

SPINNING RED YARN(S)

Being Artist/Researcher/Educator Through Playbuilding as Qualitative Research

by

Kathy Bishop
B.S.W., University of British Columbia, 1986

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In Interdisciplinary Studies

(Theatre and Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies)

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Supervisory Committee

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Dr. Warwick Dobson, Co-Supervisor
(Faculty of Fine Arts – Department of Theatre)

Dr. Darlene E. Clover, Co-Supervisor
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Abstract

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This research was simultaneously collective and individual.

In this dissertation, my team and I inquired into what it means to undertake playbuilding as qualitative research and be a practitioner, specifically focusing on the roles of artist, researcher, and educator from an applied theatre graduate student perspective.

I drew upon the methodological and theoretical frameworks of playbuilding as qualitative research and autoethnography. Playbuilding as qualitative research offers creative methods for uncovering collective and affective ways of knowing. Autoethnography offers the opportunity to explore self and roles through art-making and reflexivity. For me, both are manifestations of the same creative impulse to make meaning and generate new understandings expressed through different perspectives and processes.

This research consisted of a cohort of applied theatre graduate students who collectively explored and devised a play on what it means to be an artist/researcher/educator. The play, *To Spin a Red Yarn: Enacting Artist/Researcher/Teacher* stands as an artefact to the collectives' generation, interpretation, and performance of research. In addition, I wrote an exegesis that spins my individual story within our collective. The exegesis, *Behind the*

Curtain, extends the world of the play into the text by taking the reader on a dramatic journey through soliloquizing as dialogue.

As a result of this study, I theorized a translated a/r/tographical framework into theatre-based language for the use by practitioners that is rooted in theatre practitioner praxis (theory and practice).

This praxis-based study was intended to provide knowledge for artist-researchers, educators, and theatre-makers. This research offers artists/researchers/educators access to more stories, insights, and ideas about what it means to be a theatre-based artist/researcher/educator undertaking playbuilding as qualitative research. This research opens up rich possibilities that are commonplace to theatre-makers and performing artists on how different theatrical conventions could be used in playbuilding as qualitative research. For theatre-makers who are interested in combining theatre with academic research, it offers another paradigm to consider, expand, and interconnect the work that they do. Likewise, for a/r/tographers who are theatre-based, this research offers a way to conceive the work they do rooted in theatre-based language.

Keywords: playbuilding as qualitative research, a/r/tography, leadership, creativity, research-based theatre, theatre-based research, arts-based research methodologies

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*An invisible **red thread**
connects those who are destined to meet
regardless of time, place or circumstance.
The thread may stretch or tangle but it will never break.*
(Grant, 2011, p. 30)

Dedication

For Alan, Cayce, and Josh ~ Now, then, always

Chapter 1: This Story Didn't Start Here . . .

This story didn't start here. Won't end here. But here we are. I could start this story from many different points. For instance, I could speak about how my first graduate research methodology course sparked my curiosity about ethnodrama (which combines the research methodology of ethnography and the art form of theatre to form a new arts-based research methodology) or how the nebulous question, "What can the theatre artist teach the researcher?" gnawed at me. But perhaps the most direct and clear way (although to get to this point was neither direct nor clear) is to tell where I landed, or in other words, the main thrust of this research. My quest, the purpose of this research is to advance the question of what it means to be artist/researcher/educator and undertake playbuilding as qualitative research. But before we go forward, I will first go back.

As a social worker/counsellor starting in the 80s, I worked with at-risk youth, both in England and Canada. I often utilized creative methods, such as theatre games, shadow puppets and art therapy to help youth gain new insights into their issues of sexual abuse, drug use, teen prostitution, and gang violence. Although my training was in social work, I experimented with the power of arts-based methods to help youth discover new ways of seeing, being and doing in the world.

I progressed from counselling to training counsellors to overseeing as executive director two not-for-profit agencies. Throughout my roles, I witnessed how the mental models (Senge, 2006) held by youth and counsellors impacted their life and the work. Senge (2006) explained, "Mental models are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action" (p. 8). I also recognized how my own mental models impacted

the way I saw the world and the choices I was making. Realizing the power of the arts and theatre to affect people emotionally and cognitively by entering “one’s psyche at a deep level, despite resistance” (Branagan, 2005, p. 40), I continued to bring the arts and theatre into my life personally and professionally. I acted in local community theatre and developed my skills as an arts-based experiential adult educator. In 2000, to meet the needs of my family (being a wife and mother of then two young children), I started my own business. I shifted into becoming a fulltime adult educator as a business consultant both in the public sector and corporate management. Again, I saw how holding different mental models affected actions.

Shifting into the world of business was easier with the lens of an adult educator, however, less so with that of a social worker. People in the fields of social work and business can have very different “images, assumptions and stories” (Senge, 2006, p. 164) about why and how to be in those organizations. On a surface level, social work can be seen as concerned with people and community whereas business with money and companies. Often people would ask me how I could go from being a social worker to a businesswoman. It took me three years to figure out my answer. I was on contract as the Executive Director of our local chamber of commerce at the time. Through developing my own business and working with other business people, I came to understand that business is a root of community. Without business there would be fewer jobs, fewer products or services, less of a tax base to fund community improvements or projects. I saw business and social work—not as a dichotomy—but as a part of the full spectrum of healthy community. My conflicting mental models, or in other words, the stories I was telling myself about these fields and roles, merged into new more holistic ones.

When my boys were in their late teens, I was ready to evolve my career. I hungered to bring together all that I was in order to be part of solving community and global challenges. I recognized through my own journey of taking on different roles within different fields (social work, arts, adult education, business) that synthesizing different perspectives and paradigms provides an opportunity to think, feel and do in innovative ways. As a result, I enrolled as an interdisciplinary doctoral student at the University of Victoria in the faculties of Education (Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies) and Fine Arts (Applied Theatre Graduate program).

Having strong roots in leadership, adult education, social work and business, I decided to push the edges of my learning and create an applied theatre foundation from which other areas could spring. Applied theatre is theatre that is used for “extra theatrical purposes such as education, community building and social change” (Neelands & Dobson, 2008, p. 185).

My first applied theatre research methodology course ignited in me the possibilities of combining the art form of theatre with academic research to discover creative solutions to local and global issues. Ensler’s (2001) *Vagina Monologues* provides an excellent example of how a performance piece based on interviews with women mobilized a global movement to stop violence against women. Nevertheless, some argued that the piece was flawed. Betty Dobson (2001), for example, denounced what she saw as “creative license” and researcher bias in shaping the story, distorting truths and manipulating post-show dialogues. Over the years, scholars in fields such as education, health and anthropology have attempted to bring theatre practices into academic research, resulting in a growing body of literature on research-based theatre

which incorporates a range of dramaturgical processes and practices for purposes of collection, analysis and dissemination of data (e.g., Ackroyd & O’Toole, 2010; Beck, Belliveau, Lea, & Wager, 2011; Gallagher, 2007; Mienczakowski & Morgan, 2001; Saldaña, 2005, 2011). Playbuilding as qualitative research (Norris, 2009), in particular, seeks to holistically and collectively encompass the three components of research (collection, analysis and dissemination) to offer innovative and emergent research practices. Acknowledging the benefits of “this golden vista of a new research age”, Ackroyd and O’Toole (2010) cautioned that bringing together theatre and research creates a set of unique challenges that still need to be explored. Work needs to be done to “identify and map relationships, to uncover the tensions and . . . [determine how it] . . . can be effective as research, representation of community, art or something else entirely, or even a blend of these” (p. 5). Furthermore, as the emphasis within the academy on research-based theatre grows, so too does the interest of graduate students in a variety of disciplines in using these methods. Central to all qualitative research is the role of the researcher. By combining theatre and research a layer of complexity is added to the role of practitioner in research-based theatre. Critical to the outcome of the work is managing the different roles of theatre-maker and researcher required in varied community and interdisciplinary contexts (Biggs & Karlson, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Knowles & Cole, 2008; Mienczakowski & Morgan, 2001). Bringing together these different roles can result in conflicts such as when the ‘researcher’ overrides being the ‘artist’ or visa versa. Although the clashing of the roles as artist, researcher and often, as feminists note, adult educator and learner can have an adverse effect on the work (Chapman & Sork, 2001; Tisdell, 1993), few studies have problematized and explored the clash of these role within

playbuilding as qualitative research or how privileging one role over the other may impact the practitioner and ultimately the methodology.

Therefore, through this research, I began an inquiry into what it means to undertake playbuilding as qualitative research and be a practitioner, specifically focussing on the roles of artist, researcher, and adult educator from an applied theatre graduate student perspective. Originally, I started with two general research questions:

1. What emerges about research-based theatre as a methodology, and in particular playbuilding as qualitative research?
2. How are applied theatre graduate students' identities as theatre-based artist/researcher/teacher developed by engaging in a research-based theatre project on this topic?

I started with these two questions because method and practitioner are intrinsically linked in qualitative research. I focussed on university students because the academy is the place where upcoming practitioners are trained. For purposes of my research, I focussed on two types of identity: *role* and *existential* (Gecas & Mortimer, 1987). *Role* identity refers to various social roles, memberships or categories in which an individual commits and internalises whereas *existential* identity refers to an individual's personal identity, or sense of self, and represents the individual's uniqueness and continual creation through reconstructing the past and anticipating the future from the perspective of the present (Gecas & Mortimer, 1987, pp. 265–267). Thus, I was able to consider artist/researcher/educator as a professional role and as a person's dynamic and unique way of being. I focussed on applied theatre graduate students because of their attention to and skill in theatre while concurrently engaging in research and education. I

did so because I contend that it makes sense to start with a strong base of knowledge and skill in the craft of theatre to develop a theatre-based research methodology. I focussed intently on what it means to be artist/researcher/educator as a practitioner because I see the value in Saldaña's (2008b) assertion that "you can't learn to tell someone else's story until you first learn how to tell your own" (p. 179). Furthermore, although graduate students work in communities and may reflect on their role afterwards (e.g., Ackroyd & O'Toole, 2010), few studies have focused exclusively on applied theatre graduate students exploring their roles and assumptions as practitioners through the methodology of playbuilding as qualitative research.

As a result, I designed a research-based theatre project in which playbuilding as qualitative research was utilized to devise a play on what it means to be an artist/researcher/educator by a cohort of applied theatre graduate students. The play, *To Spin a Red Yarn: Enacting Artist/Researcher/Teacher*, stands as an artefact to the collectives' generation, interpretation, and performance of research. In addition, I wrote an exegesis that spins my individual story within our collective. The exegesis, *Behind the Curtain*, extends the world of the play into the text by taking the reader on a dramatic journey through the script, the post-show dialogue, and to the whiteboard where a translated a/r/tographical framework into theatre-based language is theorized.

As we move forward, I invite you, the reader, on this journey. Within these pages are many different threads, stories, and red yarns. In the tradition of Thomas King (2008), I encourage you to

help yourself to one if you like. . . . It's yours. Do with it what you will. Cry over it. Get angry. Forget it. But don't say in years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. (p. 25)

Chapter 2: Methodology and Design

In this chapter, I discuss the methodology and design that I used within this research.

Methodology

I drew upon two distinct cross-disciplinary methodological frameworks:

1. *Playbuilding as qualitative research* (Norris, 2009), in which participants engage in intensive theatre-based, experiential and participatory action-oriented research.
2. *A/r/tography* (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gouzouasis, & Grauer, 2006), which specifically explores artist/researcher/teacher identities and practices through art-making and writing.

I drew upon these two methodological frameworks because my research inquiry had a dual focus, namely, to inquire into what it means to be a practitioner of playbuilding as qualitative research and to undertake playbuilding as qualitative research. As a result, I saw that the two inherent components needing to be addressed were the method of playbuilding as qualitative research and being practitioner of the method. The methodology of playbuilding as qualitative research specifically addresses the method of utilizing playbuilding as research. Therefore it made sense to use it as my methodology. However, although playbuilding as qualitative research literature provided method and content, little was written about developing self as practitioner. I chose to augment the methodology of playbuilding by paying closer attention to practitioner self-development that a/r/tography offered. A/r/tography offers emergent and innovative ways of working in which practitioners engage in self-study that is rooted in art-making, reflection and

reflexivity. “A/r/tography is not a formulaic-based methodology. Rather it is a fluid orientation creating its rigor through continuous reflexivity and analysis” (Springgay, Irwin, & Wilson Kind, 2005, p. 903). In the two core books on a/r/tography, each devoted either the full book or a key component to self-study. For example, Irwin and de Cosson’s (2004) *A/r/tography: Rendering Self Through Arts-Based Living Inquiry* is divided into three parts: Explorations of self, Self process and History of self, and, Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, and Gouzouasis’ (2008) *Being With A/r/tography* has the first part composed of Self-study and autobiography. Furthermore, as a methodology, a/r/tography “creates an imaginative turn by theorizing or explaining phenomena through aesthetic experiences that integrate knowing, doing and making: experiences that simultaneously value technique and content through acts of inquiry; experiences the value complexity and difference” (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004, p. 31). Therefore, a/r/tography offered me a way to conceptualize being practitioner rooted in experience, art-making, reflection, reflexivity, and, engaging in the complexity of being practitioner and performing the work. As a result, I decided that drawing upon both playbuilding as qualitative research and a/r/tography as my methodologies could offer a more comprehensive approach to considering the practice and the practitioner of playbuilding as qualitative research.

Playbuilding as qualitative research. Playbuilding as qualitative research comes under the umbrella of research-based theatre. Research-based theatre, simply put, is about combining the forms of research and theatre. However, this simplicity gives rise to complexity. Saldaña (2011), one of the leading experts within research-based theatre identified over 80 related terms such as, “ethnodrama, ethnotheatre, performative inquiry,

reflexive anthropology, theatrical documentary, ethnotainment, and reality theatre” (p. 13–14). Common to all 80 terms, however, was that “the script or performance text is solidly rooted in non fictional researched reality” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 14). Specific definitions and practices, however, may vary greatly or subtly depending on the theatre-maker or scholar, intention and/or context.

Saldaña (2005) spoke to the diverse content across multiple disciplines and contexts through providing an overview of a variety of ethnodramas and related literature encompassing: education, vocation and occupation, health, ethnic/racial identity and racism, gender and sexual identity, homelessness, intrapersonal reflections and interpersonal relationships, anthropology, justice studies and 9/11.

Historically, research-based theatre grew out of diverse fields of study with scholars utilizing theatre as a way of disseminating data. Unfortunately, what resulted often by those unfamiliar with the artistry of theatre, were “talking heads” plays. Undoubtedly, a wide varied of disciplines could benefit from theatrical guidance or partnership. As a way of developing the field, Norris (2000) suggested that those who are skilled in theatre and drama could make “a valuable contribution to the research community, one that utilizes the full potential of our discipline” (p. 49). Similarly, Saldaña (2008a) advocated for drawing upon the theatre community; asserting that some of the best ethnodramas he has ever seen “have been developed by those with theatrical experience, and their work stands as models” (p. 204). Therefore, one of the greatest areas of growth for research-based theatre is utilizing theatre from a starting point of those who are knowledgeable and skilled in the art and craft.

Furthermore, since theatre is a social art, a way to develop research-based theatre is through engaging “communities of practice” (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4). Communities of practice was a term coined by Wenger et al. (2002), which they defined as “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (p. 4). The community of practice that I was interested in developing specifically was our University of Victoria applied theatre graduate cohort (knowledgeable and skilled in the art and craft of theatre-making for extra-theatrical purposes) for the purposes of playbuilding as qualitative research.

Playbuilding, also known as devising or collective creation, is a generic term in theatre that refers to a group of people collaboratively investigating issues of concern to them and then “turning their perceptions” (Weigler, 2001, p. xiii) into a dramatic script. Playbuilding as qualitative research recognizes that the form of playbuilding can be a structural framework for generating knowledge. As a result, playbuilding as qualitative research could expand traditional conceptions of research with its collaborative, socially constructed and emergent approaches to meaning-making through the art and craft of theatre-making.

In his book, *Playbuilding as Qualitative Research*, Norris (2009) offered a theory towards approaching playbuilding as research. According to Norris (2009), the purpose of playbuilding as qualitative research is to present findings in a way that will engage, educate and promote dialogue with the audience, thus the intent is “not to report findings but to provide evocative texts” (p. 21). As a method, Norris (2009), pointed out that playbuilding as qualitative research differs because it does not keep a “customary format”

(p. 21) of dividing data into three distinct phases—data collection, analysis, and dissemination. Instead, at times, “these three phases are simultaneous” (Norris, 2009, p. 22). Norris (2000) contended that the “potential of drama as research is fully realized, not when one translates data into a play, but when the dramatic activities shape the presentation in the same way as quantitative research uses numerical data through all stages” (p. 45).

Norris (2009) explained that playbuilding “is living research” (p. 33) in which personal stories, both participants and audience, are merged and created with others. Drawing on the methodology of a/r/tography, he referred to his team as actors/researchers/teacher; renaming the term a/r/tographer to the more theatrically friendly term: “A/R/Tors” (Norris, 2009, p. 22). He discussed how he involved his actors as co-researchers who mined their own experiences and developed research knowledge through the process of playbuilding. Regarding the process of playbuilding, he offered an outline of *a* process; however, he stated, “The description of this process is not meant to be prescriptive for others to follow verbatim” (Norris, 2009, p. 42). Not prescribing a method reiterates the contextual nature of playbuilding as qualitative research. As one example in the process, he provided a method of data recording. Norris suggested that at the beginning of each session, co-researchers be given recipe cards and asked to recount the last workshop. Co-artist-researchers were then asked to note previous as well as new stories and/or themes that arose through the discussion. Cards were collected at the end of the workshop and filed. File folders were utilized with such suggested headings as: “scene ideas, rehearsed (devised scenes), quickies (short scenes and/or phrases), themes/issues, metaphors, props/costumes/music needs, external resources, potential

titles, keepers” (Norris, 2009, p. 46). The process was a “spiral one” (Norris, 2009, p. 23) employing storytelling as research, then generating themes and translating both stories and themes into dramatic vignettes. This speaks to a hermeneutic circle of meaning-making. The data was revisited repeatedly, enabling participants (along with the audience later on) to “deconstruct and reconstruct” (Norris, 2009, p. 11) their experiences. Likewise, various theatre-based activities and exercises were utilized in this research to generate data and a spiral process was engaged employing storytelling.

Other practitioners have devised similar collectively based working methods. For example, *Alice Hoy is Not a Building* is a performance piece in which Bird, Donelan, Sinclair, and Wales (2010) undertake a performance ethnography about women in academia. Two key foundations to their project were: “to be the researchers, performance-makers and performers in an ethnographic performance; and to include data drawn from [their] own lives as women educators at the University” (Bird et al., 2010, p. 81). They generated and interpreted their own experiences through dramatic form as well as various other sources (transcribed interviews, journals, historical documents, etc.) to create a fictional story. Their research project paralleled this research in that skilled and experienced theatre practitioners inquired into the nature of devising as qualitative research. Bird et al. (2010) highlighted their collective investigation of generating “hundreds of hours of taped discussions, piles of transcribed interviews, field notes, reflective journal entries, photographs, historical documents, data matrices, character plot outlines, multiple versions of scripts and an ethnographic performance text” (p. 84). To interpret data, they used various performance techniques. For example, they would play each other’s stories but not their own. They did so as a way to get different perspectives

on stories. However, they also noted, “It felt a bit awkward to represent someone we knew and “a bit weird” to be watching representations of ourselves” (Bird et al., 2010, p. 93).

Research stories like these add to the canon of playbuilding as research. Lea (2012) identified three general approaches to developing research-based theatre: collective, playwright-centred and composite (merging both collective creation and playwright collaboration). As it stands, most research-based theatre either falls in playwright-centred or composite. For example, selected examples from mainstream theatre include (a) Anna Deavere Smith’s (1992) *Twilight: Los Angeles*—a series of monologues adapted from Smith’s interviews with Los Angeles residents about the April 1992 riots prompted by the Rodney King verdict (playwright-centred); (b) Moisés Kaufman and members of the Tectonic Theater Project’s *The Laramie Project* (Kaufman et al., 2000)—a verbatim collage of monologues and small group scenes of citizens from Laramie, Wyoming, reflecting on the 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard (composite); (c) Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen’s (2004) *The Exonerated*—centering on the stories of six innocent people on death row who were falsely accused, convicted and then exonerated (composite); (d) *8 the Play*—created in verbatim style by Dustin Lance Black (2011), with an all-star Hollywood cast portraying the closing arguments of the federal trial of Perry versus Schwarzenegger. The trial led to the overturn of Proposition 8—an amendment eliminating rights of same-sex couples to marry in California (composite). Some examples from the academy include (a) Johnny Saldaña’s (1998) *Someday I Will be Famous*, an ethnodrama portraying “the artistic development of an adolescent actor over two and a half years” (Saldaña, 2003, p. 221); (b) *Second Chair* Saldaña’s (2008b)

own autoethnodrama exploring his reminiscences of his high school band years (playwright-centred); (c) Jim Mienczakowski's (1995) work on *Syncing Out Loud* dealing with teenage experiences of schizophrenia and *Busting* a play based on an urban detoxification unit and the oppressive social relationships related to drinking, which was a composite; (d) Ross Gray and Christina Sinding's (2002) *Handle With Care*, a profile of women's experiences with metastatic breast cancer (composite); and (e) Warwick Dobson's (2010b) *No Particular Place to Go*, in which drawing upon extensive research data and the material generated with a team of actors he created a fictional play about the challenges older drivers face (playwright-centred).

Norris (2009) and Ackroyd and O'Toole (2010) also provided a compilation of research-based theatre projects. Sharing a variety of scripts produced through his work as scholar and director of the Mirror Theatre Company, Norris (2009) offered up a collective creation "buffet" (p. 89). He maintained that the purpose was not to prescribe a particular form of presentation; "rather, they are examples from which other A/R/Tors can pick and choose" (Norris, 2009, p. 89). Ackroyd and O'Toole (2010) also compiled case studies in their book *Performing Research* to "interrogate and illuminate" (p. xviii) some of the artistic, social and scholastic tensions to aid understanding and improve future practice. This research adds another study into the canon of research-based theatre, focussing on playbuilding as qualitative research specifically.

A/r/tography. A/r/tography is a practice-based living inquiry (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004). It draws on theories from action research, hermeneutics, feminism, and other postmodern theories. Underpinning a/r/tography are the assertions that knowledge and understanding are produced through the process of inquiry, the body and "being(s)-

in-relation” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxii). Furthermore, a/r/tography acknowledges “the importance of self and collective interpretation . . . [and that these interpretations] . . . are always in a state of becoming” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxiv).

Searching for new ways to understand their practices as artists-researchers-teachers, practitioners seek to “integrate *theoria*, *praxis*, and *poesis*, or theory/research, teaching/learning, and art/making” (Irwin, 2004, p. 28). Integrating *theoria*, *praxis* and *poesis*, practitioners engage in reflection and reflexivity. Irwin (2004) explained, “Thought and action are inextricably linked, and through a hermeneutic circle of interpretation and understanding, new knowledge affects existing knowledge that in turn affects the freshly conceived knowledge” (pp. 33–34). As a result, a/r/tography offers practitioners the space for “re-thinking, re-living and re-making the terms of their identities” (Irwin, 2004, p. 29). As a practiced-based inquiry, practitioners “are living their work, representing their understandings, and performing their pedagogical positions as they convey meaning rather than facts (Irwin, 2004, p. 34).

Irwin and Springgay (2008) noted that, “research becomes a process of exchange that . . . emerges through an intertwining of the mind and body, self and other, and through our interactions with the world” (p. xxii). Irwin (2008) explained that self and community coexist together: “No researcher or artist or educator exists on their own, nor do they only exist within a community for in fact both occur” (p. 72). Therefore, the relationship with self and between others becomes a dynamic process and negotiated exchange. Winters, Belliveau, and Sherritt-Fleming (2009) identified how identities are constructed “intrapyschologically” through social interaction, acknowledging their own shift in understanding that “identity is not something innate or uncovered, rather that

identity is an interactive and continually reconstructed process” (p. 4). Likewise de Cosson (2004) articulated, “When engaged with/in art it is in the circling from viewer, to art, to viewer that meaning is made” (p. 137). Irwin and Springgay (2008) noted that practitioners are situated in “communities of practice” (p. xxiv). Although there may be many different communities of practice, such as adult educators, or theatre-artists, or researchers, to which a/r/tographers may belong, a/r/tographic practice “is also about communities of a/r/tographers working together in shared inquiry, articulating an evolution of research questions and performing evocative and/or provocative works for others” (Leggo et al., 2011, p. 240). Therefore, a/r/tography enables individuals to explore the self not simply as a personal process but with others, recognizing how they are impacted and potentially can impact. Within this study, participants are embedded within an applied theatre community of practice exploring what it means to be an artist/researcher/educator.

Irwin (2004) noted that a/r/tography is “an ongoing inquiry through art-making (represented in *a/r/t*) and writing (represented in *graphy*) to create new understandings and new knowledge” (p. 31). As a way to engage with art-making and writing, a/r/tography offers concepts—referred to as renderings—rather than methods. Springgay et al. (2005) explained how “renderings serve as methodological concepts of what research is when a relational aesthetic inquiry approach is envisioned as embodied understandings and exchanges between art and text and between and among the roles of artist/researcher/teacher and the viewer/reader” (p. 901). Therefore, renderings serve to address the needs of practitioners who are specifically interested in bringing together art, research and education as well as being and becoming artist/researcher/teacher without

prescribing a certain way of working. Springgay et al. (2005) explained, “Concepts are flexible, dynamic and inter-subjective locations through which close analysis renders new understandings and meanings” (p. 898). Renderings, then, can serve as a way of conceptually organizing a practitioner’s arts-based enquiry. Specifically, they can help a practitioner come “closer to an idea” (Beare, 2009, p. 164).

Writings on a/r/tography and the renderings themselves, however, can be challenging to grasp and/or difficult to pinpoint. For example, Irwin (2004) offered a definition of art, research and teaching, saying,

Art is the visual reorganization of experience that renders complex the apparently simple or simplifies the apparently complex. Research is the enhancement of meaning revealed through ongoing interpretations of complex relationships that are continually created, recreated and transformed. Teaching is performative knowing in meaningful relationship with learners. (p. 31)

The ideas—art as visual reorganization, research as meaning enhancement and teaching as performative knowing in meaningful relationships—are so broad that they do not serve as definitive guideposts. Regarding the a/r/tographical core renderings, a brief overview is given in Springgay et al.’s (2005) article, “A/r/tography as Living Inquiry Through Art and Text” (pp. 900–908) and reproduced in the book *Being With A/r/tography* (Springgay et al., 2008, pp. xxviii–xxx). In core textbooks on a/r/tography Irwin and de Cosson’s (2004) *A/R/Tography: Rendering Self Through Arts-Based Living Inquiry* and Springgay et al.’s (2008) *Being With A/r/tography*, the pioneers of the methodology provided case studies, however, instead of a clear articulation of the theory, renderings were more often implicit in the discussion than explicit. I spent many hours

trying to define and understand the concepts. As a way to help the reader avoid some confusion, I highlight and define the six renderings suggested in a/r/tography: living inquiry, contiguity, metaphor and metonymy, reverberations, excess, and openings.

Living inquiry. Irwin and de Cosson (2004) explained that a/r/tography is a “living practice of art, research and teaching: a living metissage; a life writing, life creating experience” (p. 34). Living inquiry embraces research, not as separate from life, but as part of it. Art, teaching and research is “not done, but lived” (Irwin, 2004, p. 33). Therefore, living inquiry enables an embedded and embodied exploration of the whole person. A/r/tographers take an active stance to knowledge creation through an ongoing quest for understanding—a questing and questioning (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxiii). In living inquiry, a practitioner is in a never-ending process of being and becoming. Through proceeding to understand and integrate knowing (theoria), doing (praxis), and making (poesis), practitioners seek also to understand the interweaving and dis/connecting identities of artist, researcher, and teacher and their practices.

Living Inquiry is dynamic research—research that “breathes . . . [and] listens” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 899). Dr. David Beare, a theatre-based a/r/tographer in Vancouver, discussed how he desired to “breathe life” (Beare & Belliveau, 2008, p. 141) into his research in which he developed a theoretical model linking theatre with youth development, and did so by transforming the data into a series of monologues and dialogues. Likewise, this framework allowed me to breathe life into my research through engaging in an artistic process as “an embodied encounter constituted through visual and textual *understandings and experiences* rather than mere visual and textural *representations*” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 902). Furthermore, as a mode of inquiry, it

enabled me to move with the flow and re/configure questions as the process un/folded. Although at times this open process was confusing, overwhelming and messy, it was full of growth. A/r/tographer de Cosson (2003) pointed out “it is in the messiness we learn” (p. 222). Overall, living inquiry provides an opportunity to embrace the “complexity and contradictions of relations between people, things, and understandings of life experiences” (Beare, 2009, p. 164).

Contiguity. A/r/tographers inquire into the different identities of artist, researcher and teacher and what it means to be an artist/researcher/teacher inhabiting the “in-between spaces, spaces that are neither this nor that, but this and that” (Pinar, 2004, p. 9). It directs the focus on what happens when people dwell in knowing, doing and making without losing one for the other (Irwin, 2004, p. 28). A/r/tography encourages practitioners, to beware of dualistic thinking and to explore the interconnectivity of differences, opposites, and unknowns (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxviii). Contiguity emphasizes the dis/connections between the various roles embedded within a/r/tography. Roles are seen, not as separate and distinct, but interweaving; connecting and not connecting. It is in the movement in-between and not privileging one role over another that new insight into identity formation can be gained. Beare (2009) experienced identity re/formation in his work. He was struggling to decide when the drama process was learner centred, teacher centred, or production centred when instead he began “to understand the richness of examining in-between binaries, categories, and contradictions” (Beare, 2009, p. 166). As a result, he gained new insight to himself as a practitioner and was able to take a more holistic approach to being rather than strive to privilege learners or teachers or production as central to the experience. Furthermore, through the rendering

of contiguity he gained a lens to reframe conflict. Noting the nature of unpredictable changes and emerging problems in doing collective creation (i.e., new script ideas, sick actors, lack of audience reactions, technical roadblocks, recasting roles, and interpersonal conflicts), he told how as a result of his experience he saw challenges “less as a problem to be fixed and more as an invitation to new ideas, new connections, new reflections, and new openings—out of the conflict emerges new possibilities” (Beare, 2009, p. 173).

Metaphor and metonymy. Irwin and Springgay (2008) pointed out that metaphor and metonymy are natural ways that a/r/tographers work (p. xxx). A metaphor is an image or text that reveals commonalities between distinct subjects whereas metonymy reveals relationship.

Considering metaphor, Irwin (2004) spoke to a/r/tographers “search to embrace images . . . in ways that complement and/or disrupt their written texts” (p. 35). In *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) asserted that metaphors structure an individual’s perceptions and understandings. Therefore, the metaphors that people choose may give deeper insight into their ideology—personally and culturally. If a/r/tographers see their roles in the academy as a journey; for example, this will lead to one set of expectations, while thinking of it as battle or game will carry a different set of expectations. Irwin (2004) asserted that the traditional metaphor in research is “theory as architecture” (p. 30) whereas in a/r/tography the metaphor of metissage is used. Metissage is “an interweaving and intraweaving of concepts, activities, and feelings . . . creating fabrics of similarity and difference” (p. 28), rather than a hard and fast framework of which to fit data into. Other metaphors have been used by scholars to speak about a/r/tography. For example, Sullivan (2008) used the metaphor of Venice to

represent a/r/tography and explained how “data as water” (p. 235) resonated with him because of its fluidity; whereas Ricketts (2007) utilized “Lugs” (p. 14; short for luggage) to describe her performance art in which she explored an arc of tension between points of arrival and departure that symbolized openings in her research. Within this research project, our cohort sought out a metaphor to address a more integrated approach to self as practitioner and the processes of the work.

Regarding metonymy, Springgay et al. (2005) speak to how relationships between things can be exemplified in text through the use of slashes. Slashes are used “to divide and double a word - to make the word mean at least two things, but often more” (p. 904). As a result, metonymy shows an intertwined relationship in which meaning un/does itself. It shows both a loss of meaning and simultaneously a realization of it. It invokes the presence of what it is not, and also what it might become. As well, it makes terms active and “relational, as they reverberate with, in and through each other” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 904).

According to Springgay et al. (2005), both metonymy and metaphor open up meaning to multiple interpretations; “allowing for the ambiguity of meaning to shift in space and time” (p. 904). Thus, through the opening up of multiple interpretations, reactions and dialogues, practitioners can enable new meaning and knowledge that is individually and socially transformative to emerge.

