imperative to continually examine, extend, and share methods of evaluation. In this article, I heed this call by drawing from experienced reviewers and the theoretical and epistemological foundations of the research to suggest possible evaluative entry points into *Homa Bay Memories*. These entry points are elaborated using specific examples from both the scripted and academic prose portions of my research. In doing so I provide possibilities and examples for the evaluation of other research-based theatre projects.

Toward Touchstones

Evaluative frameworks drawing on a variety of methods including audience observations, pre/show interviews, questionnaires, surveys, and post-show talks have been developed for research-based theatre projects in health research (Colantonio et al., 2008; Gray, Fitch, LaBrecque, & Greenberg, 2003; Kontos & Naglie, 2007; Mitchell, Jonas-Simpson, & Ivonoffski, 2006; Rossiter et al., 2008). However, these frameworks have focused primarily on collecting and analysing audience responses (Rossiter et al., 2008) with little literature available on the evaluation of the scripted research. Although *Homa Bay Memories* was developed with a theatrical audience in mind it has yet to be fully staged. As such, the audience-centred evaluation frequently used in health research is not useful as I evaluate my research.

Goldstein (2012) and Alexander (2005) move away from evaluating research-based theatre projects based solely upon audience responses by adapting Richardson's (2000) five assessment criteria for arts-informed ethnography: **Substantive Contribution, Aesthetic Merit, Reflexivity, Impact, and Expresses a Reality. While Goldstein** (2012) draws from audience responses in self-assessing her research-informed script *Harriet's House,* she also describes how her script aligns with each of Richardson's criteria independent of audience response. In doing so, she demonstrates how they may function as entry points for evaluation for both written and performed work.

Building upon Goldstein's (2012) example, I centre this self-evaluation of *Homa Bay Memories* on Richardson's criteria, supported by other reviewers of qualitative and arts-based research including Eisner (1991), Prendergast & Belliveau (2013), Bochner (2000), and Ellis (2000) to broaden evaluative entry points into the work (see Table 1).

Richardson's criteria provide a useful framework for evaluating arts-based research projects. However, Bochner (2000) critiques the notion of criteria as an attempt to establish culture-free standards to which all evidence must appeal,

> ...so that we won't have to rely on our own 'subjectivity' to decide. Criteria pose as something beyond culture, beyond ourselves and our conventions, beyond human choice and interpretation when, of course, they are not. Sometimes I feel that criteria are the very means we ourselves created to contain our desire for freedom and experience, a way of limiting our own possibilities and stifling our creative energy. (2000, p. 267)

Similarly, Watson (2012) suggests that what is needed "is not slavish adherence to a rubric but an open, yet attentive approach [to assessment], sensitive to nuance" (p. 463). Thus criteria such as Richardson's may be called into question as confining and limiting rather than creating entry points through which a reviewer may enter and evaluate arts-based research projects.

Touchstone		Questions
Content	**Substantive contribution**	1. **Does the piece contribute to our understanding of social-life?** a. Does the work "call to our attention aspects of the situation or place we might otherwise miss?" (Eisner, 1991, p. 59) b. "What have I learned from the story?" (Ellis, 2000, p. 275) 2. **Does the writer demonstrate a deeply grounded (if embedded) human-world understanding and perspective?** 3. **How has this perspective informed the construction of the text?**
	Reflexivity	1. **How did the author come to write this text?** 2. **How was the information gathered?** 3. **Ethical issues**? a. "I want the writer to show concern for how other people who are part of the teller's story are portrayed, for the kind of person one becomes in telling one's story, and to provide a space for the listener's becoming, and for the moral commitments and convictions that underlie the story" (Bochner, 2000, p. 271). 4. **How has the author's subjectivity been both a process and a product of this text?** 5. **Is there adequate self-awareness and self-exposure for the reader to make judgments about the point of view?** 6. **Do authors hold themselves accountable to the standards of knowing and telling of the people they have studied?** a. "I expect the author to dig at his or her actions and underneath them, displaying the self on the page" (Bochner, 2000, p. 270).
	Express a reality	1. **Does this text embody a fleshed out, embodied sense of lived-experience?** a. Is there "abundant, concrete detail?" (Bochner, 2000, p. 270) 2. **Does this seem "true" – a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the "real"?** a. Does it resonate? (Fels, 2012; Goldstein, 2012) b. "Honoring the research context, the fact-fiction balance" (Prendergast & Belliveau, 2013, p. 204) c. Built by consensus (Eisner, 1991)
Form	**Aesthetic merit**	1. **Does the piece succeed aesthetically?** 2. **Does the use of creative analytical practices open up the text, invite interpretive responses?** 3. **Is the text artistically shaped, satisfying, complex, and not boring?** a. "Good autoethnographies draw the audience in." (Ellis, 2000, p. 275) b. "Using all elements of the theater (or other performance genres) to share the research." (Prendergast & Belliveau, 2013, p. 204) c. "Is there sufficient, yet not overblown dramatic tension?" (Ellis, 2000, p. 275) d. "[L]ess is more" (Saldaña, 2005, p. 28).
Impact	**Impact**	1. **Does this affect me?** a. **Emotionally?** b. **Intellectually?** c. **Generate new questions?** d. **Move me to write?** e. **Move me to try new research practices?** f. **Move me to action**
	Cohesion	1. Does the research function as a unified whole? a. "The greater the literary work, the greater the pull of its super-objective" (Stanislavski, 1936, p. 271)**.** b. Has the author edited so "that all words are necessary, well placed, and the best choices?" (Ellis, 2000, p. 275)
	Gifting	1. Transformative, circular gifting (Hyde, 1979; Kuokkanen, 2007).
Bold text is from (Richardson, 2000, p. 254)		

Table 1. Evaluative Questions

To move away from the confinement of criteria, I follow Trainor and Graue (2013) who use **qualitative touchstones** as "parameters for criteria for estimating, if not evaluating, the quality of qualitative research" (p. 7). Unlike metallurgic touchstones ("touchstone, n.", Oxford English Dictionary, 2013), qualitative touchstones "defy facile application of a dichotomous good/bad list of quality indicators" (Trainor & Graue, 2013, p. 8). Qualitative touchstones then move evaluation from a collection of confining check-mark criteria to become entry points, guiding readers and reviewers into and through a work. Kendall and Thangaraj (2013) have previously reframed Richardson's criteria as qualitative touchstones and as such I use them to establish conditions of evaluation for my research[3], which I group, based on Alexander's (2005) three categories:

Content: Substantive Contribution; Reflexivity; and Expresses a Reality

Form: Aesthetic Merit

Impact: Impact

Saldaña (2005) notes that "the judgment of an ethnodrama's success as both art form and ethnography is ultimately for the reader, or in performance, each individual audience member to determine" (p. 33). As such, this discussion neither strives to, nor can be, a definitive evaluation of *Homa Bay Memories*. Instead, it provides possible points for readers and reviewers, including those unfamiliar with arts-based research, to enter the work in order to "estimate its quality" (Trainor & Graue, 2013). The touchstones are a guide, leaving space for each reader and reviewer to bring his or her own touchstones to complement and possibly contradict those presented here.

[3] A/r/tography, an arts-based research methodology, offers six renderings: Contiguity; Living Inquiry; Metaphor and Metonymy; Openings; Reverberations; and Excess (Irwin & Springgay, 2008; Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2005). Similar to touchstones, these renderings are not framed as criteria but as "concepts that help a/r/tographers portray the conditions of their work for others" (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxviii). As this study does not draw on a/r/tography as a methodology, I have not positioned the renderings as part of its evaluation. See Lea, Belliveau, Wager, and Beck (2011) for an example of how the renderings may be applied to a research-based theatre project.

Content: Substantive contribution

Richardson (2000) uses the substantive contribution touchstone to ask three questions:

1. Does this piece contribute to our understanding of social-life?

2. Does the writer demonstrate a deeply grounded (if embedded) human-world understanding and perspective?

3. How has this perspective informed the construction of the text? (p. 254)

Similarly, Ellis (2000) writes that she expects to learn something about the experiences of others including the author and his or her own life, while Eisner (1991) asks for works that "call to our attention aspects of the situation or place we might otherwise miss" (p. 59). Such contributions may be framed as *experiential* and *theoretical*. Richardson's first question and those of Eisner and Ellis ask what the research shares of the *experience* of social life. The second two questions posed by Richardson ask how the research is shaped by and builds upon the *theoretical* underpinnings upon which it is based.

Experiential

In *Homa Bay Memories* I share a variety of experiences including those of an early Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO) volunteer in Kenya (June), a student teacher in Kenya (myself), and a son tracing his narrative inheritance (Goodall, 2005) to reconnect with a deceased parent. Throughout the work I trace a family's experience of separation across borders of time, place, and mortality examining how connections may be created and re-established both physically and conceptually. For example, while June was in Kenya she sent audio recordings to her family to be shared on Christmas. When I scripted these recordings in *Homa Bay Memories* I started with the

character, JUNE[4], in her Kenyan home making the recordings to be sent to her mother, Phyllis, and family. The recording continues as a voice over at which point JUNE leaves the recording and enters the family living room. This use of blocking (actor movement) and sound effect exemplifies the crossing of temporal and physical borders represented in the letters and recordings.

PHYLLIS
(Running into the CS[5] area) Darling June,
I wrote you yesterday but I just wanted to tell you we had Junie sitting on our kitchen table last evening and four brothers, a sister and a dad & mom around enjoying it very much. *(Someone turns on the tape recorder)*

JUNE
(Lights crossfade SR. JUNE is at the desk speaking into a matching reel-to-reel tape recorder)
Twas six weeks before Christmas and all through the compound,
Not a creature was stirring, not even a lizard.

...

(JUNE exits. Lights cross-fade to CS area. Continued in voice-over)

A personal Christmas for each one of you: Dad, Mother, Helene, Rodney, Blois, Kevin and Brian. As I prepare this, Christmas seems far away but I do not have to try very hard to see papers on the floor, lights on the tree, day beginning to break, and *(JUNE enters)* I can almost smell orange peels and a recently lit furnace.

[4] Names in all capital letters refer to characters in the script while names in mixed case refer to their lived counterparts.

[5] I use initials to indicate locations on the stage: ie. CS – centre stage; DS – downstage (closest to audience); SL – stage left (the actor's left); DR – downstage right (the actor's right); US – upstage (furthest from the audience) etc.

(voice over stops)
Has it been a good morning, a good year?

Look up at the Christmas tree. I would like to be able to put a great package of best wishes for each one of you. As I can't do that in person, let me send along a few more words and pictures to take you to Homa Bay.

...

JUNE
Merry Christmas Family, and as Tiny Tim would say "God bless us everyone". *(JUNE exits SL. The family starts to clean up)*

(Voice over) The ghosts of Christmas Past and Christmas Future will wander with me. I look forward to sharing the ghost of Christmas Present with you in letters and tape. That spirit is a wonderful fellow. He makes me feel as if we were all in two places at once: Canada and Kenya. (pp. 121-122, 124)[6]

Theoretical

The research leading to *Homa Bay Memories* is informed theoretically by Bakhtin's (1986) notion of chains of utterances. This theoretical stance leads to the notion that our existence is co-constructed in the spaces between one another. Throughout the script I worked to embed this "human-world understanding" (Richardson, 2000, p. 254) within the physical presentation of the research such as in the stage design and directions:

[The SR and SL areas] should be dressed carefully, extending off stage with stylized movement in the dressing from a sense of verisimilitude extending from offstage that fades into the neutral space CS. This may be aided by a painted flat US of each area to help delineate the spaces and to help emphasize their distinctness. (p. 89)

[6] All script excerpts are from Lea (2013). For readability, only page numbers are noted.

Incorporating the theoretical underpinnings of the research in the stage directions emphasises that meaning is made in the space between the chains of utterance of author and addressee. Extending the set dressing offstage, beyond the audience sightlines is symbolic of the part of the chain preceding the utterance; they are comparatively stable and extend beyond our awareness. Not only are utterances shaped by those in the past, they are also shaped in anticipation of those in the future. These anticipated responses are less fixed than those preceding an utterance. The move in set dressing from a sense of verisimilitude toward the empty neutral space reflects this shift in fixedness of influencing utterances.

Methodological

Developing *Homa Bay Memories* as a research-based theatre project provided an opportunity to deeply engage not only with my and my mother's Kenyan experiences but also with research-based theatre as a methodology. This suggests another question to supplement Richardson's substantive contribution questions: does the piece contribute to our understanding of, or approach to, methodology.

One of my objectives in this research was to develop a research-based theatre script that fits within the "aesthetic performances based on systematic research" portion of the spectrum of research-based theatre (Beck, Belliveau, Lea, & Wager, 2011, p. 695). Throughout the critical commentary in my dissertation I discuss possibilities and tensions inherent when working toward this part of the spectrum such as the tension surrounding my use of verbatim text and the decision not to include June's journals as part of the data. I have also striven to build the methodology by drawing upon theatre practitioners and theorists such as Stanislavski (1936), Mamet (2010), and Brook (1968). For example, Stanislavski's notion of the super-objective deeply informed the scriptwriting process and methodological choices such as what data to include. Similarly, the use of staging to express the theoretical underpinnings of the research provides insight into possibilities for blending theoretical and theatrical

understandings. Through such examples, I seek to draw both research and theatre traditions together to make contributions to research-based theatre methodology.

Content: Reflexivity

Richardson's reflexivity touchstone is consistent with the reflective turn of social science research (Goldstein, 2012) in asking researchers and authors to position both text and themselves, making explicit the structural, methodological, and epistemological construction of the research. As part of this touchstone, Richardson also calls researchers to share ethical issues related to their research. To address reflexivity Richardson (2000) calls attention to six questions:

1. How did the author come to write this text?

2. How was the information gathered?

3. Ethical issues?

4. How has the author's subjectivity been both a producer and a product of this text?

5. Is there adequate self-awareness and self-exposure for the reader to make judgments about the point of view?

6. Do authors hold themselves accountable to the standards of knowing and telling of the people they have studied? (p. 254)

7. Bochner (2000) similarly calls upon authors to "dig at [their] actions and underneath them, displaying the self on the page" (p. 270) and to show concern for "how other people who are part of the teller's story are portrayed" (p. 271).

Prendergast and Belliveau (2013) establish four qualitative touchstones for performative research such as research-based theatre. Among these is the call to share "the artistic in the academic article to provide the reader entry points inside the work" (p. 204). This

touchstone draws attention to the dual position of research-based theatre: that it may be shared by itself and/or positioned within or alongside an academic discussion. This provides an opportunity for authors to engage in two forms of reflexivity: *internal* and *external*.

Internal reflexivity

I use internal reflexivity to refer to that which is contained within the artistic component of the research such as the script of *Homa Bay Memories*. For example, in the opening and closing monologues I share with audiences the various data used to develop the script while problematising the memories used and my role in (re)creating these stories:

Excerpt from the Opening Monologue:

> *(Lights fade up CS. JUNE moves the large white box to face front to become a kitchen table. Preset behind is an apron and a variety of ingredients. While most may be fake, ideally the smells of coriander, cinnamon, and cloves will be detected in the audience. JUNE puts on the apron)*
>
> GRAHAM
> When narrators disappear, they leave behind given circumstances that help keep their stories alive. Things like letters, journals, photos. *(As he mentions them, GRAHAM holds up some of the letters, diaries, and photos. Simultaneously, JUNE, takes the ingredients and places them on the table)*
>
> JUNE
> Okay Graham, everything is ready, come on. *(GRAHAM remains DR but becomes younger)*. Milk, water, butter, eggs, flour, yeast, honey, coriander, salt, cinnamon, and cloves. Now mix the yeast and water together, set them aside. *(GRAHAM, mimes doing this along with JUNE, CS)*. You want all of these ingredients to be well mixed so sift all the dry ingredients together and then stir them into the milk and water. (pp. 92-93)

Excerpt from the Opening Monologue:

> GRAHAM
> In my memory.
> These are our stories now. I cannot recreate my mother's experiences. I have only fragments to build upon *(Looks in the box),* letters, slides, artifacts, journals, stories, memories.
>
> ...
>
> I work with and from these stories. In doing so they become something new. Something different. And so do I. My voice is filled with the words of others[7]. (p. 144)

This *explicit internal reflexivity* is also demonstrated in the questions asked throughout the script. For example, in one scene I retell a harrowing bus ride that ends with me expecting to have been robbed. In the script I question my conclusion that my suitcase was stolen when we were asked to leave the bus:

> GRAHAM
> After an hour that seemed to stretch further than the grasslands around us we got back on the bus. How will I explain that I got robbed? I hope beyond hope that they left the letter....
>
> When we finally arrived, (*GRAHAM pulls suitcase off bus and opens it)* I opened my suitcase expecting a missing laptop – but there it was. *(GRAHAM exhales.)* The letter... (*GRAHAM holds the scrap of cloth)* The letter. *(GRAHAM looks up)* But why'd I assume it'd be stolen? *(Blackout on the CS area)* (p. 138)

I do not recall questioning my reactions *in situ.* However, revisiting the experience during the scriptwriting process allowed me to reflect upon and question my reaction to the experience. June's letters

[7] (Bakhtin, 1986)

are frequently self-reflective and I retain this self-questioning and positioning in the script to help build explicit internal reflexivity such as when she asks her family:

> JUNE
> Please don't 'accuse' me again of knowing what people are thinking, for I only 'think they may think' or say things by accident. (p. 110)

There is also *implicit internal reflexivity* in the script. Such reflexivity informs moments of the script but the reflexive questions are not aired explicitly. In another scene I recall an experience in which I modelled clearing dishes from the living room of my host family for a Kenyan man who then began to do the same. I juxtapose this in the script with June's story of having Kenyan women laugh at her manner of carrying a heavy load from the market:

> JUNE
> I spent Saturday baking, sewing and marketing. *(PHYLLIS and HELENE enter with backs to the audience - we should not see who they are. They are laughing)*. I was carrying a huge basket up from the market in my arms – you know, propped against my stomach. This caused out and out laughter from a couple of women who couldn't tell me, but showed by gestures, the proper place to carry a basket *(The two women are indicating that the proper way "is on your head. Not your belly". Laughter and smiles. Once done, the two family members exit)*. Observation? A Maritime smile goes a long way. The distance home never seemed so short. It was a very warm feeling to share their genuine and easy amusement at the habits of strange Europeans. (p. 115)

By scripting these experiences together, I gesture to the possible roles of mimicry (Bhabha, 2004) in our experiences and draw them together to create a moment of reflexivity implicit to the script.

External reflexivity

The space between artistic script and academic prose provides opportunities for research-based theatre practitioners to be reflective of their work outside of the artwork: part of the research but not contained within its artistic representation. As described earlier, I constructed my research-based theatre script with an accompanying critical commentary. This "compound of genres" (Holquist, 2002, p. 98) provides a space in which I can respond directly to Richardson's reflexivity questions: making explicit the origins of the research text and how the information was gathered; and, digging deeply into ethical issues encountered while developing the script. For example, Bochner (2000) calls writers to "show concern for how other people who are part of the teller's story are portrayed" (p. 271). This concern is discussed throughout the critical commentary, most notably in my deep examination of my choice not to include June's Kenyan diary entries as part of the data on which the script was based. Commenting upon these choices internally within the script may not have been a strong aesthetic choice. Using the *external reflexivity* afforded by the critical commentary accompanying the script allows a different method of engaging with the reflexivity questions of Richardson and others, without the same level of concern for their aesthetic impact on a theatrical audience.

