Creativity and Embodied Learning

Section 1: Stories and images
THE GENESIS

In the beginning

As a child I read and enjoyed parts of The Bible, particularly The Old Testament, as adventure stories. As an adult I can read The Old Testament as much more than an adventure story or a story about God’s creation of heaven and earth. I can read it as the story of the creation of a system - a way of understanding - through the naming and interpretation of experience and, through this, the 'creation' of a set of relationships. I can read it as both discourse and praxis. The relationships that are identified and ‘named’ in Genesis occur in the writing and facilitate the further creation of a ‘languageing’ system that provides further means for the interpretation of further experience. In so doing these relationships facilitate the initiation of action.

In the opening lines of The Bible (Chapter 1, Verse 1) we are told, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." This sentence can be read as demonstrating that a relationship arises through it being named. It can be deconstructed to read that, rather than the creation of two physical entities (‘earth’ and ‘heaven’), the naming enables a dialogue to develop around an experience that can be understood as a relationship between entities or experiences (named here, for convenience’s sake ‘heaven’ and ‘earth’). This suggests that something exists beyond the terminology that is employed in the text. There is a phenomenon of some sort at play in this process and meaning is being attached. The relationship embedded in the ‘and’ that is identified and named (and therefore created) enables current or previously cognised experience to be appreciated, understood and talked about, perhaps even ‘known’, within the new context of the new discussion. This is not to overlook the fact that a relationship of some sort must exist in the experience of those who read or are told the story for the story to hold and communicate meaning. It must resonate with some sort of actual or conceptual experience. There must be some understanding that allows the relationship to be sustained in the imagination for the naming to hold meaning. The identification of that meaning and the manner in which that meaning is incorporated into a story in Genesis - and responded to through history - is a lesson in the power of both systemic communication and narrative.

The narrative of Genesis can be read in many ways. One of the ways it can be read is as a moral fable. A moral fable, like Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein
(1992), in which a creator comes into conflict with its own creation. In the 'author's introduction' to the original edition of *Frankenstein*, Shelley described the circumstances leading to the writing of her novel.

I did not sleep, nor could I be said to think. My imagination, unbidden, possessed and guided me... I saw - with shut eyes, but acute mental vision - ... I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life... Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world... His success would terrify the artist; he would rush away from his odious handiwork, horror-stricken. He would hope that, left to itself, the slight spark of life which he had communicated would fade... I opened (my eyes) in terror. The idea so possessed my mind, that a thrill of fear ran through me... Oh! if only I could contrive (a ghost story) which would frighten my readers as I myself had been frightened that night! (p. 9).

Like the novel *Frankenstein*, which has been interpreted as, among other things, a writer's (Shelley's) critique of problems arising from with the emergence of industrialisation and the scientific penetration of the 'secrets of nature', *Genesis* can be read as a 'writer's or writers' critique of aspects of a newly unfolding civilisation. The engagement of the writer(s) of *Genesis* in the identification of relationships and the naming of experience is akin to the engagement of any creative person in his or her particular expressive domain. It is akin to the experience of any writer communicating with a literate audience (likewise, a dancer, a musician, a visual artist or an actor). The starting point in any such communication is the personal experience of the individual who seeks to make contact with another. This implies a preparedness to communicate which involves a recognition that communication can occur. The individual then becomes an self-conscious participant in the process of communication. The learning that arises in association with or as a consequence of that communication refines and advances the means whereby further communication does or does not occur.

**Naming**

The first relationship that is named in *Genesis* is the relationship between the entities ('heaven' and 'earth'). This naming or 'creation' - which professes then offers a way of understanding - begins from the premise that 'the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And God
said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:2). Following the naming of heaven and earth, Genesis then tells the story of the creation of further relationships as a consequence of that initial creation.3

4. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.
5. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.
6. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.
7. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so.
8. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.
9. And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so.
10. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters he called Seas: and God saw that it was good.

Other ways of understanding experience arise through different naming processes. The pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Heraclitus made the "Logos" the core of his philosophy. "Listening not to me but to the Logos, it is wise to agree that all things are one". The term is also used by St. John in referring to Jesus Christ as the Divine Word: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1.1.14). To Heraclitus the logos represents the rational principle that governs the universe. It is, according to Allen (1966), "the first principle of knowledge (and) existence" (p. 10). It is a rationalisation derived from a recognition of the significance of language and context. Parmenides, another pre-Socratic philosopher, extends this notion with the claim that language, thought and being are inextricable. He claims, "that which can be spoken and thought needs must be" (p. 45). In the Tao te Ching (1963), the principal text of the Chinese philosophy of Taoism, frequent reference is made to the naming and the relationship between 'naming' and 'knowing'. Central to Taoism is the image of the 'Tao' (also referred to as the 'Way') as 'the uncarved block'. Because it - the uncarved block - is the source of all things, it is nameless. "Though the uncarved block is small, it may be subordinated to nothing in the world". However, "once the block is cut, names appear" (De Bary 1960: 57). The first chapter of the Tao te Ching makes immediate reference to the interpretation of experience through name. It begins;
The way (Tao) that can be spoken of
is not the constant way;
The name that can be named
is not the constant name.
The nameless was the beginning of heaven and earth;
The named was the mother of the myriad creatures. (p. 57)

Chan (1963) asserts that this first chapter is the most important of all chapters in the Tao te Ching: “for in one stroke the basic characteristics of the Tao as the eternal, the nameless, the source and the substance of all things are explicitly or implicitly affirmed” (p. 97). As in the opening verses of Genesis, the experience of relationships that are identified through ‘naming’ are of great and immediate significance. Chan (1963) writes,

The concept of name is common to all ancient Chinese philosophical schools... Most schools insist upon the correspondence of names and actualities and accept names as necessary and good; Taoism, on the contrary, rejects names in favour of the nameless... To Lao Tzu, Tao is nameless and is the simplicity without names; when names arise, that is, when the simple oneness of Tao is split up into individual things with names, it is time to stop. (p. 97).

While Chan insists that the Tao is simply that which is, and therefore beyond naming, the understanding of the experience of the ‘myriad creatures’, referred to in other translations as “all things” (Chan 1963; de Bary 1960), exist in social experience - like that which The Bible tells us God has created - through being named. In a mixture of images drawn from the language of Genesis and the Tao te Ching, God could be described as casting light upon those who are chipping away at the uncarved block in pursuit of a mystery that demands engagement, if not understanding. Just as I, the writer of this page am chipping away, using language, or ‘languaging’ to communicate, through the form I am most practiced in, the ‘mystery’ of my reflection upon my own experience. A dancer may reflect upon, construct and communicate that mystery differently, likewise a visual artist, a musician, a singer or an actor. Likewise a biologist, a computer technician, a marine biologist, a statistician, an economist or a magician. Likewise a Catholic or a Jew, a man or a woman, an adult or a child.
Story telling

I would like to pursue the story of Genesis further. I acknowledge that in 'naming' Genesis a 'story' I am immediately signalling a plethora of attitudes and assumptions. I recognise that by acknowledging this signalling of attitudes and assumptions I am immediately locating myself beyond the bounds of one or more ways of understanding experience while, perhaps, aligning myself with others. By doing this, I am telling you, my reader, a story. I am saying very little but trusting that the understanding I assume is contained within the very few words - "naming Genesis a story" - will arise in your experience in a form that will enable you to attach meaning to my allusions. In short, like anyone who communicates through language, I am making assumptions about you, my reader.

I pursue the story of Genesis because I believe there is much in it that throws light upon the difficulties that arise in the interpretation of experience, particularly when that experience is understood through reference to past experience. For while experience may exist in itself and while that experience may in itself be significant or meaningful (even if it is an experience of 'mystery' or an experience that is beyond name or unnameable) that experience and its significance or meaningfulness cannot be separated from the social, cultural and historical circumstances of its occurrence. It arises both contextually and relationally. It arises in a particular environment and it exists in relation to past, present and quite possibly future experience in other environments.

Genesis, in both its original form and in its various translations, also exists in relationship to other stories and other writings. Like so many ancient texts, The Old Testament is a transcription of an oral history, or collection of oral histories, that were passed down through many generations before finally being recorded in writing. The original languages of The Bible were Hebrew and Greek. The first English language version - translated from Jerome's Latin text from about 400 AD - appeared in the 16th century. The revised standard King James Version, which I am using as my reference, was first published in 1952. Before and since then an abundance of other versions has also been produced, the most important English language edition being the New English Bible which was published in, what is described in a preface to my edition as "today's language" in 1970. Those many other editions have been published in a wide variety of lands and languages. In Africa, Asia and the Middle East
and the languages spoken there, in Australian Aboriginal languages, in 'pidgin', in hybrid 'street' languages, in Braille and in many, many more forms. The original recording of the various stories and the many translations, updates and adaptations of these ancient oral histories are themselves also forms of naming. Each of these adaptations are premised on the assumption that more appropriate forms of language are needed if the understanding of experience that is contained in the original text is to be communicated to new and changing communities, each with their own particular way of understanding experience. The assumption that more - and a greater variety - of chips need to be made in the uncarved block.

Naming experience

Within the European system of taxonomy, the process of naming is a process in which a relationship is established and distinctions are made. The viper and the taipan need to be identified in the general category of snake, then distinguished. The harbour and the estuary need to be understood within the general category of bodies of water then differentiated. A hug and a caress need to be understood as similar before they can be appreciated as particular.

Some distinctions, more than others, can be appreciated on a sensory as well as an intellectual level. For example, in English, the language with which I am most familiar, the sensual experience of the words 'hug' and 'caress' are different. In addition to the actual experience of a hug and a caress being different, the words through which the English language represents the experiences of 'hug' and 'caress', are different. The hand moves in different ways to write them. The mouth moves in different ways to say them. The two words, quite apart from their meaning, are phonetically dissimilar yet both in their own way evoke a sensual response. Caress, with its lingering sibilant '...sss', embraces and lingers in a way that the short and rather perfunctory 'hug' does not. The English language is rich in this sort of signalling. Not all languages share this richness. This means that naming, in English, like the experience of which it is a consequence, can be both sensual and cerebral. This understanding is frequently explored in poetry.\(^5\)

Some teachers have attempted to bring both sensory and intellectual ways of knowing together in the construction of education systems. One of these is the Rudolf Steiner system. This system is designed to do more than inform students about the cultural or aesthetic traditions which have formed their
heritage, it is designed to use cultural and aesthetic tradition to promote a particular experience in students. The educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner (1978) places great store on the rich poetry of language.

In finding one’s way consciously into the structure of language one learns a great deal from the genius of language itself. And learning to feel something concrete about the working and weaving of the spirit of language is of exceptional importance. It is precisely to language that we owe so much of our ego-feeling, in our feeling of ourselves as personality. And in man (sic) the feeling can be raised almost to something akin to an attitude of prayer: ‘I hear people speaking in the speech round about me, and then the power of language flows into me!’ (p. 45).

A Steiner education incorporates speech exercises that, like eurhythmy, the dance and movement system that has long been central to a Steiner education, are designed to exercise both physical and emotional aspirations. Although the speech exercises were originally written in German, the similarities between the roots of old English and old German - both are abundant in assonance, alliteration and onomatopoeia - ensure that it is still possible to exercise both mind and body through the English translations. The best of these writings exercise the body at the same time as they exercise the sense of mystery that is at the heart of Steiner’s transcendentalism.

In the vast unmeasured world-wide spaces,
In the endless stream of time,
In the depths of human soul-life,
In the worlds great revelations:
Seek the unfolding of life’s great mystery. (p. 39)

While the naming process is creative in that it generates further relationships between existing entities, it is not productive. It does not generate or create any entity in itself. The naming process can however bring new things into the social domain. I find it remarkable that ‘new’ stars along with ‘new’ plants, insects, birds, even mammals continue to be ‘discovered’. Despite what is in all likelihood, their long standing existence, it is only through their ‘naming’, in relation to that which they are not, that they can be allocated a place in the order of things. While it is a snake, it is not a viper, taipan, brown, black, striped or tartan snake, therefore I am are free to name it an XYZ snake. It is only through the understanding of the relationship between the personal experiences of ‘snake’ and ‘not-snake’, then through the personal experience
of ‘viper’ and ‘not-viper’, that the individual names attached to types of snakes can have meaning. This means that in Genesis, that which is not darkness can be identified as ‘light’. It also means that various gradations (or shades) of light and dark can be identified. It identifies entities within a particular domain. It is a pragmatic way of knowing. It has long served the interests of the institutional hierarchies that emerged in western society through the power of the Christian church. It means that absolute qualities can be identified in relation to that which is not absolute. The void and that which is not void, God and that which is not God. While this binary system enables clear distinctions to be made it also, importantly, places emphasis upon the space between the binaries. It emphasises that identities arise in relationship rather than in isolation.

From this perspective Genesis can be read as a story about the identification and understanding of experiences through the naming of related entities. Within this ‘creation’, distinctions are made. These distinctions enable further distinctions to be made. This leads to the communication of experience through a languaging system appropriate to the needs of those who participate in it. Without communication - which is a means of ordering and assimilating individual experience - there cannot be a community and there cannot be a culture. Without communication there cannot be stories.

**Authority**

If we follow events in Genesis further, the conflict over the ‘naming’ of experience emerges as a truly important issue. Genesis tells us that “God created man in his own image” (1:27) as it tells us that God created further distinctions; “the tree of life... and the tree of knowledge of good and evil” (2:9). It tells us that when Adam and Eve were tempted to reflect upon their position in Eden and eat “of the food thereof... the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked” (3:7). God said to Adam, “Cursed is the ground for thy sake” (3:17) and sent him (accompanied by Eve, over whom God had designated he “shall rule”) “forth from the garden of Eden” (3:23). Subsequent to this expulsion, The Bible tells us, Adam and Eve gave rise to generations, which gave rise to further generations, each of which are given significance by being named.

1. This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him;
2. Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

3. And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth:

4. ... and he begat (more) sons and daughters:

5. ... and he died.

6. And Seth... begat E'nos (5:1-6).

And the next 24 verses of that same chapter list generation after generation of births and deaths. The first born son in every generation is named and thereby distinguished from his predecessors, until Noah fathers three children. The three children, Shem, Ham and Ja'-peth, are named and therefore individuated. Here the litany of births and deaths ceases and Genesis tells us, “there were giants in the earth in those days” (6: 4).

Nevertheless, disaster awaits. “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (6:5). God declares his intention to “destroy man”, relenting only in his decision to save Noah and his family. Following the flood, the generation upon generation that are named as following Noah - through Shem, Ham and Ja'-peth - become “the nations”. A form of stability arises. There is unity within and between these nations. Experience is shared and understood in accordance with the word of God. A common language is spoken and common stories are told. “And the whole earth was of one language and one speech” (11:1). This unity is shattered as a result of a decision made in the land of Shi'-nar. There, Genesis tells us, those who shared in that one language and one speech declared; “Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.” (11:4).

**Babel**

This tower, the tower of Babel, can be read as representing an aspiration for a more appropriate understanding of experience. That need is expressed in the determination to “make a name” (11:4). This can be read, in the context of Genesis, as the aspiration to assume a power heretofore assumed by God and God alone. It is the power to conceive a story - a personal understanding - separate from the authority of God. In seeking to arrive at a personal understanding of that which forms the basis of God’s authority - God’s
identification of a distinction and a separation between heaven and earth - those who seek to build the tower challenge not just the authority of God, but the word (the words) of God.

By building a tower that will enable the people of ‘the whole earth’ to “reach unto heaven” (11: 4) metaphorically or actually, God’s distinction between heaven and earth will become irrelevant. The experience of that which God named ‘heaven’ and differentiated from that which he named ‘earth’ will arise in the experience of the people of the earth. That experience will live within those people. It will enable them to decide how they wish to identify and communicate the experience. The distinction between the two concepts or entities created by God will be shattered. It will be rendered meaningless. This will enable the people of the earth to appreciate their own understanding sufficiently to ‘name’ their own experience and thenceforth define their own understanding of the relationship between the entities which God alone has, until this point in time, known sufficiently to name.

However, this story is not a simple one. In Genesis, the assumption of the power to interpret, identify and name personal experience that is contained in the ambition to build a tower “whose top may reach unto heaven” draws the attention of God. Genesis tells us,

6. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do; and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do (11:6). (my emphasis)

God’s lament is matched by his sense of betrayal. The possibility of the capacity to realise imagination, to exist within experience unencumbered by the interpretation provided by God, to arrive at another language, a new set of names, a new way of understanding and communicating what had previously been contained by God, provokes God to take action. Like Doctor Frankenstein, God feels betrayed by that which he has created. His revenge is unrelenting and unforgiving. He attacks the language of his antagonists.

7. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.

8. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.
Following this incident another sequence of generations are born leading finally to the arrival and the settlement of the family of Abram in the land of Canaan. To Abram, the Lord said,

2. And I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. (12:2-3)

This quick summary is designed to point out that not only does the incident at Babel lead to a shattering of the unity of language, speech and belief, it leads to the confounding and scattering of many tribes, each no longer able to share in that one language, speech and belief. It leads then to God’s designation that one family or tribe or nation is pre-eminent, that one family alone is blessed and to be blessed. It leads to a tribe of believers, surrounded by non or former believers. As a consequence of the aspiration to name, pursued in the land of Shi’-nar, that which was once unity becomes diversity, thence division. Out of one language comes many. Out of understanding comes misunderstanding, then conflict. Foregoing equanimity, God takes sides.

Responsibility

Why have I turned to Genesis in a discussion of learning and creativity? There are several reasons. I write about it first in questioning a foundation text of my culture. A text that offers substantial comment upon learning and creativity. In questioning that understanding I find myself reflecting upon the contradictions contained in the story. I see it as a story that, like Frankenstein, depicts the entity that has created the relationships that have determined the system of understanding as the destroyer of its own creation. Realising this, I find myself reading Genesis as an unwitting display of vulnerability. It is as if, in telling the story, the saint has lifted his robes. Faced by a powerful challenge to a determination of the relationship between things, the creator fails to consider relinquishing authority and trusting that which has been granted life. In his destruction of that which has been created, what is destroyed unutterably is the relationship. The entities that exist in that relationship are trapped, caught
by the writer (or creator) within the confines of the system of behaviour approved by that superior power. The result is confusion, conflict and dissent. This is, *Genesis* suggests, the necessary fate of those who seek to interpret experience independent of the constraints of the authority of God. This suggests that the pursuit of personal meaning is a threat to social organisation and that independence, creativity and imagination are to be punished. It suggests that experience can only be interpreted in terms already constructed and defined, that personal expression can be cruelly limited and limiting and that creativity is a reservoir of great personal danger. It suggests that learning is a function of obedience rather than initiative, imagination, creativity and the pursuit of a personal voice.

Secondly, and much more importantly, when considering *Genesis* in this way, I am reminded of the time I first 'looked' beneath this story of creation and recognised the potency of the language that 'God' (the writer) uses to interpret and identify experience, the language that he uses to ordain and through story, put in place a world view. I am reminded even more importantly of a physical sensation that arose at the time of this realisation. I remember I felt a flush, a tingle, a *frisson* from head to toe. It rushed through me for only a second or so, then for a few seconds more I felt the afterglow, but it marked that time for me, as I recall it, as both a physically and intellectually memorable moment. I had, at least momentarily, seen through an illusion. I had lifted my consciousness to another level and gained a deeper and more penetrating vision. And I relished the view. And while it may not have amounted to much in the history of humankind, and while it may be contested with much spirit by countless others, at that moment in my life a light headedness took over ever so briefly. An enthusiasm, a short, sweet rush of emotion, a flush, a sweetness, a tingle, a delight. It felt as if something special, something exciting, something new had occurred. It wasn’t like the physical sensation that arose as I stood in the city street on Anzac Day that year and watched the war veterans parade by. It was more like the physical sensation that occurred that same day when I saw the aged war veteran with his grandchildren, or perhaps great-grandchildren. One was sitting on his knee and one was tugging at his boot and he was smiling almost uncontrollably. I felt a flush of pride in his delight but beyond that, even more, a flush of pride in me being able to feel his delight. A flush, a rush, a sweet embarrassment of pride. Words can only approximate the sensation. It is this approximation that makes the determination of language as something that so strictly defines experience, problematic. Whatever value my insight may have or may have had beyond
my immediate experience, in that moment back then, and on occasions now when I recall it, it carries significance, in the immediacy, in the moment, for the sensation that marked it as an experience of learning.

So I write about the opening chapters of *Genesis*, for the frisson I felt. I write about it principally to remind me that it marked the learning in the experience. I write about it also because it reminds me that learning is a physical experience and as such, a biological process. It reminds me that reflection is a consequence of that experience. And though I may never understand or become accustomed to or be able to call up at will the symptoms that accompany the experience of learning (though I may be able to try to structure the preconditions for the possibility of their occurrence) I know that, on that occasion and on other times like it, a very specific sensation led me to reflect upon the learning in which I had been a participant.

This is not an experience that I hold alone. Talking about this experience with others I have been told stories of sensations akin to what I have called the frisson. Others also have told me of the physical sensations accompanying occasions of insight or learning. I am not suggesting that anyone else has had an experience that is identical to mine nor am I suggesting this is the only means whereby learning can or should be realised. I offer my anecdote only as something that I consider worth noting, something which I consider worthy of reflection, an intuitive response to something ‘out there’. It is what the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1965) would call a ‘phenomenological insight’. Phenomenology, as posited by Husserl, neither seeks nor accepts evidence from anything but consciousness. “The point of the phenomenology is to suspend theory so that Being can be met, unmediated. It is... an ontological perspective that... takes corporeality for granted... it begins from an open ended trust in Being ‘being there’.”

My anecdotal evidence is also supported by various traditions of learning. Among them is the Zen tradition in which the ‘koan’ is used to prompt reflection upon experiences similar to mine. Peter Matthiessen (1987) describes ‘koans’ as “cryptic Zen texts, which refer obliquely to that absolute reality beyond the grasp of our linear vocabulary.”(p. 5) One of the koans first confronted by Zen initiates is the question: “Does the dog have Buddha-nature?” Another is the statement attributed to a Chinese patriarch, Nui Heng. “Is it the flag that moves? Is it the wind? No, it is your mind.” Matthiessen says:
There are two ways to answer almost any koan in a way the teacher must take seriously until he is sure that the student has more koan 'style' than understanding. The first is to vividly present a key word, such as 'flag', that is, BE the flag in all its flag-ness, just as it is. The second is a forceful shout of MU!, which symbolises this such-ness, this ever present Buddha-nature, this eternal now! However, it is not enough to present the flag, or present Mu with a shout. One must become it, there must be no separation. As for a 'correct' koan response, it is utterly meaningless unless infused with prajna wisdom - the experiential insight, the non cerebral knowing that arises from the depths of profound samadhi (p. 57).

In a similar way Buddhist scholars argue that meditation allows embodied experience to be observed.

Meditation slows the breath, the heart rate and metabolism. Whenever defilements arise, two things happen on a physical level: 1. The breath loses its normal rhythm. When greed and aversion stimulate the mind, I start breathing hard. 2. Biochemical reactions occur in the body. Every emotional experience has a corresponding glandular, cellular reaction. Samsara sells us its addictions. Lost in my blind reactions I am oblivious to their effects on my psychosomatic condition... Sensitive to breath and what is happening inside me, I allow negativity to pass without adding to misery.\(^9\)

This equivalence suggests that the phenomenon I am discussing is akin to something that resides in the subjective experience of others as well as myself. It suggests that, difficult as it may be for me to pin it down and inexact as my representation of it may be, those difficulties and inexactitudes are not mine alone. That I can communicate to you, in some manner or form, the phenomenon I have experienced, suggests that something similar is alive in the subjective experience of you, my reader. Perhaps you also struggle to make known your own understandings of your own experience.

Husserl looks beyond this struggle, to place his trust in intuition. In his introduction to Husserl's *Phenomenology and the crisis of philosophy* (1965), Quentin Lauer writes,

Language functions in communication because the meaning given to it by the one who uses it is the meaning grasped by the one who understands it. The intention of meaning is the effective link... however, the conscious relationship can be an illusion if it is no more than an intention of meaning. What rescues it
from illusion is the verification furnished by an intuition, wherein an object or ‘state of affairs’ is not simply ‘intended’ but rendered, so to speak, ‘bodily present’ or ‘present-in-itself’ to the consciousness that intends it (p. 61).

I experience this intuition as a sense or a feeling and therefore a physical sensation. According to both Lauer and Husserl it is this physical sensation, this ‘bodily’ presence or sense or feeling that confirms understanding and determines whether the communication has or has not been realised. The verification of experiences (like my frisson), are no less actual to Husserl than the verification of material entities. Each are phenomena that are ‘realised’. It is in its failure to reflect upon subjective experience that, according to Husserl, reductionist science stumbles. Anticipating the insights of Heisenberg and Bohr and their work on relativity and quantum mechanics, Husserl argues, “in so far as the intuitive environing world, purely subjective as it is, is forgotten in the scientific thematic, the working subject is also forgotten... the scientist is not studied”. (p. 186)

In this regard I look to my story about Genesis finally for what it means to me. This is I suppose, the most important issue. Is it the frisson, the experience of learning that I value the most - the sensation, the sensual delight of absorption in it, its ultimate unknowability - or is it the challenge that the experience represents? Is it the attempt to identify it, is it the identity that I, hesitatingly, attach? The identity that enables me to conceptualise and contemplate the experience long after its occurrence, to write about it, here and elsewhere, to construct my experience within categories in accordance with definitions established and accepted by others? Is it the desire, is it the struggle to communicate that I enjoy or is it the interrelationship between these understandings that I value the most? I remember the first - the only - time I met a man who claimed to come from another planet. I asked him which one and he named it. The fact that I had never heard of it was of little consequence. I asked him how he got to Earth. He raised his hands above his head and said, “as energy”. He became a friend. Other people considered him crazy, I enjoyed our conversations. We talked at great length. We joked, played games, shared stories. He told me about his planet. He helped me to repair my Morris 850. He tried to. He told me about the time he applied for unemployment benefits and the clerk behind the counter asked him, “Are you working?” He replied, “Yes”, to which the clerk said, “Who do you work for?”. My friend paused for a few seconds, looked into the eyes of the clerk, lifted his status in his own mind, and replied, “The government. Who do you work for?”
The clerk quaked. Many people found my friend difficult. And while I say I accepted him for who he said he was and for the friendship that we had, the truth is that I did attempt to untangle much of what he said through metaphor and poetry. I did look beyond the immediacy of the experience into a range of possible explanations. Despite my respect for the uncarved block, I did attempt to chip away, to marvel in my uncertainty and his difference and chip, chip, chip in pursuit of some sort of certainty, some sort of knowledge in addition to an appropriate and satisfying trust in my ‘knowing’.

Just as in Genesis God posits a relationship between heaven and earth through a process of naming, I am positing a relationship between learning and creativity by naming these two phenomena. They are the phenomena that are central to my explorations in this thesis. The interweaving of these phenomena is central to the search contained. Without the search there can be no meaning. Without meaning, there can be no search. Without creativity there can be no learning. Without learning there can be no creativity.

THE METAPHOR

*The metaphorical concept*

The decision to use metaphor to communicate the experience I am exploring in this thesis came quite late in the planning process. The metaphor I want to use in this section had been with me for a considerable time but the manner of its inclusion was more problematic. I had made reference to it in conversations and during conference presentations but had avoided the temptation to write about it in this way. Perhaps this is, in part, the creative process, the process of the finding the connections that reveal the obvious. In my defence I submit that my failure is a failure to recognise the power of metaphor in general more than a failure to recognise the power of any one particular image. In a recent interview, psychologist John Grinder argued that “all which is not concrete is metaphoric. Clearly, this involves the vast majority of our everyday experiences.”¹⁰ Lakoff and Johnson, in *Metaphors we live by* (1980), assert similarly,

Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish - a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. For this reason most people think they can get along perfectly well without metaphor. We have
found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature (p. 3).

This conceptual system, they argue, plays a "central role in defining our everyday realities... the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor" (p. 3). It is something that we are not ordinarily aware of despite the fact that our language contains it and our languaging employs it. They assert that since "communication is based on the same conceptual system we use in thinking and acting, language is an important source of evidence for what that system is like" (p. 3). Extending this analysis, they argue that human thought processes are essentially metaphorical.

Metaphors as linguistic expressions are possible precisely because there are metaphors in a person's conceptual system. Therefore, whenever we speak of metaphors... it should be understood that metaphor means metaphorical concept. (p. 6)

This analysis can be developed into a broad discussion of language and the creation of meaning through languaging systems. The system of meaning-making through written and spoken language forms exists only because of the agreements that enable the communication to take place. The language itself has no significance without that agreement. The plethora of different languaging systems shared by nationalities, communities and special interest groups is evidence of this. Within the English language system, agreement is tested continually. The assignation of terminologies requires agreement around the phenomena to which the term is attached. Agreement around an immediately tangible physical phenomena such as 'box' or 'horse' or 'male' or 'female' is quite straightforward. Agreement around more ephemeral phenomena such as colour, a little less so. I, like most people perceive 'red' to be quite distinct from 'blue'. Exactly how any other person perceives 'red' I am not completely sure. Inevitably, I am drawn to judge their experience by my experience. In doing so it is sufficient for me to understand that within the colour spectrum I can describe only one range of colours as 'red' if I wish to obtain the agreement of most other English speakers. I could extend the range within the spectrum by qualification, by speaking of things as 'reddish' or 'somewhat red' or 'almost red'. However, a conversation around this range of colours excludes a colour blind person whose experience of the range of
colours termed ‘red’ may differ very little from his or her experience of the range of colours termed ‘brown’ or ‘orange’ or ‘yellow’ or ‘blue’ (depending on the form or degree of colour blindness). The social nature of experience may require however that the actuality of the colour experienced by a colour blind person may differ from the experience that person claims in order to sustain communication in a world populated by a majority of people who are not colour blind. “Nice shade of red isn’t it”. “Yes, sure, nice.” This suggests that there can be emotional conflict around the perception of colours in the spectrum. In the same way there can be emotional conflict around all the senses; the capacities to touch, taste, see, feel and hear. The conflict is not around what could be called the first order activity of the experience of the colour, it is around the second order activity of the experience of difference or more accurately, the experience of a difference in the understanding of experience.

The terminologies attached to the experience of emotions carry more difficulties. For example, the word ‘happiness’ stands for or represents a feeling or a combination of feelings. Those feelings arises in the body. Feelings are felt. As Milton Erikson (1992) says, “the feeling is the essential thing. Knowing about it is not the essential thing” (p. 91). The feeling bears no necessary relationship to the word. This enables those feelings to be negotiated, to be talked around, to be appreciated in others, to be shared.11

It is quite possible that the experiences I and another person describe as ‘happiness’ differ. Like the experience of the colour described as ‘red’, I am not sure how other people actually experience ‘happiness’. I assume therefore that this lack of certainty is not just my experience but also the experience of others who use the word. And yet I continue to use it and I continue to assume that I have some understanding of what the term means when it is used by others. The social utility of the term sustains it, rather than any particular feeling or combination of feelings. I am reminded for example of the relatively recent use, by English speakers, of the German word ‘schadenfreude’ (meaning a feeling of pleasure, in response to the social discomfort of others, particularly superiors). Before the word became familiar to English speakers many people experienced the feeling but the feeling was not accessible. It could not be talked about. This made it uncomfortable. Naming the experience has somehow made the feeling less uncomfortable. It has made it more acceptable and perhaps even less shameful. Clearly while language is a metaphorical concept and is quite distinct from the experience it stands for,
represents and communicates, it also does more than this by the manner in which enabling understanding to be shared.

This aspect of the languaging process generally goes unexamined. In my experience, there is no need to reflect upon it unless, like a colour blind person, I find the socially accepted labelling system inefficient, inadequate or inappropriate to my needs or experience. And yet, while I say there is generally no need to reflect upon language use, I know that as a writer, there are many occasions when I ponder over words at great length. Like all writers, I choose my words with great deliberation. Not just my words but the sentences and the paragraphs that I build with them. As an active user of language I know that the actual meaning of a word is not the sole consideration in the decision to use it. It may be the sound of a word or the phrase it sits within that determines the decision to use it. It may be the appearance of it. It may be a particular personal association that I wish to sustain. It may be, as French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu suggests, the consequence of the particular social-historical environment I come from or wish to identify with. The same decision making process is employed in oral communication and non-verbal communication. A nod is, on many occasions, as good as a wink. However, it is not just those who are colour blind or those who write who are drawn to reflect upon the artful construction of communication. Such reflection is a process that is entered into by all people, every day. All people calculate in their communications, all improvise within circumstance. In this process of reflection lies both the occasion of and the site for learning.

Aaron Williamson

Aaron Williamson is a performance poet. He also happens to be profoundly deaf. In Williamson’s pursuit of learning and creativity I find a metaphor for my own pursuit.

While deaf, the subject matter of much of that which Williamson writes and performs is the experience of sound. As I sit now, I recall the time I first encountered his work. It was late on a Saturday afternoon. I was in the city. I had arranged to see a one-man show by the British writer, actor and director Stephen Berkoff. The show began at 8pm and while there was enough time, there was not enough reason to go home. I needed a bookshop to waste away at least one of those hours and I needed something to read as I ate, then
waited for the show to begin. I chose the book not because I knew anything of it - the title and the author were unknown to me - but because of a quote on the back cover. The quote read, “a book is in the act of becoming. It arises from the futility of searching for its own components. Everything here is fastened into its rigid embrace, especially the futility of its search.”

The ‘book’ and its ‘becoming’ caught me. I liked the suggestion that a book, like a play, like a thesis, develops a quality, an identity, perhaps even a life of its own. That it emerges differentiated from its creator and the circumstances of its creation. That the reader, like the writer, participates in the creation of the book through the reading or the writing of it. That the book becomes, as it is written or read, something greater than the sum of its parts, that the product of this process is something that gathers temporal thoughts and give them permanence, separate from the writer, under the imprimatur of ‘book’. This seemed so elementary as to demand recognition.

I was drawn also to the image of a book “searching for its own components”. As a writer or reader, through the writing or the reading, I have on occasions finally - perhaps almost accidentally - come to understand that which most causes concern, that which most frustrates and infuriates, that which most represents fear and failure, incompleteness and lack of accomplishment in the writing or reading may in fact be that which most succinctly defines the thing itself: ‘the book’, ‘the play’, ‘the thesis’, ‘the life’. Incomplete. Unaccomplished. Accompanying this lies the fear surrounding “the futility of its search.”

At the theatre I was due to meet Sally Sussman, a theatre director with a special interest in Peking Opera. We were in the early stage of discussions around Formwork, a cross cultural performance project in which Sally had invited me to participate as a writer. (This project is discussed at length in Section Four of this thesis.) We were going to see Berkoff because we were both excited by what we knew of his work. I admired the richness of his language, the way it rushed and flowed and occupied space like oil flows into and around an engine. I liked the way his work rose from a writer’s factory floor - a desk and a rehearsal room - and was thrown into the genteel environment of contemporary British theatre. I admired his capacity, as a writer, to invest an East End delinquent with a classical vocabulary without denying or undermining the essentially robust vulgarity of that character. Sally was interested in him as a performer: as a well-trained and highly disciplined actor who orchestrated his movement (like the Chinese performance styles she was
trained in) to heighten and enrich the music and emotion of the words he spoke, as a physical artist whose body communicated with an audience through a vocabulary of highly focused and economically constructed visual and verbal images. Together we shared an interest in non-naturalistic theatre, in the exploration of the various languages that are available in such a domain. I wanted to see how Berkoff managed questions such as mine. I imagined that Sally had questions about my questions, as well as an abundance of questions of her own.

I bought the book. I began to read it. The first surprise was that the book, *A Holythroat Symposium* by Aaron Williamson (1993) was a sequence of brief, condensed, highly intense writings, which, in accordance with Gadamer’s description of poetry as speculative creativity that produces new meaning (Rundell 1995:35), could only be described as such. The second surprise was how quickly I became absorbed in it.

*A Holythroat Symposium*

The first segment of the first section of *A Holythroat Symposium* is called “Within the Grain”. Reading it in the foyer I noted that it began with the extract that is cited on the back cover. I read it again. “A book is in the act of becoming...” I read this as an invitation to participate in that “becoming”, to ‘become’ through the reading. I read further.

The opening section seemed like an overview or an introduction designed to establish the pre-conditions for the journey. If these themes and these images were to be maintained, it would be necessary that, periodically along the way, the progress of the journey would have to be alluded to, stages would need to be monitored, then at the end of the journey some sort of summation made. This was to be the journey of the writer as well as the journey of the reader. As I read, Williamson spoke to me of the difficult process of entering into and writing a major work.

The opening section continued. “There is to be an embarkation.” A beginning point. “All is known, charted and gridworked beforehand.” A tentative hope flies, anticipation prevails. “This is in the act of becoming.” The process needs to be understood and appreciated. It requires immersion. This needs also be understood (not least by the writer) as participation, as working with and through ideas, with and through language. It is a process of ‘becoming’. It is
not something that can be observed effortlessly. Like ‘the book’, ‘the
becoming’ implies or more precisely, requires participation. We cannot remove
ourselves from it. We cannot stand to one side and comment - toss off witty
asides - for it also carries responsibilities. In participation, we owe as much to
ourselves as we do to others.

The next five segments in the opening section of the book are composed of
overlapping images of ‘becoming’. These include images of the book coming
into being, the process of creation through writing and reading, the journey of
exploration, the movement into the unknown and the processes of birth and
parturition. Williamson writes, the “nib is tracing”, “a mirage (is) beckoning”, “a
lightning-rod (is) trawling for ignition”, “the text, snaking, arches along such
devious twistings and self delusions towards incendiary gratification. Towards,
in fact, these flames” (p. 9-10). The birthing images depict a relationship to
creativity. The stages in the creative process are portrayed as akin to birth. I
could chart my own relationship to my own writing in such a way: yet
Williamson is doing more. I read his poetry as a search for more than another
story or another poem, it is the search for a voice, his own voice and the voice
of others. Williamson not only wants to be heard, he wants to listen. Deaf
though he may be, Williamson remains fascinated by sound, yet sound is
something he is fated never fully to hear.

Reading this, in a foyer awaiting a performance by Berkoff, seemed somehow
appropriate. Both are writers who are not afraid to exploit the tension made
available through strong physical imagery. Both journey into and through rich
symbolic domains. Both appropriate the rhythms of language to their own ends
and both write for performance and recognise that the sound of individual
words or combinations of words and the tone and emotion with which those
words are delivered can be of much greater significance than any meaning
that might be attached to those words, alone or in combination. Each is, in his
own way, a student of a classical tradition. Each makes use of his own
particular experience of oppression in the construction of this work, Williamson, his deafness, Berkoff, his working class Jewry.

The other comparison that occurred to me, sitting under the subdued lighting
of the theatre foyer, lifting my eyes, watching the audience grow, was with the
film maker, Werner Herzog. Like Williamson, Herzog’s vision in films like
Fitzcarraldo, Aguirre, Wrath of God and Woyzeck is of a gothic, almost an
alien landscape, populated with chaos. Herzog observes the journeys of

David Wright: ‘Creativity and embodied learning’
emotional innocents in pursuit of their dreams. Williamson could almost be one of his subjects. Herzog’s film *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*, based on Wasserman’s (1992) study of the mysterious young man who wandered into a German village in 1828, invites the comparison even more so. In choosing to portray the life of Hauser, Herzog concerns himself with issues that overlap those of Williamson. Wasserman reports that the deposition of the municipal-court doctor who examined Hauser on his arrival included the comment.

One thing is evident, we are dealing with a person who has no conception of his fellow men, does not eat, does not drink, does not feel, does not speak like others, does not know anything of yesterday or tomorrow, does not grasp time, does not even know he is alive (p. 33).

This condition was seen as, according to Wasserman, an opportunity to invest Hauser with significance. Hauser’s difficulties in making his own experience known ensured that he became the stuff of dreams. Williamson can relate to this experience. His poem “Solo Boy” (from *A Holythroat Symposium*), which is about the experience of a deaf boy, is a comparable study. It begins. “A four year old boy / resides in a small room / within a remote building / filled with starched adults / he remembers his parents / and begins to feel their absence palpably / as part of the room / and why he is in it / the adults have words / for him and a use / Tabula Rasa they call him / clean slated / is the Solo Boy / he isn’t even here” (p. 62). Assumed by his teachers to be beyond consideration, this child learns nonetheless. Through Williamson, the deaf Solo Boy constructs an image of the universe that he is a conscious part of. A universe that he, like Williamson, like all of us in our different ways, participate in and struggle to make sense of.

**Deaf? Deaf!**

Approaching the end of the first section of *A Holythroat Symposium*, birthing imagery again comes to the fore. The book is being born, it is an assisted delivery. It is also the birth of a deaf consciousness. “The spine begins to form,” “ribs, curling within the pulp”, “a spatula... slides, between skin and our chest, the air and these pages, pulling with its splinters into the grain.” Upon delivery, in becoming, it is the book that allows the realisation of meaning. “Swollen with the blackness of its shadowing ink, in the beat of its convulsive
parturitions.” (p. 12-13) I looked again at the back cover of the book. It described the writer, Aaron Williamson as,

an experimental writer and acclaimed performer. Enacting poetry, sounds and atmosphere, sometimes accompanied by drumming, Williamson is deaf and has evolved a physical approach to demonstrating a text in live settings. Combining rhythm, silence, vocalisation and movement to produce contorted, volatile displays, his work aspires to a bodily evocation of deafness itself.

Deaf? Deaf! It is no surprise he is interested in the silences that occur within language.

Williamson describes this silence as a weapon. He demands recognition of it as a habitat. “Within (silence) a figure has chosen to occupy an unexceptional area... A residue of feedback is framing up the mind... This will be an enigma.” (p. 16-17.) Confronted by such an enigma - the deaf in a hearing world - he suggests that we - the audience, the readers, those who look on - are confused about our role. Are we no more than observers? Are we conscious of the way we appear to those such as Williamson, who cannot hear? Are we condemning ourselves to a failure to understand? Are we beyond participation? Beyond participating?

There is something untouchable and yes, preposterous here. Petrifying. Indeed, we are captive, stricken in its stare. Our fear preserves and confirms its secret and isolation creeps in from the loss of antennae; from the loss, that is, of our response. Out of the deadlock, the distance sense is spun amok. We are going it alone. No means by which to monitor this thought and feeling. Within the silence, head to head, the ear is our mirror. (p. 17)

This forces me to ask, what it is that I am captive of as I explore my own learning and creativity? What it is that I am stricken in the stare of? What parts of my body am I using to harvest my learning and disseminate my creativity? What is my version of Williamson’s ear?

Curiously now, as I write, I remember I did not learn Williamson was deaf until some time after my first encounter with the book. When I made mention of his deafness earlier, I did it out of a need, as a writer, to construct effects that seemed important at the time of writing. I did not in fact discover he was deaf until long after that Saturday night, after I had put the book down and taken it
up again several more times, fascinated, intrigued, aggravated and upset by
the disturbingly chaotic strength of his writing. It is worth reiterating the obvious
point that, for a considerable amount of time, for the writer to be deaf or not did
not matter to me. Despite the fact that his deafness is central to his work, I
found my way into his writing without any need to consider such a
circumstance. Early, I found ‘the becoming’ of ‘the book’ sufficient intrigue. I
came to see his pain - the pain he wrote of - as something I shared in. It was
not the pain of a deaf or disabled poet, nothing so obtuse, nothing so noble. It
was the pain of the social world. A pain I share in. “The text is born of yearning.
It accumulates the need. Pain is stacked through its racks, stratified. The clag
of guilt for feeling the pain. The text collects it, consists in it” (p. 20). I shared it.

Now of course, it seems ridiculous that I did not appreciate his condition, that I
did not appreciate the particular hurt he felt, that I did not sufficiently extract
myself from my pain, stand apart, look on, objectify his suffering and
appreciate his art. To do so would have been to indemnify myself, to disqualify
my own suffering, to see him as confessor, to see myself as priest. I failed to do
this quite simply because I was intellectually and emotionally absorbed in his
communication. His pain was mine. His languaging pulsed with it. It rippled
with it, through me. I could, without difficulty, find myself deep within it. I felt so
drawn that learning of his deafness came almost as a relief. It released me
from the exuberance of his writing and the danger of my deep, drowning in his
suffering. It gave me an opportunity to contextualise - an excuse to avoid - his
strength. Exactly how or when the impairment became apparent I cannot recall
precisely. Entering into and appreciating his use of language was sufficient
challenge, early. It was as if I, like Williamson, found it convenient not to focus
on the obvious truth. “The affliction: Don’t mention it. Untalked around. It
speaks itself.” (p. 22) Recognition of his impairment led me to reflect further on
my own impairment(s). It led me to consider what it was that I pursued, as
Williamson does sound, and can never fully realise. To ask what I want to
‘hear’, but am incapable of ‘hearing’. In the context of this thesis that thing is
‘learning’, it is ‘knowing’, it is creating communication and understanding. It is
not the products of learning and creating but the processes that I pursue. Not
the nouns that stand alone but the verbs that situate me in relationship to the
world and others.

Trevor Pateman (1991) defines a language as anything for which a grammar
can be written. A grammar he defines as “a set of rules which takes as input a
vocabulary and delivers as output all and only the well-formed (grammatical)
expressions (sentences) of the language.” (p. 90). Such a definition suggests that it is only through the act of languaging that any understanding or appreciation of language arises. Just as it is the processes of learning and creating, it is the languaging rather than the language that constructs the culture we inhabit and the explanations with which we populate it. Aaron Williamson, limited in his capacity to participate in speech, the most common form of negotiation through language, is drawn to reflect upon the particular nature of his language experience. Confronted by his deafness, marked as disabled in a hearing world, sound captures his imagination. He wants to be heard. He writes of “the sounds of words, trapped in the torso (that) continue with speaking. Silently.” And of being “Possessed by sounds... they have me... I feel them...I catch them before they reach out”. He says that for him; “the sickness itself (is), a language” (p. 25).

Williamson nevertheless performs his poetry, for deafness has forced him to realise and appreciate aspects of the relationship between sound and the body that may not be as obvious to the hearing. In performance he negotiates communication through his own particular understanding of sound and the body. The sound and the body he lives with, the sound and the body he knows.

Williamson experiences sound - despite his inability to hear - through the physical sensation that accompanies it. Because sound is transmitted on a wave length, it is a form of energy that has an impact upon material objects. The ear is one such object. Specially balanced to receive the energies of sound, the human ear amplifies a particular range of wave lengths. Other parts of the body also respond to sound waves. For Williamson the physical sensation of sound rises from the ground, into his body. The energy of sound moves up his legs into his pelvis and resonates between his diaphragm and his stomach. This is a sensation he has learned to ‘listen to’. The energy that gives rise to the physical sensations that rise from the floor and vibrate in the pit of his stomach, become what he calls ‘sound’. For Williamson, this is what sound is. Of hearing his own voice, he writes:

The sound of my voice is something I experience primarily physically, through the jaw, in the chest etc. rather than in the site of the inner ear. My instrumentation of the voice then, is a way of retaining or perhaps recapturing my voice in a personal dynamic with the intra-sensoral nature of empirical experience.
The text is timpani / the text is mallet

In the central section of the book, the author’s pursuit of meaning rises to a fever. In a sequence of six intense and demanding performance pieces, gathered together under the title “Cacophonies”, Williamson unearths and unleashes an awesomely powerful combination of sound and meaning. His energy confronting, his intelligence shirt-fronting, his vocabulary kicking, biting and brawling he takes on, subdues, then overwhelms his audience. Within this section lies the piece, “A holythroat symposium”, from which the title of the collection is taken. He establishes the context for the reading of this piece, although it is also a work intended for performance, by locating it centrally within his experience of sound. Introducing the journey that infuses the work, he writes; “the text is timpani / the text is mallet”.

A holythroat symposium
tuned into its neckbox
relays the static
the overlap of phonemes
pneumatic
in the pull of surges
wireless
and jabbering
the fricatives

...enough force to counteract
the suction
the turbulence
battering
time and again after
time through the
squall bursts
a palatal noise
heaped up in different
manners
the exchange of sensation
incessant
distinct
distributions of energy
a gut talk,
head to head gut talking
as regards

labiodental, lingua dental...
- guttural-
  intensity referred
back into ad-hocery
those frequencies
of spectra
diminishing to flickers
pervasive voice-sources
duration intensity frequency
sustained into incoming
  bulletins
cable-crazed diatribes
  through spirilla
and studding a facula
  sheen-tendonned
ligaments and straps
  the rig-up framing
lariat transmissions
  emitting
diaphanous lassoes
  rife-rebus in many tongues
  pitch, loudness
  and craw-emphasis
  a pulsar turned up into surcharge
  the quasi-buzz nexus
  to excite the interruptives,
  the noncontinuents...
THAT IS: the asterisk
pump-valved afloat
  in the bitumenaxis
of flat and thin signals
  spew-nova
  table-talk & blocktackle
  as well: the hook-up
mongered with link-people
the vinculum of used imagery
outside of the acquired language,
primitivised by feral sickness
and engaged in halucinoids
and STRATIFYING
RAMIFYING
a spargefacting diaspora
through intersecting meshwork:
uniformity
in the points
of view
altered
dichotomous
dichotomous
rapid spectral
changes
in time
picked up
dimension
between
relays
before
compacted
all about it
become
being
centred a
vox sustain
into its nasals & antiformants
glides and semivowels
jammering
impedance
spray and
emerging & merging
eloquently by
brain
preverbal
in organism
representing
intensity
as one
dimension
coiling
before
all about it
being
clustered
stimuli
harmonic
periodics
concentrating
the feedback
of beyond
along channel
and cavity
and merging

(Williamson, 1993: 42-45)

* Casting the net *

I appreciate many qualities in the work of Williamson. I regard him as a strikingly original writer and performer, a challenging writer and performer. His work holds both an emotional and an intellectual intrigue for me. It offers a curious fascination. It is confronting, it is compelling, it advances ideas and
understandings I find myself drawn towards. It draws immediate and powerful responses. I feel it as I read it. His evocations of 'becoming', in the experience of the participant, reinforce his powerful understanding of the learning of the body, a learning born from his own experience. It foreshadows his efforts to construct a means of communication that does not rely upon speech, a form of communication that is derived from and connected directly to the body's physical and emotional experience. Equally, I am fascinated by Williamson's pursuit of something he can never know in the same way hearing people know it, just as the hearing cannot know deafness in the way he does.

Sound is both the substance and subject matter of his communication. Much of his written poetry gains its impact through its juxtapositions of sounds as the video and audio tapes included as appendices (video appendix 1, audio appendix 1) demonstrate. His deafness drives him deeply. It annoys, frustrates and perhaps even enragés him. In driving himself in this way, despite the annoyance, frustration and rage, or perhaps as a consequence of it, Williamson arrives at a form of expression that overcomes some of the limitations imposed by deafness. This, remarkably, then enables him to point to limitations in the experience of the hearing.

It could be said that Williamson has 'entered into' sound. He has entered into a relationship to sound that he is attempting to represent through writing and performance. In the process, he has become a highly motivated student of the creation, transmission and reception of sound. It is in his pursuit of something that he cannot fully know, that Williamson serves as a metaphor for my ambition. For in this thesis I too am attempting to write about things I cannot fully know, those things are learning and creativity. Like he, I have absorbed a considerable amount of 'learning' about my subject and moved beyond the first order activities of 'learning' and 'writing' to the second order activities of 'learning about learning' and 'writing about writing'. His 'sound about sound' encourages me in my exploration.

My own efforts to understand learning and creativity, alongside the careful construction of this discussion, are also undertaken through stories. Some of the stories are included in the thesis. They exist as evidence, of a sort. "Now", as I say in one story, "Beyond the clichés. The timeworn responses. The old stand-bys. The regular diversions. The home grown homilies. The practiced performances. Further. More. Pushing. And peeling. Peeling away the
layers." I enter into the exploration. Another story, another understanding: titled *It is midnight*, it begins,

It is midnight, maybe a little later. It is early in January. I am in my flat alone. I have been working on this project - intensely - since my holidays began in the second week of December. I shared Christmas with friends. Took a few days off between Christmas and New Year and visited relatives. I have been to the movies, been out for a meal now and then and been to the swimming pool, to swim at least one and a half kilometres, every second day. The weather has not been overly hot. It has been cool and wet enough to make working at home comfortable. I have not been bedevilled by the humidity that makes it so difficult to work in a room without air conditioning and curiously, I have not been bedevilled by a great need for company. I have, almost gladly, been quite satisfied working here - some days accomplishing a substantial amount, some days accomplishing little; some nights going to sleep satisfied with what I have done, other nights feeling that here is so much more to do - alone.\(^{17}\)

Here, I feel, I am setting the scene for my own learning and creativity. They are both the subject of the study and the manner of its delivery. While my pursuit of learning and creativity does not demand that I stretch convention as far as Williamson does, my learning, like his, lies in the conversation I am having with myself about my own experience. I conclude another story, *Cartoons and the blues* - about a discussion with my eight year old nephew - with one such conversation.

So... we’re both playing. He’s watching TV I’m listening to the radio. But we’re doing more than watching and listening. We’re emotionally involved. We’re involved in a relationship. We’re participating. We’re feeling our way into and through something. We’re living life more fully because of an experience we are having. We’re playing with possibilities, just as I, when I write these words feel my way in, and negotiate my way through the feelings that I want to communicate and the feelings that I want to experience as I communicate. “Play; it’s not as simple as it seems.” I can hear him saying. “Speak for yourself!” I imagine myself replying. Then, I imagine, I’d smile at him and I’d say. “You eight year olds. You think you know everything.”\(^{18}\)

Williamson’s emotionally driven fixation upon sound is not sufficient to allow him to realise sound as hearing people know it. If he knew sound as hearing people do there would be no need for his pursuit. I see this as comparable to
my pursuit of learning and creativity. In this thesis I am telling stories about
learning and creativity, listening to stories and trying to understand stories and
yet, inevitably, learning and creativity - not so much the products but the
processes - remain beyond my grasp. Herein lies Williamson’s significance for
me. I see his pursuit of sound - something he can never fully grasp - as a
metaphor for my pursuit of learning and creativity - which I can never fully
grasp. If I was satisfied that I could there would be no need for the pursuit. I am
not deaf. I can observe Williamson’s exploration of sound from the perspective
of one who hears. It is a privilege that affords me a special understanding of
his efforts. It makes me wonder if there is someone somewhere who can
observe my explorations of learning and creativity with an understanding that
encompasses mine. Perhaps there is someone able to read my pursuit
respectfully and knowingly. Perhaps that person could try to communicate to
me that which I am incapable of realising. Perhaps that person is Williamson,
for learning and creativity are his subject matter as well as mine.

The poems gathered together in A holythroat symposium in the section titled
“Exuviating The Text” address the issue of the body and its language further.

The problem that is taken to task in proposing to write the anatomy is the
problem of anatomy itself as related through the crucibles and alembics of
Alchemy. To attempt the transmutation of base alloys into gold seems a curious
metaphor for the inevitability of failure but is in fact an act of decoy providing
locomotion for a concealed interpolation of spirit into matter. The gold is for fools.
Thus when considering the notion of transmuting anatomy into text, one should
account the literal failure as of no consequence. What is of value is the
variegated incidental yield issuing above its tegument (p. 85).

Through his publisher, I made contact with Williamson. We began exchanging
letters. In one of his early letters to me, he wrote,

I am greatly concerned with the sheer inability of our linguistic selves to cope
with the emotionality that surpasses and overruns our experience of
communication. I’m interested in the unrepresentability of emotion as it reaches
strengths and depths at which language literally fails us. And yet, we have no
other medium, no other direction to turn than to attempt to convert what we
experience into language. The decision to attempt this or not seems to me to be
crucial to our continuance as an environmental presence when we have been
conditioned to think of our own presence primarily in terms of the facility language

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gives us to generate a return (and the possibility of change) on our initiative. I'm interested in the idea that here, language departs from its functional mode into areas of possibility which may not relate to its ability to close around something (an emotion, feeling) which is in itself concerned with being freed. So there may be a conflict of interest between our need to release (I am characterising the possession of emotion here as a form of tension), and our desire to be understood. This means we may need to discover new modalities of communication precisely at the point where our established ones are discovered to be inadequate.\(^{19}\)

Williamson seeks direct emotional contact in his communication. In seeking that contact he struggles with that which is required to make that contact. Like he, I confront the limitations of language as I attempt to prompt myself and you, my reader, towards an appreciation of my intent. Like Williamson I worry about my capacity to communicate, yet again, like Williamson I continue to channel my lack of certainty into a form available for public scrutiny. While doing this I know that the moment this claim is set in ink, the confusion and the doubt that my language casts boundaries around is something for which I must take responsibility. Such is the power of writing.

**Correspondence**

I continued to write to Williamson, almost spontaneously, without forethought or deep consideration. Deafness was far from my mind. In response to one of my letters, Williamson drew a distinction between his written and published work and his work in performance. The video that he sent along with the letter gave me a basis for appreciating that distinction. The physicality of his work in performance is striking. The grinding of noise, the conflict within and between sounds, the straining of bodily functions through a vast, improvised, consciously disturbing vocabulary that is apparent in the written text is considerably heightened in performance. His performance is described by Richard Dyer (1992) as a response to profound deafness mediated "not by the use of conventional body language, but by a new and affective 'language of the body'." It is, in the words of Dyer, "a deeply felt cathartic experience... a process of public encounter with a most private and intimate anguish" (p. 113). In his promotional material Williamson says his intention is to invoke a "presence of deafness". In doing so he says he is trying to bring about "a reposition and repossession of language through the body."\(^{20}\)
The video suggests that in performance Williamson demands not simply to be listened to, but to be heard. While he performs some work included in A holythroat symposium, his performance reconfigures the written text. It almost renders it meaningless. A great tension, within and between sounds, is unleashed. One commentator has described Williamson in performance as embodying a “feral intensity”\(^2\). Another has written,

Williamson’s body spasms are not emotional semaphore, but the violent pulse of the work... It is impossible to know if the moving, explosive purges of language that are spitefully contorting his body are generated from it, or its irritant cause. Williamson’s performances are so fused that (the) normal cause and effect of dialogue become obsolete.\(^2\)

Necessarily, any attempt to represent Williamson’s performance in words runs counter to his intent. Williamson not only seeks to, but needs to, move beyond a verbal language to discover a form of communication beyond verbal language. He pursues this goal with even greater energy in an audio tape of a more recent performance, sent along with the note, “I’m no longer satisfied with the video” (see audio appendix 1). This work does not simply challenge the boundaries of the literal, it floods them. As a construction of sound, it neutralises objective analysis. It demands a feeling response and as such, draws the audience into the experience of those who experience sound thus. A personal response to the work, rather than a representation or a critique is, as in Dyer’s description, the only legitimate form of review.

When I read his work that first day, and as I read it again from time to time, it is Williamson’s attempt to capture his own languaging, to retain and recapture his ‘voice’, that continues to excite me. I believe that without an equivalent attempt to retain and recapture our own learning and creativity, we cannot begin to value, enjoy or effectively discuss these elusive processes. The discourse around performance offers opportunities to appreciate these processes.

**Introducing Artaud**

In the field of drama, play and performance, Williamson’s work bears discussion alongside that of avant garde provocateur and performance theorist Antonin Artaud. In his “First Manifesto” for “The Theatre of Cruelty” Artaud demands a “dynamic spatial” language of things, movement, attitude
and gesture; of shouts, sounds, lights and onomatopoeic language; a language rich in "symbolism and interconnections in relation to every organ and on all levels." (Artaud 1977: 68-69). The physical experience of such languaging is that which Artaud most values. In his approach to theatre, rational analysis is secondary. He writes:

this tangible, objective theatre language captivates and bewitches our senses by using a truly Oriental concept of expression. It runs through our sensibilities. Abandoning our Western ideas of speech, it turns words into incantation. It expands the voice. It uses vocal vibrations and qualities, wildly trampling them underfoot. It pile-drives sounds. It aims to exalt, to benumb, to bewitch, to arrest our sensibility. It liberates a new lyricism of gestures which because it is distilled and spatially amplified, ends by surpassing the lyricism of words. Finally it breaks away from language's intellectual subjugation by conveying the sense of a new, deeper intellectualism hidden under these gestures and signs and raised to the dignity of special exorcisms. (p. 70).

The romantic appropriation of ‘Oriental’ theatre - based primarily upon his experience of Balinese theatre - aside, the work of Artaud, undertaken over sixty years ago, continues to represent a far reaching critique of contemporary understanding of the languages of performance. His attempts to escape the tight bounds of theatrical convention propelled him, like Williamson, deep into issues of creativity and learning. By arguing that the limits to language must be subject matter for discussion, both Artaud and Williamson are arguing that the limits to creativity and learning must also be discussed. Williamson says, “I'd... like to emphasise that my disability is not deafness... but speech as it is used by others and which disables me in terms of social exchange.”

In concluding this section, I return to the few sentences that initially drew me to Williamson’s work. He wrote; “A book is in the act of becoming. It arises from the futility of searching for its own components. Everything here is fastened into its rigid embrace, especially the futility of its search.”

The 'book' - the becoming of which Williamson observes with such intensity - can be 'read' as many things. In a recent television interview, songwriter Archie Roach talked about his songs as accomplishments that stand in their own right quite separate from him. He said that those songs make it easier for him to accept the experiences of which he felt the need to write. Those songs can be equated with Williamson’s 'book'. Jorge Luis Borges responds to an
equivalent experience differently. In *Borges and I* (Borges 1972: 171)\(^{25}\), one of his most admired tales - certainly one of my favourites - he separates the writer Borges, and the work done by him, from himself, the person Borges, who is doing the writing. “I shall subsist in Borges, not in myself (assuming that I am someone), and yet I recognise myself less in his books than in many another, or than in the intricate flourishes played on a guitar.” (The full text of the story, which is referred to several times in the discussion that follows, is included at appendix 5.) The fixity of ‘the book’ is something Borges feel trapped by. Nevertheless, just as ‘the book’ enhances ‘the becoming’ of Roach, it also enhances Borges’ understanding of his experience (even if only of the degree to which he feels trapped). That process of understanding is a process of learning. That learning is a consequence of creativity. The creativity feeds the learning just as the learning feeds the creativity. I do not know the Borges - be he legend, writer or man - that Borges seeks to know. I only know the stories. Nor do I know the experiences that Roach seeks to give voice to. I only know the songs. However, I do know sound. I do know that which Williamson is frustrated in his pursuit of. While it may not have the same significance for me as it does for him, I have had the experience that he seeks to know. I can look at his work and see not my pursuit of something I cannot fully know, but a pursuit like my pursuit of something I cannot fully know. This is ‘the learning’ that Williamson articulates for me. If this learning can be imagined as something quite separate from us (me, you, we individuals) - as for example, Williamson’s ‘book’, the interpretation of that book becomes the source of our explanations. Our learning becomes, as Shaun McNeill (1992) says, “an unending process of attunement” (p. 57). Senses work their way towards learning, failings in one serve to emphasise others, something is fashioned from that which occurs. That something is given a name, the word, or one word at least, is ‘learning’.