Reverberations. Reverberations, Springgay et al. (2005) wrote, “Call attention to the movement, the quaking, shaking, measure, and rhythm that shifts other meanings to the surface” (p. 906). As a result, “these vibrations allow art making/researching/teaching to sink deeply, to penetrate, and to resonate with echoes of each other” (Springgay et al.,

2005, p. 907). Thus, reverberations pay attention to deep shifts for new meaning, awareness, and discoveries. In her article *Identities (Academic + Private) = Subjectivities (Desire): Re:collecting Art-I/f/acts*, Brogden (2010) examined the ways in which her performance and paper was produced by, and simultaneously produced, academic identities through shifts. She explained that the

invitation into instability, and dwelling there, can create altered spaces for coming to know coming to be as academics, which may in turn alter the ways our multiple, shifting, temporal identities come to produce, and be produced, and where crisis, like life, makes different things possible. (Brogden, 2010, p. 375)

In this research, the invitation to dwell created a space for inquiry into being theatre-based artist/researcher/educator both as a collective and for my self as practitioner.

Attention was paid to crisis and reverberations that triggered openings in which words and actions rippled into an enmeshed co-creating as well as personal creating.

Excess. Excess encompasses all—“the monstrous, the wasteful, the leftover, and the unseen as well as the magnificent and sublime” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxx). Springgay et al. (2005) explained that excess is a point of rupture between absolute knowledge and sheer loss, saying,

Vacillating between conservation and destruction . . . a movement toward anything; everything returning in a dynamic momentum; Excess provides opportunities for complexity and deeper understanding; It is open, pliable, and in constant change; to un/ravel, un/write, and re-image in a continual process of exploration. Excess, thus, questions not simply material substances but also how

things come into being, the philosophical nature of existence and meaning making. (p. 907)

This notion of excess speaks to the playbuilding process as a whole. In devising, theatre-artists work with all the material that comes and at the same time engage in a continuous process of cutting away. To cut away can be likened to what director Peter Brook (1993) called “compression” (p. 11), in which the unnecessary is removed and the necessary intensified. In this way, practitioners decide what to cast out and what to keep in and why. However, the question that arises then is: what makes some material worthwhile whereas other material wasteful or to be discarded? These artistic choices can reveal a practitioner’s deeper meanings and values about self, the work and life in general.

Moments of tension, awe, humour, the grotesque, possibilities or anything else appearing significant can be attended to through this rendering.

Openings. A/r/tography offers a place where answers are not closed, but left open. A/r/tographic research creates conceptual openings by “deliberately seeking out the difficult, the unknown, the ambiguous and the unpredictable” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 905). Encounters “are active—frayed, entangled, and split open” (Springgay, 2005, p. 905). These are known as ruptures. Ruptures disrupt the uniform surface. Springgay et al. (2005) explained, “These openings are cuts, cracks, slits, and tears; refusing comfort, predictability, and safety (p. 906). By negotiating these difficult areas the a/r/tographer seeks the un/making and re/construction of meaning.

Likewise in the theatre, Bertolt Brecht (1964) advocated for this type of un/making and re/construction of meaning, in what he termed “*verfremdungseffekt*” (p. 99). Brecht’s *verfremdungseffekt* has been translated in various ways, for example,

“strange-making effect” (Willett, 1959, p. 177), “defamiliarization effect” (p. 177), “alienation” (p. 177), and “estrangement” (p. 177). Weigler (2011) explained,

The term describes staging devices that interfere with viewers’ expectations by presenting common behaviours, actions, and characterizations in unfamiliar ways. Alternatively, things that an audience may consider strange and unknowable are rendered on stage in ways that seem unexpectedly familiar. (p. 18)

By making the familiar strange or the unfamiliar familiar, theatre makers can disrupt individuals’ self and worldviews, or what Senge (2006) deemed mental models.

Ruptures can also provide a way into looking for the cracks in the work or the blind spots or the shadows of the practitioner. Brogden (2010) noted how she worked “with shadows of embodied knowing/becoming as/in academia” (p. 368) to gain new insights into her identity. Likewise, Silvers (2011) explored her self and her professional practice, saying that this rendering opened her up “to venture inward to see what might be found on [her] inner landscapes” (p. 1). Openings allow researchers to “move within the research text, penetrate deeply, and to shift boundaries of perspective” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 905).

As a result, ruptures and openings in a/r/tographic practice allow for new dialogue and concepts to enrich the research practice. Springgay et al. (2005) explained,

Research is situated as a conversation for understanding, as an act of negotiated meaning, and as an ongoing exchange between Self and Other, and between texts and images. Therefore the intention of the imaging/writing is not to inform—as in to give information—but to open up to conversations and relationships. (p. 906)

Through opening up conversations and relationships, a/r/tography creates a space for analytic and reflexive discourse as a source of academic rigour. As an open methodology—open to change, criticism, new ideas and discourses—a/r/tography offers a way for research-based theatre practitioners to attend to the dynamic nature of theatre as an experience of the moment.

In closing, these six renderings are not exclusive. Beare (2009) aptly pointed out, “Because a/r/tography is a never-ending and incomplete inquiry process, a/r/tography remains open to the reinterpretation of renderings and the discovery of new ones” (p. 164). Interested in exploring and filling some gaps in a/r/tography in relation to research-based theatre, I utilized all the renderings and kept open to potential reinterpretation and new discoveries.

Gaps. As an emergent methodology, there is no common agreement regarding roles or meanings within a/r/tography. Springgay et al. (2005) acknowledged, “Although we call attention to these roles and the process of aesthetic inquiry, we recognize that not all arts-based researchers share this perspective” (p. 910). Even someone who founded and works with the methodology, de Cosson (2003) shared that a/r/tography “houses different meanings to all of us. The most consistent is this digging, this archeology of sifting through the layers of our praxis to discover meaning, or at least place a layer of meaning, however illusive” (p. 170). Although a/r/tography is purported to easily embrace any art form (music, dance, drama, film, etc.), visual imagery directs discussion. Limited application has been explored with a/r/tography and theatre (e.g., see Beare, 2011; Beare & Belliveau, 2008; Belliveau, 2006, 2007; Mackenzie & Belliveau, 2011; Wager, Belliveau, Lea, & Beck, 2009; White & Belliveau, 2010, 2011). In this research, I

was interested in expanding a/r/tography with greater attention to theatre. Therefore, this study adds another individual study into the canon of a/r/tography research studies, specifically, from a theatre-based research perspective.

Design of this Study

Drawing upon playbuilding and a/r/tography as its methodologies, this research project had a multi-layered nested design that attended to both the collective and individual. This section discusses its core elements, namely, the research questions, objectives, ethics, limitations, participants, data (generation, interpretation, and performance), and the framework of art-making and exegesis.

Research Questions

Originally, the two primary research questions that I began this study with were: What emerges about research-based theatre as a methodology, and in particular, playbuilding as qualitative research and, how are applied theatre graduate students' identities as theatre-based artist/researcher/teacher developed by engaging in a research-based theatre project on what does it mean to be a theatre-based artist/researcher/teacher? However, in alignment with a/r/tography and "an evolution of research questions" (Leggo et al., 2011, p. 6), my questions converged and merged to become the following: How does this research contribute to forwarding the development of theatre-based research by performing a collective and individual analysis on what it means to be artist/researcher/educator and undertake playbuilding as qualitative research?

Purpose and Objectives

The primary purpose of this study was to inquire into the praxis of undertaking playbuilding as qualitative research and being practitioner.

- To extend and adapt the methodology of research-based theatre, and in particular, playbuilding as qualitative research from an applied theatre perspective.
- To add a research-based theatre perspective to the methodology of *autoethnography*.

Ethics

Ethical approval was obtained through the University of Victoria. A Certificate of Approval and a Modification of an Approved Protocol were issued. Ethics in playbuilding as research projects are critical and need to be considered throughout all phases of the project. Recognizing the complexity and potential ethical issues when doing playbuilding as qualitative research, I entered into the research considering deeply the ethics of this research. See Appendix A for Ethical Entry into Research. In this appendix, I include excerpts from the ethics application (namely pertaining to recruitment process and materials, free and informed consent, ongoing consent, participants' right to withdraw, confidentiality, possible risks, risk response if necessary, and compensation), recruitment scripts, and consent forms.

Regarding the Modification of an Approved Protocol, in my original ethics application, I identified that primary participants would progress from exploring their individual experiences (and those of expert living or text-based informants they interviewed or researched) through the use of theatre processes and techniques. As a result, I requested a modification to incorporate specifically a 2-hour Playback Theatre session with expert living informants. See Appendix B Modification to Ethics Approval – Playback Theatre Session for overview, recruitment, script, and consent form.

Limitations

As this was a doctoral project, the scope of this research project was limited to the artist/researcher/educator as defined as an applied theatre practitioner within the academic setting of the University of Victoria. The core participant group generating initial data included those affiliated with the University of Victoria Applied Theatre Program (current students or alumni). Neither arts-based researchers nor applied theatre practitioners outside the university faculty of theatre were included as the primary participants group. Larger audiences, however, were invited to attend a data generation session and a post-performance dialogue.

Participants

The primary participants in this study were a cohort of six applied theatre graduate students, including me. Secondary participants were comprised of two groups. The first group of the secondary participants consisted of participants who took part in a 2-hour Playback Theatre session. These participants, encompassing the University of Victoria's present and past students and faculty affiliated with applied theatre, arts-based research and/or education, were invited to share their stories of their struggles as artist/researcher/teacher as well as mentoring stories. The second group, comprised of a general audience, watched the play devised by the primary participants and engaged in a post-show dialogue following. These participants were invited to offer reflections or questions on the characters and roles, aesthetic form, and/or any issues that arose for them about integrating arts, research and education. Regarding the primary participants, my sample was purposive, in that it was "based on the particular research question as well as consideration of the resources available to researcher" (Nagy Hesse-Biber &

Leavy, 2011, p. 45). The key characteristic of the participants was their position as a student/practitioner in the University of Victoria's Applied Theatre graduate program. They were all woman of similar race and ethnicity, that being Caucasian with one person of mixed Aboriginal and European roots. Their ages ranged between 26–58 years old. One participant was completely new to the group and program; however, the other five had various degrees of relationships with each other.

The intention for this project was that all primary participants would be involved in it as researchers, devisers, and performers. However, due to life circumstances (health challenges and giving birth), all six were involved in the generation of data, then five in devising, four in performing (along with the last minute addition of a young undergraduate male student in performance), five for the post-show dialogue and five for the final focus group. Within this research project, I engaged in two processes simultaneously: as an insider within the group, being a graduate student myself developing my artist/researcher/educator identity, and as an outsider as artist-researcher of the collective process for my doctoral degree.

Data – Generation, Interpretation, and Performance

The research was structured as a graduate student research-based theatre project in which playbuilding as qualitative research was utilized to devise a play on what it means to be an artist/researcher/educator. Thus, our collective cohort used playbuilding as a way to generate, interpret and perform data. As well, I incorporated a “repeated/reconvened” focus group pre and post (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan, 1997). A repeated/reconvened focus group consists of hosting one focus group and then later on a second focus group with the same

participants. In my research, the primary question I asked at both focus groups was: “What does it mean to you to be an applied theatre practitioner, specifically regarding the roles of theatre artist, researcher and teacher/educator?” Additionally, in the second focus group, I asked, “What were the moments of impact for you?” I asked these questions as a way to understand participants’ beliefs and mental models (Senge, 2006), to determine any changes pre and post to their identities, and to garner their thoughts about best practices after engaging in a research-based project. I ran the focus group in addition to the playbuilding piece because I wanted to create an opening to allow our playbuilding process to emerge through the collective will rather than to a pre-set agenda or concern for meeting standards related to my dissertation. As well, by including this more traditional research tool, I was able to garner more information and triangulate data. Although the data set may have been different had an outside facilitator hosted the focus groups, I chose to do it myself because of my original conceptualization of us engaging together as co-researchers within this participatory research and my position as an insider of the group. To me, the focus group paralleled playbuilding as qualitative research as a collaborative interview and process. Norris (2009) supported engaging the “lived-experiences of individuals in collaboration” (p. 41) and identified the need to attend to the interpersonal dimension in playbuilding in qualitative research. Norris deemed some major elements of the interpersonal dimension to be “actors must change” (p. 58), “spirit of play” (p. 59), “trust is central” (p. 60), “safety and risk” (p. 61), “no unfinished business” (p. 62), “entire group focus” (p. 62) and “ownership/co-ownership” (p. 62). By attending to these interpersonal dimensions, I believe I fostered an atmosphere for participants to speak their truth in the focus group and throughout the playbuilding

process. For example, on September 24, 2012, I was approached after the session by one of the participants expressing concern about speaking against ethnodrama because she felt I was committed to it. I assured her that I too was in the process of making my mind up about ethnodrama and welcomed the openness of examination without the need for consensus and wanted people to speak their truth. In our next group session, September 27, I brought this issue up for discussion. I believe this enabled our playful banter within the process and the play, as shown by one of the play's characters, questioning, "Am I killing theatre or breathing life into a new form?"

The research site was located at the Phoenix Theatre at the University of Victoria and occurred within the academic semester September–December 2012. All process and performance data were captured via audio and videotape and a researcher journal, which was kept throughout. Data generation, interpretation, and performance occurred over three stages, according to Schechner's (2003) *Performance Theory*.

1. Pre-performance. First, on September 17, 2012, a researcher-facilitated focus group inquired into how core participants saw themselves in their roles at the beginning of the research project. This was a 1.5-hour recorded session. Data were used as a baseline for meanings. Second, the playbuilding project occurred over a 12-week period, twice a week. Each session was 1.5 hours and extra time was scheduled for rehearsals as negotiated (see Appendix C for project outline). The first phase consisted of exploration. The process involved participants' exploring their experiences through the use of theatre processes and techniques. As well, a Playback Theatre session was held to garner more data through secondary participants on October 25, 2012, for 1.5 hours (the

Playback Theatre session is discussed in Section 6 of Chapter 5). The second phase focused on interpretation through devising and rehearsing.

2. Performance. The end result of this process was a public performance of our collective (playbuilding as qualitative research) creation: *To Spin a Red Yarn*. A post-show dialogue for the larger academic, applied theatre and arts-based research community followed the one time performance on December 3, 2012. The post-show dialogue served as informal data that addresses impact with wider audiences.
3. Post-performance. On December 6, 2012, a researcher-facilitated repeated/reconvened focus group inquired into how participants saw themselves in their roles after the research project.

Art-Making and Exegesis

Combining the methodologies of playbuilding as qualitative research and a/r/tography, I utilized the framework of a/r/tography, which embraces art-making and writing. For art-making, we created a play. For writing, I created an exegesis. Within this context, I define exegesis as a commentary on a piece of artwork.

Art-making – Creating collectively through playbuilding as qualitative research. *To Spin a Red Yarn: Enacting Artist/Researcher/Educator* was a 25-minute, collectively devised, and performed research-based theatre play. It was a fictional story devised from “unpacking experiences” (Stringer, 2007, p. 98) and capturing themes from real-life experiences about what it means to be an artist/researcher/educator for our cohort. The intended audience was what Schechner (2003) termed an “integral” (p. 218) audience, which consisted of experts in the field. As a result, the audience consisted

mainly of applied theatre practitioners and artists/researchers/educators. The play stands as an artefact to the collective generation, interpretation and performance of the research. Since the play is front and centre in the research, I start by spotlighting the script in the next chapter (Chapter 3).

Exegesis – Writing through reflexivity and soliloquy as dialogue. Australian university professor, John O’Toole (2006) explained that in arts-based dissertations the outcome normally consists of a piece of dramatic art accompanied by an exegesis. An exegesis might chronicle “how the process was achieved, the way the content and form developed and their relationship, or the particular structural or contextual problems that the artist-researcher faced” (O’Toole, 2006, p. 58). O’Toole gave the example of Tony Millet who wrote an autobiographical monodrama for his doctoral degree. Millet utilized a three part exegesis: a *generic* exegesis outlining the background literature that informed his playwright choices; a *process* exegesis recording his process of writing, directing, and performing the play; and a *critical* exegesis examining responses to the art work, both as it was written and when it was performed. New knowledge was deemed to result from both his monodrama as unique artwork and from the findings in the exeges.

Recognizing a range of complex and often contradictory practices across Australian universities, Milech and Shilo (2004) addressed three typical models of exegesis: the *commentary* model, the *context* model and the *research-question* model. They suggested that the exegesis commentary model is conceived as a critical explanation or interpretation of, or on, the creative production. They explained that a weak version of this model provides only a brief explanatory annotation whereas a strong commentary exegesis describes the research framework and process surrounding the

creative piece through telling “the story of the research: its aims, its methods, its achievements” (Milech & Shilo, 2004, para. 15). On the other hand, the context model exegesis focuses on the historical, social and/or disciplinary context(s) in which the creative piece was developed. This model may include relevant contemporary critical debates and practices, which inform and position the work or comments that support and complement the exhibition. In both these examples, however, the research and the creative piece are seen as separate process. In the research-question model, both the exegetical and the creative component are seen as integral and develop as the research question is “posed, refined and reposed” (Milech & Shilo, 2004, para. 20) across the several stages of the research process. Milech and Shilo highlighted how, in the research-question model,

the written and the creative component of the thesis are conceptualised as *independent answers to the same research question*—independent because each component of the thesis is conducted though the “language” of a particular discourse, related because each “answers” a single research question. Thus the two components of the research thesis are neither ambiguously related, nor does one undermine the language—the autonomy—of the other. (para. 20)

I utilized the research-based model of exegesis and centred my dialogue around my research questions. As a result, my exegesis had two core elements: performance conventions as research practices and being artist/researcher/educator. In this way, I chronicled the way some of the process was achieved, how some of the content and conventions developed and the effectiveness of the practices discussed. I did so by writing through reflexivity.

Writing through reflexivity. O'Toole (2006) used an oceanographic metaphor to approaching data analysis and synthesis. He offered that research provides an ocean of data in which practitioners can trawl to get deeper, saying, "the Research Question is your little boat on the surface of the data . . . your trawling will get down to deeper levels till you can map the ocean floor and find the big and unknown fish" (p. 129). In approaching the exegesis, I trawled through different depths as suggested by O'Toole. I started with my research questions and then went deeper through sub questions. The data I fished and swam with were from the pre and post focus groups, the process, the performance, and post show dialogue, which were contained in video footage/transcriptions, our collective script, and my researcher's field notes and journal. My researcher's field notes included a reflexive and reflective journal.

Journals serve as a way to evaluate experience, improve and clarify thinking, and enable "us to experience in a full and open-ended way the movement of our lives as a whole and the meaning that follows from reflecting on that life" (Janesick, 2004, p. 145). For Janesick, "journal writing personalizes representation in a way that forces the researcher to confront issues of how a story from a person's life becomes a public text, which in turn tells a story" (p. 144). Furthermore, she asked, "How are we to make sense of this story?" (Janesick, 2004, p. 144). In making sense of this story, I reflected on this research in different ways.

Piantanida and Garman (1999) delineated three ways of reflection: recollection, introspection and conceptual. They explained reflection as recollection is an external view of documenting and gave an account of an experience systematically, whereas reflection as introspection is an internal view of examining mental and emotional

responses to the experience. However, conceptual reflection connects recollection and introspection reflections with broader theoretical concepts and issues. Therefore, reflecting through recollection, the researcher describes the events thoroughly as observer. Reflecting through introspection, the researcher expresses her or his own thoughts and feelings. In addition, reflecting conceptually, the researcher moves the research from the particular to the universal and the situational to a conceptual understanding. Piantanida and Garman (1999) suggested,

Instead of relying on their immediate or instinctive interpretation of events, researchers begin to draw upon formal knowledge to (re) construct the meaning of experiences *in relation to the phenomenon under study*. In conceptual reflection, interpretive researchers are resonating simultaneously with the specific context of the study and with existing discourses about the phenomenon under study.

(p. 143)

Resonating with the context of the study and the existing discourses, I was able to write, as a/r/tography suggests, with a “fluid orientation creating rigor through continuous reflexivity and analysis” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 903).

Conceptual reflection recognizes an ongoing re/construction by the practitioner from the perspective of the practitioner. Piantanida and Garman (1999) stated that it is a dysfunctional notion to come to inquiry as a “blank slate” (p. 143) because it can lead to “overly simplistic interpretations and impoverished conceptions” (p. 143). I constructed the meaning from my ontological and axiological perspectives. My core values as a practitioner are to be self-aware, cultivate constructive relationships with others and to practice creatively, ethically, and with accountability. Drawn from my own experience

and wisdom and that of others in the field, I was able to highlight issues that may only be hinted at in the collective stories. I constructed conceptual frameworks through my perspectives from the data in the study and from the discourse in the field.

As an interpretive, constructivist artist/researcher/educator seeking emergent knowledge, my findings were subjective and unique. Through this research, I am not claiming that I have identified, discovered, or verified some essential nature or *truth* about playbuilding as qualitative research or being artist/researcher/educator. Rather, this research portrayed the essence of our and my experience and understanding in a particular moment in time and place. To locate this research within the larger discourse, I used a cyclical process of reflexivity, reflecting, writing, reading, and art-making.

Writing through soliloquy as dialogue. As an artist/researcher/educator it makes sense for me to use tools that blend the arts and research. I strive to be in alignment with theatrical form and practices as suggested by O'Toole (1997) who counselled,

Our practice and our research are both full of audacity. The conferences where we share and exchange these imbued by our art form and pedagogy, are usually far more exciting and stimulating than those of other educational disciplines. Our writing too should lead from the front: like drama itself, inspire, provoke and demand immediate reflection, not limp halting and laboured behind, dragging bundles of scholastic bric-a-brac for the reader to scavenge through . . . the power of the art form should be evident in the text. (pp. 189–190)

As I began to write up this research, I struggled with how to tell my story not only reflectively and critically but also creatively to “lead from the front: like drama itself, inspire, provoke and demand immediate reflection” (O'Toole, 1997, p. 190). My writing

was stilted and forced until, in discussions with one of my doctoral committee members, Dr. Prendergast, I had the epiphany to incorporate my artistic side within the exegesis through considering the dramatic convention of soliloquy as dialogue.

A soliloquy is when a character on stage engages deeply in a conversation with him or herself and the audience is able to witness this inner dialogue. Soliloquy has been utilized as an arts-based research tool (Prendergast, 2003). In addition to bringing in the power of the theatrical form to my writing as artist-researcher, I utilized soliloquizing as a way to go deeper into the content of my research inquiry. Prendergast (2003) observed that soliloquies applied to qualitative research writing enable arts-based researchers to access “a more internal, private, reflective and contemplative voice” (p. 2). Through soliloquy, I was able to explore creatively the personal and social as well as the cognitive, affective and meaning-making (phenomenology) of the experience. Soliloquizing is also a way for the reader to witness my inner dialogue and the different forces acting upon my self, psychologically, politically, even mythologically through use of metaphor and story.

Prendergast (2003) provided four examples of how she utilized soliloquies through (a) reflective practitioner narrative, (b) literature review as an autoethnographic annotated bibliography, (c) symbolic interaction of the “I” (in practice) and “Me” (in reflection), and (d) choral soliloquy data poems. Furthermore, Prendergast suggested that there were many possibilities for soliloquizing as “the chance to reflect more deeply on existence and self through the action and reception of creation through what (Maxine) Greene calls ‘releasing the imagination’” (p. 15). The imaginative way I enacted soliloquizing was through writing about my experience as dialogue. In dialogue, I engaged with key characters—the Pregnant Grim Reaper and the Mentor—inspired from

our collective play and using verbatim text from my Cohort through the theatrical device of choral voices.

I drew upon the work of Sociologist Lonnie Athens whom Prendergast (2003) highlighted as advancing the concept of self as soliloquy. Athens (1994) discussed the philosophical/sociological and symbolic interactionist views of George Herbert Mead, Manford Kuhn, and Herbert Blumer. Mead viewed soliloquy as

a conversation between an “I” and a “me”. The “I” represents the impulse or inner urge to act, as well as the later expression of the impulse in overt action. . . .

Conversely, the “me” represents the perspective of the other from which the “I” is viewed. (p. 521)

According to Athens (1994), Kuhn and Blumer advanced Mead's notion of self as soliloquy from different points of departure. Athens (1994) explained that Kuhn (1964) recognized self as a social object, whereas Blumer (1966) stressed the importance of self as a fluid process. As a way to envision self more fully, Athens contended, “The self’s fluidity must be seen as arising from our ever-changing soliloquies; while its constancy must be seen as coming from the stability of the ‘other’ with whom we soliloquize” (p. 524). In this way Athens accounted for both a personal and social paradigm of identity, which was aligned with my approach to this research. Soliloquizing enabled me to explore and bring out my inner dialogue as a practitioner considering both the personal and social experience reflectively, creatively and critically.

Athens (1994) offered “Thirteen Basic Principles Governing Soliloquizing” (pp. 524–530):

1. “People converse with themselves as if they were conversing with someone

- else, except that they converse with themselves elliptically” (p. 524).
2. “When conversing with someone else, people must also simultaneously converse with themselves” (p. 524).
 3. “When other people are conversing with us, we must converse at the same time with ourselves about precisely what they are conversing with us” (p. 524).
 4. “Soliloquizing transforms our raw, bodily sensations into emotions” (p. 525).
 5. “When soliloquizing we always converse with an interlocutor, even though it may deceptively appear as if we are only speaking to ourselves . . . one set of our interlocutors is always the people with whom we are conversing while undergoing a social experience. . . . We also converse with *phantom others*” (p. 525).
 6. “The Phantom other is . . . both ‘the one and the many.’ . . . It is a single entity because we can only normally talk to one phantom companion at a time during our soliloquies. It is also a multiple entity because we usually have available more than one phantom companion with whom to speak while soliloquizing” (pp. 525–526).
 7. “Soliloquizing operates on both a surface and deep level” (p. 526).
 8. “The phantom other is a hidden source of our emotions that can heighten, for better or worse, our sensitivity to certain life experiences” (p. 526).
 9. “Soliloquizing makes possible self-portraits. Conversely stated, it would be impossible for us to paint the relatively enduring pictures of ourselves with which we invest so much heartfelt emotion, if we could not soliloquize”

(p. 527).

10. “The phantom community always plays the premier part in our soliloquies. It occupies the centre of the stage when we soliloquize during solitary, introspective experiences, as well as during more genuine social experiences” (p. 528).

11. “Soliloquies are by their nature multi-party dialogues, in which potential conflicts of opinion may always arise between our different interlocutors” (p. 529).

12. “People can rarely be pigeonholed as either a conformist or an individualist, but can be sometimes one, sometimes the other depending upon what they are told by their phantom community . . . during their social experiences” (p. 529).

13. “Social experience is the unknown sculptor of our phantom others or ‘us’” (p. 530).

Athens (1994) noted that people “converse with phantom others, who are not present, but whose impact upon us is no less than the people who are present during our social experiences” (p. 525) and that it is during soliloquies of self that our “self portraits are painted, as well as repainted” (p. 527). My phantom community appeared as PGR, Mentor(s), Cohort, and Colleague. Through our collective creation, the characters of the Pregnant Grim Reaper and Mentor emerged. The Pregnant Grim Reaper figured predominately in our play as the “‘difficultator’, undermining easy judgements, reinforcing our grasp of the complexity of a situation” (Boal, 1995, p. xix). The Pregnant Grim Reaper impacted me immensely. She continues to live and grow with/in/as me.

PGR is the name that I gave the Pregnant Grim Reaper in my writing as a way to represent my reframing and interacting with this altered/expanded character. Mentor(s) also evolved from our original collective creation character of Mentor. Within our play, Mentor was a composite character that incorporated ideas and themes gathered. To distinguish between our collective mentor and to recognize that I have also incorporated some near verbatim recollections from experiences with my own mentors, I created the character of Mentor(s). Through the character Cohort and utilizing the Greek theatrical convention of chorus, I presented the real voices of my cohort. Reviewing video, reading transcripts and hearing memories echoing in my head, I experienced the words of my cohort alive. I presented them as a chorus of voices to honour the confidentiality of participants and to honour the collective. Although I identified my participants with their real names in the play, I did so because as applied theatre practitioners they were part of constructing how they would be presented on stage and in what characters. However, to discuss in the exegesis the process and my interpretation by extracting individuals and putting them on stage bare would afford them no input or protection on how their interactions would be framed. Furthermore, although the chorus is made up of individuals, the chorus speaks as “us,” which is aligned with how we collectively created throughout the process. Therefore, Cohort represents the verbatim choral voices of our ensemble. The character Colleague provides a composite “based on or inspired by” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 17) voices along the path and represents the ongoing impact of others within my journey, which does not happen in isolation but is both an individual and social construction. Thus, I was able to simultaneously honour the participants and the characters as they were collectively created and to, as Athens suggested, paint and repaint

how I interpreted the experience through allowing understandings and characters to evolve and emerge by way of this internal, blurred fictional/real constructed dialogue. In this way, my soliloquy performs in my writing as a dialogue.

Similarly, research-based theatre a/r/tographer, George Belliveau published articles through constructing dialogue with other drama-based collaborators (see Beare & Belliveau, 2008; Belliveau & White, 2010; Mackenzie & Belliveau, 2011). Mackenzie and Belliveau (2011) recognized that the approach dates back to Plato's *Dialogues*, noting,

There is also a long history in the art of theatre to use one or more of its own techniques to both express and comment upon the art; for example, works by Shakespeare, Pirandello, or more recently, the adapted film of Wallace Shawn's two character theatre-based work, *My Dinner With Andre* (Malle, 1981). (p. 4)

They explained that they chose to offer their ideas as dialogue to share the different perspectives and different voices at the heart of research-based theatre and be representative of the form (i.e., dialogue/interviews and playscripts). My exegesis also used dialogue, albeit fictional. My use of fiction paralleled our collective play and allowed me to discuss practice and theory in a similar way. Likewise, Brecht (1965), in *The Messingkauf Dialogues*, created fictional characters as a way to discuss theory in theatre and allowed "ideas to emerge from a conflict of opinions" (p. 106). On a final note, I reiterate, as did Mackenzie and Belliveau (2011), that although my exegesis is set like play, it "is not intended to be a play script, it is a conversation, a constructed dialogue" (p. 3).

This reiteration is important as it is congruent with my research about looking deeper at utilizing the theatrical form in its true form within research. In his journal article, *This is Not a Performance Text*, Saldaña (2006) differentiated and ranted about the overuse and abuse of the word performance within various academic communities, saying, “How dare they call it performance when it has never been truly performed” (p. 1093). My writing is not to be performed but is *performative*. Pelias (2014) explained that performative writing “reaches toward the poetic, rhetorical and relational in the desire to create dialogue” (p. 7). Attending to these subtle differences honours the craft and skill of different forms when blurring them together.

In the next five chapters, I begin with the art-making—*To Spin A Red Yarn*—in script form, which was our collective performance story. Then I shift into the exegesis—*Behind The Curtain*—which, parallel to how we collectively created a fictional story, I document and analyze through writing a fictional dialogue that takes the reader on a journey through (a) walking the script, (b) walking the post-show dialogue, and being (c) at the whiteboard. In walking the script and walking the post-show dialogue, I share some of the behind the scenes story and tell my story. I share some of the behind the scenes stories because the research participants found this to be important. For example, after reviewing other theatre-based research studies, one participant stated, “I wanted to know what was done. They talked *about*. They used dramatic conventions, well which ones and how did you make those decision?” (Study Participant). Also, as a result of this study, I conclude, in Exegesis Part C – At the Whiteboard (see Chapter 7), with a way of conceiving playbuilding as qualitative research through interconnecting playbuilding language with a/r/tographical renderings.

Chapter 3: Art-Making: *To Spin a Red Yarn*



Figure 1. Invitation poster for the research-based play.

TO SPIN A Red yarn

UVic Phoenix Building
McIntyre Studio, Dec 3, 2012
5.45pm Show
6.30pm Post Show Dialogue
A Theatre-Based Research Project

Enacting the Artist/Researcher/Teacher

Welcome to our Show!

This show questions: What does it mean to be an artist-researcher-teacher and what are the challenges of blurring together the genres of theatre and academic research? Inquiring into the synergy of roles and methodology, six UVic's applied theatre graduate students explored, interpreted and devised a piece of theatre-based research on this topic through a 12 week course. This show tells the story of the journey to understand who we are individually and collectively as we seek creativity and relevance in today's world through bringing together the arts and academic research. A post-show dialogue follows in which we hope to expand the discussion, and is really an opportunity for you to let us know how it impacted.... if there were there things in the show that made you think. Or, if there was anything that took you by surprise or confirmed things that you already knew. And, of course, it's also just a chance to ask questions or make comments and share your own stories. To stay for the post show dialogue, you will need to read and sign the attached consent form. Enjoy the show!

Cast - Ensemble

Kathie - Kathy Bishop. Kathy is a PhD candidate and this is her PhD research project. Although she facilitated the process, it was truly an ensemble creation. She counts herself lucky to have been part of such a skilled, intelligent and passionate cohort.

Pregnant Grim Reaper - Kate Bessey. Kate is currently working on her PhD in Applied Theatre and yes, expecting a baby any minute. Her research interests include ways to deepen Drama in Education/Applied Theatre practice and contemporary Argentine Theatre.

Allyson - Lauren Jerke. A recent MA grad, Lauren currently teaches in UVic's Applied Theatre Program. Her intention is to be in the Applied Theatre PhD program, Fall 2013.