Content: Expresses a Reality

To determine how a work expresses a reality, Richardson (2000) asks two questions:

1. Does this text embody a fleshed out, embodied sense of lived-experience?

2. Does it seem "true" – a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the "real"? (p. 254)

Bochner (2000) reiterates Richardson's first question asking for "abundant, concrete detail; concern not only for the commonplace, even trivial routines of everyday life, but also for the flesh and blood emotions of people coping with life's contingencies; not only facts but also feelings" (p. 270). Throughout *Homa Bay Memories* I build moments of 'reality' by introducing concrete details. Such details may be shared orally by the actors to help establish the physical setting of a scene in the audience's mind. For example:

> GRAHAM
> As mzungus, foreigners, we were a draw. Neighbours often came to visit in the living and dining room of their clay brick house where we sat on a random assortment of furniture worn with age and heavy use and loosely covered by a mismatch of old blankets and sheets. The cracked yellow paint on the walls was broken up by a few pictures and a large mantle on which sat a small black and white TV that, might get some reception, if we were lucky. (p. 111)

Alternatively, concrete details may be expressed through stage directions. I set one particularly tense scene during an approaching thunderstorm. The thunderstorm was inspired by my experience watching a band of rain cross the water in Mombasa and by letters June wrote describing various approaching storms. Throughout the scene, I included stage directions with the intent that if the production were mounted, the sounds described would be played for the audience, providing them with auditory concrete details. Such directions include:

> *(The bird sounds fade into the sounds of night creatures) ...*
> *(Sounds fade to an unnatural silence as if a storm is coming) ...*
> *(Sounds of rain begin that build into a storm) ...*
> *(Sounds of the storm peak and begin to subside) ...*
> *(After a beat of silence, the night sounds start to return).* (pp. 127-128)

The storm serves to underscore particularly crucial and difficult decisions June and I both encountered while in Kenya. As such the

stage directions not only contribute concrete details to help express a reality, but also help highlight and reflect critical moments of the research.

Richardson's second question highlights that this touchstone is not necessarily calling for a replication of the research context but instead seeks that which is 'real.' Prendergast and Belliveau's (2013) fourth touchstone similarly reminds researchers to honour "the research context, the fact-fiction balance" (p. 204). This leaves space for the artistic inclusion of fictive elements into the research while stressing that they be rooted in the context of the data. This sense of 'true' fiction is built, as Eisner (1991) suggests, by consensus: "the condition in which investigators or readers of a work concur that the findings and/or interpretations reported by the investigator are consistent with their own experience or with the evidence presented" (p. 56). Consensus cannot be imposed but rather 'truth' and 'reality' must resonate (Fels, 2012; Goldstein, 2012) with viewers and readers as well as with the context of the research and with research participants.

To help ensure this research resonates with the context of the data and participants, I shared the script with June's brothers and sister as well as the three women who travelled to Kenya with me and invited them to respond to it. In the prologue of *Homa Bay Memories* I stage my mother's death:

> *(JUNE lies in the bed. … She has a nasal cannula and a bandana on her head. … Sounds of an oxygen concentrator with a bubbling humidifier and a heart monitor. … She lies back. Heart monitor sounds change indicating a heart stoppage. The sounds stop abruptly first the heart monitor, then the concentrator. Lights begin to dim on the CS area. JUNE stands, faces SL and walks off slowly.* (pp. 94-95)

When I shared the script with my mother's sister, a retired nurse who was with my mother at the time of her death, she commented that my mother was never on a heart monitor as I staged in the prologue (personal communication, March 17, 2013). Thus the sound of the

heart monitor does not resonate with the 'factual reality' of my mother's death. However, I retained the sound to provide a quick, culturally resonant method of showing, rather than telling of a death.

I cannot comment on how this research may or may not resonate with readers or viewers of possible stage productions as such resonances can only be determined in each individual encounter with the work (Bird, Donelan, Sinclair, & Wales, 2010). However, to encourage possible resonances, I have left openings throughout the research for viewers and reviewers to enter the work personally, theoretically, and/or methodologically.

Form: Aesthetic merit

Richardson's content touchstones share common concerns with a broad spectrum of qualitative research. In her fourth touchstone she asks questions focusing more specifically on arts-based research:

1. Does this piece succeed aesthetically?
2. Does the use of creative analytical practices open up the text, invite interpretive responses?
3. Is the text artistically shaped, satisfying, complex, and not boring? (p. 254)

Prendergast and Belliveau (2013) similarly call for attention to aesthetic elements when assessing and reviewing performative works, suggesting using elements of the theatre to their full advantage to create spaces for audiences to enter the work, heightening possible understandings of the research. However, Saldaña (2005) notes that while there are a wealth of theatrical elements from which to draw, he suggests "from my own experience I offer the classic design adage for guidance: 'Less is more'" (p. 28). This reflects Jackson's (2007) concern that the aesthetic elements of educational drama not outweigh the instrumental (research) elements but that the two must balance each other. Similarly, Ellis (2000) asks if there is "sufficient, yet not overblown dramatic tension" (p. 275). While the aesthetic is important in arts-based research, as Ellis, Jackson, and Saldaña

caution, aesthetic elements such as dramatic tension should not be 'overblown' or added for effect; instead, they should be organic to, and in support of, the research.

As mentioned earlier, I position my research within the aesthetic/systemic portion of the spectrum of research-based theatre (Beck et al., 2011). In doing so, I have from its inception been developing *Homa Bay Memories* as both an aesthetic piece of theatre and a systemic research study. To strengthen the aesthetic potential of the work, I have been particularly conscious of elements such as blocking, projections, lighting, sound, set design, and plot. While helping to develop aesthetic potential, these elements are also included to help inform meanings and tell the story of the research.

For example, the heart monitor sound effect in the prologue described earlier draws from the auditory possibilities of theatre to suggest a death rather than stating it explicitly: to show, not tell. However, the sound serves a double purpose. In the beginning of the next scene, the sound transforms into that of a telegraph, signalling the beginning of June's new life in Kenya. Using the same sound in these two different contexts draws them together, blending borders of time, space, and mortality. In doing so this organic sound effect, an aesthetic theatrical element, serves to both convey elements of plot and inform understandings.

Richardson's third aesthetic question asks if the artistic research is boring. Similarly, de Vries (2012) suggests that one of the hallmarks of a good autoethnography is that it draws in the audience, holding their attention. This coincides with Collinson's (1992) suggestion "that aesthetic experience at its highest and best is arresting, intense and utterly engrossing; that when fully achieved it seizes one's whole mind or imagination and conveys whatever it does convey so vividly that the result is delight and knowledge" (p. 115). Assessing whether or not a research-based theatre work is engrossing is made on an individual basis (Collinson, 1992; Jackson, 2007; Saldaña, 2005) ideally made in response to a theatrical staging, making it difficult to comment upon *Homa Bay Memories,* having not yet staged the script.

However, I have had several opportunities to share selections from the script with various audiences, who have responded favourably to its aesthetic potential. For example, after performing a monologue for a graduate class I was approached by a student who remarked, "I couldn't take my eyes off of you" (personal communication, November 6, 2012). A full staging of *Homa Bay Memories* will provide an opportunity to build upon and evaluate this aesthetic potential to draw and hold attention. However, as I move toward theatrical production, I remain cognisant of Saldaña's concern to 'keep it simple.'

Impact

Richardson's final touchstone asks reviewers to consider the impact a work may have on an audience:

1. Does this affect me?
    - emotionally?
    - intellectually?
2. Generate new questions?
3. Move me to write?
4. Move me to try new research practices?
5. Move me to action? (p. 254)

These questions focus on impacts upon audiences of the research. However, it is not only audiences but also authors that may be impacted. One of the great surprises I encountered during this research was realising that the script development process was in large part an opportunity to re-establish conditions of connection between my mother and I (Lea, 2013). Researching, developing, and writing *Homa Bay Memories* has created an opportunity for beginning a progression of the relationship between my mother and I despite the borders of mortality. As such, regardless of any impact the work may have on an audience, it has had significant impact upon me.

Other Touchstones

The assessment criteria described thus far draw on the literature to provide readers, viewers, and assessors of artistic research with entry points for estimating the quality of arts-based research. Based on the theoretical and epistemological underpinnings of the research leading to *Homa Bay Memories,* I add to this conversation by offering two other potential touchstones: cohesion and gifting.

Cohesion

As part of a critical commentary accompanying *Homa Bay Memories* I discuss three versions of the script, each one built using a core narrative mechanism: resonances, research quest (Sallis, 2011), and super-objective (Stanislavski, 1936). Prior to writing the third version I identified a super-objective shared by June and I while we were in Kenya: to connect. Based on this I revisited the script culling, as much as possible, parts that did not support the objective. This cull was inspired by Stanislavski's (1936) suggestion that "the greater the literary work, the greater the pull of its super-objective" (p. 271). From this perspective, the more aligned the minor objectives and details are to the super-objective, the more cohesive the script. This suggests a potential touchstone, that the research be cohesive: that all elements function together to help express the research. Ellis (2000) similarly asks if the author has edited "so that all words are necessary, well placed, and the best choices" (p. 275).

For example, in her letters June used the metaphor of adolescence to describe Kenya as a young emerging country striving to establish its identity. The metaphor is used in several letters that could have been developed into potential scenes. While interesting, and potentially informative, the scenes did not help support the super-objective or other understandings gained in the research and were cut to maintain cohesion in the script. I found, however, I was unable to cut everything that did not inform the super-objective and instead had to balance the aesthetic drive for cohesion with the instrumental/ academic desire for comprehensive understanding.

Gifting

The second touchstone I put forward draws from the epistemological positioning of this research as a sharing of gifts. Through the research, I treated the gifts of data from June's and my experiences as transformative circular gifts (Hyde, 1979; Kuokkanen, 2007). As such, the research process became one of transforming these gifts in preparation to continue a chain of gifting. These transformations and gifting are successful if they resonate with the reader/viewer, evoking or provoking, providing insights, sparking questions, shedding new light and are then passed on. To help provide opportunities for continuing this chain of gifting I left openings in the research to allow those reading or viewing the work to position themselves within it. This passing on may occur on an individual basis or through a more public forum such as the published responses to Saldaña's (2008) *Second Chair: An Autoethnodrama* by Bowman (2008), Brewer (2008), Robinson (2008), and Smigiel (2008); and Goodall's (2006) *A Need to Know: The Clandestine History of a CIA Family* by Bochner (2008), Denzin (2008), Ellis (2008), Hartnett (2008), and Pelias (2008) which use a variety of textual forms to respond to Saldaña and Goodall's original work, continuing the chain of gifting. As *Homa Bay Memories* has not yet been widely shared, there have not been opportunities for this continual chain of gifting to be established. However, as I continue to share my research through writing (including this article), giving presentations, and working toward a full production, I increase the audience for the research. In doing so I create further opportunities for the research to continue the chains of transformative circular gifting.

The touchstones discussed in this article are intended to provide readers, particularly those unfamiliar with arts-based research, with ways of entering into and through the work. In sharing these touchstones I recognize that, like any utterance, they are shaped not just by their author but also by the addressees (Bakhtin, 1986). Thus when encountering such works, readers and reviewers are also influenced by their own chains of utterances and experiences. This will shape their application of the described touchstones and inspire

others that may be brought to the work. Thus the touchstones in this paper are not positioned as a definitive collection of check-mark criteria for *Homa Bay Memories* or any other research-based theatre script. Instead they are guides into and through my work, ones I hope other practitioners may draw from and expand while envisioning how to evaluate their own research-based theatre projects.

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REFLECTIVE INTERLUDE I

THE VOICES IN MY HEAD

Michelle Ludecke

Deakin University, Melbourne

Dr Michelle Ludecke's research centres on notions of becoming a teacher. Her PhD investigated first-year teachers' experiences in their transition to teaching. Michelle employed a theatre-based research approach to analysing and representing participants' *firsts* as moments of identity transformation. Michelle has a background in secondary dance and drama teaching, and is a lecturer in Pedagogy and Curriculum in the Faculty of Arts and Education at Deakin University. Her work aims to promote the complementary dimensions of performance and education.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This piece outlines my practice of performed research investigating first-year teachers' experiences of identity transformation. The processes of framing the inquiry, analysing the data, and presenting the findings were enacted through the processes of scripting, rehearsal and performance. A discussion of these processes is framed around vignettes of the voices in my head.

The voices in my head

My experience of performed research was initiated, strengthened, and sustained through a variety of voices in my head during my research journey.

SUPERVISOR 1
Performed research – what's that?

ACADEMIC
How does that turn into a PhD? How do you 'write that up?'

PERFORMING ARTS TECHNICIAN
Are you from the faculty of performing arts? Is it a performance and exegesis?

CONFERENCE ATTENDEE
Where's the rigour?

ACADEMIC
Are you one of those drama-types?

SUPERVISOR 1
How are you going to frame your research? What lens are you using? What's your methodology?

ACADEMIC
How did you get ethics approval for that?

CONFERENCE ATTENDEE
What's the theatre-based method you're using called?

PhD STUDENT
What are your findings?

ACADEMIC
That's different...you're very brave!

Performed research to frame the inquiry

These voices, while seeming brutal, dismissive or arrogant, actually caused me to clarify how performed research would work in my inquiry. Over time, the voices took on abstracted personas – Commedia-like stock characters. They questioned, taunted, encouraged, enlightened, frightened and congratulated me throughout my journey. During periods of denial, self-deprecation, and a kind of flat-line where literally nothing would happen, the difficult questions actually drove me forward, leading to moments where I felt as though everything 'just clicked'. At moments such as these I recognised my tacit knowledge, shaped by my background in the performing arts, influenced me to make seemingly 'instinctive' decisions. Analysing these decisions helped me to explain why performed research was an appropriate method for me to frame the research, analyse the data, and present my findings. Making connections between these processes and scripting, rehearsing, and performing assisted to justify the method for myself, and others – particularly other researchers who tended to ask the tricky questions.

SUPERVISOR 1
And what about the idea you had a while ago, about the drama side of things? How might that fit in?

ME
Um, I thought you didn't like that idea, so I've given up on that.

SUPERVISOR 1
No - I never said that. It's just not my area of expertise, so I'm unclear as to how it might play out.

ME
Oh! I though you were steering me away from all of that...so maybe I'll send you my thoughts...I was thinking of a script...

Scripting as data analysis

I came to understand and appreciate that 'tricky' questions were often based on people's unfamiliarity with performed research as a methodology. The voices of my supervisors taught me that I needed to explain in order for others to understand...and that's the tricky bit. I can't just say 'trust me and I'll show you'. Through the processes of performing my research I learnt to justify, be clear, and make connections to the audiences' understandings. My audiences needed information presented to them with enough clarity to be understandable, and enough ambiguity to allow them to feel like they'd had a revelation they could own.

Scripting as a process of analysis also allowed me (and other readers) to view the data from a critical distance. The process of inquiry in this instance occurred within the process of composition and vice versa. The purpose of undertaking performed research was more than the creation of an aesthetic object; it was employed as a method of inquiry in itself. Performed research as a method of inquiry involved experimenting with ways of analysing and presenting, or representing, the interview texts.

When I was grappling with analysing masses of interview data many voices swirled around in my mind to the point where I couldn't focus. Shaping the data into a playscript allowed me to hone in on the essence of the data. I stripped back the layers of each participant's interview to their defining *first*. These *firsts* were revelations in multiple senses. They were the epiphanic moments (Denzin, 2003) belonging to each participant that revealed aspects of their practice and identity. *Firsts* are also temporal, frozen in a particular moment in time and place. They are highly dramatic anticipated or unpredictable liminal moments. I noticed that the *firsts* fractured time and identity into a before and after. As such I shaped the script through the use of a trio of Interviewee characters to represent the 'after' as the 'before' plays out in front of them. This captured what the participants said, and how they recreated their *firsts* in the interviews.

All the text in the original play script was verbatim data. In working with strictly verbatim data I had little influence over the choice of words to form the text. However, I employed several rhetorical strategies in the shaping of the verbatim data by considering the intended audience, the selection of thematics, and the juxtaposition of stories both within the scenes and between the scenes. My main intention was to compare and contrast in order to discover, analyse, and express meaning. When making decisions about what verbatim data could be transformed into stage direction and action additional evocative rhetorical devices such as body language, facial expression, gesture, movement and stillness were employed.

SUPERVISOR 2
I am trying to think of a supervisorial way to say this...but I can't. I LOVE THIS SCRIPT!

PLAYWRIGHT
I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed reading the script. I am intrigued by the proposal that you put together as the framework and impetus for creating this piece. What you have has absolutely no fat on it. There is a truthfulness to the characters and their experience that exists on the page (a clichéd line I know but true nonetheless!).

TEACHER-ACTOR
Oh my God - it's me all over again!

Scripting as an analytical framework

The voices made the process of scripting, and later rehearsal and performance a joyous and exciting framework for analysis. Framing the script within a phenomenographic paradigm assisted me to explore and explain the experiences of the first-year teachers' identity transformation. The scenes were logically related through the ordering, in a deliberately parsimonious manner, from first days, to first experiences, then first reflections. I employed theatrical conventions and devices that I believed would enhance the portrayal of the experiences

of the participants being represented, while attempting to stay true to each situation – to take the audience far enough away from reality in order to allow new ways of seeing. I refrained from including unifying dialogue within and between scenes unless it could be found in the interview data. I judiciously selected scenes that represented different discourses surrounding first-year teachers in general while maintaining the personal experiences of each participant as an individual. In these ways I attempted to avoid one of the performative stance pitfalls of the performance ethnographer – the 'custodian's rip-off' (Conquergood, 1985, p.5), that selfish stand where the researcher's aim is simply to find some good performance material. If I am honest I was tempted to create extra dialogue, and embellish some accounts in order to create a more theatrical piece. At these times I reminded myself that the purpose was to analyse the participants' experiences in an ethical and accessible manner, not just to create a performance as a finished piece.

Rehearsing to theorise and discuss

The participants all knew at the outset of the research that their data would be formed into a theatrical representation of some kind. Initially I was thinking of holding a Forum Theatre event, but over time I became more conscious of my responsibility to represent faithfully and ethically the participants' experiences.

PARTICIPANT 1
So do I have to perform in the play?

PARTICIPANT 2
I don't have to be in the play do I?

PARTICIPANT 3
Can I be in the play?

PARTICIPANT 4
Who is going to be me in the play?

PARTICIPANT 5
Did I say that? I can't remember now, it was so long ago, and so much has happened.

PARTICIPANT 6
Um...can we change that? I don't want my colleagues finding out that I said that...they won't know who I am will they?

PARTICIPANT 7
I don't wear those sort of clothes!

PARTICIPANT 8
How come my scene was the shortest!

PARTICIPANT 9
Why did you pick that bit for my scene?

PARTICIPANT 10
Can I bring 15 people to the play?

PARTICIPANT 11
I don't want to come to the play - I just don't want to think about school or teaching at all any more.

PARTICIPANT 12
I couldn't believe it but after the play I was really excited to teach the next day!

The participants' voices emerged as they read, discussed and observed the play and performance. Their words assisted me to consider the range of responses people have to performance in general and performed research in particular, in the transition from page to stage. The participants responded to the script, rehearsals and performance in a variety of ways, including fear of having to perform, misconceptions regarding their representation, and despair or sheer joy at being reminded of events that had shaped who they were becoming. Performance can be feared, provocative, uncomfortable, confusing, and uplifting all at once. Individuals bring their own

histories to their understanding of performance. With such thoughts in mind I considered carefully the implications of employing actors to portray the teacher characters in the performance. I decided against employing actors to portray the participants' characters, and instead employed teachers with an understanding of performance. I encouraged the teacher-actors to bring their own personal histories to the performance and offer suggestions as to the interpretation of their characters. I wanted the experience for the audience to be as authentic as possible, to move their experience beyond enjoyment to something that would speak to teachers from teachers, and to counter the pitfalls experienced when employing actors who know little about those they are representing (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010, pp. 14-15).

During rehearsal it became more important that I maintained an ethical and moral commitment to the participants' voices, yet I was also conscious that I was creating a piece of theatre – a virtual reality. This is one of the tensions many performance ethnographers face (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010; Anderson, 2007; Denzin, 2003; Mienczakowski, 2001; Saldaña, 1999), and I found myself meticulously self-justifying every intricate decision I made in shaping the text into performance. Ethical considerations emerged during the validation rehearsal where a participant voiced her discomfort at the way her colleagues were portrayed, and that she may be identifiable. This example also draws attention to the power and problem of vernacular language when interpreted by another. In encouraging audiences (including the teacher-actor portraying this character) to bring their own personal meaning to the text the reader or audience member may attribute a different tone or emphasis than the one intended.

Performing to present findings

The 'expert' audiences of 'The First Time' – those who had an investment in the phenomena, and to whom the research was relevant – voiced their responses to the work in a variety of ways.