**THE MAP**

**Making marks**

Both the subject matter of this thesis and the research and learning that supports it can be approached through another metaphor, that of ‘the map’ and the process that supports it, ‘mapping’. Joseph Conrad addresses the magic of maps early in his novel, written almost 100 years ago, *Heart of Darkness*. In this novel Conrad depicts his central character Marlowe
enthralling fellow dinner guests with stories of his adventures. He begins his story telling with reflections upon his youthful musings upon maps.

Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth; and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, When I grow up I will go there... but there was one yet - the biggest, the most blank, so to speak - that I had a hankering after.

True, by this time it was not a blank space any more. It had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery - a white place for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness. But there was one river especially, a mighty big river, that you could see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land. And as I looked at the map of it in a shop window, it fascinated me as a snake would a bird - a silly little bird... I went along Fleet Street, but could not shake off the idea. The snake had charmed me (1995: 21-22).

And while the writing of Conrad has a charm all its own, it is his articulation of the fascination engendered by maps that interests me most here. For it seems to me that the discovery that leads to, and accompanies the process of mapping is akin to the discovery that leads to, and accompanies the process of writing a major work, such as a thesis. As I undertake this journey I find myself constructing maps (in the form of written images and ideas) to represent the territory I have explored and am exploring. I use these maps, (images and ideas) to explain my discoveries to myself, while trying also to put them in a form that makes them accessible to a larger audience. In his extended meditation upon fiction, Emerald Blue, Gerald Murnane (1995) uses the same metaphors in describing the challenges of writing fiction.

During the years when I earned my living as a teacher of fiction-writing in a university... I would sometimes say to one or another of my students... that any person who was paid to teach other persons how to write pieces of fiction should be able... to write the whole of a previously unwritten piece of fiction and to explain at the same time what had seemingly caused each sentence of the piece to be written as it had been written. I would then write a sentence on a
sheet of paper... I would then explain to my student that the sentence was a report of a detail of an image in my mind... I would then explain that the image I had begun to write about was connected by strong feelings to other images in my mind.

I would then... tell my student that my mind consisted only of images and feelings; that I had studied my mind for many years and had found in it nothing but images and feelings; that a diagram of my mind would resemble a vast and intricate map with images for its small towns and with feelings for the roads through the grassy countryside between the towns. Whenever I had seen in my mind the image that I had begun to write about just then, so I would say to my student, I had felt the strong feelings leading from that image far out into the grassy countryside of my mind towards other images, even though I might not yet have seen any of those other images. I did not doubt, so I would tell my student, that one after another of those other images would appear in my mind while I went on writing about the image that I had begun to write about on the sheet of paper that was before me (p. 1-3).

In these paragraphs it is not so much the images and feelings that Murnane is interested in, but the relationship between them. Those relationships define the scale, the shape, the outline, the contours the natural and man-made features amidst the many other things that the map depicts.

A map, like a thesis, commences as a blank page. As it is constructed, it becomes a detailed material object through which travellers chart their journeys. Like writing, the process of mapping is a physical transmutation of experience. It is a practical representation of the imagination. It is both a physical and an emotional experience. Even the most skilful draughtsman and the most sensitive measuring or reprographic equipment cannot void the fact that like the diary, the biography, the memoir, the story re-told, the map is an interpretation under the guise of a true and accurate representation. It is, and contains, a story. In his novel, A mapmaker’s dream, (subtitled “The meditations of Fra Mauro, cartographer to the court of Venice”) James Cowan (1996), offers the journals of a monk, who sequestered in his chamber on an island in the Venetian lagoon in the Middle Ages, meets a series of travellers and attempts to “derive meaning from... (their) mystery.” Cowan describes Mauro as trying “to encourage a process of unlimited deciphering, as if these facts (the stories told by the travellers) are but the tip of an iceberg” (p. xviii).
Cowan depicts his imagined monk, (Mauro) writing at length about the world he comes to 'know' through his visitors and his maps.

What lies beyond the margin of the world often sings to us with the voice of a siren, as if calling us to its embrace. We listen, we are lured, and finally we are seduced. The heavily scored margins on charts that I have observed over the years are testament to this predilection on the part of many seafarers. They are utterly bewitched by the prospects of continuing along one rhumb line until it reaches its farthest point. They want to find out whether its ultimate destination concurs with their idea of how the world really is.

Moreover, there is little difference between performing my rosary in chapel of a morning or fashioning a wind rose on a chart. Each is a form of meditation. A man staggers along the Via Dolorosa every time he sets out to create a thing of beauty... I do not see obsession with maps and traveller's tales as being in conflict with my spiritual concerns. Not in the least. My role as a cartographer is tantamount to the discovery of the world. Though sometimes spurned by my fellow friars as a thing of evil, I consider this world to be no way different from that espoused by our Saviour. It is yet another manifestation of His kingdom masquerading in the guise of multiplicity and change. As I see it, what tumbles forth from the lips of wayfarers can be as fragrant as myrrh emitted from a saint's bones on feast days (p. 5-6).

Mauro's attempt to develop his own relationship to God's distinction between heaven and earth, through the tales of seafarers and travellers bears a striking resemblance to the attempt by the descendants of Shem, son of Noah, to build a tower unto heaven in the land of Shi-nar. This should come as no surprise. Ritual, myth making and the mapping of known and unknown worlds are intimately related activities. The interpretation and representation of the world as it becomes 'known', is a function of the way in which the societies and cultures that occupy that world, map and 'know' it. In every culture, the process of mapping orders territory by selectively rendering characteristics and qualities in accordance with shared concerns and priorities. Through this determination, the map 'becomes' the world and knowledge is extended far beyond its previous bounds. This is no less the case in this work.

Thomas Kuhn describes the map as a 'paradigm', arguing that, "in learning a paradigm, the scientist acquires theory, methods, and standards together, usually in an inextricable manner" (1970, cited in Turnbull, 1989: 1). This is
evident, as demonstrated by Turnbull (1989), in comparisons between indigenous Australian and non-indigenous (European) approaches to mapping. Each reveals a radically different approach to visual representation in association with a base of knowledge and experience that requires that each culture construct its maps differently. Helen Watson, in her study of indigenous Australian maps (Turnbull p.28), says that to European eyes, bark paintings “by Aboriginal Australians are not immediately recognisable as maps”, despite the fact that “Aborigines sometimes see them as maps”. According to Watson and the Yolngu community at Yirrkala with whom she worked closely over an extended period of time, bark paintings are significant because they represent important aspects of djalkiri.

In talking of their djalkiri, a speaker refers to a specific series of stories or songs, dances and graphic representations about the creative epoch as well as the country defined by those stories, songs, dances and graphic representations. This is the country ‘owned’ by that person or group. The whole country is constituted by a network of tracks which intersect and define a framework for the political and economic processes of Yolngu society... For Yolngu, what provides the connections between places... are the tracks of the Ancestral beings, and the tracks are the landscape... in a profound sense the Yolngu ‘theory of land’ has the landscape as a map of itself (p. 28-30) (my highlighting).

The conscious depiction of a set of cultural creation myths through which the ‘reader’ gains history, tradition and identity, is an explicit rendering of that which is implicit in so many other forms of mapping. The old school atlas with its depiction of the globe as a collection of territories divided between the great imperial powers of Europe - British colonies coloured pink, French, German, Belgian, Dutch, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese colonies coloured differently - is no less a cultural creation myth. This relationship between culture and environment is explored continually in creative art forms. It is a subject of immense fascination. James Hillman (1996) depicts the conflict well. He argues that it is becoming “more and more difficult to make a cut between the psyche and the world, subject and object, in here and out there. I can no longer be sure” he says, “whether the psyche is in me or I am in the psyche as I am in my dreams, as I am in the moods of the landscapes and the city streets” (p. 154). And yet while it is an experience that is explored most often in the creative arts, it is, as Hillman would assert, very much an everyday experience.
**Self referentiality**

All art forms, but most particularly theatre and literature, require artists to map ideas, characters, environments and relationships through the languages they use. Dramatists and novelists have done this from ancient to modern times in writing. Yet the writing of narrative and dialogue is only one form of mapping. Many other languages, in addition to those which are spoken, are also available for exploration, particularly when spoken meaning is not shared. In *Invisible Cities* (1974) Italo Calvino depicts Marco Polo - who could not speak any of the languages of China - using the **language of performance** to communicate his mapping of the empire of Kublai Khan.

Returning from the missions upon which Kublai sent him, the ingenious foreigner improvised pantomimes that the sovereign had to interpret; one city was depicted by the leap of a fish escaping the cormorant’s beak to fall into a net; another city by a naked man running through fire unscarred; a third by a skull, its teeth green with mould, clenching a round white pearl... As the seasons passed... each piece of information about a place recalled to the emperor’s mind that first piece of information...with which Marco had designated the place. (p. 22)

Performance, like mapping, like writing, like painting, like so many other creative activities, is either implicitly or explicitly self-referential. In recognition of this, many artists have created works that play with the self-referential form. The ironies of post-modernism work in this way. I am reminded of the serious playfulness contained in the story, “Borges and I” (referred to earlier and included in full at Appendix 5). This story can be read as a map of the conflict that writing has caused Borges, the writer of the story, to experience. The attempt to chart the overlapping domains of firstly the person, secondly the writer and thirdly the work of the writer, identifies Borges as the source of his own creation myth and the marker of his own sites of significance. It follows no narrative, provides no solutions and tells of no significant events. It is both fictional and non-fictional. It is both eloquent and beautiful. The term ‘metafiction’ has been applied to this sort of self-conscious literary experimentation. Metafiction is described by Waugh (1984) as “fictional writing which self consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality” (p. 2). She (1984) goes so far as to ask whether “it is possible to ‘describe’ anything?”

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The metafictionist is highly conscious of a basic dilemma: if he or she sets out to ‘represent’ the world, he or she realises fairly soon that the world, as such, cannot be ‘represented’. In literary fiction it is, in fact, possible only to ‘represent’ the discourses of that world (p.3).

Waugh links meta-fiction to terms like ‘metapolitics’, ‘metarhetoric’ and ‘metatheatre’ as part of the “meta level of discourse” emerging in the 1960’s as part of a “more general cultural interest in the problem of how human beings reflect, construct and mediate their experience of the world” (p.2).

The meta level of discourse requires that language be acknowledged as not simply a reflection or representation of meaning but a utility that employs a culturally specific form to create meaning. That form generates communication just as it generates the limits to communication. The meta-level of discourse engages language in an attempt to understand language. It involves the use of theatre to understand theatre, writing to understand writing and mapping to understand mapping. 26

The self-consciousness that is a necessary consequence of the meta-level of discourse identifies it also as the domain of a very specific form of learning. It is a form of learning in which the context that frames the experience is continually reflected upon in the determination of understanding. This is described by Mezirow as ‘emancipatory learning’. Emancipatory learning “involves an interest in self-knowledge, that is, the knowledge of self-reflection, including interest in the way one’s history and biography has expressed itself in the way one sees oneself, one’s roles and social expectations” (1988 cited in Khatoonabadi 1994: 118). Such learning is explicitly self referential. This does not mean that it is part of a discourse that fails to recognise that which is ‘not self’, rather it acknowledges that which is ‘not self’ is necessarily interpolated through that which is.

A personal thesis

This thesis can also be read as, in part, meta-fictional. My own experience of my own experience, is central to the project. It is my subject matter. I am making it explicit that it is that which I bring to the project directly and it is that through which I filter others’ stories of other experiences. It forms the bounds of my map. Yet, I recognise and I celebrate that experience is not mine alone. Being and having been realised in a social, emotional and physical
environment, it is something that others (other things and other people) participate in or contribute to continually, either consciously or unconsciously. Our (and my) maps are continually being checked against others'. Our emotion and our language - our emotioning and our languaging - are forever being captured by the context of their occurrence, the social discourse in which they participate. Accordingly, participation, and the learning that arises as a consequence of it, is also central to this thesis. Inevitably, my reflection upon my participation dictates that issues of 'self-knowledge' and 'self-consciousness' must arise within the discussion.27

Cowan's mapmaker, Fra Mauro concludes his meditations on maps and life with a series of comments that are worth repeating.

Gazing at the map, I begin to see a portrait of myself. All the diversity of the world is illuminated on the parchment, even as this diversity is intimated within me. An aura of remoteness hovers about its contours, as it does my head, clarifying what I see. Both the map and myself cling to the invisibility of what we represent. Nor is the tension between us that of myself and it, but of the merging of these. The map and myself are the same... Even at this moment I know that something within me is beginning to shift. I am sailing at last, as if absorbed into the margins of my map, a ship embarking upon its maiden voyage. I am travelling towards a supreme uncertainty, or have inadvertently become a part of some endless continental drift. Who but those who have made a journey beyond this world will understand what I mean? All I know is that for me at least, freedom is at last restored. The realisation that I am travelling nowhere in particular has given me the courage to abandon all pretence to being on course. Or is this, as Simon of Taibuthah suggests, the only way one can finally discover that most mysterious principality of them all - that of the kingdom of "no-knowledge" (p. 144-148).

Anticipating his death, Mauro finds meaning in life. That meaning takes the form of satisfaction with that which is. He feels his learning. It is, like all learning, embodied, as in the frisson I felt when I lifted the pages and looked beneath the language of Genesis, as in the feeling that rises through Aaron Williamson's legs and resonates in the pit of his stomach, the feeling that he learns to identify as 'sound'. And Cowan depicts Mauro similarly, as he pens the final pages of his journal. He reports him as feeling "weak yet exhilarated at the same time", as if he is "partly suspended in the room... What is happening?" he asks. "All I want to do is fall asleep. Yet I can't: before me lies
the summation of my life. This map of the world, for all its flaws, is as scintillant as a rapier in sunlight." (p. 148) Like the Zen student confronted by the imponderable koan, his learning is realised in his body. In this sense, the body too can be understood as a map: the 'body' of individuals, the community, the species and life on earth, the stories that document that body no less so.

The interrelationships that maintain life within the body enable another metaphor to be used. That metaphor is 'the system'. A system is a set of relationships 'mapped' as undergoing change. This map of change or 'evolution' can be understood therefore as a representation of transformations of a system over time (Dubos, 1973: 56). Individual learning, no less my own, cannot be considered apart from this map, this map of cultural and physical transformations.  

I conclude this section with an extract from another story of my own. The story is called "Questioning the dream". The dream referred to in the story is a dream that maps another nation and another land. 

In the dream I was aware of our bodies - hers and mine - on the bed. Yet I felt that our energy - mine and hers and ours in tandem - extended far beyond our physical composition. I felt as if we were tapped into a network of relationships. I felt that our connection, in forming this friendship, expanded the network that we participated in. I felt that we were part of a flow of feelings that linked us to other parts of the nation, other parts of the earth. That there were paths and channels and networks and connections and junction points and taps that provided access to and outlets for that flow of feeling - that emotion, that thinking - that we exist within. I felt that we, as we slept together, formed a crucial part of that flow; that we bought feelings from specific locations to here, this place where we slept, amidst our feelings, our emotions, our thoughts, our dreams, within our network of sympathetic reception and transmission. I felt that this gave us a particular responsibility. That lying in this bed together, we were a part of something much more substantial than ourselves alone, even ourselves, as a couple.

Other ideas emerged from the same set of images. If we existed within a network of energy, our energy could become more substantial. In my dream our bodies transmitted goods and services. We transported freight and consumer goods as well as training and abilities and skills from other regions to our own, as we lay together and dreamed. We relocated things through transmissions of energy along and through paths and channels and networks and connections and...
junction points. A gushing flow of soft drink emerged from a tap in the hills nearby. This was a physical substance, that could be bought and sold. It flowed from a pipe line that we imagined in our dream. I dreamed that in our sleep we were a switching point. We were entrepreneurs, manoeuvring, without moving. Somehow, subtly, almost imperceptibly, our networks of relationship, it seemed, had become subsumed by commerce. The energy that we shared, the links we established, the networks we created had turned us into creatures of our own prosperity.

I was humbled when I woke the next day and recalled my dream. I was not wealthy. I was not an entrepreneur. I was not responsible for the trade of many things. The room I woke up in was small, the roof low, the cool air, bracing. The great satisfaction I felt in being able to transmit materials over vast distances, with my mind, was gone. All that remained was my memory of the dream and my interpretation of its meaning. The act of remembering is itself an act of interpretation. The historical fascination with dreaming as a source of meaning aside, dreams cannot, not be subject to interpretation. What is the story of my dream I ask myself. What do I map it as meaning?29
Section 1: Notes

1 I am using the term 'languaging' in accordance with its use by Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela in their seminal work The tree of knowledge (1987). This work is referred to often in this thesis and Maturana and Varela's construction of the processes of 'languaging' and 'emotining' is central to my thesis.

2 Genesis is the product of more than one writer, just as it is a construction arrived at through combining many stories over time. Though The Bible may not be referred to in all accuracy as 'the word of God', it is frequently referred to as 'the story of God' and 'God's message'.

3 In this thesis references will be made to God and quotes from The Bible referring to God will be used. In keeping with the gender attached to God in The Bible and to avoid an overly cumbersome narrative, while generally attempting to avoid the assignation of gender to God, I will maintain the pattern established in The Bible and refer to God as 'he'.


5 For example, Wordsworth writes: "A whistle-blast from behind the hill / rushed o'er the wood with startling sound; / then - all at once the earth was still, / and showers of hailstones pattered around." (1950: 81). And E.E. Cummings asks in a very different tone, "O sweet spontaneous / earth how often have / the / doting / fingers of / prurient philosophers pinched / and / poked / thee?" (1959: 6).

6 In this section of the story it is the knowledge of being naked - that is, reflection upon the social experience of nakedness leading to knowledge - rather than the nakedness itself, that leads to Adam and Eve being "sent... forth".


8 "Gaining enlightenment is like the moon reflecting in the water.
The moon does not get wet, nor is the water disturbed.
Although its light is extensive and great...
The whole moon and the whole sea are reflected
in a dew-drop in the grass, in one drop of water.
Enlightenment does not disturb the person,
just as the moon does not disturb the water.
A person does not hinder enlightenment, just as a dew drop
does not hinder the moon in the sky.
The depth of the drop is the height of the moon."
Actualisation of the Kōan: Eihei Dogen.
(Quoted Matthiessen, 1987: 20)

9 Quoted from untitled leaflet distributed by the Sunnatsaram Forest Monastery. Bundanoon N.S.W.

10 Unpublished interview. Chris and Jules Collingwood with Dr John Grinder; July 1996.

11 And yet the connection between the feeling and the terminology that describes it is infinitely more subtle than this. It may even be that to articulate or talk about a feeling is, to some degree, to negate the sensory impact of the experience in the moment of its occurrence. (See Neville 1989, 50).

12 The same curiosity has generated interest in the phenomenon of 'wolf-children', as commented upon by many including Maturana and Varela (1987: 128.)

13 Among those who sought to do so was a local teacher called Daumer (Wasserman 1992, 40) who described Hauser as "This trembling figure, helpless in a strange world...are for me evidences of an indomitable power of understanding... if I can dig up the roots of his being and make his branches bloom, I shall show the jaded world a mirror of untainted humanity; then people will see that there are valid proofs for the existence of the soul (1992: 40).

14 Herzog is not the only German artist to have been fascinated by the legend of Kaspar Hauser. Peter Handke (in his play Kaspar) is one of a number of German artist to use the legend of Kaspar Hauser to explore the relationship between the innocent and society at large.

15 Private correspondence Aaron Williamson / David Wright 11/1/95


David Wright: 'Creativity and embodied learning'
19 Private correspondence Aaron Williamson / David Wright 11/1/95.
23 Private Correspondence; Aaron Williamson / David Wright 11/1/1995.
26 The map is a metaphor that is often explored in metafiction. Borges often employs the map as a device for the construction of meaning.
27 Anthony Storr (1989) focuses considerable attention upon the self-consciousness of those engaged in creative work in his extended study of solitude. Storr observes that the concept of 'self' is a relatively recent phenomena. Drawing on the work of Peter Abbs, he claims that; "it was not until 1674 that the word 'self' took on its modern meaning of 'a permanent subject of successive and varying states of consciousness'" (p.79). He reports that this period also witnessed the emergence of a new interpretation of the word 'individual'. Abbs notes that the original meaning of the word was 'indivisible' and that the word could then have been used to describe the relationship between the three aspects of the Trinity or a married couple.
28 Dubos (1973), a distinguished biologist, looks to poetry and literature to inform his science. He cites observations by, among others, Milton and Proust on childhood memories, (p. 65-66), Auden on the operation of the senses (p. 86) and Hans Suyin on genetic memory (p. 87).
Creativity and Embodied Learning

Section 2: Constructivism and creativity
Introduction

The ideas that construct the parameters of this inquiry into learning are derived from the constructivist notion that the experience of the learner is realised first and foremost by the learner, him or herself. (Kelly, 1963; Bateson, 1972; Guba, 1990; Guba and Lincoln, 1990; Maturana & Varela, 1987) This notion, as outlined by Guba and Lincoln, arises from four precepts that mark the ontology of constructivism as relativist and its epistemology as subjectivist.

1. **The theory ladenness of fact**: Facts are facts only within some theoretical framework. Reality exists only in the context of a mental framework (construct) for thinking about it.

2. **The under determination of theory**: No theory can be fully tested... because of problems of induction. A large number of theories can ‘explain’ facts, no unequivocal explanation is possible. ‘Reality’ can only be ‘seen’ through a window of theory, whether implicitly or explicitly.

3. **The value ladenness of facts**: Constructivists concur with the ideological argument that inquiry cannot be value free. Many constructions are possible.

4. **The interactive nature of the inquirer / inquired-into dyad**: Objectivity is not possible. Results are shaped by the interaction between the inquirer and the inquired. This interaction undermines positivism. (Guba 1990: 25-26).

Constructivism is an imaginative and flexible understanding that accommodates individual relationships to meaning without denying the social context of those relationships. It stands in stark contrast to traditional reductionist approaches to science, which employ an absolutist ontology and an epistemology of objectivity. Science writers Coveney and Highfield (1995) point to the limits of reductionism in the most vivid terms.

The vision of the world that naive reductionist science has proclaimed is a cold and solitary one that sets mankind apart from an unseeing and uncaring universe... this austere world view has been instrumental in promoting a view of science as separate from the rest of human culture (p. 13)

George Kelly’s ‘Personal Construct Theory’ - which was significant also in the development of systems theory - is similarly constructed. Kelly’s fundamental postulate is that “a person’s processes are psychologically channelised by the way in which he (sic) anticipates events.” (Kelly 1963: 103-104). Kelly’s theory is, like that of Guba and Lincoln, an attempt to arrive at a methodology for the
understanding and effective communication of personal experience. "As a scientist", Kelly argues, "man (sic) seeks to predict and thus control the course of events... the construction which he formulates are intended to aid him in his predicted efforts." (Kelly 1963: 12).

Mathematician, Ernst von Glasersfeld (1987, 1990) expands upon the understanding offered by Guba and Lincoln to postulate a 'radical constructivism'. Von Glasersfeld describes himself as a radical constructivist because, he says, he takes his theory of knowledge seriously. Accordingly, von Glasersfeld says radical constructivists are frequently challenged to produce proof of their assertions. However it is "difficult to show the critics that what they demand is the very thing constructivism must do without."

To claim that one's theory of knowledge is true, in the traditional sense of representing a state or feature of an experiencer-independent world, would be perjury for a radical constructivist. One of the central points of the theory is precisely that this kind of 'truth' can never be claimed for the knowledge (or any piece of it) that human reason produces (1990: 19).

That which marks his 'radical' departure from constructivism, is von Glasersfeld says, his decision to call his orientation a 'theory of knowing' rather than a 'theory of knowledge'. This echoes cognitive biologist, Humberto Maturana's use of the terms ' languaging' and 'emotinging' (1987). It emphasises 'knowing' as a living experience, rather than something that is stood outside of, sized up and mastered. In his most significant contribution to this discussion, Von Glasersfeld describes radical constructivism as post-epistemological. This is equivalent to Maturana's assertion that our ontology is our epistemology. It is the domain within which self-reflexivity asserts its validity. Von Glasersfeld argues that,

One of the consequences of (radical constructivism is)... that one does not persist in arguing against it as though it were or purported to be a traditional theory of knowledge. Another consequence - for me the more important one - is that constructivism needs to be radical and must explain that one can, indeed, manage without the traditional notion of Truth (1990:19) (my highlighting).

Von Glasersfeld traces constructivism back to the Greek philosopher Xenophanes, who in the 6th century BC asserted that "if someone succeeded in describing exactly how the world really is, he or she would have no way of
knowing that it was a 'true' description." (p. 20). He aligns it to the thinking of sceptics over the last two and a half thousand years.

It is based on the assumption that whatever ideas or knowledge we have must have been derived in some way from our experience, which includes sensing, acting, and thinking. If this is the case, we have no way of checking the truth of our knowledge with the world presumed to be lying beyond our experiential interface, because to do this, we would need an access to such a world that does not involve our experiencing it (p. 20).

Drawing on the work of Piaget, von Glasersfeld offers three principles of radical constructivism.

1. Knowledge is not passively received either through the senses or by way of communication. Knowledge is actively built up by the cognising subject.
2. a) The function of cognition is adaptive, in the biological sense of the term, tending towards fit or viability;
   b) Cognition serves the subject’s organisation of the experiential world, not the discovery of an objective ontological reality (p. 23).

"One cannot adopt the constructivist principles as an absolute truth" von Glasersfeld warns, "but only as a working hypothesis that may or may not turn out to be viable. This is the main reason why the constructivist orientation is unequivocally post-epistemological" (p. 23). This orientation is my guide in this thesis. My construction of my experience of the world is being discussed in biological terms. My intention is to prompt greater reflection upon the process whereby embodied experience is appreciated and communicated.

I find it particularly interesting that a mathematician offers such a challenging view of knowledge. Describing mathematics as the “epitome of the rational game”, von Glasersfeld emphasises the ‘game’ within mathematics. Comparing it to chess, he points to the certainty the game constructs, while pointing also to the agreements around rules that enable that certainty to exist.

It is obvious that the certainty... springs from nothing but the conceptual relations that constitute the rules of the game; and it is equally obvious that these conceptual relations are absolute in the sense that if I broke them and thus destroyed the certainty they generate, I would no longer be playing that particular game (p. 25).
The difference between the play in mathematics and the play in other games lies, according to von Glasersfeld, in the way in which the evidence of play is displayed. The creative play of the mathematician exists between the lines, in the exercise of the imagination that precedes its documentation (and is perhaps insufficiently accessible to the reluctant student of the subject). I am reminded of an old Sufi saying that, in order to understand that one and one makes two, you must first of all understand 'and'.

In the sciences, as in the arts, radical constructivism imagines a connection between knowing and responsibility. It points to the notion that it is we, individually and collectively, who are responsible in no small part for the understanding of the world we are experiencing. And while "radical constructivism does not suggest that we can construct anything we like... it does claim that within the constraints that limit our construction there is room for an infinity of alternatives." (von Glasersfeld 1990: 28). Within this understanding lie ethical considerations. The knower has some degree of personal investment in, and therefore personal responsibility for, that which he or she constructs.

**The self and learning**

The artist, like the scientist, whose work entails the construction of responses to experience, is continually working within an unfolding process. Inevitably as Kelly says, attempts are made to predict and control that process. Attempts to predict and control processes are an important part of learning. Any attempt to gain an awareness or consciousness of the process of learning requires that the learning of the 'self' be taken into consideration. Constructivists argue that admitting 'the self' to the learning process considerably enhances opportunities for effective understanding.

In her discussion of science, feminism and constructivism, Linda Shepherd (1993) argues that, "rather than seeking self awareness so that they can edit the self out of the science, constructivists use the self as an instrument of understanding" (p. 103). Significant within this process of understanding is, she says, "the art of listening, of being open, of allowing something to enter without immediately intercepting it with our thoughts and interpretations".

The more we are aware of our own thoughts, the more authentically we can listen to ourselves - and the more open we can be to nature and to new perspectives of reality... Rather than identify with being scientists, constructivist
researchers reflect upon the contexts that confine and define them, and bring their inner experience to their work. They weave together the strands of rational and emotive thought, integrating knowledge that feels intuitively important to them personally with knowledge acquired from others (p. 104).

Shepherd identifies the constructivist research method with 'the feminine'. She argues that, "from the perspective of the Feminine, all truth is in context" (p. 112). Constructivism requires, she says, the recognition that there is a necessary relationship between the researcher and the subject matter of the research, beyond the 'pure' scientific pursuit of important truths. In arguing this she acknowledges - perhaps even celebrates - the fact that effective research holds personal and emotional significance.

We are projecting our personal issues and trying to solve them in the lab. It activates and informs our work. We become the alchemical vessel in which the interaction takes place and, if we are successful, something new emerges (p. 119).

The learning that arises in this process is not only personal, but vital. Learning holds challenges and challenges demand a personal response. While my experience, or my explanation of my experience is derived from a history of engagement in my own particular form of learning, which is different to Shepherd's, the personal understanding that identifies the self as central to the research process is common to the inquiry that supports us both. Shepherd again:

If we are conscious of how our research is symbolic of ourselves, we can try out solutions in the laboratory as well as integrate them into our lives. Our inner and outer lives become progressively linked. Through the course of a project, the progressive psychological and scientific developments inform each other. Solutions to technical problems may even present themselves in our dreams... once we solve the inner issue, the energy seems to withdraw from the topic (p. 122).

I identify with the experience Shepherd reports on the basis of my experience as a writer. In each of the major works I have undertaken, personal concerns that have arisen prior to and/or during the construction of the text as central focus questions, often to all appearances, incidental to the structure and content of the text, have informed the understanding that has developed within
and through the writing. **The writing process cannot be isolated from the life that surrounds it.** This makes it inevitable that the text becomes rich in associations of personal significance. Those significances may or may not be accessible to an audience other than myself. The reader or audience may find a totally different set of significances. This is not necessarily important. It allows the processes of writing and reading to be regarded as quite distinct from the written product.

**Participation**

Any study of the self is a study of the self in context, which is by definition, a study of participation. Participation constructs a necessary relationship to experience such that when “truth is seen as a process of construction in which the knower participates, a passion for learning is unleashed” (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule 1986). This the basis for Belenky et al.’s description of the constructivist as a ‘passionate knower’ and their citation of Polanyi’s description of personal knowledge as “the passionate participation of the knower in the act of knowing” (p. 140-1). While Shepherd asserts that listening is central to the relationship between the knower and the act of knowing, Belenky et al. extend this understanding with the observation that the constructivist is not necessarily self absorbed and alone, “the capacity for speaking with and listening to others, while simultaneously speaking with and listening to the self, is an achievement that allows a conversation to open between constructivists and the world” (p. 145).

Like Shepherd, Belenky and her associates address such knowledge from a feminist and therefore a political perspective. Identifying ‘knowing’ in this way requires that the methodologies that facilitate the construction of that ‘knowing’ must also be understood as political. Paulo Freire (1972) and Augusto Boal (1979, 1992, 1995), who worked together at various times in literacy campaigns in South America, also locate knowledge in a political context. Both advocate knowledge as a means of overcoming oppression and both nominate the self-conscious experience of the learner as central to the realisation of oppression and liberation from oppression. Both are passionate advocates of participation as a research method and a practical way of knowing. It is only through participation that dialogue can occur. Dialogue both requires and creates learning, within it there is a feedback process at work. Critical dialogue and the social relationships that arise as a result of it are, Friere says, the key to
personal and social liberation. A ‘dialogic education’ Freire (& Shor 1987) asserts, draws us “into the intimacy of society”.

Through critical dialogue about a text or a moment of society, we try to reveal it, unveil it, see its reason for being like it is, the political and historical context of the material... As conscious human beings, we can discover how we are conditioned by the dominant ideology. We can gain distance on our moment of existence. Therefore, we can learn how to become free precisely because we can know we are not free! That is why we can think of transformation (p. 13).

In a similar way Augusto Boal in *Theatre of the oppressed*, his treatise on the ‘poetics of the oppressed’ and *Games for actors and non-actors*, his practical handbook for its enactment, demonstrates how “the theatre can be placed in the service of the oppressed so that they can express themselves and, by using this new language, discover new concepts.” (Boal 1972: 121). Significant within this new language is the body. “Man (sic) must”, Boal argues, “first of all, control his own body, know his own body, in order to be capable of making it more expressive. This enables him to, by stages, cease being an object, and become a subject.” (p. 125-6). This knowledge is central to this thesis.

*The Artist*

The research methods employed by artists bears discussion alongside those detailed by Shepherd. These research methods, which vary widely, are often detailed in interviews, biographies, prefaces and personal commentaries. In one such interview Jorge Luis Borges says “the poet’s trade, the writer’s trade, is a strange one... To be a writer is, in a sense, to be a day dreamer - to be living a kind of double life” (di Giovanni et. al. 1973: 163). The ‘double life’ that Borges says the writer lives - the life that is lived alongside the observation of the life that is lived - is central to Borges’ creative output. A large proportion of his work comprises meditations upon the life of observation. In his poem, ‘The Moon’ (Borges 1968: 170). Borges writes,

Art is endless like a river flowing,
passing, yet remaining, a mirror to the same
inconstant Heraclitus, who is the same
and yet another, like the river flowing.
While the artist's method and the artist's research may be deliberated on at length in commentaries, it is the work of the artist that speaks most eloquently of the artist. That work, and the research that supports it, can be more easily ascertained in some output than others. In this regard, Borges is a particularly interesting and accessible study. His reflections upon his own research method are often the subject matter of his best writing. An example of this is the poem, 'The Watcher', which Borges says is about, "the feeling I get every morning when I awake and find that I am Borges" (di Giovanni 1973: 95). The poem begins,

The light comes in and I awake. There he is.
He starts by telling me his name, which is (of course) my own.
I return to the slavery that's lasted more than seven times ten years.
He thrusts his memory on me...

There are strong similarities between this poem and the short story 'Borges and I' (Borges 1972: 171-2). This story, to which I made reference before, is a deep meditation upon the forces that have motivated Borges as a person and a writer struggling with his awareness of - and his participation in - his reputation, his body of work and his personal doubt about his ability to differentiate between these aspects of his experience. The story begins, "Things happen to him, the other one, to Borges." The differences between Borges' image of himself and what he perceives to be the images held by others of him are the subject matter of the story. Following the development of a series of observations on this issue, the story concludes,

I live, I go on living, so that Borges may contrive his literature; and that literature justifies me. I do not find it hard to admit that he has achieved some valid pages, but these pages can not save me, perhaps because what is good no longer belongs to anyone, not even to him, the other one, but to the language or to tradition. In any case, I am destined to perish, definitively, and only some instant of me live on in him. Little by little, I yield him ground, the whole terrain, though I am quite aware of his perverse habit of magnifying and falsifying. Spinoza realised that all things strive to persist in their own nature: the stone eternally wishes to be stone and the tiger a tiger. I shall subsist in Borges, not in myself (assuming that I am someone), and yet I recognise myself less in his books than in those of many another, or than in the intricate flourishes played on a guitar. Years ago I tried to free myself from him, and I went from the mythologies of the city suburbs to games with time and infinity, but now those
games belong to Borges, and I will have to think up something else. This is my life a flight, and I lose everything, and everything belongs to oblivion, or to him.

I don’t know which one of the two of us is writing this page.
(Borges 1968: 171-2)

The study Borges undertakes is propelled by subjective experience. The recording of that study is further experience, available for further study by the self and/or others. The development of an understanding of the socially constructed image of 'Borges' is, for Borges himself, a necessary but paradoxical process. Thus it can be said that Borges uses the constructivist perspective upon the self as a platform for the exploration and extension of creativity and the creative process. For any person involved in creative endeavour, the recognition that any such observation is itself a creative expression of a personal experience is a significant step towards the effective contextualisation of creativity. Eco-philosopher Henryk Skolimowski (1994) argues, in a particularly poetic way, that participation deserves more effective recognition.

Participation is the oldest methodology that has ever existed. Participation is the methodology of life as growing and evolving. All life is participation... The deeper and more multifarious the forms of our participation, the deeper and richer the universe in which we live. The real journey is our immense journey to becoming through participation... (Participatory research is) the art of dwelling in the other, is the art of penetrating from within, is the art of learning to use the language of the other; in short, is the art of empathy (p. 182).

Skolimowski places great significance upon constructivism and participatory research as 'ecological' ways of thinking. He describes this as a way of knowing the world though ongoing interactions between us as 'knowers' and what it is we 'know' (or are aware of). This contrasts with the view of us as 'knowers' progressively coming to know an objective, fixed external reality. The same understanding is offered by Shulamith Reinhartz (1992) who reminds us, "eco means house, logos means word, speech, thought. Thus ecology is the language of the house. Defined more formally, ecology is the study of the interconnectedness between all organisms and their surroundings - the house." (p. 241). The separation between 'this house' and 'its inhabitants' is the ground upon which the emerging field of 'eco-psychology' is growing.
A similar process - cast in a different environment and requiring a sensitivity to interpretation different to that which Borges employs - is detailed by James Bardon (1991) in Revolution by Night. Bardon’s representation of his conversation with a group of indigenous Australian elders about the claims of early white explorers, requires that he do significantly more than enter into a conversation. Bardon, as far as possible for someone not immersed in this culture since birth, must enter into and participate in an indigenous Australian ‘way of knowing’. This is a way of knowing that is radically different to that generally valued in non-indigenous culture. Yet, it is only through an attempt to arrive at an effective level of participation in that way of knowing that Bardon can arrive at the degree of knowledge that he is pursuing. Through his participation, Bardon’s study becomes an ongoing interpretive exercise informed by the rich interrelationship of history, language and art that makes up indigenous Australian culture. This research method carries with it the ethics and responsibilities that arise with ‘belonging’ in a particular cultural context.

Bardon’s response to the experience - detailed in the following extract - is best described as a creative reading or interpretation of that experience. His rendition of that reading, which is then transposed through the history, tradition and discipline of the English language, becomes an exercise in expression and communication. It is only through creativity that the learning experience that Bardon participated in can adequately be conveyed. It is only through entering into the rhythm of the writing, as well as the meaning of the words, that the experience Bardon is representing can be approached by the reader.

I have put Charles Sturt’s map-line upon the sand; the painters say that it is lie for it does not sing, they quietly disparage the line which died as it was born, they say. Now I have placed Sturt’s great detailing of the chaining marks upon the sand, all six artists come and peer relentlessly at it in that wild sun-glare, troubling their fingers softly about the shadows and the wilytja, bush shelter, is full of late afternoon and dust, puppy dogs which yap and sneeze behind the set-down branches-place. I am systematising the signs they make upon the sand and after a quiet song is murmured at what they put down a while before to make the next story. I transcribe and I itemise the signs upon my notebook and ask how the relationship between the signs made the story talk. Billy Titus-Mindah is sort of growling and wheezing at once about how each sign can mean this, then mean that, it can have two or three meanings depending on where everything else speaks. When it speaks here, he whispers, when it speaks there, when I come and add this place to that. No time in the story, I try
to say, yet he won’t speak about time, he doesn’t want to know where it’s at, spreading out more spaces before me so as to say what the story said. I am trying again, marking in my notebook the story-lines which he is singing, uiri, the names of, because sing means name. “Same word”, he says, he trickles his fingers about in the shape of the cave he has told me of and seems to waste his thumb upon the incising row. The water-man emerges out of his song, he says, like this, “You see,” this, and he dabs his thumb into the direction he is singing, where the track went in the story he has brought to me this afternoon, and I understand there is no time in the story, only space, time can only be known by the names of the places over which the song goes, talking so softly you can only gradually catch their words; they are sliding their fingers upon the paper, closing their eyes as they do, and suddenly I am thinking of how I, of all people, have brought myself here to watch them put the lie to what (the explorers) McDouall Stuart and Sturt thought. (p. 22-23).

For a more extensive discussion of the art and mapping of indigenous Australians see the chapter by Helen Watson with the Yolngu community at Yirrkala, ‘Aboriginal Australian Maps’ in David Turnbull’s Maps are territories (1989a: 28-36) and Helen Watson with the Yolngu community at Yirrkala and D.W. Chambers’ Singing the land, signing the land (1989b). Watson, in consultation with the Yolngu community at Yirrkala, points out that paintings by indigenous Australians are not immediately recognisable as maps. They can nonetheless, be seen as maps. The meaning that is contained in the map is only available to those who can read it. The land speaks through these maps. “Reading the map is penetrating deeper into the texture of the knowledge network - the land itself” (Watson 1989a p. 36).

**Contextualisation of experience**

The realisation that learning is defined first and foremost by the learner arises within the context of the discourse - the language and value system, in effect the strategies of power that enable and/or constrain writing, speaking and thinking within historical limits - that facilitates its realisation (Foucault 1980). As Bardon suggests, in identifying and attempting to appreciate creativity, it is necessary that the writer (or reader) consciously engages in and makes use of the creativity with which he or she is identifying. For that reason, in reflecting upon my own experience it has become apparent that, in the development of a discussion about learning and creativity, it is not simply appropriate but necessary that creativity in general and reflections upon my own creativity in
particular become significant within the discussion. This admits my own learning as both subject matter and evidence.

Quite clearly, no inquiry can be detached from the experience of the inquirer. The critical interpretation of that experience necessarily locates the researcher within an interpretive framework bound by the understanding arrived at through previous interpretations. This hermeneutic circle of experience is a universal human context (Gadamer 1977). It is inhabited by all who employ language in explanation, by all who participate in languaging relationships and by all who make meaning. In reflecting upon my own use of language and my own making of meaning I am engaged in an historical analysis of my own reflexivity, within the constraints of the languaging system I am employing. Making that engagement explicit is part of the process of acknowledging the understanding that I bring to the analysis.

**Categorising creativity**

It is possible for me to search out and find evidence of creativity in innumerable aspects of my own experience. The literal boundaries of this document require that I select and make reference to particular categories of that experience. For the purposes of this exercise, I am submitting that evidence of my own creativity - in relation to this thesis - exists in three distinct forms.
1. Work undertaken prior to the thesis.
2. Work undertaken during, yet separate from the writing of the thesis.
3. The thesis itself.
Each of these forms of evidence employ and in so doing, identify as research methods, the writing process along with the reflective interpretation accompanying that writing process. (A fourth 'form' of written evidence also exists. This is the creativity that arises subsequent to the completion of the thesis. This is a form that, by definition, cannot be discussed or documented within the bounds of the thesis.) These forms of evidence need to be acknowledged as contributing to the exploration of learning that is both represented in and documented through the thesis.

1) **Work undertaken prior to the thesis**

As has been stated I have, and have had for quite some time, a strong interest in writing, performance and writing for performance. While I have written prose
for publication I have put more sustained effort into writing for stage, film, television and the hybrid form termed at first 'performance art', then more recently 'contemporary performance' (Birringer, 1991, Carlson 1996, Goldberg, 1988; Hilton, 1987; Kaye, 1994; Sayre, 1989; Van den Heuvel, 1991). As a writer working for an audience through performers, I am practised in personal and social reflection upon my own creative output. On many occasions I have had deep conversations with performers about language and languaging. I have contested the making of meaning with many actors. I have come - after some resistance - to value such meetings, to appreciate them as rich opportunities for discussion and reflection. They have challenged me to defend my world view and my construction of a world view for performers. This experience has, among other things, taught me that the context of both the creative work and the reflection upon it - the circumstances within which it occurs, the relationships from which it arises - play a major role in determining the significance that is attached to those considerations. This suggests to me that it is only through the contextualisation of creativity that issues of learning and creativity can seriously be addressed. Hence, the experience of my own learning, based on historical evidence, in the form of writings undertaken prior to the commencement of this thesis, and derived from a relationship between past and present experience of those writings, is subject matter that warrants consideration in relation to the issues of creativity and learning. It is given considerable attention in Section 4, the case study of the Formwork experience.

2) Work undertaken during, yet separate from the writing of the thesis

Frequently, during the process of developing this thesis, I have felt the need to, or been requested to, explore issues through fiction and/or non-fiction that were to first appearances, quite distant from the subject matter of the thesis. That work has taken the form of a narrative or a dialogue or a performance script or a combination of one with the other. Upon deeper reflection and closer reading I have often found that this writing could be interpreted as commenting upon and offering insight into the issues I was addressing in the thesis in a more traditional academic manner. This has enabled me to ponder those incidental writings as research coincidental with and available for discussion within the boundaries of the thesis. The significance I attribute to such work may not be the same as the significance another attributes to them, but this is not to say that significance does not exist. Accordingly, I have placed sections from some of these incidental writings at strategic points within the body of the thesis. (A
selection of these writings have also been included as 'Selected stories' at Appendix 10.)

Just as Shepherd (1993) values dreaming as a research method, I value the meaning that I find within incidental expression. The inclusion of such material as evidence serves, like the inclusion of the work of Borges and Bardon (along with reference to the work of many other writers which could have been included), to confuse the traditional distinction between 'fiction' and 'non-fiction'. Participation in the process of constructing a thesis and a recognition of the myriad of rhetorical devices available to any writer engaged in such a process reinforces that confusion. This confusion is played out regularly meta fiction (Waugh 1984). Of the form, Patricia Waugh writes,

Metafiction... does not abandon the 'real world' for the narcissistic pleasures of the imagination. What it does is to re-examine the conventions of realism in order to discover - through its own self reflection - a fictional form that is culturally relevant and comprehensible to contemporary readers. In showing us how literary fiction creates its imaginary worlds, metafiction helps us understand how the reality we live day by day is similarly constructed, similarly 'written'. (p. 18).

As a research method, metafiction entails ongoing reflection upon personal experience. It is a dialectical inquiry within which the thesis of reality is set against an imagined antithesis. The synthesis is not so much a fact as a perspective, not so much a reality as a way of knowing.²

There are similarities between metafiction and the 'new journalism' (Wolfe and Johnson 1990). The premise of each is that creativity is central to the effective communication of understanding. Tom Wolfe, one of the most influential of the practitioners of the 'new journalism' claims, somewhat ironically, that the emergence of the new journalism told both writers and audiences "that it just might be possible to write journalism that would... read like a novel. Like a novel, if you get the picture. This was the sincerest form of homage to The Novel, and to those greats, the novelists" (Wolfe 1975: 21-22). Envisaging journalism as a constructed literary form, rather than the reporting of objectively verifiable 'truths', requires it be acknowledged that each journalist views his or her subject matter differently. The old fashioned caricature of the police reporter, hat clamped on head, cigarette delicately balanced on lower lip, who asked for "Just the facts Ma'am; just give me the facts," is a fiction that is out of

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place in such an environment. Modern broadsheet newspapers increasingly feature such writing. It is intended as much to amuse, as to inform, as the news media becomes more and more a medium of entertainment.

In the context of a discussion of learning, in part through the perspective of my own learning, the explanations that I develop are necessarily reflective and 'self conscious'. Obviously, an exploration in pursuit of an explanation of a personal experience can be nothing but reflective and self conscious. Other writing - developed during, yet incidental to, the writing of the thesis - exists, I contend, also as evidence. This incidental writing is, like the life that surrounds the thesis, inseparable from it. Any correspondence I imagine between the thesis and the incidental writing underlines the significance that the thesis holds for me as a developing entity - a work in progress - subject to the many feelings I experience and express during the writing of it, feelings about myself, my relationships, my career, my health, my subject matter and more. In searching for my own form of certainty it is necessary that I view and experience my writing as anything but a collection of permanent truths. The published form that you, the reader, have access to, is like that which I am working on to-day, no more than a summation of understanding up to a particular point in time. The incidental writing, like the thesis, represents and expresses the learning process I am engaged in. By using some of it strategically, within the thesis, I am setting up a context for its interpretation. I am suggesting meanings rather than defining truths.

What I am calling 'incidental expression' can take many forms. They might take the form of letters, journal entries, stories, poems, a note written on an envelope during a bus trip, perhaps even a shopping list. They are writings that can be interpreted within what William James was the first to call, a 'stream of consciousness'. Reflection upon that stream is a research method that has long been valued in psychotherapy (James, 1971; Kohut, 1985; McNiff, 1992; Mair, 1989). It is significant in much 20th century literature. It is a foundation stone of Heinz Kohut's (1985) 'self psychology', McNiff's (1992) 'art therapy' and Mair's (1989) 'poetics of experience'. In a world of increasing self-consciousness, it is a research method of increasing significance.

3) The thesis itself

As stated earlier, any thesis is a construction marked by both creativity and self-consciousness. Clearly, the development of an extended work that involves
consideration upon such things as organisation, the inclusion or exclusion of particular content, appearance, style, language use and of course structured argument is nothing if not a self-conscious and creative construction.

Acknowledging this thesis as a self conscious construction involves seeing it also as a self-reflective document. Acknowledging it as self-reflective enables me to appreciate it as an opportunity for learning. This means that the thesis contains learning about a subject area and learning about me and for me. To the reader, it may also contain learning about the reader. This underlines the contradictions at work in any attempt to separate learning from the circumstances of its occurrence. It requires that the processes of structuring, organising and writing the thesis be recognised as worthy of discussion within that category of creative experience I identify as my own. It requires also that the writing and the construction of the thesis be recognised as requiring, containing and elucidating learning. Necessarily, the priorities I feel bound to express within this work indicate particular values that I place upon the learning, which I conceive of as my own.

'The first stone'

Australian novelist Helen Garner brought 'new journalism' and 'meta-fiction' together in her controversial study of gender and power, The First Stone (subtitled; 'Some questions about sex and power') (1995). Her consciousness of her own participation in the work is an integral part of both the study and the writing.

The First Stone arose in response to an incident of sexual harassment at Ormond College in Melbourne University in 1991. In the 'Author's Note' that precedes the main body of the text, Garner writes,

At first, when I imagined this book as an extended piece of reportage, the only names I changed were those of the two young women... However, I soon encountered obstacles to my research which forced me, ultimately, to write a broader, less 'objective', more personal book. They also obliged me to raise the story on to a level where, instead of its being just an incident specific to one institution at one historical moment, its archetypal features have become apparent (Garner 1995).
Declaring her feminist perspective - in fact using the book to develop further discussion about feminist theory and practice - while writing to a general as well as a feminist audience, Garner’s research method required that she directly acknowledge her intellectual and emotional involvement in the event and the discussion that flowed (and continues to flow) from it. The subject matter and the approach to writing that Garner adopted are intimately related. It is the approach to the writing that Garner employed in the book, rather than the subject matter that interests me most here.

The First Stone is as Garner states, a very personal form of reportage. The writer’s participation in the subject matter is early made explicit. The questions Garner asks herself and the questions she asks about the relationship between the incident, feminism and social change are at the core of the work. These questions arise through Garner’s direct, personal experience of feminism, social change and writing. Writing about her experience in the first person is a very deliberate choice. Reflecting on her thoughts one third of the way into the work, she writes,

I felt I was on the verge of finding out things that would cause an upheaval in my whole belief-structure, particularly where men and women are concerned, and the way power shifts between them. I was working so slowly that by the time I got anything coherent written, the newspapers would have got bored with the topic and moved on. I needed a purpose for the questions I wanted to ask. I would have to write a book. I had no idea how to do it, how long it would take, or whether what I eventually wrote would be publishable: I thought I would just keep ploughing forward, asking questions, taking notes, and see where I ended up (p. 72).

While the Ormond College incident is her subject matter, Garner’s process of writing about the incident and the manner in which she documents and comments upon her research process, including the correspondence that supports the research in a most detailed way, is also subject matter. On one occasion she writes of the considerations behind the composition of a letter to a woman with a strong interest in the incident. “It took me more than a week to answer the letter”, she says.

I put my reply through draft after draft. It mortified me that I was so exercised by the thing. ‘It’s not worth addressing yourself to her,’ said a French friend, after an hour of close textual criticism under an oak tree in the Botanical Gardens.
'Address yourself to something beyond her. To the women who are experienced enough to have gone beyond fanaticism and hatred' (p. 83).

Garner then includes the letter she wrote within the body of the text. She also includes her own reflections upon the construction of the letter. Of the letter, she says, "A bit pompous, but I was getting bored." (p. 84) Her consciousness of her own participation in the construction of her response to the letter is emblematic of her consciousness of her construction of the whole of The first stone.

Also significant in her discussion is her reflection upon the 'sort of book' she is writing, or is reputed to be writing. It is this 'sort of book' - of which Garner displays a prescient consciousness - that predicates the response of many of the participants in the story. The book is identified as a 'sort', from Garner's perspective, by the approach she is taking to the experiences that arise from the original event, as well as the way in which she is writing the book. In a similar way Garner identifies herself, or perhaps more accurately portrays herself, as being identified by some of her subjects (critics and antagonists) as an "old guard feminist" who is "incapable of being a journalist" (p. 178). These self-conscious considerations must have prepared her, to some degree, for the furore that greeted the publication of the work.

Increasingly, as Garner works towards her conclusion, she (the writer) and her process of researching and writing, become the centre of her attention. This almost completely overshadows the event of sexual harassment. This has the effect of focusing discussion in the book upon developments in Garner's thoughts about feminism rather than that one single instance of sexual harassment (or the more general issue of sexual harassment). Far from an abstract set of ideas, feminism becomes, through Garner, a living entity, a way of knowing, an understanding constructed by those who participate in it, those who debate it, reflect upon it, argue it, become confused by it and gain insight through it. It becomes a construction that people - women in particular - measure themselves through and in relation to. That relationship differs between women. It is defined in different ways by different women. Garner's discussion becomes a meditation upon differences in that relationship and the understanding that supports it. Any answer or solution or reason or explanation for the event of sexual harassment at Ormond College - as in the traditions of positivist inquiry - quickly becomes irrelevant. The First Stone is not an episode
of *Murder She Wrote*. Solutions are not called for, no-one is bought to justice, no hangman's noose is stretched.

While *The First Stone* is a book about feminism, it is also if not more so, a book about a learning process. It is this learning process that Garner represents, it is this learning process that her critics have focussed upon, but the learning process cannot be separated from the person who has undergone the experience. Through the experience of writing *The First Stone*, Garner participates in and contributes to not only her own learning, but a form of social action. Her practise is, in accordance with Marilyn Cooper's (1989) description of writing, "one of the activities by which we locate ourselves in the enmeshed systems that make up the social world. It is not simply a way of thinking, but more fundamentally a way of acting" (p. 13).

I have developed my understanding of my own participation in the writing process through a similar process. My initiatives in drama have always been designed to facilitate a greater appreciation of the social experiences I have found myself participating in. Each work I have written, without being directly autobiographical, has contained sufficient personal meaning to enable me to map a strong set of personal references and associations through the work. I doubt whether I could have completed these works otherwise. As such, those works have been barely disguised searches for the most appropriate course of action. The mental speculation, the imagining, the foreshadowing, the sifting between options that has taken place during the writing process has proved to be inseparable from the mental speculation, imagining, foreshadowing, sifting between options that has been a necessary part of my daily life. To attempt to separate that creative process from the activities of everyday life seems far more aberrant than to acknowledge the intimate relationship between creative work and the process of making decisions and taking action each day. In that regard, the qualities employed during creative work may also be seen as worthy of acknowledging in the processes of daily life.

In my own experience of writing, logic has often been far less important than the 'rhythm' of the writing, the 'sense', the 'feel', the 'mood' that invokes the next line, the next character, the next step forward, the next choice that has to be made. This is a physical experience: a sensation one attempts to become attuned to. I am attracted very much to Stephen Nachmanovitch's (1990) deconstruction of creativity. He argues that "the most common form of improvisation is ordinary speech... Every conversation is a form of jazz. The
activity of instantaneous creation is as ordinary to us as breathing" (p. 17) (my highlighting). So it exists also in relation to the construction of this thesis. The manner in which I chart this process is also reliant upon rhythm, sense, feel and mood. As soon as feelings and senses are acknowledged as central to the processes of creativity and construction, the body is acknowledged as part of the process. There is an instinct to be trusted and intuitions to be relied upon, there are senses to be worked with. In the research and the writing, feelings have been let loose and there is a need for them to be acknowledged and appreciated.

**Creativity, learning and the self**

Psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut (1985, 1984, Meares 1992) describes ‘the self’ as an ongoing process that develops and requires different relationships throughout life. Kohut says that creativity defines a particular relationship between the self and the environment. He says that “the creative individual, whether in art or science, is less psychologically separated from his surroundings than the non-creative one; the ‘I-you’ barrier is not as clearly defined.” (Kohut 1984: 112-113). This suggests that a particular relationship exists between creativity and the self that identifies and interprets that relationship as creative. In an article, ‘The self and the creative process’, included in an anthology dedicated to the memory of Kohut, Kurt Schlesinger (1984) examines one of his own poems in an attempt to “support some specific and general propositions about creativity and its relationship to self psychology” (p. 233). While doing so, Schlesinger questions the quality of his poetry, before concluding that the qualities a work holds as art are of little relevance in the attempt to seek the self within the work. (Though they can be, the processes of ‘art’ are not necessarily those of self psychology.) Schlesinger argues that the search for the self is not conducted solely within or through poetry, or for that matter writing. He insists that ‘any mental construct’ can serve the same purpose.

For at bottom is the human proclivity for forming constructs that underlies creativity. These constructs may range from integrated conceptual wholes to fragmentary gleanings. The basic creative process is the construction of self, the establishment of a coherent, continuing sense of self, a construct, with positive affective coloration (self esteem). In the ongoing lifelong activity of self creation and renewal there are generated a wide range of activities and products. When these have more than universal appeal, we consider them art.
But if my definition is accepted, then the creative process subsumes both artistic and non-artistic creativity. Or, to put it another way, artistic achievement and less recognised creative endeavour have similar functions in self creation, renewal and repair, and possess analogous dynamics (p. 234).

Miller Mair (1989) extends this understanding by asking us to be aware of the language through which we ‘mentally construct’ our society. Mair argues that “we create realities by and through the conversational practices we are involved within and undertake” (p. 272). He asserts that a ‘poetic’ awareness is a fundamental part of effective personal and social understanding. Highly conscious of the relationship between form and content in the conversations we participate in, Mair presents part of his argument in poetic form.

No academic solution
is satisfactory.
it has to be
a lived posture.
That’s why
I can’t get away
with saying one thing
and doing another
or with preaching
and not practising.
Everything has somehow
to exemplify
and be itself (p. 111-112).

He advocates a conversational psychology “that starts in practice and involves reflection thereon” (p. 251). His work is a plea for the recognition of ‘stories’. These are equivalent to the ‘patterns which connect’ referred to by Gregory Bateson (1972), the ‘mental constructs’ referred to by Schlesinger and the ‘narratives’ that are central to the work of Michael White, David Epston and their colleagues (1995).

The vision Mair offers is of a “new self”. This will be “a conversing self, involved in turning round to see and sense the other side, other points of view” (p. 261). Any such ‘conversing self’ participates in the creative formation of mental constructs, just as any ‘artist’ participates in a conscious process of creative construction through the particular medium within which he or she works. I am
reminded of the comment made by Mario, the central character in the movie Il Postino (The Postman). In the film Mario, a poorly educated Italian villager and the exiled Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda, develop a strong friendship. As the two men talk about life, love and poetry, the postman surprises Neruda with his articulation of his relationship to Neruda’s poetry and creative work in general. He tells Neruda that “poetry does not belong to he who wrote it, but he who needs it.” (my highlighting)

The self and scholarship

The significance of creative endeavour lies in personal and social explanation. It lies in the interpretation that creates the meaning of and through the experience. In some of the more interesting work in this area, feminist and sociologist Susan Krieger (1991) argues that the sort of personal boundaries explored by Garner, Schlesinger and Mair contain the seeds for a reformulation of research practise within the social sciences. She introduces her argument in Social science and the self with the observation that “the social science disciplines tend to view the self of the social scientific observer as a contaminant.”

The self - the unique inner life of the observer - is treated as something to be separated out, neutralised, minimised, standardised, and controlled. At the same time, the observer is expected to use the self to the end of understanding the world. My central argument... is that the contaminant view of the self is something we ought to alter. I think we ought to develop our individual perspectives more fully in the social sciences, and we ought to acknowledge, more honestly than we do, the extent to which our studies are reflections of our inner lives. (p. 1).

This is the research area that I see myself as working in. I am beginning my study with an examination of my own experience. I am developing my analysis through my interpretations and explanations of that experience. I discuss the experience of others through my interpretation of their experience and my interpretation of their explanation(s). My experience is important to me, as are my explanations: important, though different. My creativity assists me in this process and through it my learning is compounded. Krieger argues that people working in this way - people such as Schlesinger, Mair, Garner and myself -
are, and should be recognised as conducting social research that is both important and valid.

In her work Krieger brings feminist scholarship, self referential psychology and creativity together in a strong critique of traditional research methodologies. She argues that a reformulation of the view of the self in the academic domain must admit greater access to the ‘authorial first person’ and that the “idiosyncratic individual view, and the basis of that view in an observer’s inner life” must be granted greater recognition. Personal explanation and personal constructions upon experience needs to be accepted as evidence of the most central importance. Developing her argument (in the manner she advocates), Krieger says she has arrived at this appreciation of process through an appreciation of her own scholarship and research.

In recent years, I have increasingly come to think in personal terms about the social science I do. At one time I could write a study and then write separately about how, and why, I came to do it. I no longer feel I can proceed in that way. I now need to speak more directly about my involvement in any subject I study. Writing about others, or about a social process, without reference to the self has come to feel alienating and untrue to me. Writing personally has become a way that I can feel I am doing social science in a responsible manner (p. 2).

Krieger describes her science as “soft, subjective, idiosyncratic, ambivalent, conflicted, about the inner life, and about experiences that cannot be measured, tested and fully shared.” This is reminiscent of von Glasersfeld’s ‘radical constructivism’. In developing her studies (which are also, of necessity, discussions of methodology) Krieger draws on her own life, the life and work of a range of artists (including Georgia O’Keefe and Pueblo Indian potters) and the work of several feminist writers, on the relationship between self, style and society. She reflects on the personal and social significance of authors she has read, people she has interviewed, meetings with editors and colleagues and conversations with people with whom she has shared a park bench. Krieger makes her own experience her case study. She claims it as a valid source of research data, a valid ‘way of knowing’, rather than subject matter for autobiography or barely disguised fiction. In the process she makes it explicit that the relationship between the self and others is represented and interpreted through the experience of the other by the self. In doing so she denounces objectivity, declaring it a fiction. This suggests that any problems that arise in the representation of personal knowledge and understanding, and the
limitations imposed by communication through various mediums (including the written word), can or should also become valid subject matter. Like Shepherd, she argues that,

My central argument... is that when we discuss others, we are always talking about ourselves. Our images of “them” are images of “us”. Our theories of how “they” act and what “they” are like, are, first of all theories about ourselves: who we are, how we act, and what we are like. This self reflective nature of our statements is something we can never avoid... understanding others actually requires us to project a great deal of ourselves into others, and onto the world at large. It also requires taking others into the self in an encompassing way. (p. 5).

Krieger's study is therefore, “both about its subject and a demonstration of what it (the study) advocates.” (p. 7). It is a study and a process that I find myself embracing. Her articulation of it and her capacity to contextualise it within the domain of academic research, along with the studies through which she models the process, strengthens me in my resolve to work in this way. The more I become immersed in academia the more I recognise the conflicts of which she writes. My enthusiastic embrace - of an approach that she describes as academically problematic - is, I believe, a consequence of my past experience as a writer for performance and a teacher of drama.