June - Shona Athey. Shona is currently a MA student in the Applied Theatre Department with dreams of becoming an Elementary school teacher to share her love with children.

Mentor - Jennifer Ault. A MA student in Applied Theatre, Jenn hopes to go to South Africa for her project to experience Theatre making and draw parallels in Canada.

Participant Researcher - Trudy Pauluth-Penner

Stage Manager - Blair Moro, BFA student

Lighting/sound - Sean Brossard, BFA student

Videotaping - Sean Downey

Front of House - Alan Bishop, Larry Martin

*Special thanks to

Cliff Haman - Digital Media Wizard

Bert Timmerman - Theatre Manager

Andrienne Holierhoek, Marketing Manager

Robert Birch - Playback Conductor

Kathy's PhD committee:

Dr. Monica Prendergast, Dr. Warwick Dobson

& Dr. Darlene Clover for their continued support and encouragement.

Figure 2. Program for the research-based play.

Art may be called “research” in that as with other researchers, artists inquire into the world through particular modalities (poetry, dance, music, etc. just as conventional social scientists employ social science inquiry protocols) and manipulate materials (play with data) through which the artists discover a world. Then, as with other inquiry, artists present their findings to the public through presentation of their artwork. (Blumenfeld-Jones, 2004, pp. 317–318)

On December 3, 2012, our cohort performed our findings to the public as advertised through word of mouth and the posted invitation poster (see Figure 1). As a way of framing the play, we provided a program to audience members as they entered (see Figure 2). The script that follows was the play we devised collectively with regards to the research questions: What does it mean to be an artist/researcher/teacher and what are the challenges of blurring together the genres of theatre and academic research? The script is single-spaced and in present tense because it aligns with a script layout rather than conforming to the American Psychological Association’s (2010) format style.

Script of *To Spin A Red Yarn*

Characters

KATHIE, THE RESEARCHER – A researcher presenting a theatre-based research play.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER – Antagonist to Kathie, personifying artistic creation.

ALLYSON – Protagonist of Kathie’s theatre-based research play. Applied theatre graduate student.

JUNE – Sister to Allyson. Actor in the community.

MENTOR – Mentor to Allyson. Professor in the academy.

The characters wear basic costumes, which are black accentuated with red.

Setting

The McIntyre Studio, affectionately referred to by students as “the Mac,” is not a traditional theatre with a proscenium arch but a flexible black box studio space. Audience seating has been pre-set in a V-shape, creating an intimate performance space. The walls are draped in black curtains. The seating faces a white board on wheels. Next to the white board is a staircase leading up to a second level. On the white board, a red thread is drawn as if twirling from corner to corner. Three black cubes are on the stage and in the corner by the staircase is a white laundry basket full of red knitted sweaters.

1. PRE SHOW

KATHY/KATHIE enters, reading from her clipboard, welcoming people to the show and giving a preamble about last minute changes: Kate, who was playing the pregnant grim reaper, gave birth the day before to a beautiful baby girl. As a result, Jenn, who was playing the Mentor, stepped in as the Pregnant Grim Reaper and Blair, our stage manager, played the part of the Mentor.

KATHIE: The story you are about to see didn't start here. Won't end here. But here we are.

Unbeknownst to Kathie, the Pregnant Grim Reaper starts descending from the staircase. In her hand is a mop/scythe.

KATHIE: It's not just a play for a play's sake
but a play for extra-theatrical purposes.

That being theatre-based research.

Kathie hears something. Pregnant Grim Reaper freezes then continues to sneak up on her.

KATHIE: This project explores integrating the roles of researcher, theatre-based artist and teacher

and the various tensions between those roles within institutions and/or contexts.

We are interested in your thoughts and feedback and we invite you to stay after the show. In order to stay for our post-show dialogue everyone needs to fill out the consent form in your program.

Pregnant Grim Reaper startles Kathie by grabbing butt cheeks.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Yeah, I got something too.

KATHIE: Who are you? What are you doing?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Isn't it obvious? I got some questions for them too. Vanna!

Shona enters and flips the white board. Written are three questions: Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Check it out. This is a test. And, you'll all be graded . . . eventually. *Pregnant Grim Reaper mimes cutting her throat.*

KATHIE: Am I going to die?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Yes. *(Beat.)* But not today. Don't worry, Kathy I'm not here for you. I'm here for your show.

KATHIE: What are you talking about. So am I.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: No, you killed it. Now it's a funeral.

KATHIE: *(sputtering)* How can you say that? You haven't even seen the play yet. *Pregnant Grim Reaper mimes sleeping, snores.* It explores the roles – of being researcher, educator *and* theatre-based artist.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: I know I heard you. And why those roles? I mean you're a mom. *Pregnant Grim Reaper mimes mop/scythe as baby.* Isn't that important to you? Where's that in your play?

KATHIE: I can't put that in the play, it's beyond the research question.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Ding! Ding! Ding! *Pregnant Grim Reaper bounces mop/scythe up in the air – that's the problem. Theatre is bigger than that; it is about life and death. (Winks at audience.)*

KATHIE: But in this box, you can play with ideas. The rehearsal space as a lab can be used to generate and interpret data; the stage for characters dramatize it. *Pregnant Grim Reaper mimes blah, blah, blah.*

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: I know, I've been watching you *(reading the clipboard over Kathie's shoulder)* 90% . . . verbatim extracts . . . necessary to comfortably label the play "ethnodramatic." . . . Why the hell would you call a play anything but a play? Sounds like a fancy presentation to me.

KATHIE: Theatre can entertain AND do other things.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Here we go again.

KATHIE: *(preaching)* . . . teach, address findings, build communities, provoke social change, provide a message . . . *Pregnant Grim Reaper cuts Kathie off.*

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Messages! They're not stupid!

KATHIE: Oh. *(To audience)* Sorry. *(To Pregnant Grim Reaper)* You did this! Killing time. We need to get on with the show.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Don't worry. Time doesn't die . . . other things do. Let's put this thing out of its misery. *Starts to mop Kathie off the stage.*

KATHIE: Wait! Am I killing theatre or breathing life into a new form?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Now, I like that question. Maybe I can help you. You know I always get such a bad rap . . . but I'm really full of ideas too, really ripe with possibilities, bursting with potential. I mean, there's stuff cooking in this oven. . . . Let's give birth to something new. . . .

KATHIE: Fine. Why don't you stay and watch.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Okay.

KATHIE: Sit there.

Pregnant Grim Reaper sits in the audience. On stage, Kathie goes to the white board and flips it. It now has a picture of a window drawn in a red marker. She pushes out the laundry basket full of red sweaters to center stage. Then, she leaves the stage and sits beside the Pregnant Grim Reaper in the audience.

KATHIE: Okay, let's watch.

2. THE IDEA

Stage is silent and black except for a spotlight shining on the laundry basket. The basket starts to move and rock. Allyson buried in the hamper under various red knitted sweaters, pops out. She stands strong, smiling with inspiration. After a moment, she scoops the sweater pile into the laundry basket and takes it over to the "table" of three black cubes and starts folding them. June enters.

3. TELLING JUNE

ALLYSON: June! I am so glad you are home. I have been waiting for you all day. I figured out my research project!

JUNE: Great.

ALLYSON: *(not noticing June's mood)* I'm going to study how the artist's, teacher's, and researcher's roles collide within an applied theatre practitioner. Do they have the same processes? Are they different? I don't know why I didn't think of it before. I've

always been interested in studying innovators. This could be cutting edge for applied theatre practitioners all over the world. June? Are you okay?

JUNE: I didn't get the part.

ALLYSON: You didn't? That sucks. I thought you'd be perfect for it. What happened?

JUNE: I don't know. Maybe I just fucked it up. The call back went really well. You just never know, do you?

ALLYSON: What are you going to do?

JUNE: I don't know.

ALLYSON: Can you help me with this? *June and Allyson fold sweaters together.* Sorry, I know you don't care about this right now. But, I need to talk this out. I need you to help me figure out how to sell this to my supervisor. I mean she is brilliant, but she kind of intimidates me. I really respect her and I need to find a way to tell her about my project confidently. And get her feedback. I am really excited about this project. What do you think? *(Pause)* Oh. So . . . what are you going to do?

JUNE: I don't know. I have a cheque coming in soon.

ALLYSON: Maybe you should find a job?

JUNE: I have a job!

ALLYSON: Jesus! I was just trying to help. I'm not saying that acting isn't a job.

JUNE: I don't need your help. *Leaves Allyson folding the rest of the sweaters.*

Action shifts from play on stage to the Pregnant Grim Reaper and Kathie sitting in the audience side by side.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Nice beginning.

KATHIE: Thanks. Is the story good? There are so many different things we could have done with all the conventions in theatre.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: ah-humm.

KATHIE: But how do we incorporate the data as well?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: We? Aren't you the playwright?

KATHIE: Not that kind. *(Beat.)* There's so much that we want the audience to know . . . and experience.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Relax. How about I do the next one?

Kathie nods. The Pregnant Grim Reaper proceeds to orchestrate. She flips the whiteboard which now shows books on shelves. She rearranges the black cubes to form two seats and a table. She beckons to the actor who is playing Mentor. Mentor enters carrying a tray with a teapot, two mugs, a knife and a real freshly baked roast chicken, singing opera softly. The Pregnant Grim Reaper adds a few red scarves around Mentor's neck while telling actor to "play it really big and eat a lot." Pregnant Grim Reaper leaves the stage and returns to her seat beside Kathie in the audience. Allyson enters.

4. MENTOR RIDDLES

ALLYSON: Hello? Busy? *Mentor's mouth is full, motions for Allyson to come in and gestures for her to continue.* Did you get my email? *Mentor nods yes.* So, I've figured out what I want to do. I've been playing with these images in my head. I'm just not sure how to turn them in to research. And how to turn that into something I can publish. I'm really excited about it all though. Do you think it can work? Where should I start?

MENTOR: Have a seat. *Pours Alison a cup of tea.*

ALLYSON: Sooooo, how do I turn this idea in to research?

MENTOR: Well, words are horizontal and images are vertical.

ALLYSON: Ok. *(Beat.)* Um, so what do I do with that?

MENTOR: So, are you looking for a weathervane to tell which way the wind blows?

ALLYSON: Maybe? My idea's a bit out there. I just don't know where to start.

MENTOR: Well, what do you wanna do?

ALLYSON: I dunno. Maybe I should start with some reading? I could check out some projects that were like mine.

MENTOR: Sounds good. *Takes a stack of books from a hand which stretches out from behind the white board 'bookshelf.'* Does that help?

ALLYSON: Uh, sure, I guess it just feels like I've fallen down the rabbit hole.

MENTOR: I'll tell you a secret, all the best people do.

ALLYSON: Okay thanks. I guess I will just see if I can find something in these. *Allyson starts to leave.*

MENTOR: Allyson . . . I bet sometimes you do six impossible things before breakfast. *(Winks.)*

KATHIE: No! *(Pause)* No! No! *(To actor)*: Take this off the stage. *(To Pregnant Grim Reaper)*: That's not true to the data. It gives the wrong impression.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: So what are you trying to do?

KATHIE: Tell the truth.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: But is that the best theatre?

KATHIE: This is the complexity of what we are trying to do.

Kathie flips whiteboard to reveal a clean slate. She moves the cubes into a triangle shape. Then, signals to the actors to come on stage. Three actors go and position themselves by cubes. Allyson is in the middle. Kathie whispers into her ear.

5. DEVISING #1 – Autoethnodrama

ALLYSON: To tell others stories, we need to tell our own.

Music starts. Actors stand on cubes. Shona mimes the theme of perfection, freezes. Jenn mimes theme of new kid, freezes. Lauren mimes theme of being in boxes. Then as the song ends, all make eye contact together and freeze. Pregnant Grim Reaper stops eating popcorn.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Knock. Knock

KATHIE: Who's there?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Afraid to act?

KATHIE: Afraid to act who?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: You! I wanna see you do it!

Kathie gets up and goes into the next scene. Kathie and Shona push boxes stage right for Playback Theatre set up. Then all stand in a line in neutral position facing audience. Allyson steps forward.

6. DEVISING #2 – Playback Theatre

ALLYSON: Thank you all for coming. We have a Playback Theatre expert here today to guide us as we use Playback Theatre as a research methodology.

PLAYBACK FACILITATOR: *(Asks audience)* Does anyone have a story that they would like to tell?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Pick me!!!

PLAYBACK FACILITATOR: *Goes into the audience where there is a spotlight on a vacant seat. Welcomes an imaginary teller. Please take a seat. First choose who will play you? Allyson steps forward. And . . . ? Shona steps forward. And . . . ? Kathie steps forward. Okay. Let's watch. Pregnant Grim Reaper starts knitting while watching in audience.*

The actors proceed to make four tableaux (stink/birth/flying/piggyback point).

Shona (*stink*): Exactly what I needed to hear

Kathie (*birth*): In the end, it was all about relationship. *Kathie's acting is bad – over the top.*

Lauren (*flying*): The courage to use what you know. *Lauren and Shona smooth transition, Kathie late.*

Shona (*piggyback point*): No thanks! We are going this way. *(Kathie upstages Lauren and Shona.)*

Pregnant Grim Reaper pulls Kathie off stage with mop/scythe/hook.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Okay, good effort dear. You know everyone is not meant to be an actor.

KATHIE: But don't you want me in the next scene?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Let's just see how the show continues to unfold.

Actors rearrange the stage for seating. Allyson and June start playing cards. They use an oversized deck of cards.

7. PLAYING THE GAME

ALLYSON: It was so cool. Everyone did playback as ethnodrama . . .

JUNE: (*interrupting*) Ooooo ethnodrama . . . English please, Allyson. I don't know what you are talking about.

ALLYSON: Oh. It's a way to improvise people's stories. I'm starting to see things in new ways. This is what I need to do to graduate, to get published. It's like speaking a foreign language in a different country.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER *Blows whistle*: If you are going to play a game, play a real game – use your bodies. *Throws down Twister game mat. Right Hand Blue. Allyson and June each find a blue spot to place their right hand on.*

ALLYSON: I'm just trying to play the game.

JUNE: I don't believe in playing games to get ahead.

ALLYSON: Oh yeah. People working in the industry never play games?

JUNE: I don't.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Right Foot Yellow. *Allyson and June find a yellow spot to place their right foot on.*

ALLYSON: And how much do you work?

JUNE: What's that supposed to mean?

ALLYSON: I'm saying . . . no matter where you work there are politics . . .

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Left Hand Blue. *Allyson and June each find a blue spot to place their left hand on. Their bodies start to twist and manoeuvre over each other.*

ALLYSON: . . . hoops you jump through and you need to figure them out if you want to work more.

JUNE: Oh, I see.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Left foot green.

JUNE: Spare me the lectures, professor. You never had the balls to do what I do. So don't talk to me about an industry you know nothing about.

ALLYSON: Okay.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Right hand red.

JUNE: Fine.

ALLYSON: Fine.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Left hand blue.

ALLYSON (*arched back and looking down at June*): I'm sick of you looking down at me! I love what I do. And I'm good at it.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Left hand yellow.

Allyson extends her hand and falls down; both collapse onto the mat.

Stage goes black. Shona takes mat, flips white board to reveal bookshelf.

Lights up: Allyson sitting on cube drinking tea with Mentor.

8. DEVISING/MENTOR SUPPORT

ALLYSON: Thanks for agreeing to meet with me on such short notice. My rehearsals have been going great up until now, but yesterday things really went sideways.

Shona (*enters off to the side, spotlighted as a flashback*): Allyson, I'd really like to explore something. I think the experiences you have as a child can deeply affect you.

ALLYSON: (*to Mentor*) I am afraid that everything that I thought that I knew is wrong.

Shona (*flashback continues*): So I've kind of prepared something to show, but I need your help. Just act out the part of my father as I tell the story.

MENTOR (*to Allyson*): Everyone doubts. We all fall down. And bold action in the face of uncertainty is terrifying, but necessary in the pursuit of great work.

ALLYSON: I just didn't know how to stop it – or if I should at all. I mean I am the one who encouraged her to share personal stories. I wanted to honour her experience and let her tell her story, but I just didn't know what to do.

MENTOR: I understand.

ALLYSON: But do I have to put that in the play?

MENTOR: It's up to you.

ALLYSON: I guess my dream of safety has to disappear.

Allyson and Mentor freeze. Lights go black. In dark, Mentor leaves stage. Allyson remains sitting alone on the cube. Spotlight turns on Kathie and Pregnant Grim Reaper.

9. BATTLING IT OUT

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Why so sad?

KATHIE: We have to be careful with people's stories.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Come on, she couldn't hurt a fly!

Pregnant Grim Reaper goes onto the stage. Stage Lights come up. Pregnant Grim Reaper pulls Allyson up from sitting on the cube to a standing position.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Look she's a mess. *Pregnant Grim Reaper starts pulling at the threads on Allyson's sweater. Kathy goes onto the stage.*

KATHIE: That's what I am saying! This work is messy!

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: So the show must go on?

KATHIE: Yes! But not like it always has.

Pregnant Grim Reaper starts unravelling the threads on Allyson's sweater. She then takes a pair of scissors out and starts cutting chunks off it.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: What are you suggesting? A bit here. (*Snip.*) A bit there. (*Snip.*) Shakespeare's heart? (*Snip.*) Darwin's mind? (*Snip.*) Brad Pitt's ass! Are you going to stitch them altogether?

KATHIE: No! Not stitch! I want their spirits to live in all contexts! *Kathie goes to black cube and steps up on it. Pregnant Grim Reaper pushes Allyson to the floor.* Romans, countrymen, and lovers, hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear.

As they continue to battle, Pregnant Grim Reaper gets the laundry basket and pours a tangled mess of red yarn, red sweaters and blankets over Allyson as she is on the ground.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Will you ha' the truth on't?

KATHIE: Tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune . . .

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Or, to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them. To die . . .

KATHIE: to sleep, perchance to BIRTH SOMETHING NEW! I am not sewing dead parts together to create a Frankenstein. In order to understand, to be a catalyst of change, I am channelling an ocean of ideas!

Kathie and Pregnant Grim Reaper both stare silently upwards in the same direction as if seeing a vision. Pregnant Grim Reaper offers Kathie her hand to step down from the cube. Kathie takes her hand and steps down.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Hey, I have a question for you: When is theatre research and research art? *Pregnant Grim Reaper turns on her heels and exits the stage.*

KATHIE (*chasing after Pregnant grim reaper*): What? Wait . . .

Allyson remains on stage under the tangled mess of yarn.

10. PILE OF YARN

The music from Space Odyssey begins.

Allyson emerges with goggles and playfully swims around this ocean of red yarn. After bobbing up and down, she looks at and pulls on one particularly long strand of red yarn.

The cast comes out one by one all attached. The ensemble takes a bow.

11. POST SHOW DIALOGUE

Chapter 4: The Exegesis: Behind the Curtain

In this exegesis, I document and analyze the research through writing a fictional dialogue that takes the reader on a journey from here and through (a) walking the script, (b) walking the post-show dialogue, and being (c) at the whiteboard. The constructed fictional dialogue that carries across all sections is between me and the characters of PGR, MENTOR(S), COLLEAGUE(S), and COHORT. Although it is a constructed fictional dialogue, it incorporates verbatim text and “dramatic composition based on or inspired by raw . . . materials” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 17). It is “rooted in non fictional researched reality” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 14). And, it is a narrative research that provides “truthful fictions” (Denzin, 1989, p. 23). In this way, I use the theatrical convention of fiction to show reality, albeit not always realism. Writing creatively in dialogue as such locates me—the I on this journey of being artist/researcher/educator—in relation to my individual perspectives and lived community perspectives. This practice is aligned with the views of Prendergast and Belliveau (2013) who advocated that theatre-based research’s “ultimate strength is when art and research inform one another, working in tandem, neither taking precedence over the other” (p. 204). Morphing out of our collectively devised process and play and into my individual writing process, the characters of Pregnant Grim Reaper and Mentor have been renamed to PGR and MENTOR(S) respectively to represent my personal reframing of, and interacting with, these altered characters. With my re/creation of PGR, MENTOR(S), and COLLEAGUE(S), I draw upon real moments to bring out different aspects of my identity as artist, researcher and educator. However, with COHORT (which consists of the six participants who speak as a Greek Chorus), I draw upon exclusively verbatim extracts

from the data, remaining true to my participants' voices. As a result, by dialoguing with all these characters, I had a diverse sounding board for making sense of the research experience and am able to suggest the continual inter(ex)change between my self and others. Furthermore, you, my reader, are offered an experience that blends artistic and research elements in writing to journey along with me through this research project and process. Let us begin.

Imagine if you will, Kathy is standing in the Mac. A year has passed since the play was performed. The room is dark except one spotlight. The studio space has been swept clean. The white laundry basket and remains of the mess of red yarn and sweaters is gone. The whiteboard, now erased, is in the corner beside the staircase leading up to the second level. The three black cubes are stacked beside it. The retractable seating has been put back behind the curtains. Kathy is dressed in black yoga pants and top, holding some paper and a book in one hand, a cardboard tube in the other. Her French-braided hair is tied with a red knitted band. Spotlighted on stage, she begins to speak.

KATHY: I write with blood not ink.

Extracting every word from my veins.

Locked away. Spinning. Drowning.

I am Allyson in an ocean of red yarns.

Alone. On this empty stage full of phantoms.

How do I bring back,

what Campbell (1973) called,

“the ultimate boon” (p. 172), the wisdom to my community?

In one hand, a script and logbook (*holds up copious paper*).

In the other, a telescope (*holds out cardboard tube*).

A telescope that when I look through

becomes a jumbled mess of colours, shapes, slivers, bits, pieces in motion.

If I turn it a fraction to the right.

I see . . .

A jumbled mess. *Puts tube down in frustration.*

MENTOR(S) enters from behind the curtain, stage right, takes a cube and sits on it.

COLLEAGUE enters from stage left, takes a cube and sits on it.

Both are frozen until engaged by KATHY.

KATHY gives the script to MENTOR(S).

KATHY: Here's my Chapter 3.

As MENTOR(S) glances over it, KATHY takes a cube and sets it between MENTOR(S) and COLLEAGUE(S). She sits facing forward and then turns to MENTOR(S) expectantly.

MENTOR(S): You should put notes in the script. Playwrights do that. Look at George Bernard Shaw. Some of his notes were longer on the page than his script was. They were like lectures in and of themselves. What about weaving your exegesis into the script?

KATHY: I want the play to stand on its own. This was a collective creation and I want to showcase what we created, not my interpretations of it.

MENTOR(S): Well, you should get someone, who wasn't there, to read the script to see if it makes sense in the reading.

KATHY nods, turns to COLLEAGUE(S).

KATHY: Mentor(s) suggested that I get an outside eye to let me know if it makes sense. I want to know, if the script makes sense from someone who did not see the play, or if there is more director notes I might have to add in for the reader. Would you take a look?

COLLEAGUE(S): Sure, would love to. *Takes the script and starts to read.*

KATHY turns to MENTOR(S).

KATHY: I worry about how much I can engage. Do I need ethics approval to discuss my dissertation with Colleague(s)?

MENTOR(S): Not to understand how the script reads as a version of your performance piece.

KATHY turns to COLLEAGUE(S).

KATHY: Thanks for doing this.

COLLEAGUE(S): Happy to. What kind of feedback do you want?

KATHY: Good question. I do not want you to tell me how to make the play better. We discussed that in our post-show focus group. We know that there were things that need to be improved. Between you and me, it was more of an open rehearsal than a play. Although I'd be interested in your thoughts. I want to know, as someone who did not see the play, if the script makes sense to you, or if there are more director notes I might have to add in for the reader.

COLLEAGUE(S): The play started off really powerfully. The Kathie character is vulnerable. It's a good set up for researcher's process. I was confused though. What I gathered was that the aesthetics are very important in your play.

KATHY opens log book and starts taking notes.

KATHY: Yes they are. That's what we were going for, an aesthetic piece.

COLLEAGUE(S): You should include notes on the aesthetics in your play.

KATHY: I want the play to stand on its own.

COLLEAGUE(S): In order for the play to stand on its own, you need to put the notes in the script.

Kathy is silent, contemplating.

COLLEAGUE(S): Was this a full play then or vignettes? What's with the numbers and titles, how were they shown in the play?

KATHY: They weren't. They were the order of the scenes and titles that originally we numbered as bits and were remnants of our devising notes. In the watching, the play flowed and transitioned as a whole, not separated vignettes.

COLLEAGUE: You should put those notes in. I am just thinking down the road, that for a journal article, you'll want to include the notes right in the play.

KATHY: Oh, I get what you're saying now. I just realized that I have been treating the play and the script as one. They are subtly different. The play is a lived experience. The script does not capture what we did in the play. I need to put those notes in. Putting those types of notes is not the same as weaving my exegesis within the play. There is a difference between adding in director's notes so that people can understand the play in written form and adding in my interpretations as artist/researcher/educator.

COLLEAGUE(S): In reading the script, I thought you were very clear with your research intention—the voice of the artist/researcher/educator.

KATHY: Good. The intention was dual though. Did you also get the intention of performance as research?

COLLEAGUE(S): Yes, but I wasn't clear about what you are referring to as data?

KATHY continues to write down notes.

COLLEAGUE(S): Your play has a through-line as the red thread, yes?

KATHY: Yes.

COLLEAGUE(S): And, your title somehow connected to that as well, right?

KATHY: Yes.

COLLEAGUE(S): But I didn't really get what you were trying to say. I was able to follow the text, but I was not able to follow the through-line. What were the themes? Often, I found myself wondering, where am I? There were places where I was surprised. What I mean by surprised is that you lost me. I didn't know how this connected back to what you said you were going to do.

KATHY: Where were those places?

COLLEAGUE(S): I wasn't sure about what was happening in Devising #1 and Devising #2. For Devising #2, did you do Playback Theatre with the audience then?

KATHY: No. This was our representation of the Playback sessions we had done prior.

COLLEAGUE(S): How did you show the Playback headings?

KATHY: We didn't. They were the titles that we gave to the tableaux we created representing some of the themes raised. They were there as references for ourselves as performers. I would clean this up in a revised script.

COLLEAGUE(S): There were other things I wondered about too. I wondered about the characters and the actual use of names—why the dichotomy with the Kathy/Kathie character, was that actually you? I wondered about the Pregnant Grim Reaper was this just someone trying to be clever? I wondered about some of the lines. What was an actual line, and what was fictionalized? Was the intention that the script evidenced what you did—verbatim? Or was it a model for others to pick up, to be able to do? And, I was curious about what came up in the post-show dialogue.

KATHY: I will include that. I see the post-show dialogue as a key component of the work because the audience has the opportunity to speak about what had an impact on them and how this enabled us to expand the dialogue.

COLLEAGUE: With it being such a visual piece, it seems that your play needs to be seen. It may lose its power in the reading because it's a play that needs to be brought to life. Did you take photos?

KATHY: No, only video. It would have been good to have photos.

COLLEAGUE: If it's going to be a stand-alone piece, perhaps you need to include screen shots?¹

KATHY: Good suggestion. I really appreciate your outside eye. It makes a difference for someone to read the play that hasn't seen it.

COLLEAGUE(S): This is an intellectual play. I kept expecting an overview to come. It never did. It was like I got caught up in the chaos, like being in a stream of consciousness of what you were discovering as self as artist/researcher/educator. Your question at the end, "When is theatre research and research art?" was an amazing question. I think this is actually what you are trying to answer in your play. Maybe it needs to come sooner? All

¹ See Appendix D for screen shots from *To Spin A Red Yarn* (with a YouTube link to a video of play).

the while remarking that it is a great final line. What I was left with was that research-based theatre is messy. That there are a lot of questions unanswered.

KATHY: Yes, we didn't want to package up everything in a tidy 'Hollywood' ending. We wanted to raise the questions and provoke dialogue.

COLLEAGUE(S): But as a researcher, it's important to have answers. It's great to raise questions—and more questions always come up—but there are answers too. You had answers too, didn't you?

They freeze. Stage goes black. COLLEAGUE(S) and MENTOR(S) exit and KATHY moves to centre stage. Spotlight on KATHY. PGR enters from behind the curtain and stands behind KATHY with arms positioned as if hands of a clock. As KATHY speaks, PGR makes ticking sounds.

KATHY: Of course, I have answers. I am just not sure what *the* answers are.

KATHY acts out the following cycle of movement:

She looks through her journal.

Looks through the script.

Picks up the cardboard tube. Puts it to her eye like a telescope.

Writes on paper.

Crumples paper and throws it away.

Repeats four times.

Each time she changes the speed—doing it at a regular pace, then slow, slower and painfully slow. Each time the PGR makes ticking sounds to correspond with KATHY's movements.

On the fourth cycle, KATHY lays down on the floor, staring at the ceiling.

MENTOR(S) enters.

MENTOR(S): Need a pep talk?

KATHY: Why is it taking me so long to write this up?

MENTOR(S): Have you ever done a PhD before?

KATHY: No.

MENTOR(S): That's why.

KATHY gets up and repeats the cycle of movement:

She looks through her journal.

Looks through the script.

Picks up the cardboard tube. Puts it to her eye like a telescope.

Writes on paper.

Crumples paper and throws it away.

Repeats four times.

Speed changes: slow, then faster, and faster pace until in a frenzy of movement.

Each time the PGR makes ticking sounds to correspond with KATHY's movements.

On the fourth cycle, KATHY collapses on the floor in a curled ball.

KATHY: Why is it taking me so long to write this up?

MENTOR(S): I have found that students consistently underestimate the time it takes to do doctoral research. There is a reason they give you seven years to complete it. It's not an arbitrary number. Well it is, and it's not. It takes time to do. It's not a fast fry, but a slow cook.

KATHY gets up and goes through the cycle of movement again:

She looks through her journal.

Looks through the script.

Picks up the cardboard tube. Puts it to her eye like a telescope.

Writes on paper.

Crumples paper and throws it away.

Repeats four times: at a regular pace, then slow, then faster, then painfully slow.

Each time the PGR makes ticking sounds to correspond with her movements.

KATHY sits down and looks at MENTOR(S).

KATHY: Why is it taking me so long to write this up? As a businesswoman and educator, I pride myself in getting things done. I set tasks and deadlines. I meet them. Writing this research up, my deadlines keep shifting. Why is it taking me so long to write it up?

MENTOR(S): Doing arts-based research is not for the faint of heart. You are engaging in a different way of doing. You didn't choose the traditional research road where it's clearly laid out with a literature review, findings, and recommendations. You chose this one. To blend research and creativity. You have to walk it. You are walking it.

KATHY: But what can I say? I mean we explored what it means to be an artist/researcher/educator but it means different things to different people.

MENTOR(S): Sure. And, you're still looking at it from an old worldview. One, that Eisner (1997) pointed out, in which "we prefer our knowledge solid and like our data hard. It makes for a firm foundation, a secure place on which to stand. Knowledge as a process, a temporary state, is scary to many" (p. 7). You don't have to give an answer. You don't have to say definitively this is what an artist/researcher/educator is. You have to give an analysis. What happened in this time and place?

KATHY: So it is legitimate to speak to movement and process?

KATHY gets up and goes through cycle of movement:

She looks through her logbook.

Looks through the script.

Picks up the cardboard tube. Puts it to her eye.

Writes on paper.

Writes on more paper.

Repeats four times – This time, halfway through the first cycle, the PGR initiates the change in tempo with ticking—regular, slow, fast, regular—and KATHY responds then stops and looks expectantly at PGR.

PGR takes script. Goes behind the whiteboard and drags out a five-foot roll of paper.

PGR ceremoniously taps the roll of paper with the script. PGR motions to MENTOR(S) and together they roll out “the script.”

MENTOR(S): Walk us through it.

Chapter 5: Exegesis A: Walking the Script

So dear reader, we continue on the journey with the PGR, MENTOR(s), COHORT, and me venturing forward in an unconventional format. This upcoming part is laid out with two columns. In the left-hand column is the script of the play *To Spin A Red Yarn* that you read in Chapter 3. In the right-hand column is my Exegesis A: Walking the Script. In this column, the characters spring to life to discuss the play and how some of the conventions and themes were evoked and evolved. In this form, I hope to give you a sense of walking the script along with the characters and being part of the action. In this format, I am also seeking to privilege the script and recognize the central role a performance piece plays in theatre-based research while interconnecting it with an exegesis. I acknowledge that this layout may at times be challenging to read. I invite you to approach it playfully. One option may be to read the right-hand column straight through without referring to the left-hand column at all, since you have already read the script. Another may be to move back and forth between the columns as you read and see how the dialogue is connected to the script. The choice is yours. I encourage you to find the any number of ways that may work best for you. When watching theatre, you get a full view of the stage and choose what you focus on. Likewise, in this reading, you get to choose what you focus on by having both the script and commentary on the page. So onward, we journey with the verbatim text of COHORT and the conversation of the other characters “based on or inspired by raw . . . materials” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 17). A more in-depth explanation of this fictionalized dialogue for documenting and analyzing this research can be found in the first paragraph of Chapter 4. For now, let us carry on.

KATHY starts to walk along the script and stops at the title.