CANADIAN ACADEMIC
Our group saw the video [and] we found it very interesting that new teachers half a world away, who would have had different teacher education experiences, seemed to have such similar experiences to our new teachers.

COLLEAGUE
It was just great - how do you keep your actors so engaged?

SUPERVISOR 2
I too am amazed with the actors' commitment - it was brilliant - and I feel like the event took the work forward in ways we will unravel over the months ahead. I can't stop thinking about the lunch box scene - having the play performed so close up was great.

PRE-SERVICE TEACHER
I went for coffee afterwards with a couple of other pre-service teachers who also attended, and it provided a great stimulus for discussions about our perceptions, fears and expectations about beginning teaching.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE OFFICER
Congratulations on the wonderful performance last Thursday night. It was very rich and meaningful.

PRINCIPAL
Just amazing how many real classroom/teacher/school admin issues were revealed within the space of 45 minutes - and you could tell by the sighs from the audience how pertinent they were, like the 'keys' issue for instance.

PRE-SERVICE TEACHER
It was just so awesome, great to see something real and relevant and something I'm sure I'll remember next year when I'm in my own school as a grad!

These post-performance voices demonstrated the play was more significant than I had anticipated, and each performance brings new insight – both an understanding of the experiences of beginning teachers, and of the methodology. For me performed research is not only about the 'end result' or performance. The processes of framing the research, data analysis, theorising, discussion and presenting findings were all 'performed' through scripting, rehearsing and performance. By 'performed' I not only mean presenting a finished product. The research was also 'performed' by engaging with, doing justice to, and listening to all the voices in my head.

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WE ARE NOT ALONE:

Christine Sinclair

The University of Melbourne

Christine Sinclair is head of drama education at the University of Melbourne. She lectures in teacher education, drama and arts education, and her research interests include arts-based and performed informed research methodologies. She has collaborated on performance ethnography projects which have been performed in public venues, at conferences and academic forums in Australia and internationally and is co-author (with Anne Harris) of an upcoming Sense publication, *Critical Plays*, which examines embodied practices in research settings. Christine is the former Director of Publications for Drama Australia and was a Chief investigator in *TheatreSpace: Accessing the Cultural Conversation*, an ARC funded study into young people's attendance at mainstream theatre.

THE QUEST FOR DIALOGIC SPACES AS SITES OF INQUIRY

ABSTRACT

Drawing on the seminal work of ethnographer Dwight Conquergood, this paper examines the proposition that the performative opens a dialogic space which brings together "different voices, world views, value systems, and beliefs so that they can have a conversation with one another": a conversation that "resists conclusions" and invites "question, debate, and challenge".

Through an examination of two historical examples of practice, drawn from the traditions of documentary and community-based theatre, this paper explores the proposition that the heritage of various artistic, pedagogic and performance languages at work in the achievement of 'dialogical performance' in theatre traditions have potential to inform and enrich the practice and theoretical underpinnings of the parallel tradition of performed research. The paper proposes that those undertaking performed research in the exploration and expression of multiple ways of knowing (following Conquergood), have much in common with their theatrical antecedents, who also sought to privilege the 'different voices and world views' in a creative nexus situated between theatre and research.

> Art celebrates with peculiar intensity the moments in which the past reinforces the present and in which the future is a quickening of what now is. (Dewey, 1934, p.18)

This paper considers the practice of performed research from the perspective of one who has been immersed in it as researcher/artist/practitioner/performer/audience for two decades. My immersion began before I was aware of this methodological possibility and has continued during the burgeoning in practices that can be located under the notional umbrella of performed research[1]. Throughout a career in the academic world as educator and qualitative researcher, I have lived a parallel life as a theatre practitioner, being a writer and director and occasional performer in works made with, by and for community – works which echo powerfully with the more formal lines of inquiry undertaken as performed research. I find myself walking across borders of practice, from theatre made in communities, to mainstream theatre making, to the classroom where drama is made with young people, and then to the sites of performed research which provide a rich and regenerative vein to my professional life. It is from this perspective, or these multiple perspectives, that I propose the central argument of this paper: as perpetrators, and advocates, of the burgeoning field of performed research, we are not alone.

There is much discussion by scholars and practitioners of performed and arts based research (Beck et al, 2011; Knowles and Cole, 2008; Bird et al., 2010; Saldana, 2005, 2011; Barone and Eisner, 2012) seeking to articulate and extend the boundaries of this emergent form and its various practices and purposes. As one long committed to scholarship in this field, I continue to be interested in questions of process and

[1] The definition of Performed Research included here is consistent with the definition of Performed Research provided by George Belliveau in his paper, also published in this special edition of JACE. According to Belliveau, Performed Research refers to projects that deliberately involve theatre within a research process, or formal research in a theatre process. A number of other terms are used to define similar approaches: ethnotheatre (Saldana, 2011), performance ethnography (Denzin, 2003; Sallis, 2010), research-based theatre (Belliveau & Lea, 2011), research-informed theatre (Goldstein, 2012), performative inquiry (Fels & Belliveau, 2008), among others.

production: how will we conduct performed research; what might it look like; and, how might it impact others? This self-reflexive act has launched me into an exploration beyond the boundaries of research methodology, into other artistic paradigms, where dialogic, performative spaces of inquiry (Conquergood, 1985) exist in parallel paradigms, and have done so for a long time.

It is now almost thirty years since Conquergood proposed his notion of dialogical performance, when arguing for alternative ways of exploring and representing research:

> One path to genuine understanding of others...is dialogical performance (after Bakhtin). This performative stance struggles to bring together different voices, world views, value systems, and beliefs so that they can have a conversation with one another. The aim of dialogical performance is to bring self and other together so that they can question, debate and challenge one another. (Conquergood, 1985, p. 9)

Significantly, Conquergood made a distinction between different kinds of performance practices, making note that there were some theatre forms which invited dialogue through the crafting of research-informed aesthetic spaces where research stakeholders and performers could come together. He foreshadowed and advocated for a range of practices, from verbatim and community-based[2] theatre, to the fields of theatre anthropology and environmental theatre. He too was not alone. Following Turner (1982, 1990), Myerhoff (1980) and Schechner (1985), he continued the exploration of the territory between research, ritual and theatre as it became populated by artists, researchers and activists whose agendas involved the generation of dialogic artistic encounters, the privileging of voices from groups and individuals otherwise silenced, and the purposeful politicising of art.

[2] In this paper, community and community-based theatre refers to theatre practices in which community members are engaged in making artistic works relevant to their own community. For North American readers, the term 'grassroots theatre' may be more commonly used to describe this kind of practice.

Upon closer examination, this nexus between research and theatre which I take to be the territory of the dialogic performance, reveals itself to be verdant ground, with the heritage of many traditions available to those of us who currently practice some iteration of performed research, such as performance or auto-ethnography, research-based theatre, or ethnodrama. It is therefore somewhat surprising to note in the current literature of performed research methodologies, how rarely the rich traditions of documentary and community theatre, agit-prop, theatre of the oppressed and the myriad forms of applied theatre, are invoked. Artists such as Spalding Gray, David Hare, Anna Deveare Smith, Moises Kaufman of Tectonic Theatre, and the National Theatre of Scotland (in their production Black Watch) have achieved prominence as innovators in theatrical form. Such artistic practitioners bridge journalism, social history, and activism, in the theatre events they have created. Their work is based on research, and is deeply committed to theatrical form and to an authenticity of voice and story. Significantly, they commit to an engagement with public discourse through dialogue with audience and 'stakeholders'. But how does their work, or the processes they employ to arrive at their particular dialogic performances inform the current understandings and practices of performed research? If we are indeed not alone, what then, can we learn from those in whose territory we, apparently, co-exist?

This paper considers an overarching question, *how can these sites for dialogic performance inform the quest for dialogic artistic practice within a performed research paradigm?* My exploration of this question will be further informed by an awareness of some of the recurring tensions which present themselves to practitioners of performed research. These tensions revolve around three key principles:

1. **Epistemology**: how do we understand the construction of knowledge when research is embedded in an aesthetic, performative framework?

2. **Aesthetics**: how can both aesthetic and systematic research processes be privileged in a research informed performance?

3. **Voice**: how are the voices of individuals and communities which are said to be represented in research-informed performance modes, privileged ethically and authentically?

I propose to explore the questions of this paper by examining two complementary, historical sites of practice: 1) the Living Newspaper of the Federal Theatre Project (FTP), from Depression era United States; and 2), EcoTheater, also a US based grass-roots theatre project. My exploration focuses on the examination of historical data, and my aim is to construct two case studies from the review of this data. The sites chosen are somewhat opportunistic. They represent sites of practice with which I am familiar as a community theatre practitioner and an arts educator. They are also conceptually related but geographically and historically distant (from Australia, at least). This distancing provides a useful perspective when considering the central question of this paper. To be able to stand back in order to view just how a theatre practice from another time and place could have relevance to 21st century performed researchers is a core premise of this paper. The relationship between the two cases is not overt but both draw on documentary and verbatim traditions with the aim of privileging the marginalised or 'ordinary', a recurring motif of practice in both sites.

In the development of these cases, the data I have drawn on come from artefacts of practice: such as script, photographic image, stage directions, program notes, planning documents, a company training manual, third party accounts of practice, and historical and scholarly works. These data are available to me as points of entry and subsequently, of illumination, as I attempt to capture the aesthetic and the visceral qualities of live, dialogic performance on the two dimensional page.

This paper concludes with a return to a consideration of the conditions of performed research as methodology. I take up Conquergood's challenge and my own earlier claim, to consider how the dialogic performative space is a central premise of performed research and question how it might be constructed

and what the characteristics of that space are, when enacting a deliberate act of methodology and art.

CASE STUDY ONE: THE LIVING NEWSPAPER AS DOCUMENTARY THEATRE

Documentary theatre identifies itself as a genre in which the testimony of real people, often a verbatim accounting of events, is elided with the artistic medium of the play (Bottoms, 2006; Innes, 2007). It is mediated by the creative products of the playwright, researchers, producers, director, dramaturg, actors, and designer, with each one of their interventions offering a selective interpretation of an original 'truth'. Research is fundamental to the form and the artistic rendering of that research the pivot point for audiences. Interestingly, there has been a resurgence of documentary theatre forms, such as verbatim theatre, in recent times in the UK, US and Australia (Anderson and Wilkinson, 2007), with staged representations of 'real life' based on research and word for word accounts of experience (for verbatim theatre) from those who lived it. While currently burgeoning, the heritage of this work goes back a long way. One of the most powerful examples of this kind of work can be found in Depression Era USA, in Roosevelt's New Deal program, within The Federal Theatre Project.

The Federal Theatre Project: The Living Newspaper

In the era of the New Deal in the United States, there were many initiatives to the millions of unemployed to work through President Franklin Roosevelt's Works Progress Association (WPA), including the Federal Theatre Project (Stott, 1973; Library of Congress, nd).

The director of the Federal Theatre Project, Hallie Flanagan, promoted theatre as social action and was responsible for the development of several innovations that provided employment to actors, writers and directors in the Great Depression, as well as facilitated theatre productions which ultimately gave voice to the marginalised and silent in communities across America (Library of Congress, nd; Flanagan, 1936).

One of the specific approaches taken by the Federal Theatre project was the Living Newspaper (Library of Congress, nd). There were three phases in the process of creating a Living Newspaper performance, which will be elaborated later in the article:

1. **Research** conducted by designated researchers. In addition to theatre professionals, the Living Newspaper employed actual newspaper staff, including editors and researchers whose task was to gather data on chosen topics from a range of sources, including formal reports, policy documents, newspaper articles and interviews.

2. **Collaboration** between Living Newspaper editorial staff and the dramatists responsible for staging the play. In some projects the managing editor of the Living Newspaper was also the playwright. For example, in the production '*...one third of a nation*,' Arthur Arent was managing editor and playwright, located at the nexus of research and art. In this role he was also instrumental in the third phase of preparing a Living Newspaper, the realisation of the play.

3. **Artistic realisation** of the play. Here the goals of the Living Newspaper research enterprise merged within the living performance, through the stylistic and staging choices of the director in collaboration with the playwright and the actors. These goals included: accuracy of research and reporting; privileging voices of ordinary Americans; employing large numbers of unemployed theatre professionals; bringing affordable, quality theatre to urban and rural populations; capturing the life and times of the country on stage (Stott, 1973; Library of Congress, nd.).

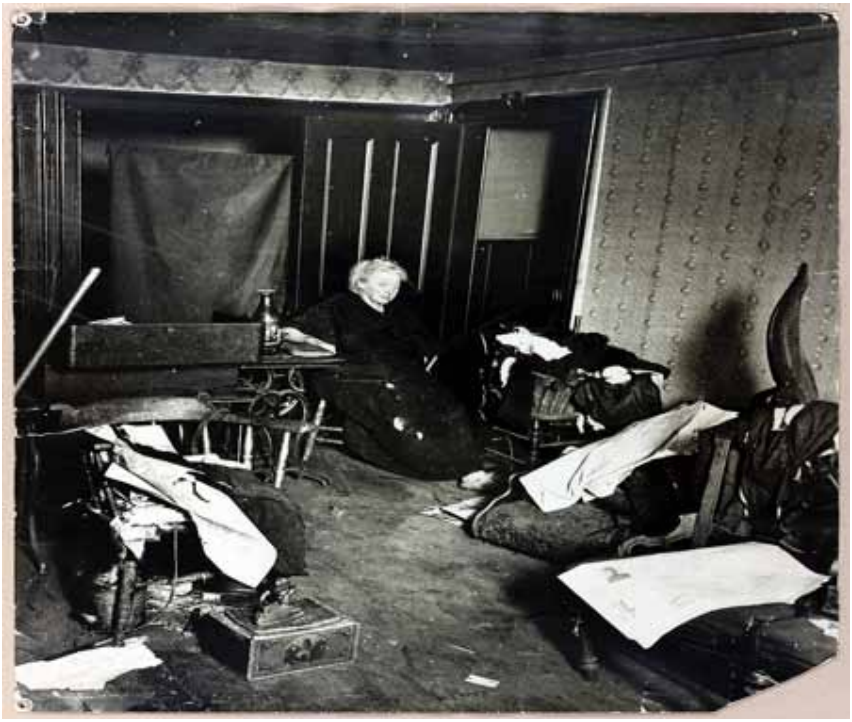


Figure 1. Play research photograph: A woman living amid squalor in a tenement, ca. 1938. Federal Theatre Project Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress.

It would be misleading to suggest that this venture was easy or uncontested. For many, including theatre professionals, audience members and politicians, the Living Newspaper, and indeed the Federal Theatre Project as a whole, was confronting, uncomfortable, incomprehensible, and controversially, at times bad art (Brown, 1979; Flanagan, 1940).

The artefacts from one of the most successful Living Newspaper events, '*...one third of a nation*', provide vivid illustrations of how these three phases unfolded and allow for an examination of how this work addresses the driving questions of this paper.

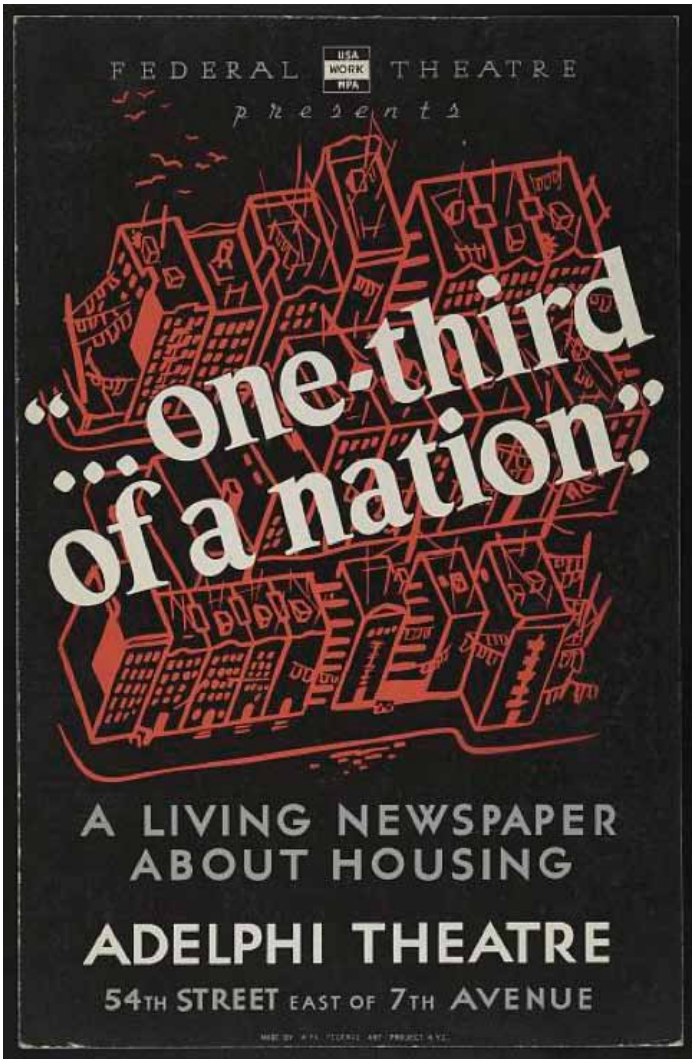


Figure 2. Poster '*...one third of a nation*', 1937, Library of Congress archives.

'*...one third of a nation*', as the poster indicates, was a play about housing. The title comes from a quote by Franklin Roosevelt from his 2nd Inaugural Address as President in January, 1937. He says,

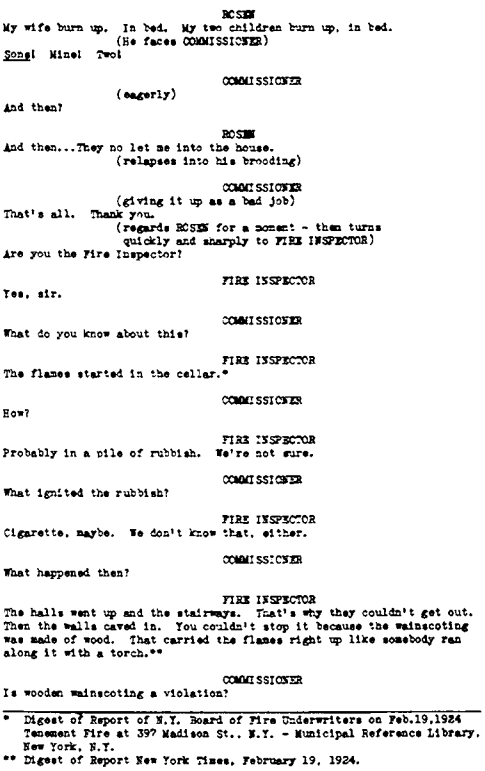
"I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished."

And later in the speech:

"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little" (Roosevelt, F.D. 1937).

The poster provides the usual information regarding title, time, place and, in words and graphic design, informs the observer of the theme and topic of the play. There is more to be inferred from the poster, however, through what it reveals and what it omits. The poster's design motif is modernist and striking, suggesting perhaps, the input of a capable and aesthetically oriented design team, characteristic of the era, and of other FTP designs. No individuals responsible for this production, including the playwright, director or lead actors are named. Perhaps this is economy of design or perhaps it is ideology on display. However, the producing organisation, the Federal Theatre Project is clearly acknowledged, highlighting in this instance, the FTP brand on the production, rather than that of any individual artist, as would happen in contemporary theatre. One final observation, which *may* indicate something of the ideology underpinning this performance event is that the title is presented all in lower case and is framed by quotation marks. For a 21st century audience this could draw attention to the underlying research focus of this play. For a 1937 audience perhaps it reminds them of the rallying call of the President at his second term inauguration, suggesting that the use of the quote is a shorthand reference to the New Deal and all it signified to the American people.

Perhaps the script reveals more. This play opens with a loudspeaker announcement, "Ladies and gentlemen, this might be Boston, New York, St. Louis, Chicago, Philadelphia, and with changes in names and locale, '...one third of a nation' can be produced for all the nation." From the outset, there is an invitation to audiences to claim the play for their own community, so that the vexed issues of housing and opportunity can be considered in the context of *their* place. The invitation to dialogue is issued before the play begins.