Whilst currently working in a university I find myself, to some degree, caught between identities. One identity is that of an academic teaching and researching within the Faculty of Social Inquiry at UWS Hawkesbury. Another is that of an individual with considerable interest and experience in performance and writing, particularly writing for performance, along with a significant amount of experience as a drama educator. This conflict is reflected in my approach to writing and researching, in the subject matter I choose to examine and the stylistic orthodoxies and writing and research methodologies I employ, just as it is reflected in the body of comparative knowledge, experience and literature that I seek out and use to further my understanding and communicate my views. Being caught between identities requires also that I am caught within and between practices. My background as a practitioner rather than a theorist requires that I evaluate experience from the perspective of one whose priority is (or has been) largely determined by practical application. This means that I place great significance upon whether or not a particular understanding of the teacher/student relationship or the words on the pages of a script 'work'.

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Whether or not something ‘works’ is of greater importance than whether or not it should work or has worked for someone else in the past. Like Krieger, I am used to using “my own experience as a guide”. This is not an issue confined to the social sciences. Baruch Blomberg makes a similar point in his introduction to Coveney’s and Highfield’s *Frontiers of complexity* (1995). Describing his experience in medicine, he differentiates between solutions found in practice and those found in the reductive isolation of the experimental laboratory.

It is valuable to know the ‘real’ cause of a disease... but this is often not knowable and may be a fiction of the investigator’s desire to have simple answers for complex problems. But... applied scientists are practical and don’t allow the perfect to drive away the good. Understandings that are derived at the border between chaos and order where... many of the problems of nature lie, may not provide exact solutions but rather those which can allow application and understanding to emerge (p. xiii)

My understanding of whether or not something ‘works’ is, in the first instance, subjective. It is dependent upon the criteria by which I ‘feel’ it to be working. Those criteria may be many and varied. They allow experience to be analysed at length and in depth. That analysis, whilst producing extensive data about the experience, may not necessarily make the feeling any easier to understand. It may be that such an analysis runs contrary to the feeling. It may be that the feeling defies understanding. It may be that understanding is inappropriate to the feeling and, the experience and the explanation are quite separate things. This is why, in part, the athlete needs the coach and the actor the director, it is why Mario needs Neruda. Intellectual engagement, moment by moment, inhibits the capacity to become fully immersed in experience. Yet, within immersion there is great intelligence, there is great rationality. It is the intelligence of the body and the rationality of the learning contained in the body.

*Introducing the body*

Earlier this year I was asked to contribute to a collection of writings by men, about men called ‘From the heart’. As I took on this task I found myself involved in an attempt to articulate a conversation between my mind and my body (along with a set of culturally determined notions of the ‘male mind’ and the ‘male body’).
I listen, I hear, I hesitate. From the heart. Is this what you want to know? It is as if my heart stalls. The carburettor is blocked. The points need setting. I laugh. I submit to the caricature. I have never worked on an engine in my life. Nevertheless, it is as if as I stepped on the heart accelerator the engine flooded. I could not start. I needed to sit. I needed to pause. I needed to cool my heels, gather my thoughts, count to ten, let the blood drain away from my head, think things through a bit, and gradually, when the time is right, start all over again. Now. Beyond the cliches. The timeworn responses. The old stand-bys. The regular diversions. The home grown homilies. The practiced performances. Further. More. Pushing. And peeling. Peeling away the layers. The clothes. Never fashionable. The hairy chest. Not luxuriant. The fat. Enough to talk about. Too much just to keep me warm. The ribs. Never broken. Not in sport or car accidents. Though I almost lost a thumb when my motorbike slid under a car. At eighteen. Hair flying in the slipstream. On the way home from school. A lost thumb would have been permanent. To lose one thumb may be seen as unfortunate. To lose two might be seen as careless. Fortunately the broken leg, the cuts and abrasions healed. Unlike the teeth. Yet, modern dentistry. I went to school in plaster. It was an accident. I don’t remember what occurred. I could have died. Scars. I wore them. I wear them. Back to school. A flush of pride. A twitch, an itch, my head turning left. The impression I create. The crash I fear. Beyond that accident. The heart. It pumped. It pumps. Now. Still. I listen. I hear its rhythmic echo. Still. I hear its hollowed sound. A Moroccan drum. Skin drawn tight. So close to me that I neglect it. That I forget it and live my life despite. The heart. Its pulse. I smile. I fear. I recognise. Finally. Beyond the symphonies it beats with others, which rise and fall, my heart beats alone. It beats itself, through me, if I care. I wonder. I ask. Do I truly spend more money on my car? Which crash do I fear? From the heart.6

The relationship between the body and learning, between experience and explanation, is a radical constructivists’ play-ground. French theatre director Antonin Artaud, in his ‘First Manifesto’ of ‘The Theatre of Cruelty’ (in The theatre and its double Artaud, 1977), approaches the subject from an interesting direction. Artaud tries to look beyond the relationship that arises between minds, towards the relationship that arises between bodies. This relationship is, he suggested (back in the 1920’s and 30’s), a source for a new understanding of language, a language that is not subject to the intercession of the mind, a language that cannot be explained.
Artaud described theatre as a laboratory for research into life. Through work in this laboratory, the human body, Artaud said, must become a sign and the theatre a “throbbing ensemble of rockets, flights, canals, detours in all directions of our inner and outer perceptions to teach us what it (life and theatre) ought never to have stopped being” (p. 41). Though an actor and a writer, a researcher and a teacher, Artaud’s principal subject matter was, unbeknownst to himself, learning.7

His image of the theatre as a laboratory and his emphasis upon the body and the need for a vocabulary through which to appreciate and articulate the experience of the body introduces the next section of the thesis. In this section I want to explore the laboratory further: to work with the insights of scientists who make value judgements as a result of their inquiries. I want to place considerably more attention upon embodied experience and the manner in which meaning is made from that experience. As ever, creativity is complicit.

Rupert Sheldrake (Sheldrake & Fox 1996) points out that “the idea that scientists are somehow disembodied - not bodily or emotionally involved in what they’re doing - is part of the style of science to this day” (p. 17). This is part of the reductionist or mechanistic world view, a world view that postulates the Earth as inanimate and therefore dead (and ultimately, knowable). In the next section I would like to ride on the shoulders of those who are contributing to the scientific ‘rediscovery’ of a living earth. Those who, in Sheldrake’s words have a sense of science as “participatory”, those who are “involved in what he or she observes”, those whose inquiries effect what is found. “This of course” Sheldrake says, “raises the question of the nature of creativity in an entirely new way. In an evolutionary world, creativity is an on-going feature of the developing cosmos” (p. 21). In this process, learning and creativity are intertwined.
Section 2: Notes

1 Physicist and educator, Bruce Gregory (1988) makes roughly similar claims for his subject area,

In many ways, physics resembles abstract painting... The world of physics is a world of hard edges and abstraction - a mathematical world as austere and beautiful as a painting by Mondrian. A world in which the creativity and imagination of human beings, is every bit as important as they are in music and painting (p. 3).

2 Searching out more accessible terminology for 'meta-fiction' Waugh uses the term 'self conscious fiction'. The phrase challenges its own logic. If a fiction displays a consciousness of self, it cannot be 'feigned, invented or made up' (in accordance with the Macquarie Dictionary's definition of fiction). It is necessarily deeply felt and the product of personal reflection and the pursuit of personal insight.

3 Following the publication of The first stone Garner was forced to defend her book in response to criticism from feminists offended by her suggestion that the incident of sexual harassment was trivial and deserving of ridicule rather than legal pursuit. Garner's critics point to the power imbalance between the Bursar and the female students.


5 Formerly the School of Social Ecology in the Faculty of Health, Humanities and Social Ecology, University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury. The school, which continues to exist as a collection of scholars rather than a formally structured organisation, adopts a transdisciplinary action based approach to people, their communities and environment. It has a small undergraduate and large postgraduate community and draws students from many disciplines seeking to explore the assumptions that structure participation in culture and community.

6 Wright, D. 'From the heart' Unpublished story. See story in full included at Appendix 10.

7 In his study of Artaud, Derrida (1978) claims, "there is no theatre in the world today which fulfils Artaud's desire" (p. 249). Susan Sontag (1980) extends Derrida's observation, arguing that Artaud's vision of theatre (and life) is in fact beyond realisation. "What Artaud has left behind is work that cancels itself, thought that outbids thought, recommendations that cannot be enacted" (p. 67). It's accomplishment is Sontag says, its death. It is to move beyond language and the language through which research is entered into.
Creativity and Embodied Learning

Section 3: Systems, science, language and learning
Introduction

The pursuit of the construction of meaning in social experience is part of the larger pursuit of the means by which meaning is created and shared. In my research I have found the ‘system’ a very useful metaphor. It is a metaphor that has enabled me to step back a little from the subject I am examining, to imagine and experience connections more clearly (not the least being my own connection to the subject). I am not the only person who has found the ‘system’ useful as a metaphor. In the increasingly researched field of ‘systems theory’ science meets poetry in an imaginative synthesis of researching and dreaming, that like von Glaserfeld’s ‘radical constructivism’ encourages a reluctance to lay claim to ‘truth’.

Systems theory is, according to Fritjof Capra, an holistic study that has had a profound effect upon scientific thought.

The great shock of twentieth-century science has been that systems cannot be understood by analysis... systems thinking does not concentrate on basic building-blocks but rather on basic principles of organisation. Systems thinking is ‘contextual’, which is the opposite of analytical thinking. Analysis means taking something apart in order to understand it; systems thinking means putting it into the context of a larger whole (Capra 1996: 29-30).

The System

Systems theory emerged in the 1920’s when work on the biology of living organisms underlined the limited applicability of traditional, reductionist, scientific principles. Subsequently, researchers working in such fields as Gestalt psychology, chemistry, cybernetics and the emerging science of ecology embraced similar ways of thinking. One of the most significant of these researchers has been Gregory Bateson (1972, 1988). Bateson’s work traverses the disciplines of biology, cognitive psychology, ecology and cybernetics. Morris Berman (1990) describes him as an “alchemist”. “This man”, he says has “somehow managed to bring fact and value back together in a way that (is)... rationally credible...his writings ooze life because the theory emerges not from abstractions but from concrete situations” (Berman 1990: 15-16). His work evokes, Berman says, “a process reality” that instead of being an abstract construction of thought, includes both the mind and the body in its calculations.
The language we use and the stories we tell loom large in Bateson’s calculations. “His thesis was”, Jeanne M. Plas (1986) says, “that mind and nature are twin aspects of the same phenomenon - that anatomy was a transform of grammar. In practical terms, this meant for Bateson that biological patterns and communication patterns were of the same ‘stuff’ - and that stuff was stories” (p. 12).

I arrived at the work of Bateson inadvertently. Although I had been aware of him as a thinker of substance for some time, it was only through my introduction to the work of Humberto Maturana and his colleague and former student Francisco Varela, that I came to look more closely at that of Bateson. The thoughts of Bateson on recursive processes of communication foreshadow those of Maturana and Varela on self organising systems and autopoiesis. Before entering into a detailed discussion of self organising systems and autopoiesis, there is considerably more to say about systems theory.

The focus on relationships - rather than independent units - that is central to systems theory, is part of a paradigm shift in scientific thinking, first discussed at length by Thomas Kuhn in The structure of scientific revolutions (1970). Kuhn says that “paradigms provide all phenomena except anomalies with a theory-determined place in the scientist’s field of vision” (Kuhn 1970: 97). A paradigm is he says, a matrix of belief systems of which we are generally unaware. This shift began when limitations to the mechanistic world view of Newtonian physics were made apparent by quantum mechanics and the Uncertainty Principle. Through his three laws of motion, Newton sought to calculate the behaviour of objects interacting in the universe. This led him, through determinism and mechanism, to metaphorically depict the universe as a giant clockwork (and philosophers of the time to envisage God as he who started the clock). By contrast, quantum mechanics built on the ‘principle of complementarity’ to assert that waves and particles represent complementary aspects of the same phenomenon. Principal to the development of quantum mechanics were Erwin Schrodinger and Werner Heisenberg. Schrodinger postulated a non-deterministic theory of probability based on an understanding of change as a ‘wave motion’. Complementing this work, Heisenberg proffered the Uncertainty Principle, which says that it is impossible to measure both the position and momentum of a particle with arbitrary precision. The significance of both principles revolves around the proof that we cannot know everything about the universe and that there are limits to our
knowledge. This has been reinforced more recently by the observation, arising in association with newly articulated theories of chaos and complexity, that the number and range of factors that need to be included in any equation that seeks to determine the behaviour of a system makes that behaviour difficult if not impossible to forecast.

This new world view admits the understanding that rather than being a clockwork device that has to be mastered, the universe is a network of relationships that the researcher seeks to know. The full extent of this knowledge is ultimately unknowable, if only because the network includes those who are seeking the knowledge. In the words of Heisenberg, “every word or concept, clear as it may seem to be has only a limited range of applicability.”¹ This means that scientific ‘truth’ is conditional because any inquiry into truth is determined, in part, by the context of the inquiry. Capra extends Kuhn’s analysis of this ‘revolutions’ in scientific thinking by describing it as a shift from a ‘mechanistic paradigm’ to an ‘ecological paradigm’ (Capra 1996: 17).² Just as any inquiry is contextual, Capra argues that any inquiry is also environmental, in that it is determined in part, by the environment of that inquiry.

If a systems analysis is helpful in understanding the relationships between entities, that understanding can be enriched considerably by an analysis of the relationships between systems. Such an analysis suggests that we exist in, and therefore both observe and participate in, a matrix of systemic relationships. While it might be accurate to say that these relationships determine the limits of the environment that we participate in, it would be more accurate to say that these relationships determine the limits of our understanding of the environment we participate in (despite our understanding, the environment remains). In accordance with Bateson, these relationships determine ‘the stories we tell’. One of those stories is the story of ‘ecology’. Ecology is a relatively recent science. This does not mean that what we call ‘ecological systems’ did not exist before the science of ecology was postulated, it does suggest however, that ‘ecological systems’ exist now because they have been theorised, identified and categorised in accordance with the limits of current knowledge. Clearly, the ecological system, like systems theory itself, is a construction that facilitates understanding. It is an understanding that has utilitarian value. It is a practical ‘way of knowing’. As such, it a base from which action, in relation to those ecological systems, can be taken. That action can then be discussed and evaluated and new
knowledge, that leads to new action, can arise. When a more practical way of knowing emerges, the earlier way of knowing, in this case the concept of the ecological system, may lose its utility. Until that time, it remains a concept that allows particular forms of experience to be identified and communicated. As such, it facilitates language systems and the many processes of language use that lead to the creation and sharing of meaning in life. There is therefore, an intimate relationship between systems theory and language.

**Self organising systems**

The concept of ‘the system’ is advanced further by the concept of the ‘self-organising system’. This grows from the understanding that the principal function of each living system, including that of humans, is the constant recreation of itself from within. This means that each living system is determined by its internal structure. Each living system can therefore be described as ‘self-organising’. The structure and function of a self organising system is not something that is imposed on the system by some thing external, both structure and function can only be determined by the system itself. While a living system may interact with its environment it is the structure of the individual system rather than the environment or elements within the environment that determine the particular nature of the interaction (Capra, 1982). While I may eat a particular food and become ill, it is not the food that is creating my illness, it is the structure of my body in relation to the structure of the food, that is upsetting the equilibrium of the relationships that comprise the body. If my body was structured differently it would respond differently to the food. Capra points out that the concept of living organisms as ‘self-reproducing, self-organising wholes’ goes back to Kant.

In a machine, according to Kant, the parts only exist for each other, in the sense of supporting each other within a functional whole. In an organism, the parts also exist by means of each other, in the sense of producing one another. "We must think of each part as an organ", wrote Kant, "that produces the other parts... Because of this (the organism) will be both an organised and self organising being" (Capra 1996: 22).

Any discussion of self-organising systems bears consideration alongside ‘second-order cybernetics’, as articulated by Heinz von Foerster (1992). Cybernetics is a form of systems analysis. It is defined in the Macquarie Dictionary (1981) as the “scientific study of those methods of control and
communication which are common to living organisms and machines" (p. 456). While its origins lie in computer science, it is not a study of mechanical relationships. According to von Foerster, “cybernetics arises when effectors, say, a motor, an engine, our muscles etc. are connected to a sensory organ which, in turn, acts with its signals upon the effectors. It is this circular organisation which sets cybernetic systems apart” (p. 9-10). The relationship between mechanical and human systems that is explored in cybernetics provides both models and metaphors for the interpretation of human participation in industrial society. Cybernetics is both the subject and the experience of the cybernetician. “The cybernetician, by entering his own domain, has to account for his own activity: cybernetics becomes cybernetics of cybernetics, or second-order cybernetics” (von Foerster 1992 11). In such a relationship, recognition of interdependence brings responsibilities. This recognition, von Foerster argues, is the origin of ethics in social practice and scientific research. He explains it thus: responsibilities initiate decisions or choices, those decisions or choices become manifest in action, they rise to consciousness through language then ‘feedback’ into the system. This feedback means that the ethics that determine those choices determine the nature of the system that offers further choices. This has a necessary impact upon future decisions. Second order cybernetics can therefore be described as a way of thinking. This is also how organisational analyst Margaret Wheatley (1992) describes self-organising systems theory. To Wheatley self-organising systems theory is more significant as a development in thinking than it is as a development in science. She suggests that self-organising systems theory is, along with quantum mechanics and recent theories of chaos and complexity, among the most important “images, metaphors and ways of understanding” to emerge from the ‘new sciences’. Like German educationalist, Herta-Elisabeth Renk (1993), Wheatley asserts that these developments bring with them the need for substantial changes in our approach to learning and other change processes.

If we are to continue to draw from the sciences to create and manage organisations, to design research, and to formulate hypotheses about organisational design, planning, economics, human nature and change processes, then we need to at least ground our work in the sciences of our times. (Wheatley 1992: 6).

By saying that these new scientific insights are valuable not because of the scientific data they provide but because of the “images, metaphors and ways
of understanding" they offer. Wheatley, like Bateson, suggests that research in
the new sciences is intimately linked to research into the role that language
systems play in the creation and communication of meaning.

**Systems and language**

It is worth remembering that of itself language does not transmit anything. In
von Foerster, says that the effective realisation of understanding through
language requires a **strategy**.

The strategy... is to shift one's attention from the appearance of language to its
function. Language appears to be denotative and descriptive, referring to things
and events; but in its function it is connotative and constructive, referring to
concepts and thoughts (p. ix).

Accordingly, the language used by an individual, like a community, offers an
ongoing commentary upon that individual or that community. This
understanding is supported by the work of linguists Benjamin Lee Whorf and
Edward Sapir. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis states that our conceptual
categorisation of the world is determined, in part, by the structure of our native
language. Sapir asserts that,

Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of
social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the
particular language that has become the medium of expression in their society. It
is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the
use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving
specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the
'real world' is to a large extent built up out of the language habits of the group...
We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the
language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.
(cited in Hattiangadi 1987: 13.)

Clearly, finding meaning in language involves considerably more than
mastering a vocabulary. It involves effective reflection upon social forms of
exchange. The finding of meaning in and through language is a process that
Maturana and Varela (1987) describe as **'languaging'**. I find this term striking
in its simplicity and rich in the practical understanding it contains. Not only
does it transform the abstract study of language into the practical study of language use, it introduces a general verb - ‘linguaging’ - that encompasses the many verbs that signify the social creation and communication of meaning. In doing so it does not privilege any one particular method of meaning making. It accommodates an abundance of activities from ‘speaking’, ‘acting’, ‘dancing’, ‘stroking’, ‘prodding’, ‘teasing’, ‘surfing’ and ‘buying pizza’ within the general category of ‘linguaging’. By doing this it emphasises an understanding of language as connotative and constructive - as stressed by von Foerster - before inviting questions about the meaning drawn from the particular form of experience. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, the term ‘linguaging’ emphasises language use as an activity that we participate in, rather than an activity that we stand outside of, observe and fully comprehend. This emphasises that those who study language use are also language users. Languaging is therefore, the process of participating in a way of communicating. It is the process of making meaning through participation in a meaning-making community. Maturana and Varela assert that without languaging there can be no community. Languaging can therefore be said to define the parameters of the experience that is shared in communication, along with the community that shares it. It is the process whereby we, in Maturana’s terms, “bring forth” our world. It implies that our way of knowing is our way of doing, that our epistemology is our ontology.

As Gregory Bateson might say, “that reminds me of a story”.⁶ The following is an extract from a story of mine called Cartoons and the blues. I used the ending of it in the introduction to this thesis. I am using the opening of it here.

I am watching my nephews, aged eight and eleven, watching cartoon violence on T.V. Animals, with American accents. A cat slaps a dog around; humiliates it, laughs at it, pulls its tongue, hits it with a hammer, bites its tail then steals its girl friend. My nephews love this. By the tone of my writing it is clear that I am not as taken. They, nevertheless, are roaring. The eight year old notices I am watching. He looks at me. “What?” he smiles. “Nothing”, I reply. “You’re looking”, he says. “Aren’t I allowed to?” His brother nudges him. He returns to the cartoon. “Do you like that stuff?” I ask afterwards. “It’s O.K.” he replies warily. Why am I asking? What reply do I want? He’s eight years old, I can’t expect him to articulate his feelings - to my satisfaction - without being influenced by my expectation. To appreciate his feelings I must enter into his experience. “I love it”, I say. “Oh, bull”, he tells me. “No, you don’t.” “No?” “You’re just saying that.” I look at him, I smile and nod. “True.” “See; told you.”
French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu comes to similar conclusions. In *Language and symbolic power* (1991), Bourdieu depicts meaning as something that is both ordered and negotiated. His analysis builds on patterns of language use rather than abstract structural theories. Bourdieu argues that the negotiation of meaning through language constantly contains the influence of the social structure that defines social relationships. Those relationships exist between individuals and the groups of people with whom those individuals identify. In doing so, language use 'feeds back' and reproduces that social structure and those social relationships. By focussing on the relationships that determine language use Bourdieu is drawn to the 'habitus' or "set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways" (p. 12). These are the stories we tell (in all aspects of our life). Bourdieu's analysis extends beyond written and spoken forms of language use, the habitus also determines the way in which individuals act and react. Maturana and Varela describe acting and reacting as ways of languaging. By influencing actions and reactions, the habitus gives individuals what Bourdieu describes as a "feel for the game". This is not an intellectual state but a feeling state, a physical state, a state of the body (subject to explanation). In his introduction to *Language and symbolic order*, John B. Thompson writes,

> It is because the body has become a repository of ingrained dispositions that certain actions, certain ways of behaving and responding seem altogether natural. Bourdieu speaks here of a bodily or corporeal 'hexis', by which he means a certain durable organisation of one’s body and its deployment in the world. 'Bodily hexis is political mythology realised, *em-bodied*, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking.' The importance of bodily hexis can be seen in the differing ways that men and women carry themselves in the world, in their differing postures, their differing ways of walking and speaking, of eating and laughing, as well as the differing ways that men and women deploy themselves in the more intimate aspects of life. The body is the site of organised history. The practical schemes through which the body is organised are the product of history and, at the same time, the source of practices and perceptions which reproduce that history (p. 13).

**Language systems**

Bourdieu's understanding of corporeal 'hexis' suggests that within a culture - contemporary European, post-industrial culture - that is for the most part
documented and preserved through the written word (despite the rapidly
growing influence of the visual electronic media of film, television and
computers), the non-written forms of language use, or languaging, that
permeate this culture deserve greater acknowledgment. One of those forms is
the oral tradition.

In the introduction to his translation of Homer's *The Odyssey*, E.V. Rieu (1946)
points out that Homer lived in a civilisation in which the art of writing was
"hardly known save to the minstrel fraternity to which he (Homer) belonged".9
Rieu asserts that Homer's classic tales, *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*, were
stories that were "worked up from a mass of legendary and mythical material"
that was already well known. He points out also that Homer's heroes and
heroines were the ancestors of the nobles before whom he recited his poems,
(for payment). He suggests that the circumstances of the telling of these tales
meant that Homer, consciously or unconsciously, adjusted his tales to flatter
his audience to imagine themselves as closely related to, in blood or bravery,
the godlike beings of whom he spoke. Such is the power of metaphor. The
result was that these myths and legends, when told by Homer, unfolded
differently in performances before different audiences. That is, until they were
written down. *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad* exist now as recorded stories. While
they can still be told, they are more likely to be referred to in their written form
as fixed entities, as cultural and historical (arte)facts. Beyond the shifting
whimsicalities of translators and the applied imagination of actors and
directors keen to reinterpret these ancient tales in performance, the myths and
legends with which Homer charmed his patrons will change no more.
Obviously, written history objectifies in a way that oral history does not. In an
oral culture fact and fiction are not so easily differentiated.

There are many other demonstrations of the cultural implications of different
ways of languaging. One exists in the experience of performer and poet Aaron
Williamson, as discussed earlier. Oliver Sacks' (1989) study of the visual
languaging of the deaf through Sign, offers another.10 Sacks, who is not deaf,
observes that Sign is a language with qualities that make it the equivalent of
speech, "lending itself equally to the rigorous and the poetic - to philosophical
analysis or to making love - indeed, with an ease that is sometimes greater
than that of speech" (p. 20). Sacks' report on his meeting with a couple who
became fluent in Sign to communicate with their deaf daughter is an
illuminating insight into the relationship between language and world view. It
begins with the recognition by the parents that their daughter Charlotte thought
in Sign, that she used ‘visual thought patterns’ and that this “both needed and generated a visual language”. This suggests that Charlotte’s ‘inner speech’ - the “ceaseless stream and generation of meaning that constitutes the individual mind” - and that of other deaf people who think in Sign is very distinctive. Sacks writes,

It is evident to her parents that Charlotte constructs her world in a different way, perhaps radically so: that she employs predominantly visual thought patterns... her mother said ‘When Charlotte signs, the whole scene is set up; you can see where everyone or everything is; it is all visualised with a detail that would be rare for the hearing’. This placing of objects and people in specific locations, this use of elaborate, spatial reference had been striking in Charlotte, her parents said, since the age of four and a half - already at that age she had... shown a sort of ‘staging’ power, an ‘architectural’ power that they had seen in other deaf people - but rarely in the hearing.” (p. 75).

Sacks quotes William Stokoe, one of the most significant of Deaf educators.

In a signed language... narrative is no longer linear and prosaic. Instead the essence of sign language is to cut from a normal view to a close up, to a distant shot to a close up again, and so on, even including flash back and flash forward scenes, exactly as a movie editor works... Not only is Sign arranged more like an edited film than a written narration, but also each signer is placed very much as a camera: the field of vision and angle of view are directed but variable. Not only the signer signing but also the signer watching is aware at all times of the signer’s visual orientation to what is being signed about (p. 90).

Like deafness the experience of synaesthesia constructs a different cultural experience and a different approach to cultural communication. The Macquarie Dictionary (1981) describes synaesthesia as “a sensation produced in one physical sense when a stimulus is applied to another sense, as when the hearing of a certain sound induces the visualisation of a certain colour” (p. 1721). In a recent Time magazine article James Geary describes synaesthesia as “an embarrassment of neurological riches” (p. 121). He cites neurologist Richard Cytowic. “Synaesthesia is a normal brain function in every one of us, but its workings only reach consciousness in a handful... Synaesthesia is not a disease, but a bonus. Your senses give you more than you bargained for” (Geary 1997: 120-121). Geary describes Russian novelist Vladimir Nabokov as ‘gifted’ with the disorder and quotes from Nabokov’s
biography *Speak, Memory.* "In the green group, there are alder-leaf *f*, the unripe apple of *p*, and pistachio *t*. In the brown group, there are the rich rubbery tones of soft *g*, paler *j*, and the drab shoelace of *h*." (p. 120). One of the most influential and innovative of twentieth century writers, Nabokov was a meta-fictional novelist who constantly experimented with the perspective of the author and the relationship between the author and the novel. Meta-fiction is more than a genre, it is a way of looking at the world through fiction. It embraces, in a sense, a way of life. Nabokov suggests this in his introduction to the 1959 publication of his novel *Invitation to a beheading*.

I could never understand why every book of mine invariably sends reviewers scurrying in search of more or less celebrated names for the purpose of passionate comparison. During the last three decades they have hurled at me (to list but a few of these harmless missiles) Gogol, Tolstoevski, Joyce, Voltaire, Sade, Stendahl, Balzac... One author, however, has never been mentioned in this connection - the only author whom I must gratefully recognise as an influence upon me at the time of writing this book; namely, the melancholy, extravagant, wise, witty, magical and altogether delightful Pierre Delalande, whom I invented (Nabokov 1980: 8).

Other examples of the intertwining relationship between experience and language lie in discussions of the process of performance. Performance incorporates verbal expression and the form of staging and structuring that Sacks and Stokoe refer to. It also incorporates emotion. The communication of lived experience is the intention in the modern European tradition of actor training, which grew from the work of Russian actor, director and writer Constantin Stanislavski. In his extremely influential book *An actor prepares* (1980b), Stanislavski adopts the persona of an acting student to describe an experience of performance.

When I stepped away from the darkness of the wings to the full illumination of the footlights, headlights and spotlights, I felt blinded. The brightness was so intense that it seemed to form a curtain of light between me and the auditorium. I felt protected from the public, and for a moment I breathed freely, but soon my eyes became accustomed to the light, I could see into the darkness, and the fear and attraction of the public seemed stronger than ever. I was ready to turn myself inside out, to give them everything I had; yet inside of me I had never felt so empty. The effort to squeeze out more emotion than I had, the powerlessness to do the impossible, filled me with a fear that turned my face and my hands to
stone. All my forces were spent on unnatural and fruitless efforts. My throat became constricted, my sounds all seemed to go to a high note. My hands, feet, gestures and speech all became violent. I was ashamed of every word, of every gesture. I blushed, I clenched my hands, and pressed myself against the back of the armchair. I was making a failure, and in my helplessness I was suddenly seized with rage. For several minutes I cut loose from everything about me. I flung out the famous line, 'Blood, Iago, blood!' I felt in these words all the injury to the soul of a trusting man. Leo's interpretation of Othello suddenly rose in my memory and aroused my emotion. Besides, it almost seemed as though for a moment the listeners strained forward, and that through the audience there ran a murmur (p. 10-11).

The words that are spoken, "Blood, Iago, blood," are an essential part - with the emphasis upon part - of the communication. Following the performance, Stanislavski's fictional director, Tortsov, quizzes his fictional student, Kostya Nazvanov, on his performance. When asked how he felt, the actor replies "I neither know nor remember." The director tells the actor,

the very best that can happen is to have the actor completely carried away by the play. Then regardless of his own will he lives the part, not noticing how he feels, not thinking about what he does, and it all moves of its own accord, subconsciously and intuitively... The great actor should be full of feeling, and especially he should feel the thing he is portraying. He must feel an emotion not only once or twice while he is studying his part, but to a greater or lesser degree every time he plays it, no matter whether it is the first or the thousandth time... To rouse your subconscious to creative work there is a special technique. We must leave all that is in the fullest sense subconscious to nature, and address ourselves to what is within our reach. When the subconscious, when intuition, enters into our work we must know how not to interfere. (p. 12-13).

American psycho-therapist and group leader Arnold Mindell approaches an equivalent problem though a different vocabulary. Mindell, like Tortsov, pursues the "energy" that communicates. In his book on techniques and strategies for group work The leader as martial artist, Mindell (1993) describes the process of group work as working "the group energy". Using principles and terminology drawn from the Japanese martial art form of aikido, Mindell refers to this energy as "divine energy" or "Ki". Quoting Kisshomaru Ueshiba, Mindell says that Ki is "the source of creativity expressed in the form of yin and yang (Lao Tzu), the vital fullness of life (Huaninan-tzu), the courage arising from
moral rectitude (Mencius), the divine force that penetrates all things (Kuan-tzu).” (p. 50).

In our terms, Ki would be the field’s force or intensity... (it) is empty or contentless. It is an energy that creates changing patterns out of chaos... it is also the metaskill or attitude necessary for dealing with itself. The field teaches the facilitator how to work with the field itself by remaining... open to the movement trying to happen.

If we want to ski, the mountain itself becomes our teacher and our method. If we want to surf then the sea is our teacher. If we want to learn how to facilitate difficult groups, nature teaches us the way through its changing seasons of anger and love, egotism and compassion. The best interventions for a group on conflict are not those that the facilitator brings in from the outside but those that arise naturally out of the group’s changing moods, tensions, emotions, roles and time spirits. The narrow path that the facilitator must follow is a path the group itself creates and can accept... In my experience... group energy cannot be completely controlled or predicted... it is a mysterious spirit. I have tried many times to govern the way in which processes proceed. Sometimes I have been successful, sometimes not. When I could not control a group process or intense conflict, I inevitably discovered that the reason was that I had turned against it and some of the people involved. I thought I knew better. Since I was not following the Ki, or spirit, I learned the hard way that my job was to serve and not to act like the spirit (p. 51).

The languaging employed by Homer in relation to his audience, Aaron Williamson and Charlotte in relation to their audiences, Kostya Nazvanov and his audience and Mindell’s group (which is its own audience) are embodied. Sounds that are used and words that are spoken may be significant but they do not determine the communication. There is considerably more involved in the creation and appreciation of meaning and not the least of these is emotion. Maturana and Varela speak of the interwoven nature of, or the “braiding” of languaging and emotioning. As emotions change, languaging changes and vice versa. This facilitates what Fell and Russell (1994c) describe as “the dance of understanding”.

We subscribe to the view, expressed by Maturana and others, that a satisfying experience of understanding does not result from invoking objectivity, the truth, or a compelling argument, to achieve agreement by the force of reason, nor from a
process of information exchange, but from some other qualities of the biological interaction itself. We find a simple explanation of these qualities to be elusive and therefore we try to combine scientific explanation with a poetic metaphor which likens understanding to a dance (p. 217).

The anticipation of any individual - be it that of a dancer, an artist, a mathematician or a scientist - that precedes understanding is facilitated (as Kuhn, Maturana, Varela and Bourdieu suggest) by an hypothesis, theory, ideology or world view. The negotiation of that hypothesis, theory, ideology or world view both employs and activates learning.

**Self organisation, systems and learning**

Self organising principles offer considerable insight into the learning process. Learning is a process of self organisation. Because it is a second order activity that is built upon a consciousness of process, reflective consciousness, abstract thought and language are the tools that feed back and enable the process of self organisation to be understood, appreciated and communicated. They underline learning as a response to, a reflection of and an effect upon the community or network that individual self organising systems exist within. Each of these are processes that individual self organising systems participate in. A consciousness of participation is intimately tied to learning. It is the perspective of the self-conscious participant that enables experience to be identified and appreciated in the self and others. It is only through the capacity to identify with an explanation that an understanding can be arrived at and socialised or communicated. This in turn enables systems of understanding to be constructed, leading to complex languaging systems, self awareness, art, culture and an appreciation of change processes.

The relationship between participation, systems and learning has been significant in the work of many. They include Fritjof Capra and Jeanne M. Plas. Both have pursued their understanding of the process of learning, through reflection upon learning communities. While best known as a writer and a physicist, Capra (1995) has also sought to apply the understanding he has gained through research into the 'new sciences' to education. In this pioneering work he draws a parallel between ecological communities (ecosystems) and learning communities (schools). Asserting that both ecology
and education are “living systems” he suggests that the principles of ecology—
“interdependence, diversity, partnership and so forth”—should become the
principles of education. Accordingly, he offers an understanding of learning
drawn from an understanding of systemic patterns of nature. Central to this
understanding is the principle of ‘self-organisation’. Capra asserts that through
this biological process, self-consciousness and learning offer opportunities for
“self-transformation and self-transcendence”. He argues that a systems view of
change enables the change process of evolution, or learning, to be
understood and constructed to enable “an unfolding of order and complexity...
(a) process involving autonomy and freedom of choice... an ongoing and open
adventure that continually creates its own purpose.” (Capra 1982: 312-313).13

While Capra offers an all encompassing vision of the possibilities made
accessible through systems principles, Plas (1986), who has worked
extensively in school psychology and special education and who describes
herself as a “systems psychologist”, seeks out more specific applications for
those principles. Plas, like Bateson and Maturana and Varela, insists on the
importance of stories.

Stories facilitate mediation between the self and others. They succeed
because, either explicitly or implicitly, they comment upon the relationships
they arise from (and then feed back into). Those relationships are not simple
and linear. They are complex and patterned. They construct a context for
communication rather than a rationale. Any reason that they do create, they
create analogically. Plas says, “searching for the causes of human activity
ceases to be important. Inductive and deductive logic make room for other
types of rationality, such as reasoning by analogy.” She adds the observation
that in this process, “understanding human language patterns is critical” (p. 3).

The recent history of art has involved ongoing challenges to patterns of
language use. Recognising, like Bourdieu, the authority contained within
language and keen to challenge the limitations imposed by authority, the
Dadaists sought, among other things, to upset social convention by upsetting
social patterns of language use. One of the most celebrated of Dada events
occurred in Paris in February 1920. Rose-Lee Goldberg (1988) reports that a
crowd that had gathered to see a (falsely advertised) performance by Charlie
Chaplin were confronted by a series of Dadaists reading manifestoes. This
included seven performers who “warned the public that their ‘decaying teeth,
ears, tongues full of sores’ would be pulled out and their ‘putrid bones’
broken.” Goldberg tells us that, “this barrage of insults was followed by Aragon’s company chanting ‘no more painters, no more musicians, no more sculptors, no more religions, no more republicans... no more of these idiocies, NOTHING, NOTHING, NOTHING!’”. She says, “these manifestoes were chanted like psalms, through such an uproar that the lights had to be put out from time to time and the meeting suspended while the audience hurled all sorts of rubbish on to the platform. The meeting broke up on an exciting note for the performers” (p. 76). This early adventure in ‘performance art’ was designed, like so many subsequent events, to upset social expectations by a deliberate confusion of languaging.

The patterns that emerge in and through languaging relationships are a consequence of conscious and unconscious processes of negotiation. All forms of languaging are employed in such negotiations. An understanding of the languages that facilitate negotiation enables such patterns to be appreciated and employed most effectively. These languages include, but are not confined to the verbal. They include also languages of shape and movement, colour and symbol, sound and music, smell and touch. Most importantly they include the languaging - interwoven through all of the above - that arises in emotional experience. Similarities exist between this notion and Dorothy Heathcote’s suggestion that drama education is first and foremost an education in negotiation (Johnson & O’Neill 1984. p. 114). Negotiation like conversation is, as Nachmanovitch (1990) says, a form of improvisation. It could also be described as a form of play. As such, it occupies a very special position within communication. While there may be as many experiences of play as there are players, it is in the experience of the player and that of playing that a commonality exists.14 The actor who is playing a role, the musician who is playing an instrument, the philosopher who is playing with ideas, the child who is playing with a pet are all defined by the relationships they participate in rather than any particular action they take or any particular effect they create. Trevor Pateman (1991) says, in play we do not have to aim at ‘literal truth’. We are free to invent non-existent entities and treat them as existing for the purposes of the play. We are free to improvise... We are free to associate senses and symbols as we wish, and to create nonsense. The test of good play is not whether it mimics the world or conforms to pre-existing rules, but whether it satisfies the participants. (p. 142). When children play, they know that ‘play’ is the activity they are engaged in. Play is quite separate to other activities. All that is required to transform, for example, ‘putting on shoes’ to ‘play’, is a change of language and a change of emotion. Shifts between
‘play’ and ‘not-play’ can swing rapidly, one way then the other. Language and emotion change, the relationship to others changes, participation occurs differently, apprehension, accusation, the need for amelioration arises - “What’s wrong?”, “Why isn’t it fun any more?”, “What did I do?” - and demands a new language and a new emotion before congruence can re-emerge. When Humberto Maturana concluded his 1994 seminar at Camden on the outskirts of Sydney he described the future as ‘play’ because, “play is”, he said, “something that occurs simply from (and for) the doing of it.”

‘Situation Improving’

Because the analysis of the processes or system of communication is undertaken by participants in that system, and because knowledge about the system constructs action that feeds back into the system, the analysis of a system necessarily leads to improvements in the system (from the perspective of the participant). To learn about a system is therefore, to improve the system. The “Hawkesbury learning spiral” offers a way to approach problem solving (see Fig. 1). It postulates a spiral rising through different degrees of learning. As the spiral rises so does the measure of personal responsibility that is required. The model begins with ‘puzzle solving’, which it calls ‘basic learning’ then moves up towards ‘situation improving’, which is an outcome of ‘soft systems learning’ and ‘communicative action’ which involves critical and self-reflective inquiry. The distinction between soft and hard systems which is made in this model, but into which I do not want to go too far here, is described by the Open Systems Group as a function of,

the extent to which there is clear agreement as to... objectives. In harder systems it is generally possible to come to some such agreement. In softer systems such agreement is less likely, or if obtainable, not useful... it is more appropriate to consider soft, social systems as relationship-making rather than goal-seeking systems... (also) in harder systems there will already exist some sort of recognisable hierarchy of systems. ‘The system’ will exist in the real world, rather than being, as with softer systems, a way of looking at a collection of factors which can vary dramatically from observer to observer and from purpose to purpose. (Open University Systems Group, 1991: 24-25)

Critically normative heuristic describes a domain of inquiry in which responsibility is taken for a personal process of discovery despite the conflict the discovery process might cause. It is an outcome of a very particular form of learning.
Fig. 1 The Hawkesbury hierarchy of approaches to problem solving and situation improving.
Plas, who looks at the systemic communication relationship from the perspective of a therapist, reinforces the equation of systemic learning with an improving situation. She quotes Brad Keeney who points out that, “the observer first distinguishes and then describes. A question, by proposing a distinction, (then) constructs its answer.” (p. 45). A critical, analytical language form is part of this process. It is complicit. It serves as, to use Keeney’s image, an “epistemological knife”. Keeney describes this process in the context of therapy.

The most a therapist can do is vary his (sic) behaviour, recognise the subsequent behaviour of those in the surrounding social field and modify his reactions to their reactions. If the effects of his behaviour on others are used, in turn, to change his behaviour, feedback is established. The therapist is not controlling their behaviour, but is recognising the response of their behaviour to his and the response of his behaviour to theirs (Keeney 1983 cited in Plas 1986: 45).

The role of the agent of change in such a situation, is to gain a consciousness of the epistemological basis of distinction or, in Gregory Bateson’s terms, “the pattern which connects”. The ‘pattern which connects’ is, Bateson says, “nature’s metaphor”. In this context, the work of Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela on autopoiesis deserves considerable attention.

**Autopoiesis**

Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (1987) have undertaken a searching analysis of biological systems. Through this work they have arrived at important insights into self-organising systems that reach beyond the limiting discipline of biology into ethics and philosophy. Appropriately, their most influential text, *The tree of knowledge* (1987), is sub-titled ‘The biological roots of human understanding’. Maturana and Varela develop this analysis through a study of the process of cognition. Fritjof Capra describes their work as the “first coherent scientific framework that really overcomes the Cartesian split.” Through this work, he argues, “mind and matter no longer appear to belong to two separate categories but are seen as representing merely different aspects, or dimensions, of the same phenomenon of life” (Capra 1996: 170). John Mingers, in one of the most comprehensive discussions of the work of Maturana and Varela yet published, observes that “in recent years
Maturana's and Varela's concept of autopoiesis, originally a biological concept, has made a remarkable impact not just on a single area, but across widely differing disciplines such as sociology, policy science, psychotherapy, cognitive science and law" (Mingers 1995: ix). The concept of autopoiesis is no less significant in the field of education and no less helpful in our attempts to gain greater understanding of the learning processes of ourselves and others.

Maturana, who describes himself as a radical constructivist, began a recent series of lectures with the assertion that the most significant question that can be asked is not what is real or known but how you say that something is real or known. Responding to his own question, Maturana outlined an epistemology arrived at through research into the biology of cognition. It is a systemic epistemology which holds that the reality we come to know is born of the inseparable relationship of the observer to the observed. From considerations upon the behaviour of single cell amoeba, Maturana worked through a study of cognition into a study of ethics. Necessarily, this study extends into all areas of human experience. Central within it is the argument that the biological process of change which Maturana and Varela equate with learning and, which they assert, is only accessible through reflection, underlies all experience. This is sufficient to describe the biological process of change as it is understood, appreciated and explained as 'the learning process'. This suggests that, in Capra's words,

mind is not a thing but a process - the very process of life. In other words, the organising activity of living systems, at all levels of life, is mental activity. The interactions of a living organism - plant, animal or human - with its environment are cognitive, or mental interactions. Thus life and cognition become inseparably connected. Mind - or more accurately, mental process - is immanent in matter at all levels of life (Capra 1996: 168).

Maturana and Varela's critique of 'objective' science builds from an account of an experiment - originally conducted by Richard Sperry - in which the eye of a frog is rotated 180°, while the optic nerve of the frog remains intact. The eye that has not been tampered with is then covered and the frog is observed striking at a fly with its tongue. Invariably the aim of the frog deviates from its target by 180°. Maturana and Varela conclude that the frog does not co-ordinate its aim at an external object, but at an internal part of its own nervous system.
This experiment is... direct evidence that the operation of the nervous system is an expression of its connectivity or structure of connections and that behaviour arises because of the nervous system's internal relations of activity (Maturana & Varela 1987: 126).

This experiment suggests that, in any experiment, the logic of the observer needs to be assessed in relation to the logic of the observed if an effective explanation is to be arrived at. Maturana argues that an effective explanation - or understanding - is only possible if the appropriate question is asked. In relation to Sperry's experiment he says, the appropriate question is: "How do you know that the frog is missing the fly?" An effective answer - in addition to the obvious comment, "because it doesn't get to eat the fly" - must include the self in its calculations. It must begin; "According to my criteria of observation..."20 As such, explanation is a uniquely human experience. Capra observes that, "while the cohesion of social insects is based on the exchange of chemicals between the individuals, the social unity of human societies is based on the exchange of language" (Capra 1996: 205).

Maturana argues that behaviour and explanation must be acknowledged as separate, though related experiences. He observes that humans, like frogs, like all living beings, are a set of internal correlations. This means that any observation and explanation of behaviour must be contextualised in relation to the experience of the observer. He argues further that, because context is defined by experience, reflection upon experience defines that context. Necessarily, this creates another context and further experience for further reflection. Through this process of reflection individual humans define - moment by moment - their changing world. Explanation then takes that definition into a social domain. This creates another context for experience and another context for reflection. Because any claim to truth, knowledge or rationality denies reflection - in that there is no need to reflect if truth, knowledge or rationality exists - the trigger to reflect is necessarily based in mood, feelings or emotion. The embodied experiences of moods, feelings and emotions exist in relation to abstractions and possibilities as much as they do 'facts'. Certainly, I know that each Monday I tell different stories to different people, in response to the same question: "How was your weekend?" My weekend remains the same, my memories and my explanation of my weekend in response to each inquiry is a function of the mood, feelings and emotions, orchestrated on the occasion of the inquiry. That explanation, in turn,
reinforces the relationship. That leads to further explanations, and so relationships are constructed.

The process of autopoiesis

Autopoiesis is described by Maturana and Varela (1987) as, “the mechanism that makes living beings autonomous systems” (p. 48). Erich Jantsch describes it as "the characteristic of living systems to continuously renew themselves and to regulate this process in such a way that the integrity of their structure is maintained."\(^{21}\) Fritjof Capra (1996) describes it as "a network of production processes, in which the function of each component is to participate in the production or transformation of other components in the network. In this way, the entire network continually ‘makes itself’." He cites Maturana and Varela: "In a living system... the product of (the system’s) operation is its own organisation" (p. 98) John Mingers (1995) extends this by saying autopoiesis connotes that,

in their operations (self producing systems) continuously produce their own constituents... which then participate in these same production processes... (this) gives (the autopoietic system) an important degree of independence or autonomy from its environment since its own operations ensure, within limits, its future continuation (p. ix).\(^{22}\)

All autopoietic entities are, according to Maturana and Varela, closed, organised networks of molecular interaction.\(^{23}\) They create the components that maintain their own internal cohesion or organisation and the boundaries that determine their domain of operations and their existence as a system.

What is distinctive about (living systems) ... is that their organisation is such that their only product is themselves, with no separation between producer and product. The being and doing of an autopoietic unity are inseparable (Maturana & Varela 1987: 48-49).

Margaret Wheatley has taken the understanding of autopoiesis presented by Maturana and Varela and used it to argue that autopoiesis offers important insights into the study of human social organisation. Wheatley says that autopoiesis tells us that each living structure has a unique identity, while existing within a larger environment. It tells us that at any point in its evolution that identity has its own unique structure, despite its relationship to the larger

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environment. It tells us that in ourselves and others there are boundaries that preserve us from and connect us to the infinite complexity of the world beyond. It tells us that this world is rich in processes that support growth and coherence on an individual and holistic level (Wheatley 1992: 18-19).

**Structural determinism**

Autopoiesis tells us, even more importantly, that each living system is self-referential. It is self-referential because its behaviour is determined by its structure just as its structure determines its behaviour. It is, in Maturana’s terms, ‘structure-determined’. While change may occur in response to interaction with external phenomena, the change that results is determined within and by the system. The change may be triggered by the environment but the manner in which the change occurs within the system can only be determined by the structure of that system (Mingers 1995: 30). Making the link between biology and knowledge, Maturana argues that “things are according to the conditions that constitute them, the problem is not with experience... (which cannot be denied, it occurs, the problem is with)... explanation.” (Maturana 1994) (my highlighting). Explanation, which is separate to and distinct from behaviour, is a recursive process that seeks to conserve the regularity of experience through language. It is determined by the coherence of experience and the context within which it (the explanation) occurs.

Structure-determined systems do not admit instructive interactions. The structure of the system alone determines what structural changes it may undergo, just as it determines which structural encounters trigger structural change. This understanding has many implications for education and the construction of learning systems. While it may be the educator who has an impact upon the system of the student or students, it is noteworthy that the response to that perturbation is determined by the “internal co-ordinations and organisational relationships between the structural components of the (student’s or students’) system.” The stimulus is no more than the occasion for the response’s occurrence. Observations made by Goolishian and Winderman (1988) in the context of family therapy are equally applicable to the learning relationships that arise in an educational setting.

What takes place in communication between two entities is not literal instruction of one entity by another (the giving of something, for example advice or
knowledge, by one and taking in by the other), but rather the reciprocal fit between the structure-determined interactions of one entity to the structure-determined interactions of another, such that each entity’s behaviour is the reciprocal perturbation for the behaviour of the other (Goolishian & Winderman 1988: 132).

Many people attribute their success or lack of success in school to their relationship with a teacher (or teachers) rather than a subject matter. My relationships with my teachers have certainly played an important role in my education. Within any self organising system (of which the classroom is one), the contribution of any individual can have considerable effect upon the collective and/or individual systems present. Any disturbance to a state of equilibrium feeds back into the system(s). According to its structure, the system(s) may amplify that disequilibrium, it may turn that source of disequilibrium into creative change (or learning). If it has the capacity to do so, this causes the system to change and this, of necessity, has an effect upon the environment that contains that system.

In the world of self-organising structures, everything is open and susceptible to change. But change is not random or incoherent. Instead we get a glimpse of systems that evolve to greater independence and resilience because they are free to adapt, and because they maintain a coherent identity throughout their history. Stasis, balance, equilibrium - these are temporary states. What endures is process - dynamic, adaptive, creative. (Wheatley 1992: 98)

**Structural coupling**

The third major component of Maturana and Varela’s thesis, after autopoiesis and structural determinism, is a process they describe as ‘structural coupling’. This process determines, in short, that as the structure of a system changes, the kinds of encounters it admits also change. Mingers describes this process more fully.

In an environment characterised by recurring states, continued autopoiesis will lead to selection in the organism of a structure suitable for that environment. The organism becomes structurally coupled to its environment and, indeed, to other organisms within that environment (Mingers 1995: 35).
This offers a contrary view to traditional theories of adaptation and evolution. While acknowledging the close relationship between the structure of a system and the environment within which it exists, Maturana’s research stipulates that it is the structure rather than the environment that specifies the way in which the structure will change. That change does not occur in isolation. It is a change that occurs in relationship to other forms of change. Hence change occurs in relationship within systems within systems. “Rather than seeing evolution as a result of random mutations and natural selection, we are beginning to recognise the creative unfolding of life in forms of ever-increasing diversity and complexity as an inherent characteristic of all living systems” (Capra 1996: 217). This suggests that ‘mind’ is active in all living systems (human systems, social systems, language systems, financial systems, ecosystem systems etc.) in addition to individual organisms. It suggests that all living systems are systems of cognition, or knowing. Language, which is an all pervasive thought-structuring influence, is central to making that knowing explicit. Maturana asserts that, in Capra’s words,

at a certain level of complexity, a living organism couples structurally not only to its environment but also to itself, and thus brings forth not only an external but also an inner world. In human beings, the bringing forth of such an inner world is intimately linked to language, thought and consciousness (Capra 1996: 263).

Capra underlines the notion, mentioned earlier, that the symbols exchanged in language have no necessary meaning (that is, they denote nothing inherently apart from that which the culture has attached to them) by asserting that the process of structural coupling leads to the agreements that support the exchanges that arise through the use of language. Mingers observes that, “once we have learnt a language, we feel so comfortable and easy in using it that it appears as though the language and the words have inherent meaning in their own right... (however) the communication is possible only to the extent that the systems involved are structurally coupled” (Mingers 1995: 36). This is equivalent to the understanding arrived at by Bourdieu in his study of social patterns of communication. It suggests the parameters of discourse. Like Maturana, Bourdieu is interested in our agency (in Maturana’s terms, our ‘linguaging’), not us, as static individuals in isolation. The outcomes of what Bourdieu refers to as “our strategic practice as determined by our sociocultural environment (our habitus)” (1991: 12), is comparable to Maturana and Varela’s argument that structural coupling is facilitated by, and in turn facilitates, very specific ranges of social expression.
Because an environment is comprised of the systems that exist within it, structural coupling requires that the environment changes as individual systems within it change. This contributes to a dynamic of change through which all elements in an environment, within which ongoing structural coupling is taking place, also change. The imagery used by Maturana and Mingers is worth extending. It can be argued that as a person feels increasingly 'comfortable and easy' using the language that he or she is learning, his or her relationship with others in that languaging community will develop further. The relationship will gain in depth and complexity. The greater the consciousness of participation, the greater the understanding of and the investment in the community. In the context of language use, it ordains that as soon as we feel less than comfortable with the language that is being used - be it a form or style of language use or an expression of understanding of some sort - we will participate differently in that community. Perhaps we will seek new communities that we feel more affinity with: new family, new friends, new towns, new regions, new nations, new images of one's self and new forms of expression and explanation. In my own life I have moved into and through a range of communities. The friends I have needed, the people I have sought out have changed considerably over the period of my life. Like many others, as I made the transition from primary, to secondary school, to university I found myself leaving behind old friends and communities and finding new ones. I remember my high school friends Frank Martone and Karl King who, after finishing high school, I never saw again. The circumstances of schooling that bought us together gone, different demands took us in different directions, to different communities. While I went to university, as my family had encouraged me to assume I would, (Greek born) Frank followed his older brother into a male hairdressing salon, while Karl (christened Karl Mao King by a zealous Communist mother) was granted a ticket in the then Communist led Seaman's Union and given a position on a coastal trader. From the enforced uniformity of the secondary school learning experience, we each entered into different systemic relationships and, in accordance with the principles of structural coupling, 'set sail' on different learning journeys.

A structurally coupled system is both a creative system and a learning system. As all living systems are structurally coupled, all living systems are also creative learning systems. All living, structurally coupled systems also participate in a network of relationships that trigger changes in the structures of others. During our time in secondary school, I influenced Frank, Frank influenced me, I influenced Karl, Karl influenced me, Karl influenced Frank,
Frank influenced Karl. Age, ethnicity, politics and education identified us as, I think, a very interesting learning system. This suggests that human society (which is a system within the category of all living systems) exists as an interlocking network of structurally coupled systems, in which each individual system is actively and continually triggering changes in the structure of others. The outcome of this dynamic interaction is a process that Maturana calls 'ontogenic structural drift'. This builds upon the very important notion that the ontogeny, or becoming, or history of an individual occurs without conscious control. On this point, Maturana (1994) asserts that "the life of the living system is a structural drift.... individuals cannot understand the course." Mingers (1995) offers the (oft-used) analogy of a boat (or a large number of boats), "drifting uncontrolled in the sea, whose path is continuously determined by (their) structure and (their relationship to) the winds and the waves." (p. 37).26 This builds upon the recognition that any understanding of the experience of 'drift' is constructed in reflection by the subject and communicated through explanation to the community beyond. That understanding, like its communication, contributes to further neuronal activity in the subject and others, which results in further structural change. This determines the basis of further structural coupling and further explanation.

The ontogeny, or becoming, of an individual - while it may be described as 'drift' - does not occur in isolation. The continual co-ordination of action between systems creates, again, what Maturana describes as, a 'co-ontogenic structural drift', or a system of co-evolving parallel paths of systems evolution. This involves a recognition that while individual entities drift, they drift in relation to each other. It recognises that in our own individual becoming we continually move in and out of paths and processes, in accordance with our structure and our (social) explanations of our experience to ourselves and others.27 Explanation therefore, holds an extremely important place in this process. It is explanation that enables individuals and communities to develop a relationship to the changing processes of life. Strongly influenced by the work of Maturana, Joy Murray (1994) a curriculum officer in the N.S.W. Department of School Education argues that "explanations are not necessary for living (though humans rarely live without explanation) but if you accept (explanations) your life changes (forever)" (p. 95). Different explanations, she points out, lead to different experiences of life.

An actor friend once told me of an exercise developed by theatre director Peter Brook around these principles. Brook laid a circle of rope on the ground and
asked his actors to stand outside the rope, around the circle. They did, one by one taking up their positions. Brook then told the actors that if they stepped over the rope into the circle, their life would change. He told them that they had a choice to step over the rope and into the circle or not. In effect, to change their life or not. My friend said, that for a considerable amount of time no-one moved. They stood outside, looking in, wondering. Finally one of the actors stepped forward, over the rope and into the circle. Once inside, he began to walk. His movements drew the attention of those beyond the rope. His feet lifted and his arms swung with increasing confidence. His mouth opened. He smiled. His mouth opened further. His lips stretched. He began to beam with pride. He displayed accomplishment. He strode with a new found faith, as if to challenge those doubters who still remained outside the rope circle. The next actor to step over, beamed almost as broadly when he too set his feet down inside the circle. When finally my actor friend stepped over and in, and his feet settled, he too began to smile. He felt great relief. He had taken a risk. He had overcome his trepidation. He felt a mounting pride. His smile grew. A transformation had occurred. The change he felt, he understood. In reflection, he 'knew' what happened. He had constructed then explained the change to himself, such was his understanding.

As this story suggests, each explanation provides the context for further explanations, which leads to a conceptualisation of change. This becomes the change and the change manifests in the culture within which we participate. Change occurs not as a necessity, but once it is understood that change has occurred, that change cannot be ignored. Change installs change (Maturana 1994). It is something we negotiate and, as we negotiate it, we participate in it continually. Our consciousness of our participation means that we participate with understanding, without necessarily understanding the full ramifications of our participation. Nevertheless, through explanation, the ethical standards that we apply to our participation define the limits of the change that we participate in, along with the context or culture in which others participate with us. It is in this regard that explanation creates community. Beyond this, it is within the explanations that define change within a particular context that the explanations that define learning arise. The processes of knowing and living are therefore, inseparable. While this may be a radically new idea to modern European science, it is Fritjof Capra (1996) suggests, one of the fundamental beliefs of many ancient civilisations (p. 257).
**Languaging**

Languaging is that which, according to Maturana and Varela, liberates the structure-determined system from the strictures of pre-determinism. It is what makes the human experience unique. Languaging brings with it the possibility of constructing connotations. The construction of a connotation is a neuronal activity that leads to, and arises from, reflection and recursion. Constructions lead to constructions of constructions. This process generates the observer. Maturana asserts that we are all observers when it comes to arriving at explanations: “everything said is said by an observer, to another observer, who can be himself” (Maturana cited in Mingers 1995: 47). Self-reflective self construction brings with it freedom of will within the constraints of language and culture. It enables us to, in Capra’s words, “bring forth our world together”. The physical (embodied) nature of the learning arrived at through reflection and explanation cannot be emphasised enough. All abstract thought is a consequence of reflection upon embodied nervous activity, which through its further interaction with the nervous system becomes an object of additional nervous activity. This, Mingers says, “is the basis for a further expansion of the cognitive domain, a domain of interaction with its own internal states as if they were independent entities.” (p. 73). Through this process, Maturana argues, a conscious awareness of the experience of life is created.

From the notions of autopoiesis, structure-determined behaviour and structural coupling, Maturana and Varela theorise the creation of languaging systems as a means for the social explanation, hence co-ordination, of behaviour. Just as ‘to know’ is, as Maturana says, no more than to know how to behave in a particular domain, language exists only as a set of agreements about knowing how to behave. It exists in a ‘consensual domain’. If this is so, language can be understood as taking the form of far more than a set of written or verbal signifiers, just as it can be understood that structural coupling allows any form of behaviour to be contextualised as language (and therefore, explanation). Agreement around the semantics of the contextualisation is required for a form of behaviour to be conceived of as language. “The important thing (in the construction of a languaging system) is that the behaviour symbolises something other than itself” (Mingers: 74). This can range from the action of scratching the head to symbolise the feeling of ‘being worried’, to rolling into a foetal curl, to pinging one note on the piano continually or using the words “I am worried”.

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Through reflection upon experience, which results in explanation, Maturana and Varela equate living - which is, the consciousness of living - with cognition. They observe that “all doing is knowing; all knowing is doing” (1987: 27). Understood in this way, cognition does not require explanation. That which does require explanation - or learning - is the consciousness of cognition. In a similar way, if I am reflecting upon my learning, what I am reflecting upon are the connotations of my constructions in the context of their creation. It is within the inter-weaving of mood and explanation ('emotioning' and 'languaging') that the congruence will be found that constructs the learning and the environment for learning. This process, in which there is an inextricable linking of language, emotion and the body, is integrated through the nervous system (Mingers: 79). Maturana and Varela refer to it as ‘conversation’, as mentioned earlier, Fell and Russell (1994) refer to it rather more poetically as the “dance of understanding”.

If we say that the flows of languaging and emotioning are braided, it follows that, without emotional matching, a semantic connection or congruence could not occur... Only when we dance in the flow of emotioning of another can we experience understanding. Then we are moving in the same stream - cognitively flowing together. (Fell & Russell 1994:c: 234).