To Spin a Red Yarn

KATHY: Our play was called *To Spin a Red Yarn*.

COHORT (six actors in different coloured knitted sweaters enter the stage and stand in a semicircle around KATHY).

KATHY: Our quest: What does it mean to be an artist/researcher/teacher and what are the challenges of blurring together the genres of theatre and academic research?

MENTOR(S): So this was the re/presentation of your collective analysis?

KATHY: Yes, on one level.

MENTOR(S): And on another?

PGR: A play, for God's sake!

KATHY: And therein lies the challenge—
speaking different languages and the subtle
consequences of translating from one to another.
In theatre language metaphor is a core component.
Our play's title was a metaphor for the process of
doing and being practitioner.

MENTOR(S): What do you mean?

KATHY: Yarn has simultaneous meanings: it is
both a story and a textile fibre. In Playback
Theatre, which was one of the conventions we
used in our research project, it is recognized that
stories beget stories and themes emerge. These
themes are referred to as red threads. The red
thread “is a metaphor from weaving, in which a
red thread allows the weaver to follow the pattern,
and is a common phrase in German ‘for the
connecting element’” (Hoesch, 1999, p. 22).

Similarly, in stories from Chinese and Japanese mythology, the red thread of destiny refers to an invisible red cord that is tied by the gods around the ankles or little fingers of those who are destined to meet and help each other regardless of time, place, or circumstances. As we inquired into doing theatre-based research, we recognized that identifying red threads could be likened to identifying themes in research practices. Thus, our use of red yarn encapsulated the notion of creating a theatre-based piece based on devising a story through identifying red threads or universal themes. Furthermore, it represented a more holistic way of thinking about self as practitioner. It arose out of our cohorts' strong reaction against a/r/tography's concept of thinking about the roles of artist/researcher/educator as a braided rope.

COHORT: Too finite edges. We need a new metaphor.

KATHY: The initial metaphor we discussed to represent self as practitioner was that of an ocean. We were looking for something that addressed the fluidity of the process. We wanted to convey the notion of artist/researcher/educator as one practitioner, not as separate individual roles, but as someone who engaged in the processes of theatre-making, researching, and educating. The challenges of staging an ocean led us to consider an ocean of yarn. Yarn touched on the braided rope concept; however, it was a more holistic and integrated visual since yarn is also a material fibre, which is made up of strands or threads spun together. Therefore, our use of red yarn doubled as a metaphor for a theatre-based research story and self as holistic practitioner who spins together the processes of theatre-making, researching, and educating.

MENTOR(S): And, “to spin,” I assume is about creating?

KATHY: Yes. Creating. Creativity. Creation.

Creation is an emergent, dynamic process that allows things to emerge and includes letting go of some things and nurturing others.

As Kathy is talking, PGR wanders over to the cubes and starts playing with them, eventually putting her head inside one of the cubes and freezes in position.

KATHY: At the heart of theatre is the process of creating; both in its art form (creating theatre) and its content (creating new ways of seeing and understanding the human condition). Likewise, research is concerned with deepening the understanding of the human condition through acquiring knowledge from facts and themes discovered. So to recap, the title *To Spin a Red Yarn* speaks to generating knowledge through creating stories with “themes rooted in reality”

(Saldaña, 2011, p. 11). At the same time it speaks to our particular story, the one we created in this moment in time as a result of collectively exploring what it means to do theatre-based research and be an artist/researcher/educator. The threads that we spun throughout our play were (a) path-finding, (b) engaging in a (messy) process, and (c) speaking different languages. However, the most contentious issue for us was questioning whether the integrity of the art form of theatre could be maintained in research.

COHORT: Killing theatre or breathing life into a new form?

PGR (*voice muffled from within the cube*): Killing theatre.

KATHY: Breathing life into a new form.

COHORT: Tell a good story.

 Art-Making: To Spin a Red Yarn

 Exegesis A: Walking the Script

Characters

KATHIE, THE RESEARCHER – A researcher presenting a theatre-based research play.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER – Antagonist to Kathie, personifying artistic creation

ALLYSON – Protagonist of Kathie’s theatre-based research play. An applied theatre graduate student.

JUNE – Sister to Allyson. Actor in the community.

MENTOR – Mentor to Allyson. Professor in the academy.

KATHY: The characters we created were Kathie the researcher, Pregnant Grim Reaper, Allyson, June, and Mentor. Originally, in our devising, we began with a play that would tell the story about a moment of time in an applied theatre practitioner’s journey. This was eventually refined to the journey of an applied theatre graduate student. The journey was framed with Allyson as protagonist representing the role of practitioner as a whole person engaging in theatre-based research. June embodied the artist role of actor. Furthermore, she represented other relationships outside of the academy and showed the emotional side of relationships. Mentor embodied the role of teacher, which we redefined because of our understandings that an applied theatre practitioner was more like a facilitator or educator within the community than a K–12 teacher in the school system (which is the image often evoked by the term teacher).

A banging sound is heard from PGR pounding on the side of cube on her head. PGR pops the cube off her head and stands there grinning.

PGR (*to Kathy*): You know your character was never supposed to be in the play.

COHORT: No researcher in the play!

KATHY: In research-based theatre, the researcher-as-character has been used as a device (e.g., see Bird et al., 2010; Burke, 2012; Kaufman et al., 2001). The researcher-as-character can serve to remind audiences that it is a play that they are watching and that the researcher has his or her own subjective perceptions of the world and ways of reporting findings. Reflecting on his verbatim play *The Middle Place*, playwright-researcher Kushnir, in an interview with Salerno (2009), confirmed this conception when he said,

The longer I worked on it, the more

apparent it was to me that this is a deeply personal piece of writing and that I can't take myself out of it. To take myself out of it would be inaccurate and irresponsible. I don't want audiences to forget that an artist has chosen to show what he wanted to show. I want audiences to see that the questioner is not some kind of god but a very human, flawed, at-times-nervous presence. (para. 9)

COHORT: Too obvious. Too contrived. Other ways to show that this is a research-based play. Like in the program.

KATHY: A major downfall of utilizing the researcher-as-character may be that the play becomes more about the researcher and hers or his journey than the research. Bird et al. (2010) documented their evolving understanding by questioning, "Perhaps we should have tackled the

task of representing the research, not the researchers” (p. 101). Although we initially discussed not putting the researcher as character in the play, our choice to include the character of researcher was directly in line with the content of our inquiry and the major struggle we were experiencing. After all, we were inquiring into what it means to be artist/researcher/educator and the challenges of blurring together theatre and research.

COHORT: How do we turn something so intellectual into something human?

KATHY: Eventually we utilized the convention of a play within a play, in which the story of being applied theatre practitioner could be told as well as the struggle within our cohort around the different beliefs about doing theatre-based research.

PGR: You made an artistic choice.

MENTOR(S): A researcher decision.

KATHY: An artist-researcher choice.

MENTOR(S): And the Pregnant Grim Reaper?

KATHY: A very effective choice to represent theatre interests, challenge assumptions, and bridge the different worlds.

PGR: Thank you.

Setting

The McIntyre Studio, affectionately referred to by students as “the Mac,” is not a traditional theatre with a proscenium arch but a flexible black box studio space. Audience seating has been pre-set in a V-shape, creating an intimate performance space. The walls are draped in black curtains. The seating faces a whiteboard on wheels. Next to the whiteboard is a staircase leading up to a second level. On the whiteboard, a red thread is drawn as if twirling from corner to corner. Three black

KATHY: Our staging was minimalist. Aesthetics are also core in the language of theatre. Much of the excess from our process was boiled down to discerning the essence and capturing what we wanted to say aesthetically with the use of set, props, and costumes. The set was constructed to have an intimate feel. The whiteboard doubled as a representation of educating as well as a way to create new scene settings quickly and effectively.

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cubes are on the stage and in the corner by the staircase is a white laundry basket full of red knitted sweaters.

The black cubes and black curtain were meaningful to us from our devising process and doubled as reinforcement to the notion of being or playing in a box. Our costumes were basic black and accented red. Black, worn by stagehands in a theatre, represented to me taking care of the basics and working both behind and in the scenes. The red reinforced the concept of the red thread or yarn.

COHORT: Show – don't tell.

1. PRE SHOW

KATHY/KATHIE enters, reading from her clipboard, welcoming people to the show and giving a preamble about last-minute changes: Kate, who was playing the Pregnant Grim Reaper, gave birth the day before to a beautiful baby girl. As a result, Jenn, who was playing the Mentor, stepped in as the Pregnant Grim Reaper, and Blair, our stage manager, played the part of the Mentor.

KATHIE: The story you are about to see didn't start here. Won't end here. But here we are.

Unbeknownst to Kathie, the Pregnant Grim Reaper starts descending from the staircase. In her hand is a mop/scythe.

KATHIE: It's not just a play for a play's sake, but a play for extra-theatrical purposes. That being theatre-based research.

Kathie hears something. Pregnant Grim Reaper freezes then continues to sneak up on her.

KATHIE: This project explores integrating the roles of researcher, theatre-based artist, and teacher and the various tensions between those roles within institutions and/or contexts.

We are interested in your thoughts and feedback, and we invite you to stay after the show. In order to

KATHY: Our story was fictional rooted in data from our inquiry.

COHORT: I hate the word data.

KATHY: We blended elements of themes drawn from our inquiry that we fictionalized. We also stylized actual events and incorporated some verbatim lines. In the beginning, I came out as myself, to introduce the play. There was a seamless flow into the play with the Pregnant Grim Reaper entering as I was talking. This was a way to show how the actual and the fictionalized could move in and out of theatre-based research.

MENTOR(S): Looking at the doubling of names—Kathy/Kathie, and later on,

Allyson/Lauren, June/Shona—could be confusing.

KATHY: Yes, you're right. In the script, the use of our cohort names was for our notes in

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 Exegesis A: Walking the Script

stay for our post-show dialogue everyone needs to fill out the consent form in your program.

Pregnant Grim Reaper startles Kathie by grabbing butt cheeks.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Yeah, I got something too.

KATHIE: Who are you? What are you doing?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Isn't it obvious? I got some questions for them too. Vanna!

Shona enters and flips the whiteboard. Written are three questions: Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Check it out. This is a test. And, you'll all be graded . . . eventually.
Pregnant Grim Reaper mimes cutting her throat.

KATHIE: Am I going to die?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Yes. *(Beat.)* But not today. Don't worry, Kathy, I'm not here for you. I'm here for your show.

KATHIE: What are you talking about. So am I.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
No, you killed it. Now it's a funeral.

KATHIE: *(sputtering)* How can

performance. In performance, the audience could recognize the characters not as the people per se, but as the actors involved in the play. Next time, I would not include real names in the script but instead label them Actor 1, Actor 2. It was one of the details I missed in all that was involved in this project.

you say that? You haven't even seen the play yet. *Pregnant Grim Reaper mimes sleeping, snores.* It explores the roles – of being researcher, educator, *and* theatre-based artist.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: I know I heard you. And why those roles? I mean you're a mom. *Pregnant Grim Reaper mimes mop/scythe as baby.* Isn't that important to you? Where's that in your play?

KATHIE: I can't put that in the play, it's beyond the research question.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Ding! Ding! Ding! *Pregnant Grim Reaper bounces mop/scythe up in the air*—that's the problem. Theatre is bigger than that; it is about life and death. *Winks at audience.*

KATHIE: But in this box, you can play with ideas. The rehearsal space as a lab can be used to generate and interpret data; the stage for characters dramatize it. *Pregnant Grim Reaper mimes blah, blah, blah.*

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: I know, I've been watching you (*reading the clipboard over Kathie's shoulder*) 90% . . . verbatim extracts . . . necessary to comfortably label the play "ethnodramatic" . . . Why the hell would you call a play anything but

COHORT: We wear many hats, feet in many different realms, like an octopus.

a play? Sounds like a fancy presentation to me.

KATHIE: Theatre can entertain AND do other things.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Here we go again.

KATHIE: (*preaching*) . . . teach, address findings, build communities, provoke social change, provide a message . . .
Pregnant Grim Reaper cuts Kathie off.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Messages! They're not stupid!

KATHIE: Oh. (*To audience*)
Sorry. (*To Pregnant Grim Reaper*)
You did this! Killing time. We need to get on with the show.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Don't worry. Time doesn't die . . . other things do. Let's put this thing out of its misery. *Starts to mop Kathie off the stage.*

KATHIE: Wait! Am I killing theatre or breathing life into a new form?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Now, I like that question. Maybe I can help you. You know, I always get such a bad rap . . . but I'm really full of ideas too, really ripe with possibilities, bursting with potential. I mean there's stuff cooking in this oven. . . . Let's give birth to something new. . . .

KATHIE: Fine. Why don't you stay and watch.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Okay.

KATHIE: Sit there.

Pregnant Grim Reaper sits in the audience. On stage, Kathie goes to the whiteboard and flips it. It now has a picture of a window drawn in a red marker. She pushes out the laundry basket full of red sweaters to center stage. Then, she leaves the stage and sits beside the Pregnant Grim Reaper in the audience.

KATHIE: Okay, let's watch.

2. THE IDEA

Stage is silent and black except for a spotlight shining on the laundry basket. The basket starts to move and rock. Allyson, buried in the hamper under various red knitted sweaters, pops out. She stands strong, smiling with inspiration. After a moment, she scoops the sweater pile into the laundry basket and takes it over to the "table" of three black cubes and starts folding them. June enters.

KATHY: The process of doing this work was a key theme for us.

COHORT: Process is as important or more so than product.

KATHY: We recognized that often we proceed into the unknown and thus . . .

COHORT: . . . need to become comfortable in the

uncomfortable. No matter how well planned, we need to adapt—become comfortable. Comfortable in conflict. That’s theatre!

KATHY: We showed being comfortable in the uncomfortable in different ways such as Allyson swimming playfully in the ocean of yarn at the end, as well as her text of saying: “I guess my dream of safety has to disappear,” and the verbatim line, “The courage to use what you know.” This first scene with Allyson highlighted the moment that she was inspired by an idea and was the starting point for our assertion that sometimes you have to come undone to come together while learning and practicing. That’s part of the process.

3. TELLING JUNE

ALLYSON: June! I am so glad you are home. I have been waiting for you all day. I figured out my research project!

JUNE: Great.

ALLYSON: *(not noticing June’s*

KATHY: Theatre is a social art. It shows emotions and relationships, so while Kathie and the Pregnant Grim Reaper were engaging in an intellectual debate, we devised the characters of Allyson and June to show the more human side of

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mood) I'm going to study how the artist's, teacher's, and researcher's roles collide within an applied theatre practitioner. Do they have the same processes? Are they different? I don't know why I didn't think of it before. I've always been interested in studying innovators. This could be cutting edge for applied theatre practitioners all over the world. June? Are you okay?

JUNE: I didn't get the part.

ALLYSON: You didn't? That sucks. I thought you'd be perfect for it. What happened?

JUNE: I don't know. Maybe I just fucked it up. The call-back went really well. You just never know, do you?

ALLYSON: What are you going to do?

JUNE: I don't know.

ALLYSON: Can you help me with this? *June and Allyson fold sweaters together.* Sorry, I know you don't care about this right now. But, I need to talk this out. I need you to help me figure out how to sell this to my supervisor. I mean she is brilliant, but she kind of intimidates me. I really respect her, and I need to find a way to tell her about my project confidently and get her feedback. I am really excited about this project. What do you think? *(Pause)* Oh. So what

relationships and their emotional nature. Theatre speaks the language of the affective.

MENTOR(S): That's one type of theatre. What about Brecht's presentational style? Isn't that the most effective way for research to be enacted?

KATHY: That depends on context, people, and intention. It comes down to artist-researcher choice. This play stands as an artefact to the choices we made. This walk gives a glimpse into some of the choices we made as a result of the interconnecting factors of the context we were in, who we were individually and collectively, and, the project's intention. Importantly, we all agreed that we wanted to . . .

COHORT: . . . tell a good story.

are you going to do?

JUNE: I don't know. I have a cheque coming in soon.

ALLYSON: Maybe you should find a job?

JUNE: I have a job!

ALLYSON: Jesus! I was just trying to help. I'm not saying that acting isn't a job.

JUNE: I don't need your help.
Leaves Allyson folding the rest of the sweaters.

Action shifts from play on stage to the Pregnant Grim Reaper and Kathie sitting in the audience side by side.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Nice beginning.

KATHIE: Thanks. Is the story good? There are so many different things we could have done with all the conventions in theatre.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
ah-humm.

KATHIE: But how do we incorporate the data as well?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
We? Aren't you the playwright?

KATHIE: Not that kind. *(Beat.)*
There's so much that we want the audience to know and experience.

KATHY: To this end, we acknowledged the range of artist-researcher choice within devising with that line. *Kathy takes a marker and underlines it on the script. (The reader can see this to the right).*

MENTOR(S): I was expecting that we would see this exchange re-staged possibly in different ways. That would *show* what you were saying.

KATHY: Yes, we discussed that possibility. In fact, we played around with the idea of using the

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Relax. How about I do the next one?

Kathie nods. The Pregnant Grim Reaper proceeds to orchestrate. She flips the whiteboard, which now shows books on shelves. She rearranges the black cubes to form two seats and a table. She beckons to the actor who is playing Mentor. Mentor enters carrying a tray with a teapot, two mugs, a knife, and a real freshly baked roast chicken, singing opera softly. The Pregnant Grim Reaper adds a few red scarves around Mentor's neck while telling actor to "play it really big and eat a lot." Pregnant Grim Reaper leaves the stage and returns to her seat beside Kathie in the audience. Allyson enters.

4. MENTOR RIDDLES

ALLYSON: Hello? Busy?
Mentor's mouth is full, motions for Allyson to come in and gestures for her to continue. Did you get

theatrical convention of *Whoosh*, where Allyson, the Pregnant Grim Reaper or Kathie would come in and say *Whoosh*, and then variations of the scene would be acted out quickly and many different times. We had many possibilities of things that we could do. However, we ran out of time. We had a play to, not only to devise, but rehearse and perform on December 3rd. In the end, it was enough for me to have the line be one of the gems in the script that I could speak to later.

PGR: Un momento para cada cosa.

KATHY: Yes, a time for everything and everything in its own time. It would have been lovely to spend hours letting the creative process un/fold as it may have wanted to; however, we had deadlines.

KATHY: We layered many different concepts and ideas through founding this scene on metaphor.

Likening the academic graduate student journey

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my email? *Mentor nods yes.* So, I've figured out what I want to do. I've been playing with these images in my head. I'm just not sure how to turn them in to research. And how to turn that into something I can publish. I'm really excited about it all though. Do you think it can work? Where should I start?

MENTOR: Have a seat. *Pours Alison a cup of tea.*

ALLYSON: Sooooo, how do I turn this idea in to research?

MENTOR: Well, words are horizontal and images are vertical.

ALLYSON: Ok. *(Beat.)* Um, so what do I do with that?

MENTOR: So, are you looking for a weathervane to tell which way the wind blows?

ALLYSON: Maybe? My idea's a bit out there. I just don't know where to start.

MENTOR: Well, what do you wanna do?

ALLYSON: I dunno. Maybe I should start with some reading? I could check out some projects that were like mine.

MENTOR: Sounds good. *Takes a stack of books from a hand, which stretches out from behind the whiteboard 'bookshelf.'* Does that

(and the journey of doing theatre-based research) to the story of Alice in Wonderland, we utilized lines from Lewis Carroll's (1865) book for Mentor lines. Our intention was to show that moving into and between different contexts and forms can be baffling as we learn new languages and ways of speaking. In our inquiry, we recognized that translating from one language to another can be problematic.

MENTOR(S): Like taking verbatim lines from one context and transposing them into another context?

KATHY: Yes, Jerke (2010) pointed out, "Each verbatim quote contains a lifetime of context" (p. 7). She explained that to cut and paste from one context into another context is not necessarily an accurate representation – the meaning changes.

MENTOR(S): Yet you took lines from Alice and Wonderland and put them in this research.

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help?

ALLYSON: Uh, sure, I guess it just feels like I've fallen down the rabbit hole.

MENTOR: I'll tell you a secret, all the best people do.

ALLYSON: Okay thanks. I guess I will just see if I can find something in these. *Allyson starts to leave.*

MENTOR: Allyson . . . I bet sometimes you do six impossible things before breakfast. *(Winks.)*

KATHIE: No! *(Pause)* No! No! *To actor:* Take this off the stage. *To Pregnant Grim Reaper:* That's not true to the data. It gives the wrong impression.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: So what are you trying to do?

KATHIE: Tell the truth.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: But is that the best theatre?

KATHIE: This is the complexity of what we are trying to do.

Kathie flips whiteboard to reveal a clean slate. She moves the cubes into a triangle shape. Then, signals the actors on stage. Three actors go and position themselves by cubes. Allyson is in the middle. Kathie whispers into her ear.

KATHY: Yes, although not true to the Alice in Wonderland story, we created a new story with these lines that was true to the essence of our inquiry.

MENTOR(S): So why did Kathie the researcher stop the scene and say that it was not true to the data?

KATHY: Originally, we devised this scene framed in the fictional story of an applied theatre practitioner working in the community. We created the character of Mentor as a way of being in the role of educator. Allyson and Mentor showed the difference between being on the beginning of a journey and attaining a level of mastery in which new understandings and language are gained and become integrated into who one is as a person, both in existential identity and role-identity. However, when our story

changed to Allyson being an applied theatre graduate student within the academy, the Mentor became a faculty member in the academy. As this was a theatre-based research play, it was plausible that the audience may see that we were parodying an actual faculty member or members. This was not the case. In fact, it didn't cross our minds. Being focused on the theme of language, we did not realize this possible unintended consequence until after our working scene was shown to others and we were queried if the character was a particular faculty member. Advocating against performing people's real stories, James Thompson (2009) identified the hermeneutic tendency in the arts that "seeks to read what is hidden beneath the skin" (p. 163). As a result, he contended that audience members may look for what isn't there and interpret actions or narratives in a way that is upsetting or harmful to others. I thought we were safe using fiction. However, despite using fiction, the risk of information being conveyed

inaccurately and/or attached to real people still resided in our work. We wanted to show this risk and unintended result in devising and, thus, kept the scene. However, we shaped it by layering it with the Pregnant Grim Reaper's quest for *good* theatre and then had Kathie interrupt it for the sake of *good* research.

**5. DEVISING #1 –
Autoethnodrama**

ALLYSON: To tell others stories, we need to tell our own.

Music starts. Actors stand on cubes. Shona mimes the theme of perfection, freezes. Jenn mimes theme of new kid, freezes. Lauren mimes theme of being in boxes. Then as the song ends, all make eye contact together and freeze. Pregnant Grim Reaper stops eating popcorn.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Knock. Knock.

KATHIE: Who's there?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Afraid to act?

KATHIE: Afraid to act who?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
You! I wanna see you do it!

KATHY: Autoethnodrama and Playback Theatre were identified by our cohort as some of the most impacting moments of doing this work.

COHORT: The Playback sessions were a moment of impact for me. I don't know what it was about that day. Just the energy. I was really in the moment, and just having fun with it and playing. I was really feeling like an artist. I felt like I was given the opportunity to play and explore and have fun. The audience didn't bother me. I felt really comfortable in my skin. I was really feeling like an artist. That was nice for me because I generally tend more to the teacher side of things. Also, the

Kathie gets up and goes into the next scene. Kathie and Shona push boxes stage right for Playback Theatre set up. Then all stand in a line in neutral position facing audience. Allyson steps forward.

ethnodramas—when you first said go home and do a one-minute play about yourself. I had been asked to do that for auditions, go write a 2- or 3-minute play about your self and tell your story, and I always thought it sounded really cool and neat but also sounded like a daunting challenge, so just going through the process and doing that theatrically and feeling good about what I came with was nice for me. And then seeing everyone else's stories and how different they were. All that was a good process for me and led me more toward the artist side.

PGR: But how did it read on stage in the devised piece?

COHORT: To me that (the autoethnodramas) was the most interesting theatre that we made, period. Better than the devised piece, because it was real stories about real people, and it was about something human, which to me is just more

interesting—and about an individual’s conflict. As an audience member that engages me more.

KATHY: Ironically, on stage, they were the two scenes that were the least “readable” by the audience. The reason was twofold. First, we were trying to represent what happened in our devising process.

PGR: Performance is an experience. Disrupt don’t illustrate!

KATHY: Second, we didn’t have enough time to develop the scenes so that the audience could get an in-depth understanding or experience akin to what we had experienced. Representing data created challenges because it deadened the creative flow in the devising process. Instead of allowing for impacting moments to emerge, the focus for us became about reproducing a moment in time. The richness of developing a scene was

stilted by calling back to a past moment instead of allowing the material to morph in the present moment. Fleishman (2012) pointed out that performance as a way of knowing “gives rise to representations but is not of itself ‘a project concerned with representation’” (p. 30). We were not able to convey the potency of the process by reproducing an image of it. Boal (2006) maintained, “The Artistic Product – the work of art – must be capable of awakening, even in those who did not participate in the Aesthetic Process by which it came into being, the same ideas, emotions and thoughts that led the artist to its creation” (p. 18). By simply trying to show our autoethnodramas by presenting them as copies, albeit stylized copies, we lost the juiciness of the ideas and emotions that were generated originally. We kept the scenes in because they spotlighted elements of our inquiry but also because they were scenes that we could include quickly and easily while we turned our attention to developing other

scenes. We were under intensive time pressures. To devise and rehearse a play within the 12-week period was already tight, but our time pressure was even more intense because 3 weeks prior to performing . . .

COHORT: . . . we rewrote the whole show from scratch. Because it was really bad.

6. DEVISING #2 – Playback Theatre

ALLYSON: Thank you all for coming. We have a Playback Theatre expert here today to guide us as we use Playback Theatre as a research methodology.

PLAYBACK FACILITATOR:
(Asks audience) Does anyone have a story that they would like to tell?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Pick me!!!

PLAYBACK FACILITATOR:
Goes into the audience where there is a spotlight on a vacant seat. Welcomes an imaginary teller. Please take a seat. First choose who will play you? *Allyson steps forward.*
And . . . ? Shona steps forward.
And . . . ? Kathie steps forward.
Okay. Let's watch. *Pregnant Grim*

MENTOR(S): Isn't Playback a distinctive form of theatre in which the founder Jonathon Fox (2003) advocated for its practices to be adhered to in order to maintain its integrity?

KATHY: I did adhere to the practices maintaining its integrity. I hired Robert Birch, a certified trainer of the International Playback school and one of Canada's longest running Playback conductors, to conduct two sessions. The first session was with our cohort only, and the second was with a wider audience of applied theatre and arts-based practitioners and faculty. The stories we

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Reaper starts knitting while in audience watching.

The actors proceed to make four tableaux (stink, birth, flying, and piggyback point).

Shona (*stink*): Exactly what I needed to hear.

Kathie (*birth*): In the end, it was all about relationship. *Kathie's acting is bad - over the top!*

Lauren (*flying*): The courage to use what you know. (*Lauren and Shona smooth transition, Kathie late.*)

Shona (*piggyback point*): No thanks! We are going this way. (*Kathie upstages Lauren and Shona.*)

Pregnant Grim Reaper pulls Kathie off stage with mop/scythe/hook.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Okay, good effort dear. You know everyone is not meant to be an actor.

KATHIE: But don't you want me in the next scene?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Let's just see how the show continues to unfold.

Actors rearrange the stage for seating. Allyson and June start playing cards. They use an

garnered were rich in and of themselves. Playback Theatre provided a great example, and I contend can be a great model of a way to generate, interpret, and perform stories for purposes of research.

MENTOR(S): Why didn't you conduct the sessions yourself? You were trained in Playback Theatre, correct?

KATHY: Yes and by that time, I was starting to feel that I was becoming fragmented and overwhelmed by being session planner, facilitator, cameraperson, researcher, and co-participant. I was happy not to add 'developing Playback Conductor,' and instead focussed on being co-participant and researcher. For the second session, however, I opted out of being a participant as well, due to all the tasks requiring my attention. I guess I wasn't able to do it all.

oversized deck of cards.

MENTOR(S): The challenge of being a participant is a sophisticated and complex process. Not to mention all the other roles. It could be the concept not you.

KATHY: Do you think this construct of being and becoming artist/researcher/teacher—recognizing that there can be other roles that impact too such as learner, activist, therapist, friend, mother—Do you see maybe this construct is setting us up? That we are setting people up for an ideal that isn't necessarily there?

COHORT: I do. When I think of any other discipline, like nursing. They are nurses, and they do research. I see myself as applied theatre practitioner. There are teacher roles in that. I am primarily an artist who does research. I wouldn't put research under title of practitioner.

KATHY: But applied theatre is theatre for extra-

theatrical purposes. One of those purposes could be for research.

COHORT: This is what I think. I think a/r/tographer is a specific type of artist. Not all artists are good teachers, and not all artists are good researchers. But one who is all those is an a/r/tographer, if you want to use that term. I think it is a special skill set.

7. *PLAYING THE GAME*

ALLYSON: It was so cool. Everyone did playback as ethnodrama . . .

JUNE: (*interrupting*) Ooooo ethnodrama . . . English please, Allyson. I don't know what you are talking about.

ALLYSON: Oh. It's a way to improvise people's stories. I'm starting to see things in new ways. This is what I need to do to graduate, to get published. It's like speaking a foreign language in a different country.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER (*blows whistle*): If you are going to play a game, play a real game – use your bodies. *Throws down Twister game mat.* Right Hand

PGR: And what about honouring the skill set of theatre-maker?

KATHY: I want to dwell in a place of knowing, doing, and making without losing one for the other.

PGR: Yet by using research-based terminology and the language of a/r/tography for that matter, you are privileging a dominant discourse. There was a beauty in the metaphor of the Twister game as it was performed.

Art-Making: To Spin a Red Yarn

Exegesis A: Walking the Script

Blue. *Allyson and June each find a blue spot to place their right hand on.*

MENTOR(S): Indeed, language has power. It

ALLYSON: I'm just trying to play the game.

shapes the way we view the world.

JUNE: I don't believe in playing games to get ahead.

KATHY: Yes playing Twister worked on different

ALLYSON: Oh yeah. People working in the industry never play games?

levels. It spoke to making strong artistic choices in theatre. It was much more visually interesting and

JUNE: I don't.

unique than playing cards. Even if they are big

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Right Foot Yellow. *Allyson and June find a yellow spot to place their right foot on.*

cards, which was what we originally had. It shows how we as individuals and as professionals can get twisted up in the politics of institutional contexts.

ALLYSON: And how much do you work?

PGR: A real power of the language of theatre is in its showing.

JUNE: What's that supposed to mean?

ALLYSON: I'm saying . . . no matter where you work there are politics . . .

MENTOR(S): Twister also showed the tenacity it

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: Left Hand Blue. *Allyson and June each find a blue spot to place their left hand on. Their bodies start to twist and manoeuvre over each other.*

may take to claim who we are, both existentially and in role.

ALLYSON: . . . hoops you jump through and you need to figure them out if you want to work more.

PGR: Or how ludicrous it is to do it all and the cost to that. There was a beauty in the metaphor of

Art-Making: To Spin a Red Yarn

Exegesis A: Walking the Script

JUNE: Oh, I see.

the Twister game as it was performed without you

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Left foot green.

having to state the obvious, like *use your bodies!*

JUNE: Spare me the lectures,
professor. You never had the balls
to do what I do. So don't talk to
me about an industry you know
nothing about.

KATHY: It's true. It wasn't necessary. However, I
wanted it in the script as a way to call back to the
concept of embodied practice in case it became
relevant for academic reference in my dissertation.

ALLYSON: Okay.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Right hand red.

JUNE: Fine.

PGR: What about keeping with Playbuilding

ALLYSON: Fine.

terminology?

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Left hand blue.

MENTOR(S): This isn't all about theatre. It is
about theatre-based research. How about merging
playbuilding terminology with a/r/tography?

ALLYSON (*arched back and
looking down at June*): I'm sick of
you looking down at me! I love
what I do. And I'm good at it.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Left hand yellow.

KATHY: Through this journey, I did come to a
place where I understand theatrical terms as

*Allyson extends her hand and falls
down; both collapse onto the mat.*

*Stage goes black. Shona takes mat,
flips whiteboard to reveal
bookshelf.*

a/r/tographical renderings. Namely, devising and
artistic-researcher choice as living inquiry,

*Lights up: Allyson sitting on cube
drinking tea with Mentor.*

generating material as excess, exploring conflict as
openings, finding the appropriate metaphor as

metaphor, creating aesthetic arrest as reverberations, and metatheatricality as contiguity. On one level, I am now, like Saldaña (2006) who wrote, “Embodied methodological praxis? I scowl, shrug, and think, “acting”” (p. 1093).

8. DEVISING/MENTOR SUPPORT

ALLYSON: Thanks for agreeing to meet with me on such short notice. My rehearsals have been going great up until now, but yesterday things really went sideways.

Shona (*enters off to the side, spotlighted as a flashback*): Allyson, I’d really like to explore something. I think the experiences you have as a child can deeply affect you.

ALLYSON: (*to Mentor*) I am afraid that everything that I thought that I knew is wrong.