ROSEN
My wife burn up. In bed. My two children burn up, in bed.
(He faces COMMISSIONER)
Song! Mine! Two!

COMMISSIONER
(eagerly)
And then?

ROSEN
And then...They no let me into the house.
(relapses into his brooding)

COMMISSIONER
(giving it up as a bad job)
That's all. Thank you.
(regards ROSEN for a moment - then turns quickly and snarply to FIRE INSPECTOR)
Are you the Fire Inspector?

FIRE INSPECTOR
Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER
What do you know about this?

FIRE INSPECTOR
The flames started in the cellar.*

COMMISSIONER
How?

FIRE INSPECTOR
Probably in a pile of rubbish. We're not sure.

COMMISSIONER
What ignited the rubbish?

FIRE INSPECTOR
Cigarette, maybe. We don't know that, either.

COMMISSIONER
What happened then?

FIRE INSPECTOR
The halls went up and the stairways. That's why they couldn't get out. Then the walls caved in. You couldn't stop it because the wainscoting was made of wood. That carried the flames right up like somebody fan along it with a torch.**

COMMISSIONER
Is wooden wainscoting a violation?

* Digest of Report of N.Y. Board of Fire Underwriters on Feb.19,1924 Tenement Fire at 397 Madison St., N.Y. - Municipal Reference Library, New York, N.Y.
** Digest of Report New York Times, February 19, 1924.

Figure 3. Script excerpt - Act 1, Scene 2 *'...one third of a nation'*, 1937, Library of Congress archives.

Research and the construction of a performative epistemology

In this preliminary phase the Living Newspaper staff gathered information, including images and headlines, facts, government reports, personal interest stories, and personal interviews into a complete data set for the production. The extant script of *'...one third of a nation'* held at the Library of Congress reveals the commitment to research. Seven pages of bibliography precede the script itself. This is followed by the acknowledgement of editorial and research staff of the Living Newspaper, alongside the actors and cast of characters. The script itself then follows.

Any of the research information used in the final script was footnoted (see Figure 3), including an indication of whether a character was a real person or an invention. Fictional and living characters and scenes taken from factual accounts combined with confabulations[3] by the playwright were woven together to create a play where 'fact' was honoured alongside devices for theatrical engagement. In Scene Two of the play for example, two fictional characters meet. Shultz, the owner of a tenement in which there has been a fatal fire, and Rosen, introduced in the excerpt above, has lost his entire family in the fire. Other characters in the scene, building department inspectors, fire investigators and commissioners are drawn from life, their dialogue taken directly from newspaper articles and official reports. The juxtaposition of dramatised research and the fictionalised portrayal of the human dimension of a very real tragedy demonstrate the essence of the Federal Theatre Project approach to the Living Newspaper as a newly evolved theatre form.

Rosen*: My wife burn up. In bed. My two children burn up. In bed. Sons! Mine! Two!*

Historian William Stott argued that this theatre, with its emphasis on the ordinary person's experience, successfully domesticated the idea of culture for the population and as a result, became a potential agent of change:

> By domesticating the very idea of "culture," the New Deal arts programs catalyzed a new-found sense of cultural nationalism and brought everyday people in touch with what had been previously considered "high" art. (Stott, 1973, p.103)

[3] These confabulations were noted in the footnotes and described as "scene creatives".

Aesthetics and the evolution of artistic problem solving in documentary theatre

It is instructive to examine how the evolution and intentions of the Living Newspaper project impacted on the evolution of a theatrical style. It's even more instructive to consider the tensions associated with a form that attempted to communicate documentary information, reach out to a non-theatre literate community, and employ as many actors as possible. While there was no shortage of unemployed theatre professionals, the skill level of performers was variable and at times, limited (Flanagan, 1940). One of the ways in which this was resolved was to create a montage style theatre form, employing a series of short, stylised scenes, to convey meaning and heighten impact. This stylised representation of people en masse, enhanced by the use of light and shadow and other design abstractions had the effect of focusing on the overall impact of the play, rather than on individual performances.

However, while this approach provided an aesthetic solution to a problem of perceived artistic limitations, some of the experienced actors reacted negatively to the style of the work. Referring to the first Living Newspaper production, *Triple-A Plowed Under*, the Director of the Federal Theatre Project, Hallie Flanagan (1938) provides an account of this reaction. According to Flanagan, the actors addressed her with:

> impassioned speeches explaining why this swift, pantomimic, monosyllabic, factual document was not drama and why no New York Audience would sit through it. They complained that there was no plot, no story, no chance to build up a character, no public interest in the subject matter. Who in New York cares about the farmer, about wheat, about the price of bread and milk? (Flanagan, 1938, p.ix)

Clearly, The Living Newspaper was a form which grappled with the aesthetic demands of representing so called real stories and factual information in a dramatically compelling way. Hallie Flanagan was

Figure 4. Scene from the Federal Theatre Project production, *'...one third of a nation'*, Seattle, 1938. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division.

at the vanguard of this movement and insistent that the theatre created as Living Newspaper be of high quality, artistically and 'journalistically.' She advocated for theatre which reflected the times: "the plays that we do and the ways that we do them should be informed by our consciousness of the art and economics of 1935" (Flanagan, 1940, pp.45-46).

In the Living Newspaper, new theatrical approaches were developed to address the specific intentions of the socially relevant work, and the needs of those performing, and this brief account underpins the complexity of the form. Although the community of actors was not necessarily the community who was represented in the theatre, despite the fears of the actors, the audience did embrace many of these plays with no plot, no characters, no "interesting subject matter". *'...one third of the nation'* had over 80 performances in New York in its first season, with over 110,000 people attending. William Stott suggested that the arts projects of the WPA captured the "documentary impulse" of 1930s America. It was a time, he suggested, in which there was a strong drive to "record and clarify for the American people aspects of their experience, past or present, main-current or side-stream" (Stott, 1973).

These artefacts of the Federal Theatre Project suggest a dialogic performance many years before Conquergood began researching and advocating for performative ways of bringing everyday experience into a public discourse.

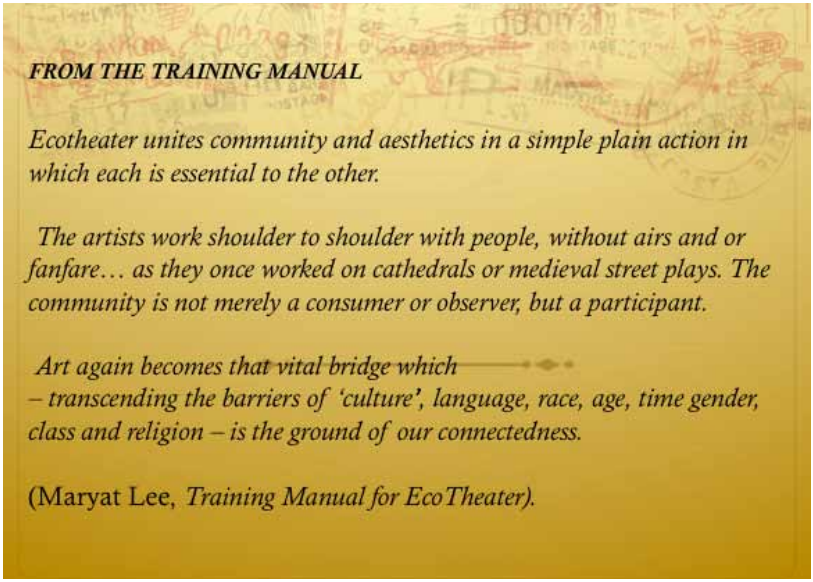
CASE STUDY TWO: GRASSROOTS - ECOTHEATER OF WEST VIRGINIA

The natural successor to the Federal Theatre Project is a form of community-based theatre that comes under the banner of Grassroots theatre. There are many manifestations of Grassroots theatre and it is still alive and well in communities across America. It has been defined in the following way:

> Grassroots theater is given its voice by the community from which it arises. The makers of grassroots theater are part of the culture from which the work is drawn. The people who are the subjects of the work are part of its development from inception through presentation. Their stories and histories inform the work, their feedback during the creation process shapes it. The audience is not consumer of, but participant in the performance. (Cocke, Newman and Salmon-Rue, 1992)

This manifesto, produced at a 1992 Grassroots Theater Convention, highlights an ideology and a practice in which the voice of 'ordinary' people is privileged. This is in contrast to the FTP's Living Newspaper, where the authentic voice of the 'ordinary' person is *acknowledged* through the use of the footnote in the script, rather than overtly incorporated in the performance. The Grassroots process is inclusive, democratic and implies the construction of a dialogic performative space. By its very nature, Grassroots theatre practice and practitioners are rarely well known beyond their immediate community or sphere of influence.

Maryat Lee was one such grassroots practitioner. She is credited with having created the earliest iteration of contemporary street theatre in the US with her play, *Dope!* performed on the back of a truck in Harlem in 1952-3 (French, 1998, p.1). Lee's work is of particular interest here because she systematised her community theatre practice. Her aim was to develop a sustainable practice while maintaining her central commitment to honouring the voice and the experience of those in her local community. Lee's system was implemented through the Training Manual she and colleagues created for her inexperienced theatre collaborators. In it she addressed questions of 'voice', of artistic quality, of epistemology, and of how artistic problem-solving can be a knowing, respectful and purposeful act (Asbury and Jackson, nd). The Manual was disseminated amongst Seed Groups, who were small companies inspired to take on her working methods in community settings. Lee chose to work only with non-professional theatre performers and theatre-makers. She found them more able to access the authenticity of the material while their performances



(Figure 5. EcoTheater Training Manual, Asbury and Jackson, nd)

were less mannered and more open to bringing an emotional life to the stories drawn from verbatim interview data (Lee, 1983, p.50).

Developing a research - rehearsal nexus

When Lee first started working in community-based theatre, she chose to work in Harlem. Her play, *Dope!* played outdoors on the back of a truck. And like the medieval mystery cycle plays which inspired it, members of the local community performed the stories important to their lives, which, in Harlem, were entirely local, focusing on the impact of the heroine trade in their neighbourhood. The play generated enormous interest from the theatre and wider community. There was a suggestion from commentators that Lee had created a new theatrical form. Brustein later described it as "Theater of Communion," (French, 1998, p.1), for capturing the voices of 'ordinary' people in a style not seen in the mainstage theatres of the time.

Lee's 'research' process was based on the telling of stories in the

rehearsal room. Her storytellers were people from the Harlem neighbourhood and they were also her actors. As playwright/researcher, she gathered data by inviting the telling and retelling of the stories through the rehearsal process. The essence of the story was refined through the voice and body of the actor in improvised action[4]. Away from the rehearsal floor, Lee transformed the scene into script, thus taking responsibility for moving from data generation to analysis and ultimately interpretation. Lee then returned to the rehearsal room to hand the script back to actors to embody in the refinement process. Lee repeated this a number of times, going deeper into the analysis, taking the actors into a more layered and embodied understanding of character, and by implication, of the person whose stories the enactments were built on. Lee's biographer, William French described it as "a theatre where an audience could re-enact its own stories, shape its own myths, re-create itself in the act of acting itself" (French, 1998, p.1).

After Harlem, Lee returned to her native West Virginia and established a Grassroots company, EcoTheater, whose work centred exclusively on the community in which they all lived. Lee further developed her process of 'research' through story gathering, exploration and analysis on the rehearsal floor, which she then refined and articulated into her training manual, used for the induction of new company members. Interestingly, Lee's work pre-dates later practitioners who systematised a training process to support and facilitate a practice in which non-actors developed and performed in theatre informed by the voices of the 'ordinary' person.

Aesthetic/research considerations in developing performance

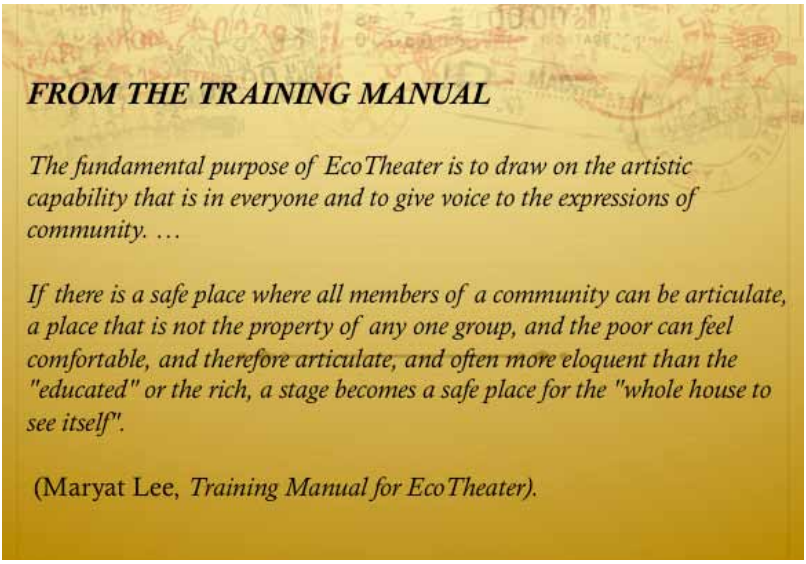
While the EcoTheater company focused explicitly on the telling of the stories of the communities, performers did not tell their own personal stories. A key element in the training of the non-actor was the induction into a style of storytelling which evoked the personal,

[4] This approach has been implemented in a range of research-based theatre practices, notably in Norris' *Playbuilding as qualitative research* (2010).

but captured a wider community experience as well as an individual one. Members of EcoTheater Seed companies were trained in gathering oral histories, and as they became more skilled, they were given guidance in how to recognise rich material, and how to draw the storyteller into giving more and more detail in their stories:

> Once you choose your people, simply go to them; be with them listen to them; let them happen to you; record them; be sensitive to their voices, cadences, concerns and to the stories and messages between the lines. (Lee, 1981, p.22)

In EcoTheater the storyteller had the status of Expert. The expert status implied a greater investment in the story's outcome. According to Lee's theory, the teller was more likely to labour over the choice of the correct word and idiom, to enable the collector of the story to glean the unspoken text of the story and the nuance which would render the story compelling. The underpinning ideology is articulated clearly in the Training Manual:



(Figure 6, EcoTheater Training Manual, Asbury and Jackson, nd)

Aesthetic considerations in the process of performance-making

For Lee, the key to facilitating an authenticity of voice in script and performance was the working process used to develop the theatre piece for a community audience There were several contributing features in Lee's approach.

Casting: Lee's preference was to work with non-actors and those who came from the community. On occasion when professional actors were included in the EcoTheater working process, Lee's ability to give her untrained actors authority over the material in the performing space was compromised because the trained actor was working from technique rather than "truth". For Lee, the two approaches within the same rehearsal process were incompatible. According to Lee:

> The non-actor typically has no need to act. If anything, non-actors have a need not to act, a need to be seen for what they really are. This is, then, part of the argument about getting non-actors on stage. In casting our plays, the person's ability to find in themselves the character of the play is the important thing. Then, the parts are tailored further to make them as comfortable as a suit of clothes, until the actor feels that it is him/herself. (1983:49)

Lee often commented in her writing about her 'reluctant performers'. Commitment was dependent on their connection to the material their availability at any given time and their ability to *feel safe in* the performing of it.

Finding authenticity of 'voice' in the rehearsal room

In the collecting of stories, the EcoTheatre playwright/director began as she would intend to continue, with a respect for the original voice and an expectation that this voice would remain present in the "intensive refinement" of the script. In this process of refining the original source material, the performer and the playwright/director

together investigated the possibilities of the story as told, to discover its fit with the performer. In creating the theatre piece, the story had to be transformed through others in order to eventually be made available to the whole community. The challenge was for the authentic voice of the original teller to be heard, and shaped in such a way that it was honoured, but capable of being performed by others, and then accessible for a community audience. While the storyteller was pivotal to the eventual product, the influence of the director and the performers on the material was inevitable.

Actors in EcoTheater performances were often taken to be the characters they were portraying. Lee and others described how audience members would stay long after a performance, wanting to give advice to the characters they had seen on stage, and wanting to tell their own stories (Judith Walker in Asbury and Jackson, nd).

In EcoTheater, the performance invited identification and engagement from the audience, and set up the space for dialogic exchange after the play had concluded (French, 1983, p.32). This post-show dialogue fed into future iterations of the play with performers and the playwright/ directors learning about how the audience experienced the performance, as together, they co-constructed meanings generated through character, narrative and staging.

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

I now return to my question *how can these sites for dialogic performance inform the quest for dialogic artistic practice within a performed research paradigm* and to the principles underpinning this question: epistemology, aesthetics, and voice.

Epistemology - as foundation

In Conquergood's writing on performance as a means, as well as the object of inquiry (2002), he uncovers the multiple ways of knowing that may be possible through the creative performative act. There is, he says, "[a] whole realm of complex, finely nuanced meaning that

is embodied, tacit, intoned, gestured, improvised, coexperienced, covert—and all the more deeply meaningful because of its refusal to be spelled out" (Conquergood, 2002, p. 146). In this discussion, theatre practitioners seeking to represent lived experience in an authentic way, through Documentary or Grassroots theatre, developed performance-making processes and theatre events which aspired to house these other ways of knowing, and made them accessible for the participants and the audiences, in the same way that those engaged in performed research invite stakeholders into co construction of new knowledge. Conquergood highlights the interconnectedness between epistemology, artistic processes and a broader political project, which he describes as 'civic engagement'. He observes:

> This epistemological connection between creativity, critique, and civic engagement is mutually replenishing, and pedagogically powerful. (Conquergood, 2002, p.153)

By establishing a clear relationship between the creative endeavor, the civic enterprise, and the pedagogically driven quest for new understanding when considering the potential for performance as an instrument of research rather than merely an object of it, Conquergood provides a framework in which theatrical traditions such as those considered in this paper, can sit alongside the performative research traditions such as performance ethnography, ethnodrama, and research-based theatre.

In the FTP's Documentary Theatre the tension of a research-based theatre form seeking to generate and disseminate new knowledge was played out, as actors and directors sought to find theatre styles which were accessible to diverse audiences, while continuing to honour the research which informed their creation. For Lee also, there was an ongoing quest to bring sufficient skill and confidence to her inexperienced actors so that they could traverse the epistemological landscape of the personal story transforming into community story. This paper has looked closely at specific aspects of the artistic and methodological processes undertaken in these two sites of practice and in so doing, I've come to a better understanding of some of the

ways in which I believe these theatre traditions call illuminate sites of practice within the traditions of performed research. The lens that I have chosen for this examination is the quest for the dialogic space, elegantly described by Conquergood as "an occasion of orchestrating two voices". This leads me to consider, in tandem, the key principles of my inquiry – aesthetics and voice – within a research framework.

Aesthetic considerations in research

> The sensuous immediacy and empathic leap demanded by performance is an occasion for orchestrating two voices, for bringing together two sensibilities. At the same time, the conspicuous artifice of performance is a reminder that each voice has its own integrity. (Conquergood, 1985, p.10)

Conquergood's own words hold the key to understanding how a theatrical event which *draws* on research but does not claim to *be* research can be educative for practitioners of performed research. In the examples explored in this paper, there is an incipient or explicit tension associated with how the 'research' is to be transformed into performance in a way that maintains the integrity of the source. In the two case studies, I have interrogated the ways in which the theatre practitioners have set about managing this tension through the practice: in the development of the piece, in the casting of the play, on the workshop/rehearsal floor, and in communication with the audience through the performance. It is in the articulation of these processes, I believe, that new light can be shed on the assumptions and practices of performed research.

Beck et al. (2011) have delineated a spectrum of research-based performance, proposing that performance informed by research sits on a continuum from formal research contexts to informal contexts, with the place of the aesthetic and the role of audience and other research stakeholders key factors that must be considered in the spectrum.