This process - whether it be understood as ‘conversation’ or ‘dance’ or even more simply as ‘play’ - reinforces language as first and foremost, a connotative system for the creation of meaning. By contrast, denotative systems of language use arise as a consequence of the construction of a languaging community, where an artificial system for the allocation of meaning is constructed by agreement. The understanding that arises through the connotative processes of language use is a product of the process of structural coupling, through which languaging and emotioning become meaningful. This underlines the social processes through which meaning is determined. It emphasises that both reflection and learning are bound by the social context of their occurrence and that learning is, of necessity, a co-operative activity. It is no different whether we are bringing forth an understanding of our selves or an understanding of other objects. Neither have any independent existence beyond our internal (and systemic) structural coupling (Capra: 287).
Implications

The implications of autopoiesis, as presented by Maturana and Varela and expanded upon by Mingers, Capra and others, are considerable, though not uncontested. In their work, Maturana and Varela use biology to discuss knowledge. They enter into this discussion by suggesting that the way in which knowledge is obtained requires that there are essential limits to human knowing. These arise, they say, because the self cannot be removed from the process of meaning-making. Despite his enthusiasm for this idea, Mingers describes it, quite appropriately as ultimately an “anti-realist” position. He points out that this position defines “belief and theories (as)... human constructs which constitute rather than reflect reality.” (p. 85). In this regard Mingers points to similarities between Maturana’s ideas and the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger (1995: 101-110).

The most important similarity among all three writers is the recognition of the problematic nature of external reality and the decision to turn inward, to examine and analyse the nature of the observer, the person who experiences and gives meaning to the world. For Heidegger and Husserl this is at the level of mind and consciousness, while for Maturana it is based on a theory of the biology of the cognising system (p. 107-108).

Mingers (1995) challenges this position by asking the question, if our environment is constructed by our beliefs and theories, how is it possible for us to exist in the physical environment that constructs our world? He argues that “we can imagine the world existing without human beings to observe it, and therefore with no science to describe it... However, is it possible for us to imagine us observers existing without a world in which to exist?” (p. 114). Varela suggests that this question reveals a “deep source of frustration and anxiety.” He equates “clinging to an outer ground in the form of the idea of a pre-given and independent world” with grasping after an ‘ego’ or a sense of ‘self’. Capra responds similarly. He argues that, “we are autonomous individuals, shaped by our own history of structural changes. We are self-aware, aware of our individual identity - and yet, when we look for an independent self within our world of experience we cannot find any such entity” (Capra 1996: 287).

While asserting that Maturana’s position on the construction of reality through language is “anti-realist” and “ultimately inconsistent”, Mingers reconstructs his
approach to the idea and argues that it remains an understanding that can be “successfully reconstructed in the light of critical realism.” This reconstruction respects the fundamental hypotheses that Maturana develops in relation to autopoiesis, structural determinism and structural coupling, while seeking greater clarity in the relationship that Maturana postulates between the observer and the world within which that observation is made. Mingers begins his reconstruction with the assertion that “there is a single, real, materially existing world”. He continues, arguing that this world has through evolutionary processes generated “organisms capable of creating distinctions, descriptions and constructs, subject only to their own internal structure”. These constructs and descriptions have enabled we human beings to create “domains of experience... free from dependence on and determination by the material world.” Mingers asserts that one of these domains is science. This is a domain of learning “in which observers cast their net of descriptions back onto the world itself.” Another one of these domains of learning is the arts. The arts and the sciences are both systems of understanding that share in self-reflectivity. As such, he says, they are social systems united by a form of understanding that human participants contribute to, share in and extend. They are Mingers asserts, “free human constructs... yet the world they relate to is independent of the observer’s descriptions and existed prior to them” (p. 116). They are therefore much more than explanations.

**Applying autopoiesis**

The concept of autopoiesis has been used widely. While it has been used to suggest that organisations as diverse as businesses and corporations, schools and universities, hospitals, departments of government and even nation states can be described as self-organising autopoietic entities, Mingers argues that both Maturana and Varela have acknowledged problems in claiming that social systems are autopoietic.\(^{30}\) Clearly, social systems do not biologically reproduce the entities that participate in them, as an autopoietic organism does. Mingers reports Maturana as equivocating around this point by arguing that, “social systems are not themselves autopoietic, but (they) constitute the medium in which other autopoietic systems exist and interact in such a way that the interactions become bound up with the continued autopoiesis of... (that system’s) components” (p. 103).\(^{31}\) This is to say that social systems create the environment within which autopoietic systems are maintained.
Mingers (1995) suggests that instead of using autopoiesis to depict then define social processes, autopoiesis can more effectively be used as an image or metaphor in the representation of that process. This is how Wheatley uses autopoiesis in her discussions of organisational change. By contrast, Knodt, in her foreword to social theorist Niklas Luhmann’s *Social systems* (1995), while observing that “the adaptation of autopoiesis to realms other than biology (has) encountered considerable obstacles” puts a different case to that of Mingers. Knodt, in her discussion of Luhmann, argues that the concept of autopoiesis can and should be used in other than “a loosely metaphorical sense”.

Luhmann resolves this apparent dilemma by reconceptualising the social... All we have to do, he proposes is give up the Aristotelian premise that social systems are living systems, and think of them instead as systems whose basic elements consists of communication ... the features that distinguish these different types of autopoietic systems come into focus only when the concept of autopoiesis is abstracted from its biological connotations. The reproduction of cells is based on chemical processes, the brain works with neurophysiological impulses. By contrast, systems that operate on the basis of consciousness (psychic systems) or communication (social systems) require meaning for their reproduction (p. xxiii).

Referring back to developments in biology, neurophysiology, information theory and cybernetics, Luhmann argues that society is autopoietic on the basis of the ‘communicative events’ that maintain it. (Luhmann 1995, Mingers 1995, Roberts 1995). He suggests that human social systems maintain and produce themselves through the communications they construct. Those communications cannot exist outside the network of those who participate in them. Luhmann describes communication as,

an event consisting of three indissoluble elements - information, utterance (communication or action), and understanding (comprehension) - which can enable further autopoietic operations to occur... Each of these elements is... one possibility chosen... it is the operation of the autopoietic system which defines and makes the selection (Mingers 1995: 142).

For Luhmann, society is a ‘communicative system’. “Language is not itself a system, but rather the medium of communication and the structure that connects consciousness (psychic systems) and communication (social
Communication accordingly takes the place of language... and presupposes not only language but meaning" (p. 6). It is therefore 'meaning' that creates the connection between the physical world and the (concept of) the system. This means that all systems boundaries are meaning-boundaries. As boundaries, they reduce the complexity of the world while remaining responsive to changes in the environment.

This preserves the system's identity and independence from the environment... Politics, law, love, art, the economy, science and so on have become autonomous and functionally differentiated communication systems, which are no longer organised... by reference to human beings as the subjects of the communication. And this is the point at which systems theory emerges as the self description of social evolution (p. 6-7).

Central to what Roberts describes as Luhmann's 'radical functionalism' is the constructivist understanding that societal systems are both engaged in the first order practice of observation and the second order practice of observation of observation (or self-observation). The process of self-observation is facilitated by, Luhmann asserts, accomplishments in the arts, which are constructed around second-order activities. Through these processes of observation, society functions autopoietically. Meaning is the chemistry that creates the connections within the meaning-generated limits of the system and the systems it overlaps and the sub-systems it contains. This means that society does not communicate directly with its environment. The relationship is such that, Luhmann claims, threats to society as a result of environmental degradation, for example, emerge from communication about the environment, not from the environment itself (Roberts 1995: 77-84). Language facilitates this understanding. The second-order rationality of reflexiveness denies "the unity and identity of society". Roberts argues that the "decentring of society is the condition of differentiation". In terms reminiscent of the discussion of ‘Genesis’ in the introduction to this thesis, Roberts uses a theological metaphor (that he says Luhmann himself likes to employ). "In the beginning was difference, not identity; and if we have lost God, we are left with the modern equivalent of the Devil, the observer, dedicated to sociological enlightenment" (p. 8).

Luhmann nominates a number of meaning-bound autopoietic communication systems. These include the political system, the law, the economy and art. He argues that each of these systems exist as established orders of complexity that define and re-define themselves continually. They are not independent
entities, they exist by conceptual fiat. Individual participants in each system contribute to their conceptualisation and re-conceptualisation, without being an ongoing or even necessary element within each system. Governments and Prime Ministers come and go, but the political system continues. Judges and lawyers enter the profession then eventually retire, meanwhile the legal system continues.33

Learning and autopoiesis

While stipulating that a social system requires meaning, arising from communication, for its maintenance and its continuation, Luhmann makes no reference to the process of learning and the function that learning serves in a social communication system. By extending this discussion of autopoietic, social communication systems it is possible to suggest the special place that the process of learning holds in such an analysis.

Through Luhmann’s analysis, education systems, which are constructed as systems to further learning, can also be described as autopoietic social systems. Learning also occurs within the bounds of social systems other than formally structured education systems. The political system, the legal system, the economic system and other such systems all further learning, without this being the declared aim or the principal product of that system. While meaning is maintained sufficiently to ensure the continuation of the social system, learning continually challenges the boundaries of that meaning.

Learning serves the purpose of defining and re-defining systemic boundaries. It is also that which enables individual participants to move from one system to another. From politics to the law, from education to the arts, from commerce to agriculture, from stockbroking to green activism. That movement does not necessarily challenge the meaning that defines the boundaries of each autopoietic, social system, but it does affirm individual processes within and apart from the closed (though shifting) boundaries of a meaning derived system. Movement also occurs from systems into social experiences that are not systemic and not encompassed by autopoiesis. From the education system to alienation for example. Alienation is not an autopoietic social system - according to Luhmann’s definition - within which meaning is sustained by communicative events. It is an individual experience that can be contextualised in relation to other experiences. It does not however, feed back into social process until it is conceptualised as encompassed by some form of
social understanding. Other examples of shifts out of autopoietic social systems include the movement from the prison system to freedom, from employment to disillusion, from the priesthood to personal mystical reverie, from participation in the political system to disenchantment, cynicism and isolation. Margaret Wilson, in her study of life changing experiences tells the story of several such transitions. She documents the experience of the police inspector, who following what he described as a “near-death experience” found himself unable to identify with the interests of his work colleagues. Feeling no longer a part of the culture he had long been a participant in, he left the police force in pursuit of more satisfying and sympathetic relationships. She also tells the story of the adolescent and family counsellor who found herself so distressed by the suicide of a 14 year old client that she seriously questioned her function in the social welfare system and the school administrator who, while on a trip to Bali, decided he wanted to return to teach in the classroom. Each of these are shifts from systemic relationships into individual emotional experiences that are less easily understood, articulated and communicated. These individual experiences force a reassessment of the social systems through which relationships unfold. They entail a re-evaluation of ways of knowing. While such reassessments can be considered a critical part of the broader social system, and evaluated and explained as such (my description is one explanation), it is the perspective of the individual who is making the reassessment, contained within the cultural context within which the process occurs, that finally determines the manner in which the experience is 'known'.

**The shadow side of systems theory**

Within this general embrace of autopoiesis and systems theory, it is worth pointing out that systems thinking has not been received uncritically. Morris Berman (1996) in his discussion of “the shadow side of systems theory”, expresses some concerns about the difficulties in defining the boundaries of systems. Berman is most concerned about the use of systems theory as a conservative, even authoritarian tool by “the emerging global corporate economy with its demands for worldwide political stability.” This global economy is driven by the desire of transnational corporations for international financial systems, trade systems and communication systems beyond the determinations of individual participants within individual nation states. The argument for the strategic, international deregulation of markets that has had such an enormous impact on national economies and individual lives over the
last twenty five years can be described as a consequence of the reach and effectiveness of this strategy.

Systems thinking is not a recent addition to the analytical tools of international corporations. It has been significant in the planning and organisation of industry and management since the 1940's. The American military research and development institution, the RAND Corporation pioneered a strategic thinking process called 'systems analysis' - which Capra (1996) says grew out of military operations during World War 2 - in the late 1940's. This became, he says, the model for the numerous policy 'think-tanks' that emerged at that time. Since the 1950's and 60's, systemic models have been used increasingly by industry and management analysts (though the scale of the modelling that has been undertaken has often failed to appreciate local and regional differences). In his critique of systems theory Berman focuses on what he sees as an over reliance upon generalities. Despite this criticism, Berman suggests that systems thinking holds some significant advantages over mechanical determinism. It offers a radical vision and a spontaneous and non-formulistic way of thinking. It is, he says, "a tool that may be useful in certain situations". A tool that will "undoubtedly continue to be part of contemporary scientific and philosophical discussions" (p. 29).

And yet while the seemingly irrevocable move towards a world economy dominated by an increasingly small number of increasingly powerful, transnational corporations may be a facilitated by systems analyses, an awareness of systems thinking has enabled the emergence and communication of a deeper understanding of systemic relationships that offers further perspectives upon this development. Evidence for this exists, for example in the science of Bateson and Maturana and Varela, with its emphasis upon the ethics implicit in 'knowing'. It exists also in the work of biologists Lyn Margulis and James Lovelock, who explain the Earth (and by inference, the planetary system beyond it) as an eco-system, through the 'Gaia hypothesis'. This hypothesis, in which the Earth is conceptualised as an integrated living entity, was assisted by images sent back to Earth by NASA space craft in the early 1960's. As a holistic study, it represented then, and continues to represent, a considerable break with traditional scientific approaches to research. The implications of this work are profound. James Lovelock summarises the Gaia hypothesis by comparing Gaia theory to traditional approaches to scientific research.
Consider Gaia theory as an alternative to the conventional wisdom that sees the Earth as a dead planet made up of inanimate rocks, ocean, and atmosphere, and merely inhabited by life. Consider it (Earth, instead) as a real system comprising all of life and all of its environment tightly coupled so as to form a self regulating entity (Lovelock 1991 cited in Capra 1996: 102).

The concept of a 'social ecology', as first articulated by Murray Bookchin (1982), which incorporates the social organisation of human life within the self-organisation of the planet, enriches this theory considerably. Bookchin uses metaphors drawn from the earth sciences to introduce his critical analysis of the human relatedness.

What makes this ceaseless movement of de-institutionalisation and de-legitimation so significant is that it has found its bedrock in a vast substratum of western society... Intertwined with the (human social) crisis is a crisis that has emerged directly from man's exploitation of the planet. Established society is faced not only with a breakdown in its values and institutions, but also of its natural environment (p. 19).35

Bookchin suggests that the solution to these problems lies in an ecological consciousness, "a consciousness and sensibility far broader than customarily meant by these terms. Our definitions must include... a fresh awareness of the relatedness between things and an imaginative insight into the possible." It must he says, "draw its poetry not from the past but from the future... Poetry and imagination must be integrated with science and technology, for we have evolved beyond an innocence that can be nourished exclusively by myths and dreams" (p. 19-20).

Another writer who has found self organising systems theory valuable is Buddhist scholar and peace activist Joanna Macey (1991). Macey arrives at similarities between traditional Buddhist scholarship and modern scientific thinking through self organising systems theory. She uses this understanding politically. Arguing that self organising principles point to an implicit order in life, Macey confronts her political opponents with science, spirituality and deeply felt emotions.

Living systems evolve in complexity, flexibility and intelligence through interaction with each other. These interactions require openness and vulnerability in order to process flow-through of energy and information. They bring into play...
new responses and new possibilities not previously present, increasing the
capacity to effect change. This interdependent release of fresh potential is... like
grace, because it brings an increase of power beyond one's own capacity as a
separate entity... I see the operation of this kind of grace... everywhere I go. For
example I see it in the network of citizens that has sprung up along the tracks of
the "white train" that carries the nuclear warheads from the Pantex plant in
Amarillo, Texas, up to the Trident base in the north west of Puget Sound and
across the south to the Charleston Naval Base on the Atlantic... Even though
this network is scattered across thousands of miles and relatively few of its
members have met face to face, it calls itself now the Agape community; for these
people have learned to feel each other's presence and support. And the tracks
that bear the weapons for the ultimate war have become arteries interconnecting
people and eliciting new dimensions of caring and courage (p. 35-36).36

While Berman points to the limitations imposed upon individuals and
individual communities by systemic analyses of human organisation, he fails
to acknowledge the conflicts such analyses have exposed. Individuals and
communities have been challenged, in response some have also been
empowered. While acknowledging Berman's misgivings, it is clear that
systems thinking can lead to an appreciation of the need for community action
and community development. It can lead to a greater understanding of the
concept of sustainable development and widespread use of this
understanding to challenge the environmental excesses of governments and
corporations. More specifically, on the ground, it has contributed to the
development of systems agriculture and regenerative agricultural systems like
permaculture (Mollison 1991). This same understanding has allowed cultural
community workers like Rustom Bharucha (1993) to defend Indian culture from
the all-embracing structural analyses of European-based cultural theorists,
without necessarily asserting that there is nothing to be learned from those
analyses. For there to be a shadow to systems theory, there must also be the
substance that throws the shadow.

Learning and education systems

My interest in applying theories of autopoiesis has not so much been an
interest in defining the systems within which learning occurs but an interest in
appreciating the experiences of individual learners (beginning with my own
experience) within systems. A systemic analysis makes it clear that the
experience of individual learners cannot be treated in isolation. This means
that my interest in my own learning must extend to an interest in the relationships within the systems - or learning community(s) - that arise as a consequence of reflection upon my own learning and my understanding of the change, or learning, that occurs in the community(s) of which I am a part.

Maturana and Varela emphasise that in appreciating learning as an experience of change, it is important to understand that this is first and foremost a **biological process**. This requires the recognition that the learning of a living organism is **embodied**. If it is a biological process it cannot be anything but embodied. As consciousness is required to bring this learning to awareness, self-conscious learning is a consequence of that consciousness (and processes, such as reflection and explanation, that facilitate it). Therefore, only self-conscious organisms can be depicted as conscious of their own learning.

If learning is embodied, in that it is a consequence of biological change within each autopoietic living system, that learning is available for interpretation, by self-conscious organisms, within and through the body. Interpretation and explanation then place the consciousness of that learning in the social domain. This makes it available for further reflection and further explanation.

All learning does not occur in places or times managed by formally structured teaching and learning systems. In writing of formally structured teaching and learning systems I am referring to settings and experiences that have been constructed to introduce participants to important social skills and knowledge. These include the various primary, secondary and tertiary education systems. They also include structured learning experiences contained within the workplace and community. Necessarily, the structuring of a learning experience reflects the priorities of those who are facilitating the learning. However, it must be emphasised that the learning that individuals take away from structured learning experiences may or may not be in accord with the aims and objectives of those who established and those who maintain the system. Michel de Certeau (1984) argues similarly.

The presence and circulation of a representation (taught by preachers, educators, and popularisers as the key to socioeconomic advancement) tells us nothing about what it is for its users. We must first analyse its manipulation by users who are not its makers. Only then can we gauge the difference or similarity

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between the production of the image and the secondary production hidden in the process of its utilisation (p. xiii).

Recognising this, Joy Murray has tried to use the work of Maturana and Varela to develop effective models of learning within primary and secondary school settings (Murray, 1994, 1995). In trying to apply this work, Murray claims to have arrived at two principal insights. The first relates to Maturana’s and Varela’s work on explanation. As stated earlier, Maturana equates living with cognition. He argues that “all doing is knowing; all knowing is doing” (Maturana & Varela 1987: 27). Understood in this way cognition does not require explanation. That which does require explanation is the consciousness of cognition. If for example, I seek to reflect upon my learning, I am not reflecting upon my learning as much as I am reflecting upon the experience that I am explaining, or conceptualising, as my learning. This occurs within the social domain that allows me, or encourages me, to explain it in that way. However, it is clear that different societies, organisations, structures and systems validate different explanations, and therefore allow or encourage different explanations, and therefore different learnings. Accepting this, Murray argues that “domains of explanations and the bodies of knowledge belonging to other social and cultural groups are equally valid”. This argument is in accord with a range of arguments that are being put, to varying degrees, at a systemic level, in primary and secondary school systems within and beyond N.S.W. and Australia. These include considerations upon the significance of gender in learning and the relationship between learning and other categories of ‘difference’ such as ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality, religious persuasion, ability and disability. Murray argues that the work of Maturana and Varela requires that the definition of social and cultural groups be arrived at with due consideration to the groups that are being observed.

The systemic analysis, that supports the policy of multiculturalism, that has been adopted by Australian schools, is an analysis that has been made by some participants in the school education system. Students, whose perspective upon the school system is a product of experience quite different to that of teachers, administrators and parents, necessarily perceive their education system, and more particularly their learning community differently. An experience of mine in 1993, demonstrated this difference very effectively. In accordance with a principal’s directive, I asked a group of Year 9 Drama students to reflect upon the significance of the ethnic differences within their
class. Multi-Cultural Week was approaching and the issue of multi-culturalism was being brought to the fore throughout the school. Some sort of ‘dramatic’ contribution to this week was expected of me and my students. These students - all aged between 14 and 16 and all attending a co-educational, government, secondary school in the western suburbs of Sydney - came from Korean, Bosnian, Lebanese, Slovenian, Hungarian, Greek, Chinese, Irish, English, Islander, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australian backgrounds. When I broached the subject with them, they claimed to get on reasonably well with each other. They told me that as far as they were concerned, ethnic differences were of little importance. They told me that much greater significance was placed by students on how individuals fitted into the various shifting and overlapping student groups in the school. In short, they asked, “What are you? Are you a ‘rapper’, a ‘footballer’, a ‘hand-baller’, a ‘prefect’, a ‘dumb bully’, a ‘snob’, a ‘weirdo’, a ‘Year 7’ or a ‘kid who hangs out in the library cause it’s the only safe place for him to go’?” (Wright 1994: 44). This is not to suggest that ethnic difference is irrelevant to these students, rather, it is to suggest that as a group, at this time and place, in this particular circumstance, they judged other issues of difference as more important.

This experience reaches beyond the determination of the ‘other-ness’ of social and cultural groups in the N.S.W. secondary school system by those making observations and providing explanations at a policy level. It reaches towards the celebration of participation on the part of those who experience or have experienced themselves determined as ‘others’ (by people whom they may regard as ‘others’). In this respect, it relates, to a greater or lesser degree, to the experience of all individuals. It relates not to their ontologies or their participation, but to our ontologies and our participation. It is inclusive, rather than exclusive. It emphasises that all our explanations of our experiences - all our stories - are valid. It emphasises that all our stories must be recognised, appreciated and celebrated. By asking the question, “what are you?” - either explicitly or implicitly - it is ensured that ‘communicative events’ create systems of learning. This understanding has relevance far beyond the formal confines of the N.S.W. secondary school system.

The second principal insight that Murray arrived at, is that Maturana’s work demands that “teachers accept that people operate out of different realities” and that effective teaching requires that teachers “invite students to... reflect”. This invitation carries with it a range of requirements and responsibilities. It requires first and foremost that teachers establish an environment within which
reflection can occur. It requires also that individual teachers acknowledge their participation in both the community contained within the classroom and the community beyond the classroom (the community that contains the classroom and the policies and practices followed within it). It requires that each teacher participate in the learning being generated in both communities and it emphasises the roles and responsibilities of the ‘learner’ over those of the ‘teacher’. This requires that the teacher participates in the reflection that facilitates learning (within both communities) and that the process of reflection be accepted as an experience of learning with significance to all members of every community (of which the teacher is but one). Out of this arises a responsibility to act upon that learning.

In participating in reflection in this way, it will be possible for teachers and students to both create a classroom domain, and explain (and perhaps challenge) ‘from the inside’ the traditions and cultural expectations of different groups in society represented by members of the class (e.g. males / females; low socio-economic groups; students from language background other than English etc). With the disposition to reflect comes the ability to move away from traditions (Murray 1994: 100).

Murray does not directly address individual ontologies. By focussing on the problems of ‘different’ or ‘other’ groups she identifies the school system as one that maintains difference and other-ness. Accordingly, she advocates a learning environment that - through a greater consciousness of participation - builds relationships and reduces alienation. Maturana suggests that such a consciousness is not a group consciousness. He says it arises within individuals, though it is contextualised or given expression within a social domain. In postulating difference, as Murray does, it is inevitable that she will find herself confronting individual differences. Yet, that difference becomes the shared experience of the community when stories are told and when stories are listened to. It is the voicing of individual stories, in addition to the stories of groups (to which individuals give expression) that changes those who ‘give voice’ and enable changes to occur in those who ‘listen’. Agreements and understandings enable new communicative events to occur. This enables meaning to be created, out of which learning arises.
A personal reflection

Accepting that we, as parents and citizens, men and women, adults and children, teachers and learners, cannot directly cause people to learn, it is worth considering further the creation of the conditions within which learning can most effectively occur. If I am - as an educator - to do this, I need to reflect upon my own relationship to learning and the learning process. I need to have some appreciation of the perspective I bring to the task. To do this I must question the experience that has bought me to inquire into learning. What is my motive? Why do I want to know? What do I want to do with any learning that results? I must reflect upon that which I understand learning to be, just as I must consider my own experience as a learner. I must ponder such things as whether or not an experience of learning is different to a body of learning? What is the relationship between learning and consciousness? When do I know? How do I know? I need to reflect upon - as I understand it - the individual and collective experience of the people with whom I am working, for they are the people for whom I am seeking to create an environment to learn. I need to consider whether or not in seeking to create an environment for others to learn in, I am doing anything more than seeking to create an environment within which I can learn or, alternately, an environment within which it is no more than convenient for me to consider their needs. I must consider no less, the difficulty in arriving at anything more than perfunctory explanations in response to these questions. Inevitably, the explanations I arrive at - in response to my own questioning - are significant within the consciousness I bring to the process. They reinforce my understanding of my own learning and my appreciation of the significance of that learning in relation to the learning of others.

I feel that, in my work as an educator and, more specifically, in this thesis, I have given a great deal of consideration to the learning that I have found in specific experiences. One of those experiences, Formwork, is discussed at length later in the thesis. Another, my encounter with the person and the poetry of Aaron Williamson is discussed in Section 1. There have been other important learning experiences. A particularly interesting learning experience - that was alluded to briefly before - arose one Tuesday in 1993, a few weeks before Multi-Cultural Day, at Mitchell High School, in the western Sydney suburb of Blacktown. On that day, students in 9X Drama volunteered to perform during the annual Multi-Cultural Day concert. Shortly after Multi-
Cultural Day, in an article written for a national magazine, I reflected upon the consequences of that commitment to perform.

Discussion... revealed that few in 9X Drama had difficulty in accepting students from other cultures... (it seemed) the philosophy of multiculturalism had been absorbed. It was suggested (by the students) that of much greater importance than ethnic origin was where individual students fitted into the various sub-cultures of the school. "What subcultures?" I asked. Suggestions flowed... "How might we 'perform' these groups?" I asked. As the class had been doing work on comedy, they decided parody would be the most appropriate form (Wright 1994: 44).

The dismissal of the significance of ethnic difference, whether or not it concurred with my experience, enabled me to invite class members to describe the sorts of differences they experienced. I was aware of some of the sub-cultures they nominated, but totally ignorant of others. I was completely unprepared for the sub-culture described as "the kids who hang out in the library 'cause it's the only safe place for them to go."

Peter said, "that's my group", and detailed what they got up to. "We look at all the books with nude pictures, we take books from the fiction section and put them into non-fiction, we talk a lot and we get tossed out" (Wright 1994: 44).

Stated thus, it was difficult for me not to understand.

Why did I continue with this? Firstly, the students were increasingly enthusiastic. Secondly, I had promised to fill a certain slot in the program. Thirdly, I thought that through this work we - the students and myself - might be able to use drama to probe issues other than drama. Issues that had direct bearing upon our own experience. What's more, my personal and professional curiosity was roused. I wanted to see us create a performance about something we knew. I wanted to see us explain that understanding to ourselves and a larger audience through the social activity of group devised performance. I wanted to see us use work we had done in class and take it to performance level. I believed that there was considerable learning involved in demystifying the cultural barriers that separate group from group, and individual from individual. I believed that to do this in front of an audience of peers would enable class members to celebrate identities, whilst gently mocking the intensity with which those identities are sometimes held. In the
true spirit of multi-culturalism, I believed that the celebration of hitherto
unrecognised diversity brings with it acceptance, understanding and pride.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the project was the response I got when I
asked class members to nominate the sub-culture they wanted to portray. All,
with one exception, opted to portray - through parody - the sub-culture with
which they most closely identified. The work of two groups who chose to
portray their own sub-culture, especially interested me.

Several of the students who chose to portray ‘heavy metal freaks’ epitomised
the rebellion inherent in the image... They wore with pride - though often
 surreptitiously - the black t-shirts emblazoned with band names: Bon Jovi, Guns
n’ Roses, Metallica, AC-DC etc. which were officially banned from the school.
When it was suggested they use this ‘uniform’ to parody the loyalty the ‘heavy
metal freaks’ have for the uniform, one member of the group protested loudly. The
uniform was a statement. It carried his ‘colours’. Jim, Susan and Bonnie wanted
to perform and they wanted to perform themselves, to the whole school. The
greatest difficulty lay in knowing how to perform themselves. They wanted to be
included but the image they nurtured - that of dark, angry rebels - precluded them
from feeling included. In asking to perform, they were confronting - not parodying
or simply portraying - their identities (Wright 1994: 45).

Early work undertaken by members of this group appeared to be less than
satisfying. No-one could come up with a performance language that would
allow them to stand in front of and entertain the whole school, a school from
which they felt alienated, a school for which they themselves harboured
hostility. Why did I want them to do this? I left the decision to them. It was they
who continued to pursue ways in which they could participate. While the
‘heavy metal freaks’ appeared to feel trapped by the power of their identity,
‘the group who hang out in the library because it’s the only place safe for them
to go’ appeared to feel liberated from their identity by this opportunity.

They knew their identity and their habitat so well that the only problem was
containing their enthusiasm within the time that was allowed. It was not the self
awareness of these students that surprised me, but the glee with which
acknowledgment was greeted. At last, to be noticed! (Wright 1994: 45).

When the heavy metal group came to me and expressed their frustration with
the process of developing material to perform, I offered seed material for them
to work with. This included a few old fashioned formula-jokes designed to give them permission to have fun with the heavy metal identity. The jokes included:
A. Who was that rotten old drunk I saw you with last night?
B. That was no drunk, that was me Dad.
A. What do you get when you combine Anthrax and AC-DC?
B. A bloody messy corpse.
A. Worse than that, a bloody messy t-shirt."

Their initial difficulties related to an uncertainty about approach. I imagine they feared that the violence attached to the identity might lead to a requirement that they sanitise or cheapen or sentimentalise something that they valued. By allowing them to ‘play’ with their identity, rather than undermine it, the suggestions I made in the seed material hinted at possible directions. It didn’t surprise me that my ideas were tossed out - I would have been surprised if they had not been - but their existence stimulated effective work... The performance that eventuated was their own creation. Work done in rehearsal was transformed outside school hours (during, I imagine one of the few times these students did school work outside of school hours). While their performance was parody, it was a parody that had been developed consistent with their own particular identity, beyond the bounds of school and teacher authority. It represented both in form and content the identity of ‘the heavy metal freaks’. It was also - without being uproariously funny - amusing. The freedom they were allowed and the trust they were given negated the requirement to provoke hostility through public confrontation (Wright 1994: 45).

What’s more, the success of their performance - in the true spirit of multiculturalism - actually undermined their alienation. By sharing their experience with an audience of their peers they could no longer claim to feel excluded, hence, exclusive. Their creativity ensured their inclusion. Their hostility became something they had been able to reflect upon and contextualise. Their anger was recognised - by themselves and their audience - as, to some degree, performance.

The “kids who hang out in the library ‘cause it’s the only safe place for them to go” and who also perceived themselves as excluded (though did not rationalise this by deliberately excluding themselves) gained their inclusion through a similar process.
The abundance of ideas considered by the ‘library’ group immobilised them. Finally, aware of time restraints and the need to structure their performance into the overall program, they embarked on a savage process of editing. Their final script read;

**LIBRARY PERSON A** enters from the left; slowly walks to microphone front centre-left, head bowed, shy, nervous, humble... almost tearful

**LIBRARY PERSON B** enters from the right; slowly walks to microphone front centre-right, head bowed, shy nervous, humble... almost tearful

Both stand... Finally they acknowledge each others’ presence. **L.P. A** looks at **L.P. B**. he offers a meek smile.

**L.P. A**: *George; you’re my best friend.*

**L.P. B** looks back at **L.P. A**. hesitates, replies quietly.

**L.P. B**: *Lee; I’m you’re... only... friend.*

Both look away from each other beyond the audience. They think. They look back at each other, raise their eyebrows, grin meekly, the grins becomes smiles, then grimaces of recognition. They nod at each other in agreement; wait for the laughter, then...

**LIBRARY PERSON A** turns, head bowed, slowly exits stage left.
**LIBRARY PERSON B** turns, head bowed, slowly exits stage right.

END OF SEGMENT. (Wright 1994: 46).

The contextualisation of an (objective) truth - their loneliness, their isolation and their alienation - in front of an audience of their peers, ensured that these students were noticed. Their story was heard. They were not victims. They belonged. In telling their story in their own way they gave the school permission to laugh with them. I, along with each member of the audience had, I believe, some understanding of the experience they depicted.

In observing the work of these two groups the quality that impressed me most was the honesty of the students who participated. There was an abundance of trepidation and not a little in the way of pre-performance nerves, but there was
little embarrassment and little shame. In the attempt to broaden social understanding and self knowledge - and to provide greater insight for these students into their own learning - this project provided further evidence of the benefits of a creative approach to the social communication of experience. It provided students with an opportunity to claim their experience. This was a performance of what De Certeau describes as “the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already caught up in the nets of ‘discipline’” (p. xiv-xv). By, in Maturana and Varela’s terms, the “braiding of language and emotion” both effective learning and effective communication occurred, from my perspective.

**Language and learning**

To reiterate, Maturana and Varela employ constructivism and systems thinking to arrive at the concept of autopoiesis. This makes it possible to arrive at an explanation of social experience that is grounded in a scientific analysis. This explanation employs the understanding that as we observe we participate in that which we are observing and the language we use to conduct that observation also contributes to and therefore participates in that observation. This explanation brings with it a world view. This world view contains both a way of understanding experience and a way of understanding the context within which that experience occurs. This ‘way’ is a recursive, self-referential process. In systems thinking it is described as ‘feed back’. Feed back “shows how actions can reinforce or counteract (balance) each other... it simplifies life by helping us see the deeper patterns lying behind the events and the details.” (Senge 1990: 73). It implies action and responsibility. Von Foerster (1992) writes, “whenever I act, I am changing myself and the universe as well.” (p. 15). This ‘way’ is therefore of great significance in the process of learning and the organisation and delivery of education systems.

Central to the process whereby feed back occurs is the adoption, by the observer of the perspective, or world view, of the self conscious participant. This is the perspective that brings the human experience of change (emotioning) together with the explanation of change (linguaging). The representation of this, through language, of which one form is verbal language, is an ongoing challenge. In this extract from Burnt Norton, from the *Four Quartets*, T.S. Eliot uses his poetic skills to attempt it:
Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay still. Shrieking voices
Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering,
always assail them. 38

This construction of a connotation of learning could have been arrived at otherwise, seen in a moment on a face, heard in a sudden sound, picked up in a rhythm, felt as one body clings to another, read in the tension suspended in silence between two or more things, discovered in the contrast between light and dark, loud and soft, sharp and blunt, smooth and rough, whispered, thrust, shrieked, hurt, breathed or moved. Constructed thus, meaning is made in the meeting between the subject and the object in the domain within which the meeting occurs. And while constructivism recognises the ‘play’ that exists between the knowing of the subject and the knowing of the object, it acknowledges that meaning can only, finally be made by the meaning maker. While not alone and while both extended and constrained by the associations and actions that construct the history that greets new life and new experience, explanation establishes understanding afresh.

In extending this discussion further I would like to examine an experience of learning from a systems perspective. This involves reflection upon the learning that arose as a result of my participation in the group process, Formwork. Though each of the members of the group who took part in this process were charged with the responsibility of elaborating on ideas and understandings arrived at with others participation, I alone was charged with the responsibility of elaborating on ideas and understandings, as I perceived them, in writing. My particular perspective on the group and the learning that we participated in makes this case study integral to my discussion of the learning process.
Section 3: Notes


2 By describing the paradigm as a matrix of belief systems of which we are generally unaware, Kuhn suggests that recognition of a lack of awareness prompts the pursuit of awareness. This is, of necessity, a pursuit that seeks out and questions current belief systems. Like the Uncertainty Principle, it implies that participation limits the capacity to fully 'know'. Constructed thus, paradigms can be imagined as interwoven and layered. One facilitates another, to then be facilitated itself.

3 Invariably, individuals with different priorities will construct different 'systems' within the same environment. This can be expanded from an individual perspective to a general understanding of the life that humans participate in (Laszlo 1972).


6 Both Capra (1996) and Plas (1986) write of Bateson's manner of responding to ideas through story.


8 The quote continues, "The continuing process of production and reproduction, of history incorporating and incorporation actualised, is a process that can take place without ever becoming the object of a specific institutional practice, explicitly articulated in (written or spoken) language. The latter presupposes the development of a certain kind of pedagogical institution which is not present in all societies, and which in our societies is generally associated with the educational system." (Bourdieu 1991: 13)

9 Homer according to Rieu was, in all likelihood, the one who committed his poems to writing.

10 'Sign' is referred to here as title for a language, rather than a method of communication. Oliver Sacks (1990) uses the term in this way and indicates that this is the way in which it is perceived by those who language in this way. Although different forms of Sign are used by different people in different regions - as English users have accents, dialects, pidgin forms etc. - the ease of access that users share entitles Sign to be recognised as one language.


12 Arthur Koestler uses the term "holon" to describe a relatively autonomous organism (that is also a component of a larger organism). It is, Koestler says, something that manifests "both the independent properties of wholes and the dependent properties of parts". (cited in Capra 1982 p. 27) This term has also been used by Richard Bawden (1995) in his construction of the "holonocentric perspective". The holonocentric perspective is a "concern is with the whole community/environment relationship, and with the myriad of different opinions and world views that together, all of the various stakeholders represent... from this perspective, they (the stakeholders) must be heard, for they comprise the system of inquiry... new systems for public participation must be designed if 'true' progress is to be made." (Bawden 1995: 41).

13 Capra has grappled with this in his work with Global Learning Communities. G.L.C. have developed a model for schools as "collaborative learning community" on the principles of living systems as outlined by Capra in 'Schools as collaborative learning communities' in (Cooper, C. and Boyd, J. (1995) Global learning communities newsletter. Published and distributed by Global Learning Communities, 163 George St. Launceston. Tasmania. 7250. Australia.)

14 The *Macquarie Dictionary* (1981) offers 54 usages for 'play' ranging from "dramatic performance", "amusement or recreation", "fun or jest" - along with the action of participating in each of these activities - through to "playing for stakes; gambling", "playing in a game", "to perform on an instrument", to "employ oneself in diversion, amusement or recreation", "to do something... which is not to be taken seriously" and "to work on (the feelings, weaknesses, etc., of another) for one's own purposes". The understanding I am offering is dictated also by the need to differentiate between the category of an action, in this case 'play', and the enactment of that category, in this case 'playing'.


Capra points out that "metaphor, according to Bateson, is the language of nature. Metaphor expresses structural similarity or, better still, similarity of organisation, and metaphor in this sense was the central concern of Bateson's work. Whatever field he worked in, he would look for nature's metaphors, for 'the pattern which connects.'" (Capra 1982: 84)

18 Maturana Seminar; The Folding Centre; Camden, N.S.W. 20-22 Sept. 1994.

19 "This experiment reveals in a very dramatic way that, for the animal, there is no such thing as up and down, front and back, in reference to an outside world, as it exists for the observer doing the study. There is only an internal correlation between the place where the retina receives a given perturbation and the muscular contractions that move the tongue, the mouth, the neck, and, in fact, the frog's entire body." (Maturana & Varela 1987: 125-126)

20 Just as he places limits upon the process of observation Maturana also places limits upon the assumptions arising from observation. He differentiates between a contextual form of objectivity and objectivity as an absolute form by placing the former within parentheses; hence (objective) truth is differentiated from objective truth. The validity of the former is defined by the manner in which it is understood. The latter is only accessible to those with transcendental authority.


22 "Systems which do not produce themselves are called allopoietic, meaning 'other-producing' - for example, a river or a crystal. Maturana and Varela also refer to human-created systems as heteropoietic. An example is a chemical factory. Superficially this is similar to a cell, but it produces chemicals that are used elsewhere, and is itself produced or maintained by other systems. It is not self-producing" (Mingers 1995: 12)

23 "Since all components of an autopoietic network are produced by other components in the network, the entire system is organisationally closed, even though it is open with regard to the flow of energy and matter. This organisational closure implies that a living system is self-organising in the sense that its order and behaviour are not imposed by the environment but are established by the system itself. In other words, living systems are autonomous. This does not mean that they are isolated from their environment. On the contrary, they interact with the environment through a continual exchange of energy and matter. But this interaction does not determine their organisation - they are self organising. Autopoiesis, then, is seen as the pattern underlying the phenomenon of self organisation, or autonomy, that is so characteristic of all living systems." (Capra 1996: 163).

24 "Living things are continually changing and developing, and these changes are determined by their own structure. Some changes, such as growth, leave the organisation the same; other changes result in a new organisation - for example, a caterpillar developing into a butterfly or an egg into a chicken - while other, such as death, lead to the loss of both the organisation and the unity. Equally, what does or does not affect the organism and the nature of any effect is determined by its structure. Humans have receptors for light and colour so can be triggered by it, while bats can receive high-pitched sounds that humans cannot hear. Each organism has its own particular domain of interaction that can affect it and those that cannot. The effects are also structure determined." (Mingers 1995: 30-31)

25 There is a reciprocity or 'congruence' in the process of change in which the system and the environment participate. When congruence is lost, the structure within which the interrelationship takes place also comes to an end. An ongoing recurrence of reciprocal interactions creates a history of 'structural coupling'. This history continues only as long as autopoiesis remains. Because explanation arises as a consequence of an event, the interaction between any two systems is, itself, aimless.

26 "Such a system, in interaction with its environment conserves its organisation through structural coupling. Its particular structural changes are triggered by occurrences in its environment and, just as the path of the boat is a determinate outcome of its history, so is the path of structural change of the system." (Mingers 1995: 37)

27 Autopoietic systems continue to exist as a result of the biological process of reproduction. As this biological process takes place something is conserved in addition to a physical cohesion. This, Maturana and Varela describe as a 'manner of living'. This manner of living arises and is conserved through 'lineage'. The lineage consists of the particular activities that the species has developed over time to ensure its survival. The conservation of a manner of living preserves that lineage. When the manner of living is lost, so is the lineage. However, change can occur within a manner of living whilst conserving - not concluding - the lineage.
28 Goolishian and Winderman explain their understanding thus: "When two living entities possess a history of reciprocal interactions such that they are structurally coupled, an observer might say that they co-ordinate their actions in this structurally coupled domain of their existence. If these entities are of sufficient complexity, they are capable of co-ordinating their actions about their co-ordinated actions. At this point, Maturana would say that language arises. Language is more than the co-ordination of behaviour. Language (or the co-ordination of co-ordinated behaviour) is the ascription of meaning about the co-ordination of behaviour. Behavioural complexity of this type yields the creation of a consensual linguistic domain: a domain of semantic interactions. In this domain of experience, participants interact through their descriptions of experience (nothing is ever explained) and the descriptions of their descriptions, and their descriptions of their described descriptions, and so on. Such linguistically interacting biological systems create systems of meaning, communicated through language." (Goolishian and Winderman 1988: 132-133).


31 "In other words, a group of living systems (not necessarily human) take part in an ongoing series of interactions with one another. These coordinations of action contribute to the continued survival of the individual autopoietic systems. This generates networks of particular interactions and relations through the structural coupling of the organisms, and these networks become involved in the continuing autopoiesis of the organisms. The resulting system (or unity, distinguished by an observer), consisting of the living components, their interactions, and the recurrent relations thus generated, is characterised by a particular organisation - the social organisation. It is also an example of a consensual domain." (Mingres 1995: 130)

32 "The encompassing societal system... observes and regulates communications through communication... Social systems are highly coded forms of particular communication that arise out of the functionally differentiated nature of modern, complex societies. The economy, the law, politics, science, religion and education are, for Luhmann, so many social systems. They demarcate themselves from their respective environments through the ways in which their internal forms of coding both close them off operationally from their respective environments and differentiate them internally from other social systems. The deconstruction of inherited theories of society and its systems-theoretical reconstruction is the guiding idea that underlies Luhmann's re-conception of the functionalist tradition in sociology." (Roberts 1995: 66).

33 While these systems may overlap each can be conceived of as sufficiently different to exist as a discrete, though complex, social self-organising system within. Just as sub-systems can be identified within each system, so each can be conceived of as a sub-system, contained within a broader conceptualisation.


35 Bookchin (1982) says that he uses the term 'man' advisedly. Rather than using it as a generic term for humanity he is pointing out the extent to which "the split between humanity and nature has been precisely the work of the male." (p. 19).

36 Macey includes more such examples including networks constructed to provide asylum to South and Central American political refugees, contact between American and Russian peace activists, ecological campaigns around the world and a range of other world wide political protest movements. Macey comments: "These people show us what can happen through us when we break free of the old hierarchical notions of power. They show that grace happens when we act with others on behalf of our world" (p. 36-437)

37 The concept of feed back is, according to Margaret Mead, the basis of 'cybernetics' (von Foerster 1992: 10).

Creativity and Embodied Learning

Section 4: ‘Formwork’ : A case study
The Peking Opera Project

Some time ago I was invited, as a writer, to participate in a workshop designed to introduce four Sydney-based actors, trained in various styles and traditions (including the European realist mode based on Stanislavski’s training, the Lecoq school of mime and movement, the training methods of Tadashi Suzuki and the performance tradition of classical ballet) to the training methods and performance styles of Peking Opera. The workshop, titled Formwork, was funded by the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council and the Australia-China Council following applications from theatre director Sally Sussman.¹

Born, educated and introduced to theatre in Australia, Sussman spent over three years in China studying and working in Peking Opera companies. In her proposal to the Australia Council Sussman described the project as,

a four week process of training and workshopping with 4 actors and 4 musicians to develop a performance style, based on the principles of Peking Opera performance and percussion... the project will culminate in a workshop demonstration of a style of performance which aims to cut across boundaries of culture and tradition in creating cutting edge theatre.²

I was asked to create a written text for the Sydney-based actors to develop into a performance for an invited audience of sponsors, professional colleagues and friends. The text was to arise from my experience of the workshop process, my conversations with the director and my readings on the form. I was given great freedom within these bounds. I found working on Formwork an enjoyable and illuminating experience, it was also, in my opinion, a successful experience. This was affirmed in conversations following the event. The text that resulted met the needs of the director and the performance that marked the culmination of the workshop process was a memorable event. The large audience that attended - many of whom were influential in the arts industry - responded enthusiastically. While some controversy arose, it did not undermine the accomplishment. Encouragement was abundant, new associations were formed and discussions about more substantial projects, in the same vein, began.

In retrospect, neither the workshop nor the text are the elements of the experience I most value now. The workshop has long since concluded, but Formwork remains in my consciousness as a significant learning experience. I feel I have been changed by the process. The people I met, the ideas I conceived, the further opportunities that I gained as a result of the work
are a major part of this change. Certainly, without Formwork this thesis would not take the form it now does. Without Formwork I might not even be employed where I currently am. This is sufficient to suggest that, in the language of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, auto-poetically, through the experience of Formwork, I have found congruence in new relationships. I have come to participate differently in a world that has, from my perspective, changed.

Maturana and Varela suggest that the imagination that accompanies any experience - let alone any product resulting from participation in any project - is enough to create a change in substance. Using this reasoning, I can reflect upon my experience of Formwork as physical experience. It was physical even more so because I was an engaged participant. Each day I worked amidst the heat and dust of the rehearsal room, and while I was not required to participate in the strict regime of physical training that the actors were taken through each day, I feel I gained my greatest learning about the style of performance through my experience of the physical experience of the performers, both Chinese and non-Chinese.

As the writer, I was required to interpret and represent my experience of the workshop: to feel my way into it, to try to understand it. Some years later I feel like I am still representing it and interpreting it and feeling my way into it and trying to understand it. In accordance with Maturana’s and Varela’s thesis, I am arguing that my biological structure determined my relationship to the experience and the change that occurred in my understanding was also biological. It expressed, and it continues to express itself in the relationships I am forming and the explanations I am arriving at. (Segments from the training and the performances that were part of Formwork can be seen in Video Appendix 2. The script that the work finally gave rise to can be found at Appendix 4.)

_The body of learning in Peking Opera_

I place emphasis upon the link between ideas, images, feelings and the body because so much of the learning that was encountered during Formwork was physical. The project did not materialise, to any great extent, through research into data, stories or text. The work was initiated and undertaken primarily by active physical bodies. I worked with those active physical bodies. I watched them, I listened to them, I experienced and imagined them, I imagined myself
into their experience. I wrote about them and their inter-relationships as I saw them unfold. In short, while my physical experience of the workshop was considerably different to that of the performers, I feel that I assumed the role I had been appointed to fulfil and wrote for them and their physicality. This meant that both the active physical bodies of the performers employed in the project and my relationship to those bodies became the subject matter of my research.

Because Formwork was a research project that sought to develop familiarity with a highly refined performance style, the physical training of the bodies of the performers was an extremely important part of the process. Explanations of the performance tradition that the actors were being introduced to were largely confined to physical explanations. The tradition was passed from body to body, bodies were far more important than words. The fact that the Chinese actors and musicians involved in the project spoke very little English ensured, even more so, that physical - and to a large extent traditional Chinese - training methods predominated. (Importantly, this language problem also limited the degree to which I, as both writer and researcher, could confer with the Chinese-trained performers about their experience of the workshop.)

The initiation of the local performers into the performance tradition of Peking Opera was strenuous and demanding. Each day began with 3-4 hours of training. This included meditation and visualisation exercises, breathing exercises, a variety of stretches, kicks and ongoing repetitions of movement patterns, in particular the 'cloudhand' sequence. The cloudhand sequence is a rhythmic flowing gesture designed to enhance "eye-hand-step-body harmony" (shou-yan-shen-fa-bu). Cloudhand is emblematic of the performance patterns of Peking Opera. It can be expanded to represent movement around the stage, just as it can be reduced to represent the flow of thoughts in the mind of a Peking Opera performer. It is a physical movement that is entered into, a rhythmic flow that has to be performed before it can be fully understood.

In the early stages of the training the performers also learned to recite the Chinese percussion patterns used in Peking Opera while performing movements. This led them further into the exploration of the relationship between movement, gesture, rhythm and sound. Training in liangshan - the striking of a pose accented by a precise rhythmic pulse - was also introduced early and considerable work was done to establish a performative rapport
between the Australian and the Chinese actors and the Australian actors and the Chinese musicians.

While Sussman modelled the training and exercise regime on training and exercise regimes she experienced in China, most of the activities were demonstrated and directed by the Chinese actors (Xu Fengshan and Zhang Zhijun) employed in the process. The intention was to introduce the local performers to the physical training undertaken by initiates into Peking Opera. It was not expected that anything more than a cursory understanding of Peking Opera would be acquired. That cursory understanding, in combination with skills and abilities already possessed by each performer, was the basis from which Sussman sought to construct Formwork.

The physical training was structured around repetition. Over the course of the workshop a range of key movements patterns, in particular the cloudhand sequence, were developed and refined in this way. The movements would be demonstrated, the actors would copy the movements then repeat them and repeat them and repeat them. Further movements and combinations of movements and developments upon movements would then be introduced, they too would be repeated and repeated. Repetition was used, not simply to 'get the movement right'. The repetition of physical action is regarded in Peking Opera, according to Sussman, as a way of absorbing information. She claims that there is a deliberate attempt, in this training, not to engage the actor in thought. The actor needs only to 'learn' the action, in order to repeat it. The principal form of learning that is engaged in the training is the learning of the body. The body learns, then contains the information that comprises the style and the role and therefore the performance. It is the body that enters most fully into this research process. And as the body learns, the body changes as a result of that learning. This is the case, to varying degrees, in all performance training.

Sussman describes Peking Opera training as whole body training. Movement training commences from the waist or the diaphragm, the centre of the body. It involves the shifting of bodily weight and bodily 'energy' away from, then back towards this centre. The repetition upon repetition of movement is intended to develop the performance of movements beyond the mechanical reproduction that invariably marks earliest attempts. The development of a greater level of skill leads to a deepening of perception into the performance tradition. "The training leads you to see what you are looking for", Sussman says. It enables
the performer to "reach another level of perception"\textsuperscript{4}, to discover 'the flow' within the movement and the performance. It is this flow that is sought by the informed student of Peking Opera. The flow is referred to variously, as \textit{qi} or \textit{jin} and actors are required to cultivate \textit{qi} and \textit{jin}. This cultivation extends beyond the rehearsal room and the performance hall into life. It leads to the identification of the performer with the aesthetic tradition that contains the training, and therefore the learning that has been mastered through the training. In attaining a high level of performance skill, the performer honours his teacher or master and the tradition his master serves. (Until recently all Peking Opera performers were male. This pattern has been changed in recent years). In this respect, the tradition of Peking Opera and the physical training methods it employs, are inherently conservative. It constantly refers back to, and honours its feudal origins. Students are drawn to pay homage to their masters just as their masters pay homage to their masters.

Not only do actors absorb the value system that accompanies the form, but admirers and aficionados do likewise. That value system provides a link between the China of the past and the China of the present. It is a touchstone that keeps the present informed by the past. This suggests that the status of Peking Opera in China - and other such conservative learning traditions - can be read as an ongoing commentary upon artistic, social and political developments in China (as do most traditional performance styles). It suggests also that Peking Opera actors - as embodiments of a noble past - can find themselves unwitting victims of those developments. (The film \textit{Farewell my concubine} depicts this conflict most graphically.) It also mean that attempts to use Peking Opera to provoke change in social and political relations, as important art forms can do, are invariably confronted by the feudal origins of the performance tradition. In the 1960's Jiang Qing, Mao Zedong's wife (often referred to as Madam Mao), tried to use Peking Opera to promote the objectives of the Cultural Revolution. The series of revolutionary operas that she produced - while great heroic tales of struggle and the overcoming of oppression - professed values at odds with those of the feudal tradition of Peking Opera. They have never truly been accepted as works of substance and are not now included in the repertoire of major Peking Opera companies. In the language of Maturana and Varela, there appears to be a growing \textbf{incongruence} between Peking Opera and contemporary China. This suggests that the learning system through which Peking Opera is constructed is insufficiently flexible, that Peking Opera must become something that is not-Peking Opera if structural coupling is to be maintained.
After the event

With some despondency, several years after Formwork, Sussman views her ambition to, as she said in her proposal, "cut across boundaries of culture and tradition" as, in part, futile. Arguing this, she points to the conflict between the learning contained in the European-trained body and the learning contained in the body of the Peking Opera performer. Unconsciously affirming the theories of autopoiesis of Maturana and Varela, Sussman goes so far as to suggest that there is little possibility of deep and abiding communication between European and Chinese culture because of the feeling states established by the collective wisdoms of each tradition of learning. The ramifications of such an argument are many. While personal factors may have influenced Sussman's judgement - the breakdown of her marriage to her Chinese husband, the souring of her relationship with some members of Sydney's Chinese community as a result of Formwork - her observations remain worthy of discussion. They resemble arguments put by cultural theorists Edward Said (1978), Rustom Bharucha (1993) and Patrice Pavis (1992), who each in their own way are concerned about the manner in which members of dominant cultures theorise the cultural life of others.6

Inquiries into 'other' cultures inevitably challenge the assumptions that stand behind the inquiry; why is the inquiry being made, what sort of information is being sought. Sensitivity is required if another culture is to be valued for its own qualities rather than the values of the inquirer. Close observation and careful listening may be necessary, new understandings may need to be accepted, attitudes and behaviours may need to change. A long term commitment may be required.

In her analysis, Sussman looks beyond verbal explanations that may be offered, towards the learning contained in the bodies of those learning. Her experience of what she calls, the symbiotic relationship between Peking Opera and the Chinese national identity, guides her in her argument. Asserting that different performance traditions offer an insight into differences in the construction of bodies and ways of knowing - ontologies and epistemologies - Sussman argues that essential, perhaps even intractable differences exist. These differences are sufficient, she suggests, to ensure that a full understanding can never be arrived at. Establishing the contrast in the broadest of terms, Sussman describes the Peking Opera's physical training regime as characterised by 'control', wherein the body is cultivated for performance within a strictly defined tradition of knowing. She compares this to

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the European realist forms of actor training - a performance tradition based on Stanislavski's 'method' which has had considerable influence on acting for film and television and some influence upon acting for the stage - which she describes as a training in 'release', wherein the training allows the body to open and emotions to flow. She sees these differences in training methods as emblematic of the differences between the experience of the Chinese performers and their local counterparts.7

Interestingly, recent changes in China, among them greater cultural and commercial contact with Western Europe, the USA and Japan, increasing urbanisation, the gradual breakdown of the centrally controlled economy, the emergence of an industrial middle class, more widespread access to consumer goods and greater use of agricultural machinery, has been accompanied by a declining interest in Peking Opera. As the connection between feudal and modern China, with its strong European influences, becomes strained, Peking Opera is being threatened with obsolescence. The values contained within the tradition and the training methods that have traditionally been used appear to be at odds with emerging priorities and practices. In a recent newspaper article, Steven Hutcheon commented upon changes in the popularity of Peking Opera.

Falling attendances, ageing audiences, a dwindling number of venues and... a sharp drop in acting standards have become the hallmark... The plight of Peking Opera has become a metaphor for the rest of the country, which has embarked on modernisation at a breakneck pace. Pausing to glance back, the nation has discovered that many of the traditions that defined ancient China have been jettisoned in the name of progress.8

Different learning and different bodies are needed for different industrial, social and cultural practices.
List of photographs (pages 157 to 160)

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1. (From left) Sally Sussman, Nigel Kellaway, Katia Molino, Xu Fengshan, Miki Oikawa (obscured) and Nicholas Opolski. Xu Fengshan leads a rehearsal of the female walk.

2. (From foreground) Shen Yong, Zhang Zhijun and Xu Fengshan. Zhang Zhijun, orchestrates the performance, while playing the sigu (Chinese hard drum).

p. 158
1. (From foreground) Katia Molino, Nigel Kellaway, Miki Oikawa and Nicholas Opolski. The performers rehearse 'langshan' (the striking of a pose, accentuated by a precise rhythmic pulse).

2. (From left) Nicholas Opolski, Nigel Kellaway, Katia Molina and Miki Oikawa. The performers rehearse the structured ensemble movement.

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1. Nigel Kellaway, Nicholas Opolski and Miki Oikawa, wearing long silk 'water-sleeves', 'circle the stage'; expanding the 'cloud hands' motion into a movement across the performance space, while Chen Baoping, Shen Yong and Xu Fengshan orchestrate their movement.

2. Nigel Kellaway rehearses the role of 'The Leader', watched by Miki Oikawa and David Wright.

p. 160
1. (Top) Miki Oikawa rehearses the role of 'The Chef', her movement orchestrated by Zhang Zhijun on the sigu, watched by (from left) Xu Fengshan, Sally Sussman, Nicholas Opolski, Nigel Kellaway and David Wright.

2. Xu Fengshan helps Nicholas Opolski prepare the role of 'The Philosopher', watched by Miki Oikawa.
Brecht and Barba on Asian theatre

Other performance analysts have also made comparisons between what have been termed 'eastern' and 'western' performance traditions. Bertolt Brecht was one of the first major European theatre theorists to present an informed analysis of Peking Opera. His writings on what he described as "traditional Chinese acting" followed a performance by, and a meeting with Mei Lan-fang, one of the most celebrated of modern Peking Opera performers, in the spring of 1935. Brecht's analysis, which Sussman used as a key reference, is largely confined to the use of the "alienation effect" in traditional Chinese theatre (Willett (ed) 1978: 91-99). Within his discussion, Brecht allocates a section to a comparison between "traditional Chinese acting" to the "European stage technique" of the time, as modelled on the teachings of Stanislavsky.

The Chinese artist's performance often strikes the Western actor as cold. That does not mean that the Chinese theatre rejects all representation of feelings. The performer portrays incidents of utmost passion, but without his delivery becoming heated.... this is like a ritual, there is nothing eruptive about it... a representation, even though an artistic one. (If a) performer shows that (a) man is not in control of himself... he points to the outward signs. And so lack of control is decorously expressed... certain particular (signs) are picked out... corresponding fluctuations in emotion are portrayed economically... (with) the actor holding himself remote from the character portrayed... He is careful not to make its sensations those of the spectator. The Western actor does all he can to bring his spectator into the closest proximity to the events and the character he has to portray. To this end he persuades him to identify himself with him (the actor) and uses every energy to convert himself as completely as possible into a different type, that of the character in question. If this complete conversion succeeds then his art has been more or less expended. Once he has become the bank clerk, doctor or general concerned he will need no more art than any of these people need in 'real life'. (p. 93-94)

Brecht describes the transformations of the "western actor" as very tiring. He argues that the actor soon gets exhausted and "begins to just copy various superficialities of the other person's speech and hearing". This, he says, leads to insubstantial work. He attributes this difficulty to "the fact that the other person has been created by an 'intuitive' and accordingly murky process which takes place in the subconscious." Brecht asserts that such difficulties do not trouble the Chinese Peking Opera performer "for he rejects complete
conversion. He limits himself from the start to simply quoting the character played" (p. 94). This analysis is part of Brecht’s critique of the theatre of the time. Identifying failings in the means by which social relationships are constructed in the understanding of the audience, Brecht argues for “new artistic principles” and “new methods of representation” to meet the “compelling demands of a changing epoch” (p. 98). He makes reference to Peking Opera therefore to comment upon problems in European theatre rather than, like Sussman, to conduct a conversation, in performance, between various training methods, theatrical styles and traditions. (Ironically many of the qualities Brecht finds in Chinese theatre including the display of “passion... without... delivery becoming heated”, the economic portrayal of “particular (signs)” and “fluctuations in emotion... (with) the actor holding himself (sic) remote from the character portrayed” can also be found in long standing, conservative European performance traditions, particularly classical ballet.)

More recently Eugenio Barba has written extensively on the differences between what have “often been identified as ‘Oriental Theatre’ and ‘Western Theatre’.” (Barba 1995: 13). (The work of Barba was also a key reference for Sussman.) Describing this as an erroneous distinction that suggests “false associations with specific cultural and geographic areas”, Barba proceeds to discuss two imaginary performers, one from the North Pole and one from the South Pole.

The North Pole performer is... less free. S/he models his/her scenic behaviour according to a well proven system of rules which define a style or a codified genre. This code of the physical or vocal action, fixed in its own particular and detailed artificiality (whether it be that of ballet or one of the classical Asian theatres, modern dance, opera or mime), is susceptible to evolution and innovation.

At the beginning (of training)... every performer who has chosen this type of theatre must conform to it and begins his/her apprenticeship by depersonalising him/herself. S/he accepts a model of a scenic persona which has been established by a tradition. The personalisation of this model will be the first sign of her/his artistic maturity.