Shona (*flashback continues*): So I’ve kind of prepared something to show, but I need your help. Just act out the part of my father as I tell the story.

MENTOR (*to Allyson*): Everyone doubts. We all fall down. And bold action in the face of uncertainty is terrifying, but necessary in the pursuit of great

KATHY: This scene has threads of all the themes: path-finding, engaging in a (messy) process, and speaking different languages. Perhaps the most pregnant line is: *But do I have to put that in the play?* Undercurrent to this question was the challenge of ethics when devising a theatre-based research. In our inquiry, we discussed various ethical situations. We developed this scene recalling some scenes and dialogue we devised utilizing Chapter 6 of Saldaña’s (2011) work—“*But is it Art? An Ethnotheatre Aesthetic*”—as a catalyst. We blended these ideas with situations we experienced and experiences of others to show that the answers are not always easy or clear and the process isn’t always what we planned. The character Allyson spoke our cohort assertion that

Art-Making: To Spin a Red Yarn

Exegesis A: Walking the Script

work.

ALLYSON: I just didn't know how to stop it – or if I should at all. I mean I am the one who encouraged her to share personal stories. I wanted to honour her experience and let her tell her story, but I just didn't know what to do.

MENTOR: I understand.

ALLYSON: But do I have to put that in the play?

MENTOR: It's up to you.

ALLYSON: I guess my dream of safety has to disappear.

Allyson and Mentor freeze. Lights go black. In dark, Mentor leaves stage. Allyson remains sitting alone on the cube. Spotlight turns on Kathie and Pregnant Grim Reaper.

our dream of safety has to disappear.

COHORT: There were certainly moments I didn't feel safe.

ANOTHER COHORT MEMBER: Which I think happens repeatedly in almost every play devising process, and that's telling us something—we hit this every single time, so what are we doing about it?

KATHY: What? When didn't you feel safe?

COHORT: You need someone in charge to make sure you don't look stupid up on stage. The director has to be clear. Actors never directed each other. They are directed through the director.

ANOTHER COHORT MEMBER: We do this a lot I think in applied theatre, which is devising, which is playbuilding; we work in this collective,

we all want to share our power and be collaborative in our process but there always comes a part where you need a leader.

ANOTHER COHORT MEMBER: I think the part where you need a leader is not just in the final stages. I think you need a leader when you are devising: to oversee those conventions, and think about them beforehand and build them into your process.

KATHY: A leader then as a director not as a facilitator, in this context.

COHORT: When talking about the need for director, visionary, editor whatever that overarching character is, I also think that speaks very much to the ethics. If we do not have that one strong, clear person, you don't feel safe in the process.

Art-Making: To Spin a Red Yarn

Exegesis A: Walking the Script

9. *BATTLING IT OUT*

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Why so sad?

KATHIE: We have to be careful
with people's stories.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Come on, she couldn't hurt a fly!

*Pregnant Grim Reaper goes onto
the stage. Stage Lights come up.
Pregnant Grim Reaper pulls
Allyson up from sitting on the cube
to a standing position.*

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Look she's a mess. *Pregnant Grim
Reaper starts pulling at the
threads on Allyson's sweater.
Kathy goes onto the stage.*

KATHIE: That's what I am
saying! This work is messy!

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER: So
the show must go on?

KATHIE: Yes! But not like it
always has.

*Pregnant Grim Reaper starts
unravelling the threads on
Allyson's sweater. She then takes a
pair of scissors out and starts
cutting chunks off it.*

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
What are you suggesting? A bit
here. (*Snip.*) A bit there. (*Snip.*)
Shakespeare's heart? (*Snip.*)

KATHY: It is in constructing and deconstructing
projects like this and dialoguing around them that
we can address the tensions and challenges that
may arise.

MENTOR(S): That line (*takes marker and
underlines it on the script*) really resonated with
me because some of the stories that would have
made the juiciest theatre I have had to let go due to
issues of confidentiality and the ethics of the work.

COHORT: Theatre is only profession that doesn't
have a code of ethics. Guillemin and Gillam
(2004) clearly articulated there are procedural
ethics, but they also talked about the practical
(relational) ethics in the here and now dealing with
people. There is the basic code, principles, moral
imperative, but what are the *values* of working
with people? Build ethics into a training
curriculum. I loved your article, Kathy (see
Bishop, 2014), of all those key core values that we
touch upon and work within that framework.

 Art-Making: To Spin a Red Yarn

 Exegesis A: Walking the Script

Darwin's mind? (*Snip.*) Brad Pitt's ass! Are you going to stitch them altogether?

KATHIE: No! Not stitch! I want their spirits to live in all contexts! *Kathie goes to black cube and steps up on it. Pregnant Grim Reaper pushes Allyson to the floor.* Romans, countrymen, and lovers, hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear.

As they continue to battle, Pregnant Grim Reaper gets the laundry basket and pours a tangled mess of red yarn, red sweaters, and blankets all over Allyson as she is on the ground.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Will you ha' the truth on't?

KATHIE: Tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune . . .

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Or, to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them. To die . . .

KATHIE: to sleep, perchance to BIRTH SOMETHING NEW! I am not sewing dead parts together to create a Frankenstein. In order to understand, to be a catalyst of change, I am channelling an ocean of ideas!

KATHY: By utilizing a multiple ethics framework that is relational and rooted in real life experience.

Considering both procedural ethics and "ethics in practice" (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 261).

COHORT: Ethics can be so constricting when you are not even allowed to tell the story but that is what you do is tell stories. But we can't tell them.

KATHY: Yes, what you are saying is that

procedural ethics may constrain us from telling stories due to confidentiality issues or issues of informed consent, yet as theatre makers we are

story tellers and for our participants there may be real value in telling their stories. It raises some interesting challenges around about how it may be

unethical to tell people's stories and how it may be unethical not to tell people's stories. It depends on the context and perspectives we take.

Art-Making: To Spin a Red Yarn

Exegesis A: Walking the Script

Kathie and Pregnant Grim Reaper both stare silently upwards in the same direction as if seeing a vision. Pregnant Grim Reaper offers Kathie her hand to step down from the cube. Kathie takes her hand and steps down.

PREGNANT GRIM REAPER:
Hey, I have a question for you:
When is theatre research and
research art?

*Pregnant Grim Reaper turns on
her heels and exits the stage.*

KATHIE (*chasing after Pregnant
Grim Reaper*): What? Wait . . .

*Allyson remains on stage under
the tangled mess of yarn.*

10. PILE OF YARN

*The music from Space Odyssey
begins.*

*Allyson emerges with goggles and
playfully swims around this ocean
of red yarn. After bobbing up and
down, she looks at and pulls on
one particularly long strand of red
yarn.*

MENTOR(S): Coming back to the script, I don't get the whole Shakespeare thing. Other than he is one of the giants in the theatre world. Why did you use his text?

KATHY: One of the reasons is because he is one of the giants in the theatre world. Initially, our scene included lines challenging the relevancy of plays created long ago to today's world. Although an interesting and potentially provocative idea, it was not key to our struggle of doing theatre as research. It was a rhizome and without time to develop it, we edited it out. It did serve to show another example of using verbatim text in different contexts though.

KATHY: Although in the end, we did not package the play into a tidy ending, we did end on a positive note and swimming in possibility. Saldaña (2011) echoed the notion of leaving the audience in a positive state by saying, "Regardless of the

*The cast comes out one by one all attached.
The ensemble takes a bow.*

play's story, subject matter, and themes, *end with hope*" (p. 1). He went on to explain,

This is not to suggest that there must always be an artificially applied happy ending, or that we sugarcoat or negate the seriousness of the problems and issues we address. I advocate that we need to write theatrical experiences with the sense that obstacles can be overcome. We need to know that we can endure, despite the odds against us. We need to know that vulnerable and fragile human beings can also be quite resilient, when necessary.

(Saldaña, 2011, p. 1)

KATHY: So the arc of our story started with Allyson fully put together, then moved into her coming apart, and ended with her playfully swimming around in the possibilities of becoming more.

KATHY: At this point, we took a 10-minute break, and those who wanted to stay for the post-show dialogue handed in their consent forms, and those who did not were able to easily exit the Mac.

MENTOR(S): I am really curious, what came up in the post-show dialogue.

KATHY: Happy to walk that too.

Chapter 6: Exegesis B: Walking the Post-show Dialogue

To walk the post-show dialogue, I again encourage you, my reader, to figure out which is the best way for you to proceed and read. The right-hand column provides the characters' analysis of the post-show dialogue. The left-hand column presents the transcribed post-show dialogue. The post-show dialogue was the audiences' immediate response following the play. Highlighting the post-show dialogue affirms the importance of audience to theatre-based research. As well, it shows the quality of conversation that was generated as a result of the performance. I edited the completed transcript by replacing individual names (other than myself) with either audience member or cohort member (numbered 1–5). I identified cohort members with numbers because there are certain through-lines in their comments during the discussion that may help the reader to discern the varying (and in/consistent) perspectives on the collective experience. I took out any identifiers so that people's comments and ideas remained intact while individual confidentiality was conserved. In the right-hand column, the constructed fictional dialogue, which incorporates reality and verbatim text, continues on between myself and the characters of PGR, MENTOR(S), and COHORT. COHORT dialogue remains exclusively verbatim text, whereas with the other characters, I “develop an original dramatic composition based on or inspired by raw . . . materials” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 17). A more in-depth explanation can be found in the first paragraph of Chapter 4. So as you consider how you want to proceed, may I suggest that you take a moment and read through the post-show dialogue on the left side to get a first-hand experience of the dialogue without outside influence. Then come back to the beginning, and let's walk it together. However, as always, the choice is yours.

 Post-Show Dialogue

 Exegesis B: Walking the Post-Show Dialogue

KATHY: Welcome to our post-show dialogue. As devisers and creators of this piece we are very interested in how this landed for you, what it got you thinking, anything that surprised you, anything that you found familiar, any questions you have. Before we begin, I would like our troupe to introduce themselves.

COHORT introduces themselves.

KATHY: And I am Kathy, Kathy Bishop. Both the character in and out of the play. As the facilitator today, I will keep it to 30 minutes. We will have a 30-minute dialogue. I will open it, does anyone have any comments or questions?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I thought some of the lines in the play were pretty fast; they were very typical in the experience of the researcher/applied theatre student.

They were spot on. I wish I had written them down. I thought that it meant that the process was pretty thorough to really delve into the fear, inadequacies, and doubts that a researcher would have, especially for a practice that is not always recognized outside of our comfortable cohort of academics.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I thought it was genuinely entertaining. I was afraid. Not knowing really what to expect. But knowing you I guess I shouldn't have been afraid.

MENTOR(S): Nice that you started with allowing the audience to give their input first.

KATHY: Yes, I deliberately did this to hear how the play was received by the audience without imposing our intentions for the piece on them.

First though, to shift the focus from “me” as facilitator to “us” as devisers and creators together, I had the Cohort introduce themselves.

After setting my role and the parameter of the dialogue, I opened the floor for comments or questions. Right off the bat, the verisimilitude of our process was acknowledged as evidenced by this line. *(Takes a marker and underlines it).*

MENTOR(S): What did you want the audience to take away? Confirmation? Provocation? A call to action?

KATHY: We wanted to be “genuinely entertaining.” However, in line with Norris’

 Post-Show Dialogue

There is a tendency in something like this to draw on—not even clichés—but things that we are familiar to sort of put them up and send them off and make sort of a parody of. What I found you doing was finding those things, but finding the humour in those things, and being affectionate towards those things that affect us.

KATHY: Definitely for me it was a very much a privilege to work with such a creative team. And a resilient team (*Audience laughter*). In terms of one thing after another how things would come up. And how we would change and move things. It was a 12-week process, a 12-week course. We met twice a week and really looked at a lot of these questions. What were our own struggles? Where were the common themes? How did we work? We had disagreements or at least questions of why would we even do something like this? Even among our cohort still wondered and wrestled with that. A question over there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I was just curious in terms of the cast and yourself, Kathy, with the idea of balancing these identities of the artist, the researcher, the teacher, how you experienced that through this process. Hopefully, today you get to feel like you are embodying that artist identity, but was it a balance all the way through? Did you feel yourself drawn in different directions?

 Exegesis B: Walking the Post-Show Dialogue

(2009) assertion that the intent of playbuilding is to “provide evocative texts (Barone 1990) that invite live audiences to engage in discussion for mutual learning of all” (p. 21), we also wanted to provide an experience for the audience that generated dialogue. To that end, I believe we were successful, as noted by one of the audience member who said later on, “Here we are all co-creating new understandings based on this one shocking moment.” And, it could have been more. In our post-show dialogue, two key questions came up about: (a) balancing the roles of being artist, researcher and teacher through our process and (b) the “shocking moment” of cutting the red sweater. Regarding the balancing of roles, a strong sense of existential-identity emerged from the Cohort. Comments were made such as, “By the end of it for me, personally, definitively, signed, sealed on the last paper I just handed in, this is who I am. . . . In different contexts, I address different needs but I am all of the above” and that

 Post-Show Dialogue

 Exegesis B: Walking the Post-Show Dialogue

KATHY: (*to Cohort*): Anyone want to speak to that?

COHORT MEMBER 1: I'll speak to that. The initial process, literally I had just come out of a pretty intensive, amazing, but challenging at times, devising process, and the very first question, who am I? who are we? Artist, researcher, blah, blah, blah, that really resonated loud and clear. I really didn't know. I was really honestly questioning and challenging myself. By the end of the process, and especially after seeing this here, my answer for me is all of it. It came up often in our earlier discussions: Why are we even asking this question, why do we feel we have to rationale and justify who we are? We are equal and just right professionals as medicine or psychology or any other profession, so it was a really interesting process. By the end of it for me, personally, definitively, signed, sealed on the last paper I just handed in, this is who I am. I am all of the above. In different contexts, I address different needs but I am all of the above.

COHORT MEMBER 2: And, I was like, this is my first semester as an applied theatre person. So I spent most of the time going, "I'm not trying to be mean but I don't get why we are asking these questions." That was really my thing. Because research has always fuelled me as an artist. That was

"really encapsulated my journey." Furthermore, as a community, we developed closer relationships and stronger ties with our role-identities as practitioners and was acknowledged in our final focus group within the Cohort.

COHORT: Our relationship as a cohort has been so phenomenal, and is so much stronger now. For the first time it's felt to me like we are a unified whole. Each of us out in our own little pockets doing our thing and coming together socially through classes but it's the first time, I can really say, "Wow." And I felt that at the play. I felt that at the play too. With several generations. History has come to those mentors in the room. And there's this next generation moving forward with something that I feel is really solid, valid and important.

KATHY: Although some people didn't get "asking these questions" or "the play," these

 Post-Show Dialogue

 Exegesis B: Walking the Post-Show Dialogue

how I was trained as an actor. Absolutely. Research was essential to me as a creator. So it was a like no brainer they just are together. They are so automatically integrated, that I was why do we have to talk about it? Was really how I started, and I still sort of feel that way. But I am really a baby in this process, so I don't know what it is like out there in the rest of the world or academia. That was my perspective.

COHORT MEMBER 3: Oh, is this going in order? (*Audience laughter.*) This 12-week process was great! (*Audience laughter*) I had two rehearsals.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: You did great (*Audience murmurs agreement*).

COHORT MEMBER 2: He ate a lot of chicken (*Audience laughter*).

KATHY: He ate that whole chicken yesterday and came in this morning at 9 a.m. to rehearse with us again and said, "Is the chicken here? Do I have to eat another chicken?" (*Audience laughter*).

COHORT MEMBER 3: I saw my first run through on Thursday. And then I was called yesterday at 11 o'clock in the morning, being told that Kate was going into labour.

KATHY: He won our birth pool.

COHORT MEMBER 3: I learned

voices were heard and served to locate where they were in process whether it was about who they are as practitioners ("that is how I was trained as an actor") or developing as practitioners ("I am really a baby in this process"; "probably because I am not a grad student, I didn't get a lot of the references"). Being who they are as practitioners,

these participants offered different perspectives which served to challenge personal assumptions and/or worldviews. Being new in the process,

these participants brought, what Paula Underwood (1993, 2002), Native American author and

Iroquois Oral Historian, noted as *new eyes*. In a community all eyes are valued whether old or new eyes and "wisdom can come in many ways . . . all voices are equal, are relevant"

(LearningPeople.org, n.d., para. 1). When I

compared the pre and post focus groups in which the cohort put themselves on a triangle that was marked artist, researcher, or educator at one of the points, all participants moved toward the centre of

 Post-Show Dialogue

 Exegesis B: Walking the Post-Show Dialogue

it very, very quickly. I have to admit, I still don't get the play. I am figuring it out. I figured out parts every time we ran it yesterday. I know this was a grad student production, so probably because I am not a grad student, I didn't get a lot of the references. So I am sure over the next couple of years, it will be like, "Oh, that is what this play meant." Sorry, it doesn't have meaning.

COHORT MEMBER 4: For me, this whole class, this play, was an exploration. One of the first exercises that we did was placing our self on an imaginary triangle—artist, researcher, teacher—and where do you feel that you fall. And it is always shifting and changing and moving. In beginning I was more drawn to teacher, and today and through this process and doing playback, I leaned more toward artist, which is great. This whole process has been a lot of fun for me. Research was always a bit more my fear. This process and exploring all these roles has been interesting and unique. And doing our ethnodramas allowed us to explore our own identities and bring that to play. It was a good process.

COHORT MEMBER 5: And I get the last word (*Audience laughter*).

KATHY: No, actually, I do. (*Audience Laughter.*)

COHORT MEMBER 5: What

the triangle, feeling a more holistic sense of existential and role identity. Engaging in our collective journey, we were each able to move on our own journey. In my own journey, I was able to challenge some of my assumptions as a researcher within a framework of playbuilding as qualitative research. So were others in the cohort.

COHORT: As a researcher, now this is something new for me that I hadn't thought of before, for me being a highly skilled researcher is being able to acknowledge your assumptions, being able to lose your agenda, and being able to push yourself to go deeper. I think what you said about checking your own assumptions is so important.

KATHY: Upon reflection, I see that my initial framing of artist, researcher, and educator within this process was more of an intellectual conceptualization. Initially, we discussed these concepts more like archetypes than actual

 Post-Show Dialogue

Cohort Member 1 said really encapsulated my journey through this work as well. But I will just add to it that it was a nice way for me to be able to take the space to really think about how those roles interact and what is it exactly about that roles, what is it that you do, that makes you focus more on your research work. I kind of found the very clear cross overs between all of them. For me, I started to realize how teaching is very similar to being an artist. And how you can approach teaching in a similar way to theatre-making and devising and acting on stage.

KATHY: And I would like to share some of my moments of impact, which one of my mentors—none of whom are like the one in our play—*(Audience laughter)* often questions me, constantly asking me, “What were some of the moments of impact you had?” When I came in, I came in with this is my research project about the artist, researcher, and teacher. I came in with the methodology of a/r/tography, which is about exploring artist, researcher, teacher. It didn’t cross my mind to do anything else but us explore those roles. It seemed really natural as an applied theatre practitioner that those are elements of it. One of my moments of impact very strongly when it was shared was, “Why are we fragmenting this?” Everyone in the group was saying, “Why are you dissecting this, Kathy? We need a

 Exegesis B: Walking the Post-Show Dialogue

existential or role identities. The existential and role identities started to emerge in the stories we were telling, hearing, and living. It was in the doing that I started to experience the subtle tensions between theatre-making, researching, and educating and at times the clash of trying to do it all. I touched on this in the post show dialogue with the example of wanting to be an actor in the play and then finding it could be too much to be and do it all.

COHORT: In the beginning I was thinking about the role of the director, for me I questioned a lot and how it fits in devising process, collective creation, or whatever you want to call it. For me personally, and what works best for me I am talking about, I think I have decided that in the end, that there is a need for a director, it doesn’t make it something that isn’t a collective creation. There needs to be someone who does not necessarily create along with them, maybe on a

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new metaphor. One that is holistic and synergetic.” We talked about the braided rope. Lots of time, people were saying, “Why are you saying a braided rope? I do not see us having defined pieces that we are pulling apart.” And that is part of what this (*gestures to the ocean of red yarn on the floor*) became was our new metaphor, the red thread, the theme that goes through, across all stories. But there is a new metaphor that is happening that is more holistic and synergized.

Another moment of impact for me was very much that “being comfortable in the uncomfortable.” That one of the things that we realized in terms of all those roles that when we bring them all together, we just need to get comfortable in being uncomfortable at times. Even the whole thing about one thing after another, things would happen or shift or change, and we would just move with it. We would move with what we had. That is one of the greatest things that theatre, and theatre-artists have taught me.

But even for me, there were lots of struggles between being, am I the director, or I walked in one time and said to the group, “The actor in me is feeling unfulfilled because I have no part in this play,” which I didn’t, and then all of sudden I did, thinking then, “be careful what you ask for” (*Audience laughter*). “Boy, why did I even

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little bit but isn’t fully involved in creative process in that way in people working together to make drama. Or, maybe one actor to be designated to see things as a whole, and to work towards that whole by making decisions. That’s one thing I learned. For me, personally, having that overseer, editor, or visionary, having that person there doesn’t mean the rest of the collective doesn’t have a say, it makes the work stronger.

KATHY: As artist-researcher, I started to see that distilling data was not necessarily about coding and categorizing but another process was about “unpacking key experiences” (Stringer, 2007, p. 98). For me, key experiences were defined as moments of impact. Moments of impact can be seen as fragments of the whole experience. Leggo (2008) noted,

What writers, story-tellers, and artists of all kinds attempt to do is frame fragments of experience in order to remind us that there

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say that?” So again there is a lot of being comfortable in the uncomfortable.

So a lot of the script includes real nuggets to so much more. It took us so much more. And we kept cutting, especially people saying to me, “Say it plainly, Kathy” (*Audience laughter*). “Say it like a researcher but say it plainly.”

COHORT MEMBER 2: That was me.

KATHY: Which I think is a really gift of theatre, it is about entertaining but at a very complex level. That’s the gift. So for me, it is that methodology, theatre-based research when you blur those two genres, it really is privileging theatre for what it does best as opposed to just dramatizing data. Yet we did but it wasn’t the conventional, like readers’ theatre, way. There was a real privileging of the story. A lot times people would say but how is this for your research project? Can you include this in your research project? Finally, I had to agree, in my own mind, at this point of the game, it’s about privileging the story. In order to make good theatre we need to *be* with the story. The other stuff I can do in my dissertation if I need to follow up. So knowing that when blurring the genres.

COHORT MEMBER 1: What really resonated with me, looking

is significance in the moment, in the particular, in the mundane. But that

significance is highlighted in stories that are told and written in energetic and engaging and evocative ways. (p. 5)

COHORT: The performance itself was a moment of impact, when I really looked at the people who I was talking to and thought about what I was saying to them. It was interesting for me to experience performing a piece I made for my community. I never realized how nerve wracking it is. In that moment, I really realized the importance of not only just portraying or representing things that may already be true, or that audience may already know, but also the importance of bringing something new to the table. And really new. Really innovative. For me that goes back to in the devising process, speaking to the need of really creating some content. I think we really did have a realization that these three

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at all the red, here's the through-line (*gestures to the ocean of red yarn on the floor*). I am interdisciplinary. So you walk in different worlds, and often these worlds can become so polarized. Everyone is fighting so hard for their place, their research, their paradigm, and their beliefs, which is all really valid, and sometimes I think we lose our way in that. So we often, as a company, had that discussion. So it's very exciting for me here to see in the end, this pool of red. In other words, what can theatre do that we can add to other disciplines? We have created here, created beautifully, an open, as Peter Brook would say, here's an open space, a complete unknown, just an exploration. But there is a through-line. And that's the connectedness between the disciplines, between human nature trying to understand the world - make sense of it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Just as an aside, speaking as an audience member, I picked up many different through-lines throughout the course of the show that applied to me. Not as one in the theatre department, but I was able to resonate with a lot of those different examples of how to put it in practice in real life. And I think that, speaking to what you said, it allowed me to go to a lot of different places, whether that is the relationship with the father, whether it's the relationship with the research, whether it's the

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roles aren't separated, and we could have gone deeper. A lot deeper into it. I think that idea the audience when presented with it thinks, Oh yeah, okay, and that's about how much impact it has.

We really need to think about how we use the devising process as a way to really dig deeper.

KATHY: One of the moments that spoke loudly from the performance in our post-show dialogue was the cutting of the red sweater. It generated much dialogue. Insights were shared and we were able to co-create new understandings. However, as a theatre-maker now, I see that this moment took people outside of the play.

MENTOR(S): Brecht would be pleased.

KATHY: I don't think so. Brecht (1964) took people outside of the play, but he did it purposefully. Brecht is known for his presentational style. Early research-based theatre

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relationship with the passion, they came together very well.

COHORT MEMBER 1: So just even for that moment we can set aside that need to have the quantitative data that verifies, triangulates, replicates, is valid, and all those scientific ways and are just left in the end, open and questioning and curious. And is that not what we want?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can you tell me a little bit about, because it sticks with me the strongest, the sweater. And when you took the scissors to the sweater. And what happened was someone said, “But that’s a good sweater” (*Audience Laughter*). And so, I am going this is really interesting because there’s a moment of someone coming out of the metaphor of the theatre and seeing that. I’m really interested, as artists, how or what that sweater and cutting represented. Which I can’t remember because I was so taken with that sudden interruption of reality. “Fuck, that’s a good sweater, what’s happening?” And yet, again for me, it’s an image, maybe because I am wearing a red sweater (*Audience laughter*), it’s an image that sings really loudly in my mind, but the metaphor doesn’t sing because of the reality that interrupted it. And I am just wondering what that red sweater was as you cut it apart.

COHORT MEMBER 2: For me, we talked a lot about the red

tended to use a presentational rather than a representational style. Presentational theatre seeks to establish a here-and-now experience in which the play is issue-based and seeks to challenge the audience to think about and engage in the play cognitively rather than emotionally (Neelands & Dobson, 2008, p. 38). On the other hand, representational theatre seeks to provide the audience with an experience of realism—specific to a particular time, place, and story. The characters live on stage to be viewed and the audience is drawn into their world. In our piece, our story was representational, and by an audience member yelling out, “but that’s a good sweater,” it was more about the sweater than the metaphor. It did not keep the integrity of the moment within the play itself. It broke the magic of theatre, when that wasn’t our intention.

PGR: Yup, you didn’t pull it off.

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sweaters all being intact at the beginning and falling apart at the end. It was the idea that when you walk into something, and I can speak to this as being new, you think you got it all figured out, you know what you are going to do and how it's going to go, and you basically fall apart. And you go, Ah, I really have no idea, at certain points. So it's sort of that idea like you gotta cut apart and then put back together sort of what you come to with. Sort of like chopping up your idea of what was whole, for me. And then you have to find the strings and bring them back together. So starting with something that was whole and then fell apart.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: But it didn't fall apart, it was cut apart, deliberately. If you were to do this again, and as it opened I thought this is an interesting thing to do for sure, with some more work, but I would love to see that metaphor.

KATHY: So, I am not sure if another of our cohort wants a chance to speak, but just to let you know, we did not start with cutting the sweater. One of our cohort members sought out sweaters that we could unravel, so it was a pulling apart of the sweater. It was just simply the sweater would not pull apart. (*Audience laughter.*) It would not unravel nicely. So again to try and demo we cut. And part of that was then also saying what are trying to do, cut a part of

MENTOR(S): And still good came out of it.

KATHY: Yes, the value of misperformance.

Prendergast (2014) addressed the notions of misperformance and the poetics of failure, within the field of performance studies, highlighting “how (un)planned mistakes, errors, even disasters may befall those who perform, including the ever-pressing potential aesthetic disaster of a failed performance” (p. 77), and asking, “How do these aspects of performance affect both performer and spectator, whether intended or not?” (p. 77). As a researcher and educator I was excited by the dialogue it generated and the different perspectives raised about the content (of being and becoming artist/researcher/educator). As a theatre-maker, I was disappointed that the convention didn't work. However, it created an opening for me to look deeper at how aesthetic arrest happens in theatre and the reverberations it creates. I talk more about this at the whiteboard (Chapter 7) when

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Shakespeare here. So that is where we went. But really it was suppose to be a more gentle unravelling.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: But that Audience member is right, Kathy. It reads so differently when it is cut. Unravelling is one thing. Cutting is another, and I don't know . . .

AUDIENCE MEMBER: As a knitter, I just offer, it will unravel from the top, but not unravel from the bottom.

(Audience OOOing and Ahhhing)

COHORT MEMBER 5: Some knitter I am.

AUDIENCE: Needed to do more research. *(Audience laughter.)* More research. Research.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I actually really liked all of that part. As someone who had to do a performance for my masters, the cutting apart of theories, bits of things, to patch it together again and then the argument . . . the line was, "But I don't wanna put it together in some crazy patchwork." I almost thought you *(addressing person who called out "But that's a good sweater")* were planted, to be honest, because of the play. Because that is always the argument. But this is a really great theory, and I really like this or this is a really great method and then, oh, to cut it apart. It is always

considering aesthetic arrest as reverberations and showed how a variety of meanings and

perspectives emerged ranging from self, theories, artistic conventions, artistic conventions as research practices, to co-construction of knowledge.

MENTOR: You pulled out new threads?

KATHY: Those post-show dialogue threads were interconnected with our plays' threads of path-finding, speaking different languages and engaging in a (messy) process. An example is the audience member who relayed her own experience, saying "I almost started to do this [cutting and starting again] to myself too because by the end I was in pieces." This comment of self spoke to path-finding as a personal journey and having *the courage to use what you know* which goes back to, and was a verbatim line from, our play. Furthermore, it suggested the impact, both

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that debate between qualitative, quantitative. Do we add them together? I don't know. It's all part of the conversation. And I think, as the metaphor of theatre, part of the theatre, just as much is the audience and the audience experience. And how that impacts what is going on stage. Or doesn't. Or does it. So it's the ongoing conversation that I really heard. As someone who is going into do some research again, all those things are what you play with - the break down, the building up, the multifaceted sides, the many roles that we are, not just now as workers in the field, but people who are then going to become mothers, wives, or, or, or . . . so there was all that present. I thought it was a very nice piece.

COHORT MEMBER 5: I think it is interesting that we had a very good idea and a comment to make but in that case the artistry of it didn't quite work. It just shows the there is always that tension between things. I think it shows the importance of having an audience and having feedback.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: That's why you do tryouts. That's what it's all about. These conversations are the really interesting thing for actors. So where do you go from here with this? I think, bouncing off what you are saying, there is a whole series of wonderful new ideas, sitting there waiting for you to go "Ah, this is what it is! It's

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constructive and destructive by others as we path- find. As for language, one audience member identified the challenge through posing the questions "am I staying true to the form of theatre with all its potential magnificence and aesthetics or am I trying to jazz up boring old research? Not that research is boring old research," which touched on theories, artistic conventions and artistic conventions as research practices. As for engaging in a (messy) process, audience members shared "the cutting apart of theories, bits of things to patch it together again" and not knowing whether to add them together and the confusion of "a lot of these things don't work" and of having to "dump your agenda . . . [because] . . . that's the essence of the work" which all spoke to co-construction of knowledge. In fact, all of this shows how "this form of dissemination moves from a didactic portrayal to a dialectic conversation" (Norris, 2009, p. 2007).

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not about us anymore, that was a good place to start, but now we can begin to look at the materials we work with and what are we doing with them and how do they function and how we can deal with them in an artistic sense, aesthetic sense, intellectual sense, in a visual, somatic sense. Really lovely, I love this movement stuff.

AUDIENCE MEMBER:

Wonderful . . . this is where we are getting into the question: What does it mean to be an artist/researcher/teacher and what are the challenges of blurring together the genres of theatre and academic research? And here we are all co-creating new understandings based on this one shocking moment. I mean it's the whole production but that one shocking moment and what does that mean to different people . . . yes aesthetic arrest . . . and to continue with what my friend over here was saying, the piece was around "well no I don't just want to take bits or pieces." I can't remember if it was the reaper or someone else asked at the beginning, "Am I killing theatre or am I giving life to something new?" And I think that this piece about cutting speaks to the challenge—that very challenge of—am I staying true to the form of theatre with all its potential magnificence and aesthetics or am I trying to jazz up boring old research? Not that research is boring old research. (*Audience*

MENTOR(S): How does this give you greater insight to yourself as a practitioner?

KATHY: There were many times that I had to dump my agenda. Different times, as I discussed in walking the script, where I had to let go of different roles. It reminds me of Gallagher, Freeman, and Wessell's (2010) who "moved by the observation that teachers and students alike seem to be pursuing elusive aesthetic and social ideals, the authors [drew] on Judith Butler's notion of "melancholia" to explain the feeling of disappointment that sometimes follows difficult drama work—the sense, as a teacher in one of the research sites put it, that "it could have been so much better" (p. 6).

MENTOR(S): You felt disappointed?

KATHY: On one level. It could have been so much better. Our intention was to devise a fully

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laughter.) So I think this is exactly that cutting up piece provides a wonderful image—a wonderful image—for that possibility.