In the case studies discussed here, it is the centrality of the aesthetic

which is compelling. On the surface, this is not surprising, as in these two examples, there is a commitment to a 'performance' or a performative outcome of some kind. However, each of the works or companies considered here has a stated intention beyond the aesthetic outcome. Flanagan prevailed upon her Federal Theatre workers to consider the capacity of their theatre to effect change, and in order to do this, it had to be 'good' theatre:

> And the theatre, when it is any good, can change things. The theatre can quicken, start things, make things happen. Don't be afraid when people tell you this is a play of protest. Of course, it's protest, protest against dirt, disease, human misery. (Flanagan, 1937)

Lee's stated agenda was community connectedness, through theatre. Her claim was for a form of community-based theatre "transcending the barriers of 'culture', language, race, age, time gender, class and religion … the ground of our connectedness" (Lee, Training Manual for EcoTheater, nd).

When practitioners set about transforming their original data into the performative, they may consider the aesthetics of the form in order to achieve the theatre outcomes; their underlying political or social purpose; and their informal research inquiry. They employ the craft skills and artistry of the theatre form in the achievement of a dialogic performative space. It appears that this is the key factor in achieving a dialogic space, where the experience and voice of the 'ordinary' person is privileged.

In my view, it is the identification of this factor that is invaluable for the performed research practitioner. The two examples considered here do not constitute a comprehensive review of the dynamic relationship between research and artistry, however, they gesture towards a clarification of the role that the aesthetic dimensions of practice can play in performative approaches to research. I believe it is the elements of practice, perhaps best described as the craft of the artist, which allows for the achievement of research goals, such

as the representation of the authentic voice of participants, research contributors, and where appropriate, audience, as stakeholders to the research. In other words, it is understanding *how,* rather than *why*, or even *who*, that is most instructive when the performed researcher looks beyond their own research practice to parallel theatre practices in which the construction of new knowledge is pursued with the same vigour as it is in the academy.

'*...one third of a nation*' reminds us of the heritage of documentary theatre, as an artistic form created on a foundation of research. The play itself created a fusion of verbatim data and 'real characters,' with 'scene creatives' employing fictional characters, to best document events while revealing the underlying human impact of the historical moment in which a housing crisis impacted on one third of the American population. Playwrights and directors responded to the performance context for this and other Living Newspaper productions in the aesthetic accommodations they made, to ensure a quality outcome regardless of the level of expertise of their actors. Stylised staging, montage scenes, voice overs and narrators, and cartoon-like, expressionistic portrayals all feature in Living Newspaper productions as strategies for heightening the artistic qualities of the play and the theatrical impact of the work without compromising the underlying fabric of the research or losing the connection to the story of the 'ordinary' person that was at the heart of the work.

Maryat Lee strongly advocated for the importance of creating a dialogic space through her performances. The EcoTheater Training Manual and other accounts of practice that Lee produced painstakingly addressed the transformation of 'research' (which in EcoTheater terms were the stories and historical accounts of the community) into compelling and convincing theatre performances. Audiences reported powerful, engaging 'naturalistic' performances which promoted an immersion in a performative dialogic space. For Lee, the integrity of the performance and the capacity to honour the voices of the original contributors were achieved through the crafting of character and narrative.

These encounters with the processes of theatrical form highlight the significance of craft knowledge for practitioners across the spectrum of research-based performance. The interrelationship between pursuing a line of inquiry, and the construction of new knowledge through aesthetic performative processes is fluid (Beck et al., 2011). When the performance-maker or the researcher seeks to privilege the voices of participants or stakeholders or community members through the process, it seems that the nexus between artistry and inquiry is the pivot point upon which the work turns, and it is the crafting of the ineffable through the aesthetic that is the catalyst for the creation of a dialogic performative space. This, as I see it, is the opportunity offered to the practitioner of performed research seeking to extend the scale and scope of their work, and a response to the invitation some thirty years ago, by Dwight Conquergood:

> If we bring to our work energy imagination, and courage – qualities that can be exercised and strengthened through dialogic performance – then we can hope not to trample on the 'sweet, terrible wholeness of life'. (1985, p.10)

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REFLECTIVE INTERLUDE II

THE SPACE BETWEEN

Janice S. Valdez

University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

Janice S. Valdez is a PhD student at the University of British Columbia in the Department of the Language and Literacy in Education. Using arts-based research approaches she has explored experiences of identity in professional healthcare settings. In particular, she has worked with medical students using drama to simulate patient-doctor scenarios. As well her Masters work at NYU led her to work as a drama therapist. Janice's interests are in research-based theatre, teacher training and health education.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The performative poem 'The Space Between' shares my response to being an actor in *All In*, a research-based play produced in Vancouver, Canada in October 2013. The research-based play was developed by All the World's a Stage whose overarching purpose is twofold: first, to give an opportunity to a diverse range of people to learn skills to pursue professional experience in theatre; and second, to foster, through theatre arts, attitudes of understanding, acceptance and inclusiveness across cultures, ethnicities, abilities and sexualities. Award-winning playwright Jan Derbyshire was commissioned to write the play and worked with Dr. David Beare to facilitate the research with participants of All the World's a Stage in conjunction with The Frank Theatre. The participants of the workshops and the mentoring artists on the production included Andrew Vallance, Flo Barrett, Monique Fillon, Pegah Behbehani, Salvadore Ramirez, and Sarah Rose. The cast for the stage production of *All In* consisted of emerging actors whose experiences range from semi-professional to professional, and they included Adam Warren, Evelyn Chew, Mitch Janzen, Patrick Mercado and Janice Valdez.

The Space Between

Stimulus...Response
Sound cue ends, we enter with screams of playful glee

Stimulus...Response
I perform an expression of infatuation
A familiar laugh from the front row
A childhood friend watches me play as we did once
Her response stimulates in me

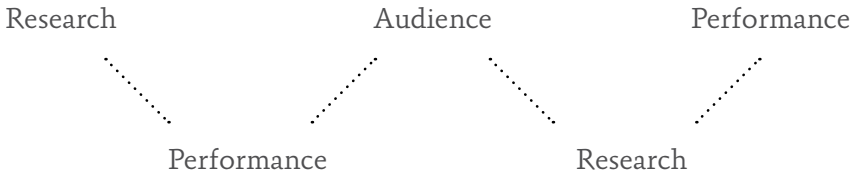
a lift of spirit...and questions.
Does she see me or the character? Am I being clear?
I, Performer hears her, Audience.
Am I not also audience to her performed laughter?
Both of us creating spaces for new meanings.
Remembered meanings.

Stimulus...Response
The space between
Stimulus...Response
is our freedom (ask Stephen Covey).

I was in that space between
as performer
of realities lived by people seldom seen or heard.
The space where I play a character,
her story from a person I have not met.
The artistic task to imitate life
to illuminate,
not replicate.
This did not always feel like creative freedom.
What I know are words on the page,
Desires interpreted and a chain of consequences to actions.
Reactions. Responses.
Realities and Interpretations
weave a chain

between
knowledge
and imaginations.
Writer and director are two in one.
We are lost in the writer's direction and the director's edits.
Where is the freedom when the space between disappears?
Space between writer and director
Space between actor and character
Sooner must she begin than I end to honour the story and serve the research.
Stimulus...Response
The space between
Three dots
Three words
THREE, my character's name.

Performance. Research. Audience
The Audience's response is my stimulus. And my performance a response to research. Research my stimulus and research responses from audience performers.



A Queer-loving Christian fundamentalist,
THREE is not all that different from me.
Despite what I wanted to believe.
To portray THREE, I had to learn to be free
Free from judgment and fear
by those who judge from fear.
Fellow cast members, our director, a liberal minister
Were my shepherds to the pasture of compassion
Where I learned to respect THREE
and still allow me to be Me.

Where did my relationship to this performed research begin?
My audition?
In Christian Sunday School?
Or with the research questions that would become the script *All In*?

Stimulus...Question...Response

Response...Response...Response

The space between
is our Freedom

and

Responsibility.

REFLECTIVE INTERLUDE III

AUNTY YASMINE

Anar Rajabali

University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

Anar Rajabali is a 2nd year PhD student in Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia. Her research interests include poetry, creativity, spirituality and education and arts-based research. As a poet, Anar is intrigued with the kinship between poetic discourse and spiritual expression. As an educator with a background in teaching the language arts, Anar's research embraces the role that poetry can play in inviting the contemplative into the classroom. Her work continues to promote aesthetic encounters and fostering spiritual literacy in educative practices.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The poem that follows was developed while taking courses in Performed Research and A/r/tography at the University of British Columbia. Parts of the poem were performed in Vancouver, Canada in November, 2013. A/r/tography is an "evocation that calls out, asking for a response, a living inquiry, transforming static moments into momentum" (Springgay, Irwin & Kind, 2005, p.907). *Aunty Yasmine* is evoked through a profound intimate moment of grief, experienced in nature and then captured through the sheer power of remembrance and imagination. Spinning through deep generative layers of both seeking and reflecting, this work then became a questing fueled by a desire to name the unknown, a metaphoric heartbeat that both calls and answers. This poetic desire, also exists in the gaps in between the words and spaces where its essence lingers and remains. This work speaks to the notion that when we venture into openings, into these vibrating vulnerable places, they can be richly revealing spaces of learning, knowing and affirmation. Poetry and drama both live in the resonances of the spirit that thrives beyond its very moment of happening. In *Aunty Yasmine*, it is the hope that this communion continues and in the lifting off the page comes with it both grace and light that echoes and reverberates. It is in this space where the words are eternally performing.

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Aunty Yasmine

It was three years ago
that you left this world
aching
for your fervent green eyes
and a laughter
that would resound
heavenward
I carry your resonance
of echoing laughter
in the hollowness
of my heart that harbors
mounting memories of a
life filled with
wondrous wit and musical wisdoms

"It's all relative" she would propose and pause
"Your relatives and my relatives"

I remember in Vancouver
a family celebration in which
you graced
you
dancing with my Mother
two sisters reveling in the circling rhythm
of untold stories unfolding in the
arms they outstretched
whirling
heavenward

If I would have known
that you were destined
not to return to this
earthly life
I would have held you
longer

stronger
placing
your head against my
lamenting
heart –
in the grieving gravity of
the ensuing loss
in the rising
lingering
swirling

sublime sadness

Aunty Yasmine, to me
You will always
Be
Africa

I am told
when I was a baby filled with fever
you carried me on your bike in a basket
through Nakuru
meandering the dust and the dark heat
with a brightness that only love can carry
how you must have rode
feisty, fearless and fifteen

At one, I fled from my homeland
in which you remained rooted
to the stoic soil
while the sorrow of exile
embodied in my one tiny hand
remaining in the East

clutching the memories
that I will not remember
but that echo *echo* *echo* *echo* *echo* *echo*

At twenty-one, I returned
to the sensual smells
awakening every cell
of my being
filling the longing with
a patient profound love

You were waiting
And
You were
Africa

Vibrant and vulnerable
the red thread
I once held
in that tiny hand
unfurling
as we rode
meandering in your car
through the streets
of Nakuru
with a brightness that only love can carry

"It is all relative" she would propose and pause
"Your relatives and my relatives"

I am also told
that when you died
in that small African town

your body black from cancer
but your eyes still resilient green
and that your soul could be
seen
as it lifted up, out and through
your mouth
heavenward

I knew you were leaving
and oceans away
on the beach in Jericho
I felt you gently go *go* *go* *go* *go* *go*
And I fell to my knees
And buried my head in the bile bitter grass

And as I looked up
I saw your spirit
moving
meandering
in the clouds
illuminating the skies placidly green
and leaving ribbons of luminous laughter
over the mountain
over the valleys
to the Unknown

IN PRAISE OF ANXIETY IN THE FIELD:

Linden Wilkinson

The University of Sydney

Linden Wilkinson completed her Master in Education (Research) in 2008; her area of study was an exploration of the creative process entailed in the making of verbatim theatre. Her doctoral thesis began with an investigation of cross-cultural verbatim theatre in the Australian context, using the Myall Creek massacre and memorial as a case study. The play that emerged from that study, *Today We're Alive*, is to be published in August, 2014. Linden has also worked with Moogahlin Performing Arts, based in Redfern, NSW, co-creating a play as an actor and writer. The play became *This Fella, My Memory* and reflects input from the acting ensemble as well as cultural consultants. She is a performer, teacher and writes for stage, film and television. And in a distant life, she was very briefly an economist.

RESEARCH, PERFORMANCE AND RENEWAL IN DECOLONISING METHODOLOGIES

ABSTRACT

This paper suggests that the role of anxiety in the performed research field supports rather than inhibits the research journey; therefore it is an emotional state that potentially heightens researcher receptivity to new knowledge. Anxiety here is identified as the *quieter voices*, the voices both real and metaphoric, which interrogate decisions too-hastily made. And, anxiety reconstructs as assumptions those understandings which might have begun as certainties.

With particular reference to a performed research project which had a decolonising intention, this paper investigates three instances where anxiety led to radical changes in the content and structure of the research. This paper also suggests that anxiety is inherent in performance-informed research: as a participatory mode of knowing offering multiple sites of engagement, quieter voices have the opportunity to continually offer transformative insight.

Engagement with the uncertainties these voices generate is the essence of both participation and collaboration. Therefore the presence of anxiety, the readiness to listen, to question and to transform supports a level of engagement and craft that distinguishes between the presentation of research as reported text and research reinterpreted for performance.

Acknowledgement

Permission to commence this research project was given by the Myall Creek Memorial Committee in February, 2011. All participants, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, signed consent forms after a verbal explanation of the project and being issued with a participant information form. The committee and those people they recommended want this history to be known; national recognition of this massacre and all massacres is regarded as a significant step towards genuine reconciliation.

Fear and the field

This paper explores researcher vulnerability in the ethnographic performance field, when old ways of understanding acquired through past experience and accessed through self-reflexivity suddenly surrender to new insights revealed through arts practice. Are re-interpretations of field data through the prism of performance reflections of indecision or responses to new experiences of old data? If they are the latter, are these new experiences a reflection of a changed state within the researcher or integral to the participatory nature of performance itself?

By reflecting on three key turning points in a doctoral and subsequent post-doctoral research journey, this paper suggests that, because of its participatory potential, the pursuit of a performance outcome as a way of presenting research findings generates an inherent and productive tension between anxiety, receptivity and renewal. Furthermore this interdependent relationship occurs and recurs; it is embedded in the sequential nature of performance delivery from its conceptualisation to the construction of its content, to its collaborative creation as a work of art.

Although anxiety is the least comfortable of these three responses to the pressures of performance as an ultimate aim, it does, in my experience as a performer, playwright and researcher, generate a level of porosity that brings with it a heightened awareness of the quieter voices in the field, both actual and metaphoric. In decolonising

research particularly, it is perhaps these quieter voices and the questions they ask that are, once heard, the most insistent.

The following is my experience of these quieter voices in the specific instance of devising a verbatim theatre play, which interweaves Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal voices to create the play text on paper and on stage. This paper examines how these quieter voices motivated my research practice and how they changed the research itself. The primary aim of the research endeavour was to devise a play; an underlying quest was to locate a reconciliation narrative. To do this I chose to look at a nineteenth century massacre and the twenty-first century memorial built to commemorate it.

About the research

Inspired by a cross-cultural event in a New Zealand drama school classroom in 2007, when Pākehā, Māori and Pacific Islander students performed the school haka, I decided to explore cross-cultural performance opportunities in Australia, my own birth-country. I approached this challenge as an artist and as a researcher. As an artist I became involved as a writer and performer with Moogahlin, a fledgling Aboriginal Performing Arts company based in Sydney and over a five year development period, we created a play, *This Fella, My Memory*, which received a public performance season at Carriageworks, a Sydney venue, in 2013. As a researcher, fresh from completing my Master's degree which explored creating a piece of verbatim theatre, I decided to investigate an actual cross-cultural story instead of a fictional one. I undertook both projects simultaneously.

The play, generated by what became my doctoral research, is entitled *Today We're Alive*. It is a verbatim account of the 1838 Myall Creek massacre in north-west NSW and the memorial that now stands on Crown Land overlooking the massacre site one hundred and sixty two years after the event. The play's content consists of edited transcripts of interviews with twenty Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal research study participants, most of whom are members of the Myall Creek Memorial Committee. There are however significant contributions

from non-members and in an early but performed draft there were documentary extracts from what at the time I considered to be informative inclusions from relevant historical records.

At its first performed reading the play ran for seventy minutes. Originally drafted for six actors, three Aboriginal and three non-Aboriginal, the play did not delineate characters and was structured into seventeen chronological segments. I considered this draft to be a work-in-progress and its structure was a way of handling the content. The performed reading addressed ethical considerations by taking the play back to the community that generated it for feedback. Funding from the Department of Education and Communities enabled further development of the draft through a two week rehearsal period. The play then toured schools and communities located in the region, where the massacre took place and the memorial now stands. As a result of this process which permitted a rigorous engagement with the text prior to and during rehearsal, the play was reduced to a running time of fifty-five minutes with a cast size of four.[1]

Research context

Historical background

By 1888 after one hundred years of colonisation, Milroy (2011) estimates that nearly 95% of the Aboriginal population had 'disappeared'. For generations as children in Australia we were taught that this disappearance was due to disease – smallpox, measles, influenza – by-products of colonisation. The stories of the massacres existed in oral history, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and references peppered official documents, eye-witness accounts and public records. Colonisers considered the Coniston massacre in the Northern Territory in 1928, when perhaps 17 or 70 or perhaps more Aboriginal men, women and children were murdered over a two

[1] A short excerpt from this production is available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lOlYr1ORUMY&feature=youtu.be

month period in reprisal for the death of a non-Aboriginal dingo-trapper, brought the prolonged period of 'punitive expeditions' to a close. No charges were ever laid against the massacre perpetrators, despite widespread condemnation from Australian capital cities and internationally.

The massacre at Myall Creek in 1838 is significant because it is the only massacre in Australia's history where some but not all of the perpetrators were punished in a court of law. It left a paper trail. As the true nature of first contact was not a subject taught in schools until recently, it is also an event that many of the participants, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, 'stumbled upon'. Discovery and silence are important themes in Myall Creek stories.

Some Myall Creek stories

The following narratives are from two of the participants, both Aboriginal, both Elders. In order to protect all the participants' privacy, real names are not used in this paper but, out of respect and gratitude for all of the participants' contributions, where appropriate, prefixes indicate either status or vocation.

Aunty Essie has lived in the area where the Myall Creek massacre occurred all her life. She is a member of the Memorial Committee and is descended from a massacre survivor:

> I had an Aunty who worked for all the top farmers across NSW, she died when she was 100; she never ever mentioned Myall Creek. I think because the manner in which the people were killed. It was a shock that went through the system of black people. And it was never told. (Aunty Essie, 2011)

Aunty Narelle had family in the area but not at Myall Creek. A strong political advocate for Aboriginal rights, she has mixed feelings about the memorial as a symbol of reconciliation and is not a member of the Committee. I have included this extract, because it is about more than discovery and silence. It also reveals the long-term effects

of colonisation in Australia for Aboriginal people; it is about fear, exclusion and dispossession on all levels:

> My Granny, Lizzie, never talked about anything to us kids. Born in NSW under the Aboriginal Protection Board. If you were born in Queensland, you'd be under the Noxious Weed Act. In those days it wasn't called Bingara, it was called Bin–gara. And it took me a long while to realise Aunty Lizzie was talking about Bingara; she'd say: oh no, no. Bad place, bad place. Bad spirits. And I'd say but why? Oh, just don't go there. Aboriginal people don't go there. And of course the Myall Creek Massacre is at the back of Terry Hie Hie and all those people at Terry Hie Hie knew about the massacre but they wouldn't talk about it. It was even bad to talk about it! (Aunty Narelle, 2011).