The South Pole performer does not belong to a performance genre characterised by a detailed stylistic code. No repertoire of specific rules to be respected has been provided. The performer must construct the rules of support by her/himself.
The apprenticeship begins with the inherent gifts of her/his personality. She/he will use as points of departure the suggestions contained in the texts to be performed, the observation of daily behaviour, the emulation of other performers, the study of books and pictures, the director’s instructions. (Barba 1995: 13)

Comparing these two performers (and by implication, performance traditions), Barba argues that “contrary to what may first appear to be the case, it is the North Pole performer who has the greater artistic freedoms.” The South Pole performer, he argues “easily becomes the prisoner of arbitrariness and of a lack of points of support.” By contrast, “the freedom of the North Pole performer remains completely within the genre to which she/he belongs and is paid for with a specialisation which makes it difficult for her/him to go beyond known territory.” (Barba 1995: 13-14).

Sussman’s disaffection with her attempt to create “a style of performance which cuts across boundaries of culture and tradition” has arisen, she claims, as a consequence of her greater appreciation of the learning contained in the body and the relationship between embodied learning and culture. Despite the encouragement she received from the Chinese musicians and actors employed in the project, she continues to discount her efforts. At the conclusion of the process one Chinese actor, Xu Fengshan, expressed regret only for the lack of time for “the actors to really digest what they had learnt and be more adventurous with their creativity”. His colleague, musician Chen Baoping agreed about the lack of time, while adding, “I don’t think we went far enough. We really didn’t ‘destroy’ the form, but stayed more or less within it...but even so I was surprised by the result. It shows that there is a great possibility of making something new.” At present, Sussman says she is uncertain, and unconvinced, about what was accomplished. Without challenging her observations upon the process, I value the experience rather more so. This is in part because our ambitions for the project were different.

**Valuing the learning**

In the months that followed *Formwork* I began to reflect upon the process through which the text for the final presentation was created. I began to consider more deeply the creativity, language and learning - and the interrelationship between these three elements - that had generated and been generated by the process. My curiosity and my experience as a writer
triggered this investigation. My curiosity and my experience as an educator and a researcher propelled the investigation further.

Quite by chance, several weeks after the presentation, I came to review the notes I made and the drafts I wrote during the period of the workshop. As I did this I began to reflect upon the manner in which changes had occurred between the various drafts. As might be expected, there is a substantial difference between the meandering thoughts I put down when the subject was first broached and the written text that the final performances were drawn from. Without close scrutiny, the former is not recognisable in the latter.

It occurred to me that these changes could be mapped. They could then be characterised as evidence of the learning process that I had undergone during the writing. Each of the twelve drafts could then be seen as representing stages in my learning. Each could be seen as sign posts signifying not only my direction but my depth of involvement in the process. Through this study, the influences that contributed to those stages could then be analysed and reviewed. The learning could then be approached as subject matter and my own experience of learning, in the context of the workshop, talked about.

This method resembles that adopted by psychologist Howard Gruber. Howard Gardner (1982), reports that when Gruber told his mentor, Jean Piaget, of his intention to undertake a study of creativity, “Piaget responded sceptically, though not without sympathy, ‘It touches everything.’” (p. 352) Gruber, in his wisdom, spent ten years analysing “the emerging creativity of Charles Darwin”. He pored over voluminous records, from the books and formal papers Darwin wrote, to the scattering of notes and questions Darwin left, addressed to himself. Gardner studied Gruber’s approach.

As Gruber sees it, the student of creativity must reconstruct the mental life of the creative individual at various points in the development of his work.... ‘In his(Darwin’s) notebooks’, Gruber reports, ‘ideas tumble over each other in a seemingly chaotic fashion. The underlying order is something to be constructed, not observed.’ Accordingly, the theorist of creativity has to identify certain enduring motifs... and produce a series of ‘cognitive maps’ that capture the thinker’s view of his project at various stages of its evolution” (p. 353)

Within this work it is my own construction of meaning that I wish to document. I am using the cognitive maps of my own, the writer’s, process. In undertaking
an examination of my own creativity - as an *entree* to the general area of creativity - it seems appropriate to acknowledge the influences that were in place before the workshop began. They were many. They included the texts I read on the recommendation of the director: Brecht's essay, 'Alienation effects in Chinese acting' (Willett (ed) 1978: 91-99), a contemporary German play script, The Battle (1989) by Heiner Müller, the Complete Poems (1988) of an early 20th century author and critic Lu Hsun, the Children of the Pear Garden (1961), a highly stylised traditional opera script with an introduction by Josephine Huang Hung and a collection of 100 Chinese Myths and Fantasies (1988), edited by Ding Wangdao. I had also seen the Chinese movies Raise the Red Lantern and Farewell My Concubine in which Peking Opera is featured, as well as other Chinese films. I had also been to a performance by the Peking Opera Theatre of Tianjin which had visited Sydney less than a year earlier. To this must be added the extended discussions I had with the director in the weeks, months and years prior to the workshop. This 'showbag' of experience enabled me to prepare a considerable amount of work before the workshop began. I was aware nonetheless, that this was not enough to provide me with a deep understanding of the performance style. Perhaps this was an asset of sorts. Despite my occasional, though recurring doubts, the director expressed no lack of confidence in my capacity to contribute.

The project was explained to me, not as an attempt to replicate Peking Opera with actors trained in traditions other than Peking Opera, but as an attempt to explore the training methods used in Peking Opera with performers practised in other traditions. It was a search for both tension and agreement. Both the Chinese Peking Opera actors and musicians and the local performers who were hired to participate in the project were performers of considerable skill and experience. They were; Xu Fengshan ('Stephen'), who commenced his training in the tradition of Peking Opera in a long established school before the 1949 revolution. He was a principal artist with the Northern Kunqu Opera Company in China for over 30 years, specialising in female roles and the Male Scholar role, before coming to Australia. Zhang Zhijun ('John'), the second acting trainer was a leading performer with the China Peking Opera Company before coming to Australia. He specialised in the Old Man role for over twenty years. He is also a highly accomplished sihu (Peking Opera hard drum) player and a skilled conductor of Peking Opera music ensembles. Chen Baoping and Shen Yong, though younger and less experienced than their associates are both also highly skilled. Chen is a leading jinghu (Chinese Peking Opera violin) player and percussionist and Shen a leading yuegxin (moonlute) player.
and percussionist. The local, non-Mandarin speaking performers were: Nigel Kellaway, who has a strong background in music, dance and performance art. He has worked extensively in self-devised and group-devised projects and was a founding member of The Sydney Front. Katia Molino, a respected performer who trained in movement and mime with Entr'acte and Tadashi Suzuki. Katia was the only female non-Japanese performer chosen to work with Suzuki in his 1991 Melbourne production of Macbeth. The third local performer, Japanese-born Miki Oikawa has a strong background in dance, and has trained in Australia and Japan and worked in Australia in both dance and non-dance based productions. The fourth, Nicholas Opolski, is a NIDA trained actor and has worked in major state theatre companies, in television and film. Nicholas has a strong vocal rather than, like the other three, a movement-based training, and considerable experience in text based work. While referring to these actors as local actors or Sydney-based actors only one, Nigel, is of Anglo-Celtic background. Nicholas is the son of Polish immigrants, Katia is the daughter of Italian immigrants and Miki Oikawa is an immigrant, with Japanese parents. Each of the performers were auditioned and selected by Sussman for the very particular attributes they bought to the project. I, like the performers, considered myself to be working under her guidance and within the parameters she set. That those parameters required me, like the others, to take responsibility, to question, to explore and to interpret what I saw happening around me during the workshop, was something I valued greatly. From this perspective, the project could be described as an embodied self-organising communication system.

**Beginning the writing**

While a number of images developed prior to the workshop remained significant well into the process, the substance of the text grew as I became educated in the training methods used by the director. From my starting point as an observer (I spent a lot of time sitting on a wooden bench in a cold church hall, watching and listening, making notes and imagining) I gradually came to understand the part I was to play. I, like the locally trained performers, was participating in a learning process. My learning arose in relation to their learning. Their learning was physical and imaginal. My learning, drawn from their learning, was physical and imaginal also. I was required to take responsibility for my learning, to represent it in a script written for performance. While within the ensemble and thus part of the learning system, I had specific responsibilities of my own.

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The first draft of the text was written before the workshop began, and influenced largely by presuppositions. It was constructed around a central character whom I called, and who called himself, 'the anthropologist'. As Levi-Strauss (1994) suggests, the allegiance of the anthropologist is divided between two communities. One community he observes and documents, the other community observes the documents he creates. Like myself, at the early stage of the process, the anthropologist was detached from the community he sought to document. He observed them from afar with a pretence of knowledge and an abundance of confidence in his authority. "I am the custodian," he said, "quickly! Their rituals, their secrets, their heartfelt emotions. I must write them down." "Your tragedy, your happiness is safe in my hands" he mumbled to himself as he reconstructed a hide from which to observe: "Tarpaulin on the roof, insulated, new steel beams. Furniture with cushions too. Binoculars... The view". While I have called this an extract from a 'first draft', it is in fact an extract from little more than a ragged collection of images and ideas. Reflecting on it now, I find it curious that the character was written speaking in rhyme. This was not a considered strategy. The rhyme arose in the writing. Perhaps it is a comment upon the ease of rhyme, perhaps it was a product of my earliest feelings about the style of presentation that might be required. Of greater interest however, is my construction of parallels between my position in the project and the position from which the Anthropologist casts his view. It is as if the view of the Anthropologist was mine. As if, through the Anthropologist, I was speaking for myself. His was my attitude. I was then, little more than a very distant observer.

**The refugee**

The second draft was also developed before the workshop began (though I was at that stage involved in much of the early planning). In that draft I teased out a rough image of a character that I was developing an increasing interest in. I called the character 'the refugee'. The refugee was a further development of 'the anthropologist'. The anthropologist's confusion around identity and commitment is shared by the refugee. His (I viewed the character at this time as male) emotional involvement in these problems was however, much greater. That strong emotional involvement contributed to 'the refugee' becoming an image (though not a character) of long standing significance.10

Re-reading my notes following the workshop, I began to reflect upon the dilemma of the refugee. The refugee leaves one community by compulsion
and finds, or seeks, safe refuge in another. The refugee is different to the immigrant, a degree of compulsion separates them, (though no person leaves one place and moves to another without feeling some degree of compulsion, be it economic, political, spiritual or existential). The refugee fears for his or her life at home. The refugee is a survivor who seeks accommodation, solace and security. The refugee leaves a considerable amount behind, usually a lack of social order and/or a hostile government, but more importantly a network of family and friends, a history of associations, a culture and a language through which that history and that culture has been understood. But there are other refugees. It is not only political upheaval that can give rise to the refugee experience. "I am the emotional refugee", I wrote in a margin, as a note to come back to. "I have had to leave feelings behind me." I repeated the line. It stayed in my mind. It reverberated within me. As a metaphor for a variety of experiences, not the least mine, ‘the refugee’ continued (and continues) to ferment. I find it next to impossible to conceive of the refugee as separate from the emotion that the refugee experience contains. “I am the emotional refugee. I have had to leave feelings behind me.” Is not the experience of the child who, arriving at adulthood, feels the need to leave the family home and establish a home of his or her own, analogous to that of the refugee? Yes, but... I hesitated. Generally, the experience of the latter lacks the intensity of the former. Yet the analogy has validity. “I am the emotional refugee.” But the refugee cannot return. “I have had to leave feelings behind me.”

The refugee knows two ways of living, two contexts within which living can occur, two languages, two ways of interpreting and understanding the processes of life. They are the way of the old and the way of the new. S/he is constantly required to compare and contrast, to negotiate between these two ways of knowing. S/he is required to manage this conflict in the present. S/he translates present events and experiences through a reservoir of past events and experiences. The associations through which the translation occurs are the product of past processes of translation. This process is replete with learning. That learning walks and talks. It holds its head high, it talks to friends in short sentences, it sits quietly again, it lifts its eyes and looks out. It imagines the world anew.

As I worked with these ideas, I identified with the refugee. In my own experience I tracked down the signals, I captured the signs, I imagined the experience as mine. I imagined it as analogous to my function - my creative responsibility as ‘writer’ - in Formwork. I was there to translate events in the
new world of the workshop through the old world of my experience. As I pondered this it became clear to me that the process of translating experience that is entered into by the refugee is the process of anyone who learns. This is the experience of any self-conscious participant in any self conscious learning process. Only in reflection, it is explained. The product of the process may be suspected beforehand, anticipated or even wished for, but it cannot be fully known. It can only be known in the moment, reflected upon and explained in the next moment. So, as I entered into this experience, I had an image and an understanding of a process and perhaps even a character: ‘the refugee’. These meditations influenced the structure and content of the next few drafts.

‘New’ knowledge

As the workshop process got underway and I was introduced to both the local and the Chinese performers, my participation in the project became more considerable. The image of ‘the refugee’ was consolidated as I gained a greater appreciation of the histories of each of the Chinese performers. Each were and still are refugees. Each have, as a result of perceived and/or actual threats within their homeland, left family members, friends and established careers to make a ‘new’ home, in a ‘new’ land, within a ‘new’ culture. In doing so, they have confronted ‘new’ knowledge, ‘new’ authority, ‘new’ forms of respect and by no means least, ‘new’ bodies shaped by ‘new’ learning. These new phenomena continue to challenge the learning that has shaped them, the systems - carefully crafted by decades of training - that they walk with.

In the next draft characters were delineated numerically. Hence, ‘Character One’ - who grew out of the image of ‘the anthropologist’ into that of ‘the refugee’ - spoke of his experience.

Everyday I see them. Reflections in windows. Just over my shoulder. Disappearing round corners, I see them and I smell them. In the stale afternoon breeze, from a kitchen beyond a high wall, from the block of flats next to the bus stop, from the home units next to the store. I smell them and I feel them. Stepping in my front door. Standing between me and the wall. Looking down at me as I lie on my bed and recall. The war. I am the refugee. Get behind me. Memories. The mattress is moulded to the sagging weight of my body. My wife. I recall.
Stylistic boundaries

The third draft - written during the early workshop sessions - displays a strong response to Peking Opera training methods and performance strategies, particularly the use of percussion. The notes taken during these sessions focussed on the relationship between the form and its characters. I came to understand during these sessions that Peking Opera is a highly refined form of music drama, that the works that are performed in Peking Opera are, for the most part, established, well known and small in number, that performances are built around recognised character-types (the old man, the warrior, the scholar, the young girl and others) and that just as a classical concert pianist or a classical ballet dancer may perform a well-known work with great sensitivity or delicacy or ebullience, so the Peking Opera actor may display ‘virtuosity’ in the performance of a character-type. As the director continued to remind me, aesthetic virtuosity is the quality that is most valued by a Peking Opera audience. Emotional identification with characters, through their physical and emotional journeys, so valued in European realist theatre, is neither expected of audiences nor sought by Peking Opera performers. 11

As the workshop progressed it became obvious that the style and the technique with which the Peking Opera actor creates his character is very strictly defined. On one occasion I was astonished to hear Zhang Zhijun distinguish between positionings of the feet of a performer with the comment (translated by the director), “This is not Peking Opera; this is Peking Opera”. I came to understand that while Peking Opera characters are defined by their movement, that movement has its origins in another era. An audience therefore requires cultural knowledge as well as aesthetic sensibility to appreciate the subtleties that are being explored. The positioning of the hands may be all important. The warrior, for example, enters the stage holding his hands as he would if leading a horse. This is a classical image. Of course nowadays on stage, he does not lead a horse but the positioning of his hands are enough to tell an informed audience about his status and his history and the possibilities inherent in his role. These subtleties are articulated in conversation with live music. In the workshop I heard the rhythms being established and the performances being built. I heard the drums, I heard the cymbals, I heard the bells. I saw characters move, time pass, locations shift and relationships unfold within the bounds of the music. I realised that a text for such a performance would require that the language patterns employed in conversation be co-ordinated with the music that patterns the movement of the
performance. It became clear that the contents of any speech need to be integrated with, rather than separate from the mood created by music and the meaning articulated through movement. The fact that none of the Chinese employed in *Formwork* had a strong understanding of English made it even more important that the meaning of the words I wrote could be conveyed through their sound or their performance sufficiently to allow the percussionists to score their impact. I began to appreciate that in Peking Opera, image, music and movement are co-equal with word and that in *Formwork* I was being asked to work with - not be served by, as most dramatists are - each of these communication systems.

*The Crocodile’*

The image that I used to carry the next stage of the writing forward was ‘The Crocodile’. This character became a further development of the refugee. By naming the refugee, ‘The Crocodile’, I began working with a persona. As a character, the crocodile entered into a particular learning process drawn from the general learning that the refugee experience entails.

The image of ‘The Crocodile’ arose at first as a metaphor for the performance style that I saw being developed in the workshop. It was at first, a self-conscious reflection upon Peking Opera. Observing the workshop it occurred to me that, like Peking Opera, the crocodile has arrived at an evolutionary standstill. It has reached a degree of specialisation that renders it impervious to demands that it evolve further. It now requires that others adapt to it. Reminiscent of a brutal past, it teases us with an uncertain future. I saw the crocodile as an endangered form threatened by an encroaching civilisation armed with technologies that far outstrip its natural capacity to survive. Like Peking Opera, if the crocodile is to survive it must be protected. I could tease the metaphor out further. The crocodile is an animal that, like Peking Opera, is admired though insufficiently understood and insufficiently appreciated by those not learned in its ways. Its greatest legacy is its reputation, insufficient people know it at close quarters. Its by-products - its costuming, its narratives, its mythology - are more celebrated and more accessible than the thing itself. Hence, the first lines the character I called ‘The Crocodile’ spoke - broken up in staccato, in conversation with the cymbals and the Chinese hard drum were: “I am the crocodile. I am isolated, I am specialised, I am highly skilled.”
Connecting characters

As stated earlier, the mornings of the first weeks were taken up with basic physical training - meditation and visualisation, breathing, stretches, bends, kicks and movement patterns - in particular the cloudhand sequence - and liangshan, accompanied by percussion. In the afternoons of these weeks the performers were trained in the walks and stances of some of the principal roles. The female roles included Qingyi (the maiden), Huadan (the coquette) and Wudan (the female warrior). The male roles included Laosheng (the old man) and Wusheng (the male warrior). Each of the initiates - both male and female - were trained in each of the roles. This helped to develop a sense of ensemble.

Various patterns such as 'circling the stage', 'figure eights' and the use of the body, hands and eyes to draw the audience along with the performer in the space were practised, as well as the exact nature of the step, with its need to control and still the upper body, while the motion of the legs and feet create the illusion of water flowing.\(^\text{12}\)

Watching the actors 'circling the stage' in wave upon wave reinforced the unity, rather than individuality, of the performers. They moved in relationship to each other. Sometimes physically close, other times distant, the rhythm of the performance became my guide as I sought words through which to extend and enrich the movement. As the actors became increasingly learned in the processes, individual ontogenies were drawn into co-ontogenic patterns which I felt called upon to explain.

Seeing them, in the early stage of the training, as four parts of a whole, I felt no need to differentiate between individuals in the material I was writing. Each of the actors served a common purpose. They created a shared image. They told the same tale. As they moved around the stage in sweeping waves - often wearing the long silk 'water-sleeves' that are such an important part of Peking Opera - the actors resembled, on occasions, a twisting, shifting, weaving, perhaps even fire-breathing, dragon, (and one modern version of the dragon is the crocodile).\(^\text{13}\)

Even then, in the fourth draft of the script, I felt no need to identify the actors as anything but A, B, C, and D. Furthermore I saw each of the parts, at that time, as interchangeable. No specific actor was thought of for any specific role.
Some of the lines that follow were spoken by one of the four actors, others by more than one.

A:     I am the crocodile.
B, C, D: I am isolated. I am specialised. I am highly skilled.
A:     Look towards the west.
B:     Look towards the evening sky.
C:     Look towards the day to come.
D:     Look towards the night.
A:     I am the emotional refugee.
B:     I have had to leave emotions behind me.

Tension and release

Sussman describes communication in Peking Opera as a function of the tension and release of physical energy. She claims that Peking Opera performers have, over time, worked to refine this aspect of their performance. She speaks of the different relationships that can be created with an audience when performers ‘move energy’ around the stage in different ways. She compares, for example, the movement of actors to the fore of the stage in a straight line, to the movement of actors in circular patterns around the stage. She speaks of the ‘feeling states’ that can be created in audience members by the patterned movement of bodies across or around a limited space. Accordingly she argues that a choreographer working in the style of Peking Opera is required to make important and strategic decisions between movement patterns. Each constructs, in Sussman’s terms, a ‘pattern of energy’ that has a particular effect (on performers and audiences). Contrasting yin and yang images - hard and soft, straight and round, fast and slow, hot and cold and more - are constructed and juxtaposed through such choreography. Hence, while aesthetic images are created, feeling states are evoked as well. Sussman describes these feelings states as responses to the physical presentation skills of individuals and groups of performers within the ensemble. It is the feeling states in response to these skills, that are valued and celebrated by an ‘educated’ Peking Opera audience. It is the creation of such feeling states, in the experience of the audience, that define virtuosity. This is quite different to the manner in which the European tradition of realist drama, with its emphasis on the skilful portrayal of emotional conflicts within and between characters, has come to value performance quality.
Continuing the training

Greater assurance with movement emerged as the training continued. As this became apparent, we began to think about the presentation that was to mark the accomplishments of the workshop.

In the third week, an increasing amount of time was devoted to the “aesthetic, spatial, structural and role making conventions” that underpin Peking Opera. Sussman says some of the ideas that governed work undertaken during this time were,

Aesthetic(s) governing the body and shaping (of) all movement on stage, roundness, balance, the motif of the figure 8 (the aesthetic originates in the symbol of the tao and thus the body is balanced at any moment in an equilibrium of yin and yang). The (balanced) structuring of movement... (and) its relationship with percussion, which uses both ‘empty’ and ‘full’ beats to correlate with the preparation and execution of movements (and the) idea of beauty in Peking Opera... even ugliness was beautified.

Responding to the input of one of the performers (Nigel Kellaway) attempts were made to heighten the distinctions between male and female characters. The cloudhand sequence was expanded into a figure 8 movement traversing the length and breadth of the stage and rapid transformations between male and female characters were introduced as the performers sought to explore the tensions that are contained in the traditional differences.

The performers travelled through the figure 8s and at each juncture of the 8, a role transformation took place from qingyi (maiden) to laosheng (old man) to huadan (coquette) to wudan (female warrior). We extended the moment of transformation so that the performers could master and experience this change more acutely. The musicians worked closely together with the performers to devise a specific rhythm for each role and a rhythmic change to accent the role changes... Chen Baoping talked about the structuring of a performance in a cycle of distinct phases. This was extremely useful when we began working on characters derived from David’s text.

Sussman list the phases that comprise the cycle as;
1. **QI**: Beginning/preparation, corresponding physically to taking a breath, focussing the energy in the body and lifting up from the lower back in preparation for locomotion.

2. **CHENG**: Flow/continuity, corresponding to a sustained and constant placement of energy throughout the execution of a movement of series of movements.

3. **ZHUAN**: Shift/change, corresponding to shifting the focus of the body/eyes etc in the direction opposite to that which it is moving, ie [preparation for going forward and thus accenting there forward.

4. **HE**: Coming together, corresponding to the liangshan or striking the pose, when the body focuses on a sharp meeting point outwards towards the audience, accented with percussion and is held in a moment of contained energy.  

As conversations continued in performance - between the performers and the musicians, between performers and the (imagined) audience and between individual performers - I found that more distinct impressions of the four characters I had now decided to write emerged. This was a physical, emotional and intellectual experience. I felt my way into the understanding that was needed. My body, like my imagination, twisted and turned. I had trouble sitting still during workshop sessions. I had trouble sleeping. I had trouble sitting down and writing.

**The four characters**

The first character that rose from the swampy confusion occurred to me as an innocent. A character, simple in thought, manner and expression. A character ‘more acted upon than acting’. A character who could, inadvertently, upset the balance contained within the all encompassing bounds of ‘The Crocodile’, and let chaos loose.

Narratives generally begin when a balance of tensions - which construct unity - are broken. Inevitably, the character who breaks the unity suffers as a result of this action. However, if the character is an innocent, in a simple story like this, that character must emerge from the suffering, wiser. A new form of balance must emerge. This is the journey of learning, the process of change, the transformation of an individual, and through that individual, a community. Necessarily, conflict experienced by one within such a system has an impact.
upon others. Inevitably, levels of crisis are moved through before a new balance can be formed.

If the 'innocent' was to suffer, he would have to leave home. (The character was originally written as a male but was developed further then performed by a female actor.) He would have to become an exile of sorts or, as he may in modern times, a refugee. And of course the workshop was a workshop about the experience of refugees. It comprised refugees. The refugee experience abounded. This innocent would have to become, as I wrote in my notes at the time, "Everyman, trying to leave his past behind". If I was to identify the one character who upset the dramatic tension that sustained the long standing relationship between the four participants, I would also have to identify the other characters and the qualities they represented that enabled this balance to be sustained, before providing the impetus for it to be upset.

If there was to be a character (the 'innocent') who acted unknowingly and asserted little authority - though sustained a certain regard - there would have to be a countervailing force. A leader, a person of authority, a person who consciously sought to maintain the relationships that sustained the unity. This would be my second character. Applying the principles of yin and yang, what the Innocent lacked in confidence, the Leader would have in abundance. The small measure of conscious consideration that the Innocent applied to his experience would lie in stark contrast to the conscious calculation of the Leader. The Leader, who I also viewed as representing the authority of the state, was juxtaposed therefore against the individual within the state; the large against the small, the important against the insignificant, the apparently powerful against the apparently weak. Inevitably strength in one would have to be balanced against weakness in the other. As in any systemic relationship, change in any one member or component, has to produce change in the others.

It seemed necessary that the two other characters that sustained the balance would also have to have a complementary relationship. As much of the workshop revolved around mind-body relationships it seemed appropriate that the third character could be circumscribed as representing mind, and the fourth circumscribed as representing body. Hence, in the sixth draft four distinct characters were drawn from the whole. They were called the Crocodile, the Leader, the Chef and the Philosopher. I imagined them at the beginning of the story, as balanced (see Fig. 2). Inevitably, that balance

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would have to be upset. (The stages of development; from the whole, to the balance of parts, to the imbalance caused by the loss of one part of the whole is depicted in Fig. 3.)

**Introducing the characters**

In the next few drafts I worked on developing stories about the relationship between the four characters. While I imagined the four characters as initially four parts of a whole - each physically and emotionally connected to the other - I imagined them also as shifting, moving, interacting and being transformed. Accordingly, I scripted a movement sequence in which each individual would begin, subsumed by the group, then emerge, then merge back, then emerge again. I imagined it as an unfolding motion. A weaving and interweaving of community. I saw this as a starting point. A point from which individual characters could be introduced.

A: Behind me
B: Heroics.
C: Behind me,
D: Suspense.
A: Behind me,
B: Expectation.
C: Behind me.
D: Endless
A: Bodies
B: Hunched forward
C: In search of...
D: Youth.
(PAUSE)
A: I am the crocodile.
A, B, C, D: I am isolated. I am specialised. I am highly skilled.
B: I, the leader.
C: I, the chef.
D: I, the philosopher. You...
B, C, D: The fool.
(PAUSE)
A: I am the crocodile.
Fig. 2  The Crocodile, the Leader, the Chef and the Philosopher

Fig. 3  The balance of characters
Issues of balance, symmetry and the dynamics arising from interrelationships between parts of a whole were central to the work from the earliest stages. In retrospect, it was not characters that were central to my thinking at this time but relationships. Through imagining a set of relationships I was able to arrive at characters and explanations of the understandings (and/or lack of understandings) that linked them. It is shifts in relationships therefore that determined the manner in which the system changed. I saw the relationship as something that contained the four characters. When those relationships changed the system still contained the characters but the pressure that arose caused the system to change. The visual image I worked with was a biological one. It was that of a three dimensional cell with a cellular 'skin' that, as a result of internal pressure, changed shape, its original shape became stretched or distorted. The distortion of one part of a cell (or system) inevitably has an effect upon other parts. This sets up a process that results in further change as the system re-organises itself. Another image might be that of the family. Pressure on one family member puts pressure on the relationships that define the family, this has an impact on other family members. Self-organising systems theory has been put to considerable use in family therapy. (Goolishian, H & Winderman, L., 1988.)

In her introductory notes, Sussman wrote of the need for the “total harmony of each part of the body in a single gesture”.

the waist is the pivot of all body movement and other parts of the body are linked in a balance of directional opposites: feet/hands/eyes, ankles/wrists, elbows/knees, shoulders/ships. From the pivot of the waist, the movement of the body and all gestures, stances and choreography are traced in the form of a three dimensional figure 8. This figure 8 represents the Dao (tao) and thus the body is balanced at any one moment in an equilibrium of YIN and YANG (e.g. weight and weightlessness; hard and soft; high and low; concave and convex; flexed and unflexed; fist and open hand). 19

As long as balance remained there would be order. Order in the images that arose and the patterns that developed in movement, in the conversations between the musicians and the actors and the dialogue spoken by individual performers. As soon as that order was upset, when either the mind, the body, the state or the individual was thrown out of balance the symmetry and order in the performance would also be upset. Perhaps even chaos would prevail
(which would lead to different explanations of different systems b different participants).

**The storyline**

As the characters and their relationships became more focussed, both the style and content of the text became more clear. If the Crocodile was to become a refugee, there must be a reason why he leaves home. There must be a reason why the energy that holds the four players together is broken. If it were to be misunderstanding - even as a consequence of innocence or simplicity - there had to be some substance to that misunderstanding. Some suggestion of, or apprehension of, duplicity. To depict the Crocodile as vacuous and stupid would be to counter the integrity that maintained the unity between the four characters. The Crocodile needed to have some basis for the interpretation of events that he falls prey to. There would have to be a history. That history may not have to be spelt out but it must at least be inferred.

The script that I was arriving at - a rapid interweaving of short comments and lines spoken in unison by more than one character, combined with the percussion that plays such a significant role in this style of performance - placed great emphasis upon the rhythmic patterings of vocal exchange. Working in this fashion I found the use of rhyme not only easy but appropriate. I found it reminiscent of the rhyme used so successfully for so long in children’s story telling. Such rhymes emphasise, to an audience not educated in Peking Opera, the accessibility of the subject matter despite the exotic nature of the performance style.

The next few drafts were focussed on the structuring of a storyline appropriate to the style. That script (the draft arrived at, by the conclusion of the workshop is included at Appendix 4) is summarised in the extracts that follow. The extracts are taken from various of the final drafts. In these extracts, character A is the Crocodile, B is the Leader, C is the Chef and D is the Philosopher.

```
B: Ffff...
B, C, D: Fffoooood.
D: I eat, thus I am.
B: Hazelnuts, honey dew, strawberries, lime. Venison, veal, apricots, thyme.
C: Ready? Leader?
```
Having made the decision to leave, the Crocodile undertakes a long and difficult journey. This is performed symbolically in a series of figure 8 - 'cloudhand' - sweeps around the performance area. The text that supports these sweeps track the Crocodile through a series of different environments until he finds himself, at last, in a land in which he can rest, albeit temporarily. In exile, his experience resembles that of the Refugee (and many of the lines written for the Refugee were adapted for this circumstance). Meanwhile, in the home land, the disorientation caused by the departure of the Crocodile creates problems for the Leader. These problems increase as time passes. The Leader, nevertheless, is reluctant to accept responsibility.

B: Where is the Crocodile? It's been almost a day.
C: A week.
D: A month. Can't you count.
B: Who got him upset then. Which one is at fault.
(PAUSE)
C, D: Croc, croc, croc, Crocodile.
(PAUSE)
B: Gone.
C: Lost.
D: Wronged.
B: No point getting miserable...

Finally, fearing a loss of authority the Leader agrees to lead the others away from their home to attempt a reunification with the Crocodile.

B: The solution it seems, to this melancholy disease...
C, D: Crocodile.
B: He'll be back. You'll see. Meanwhile...
C: Let's pack bags and travel (I'm scared on my own).
B: Please. The orders come from me. (I must try to take the lead) Put brandy into casks. Put muesli into sacks. (PAUSE) My brave and faithful subjects. (Travel makes me ill.) Let us find... the Crocodile.

The Leader, the Chef and the Philosopher set off in search of the Crocodile. Their journey is performed in one of the more emblematic of the movement sequences developed during the workshop. The script contributes to the rhythm of the performance sequence. It introduces a series of ensemble movements (which the Crocodile contributes to). The script provides considerable time and space for the director to construct images of travel.

A: Travel is like dreaming.
C: Red mountains.
D: Green rivers.
C: Blue forests.
D: White seas.
A: Move forward. Follow my trail.

The Crocodile, a long way from home, feels a strong connection to his homeland and the significance it holds. Alone, he laments his fate. Without his knowledge however, the search continues.

A: Crocodile's in exile. Should I become the modern reptile? Should I wear a tailored suit? Should I take up ocean racing? Trade in futures? Learn the flute?

(PAUSE)
B, C, D: Crocodiiiiile.
C: Your village.
D: ... Caaaaalls.
B: Guilt.
C: Envy.
D: Suspicion.
B: Hate. (PAUSE) Responsible people.
C: Don't neglect their...
D: Croc, croc, croc, Crocodile.
B: Fate.

The Crocodile too is thinking of the past. His difficulties in adapting to the new land lead him to ponder those he left behind. His distress is now palpable.


The Leader, Chef and Philosopher finally track their compatriot down. Upon arriving in the new land, each character has an individual response to the new environment.

C: The breeze warms my nose.
D: The waves lap my skin.
B: The sun burns me. Madly. Again.
C: This foreign land. Wonderful. The food, the light the...
B: Cyclones too.
D: The dreams, desires intrigue me here.

Upon their reunion with the Crocodile and realising that the Crocodile is reluctant to welcome his antagonists, the Leader makes an offer.

B: I will find you a swamp. To sink down in.

Considering the offer, the Crocodile asks himself;
A: If daffodils can flower. If kangaroos can hop. If green tomatoes redden, cannot leaders change their spots?

The Chef and the Philosopher recognise the conflict and respond.

C: It's dietary.
D: It's cynical.
C: Not likeable.
D: But possible.

At this point the draft that was being worked on at the end of the workshop, concluded.

It is apparent that while individual characters were important, of greater importance were the relationships between those characters. It was through considerations upon the system of relationship that I arrived at individual characters and it was through consideration upon those systems that the narrative unfolded.

Refining the text

The characters and the relationships

With the characters, the relationships and the narrative defined, albeit rather simplistically, in the next few drafts I added detail to that which already existed and fashioned the work more effectively to the skills of the actors and the requirements of the director. As the workshop element of Formwork entered its final phase those requirements were defined increasingly by the presentation that was scheduled.

Realising that there would be neither the time, the required skill level nor indeed the script to present a full scale performance, it was decided that a program would be compiled to introduce the audience to the process through parts of the script. It was decided that each performer should be given an opportunity to develop a set piece and that another segment be developed to display the actors working as an ensemble. These decisions determined the direction further writing took. Two tasks emerged as priorities. The first was the development of a more complete definition of each of the four characters, through a brief monologue. The second was the development of section of text to further enrich the character based walks being developed as ensemble

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pieces. These walks became known as 'the male walk' and 'the female walk'. They were developed from the movement patterns of male and female characters that had been worked on. The male walk was refined by Zhang Zhijun and the female walk by Xu Fengshan.

Changes between the final drafts were minimal. My absorption in the process meant that I felt attuned to subtle shifts in the attitudes of and relationships between performers. This contributed to some refinements, but the most significant influence upon the work was further insight into the Tao or Yin/Yang aspect of Peking Opera character-types. This insight arose during discussions with the director. It was pointed out that in performance, Peking Opera characters engage in dialogue behind a 'fourth wall' (an imagined wall between the stage and the audience). During this dialogue one character may turn to the audience and through something akin to the western theatrical convention of the 'aside', explain his real motivation. In contrast to the psychological realism of western drama where the actor incorporates his motivation into his performance, the Peking Opera actor can show one face or attitude to one character in the stage world, then reveal that face as a mask and display his real face or attitude to the audience. I took some liberties with this convention. In my script the asides took the form of the inner thoughts of the characters. In the set pieces that were developed for performance - and structured to work with the percussion and movement - all characters except the Crocodile showed vulnerability they might otherwise have hidden. Hence all except the Crocodile used asides. I reasoned that because the Crocodile did not disguise his/her feelings, he/she did not need to make use of the convention. The following set pieces, which were presented to the invited audience display the use of the aside.


B: Crocodile. Do not challenge. I am the Leader. (Though secretly I doubt.) When I was young. A hairless boy. I played. Violent games. I've scars to show. Control. Was then what adults used. Now I'm grown. A giant
inside. (Though fear I fail to inspire.) Leadership’s the game I play. I step forth. Grown strong. I’m not a child. Any more. Like some.

C: I am the Chef. (PAUSE) Remember. The last time we made curried beef. My heart pumped blood frantically. A crimson flush flooded my skin. I feared that you. (The Crocodile; my friend.) You’d laugh. (My allergy is my disgrace.) Remember, you just looked at me. You smiled. The laugh as it occurred to you. How did I train my heart to spin. From head to toe at such a speed. What flows so slowly when we. (LAUGH) Bleed.

D: I am the Philosopher. (PAUSE) Crocodile. (He has character, but lacks intelligence.) I told you, the Croc, of Descartes. I told you, the Croc, of Marx. I told you, the Croc, of Heidegger. (PAUSE) Twice. (PAUSE) Your eyes are beginning to close. (He never listens.) Now. If free will is available. Belief arrives by choice. But faith is beneficial. Only assuming god is nice. Stop sleeping. Reptile. (PAUSE) He closes his eyes so gently. I tip-toe from the room. Crocodile, sleep sweetly. You simple minded animal. (I’m a monumental. Bore.)

The walks

The character-based walks that were performed as ensemble pieces also required that two sides of the characters be displayed. Sussman described the walks as a four stage process. BEGINNING - FLOW - CHANGE - NEW STATE (OR NEW BEGINNING). Thus within each walk a transformation needed to occur that indicated the change within the character type. These transformations were structured into both the male and the female walks. Both male and female actors performed both walks. The words that were used to orchestrate these movement pieces were written specifically for this process and were not part of the narrative.

Female walk:

A, B, C, D: My heart is a cloud.
I hover in the stillness of the sky.
I am patience.
Your servant.
A smile of virtue.
My head tilts, oblique.
The danger.
Once butterfly.
Now snake.
My body curls slowly.
I crush.
Imagining.
Smooth sincere seductive.
You deceive me.
Bones shatter.
My pressure.
Maintained.
Languidly.

Male walk:
A, B, C, D: My sentinels guard the palace.
My tempests guard the sea.
My soldier.
His brave chest bared.
Guards the people.
With dignity.
Shield and spear.
Courage.
Be.
Hyena.
Treachery.
Whispering on duty.
Purposefully.
He moves.
Ears lift.
Eyes shift.
Mouths repeat rumours.
They will assassinate.
Me.

The other section that was worked into an ensemble piece, (mentioned earlier) also required tight choreography and an awareness of the relationship between the group and the individual.
A: Behind me
B: Heroics.
C: Behind me,
D: Suspense.
A: Behind me,
B: Expectation.
C: Behind me.
D: Endless
A: Bodies
B: Hunched forward
C: In search of...
D: Youth.

The work done by the director and the actors in animating these words went far beyond my pre-conceived notions of what was possible. Of these segments Sussman wrote, in her report to the Australia Council,

David had written a particular section that was like a piece of music 'scored' for four voices. Because it was even further away from the individually one-actor centred Peking Opera approach, I decided to extend the work above into creating a group sequence. In this case the text was the starting point and it provided the rhythmic structure and punctuation points for the movement. The words also contained a geography which defined to a certain extent, the use of space. Furthermore, the very nature of the group also expressed a hierarchy of status. At first the performers worked within the abstract, dividing the text and movement between them to create a unified spatial / sculptural / percussive image and later they injected some elements of their developed characters. Again the Chinese artists worked on each moment, clarifying, articulating and extending, to make the piece more expressive, theatrical and cleanly structured. This piece seemed the closest to expressing some kind of performance style, founded in Peking Opera techniques, but breaking through its aesthetic and cultural concerns.20

Clearly, in becoming absorbed by the process of developing a text through participation in a cross cultural theatre workshop, I had a specific context within which to evaluate my creativity. This suggests that my creativity was, in part, my ability to adapt my skills to a given circumstance. In short, to learn.
Further definition

As days and nights pass and I again read and re-read the drafts I prepared for Formwork I feel the need to comment further upon the style of writing that unfolded during the process. This analysis involves reflection upon the relationships and the systems of understanding that intersected and intertwined and comprised the process. It involves an interpretation or explanation of an experience that I was, along with a number of others, an active participant in.

The Chinese percussion that punctuates performance was a very significant factor in the development of the text. The percussion suggests formal limitations to the expression that I could employ. This has been alluded to before but deserves emphasis. The short sentences, the sharp images, the layering of visual and verbal references, the building towards effects, the rapid interplay between individuals and the pauses that are structured into the writing are all a consequence of the relationship between music and movement that is contained within the form.

In Peking Opera, percussion I discovered, is used to heighten experiences. Peking Opera musicians don’t score moments in the action in the way, for example, most film makers working in American, European and Australian commercial cinema score moments. In Peking Opera music is constructed in conversation with the performers rather than as a means of signalling information to the audience. Additionally, in American, European and Australian commercial cinema percussion is rarely used alone. It is generally thought to lack the subtlety that is deemed necessary.\textsuperscript{21} By contrast, in Peking Opera percussion is the principal form of instrumentation. (In Formwork percussion was the only form of instrumentation.) There are a wide variety of drums, cymbals, bells and other devices used, the majority of which are alien to the European tradition of music making. And while instruments other than percussion - usually stringed instruments - can be used, they are used like percussion, to underscore the physical action on stage. The musician and the actor genuinely need each other. Their relationship is symbiotic. Neither is subordinate to the other. They share the stage, both are performing live, both are within eye-sight of each other and usually, the audience, both work with the ideas, imagination and energy of the other to create the tension that sustains the performance. Unless both reach their crescendos together, the energy of the performance is dissipated.
As the writer, I saw my role in Formwork as somewhat similar to that of the musicians. I was there to create sounds and rhythms as much as words, which the actors could use to generate movement around the stage to build a stronger performance that would invite the audience and the musicians into the interplay even further. Not only did I want to write words to suit the instrumentation, I wanted to write words that would enable the performers and the musicians to extend each other towards technical virtuosity. Narrative structure and the gradual unfolding of character were of less importance to me, (particularly in preparing for the workshop presentation). I was writing to provide opportunities for the display of the skills learned in the workshop, rather than to draw the audience into the emotional conflicts of and between fictional characters. While in my script I did invent four fictional types (hardly characters) and I did invent conflicts within and between those types the conflicts were sufficiently transparent to enable attention to be focussed on the performances rather than the narrative thread.

Nevertheless, the manner in which I elected to portray individuals deserves further discussion. The Crocodile, Chef, Philosopher and Leader are akin to, what are called in Peking Opera, 'character-types'. They are simple, they are outlines, they are very broadly drawn. As I sketched them, I found myself playing with them. By placing these character-types in a conflict that caused them to be transported beyond their home territory into a physical and social environment as ignorant of them as they are of it, I found myself enjoying them even more so. I was able to stretch them, to tease them out. In the process I realised, to my surprise, that I was bringing them - these Peking Opera character-types - closer to my experience. I found I was identifying with them more and more rather than relating to them as representatives of an exotic form. I was, I realised, bringing them to my home and writing my experience of home as theirs. This is an important recognition. In the context of the project, it emphasises my experience. While my experience is not an experience of an alien culture my confidence as a writer enables me to imagine that my experience includes experience enough to allow me to feel my way into the experience of others. Yet as a writer representing others to others, it is remarkable for me - humbling might be a more appropriate word - to realise that I am finally only talking to and about myself.

The issue of style also deserves further comment. While the work, in style and content, holds some resemblance to a children's story, my thoughts were influenced much more by the short moral fables told by ancient Chinese
philosophers, in particular, story tellers like Chuang Tzu. Chuang Tzu was one of the earliest members of the Taoist school. De Bary (1960) describes him as a sceptic. “Nothing delights him more than to show the relativity of things, and indulge his gift for satire at the expense of conventional belief and behaviour” (p. 63). Chuang Tzu (1964) regularly used anecdote, allegory, parable and paradox to make his points. One of his more memorable stories concludes with the following.

The fish trap exists because of the fish; once you’ve gotten the fish, you can forget the trap. The rabbit snare exists because of the rabbit; once you’ve gotten the rabbit, you can forget the snare. Words exist because of meaning; once you’ve gotten the meaning, you can forget the words. Where can I find a man who has forgotten words so I can have a word with him? (p. 140)

While the elegance of the logic holds an aesthetic appeal for me, while it is witty, and clever and it teases with its seeming profundity, I find most meaning in the analysis when I consider it in the context of performance and performance studies. Communication that does not require words, that is perhaps even beyond words, is the objective pursued by Artaud. His demand for a language that is “somewhere in between gesture and thought” (Artaud 1977: 68) is somewhat akin that which Chuang Tzu alludes. It is also one of the objectives of Aaron Williamson (1993) and is suggested in his considerations upon “the person before language... capable of human form” (p. 67). It is also to some degree the objective pursued in classical Peking Opera. Words - individually or in combination - are of limited significance. Communication exists in the gaps. It arises in the relationship between words, the representations, the movement and the music. The ‘dance of understanding’, the braiding of languaging and emotioning, is a multi-faceted system of meaning-making. To forget the words, it could be said, is to find the meaning, (this is a challenging notion for a writer to come to terms with). More accurately and more poetically, it could be said that meaning is insubstantial, if words alone are valued.

Reflecting

While Sally Sussman may have expressed some regrets about Formwork, I feel privileged to have been involved.22 A range of interesting issues arise within me as a result of this work. They centre on the relationship between the body, tradition and change, they prompt questions about culture, ontology and
epistemology. I feel these issues can be brought together in a discussion of learning.

As I argued earlier, Peking Opera is a tradition of learning that recalls and defers to its feudal origins. The relationships constructed in the training and the signs employed in the communication of meaning constantly reflect those origins. By contrast the European-realist tradition of actor training, based as it is on 'the method, first taught little more than one hundred years ago, is not constructed around such an idiosyncratically detailed tradition of 'advice'. It is not coded anywhere near as elaborately. It is however constructed from feelings, imagination and an appreciation of emotion (this is not to discount the importance of physical training in this tradition). Physical training is very much a part of all performance, from the long established traditions of classical ballet, classical music, opera and circus to the more contemporary artforms of jazz, rap and physical theatre. Each of these traditions of learning - like Peking Opera and European realism - draw on embodied learning. The physical and emotional co-ordination, (or the embodied learning) of the pianist is no less important than the physical and emotional co-ordination (or the embodied learning) of the mime. Even professional athletes or tennis or cricket or football players who draw on an equivalent level of embodied learning are constantly required to reflect upon the relationship between their mind, their body and their performance. And I, as the writer in Formwork, who sat and observed and made notes and scrambled them together during my twelve hour days, was also constantly required to reflect upon my experience of embodiment. My physical and emotional response to the languaging of actors alone and in ensembles, of musicians, alone and in combination, of actors and musicians together and in conversation, was significant in the way in which I conceived images and relationships in the writing that I did. As stated several times, in me situations the tone, volume, and rhythm of words are of considerably more importance than their logic.

The learning that I experienced during Formwork and the learning that I witnessed in the actors and musicians that I worked with strengthens me in my conviction of the worth of the learning made available through drama education. There were many things about my experience of Formwork that encourage me to mount this argument. Many of them are things that are encountered in other drama experiences, some of them may not be. Some of them are easily accessed, others are accessed with more difficulty. If I were to name one thing alone it would be the understanding alluded to by Chuang
Tzu, that there is a lot more involved in the appreciation of social process than words alone. This very simple insight is not included in the syllabus of any subject area other than Drama. But of course there is considerably more than that one aspect of learning that is worth mentioning when recalling my participation in the project.

*Formwork* was a cross-cultural project. It provided me with access to and a small measure of understanding of a tradition of performance and learning that would not otherwise have been available to me. It enabled me to meet and work with highly skilled artists, working in a very demanding style, arising from another cultural environment. It gave me some insight into that cultural environment. Even more so it enabled me to appreciate the loss experienced by these artists upon realising that their skills have no real place in their newly adopted home, that so much of the experience that has shaped their learning about themselves and the world is neither recognised, appreciated or valued here. And Xu Fengshan, a professional performer for over forty years capable of expressing himself with the most subtle of nuances becomes Stephen, the storeman, who can barely speak the language and never seems grateful for the tolerance that is shown him. So *Formwork* educated me in matters of cultural tradition, performance tradition and the learning of the individual who moves between cultures and traditions, the immigrant or the refugee.

It also provided me with insight into the training and experience bought to the process by the non-Chinese performers. The backgrounds of each of these performers were so diverse that it is difficult to give them due recognition in this summary. As a writer I found myself having to appreciate each individual’s skills. I had to work out ways to realise, then negotiate my feeling and thinking with each somewhat differently. Each demanded explanations in different terms. The NIDA trained actor wanted to understand motivation, the performance artist wanted to find the juxtapositions between images within the text and the dancer wanted to find the flow between images and the cultural referents that were guiding my meaning-making. This rather simplistic explanation suggests the challenge in working with individual artists with a range of interests, training and skills.

*Formwork* also required me to work under pressure. In a very brief time I had to interpret the experience of the workshop and produce a text that had meaning to all involved. I had to work with aesthetic images. These images were my guide. I had to construct a narrative of sorts, in response. I had to recognise
that the words I wrote were part of a larger fabric by which meaning was made. I had to integrate my expression and my meaning with that of the bodies of the performers, the sounds of the musicians, the flow of physical images and the cultural understanding of the audience. I had to be part of a team. I had to work with the strengths and weaknesses, the clarity and confusion of a director just as I had to work with the strengths and weaknesses, the clarity and confusion of the performers, both Chinese and non-Chinese. I had to work with symbols. I had to construct a story around character-types and present my meaning symbolically rather than realistically. I had to create images rather than emotional meaning. I had to draft and re-draft and re-draft again my words in response to developments in the workshop and the trained and intuitive learning of the actors and the director.

Formwork enabled me to observe and appreciate the physical learning of the actors involved in the project. It allowed me to watch bodies fashion thoughts and feelings, to watch bodies struggle with images. Hence, I saw bodies fail, then succeed momentarily, then fail again. I saw bodies work and re-work physical movement sequences until those sequences appeared extraordinarily fluid and unrehearsed. I saw bodies transform words into meaning. I watched, listened and felt the impact of their stories. Sitting in the rehearsal room day after day I feel I observed and appreciated the economy of the development of skills and abilities. Ideas were filed through rapidly, strategic choices made and responsibility taken for the decision to test out one idea rather than another. Some ideas worked, some did not. The actors moved on. Through observing and identifying with their experience I learned about their learning, and though each were professional performers with considerable experience behind them and though the transformations arising from their learning were extremely impressive, my observation of the learning process (as distinct from my observation of the final product) made that learning accessible. The workshop modelled a learning process. The process could be entered into, differently of course, by secondary school students. Such learning is available. Locating it in the body makes available an understanding about the manner in which the body contains and communicates learning that, as said before, is not available in other subject areas.

In looking back on the experience - just as to a lesser degree I looked back on the experience of each day of the workshop - I can acknowledge and appreciate the learning that occurred, both my learning and the learning of

David Wright: 'Creativity and embodied learning'
others. My reflection on the process therefore provides me with learning about learning. This is something that drama education encourages. It doesn’t simply encourage reflection, it is constructed upon reflection. Reflection leads to the understanding that allows the next stage in the process to be realised, whether it be the reflection of the writer, the director or the performer(s) involved in the process. The insight that accompanies the making of meaning in drama points to the way in which meaning is constructed in the community. The stories that are told, or not told, point to the stories that are told, or not told, in the community. The bodies that hold meaning in what Artaud calls the ‘laboratory’ of theatre point to the way in which bodies hold meaning in the community. Admitting the body to the learning process must admit also the understanding that different approaches to learning have the effect of constructing different bodies. The construction of different bodies, through different learning traditions, leads then to the construction of different ways of being in and knowing the world. This insight into the interdependent relationship between the body and learning that is implicit in drama education should be a fundamental part of all teaching and learning programs. Within it lies considerable learning about the self and the self in relation to the shifting set of associations we live amidst. That learning contains learning about the languaging systems through which communication arises that is not made available through other subject disciplines. That learning is both personally and socially meaningful. As Maturana and Varela (1987) point out,

We humans, as humans, exist in the network of structural couplings that we continually weave through the permanent linguistic trophallaxis of our behaviour. Language was never invented by anyone only to take in an outside world... We work out our lives in a mutual linguistic coupling... because we are constituted in language in a continuous becoming that we bring forth with others. We find ourselves in this co-ontogenic coupling... as an ongoing transformation in the becoming of the linguistic world that we build with other human beings. (Maturana & Varela 1987: 235).

**Finding the learning**

This inquiry can be re-framed as a case study that seeks to extend discussion about what Maturana and Varela call “the biological roots of human understanding”. I find the concepts of autopoiesis, structural determinism, structural coupling and structural drift, detailed in the earlier chapter, useful in developing an explanation of the learning processes that I and others
participated in during Formwork. It provides me with a vocabulary through which to further articulate my experience. While it is not the only language that could be used nor the only possible explanation of what occurred in the process, it is a language that I find helpful at this point in time. As one learning (and communication) system was introduced to performers practiced in others the means whereby they (and I) came to use and know the new system became subject matter for interpretation. Through the analytical language provided by self-organising systems theory each of the participants - myself, the Chinese-trained performers, the non-Chinese performers and the director - can be described as part of a self-referential system that changed, or learned, over a four-week period. The result was that something which did not exist prior to Formwork was realised. New ways of doing things occurred and new ways of knowing things emerged.

In this discussion I have focussed on my own learning almost to the exclusion of that of other participants. This reflects my focus on my own interpretation of my own experience of the process: my own learning. While saying this I am aware that each of the other participants had or have their own experiential frameworks through which to arrive at their own explanations of the process, (hence their own learning). Though each of those participants - the director, the actors and the musicians - offered a written summation of their experience and each made themselves available for consultation, language problems made it difficult for me to talk at length with the Chinese actors and musicians.

In a way this is a comment upon the project. Constructed, as Formwork was, around problems in translation between ways of knowing in different performance traditions, the languages of performance offer more appropriate opportunities for the negotiation of learning than written or verbal exchange. Recognition of the worth of languaging systems other than, or in addition to, the verbal and the written in one context suggests that they may be relevant in others. This is central to the learning contained in drama education. In the two sections that follow I want to look at how advocates of drama education have attempted to have the learning contained in their subject area appreciated and understood as providing access to learning processes with an important place in structured education systems. With a focus on developments in Australia and New South Wales in particular. I want to look at the history of and the prospects for drama education.
Section 4: Notes

1 ‘Formwork’ formed the basis of a later production, Orientalia which was presented at The Performance Space in Sydney in February 1995. Although invited to write for Orientalia other priorities caused me to decline the invitation. Orientalia, nevertheless, combined with other work by Sussman, led to her being granted the Rex Crampthorn Scholarship. The Crampthorn Scholarship is awarded, annually, to young, innovative directors, judged by the award committee to be capable of contributing significantly to Australian theatre. This award will fund Sussman to undertake further research into developments in performance in China and Germany and to work with innovative theatre groups in the USA in 1997.

2 Proposal to the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council by Sally Sussman. 1993.

3 Interview between David Wright and Sally Sussman January 1997.

4 Interview between David Wright and Sally Sussman January 1997.

5 Proposal to the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council by Sally Sussman. 1993.

6 In September 1997 an equivalent argument was put to me by a number of Aboriginal spokesmen - including Bobby Stewart, one of the traditional custodians of Alice Springs - during a colloquium at Hamilton Downs 120 kilometres north west of Alice Springs.

7 Sussman’s critique of European training methods has limited validity if extended beyond the European tradition of realist acting.


9 Report by Sally Sussman to the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council, June 1993.

10 The character of ‘the refugee’ is also central to Heiner Muller’s The Battle, in The Battle. Muller suggests that the only advantage to be drawn from warfare is the possibility of rebirth. He suggests that this is a privilege that is conferred upon the refugee. It is a reward for the hardship the refugee suffers. Muller asserts that by surviving a major conflict, his or her past in ashes, the refugee is born again into a new world and a new life. To be surrounded by the new is a new opportunity.

11 It is worth noting here that the origins of Peking Opera lie in the martial arts traditions of the warring Chinese dynasties. In this development skills derived from martial arts training, that is movement and acrobatic skills rather than skills in characterisation, were developed into performance and story-telling techniques.

12 Report by Sally Sussman to the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council, June 1994.

13 The ‘water-sleeves’ are long silk sleeves that hang about 50 cm from the end of the shirt sleeves. They are used in Peking Opera as an ornament, an extension of the arms and a device with which the performer can work to impress the audience.

14 Report by Sally Sussman to the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council, June 1994.

15 Report by Sally Sussman to the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council, June 1994.

16 Report by Sally Sussman to the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council, June 1994.

17 Report by Sally Sussman to the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council, June 1994.

18 Initially the innocent was called the Crocodile in lieu of anything else. As time passed it seemed a name that was strangely appropriate. If the Crocodile was going to become a refugee, attention could be drawn to the refugee status of the Chinese performers and the conflict the performance tradition of Peking Opera encounters beyond its borders.


20 Report by Sally Sussman to the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council, June 1993.

21 Percussion is used more extensively in the western tradition of circus. There are similarities between circus and Peking Opera which deserve to be explored.

22 In retrospect it seems that the difficulties in arriving at a common understanding of movement patterns contributed to the difficulties contained in the performance. The initiation of the performers into a strong regime of Peking Opera training failed to sufficiently acknowledge the performance training that different performers bought to the workshop. Local performers were invited to contribute to and comment upon the patterns of movement that were developed, but the lack of clarity of the director - and the variety of performance skills on hand - meant that the strength of the embodied learning contained in Peking Opera subsumed other contributions. The little time that local performers had to absorb the training and to work together to allow variations to evolve was also significant. It was not available to Sussman. The tradition in which she works now, values time differently to the tradition that she harkens back to; the tradition that she now, three years after Formwork, says she wants to break away from, rather than inhabit.
The disciplined training of the body in Peking Opera requires training in the social relationships that are an integral part of that tradition. In this training the feudal origins of the performance style are constantly being cited. This locates the initiate in a social tradition as much as it does a theatrical society. The training methods offered by Stanislavski position the actor neither socially nor historically. Instead they offer an understanding of a relationship to the self, to what Stanislavski calls the "subconscious creative nature" (Stanislavski 1967: 257). "I do not give you any technical methods to gain control of the subconscious. I can only teach you the indirect method to approach it and give yourselves up to its power" (p. 258).
Creativity and Embodied Learning

Section 5: A short history of drama education
Introduction

Drama is a branch of literature, it is also a form of representation, a form of action. The emerging discipline of drama education combines the study of drama as literature with the study of drama as action. While I have an interest in drama as literature, especially due to my interest in writing, it is in drama as action that I am most interested in this section. This is not in conflict with my interest in writing. The writing of drama, no less than the activity of participating in drama, involves ongoing consideration upon drama as a source of meaning. Action is a form of languaging. For the actor, or the participant in the action, it is a source of meaning. That meaning arises in the experience and in reflection. Drama education, which entails learning through and about drama, invites reflection upon embodied experience. Through a study of the theory and practices that have lead to current understandings of this process it is possible to gain greater insight into the relationship between drama and learning and perhaps even to learn something about the experience of learning itself.

Writing, drama, learning and embodiment

My interest in drama education is a function of my interest, both professional and otherwise, in writing, teaching and learning. For over a decade I pursued an interest in writing for performance. This included writing for film, television and stage. The stage work included stand-up comedy, comedy sketch material, one act and full length stage plays and experiments in cross-cultural performance (Formwork). Unlike some writers, I never had a serious interest in performing. During this time I enjoyed the opportunities I have had to be in the environment of theatre, to participate in a community of artists. This experience encouraged me to find meaning in the everyday, to seek out the theatre, the drama, the performance in aspects of everyday life. In doing so I have found myself adopting an attitude akin to that adopted by Joseph Conrad’s Marlowe in Heart of darkness.

No, I don’t like work. I had rather laze about and think of all the fine things that can be done. I don’t like work - no man does - but I like what is in the work, - the chance to find yourself. Your own reality - for yourself, not for others - what no other man can ever know. They can only see the mere show, and never tell what it really means. (Conrad 1992: 52)
I developed a particular fondness for the rehearsal process and all that is involved in the preparation of plays for performance. I liked to meet new people, to improvise, to play with ideas, to dream, imagine, envision. I liked to learn new skills and work with others learning new skills. I liked to think about the experience myself, to take it home and allow it to explain itself. I liked this aspect of theatre much more than I did the nervous tension of performance, of being in the right place at the right time, standing exposed on stage, pretending that I knew what I was doing.

When I returned to university and pursued the qualifications to teach Drama in secondary schools, I felt that which qualified me for the job lay in the work I had done in the general theatrical environment more than it did my limited experience as a actor. For me, as it should be for anyone, drama was always about much more than acting.

Appointed to a school, I gradually became an effective teacher. With increasing confidence, I stood in front of secondary school classes day in, day out and tried to manage the learning experiences of a shifting collection of twelve to eighteen year olds. As a Drama teacher I found myself participating in the 'drama of the classroom' (our drama in our classroom) as much as I found myself teaching a subject called Drama. The uniqueness of the interrelationship between the subject, the learning process contained within it and the collective body of students engaged in the study was apparent from my earliest hours in the job.

During my time in secondary schools I came to experience classes (and not only Drama classes), as communities linked by the experiences that members of that community shared. I came to experience the drama classroom as containing a living community and, as such, a biological system. A system composed of individual parts and shifting combinations of parts within which each individual, including the teacher, participates. The effective construction of relationships within such a system requires some degree of consciousness of one’s own participation. This is a second order activity that is built on an awareness of the manner in which individual explanations make meaning. This in turn is built on an appreciation of the languaging processes through which meaning is made. None of this learning had arisen during my teacher training. Most of it, particularly my appreciation of the languaging of the body and the learning contained in that languaging had arisen through my own experience in writing, drama and performance.
Considerations upon the significance of embodied learning are not new. In the European intellectual tradition such considerations can be found in the work of the romantic philosophers of the eighteenth century and traced through to some of the more interesting learning theorists of this century. While the term 'embodied learning' - of which I am particularly fond - has rarely been used, traces of such considerations are alive and well in the theory and practice of modern adult education (Brookfield 1982, Kolb 1984, Mezirow 1985, Mindell 1992, Bawden 1993, 1995, Foley (ed) 1995) and the more progressive realms of contemporary approaches to schooling and teacher education (Gardner 1982, 1985, 1993, Gore 1993, McCarthy 1996), though again, only occasionally explicitly identified as such.