COHORT MEMBER 5: I think in a way that the Grim Reaper is poking at Kathie trying to say, “Oh, is this what you are going to do? You are going to take all these different parts.” And she is pushed to the point of really coming to an argument—a real argument that she can come up with.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I think the cutting is interesting, although shocking, but it is really beautiful in a way that it is so disruptive. Because a lot of these things don’t work: artist, researcher, teacher. What is my PhD for? What if I don’t finish this course, and I don’t finish my PhD? Or, all of these artist pieces you think I am throwing away a perfectly good course here. All these things are suppose to work just like that beautiful red sweater. But they don’t really always work out the way we want them to. Like that sweater doesn’t unravel like I imagine.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: But that is art! That is art! That is the surprise and wonderful thing that happen.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes. That is the wonderful thing. That is what I am saying. It was a beautiful thing that it didn’t

developed play. As one audience member pointed out “this is an interesting thing to do for sure, with some more work.” Upon reflection, our play could be considered more of an open rehearsal.

MENTOR(S): Okay. Are we getting away from the post-show dialogue analysis?

KATHY: Not really because you asked about how this gave me greater insight to myself as a practitioner which was akin to the audience member who asked about the ideas of balancing these identities and “was it a balance all the way through? Did [I] feel [myself] drawn in different directions?” I felt drawn in different directions and there was a cost and a gift to that.

MENTOR (S): The cost being disappointment?

KATHY: Yes.

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unravel the way you wanted, because you now have this shocking moment that is true to all our lives when things don't work out the way we thing they should as artist, researcher, teacher. And one red thread as opposed to . . .

COHORT MEMBER 2: I can also add to that. Three weeks ago, we rewrote the whole show from scratch. Because it was really bad.

(Audience laughter)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: That is the way it works.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: What did you keep?

COHORT MEMBER 2: The Mentor scene. That's it. We dressed it up and changed it.

ANOTHER COHORT MEMBER 5 : And the June scenes.

COHORT MEMBER 2: But I, we, rewrote them. They were there but we shortened them and rewrote them. That was the only one, pretty much for the text that was the only one.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: But that's good theatre. That's making good theatre. That's how you do it.

COHORT MEMBER 2: That's what I'm saying.

KATHY: And having another set

MENTOR (S): And the gift?

KATHY: It pushed me to think after about the potential limits of the practice of playbuilding as

qualitative research. Mackenzie and Belliveau

(2011) discussed that most research-based theatre

have been conferenced created and "is most often

a staged reading or reader's theatre sharing of an

early draft of a playscript" (p. 7). Playwright

Mackenzie shared, "I learned quickly that the most

you can typically hope for in research-based

theatre is a workshop production, or a reader's

theatre presentation. Although, I am not quick to

confirm that assertion, I recognize that time

constraints due come into play and wonder how

with this knowledge, research-based theatre can be

more (Mackenzie & Belliveau, 2011, p. 7).

MENTOR(S): How can it be more?

KATHY: One way is to recognize the need for

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of eyes come in. A couple sets of eyes. Come in a give us feedback. Okay, this audience member than the one over there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I was going to comment on the sweater again. I think because that was really an opportunity to go somewhere with it. Other than the meaning that it was initially anticipated. I am glad that you said that you intended it for a different reason. But it turned out to be something completely . . . a lot more violent or a lot more gripping. And it reminds me also of the process, of being an applied theatre practitioner/researcher. It comes with the practice that when you are in the middle of a rehearsal or working with a group, you can walk in with whatever plan you want (*Audience laughter*) but stuff will change because they've got their own stuff going on and if you're not right there, watching for that new stuff that gets presented, you're just going to stick with your little agenda and you won't get to the jewels of the work. It's when you dump the agenda and really listen to what is happening. It's the skill of being the improviser facilitator to go, "Oh, wait a minute, let's just go with this, let's take it somewhere completely different." But that's the essence of the work. It's not what you thought you were going to do. And it reminded me also of the research itself. I walked into the research with lots of ideas, a

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more time. It would have been great to structure this as a full year course, instead of one semester.

In the second semester, we could have really fleshed out the play and offered more performances after offering more open rehearsals.

Another is to consider Gallagher et al.'s (2010) recognition that feelings of melancholia may be a result of "the loss of ideals" due to lofty goals, and "hyper-judgment of self" (p. 7). Gallagher et al.

(2010) explained that with "such laudable goals . . . what is "captured" is partial, halting, interrupted; and what is shared, a mere shadow of what was imagined or experienced" (p. 6) which may lead to a loss of ideals. However, although the play may be a mere shadow, Boal (2006)

offered "the work of art – must be capable of awakening, even in those who did not participate in the Aesthetic Process by which it came into being, the same ideas, emotions and thoughts that led the artist to its creation. (p. 18). Holding to the insights, of both Gallagher et al. (2010) and Boal

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lot of us probably have, and this character (*points to Pregnant Grim Reaper*) reminds me of my committee members (*Audience laughter*). Who were constantly, “What? No start again! No.” And it wasn’t just that. I almost started to do this to myself too because by the end I was in pieces. I didn’t speak to my troupe. I started from scratch. So this ripping of this sweater is really a brilliant moment to say, “We intended it to be this way and now look at the violence and what it makes us feel like. Where is it going to take us?”

COHORT MEMBER 2: And I think I am a more violent sweater cutter than Kate was (*Audience laughter*). Honestly. Because truthfully, I took this over, and I was an actor with an objective. And I am going to make it as good as I can. And Kate was a much more gentle cutter.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well your take was quite refreshing. And I kept thinking to myself, Kate – I would love to see her do this character. Because she is anything but that.

KATHY: It was Kate’s brainchild. She right from get go said, “I want to be a Pregnant Grim Reaper,” and we worked with that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: That’s Brilliant. Refreshing. Maybe we can have a discussion what you really intended for this show

(2006), I did not lose my ideals. However, I did become hyper-judgemental of myself in the research process. I began to doubt myself if I was capable enough to be artist, researcher, educator, participant-learner as well as other roles as they arose, until some of my mentors questioned whether being and doing it all was an impossible ideal. Releasing some of these self-expectations and having the exegesis to continue the story, I came to a place where I felt satisfied and complete in this research.

MENTOR(S): Anything missing in the post-show dialogue?

KATHY: Some of my colleagues who did not attend the play but read it afterwards had questions about the data and what was verbatim and what was fiction text. This was not raised in the post-show dialogue. I wonder about the undercurrent to the verbatim/fiction question. Historically,

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(Audience laughter). I thought how brilliant she is recognizing that it can seem to be elitist, so completely out of touch.

COHORT MEMBER 2: We rewrote it at one point. And I said she should be like Rosanne Barr, the image of Rosanne Barr, from the Rosanne show.

KATHY: Okay, so we have one more audience member. Then we are heading into our 30 minutes, so I will let this audience member go, and then I will wrap up.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I think the sweater is much more interesting looking now, then when we first assumed. I just think of an old movie where out of frustration the sweater gets cut and new fashions emerge. So thinking about your title, and Jonathon Fox when he talked about, in his concept of Playback Theatre, the red thread—how one story sponsors another. And how as researchers, artists, and teachers we are always looking to the particular. We ask the question and we form the particular in response to our questions. We attempt to improve our questions. We attempt to refine the particulars of it all but within the notion of the red thread that is only part of the makeup of the whole. The red thread is really just what inspires something else. What's valuable is the initial, the A sponsoring, the B sponsoring, C,

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desiring credibility and acceptance in research-based theatre, researchers often used a non-fiction approach to dramatize the data. Using verbatim text, documentary laid claim to “a special kind of authenticity, extra-realism, and a hard-edged engagement with ‘real’, usually political, issues of power” (Hutchinson, 2009, p. 209) because it was based on the assumption that everything presented as an archived source is reliable and true. As an alternative to factual accounts, interpretive ethnography and performance ethnography validated fiction in research as a way of exploring the human condition (Denzin, 1997, 2003; Schechner, 2003). Our play was “solidly rooted in non fictional researched reality” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 14). In my exegesis, I was more transparent to the reader about highlighting verbatim text (such as Cohort and Audience Members) and that other characters were “based on or inspired by raw” data (Saldaña, 2011, p. 17).

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and so on. My notion of Jonathon's understanding the red thread actually is the liminality, the space between it all that actually refreshes, generates, and creates more thought towards what's next. So I think the notion of looking between these three intersecting roles: All roles need role relief. Every role we play needs a break occasionally. We provide that for each other. When we stop looking at *fixing* them and getting those agendas for each role met, we open up to this liminal space; which would include Kate having her baby. So none of it is just located on the stage. Art is life. And it gets into that metaphysical awareness. That's actually where is just the place of dreaming. So although I may want a greater intention for this piece, I think the ongoing circular, the ripple effect is valuable, is a success of this particular piece. It was a great experience.

KATHY: So on that note, I will allow things to ripple out, to create as you create. Thank you so much for being part of this.

MENTOR(S): Why is this interplay important?

KATHY: Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2008) pointed out the need to merge both scientific and artistic criteria without privileging one or the other to create a new hybrid criteria "to create a third space . . . paralleling the 'third voice' produced" (p. 14). For me, this third space and voice is akin to what Prendergast and Belliveau (2013) identified as the need for "honoring the research context, the fact-fiction balance" (p. 204).

PGR: "Who sees the human face correctly: the photographer, the mirror, or the painter?" said Picasso.

KATHY: Sullivan (2005) argued, "The imaginative and intellectual work undertaken by artists is a form of research" (p. xi). He pointed out that what art has in common with research is "the attention given to rigor and systematic inquiry, yet

in a way that privileges the role of imagination and intellect plays in constructing knowledge that is not only new but has the capacity to transform human understanding” (p. xi). Overall, I was concerned with telling a good story with reality, not necessarily realism, in this exegesis. This paralleled our collective desire to tell a good story in our play to transform human understanding.

MENTOR(S): We are starting to get into research rigour and evaluation.

KATHY: As an artist/researcher/educator, I concur with Freire (1997) who said, “I refuse to accept a certain type of scientific criticism that insinuates that I lack rigor in the way I deal with these issues or the over affective language I use in this process” (p. 30). A/r/tographer Carl Leggo (2011) talked about “playing for years with notions of rigour mortis and vigour and Tigger-like wonder” (p. 23).

PGR (*starts singing the Disney Tigger song*): The wonderful thing about Tiggers. Is Tiggers are wonderful things. Their tops are made of rubbers. The bottoms are made of springs. They're bouncy, flouncy, trouncy, pouncy, fun, fun, fun, fun, FUN! But the most wonderful thing about Tiggers is I'm the only one.

KATHY Since we were devising on our own experiences and looking at our own meaning, we were constantly looking for the essence or spirit of what we were saying. However, working with our own experiences predominately, we also needed to be wary of “flights of fancy” (Dobson, 2010a, p. 5). This need to attend to flights of fancy extended into my writing the exegesis. As a result, in this exegesis, I write in a third space, one that honours reality, incorporating verbatim text as well as text that is “based on or inspired by raw . . . materials” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 17).

MENTOR(S): So much to dialogue about. We've gone past the post-show dialogue. You cut it off after 30 minutes. I see that the cutting of the red sweater took up the bulk of the time. Perhaps too much time. I should have facilitated the discussion.

KATHY: I wouldn't have let you then. It worked in the frame of how we structured the play with me opening and closing as researcher/facilitator. However, in the future, I would rethink the roles and the magnitude of each role and its ability to meet its task. I was stretched. I was tired. And because of this, maybe I wasn't as focussed on drawing out information from the audience. Or maybe, I was too open to letting it emerge. Perhaps it is not always about being artist/researcher/educator but seeing and delegating those roles based on the needs of each project.

MENTOR(S): And available resources.

PGR: And the time it takes.

KATHY: It was an amazing experience though.
And it really resonated for me what that one
audience member said about,

These conversations are the really
interesting thing . . . so where do you go
from here with this? Bouncing off what
you are saying, there is a whole series of
wonderful new ideas, sitting there waiting
for you to go, “Ah, this is what it is about!”
It’s not about us anymore, that was a good
place to start, but now we can begin to look
at . . .

Well, let’s jump off the script and take a look.

Chapter 7: Exegesis Part C: At the Whiteboard²

KATHY jumps off script and goes over to the whiteboard and with a red marker writes meticulously: Theatrical conventions as research practices. PGR, MENTOR(S), and COHORT watch as KATHY erases the board. She writes: Becoming artist/researcher/educator. She erases the board and writes: Being artist/researcher/educator through playbuilding as qualitative research. She looks at it, shrugs her shoulders, and erases the board again. She writes and erases and becomes more and more frantic in the cycle of writing and erasing. As she is doing this PGR shakes her head, goes off stage, and then returns eating MacDonald's and smoking a cigarette.

PGR (*chewing on French fries*): You keep wrestling with that puppy. Show us what you got already.

KATHY: Okay, well, I could talk about when theatre is research. Focussing in on stories, characters, staging, and the post-show dialogue. Being on your feet. Telling a good story. Finding the appropriate metaphor. Being comfortable in the uncomfortable—and uncomfortable in the comfortable. Living contradictions. Following the red threads, and how research as art, may be seen through other lenses and words, like *generating*,

² In this third part of the exegesis, I continue to document and analyze the research through writing a fictional dialogue that takes the reader on a journey from the beginning of the exegesis (Behind the Curtain) to (a) walking the script, to (b) walking the post-show dialogue, and to now (c) at the whiteboard. The constructed fictional dialogue, which incorporates reality and verbatim text, is between myself and the characters of PGR, MENTOR(S), and COHORT. COHORT dialogue is exclusively verbatim text whereas with the other characters, I “develop an original dramatic composition based on or inspired by raw . . . materials” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 17). A more in-depth explanation can be found in the beginning of the Chapter 4.

interpreting, and performing, as opposed to data collection, analysis, and dissemination.

Or, I could focus on the process. A messy process. But the outcome is important. Or my participants' voices. Or my own. Hmmm, I will start with generating. No, stories. And how about the characters? But then again, I could go with exploring the tensions of being artist/researcher/educator. But I don't want to be boring. Theatre is never boring.

She looks through the playscript, the transcripts, and her journal.

Watches the videos yet again.

Looks through her journal, the transcripts, and the script.

She picks up the cardboard tube. Puts it to her eye like a telescope.

Writes on paper, on the whiteboard, and on paper again.

Crumples paper and throws it away.

Repeats four times, changing the tempo each time.

Each time the PGR makes ticking sounds to correspond with KATHY's movements.

On the fourth cycle, KATHY lays down on the floor, staring at the ceiling.

KATHY: Why is it taking me so long to write this up?

MENTOR(S): Maybe you haven't finished transforming your identity yet.

PGR: Geez. Enough already. Start with something. Something of impact.

Kathy picks up the cardboard tube, examining it. She looks at the PGR, MENTOR(S), and COHORT.

COHORT: There must be a way that we figure out what our artist-researcher box is so we can use it. Johnny Saldaña has figured it out. He can publish anything. He has written his own box. He cites himself a thousand times.

KATHY: *(Looks at the cardboard tube in hand. Holds it up to her eye):* If I turn it a fraction to the right, I see. . . .

PGR: A jumbled mess?

KATHY: Yes, and if I look at the whole, I see colours, shapes, and patterns e/merging.

MENTOR(S): From the gems?

KATHY: Yes. *She ponders in silence for a moment.* Hey, would you say this is a telescope or a kaleidoscope?

PGR: Yes.

MENTOR(S): You tell me your fingerprints are all over it.

KATHY (*Looking through the cardboard tube again*):

If I turn it a fraction to the right, playbuilding as qualitative research e/merges with a/r/tography.

Seeing

. . . devising and artist-researcher choice as living inquiry.

Turning it to

. . . generating material as excess.

Turning it to

. . . exploring conflict as openings.

Turning it to

. . . finding the appropriate metaphor as metaphor.

Turning it to

. . . creating aesthetic arrest as reverberations.

Turning it to

. . . metatheatricality as contiguity.

Kathy puts down the tube and goes to the Whiteboard. She gestures to PGR,

MENTOR(S), and COHORT to grab a cube and sit in a circle. On the Whiteboard, she

writes, Being artist/researcher/educator through playbuilding as qualitative research.

She faces the audience and says the following:

Drawing upon the two distinct cross-disciplinary methodological framework of playbuilding as qualitative research and a/r/tography, I explored, with applied theatre graduate students, the question: What does it mean to be and become

artist/researcher/educator through playbuilding as qualitative research? This question had two key components: a being component and a doing component. As a result, this research addressed the question from a content perspective (what does it mean to be theatre-based artist/researcher/educator) and a methods perspective (how did the participants engage in playbuilding as qualitative research and a/r/tography). The answers to the question, both from a content and methods perspective, are found in our play and my exegesis.

Our play and the resulting script was our collective analysis. Three key themes emerged: path-finding, engaging in a (messy) process, and speaking different languages. The script was presented as its own chapter (Chapter 3) to forefront the play as a way to recognize that a performance piece is foundational in playbuilding as qualitative research. Following the script, in Exegesis A: Walking the Script (Chapter 5), I clearly identified the three themes that emerged from the research, as well as highlighted some of the artistic choices and theatrical conventions used both in performance and from our devising process. In Exegesis B: The Post-Show Dialogue (Chapter 6), I included the full transcript to give the reader a sense of how the play engaged a live audience. I proceeded to discuss the key issues raised by the audience and cohort, as well as provide some insights and individual development that resulted for our cohort on what it means to be artist/researcher/educator and undertake playbuilding as qualitative research. Now, in Exegesis C: At the Whiteboard, so named to highlight the element of educating in addition to researching and art-making, I offer a way of conceiving playbuilding as qualitative research through interconnecting playbuilding language with a/r/tographical renderings.

Utilizing playbuilding language with a/r/tographical renderings is significant on many levels, such as accessibility, alignment with the desire to speak in theatrical terms, and conceptualization. Regarding accessibility, a/r/tographical language can be inaccessible to applied theatre practitioners who are interested in engaging in playbuilding as qualitative research. The theory can be dense and challenging to decipher at times. By translating a/r/tographical renderings into theatrical language, not only can accessibility occur, alignment with the desire to speak theatrical language can occur, as forwarded by the participants of this study. The desire to speak theatrical language was contained within the theme of speaking different languages. Elaborating on the theme, one participant mentioned the need to find a common language and at the same time define our own methodologies, saying,

I think research is critical for applied theatre. We are interdisciplinary. We need to have dialogue with other disciplines, find a common language. Need to find our own way of defining ourselves and have methodologies that work for us specifically. (Study Participant)

By utilizing the art form of theatre as it is, through playbuilding and translating a/r/tographical renderings, we can start to find a common language while defining ourselves and utilizing methodologies that work for us. Similarly, through his doctoral research, theatre-based researcher David Beare (2011) was led to explore deeper how the language of theatre connected with the concepts of a/r/tography. For example, he suggested using the term “the fourth wall” (Beare, 2011, p. 52) as representative of the in/between space within contiguity. Furthermore, a/r/tographical renderings offer a way of conceptualizing research beyond what currently exists in research-based theatre

methodologies. These concepts can enhance examples or suggestions of a “research to performance process” (Norris, 2009, p. 39) by offering lenses to view, and ways to approach and analyze, playbuilding as research.

I will now provide concrete examples of how a/r/tographical renderings are demonstrated in playbuilding as qualitative research. Specifically, the playbuilding language of devising and artist-researcher choice, generating material, exploring conflict, finding the appropriate metaphor, creating aesthetic arrest, and metatheatricality are shown to be translations of the a/r/tographical renderings of living inquiry, excess, openings, metaphor, reverberations, and contiguity. Therefore, in keeping with the theme of speaking different languages, I argue that translating and conceptualizing devising and artist-researcher choice as living inquiry, generating material as excess, exploring conflict as openings, finding the appropriate metaphor as metaphor, creating aesthetic arrest as reverberations, and, metatheatricality as contiguity provides an a/r/tographical framework for practitioners of playbuilding as qualitative research that is rooted in theatre practitioner praxis (theory and action).

Devising and Artist-Researcher Choice as Living Inquiry

Devising is a term used in the process of playbuilding. The term comes from devised theatre (Bicât & Baldwin, 2002; Oddey, 1994), which playbuilding is also known by. Devising is the creative process from which a play comes to life through the devisers’ collaborations and artistic choices.

In our dialogues about playbuilding as qualitative research, our cohort agreed that although playbuilding and research have similar processes, devising a play in and of itself does not make it academic research. Participants identified, however, that playbuilding as

academic research could occur when devising the play is combined with research questions, analysis, and researcher reflexivity. For example, one participant stated,

It is a similar process . . . we are always researching, gathering information trying to understand either content or an issue, people or meaning in relation to the world around and all of that but is that research? . . . what is the question? Then you design accordingly to that. (Study Participant)

Another participant expanded on the notion of research questions as a key element in research while recognizing the need for analysis and researcher reflexivity. She commented,

There are lots of other things that you would need to do as a researcher . . . there is a level of analysis . . . there is still a point, where you need to sit down and discuss things. That's part of where it becomes research . . . where you are recording that process and those thoughts and why you are doing things and where your bias come from. That's what makes it research because you have a central question that you are looking around and exploring. (Study Participant)

Participant responses could be likened to speaking about living inquiry. Living inquiry incorporates research questions, analysis, and researcher reflexivity. It offers a space for “embodied understandings and exchanges” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 901) that are “flexible, dynamic and inter-subjective” (p. 898), which is akin to the creative process of devising. Furthermore, researcher reflexivity and the inherent choices made by the researcher parallels the inherent artistic choices made by devisers. The notion of artistic choice is critical within the devising process. In every stage of devising, we made artistic choices around themes, storylines, scenes, and conventions. In addition to considering

artistic choices, we also considered research choices. Therefore, in discussing researcher reflexivity and considering both artistic and research choices, the participants engaged in artist-researcher choice. Within our project, examples could be found of both artist-researcher choice and devising as living inquiry.

Many examples of artist-researcher choice were embedded in the playscript. For example, we included stylized versions of our autoethnodramas and Playback Theatre experiences and reframed Scene 4 (Mentor riddles) to be interrupted because it was not true to the data. Behind the scenes, an example of my artist-researcher choice was in how the questions of the study evolved. Originally, I had the additional question: How are applied theatre graduate students' identities as theatre-based artist/researcher/teacher developed by engaging in a research-based theatre project on this topic? My intention was to inquire into socially constructed identities and transformative learning experiences from a pedagogical viewpoint. Designing this theatre-based research project also as if simultaneously a graduate-level course, I hoped that from the findings of this study, I could theorize a model that could enable every graduate student in the arts and social sciences to explore and expand their skills by synergizing the perspectives of art, research, and education. However, through the process and finding a path, I realized that to see what emerges in playbuilding as qualitative research, to inquire into what it means to be and become artist/researcher/educator collectively and individually, to determine what are some of the challenges of blurring the genres of theatre and academic research, to inquire into how applied theatre graduate students' identities as theatre-based artists/researchers/educators are developed, and to consider a pedagogical model all within one research project were lofty goals. As a result, I let go of the question about

how students' identities developed and . Upon reflection, I realized that the goals I set and questions I asked were formed when I was considering my roles separately as theatre-maker, artist-researcher, and educator. It was only when I claimed my identity as artist-researcher who engaged in theatre-making, researching, and educating, as suggested by our cohort, did I find clarity. As artist-researcher, I chose to focus on the being and doing of playbuilding as qualitative research, as practitioner. Thus, living inquiry allowed for "an evolution of research questions" (Leggo et al., 2011, p. 240), which enabled me to let go of one of my original questions. Furthermore, artist-researcher choice as living inquiry brought me "closer to an idea" (Beare, 2009, p. 164), that being what it means to be theatre-based artist/researcher/educator for me.

Moving from examples of artist-researcher choice to devising as living inquiry, our devising process, which encompassed the full playbuilding process from start to performance, was a living inquiry. As we quested and questioned and sought to understand what it means to be artist/researcher/educator, we moved with and built on our particular identities, strengths, and abilities. Govan, Nicholson, and Normington (2007) noted that devising "builds a language of performance that uniquely suits the actor's particular identities, strengths and abilities" (p. 6). An example of how living inquiry wrapped together our identities, strengths, abilities, as well as our quest is shown as we discussed the title of our play. An excerpt from our dialogue was as follows:

The red thread is a great title. You're the red thread. The things that we are weaving through are too. Perhaps, the red threads. I picture you knitting. You are an awesome knitter. That's a skill you have. What about the red yarn? A play on words. A story. Yarn can unravel. Yarn is one string. When you are in this role,

you are not allowed to fray. People like you and I are not allowed to fray. (Study Participants)

By identifying knitting as an ability and strength and not allowing to fray as part of identity, participants weaved the quest to do theatre-based research as a practitioner while figuring out the play's title. With regards to being a practitioner, there were points in our process that presented the opportunity to fray both from inside the devising process and from outside of it due to life happenings. Inside the devising process, I could have frayed with the demands of enacting so many roles simultaneously within the theatre-making/researching/educating process. For example, in doing Playback Theatre, I could have frayed if I did not let go of being conductor and participant. As well, two life events shook our project, which could have caused us to fray. One of our participants left the project after the generation phase for treatment after being diagnosed with breast cancer and our Pregnant Grim Reaper went into labour the day before the show. Through conceptualizing devising as living inquiry, I was able to embrace and move with what was happening and not make it different from what it was. Recognizing research is "not done but, lived" (Irwin, 2004, p. 33). We honoured the participant who left by utilizing some of her puppets when we were creating scenes and she joined us on stage at the post show dialogue. We also had a back-up plan of our Mentor playing our Pregnant Grim Reaper because the role was critical in the play and the Mentor character could be stepped into more easily. Although I had hoped to have another one of our female graduate students from the department step in because our cohort was comprised of female graduate students, no one was available. Instead, the undergraduate male student who was our stage manager stepped in as Mentor, and we each took some of the stage

managing tasks that were necessary. Thus, as we moved with the challenges, our cast did not fray but was resilient. We were able to devise with personal and life situations as they arose. Living inquiry allowed for our process and path-finding within it.

In closing, devising and artist-researcher choice as living inquiry is a translatable a/r/tographical rendering because (a) participants recognized that playbuilding needs to be more than devising in order to classify as qualitative research, (b) examples were documented on how devising and artist-researcher choice was enacted as living inquiry, and (c) the research findings of path-finding and (messy) process were encompassed in the concept of living inquiry.

Generating Material as Excess

Generating material can be a practical application of excess. Within the devising process, generating material is core. Generating material happens through dramatic engagement by all participants involved in an ongoing process. Dramatic engagement, as explained by Prendergast and Saxton (2013), is “a personal engagement in the dramatic world” (p. 28). Through dramatic engagement, participants “work creatively and spontaneously to create their own ideas and stories and have . . . opportunities to select and choose what they wish to share” (Prendergast & Saxton, 2013, p. 28). Inherent in generating material is the notion of creating and selecting material. Similarly, excess in a/r/tography encompasses all, and involves a “vacillating between conservation and destruction” (Springgay et al., 2005, pp. 907–908).

Within this research, playbuilding as qualitative research was a place where the excess occurred, was processed, and distilled. As we began our inquiry into what it means to be an artist/researcher/educator, our cohort generated a flurry of ideas,

experiences, and stories. Over time, themes began to emerge organically. At the same time, we also mined the material for gems—things that stood out and impacted us. Throughout our devising process, we took themes and moments of impact and worked and re/worked them to develop scenes. An example from the research was when we decided we needed to revamp our play three weeks before we were to perform because it wasn't working. The following excerpt of our dialogue depicts this:

This is useful skeleton. We created a democratic storyline. Now it's time to add back into it. Plug in dramatic stuff. What did we generate that we loved? Piling things on. Pumpkin. Kid with scarves. Working with *The Idea*. What if. . . .

(Study Participants)

This dialogue, which addressed both having a skeleton and adding back into it, exemplified the “vacillating between conservation and destruction” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 907) that is highlighted by excess or otherwise can be said to show elements of creating and selecting.

In addition to considering the elements of creating and selecting in generating, we also sought to get at the essence. We strove to see how a word could replace a chunk of text, or a gesture could replace a word. This process of getting to the essence is akin to distilling data, as confirmed by Mackenzie and Belliveau (2011) who asserted,

Any playwright will tell you, the process of writing and distilling data into stage action through dialogue is riddled with analysis—which themes, characters, moments, words to words to pursue? From what perspective will it be told? Where will it be set? (p. 12)

In this way, practitioners decide what to cast out and what to keep in and why. However, the question that arises then is: What makes some material worthwhile whereas other material wasteful or to be discarded? These artist-researcher choices can reveal a practitioner's deeper meanings and values about self, the work, and life in general. For example, originally Scene 3, Telling June, had a greater focus on money. As we considered the scene, we chose to streamline it to highlight the notion that being an actor is not always valued as a profession, which has financial implications, rather than the struggle of making money. By having all the material to work with, we were able to discern clearer what meaning we were trying to convey. Thus, generating material as excess “questions not simply material substances but also how things come into being, the philosophical nature of existence and meaning making” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 907).

As in devising, I generated material in my writing. Springgay et al. (2005) explained that through the rendering excess, writing is an ongoing practice concerned not with inserting facts and figures and images and representations into language but with creating an opening where control and regulation disappears. . . . Excess is a way to re-image ourselves into being; re-assembling the mundane of our experiences. (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 907)

The writing helped me to re-image myself and re-assemble the mundane of my experience. In writing up this research, which at times could be mundane, I allowed for the creative process. In doing so, the format of dialoguing with the fictional characters of PGR, Mentor(s), Cohort, and Colleague emerged. As a result, I was able to share, as Prendergast and Belliveau (2013) advocated, one of the touchstones in theatre-based

research, “The artistic in the academic article to provide the reader entry points inside the work” (p. 203). Through this process, I felt a great sense of pleasure and developed my identity as artist. I developed this artist identity, for example, by acquiring a strong belief in the value of writing as artist within arts-based research. On the other hand, as a researcher, at times, I often felt overwhelmed by the sheer volume and weight of the data (36+ hours of video, plus audio, transcripts, scripts, and a researcher journal). I sought ways to distil the data down. However, with a broad research question exploring what it means to do playbuilding as qualitative research and be practitioner, I went off in multiple directions. I kept returning, however, to the question: What story did I want to tell? Leggo (2004) spoke to the challenge of composing a story that represents experiences truthfully while at the same time recognizing that “we can never tell the whole story” (p. 98). Leggo (2004) went on to say that by telling one story, many others might be precluded: “One story can render other stories invisible or silenced . . . to present one version of self is to withhold other versions of self” (p. 110). In this way, I recognized my strong preference to storytelling in writing, which paralleled our cohort’s strong propensity toward “telling a good story” (Study Participants). As well, I came to terms with the reality that I could not tell every story of this research. I chose to tell the stories of our collective performance with the three themes identified and offer a glimpse into some of the artistic choices and theatrical conventions we used as research practices, translating a/r/tographical renderings and my struggle with the time it takes to engage in the write up of arts-based research. My experience provides evidence to Springgay et al.’s (2005) contention that the writing through excess becomes more than expressing oneself because “this becoming through writing reveals fears, inhibitions, desires, and

pleasures” (p. 907). In the revelations, I gained insight into my own mental models (Senge, 2006) and discovered new ways of doing. As a result, I was able to re-image my self as artist/researcher/educator.

Exploring Conflict as Openings

PGR: Conflict is the lifeblood of theatre. If you have five people in a room agreeing, four need to go.

Within theatre, conflict is intentionally sought out to understand more deeply the human condition. Boal (1995) explained, “Theatre denotes conflict, contradiction, confrontation, defiance. And the dramatic action lies in the variation and movement of this equation, of these opposing forces” (p. 16). This recognition of contradiction was echoed by Bray (1991), who in his book *Playbuilding*, identified contrast as one of the keys in doing drama. Bray asserted, “Drama seems to have its greatest impact at moments of strong contrast” (p. 32). Likewise, the a/r/tographical rendering of openings urges practitioners to seek out the difficult and engage in encounters that are “are active—frayed, entangled, and split open” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 905). Irwin and Springgay (2008) explained, “It is here that knowledge is often created as contradictions and resistances are faced, even interfaced with other knowledge” (p. xxx).