The slaughter of twenty-eight old men, women and children of the Weraerai clan of the Kamilaroi people by a vigilante group of convict and ex-convict stockmen was motivated, suggests one participant, Gerry, by greed rather than racism:

> ... but those convicts ... they were really in another sense scapegoats, because the people who were the really guilty ones were also the landholders like Dangar, who, who – and so it wasn't the Mum and Dad settlers who in this case, who were the drivers, it was the, if you like, the multi-nationals of their day. That was the driving force. You could argue it wasn't racism that was the key ingredient; it was greed. (Gerry, 2011)

The massacre occurred on a Sunday afternoon in winter when the Weraerai men, the husbands and fathers, were absent. The Weraerai were known in the district as 'tame' blacks; arriving without spears, they had sought sanctuary on Henry Dangar's Myall Creek station three weeks previously. Attacks on Aboriginal people had been accelerating in the district on the flimsiest of pretexts. As Aboriginal historian and research participant, Nathan, quipped:

> Evidence revealed later that they were a very passive people and were not involved in cattle rushing, cattle spearing. Cattle rushing? You die rushing cattle. (Nathan, 2011)

Background to the massacre – the Australian colonial enterprise

British settlement had begun to significantly advance into the rich grasslands of the Kamilaroi nation from1835. By1838, fifty years after the arrival of the First Fleet, with its cargo of soldiers and convicts, there were convict shepherds and their overseers way out there subsisting in their bark huts; there were a few thousand farmers, a million sheep and half as many cattle and all of them hundreds of miles from Sydney, now occupying tribal land. The colonial enterprise was faring well: the wool trade was booming, land grabs were out of control and the wealthy squatters responsible were the most powerful group of men in the colony. Though resident elsewhere, the squatters wanted to remove any barriers to colonial expansion; Aboriginal people were one of them.

Incursions by the army against 'the blacks' had begun at the squatters' request in January, 1838. Rumoured to have involved the murder of three hundred Aboriginal people, a massacre at the (then named) Waterloo Creek, about a hundred kilometres from the Myall Creek site, was led by Major James Winniett Nunn. It was never investigated. As Aboriginal Elder and participant, Uncle Clayton, explains: "You want genocide to happen? You get the government to promote it".

But genocide was not the distant British Government's intention. By February, 1838, George Gipps had arrived to take up his new post as Governor of the penal colony of New South Wales; one of his tasks was to improve relationships with the blacks, and one of his priorities was to curb the power of the squatters. When news of the Myall Creek massacre arrived at Government House, Gipps decided to pursue it. It is at this point in history's tale that Myall Creek assumes its unique character.

Gipps appointed Police Magistrate, Edward Denny Day, to investigate the alleged massacre; which by July had been reported to Gipps twice, once by an outraged farmer, Frederick Foot, who had heard of it, and once by Dangar's overseer, William Hobbs, who had seen the bodies. In his hand-delivered report Foot had also gone to the trouble of listing suspects. Day had somewhere to begin.

Day arrived at Myall Creek Station six weeks after the massacre to find the reported massacre site had been swept clean of evidence. The headless corpses of the Weraerai seen by Hobbs, because they had failed to burn on the hastily-erected wet, wooden pyre, had disappeared. Those responsible had tried to cover their tracks but Day had his list. Pursuing the accused and gaining a picture of the men's activities before and after the massacre, Day arrested eleven men and marched them to Sydney. Court proceedings began in November.

Local place names that still remain in the district, including Slaughterhouse Creek, Gravesend and Gin's Leap, indicate the level of activity engaged in by the vigilante group. The group was known and named, indicating that the men were visible and fearless, but not everyone condoned the vigilante group's activities. When outraged farmer, Fredrick Foot, mounted his horse and galloped to Sydney to report the atrocity, he was alone and on the road for a ten-day period; a journey which placed him in considerable personal danger. This act demonstrates that not all players in the colonial enterprise failed to question its morality. There were those, who "burrowed beneath that sense of certainty necessary to push one's fortune in the new world" (Reynolds, 1998, p.xv).

Six men in all challenged the colonial ethos through the Myall Creek event. This disparate group ranked from lowest to highest in the colonial hierarchy: from illiterate convict, George Anderson, who testified against the perpetrators; to overseer, William Hobbs, and farmer Frederick Foot; to Police Magistrate, Edward Denny Day and Attorney-General, John Plunkett, who led the case for the prosecution

in two subsequent trials; and finally to George Gipps, who, having triggered the investigation, blinked first when attempting to stare down the squatters. In doing so, he failed to improve relationships with anyone.

Despite the squatters banding together to pay for their employees' defence, as a result of a second trial, seven of the accused were hanged in late December, 1838. It was probably not their defeat in court that so entrenched the squatters against Gipps; it was perhaps looking at seven units of free labour swinging from the gibbet. Meanwhile the colony was in an uproar. Nathan explains:

> Previous to [Myall Creek] they argued: why was it a crime to … um … to kill Aboriginal people? We could kill them like you would shoot a duck or shoot a dog. Something like that, because nobody was ever brought to trial for doing that up until then. (Nathan, 2011)

Letitia, a descendant from a massacre perpetrator and a participant, had another perspective:

> The stories you hear – the murders, the poisoning. But they were convicts. In a way you've got to feel sorry for them. They thought it was a normal thing to do – shooting kangaroos and shooting - Aborigines. It's so sad for the people and for the convicts themselves. They were so oppressed … they came out here, they had these horrible masters and overseers over them and I just feel for them… They came from one country to another country and they end up dying and they didn't have a chance in the world. It was a horrific thing for both sides. (Letitia, 2011)

Gipps faced a hostile press and a powerful enemy in the squatters; the four remaining perpetrators were released from jail two months later and all other massacres went underground. Millis (1994) suggests what ensued was 'war'. Clark (1973) refers to it as a war of extermination. The rest of Gipps' term in office remained turbulent: the squatters retained their power and influence but faced a three

year drought and the collapse of wool prices; key witness for the prosecution, George Anderson, remained in protective custody until 1847. And so Myall Creek became subsumed by the dominant colonial narrative of advancement, acquisition and identity.

The leader of the massacre, young John Henry Fleming, free-born and from a pastoral family, was the only one to escape any punishment. Shielded by his protective network of relatives, he died in 1894 still with a bounty on his head, having lived a public life in a prosperous farming community on the Hawkesbury River. In a biography written about him by a family member (Roberts, 1990), it is suggested that the 'incident' at Myall Creek could be seen as an act of self-defence.

About the memorial

In 1998 another group of disparate people, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, formed a committee. Led by Sue Blacklock, a Kamilaroi Elder and descendant of a massacre survivor, in partnership with members of the Uniting Church, they gathered "in an act of reconciliation and in acknowledgement of the truth of our shared history." (Myall Creek Memorial Plaque) Together they began discussing making something permanent to remember those who died and those who ensured their deaths. Along with the history above, the memorial story is told in the verbatim play, *Today We're Alive* (Wilkinson, 2014a & b, p2).

Taking eighteen months to build, the memorial at Myall Creek stands as a "goodwill landmark in colonial and heritage history" (Harris, 2009, p.7). It consists of seven rocks placed strategically along a winding red gravel pathway that leads to a boulder overlooking the massacre site. Each boulder has a plaque telling the massacre story in English and Kamilaroi, as well as visually. Its remote location on Crown Land twenty minutes outside the small township of Bingara, with its trees, its winding pathway and its isolation inspire contemplation. Memorial services are held annually on the anniversary of the massacre, June 10th, 1838 or on the Sunday closest to that date. Between three and four hundred people attend the memorial service

which receives national press and television coverage.

Memorial services begin and end at the memorial hall. Built in 1923 to remember the local boys who would never return from the battlefields of the First World War, the memorial hall is close to the massacre site. Annual services include a pilgrim walk from the hall to the memorial, a smoking ceremony at the memorial's entrance, speeches at the big boulder and a ritual exchange between descendants of massacre perpetrators and massacre survivors. It is a place that celebrates unity of intent, recognition and shared vision. The ceremony finishes with another pilgrim walk back to the memorial hall. The memorial hall was also the site of the first performed reading of the play in November, 2011.

The plaques' narratives reflect an evolving understanding of the truth of the past. The word "massacre", for instance, appears twice on the seventh boulder's commemorative plaque. Elsewhere in Australia colonial conflicts between settlers and Aborigines are referred to as "battles", if they are mentioned at all. As the word "massacre" is still so contentious elsewhere (Harris, 2009), because of conflicting accounts between colonisers and those colonised, the memorial at Myall Creek was always intended to represent a shared history for all Australians (Batten, 2009). It is the one and only site in the country where historical documentation and oral history concur.

I chose this site for my research study, because I wanted to know, after this history, how did Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people come together? And I wanted to share the findings of this research as a performance ethnography.

Performance ethnography as a decolonising methodology

Although performed research has multiple labels, performance ethnography being just one of them, Sallis (2010) considers that all of the terms indicate that the research:

> originates from a study of real people and their culture … that

> the text is written or devised to be performed and that its presentation re-performs the real life experiences and situations of the research participants (2010, p.72).

In the decolonising sphere, it is in the enactment of culture with its encrypted hegemonic and counter-hegemonic meanings that performance ethnography offers an inclusive practice, because it demonstrates through the body positions of difference and positions of affinity (Meredith, 1998). Theatre, as Greenwood (1999) suggests, then becomes a powerful agent for understanding those multiple transactions that occur when two cultures meet within one national identity, because it is through the body that "information, transmission and transformation" (Jones, 2005, p.340) is conveyed. However a further advantage of performance ethnography is that through the performative intent, a performance outcome constantly shifts the researcher's relationship to the work, because the nature of the work is participatory. There are moments of inclusion and moments of distance.

Planning performance, executing performance and re-performance, in my experience as an artist and a researcher, can heighten receptivity to new understandings and new interpretations of selected findings. Whether the researcher elects to participate in the performance or not, I suggest that the researcher is in a different emotional state during different phases of the work and I discuss three of those different states below. Different emotional states potentially open the researcher up to different ways of engaging with field data and subsequently a different way of understanding the performed text, as it might be spoken and as it is articulated through silence.

Davies and Spence (2010) argue a researcher's state of being during field work "may either enable or inhibit the understanding that fieldwork aims to generate" (2010, p.1). Both empathy and engagement are critical elements in performed research texts; both influence content, structure and story-telling skill (Saldaña, 2005). But so too, I suggest, does anxiety.

Anxiety creates tension: as a performer this might be the desire to go beyond discoveries made in rehearsal; as a writer it might be the desire to share new insights; as a researcher it might be the hope that the research plan leads to findings that contribute to the existing field. Anxiety in these instances, to name a few, exists within the quest to locate the new: new experiences, new insights, new knowledge. Paradoxically, the closer one gets to discovery, the more important the existing structure becomes. This existing structure might be the rigour of arts practice in rehearsal or the authority of other texts or, in the decolonising arena, the certainty of assumed cultural protocols. It is my contention that, it is the existing structure that is most challenged by the quieter voices, whether those voices belong to research participants or stem from self-doubt.

Existing structures however present a resilient dynamic. The anxiety they instigate when confronted can feel like something else. Anxiety to me felt like common sense or respect or restraint. It was only when faced with what anxiety might potentially be inhibiting that I could recognise it for what it was; that I could discard structure and reach for the new.

The decolonising space – in principle and in practice

To locate new ways of knowing is central to decolonising methodologies, where tasks are not only to define a shared, equitable and sustainable future but also to find ways of confronting and addressing the wrongs of the past. The fragmented history that renders the coloniser as blameless and the colonised as inconsequential accentuates the epistemological challenge embedded in conflicting systems of knowledge. Ladson-Billings (2000) argues that "the hegemony of the dominant paradigm makes it more than just another way to view the world – it claims to be the only legitimate way to view the world" (2000, p. 258). Questioning this fragmented history, this "inherited wisdom" (Bhabha, 1990), adds another layer of tension to the research endeavour and, in my situation, the researcher became the researched. Being of convict ancestry as well as enjoying the privileges of the dominant culture I was doubly aware

of the moral, epistemological and ethical barriers to my participation in this research field. It felt like common sense to choose another way of investigating cross-culturalism; it felt inappropriate and disrespectful to ask about a massacre.

However, I had sought and been given permission by the Memorial Committee to conduct my research: I had spoken to Committee members and I was supported and encouraged. It was at the Memorial Service in 2011 that I realised my fragmented knowledge of the past was the same as everyone else's, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and that this fragmentation was equally troubling emotionally. I recognised that colonisation had left a mark on us all in some way and shying away from the project would be reinforcing the old culture of silence. The common-sense I felt before revealed itself as anxiety; I decided to pursue the project, to cross into new territory.

I began looking for stories.

Answering the first question: what are you even doing here?

I met with Committee Member Tom and his wife after the 2011 Memorial Service. Tom's stories detailed the massacre but put it in an historical perspective that informed rather than shocked. He allowed the massacre to deliver an urgent insight into the colonisers we had been and about whom we continued to remain unconscious. And then he told me a story about his own awakening to injustice:

> As a young teacher I was sent to the Nimbin central school … the Nimbin school had a sporting excursion to another town up there near-by … And I was the acting sports master on that trip, wasn't I, and anyone who knows me well will know what a joke that was. But the deputy principal of the school took me out for a drive in the afternoon and he took me out to the local Blacks' camp. On the side of a hill out from town and ah … old motor cars and housing with sheets of iron, you know, generally a marked step down in housing quality of several grades from the rest of the community and very much a ring, an outer fringe and

> I was you know, I felt the injustice of that... um ... and he made some remarks how difficult it was to get the kids to do much at the school. And so on - the aboriginal kids.
>
> And the next day was this sporting carnival and there was this one name of this kid who was ...who kept getting all the events. You know? And somewhere along the way I worked out or was told that he was an Aboriginal boy. And we ... (*he cries*) and there was a dance that night and he was the only aboriginal child that came. (*He sobs*) and ah ... he hung about outside... I tried to get him to go in but he ... hung his head and wouldn't ... (*cries*) ... Anyway that's a memory obviously that still moves me. And he was a very good looking very athletic young man. And of course you look back now and what would be that boy's future, you know? (Tom, 2011)

A powerful and motivating orator, Tom's stories gave me a structure for the play; they showed me that history was not in the past but still emotionally resonant. I decided that the play had to be about history.

Late in the afternoon I returned alone to the memorial. I wanted to find an Order of Service in case I needed it as a documentary source and hoped there might be one being blown about on the now-abandoned site. I walked down the winding path towards the big rock, the final boulder. Tom's vivid description of the massacre inevitably intruded:

> ...we know at Myall creek at that time of the year it is pretty consistently cold and miserable late in a Sunday afternoon. They arrived there, I think, at ... as the Aboriginal people were getting their evening meal together, you know. *Ah* ... say four o'clock or something that order. And they captured them and tied them up and led them away with the convicts on horseback and the rest being tied to ... to a leg rope ... it's so called ... and I imagine it's a rope used for restraining animals or tying them around their legs ... and they were tied to this long rope and led away. (2011)

I stood quite alone at the big rock. I decided that the play should

begin with the history of colonisation and lead into the massacre. I would ask my participants about the stories they had gleaned from history; whether they elected to talk about the massacre would be their choice. I just had to hope other Committee Members found the history as affecting as Tom did. In other words, I was not attuned to the site at all.

Answering the second question: what story are you telling?

Five months later in the Memorial Hall I watched the actor/co-researchers 'perform' the first draft of the play. I was aware that the play seemed to be dragging. I assumed it was because we hadn't rehearsed it. We had arrived the day before: the actor/co-researchers had spent an hour at the massacre site and that was after eight hours in the hired van driving from Sydney. Exhausted, we called it a day. The only reading we had with all the cast present was over breakfast on Sunday morning. Then, a third of the way through the play, during the massacre scene, as told through Aboriginal eyes, the dynamic completely and suddenly changed. One of my Aboriginal actors, Aunty Rhonda, began to cry.

I was shocked that I was putting her through this. I felt I had been inappropriate and ought to have self-censored. Then I realised Aunty Rhonda was determined to continue, I noticed her reassuring glances to the rest of the cast, now equally anxious; I noticed how many people were also crying in the audience. Aunty Rhonda's reaction to reading about the massacre had generated a hesitancy, a fresh way of engaging amongst the cast and silences filled with empathic portent. And I recognised that this is where the play began. This was the history we wanted to share. Aunty Rhonda said in her interview some weeks later:

> I was actually sobbing and I just kept trying to slow myself down and take some deep breaths and say my lines... I guess it was because I was right there in that country. And it was almost like you could feel them, you know, you could feel the people; feel the mums and their children and that. Well, having ten

grandchildren of my own, you know ... I guess it really, really hit me. It hit me hard. (Aunty Rhonda, 2011)

I realised the history I had included in the first third of the script was not the right history; it was my history and I had included it, because I had wanted to demonstrate that white people had done good as well as bad things. But the play was struggling under the weight of the trials, the court case, the hangings. I realised during the performance of the massacre scene that the consequences of the massacre were irrelevant; it wasn't necessary to talk about the dispossession, white guilt, black dehumanisation. All that history was embodied in the actors - it was understood. All we actually needed to know was the massacre story, told here by the three Aboriginal actors, Fred, Lily and Aunty Rhonda, and two of the three non-Aboriginal actors, Terry and Genevieve:

Rhonda: And they came upon them and they never had a chance. When they came upon them they just never had a chance.

Gen: They captured them and tied them up and led them away with the convicts on horseback and the rest being tied to ... to a leg rope ... it's so called ... and I imagine it's a rope used for restraining animals or tying them around their legs ... and they were tied to this long rope and led away over a slight rise, so that Anderson, who was at the hut couldn't see what happened.

Fred: These guys only had three swords. And I mean that's - and Anderson only heard two shots. So I mean you know when you kill 28 people with just two shots you know and only 3 swords and those poor people had to wait a hell of a long time for their turn to be slaughtered. You know, tied to a rope ... an absolutely horrific crime.

Rhonda: And then we know we have to forgive. And um it's hard.

Terry: And I don't think there was time for the sort of sports you know, the releasing of one person at a time and the so on... I've

had it suggested to me that more than likely –the convicts rode at this tied-up group with their swords and ah … decapitated then from horseback. I think that's more … I don't know of course …

Terry sits.

Rhonda: What it actually would have been like? Just the fear and the terror that they would have experienced.

Lily: I s'pose, after they done it, all the pots would all still be boiling, the fires going but there would be no sound. And they made a bonfire of their bodies. Um. Must have been terrible, you know?

Rhonda: Yeah … (*cries*) … just thinking what those people went through.

Fred: And then the men come home looking for their wives, their kids …

(Today We're Alive, 2014a)

I realised I had misunderstood the theory; both the theory around performance ethnography and the theory around decolonising methodologies. I understood that performance ethnography was a body-centred way of knowing (Alexander, 2005) but didn't recognise how much a body said without words. I hadn't appreciated that healing in terms of decolonising methodologies did not mean hiding - I had buried the massacre behind eleven other scenes about colonisation that played out before it.

In structuring the play from edited transcripts, I had been drawn to what I saw were recurrent themes without realising that for the play, the recurrent themes, particularly the non-Aboriginal response to the massacre, did not drive this dramatic narrative forward. This dramatic narrative was about Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together, not what non-Aboriginal people did about Aboriginal people and their terrible fate. I had wanted to show that in 1838 a few white people defied the morality of the

colonial enterprise but actually what I had demonstrated was colonial resistance to social justice – after all, the memorial took 132 years to be acceptable.

Although most of the interviews had described the events, the arrests, the convicts, the trials, the incipient moral corruption of colonisation, collectively these interviews only really came to life when the participants talked about memorial. It was the joy of building the memorial that created the heart of the play. But exposing the trauma of the massacre was critical to the release of energy and positivity when the building of the memorial became a reality. For all parties engaged in this story, the trauma of the massacre continues; it is something everyone has to deal with. The memorial is a powerful symbol but the memorial doesn't bring closure It offers acknowledgement, relationship, empathy.

If at the memorial that afternoon after my first interview with Tom I had engaged with something other than the history, perhaps I might have structured the play differently: if I had been attuned to the memorial, for example. But performance offers multiple sites for engagement. Tom's story gave me one way of engaging with the material but it was only in the changed emotional state triggered by another site of engagement, that of watching the script in performance, that I could be receptive to the real story of the play.

Answering the third question: what makes you think you're right?

A similar learning process of shedding one structural idea in the discovery of another occurred during the rehearsal period for the touring production, which succeeded the initial performed reading the following year. This time anxiety was triggered by commentary on Aboriginal stereotypes perpetuated by non-Aboriginal writers. Aboriginal playwright, Jane Harrison (2012), remains critical of the limited and clichéd view non-Aboriginal writers have of Aboriginal characters; she suggests non-Aboriginal writers particularly favour the political, the downtrodden and the spiritual.