In Learning to learn, his discussion of learning theory and key learning theorists, Jerry Gill (1993) asserts that the body is 'pivotal' to learning. He describes the relationship the learner develops with his or her body as a 'dialogue' that establishes a relationship to the world. This dialogue, Gill says, gives rise to a 'self-awareness' that is grounded in physical experience. This is equivalent to the learning process that both Richard Schechner and Howard Gardner describe as 'kinesics'. Gill argues that,

An important dimension of human embodiment pertaining to cognitive activity is tacit knowing. What is often overlooked is that a great deal of a student's learning, perhaps the most significant aspects, occurs at a subliminal level and is brought about by indirect means... What Polanyi calls 'indwelling' when combined with bodily interaction, helps produce the interactive Gestalts which form the cognitive framework within which facts and abstract ideas are apprehended and correlated. Without this tacit dimension, education is reduced to mere exposure and memory, with real learning being more of a happy accident and exception than an achievement. (Gill 1993: 141).

Before looking at the understanding of embodied learning contained in the historical development of drama education and drama education theory, it is worth considering how some of the more interesting general learning theorists of this century have developed ideas about embodiment and learning. The three theorists I will be discussing here, Alfred North Whitehead, John Dewey and Paulo Friere have each, in their own ways, contributed to the development of the theories that support drama education.
Whitehead, Dewey, Friere

Whitehead - working, in the 1920’s and 30’s and heavily influenced by the then new and revolutionary theories of relativity and quantum mechanics - developed an understanding of learning as a process driven by the enthusiasm of the learner. This, at the time and to this day, marks him as an innovator of some significance. The acknowledgment that emotion is a factor in the learning equation allows the process to be appreciated as organic (or biological) rather than mechanical. The use of organic imagery enables Whitehead to depict learning as a process within which the learner and the learned are transformed. Gill quotes Whitehead:

It must never be forgotten that education is not a process of packing articles in a trunk. Such a simile is entirely inapplicable. It is, of course, a process completely of its own particular genius. Its nearest analogue is the assimilation of food by a living organism (p. 16).

The central motif of this image is ‘growth’. From Whitehead’s perspective, learning is not a product that is consumed but a process of using experience such that some as yet undefined change can result. The identification of change is the identification of learning. This involves, in Maturana’s terms, ‘explanation’. As such, learning is physically, emotionally and intellectually transformative.

Whitehead asserts that the way in which learning occurs is as important as its content. He asserts also that learning arises only in relation to the needs and the experience of the learner. There can be no learning if the learner bears no relationship to it. This is the base from which he is able to assert that life, in all its manifestations, is the only subject for education and that too much specialisation undermines understanding of the relatedness that our experience creates for us.¹ I find this a powerful, a liberating understanding.

Around the same time as Whitehead, American educationalist John Dewey offered a similar appreciation of learning. Dewey laid particular emphasis on the experience of participation in a learning community. He believed that the natural world was an important element in the experience of that community.
We cannot overlook the importance for education purposes of the close and intimate acquaintance got with nature at first hand, with real things and real materials, with the actual processes of their manipulation, and the knowledge of their special necessities and uses. In all this there (is) continual training of observation, of ingenuity, constructive imagination, of logical thought, and of the sense of reality acquired through first hand contact with actualities (Dewey cited in Orr 1992: 128).

Dewey asserted that "the primary root of all educative activity is in the instinctive, impulsive attitudes and activities of the child... and that... spontaneous activities of children, play, games, mimic efforts... are the foundation stones of educational methods" (Dewey 1900 cited Courtney 1974: 42). He established a Laboratory School in Kirksville, Missouri to apply this philosophy. This became the first of a network of schools that used his ideas.²

‘Organic’ imagery is even more prominent in the work of Dewey than it is in that of Whitehead. Dewey argued that learning was a consequence of a response to confusion or doubt. This is akin to learning as reflection and explanation. Like Whitehead, he was interested in 'growth', the stimulus to growth and the relationship between growth and experience. He recognised also that the context within which growth - and therefore, learning - occurs, has a direct effect upon future experience. Hence Dewey argued that it is necessary that notions of growth come to the fore in the fashioning of learning environments and the structuring of learning experiences. In this, Dewey prepared the ground for what is now termed 'experiential learning'. He argued that; "everything depends upon the quality of the experience which is had... There is an immediate quality of agreeableness or disagreeableness, and there is its influence upon later experiences... Hence, the central problem of an education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences." (Dewey 1975 cited Gill 1993: 21).

Dewey's work suggests that experiences from which we learn could be described, in modern vernacular, as experiences that 'work'. Such experiences cannot be predetermined for all people under all conditions. For this reason the learning process must be understood as one of establishing and/or responding to existing opportunities for learning, then adapting to the consequences of, and accepting the responsibilities for that experience. The same logic stands behind Kolb's model of the learning cycle (see Fig. 4). In
this process the learner and the learning are both transformed. Participation in the process therefore transforms the individual and the individual's participation in the world. This means that learning occurs through doing. That doing shapes the learner. In doing so, it shapes or transforms the world in which the learner participates.

![Concrete Experiences Diagram]

**Concrete Experiences**

- Testing Implications of concepts in new situations
- Observations and reflections
- Formation of abstract concepts and generalisations

**Fig. 4 Kolb’s learning cycle**

‘Transformation’ is the goal of Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire. Freire acquired much of his learning in the second half of this century in South America, principally Brazil. His learning environment was markedly different to that of Whitehead and Dewey. The experience of gaining an education in an under-developed nation under the power of a series of authoritarian regimes contributed significantly to the development of his ‘radical’ approach to learning.

In his principal text, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1972), Freire encourages recognition of the oppression inflicted upon those who lack formal learning. He argues that those who suffer this oppression can only overcome it by effective participation in the learning of the world. Freire argues that oppression does more than limit participation, it conditions responses and in so doing. It perpetuates itself and restricts opportunities for change. This oppression is both mental and physical. It weighs down upon the mind as comprehensively as it weighs down upon the body. This means that the education, or the transformation, of the oppressed peasantry of Latin America - around whom *Pedagogy of the oppressed* is constructed - is a challenge to traditional, European-derived, upper-middle class understandings of learning. In such circumstances a radical approach to learning is required.
Such learning is, Friere asserts,
an instrument for their (the oppressed's) critical discovery that both they and their
oppressors are manifestations of dehumanisation... The man (sic) who emerges
is a new man, viable only as the oppressor-oppressed contradiction is
superseded by the humanisation of all men... In order for the oppressed to be
able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of
oppression, not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting
situation which they can transform (p. 25-26).

Friere does not employ 'organic' imagery to represent the learning process in
the same way as Whitehead and Dewey. It is not necessary. The
dehumanising experience of oppression is relentlessly physical. For Friere,
transformation is a social responsibility, more than an individual
accomplishment. It is is a necessary response to an unnecessary problem. In
confronting oppression, Friere confronts both personal and political aspects of
the problem. Neither Dewey nor Whitehead present their understanding of
learning as political. They neglect the dimensions of power that are contained
within the exchange of understanding and experience, Friere has no such
difficulty.

Problem-posing education affirms men (sic) as beings in the process of becoming
- as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality...
The unfinished character of men and the transformational character of reality
necessitate that education be an ongoing activity (p. 56-57).

To 'become' or to be 'becoming' is, according to Friere, like learning. It is to
transform the world as the learner enters into it. This occurs through the
transformation of the experience of those who learn. It is to invite the
observation that "through learning, I experience the world differently." Outlining
this process, Friere constructs an indissoluble link between experience and
action. Language, 'the word', is central to this process. "Within the word we
find two dimensions: reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one
is sacrificed - even in part - the other immediately suffers. There is no true word
that is not at the same time, a praxis" (p. 60). This means that to name the
world, is to change it. This is the explanation of which Maturana and Varela
write. It is the 'praxis': the 'doing' and the 'being' of learning.

The work of all three of the above has been significant in the creation of a
pedagogical environment within which 'action research', 'experiential
learning’ and a range of post-positivist inquiry methods have been embraced. These understandings have not only had an impact on research methodologies they have legitimised a wide variety of teaching and learning methods designed to transform the passive learner into an active learner and the instructive classroom into an interactive classroom. However, the significance of the body and embodied learning in formal education settings, while theorised in varying ways by educationalists such as Whitehead, Dewey and Friere, remains largely unarticulated beyond the formal boundaries of behavioural psychology. Whitehead through his discussion of ‘enthusiasm’, ‘organic processes’ and ‘change’, Dewey through his discussion of ‘experience’ ‘participation’, ‘play’ and ‘growth’ and Friere through his construction of learning as a consequence of reflection upon mental and physical oppression refer only to the body indirectly. In the N.S.W. secondary school system, direct reference to embodied learning occurs primarily in the domains of Sports, Biology and the various subject areas that straddle issues of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. Even in these areas the body remains largely a depersonalised object, an ‘other’ that is discussed largely without reference to personal feelings or emotions. It would appear as if the relationship between the body and learning is not considered crucial to a student’s progress into and beyond the school system, that self and social consciousness of this kind are not a priority.

The Arts in general, and the subject areas of Dance, Music and Drama in particular, are logical domains for further exploration of interactive and embodied learning systems. My own experience in drama education leads me to ponder the incongruity of a discipline that employs the body explicitly yet neglects to deeply consider the relationship between the body and learning. Despite its presence, through history, in all aspects of performance, in ritual and ceremony, early Greek theatre, Commedia dell’arte, the Moscow Arts Theatre, in performances by the Futurists and Surrealists, in experiments in cross-cultural theatre and the de-construction of performance in more recent years - embodiment and biology have either been avoided or addressed only obliquely in the attempt to understand and argue for the learning made available through drama education.

**Drama Education**

The teaching of Drama in Australian schools as a formal, externally examined subject is a relatively recent phenomena. In N.S.W. the subject was introduced
as an HSC subject (Year 12) in 1992 and examined for the first time in 1993.\textsuperscript{3} Comparable situations exist in other Australian states.\textsuperscript{4} At School Certificate level (Year 10) in N.S.W., where most subjects are not examined externally and there is greater flexibility in the design of the school syllabus, the subject has been taught for over ten years but only in some schools.\textsuperscript{5} The number of schools offering Drama and the number of students choosing to study it have greatly increased in both junior and senior secondary school in recent years.\textsuperscript{6} The numbers of teachers qualified to teach the subject have also increased. This is partly the result of the subject being granted Category A, HSC status, (which ranks the subject equivalent to long standing subjects like English, Physics, Modern History and Economics in the calculation of the Tertiary Entrance Rank or T.E.R.). Despite the growing popularity of the subject, Drama syllabuses remain to be finalised for years K-6, 7-8 and 9-10 in N.S.W. This lack of finality - during which draft and incomplete documents have directed the teaching of drama at these levels for some time - has failed to guide teachers adequately. This failing suggests the low order of priority that education bureaucrats have attached to this subject and this way of learning.

History of Drama education

The history of drama education in Australia is closely tied to that of drama education in Great Britain. The early days of the movement in Australia were influenced strongly by those who developed drama education theory and practice in Great Britain. Mary Mooney (1996) claims that the movement towards recognition of Drama as a subject in its own right in N.S.W. began with the 1975 visit of British drama teacher, Dorothy Heathcote.\textsuperscript{7} (This visit also played a role in the more widespread offering of Drama in Education courses at tertiary level.)\textsuperscript{8} While before this date the study of drama texts was an important part of the English curriculum and the English class play along with the school musical occupied a slot in many N.S.W. school calendars - I well remember playing the back end of a horse in my class play in Year Nine many years ago - the subject of Drama was not accorded the status of a state-wide syllabus or an external examination until recently (an exception being the subject ‘Speech and Drama’, as designed and examined by the A.M.E.B. and Trinity College in London, which was taught in some private schools in Australia).

Roger Moulton tracks the relationship between the British drama education movement and events in Australia back even further than Heathcote’s visit.
Moulton, a student of British drama educator Brian Way in the 1960’s, claims that Way and his teacher Peter Slade (in the great traditions of Christian evangelism and British cultural imperialism) actively encouraged their students to emigrate from Britain to communicate the benefits of drama education. Moulton says Way, like any good drama educator, believed that “direct communication is a far more efficient means of passing on ideas than books”. Moulton accepted Way’s encouragement and in the early 1970’s left Britain for Australia. Gavin Bolton affirms the experience of Moulton. He points out that,

the influence that pioneers (in Drama and Education in Great Britain) have had and still are having is considerable. Many English Drama specialists... emigrated to Canada and Australia... during the post-war years (and) are to be found in teacher-training and university posts in those countries (Robinson 1984: 1).

Fuelled with enthusiasm, Moulton and his wife set up one of the first Theatre-in-Education (T.I.E.) companies in Australia. With this group he took drama performances (several scripted by Way) to schools in the city, suburbs and country towns of N.S.W.⁹

Unremarkably, the early years of drama education in N.S.W. were marked by conflicts similar to those that beset the English movement. These conflicts, which overlap considerably, revolve around ‘process vs product' and ‘drama vs theatre'. These are arguments about whether the process of working on drama in the classroom is more educationally advantageous than the production of specific performances. This argument is echoed throughout education in various forms. It is can be found in the debate about the relationship between the learning a student experiences in the school environment and the proof of learning that is ascertained through public examination. Applied to the study of drama, it asks whether the activity - the ‘doing' and ‘being' - that is central to drama should be the principal focus of the study, or whether a sociological, historical and aesthetic study of theatre and the society within which theatre is made, should be to the fore. Certainly, in the early years of drama education in Australia, process was very much to the fore. Burgess, Collins, Gaudry and Tartaro observe that,

drama came to be perceived as synonymous with ‘personal development', ‘self expression' and ‘interpersonal communication'. It was the development of these qualities - through the process of dramatic activity which was deemed to be

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educationally significant; the product, performance was not... Theatre... came to be viewed as not only an extra-curricular activity, but its contribution to the child's personal development was seriously questioned by drama teachers (Burgess, Collins, Gaudry and Tartaro 1982 cited in Burgess and Gaudry 1985: 3).

Internationally, drama education has been documented from a range of perspectives. The work of Richard Courtney (1974) - whose death in September 1997 deserves to be marked - stands apart from most other writings on the subject, for the breadth of Courtney's construction of an intellectual (rather than a methodological) super-structure for drama education. Central to this work is the observation that drama is a "dual discipline with... practical and theoretic elements... of equal importance" (p. v).

Courtney argues that drama education "is based upon dramatic play which is pursued in a school in order to further the development of the child" (p. 1) and offers a rationale to support this assertion. He nominate stages in the learning that arise within the process of drama education, while emphasising the point (fundamental also to the work of Peter Slade) that "we do not commence with the idea of where this form of education is going to lead us because, if we did that, we would impose our ideas on the child" (p. 2). His argument for the study of the process of drama draws on a number of disciplines, from philosophy to psycho-linguistics and developmental psychology. His work remains an invaluable resource for those interested in the field. While Courtney's influence has remained, the influence of another group of writers, who have focused on methodologies, have waxed and waned. It is not however Courtney's intellectual substantiation of drama education that I will place most attention on here, but the work of those who have initiated developments in methodology. It is through methodologies that structured drama experiences are embodied before reflection allows them to be articulated as 'learning'.

Early developments

progressive education movement that arose in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century as crucial to the introduction of drama education. Here, progressive school teachers, reacting against the crudities of the Industrial Revolution and patronised by an emerging merchant class, offered themselves, in the tradition of Rousseau, "as educational facilitators, rather than teachers in the conventional sense". It is here, Hornbrook (1989) contends, "the radical spirit of drama-in-education has its source" (p. 6).

Documentation of formal classes and reasoned theory supporting drama education did not begin to emerge until the early 20th century when a Cambridge teacher Henry Caldwell Cook, published his thoughts on art and education in The play way in 1917. Caldwell Cook envisaged a pastoral environment in which Singing, Drawing, Acting and Poetry Writing would share the timetable with Carpentry, Weaving, Bookbinding, Printing and Gardening. He said, "we must let ourselves live fully, by doing thoroughly those things we have a natural desire to do" (Caldwell Cook 1917 cited in Hornbrook 1993: 9). Gavin Bolton describes this as a romantic movement in education that perceives drama as a means of putting "children in touch with the spiritual side of themselves" (Bolton cited in Davis and Lawrence (ed) 1986: 21). He is uncomfortable with Caldwell Cook's perception of drama as a sophistication, a finishing, a polishing or a refinement. He argues that Caldwell Cook's methods were not challenges to the traditional view of education, merely an alteration of method. Teaching by "doing things, and not by instruction" (Bolton quoted Davis and Lawrence (eds) 1986: 12). I would argue that within any such "alteration of method" lies a very significant challenge.

Progressive education movements took hold in many other nations around the same time. In Europe, most particularly in Germany, the anthroposophical movement, initiated by Rudolf Steiner in the last decades of the nineteenth century, constructed an education system around the philosophy that 'education is an art'.

First in the method comes the encounter; then encounter becomes experience; and out of the experience the concept crystallises. Encounter, experience, concept - perception, feeling, idea: these are the three steps in every genuine learning process.11

In the USA educators influenced by Dewey's philosophy of 'learning by doing', also set up networks of creatively focused schools. Elsewhere, the relationship

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between ‘play’ and learning was affirmed through the influence of psychoanalysis. Play was increasingly seen as a means whereby children (in particular, but all people in general) could act out an ‘inner world’. This was underscored by the work of developmental psychologist, Jean Piaget. It was also the period in which Viennese psychotherapist Jakob Moreno used his work with children to link learning and psychotherapy in a ‘theatre without spectators’. (This came to form the basis of the learning process termed, ‘psychodrama’.) The result was that drama began to gain acceptance, not “in the form of a body of theatrical skills and practices, but as a psychological process” (Hornbrook 1989: 9).

The peace that following the Second World War introduced the next stage in the development of drama education. In Britain, as in Australia, the post war years heralded a population boom, an expanding middle class and greater government commitment to social welfare. This led to a rapid expansion in education facilities, more students staying longer in school and a concomitant demand for educators. Within this environment Peter Slade, the first of a series of influential British drama theorists and practitioners, began to articulate a challenging understanding of the relationship between drama and education. His influence was magnified by the endorsement contained in his appointment as Drama Adviser to the City of Birmingham and, in 1948, his appointment as director of the British Educational Drama Association, who sponsored him on national and international tours. Slade did “drama advisory work in almost every (English) county”, according to Brian Way (Slade: 1954: 10). Following the initiatives of Slade, advocacy for drama education increased in both reason and sophistication.

Child drama: Peter Slade, Brian Way

Central to the work of Peter Slade is the perception that children’s drama is a special form of expression; “a very wonderful thing which exists in our midst but is as yet hardly noticed” (Slade 1954: 19). It was Slade’s belief that children’s drama was not only a legitimate art form - quite distinct from adult theatre - but an inherently superior art form. This perception led him to profess the need for a ‘child-centred education’ within which the teacher plays the role of a ‘loving ally’ who teaches with ‘absorbed sincerity’.

Within such an education, Slade argued that the child is both an actor in and an audience to its own development. He said that this makes learning
accessible to children through their own observation of their own participation in creative activity, in particular dramatic play. In such circumstances, that which is learnt is not simply expressed but experienced. Attempting to 'name' this experience, Slade says,

It is a creation, a skill. It blossoms where there are patience, understanding, happiness, freedom, observation and humility. It is born of Play and is nurtured, guided and provided for by the wise parent and the able teacher. It can be drawn out, though it may evolve alone to some extent. It can take the form of games, dramatisation, classroom drama, acting exercises, free expression, improvisation, activity method and creative drama (Slade 1954: 19).

Structured dramatic play is therefore, an opportunity to demonstrate and realise learning. That learning is realised as a consequence of its demonstration. 'Psychological development', 'creative self-expression', 'mental liveliness', 'experience of inner goodness', 'stimulation of the imagination' through 'spontaneous experience' are the qualities that Slade says emerge through such work. In this process, the teacher is responsible for providing the environment for the generation and release of these qualities. Thus emotional and feeling states are promoted over analytical thought processes, as learning techniques and sources of truth.

Integrated within play is the process of being other people. Such identification is both a 'stage' of development and a valuable learning experience. Slade imagines this mode of play as a stage prior to the realisation of inherent abilities. Children's play at being mothers and fathers is therefore Slade says, preparation for parenthood. Thus identification through play prompts psychological development. Similarly, the items with which children invest meaning during play, contain symbolic messages. Slade argues accordingly that drama is a form of therapy. The growth towards happiness and fulfilment - the raison d'être of child drama according to Slade - is an internal process. On the part of the child it requires observation, which per se requires detachment, but these observations do not need to be articulated or socialised, their explanation need only be personal. Thus drama or play makes "situations conscious", enabling "the child to... make slow inward decisions" (quoted in Burton 1991b: 36). The transformation of the self provides the means whereby social change arises. Social reverberations occur because inner qualities have been realised. Slade seeks to break down the limitations imposed on children, not by directly addressing the culture that imposes those limits, but by

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providing its social victims with the capacity to rise above those limitations then if necessary, critically analyse their impact and if appropriate, act upon that analysis.

Many people ask what are the aims of Child Drama. Probably the shortest answer is: a happy and balanced individual. But this is only a partial answer, for although we find therein some suggested accomplishment in the realms of education, and even partly of health, it does not entirely cover the effect of the individual upon society, the fullness of the personality developed, nor take into account the quality of the activity itself, and finally what effect that activity has on any like activity of an older age group (Slade 1954: 105)

Slade's romantic ennoblement of child drama - "Child Drama is an Art as well as valuable education, it is... a simple thing and stands alone, though its repercussions are more complex" (p. 122) - places great onus upon the teacher. "It would be a difficult and responsible task to advise exactly what any teacher ought to do, and if one did, it would defeat its own purpose... the teacher must be an artist, and create also" (p. 131). The task of the teacher, he says, is to act "as a kindly and gentle guide" (p. 140). There is no suggestion however that the teacher is a beneficiary of the process other than through sharing in the joys of the child and delighting in its accomplishments. He or she remains a facilitator, burdened with the responsibility of providing the environment within which the learning can occur. The teacher also must be the person who makes judgements about student accomplishment. He or she is assumed by Slade to be competent to understand and guide the student to an attitudinal and behavioural goal that remains largely unspecified, within an culture lacking or even at odds with the qualities being taught and learnt. Thus the learner-centred process of child drama advocated by Slade holds the facilitator, who is also to some degree inhibited or contained by the same culture as that which contains the child, responsible for the development and the assessment of qualities that he or she is also struggling to realise. In practical terms this makes it difficult for the teacher to do much more than admire, rather than actively respond to, a child's accomplishment.

By discounting the influences of 'adult' society Slade also discounts 'adult theatre'. Acknowledging it as a cultural form to which the teacher theoretically subscribes and through which the teacher has probably gained dramatic skills and inspiration, Slade contends it is of little relevance to 'child drama'.

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For Slade,

The proscenium form of theatre has disastrous effects on the genuine drama of the child. All the slow and delicate natural processes of shape, space, sharing mastery of the area around the body, depth, discovery and integration of self with others, to say nothing of personal creation, are shattered (Slade, cited in Burton 1991: 40).

In the work of Slade, positive moral values are automatically tied to the unfettering of experience. There is little discussion of the social (or emotional) context of these experiences, nor the process of reflection, nor the varieties of responses to the experience that may unfold. His argument is not so much for a subject but a process, a way of valuing individual and social experience. To Slade, drama is an essential element in all educations. As such, he foreshadows the argument - put by Dorothy Heathcote - for drama as a way of learning that is relevant to all subject areas - 'drama across the curriculum'. In such circumstances Drama is perceived as a method relevant to all learning processes within the school. (Despite this similarity, it is worth noting that for Slade 'child drama' is to be encouraged across the curriculum only in infants and primary school. Beyond this he argues that theatre studies deserve to come to the fore. By contrast, Heathcote believes that drama processes should be used across the curriculum in infants, primary and secondary school.) The work of Slade, according to Ken Robinson, "pushed drama into the mainstream of progressive education and strengthened its ideological framework with the concepts of child psychology and liberal philosophy" (Robinson 1984: 146).

Slade's theory and practice, like that of each of the educators who follow in this section must be seen in relation to the general teaching methods of the time. When looked at in this way it is clear that Slade is mounting a case for considerably more than the broadening of the curriculum to include one specific subject. He, like Way, Heathcote, Bolton, Abbs, Best and Boal, is arguing for a shift in priorities in education. Implicit in this is a critique of the values contained in the system of education operating at the time (and thereby the social system that constructs that system of education). For this reason the social and political implications of the various arguments for drama education deserve to be acknowledged, along with the social and political environment within which those arguments are put.
Brian Way - both a student of and collaborator with Slade - wrote the next most influential British drama education text. Way describes *Development through Drama* (1967) as "an attempt to help teachers in an ever growing sphere of educational practice", whilst adding rather presciently, "within a decade, the book may be read as history, for the subject matter is still so new that there is much yet to be discovered and understood" (Way 1967: v). While less enthusiastic to advance child drama as an individual art form, Way, like Slade, was a vigorous advocate of drama as a road to 'self knowledge'. Claiming that his concerns are "with the development of people rather than the development of drama" (p. 2), Way describes drama as a source of "moments of direct experience, transcending mere knowledge, enriching the imagination, possibly touching the heart and soul as well as the mind" (p. 1).

Like Slade, Way seeks to use drama to focus on personal learning and personal experience rather than the social relationships that contain those experiences. Both idealise a form of personal knowing, a form of personal transcendence that is made available though participation in drama. In doing so both fail to look beyond their assumptions about an unquestioned 'basic nature of human beings' to examine the social environment within which the drama unfolds. They fail to consider the interconnections within the play (and between the players) that facilitates the learning that occurs. They fail to seek out explanations of that learning by those who experience it.

Some of the failings of Slade and Way were taken up by those who led drama education into its next phase. While the romantic idealism of Slade and Way had a direct impact upon the early days of drama education in Australia, the work of Dorothy Heathcote offered not only a more practical understanding but also a greater personal challenge to individual educators. It offered also a more radical challenge to then current understandings of teaching and learning processes in its demand that students (and teachers) appreciate the context of their play, as much as the play itself.

**Drama across the curriculum: Dorothy Heathcote, Gavin Bolton**

Dorothy Heathcote not only influenced the next stage in the development of drama education, she also offered herself, consciously or unconsciously, as a role model to drama educators frustrated with the lack of educational focus contained in the work of her predecessors. While Heathcote wrote little, many of her lectures have been recorded, various thoughts and interviews bought
together and a healthy collection of observations and commentaries have been produced in response to her work. Particularly influential have been Betty Jane Wagner's 1976 publication Dorothy Heathcote: drama as a learning medium and Liz Johnstone and Cecily O'Neill's Dorothy Heathcote - collected writings on education and drama published in 1983. Through these publications the work of Dorothy Heathcote has reached people around the world who never had the opportunity to witness her at work.

David Hornbrook (1989), one of the most informed and active critics of the form of 'process drama' advocated by Heathcote, describes Heathcote's major accomplishment as "channelling the motivating energy of dramatic play (as discussed by Slade) into the curricular imperatives of the teacher". In doing so "she slowly succeeded in diverting thinking about school drama from its more overtly therapeutic course and re-defining it as a learning process" (p. 14). In this way Heathcote invited all those involved in schooling to deeply consider the social function of education.

Heathcote views dramatic work as a 'language' through which participants reflect upon and interpret issues. This approaches Maturana's and Varela's work on 'languaging' and our life in language. Drama is, Heathcote says, an 'as if' world, in which experiments occur and failure is not penalised. Like all arts experiences, it works through stretching ordinary perception so that we really 'see' the world instead of 'numbly recognising' it (McEntegart 1991: 7). She depicts the teacher as a person charged with the responsibility to "bring about a change, a widening of perspective, in the life of the real person" (Heathcote 1984: 10). Such change goes beyond the provision of self esteem. It challenges students to create meaning for themselves by constructing their own understandings of their own experience in the world. The drama process is, for Heathcote, an educational tool through which insight into social experience is acquired, then applied. This has relevance far beyond the Drama classroom. To isolate this process in one single subject area is to fail to recognise its potency as a teaching and learning method. It is to privilege the art form of theatre over the vast learning that the drama process contains. Hence, 'drama-across-the-curriculum'.

As a drama educator, Heathcote argues that she is involved in the provision of social knowledge. She offers this 'knowledge-centred' approach to learning through drama as an improvement upon Slade and Way's 'child-centred' approach. The 'knowledge', of which Heathcote speaks, is a knowledge of the
world and the participation of individuals within it. It is an expanded version of the self awareness valued by Slade rather than a set of objective criteria by which accomplishment can be measured.

Learning, for Heathcote, like Slade and Way, remains a function of 'participation'. "I must create effective participation. If I don't do that, I'm not in art of any kind and I'm not in learning" (Heathcote 1984: 28). It is the processes that arise through participation, rather than the end product of that participation, that facilitates the unfolding of knowledge. The end product of this process is no more than an opportunity for students involved in the experience to "stumble upon authenticity... to experience and reflect upon... experience at the same time" (Heathcote 1984: 11). Effective participation in the 'as if' world requires absorption and commitment. Even more than that, it requires belief. Heathcote says that "if you want to use drama as education, you have to train people... how to negotiate" (Johnson and O'Neill 1984: 114).

Heathcote's major teaching strategy, and one of her most important contributions to drama education, is a structured activity that has become known as 'teacher in role'. This work is predicated upon the belief - in contrast to Slade's faith in child drama - that children need the intervention of a teacher to most effectively direct the drama process.

The teacher's role is to harness drama to its own needs. To use it in the way in which it will most aid him (sic) in challenging children to learn. Its purpose will never vary but the activity will vary as the child matures." (Heathcote 1972: 159)

In a 'teacher-in-role' exercise, the teacher adopts a role and enters directly into the dramatic role-play being developed within the class.

Often my classes do not understand drama... if I move into role I put the emotive, the tension element in immediately... I can respond to their imagery and start to become redundant... in role, you're giving the group information on one level and throwing a challenge at them on another (Heathcote 1984: 23).

Through entering into the drama in role, Heathcote believes the teacher is best able to manage the emotional direction and the intellectual organisation of the process and to assist students to confront problems that may arise. "To harness (the) drama to his (sic) own needs... to use it in the way in which it will most aid him in challenging children to learn" (Heathcote 1972 cited in Burton
1991: 54). A strong social and political agenda informs Heathcote’s practice. “As a teacher I seek to keep people’s experiences ‘real’; that is I try to bring about a change, a widening of perspective, in the life of the real person, as well as to offer systems of learning and knowing.” (Heathcote 1972 cited in Burton 1991a: 58)

Within the classes she directs, Heathcote maintains a commitment to the production of a realistic emotional world within which what Augusto Boal calls ‘magic’ (non-realistic or fanciful) solutions have no place. While Heathcote’s students are dramatically engaged in problems constructed to test idealism and morality the same problems are also structured to test practical problem solving skills. Heathcote argues that in this process, the depth of emotional commitment that is provoked allows students the spontaneity to come up with creative solutions. Commitment and spontaneity is valued as much as, if not more than any performance product that may result.14

One of my first experiences with teacher-in-role involved me, in the role of a priest, entering a convent to discover who had stolen a crucifix from the room of the Mother Superior. An exercise that I initiated rather timidly (I had only recently educated myself about teacher-in-role and was quite unsure of what I was doing) very quickly took on a life of its own. The subtleties of the power structures within the convent came to the fore as one after another the nuns unburdened themselves of pent-up hostilities and resentments. It was as if each student had an intimate knowledge of the life of a closed order. The students (all girls except one), many of whom were not experienced in Drama, surprised themselves with their capacity to imagine themselves into this community. In the discussion that followed generalisations about life in an isolated community of women led to talk about the manner in which girls in secondary schools rely on the friendship and support of each other. This led to talk about the reasons why and the circumstances in which the need for support can lead to tension and resentment, even conflict. My role in generating and managing this improvisation was limited by the response of the students to the situation. My assumptions about where the exercise might go were overtaken by the energy of the exercise and the enthusiasms of the students involved. As the teacher, deemed responsible for the process, my effectiveness lay in my capacity to work with their aims and objectives as much as, if not more than, my own.
Inevitably, Heathcote (like myself and any teacher using teacher-in-role) is confronted by problems about the ‘authority’ that is assumed by the teacher. Heathcote admits this difficulty and argues in her defence that every lesson she participates in makes different demands and takes a different course. She says that, in her experience, these differences occur not because of the control exerted by the teacher but because of the impact created by individual students on the teacher, the particular combinations that exist within the group and the setting within which the work occurs. “Notions of drama”, Heathcote claims, “are often cloaked in a kind of web of unperceived ideas which gradually work themselves free as the work progresses” (Heathcote 1984: 42). The recognition of, and the working free of those unperceived ideas, she says, defines the function of the teacher.

Learning through drama is therefore, according to Heathcote, a process of discovery in which the teacher plays a crucial role. In this process of discovery, individual truths and complexities are overlooked in pursuit of greater insight into the social web that manifests the social problem that needs to be understood and addressed. While this interest in social rather than individual truths marks Heathcote apart from Peter Slade, the purpose of learning as defined by Heathcote overlaps that of Slade. She insists that the learning must be understood and experienced by student and teacher as determined by the student. Her method - “emotion tempered with thought and planning” - is designed to allow the teacher to respond to the student’s creativity and imagination and to start to become redundant.

Heathcote lectured and led workshops throughout Britain. She did the same in the U.S.A. and most of the white dominated, English-speaking nations of the British Commonwealth (Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa) as well as parts of Europe. The master classes she conducted in the use of ‘teacher-in-role’, contributed significantly to the respect she gained. Hornbrook observes that in the early nineteen eighties,

Heathcote’s methodology came to mark out the acceptable parameters of drama in schools. Likewise, the charismatic qualities of her remarkable presence began to bewitch the increasing numbers of drama teachers who came to watch and participate in her workshops” (Hornbrook 1989 15).

Hornbrook suggests that despite Heathcote’s success, the method she modelled lies vulnerable to criticism. Many teachers discovered that in
attempting to apply her teaching methods they lacked the skill and training, to say nothing of the talent and personality to emulate Heathcote’s use of ‘teacher-in-role’. Many felt equally uncomfortable with the control of the student’s processes assumed by Heathcote. The neglect of individual learning, and the emphasis upon group learning processes proved equally problematic. Many teachers, including myself, have discovered that teacher-in-role is a method which, while offering significant opportunities for learning, needs to be used with discretion and adapted with care to particular teaching and learning environments. Heathcote says that teachers need to accept the ways in which students develop their work while watching and thinking carefully about the most appropriate way to get involved. She says the teacher needs to be able to accept the ideas of others, while remaining curious about where those ideas are going. As a general proposition, this raises as many questions about education in general and teacher training in particular as it does about drama education and the practice advocated by Dorothy Heathcote.

Just as Heathcote has been described as inspirationally standing astride the students in her classes, her presence has loomed large over drama education for over twenty years. While her most significant contribution, ‘teacher-in-role’, has been helpful in the development of a grounded theory of drama education and in the construction of arguments to be put by advocates of drama education, the precise goal of the drama teacher still remains unclear. This is an argument that has been put in recent times by British educationalist David Hornbrook. Hornbrook argues that there must be considerably more required of both a drama teacher and a drama curriculum. This is a comment that deserves consideration. I will look at Hornbrook’s contribution shortly.

While greatly admiring the approach adopted by Heathcote, from my perspective, the liberal-humanist approach to education she promoted revolves around the assumption that there is conflict, malaise or dissatisfaction within society that needs to addressed. This dissatisfaction, she suggests, can be learned about and challenged in action in the drama process in the classroom. While this may be true, it may also be true that drama is not only about problems. It is as much a tool for celebration as it is for addressing difficulties. While she does not directly say this, Heathcote suggests an appreciation of this, particularly when she describes drama education as a means of attaining a sense of identity, “a ‘we-feeling’, which our reductionist,
mechanistic, techne-oriented society will slowly and inevitably destroy if it is not co-operatively challenged" (Johnson and O'Neill 1984: 13).

The next influence upon drama education who deserves to be mentioned is Gavin Bolton. As major contributors to a critical debate during the same period of time, Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton are often discussed in tandem. Heathcote is characterised by Hornbrook as "the midwife of creative knowing", standing alongside Bolton, "the cool evaluator".

Bolton describes drama as "a mental activity where meaning is created by the symbolic use of actions and objects" (Bolton 1979: 17). He argues not that "Drama is doing", but that "Drama seems to be doing". In his work Bolton advances Heathcote's advocacy of drama as a "knowledge-centred" methodology, rather than a subject area, and reinforces her advocacy of drama as a means of addressing social issues. While Heathcote wrote little Bolton wrote considerably more. Both his writings on drama theory and his documentation of the dramatic process suggests a very strong awareness of the structured curricular requirements of schools.

Bolton identifies with Brecht's assertion that "one must have a certain inclination to penetrate deeper into things - a desire to make the world controllable - if one is to be sure of enjoying its poetry" (Davis and Lawrence 1986: 134). The purpose of classroom drama is, he says "the development of common understanding through the exercise of basic mental powers" (Bolton 1984 cited in Burton 1991: 65). He extends the knowledge-centred approach, with some concessions to experience, by arguing that drama has to be 'felt' if it is to be effective. "Drama could only be effective if... (those involved are) touched emotionally enough to bring about a change of attitude" (Bolton 1979: 32). Once the feeling - the emotional contact - is acknowledged, differences exist only in the 'quality' of the 'subjective meaning' that is attached to the feeling, in other words, the explanation. Thus for Bolton, drama is concerned not so much with changes in attitude as with changes in appraisal. Drama does not provide meaning, it provides access to "understanding; that's what the teacher is teaching and the learner is learning" (Bolton 1979: 38). Understanding is acquired socially, it is not the experience of an isolated self, it arises in response to social experience and reflection, it is the basis for the pursuit of further understanding and is the platform from which the next period of immersion in the social well is launched. Suggesting the passion behind the method, Bolton (1979) writes,
I tend to use drama in a way that poses questions, rather than implies answers... What causes me great concern is that these issues can arouse a fervour of shocked protest... For the major problem in drama in this country (Great Britain) is not that basic values are being challenged, but that nothing is being challenged at all (p. 135).

Like Heathcote, Bolton places the teacher in a very influential position in the drama process. The teacher has a critical role in the development and monitoring of the emotional states that enable the drama to proceed. That emotion, which Bolton perceives as a collective rather than an individual state involves he says, the creation and manipulation of highly affective imaginary worlds. That emotion is collectively generated and, like the learning that arises from it, collectively valued. While Bolton asserts that the "process of seeing oneself from a different angle" is the "principal purpose of drama-in-education", he questions the value of individual absorption in role as a path to learning (Bolton 1979: 64). This means that role, for Bolton, is arrived at through an emotional commitment to social values rather than any one particular psychological construction. Bolton, like Heathcote is a social activist driven by a desire for social change rather than individual transformation. Learning is conceptualised therefore as a social process and change as an outcome of a social dialectic.

Both Heathcote and Bolton would argue that to separate the theoretical frameworks that have supported drama education from the social and political environment of its construction is to offer a less than adequate understanding of this development. This insight has particular relevance in examining the development of drama education in Australia.

**Drama education in Australia**

Despite its recent successes, Drama still remains an endangered subject in the state-run education systems of Australia. In N.S.W. echoes of Britain's Education Reform Act, which severely threatened the position of Drama in the British school system, exist in the Scott Report, commissioned by the N.S.W. State Government in 1988. Other reports into the rationalisation of subject offerings that have critically examined drama education include the 1996 Board of Studies Review of H.S.C. Drama, the 1997 McGaw Review of the N.S.W. Higher School Certificate titled *Shaping their future* and subsequently, the New South Wales Government's reforms for the Higher School Certificate...
titled *Securing their future*, (released subsequent to McGaw’s findings). Ironically, one of those reports, the Board of Studies review, which was initiated in response to a Ministerial inquiry into the costs of examining H.S.C. Drama and broadened into a review of content, structure and assessment procedures not only concluded that Drama was relatively inexpensive to examine but also thoroughly deserving its place among Category A H.S.C. subjects. Endorsements of Drama as a subject area in the Review included the observations that, “Drama is the (only) one subject that contributes in significant ways to the development of competence in all of the key competency areas” (p. 29). (The key competencies, as defined by N.S.W. Board of Studies and employed by the N.S.W. Department of Education are, ‘Collecting, Analysing and Organising Information’, ‘Communicating Ideas and Information’, ‘Planning and Organising Activities’, ‘Working with Others and in Teams’, ‘Using Mathematical Ideas and Techniques’, ‘Solving problems’ and ‘Using Technology’.)

Inquiries, such as those listed above, whether into education in general and drama education in particular, require that greater understanding be developed of the learning contained in the drama experience if the subject is to be defended and the processes contained within the subject affirmed. Such understanding will allow advances in curriculum development to be built upon, teacher training to be focused and student accomplishment to be better understood, encouraged and appreciated.

Effective advocacy for the drama learning process has been a problem since the earliest days of the subject in Australia. An appreciation of the need to enhance understanding of the practice of the drama teacher was fired by Heathcote during her 1975 visit to Australia. Following that visit a group of teachers in N.S.W. formed a professional drama teachers’ association, the N.S.W. Educational Drama Association (E.D.A.). Later in that same year, the inaugural meeting of the National Association for Drama in Education (N.A.D.I.E.) was held outside Adelaide and following that the first Drama Education conference in Terrigal N.S.W. was held early in 1976. Twenty two years after those early meetings, the subject of Drama is now examined at matriculation level in all states and territories, Drama teachers in all states and territories of Australia have professional drama teacher associations and all state associations are members of a national federation established to unite, research and articulate their concerns. The circulation of local research into drama education has been encouraged by N.A.D.I.E. through the NADIE
Journal (NJ), other local and international journals and the growing interest of publishers in books on drama education.

The subject area has been promoted further by the Dawkin’s plan which, in the late 1980’s, consolidated Universities, Teachers Colleges, Institutes of Technology and Colleges of Advanced Education and upgraded these new institutions to university status. This led to a requirement that academics in the new institutions research their subject areas more thoroughly. The same expansion of the tertiary sector also led to the establishment of more university schools offering more courses in drama, theatre and dance.21 The success of these offerings proves that there is growing community interest in learning through and about the performing arts and a growing body of research. Another issue of significance is the increasingly diverse ethnic composition of the Australian community, hence Australian schools, to say nothing of Australian staff rooms. Such territories are no longer uniformly, and in most areas not even predominantly Anglo-Saxon. The diverse cultural traditions of contemporary Australia bring with them ways of acting and knowing that expand the possibilities of the performing arts in schools. As this cultural diversity extends its influence throughout the school system performance traditions from non-English speaking Europe, the Middle East, Asia and indigenous Australia are increasingly being explored in educational settings.

Attempts to bring together advocates of all arts disciplines - dance, visual arts, music, media arts, design and drama - have also provided a forum for research into and advocacy of drama education. In 1991, the National Affiliation of Arts educators (N.A.A.E.) was formed. Based in Canberra, the N.A.A.E. regularly brings arts educators together to share insights and initiatives. Focussing on the arts in general rather than any one specific art form, the N.A.A.E. brings together voices that are more often heard in conflict. By concentrating attention on education rather than arts practice the N.A.A.E. has enabled arts educators working in different disciplines to work together purposefully. In its documentation the N.A.A.E. differentiates education from “exposure”, “enrichment” and “entertainment”. “Education” it argues “means engagement with an arts discipline as a body of knowledge and skills to be sequentially acquired and applied by the student... When exposure, enrichment and entertainment are presented as substantially equivalent to arts education, the cause of knowledge and skill development in students suffer.”22 It is in these terms that its advocacy extends.
While Australian drama education has not found a central unifying figure in the style of Slade, Way, Heathcote or Bolton, several local educators have contributed significantly to further understanding of drama education. Among those whose work has interested me are John O'Toole (1992, and Haseman 1986), Phillip Taylor (1993), Roslyn Arnold (1993, 1994), Heather Smigiel (1995, 1996), Edward Errington (1993, 1996), Bruce Burton (1987, 1991a, 1991b) and John Carroll (1993). (For more details on the above see Appendix 9.) This research, while working within the parameters defined by English theorists, from Slade to Bolton, extends and applies that work while admitting a range of other influences. There are also many less well known drama educators, at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, who have who have had as significant an impact on their students as published researchers. Through the activities they have initiated and the practices they have modelled, drama educators throughout Australia have set up experiences in the classroom that, while more often than not unrecorded and un-researched, have contributed significantly to the embodied learning of their students. The success of the subject that is so evident in the enthusiasm with which it has attracted students in N.S.W. can be put down to the effectiveness of classroom teachers and the networks they have constructed, as much as it can the subject matter contained in the syllabus or the writings of theorists.

Significant within this movement has been the International Drama Education Association (I.D.E.A.). In July 1995, I.D.E.A. held its second world congress in Brisbane, Australia, around the theme: "What can be the role of drama/theatre and education in a rapidly changing world entering a new millennium?" The success of the event offers testament to the strength and breadth of the movement. The congress attracted over 1,300 people from over 60 nations, and while the majority of delegates came from Australia, the conference provided a stage for some of the more interesting voices in this burgeoning international aggregation. The diversity of the international drama education movement is suggested by the names of some of the presenters at the congress. They included Rustom Bharucha (India), Augusto Boal (Brazil), Gavin Bolton and Peter Abbs (Britain), Gcina Mhlope (South Africa) Kuo Pao Kun (Singapore), Brian Edmiston and Cecily O'Neill (USA), John O'Toole and Maureen Watson (Australia), Henry Paul (Bangladesh), Patrice Pavis, Michel Mélín and Christian Prattoussy (France), Sheila Maluf (Argentina), Lennart Wiechel (Sweden), Kao Sin-Mei (Taiwan) and Ezekiel B. Alembi (Kenya).
The variety of presenters and the selection of Kenya as the host for the 1998 Congress, indicates the cultural diversity of the movement and underlines the importance of the role that drama has played, and continues to play, in the cultural life and cultural learning processes of all communities. No longer, if it ever truly was, is the direction of the international drama education movement determined solely by a small group of educators in Great Britain. Among the guest presenters invited to Brisbane, Peter Abbs and Augusto Boal deserve further discussion. Each, like Brisbane based John O'Toole, who was one of the conveners of the Brisbane IDEA conference, in their own way represent different, though related trends in the drama education movement. Each deserves discussion in light of the research of biologists Maturana and Varela.
Section 5: Notes

1 This summation of Whitehead's work, like those of Dewey and Freire that follow, is only an indication of the general area of his research.

2 Gill (1995), who attended a school structured around Dewey's work reports some dissatisfaction with his schooling. Some of his anecdotes deserve citation.

When speaking of social control, Dewey stresses that for the most part students will be motivated to engage the curriculum by their own needs and their desire to be part of the group. My third grade writing teacher followed this non-authoritarian approach when I found writing in longhand difficult and refused to learn it. She simply left me alone. To this day I can only print. My sixth grade music teacher also followed this approach when she sent me out to sit in the hall because I was not interested in singing. I wandered down to the gymnasium and discovered basketball. Although not being able to write longhand has not proven to be much of a problem, except for my typist, I am not sure the basketball-for-singing trade-off was for the best. I am still playing basketball but I am still unhappy about my almost complete lack of musical ability.

Also at some point we were taught to read by the "sight recognition" method, complete with flashcards, rather than phonetically. The theory behind this approach was, presumably, based on the findings of Gestalt psychology. The central idea here, with which Dewey would seem to agree, is that we learn best when we are given meaningful wholes rather than isolated parts. Although I have always been a rather good reader, I remain a bad speller. Here again, I am not sure if the trade-off was for the best. (p. 189).

3 In 1993 1531 (2.5% of total) candidates sat the HSC Drama exam. This rose to 2446 (4.1% of total) in 1995. (Ref: N.S.W. Board of Studies: A review of HSC Drama, May 1996.)

4 Drama is now taught at Year 12 level in all states of Australia. The last state to approve the teaching of Drama as a matriculation subject was Western Australia, which did so in 1997.

5 In infants and primary schools in N.S.W. the teaching of drama is largely dependent on the predilections of the class teacher and/or the policy of the school as determined by the executive. Drama is not often taught as a subject area but drama teaching methods is used in the teaching of the curriculum by teachers who feel confident in their skill.

6 1991 School Certificate Drama: 5132 students; 6.6% of total candidates. 1995 School Certificate: 9558 students; 12.6% of total candidates. (N.S.W. Board of Studies: A review of HSC Drama, May 1996.)

7 At this time it was already being taught in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania.

8 Educational drama subjects were offered at Melbourne Teacher's College by Lois Ellis in the late 1960's. The first university courses in Educational Drama were offered at the University of New South Wales in 1973 by Oliver Fiala (Fiala/Wright interview Oct. 1997). Courses - using the work of the British innovators Slade, Way, Heathcote et.al. - were taught at the School of Arts in the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education (now the University of Southern Queensland) in 1974. It was taught at Mitchell College of Advanced Education (now Charles Sturt University), by John Carroll, Bill Blakie and Greg McCarrt, at the University of New England in 1977 by Colin George and Launt Thompson, at Rusden Teachers College in 1979 by John Ellis. Other people working in the field in the 1970's included Derek Nicholson (Sydney University), Karl Hatton (Acquinas College, Ballarat), Graham Scott (Drama Resource Centre, Melbourne Teachers College) Howard Cassidy at Capricornia Institute of Education. (This information was volunteered by members of the Theatreoz Email list in response to a query posted in July 1997).

9 Interview Moulton/Wright, April 1992. In the mid-seventies Moulton and his wife Nina toured through N.S.W. schools with 'Drama Experience Team', one of the first T.I.E. groups in Australia. Their 1976 primary program consisted of 'The Clown' and 'The Drought', both plays were written by Brian Way. Others who arrived from England in this period and proceeded to play a role in the development of Drama education in N.S.W. include Ray Goodlass, Joan Clark and Wendy Michaels. Oliver Fiala originally from Czechoslovakia and trained by students of both Stanislavski and Brecht arrived via Britain (Interviews with Diane Mackenzie, Mary Mooney Oct. 1996 and Oliver Fiala Oct. 1997). This transportation of ideas was not entirely one way. Australians also travelled to Britain in this period and gained experience which they applied upon returning home. Among them were Don Mamouney founder and current Artistic Director of Sydney's Sidetack Theatre, (based in inner-suburban Marrickville).
10 Rousseau's image of the noble savage imbued with natural goodness and guided by his feelings, issues a challenge to individuals to locate within themselves the source of 'true morality'. This subjective search for awareness and feelings anticipates for Rousseau a form of theatre in which "the spectators become an entertainment to themselves... so that each one sees and loves himself in the others" (Hornbrook 1989: 5). This approach anticipates the work of Jakob Moreno.

11 From Steiner, R. *Education as an art*. Quoted in introductory brochure to Bowral Rudolf Steiner School 1996.

12 Development through drama is described by Hornbrook as providing "just the right mix of theory and practical advice to stimulate and inspire a second wave of young drama teachers in the enormous post B.Ed. expansion" (Hornbrook 12).

13 Heathcote describes her contribution much as she describes her function in a teaching situation, "I simply stand midway between all that has happened before I arrived and what is now. What I do at this moment obviously shapes up some part of what is to come. Everything that has happened before me, I have something in common with, and this is my secret for finding material for drama" (Heathcote cited in Wagner 1976: 13).

14 Yet the teacher remains 'in control' of the process. It must be asked whether this is simply the teacher as Foucault's Panopticon, effecting "a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application?" (Foucault in Rabinow (ed) 1984: 206). Burton (1991) comments; "Although Heathcote acknowledges the worth of individual, spontaneous creativity in the drama process in theory, in practice her collective, teacher-directed methodology results in the creative act being subservient to other, different forms of learning... As with imagination, as with the drama process itself, creativity is a functional tool requiring skilled use by the teacher in the drama practice of Dorothy Heathcote." (p. 59).


16 David Hornbrook, for many years a Staff Inspector for Drama in the Inner London Education Authority claims "evidence suggests... (Heathcote's methodology was) rather less successful in engaging with the day to day practice of drama teaching than might be thought from reading the literature" (Hornbrook 15). The criticism of Heathcote offered by Hornbrook occurs in the context of the British 1989 Education Reform Bill in which Drama was dropped from the list of core and foundation studies. In his analysis of "what went wrong" Hornbrook concludes that the failure of Drama Education lies in the perception of drama as a process in isolation from the product oriented environment of contemporary drama and theatre.

17 Bruce Burton (1991), frustrated by the limitations in this approach argues that "Bolton's particular use of drama as a methodology for sociological learning, leads him to restrict the development of creativity to highly specific functional applications... (his) form of whole-group, in-role drama probably limits individual creativity." (p. 70).

18 The review found that Drama was relatively inexpensive to examine; that it was a subject area that attracted a substantial and growing number of students; that it is based upon a strong body of knowledge; it presents students with a academically rigorous syllabus; that it offers personal and vocational benefits to students; that it offers particular knowledge and skills not available in other subject areas. Through enactment, it prepares students for life; it offers an education around both process and product; it requires students to work together in order to succeed; it is structured to enable students to be assessed as individuals within groups; the skills acquired in Drama transfer to other subject areas; it is attractive to students who perform at above average standard. Board of Studies, N.S.W. May 1996 *A Review of HSC Drama*. Sydney: Board of Studies.

19 Key competencies as defined by N.S.W. Board of Studies and employed by the N.S.W. Department of Education.

KC1 Collecting, Analysing and Organising Information
The capacity to locate information, sift and sort information in order to select what is required and present it in a useful way, and evaluate both the information itself and the sources and methods used to obtain it.

KC2 Communicating Ideas and Information.
The capacity to communicate effectively with others using the range of spoken, written, graphic and other non-verbal means of expression.

KC3 Planning and Organising Activities.
The capacity to plan and organise one's own activities, including making good use of time and resources, sorting out priorities and monitoring one's own performance.

KC4 Working with Others and in Teams.
The capacity to interact effectively with other people both on a one-to-one basis and in groups, including understanding and responding to the needs of others and working effectively as a member of a team to achieve a shared goal.

KC5 Using Mathematical Ideas and Techniques.
The capacity to effectively use mathematical ideas, such as number and space, and techniques, such as estimation and approximation, for practical purposes.

KC6 Solving Problems.
The capacity to apply problem-solving strategies in purposeful ways, both in situations where the problem and the desired solution are clearly evident and in situations requiring critical thinking and a creative approach to achieve an outcome.

KC7 Using Technology.
The capacity to apply technology, combining the physical and sensory skills needed to operate equipment and the understanding of scientific and technological principles needed to explore and adapt systems.

State professional teacher associations include; Educational Drama Association of New South Wales (EDA), Queensland Association for Drama in Education (QADIE), South Australian Association for Drama in Education (SADIE), Tasmanian Association for Drama in Education (TADIE), Western Australian Association for Drama in Education (Drama West), Victorian Association for Drama in Education (Drama Victoria), Australian Capital Territory Drama Association (ACTDA), Northern Territory Association for Drama in Education (NTADIE).

A database of 'Drama courses offered at tertiary level in New South Wales' compiled by Dr. Donna Gibba in JEDA Vol. 4. No. 1. March 1996 p. 46-59 lists 327 courses in Drama related subjects (in the areas of English, Education, Visual and Performing Arts, Theatre and Theatre Studies, Drama and Drama Studies, Languages, Classics, Theatre and Film Studies, Performance Studies, General Studies, Creative Arts, and the Arts) offered at 11 universities in N.S.W.

Creativity and Embodied Learning

Section 6: New directions in drama education
Introduction

More recent writings on drama education offer deeper considerations upon learning and embodiment. It, particularly the work of Peter Abbs, David Best and Augusto Boal draws attention to differences between the drama process and the arts product. The drama process is an embodied experience of learning. The arts product may give rise to learning but is not in itself a learning experience. Much of this more recent work focuses on feelings, or in Maturana’s terms, ‘emotioning’. The admission of feelings to the drama process does more than acknowledge the obvious, it provides an opportunity to reflect upon the self conscious communication systems that drama embodies. Such an admission addresses drama as a relationship. It is my argument that learning must be considered in such terms. Without an appreciation of the relationships that learning arises from there can be no appreciation of that which learning constructs and contributes to. Drama represents that learning in readily identifiable ways. This understanding of the drama process, informed as it is by the work of Maturana and Varela, has little to do with theatrical art forms. Different priorities inform in different ways. When learning is appreciated through reflection upon experience forms of representation that do not allow opportunities for reflection also deny opportunities for participation. This essential difference separates subject and object, participant and audience, actor and spectator.

Re-presenting process

In their advocacy of drama education Slade, Way, Heathcote and Bolton each, in their own way, identify the ‘drama process’ as central to the learning contained within the study. By valuing the process undertaken by the student more than the product that is displayed (to teachers and examiners, to peers, parents, employers and the community in general) such advocates offer a powerful challenge to a range of assumptions about the purpose and priorities of education and by implication, the society that sets up and maintains those education systems. It has been suggested however that many of the assertions made by these drama theorists have been tested and found wanting, that their theory has been insufficiently grounded in practice (Hornbrook 1989, 1995). Clearly, Drama is not an easy subject to teach, no subject is, but Drama calls on skills and abilities in both teachers and students, that cannot be accessed or taught in a conventional classroom setting. It calls on a base of experience radically different to that which is traditionally needed by school students.
Developing then building on that base requires teaching and learning methods different to those traditionally valued. New methods of languaging need to be employed, new ways of demonstrating knowledge need to be appreciated. Subjective experience needs to be accommodated even nurtured in a way that it is not in other subject areas.

Difficulties in setting up quality control systems capable of ensuring a standard of subjective experience contribute to difficulties in establishing drama education, in the minds of some students, staff and administrators, as an important educational experience. These difficulties revolve around in part, the lack of an analytical framework, a technical language through which to discuss and assess accomplishment. This makes the international publication of The process of drama by John O'Toole (1992) a welcome addition to the drama education library.¹ Recognising that "the word 'process' is rarely, if ever, defined" (p. 1) O'Toole turns his attention to the action that is involved, the 'being' and 'doing' of drama, and re-presents it as a method of creative learning. While doing this, he is very specific in establishing contexts for drama.² Through identifying contexts O'Toole is able to focus on the drama processes that unfold within those contexts.³

Central to the understanding of process in drama is, O'Toole argues, an understanding of the centrality of relationships to drama. Accordingly, he defines process in drama as "negotiating and renegotiating the elements of dramatic form in terms of the context and purposes of the participants" (p. 2). This process of negotiation and re-negotiation entails a concentration on "fictional role taking and improvisation". Context is central to negotiation and the 'elements of dramatic form' as mapped by O'Toole (p. 6) are contained within these contexts. He lists these as, the 'real context', the 'context of the setting', the 'context of the medium' and the 'dramatic context'. These listings establish parameters for the analysis of process.

By conceptualising contexts and structures O'Toole offers a language for the critical examination of the drama process. His principal contribution has been therefore, the articulation of a model of the process that unfolds in drama. This articulation means that the paths tracked by participants, in their creation of dramatic meaning, can be articulated and that this can be done without discounting the experience of participation.

David Wright: 'Creativity and embodied learning'
As he might himself insist, the context of O’Toole’s contribution to drama education deserves mention. This detailed discussion of process emerged at a time when process drama was being subjected to considerable debate. A reaction, particularly in Great Britain, against what was seen as a gap between the claims for process drama and the accomplishment of those who taught it, challenged many of the assumptions that had guided drama education in the 1960’s, 1970’s and early 1980’s.

O’Toole’s publication can be seen as a response to a movement to promote subject disciplines emphasising theatre (or product) rather than drama (or process). The former places most emphasis upon aesthetic appreciation, the latter on participation and creation. By advancing a sophisticated understanding of process, O’Toole offers new ways to appreciate and analyse the learning contained in the creative work of drama students and stronger arguments for its inclusion in school curricula. However, it would be a considerable mistake to under value the arguments presented by critics of process drama. Like Slade, Heathcote and others, the target of Peter Abbs and David Hornbrook, whose writings I will be discussing in the next section, is not simply process drama, it is the values and attitudes, the knowledge and skills that guide contemporary education.

**Aesthetics, feeling and learning**

The influence of Abbs, Hornbrook and another writer I will be dealing with in this section, David Best, like that of Slade, Way, Heathcote and Bolton, emanates from Great Britain. Abbs, like Hornbrook identifies process drama as a contributor to the threat that faces Drama in secondary schools in Great Britain. Best is a defender of process. While Hornbrook and Abbs say Drama is under threat, and lay the blame for this upon over emphasis on process, it is interesting to note that recent surveys in Britain have demonstrated that Drama is now the most popular of the creative arts subjects in British schools and that students are enrolling in ever increasing numbers (Ross 1996). This is despite Great Britain’s 1988 Education Reform Bill in which Drama, along with Dance, Media Studies and Film (among other non-Arts subjects) were excluded from the list of ‘foundation subjects’.4

Hornbrook (1989) has tried to identify the reason for the shift in the official status of Drama.
There is no doubt in my mind that drama-in-education’s public reluctance to identify unambiguously with the arts curriculum contributed in no small measure to its exclusion from the list of prescribed subjects. To curious outsiders, the distinctions forcibly made by some drama teachers between their drama and that going on in the theatre down the road, for instance, remained less than comprehensible (Hornbrook 1989: 41).

In this regard Hornbrook casts himself as a drama in education turncoat and depicts his enthusiasm for the subject as having been tempered by observations of the teaching of it in British schools over an extended period of time.

The unhappy truth is that the internal logic of its own aims and practices conspired with history to exclude school drama from the very curriculum it once sought to colonise... The narrow sectarianism of its methodologies, together with a lack of curiosity concerning the intellectual or artistic world beyond its own very limited bibliography, led educational drama blindly yet remorselessly forward out of the subject based curriculum and into the wilderness (p. 41).

Curiously, events in Australia have proceeded in a markedly different manner. The arguments about ‘process vs product’ and ‘drama in education vs theatre in education’ that are implied in the above statements and expanded upon in much of that which Hornbrook has published have not emerged as disabling problems in Australia. A preparedness to recognise the importance of process and product and drama and theatre - which is evident in the senior school syllabuses in all states and territories of Australia - is evident also in the work of the more influential writers on drama education in Australia, particularly John O'Toole and Bruce Burton. The success of Drama programs at H.S.C. level, the rapid growth in Drama related courses in the tertiary sector and the expansion of research into the subject area have all occurred in Australia without the rabid sectarianism that Hornbrook in particular, pursues, identifies and contributes to.

The argument Hornbrook puts, which is expanded upon in different ways by Abbs, has two principal, though related strands. The first is support for the bringing of the arts together into an arts curriculum. The second is an assertion that a general arts curriculum must focus study in each of the art forms on ‘aesthetics’ and the ‘aesthetic experience’. This requires, Hornbrook (1989)
says, an understanding of the aesthetic experience, its place in culture and its place in the history of cultures.

This must be capable of giving us an account both of dramatic art's critical place in culture and history and of the way in which drama can reflect and articulate the ever-changing paradoxes of our common experience (p. 99).