As I began this research, a core assumption that I held unconsciously was immediately challenged within our cohort. Namely, that research-based theatre could be done in a way that maintained the integrity of theatre. Through this conflict, openings enabled new knowledge to emerge. When dialoguing around theatre and research, one of our cohort stated, “Is it theatre or just a really attractive presentation because for me

theatre is problematic. If you are presenting research findings, are you are still problematizing? Or just presenting?” (Study Participant). In this dialogue, the person drew a distinction between allowing for an “organic open-ended process versus starting with an agenda . . . because I have to disseminate certain information” (Study Participant). In our play, this conflict was staged as the interaction between the Pregnant Grim Reaper and Kathie, the researcher. One of the openings that the conflict created for me was to reflect deeply on the terminology of playbuilding as qualitative research after the project was completed. Norris (2009) suggested the use of the terminology “generation” (p. 23), “interpretation” (p. 30), and “dissemination” (p. 33). In our (messy) process, we generated rich data through a variety of theatre conventions, such as theatre activities, creating with catalysts, performing autoethnodramas, and engaging in Playback Theatre. Generating data was congruent with playbuilding processes as was interpreting. Our collective interpretation consisted of continually revisiting, devising, and rehearsing scenes based on stories, ideas, moments of impact, and themes that we generated. However, when we started to think about devising as dissemination as a “form of representation” (Norris, 2009, p. 22), the process got stuck and stagnant. The two scenes that were the weakest in our play were our autoethnodramas and Playback Theatre sessions. They were weak because we tried to represent, even if we did so stylistically, what happened in the past. We were representing something because it was an expectation of research criteria, rather than an organic process of devising. As a result, it killed the creative energy that fuelled the devising process. This notion of killing something was recognized by another participant who in one of our exploration phase of the project sent a link to the article, *No Science Without Fancy, No Art Without Facts: A*

Holistic Theory of Love and the Emotional Mind, by Maria Popova (2012). The study participant explained, “If you take out the word love and replace it with theatre—it hits on some of the themes we’ve been discussing more or less.” The altered version of one of the paragraphs was:

[Theatre] unavoidably partakes of the personal and the subjective, and so we cannot place it in the killing jar and pin its wings to cardboard as a lepidopterist might a prismatic butterfly. In spite of what science teaches us, only a delicate admixture of evidence and intuition can yield the truest view of the emotional mind. (Popova, 2012, para. 3)

Science, in this quote, was referring to empiricism. However, theatre-based research as a/r/tography in which “the intention of the imaging/writing is not to inform—as in to give information—but to open up to conversations and relationships” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 906). It was in the opening of this conversation and relationship that I started to contemplate how the term performing is true to the practices of playbuilding. Therefore, I now suggest using the term performance rather than dissemination or representation in playbuilding as qualitative research. Furthermore, through realizing the subtlety of language in this example and in alignment with our theme of speaking different languages, I chose to theorize translated a/r/tographical renderings as evidenced throughout this research. Thus, this serves as a documented example of how conflict served to create openings for new insights and knowledge to emerge.

Finding the Appropriate Metaphor as Metaphor

Metaphor is the language of theatre. Conceptualizing metaphor as a rendering rooted in a/r/tography can help theatre-makers understand that metaphor as research does

not require “containment and classification . . . [but instead is aligned with permeating] . . . boundaries, disturbing system and order” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 904) for the purposes of enabling new understandings and knowledge to be created.

Norris (2009) discussed a playbuilding conference research project in which metaphor was foundational. Inquiring into the question of what is qualitative research, Norris (2009) explained, “The term *distillation* provided us with a metaphorical vehicle to build our response” (p. 199). Furthermore, Norris (2009) discussed how the standard dramatic activity of making machines also led to “the concept of ‘distilling research data’ . . . to the alcohol still as a machine” (Norris, 2009, p. 200). Norris (2009) described that the research findings, which brought into question concepts such as “truth, point of view, texture, refined versus raw, and the bias of the researcher” (p. 200), were made problematic through the metaphor.

Within this research project, our cohort also sought out the appropriate metaphor to address our findings. In particular, we sought the appropriate metaphor to speak to a more integrated approach to self as practitioner and the processes of the work. For example, in our devising process, one of our cohort suggested,

I had an image for us of coming out of water. . . . When we were talking about the article, we both hated the idea of the strands and spaces in-between, because we were thinking as artist, as humans, we don’t have finite borders. Identity does not have finite borders. So how could it be these spaces in/between? We were thinking more about Jell-O, or the ocean or whole unbreakable thing. Rather than pieces that fit together. (Study Participant)

In the end, we combined the notion of the red thread (which recognizes through-lines across stories and contexts) and yarn (which is a synonym for story and symbolic of spun threads of being artist, researcher, and educator) into a holistic practitioner who was swimming around in an ocean of red yarn, as shown by Allyson at the end of the play. As a result, through working with this metaphor that we specifically created for this play, we created a moment of aesthetic arrest.

Creating Aesthetic Arrest as Reverberations

In his doctoral research *Engaging the Power of the Theatrical Event*, Weigler (2011) theorized the qualities and characteristics that contribute to the staging of aesthetically arresting theatre. Weigler (2011) explained,

Aesthetic arrest . . . describes the experience of a spectator whose predetermined attitudes toward the performance as an event, and toward the content of the play, are held in abeyance by something that is integral to the aesthetic presentation of the work. “Arrest” in these instances carries one of two meanings. The forward momentum of a spectator’s assumptions may be arrested in the sense of being brought abruptly to a halt, or arrest may signify the spectator’s experience of feeling so fully captivated by the absolute clarity of what he sees that his preconceptions about it are eclipsed. (p. 21)

In other words, aesthetic arrest in theatre involves those “moments in a performance when one is stopped in one’s tracks” (Kuftinec, 2003, p. 17). Similarly, reverberations “call attention to the movement, the quaking, shaking, measure, and rhythm that shifts other meanings to the surface” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 906). Thus, reverberations as

with aesthetic arrest pays attention to deep shifts in order to find new meaning, awareness, and discoveries.

In this research, reverberations happened as moments of aesthetic arrest in performance. In performance, one example was evidenced in the post-show dialogue around the discussion of the cutting of the red sweater. In the post-show dialogue, much discussion was generated around what one audience member identified as “this one shocking moment” of cutting the red sweater. As a result of this moment, dialogue ensued that incorporated a variety of meanings and perspectives. It was a result of the aesthetic arrest from the cutting of the red sweater that, as one audience member so succinctly put it, “is where we are getting into the question: What does it mean to be an artist/researcher/teacher and what are the challenges of blurring together the genres of theatre and academic research?” In response to this question, the variety of meanings and perspectives ranged from self, theories, artistic conventions, artistic conventions as research practices, to co-construction of knowledge. This was evidenced by excerpts from the post-show dialogue (see Appendix E for excerpts from the Post-Show Dialogue Evidencing Reverberations), which show the range of responses that occurred and the themes that were generated as a result of one aesthetically arresting moment in performance. Thus, this example can show how practitioners can conceptualize aesthetic arrest as reverberations and, in doing so, can pay attention to deep shifts from participants in order to find new meaning, awareness, and discoveries for playbuilding as qualitative research.

Metatheatricality as Contiguity

American playwright Lionel Abel (1963) described the term metatheatricality as a device whereby two events happen simultaneously on different levels, such as a play commenting on itself or the reflection of both reality and fiction. These events exist independently as whole parts and are interconnected. Similarly, contiguity inherently recognizes different parts and focuses on the relationship between parts. Contiguity offers a liminal space that explores the in/between spaces. This space is not only for self-exploration of being and becoming artist/researcher/educator. It also applies within the realm of doing research-based theatre. In his doctoral research project, Beare (2011) used the term “the fourth wall” (p. 57), representative of the in/between space. The fourth wall is a theatrical term referring to the removal the front wall of a four-wall theatre so that the audience is able to see into the world of the play. Beare (2011) explained,

The *fourth wall* in a typical theatre environment keeps the audience members and the players on stage physically separate; however, the *fourth wall* also serves as gateway for these two separate groups to interact and to respond to one another. The audience participates in the play by watching it. Through the *fourth wall*, the audience observes the players, characters, actions, story, and the imaginary and technical elements of the play. The players (and theatre-makers) participate in the play by taking on roles and engaging in the actions of the play. The players are aware of the imaginary and technical elements of the play, and they are aware of the audience observing them and the play. Conceptually, the *fourth wall* is an interactive space. (p. 57)

Thus, utilizing the theatrical reality of the fourth wall, Beare (2011) conceptualized it as an interactive space between players and audience. Similarly, I conceptualize metatheatricality as representative of the in/between space. Metatheatricality enables interaction within the play, between the audience, and between the art form and writing of research.

Within this research, we utilized metatheatricality through the technique of having a play within a play and also through the use of the fictional character of the Pregnant Grim Reaper, which served as joker and bridge between fiction and reality. In theatre, the joker is a “difficultator” (Boal, 1995, p. xix). Unlike a facilitator, who may work to bring ideas and people together, a difficultator seeks to undermine “judgements, reinforcing our grasp of the complexity of a situation” (Boal, 1995, p. xix). In our play, the Pregnant Grim Reaper joked between Kathie the researcher and the play with Allyson in which different worldviews and practices were revealed. Through enabling the space for different people with their worldviews, value systems, and beliefs to converse with one another, I was able to push up against and clarify my own thoughts of being and becoming theatre-based artist/researcher/educator. As a cohort, we also discussed extending the role of the Pregnant Grim Reaper through interacting with the audience. However, due to time constraints, we were not able to develop that possibility. Norris (2009), on the other hand, shared his “lived-experiences as Joker of over two hundred audience participatory workshops” (p. 209). He discussed how “the Joker takes a central role in this spiral dissemination phase of the research by brokering the prepared scenes with new emerging interpretations” (Norris, 2009, p. 209).

Additionally, in writing up my dissertation, I discovered a way to honour the process of theatre-making and research by drawing upon the notion of metatheatricity. I conceived the research as a simultaneous layering of art-making with the use of exegesis. Springgay et al. (2005) spoke to this as “a doubling of visual and textual wherein the two complement, extend, refute, and/or subvert one another” (p. 900). They explained, “The doubling of art and graphy is important when conceiving of a methodology that includes both visual and written processes and products of a research text” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 900). For me, the exegesis alleviated the pressure to alter the devising process because I knew that I would write an exegesis post performance. In the exegesis, I could elaborate on data that were generated, interpreted, and represented. At different points in the (messy) process, participants would check in to see if the play was meeting research standards. Although I made sure that the core themes were addressed in our play, I did not feel the need to predetermine that certain elements in the play were prescribed. As a result of this process, I contend that providing an exegesis to the artwork is critical, as it offers a way to meet research standards outside of, yet interconnected with, the performance through the medium of writing. As a result of enabling simultaneous and connected interactions within the play between the audience and between the art-form and writing of research, metatheatricity as contiguity allows new meanings, stories, and possibilities to emerge within playbuilding as qualitative research.

In closing, this research documents how one can translate and conceptualize devising and artist-researcher choice as living inquiry, generate material as excess, explore conflict as openings, find the appropriate metaphor as metaphor, create aesthetic arrest as reverberations and engage metatheatricity as contiguity to offer an

a/r/tographical framework for practitioners of playbuilding as qualitative research that is rooted in theatre practitioner praxis (theory and action). As a result, a/r/tographical renderings that have been translated into theatrical language may offer practitioners a more accessible and theatre-centric way of understanding the renderings. These translated, theatrical-based renderings can be useful to practitioners of playbuilding as qualitative research by offering lenses to view, and ways to approach and analyze, playbuilding as research.

Kathy puts down the red marker down and pulls up a cube to sit in the circle with PGR, MENTOR(S), and COHORT.

KATHY: Before we end, I would like to take one more moment to discuss being theatre-based artist/researcher/educator. One of the things that I really valued in this (messy) process was that by allowing a collective and personal exploration into the meaning of being artist/researcher/educator, participants were allowed a forum to explore their own thoughts, feelings, and ways of being and doing in relation to others with similar and/or contrary notions. For example, by having such strong voices against the use of theatre for purposes of research, I was able to clarify my own position about the value of theatre-based research. This research project provided the opportunity to clarify our own thinking and practices about when theatre-based research may be valuable and true to theatre as a community of practice, such as in the exploration and interpretation, and how we may choose to, or not choose to, engage when devising a piece of theatre for performance.

Through this project, everyone moved to a more central aligned notion of being artist/researcher/educator as shown in Appendix F: Pre and Post Focus Group Diagrams.

KATHY turns to the cohort and says: One word to sum up, what was this process for you?

COHORT: Crystallization. Learning. Surprise. This is the picture that comes to my head, the thing with the shapes in it—pull it apart, shook them around, pretty much ended up back where I started with a stronger idea of why I think those things were all together as opposed to just instinctually thinking them all together. Not a word but a picture.

KATHY: What next?

COHORT: Incubate. Process. Developing. Heading more toward research with the backpack of this class and conversations.

KATHY: For me, it's writing. I am going to write up this research!

MENTOR(S): Looks like you are almost done.

PGR: Un momento para cada cosa.

KATHY: My story of being artist/researcher/educator unfolded in leadership and learning. Leadership was part of finding my path as I led my self and our cohort through this research. Learning was inherent throughout the process. In my writing, I offer another example, from an individual perspective, of our cohort's recognition of path-finding and process. Part of the process of being artist/researcher/educator is constantly learning. In this time and space my learning also took shape in the role doctoral student. Considering research as academic research and working with participants who were all graduate students, I recognize that the role of graduate student in this time and space was part of the foundation in being artist/researcher/educator. To artists/researcher/educators beyond the academy, this example of graduate student can be applied to someone in the early phases of their learning about being artist/researcher/educator.

Upon reflection and considering my cohort's recognition of other roles that may come into play at any given time, I realized how my process was impacted by other past roles as well. I came into my doctoral program after an intensive 10 years as business leader and consultant. I was well groomed in being efficient in my workplace. I was skilled in effective programming within set time frames. I anticipated I would graduate in the spring of 2013, or perhaps at the latest, the fall of 2013. One of the greatest challenges I had to overcome was dealing with my demons of having my writing deadlines keep moving. In his book, *Perform or Else*, Jon McKenzie (2001) talked about how performance in today's world can refer to experimental art, productivity in the workplace, and the functionality of technological systems. He asserted that these three paradigms (cultural with efficacy, organisational with efficiency, and technological with effectiveness) create powerful and contradictory pressures to "perform—or else"

(McKenzie, 2001, p. 17). For those being artist/researcher/educators, recognizing other roles and their paradigms and the meaning found in same terms across different paradigms may be significant. I realized that when considering performance, I was attached to the false construct of efficiency at the expense of efficacy in my writing. In art, and in particularly theatre, efficacy is about doing something well. Doing something well takes time. Considering the time of process is important in playbuilding as qualitative research. Theatre-makers know that creativity has its own time. There comes a time in a project when the story will take on a life of its own. *Un momento para cada cosa.*

Chapter 8: Won't End Here . . .

PGR: When is theatre research and research art?

KATHY: Exactly.

This research contributes to forwarding the development of theatre-based research by performing a collective and individual analysis on what it means to be artist/researcher/educator and undertake playbuilding as qualitative research.

Significance of Research

This research is significant on many levels. The play and script of *To Spin a Red Yarn* stands as an artefact on the collective interpretation, generation and performance from the perspective of applied theatre graduate students. Through glimpses into the performance and process of the lived experience of the participants and the discussion of the three key themes—path-finding, engaging in a (messy) process and speaking different languages—that emerged, this research offers artist/researchers/educators access to more stories, insights, and ideas about what it means to be a theatre-based artist/researcher/educator within a particular time and theatre-based research project. Also, by highlighting some of the artistic choices and theatrical conventions used in performance, from the devising process and as discussed in the post-show dialogue, this research opens up rich possibilities that are commonplace to theatre-makers and performing artists on how different theatrical conventions could be used in playbuilding as qualitative research. As a result, this research, through its artefact and exegesis adds to the existing canon of research-based theatre and a/r/tography as a documented playbuilding research project.

Furthermore, this research builds on the field of playbuilding as qualitative research by offering a translated a/r/tographical framework into theatre-based language for the use by practitioners. Practitioners, as a result, are enabled to conceptualize an a/r/tographical methodological framework for playbuilding as qualitative research that is rooted in theatre practitioner praxis (theory and action). Symbiotically, this research contributes to the field of a/r/tography by providing concrete examples of how renderings could be translated and demonstrated as theatrical concepts for research-based theatre.

Red Yarn(s) Yet to Spin

Sitting in the Mac, I look around me.

There sits my Cohort, Mentor(s), and PGR.

I smile and nod to each.

I catch a glimpse of movement behind the curtain,

others are waiting in the wings.

I started this journey sparked by curiosity,

committed to push the edges of my learning

open to the un/folding of my community and my self.

As an educator, I have engaged deeply as learner.

As artist-researcher, I have quested, spun, disrupted, and gained new stories.

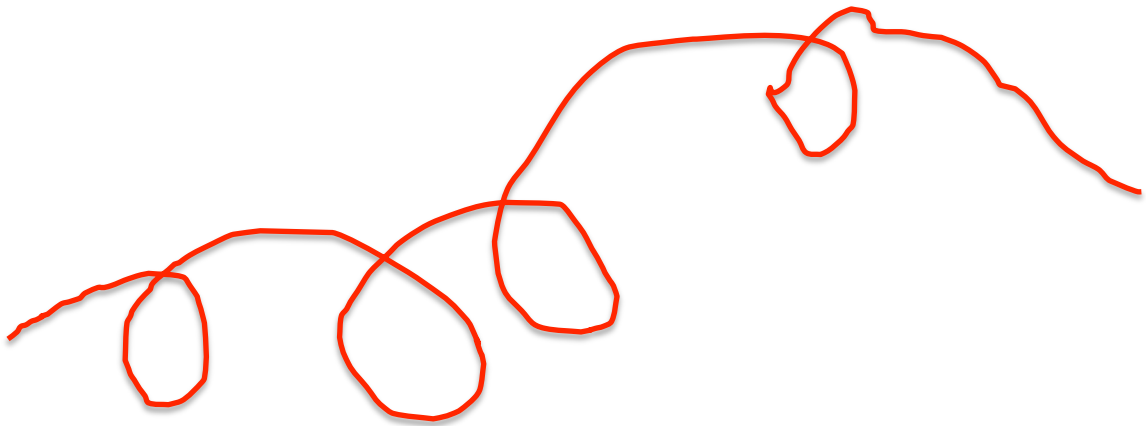
As applied theatre practitioner being and becoming a/r/tographer, I have played

in joy . . . confusion . . . despair . . . emptiness . . . beauty . . . life and death.

*Writing with my blood and bones,
I offer this story as a boon of wisdom.
For others to do what they will.*

*I pick up my papers and cardboard tube.
As I put them in my backpack, I take one slow look around,
seeing both the seen and unseen,
I breathe it all in.*

*Noticing a strand of red yarn on the floor,
I pick it up and follow it off stage.*



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Appendix A: Ethical Entry into Research

Excerpts from Ethics Application

Recruitment Process and Materials

Group 1 (Primary Participants). The recruitment process will begin August 13th, 2012. As a fellow graduate student, the researcher has a reasonable expectation of accessing current graduate students as she is in contact with them through their mutual participation in the theatre program and is connected with all current graduated students through her role as the graduate student representative within the theatre department. Regarding recruiting past graduate students and potential undergraduate students, the chair of the theatre department has agreed to have the theatre department forward the invitation to be part of this research project to these potential participants. Making contact in this way, these potential participants' privacy is protected, and interested individuals can contact the researcher directly if they choose. Once contact has been made, the researcher will discuss with participants in person or by phone the project, then email the consent form for the participant to consider. The consent form will contain an overview and description of the roles and responsibilities required, and the research component of the project. Interested parties will be given about two weeks to decide whether to participate, at which time the researcher will be available in person and by email to answer questions participants may have about the project.

Group 2 (Audience members) The recruitment process will occur with audience members who have come to the play prior to the performance. In the play's program, each audience member will receive a letter of information/consent form outlining the research project and requesting participation in a post-show conversation. The letter of information/consent form will be addressed prior to the beginning of the performance and then, after the performance, it will be read out and collected before the discussion takes place.

Free and Informed Consent

Group 1 (Primary Participants). Starting August 13th, the researcher will contact participants in person or by phone to discuss the project, and then email the consent form for the participant to review. Interested parties will be given about two weeks after that to decide whether to participate, at which time the researcher will be available in person and by email to answer questions participants may have about the project. The Researcher will have participants sign their consent forms before beginning the Focus Group.

Group 2 (Audience members) In the play's program, each audience member will receive a letter of information/consent form outlining the research project and requesting participation in a post-show conversation. Prior to the beginning of the performance, the researcher will read the letter of information/consent form and ensure that all forms have been collected before the discussion takes place. Those who do not provide a signed consent form will not be allowed to join the post-show dialogue

Ongoing Consent

Group 1 (Primary Participants). Before the first focus group, verbal and written information will be provided, and signed consent forms will be required from each participant. With respect to the on-going video taping during the playbuilding process, participants will be reminded at the beginning of each session that they are taking part in a research project and refer to their consent form. At the end of each playbuilding session, participants will be encouraged to make their own journal notes, along with the Researcher making her field notes, for reference at the final Research Project's Focus Group. The nature of this research requires participants to think of themselves as researchers and as a result, their involvement in a research project will be continuously be reinforced.

Participants' Right to Withdraw

Group 1 (Primary Participants) In the event that a participant withdraws part way through the study but agrees to allow his/her data to be utilized, the participant and researcher will discuss what contributions can be used, complete an assent form summarizing the participant's specific and unique contributions, and have the participant sign the form.

Group 2 (Audience Members) can request for a specific contribution not to be used in analysis or dissemination, however, it is logistically impossible to remove him/her from the videotape.

Confidentiality

There are limits to confidentiality for group 1 (primary participants) and group 2 (audience members) due to the nature of the research.

Group 1 (Primary participants) will be part of the focus group, playbuilding process and performance. Others from the theatre department will know that they were a part of the research. All activities done with this participant group are collaborative and with an end goal of public performance. This is explained in each consent form, and the researcher (researcher-participant/ facilitator) will discuss this prior to beginning the focus groups, and playbuilding process. Participants will need to feel safe to express thoughts and concerns around peers, and to encourage this, the researcher will check in weekly with participants to make sure that they approve of the way their personal story/contributions are being portrayed, as well as to check that participants feel their identity is kept confidential. If any participants do not approve or would like to talk about the issue further, the researcher will address it within the collective creation process and if necessary, arrange a private meeting with the participant. The researcher will seek to pinpoint exactly which lines, staging, scene, character portrayal, or concept the participant is uncomfortable with. The researcher will then ask the participant to explain how the line, staging, scene, character portrayal, or concept can be adapted to better protect the participant's personal stories and identity. Within the collective creation process, we will find similarities in all of the stories and dramatize. We will seek to fictionalize personal stories to nurture participants' confidentiality. The participants, however, as Applied Theatre students, are familiar with communicating in drama and in public performance,

and may want to be recognized professionally for their contributions in this research. This is addressed in the consent form.

For Group 2 (Audience members), they will not be asked to introduce themselves to the group, so their identity will remain protected, unless they decide to disclose their identity, however, due to the nature of the post-show conversation, and since the video-taped show may also capture visuals of participants, confidentiality is limited. The issue will be addressed in the letter of information and consent form.

Possible Risks

Group 2 (Audience Members) Possible risks are very unlikely.

Group 1 (Primary participants) Collaborative work is fraught with personal and interpersonal issues. As the focus of this research is on the role identities of theatre-based artist, researcher and educator, a difference of opinion among colleagues may occur or professional reputation may be challenged in performances. As well, since transformative learning may occur on a deeper level pertaining to sense of self (existential identity) emotional responses may be triggered. Therefore, some social and emotion risks are possible.

Group 1 (Primary participants) To prevent or deal with these risks, the following steps will be taken:

1. On the first day of the project, a code of conduct will be developed with participants around issues of group dynamics, such as giving and receiving negative feedback, not holding outside conversations with other individuals, recognizing that opinions are emergent and in process of being formed and if offended, talking directly with the person about the offense as the person may be unaware of the harm caused.
2. Prior to each session, participants will be asked if any issues have arisen for them. Each participant will be encouraged to share only what he or she feels comfortable with. If a personal sensitivity arises, bigger than the collective purpose, the individual will be requested to seek professional services, such as the University of Victoria's counseling center. In addition, the researcher, who is at the same time a skilled and experienced facilitator, will check in with participants to ensure that they approve of the way their personal story/contributions are being portrayed. Playbuilding will focus on group discoveries and revelations but individual contributions may be highlighted. If any participants do not approve or would like to talk about the issue further, the researcher will facilitate within the collective creation play building group process; adapting the play to better protect the actor's personal stories and identity.
3. Before the performances and post-show conversations take place, a discussion regarding the post-show conversation and general play critiques/comments will take place with the participants in rehearsal in November, or earlier if the topic arises. The researcher will discuss with the group the possibility of receiving

negative feedback on the play, and explore implications for professional reputations.

4. On performance days, prior to beginning the post-show conversation, the facilitator will address this issue verbally, giving general guidelines and setting boundaries around verbal criticism with the audience. The purpose of the play – to generate dialogue – will be reiterated. The facilitator will be responsible to re-direct the discussion to the content of the play and how it resonates with the audience's own experiences.

Risk response if necessary

Group 1 (Primary participants)

1. The researcher will keep her advisory committee updated and seek further strategies and outside help, such as having one of the committee members facilitate conflict resolution either within the group or with an individual participant.
2. The researcher will also remind participants that the research is entirely voluntary and that other arrangements can be made, if they chose to withdraw.
3. As for performance, it is possible that comments or topics discussed in the post-show conversation with audience members could have negative implications for the actor-participants. After each show, participants will take time to debrief the post-show dialogue, raise any issues of concern and strategize follow up actions.

Compensation

Group 1 (Primary Participants) As this research is interested in developing a pedagogical model it makes sense to structure it like an academic course. Therefore, participants may be part of this research and receive credit for their participation in terms of a directed study course Thea 590/690 or Theatre 435. However, that is an option of the course and its supervisor, Dr. Warwick Dobson. The specific details will be prearranged between the potential participant and Dr. Dobson. For students doing a Thea 590 or Thea 690 Directed studies course, this project will be the substance of their grade (participation in the project and an evaluative paper) whereas students undertaking the project under the Thea 435 (a year long course) will use the project for their fall term grade. As a result, participating in the research for the full number of hours will not factor more heavily into determining a student's grade by their course instructor, but will be an alternative and comparable option for course requirements.

There is no inducement for this research project – participants are entering into the research project voluntarily and of their own free will.

Group 2 (Audience Members) No compensation.

Recruitment Scripts for Primary participants: Initial request, Email follow up

Initial request

Hello _____

My name is Kathy Bishop and I am currently an University of Victoria PhD graduate student in Interdisciplinary studies (Applied Theatre & Educational Leadership studies).

I am conducting a research project entitled: *Enacting the artist/researcher/teacher: Identity development through research-based theatre.*

I am interested in investigating how the complex identities of artist, researcher and teacher can be nurtured and transformed into a more holistic, integrated identity as artist/researcher/teacher in order to resolve creative, aesthetic, scientific and ethical tensions which may arise when devising theatre for purposes of research and education. My primary research question is: How are the identities as artists/researchers/teachers developed through engaging in a collective research-based theatre project on this topic?

As an UVic applied theatre student (current or past graduate or undergraduate student) you are being invited to participate in this research project because Applied Theatre students, current or in the past, who are in process of developing or continuing to develop themselves as artists, researchers and teachers could provide valuable insight into how practitioners develop an integrated identity of artist/researcher/teacher through the use of dramatic conventions.

The research project consists of participating in 2 Focus groups and a 12 week playbuilding project (Sept–Dec, 2012), Mondays & Thursday for 1.5 hours at the University of Victoria as well as 2-4 performances, dates to be determined within that time frame. It is structured like a 1.5 academic course, which you can receive course credit for taking it as Thea 435 or as a directed studies program. If this is an option you would like, the specific details can be discussed with Dr. W. Dobson who has agreed to act as supervisor for students doing a Thea 590 or Thea 690 Directed studies course, this project will be the substance of their grade (participation in the project and an evaluative paper) whereas students undertaking the project under Thea 435 (a year long course) will use the project for their fall term grade.

The benefit for you is that you will have the opportunity to inquire into the issue of developing as a theatre-based artist/researcher/teacher through theatre-based methods and process and discuss it with colleagues. This may ultimately support you with your [own] further development as a professional practitioner and forming a critical community and support network of colleagues. Further, you may gain deeper understanding and practical experience in collective creation as qualitative research and explore challenges in doing research through theatre processes.

If this project interests you and you would like to consider participating in it, I have a consent form that fully outlines the project, which I would like to give to you, for your review and then have a further conversation if you would like.

Please let me know if you would be interested in possibly participating in this research project and would like to receive the consent form to review and/or if you have any questions or would like to discuss anything further at this time. I can be contacted directly in person in the theatre department, by phone at _____ or through emailing [email address].

Thank you for your consideration of participating in this project.

Best regards,

Kathy Bishop, PhD Candidate

Email follow up

Dear _____:

Thank you for your interest in potentially participating in the research project: *Enacting the artist/researcher/teacher: Identity development through research-based theatre*. I am attaching a participant consent form for YOUR REVIEW.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact me by phone at _____ or email: [email address].

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the attached consent form and forward it back to me by August 31, 2012. The research project will begin with the first focus group on September 6, 2012.

Best regards, Kathy Bishop, PhD Candidate

Participant Consent Form: Primary Participants

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled: *Enacting the artist/researcher/teacher: Identity development through research-based theatre* that is being conducted by Kathy Bishop.

Name	Role in research project	Position at University of Victoria	Contact Information
Kathy Bishop	Principle Investigator	PhD student, Interdisciplinary Studies	Email: Phone:
Dr. Warwick Dobson	Co-supervisor, PhD committee	Department Chair, Theatre	Email: Phone:

Dr. Darlene Clover	Co-supervisor, PhD committee	Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership	Email: Phone:
Dr. Monica Prendergast	Member, PhD committee	Department of Curriculum and Instruction	Email: Phone:

As a graduate student, Kathy Bishop, is required to conduct this research as part of the requirements for a Doctorate degree in Interdisciplinary studies (UVic Applied Theatre & Educational Leadership studies). It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Warwick Dobson, Dr. Darlene Clover and Dr. Monica Prendergast.

Purpose and Objectives: The purpose of this research is to investigate how the complex identities of artist, researcher and teacher can be nurtured and transformed into a more holistic, integrated identity as artist/researcher/teacher in order to resolve aesthetic, ethical and methodological tensions which may arise when devising theatre for purposes of research and education.

For purposes of analysis, I will focus on two types of identity – role-identities and existential-identities (Gecas & Mortimer, 1987). Role-identity refers to various social roles, memberships or categories in which an individual commits and internalises whereas existential-identity refers to personal identity, or sense of self, representing an individual's uniqueness and continual creation through reconstruction of the past while anticipating the future from the perspective of the present (Gecas & Mortimer, 1987, p. 265-267). Identity will be explored through the exploration of role through drama processes & performances,

Importance of this Research: Research of this type is important because it will encourage practitioners (those in Applied Theatre as well as other practitioners, such as adult educators engaging in arts-based research), who may experience a clash of roles, to develop a strong sense of self and role as artist/researcher/educator and in doing so, enable communities to express their voices through theatre in aesthetically arresting ways, gain different perspectives, push thinking in new directions for creative problem solving and utilize the theatrical form to encourage thought and responsive action amongst audiences. Furthermore, the playbuilding model utilized in this research could provide a useful pedagogical model that offers the opportunity for every graduate student in the humanities and social sciences to explore their role and existential identities in a research-based applied theatre project as part of their graduate studies. Other disciplines could draw upon this embodied model as a way of working within communities utilizing a range and depth of dramaturgical processes and practices - beyond the dissemination of data - as a tool for individual and social transformations.

Participant Selection: You are being asked to participate in this study because as an Applied Theatre student/practitioner you are capable of communicating through theatre and may be interested in exploring what it means to be a theatre-based artist, researcher

and teacher for yourself, your fellow students and, the field of Applied Theatre in general.

What is involved: If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, you will need to take part in 2 Focus groups and a 12 week project (Sept–Dec, 2012), Mondays & Thursday for 1.5 hours at the University of Victoria as well as 2-4 performances, dates to be determined within that time frame.

Two focus groups (group discussions) will be conducted with all participants, one before engaging in the project and one after all performances are completed in Dec 2012. Group discussions will be centered on what it means to be a theatre-based artist, researcher and educator. In the project, participants will progress from exploring their individual experiences (and those of expert living or text-based informants they have interviewed/researched) through the use of theatre games and techniques to the creation of a play on the topic of being/becoming artist/researcher/teacher based on their collective experiences. The end result of this process will be a public performance for the larger UVic academic community, and potentially the geographically nearby arts-based research communities of UBC and SFU. Some extra rehearsal or performance time may be required up to 8 hours.

Kathy Bishop will conduct the pre- and post-performance focus groups and act as participant-researcher/facilitator within the project.

All focus groups, sessions, performances and post-show dialogues will be videotaped for data analysis. Participants will be asked to keep journals and share from them what they chose in the final focus group. The Researcher will also make field notes on any group discoveries or significant individual revelations as well as her own thoughts about being artist/researcher/teacher. The participant’s perspectives and opinions will help the researcher assess how participant identities as artists/researchers/teachers developed through engaging in a collective research-based theatre project on the topic of being/becoming artist/researcher/teacher.