Twenty interviews with nine Aboriginal and eleven non-Aboriginal participants were distilled into eight characters for the edited touring version of *Today We're Alive* (Wilkinson, 2014b). The non-Aboriginal participants became six of these voices; the Aboriginal participants were neatly and powerfully contained in two characters, one male and one female, who could travel as consistent voices throughout the play. The female character, "Sally", and the male character, "Jayson", exactly fitted the voices Harrison most objects to: the spiritual and the political. Yet these characters were derived from the research field.

I was concerned that I created clichéd Aboriginal characters, because of the way I had heard my participants. Therefore I attempted to ameliorate these two characters, making both less, in Harrison's (2012) terms, stereotypically non-Aboriginal creations. I went into rehearsal with the intention of encouraging the actor playing "Jayson" to navigate a character arc from angry (political) to statesman-like to diffuse the aggressive, confronting political voice. And I was determined not to make "Sally" the only spiritual character. In the draft I retained interview extracts from non-Aboriginal participants about the powerful spiritual influences that they had experienced through their memorial committee membership. These I hoped would balance "Sally's" pivotal stories of transformative, spiritual gratitude.

These two interventions led to significant new understandings of the script's content through the actors but in different ways. Bjorn, playing "Jayson", resisted my direction for the character. This is very understandable from a craft point of view; it was an imposition from me and although the brevity of the rehearsal period created a kind of urgency in the rehearsal room, it did not justify this kind of interference in an actor's creative process and I accepted that.

But what Bjorn in fact did was reverse the direction. "Jayson" moved from reserved statesman to forcefully political and this generated such energy, I believe, at the end of the play, it allowed the spiritual stories both space and an element of wonder, whereas I had always seen them as deeply personal and private. Instead

they became a way of connecting with each other – almost asking: "did you experience this, too?" Bjorn's decision, made by engaging empathically with the character he was locating, a character whose dialogue emerged through interview transcripts from at least three different participants, allowed the play an unexpected and revelatory dimension. Where I had encouraged anger for speeches early in the play like, "... kill them like you would shoot a duck or shoot a dog."

Bjorn chose to invest all of "Jayson's" reactions to the massacre as manifesting a deep incredulity, a kind of bewilderment that suggested both on-going grief as well as a cry for justice. However as the play progresses and the memorial is built, "Jayson" particularly agitates for more change. Bjorn allowed "Jayson" to be increasingly forceful for these lines:

> I feel that that monument is great. It's great. To think that it's there and to recognise the fact that those people were massacred, right? But it doesn't take away the fact that they were... Because the forces of the massacre continue. The Stolen Generations; the Northern Territory Intervention. We've gone physically backwards. Twenty years. Forty years!

And so building towards:

> It's our people, we have to be reconciled with each other, before we can reconcile with anyone else. We're the ones who were separated and we're still separated today. Disharmony and distrust doesn't only pervade Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relationships, it pervades all relationships. It turns us against each other. Divide and conquer. Aboriginal people have to let go of – rebrainwashing, unbrainwashing ... we've no-one yet to lead us. Go ahead and see for ourselves, go ahead and experience for ourselves. See with our own eyes, hear with our own ears. Make decisions based on that, not on what other people say. We have to work on the younger generation. Education. I used to blame teachers but I've changed my thinking. Parents should be involved in every phase of school life. The only way we can achieve is through education. Because tomorrow

> belongs only to those, who prepare for it today. (*Today We're Alive*, Wilkinson, 2014b)

The speech opened the way then for the final reflections on 'the road ahead', which honoured the committee's aspirations to go on to erect an Education and Cultural Centre adjacent to the site that will tell the true story of first contact. Through Bjorn's choice to make "Jayson" a dynamic, charismatic visionary, unafraid to criticise, to challenge prevailing hopelessness from within, he revealed for me the story from the field I had yet to securely identify. Through Myall Creek we have located an acknowledgement story, but without a clear and shared future direction there is as yet no reconciliation narrative. It was Bjorn who identified in performance the answer to the research question, but it was the actors, who together demonstrated what reconciliation might look like.

Uncertainty in the play-making space

Should we be able to re-work the script again, I would experiment with the inclusion of more spiritual stories. I would create more cohesion at the end of the play, extending the opportunities for the characters to relate to each other. I would take greater chances with more overt speeches about racism, because I now know how strong the end of the play is in delivering a great truth of reconciliation: that it is about relationship, it is not about being the same as each other.

I suggest that in re-working texts through the performative enables renewal for the researcher, as for the artist. Old expectations can disappear with new insights. And in the demanding experience of assembling performed research, anxiety along with empathy has a role to play in heightening receptivity. If empathy delivers relationship, anxiety delivers separation, a chance to detach and reframe the question. Anxiety is an emotional medium through which research practice is confronted, challenged and adapted. It might be a poor master but it is a great companion; the only real danger is its being disguised as something less formidable, something that can be rationalised away.

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REFLECTIVE INTERLUDE IV

PERFORMING GENDER IN DANCE

Jack Migdalek

Trinity College, The University of Melbourne

Jack Migdalek has worked as a performance artist, director, choreographer, and educator in Australia, the United Kingdom, and Japan. Currently Jack is a Drama lecturer at Trinity College (Melbourne University) and Education Materials writer for the Arts Centre Melbourne. Jack's PhD on Embodied Choreography and Performance of Gender was undertaken in the School of Health and Social Development at Deakin University under the supervision of Dr. Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli. Jack's upcoming book Embodied Performance of Gender is to be published by Routledge as part of their 'Research in Gender and Society' series.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This composition describes the way in which I worked to express my PhD research interests to others. My PhD was undertaken in the school of Health and Social Development at Deakin University, under the supervision of Dr. Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli. The research explores embodied choreography and performance of gender.

To explore aspects of embodied masculinity and femininity, I collated a sound collage of several music excerpts that were evocative of 'feminine' or 'masculine' embodiment to me. The masculine or feminine aspects, which I recognised in each excerpt, pertained to images in envisioned storylines or simply movement qualities suggested by instrumentation and melody. I used the sound collage as stimuli for a physical improvisation activity that I led in a professional development workshop with performance arts practitioners. In improvising to the sound collage, the group of twenty-nine participants, with specialist skills in areas of dance, drama, design, and/or music, were asked, as choreographers-of-self, to draw on and physically explore repertoires of movement that

I noted that throughout the eleven-minute improvisation, participants appeared to *naturally* fall into common gendered repertoires of motion.

This output as well as reflective discussion with participants following the improvisation, is what inspired me to physically explore elements of my own lived experiences and sense of consciousness of embodiment and gender, in the development of an autoethnographic performance piece.

"The music sort of set up a particular normity of response".

"Straight away past experiences of movies or whatever come up. There was a tendency to just drop into ... specific repertoire"

In my initial improvisations, I too found myself naturally falling into **similar common gendered movement styles in moving to various excerpts of the sound collage.**

However I began to also **mindfully work against my usual repertoires of embodied gender expression, …**

… exploring and acknowledging repertoires of embodiment that had become natural for me, …

… as well as those **that were corporeally uncomfortable to me.**

In working on the piece, which I titled *Gender Icons*, I was mindfully exploring and acknowledging, via my own body, **unchartered areas of**

consciousness,

confusion,

frustration,

desire,

interrogation,

and **what it was to comply with and resist norms of masculine and feminine embodied action.**

I found that working on the piece helped me find and elucidate my research questions, and I subsequently decided to integrate the performance into my Confirmation of Candidature presentation.

In *Gender Icons* I dance to a series of Western music excerpts that are arguably masculine or feminine in feeling.

Through dancing my male body through and in counterpoint to excerpts of music that could be considered to be masculine, and excerpts of music that could be considered to be feminine, …

… I challenge audiences to consider how and why it is that we do and view certain embodied practices differently according to the biological sex of the performer.

As if in a *straight* jacket, **I embody the idea that biologically sexed bodies are restricted by firmly embedded iconic semiotics**

of femininity

of masculinity

Gender Icons can be regarded as a piece of auto-ethnotheatre, the data of which emanated from my personal experiences and consciousness of gender and embodiment. It is a stylized physical performance that represents a distillation of my autoethnographic data.

Gender Icons was initially performed at my Confirmation of Candidature session in November 2007, and subsequently came to figure prominently as a focal point of ethnographic fieldwork sessions that I conducted with educators and high school students over the following years. The piece served to trigger in viewers emotional responses and personal reflections on issues of embodiment and gender, which I was also able to draw on as data.

In addition to *Gender Icons,* I also wrote and conducted readings of a fictocritical play titled *Sugarplum Fairies*. The play, concerning the reactions and intervention of teachers and parents as they grapple with a young boy's 'unmanly' choice of role in a school production, also came to feature in my PhD.

Performances of *Gender Icons* and readings of *Sugarplum Fairies*, proved to be enriching both to me and to fieldwork participants, many of whom spoke of seeing things in ways they had never previously thought to question or think about.

[The performance was] *"a great way of opening people's eyes and making them see and think of the world with a new view. It was an enlightenment to watch and I can't see the world the same again" (high school student)*

All of this verified for me the power of performance arts as a means and methodology for exploring, expressing, and sharing research concerns and findings.

A video recording of *Gender Icons* can be accessed through Deakin Research Online at:

http://dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30047367/stream_migdalek_performance_2012.flv

The playscript of *Sugarplum Fairies* is featured in Jack Migdalek's *The Embodied Performance of Gender* (forthcoming, Routledge).

POSSIBILITIES AND PERSPECTIVES IN PERFORMED RESEARCH:

George Belliveau

University of British Columbia

George Belliveau is Professor of Theatre/Drama Education at the University of British Columbia, Canada. His research interests include research-based theatre, drama and social justice, drama and L2 learning, drama across the curriculum, drama and health research and Canadian theatre. His scholarly and creative writing can found in various arts-based and theatre education journals, along with chapters in edited books. His most recent book *Stepping into Drama (2014) is published by Pacific Educational Press.*

A PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST/SCHOLAR WITHIN THE ACADEMY

ABSTRACT

In this paper I examine five research-based theatre projects that I developed over the last two decades. The projects provide examples to reflect upon particular commitments artist-researchers frequently navigate when engaging in performed research. Central to the paper is an examination of the intended audience for each project, along with my position and perspective as creator (or facilitator) of each theatre-based piece. In my description and analysis of the projects I share excerpts of the theatre scripts as well as discuss some of the tensions that emerged by engaging with this artistic approach to research.

Most of us hold strong memories of a presenter disseminating his/her research in a manner that captivates our attention and imagination. The resonances experienced during these presentations are typically sparked by personal and/or professional connections we have to the research, coupled with the presenter's clarity, depth and creativity. Artful delivery of engaging research content lies at the core of *performed research*.[1] Taken a step further, performed research most often consists of translating analysed data into theatrical script or performance in a manner that research findings and art inform one another. Ideally, the woven scholarly and artistic components crystalise (Richardson, 2000) for an audience.

Introduction

In this paper I explore five distinct projects where I personally engaged in performed research as a methodological approach. Central to the ensuing discussion is an examination of the intended audience for each project, along with my position and perspective as creator (or facilitator) of each project. An underlying question involves querying the ways in which my professional position (along with the collaborators'), experience, and background shape the intended work. The five theatre-based projects were developed over the last two decades and represent examples from my shifting and evolving trajectory in performing research. Drawing on some of my own experiences allows me to critically reflect on my long-standing commitment of *creating* and *studying* performed research. I seek to open up discussions and considerations around vulnerabilities, expectations, and particularly commitments artist-researchers often navigate when engaging in performed research.

[1] Performed research is used in this paper to define projects that deliberately involve theatre within a research process, or formal research in a theatre process. A number of other terms are used to define similar approaches: ethnotheatre (Saldana, 2011), performance ethnography (Denzin, 2003; Sallis, 2010), research-based theatre (Belliveau & Lea, 2011), research-informed theatre (Goldstein, 2012), performative inquiry (Fels & Belliveau, 2008), among others.

Performed research ranges from professionally staged productions such as *The Laramie Project* by Tectonic Theatre Project (Kaufman, 2000) to university academics engaged in a readers' theatre sharing of research in a conference setting (Winters et al., 2009). Performed research projects are sometimes artist driven, research driven or a combination of both with targeted and/or public audiences in mind. Understanding where creators are professionally situated, coupled with their intentions and experiences in relation to research and theatrical approaches is imperative to help define the breadth and scope of performed research as a methodological approach. The five projects illustrate markers along my trajectory within this vast field, as such this paper is not meant to be exhaustive; instead, it offers sample approaches and tendencies within the spectrum of performed research (Beck et al., 2011).

Theoretically grounded within Bakhtin's (1986) notion of *chains of utterances*, each project affirms, responds, refutes and/or builds upon previous experiences and practices. The projects exist in relation to one another, supplementing, informing and complicating the artistic and academic unfolding (Irwin, 2004). The examples are situated within current literature on performed research (Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010; Goldstein, 2011; Lea, 2012; Norris, 2010; Saldana, 2011; Sinclair, 2014), offering various perspectives within this methodological approach.

The *commitment model* below (see Figure 1) is a two-dimensional model I use to help visualise the varying aesthetic and research priorities within the five respective projects. The location of a particular play on the graph situates the degree of commitment I had in terms of art-making and scholarship. The vertical axis represents my commitment to the theatrical aesthetics, while the horizontal axis points to the research commitment. For example, I place *Notes from the Hotseat* in the upper right hand corner of the quadrant, because in this work I had a primary commitment to both the research and art-making. In my earliest project, *The Dressing Room*, I was fully committed to the theatrical aesthetic, with the research being of less concern. Thus I place this play in the upper left section of the quadrant, indicating a primary commitment to the aesthetic endeavor and a secondary commitment to research.

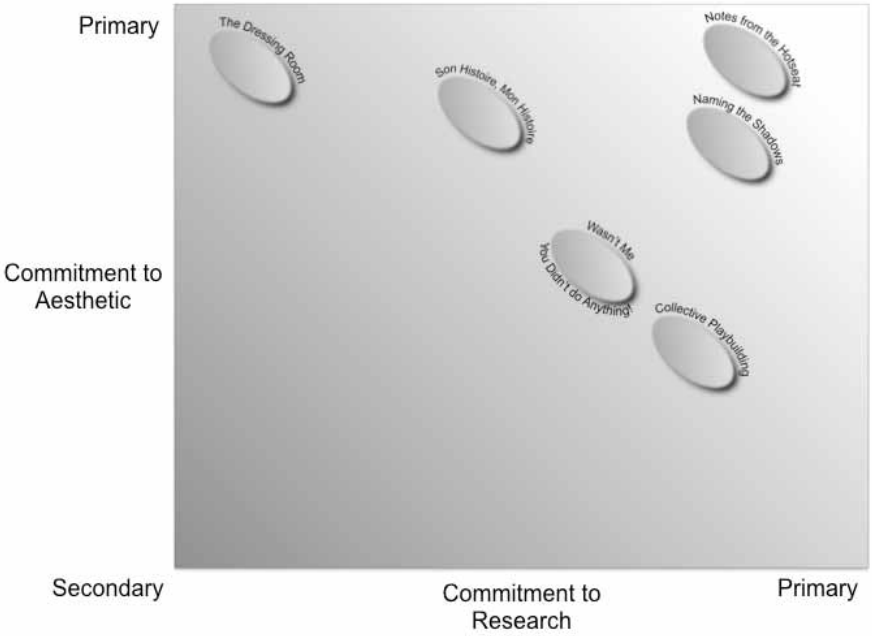

Figure 1 – Commitment Model

One: Artist - engaging in performed research

As a graduate student in theatre in the mid-1990s at the University of Toronto, I engaged in a piece of performed research called *The Dressing Room* (1996). The emerging and burgeoning work of arts-based researchers such as Eisner (1985), Barone (1995), Denzin & Lincoln (1994), Mienczakowski (1995) among others who were integrating art approaches within their research was unfamiliar to me. Instead, I was fully immersed in theatre history (Brockett, 1991), performance analysis (Carlson, 1993; Pavis, 1982) and acting theories (Grotowski, 1968; Stanislavski, 1936). I was a trained actor, and through professional engagements I gained experience as a director, dramaturge, and playwright. When developing *The Dressing Room* I was unknowingly creating an autoethnodramatic performance (Saldaña, 2011). Personal journal entries, photos, letters, theatre reviews, newspaper articles, along with imprinted memories of

travelling from the ice-hockey dressing room to the theatre dressing room during my undergraduate acting degree, inspired the piece. The play examines my hockey and theatre worlds, as I floated between these distinctly diverse passions: the university varsity testosterone-driven dressing room and the Kafkaesque actors' change room. These two identities were explored through body and use of masks.

> Conversations don't seem to exist. The put downs, one ups, swearing and bragging in the sweat-filled room is contrasted with existentialist, long-winded, self-absorbed identity crisis. No one listens. It's all talk!
>
> > Puck drops at 7:30 tonight as the Tigers battle for first place against the Blue Eagles.
>
> Stories exist. Brown-stripes. There's one on every team. He makes the mistake of wearing white long-johns, only for teammates to discover the stains and create a legend. Ripped-tights. It happens in every theatre dance class. What starts as a mere tear, expands into a story with no bounds.
>
> > Curtain rises at 7:30 tonight as acting students tackle Greek Classic.
>
> Drinks, more drinks. The cool down happens off-ice, off-stage, in the bar. We gather to replay the game. We gather to relive the experience. As the night wears on our performance is more grand, more dramatic, more … I forgot what I was going to say. (Belliveau, 1996, p. 6)

The play is written in first-person using mostly inner monologues and direct addresses to the audience. I was influenced by recent productions I had seen or performed in, such as Chekhov's *The Bear* (1916), Wilson's *Rimers of Eldritch* (1967) and *Tongues* by Shepard and Chaikin (1984). What is not apparent in the scene above is the physicality of the piece. *The Dressing Room* was conceived a few months after I had studied gesture, movement and mask at the Lecoq School in Paris. The Lecoq training became highly influential, as my

process focused on movement and gesture as key means of expression. The play's set consisted primarily of six chairs that were continually manipulated and climbed upon, as I used a physical, embodied approach to generate and share the story. Drafts of *The Dressing Room* remain but the scripted text was secondary to the physical workshopping and performance of the work. No stage directions or critical situating of the work was written. Creation, development and analysis happened within the workshop space, with data and artifacts meant primarily to stimulate the performance. Creating a script to be read or reproduced was not part of my intention. Rather, the project aimed to develop an evocative piece of theatre that I would perform, live on stage.[2]

This work represents a form of autobiographical research where creators gather personal stories (Leggo, 2008) that inform (Goldstein, 2011) and inspire (Mackenzie & Belliveau, 2011) performed research. However, allegiance to the research and facts becomes secondary to how the work plays for an audience (Pollock, 2006), as the intent of the performance is guided by truth on stage rather than truth in life (Stanislavski, 1936). Time, place, and verbatim dialogue might be attended to, but only if it works on stage. The intended audience is the general public, and this approach to performed research is most often presented in theatre spaces with full commitment to the artistic. A number of plays have emerged from theatre practitioners that are closely based on personal research, for instance Pollock's *Doc* (1984), Gray's *Swimming to Cambodia* (1985), Sears' *Afrika Solo* (1990), and Gale's *Je me souviens* (2001). These plays borrow from personal, and often traumatic, events in the playwrights' lives, yet the creative work re-shapes the stories for the stage.

Two: Artist - representing performed research

While beginning a PhD in Canadian drama, I developed another piece of performed research, *Son Histoire, Mon Histoire* (1999), and

[2] *The Dressing Room* had two workshop production performances in Toronto, Canada.

this time with a focus on playwriting. The play traces parts of my Acadian cultural heritage and is written bilingually - in French and English. This project involved historical research that included diaries and literature about the French Acadians. The play follows Max's journey in 18th century Acadia where, due to the 1755 Expulsion, the 16-yr old is forced to leave his home in what is now the province of New Brunswick in Eastern Canada. In a parallel plot 16-yr old Pierre, a descendant of Max (over 200 years later), faces the decision whether or not to leave his home in the 1980s to pursue a hockey career in Central Canada. The plot twists and turns as challenges of love, fear and opportunity arise for both individuals. Although created as historical fiction, the play is inspired by actual facts and events that are partially autobiographical.