It must balance the 'doing' and the 'feeling' of drama. Accordingly, Hornbrook advocates less emphasis upon process drama and more emphasis upon the definition of the drama experience through, among other things, the study of modern theatrical texts and productions, the history and tradition of theatre and the role of theatre in present and past societies. He envisages a curriculum in which learning will occur in two ways.

Firstly, through production, where children shape dramatic texts which express the consciousness of their lived present within the accessible context of familiar (though necessarily developing) ideological forms; secondly, through reproduction, where existing dramatic texts provide access to past structures of feeling, now recognisably incorporated in dominant or emergent ideologies within the culture. Simultaneously, a continuing process of interpretation and appraisal means that dramatic art has the potential for critical articulation, both of the felt, social present, and the ideological forms embedded in that present (Hornbrook 1989: 110).

**Peter Abbs**

Peter Abbs (1989, 1993, 1995) has constructed more comprehensive arguments on roughly similar terrain. Like Hornbrook, Abbs identifies the arts as a 'generic community' in which all art forms are interconnected. He has done this in a climate of political and social - and therefore educational - uncertainty. A climate marked by the long march of economic rationalism (termed 'Thatcherism' in Great Britain) and the long standing dominance of conservative governments keen to limit government expenditure and government contributions to the life of the community, (an experience becomingly increasingly familiar in Australia). This withdrawal of support services has been rationalised as a greater opportunity for free enterprise. This has led to greater emphasis in schools on vocational training. "What is certain is that in the coming decade arts educators are going to have to fight very hard to secure an aesthetic education for their children. To do this we
need a philosophy and a practice which are mutually supportive” (Abbs 1993: 18).

Abbs asserts that focusing on what is distinctive about art forms is central to the securing of a place for aesthetic education. To do this, he argues that it is necessary to focus upon that which is held in common in the arts, “the imaginative, the deeply expressive and the aesthetic”. By contrast, he argues that a focus on individual artforms means that differences are emphasised and commonalities are overlooked. A learning about aesthetics and the aesthetic sensibility, which Abbs describes as “a kind of apprehension through the senses and the imagination”, is the type of arts education he advocates.

The aesthetic denotes a mode of response inherent in human life which operates through the senses and the feelings and constitutes a form of intelligence comparable to, though different from, other forms of intelligence, such as the mode of logical education... The aesthetic is a much broader category than that of the artistic; it includes all manner of simple sensuous experiences from, say, the pleasure of tasting food to enjoying the breeze on one’s face. But at the same time the arts depend on the aesthetic modality because they operate through it... Through aesthetic intelligence we are able to apprehend a realism of meaning and value essential to any full concept of human existence” (Abbs 1993: 10).

Abbs is critical of what he describes as the intellectual diversions that have avoided this response. He says that academic criticism over the last fifty years has been “less than constructive” and claims that an “excess of critical theory has demoted, even corrupted” the aesthetic experience. He seeks to reintroduce and validate a ‘feeling’ response to experience. This requires the recognition that experience may be beyond full expression in words. Abbs says that experience validates rather than contains the source and the contents of personal feelings. It places words, and the use of words as systems of communication, within a range of possible forms of expression rather than elevating them as the only form. Abbs suggests, in effect, that words need to be recognised for their aesthetic qualities if they are to be used to approximate experience within an aesthetic realm. This is a substantial critique of educational priorities. It means that a creative approach to language is required if aesthetic experience is to be explored.

At times this will be a technical language; at times it will be an interpretative language; at other times, a broad philosophical language. In this way the
aesthetic moment is brought into the culture, and the culture in turn is animated by the raw energy of the experience" (p. 13).

Abbs cites his work as a poet as one of the most significant factors in his approach to arts education. He says that his "own struggle with writing poetry for thirty years" has provided him with him "insight into the nature of creativity, into the need for form and into the need for an active community" (p. 17). I can relate to his struggle. My own desire to use the written form to negotiate feelings and relationships has provided me with both insight and frustration. For me, writing has always been emotional. I feel my way into meaning as much as I think my way. In feeling my way I find myself, like Abbs, caught within language (which contains culture and tradition). Writing for performance I find myself caught within considerably more ways of languaging than the written and the verbal. Each of these, like the written and the verbal, are also containers of culture and tradition.

Respect for culture and tradition is very significant in Abbs vision for drama and arts education. He is critical of what he sees as past practice among arts teachers of failing to "introduce students to the conventions and achievements of the past and to relate them to students' own productions and preoccupations" (p. 15). In short, Abbs argues that the feelings of arts students have not been sufficiently contextualised and that the traditions that such feelings have constructed through history have been insufficiently explored in their educational experience. Accordingly, Abbs demands a greater appreciation of cultural tradition. This is a tradition in which,

primary significance is given to... a right to private property and the free expression of opinion... which seeks its own fullest realisation... (at the base of which is) freedom for the market, but at the apex... is the freedom for the collaborative pursuit of meaning and the articulation of the spirit (embodied in the life of a real culture, within a public sphere) that is so absent today and one of the proper functions of the community of learning should be to represent and reanimate it (1995:50).

Yet this is only one tradition. It is the Christian European tradition. A greater appreciation of this tradition could see the tradition of Peking Opera treated as no more than an interesting though antiquated back-water. It ignores the rich reservoir of learning contained in Peking Opera, it depicts it, and an abundance of non Christian-European learning traditions as lacking in
meaning for European audiences and European students. Abbs critique is primarily a response to popular culture, for which he expresses considerable disdain.

Most of mass culture is a surrogate culture. It robs its citizens of the materials they most need for the fulfilment of their freedom. It also tends to rob them of all the other cultural visions they need to keep their reflection bright and their minds expansive (p. 49-50).

An arts education, structured in the manner he imagines, provides Abbs argues, a "truer sense of democracy and a richer sense of a participatory culture... a vivid apprenticeship into the making and sharing of meaning and the making and sharing of relationships" (1995: 49). This deserves to be questioned. It is a distinction that invites consideration as to how any subject matter, the arts or otherwise, can be separated from the cultural context within which it is taught. Any such separation emphasises the "apprenticeship" of the student rather than the "making and sharing" aspects of "meaning" and "relationship". It invites consideration also about the manner in which "mass (or popular) culture" - remembering that at the time of its creation the work of Shakespeare, Goethe, Balzac, Dickens and Mozart had a mass audience - becomes other than mass culture. It invites the question, where does art come from and how does it comes to represent the qualities Abbs values.

David Best

David Best (1989, 1992) works in similar territory to Abbs, Great Britrain in the 1980's and 90's, but his concerns are slightly different. Best's focus is on the learning that arises through the subjective feelings that occur in the arts experience. His critique of earlier drama theorists centres on their tendency to claim the arts experience alone as justification for the inclusion of arts subjects in the curriculum. He sees this as an unwillingness or an inability to debate this as learning (and therefore determine means whereby the learning contained in the experience can be maximised). The unwillingness to name the learning that is contained in the arts experience is, Best asserts, ultimately detrimental to the future of arts education. He responds to this failing with his own vision of the learning that is acquired in this process. Central, Best says, are the 'feelings' that are accessed through arts experiences. He argues that these feelings are quite different to the feelings that we are taught - by television, pop music and other strains of popular culture - we should
experience. "Our aim should be to educate them (students) to become capable of a continuously expanding range of vivid and subtly discriminated feelings, which are their own, first hand, authentic" as distinct from the "conformist, second-hand feelings" generated by popular culture (Best 1989: 71). This is a difficult argument to sustain premised as it is on the assumptions that feelings can be not-authentic and that popular cultures can not provide access to that which is 'authentic'.

Best asserts that teaching and learning practices predicated around the establishment of the preconditions for aesthetic experience assume that emotions are passive. This he describes as an understanding constructed on the assumption that "the arts consist in expressing and receiving experiences, rather than progressively developing understanding." He concludes that this attitude suggests that "there can be no freedom, no individual artistic development, no education, on this subjectivist basis, but only something like conditioned responses". He argues therefore, for a "far richer relationship between the person and the work of art, between one's emotion and the work" (p. 73-74).

The development of this richer understanding of feelings requires a movement beyond the conception of emotion and feeling as sensation. This requires the recognition that emotion, as distinct from sensation, "necessarily involves cognition or understanding of the object of that feeling". It is through this construction around understanding and its relationship to feelings, then to learning (or changes in understanding), that Best advances the work of Bolton and his predecessors. He argues that such understanding is relevant both to the creation of arts works and to their appreciation. He suggests, almost as an afterthought, that it may also be relevant to the work of those engaged in the sciences.

For the ability to use and understand interpretive reasons involves imagination, creativity. So it makes no sense to assume that reasoning is distinct from or opposed to creativity and imagination... the very existence of interpretive reasoning depends upon, and is an expression of, the variety of different conceptions, interpretations, opinions (p. 77).

The ramifications of this 'understanding' are many. They require consideration upon the circumstances - the society, the culture, the aesthetic tradition - through which that understanding is determined. Central within this
determination is language. Best dismisses conceptions of language as independent of the circumstances of its occurrence.

I cannot have thoughts... unless there is already a medium (e.g. a language, an art form) in which I can formulate or express those thoughts. It makes no sense to suppose that such thoughts could exist if there were not already the medium of formulation (p. 80).

He thereby identifies language as a determinant of communication not simply a medium for communication. “Only because there are already linguistic and artistic forms of expression is it possible for an individual to have private thoughts and feelings of the relevant kinds” (p. 80). The link that Best makes between language and the arts is fundamental to his argument.

No sharp distinction can be made between language and the arts, since both are part of that amalgam of social practices which together comprise a culture, and which to a large extent set the parameters of possible thought and feeling of those brought up in it (p. 82).

This is the social discourse we live within. The tradition that we - through our own struggle to understand our participation in that tradition - create into the future.⁶ Best argues that it is the responsibility of the arts educator to provide his or her students with access to the vast and continuously expanding range of artistic expression. He says this is far preferable to limiting experience to the exploration of personal experience. The failure to contextualise, that he identifies and critiques with such vigour, in the philosophy and practice of other arts educators (including the generation of drama educators influenced by Heathcote and Bolton) has, according to Best, limited the effective communication of thought and feeling. He concludes,

In short, in learning to understand the art form one is ipso facto extending the range of feelings it is possible to have - i.e., not just the expression of already existent feelings, but the feelings themselves.... the common saying that the arts are a matter of subjective feeling, not of reason and cognition, is seriously damaging to the case for the arts in education. It is even more damaging that those who say it are arts educators themselves. We need to reject the subjectivist clichés, and to insist that artistic feeling is itself rational and cognitive (p. 83-84).

David Wright: ‘Creativity and embodied learning’
By emphasising the extension of feelings - ‘feelings themselves’ - the aesthetic education postulated by Best is not antithetical to an education in process. By expanding opportunities for feeling, such an education expands opportunities for expression just as it expands opportunities for explanation. Furthermore, by insisting on the rationality of feelings, Best is not insisting that rationality is contained within the bounds of a tightly defined tradition. In contemporary art rationality is continually being explored. It is itself subject matter. The exploration of rationality is a legitimate and important, even a vital artistic endeavour because rationality is a concept that is bound within particular circumstances. If artistic expression is, as Best says, continuously expanding, that expansion must occur in conceptual grounds at one time considered not-rational, for it is through explanation that rationality is constructed. ‘Feelings themselves’ are rational only as a result of explanation. Through process, rationality is arrived at. It is not assumed beforehand. The subjectivity that is socialised in explanation deserves to be acknowledged. The tradition that is created through that explanation needs the opportunity to emerge.

**A dramatic arts curriculum**

Influenced strongly by Peter Abbs, David Hornbrook (1989) argues for a Drama curriculum that places greater emphasis upon theatre and drama as artforms. He advocates the development and implementation of a dramatic arts curriculum, in an attempt to overcome what he describes as the drama/theatre dichotomy put in place by Peter Slade’s emphasis on the unique qualities of ‘child drama’.

Hornbrook envisages this curriculum as “genuinely inclusive, as happy with the vulgar spectacle of carnival and circus, for example, as it is with the metaphorical complexities of Elizabethan verse or the dramatic play of the infant classroom” (p. 129). It should, as distinct from drama-in-education, encompass “all that is the art of drama”. Significantly, he proposes it as a stand-alone subject area rather than as an educational or learning system (p. 130), as a subject designed around skills rather than an emerging social consciousness.

The difference between the activities valued by Hornbrook and those he critiques lies largely in the interpretation of the skills that Hornbrook seeks to
extend. They lie also in the language in which Hornbrook offers his understanding. He writes,

If we stop regarding improvisation as the uninhibited manifestation of the creative spirit, and instead treat it rather like the rough-cut of a film, then teachers have direct access to the crafting process... the teacher can then ask the improvisation to be run again, can suggest alterations, can examine 'freeze-frames', can send the group away to 're-cut' their work. Other watchers, the remainder of the class, can participate in this editing process, becoming essential collaborators in a form of collective evaluation (p. 134).

In his critique Hornbrook claims that drama education lacks a "suitable vocabulary". He himself does not suffer this failing. Hornbrook has cultivated an extremely vivid vocabulary and he uses that vocabulary to state his case for change in the most pungent of terms.

By bringing drama out into the open, so that it is no longer regarded by the rest of the school as freemasonry conducted behind the closed doors of the drama studio, but as an intelligible set of skills and expressive practices frequently made manifest in performance, dramatic art allows drama teachers to shed their role as curricular missionaries and the evangelical defensiveness which grew with it. It should be possible for them to share intelligible accounts of what they hope to achieve with colleagues, parents, head teachers and above all, with the children themselves (p. 138).

It is not without reason that John O'Toole refers to him as "the Alexander Pope of drama education... full of waspish complaints about process drama."\textsuperscript{7}

In Education and dramatic art Hornbrook (1989) includes an example of the sort of curriculum that could be developed. His example is a modular GCSE syllabus from the Inner London Education Authority (p. 147-155).\textsuperscript{8} He emphasises the way in which this curriculum "restores arts-subject status to school drama". It is a broad and flexible course with clearly stated aims and objectives. It is constructed around work with the basic elements of space, sound, gesture, discourse, text, form and scene making and the practices of improvisation, representation and interpretation, critical reflection, stagecraft and cultural and historical studies. In comparing that syllabus to the 2 Unit HSC Drama syllabus in N.S.W. the most striking difference lies in the heavily directed nature of the GCSE course. The performance components of the
GCSE course involve the use of dramatic work only “where the content has been broadly determined in advance”. Opportunities for ‘performance-making’ are severely limited.

By comparison, the N.S.W. Higher School Certificate course offers great freedom for students to explore their own experience through performance. In the N.S.W. course each student is required to participate in a Group Presentation as part of the HSC examination and to present an ‘Individual Project’ in either performance, script writing, design (stage design, lighting design or publicity and promotion design), direction, critical analysis or video making.

The N.S.W. course, like the GCSE module includes a range of Drama/Theatre studies. Greek Theatre, Commedia dell’arte, Theatre of the Absurd, Australian theatre 1968-74, Contemporary Women’s Theatre, Dario Fo, State and regional theatre companies and Theatre-in-education are among those that can be studied. The emphasis in these ‘topic areas’ is less on cultural and historical aspects than on performance. The study of topic areas is “framed around a form, style, movement or tradition in theatre, or around the work of an individual creative artist, performance group or theoretician” (N.S.W. Board of Studies 1993: 19). Topic areas are therefore explored theoretically and practically and the experience contained within the performative element of the study is designed to feed the skills required to develop the ‘Group Performance’ and the ‘Individual Project’. The practical exploration of the topic area, like the practical exploration of personal experience in the group performance (and, if pursued, the Individual Performance Project) entails a physical engagement in the learning that has constructed the ‘form, style, movement or tradition’.

The physical exploration of understanding that is encouraged in this approach to the various topic areas extends and enhances intellectual appreciation of their historical and cultural qualities. This appreciation of embodied learning is not absent, but is of less significance in the dramatic arts curriculum that Hornbrook advocates.

Local comparisons

It would appear that the relative isolation of Australia from the fever of the debate between advocates of ‘drama-in-education’ and advocates of ‘dramatic art’ has enabled local curriculum writers to embrace the strengths they find in each approach. The N.S.W. 2 Unit syllabus displays a blend of ‘drama-in-
education’ and ‘dramatic arts’ approaches to curriculum. While not seeking to set the N.S.W. course up as an exemplary form, it is worth making reference to if only to put the critique offered by Hornbrook in some sort of context.

The N.S.W. 2 Unit Drama course has many qualities. The 1996 N.S.W. Board of Studies Review of HSC Drama described the course as “the only subject in which it is often in each candidate’s best interest to assist other candidates to raise the level of their own performance”. The review team discovered that 40% of those Drama students who went on to higher education enrolled in Drama courses or courses with a drama component. They identified a strong body of knowledge in 2 Unit Drama in the areas of dramaturgy, history, language and technology. In relation to questions of academic ‘rigour’, the team reported,

Not being a ‘traditional academic’ subject, Drama has sometimes been suspected of being a ‘soft option’... The best way to appraise the rigour with which a subject is pursued is... to look at the candidate’s products... By any measure (those products) demonstrate that an extremely high level of rigour is required of students who hope to do well in Drama.9

As mentioned earlier, the review team said that Drama is the only subject that contributes to the development of competence in all eight of the key competency areas. This endorsement, coming from a review team led by researchers with no prior experience of drama education is a very powerful one. The report endorsed the subject for the “body of knowledge” that students are required to master, the “rigour” of the subject, the “benefits to students” - in relation to “personal skills” and “vocational opportunities” - the “preparation for life” offered and the manner in which the subject requires students to produce both “artefacts” and “performances”. It also says also that the subject was one of the few that set up opportunities for “co-operative learning”, that allowed “simultaneous assessment of individuals in a group”, effectively transferred its benefits to other subjects and successfully accommodated the needs of more accomplished students. As a result of its deliberations the review team recommended, among other things, “that an account of the innovative assessment of group performance be prepared for publication in the Board’s name” and that the feasibility of a 3 unit (or advanced) Drama course be investigated.10
Several of the qualities endorsed by the review team are those with which Hornbrook has found fault. Quite possibly Hornbrook feels affronted, perhaps even oppressed, by the drama-in-education movement. In seeking to overcome that oppression, he might be advised to test out the practical relevance of the work of Augusto Boal. Boal is included in both the 'historical and cultural studies' in the GCSE module and the N.S.W. HSC 2 Unit Drama list of 'topic areas' headed 'Drama and theatre in societies and cultures other than Australian'. I doubt whether Hornbrook would have problems with the cerebral analysis that Boal uses to critique the history of theatre. He may have more difficulties with the practices Boal advocates as a result of that analysis. Boal is not a drama educator in the tradition of Slade, Heathcote or Bolton. His work is not centred on the school system but his considerable work in drama learning systems makes him an extremely interesting subject in the context of this thesis. While not constructed specifically for use in schools, Boal's work has immediate relevance to the processes of learning that arise in the drama classroom.

**Augusto Boal: Oppression and learning**

Augusto Boal’s approach to theatre is essentially Marxist. It is constructed upon an analysis of historical patterns in the development of societies and the theatre that has existed within those societies. My intention here is to describe his analysis more than contest it. It is the activities that arise as a result of the analysis that are of most interest to me now.

Boal depicts parallels between the nature of power in society at various times in history and the performance styles that have predominated at those times. As a result of this analysis, he constructs a body of performance practices designed to effect social change. In doing so, Boal constructs a learning system. By emphasising individual and community access to learning through structured drama activities, the work of Boal (1979, 1992, 1995) merits recognition as a drama method of considerable relevance to drama education as much as an analysis of social and political power. The perspective of the participant is central to both his theory and his practice.

In *Games for actors and non-actors* his discussion begins with several simple statements about the enabling power of theatre and drama.
Theatre is the first human invention, and also the invention which paves the way for all other inventions and discoveries.

Theatre is born when the human being discovers that it can observe itself: when it discovers that, in this act of seeing, it can see itself - see itself in situ: see itself seeing.

Observing itself, the human being perceives what it is, discovers what it is not, and imagines what it can become. It perceives where it is and where it is not, and imagines where it could go (Boal 1995: 13).

This is the essence of theatre, according to Boal.

It is this capacity, this human property which allows man (sic) to observe himself in action, in activity. The self knowledge thus acquired allows him to be the subject (the one who observes) of another subject (the one who acts). It allows him to imagine variations of his action, to study alternatives. Man can see himself in the act of seeing, in the act of acting, in the act of feeling, the act of thinking. Feel himself feeling, think himself thinking.... An actor, acting, taking action... has learnt to be his own spectator. This spectator (spect-actor) is not only an object; he is a subject because he can also act upon the actor - the spect-actor is the actor, he can guide him, change him. A spect-actor acting on the actor who acts. (p. 13-14).

Through the ‘spect-actor’ Boal articulates the learning that is contained in structured drama process.

Boal’s principal theoretical text, Theatre of the Oppressed (1979) brings together a range of material written in the late 1960’s and the early 1970’s. These writings were published in Brazil in 1974 and translated into English in 1979. They emerged subsequent to, though in the general time frame of Liberation Theology and demands for a more inclusive approach to education articulated by Paolo Friere. (Boal worked with Friere in some of his literacy campaigns and some of the activities he designed emerged from those campaigns.) Any attempt to reduce his method to its essence must focus on the concept of the ‘spect-actor’. The ‘spect-actor’ constructs a bridge between the environments and experiences of the ‘spectator’ and the ‘actor’. It empowers the spectator to assume the social function of actor. An actor is, in this sense, a person who acts in society (as distinct from a person who is acted...
upon), an activist. Through theatrical processes, Boal reduces the significance of the distinction between spectators and actors and sets up systems that allow individuals to discover themselves as activists. The ‘theatre of the oppressed’ accords the performance that occurs in everyday life the consideration that is all too often reserved for the performance that occurs on stage.

In his historical analysis Boal argues that in the beginning theatre was song, carnival and feast. All the community participated. From this starting point, his analysis focuses on historical developments in theatre. He argues that in ancient Greece, a ruling class emerged to take possession of the stage. Greek tragedians separated the performers from the audience, then on stage, the protagonist from the chorus. Significant within this were Aristotle’s views on the function of art. To Aristotle art involved the ‘imitation’ of men ‘as they should be’ rather than as they are. This meant that the function of art (and science) was to correct the faults of nature. If as Aristotle asserted, happiness means living in accordance with (effectively obeying) the law, the maintenance of happiness is justification for the maintenance of social order. Boal argues that in ancient Greece theatre was used for this purpose. It became a form of state co-ordinated repression along with politics, the bureaucracy, approved social habits and customs. Central to this argument is the assertion that from the time of the Greeks, the European tradition of theatre (and outgrowths of this tradition in years, like television and film) have been used by ruling elites to manage the emotions and aspirations of the populace. In Theatre of the oppressed Boal marks various periods in history and points to changes that have occurred in theatre as changes have occurred in ruling elites. Despite these changes, he says that in European-derived cultures the essential separation between performers and audience has been maintained and the Aristotelian model of oppression affirmed.

Through a ‘theatre of the oppressed’, Boal seeks to enable those who are oppressed to reassume their protagonist function, to overcome the separation between the actor and the spectator. He hopes to change the people - spectators, passive beings in the social and theatrical equation - into subjects, into actors, into those who transform dramatic action. This, he argues, leads to the awakening of a critical social consciousness.

Instead of experiencing life vicariously through actors, as audiences have long been encouraged to do, in Boal’s ‘theatre of the oppressed’ the spect-actor is encouraged to experience his or her own life more fully. This experience
brings with it both knowledge and responsibilities. These lead to social actions which result in social transformation. Boal's analysis and the wide range of drama games and activities that flow from it represent a significant challenge to individuals and the social systems within which they live and learn. The theatre of the oppressed therefore offers a radical, perhaps even a revolutionary approach to drama education.

Boal (1995) describes the theatre of the oppressed as,

a system of physical exercises, aesthetic games, image techniques and special improvisations whose goal is to safeguard, develop and reshape this human vocation, by turning the practice of theatre into an effective tool for the comprehension of social and personal problems and the search for their solutions. The Theatre of the Oppressed has three main branches - the educational, the social and the therapeutic (p. 14-15).

The 'fundamental hypothesis' that underlies it is the notion that, "if the oppressed himself (sic) performs an action (rather than the artist in his place), the performance of that action in theatrical fiction will enable him to activate himself to perform it in real life." (p. 46). The body Is ever present in this work. The first word of the theatrical vocabulary is, according to Boal, the human body; "to control the means of theatrical production man must first of all control his own body, know his own body, in order to be capable of making it more expressive" (Boal 1979: 124-125).

In his later writings, Boal's Marxist critique is less explicit. These publications - the most widely circulated English language ones being Games for actors and non-actors (1992) and The rainbow of desire (1995) - are for the most, compendiums of activities rather than works of theory. They focus on the structured learning experiences that Boal has devised, of which 'Invisible Theatre', 'Image Theatre' and 'Forum Theatre' are the most widely used. Each of these collection of structured activities challenge participants to reflect upon their own experiences of learning just as they challenge participants to reflect upon the context of that learning. (Summaries of Forum Theatre, Image Theatre and Invisible Theatre are contained in Appendix 7.)

To Boal, learning is an outcome of physical and emotional experience. Central to the process is the physical and emotional experience of oppression. This experience can take many forms and Boal offers opportunities to rehearse the
skills needed to recognise and overcome it. The activities he has designed, moreover, provide an insight into the manner in which oppression works. For this reason their practical relevance extends far beyond their genesis. Though originally designed for an uneducated under class in Brazil, they can be used in forums in first world nations as easily as they can in the villages and urban slums of third world nations. I have used his techniques in Australia with 14 year old school children to examine peer and parental pressures, I have used them with adult psychotherapists to work with long standing memories, I have used them with trainee teachers to examine their first experience of the staff room and with professional colleagues to look at the complications of sexual harassment in the workplace. Experiences of oppression are many and varied. The oppression may differ in the form it takes, but learning can always be drawn from it. Boal (1992) argues that, “theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society” (p. xxxi). It is the emphasis upon transformation that makes his work special. The activities he has designed can be described therefore as ‘ways of knowing’ arrived at through ‘ways of doing’. Epistemologies made available through ontologies. As learning processes, Boal’s methodologies have a place in drama education as much as they do in political action. They are immediate, practical, relevant and accessible. They can also be extremely entertaining. They exemplify a systems approach to social and political process. Through empowering those who perceive themselves to be oppressed they challenge long standing systems of governance and put in place new relationships and new systems for the understanding and exercising of personal, social and political power.

The oppressed body in performance

Despite its South American origins and its more recent use in the field of therapy, the work of Boal does not stand in isolation from the classroom nor from much of contemporary theatre practice. Many of the exercises and games he uses are similar to those used in warm ups and improvisation by Viola Spolin (1983), Keith Johnston (1981) and others. The difference lies largely in the manner in which Boal interprets these exercises, for in the interpretation lies the learning. Boal constantly links the mind and the body in the exercises he formulates. He uses the word ‘exercise’ to,

designate all physical, muscular movement (respiratory, motor, vocal) which helps the doer to a better knowledge or recognition of his or her body, its
muscles, its nerves, its relationship to other bodies, to gravity, to objects, space, dimensions, volumes, distances, weights, speed, the interrelationship between awareness of the body and its mechanisms, its atrophies and hypertrophies, its capacities for recuperation, restructuring, re-harmonisation (Boal 1992: 60).

He describes each exercise as a “physical reflection on oneself”, “a monologue”, “an introversion”. “The games” he says, “deal with the expressivity of the body as emitter and receiver of messages. The games are a dialogue, they require an interlocutor. They are extroversion.” (Boal 1992: 60). In a workshop in Brisbane, Australia in 1995, Boal grouped one set of exercises under the title ‘sensitisation exercises’. He described them as designed to heighten the ability “to feel what we touch”, “to listen to what we hear” and “to see what we look at.” He argued that heightened sensitivity not only allows oppression to be experienced more fully, it also allows more effective responses to be made. Philip Auslander (1994) describes Boal’s theatre as “intensely physical... everything begins with the image and the image is made up of human bodies... The initial apprehension is of the body; discussion of the ideological implications of the images follows upon that apprehension” (p. 124). It is through a perception of the body that everyday experience becomes performance; the perception of the body frees the individual from the condition of spectator. Boal asserts that this freedom is accompanied also by the opportunity to become free of the physical and emotional experience of oppression determined by social and economic forces. Auslander (1994) observes that Boal’s image of the oppressed body is derived from Marx’s conception of the body as alienated labour.

Just as Marx sees the abolition of the division of labour as one of the essential steps in the transformation of capitalism into communism, so Boal proposes ‘de-specialisation’ of the body as a necessary step towards the exploration of oppression through theatre (p.128).

Action is required to make the change, action is inseparable from knowledge, each constantly ‘feeds back’ into the other.

The work of Boal began to be appreciated in Europe, the USA and beyond subsequent to the emergence of performance art and contemporary performance theory. This was also a time when drama education was emerging in Great Britain and psycho-drama in the USA and Europe. Certainly Boal’s experience in Europe, particularly France between 1976 and 1986,
would not have allowed him to avoid the influence of contemporary experiments in performance. Evidence of cross-pollination exists most clearly in the theatrical forms ‘Image Theatre’ and ‘Invisible Theatre’. Invisible theatre is a form of political street theatre. It is designed to entrap spectators into an recognition of their own performance(s). In form and content it bears comparison to some of the earliest performances of the Dadaists in France (Goldberg 1988: 76). Image theatre likewise bears a resemblance to Moreno’s work in psychodrama (which was launched in Vienna in the 1920’s and later refined into a recognised form of therapy in the United States). Boal openly acknowledges similarities between his and Moreno’s work (Feldhendler 1994: 87-109). Forum Theatre bears some resemblance to Heathcote’s teacher-in-role.

While most of my discussion (and most published research, especially in English) situates the work of Boal in industrialised nations with democratic systems of government where what he describes as the “cop-in-the-head” exerts most authority. The cop-in-the-head is an image that, according to Boal, arose from the observation that “authoritarianism penetrates even into the individual’s unconscious. The cop leaves the barracks (the moral, ideological barracks) and moves into one’s head... we carry them with us, they are our ‘cops-in-the-head’.” (Boal 1992: 191).

Boal’s work is extremely influential, as it was intended to be, in places where systems of oppression are more overt. As I realised while participating in the workshop in Brisbane his work is extremely political. Although I ‘knew’ this, I was surprised by how direct and focused Boal was in his pursuit of the subtleties of oppression. This helped me to understand that the ‘theatre of the oppressed’, especially under the direction of its founder, is designed first and foremost to challenge the legitimacy of authority.

At that workshop Elangovan, a theatre director from Singapore, showed Boal a copy of a manual used by political activists in the Filipino island of Mindanao. The manual was an unattributed compilation of Boal’s theatre practices, modified for use among villagers in the contested territories of the Southern Philippines. Boal said that he had seen similar publications from other parts of the world. Elangovan spoke also of the using Forum Theatre in Singapore to bring people together when other opportunities to meet and share concerns were denied. When authorities in this highly regulated island state became aware of the manner in which ‘theatre’ was being used they very quickly
withdrew permission for the meetings. Ahmed Khatoonabadi (1994), who used Forum Theatre to challenge traditional agricultural practices in Iran, describes the function of drama in such a situation as a "critical analysis procedure". He says that it sets up a "systemic action research process" that gets through to the inner resources of individual participants. In doing so it brings conceptual learning together with emotional and aesthetic experience. For this reason alone the work of Boal deserves to be included in any study of contemporary theatre practice.

Boal’s work can be looked at in a number of ways in a secondary school setting. His analysis of theatre history can be evaluated in a formal theatre study, just as his work can be considered in relation to the development of Brazilian or South American or world theatre. The games he lists in Games for actors and non-actors and The rainbow of desire can be used for warm-up exercises and/or improvisation. Forum theatre in particular, is very useful for this. It provides excellent opportunities for reserved and/or inexperienced actors to feel more comfortable in performance. Boal’s work can also be used, as it is intended, to empower individual students to reflect more deeply on their experience of oppression. The topic area ‘Augusto Boal’ in the NSW HSC 2 Unit Drama course, is described as “a study of the theory, ideology and dramatic forms developed” by Boal. It requires students to work with the “techniques... (that) support his theory and practice in Theatre of the Oppressed.”¹² This means that students are expected to engage in the processes Boal has designed. An invitation to question personal experiences of oppression is rarely issued in schools, the oppression contained in the school system generally precludes such analyses. The opportunity to engage in such an activity must be valued. The fact that Boal emphasises the learning contained in the body also deserves to be emphasised. This provides students with opportunities to consider the way in which their learning has formed their bodies (as well as their minds).

Finally it is worth reiterating that the accomplishments of Boal are far less significant than the practices that he has detailed, the activities that he describes. These are systems of learning that succeed as teaching and learning practices because they engage participants in active reflection upon strong personal experience. They are drama education at its best, they exemplify experiential learning, they acknowledge the body in learning, they acknowledge a wide variety of languaging processes, they arise and rely upon the interweaving of languaging and emotioning, they explain themselves in

David Wright: ‘Creativity and embodied learning’
performance, while encouraging active reflection and conceptual understanding. They promote the process of learning made available through drama over and above the performances produced.

**Project Zero**

Before concluding this discussion mention needs to be made of Howard Gardner and the work of the Project Zero Development Group at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. This group, of which Gardner is one of the directors, was founded by philosopher and aesthetician, Nelson Goodman in 1967. Goodman “believed that arts learning should be studied as a serious cognitive activity, but that close to ‘zero’ had been firmly established about the field”, hence the name of the project.¹³

There are two divisions within the Project Zero Development Group. The Cognitive Skills Group and the Development Group. Both groups are actively exploring arts education as a model for solving problems in other disciplines. Recent research at Project Zero has been into project based curricula, vocational education, new technologies, assessment procedures, artists in schools and the development of games that appeal to a wide variety of learning styles. The emphasis is therefore on practical teaching and learning techniques in addition to theories about teaching and learning. Lyle Davidson, a Research Associate at Project Zero, argues that,

> as we begin to understand better the underlying conditions in which learning and teaching take place in the arts, we see that the contexts for learning intrinsic to the arts are directly and perhaps uniquely relevant to education on a broader scale... it means that the arts become the model for instruction, that the characteristics of a good arts class extend beyond the narrow, traditional academic approach and can provide an educational model which other domains could profitably adopt (Davidson 1993: 9).

Davidson points out that, unlike other subject areas, arts teachers are usually also practitioners. This means that they have practical skills as well as knowledge about their subject area to communicate. This allows them to act as mentors to students. He argues also that, through their basis in group work, the arts promote thought about relationships and the systems that enable relationships to succeed. He says that the arts place learning in a cultural context and encourage students to participate in their field of study in addition...
to identifying and absorbing the learning of others in the field. This means that those who are learning are also researching. He argues also that the various assessment methods used to evaluate accomplishment in the arts have much to offer other subject disciplines.

Art teachers and teachers of artists seek more than identification of correct information and right answers. They seek documentation of students' thinking processes and evidence of their understanding... Students in art, music, theatre, and dance classes are typically engaged in projects which last over long periods of time... During the process of developing a work in workshop conditions under a mentor-teacher, students meet real and serious problems; they face head on the task of developing and maintaining uniform quality across the duration of the project; they have to revise their work and maintain their standards while they learn to solve unanticipated problems that come up, and they have to accommodate (but not necessarily give in to) the criticisms of their peers and teachers (p. 20).

Writing in the U.S.A., Davidson is optimistic about the future of arts education (which he equates with a basic education).

Fortunately, an increasing number of the important voices in the formation of school policy - school boards, the administrators, teachers, parents - are becoming more aware of what the arts provide students. If the trend in current assessment practice continues, the reduction of acceptable school subjects to those based on language and mathematical skills will wane, making it less difficult to make room for those disciplines or domains whose languages are not rooted in words and number." (Davidson 1993: 20-21).

He says that the "best schools" are already using the arts, not simply to create arts products, but also to develop communities, transmit cultural values, integrate cultural traditions, explore creativity, develop self expression and thoughtful consideration and promote critical thinking and problem solving in school age students. While generalising about the arts in this way, Davidson fails to look at the specific learning experiences that are made available through specific art forms. These 'ways of knowing' are alluded to in greater depth in Project Zero's research into "multiple intelligences". This work is discussed at length by Howard Gardner, also a member of the Harvard Graduate School of Education.
Multiple Intelligences

In *Frames of mind* (1985), Gardner defines "intelligence" very broadly. He describes it as "the ability to solve problems, or to create products, that are valued within one or more cultural settings" (p. x). Gardner uses this theory to assert that traditional methods of testing intelligence - which he describes as cultural products of a literal, scientific society - are inadequate. This suggests that more appropriate means for identifying and assessing forms of intelligences need to be found, and while he admits that the intelligences he identifies in *Frames of mind* and lists are "fictions", he says that are "at most, useful fictions" and offers them as "potentially useful scientific constructs" (p. 70).

Gardner lists eight criteria for the identification of an intelligence and seven human competences that fulfil these criteria. The criteria are "potential isolation by brain damage, the existence of idiots savants, prodigies and other exceptional individuals, an identifiable core operation or set of operations, a distinctive developmental history, along with a definable set of expert 'end-of-state' performance, an evolutionary history and evolutionary plausibility, support from experimental psychological tasks, support from psychometric findings, susceptibility to encoding in a symbol system" (Gardner 1985: 62-67). The competences are 'language', 'logical-mathematical analysis', 'spatial representation', 'musical thinking', 'the use of the body to solve problems or make things', 'self-knowledge', and 'understanding of others'. While asserting that some individuals may develop greater intelligence in one or another competence, Gardner says that we all both need and employ a blend of Intelligences. This leads Gardner to suggest that intellectual profiles could be developed for individual students and that students with particular talents could be channelled into special programs. He suggests, in addition, that as a result of this work some set of correlations between intelligence(s) and environment or cultural setting may emerge. As this study is focussing on embodied learning some mention needs to be made of the category of intelligence Gardner calls "bodily-kinesthetic intelligence". Introducing this category, Gardner uses the image of the mime.

The mime is a performer, and an exceedingly rare one indeed. The intelligences upon which he draws are not widely developed in our culture. Yet, perhaps for that very reason, he indicates in particularly striking form the actions and
capacities associated with a highly evolved bodily-kinaesthetic (or, for short, bodily) intelligence. (p. 206).

The core capacities of bodily intelligence are Gardner says, "control of one’s bodily motions and (the) capacity to handle objects skilfully". He is careful to point out that people who use these capacities also use other intelligences as well. "Nearly all cultural roles exploit more than one intelligence; at the same time... even Marcel Marceau’s capacity to use his body with such precision may well involve contributions from several intellectual domains" (p. 207).

Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence is, Gardner argues, a form of intelligence that has been neglected as distinctions have been constructed between ‘reflective’ and ‘active’ ways of knowing. “This sharp distinction... is not... drawn in many other cultures. This... should... give us pause before we conclude that a particular legacy of Western Cartesian thought is a universal imperative” (p. 208).

In his discussion Gardner looks to the attributes of a high level of bodily-kinaesthetic (or more simply ‘bodily’) intelligence. He considers the bodily intelligence of, among others, the dancer, the actor, the athlete, the musician, the surgeon and the inventor and analyses the feedback systems through which their performances can be judged as skilled. Gardner quotes Norman Mailer; "There are languages other than words, languages of symbol and languages of nature. There are languages of the body. And prize fighting in one of them" (Gardner 1985: 207). Gardner observes that,

All skilled performances include a well-honed sense of timing, where each bit of a sequence fits into the stream in an exquisitely placed and elegant way; points of repose or shift, where one phase of behaviour is at an end, and some calibration is necessary before the second one comes into play; a sense of direction, a clear goal to which the sequence has been heading, and a point of no return, where further input of signals no longer produces a result because the final phase of the sequence has already been activated... much of what we ordinarily call thinking - routine as well as innovative - partakes of the same principles that have been uncovered in overtly physical manifestations of skill (p. 208-209).

The evidence offered by Gardner for a bodily-intelligence emphasises the importance of accommodating such intelligence in teaching and learning systems. The central role that bodily-intelligence has had in the definition of
culture, particularly through dance and drama, throughout history demands this even more so.

The seven key competencies listed by the NSW Board of Studies (and detailed in the previous chapter) are comparable to, though not the same as, the seven multiple intelligences that Gardner lists. Nevertheless, the multiple intelligences, like the key competencies, are all employed in drama to a greater or lesser degree. Intelligence in the use of what Gardner calls language (linguistic intelligence) is central. Logical-mathematical analyses (logical-mathematical intelligence) are employed in the construction of performances and the provision of technical support for performance. The use of space (spatial intelligence) through gesture and setting is fundamental to drama. Music (musical intelligence) is central to all performance, be it actual music, the rhythms of movement or the rhythms of communication. The body is central to all performance (bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence) and self-knowledge and an understanding of others (the personal intelligences) are intelligences that are tested continually in the relationships constructed through drama. While some of these intelligences are more significant than others the range of the intelligences used suggests that drama offers both broad and flexible opportunities for a wide range of learning experiences.

**The body in drama education**

While Gardner has been prepared to acknowledge the intelligence and therefore the learning of the body, there are few scholars in the field of Drama education who have been as willing to engage so directly with the relationship between the body and learning. It is in this area I believe, that the most interesting and important work in drama education will emerge in the near future. It is through a recognition of the body and the importance of feelings that arise within the body that drama has the opportunity to extend the bounds of current understanding of drama processes and thereby the bounds of current educational practice.

It is my argument that the body has been insufficiently acknowledged in drama education. This may be due in part to the sensitivity that surrounds the subject in school systems. It may be due to a certain coyness about the body in European-derived cultures, perhaps a justifiable sensitivity to what some call ‘personal space’, a territory particularly vulnerable during adolescence. These issues granted, the neglect of the body as an instrument of learning can also
be seen as evidence of a general reluctance to acknowledge (and/or celebrate) the body and bodies, individually and collectively, as central to the construction of personal and social meaning.

In addition to insufficient acknowledgment, there has been insufficient published research into the body and learning in drama education. Much, including that of the principal theorists mentioned earlier, indirectly addresses the body but little research focuses directly on individual or collective embodied experience(s). In a recent article in Research in Drama Education (RIDE Vol. 1. No. 1. Feb 1996.) Anton Franks also decry's the lack of reference to the body. He observes that "despite the fact that drama education relies on bodies and the body as the main means of mediation, there is very little in theories and ideas around drama in education which raises the body as a subject and as a problem" (p. 105). He points out that in drama classrooms "the body is the pre-eminent form of representation," that "the 'scripts' (or 'texts') of improvised drama are formed and inscribed in and by the individual and collective bodies of the drama student(s)," and that "the body combines and orchestrates the communicative resources of speech, gesture and act". Acknowledging difficulties, Franks asks "how can we begin to describe learning processes in terms of what the body signifies through speech, gesture, posture, relative positions of one body to another?" (p. 105).

Responding to his own question, Franks draws on his work in improvisation with students of diverse cultural backgrounds. Describing this work, he depicts bodies as "simultaneously biological, social, cultural and thinking beings" then focuses his study on the body as a system of representation. He asks such questions as, "Why do particular students select specific roles, how does the selection process relate to students' experience of everyday life, where do students gather the resources from to give meaning to these embodied roles and what do they learn from this adoption of role?" He draws on social semiotics and the work of Boal - "in which the dramatic and theatrical application of the body is seen as the pre-eminent 'tool' and medium which transforms corporeal experience into a form of representation" - and makes reference to the work of Artaud.

Franks' attempt to discover links between dramatic action and social action and to relate this to the core principle of education, which he describes as "individual, social and cultural change through action - that is, transformation", leads him to conclude that there is a need for greater understanding of the way
in which drama students use their bodies to create meaning for themselves and their audiences. A good way to begin this process, Franks suggests, is "to look closely at bodies" (p. 118). German academic, Herta-Elisabeth Renk (1993) attempts this.

In a relatively recent article Renk discusses the process of interpreting the meaning contained in a body. This leads her into a discussion of the communication that is created by the body. As a result of this discussion Renk concludes that drama education is the only approach to teaching and learning that employs the very powerful understandings arrived at through research into the 'new sciences'.

Communication is the basis of all teaching and learning, of drama and theatre. How do we communicate in everyday life? How do we understand and learn? How do we understand or deliver an artistic message? How indeed! Would it not surprise Aristotle, Lessing or even Brecht that contemporary biologists, physicists and neurologists may contribute more to our understanding of drama and theatre than drama teachers and dramaturgs? (p. 193).

From a constructivist perspective, Renk asserts that the uniqueness of drama is a result of its deliberate use of both 'connotative' (or analogous) and 'denotative' (or digital) forms of communication. Connotative signs relate by analogy to what they signify. "Analogous messages are rooted in our physicality and are therefore just as broad and ambivalent as all other physical expressions." Denotative signs are arbitrarily linked to objects or concepts. They must be specifically learnt, like an unfamiliar vocabulary. Renk argues that,

Public and academic life demand verbal strategies, but privately we tend to communicate our innermost thoughts through connotation and analogy. Words appear late in human history and are first to be forgotten when passions are aroused. We often fool ourselves into believing that we can rationally talk ourselves into an opinion or out of a feeling, and yet we are constantly surprised how our children, and even the dog can read our thoughts (p. 194).

She asserts that, despite its constant use, the importance of analogous communication is insufficiently understood by both teachers and theatre practitioners.
Drama is... a personal process of exploring an analogous context, of making sense of life in a symbolic fashion... (it is)... the only operational form of teaching for a new paradigm of science... the central idea of this new paradigm is as follows: we do not uncover hidden truths that all along have been there for us to find. What we call truth, is in fact an analogy of the world, an image that we ourselves perceive and construct. Clearly, analogous science and philosophy need analogous expression and teaching (p. 197).\textsuperscript{15}

Arguing for greater understanding of the way in which the body arrives at and communicates meaning, she describes drama as a discovery process equivalent to the discovery processes employed in new paradigm research into physics, mathematics and psychology. She describes it as a process that employs research methods used in the chaos sciences, constructivism and interaction research. Taking this discussion of new scientific paradigms further Renk, like I do, turns to the biology of Maturana and Varela. She suggests that, if Maturana, constructivism and modern science are right, drama teachers have inadvertently found a method of communicating that is much better adapted to the human process of understanding and orientating than the abstract and denotive teaching prevalent in schools. It is not that drama should try to emulate traditional teaching; rather other subject disciplines should learn from drama how to teach efficiently in the light of new cognition theories. David Bohm, a well known scientist, has even suggested that scientists should adopt some artistic attitudes. Artists do not think in terms of right or wrong, but rather of the many possible perspectives on the same evasive ‘truth’. And so should scientists (p. 198).

The use of ‘understanding’, in preference to ‘truth’, as a guide in the search for meaning admits and values the view of the participant, the performer and the learner over that of the so-called objective observer. It deconstructs the artificially maintained separation between actor and spectator, between teacher and student, between expert and onlooker and admits the notion that it is the relationship between the two perspectives that is of most importance. This relationship, which is negotiated by the self and others, in the moment and beyond, determines boundaries, places significance, deploys language and constructs meaning. Out of this comes culture and history, which are in the end no more than stories.
The contribution of Maturana and Varela is also recognised by Feldenkrais practitioner, movement trainer and theatre director Judith Pippen (1995, 1997). Pippen observes that,

From the vantage point of biology, of what it means to be human, Professor Humberto Maturana offers researchers a new way of reflecting upon experience which has implications for how we understand the dynamics of performance, how we language our description of it and hence how we train actors and educators (and students) to participate in it (p. 81).

Pippen's description of the work of Maturana advances important areas for discussion.

It is my thesis that developments in biology offer not only a set of analogous images that suggest a more effective understanding of the social processes of learning, but also a scientific explanation for the learning that is made accessible through participation in the experiences constructed in the drama classroom. This work supports rather than undermines the ideas offered earlier by Slade and Way, Heathcote and Bolton, Abbs and Best. It offers an additional tool for the analysis and appreciation of drama activities. Additional and more effective tools for analysis mean that more effective contexts for the facilitation of learning can be constructed. More attention to the body and the learning that it constructs and represents will strengthen the position of drama education in curriculums, like those in Australia, that are constantly under review in education systems continually challenged by fluctuations in government policy.

The future of drama education lies in the success of its advocates. The most important and effective advocates of the subject area are the students who enrol in the subject. Evidence contained in the 1996 Board of Studies Review of Drama suggests that a significant number of these students are recognising the value of the work sufficiently to maintain their interest in studying Drama beyond secondary school. This does not allow those who teach the subject to relinquish responsibility for developing a greater understanding of the means whereby those students learn from the process. In the competition for access to students and what seem to be ever-diminishing school resources, the most difficult arena to mount the case for drama education can sometimes be the school itself and the most difficult arguments can sometimes be put by fellow staff members. A greater appreciation of the learning process and the
contribution the learning contained in drama can make to the learning contained in other subject areas can be advantageous. An effective understanding of embodied learning is finally of most importance in the classroom, for teachers and students. Such an understanding serves the relationships they construct in their pursuit of meaning. It drives the inquiry process forward as it seeks a deeper and richer appreciation of the relationships that define and sustain drama, learning and life experience.

Beyond research into the specific field of drama and learning a considerable contribution to understanding in this area has been made by research into contemporary performance, particularly through its focus on the body. This has arisen in part through work done in theatre anthropology. In the next section I will be looking more closely at the manner in which contemporary performance theory and theatre anthropology assist us in the development of a greater appreciation of the learning process and the learning contained in the body. This incorporates more considerations upon my experience in the Formwork project and the relationship between learning and play in a post-modern, post-industrial environment.
Section 6: Notes

1 O’Toole has also written on oracy. His work in this area reflects understanding acquired through participation in and research into drama education. His monograph Oracy: the forgotten basic: A provocation written for the Queensland Government’s Ministerial Consultative Council on Curriculum in 1991 (Issues in Education No. 5) advances a strong argument for the development of oracy (at a time when literacy and numeracy have more than enough advocates).

2 “It normally takes place among a class of school children and their teacher, not in a theatre but in a classroom or a studio within a school. The genre had its formal beginnings in the mid-1950’s in Britain, passed through a number of formative stages, and was consolidated in the late 1970’s into what is recognisably a stable genre with a shared terminology, explicit claims to the status of ‘art form’ and a body of shared practice which is current in a number of countries including Australia, Britain, Canada, some countries of Northern Europe and a little in the USA, as well as a developing body of scholarship” (O’Toole 1992: 4).

3 Drama, O’Toole argues, is a form within which traditional distinctions between functions such as ‘playwright’, ‘performer’, ‘director’ and ‘audience’ are subsumed by the networks of relationship that exist within and between class members. No specific function is privileged and no specific function is monopolised by individuals in isolation.

4 Visual Arts and Music remained on the list.

5 In his address to the 1995 IDEA World Congress, Abbs (1995) spoke of a structure that enables aesthetic experience to become learning or, what he describes as ‘the inner politics of arts education’. Abbs lists three principles, which in ‘reciprocal interaction’ enable experience to be more completely understood. These are (in summary):

   i. Education is existential in nature. Education cannot take place against the intentions of the student or without his (sic) active participation...

   ii. Education is essentially a collaborative activity. The individual is inconceivable without the notion of others and of relationship with others... the principle of learning being an engagement not in but between people...

   iii. Education is always a cultural activity which has to be continuously deepened and extended. This calls for the progressive initiation of the student into the culture of the discipline, which extends and deepens the existential and collaborative process. The richer the cultural material, the greater the possible development... (1995:46-47).

6 Best constructs an argument for “the liberating emotional power of objective reasoning” and asserts that no such liberation is available through subjectivity, through which one is “permanently confined to inner feeling” (1989: 83).


8 Great Britain’s General Certificate of School Education (GCSE) is equivalent to the N.S.W. Higher School Certificate. It is the final assessment process entered into by secondary school students in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.


11 International Theatre of the Oppressed Festivals have been held in Burkina Faso (1989), Paris (1991), Rio de Janeiro (1993) and Toronto (1996). The Toronto festival displayed Carmel O’Sullivan (1997) reports, “the immense range of work being facilitated through Theatre of the Oppressed... it included working with Amnesty International, social workers, ecological consultants, handicapped and disabled people, theatre pedagogy projects, working on children’s policies, the crisis in education, sexual deviants, and women’s issues, to name but a few.” (p. 250).


13 Project Zero Development Group information brochure (undated). Distributed by Harvard Project Zero Graduate School of Education Cambridge, MA 02138.

14 Gardner’s use of competencies is reflected increasingly in competency-based approaches to learning, where the development of competence is valued over the acquisition of information. (Refer to the NSW Board of Studies list of key competencies).

15 In full this quote reads;
It appears that drama education is the only operational form of teaching for a new paradigm of science because it is the only teaching that will deliberately use denotative and analogous communication. Moreover, such teaching is uniquely important in the light of recent research in neurology, physics, mathematics and psychology. It is amazing how fractal mathematics, chaos theory, constructivism and interaction research will lead to similar results and amount to a new theory of thinking, understanding and communicating, a theory, which so far is lacking in its operational pragmatics, unless art and educational drama can supply and develop them. Such a prospect would go far beyond an introduction to the art form of theatre or drama. It would mean using their repertoire to teach almost any subject, or to communicate any information. Essentially, the central idea of this new paradigm is as follows: we do not uncover hidden truths that all along have been there for us to find. What we call truth, is in fact an analogy of the world, an image that we ourselves perceive and construct. Clearly, analogous science and philosophy need analogous expression and teaching (Renk 1993: 197).
Creativity and Embodied Learning

Section 7: Performing and learning
Introduction

Performance is not something that occurs only within the confines of a theatre or ‘performance space’. It is a part of everyday life. This understanding, a product of postmodern insights into the relationships that comprise performance, has laid the ground for the emergence of art forms that combine sensory experience with a recognition that experience can have a variety of meanings, that it can be interpreted in a variety of ways. This represents a significant shift in tradition. It calls on different skills and different strategies for artists and audiences. It calls on a philosophical approach that expands the boundaries of arts process. However, the cut between the two - process and product - is not as clean as it might sometimes be depicted. The consciousness of the participant, whether performer or audience member or both, contributes to the quality of the experience. The same could be said of the experience of learning. This suggests a confusion of roles. It suggests transformation: that the teacher can also be a learner, the spectator an actor, the object a subject. A perspective upon self sufficient to appreciate the transformative nature of learning must incorporate the understanding that in the process the self is itself transformed. This understanding can be accessed through reflection upon embodied experience such as performance. Cross-cultural studies have been significant in performance research. They demonstrate most clearly that it is the perspective of the participant - and the community that contains that participant - that defines the significance of the experience and the learning.

Contemporary performance

Developments in drama education cannot be considered apart from developments in contemporary performance theory and practice. Certainly, contemporary performance studies have not approached the body with the same equivocation as drama education. While occupying a space akin to that of drama education, contemporary performance and the research that defines it has quite a different history. ‘The body’ has long been central to that history. It is not my intention here to compare and contrast drama education and contemporary performance however, by looking at some of the influences behind contemporary performance and considering some of the learning it contains I hope to extend discussion of the relationship between creativity and learning and provide further understanding of that which is contained in drama education.
The term 'contemporary performance' has been and continues to be used rather loosely. I do not want to try to tie it down too tightly here. I am content at this stage simply to use the term to embrace performance styles that look beyond the subject-object relationships that comprise traditional approaches to theatre.

Carlson (1996), in Performance approaches the term through its disparate usages, rather than through any theatrical or dramatic associations. He summarises ethno-linguist Richard Bauman who, in a manner reminiscent of Pierre Bourdieu, argues that,

all performance involves a consciousness of doubleness, through which the actual execution of an action is placed in mental comparison with a potential, an ideal, or a remembered model of that action. Normally this comparison is made by an observer of the action - the theatre public, the school’s teacher, the scientist - but the double consciousness, not the external observation, is what is most central... Performance is always performance for someone, some audience that recognises and validates it as performance even when, as is occasionally the case, that audience is the self. (p. 6) (my highlighting).

The principal perspective that links performance and learning is the perspective of the self. It is through the self that reflection arrives at understanding and understanding is manifested as learning. Performance studies provide, Rachel Fensham says, a perspective upon "any kind of self-reflective activity (including sitting in your study thinking about the book you have just written)" (Fensham 1997: 223). Discussions about 'performance' arise most often in the arts. While Carlson describes contemporary performance as "a highly visible - one might almost say emblematic - art form in the contemporary world." Nevertheless, the understanding of performance made available through drama and theatre has lead to the term being used far beyond this limited and limiting domain.

With performance as a kind of critical wedge, the metaphor of theatricality has moved out of the arts into almost every aspect of modern attempts to understand our condition and activities, into almost every branch of the human sciences - sociology, anthropology, ethnography, psychology, linguistics. And as performativity and theatricality have been developed in these fields, both as metaphors and as analytic tools, theorists and practitioners... have... found in
them new sources of stimulation, inspiration and insight for their own creative work and the theoretical understanding of it. (p. 6-7).

In its attempts to classify contemporary performance as a category for funding purposes, in 1994 the Australia Council, the Australian Federal Government's principal arts funding body, adopted the term 'hybrid arts'. This term was intended to suggest the manner in which contemporary performance has bought together the methodologies and knowledge base contained in the visual arts, music, dance, theatre and literature. The concept of 'hybrid arts' accommodates Peter Abbs' demand that the interlocking character of the creative arts be recognised more widely. It is reflected in a movement, given official sanction in N.S.W. in 1988, to unite the arts in schools in Creative Arts faculties and to train teachers to work across arts subject areas. (This was based on the assumption that fundamental similarities between the various arts subjects would enable teachers to teach outside their specialised subject.) The term also accommodates projects like Formwork.

Not only was Formwork an interdisciplinary performance project within which visual images, music, movement and words were accorded equal status and equal attention, it was also a cross-cultural project in which Chinese and a number of other performance traditions were plumbed and cross-pollinated. As a project based around process, it was not only a performance project, it was also a research project and therefore a site for learning. The body was the object that the research was inscribed upon. It was the object that provided evidence of learning. My own participation, as a writer, was defined by my relationship to those bodies. Drama education is ever thus. Many practices in drama education - 'warm-ups', 'cool-downs', repetitions and rehearsals - substantiate the learning of the body. The wide variety of improvisation games (Johnston 1981, Spolin 1983, Pierse 1993, Boal 1992, 1995), which are important in drama education build upon an appreciation of physical processes. Lyn Pierse (1993) in Theatresports downunder breaks the physical languages of group improvisation down to a seven stage process, which can be reduced even further to three stages: 'Offer', a physical offer is made; 'Accept', the physical offer is accepted and 'Extend', further offers are made as a result of that which has been accepted. Any breakdown between stages halts the improvisation process. Nachmanovitch (1990) describes successful group improvisation in biological terms. "It is as though we have become a group organism that has its own nature and its own way of being, from a unique and unpredictable place which is the group personality or the group
brain" (p. 94-95). While bodies do not provide evidence of all the learning that is contained in any drama process, they provide evidence that cannot be discounted and cannot be ignored. For this reason, it is difficult to understand why biology and the learning of the body has not been more significant in drama education theory.

The focus on the body that is central to contemporary performance studies opens up many avenues for further research. It can lead to discussion about the images that the body constructs (and represents) along with the cultural significance of those constructions. It can lead to discussions about the formation of bodies and this in turn can lead to discussions about traditions of performance and traditions of performance training. Any study of traditions of performance is a necessary study of the culture(s) out of which that performance comes. Carlson reminds us that "the field of anthropology has been a particularly rich source for the discussion of performance in recent years." (p. 14). In looking at the anthropological roots of contemporary performance studies, and the learning that has arisen out of this study, the work of Victor Turner (1982, 1988) and Richard Schechner (1977, 1985, 1988 and Appel 1990) cannot be overlooked. Some of the understandings emerging from this work have direct applicability to drama education, particularly that which focuses on the role of the arts in maintaining the ways of knowing that define and sustain cultures and communities over time. This is autopoiesis in action. In pursuing such an understanding it is necessary to look at the role artistic representation has played, and continues to play in different cultures and traditions.

Art, culture and learning

Susanne Langer (1971) describes ‘art’ as a generic term that brings together "painting, sculpture, architecture, music, dance, literature, drama and film." She describes the making of art as "the practice of creating perceptible forms expressive of human feelings." (p. 87). Feelings are, she says, "the very heart of personal education." (p. 93). Drama and drama-related activities - a wide variety of activities which include structured play, ritual, ceremony, movement and mime, puppetry, mask-work, improvised drama, scripted drama, story telling, musical performances, design for performance and writing for performance - are significant within the art of all communities and cultures. Langer observes that while "some primitive cultures have no real mythology or religion... all have some art - dance, song, design... (and) dance, above all,
seems to be the oldest elaborated art.” (p. 86). “Art is indeed” Langer continues, in carefully constructed imagery, “the spearhead of human development” (p. 86).

Drama-related activities unfold in different ways in different cultures. Clearly, the participants in, like the function of, such activities in a traditional village culture are different to the participants in, and the function of, such activities in an urban metropolis. Those undertaking studies of different forms of drama have usually chosen to focus on the performance, the dramatic event or the dramatic experience. They have less frequently focused on the learning that arises as a result of participation in the construction and/or the performance of that event or experience. Despite the lack of attention to the learning, it is undeniable that learning does occur.

Emmitt and Pollock (1991), through reference to Cambourne, argue that learning occurs when we change or elaborate what we already know. Learning is, they say,

a process of making connections, identifying patterns, organising previously unrelated bits of knowledge, behaviour, activities, etc, into new (for the learner) patterned wholes. We learn by attempting to relate new experiences to what we already know or believe. Learning is therefore about making new meanings for the learner - these meanings are generally developed and articulated through language (p. 8).

Making connections and relating new experiences to current knowledge or, shaping ourselves according to discourses, are integral parts of participation in structured social experiences such as performance. Any person who employs a reflective consciousness exists in a learning environment. I walk through learning every day. The voice that emanates from my alarm-clock radio at 7.15 each morning provides new information. As I listen, I reflect upon that information, make connections, identify patterns and organise previously unrelated bits of knowledge. The walk to the bus-stop past blocks of flats and the corner store, past advertising hoardings and two Chinese restaurants and the neighbours and the passers-by and the telephone technicians and the dogs running wild prompts further reflection. New experience is set against old experience, reflection occurs and re-occurs, new information is processed, new learning is realised, my experience of my environment is enriched. My learning is contained in my relationship to that environment. I feel it - and can
depict it - as surrounding me, as I engage in it, as I carry it with me. There is however an ad hoc quality to such learning, it is largely circumstantial. It arises in my casual conversation with the bus driver, my scanning of the newspaper, my gaze out the window as the bus driver slows for the orange light (but still crosses the intersection).