Visually Recorded Images/Data Participant to provide initials, *only if you consent:*

- Videos may be taken of me for: Analysis _____
Dissemination _____
- Performance photos may be taken of me for: Analysis _____
Dissemination _____

Inconvenience: If you decide to participate in this project it is a significant time commitment. As a UVic student you may opt to participate in this project as part of your THEA 435 class or a directed studies. Extra rehearsal times and performances will be set with all group members to ensure that a convenient time is found. If the time commitment is altogether too much, but you are interested in the project, you can attend the performance and post show dialogue.

Risks: There are some potential risks to you by participating in this research and they include: emotional or social risks. Collaborative work is fraught with personal and

interpersonal issues. As the focus of this research is on the role identities of theatre-based artist, researcher and educator, a difference of opinion among colleagues may occur. To prevent or deal with these risks, the following steps will be taken: on the first day of the project, a code of conduct will be developed with participants around issues of group dynamics, such as giving and receiving negative feedback, not holding outside conversations with other individuals, recognizing that opinions are in process/developing and if offended, talking directly with the person about it as he or she may be unaware of harm. Prior to each session, participants will be asked if any issues have arisen for them. A transformation in self or worldview may occur through these cognitive, affective and/or critical teaching and processes. Each participant is encouraged to share only what he or she feels comfortable with. If a personal sensitivity arises, bigger than the collective purpose, the individual will be requested to seek professional services; one option is the UVic counseling center.

Benefits:

to participant: This research project will give you the opportunity to inquire into being/becoming theatre-based artists/researchers/teachers through theatre-based methods and processes and to discuss it with colleagues. Working in this playbuilding process could help you to develop your own identity as artist/researcher/teacher in a new and creative way, and may ultimately support you with your own development as a professional Applied Theatre practitioner and forming a critical community and support network of colleagues who do this work.

to society: After the performance, the goal is to invite audience members to participate in a reflective critique about the issues it raises about bringing together art, research and education. As well, practitioners with a strong sense of self as artist/researcher/educator would gain efficacy in doing innovative, creative and ethical work and research both in the academy and communities thus enabling communities to express their voices through theatre in aesthetically arresting ways, gain different perspectives and push thinking in new directions for solving problems that they face.

to state of knowledge: This study will expand the methodology of a/r/tography - exploring artist/researcher/teacher identities through integrated inquiries of theory, praxis and 'art-making' – to include the co-construction of knowledge through a group experience not simply from an individual perspective. Furthermore, through the exploration of 'role' in the drama, a dynamic meaning-making process can occur which may shed light on how to utilize playbuilding as a method of adult education transformative learning theory. As a result, a graduate course could be built around the model and its findings; offering the opportunity for every graduate student in the arts and social sciences to explore their role and existential identities in a research-based a/r/tographic applied theatre project as part of their graduate studies. Other disciplines could draw upon the model as a way of working within communities utilizing a range and depth of dramaturgical processes and practices, beyond the dissemination of data, but as a tool for individual and social transformations.

Compensation: As this research is interested in developing a pedagogical model it makes sense to structure it like an academic course. Therefore, you may choose to do this project as part of course credit for THEA 435 course or a directed studies course (THEA 590 or THEA 690). Receiving course credit can also compensate you for any inconvenience related to your participation. If you consent to participate in this study, this form of compensation must not be coercive. It is unethical to provide undue compensation or inducements to research participants. If you would not participate if the compensation was not offered, then you should decline. During the course of the research if you chose to withdraw and are receiving course credit for your involvement, you can negotiate doing an alternate assignment(s) with the course instructor for credit.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation, EVEN IF IT IS PRIOR TO A PERFORMANCE. Upon your withdrawal, you can request to have any play notes pertaining to your actions removed. Upon the participant's request, portions of the play will be removed if they obviously draw on your own personal experiences, but because the aim is to find commonalities in all actors' stories IT MAY BE IMPOSSIBLE TO REMOVE ALL OF YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS. Regarding the devising sessions, AS THE VIDEO TAPE WILL BE RECORDING CONTINUOUSLY, IT WILL BE LOGISTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO REMOVE SPECIFIC PARTICIPANT CONTRIBUTIONS THEREFORE THE VIDEO TAPE CANNOT BE ERASED AFTER IT HAS BEEN RECORDED. That being said, if the participant withdraws and remembers a specific topic that he/she spoke about, the researcher will eliminate it in the data analysis. You can also request to have all information you have shared with the researcher during the focus group process removed. Your name will not be included in the dissemination.

Researcher's Relationship with Participants: The researcher (participant-researcher/facilitator) has a prior peer/peer relationship with some of the potential participants. You should know that your participation is entirely voluntary and if you choose not to participate it does not influence the research in a serious way. If you do not wish to participate it does not in any way create an issue for the researcher.

Ongoing Consent: To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research project, the researcher (participant-researcher/facilitator) will require this signed consent form from each participant. Participants will also be reminded at beginning of each session that they are taking part in a research project.

Anonymity: All focus groups, sessions, performances and post-show dialogues will be videotaped for data analysis by the researcher (participant-researcher/facilitator) after the performances are completed. Due to the nature of performing, it will be known that you are participating in this research project. If you opt out of the performing but are part of the devising process, due to the close-knit nature of the UVic Applied Theatre program, it may be known that you are participating in this research project. If you are in the devising process, the use of pseudonyms will help to protect your identity in the research write up. Research notes will focus on group discoveries and revelations but individual contributions may be highlighted.

WAIVING ANONYMITY PLEASE SELECT STATEMENT only if you consent:

I consent to be identified by name / credited in the performance: _____
 (Participant to initial)

I consent to be identified by name / credited in the results of the study: _____
 (Participant to initial)

I consent to have my responses attributed to me by name in the results: _____
 (Participant to initial)

I consent to have my responses attributed by a pseudonym in the results:
 _____ (Participant to initial)

Confidentiality: The focus groups and project sessions take place in a group setting. Participants will be asked NOT to share any information that is discussed in the group, however due to the nature of group activities, confidentiality of discussions or anonymity cannot be guaranteed and therefore participants are asked not to share any information they wish to keep private.

The researcher (participant-researcher/facilitator) will check in weekly with participants to ensure that they approve with the way their personal story/contributions are being portrayed. If any participants do not approve or would like to talk about the issue further, the researcher will facilitate within the collective creation play building group process; adapting the play to better protect the actor's personal stories and identity.

The post-show conversation will be group oriented, performers, facilitators and other spectators will hear your feedback. As with the focus groups and project sessions, participants are not asked to share any information that is discussed in the group or the identities of group participants.

Dissemination of Results: It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: published articles in scholarly journals, presentations at scholarly meetings, and PhD dissertation.

Using Data Beyond this Project: It is possible, that in the future, the researcher, or project participants in their professional practice, may want to analyze this data for purposes other than this research project for purposes such as comparing this project with other playbuilding processes done in applied theatre or arts-based research community contexts or using it as a pedagogical model for developing artist/researcher/teacher identities. Data will include videotapes and transcriptions. There is a possibility that videotapes will contain information that makes participants identifiable from the data. All research using this data will undergo thorough ethical review prior to commencement.

Future Use of Data *PLEASE SELECT STATEMENT only if you consent:*

I consent to the use of my data in future research: _____ (Participant to provide initials)

I **do not** consent to the use of my data in future research: _____ (Participant to provide initials)

I consent to be contacted in the event my data is requested for future research: _____ (Participant to initial)

Maintenance and Disposal of Data: Data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Researcher's office, and on her personal password protected computer. Data will be disposed of after 10 years, at which time electronic files will be erased, and paper copies will be shredded.

Contacts: Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include Kathy Bishop (Email: [email address] Phone: [telephone number]), Dr. Warwick Dobson (Email: [email address] Phone: [telephone number]), Dr. Darlene Clover (Email: [email address] Phone: [telephone number]) and, Dr. Monica Prendergast (Email: [email address] Phone: [telephone number]).

In addition to being able to contact the researcher or advisory committee at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria at [telephone number].

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
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A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Participant Consent Form: Audience members

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled *Enacting the artist/researcher/teacher: Identity development through research-based theatre* that is being conducted by Kathy Bishop.

As a graduate student, Kathy Bishop, is required to conduct this research as part of the requirements for a Doctorate degree in Interdisciplinary studies (Applied Theatre &

Educational Leadership studies) at the University of Victoria. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Warwick Dobson, Dr. Darlene Clover and Dr. Monica Prendergast.

Purpose and Objectives: The purpose of this research is to investigate how the complex identities of artist, researcher and teacher can be nurtured and transformed into a more holistic, integrated identity as artist/researcher/teacher in order to resolve aesthetic, ethical and methodological tensions which may arise when devising theatre for purposes of research and education.

Importance of this Research: Research of this type is important because it will encourage practitioners who may experience a tension in roles, to develop a strong sense of self as artist/researcher/educator and in doing so, enable communities to express their voices through theatre in aesthetically arresting ways, gain different perspectives and push thinking in new directions for creative problem solving. Furthermore, the playbuilding model utilized in this research could provide a useful theatrical form to encourage thought and responsive action amongst audiences.

Participant Selection: You are being asked to participate in this study because you have watched the play.

What is involved: If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, you will need to stay after the performance to take part in a post-show conversation in the theatre with the creators of the performance. Kathy Bishop will facilitate the post-show conversation.

This post-show conversation will be video taped for data analysis. The spectator's perspectives and opinions will help the researcher assess whether the content and form used enabled dialogue and new insights on the topic.

THIS POST-SHOW CONVERSATION WILL BE VIDEO TAPED, AND YOU CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN IT UNLESS YOU HAVE SIGNED THIS CONSENT FORM AND GIVEN IT TO ONE OF THE RESEARCH/ CAST MEMBERS AFTER THE SHOW.

Inconvenience: If you decide to participate in the post-show conversation, you will need to stay after the performance for about 20-30 minutes.

Risks: There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Benefits: This research project will give spectators the opportunity to learn more about this issue, and discuss it with those who are working with the form of theatre. The goal is to invite audience members to share their thoughts of being/becoming artist/researcher/teacher and participate in a reflective critique about the play's depiction of roles, and issues that arise as a result of integrating arts, research and education.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. Your name will not be included in the dissemination. AS THE VIDEO TAPE WILL BE RECORDING DATA, IT WILL BE LOGISTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO REMOVE SPECIFIC AUDIENCE MEMBER

CONTRIBUTIONS THEREFORE THE VIDEO TAPE CANNOT BE ERASED AFTER IT HAS BEEN RECORDED. That being said, if the participant withdraws and remembers a specific topic that they spoke about, the researchers will not include it in the data analysis.

Anonymity: Your name will not be included in the data or in the dissemination of study results. Identity will remain protected, unless you, or someone else participating in the discussion discloses your name during the post-show conversation. In this case, it will be recorded on the videotape, but pseudonyms will be used in write up of data, unless otherwise agreed upon through further signed consent.

Confidentiality: The post-show conversation will be group oriented, performers, facilitators and other audience members/spectators will hear your feedback. Participants are asked not to share any information that is discussed in the group or the identities of group participants, however due to the nature of group activities, confidentiality of discussions or anonymity cannot be guaranteed and therefore participants are asked not to share any information they wish to keep private.

Dissemination of Results: It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: published articles in scholarly journals, presentations at scholarly meetings, and PhD dissertation.

Using Data Beyond this Project: It is possible, that in the future, the researcher may want to analyze this data for purposes other than this research project for purposes such as comparing this project with other playbuilding processes done in applied theatre or arts-based research community contexts. Data will include videotapes and transcriptions.

There is a possibility that videotapes will contain information that makes participants identifiable from the data. Further consent for real names will be secured otherwise pseudonyms will replace real names in transcripts. All research using this data will undergo thorough ethical review prior to commencement.

***PLEASE INITIAL HERE if you **DO NOT** wish your data to be used in the future:

Maintenance and Disposal of Data: Data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Principle Investigator's office, and on her personal password protected computer. Data will be disposed of after ten years, at which time electronic files will be erased, and paper copies will be shredded.

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include Kathy Bishop (Email: [email address] Phone: [telephone number]), Dr. Warwick Dobson (Email: [email address] Phone: [telephone number]), Dr. Darlene Clover (Email: [email address] Phone: [telephone number]) and, Dr. Monica Prendergast (Email: [email address] Phone: [telephone number]).

In addition to being able to contact the researcher at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by

contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria at [telephone number].

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

Name of Participant *Signature* *Date*

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Appendix B: Modification to Ethics Approval – Playback Theatre Session

Playback Theatre General Overview

Playback Theatre is a theatrical form utilizing storytelling and improvisational techniques developed by J. Fox in the 70s and has been performed globally in a variety of settings for various purposes. The international Playback organization notes that Playback Theatre “promotes the right for any voice to be heard, brings group concerns to the surface, and stimulates a dialogue by making different perspectives visible (see <http://www.playbacktheatre.org/>). In a Playback event, an experienced ‘conductor’ oversees the session, inviting and then supporting volunteers in the audience to tell a moment or story from their life. Once this has been done, all those present watch the enactment of the story by actors playing the different roles to bring the story to stage with artistic interpretation and shape. Playback Theatre has been utilized within/as research practices. Within this research project, Robert Birch, a University of Victoria theatre graduate and certified trainer of the international Playback school, will lead this two-hour session. Participant-Audience members will be invited to tell a personal story about what it means to them to be, and the challenges they face, as artists, researchers and teachers. As a result, more data may be generated and analyzed for this research project with the primary participants collectively.

Recruitment

Group 3 (Participant-Audience Members)

Up to 20 Applied Theatre Practitioners will be recruited to share their stories of being artist/teacher/researcher by the principal researcher through personal call and/or email.

The key characteristic of the participants is their position as current or past UVic Students (who could have been participant-actors in the full study but were unable to due to time restraints) and/or practicing applied theatre practitioners known within the applied theatre community.

Script

Hello _____

My name is Kathy Bishop and I am currently an UVic PhD graduate student in Interdisciplinary studies (Applied Theatre & Educational Leadership studies). I am conducting a research project entitled: *Enacting the artist/researcher/teacher: Identity development through research-based theatre*.

I am interested in investigating how the complex identities of artist, researcher and teacher can be nurtured and transformed into a more holistic, integrated identity as artist/researcher/teacher in order to resolve creative, aesthetic, scientific and ethical tensions which may arise when devising theatre for purposes of research and education. *My primary research question is:* How are the identities as artists/researchers/teachers developed through engaging in a collective research-based theatre project on this topic?

Currently, six UVic applied theatre graduate students– engaged in a 12 week course culminating in a performance piece - are investigating this topic through their own experiences and would like to expand the data by collecting and interpreting stories and experiences of other applied theatre practitioners.

As an applied theatre student and/or practitioner, you are being invited to participate in this research project through sharing your stories as an applied theatre practitioner via a 2 hour playback theatre session. Playback Theatre is a form of theatre that allows ‘tellers’ stories to be told and then interpreted and acted out on stage.

The benefit for you is that you will have the opportunity to share information with colleagues and add to greater data base about being/ becoming theatre-based artists/researchers/teachers.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please let me know and I will put you on the confirmed list and will forward you the consent form.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact me by phone at [telephone number] or through email:[email address].

Thank you for your consideration of participating in this project.

Best regards, Kathy Bishop, PhD Candidate

Participant Consent Form: Participant-Audience members

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled *Enacting the artist/researcher/teacher: Identity development through research-based theatre* that is being conducted by Kathy Bishop.

As a graduate student, Kathy Bishop, is required to conduct this research as part of the requirements for a Doctorate degree in Interdisciplinary studies (Applied Theatre & Educational Leadership studies) at the University of Victoria. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Warwick Dobson, Dr. Darlene Clover and Dr. Monica Prendergast.

Purpose and Objectives: The purpose of this research is to investigate how the complex identities of artist, researcher and teacher can be nurtured and transformed into a more holistic, integrated identity as artist/researcher/teacher in order to resolve aesthetic, ethical and methodological tensions which may arise when devising theatre for purposes of research and education.

Importance of this Research: Research of this type is important because it will encourage practitioners who may experience a tension in roles, to develop a strong sense of self as artist/researcher/educator and in doing so, enable communities to express their voices through theatre in aesthetically arresting ways, gain different perspectives and push thinking in new directions for creative problem solving. Furthermore, the playbuilding model utilized in this research could provide a useful theatrical form to encourage thought and responsive action amongst audiences.

Participant Selection: You are being asked to participate in this study because as an Applied Theatre student and/or practitioner you are capable of communicating through theatre and may be interested in exploring what it means to be a theatre-based artist, researcher and teacher for yourself, your fellow students and, the field of Applied Theatre in general.

What is involved: If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, you will partake in a two-hour playback theatre session in which you may choose to share a personal story of being an applied theatre practitioner and have this story interpreted and 'playbacked' to yourself and the audience in attendance. Robert Birch, who is a certified trainer of the international Playback school and Canada's longest running teacher, will lead this session.

This session will be video taped for data analysis. The participant-audience members' stories will help the researcher-participants collect and interpret further data for a devised performance piece to be performed in December 2012. THIS PLAYBACK SESSION WILL BE VIDEO TAPED, AND YOU CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN IT UNLESS YOU HAVE SIGNED THIS CONSENT FORM PRIOR.

Inconvenience: If you decide to participate in the playback session, you will attend the 2 hour session.

Risks: There are some potential risks to you by participating in this research and they include: emotional or social risks. Sharing personal stories in a public forum are at risk for being misinterpreted. To prevent or deal with some of these risks, each participant is encouraged to share only what he or she feels comfortable with; each participant who has told a story will be asked if the interpretation was accurate; and, the audience in attendance will be limited to an expert audience of other applied theatre practitioners participants who likely will share similar experiences and challenges. If a personal sensitivity arises, bigger than the collective purpose, the individual will be requested to seek professional services; one option is the UVic counseling center.

Benefits:

to participant: This research project will give participants the opportunity to share information with colleagues and add to greater data base about being/ becoming theatre-based artists/researchers/teachers.

to state of knowledge: This study will expand the methodology of a/r/tography - exploring artist/researcher/teacher identities through integrated inquiries of theory, praxis and 'art-making' – to include the co-construction of knowledge through a group experience not simply from an individual perspective. Furthermore, through the exploration of 'role' in the drama, a dynamic meaning-making process can occur which may shed light on how to utilize playbuilding as a method of adult education transformative learning theory. As a result, a graduate course could be built around the model and its findings; offering the opportunity for every graduate student in the arts and social sciences to explore their role and existential identities in a research-based a/r/tographic applied theatre project as part of their graduate studies. Other disciplines

could draw upon the model as a way of working within communities utilizing a range and depth of dramaturgical processes and practices, beyond the dissemination of data, but as a tool for individual and social transformations.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. Your name will not be included in the dissemination. Because the aim is to find commonalities in all participant-audience stories, IT MAY BE IMPOSSIBLE TO REMOVE ALL OF YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS. AS THE VIDEO TAPE WILL BE RECORDING DATA, IT WILL BE LOGISTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO REMOVE ALL PARTICIPANT-AUDIENCE MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS THEREFORE THE VIDEO TAPE CANNOT BE ERASED AFTER IT HAS BEEN RECORDED. That being said, if the participant withdraws and remembers a specific topic that they spoke about, the researchers will not include it in the data analysis.

Researcher's Relationship with Participants: The researcher (participant-researcher/facilitator) has a prior peer/peer relationship with some of the potential participants. You should know that your participation is entirely voluntary and if you choose not to participate it does not influence the research in a serious way. If you do not wish to participate it does not in any way create an issue for the researcher.

Anonymity: Your name will not be included in the data or in the dissemination of study results. Identity will remain protected, unless you, or someone else participating discloses your name during the playback session. In this case, it will be recorded on the videotape, but pseudonyms will be used in write up of data, unless otherwise agreed upon through further signed consent.

Confidentiality: The playback session will be group oriented, performers, facilitators and other audience members/spectators will hear your stories. Participants are asked not to share any information that is discussed in the group or the identities of group participants, however due to the nature of group activities, confidentiality of discussions or anonymity cannot be guaranteed and therefore participants are asked not to share any information they wish to keep private. Data dissemination will focus on group discoveries and revelations but individual contributions may be highlighted.

Dissemination of Results: It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: a public performance, published journal articles, presentations/conferences and PhD dissertation.

Using Data Beyond this Project: It is possible, that in the future, the researcher may want to analyze this data for purposes other than this research project for purposes such as comparing this project with other playbuilding processes done in applied theatre or arts-based research community contexts. Data will include videotapes and transcriptions. **There is a possibility that videotapes will contain information that makes participants identifiable from the data.** Further consent for real names will be secured otherwise pseudonyms will replace real names in transcripts. All research using this data will undergo thorough ethical review prior to starting.

Future Use of Data *PLEASE SELECT STATEMENT only if you consent:*

I consent to the use of my data in future research: _____ (Participant to provide initials)

I **do not** consent to the use of my data in future research: _____ (Participant to provide initials)

I consent to be contacted in the event my data is requested for future research: _____ (Participant to initial)

Maintenance and Disposal of Data: Data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Principle Investigator's office, and on her personal password protected computer. Data will be disposed of after ten years, at which time electronic files will be erased, and paper copies will be shredded.

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include Kathy Bishop (Email: [email address] Phone: [telephone number]), Dr. Warwick Dobson (Email: [email address] Phone: [telephone number]), Dr. Darlene Clover (Email: [email address] Phone: [telephone number]) and, Dr. Monica Prendergast (Email: [email address] Phone: [telephone number]). In addition to being able to contact the researcher at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria at [telephone number].

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

Name of Participant *Signature* *Date*

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Appendix C: Research Project Outline

September 17, 2012	Pre FOCUS GROUP
Sept 20	I. Exploring/Generation Begins Welcome & Introductions Research Project Overview/Outline Establish code of conduct/establish rules-working procedures in playbuilding Defining A/r/tographer (artist/researcher/teacher) Utilize dramatic conventions focusing on: What does it mean to be a theatre-based artist, artist?
Sept 24	I. Studies & Theories
Sept 27	I. Plays & Performances
Oct 1	I. Autoethnodramas
Oct 4	I. Autoethnodramas
Oct 11	I. Playback Theatre Cohort Session
Oct 15	II. Devising Process Begins
Oct 18	II. Devising
Oct 22	II. Devising
Oct 25	I. Playback Theatre Larger Data Generation Session
Oct 29	II. Devising
Nov 1	II. Devising
Nov 5	II. Devising
Nov 8	II. Devising & Rehearsal Process
Nov 12	II. Devising & Rehearsal Process
Nov 14	Outside Eye. (Re)devising.
Nov 19	II. Devising
Nov 21	II. Devising
Nov 22	II. Devising & Rehearsal Process
Nov 25	II. Devising & Rehearsal Process
Nov 27	II. Devising & Rehearsal Process
Nov 29	III. Outside Eye. Tech Rehearsal
Dec 2	III. Dress Rehearsal
Dec 3	IV. Performance and Post Show Dialogue
December 6	Post FOCUS GROUP

* Note: This process referenced the Ten-Stage Devising process as outlined by Neelands & Dobson (2008) and utilized a range of dramatic conventions, determined in line with the group process and in the spirit of living inquiry.

A Summary of the Playbuilding Process interconnected with the Ten-stage Devising Process
(Neelands & Dobson, 2008, pp. 195–218)³

I. Exploring the Topic

1. Identify
2. Research
3. Focus
4. Collect & Develop

II. Creating & Rehearsal

5. Building the Performance Text
6. Refocus I
7. First Sharing
8. Refocus II

III. Full Play Rehearsal

IV. Performance & Wrap Up

9. Performing
10. Evaluation & Writing UP

Some Potential Dramatic Conventions (adapted from Flemming, 1997; Neelands & Goode, 2000; Swartz & Nyman, 2010)⁴

Collective Character	Role-reversal
Counterpoint	Choral Speak
Defining Space	Group Sculpture
Diaries, letters, journals	Mimed Activity
Games	Spectrum of Difference
Making Maps/Diagrams	Voices in the head
Objects of a character	Walls have Ears
Action Narration	Tableaux
Soundtracking	Paired Improvisation
Still-Image	Play within Play
Critical Events	Monologue
Hot-Seating	Dialogue
Mantle of the Expert	Reader's Theatre
Off Stage Activity	Dance Drama
Alter-Ego	Storytelling
Time shifts (flashbacks)	Alternative Perspective
Documentary	Beginnings

³ Neelands, J., & Dobson, W. (2008). *Drama and theatre studies*. London, United Kingdom: Hodder & Stroughton.

⁴ Flemming, M. (1997). *The art of drama teaching*. London, United Kingdom: Fulton.

Neelands, J., & Goode, T. (2000). *Structuring drama work: A handbook of available forms in theatre and drama*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Swartz, L., & Nyman, D. (2010). *Drama schemes, themes & dreams*. Portland, OR: Stenhouse.

Appendix D: Screen Shots From *To Spin A Red Yarn*

TO SPIN A Red yarn

UVic Phoenix Building
McIntyre Studio, Dec 3, 2012
Performance Screen Shots

Enacting the Artist/Researcher/Teacher



*To see full show

Go to:

<http://tinyurl.com/2012RedYarn>

TO SPIN A Redyarn

UVic Phoenix Building
McIntyre Studio, Dec 3, 2012
Performance Screen Shots

Enacting the Artist/Researcher/Teacher



*To see full performance

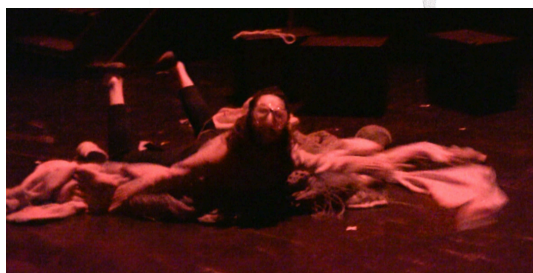
Go to:

[http://
tinyurl.com/
2012RedYarn](http://tinyurl.com/2012RedYarn)

TO SPIN A Redyarn

UVic Phoenix Building
McIntyre Studio, Dec 3, 2012
Performance Screen Shots

Enacting the Artist/Researcher/Teacher



*To see full performance
Go to: <http://tinyurl.com/2012RedYarn>

Appendix E: Excerpts from the Post-Show Dialogue Evidencing Reverberations

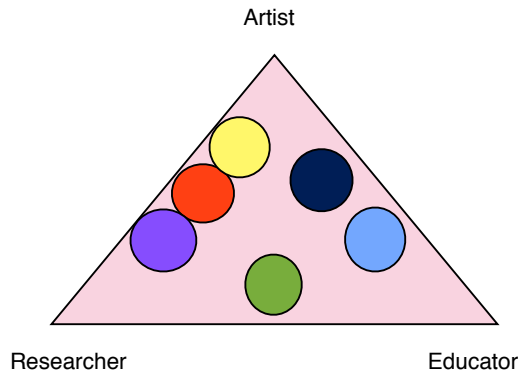
Topic	Excerpt
Self	<p>It was the idea that when you walk into something, and I can speak to this as being new, you think you got it all figured out, you know what you are going to do and how it's going to go, and you basically fall apart. And you go, "Ah, I really have no idea," at certain points. So it's sort of that idea like you gotta cut apart and then put back together sort of what you come to with. Sort of like chopping up your idea of what was whole, for me. And then you have to find the strings and bring them back together. (Cohort Member 2)</p> <p>I think in a way that the Grim Reaper is poking at Kathie trying to say, "Oh, is this what you are going to do? You are going to take all these different parts." And she is pushed to the point of really coming to an argument—a real argument that she can come up with. (Cohort Member 5)</p> <p>It reminded me also of the research itself. I walked into the research with lots of ideas, a lot of us probably have, and this character [<i>points to Pregnant Grim Reaper</i>] reminds me of my committee members [<i>Audience laughter</i>]. Who were constantly, "What? No start again! No." And it wasn't just that. I almost started to do this to myself too because by the end I was in pieces. I didn't speak to my troupe. I started from scratch. So this ripping of this sweater is really a brilliant moment to say, "We intended it to be this way and now look at the violence and what it makes us feel like. Where is it going to take us?" (Audience Member)</p>
Theories	<p>As someone who had to do a performance for my masters, the cutting apart of theories, bits of things, to patch it together again and then the argument . . . the line was, "But I don't wanna put it together in some crazy patchwork." . . . But this is a really great theory, and I really like this or this is a really great method and then, oh, to cut it apart. It is always that debate between qualitative, quantitative. Do we add them together? I don't know. (Audience Member)</p>

Topic	Excerpt
Theatrical conventions	<p>I think it is interesting that we had a very good idea and a comment to make but in that case the artistry of it didn't quite work. It just shows there is always that tension between things. I think it shows the importance of having an audience and having feedback. (Cohort Member 5)</p> <p>And I think I am a more violent sweater cutter than Kate was (<i>Audience laughter</i>). Honestly. Because truthfully, I took this over, and I was an actor with an objective. (Cohort Member 2)</p> <p>And I think, as the metaphor of theatre, part of the theatre, just as much is the audience and the audience experience. And how that impacts what is going on stage. Or doesn't. Or does it. (Audience Member)</p>
Artistic conventions as research practices	<p>I think that this piece about cutting speaks to the challenge—that very challenge of—am I staying true to the form of theatre with all its potential magnificence and aesthetics or am I trying to jazz up boring old research? Not that research is boring old research. (Audience Member)</p> <p>I think the cutting is interesting, although shocking, but it is really beautiful in a way that it is so disruptive. Because a lot of these things don't work: artist, researcher, teacher. What is my PhD for? What if I don't finish this course, and I don't finish my PhD? Or, all of these artist pieces you think I am throwing away a perfectly good course here. All these things are supposed to work just like that beautiful red sweater. But they don't really always work out the way we want them to. Like that sweater doesn't unravel like I imagine. (Audience Member)</p> <p>It reminds me also of the process, of being an applied theatre practitioner/researcher. It comes with the practice that when you are in the middle of a rehearsal or working with a group, you can walk in with whatever plan you want [<i>Audience laughter</i>] but stuff will change because they've got their own stuff going on and if you're not right there, watching for that new stuff that gets presented, you're just going to stick with your little agenda and you won't get to the jewels of the work. It's</p>

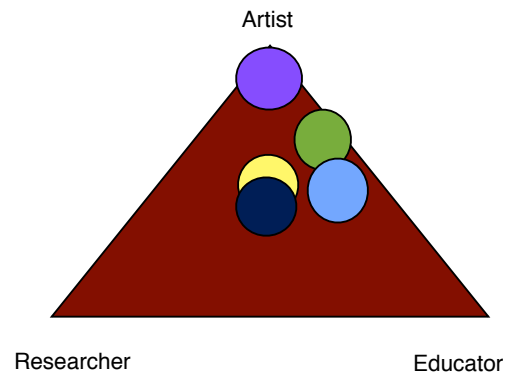
Topic	Excerpt
Identifying co-construction of knowledge	when you dump the agenda and really listen to what is happening. It's the skill of being the improviser facilitator to go, "Oh, wait a minute, let's just go with this, let's take it somewhere completely different." But that's the essence of the work. (Audience Member)
	I think the sweater is much more interesting looking now, then when we first assumed. I just think of an old movie where out of frustration the sweater gets cut and new fashions emerge. (Audience Member)
	Here we are all co-creating new understandings based on this one shocking moment. (Audience Member)
	I think the ongoing circular, the ripple effect is valuable, is a success of this particular piece. (Audience Member)
	It's all part of the conversation. . . . So it's the ongoing conversation that I really heard. As someone who is going into do some research again, all those things are what you play with—the break down, the building up, the multifaceted sides, the many roles that we are, not just now as workers in the field, but people who are then going to become mothers, wives, or, or, or . . . so there was all that present. (Audience Member)

Appendix F: Pre and Post Focus Groups







Focus Group - Pre Project Sept 20, 2012
Where do you see your self at this moment?



Focus Group - Post Project Dec 6, 2012
Where do you place your self now?



Post Project comments on Triangle placement:

-  If I were to rearrange the papers (with roles identified) I would stack all underneath artist because again for me, my journey at this point is crystal clear. They are all the same. That is what an artist does. They educate, question, reflect your interpretation of the world around you. To me they are all one.
-  At this time, with what I am doing right now, I think I just need to be more focused in this area. I think that the researcher brain is always in me. I think all these parts are within my brain, all the time. I think right now, I am focusing my energies more over here. They will always be switching.
-  I am still feeling further away from researcher although I would agree that it's all part of what we do. All these roles are combined. I realized that I have some questions about research and a/r/tography. That's why I am feeling further from there.
-  I realize that I am smack in the middle at all times. I am always all three things. I do not believe that they are actually separate. I am not interested in separating them.
-  I put myself smack in the middle too with a fluidity of movement. I think that is part of what this process has taught me. It is not that I think that I am equally all of these. It's that there is a real movement of when I am what.
-  For me, the fluidity really resonates strongly. I don't think I came into it whole. I think I came in not really knowing. But then the process we deconstructed and made sense of it. I would define artist, researcher, educator all of us are always on a continuum. We are always moving depending on what we are doing now and you attach to what you need most at those points. Now it is more whole fluid. Yes there is a fluidity. Moving in and out always.