As the lights come up the audience sees a hockey scoreboard centre stage indicating 20 minutes. Stage right is primarily a backyard hockey rink with suggestions of a rural home. Underneath the scoreboard, a rocking chair is placed where Grandpa will be seated. Stage left belongs to Max and we see his traps in the farm-like setting. Lighting for Max's scenes should be black and white, whereas Pierre's world incorporates various colours in set, light and costumes. The music "Ave Maria" underscores the beginning of the first scene.

GRANDPA *We hear a recorded voice and there is a spot on the rocking chair.*

It's quite simple. All you need is shelter to protect you from the seasons, food to eat, and family and friends to love. The rest, well, the rest only creates headaches and confusion for us all. It took me over sixty years to discover this secret.

PIERRE *enters speaking directly to the audience in character. He is sixteen years old.*

It's quite simple, I make the National Hockey League and my life is made. They provide me with housing, food, good salary ...

sure I'll miss my family and friends and … Louise, but you have to make some sacrifices if you want to play professional hockey.
He ends up stage right and begins to lace up his skates.

MAX *like PIERRE, speaks directly to the audience in character. He is sixteen years old.*

It's quite simple, I join les coureurs de bois and my life is set. They have hunting huts all over, plenty of food and adventures for a lifetime. Sure, I'll miss my parents and … Louise, but we'll be in this area every once in a while.
He ends up stage left and works on his traps. Music begins.
(Belliveau, 1999, p. 1)

My doctoral program involved closely reading numerous plays, including a number of Canadian historical works such as Coulter's *The Trial of Louis Riel* (1967), Curzon's *Laura Secord* (1979), and Pollock's *Walsh* (1973) and *The Komagata Maru Incident* (1978). *Son Histoire, Mon Histoire* consists of detailed historical accounts as well as dramaturgical devices I borrowed from playwrights to illustrate the juxtaposition of time, i.e., Stoppard's *Arcadia* (1993) or Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1954). The play makes use of many well-known structural playwriting devices such as rising action, character flaws, central conflict, love triangle, denouement, along with key symbolic props such as a fishing rod that doubles as a hockey stick. Close attention to detail was paid in the scripting, using extensive stage directions that included specific blocking, lighting and sound cues. I was committed to creating a well-constructed, comprehensive and documented theatre script. The playscript as it stands contains a literary quality resembling a closet drama.[3] Its intended audience from the outset was one interested in historical research, memoire and/or story.[4]

[3] Closet dramas are typically plays meant to be read rather than performed for the stage.

[4] The play had one public reading in Vancouver, led by a professional director, and established local actors.

A number of playwrights have closely researched historical moments as the basis of their plays, including commissioned pieces to celebrate a particular event or milestone. A recent play exploring Alexander Graham Bell's life and the invention of the telephone, *Recalling Bell* (Lintula, 2010) contains rich details that are closely researched. The script tells and describes a great deal in its attempt for verisimilitude, thus making it a powerful reading experience. This approach to performed research relies heavily on historical accuracy and sometimes foregoes the visceral necessity and human compassion that makes theatre come alive in performance. Theatre by nature is an artificial environment and so recreating history on stage is nearly impossible, as playwright Gale aptly notes, "that moment is well past" (in Grace & Wasserman, 2006, p. 312). Discussing the development of her verbatim play *A Day in December*, Wilkinson (2010) suggests how action that "happened in the past has to navigate its way back to the present through imposed character relationships and action that happened over long periods" (p. 142). The process of developing *Son Histoire* involved close attention to script writing, which differed significantly from *The Dressing Room* where the intent was to engage in an exploratory physical workshop process.

Three: Researcher - engaging in performed research

In 2002, as a newly appointed Education faculty member at the University of Prince Edward Island, I began work on a nationally-funded project that focused on ways of addressing bullying in schools through the use of theatre.[5] This project marked a distinct shift in my performed research approach as I was now working outside of a theatre environment and engaging in more formal, structured educational research. Once ethical permission was granted, my co-researchers6 and I began collecting data about children and teachers' perceptions of bullying in upper elementary schools. Through surveys, interviews and focus groups, we gathered data that informed

[5] Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), 2002-2004, funded the project.

[6] The co-researchers in this project were primarily non-theatre teacher candidates undertaking a Bachelor of Education at UPEI.

our playmaking process (Norris, 2010). Over the course of two years, the research team developed two 30-minute plays: *Wasn't Me!* (2003) and *You didn't Do Anything* (2004; 2008).7 Both pieces, inspired by research, are didactic in nature as their main intention was to promote anti-bullying behavior for an elementary school audience. *Wasn't Me!* reached 800 children in Prince Edward Island, Canada and was recognised with the Premier's Award for Social Justice in 2003. *You didn't Do Anything* reached nearly 1500 students and had 12 teacher candidates co-write and perform the play while also engaging elementary students to develop their own anti-bullying plays (Belliveau, 2007a).

SCENE III	The Cafeteria
	SUZIE, COURTNEY, and FRIEND are sitting together in the cafeteria to one side. At the other end, sitting by herself, is LAUREN. The popular girls are talking about her and their lunches.
FRIEND	Did you guys see the new girl in class this morning?
SUZIE	Which girl?
FRIEND	That one. *Pointing to LAUREN at the other end of the table.*
COURTNEY	You mean Lauren.
SUZIE	She's not new, she goes on our bus you freak. Didn't you see her this morning?
FRIEND	Nope. Weird, you think I need my eyes checked?
SUZIE	Your eyes are fine, not like she stands out. Least she didn't until she took her coat off. Who does she think she is? That shirt looks so bad.

[7] *Wasn't Me!* remains unpublished. *You didn't Do Anything* was performed in 2004 and subsequently published in 2008.

COURTNEY Don't you have one kind of like it?

SUZIE Yeah, but it looks different when I wear it. It just doesn't suit her at all. She has totally ruined that shirt. When you come over Friday I'll give you mine, 'cause I'm never wearing it again. What's her name? . . . Louise . . . she can have that look all for herself.

COURTNEY I think her name is Lauren.
(Belliveau, 2008, p. 14)

Given my new responsibility to facilitate and mobilise the objectives of the research grant, a distinct shift in my approach to performing research was taking place. To satisfy the needs of the research grant and university, I was now preoccupied with hiring research assistants, contacting schools and participants, collecting and analysing data, finding ways to research the play-making process, reporting and publishing about the process. I was still engaged as an artist yet my research role took precedence. The need to publish was central, as such my time and energy was spent situating the work academically and finding ways to speak about it in scholarly conferences. Artistic responsibility was gradually delegated to my co-researchers, and I made the theatre process more collective (Belliveau, 2006). The collective playwriting introduced tensions and triumphs as various researcher voices vied to share their stories and findings within the project (Belliveau, 2004). During the playbuilding and scripting, lively negotiations took place between holding on to research findings and representing them artistically. In the end the collective plays maintained their strong social agenda, which was to address bullying in schools by activating the often silent bystanders.

Performed research often involves social agendas and collaborative efforts, particularly in health sciences where researchers co-create playscripts by collaborating with theatre-makers (Lafrenière et al., 2013; Mitchell et al., 2006; Rossiter et al., 2008). In these contexts the research data is often collected and analysed by a research team, then based on these findings, artists use their theatre skills to develop

a piece meant to engage an audience of policy-makers, caregivers, health researchers and/or health consumers. Research-based plays such as *I'm still Here* about dementia (Mitchell et al., 2006) and *After the Crash*, about traumatic brain injury (Gray, 2011) are based on extensive funded studies and share key findings through theatre-based approaches. These types of plays often hold artistic merit and theatricality; however, the intention remains with translating findings from the formal, systematic studies while honoring its participants. A key objective is to reach their target audience on multiple levels (personal, professional and social) and engage them with the complexity of the issue(s) addressed (Lafreniere et al., 2013). The artistic interpretations of the human phenomena or dilemma, explored within such plays, become catalysts for discussion and further research (Colantonio et al., 2008).

Four: Researcher - representing performed research

Still exploring ways on how bringing research to life through theatre could be valued within my scholarly pursuit, I ventured to my next phase of performed research. Taking on a new faculty position at the University of British Columbia in 2004, I developed a script about the experience of the anti-bullying drama project that transpired on Prince Edward Island. On the ten-day, 6000km drive across the country, I set out to write one scene each day. The ten emerging scenes would represent critical moments of what I learned, gathered and documented from the various pieces of data (i.e., journals, interviews, focus groups), which had been carefully analysed over the course of several months. Traditional scholarly articles about the anti-bullying drama project had already been prepared (Belliveau, 2004; 2005; 2006), but now I wanted to artistically represent my understanding of what it meant to collaborate with non-theatre co-researchers and tour the plays in schools.

CHORUS *is spread out across the stage*

Sometimes I wonder if I'm doing enough to help our group deal with the inner tensions.

I'm glad I chose this project. Even though at times I wasn't so sure.

> In the end, we weathered the storm. The challenge of working so intimately and intensely with others was tough, but I learned so much about teaching through this drama experience and about differences in people.
>
> TRACEY *is writing and thinking out loud*. Presenting a play we wrote and created really makes it powerful – part of ourselves was invested in the work. [...] When I think of our first tableaux and how we developed them it's incredible what we created and experienced. The process has been a transformative learning experience in terms of teacher and self-development. Opening tomorrow! (Belliveau, 2007b)

The script *Collective Playbuilding* (2007b) includes verbatim data from participants, lines from the play *You didn't Do Anything*, combined with dialogue inspired by cycling through the data. While writing this play, I had become familiar with various forms of arts-based methodologies, and I was closely reading the work of academics who were publishing their research using creative, drama-based approaches (e.g., Campbell & Conrad, 2006; Diamond & Mullen, 2000; Finley & Finley, 1999; Goldstein, 2001; Pifer, 1999; Saldana, 1998). As such, my initial intention for *Collective Playbuilding* was for publication rather than performance. As a new faculty member at a research-intensive university, with the tenure and promotion clock on, my focus was on publishing my theatre research. However, the artist within me could not imagine the work remaining completely unperformed, so upon completion and post-publication submission of the script, I gathered theatre students and arts-based colleagues to present the piece at a few conferences.[8]

The semi-rehearsed research-based play inspired dialogue about the anti-bullying drama project and suited the conference programs and venues, as few props, sound cues or costumes were needed. The play was heavily research-based and met the demands for publication

[8] The play was presented at the following conferences: Provoking Curriculum (Victoria, B.C., Feb. 2005); Investigating our Practices (Vancouver, B.C., May 2005); Arts-Based Educational Research, AREA (San Francisco, April 2006).

and academically-focused conferences by representing the project findings.

The field of performed research includes a number of artist/scholars who have written scenes and/or plays intended as publishable pieces for scholarly journals, as noted in the examples above. This is not to suggest that their creative work lacks stage-worthiness. Rather, it speaks to the creators' dual intentions to disseminate their research in scholarly journals as well as possibly reading and/or performing the work. Most of these artist/scholars are situated within academic settings with an expectation to generate scholarship that is recognisable to their peers (i.e., journals, chapters, books, conferences). These published research-based plays or scenes most often exist with a front-ended description of the research context and methodology, followed by a critical commentary on the artistic piece and its reception (see for instance Gouzouasis et al., 2008, or Saldana, 2008).

Five: Artist/Researcher - engaging/representing performed research

The last project described in this paper examines two related plays I engaged in where the artistic and academic intentions are woven to generate a performed research experience balancing art and research. *Naming the Shadows* (Mackenzie et al., 2009; 2011) and *Notes from the Hotseat* (Mackenzie, 2010)[9] are both based on a nationally-funded project I led that investigates elementary students' engagement and community building through Shakespeare (Belliveau, 2009; 2012; Shira & Belliveau, 2012).[10] From the outset of this project, the research team (comprised of individuals with theatre and education backgrounds) was aware that data and findings would be developed into a performed theatre piece. Interviews, photos, video and journals

[9] *Naming the Shadows* was presented in 2009 and subsequently published in 2011 (Mackenzie et al.). *Notes from the Hotseat* is unpublished.

[10] Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), 2008-2013, funded the project.

from students and teachers were collected, along with feedback from parents and school administrators. The elementary students worked through an extensive drama-based process prior to mounting their abridged versions of Shakespeare plays (Belliveau & Prendergast, 2013). For *Naming the Shadows* data were selected almost exclusively from one classroom and focused on the students' three-month experience of working on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. *Notes from the Hotseat* centers on a different elementary classroom's experience producing *Much Ado About Nothing*. The research team did some preliminary analysis of the data, seeking out recurring themes as well as outlying ideas. However, an extended focus was on using playwriting as a form of analysis to both tease out further themes and develop a performative piece of research (Mackenzie & Belliveau, 2011). Both plays include a mixture of verbatim and imagined dialogue and were written with the intent of being performed using theatrical devices.

These research-based plays extend and refine previous theatre-based projects that I engaged in with co-researchers at UBC (Lea, 2012), in that as a team of artist-researchers we were committed in the Shakespeare-based research plays to weave research and art as seamlessly as possible. To help achieve this goal, I invited a professional playwright as a co-researcher (Mackenzie) to generate playscripts that were written for the stage. The next commitment was to artistically engage with the script by having the actors carefully rehearsing the text. Instead of only a few hours of rehearsal (as in past projects), the artistic team and I committed several weeks to rehearse *Notes from the Hotseat* in preparation for conference presentations. With *Notes* I returned to some of my actor training approaches, in an effort to find the character voice, physicality, objectives and specific beats[11] within the script. In addition, the research team created original music, sets, and props for both plays. In *Naming the Shadows*, shadow puppets were carefully designed along with a shadow box and lighting. In bringing theatre elements to the work, along with a performance commitment, the text was lifted off the page and

[11] Beats are usually small portions of a text that comprise of an emotion or action.

a more layered engagement took place with our audiences. The performances sparked audience reflections that responded to both the research context and the artistic endeavor. From inception, the work had an explicit intention to reach communities and audiences including, and beyond, the academy (Knowles & Cole, 2008) through performance and scholarly writing. Between both plays, over 15 performances were shared for children and adults, reaching nearly 2000 audience members from New Zealand, Australia, Greece, UK, US and across Canada. In addition, five scholarly articles document and explore this research-based theatre work.

Three students are discussing their roles

STUDENT AS OBERON	Look how many lines! I can't do this. It's too much.
STUDENT AS BOTTOM	*Really excited*. I'm cast as Bottom. I get to be a donkey.
STUDENT AS LION	I'm the lion. I don't know if I can do this.
STUDENT AS OBERON	But it's mostly roaring.
STUDENT AS LION	I know, that's the problem. I don't like roaring. I can't roar. At least not loudly.
STUDENT AS OBERON	You'll be fine.
STUDENT AS BOTTOM	My granddad says you learn it one line at a time.
STUDENT AS LION	But I'll never be able to roar. Really, I get too scared.
STUDENT AS BOTTOM	By the opening, you'll be scaring all the other grade twos with how loud your roars are. Just you wait.

STUDENT AS LION

She tries to roar, it comes out as a squeaky whisper. Rrrrroar. (Mackenzie et al., 2011, p. 9-11)

Most often a piece of performed research is shared once, maybe twice, then the individual or team moves on to another project. However, the intention with these two plays was to keep developing the performative elements, learning and building from each presentation. As an actor in the work, I kept seeking ways to convey the research more fluidly within the performing. New questions and considerations kept emerging after each presentation about how best to engage in and represent the work as actor and researcher. I continually refined my approach, weaving my two identities and coming a little closer to Richardson's notion of crystallisation. The monologue excerpt that follows was part of a keynote address at IDEA-Paris 2013 where I performed an interpretation of my journey of weaving the artist and researcher roles.

... *Shifting to a more calculated, controlled academic role with distinct voice and gestures.*

In my academic, researcher role I strive for clarity. I aim to persuade through argument, provide evidence and support. I anchor my work in ongoing debates, theories, methodologies, ideally contributing new knowledge.

Shifting to an artist role with freer voice and gestures and lightness in movement.

> When performing I layer, complicate, I get partially lost, in the world of the drama. I'm in the moment, prepared spontaneity. Hamlet-like I ponder, contemplate, debate with myself. I raise the stakes, make the problem colossal yet minute, worldly yet personal. I'm here *and* there.

My academic side troubles, makes stabs, seeks truth, considers the literature, the field. I strive to say something new.

I strive to be physically and emotionally present, fully alive, awake. To dream.

I observe, analyze, synthesize. I study the trees and seek to organise them in some coherent or artful forest.

I walk in the forest. I'm part of the forest, touch the trees, smell nature, breathe in the colours.

Role of academic and artist begin to gradually blur through voice and body.

I climb the trees for a better view, dwell in the forest. Amidst the doing I begin to paint meanings. Sketches, blotches in time.

Time and space are transformed, intensified. I'm here *and* there.

There, in the myriads of strands, I capture, no, I create meaning through prose.

And poetry. It's this *and* that.

I write. I re-write.

I create. I re-create.

I generate.

I present.

At this stage the academic and artist have become one.

I perform. (Belliveau, 2014)

Conclusion

The five projects explored above each contain research that is rendered in a theatrical representation. In the first example the work is artist-driven, as *The Dressing Room* was strictly intended for performance, with the rehearsal space as a site for analysis and the performance an embodied form of live dissemination. In *Son Histoire, Mon Histoire* the playwriting drove the project, showing through careful script work how research can be analysed and represented within a playscript. *Wasn't Me!* and *You didn't Do Anything* became vehicles to generate research, and was led by a social agenda that served the research project's objectives. The theatre-making by non-artist was critical, and it was in place to serve and represent the formal research. In *Collective Playbuilding* the meta nature of the piece offered a novel way to use a theatre form to disseminate understandings about a theatre-based research project. The artistic representation of the script as article served primarily scholarly intentions. *Naming the Shadows* and *Notes from the Hotseat* offer examples where a commitment to both theatre and research are present. These two plays were intended to be performed from the outset, and included collaborators with expertise in both research and theatre to collect, analyse and disseminate the findings in scholarly and artistic forms.

Where do we go next?

Returning to Bakhtin's (1986) theoretical concept of chain of utterances, the work in performed research is in constant relation to previous and ongoing work, art practices and research intentions, forming an ongoing, interconnected series of chains. In moving forward with performed research I end this paper by proposing that in future projects we closely consider three critical concepts - *reflexivity, awe, gifting* - offered by leading artist/scholars.

reflexivity

In their ongoing artistic and research development of *Alice Hoy is Not a Building*, the Auld Goats ensemble[12] have continually returned to the question, "Where do we go next?" (Bird et al., 2010, p. 102). In their quest to aesthetically and theoretically engage in and represent their research, the Melbourne-based group have been in a process of critically revisiting their creative and scholarly work (and selves), recognising and identifying how their performed research is in a constant state of *reflexivity*. As individuals and a collective, the Auld Goats keep exploring and expanding their understandings of performed research, pushing theoretical and artistic possibilities, and all the while resisting the notion of finality, dwelling in a state of inquiry.

awe

For his part, Saldana advocates to "make the performance memorable – always through quality work, and particularly through moments of dramatic and theatrical awe" (Saldaña, 2011, p.122). Finding the 'theatrical awe' while honoring the research context and participants (Mienczakowski, 1995) is essential to performed research. In bringing performed research to a sense of awe, we move beyond pre-conceived binary constructs between research and art, artist and academic. Vital to performed research is the ability and vision of artist/researchers to generate moments of awe, of aesthetic arrest (Weigler, 2011).

gifting

In Lea's (2013) theorising, he offers the concept of *gifting*. He suggests that artist/researchers involved in performed research are initially presented with gifts via research data, and they have a responsibility to then transform these gifts in an ethical and aesthetic fashion for their audience. The audience in turn processes what they have

[12] The Auld Goats include Jane Bird, Kate Donelan, Christine Sinclair and Prue Wales.

experienced and consequently expands the chain of gifting. As such, in the performance space, amidst text, theatrical devices, actors and audience, the chain of performed research extends and grows, resisting finality in a continued state of possibility.

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