There are some times when I have a greater awareness of learning. The intensity of some experiences captures my attention more fully and I am drawn to reflect more deeply. Boud and Walker (in Boud, Cohen and Walker 1993) describe this as a "meaningful encounter. It is not just an observation, a passive undergoing of something, but an active engagement with the environment, of which the learner is an important part" (p. 6). ‘Active engagement’ is the experience around which Boud and Walker develop their discussion of experiential learning.3 ‘Active engagement’ and ‘meaningful encounter’ differentiate between learning experiences. This suggests that the ‘ad hoc’ learning that I attempted to depict earlier, may not be the most rich learning experience that is available. It suggests that meaningfulness and depth of engagement can differ. Just as some circumstances facilitate deeper or richer learning, so some circumstances facilitate deeper or richer drama. This is the distinction that Richard Schechner attempts to document through his application of Victor Turner’s work on the structuring of performance. Central to Schechner’s work is Turner’s distinction between ‘daily life’ and ‘social drama’ (Schechner 1977: 108-137). Through detailing his understanding of social drama - which I will discuss at greater length shortly - Schechner offers considerable insight into the learning that unfolds within the processes of drama and performance.

Cross-cultural learning

The most important working relationship of Schechner’s life was the one he had with Victor Turner. Turner, who died in 1983, described his life as a voyage of discovery "from traditional anthropological studies of ritual performance to a lively interest in modern theatre, particularly experimental theatre." (Turner 1982: 7). Schechner, a young experimental theatre director at the time he met Turner, uses Turner’s work to pursue interconnections, in both theory and practice, between different styles and traditions of performance. In his studies of traditional, modern and postmodern performance styles Schechner argues that it is the relationship between the performance and the community as the essential difference. He argues that performance is an
integral part of the life of traditional communities. It holds meaning for all, hence all are participants. However industrialism and modernity have led to the dissolution of traditional communities and the separation and standardisation of performance events. It has led to specialised sites for performance and specialised careers for performers. It has led to the mass production of performances and the hoarding and trading of arts-products. Within the market place of performance it has been left to individuals, Schechner argues, to construct connections between arts experiences, to find the "sense of unity emerging from the multiplicity and pluralism." (1977: 88). Through his post-modern approach to performance Schechner seeks to reinvigorate community and the knowledge contained therein. The models he draws on are those traditional communities that maintain their culture through performance. These are after all, successful models of learning process.

In his attempts to explore the relationship between performance and community much of Schechner’s practice has involved the re-construction of traditional rituals and ceremonies by non-traditional performers. Turner, who introduced Schechner to many of those traditional rituals and ceremonies, defends the performance of traditional rituals and ceremonies by non-traditional performers on the basis of the learning contained in the experience. He describes such activities as valid pursuits of “perfect cultural understanding” and argues that,

if we enact one another’s social dramas, rituals, and theatrical performances in full awareness of the salient characteristics of their original socio-cultural settings, the very length and intensity of what Schechner calls "the training-rehearsal-preparation process" must draw the actors into "other ways of seeing" and apprehending the “reality” our symbolic formations are forever striving to encompass and express (1982: 18).

*Formwork* is an example of that which Schechner writes.

The performance of the performances of ‘others’ are, from the perspective of Schechner, opportunities to appreciate ‘otherness’. This is, Turner suggests an opportunity to learn through participation.

The ethnographies, literatures, ritual, and theatrical traditions of the world now lie open to us as the basis for a new transcultural communicative synthesis through performance. For the first time we may be moving towards a sharing of cultural
experiences, the manifold “forms of objectivated mind” restored through performance to something like their pristine affectual contouring... we can learn from experience - from the enactment and performance of the culturally transmitted experiences of others - peoples of the Heath as well as of the Book (p. 18-19).

The work of Turner and Schechner has not occurred in isolation. The rituals and ceremonies, images and patterns, myths and stories, sounds and music of traditional non-western cultures and communities have entered the performative discourse of the western world through the work of many artists. Some of the major figures in this movement, termed ‘interculturalism’ by Marranca and Dasgupta (1991), have been Vsevelod Meyerhold, Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski, Peter Brook and Eugenio Barba. Barba, who was heavily influenced by Meyerhold, is unique among this group for the way in which he emphasises the learning that is contained in the performance of others. Barba describes himself as a theatre anthropologist and differentiates his work strongly from performance studies. He defines theatre anthropology as “the study of the pre-expressive scenic behaviour upon which different genres, styles, roles and personal or collective traditions are all based” (Barba 1995: 9) and argues that the analysis of the work of performers across cultural styles and genres makes it possible to “single our recurring principles from a performer’s technique”. He says that an analysis of technique enables a performer to enter into the extremely important process of ‘learning to learn’. “Learning to learn”, Barba says, “is essential for everyone” (p. 9). He (1995) says his initiation into interculturalism was a result of his experience as an immigrant.

The need to decipher other people’s attitudes to me was a daily necessity which kept all my senses alert and made me quick to discern the slightest impulse, any unwitting reaction, the ‘life’ which flowed through the smallest tension, and which took on for me, attentive observer that I was, special meanings and purposes (p. 4).

This he says, led to a respect for the techniques used by performers in different traditions to convey meaning along with the recognition that this study of performance technique, the technique of technique is relevant beyond the walls of the rehearsal room. Appreciation of the technique of technique is equivalent to an appreciation of the process of learning to learn.
This is of tremendous importance for those who choose or are obliged to go beyond the limits of specialised technique. In fact learning to learn is essential for everyone. It is the condition that enables us to dominate technical knowledge and not be dominated by it. (p. 9).

The process of "learning to learn", as described by Barba, was the process entered into by 'The Anthropologist', 'The Refugee' and 'The Crocodile' in Formwork. It is the process of negotiating past learning in the context of new or present learning. (As an experience it can offer insight into the understanding of the interpreter as much as, if not more than it does that which the interpreter seeks to understand. It can be as if those others speak through the observer, not for themselves.) There is an interdependent relationship between culture and learning. Learning is contained in culture, to the extent that learning consists of the process of constructing 'new' experience within the bounds of present ways of knowing. The post-modern admission of many ways of knowing, despite the power structures that challenge that admission, offers not simply a new way of knowing but a new way of being in culture.

Performance and postmodernism

Marvin Carlson (1996) argues that 'performance' and 'postmodernism' are closely linked. Both are terms that are products of the same cultural environment and both are used to "characterise a broad spectrum of activities, especially in the arts" (p. 124). Much contemporary performance work is described as 'postmodern', and many contemporary performance artists use the term 'postmodern' to describe their work. (Birringer 1991, Carlson 1996, Kaye 1994, Phelan 1993, Sayre 1989, Vanden Heuvel 1991). In Performance and postmodernism Nick Kaye (1994) echoes Carlson, with his assertion that performance "may be thought of as a primary postmodern mode" (Kaye 1994: 22-23).

In this context, the condition of 'performance' may be read, in itself, as tending to foster or look towards postmodern contingencies an instabilities. More than any other mode of work, one might argue, a 'performance' vacillates between presence and absence, between displacement and reinstatement. It is for precisely these reasons that both theatre and the condition of theatricality have been read as peculiarly resistant to the modernist project and even as necessarily effecting a corruption of the modernist ideal (Kaye 1994: 23).
Schechner is certainly comfortable with the term. He frequently refers to his experimental work, which is in effect performance about performance, in this way. Similarly, a postmodern understanding of learning must focus upon process. It must incorporate the process of learning about learning and the understanding that there are many ways of learning (just as there are many ways of knowing and many ‘truths’) and as a result, many learners. The nature of both learner and learning must be assessed in relation to the context within which the learning occurs. Learning can therefore be constructed and evaluated in terms of ‘performance’. In the introduction to Postmodernism or, the cultural logic of late capitalism Frederic Jameson (1995) reveals why the terms performance and postmodernism are so easily linked.

Postmodernism, postmodern consciousness, may then amount to not much more than theorising its own condition of possibility, which consists primarily in the enumeration of changes and modifications... the postmodern looks for breaks, looks for events rather than new worlds, for the telltale instant after which it is no longer the same... for shifts and irrevocable changes in the representation of things and the way they change (p. ix).

The focus therefore is on possibilities of representation and the manner in which meaning is made. Hence explanations are depicted rather than ‘truths’.

Tracing the history of the distinctions that have led to the determination of performance as a postmodern form, Carlson cites Ihab Hassan’s 1980 essay, The question of postmodernism. He refers to a binary table constructed by Hassan in which characteristics of modernism are listed against characteristics of postmodernism (see Table 1). Among the characteristics compared are modernism’s “art object / finished work” as opposed to postmodernism’s “process / performance / happening”. The clear distinction between work that is depicted and presented as completed and work that is depicted and presented as work that is being constructed as part of a larger process invites consideration upon the status the work holds if it is the learning that arises from the work rather than the product of the work that holds most interest. To focus on the learning is to focus on the process which, like play, chance, anarchy, irony and rhetoric, Hassan describes as characteristic of a postmodern sensibility.
<table>
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<td>purpose</td>
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<td>performance/process/happening</td>
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<td>against interpretation/misreading</td>
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<td>antinarrative</td>
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<tr>
<td>symptom</td>
<td>desire</td>
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'Table 1 Schematic differences between modernism and postmodernism.'
Adapted from Hassan (cited Harvey 1989: 43)

Postmodernism is an aesthetic concept more than an actuality. As a concept it defies actuality. Discussion around the concept of postmodernism is conducted therefore, in images. Collage, like pastiche, irony and allegory, is often identified as a postmodern art form. It involves, like contemporary performance, deliberate juxtapositions of images. It involves ‘play’ with signs, signals and styles. Of the postmodern age, Charles Jencks says, it is “a time of incessant choosing. It’s an era when no orthodoxy can be adopted without self consciousness and irony” (Jencks 1995: 27). Umberto Eco offers a similar understanding. “I believe that postmodernism is not a trend to be chronologically defined, but, rather, an ideal category - or, better still, a Kuntswollen, a way of operating... (characterised by) irony and metalinguistic play” (Eco 1995: 32). This characterisation is consistent with the Jungian analysis offered by Bernie Neville. Neville (1995) describes the Greek god Hermes as “the god of the postmodern condition”. He observes that Hermes is “a master of illusion, a rogue and a liar”, living in “a world of signs, and representations, where substance is absent or irrelevant.” The Hermes culture is, he says, “at its best... magical, exhilarating, constantly testing the limits of our inventiveness and flexibility; at its worst it is a culture of deception inhabited by amoral opportunists” (p. 50-54). This analysis is reminiscent of the work of Michel de Certeau (1984) whose The practice of everyday life is he says, a book dedicated to “the ordinary man (sic)... this anonymous hero... (who) comes before texts.” The person who comes before texts is the person
able to ‘play’ with the literal, the person able to ‘play’ with truth. This is the person who constructs meaning from possibilities rather than received wisdoms. In such instances the meaning, like the performance, is made in the play, in the learning, in the process. Reflection upon and around that play constructs another experience and/or another version of the experience, which is, like its subject matter, further fuel for the imagination.

De Certeau depicts individuals as marginalised by (and in) their relationship to contemporary culture. He argues that marginality is “massive and pervasive”, saying that in a culture such as this one, that understands individuals as consumers, “marginality is becoming universal”. The response of individuals to this marginalisation is to struggle, to get by, to more or less “make do”. This ‘making do’ he describes as a form of production or ‘poiesis’. If that form of production is sustainable, if it is sufficient to maintain the system in the environment, the larger system, it contributes to and lives within, this form of production could be described, as Maturana and Varela do, as ‘autoopoietic’. This becomes in reflection, autopoiesis, which is after all a process of learning.

De Certeau says that individuals employ a range of tactics in ‘making do’. These are the everyday practices of everyday life. Principal among them are ‘manipulating and enjoying’, which take on different qualities in different environments. Industrial and post-industrial civilisations place very particular pressures on ‘making do’.

Increasingly constrained, yet less and less concerned with these vast frameworks, the individual detaches himself from them without being able to escape them and can henceforth only try to outwit them, to pull tricks on them, to rediscover, within an electronicized and computerised megalopolis, the “art” of the hunters and rural folk of early days (p. xxiv).

Learning and play

‘Play’ should loom large in any discussion of learning. While the Macquarie Dictionary offers fifty four different meanings for ‘play’, it is the play within, or between things that interests me most. This aspect is also prominent in Homo Ludens. Johan Huizinga’s (1949) much valued contribution to this discussion.

David Wright: ‘Creativity and embodied learning’
Huizinga observes that in play there is something “at play”. That which is at play, according to Huizinga, “transcends the immediate needs of life”. He argues that “(all the) great archetypal activities of human society are permeated with play from the start” (p. 2). It is therefore the play that exists within experience that facilitates the activity of ‘playing’. In a similar vein, D.W. Winnicott (1971) identifies playing as a transitional or transformative phenomena. He makes a strong bid for its part in the therapeutic process. It is no less significant in learning. Winnicott writes,

Psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient and that of the therapist. Psychotherapy has to do with two people playing together. The corollary of this is that where playing is not possible then the work done by the therapist is directed towards bringing the patient from a state of not being able to play into a state of being able to play (p. 38) (my highlighting).

Within the state of play alternatives can be constructed. When reality is suspended, however briefly, possibilities for future action can be tried out.

Play also looms large in Turner’s work. Extending his study from an anthropological base, into an examination of industrial and post-industrial civilisation, Turner reflects upon the relationship between play and social change. He argues that all societies have (and have had) some sort of play and leisure activities, suggesting that in pre-industrial societies ‘play’ and ‘work’ were barely distinguishable. In truth, in the earliest of texts even the Gods are depicted as at play, the Sanskrit term, ‘līla’ depicts that play. In the Bhagavad Gīta even the story of creation is depicted as the playful unfolding - the ‘drama’ - of life.

At the end of the night of time all things return to my nature; and when the new day of time begins I bring them again into light.

Thus through my nature I bring forth all creation and this rolls around in the circles of time.

But I am not bound by this vast work of creation. I am and I watch the drama of works.

I watch and in its work of creation nature brings forth all that moves and moves not; and thus the revolutions of the world go round.8
Such depictions, in such stories, are much more than poetic diversions. They incorporate and communicate ways of understanding, ways of looking at the world and ways of relating within the world. These ways of understanding did not simply sustain communities for hundreds of years, they formed the basis of long standing value systems. The Bhagavad Gita both represents and contains ways of knowing that were (and still are to some extent) passed on, through generation after generation. As such The Bhagavad Gita both represents and contains learning. By contrast, in contemporary industrial civilisations, as Turner points out, the conflict between work and play is one of the most essential and disturbing conflicts.

**Play and work**

Turner (1982) argues that the long standing ‘integrated’ relationship between work and play - work as play, play as work - was first displaced by the demands placed on the working population by the Industrial Revolution. Lynch and Veal (1996) in their historical analysis of leisure (see Table 2) suggest that the Reformation - characterised by Luther’s puritanical condemnations of the wasting of time, sociability, idle talk, luxury and more sleep than is absolutely necessary - along with the emergence of the ‘Protestant work ethic’ prepared the ground for this development. They develop this historical analysis further by arguing that the integrated relationship between work and play was slowly but surely shattered by the greater efficiencies that industrialisation demanded of workers. As a result, work and play became increasingly separate activities. Nowadays, young people who enter the work force soon learn, if they have not already learnt during their many years of schooling, that ‘work-time’ and ‘free-time’ (or non-work time) are clearly differentiated (p. 34-40). They learn that play has become increasingly limited to ‘free time’. This includes play with ideas, forms of expression, material objects and social relationships. They learn that free-time exists in contradiction to work-time, that it is antagonistic, perhaps even dangerous to work. This tells them quite clearly that the needs of industry are antithetical to play.

Daniel Bell, the sociologist who popularised the term ‘post-industrial’ argues that modern capitalism’s attitudes to pleasure and play are contradictory (Rose 1991). He points out that there is a fundamental conflict between the need for greater sacrifice of pleasure and play in pursuit of greater opportunities for pleasure and play. This results in the increasing commodification of pleasure.
and play. It leads, Bell argues, to the creation of an arts industry which legitimises play as work. When play is work, its central purpose is the generation of income. Accordingly, other terms are required to describe such work. ‘The arts’ and ‘entertainment’ are two such terms. While there has been a long standing attempt to distinguish between ‘the arts’ and ‘entertainment’ - the former being, according to Lynch and Veal (1996), non-commercial and subsidised, the latter being commercially viable - much overlap exists between the two. (Moreover, the value of the distinction is increasingly being questioned as notions of ‘high art’ and superior cultural forms are being broken down.)

As soon as they are referred to as industries, the arts and entertainment are bracketed together. ‘The industry’, as it is referred to colloquially, now even includes sport. In Australia professional sports men and women are now invited to join and be represented by the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (M.E.A.A.). This union grew out of the amalgamation of Actors Equity, the Australian Journalists Association and the Australian Theatrical and Amusement Employees Association. It acknowledges the commonalities that exist in the interests of workers in each of these sectors. Perhaps it is the ‘play’ that is such a crucial part of each of these industries that unites them. As industries the play they contain is not so much for the players as it is for the audience. The audience is, of necessity, separated from the play. The greater the separation between the play, the players and the audience the greater the power of the industry, the greater its mystique, the greater its capacity to generate income. This is true of both the media and the entertainment industries. When art is conceptualised as an industry, it is true for it no less so. Clearly, the relationship between play and work is not how it always was and not necessarily how it has to be.

Moves to reintegrate play and everyday life are also moves to revive ‘community’. It is play which facilitated Turner's and Schechner's strategic introduction of African ritual and ceremony to performers in New York in the early 1970's. It was his recognition of the importance of play that prompted Boal to provide opportunities for ‘spect-actors’ to enact change in their communities. It is play that prompts drama students to enrol in a subject that encourages them to construct their own understanding of their own learning as a consequence of their own physical and emotional experience. As a form of learning its shifts, it turns, it challenges definition and it defies domination. It both extends and tests creativity. Herein lies its fascination.

David Wright: 'Creativity and embodied learning'
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN CHARACTERISTIC</th>
<th>HISTORICAL PERIOD</th>
<th>ECO-LEISURE</th>
<th>POST-MODERN LEISURE</th>
<th>MODERN LEISURE</th>
<th>CLASSICAL LEISURE</th>
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<td>Leisure the focus of leisure</td>
<td>Classical Greece 500-300 BC</td>
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<td>Leisure in irregular bursts</td>
<td>Post-industrial revolution</td>
<td>Leisure as escape from drudgery; carnival</td>
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<td>Leisure based on residual time</td>
<td>Pre-industrial revolution</td>
<td>Labour-free elite</td>
<td>Post-modern era</td>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>Leisure as a component of lifestyle</td>
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<td>Leisure as consumption activity, style</td>
<td>Post-industrial era</td>
<td>Agrarian</td>
<td>Post-industrial era</td>
<td>Workleisure/time fractured and fluid</td>
<td>Leisure as a component of lifestyle</td>
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<td>Leisure as rest and for work, or self development and leisure</td>
<td>Post-modern era</td>
<td>Post-industrial era</td>
<td>Post-industrial era</td>
<td>Workleisure/time fractured and fluid</td>
<td>Leisure as a component of lifestyle</td>
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ACTIVITIES:
- Games, rituals, music, story-telling
- Music, contemplation, sport
- Religious observances, games, music, dance
- No recognition of leisure as separate sphere, playful/pleasurable orientation prevalent

ATTITUDES:
- No demarcation between work and leisure
- Leisure as a state of being
- Leisure as an escape from drudgery; carnival
- Leisure as rest and for work, or self development and leisure
- Leisure as a component of lifestyle

The learning that arises from the process of ‘making do’ is substantially different from the learning generated by modern, industrial societies demand for mastery.

My study of learning is therefore, a study of the learning of the participants involved in creating the performance, the play, the improvisation or the drama. The drama itself - the performance, play or the improvisation - is not my principal subject matter. In undertaking this study it is important to look at the manner in which performance and/or drama is structured into social experience. An understanding of the structuring of what Turner and Schechner call ‘social drama’ offers a good opportunity to reflect upon the learning that drama contains.

**Constructing difference**

In the essay “Dramatic ritual/Ritual drama”, in the collection *From ritual to performance* Turner (1982) writes of an invitation extended by Schechner to a group of social scientists, including Erving Goffman and himself, to take part in a workshop to “explore the interface between ritual and the theatre... between social and aesthetic drama” (p. 90). This experience led to the long standing working relationship between Turner and Schechner (marked by substantial research into the relationship between theatre and anthropology). The invitation to work with the radical and then young theatre director, and the performers and other personnel he surrounded himself with, provided Turner with practical opportunities to experiment with insights he had arrived at in his work with indigenous communities in Africa and Asia. Through this working relationship Turner sought to both test and extend his learning. Reading Turner’s discussion of his work with Schechner, I hear constant echoes of my own experience in *Formwork*.

Observing Schechner at work with his actors, Turner developed a particular fascination with the rehearsal processes he used: “Schechner aims at **poiesis**, rather than **mimesis: making, not faking**,” he writes. As with Peter Brook (1968, 1988) - who also researched theatre and performance, who was also influenced by of the insights and experiences of anthropologists - under Schechner’s direction “the role grows along with the actor. It is truly ‘created’ through the rehearsal process” (p. 93). Turner saw this as having some equivalence to the performance processes he encountered in the self-sustaining indigenous communities he worked with in Africa and Asia.
Experiencing difference

As any performance is a constructed experience of difference, the construction of an experience from a vastly different culture, built though it may be from rich base material, has the potential to multiply the experience of difference. Besides offering an insight into the performance traditions of another culture, any such exercise invites and evokes signs, symbols, images, movements and sounds that embody unfamiliar meaning, hence unfamiliar feelings. It is through the experience of unfamiliarity that the bounds of performance are expanded and then expanded again.

The exercises used by Turner with Schechner's group provided opportunities for difference to be experienced. The experience of difference through the 'being' and 'doing' of that difference carries with it the experience of learning. Peter Brook distils this in an activity he documents in The empty space. In this exercise, Brook (1968) nominates the 'empty space' as the space within which performance occurs. By nominating that space, and inviting performers to enter into it, Brook places significance upon the space and identifies performance as nothing more than the 'doing' and 'being' that occurs in that space. He says, "I can take an empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged" (p. 11). That identification engages a consciousness of difference between that which occurs within the space, just as it establishes a difference between that which occurs within the space and that which occurs beyond its bounds. This identifies performance as an act marked by assumptions, the assumptions of the performer and the assumptions of other participants in the experience (including the audience). Those assumptions lead to explanations. This is equivalent to Schechner's depiction of performance as an experience bounded by the liminal activities of 'gathering' and 'dispersing' where the performance 'space' is a space created by the performers themselves.

The use of the notion of 'the liminal' or 'liminality', in this context, is among the most significant of the many observations that Turner brings to this discussion. The term 'limen' is associated with a threshold of understanding or a period in which confusion can occur. It is described by Turner (1982) variously as, a "margin" or "threshold", "a period or area of ambiguity", "a sort of social limbo which has few of the attributes of either the preceding or subsequent... states". 'Liminality' likewise, he describes as, arising from change through a "rite of
passage”, a “rite of marginality or liminality” characterised by transition or initiation. Out of this understanding of this experience comes the term, “liminal phase”. As a term of anthropological significance, it is used in relation to the rituals and ceremonies that encompass significant transitions, or learning experiences in social and individual life. In such transitions a period of preparation leads to an unfolding of events that culminate in a condition of irreversible change. Turner describes this process as one in which general oppositions such as male and female, day and night, sun and moon, birth and death are ritualistically confused. This means, he says, that “the ritual subjects in these rites undergo a ‘levelling’ process” (p. 26). Their pre-liminal status is destroyed and a transitional status of ‘uniformity’, ‘invisibility’ or ‘anonymity’ is constructed. This brings with it a liberation from structural constraints and the learning contained within those constraints.

In liminality, profane social relations may be discontinued, former rights and obligations are suspended, the social order may seem to have been turned upside down, but by way of compensation, cosmological systems (as objects of serious study) may become of central importance to the novices, who are confronted by the elders, in rite, myth, song, instruction in a secret language, and various non-symbolic genres, such as dancing, painting, clay moulding, wood carving, masking etc.... Liminality may involve a complex sequence of episodes in sacred space time, and may also include subversive and ludic (or playful) events... **In liminality people ‘play’ with the elements of the familiar and defamiliarise them.** Novelty emerges from unprecedented combinations of familiar elements (1982: 27) (my highlighting).

This process brings ‘new’ understanding and ‘new’ experience. Even within traditional self-sustaining societies, the playful combination and recombination of elements enables the ‘new’ to be experienced. Hence, liminality provides opportunities for the rules and formulations of a social order to be disavowed temporarily and a site of confusion, chaos or even anarchy - which is a precondition for creativity - to be established. Necessarily, creativity creates meaning where meaning does not yet exist. The creativity that emerges from that site necessarily brings changes, however subtle, to the social order that existed prior to its establishment. It is, Turner asserts, “the analysis of culture into factors and their recombination in any and every possible pattern, however weird, that is of the essence of liminality, liminality *par excellence*” (p. 28).
Codes

Turner’s (1982) report upon the workshops he conducted with Schechner are particularly interesting. In the workshops Turner introduced Schechner and the actors to his recollection and interpretation of a traditional Ndembu ceremony. The Ndembu are a central African tribe with whom Turner spent two and a half years. In his report, Turner describes taking the New York actors through the stages of a traditional Ndembu ceremony, he then reflects on the manner in which he sought to draw the attention of the performers to the realisation of role through ‘kinesiological’ as well as cognitive codes.

To translate this very specific Ndembu rite into modern American terms, I took the role of the new village headman, and with my wife’s help prepared the surrogate muyombu shrine tree with knife and salt, and ‘planted’ it in a crack in the floor. The next move was to persuade someone to play Manyosa’s role in this situation. Someone whom we shall call Becky, a professional director of drama, volunteered (p. 95-96).

His extended description of the process concludes with an expression of doubt. “Surely, at so many removes, must not the whole performance have seemed highly artificial, unauthentic? Oddly enough, according to the students, it did not.” Their response, he reports, identified the workshop as an extremely powerful experience of learning.

The workshop group later reported that they had gone on discussing what had occurred for several hours. They agreed that the enactment of the Ndembu ritual was the turning point which bought to them both the affectual structure of the social drama and the tension between factionalism and scapegoatism, on the one hand, and the deep sense of village ‘belonging together’ on the other. It also showed them how an enhanced collective and individual understanding of the conflict situation could be achieved by participating in the ritual performance with its kinesiological as well as cognitive codes (p. 96).

Their discussion - their explanation, both intellectual and affectual - constructs the social understanding that identifies and admits the learning. As is to be expected, the learning drawn from the experience by the New York-based acting students was different from, though perhaps related to, the learning drawn from the experience by the Ndembu tribes-people who originated and maintained the ceremony. To consider it possible to gain the knowledge of the
Ndembu is to fail to appreciate the depth of learning contained in specific cultural experience. It is to mistake a enthusiasm to appreciate the experience of others with the thing itself, the experience of others. The learning of the New York based actors is something substantial in itself.

Kinesics is defined in The Macquarie dictionary as “the study of non-linguistic body motion in its relation to communication” (1987: 959). Bullock, Stallybrass and Trombley (1988) list it in The Fontana dictionary of modern thought under semiotics - "the study of patterned human communication in all its modes". They describe it as the "study of the visual mode - of systematic facial gestures and body gestures" (p. 769). They discuss it alongside "proxemics", the study of "the tactile mode - e.g. interpersonal movement and touch activity." While not specifically discussing kinesics, Howard Gardner (1985) writes of the "bodily-kinaesthetic (or, for short, bodily) intelligence" (p. 206) as a way of knowing the world, while Frost and Yarrow (1990) write of the "kinaesthetic sense" describing it as an "awareness of the self in space" or "body/think" (p. 98). Kinesics refers to more than bodily experience, it refers to the self-conscious experience of the body. As a study it brings embodied experience together with the making of meaning. Kinesiological coding - the encoding of meanings arrived at through ‘kinesics’ - involves therefore the interpretation of and, if required, the representation and/or annotation of embodied learning. That learning presents itself in individual and social behaviour. It is found in embodied gestures, postures and physical arrangements. It is alive in social interaction continually, it occurs before, during and after reflection arises to place consideration upon it. The learning that arises through kinesics, particularly in the ‘being’ and ‘doing’ of performance, contains meaning for both the performer and the community within which the performance occurs. In all cultures, kinesiological codes embody personal and social ways of knowing. In traditional pre-literate and non-literate cultures they are used quite deliberately to maintain and extend those ways of knowing. In contemporary, literate cultures where attention has been drawn away from embodied learning and directed towards written and other such mediums, it is only through recognition of and reflection upon the ‘performance’ within experience that such codes are duly known and the depth of learning they represent and contain acknowledged. This serves to privilege, even further, the spoken and written word over embodied experience.

To reiterate: in kinesics the learning resides in the experience which, upon reflection, can be interpreted and explained. While verbal explanations can
communicate the understanding the most appropriate means for the appreciation of kinaesthetic experience is kinaesthetic experience. This assumption guided the Formwork process. Kinaesthetic intelligence appreciated and communicated the learning with a clarity and efficiency that a spoken or written explanation could not. The written word has other qualities. It does other things exceptionally well. It can be preserved, it can be the basis for conversations over space and time, it can be used to represent, discuss and debate concepts with a great deal of complexity just as it can be used to 'contain' phenomena in a way that other forms of communication cannot. By contrast kinesiological codes arise in the moment. They exist fully, and can best be appreciated through the relationships in which they arise, in the moment of their occurrence. While the ramifications of the moment may live on, neither the moment nor its interpretation can exist apart from the space and time that contains the relationship out of which the meaning is made.

Not only does a verbal language communicate in a different way to a kinesiological language, but different knowledge is communicated in each form. Knowledge communicated through kinesics crosses barriers that spoken and written languages construct. In Seeing Voices, Oliver Sacks (1989) makes the point that international gatherings of the deaf arrive at a lingua franca sign language - despite the enormous range of regional versions of Sign - much more quickly than international gatherings of hearing people. Unlike kinesics, verbal reflection interprets, identifies and classifies learning (before constructing a body of knowledge, a bank of research, a library of reference material, a field of study, an established discipline and a reservoir of expertise) in a way that kinesics does not. It enables learning to be abstracted, to be set aside and objectified. Yet the body and the learning contained in the physical experience of the body remains. It is not an historical accident that dissatisfaction with the limits imposed by written and spoken language forms has generated disciplines and processes such as contemporary performance within which 'the body', and the learning contained in the body, is central. Such studies are cultural phenomena that deserve to be examined for their cultural significance as much as for any particular subject matter they seek to communicate.

**Expanding the analysis**

Towards the end of his life, Turner was moving towards biology and, more specifically neuro-biology to further his appreciation of the experience of
personal and social change. In doing so he allied himself with and foreshadowed some of the more compelling work in this field, including that of Maturana and Varela. This is work that chases science through the fertile fields of chaos, complexity and creativity. It is work that celebrates the understanding Kvale identifies as central to postmodern thought, that "in science the notion of an objective reality is an interesting hypothesis, but is not necessary for carrying out scientific work. Knowledge becomes the ability to perform effective actions" (Kvale 1995: 19) (my highlighting). Effective action lives therefore in explanation. This significantly broadens understanding of 'validity' in learning. Validity becomes, as argued by Angela Brew (1996), something that we aim for, rather than something that has already been determined (by others). It becomes something that is arrived in accordance with criteria that have been chosen rather than criteria that have been set, something that is realised upon completion, rather than that which is arrived at before the activity has commenced. Through this understanding learning can be appreciated and validated as a product of experience rather than an experience for which validation has to be sought.

The exploration of liminal experiences such as ritual and ceremony, as they occur in European and non-European cultures, of crossing thresholds, of rites-of-passage, of initiation, of symbolic play and creative journeying, have been significant in the fracturing of the modernist theatrical tradition. They have provided important cultural learning. The fascination with the liminal experience of others, as pursued by theatre directors with a strong interest in anthropology - Turner, Schechner and Brook (among others) - and the conscious cultivation of one's own liminality, as advocated in different ways, by actors, researchers and teachers such as Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Artaud, Grotowski and Barba has laid the ground for this important cultural movement.

As the gaze of social anthropology has turned both homewards and inwards, and the assumptions that long supported anthropological research have come under increased scrutiny, so theatre directors and those participating in performance activities have come to pursue the liminal experiences of those who inhabit the intellectual, physical and emotional margins of their own, rather than other, societies. While de Certeau would argue that the vast majority of the population feel as if they inhabit those margins, at least to some extent, in the context of performance this research has meant that performers have increasingly sought to represent their own experience of marginalisation. This process of reflection and critical evaluation has led to the recognition that
performance is itself a liminal experience. This suggests that liminality is more than anything a perception, a way of looking at things, a way of gaining a perspective. An experience, which is meaningful of and for itself, which leads to, in Maturana’s and Varela’s terms, ‘explanation’.

Turner argues that cultures “are most fully expressed in and made conscious of themselves in their rituals and theatrical performances.” Such performances are, “a dialectic of ‘flow’... (a) spontaneous movement in which action and awareness are one”. Hence, action embodies reflection in performance and “the central meanings, values and goals of a culture are seen ‘in action’, as they shape and explain behaviour.” Performance is therefore a demonstration of the uniqueness of particular cultures, whilst also “declarative of our shared humanity” (Turner cited in Schechner and Appel, 1990: 1). It embodies explanation. This is no less true of the experience of students in formal learning environments in advanced western civilisations, than it is the experience of members of indigenous communities in their traditional lands.

The cultures of the school and the classroom, the cultures of adolescence, of adolescent groups and sub-groups, the cultures of all clearly defined social groups are no less constructed around ritual and performance than those distant, ‘other’ cultures we are so used to pointing to and talking about. Our own rituals and performances, important though they may be in the maintenance of our sense of who we are, are often less easy to recognise and appreciate than the seemingly more exotic rituals and performances of others, particularly when (like most secondary school students) we have few points of reference with which to gain a perspective. By encouraging students to imagine, construct and enact their own performances, drama education offers students the opportunity to recognise the function that drama, ritual and performance play in their own, then all cultures and lives. This way of knowing, through action and reflection, is not made as accessible in most structured learning experiences. A greater capacity to appreciate the experience of the self and the community, which of itself is reason enough to encourage such a process, can then give rise to a greater capacity to appreciate the experience of other communities and other cultures. Otherness can become less ‘other’.

The opportunity to reflect upon the performance within everyday experience along with the creative freedom to expand upon that insight empowers students to construct their own cultures, their own identities, their own stories, myths and legends. The ‘art’ contained in the construction of social insight
transforms explanation into a liberating personal experience. Post modernism, performance theory and interculturalism, by transforming a study of the experience of others into an inquiry into the manner in which the self experiences the other, constructs an invaluable learning process. This process, which stands at the heart of contemporary performance theory and practice deserves also to stand at the heart of contemporary education, affirming as it does the proposition that learning is a process that involves a recognition of the manner in which our learning is and always will be, representative of ourselves.

Structuring

Unlike Erving Goffman (1959) and Shakespeare’s Jacques (in All's well that ends well) for whom 'all the world's a stage', both Turner and Schechner draw a distinction between daily life - “which is a kind of theatre” - and ‘social drama’, which Turner describes as “a kind of meta-theatre”. As a kind of meta-theatre, what he calls ‘social drama’ is a construction predicated by an understanding of the dramatic process. It is a consciously constructed experience that demonstrates an understanding, on the part of its participants, of its own creation. It is therefore an experience of learning that feeds back into daily life. In daily life that consciousness of construction - and the learning that accompanies it - is not as apparent.

Another distinction Schechner makes is that between 'aesthetic drama' - the artform of theatre - and 'social drama'. His distinction throws more light on his use of these terms. Schechner (1977) says, “the function of aesthetic drama is to do for the consciousness of the audience what social drama does for its participants” (p. 124). This means that the relationship between participants is central to social drama. It is a process of learning in which all participate in the learning. By contrast, the relationship between the spectator(s) and the actor(s) is central to aesthetic drama. In this process one group (the actors) creates the experience, the other group (the spectators) learn from it. The learning of the actors is not taken into consideration.

Schechner's structure of social drama, which was developed first by Turner, is something around which he has constructed much of his social theory and many of his works as a theatre director. Schechner identifies the 'basic performance structure' as a three stage process moving through the stages of 'gathering', 'performing' and 'dispersing'. This model can also be
applied to the process of learning, which occurs within similar bounds and can be constructed around an equivalent understanding of process. Performing can be understood then as a learning process and learning can be considered a sort of performance. Identifying learning as a social process that, like social drama, serves the learner more than any particular audience, allows it also to be appreciated as a process with structure and boundaries. A process that can be appreciated as somewhat separate from daily life. In Turner’s terms, a kind of meta-process involving self-conscious participants.

This basic performance structure places liminal borders around the actual performance. Both ‘GATHERING’ and ‘DISPERSING’ are transitional phenomena that construct a context for the performance experience. The ‘dramatic structure’ that Schechner details unfolds within the intensity of the stage identified as ‘PERFORMING’. Schechner (1977) claims that this structure is comparable across cultures, that there is “a universal dramatic structure parallel to social process”. This is because “drama is the art whose subject, structure and action is social process” (p.121).

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GATHERING → PERFORMING → DISPERSING
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Fig. 5 The basic performance structure

Indian theatre director Rustom Bharucha is most critical of this structure and the analysis that flows from it. He describes Schechner’s modelling as ethnocentric, arguing that, “apart from decontextualising ‘ritual actions’ from their larger structures (and thereby, neutralising their meanings), Schechner seems more eager to synthesise underlying patterns of structure / process in differing performance traditions rather than to confront their individual histories.” (Bharucha 1993: 3). This prompts Bharucha to claim that Schechner’s interest in the generation of new performances through an intercultural fusing of different influences fails to recognise the cultural exploitation of people of non-European origin that occurs in the process. Schechner’s response to this suggestion is, as depicted by Bharucha, a mixture of naive enthusiasm and crass cultural vandalism. He quotes Schechner, speaking of the heady days in the 1960’s, when intercultural performances were first staged.
People didn't question too much whether or not this interculturalism - this affection for Kathkali exercises, the precision of Noh drama, the simultaneity and intensity of African dance - was a continuation of colonialism, a further exploitation of other cultures. There was something simply celebratory about discovering how diverse the world was, how many performance genres there were, and how we could enrich our own experience by borrowing, stealing, exchanging (Schechner cited in Bharucha 1993: 14).12

One would expect that in the 1990's critiques of Schechner, like that offered by Bharucha would have led Schechner to recognise the cultural insensitivity contained in comments such as those he made in the sixties. A member of a dominant culture is however, always a member of that culture. It is a heritage that is not easily set to one side. For a member of a dominant culture, a new learning experience is always filtered through the learned experience of cultural dominance. I am reminded of an essay by theatre director Jan Kott (1992). Kott describes a time in Korea, when he was taken to meet a woman shaman, "supposedly the most powerful of all." After the all-night ceremony, as the participants (all bar Kott and his guide, a local Korean women) rose from their places, adjusted their clothing, tidied the room and swept the stone floor clean Kott says, "and it was at that very moment, in the kitchen of a shamaness (sic) in a Korean village, that it all became familiar to me. As though something once known and long forgotten suddenly came back." Kott uses his western cultural experience - rather than the local cultural experience of the female shaman and the other Korean women - to interpret the ritual.

As in the last scene of A Midsummer Night's Dream, when Puck sweeps the stage after all the dreams are over... Like the children with huge brooms that Goethe remembered at daybreak after St John's Night, sweeping the streets clean of the still smouldering ashes. The Sabbath was over. Or perhaps it had only been dreamed (p. 98).

The same heady, cultural confidence permeates Kott's report. While speaking for his own learning, Kott cannot possibly speak for the learning of the others who were present. Rustom Bharucha (1993) writes,

The problem arises, I believe, when the preoccupation with the 'self' overpowers the representation of 'other' cultures, which is, I would argue, the case with Schechner's intercultural writing. One can accept his belief that a confrontation with 'the other' can deepen 'our grasp of who we ourselves are',

David Wright: 'Creativity and embodied learning'
the Other being 'another and a mirror at the same time'. The difficulty arises, however, when the Other is not another but the projection of one's ego. Then all one has is a glorification of the self and a co-option of other cultures in the name of representation... Schechner presumes to represent 'other' cultures by placing them in his own 'map' of post-modern performance. Instead of questioning the validity of this 'map' to the individual contexts of other cultures, he upholds its universal applicability (Bharucha: 28).

**Learning and cultures**

Both Kott and Schechner construct explanations of ritual and ceremony - of learning - that suit their own ends. Unlike Schechner, Kott does not construct a set of general observations as a result of his experience. While not constructed, those general observations are implied. The tendency to simplify and generalise rather than work with confusion and complexity is a function of language as much as it is culture. The image that I have been playing with, 'the refugee' is not a member of a dominant culture. Disenfranchised, dislocated and fleeing one dominant culture, the refugee seeks purchase within the territory of another.

Bharucha, who is an Indian theatre director, suffers particular disquiet over Schechner's use of traditional Hindu ways of knowing. Within this argument lie a range of issues that relate to learning. Bharucha is critical of Schechner's emphasis upon the structural and performative aspects of the Indian rituals and ceremonies that accompany these ways of knowing. He is also critical of Schechner's lack of attention to the spiritual qualities these experiences hold for their participants. It is the great richness of this life that Bharucha feels Schechner traduces in his attempt to tie down a universal structure.

I believe that we (in the West and the East) need to develop a clearer, more precise, and historical awareness of the particularities of specific cultures. At this stage it seems that the particularities are being prematurely dissolved in larger, nebulous categories (Bharucha: 40).

To some degree all theorists are guilty of the neglect of specifics in the pursuit of generalities. It is in the effective depiction of the richness of emotional or spiritual experience that Schechner's structure falls. Because such feelings cannot be transmitted in a literal manner a structural analysis will always fail this test.
Bharucha is also critical of Turner’s model of social drama, as applied by Schechner. Turner depicted social drama as a process that moves through stages (see Fig. 6).

1. Breach of regular norm-governed social relations.
2. Crisis during which there is a tendency for the breach to widen.
3. Redressive action ranging from personal advice and informal mediation or arbitration to formal juridical and legal machinery, and, to resolve certain kinds of crisis or legitimate other modes of resolution, to the performance of a public ritual.
4. The final phase consists either of the reintegration of the disturbed social group or the social recognition and legitimisation of irreparable schism between contesting parties.

Fig. 6 Stages in the process of ‘performing’

In this model Turner and Schechner posit the performance process as a way of understanding social change. The word ‘performing’ could be just as easily be replaced by the word ‘learning’. Schechner’s analysis remains valid. “This way of growing by means of conflict and schism” is he writes, “a major agency of human cultural growth” (Schechner 1977: 120).

Bharucha argues that the generalities offered by Turner and Schechner are too broad. He argues that their cultural origins - Turner admits these - limit the capacity of the researcher to accommodate difference. Bharucha is critical of what he sees as an attempt to formulate a model of behaviour in one context then apply that model across cultures and experiences. Claude Levi-Strauss (1973) was the first anthropologist to formalise this sort of study and Schechner works under his influence. In the 1940’s and 50’s Levi-Strauss revolutionised anthropology by demanding that attention be paid to the
cultural myths, rituals and ceremonies around which the community structures itself. He sought to find 'translatability' between communities and cultures through an understanding of structure rather than specific behaviour or practices or artefacts. The concept of translatability forms the core of Levi-Strauss' structural analysis and his contribution to structuralism.\(^{13}\) It is this 'translatability' that Bharucha finds inappropriate.

Admitting my cultural origins - an English born mother and an Australian born father of British parentage, bought up and educated in Canberra, Australia - while I sympathise with Bharucha’s critique, I also feel some lingering discomfort. I fear that Bharucha’s critique suffers from the breadth of its own brush strokes. While the argument is based on important principles, relating to the integrity and sustainability of individual cultures and communities, the application of those principles is a less clear cut endeavour. Taken to its extreme, it challenges the instinct to find meaning in experience. It also challenges the instinct to apply that meaning in contexts different to that in which it was first experienced. This is something we do every day. We find the familiar in the alien until we are sufficiently familiar with the alien to recognise that which is specific to it. We do this whether we are physicists shooting electrons down a barrel or hunters and gatherers looking at foot prints in the sand. As Shrodinger and Heisenberg demonstrated, 'truth' is conditional because any inquiry into truth is determined, in part, by the experience and understanding we bring to the inquiry. These represent the boundaries of our learning. Our reflection on our experience and understanding continually challenges those boundaries, hence our learning is transformed according to the new context of its occurrence then transformed again and again. At times it may be inappropriate or informed by ignorance but both ignorance and inappropriateness have to be recognised or known or learned before they can be recognised as such. In different ways Pavis (1992: 160-182) and Maturana and Varela (1987), demonstrate that this process of making meaning is not exclusive to European-derived cultures.

Bharucha acknowledges that his principal motive is to challenge western theoreticians to balance their egos against the depth of their social understanding (and their compassion, if not their guilt). While he is offering a challenge to Turner and Schechner's structural analysis his main pursuit is greater interest and involvement in specific cultural events and experiences. He argues that greater cultural understanding lies in involvement in specifics rather than in the development of broad assimilatory theories that seek to

\[\text{David Wright: ‘Creativity and embodied learning’}\]
absorb and thereby discount individual differences. In seeking this understanding Bharucha reveals himself an educationalist as much as a actor, director or cultural theorist. His principal interest is learning. This involves firstly, Indian people’s learning about their own culture and secondly, the learning of others about things Indian.

**The Mahabharata**

 Appropriately, Bharucha’s critique is at its most pungent when he moves beyond theoretical issues to focus on specific events. Peter Brook’s theatrical version of the classic Indian tale *The Mahabharata* raises considerable ire. Discussing this production, Bharucha throws all caution to the wind and asserts that Brook lacked sufficient cultural knowledge even to appropriate *the Mahabharata* effectively:

> the *Mahabharata* must be seen on as many levels as possible within the Indian context, so that its meaning (or rather, multiple levels of meaning) can have some bearing on the lives of the Indian people for whom the *Mahabharata* was written, and who continue to derive their strength from it. If Brook truly believes that the epic is universal, then his representation should not exclude or trivialise Indian culture, as I believe it does. One cannot agree with the premise that, ‘The *Mahabharata* is Indian but it is universal’. The ‘but’ is misleading. The *Mahabharata*, I would counter is universal because it is Indian. One cannot separate the culture from the text (Bharucha 1993: 70).

Bharucha argues that the learning contained in *The Mahabharata* (as distinct from Brook’s production), is a function of participation in the culture that produced the text, rather than a function of participation in the text (or Brook’s production or any other production of it). The sort of learning that Bharucha promotes while putting this argument is quite different to the sort of learning that Eugenio Barba (1995) promotes. While both are theatre practitioners they are both also educationalists. The differences between the learning they seek to promote are a consequence of the community of learners they are working with. Unlike Barba, Bharucha is not promoting a form of learning about learning through a performer’s appreciation of the “technique of technique”. The learning Bharucha seeks to invigorate is a learning about the culture that contains the text, performance, ceremony or ritual through the medium of the culture and its texts, performances, ceremonies and rituals. This is a function
of an immersion in a culture rather than the sort of abstraction beyond cultures that Bharucha condemns Schechner and Barba for promoting.

Another Indian critic, the New York based and self-declared ‘interculutralist’ Gautam Dasgupta (Marranca & Dasgupta 1991) approaches Brook’s Mahabharata less severely. He questions whether Brook has “used an Indian epic to further his own private explorations... (and) in the process... misused (or even abused) the ethos and sensibility of the original?” He responds to his own question.

Yes and no. In a sense, how could he have done otherwise. As an artist, one cannot deny Brook his subjective point of view... it is surely one of the more imaginative and trans-global readings of the epic I have ever encountered.

Nevertheless, Dasgupta has some reservations. He agrees with some of the points raised by Bharucha. The quote continues,

But to be truly intercultural also requires an interpretive outlook that seeks to frame the other culture’s philosophical viewpoint in a complex manner that goes beyond mere intertextual convergences, theatrical wizardry, and formalistic innovations. It demands... a reading (even a misreading) of the cultural map to which the original belongs (Marranca & Dasgupta 1991:327).

Formwork was an intercultural or cross-cultural performance project. The attempt to arrive at a performance style informed by Peking Opera, but not Peking Opera, produced a hybrid. It was not Peking Opera, but it was not a work in any other clearly identifiable genre. The ‘reading’ of Peking Opera that framed the performance also framed a considerable amount of the learning that I took away from the process. One image - ‘the refugee’ - emerged early in the work. This image had a significant impact upon the development of the script. As I noted in the case study, that image has remained with me in my pursuit of the learning that arose through the project. Though ‘the refugee’ arose in response to work being done in the workshop, it was influenced also by the origins of the Chinese actors and musicians with whom we worked, who were and still are, refugees. As refugees they are continually confronted by the limitations contained in their prior learning. This is learning that fashioned their bodies and their understanding of the world for a considerable part of their lives. In this new land, as individuals and members of a community, they have found themselves confronted by the need to change. In
this respect, their experience bridges that of Bharucha’s Indians learning from *The Mahabharata* and Barba’s theatre anthropologists learning from the rituals and ceremonies of other cultures. They are both immersed in the learning of a culture and confronted by the need to contextualise their learning sufficiently to understand its place in a ‘new’ environment, marked by ‘new’ learning and ‘new’ styles of performance. Neither contained by the past nor trapped in the constant upheaval of the present, their embodied learning, so important for so many years, is constrained. Thus the learning of these highly talented Chinese actors and musicians begins within constraints, as all learning does. The refugee knows this. The refugee knows this because the refugee experience exemplifies that of the self-conscious participant. This is of course not the experience of the refugee alone. I write of the refugee in this way to point to the learning I am concerned with. The refugee lives in two cultures, the culture of the present and the culture of the past. The refugee has had to leave the past, there has been no option. The new land has been arrived at somewhat arbitrarily. This experience is best understood, and explained, in retrospect. The experience of the present is inevitably interpreted through the experience of the past. This is, I concluded in my case study, the experience of learning.

**Re-structuring**

Specific issues in Schechner’s formulations can be pointed to that reveal limitations in his four stage - ‘breach > crisis > redressive action > reintegration or irreparable schism’ - analysis of the performance or learning process. They arise, most significantly, in the fourth stage of the process. This is the stage that Schechner describes as leading to either “reintegration” or “social recognition and legitimisation of irreparable schism”. Because Schechner has depicted this process in the language of social and political organisation and suggested that performance is a process within which power is negotiated I feel it appropriate to discuss the process in political terms.

Schechner says the outcome of the process is either “reintegration” or “irreparable schism”. Either/or categories will always be understood in different ways, from different perspectives. I am reminded of a recent political demonstration. The demonstration was condemned by politicians and media commentators nationwide. It was said to have got ‘out of hand’. Parliament was said to have been ‘stormed’. Subsequent condemnation and vilification, even demonisation of the protesters appeared designed to isolate them from
public sympathy and shame them into regret. Suffice to say, it was rarely asked what may have driven them to take the action, to make the breach, they did. From the perspective of those in authority, the dominant culture, the breach may have been successfully reintegrated. A minority group was vilified and sacrificed to the larger good, (as determined by that dominant culture). Quite possibly, from the perspective of the protesters, the breach between them and the government may have worsened. It may have become, from their perspective an irreparable schism and the potential for future conflict (further breaches) may have become even greater. This could lead to a situation where the increasingly alienated protesters might - in their own minds at least - legitimise the schism. Turner’s structures, as used by Schechner, reveal the manner in which the sophistications of a dominant culture can be used to manage breaches and misunderstandings and in doing so, fail to appreciate the extent of the schism perceived by others. They are rationalisations that reveal an Aristotelian approach to the management of conflict, which is at odds with the notion of a 'social drama' that serves its participants more than it does its audience.

Another way of understanding the processes of social drama that Turner and Schechner have identified is to reflect upon it as a process of learning. Looked at as learning, the distinctions Schechner makes cancel each other out. The ‘legitimisation’ of an ‘irreparable schism’ then becomes a process of ‘reintegration’. If to reintegrate is to recognise the nature of a breach and to incorporate the understanding gained during the resulting conflict, to legitimise the schism is to learn. This is a dialectical process which both generates and legitimises change. It is calls on experience from both sides of the schism. It is a process of integration rather than re-integration. It is ‘multiculturalism’, with all its problems, rather than colonialism, with its irredeemable flaws. It places learning through theatre and performance in the forefront of everyday life, identifying it as neither a solution nor a problem, but a process of structural drift leading to a way of knowing through explanation, to meaning-making or in de Certeau’s terms, simply ‘making do’. This is in accord with Bharucha’s point of view.

Theatre is neither a text nor a commodity. It is an activity that needs to be in ceaseless contact with the realities of the world and the inner necessities of our lives. If theatre changes the world, nothing could be better but to let us also admit that this has not happened so far. It would be wiser (and less euphoric) if we
accepted that it is possible to change our own lives through theatre (Bharucha 1993: 10).

**Codification**

Over time, attempts have been made to notate or codify the ‘being’ and ‘doing’ of performance, with the intention of recording, preserving, studying and perhaps re-staging performances. This is of relevance to drama education. The need to reflect upon experience, which is such an important part of the learning process, in a system uncomfortable with the learning made available through self-conscious participation in drama, frequently calls on notation systems to formalise and verify learning. The essential problem with this is that the notation system preserves the notation system just as much as if not more than it does the drama or the performance.

As Bharucha demonstrates, any form of generalisation about behaviour, such as codification, is fraught with difficulty, however such criticism has not been enough to halt attempts to do so. In addition to the practical difficulties that arise in the codification of performance, cultural and ethical issues also arise. In the published proceedings arising from a recent symposium on the collection of the music and dance of Aboriginal Australia, ethno-musicologist Catherine Ellis (1992) writes of the sort of conflict that can be experienced in attempting to record and preserve traditional performances of indigenous Australian communities.14 She rationalises the attempt to codify the performances of these communities by arguing that “permanent preservation of their songs could help to provide for the world a fuller picture of their musical/intellectual life (the two being inextricably tied through mythology)” (p. 157). This rationale, while apparently accepted, perhaps even welcomed by the traditional performers she worked with, was based on assumptions that finally led to distress. These arose from confusion surrounding the understanding of ‘codification’ and ‘preservation’ possessed by each group of participants - Ellis and her team of ethnographers and the traditional performers - in the process. Ellis writes:

the senior Indulkana women asked us to film an important ceremony, which was the first we had seen performed at the actual sites represented in the song... The performance lasted for four days. The body designs, which are painted out of view of the main group of singers, were very elaborate and took a long time to perfect. During that period the women responsible for the singing had to keep the
relevant painting song present in the minds of the performers. A form of antiphonal singing arose when the women being painted also sang these painting songs. This part of the ceremonial performance sometimes took up to three hours, while the actual dance that showed the design might only have taken two minutes. It is important to remember in such circumstances that the actual performance lasts from the minute the women occupy the ceremonial ground, not just during the time the women are performing... Meaning was conveyed through the singing of many small songs, through the body design, the dance steps, the musical structures and it was tied into the mapping of the region... We took still photographs, 16mm black and white film, anthropological, musical and textual details of this and the other performances we were privileged to witness (p. 158).

Several years later, upon returning to the region, Ellis reports,

We talked about how beautiful the performance had been when I was there... I inquired of the principal performer how recently and how often the ceremony had been done since then. Her shocked response was something for which my field training had not prepared me. She said, 'Never. We've given it to you.' I discovered in the course of talking to them that I was now the sole possessor of that ceremony, and that the act of filming and recording it in order to 'preserve' it had, in fact been an act of destruction of the tradition. I had put a vital and living tradition into a dead form and I had no mechanism that would be traditionally acceptable for undoing that action. I was shattered (p. 158).

The digital codification of the performance, while designed to lead to its preservation, failed because of misunderstanding around what 'preservation' means. The effective preservation of a living tradition requires more than the digitisation of the outward manifestations of that tradition. By contrast, elsewhere in the same article, Ellis writes of another ceremony dedicated to the preservation of tradition.

We were invited to be present at the performance of a ceremony which was being passed from the leading performer on Oodnadatta to younger, more physically able women at Cooper Pedy. The senior woman at Oodnadatta was no longer able to perform any of the dances because she had problems in walking; she therefore wished to see the ceremony preserved by stronger women (p. 158).
The preservation of the dance through firstly, passing it on to someone within the same general community and secondly, passing it on through dance provides much greater opportunity for the ceremony to survive. This engages and provides evidence for Gardner's 'bodily-kinaesthetic' intelligence. This is so for all forms of dance, from the dance ceremonies of indigenous communities to the European tradition of classical ballet. Attempts to codify ballet through notation systems and/or film and video pale in comparison to the detailed knowledge contained in the body of the living performer.

As a consequence of experiences such as that which Ellis reports, changes have been made in attempts to preserve indigenous Australian performance. A shift has been made from document-based preservation to preservation through live performance and workshops led by traditional teachers. This reflects a significant shift in learning. The recognition that knowledge is contained in the being and doing of something rather than in the notebook or video camera of an observer ensures that the ceremony remains the property of those who use of it and thereby know it best. Maintaining ceremony in this way accommodates a 'way of knowing' that is embedded in embodied action. This is a way of knowing and learning that is at odds with the understanding of knowing and learning that has long been prevalent in European education systems. While Ellis describes 'traditional Aboriginal' performance as "unthinkably complicated and interlocked a process" and impossible "for anyone to be able to give it back to them, unless they're inside - unless they've grown up in that tradition" (Ellis: 166) this does not undermine the argument that performance contains and maintains learning and that learning is best accessed by performance.

For six years (1985-1990) staff and students from the School of Performing Arts at Nepean College of Advanced Education (C.A.E.), - later the Faculty of Performance, Fine Art and Design and now the Academic Unit in Contemporary Arts at the University of Western Sydney Nepean - were engaged in a program of intensive cultural exchange with the Pitjantjatjara / Yankunytjatjara people of Mimili in northern South Australia. Anne Marshall (1984, 1987, 1996) describes this as an opportunity "to learn about their music (and performance) not only by doing it but by doing it within the cultural context of their society" (Marshall 1987: 115). This program, funded by the Australia Council, Nepean C.A.E., private sponsors and the students themselves is described by Marshall as only a beginning. "Meaningful analysis can only emerge... over a long period of time, and in many
performance and teaching situations, for that is how knowledge is revealed in Aboriginal tribal society” (Marshall 1987: 115) (my highlighting).

Both Marshall and Ellis argue that it is important that people from both indigenous and non-indigenous backgrounds appreciate the richness and diversity of indigenous Australian societies. Out of that appreciation, they assert, comes greater knowledge of the relationship between performance and the community within which the performance occurs. Within that knowledge lies an understanding of the value placed upon learning in different cultures and the manner in which different societies understand the learning process. Marshall observes that Pitjantjatjara / Yankunytjatjara tribal knowledge is passed on by the whole community, rather than by designated teachers. This in itself represents a challenge to orthodox perceptions of education in non-indigenous Australia. She describes this dissemination of knowledge as occurring through,

vast, undulating networks of integrated and sequential experiences... The performance experience is part of that day to day life... The reasons for performance are linked to other survival activities... At the same time as they (the Pitjantjatjara / Yankunytjatjara) learn the skills of survival and the duties of the rituals, they learn the modes by which these are expressed in performance (Marshall 1987: 137-138).

The situations described by Marshall and Ellis are ones in which the preparation and presentation of performance contain and represent processes of learning related to - perhaps even of greater significance than - the performance of the dance, song or music itself. One of the performances observed by Ellis lasted four days. This time frame includes - like Schechner's dramatic structure - the gathering of the participants, the performance of the ceremonies and the dispersal of those who gathered. Within the framework of the performance, Ellis differentiates between particular experiences. She differentiates “the ceremonial performance (which) sometimes took up to three hours”, during which body paints were applied and song were sung and stories told, from the “actual dance that showed the design”, which might have taken only two minutes. The ‘actual dance’ however, though relatively insignificant in terms of time, remained the pivotal event within the overall structure of the social experience or the ‘social drama’. It focused the attention of all who have gathered. It was the culmination of a long process of
preparation. At the same time its conclusion marked the commencement of the next stage in the social process. The learning described by Ellis and Marshall could be said therefore, to be codified analogically. It is continuous, it is not didactic, it is alive in the embodied experience of all who have gathered. It is, like the performances, in both structure and content, inseparable from the life of the community that comes together to talk, sing, dance to celebrate and sustain their relationship to the land and each other through ritual. The community - individually and collectively embodied - and its learning, like its ceremony are inseparable. One cannot survive, in its present form, without the other.

The influences that support and guide performance within traditional and/or indigenous communities in Africa, Asia, Australia and the Americas looms large in contemporary performance theory. Interculturalism is the attempt to find common ground for understanding between these performances. Schechner is a significant proponent of interculturalism within performance studies. While this analysis may represent an extension of European intellectual hegemony and while it may serve the interests of the proponents of the theory more than it does those around whom the theory is constructed, it remains an analysis with considerable potency. Most importantly, it draws attention to the paucity of understanding of performance in contemporary European-derived cultures. It is in lament of this loss that Artaud conducts his excoriating search for a ‘theatre of cruelty’, Grotowski pursues his vision of a ‘poor theatre’, Boal predicates his ‘theatre of the oppressed’, and Barba engages in work through the International School of Theatre Anthropology.

I do not think that the crisis in the theatre can be separated from other crisis processes in contemporary culture. One of its essential elements - namely the disappearance of the sacred and of its ritual function in the theatre - is a result of the obvious and probably inevitable decline of religion. What we are talking about is the possibility of creating a secular sacram in the theatre (Grotowski 1976: 49).

The difficulties involved in tapping into this experience of performance - for purposes of codification, preservation and re-production - are many. They arise because performance is a physical and an emotional, as well as a languaging experience. They arise also because language and emotion are intertwined, or braided as Maturana and Varela say, in the construction of the relationships that comprise performance. To separate, analyse and codify the
verbal and non-verbal languages of any performance is to omit not only the emotion but also the relationship between the language and the emotion that creates the performance (and the meaning within it). To separate the act from the emotion is akin to extracting words from their meaning, removing communication from its context or, as in the tragic experience of Catherine Ellis, separating the dancing from the dreaming. Difficulties arise also because the tradition of performance is a 'living tradition'. It is not a cosseted, contained and unchanging thing. Like the great oral traditions, that evolved continually prior to being set down forever in ink, the living tradition of performance can be stilted, limited or contained through being codified. Herein lies the central conflict for educationalists like David Hornbrook and Peter Abbs, who argue for a Theatre Arts curriculum. Undue emphasis upon theatre arts reduces contact with the 'living tradition' of performance. It isolates performance on a stage in history rather than recognising it as a something that constantly lives within a community. In doing so it reduces understanding of performance as a process of transformation, a rich intertwining of languaging and emotioning within a specific cultural context, a story telling process that succeeds when it taps into the meaning making systems we live within.

**Kinesics**

Beyond anthropology, the emergence of a growing body of work within the genre of contemporary performance has been accompanied by a recognition of the need for an effective means of reflection upon the functioning of the body - the 'doing' and 'being' of the body - in performance. That reflection requires a language of sorts. We need to be able to talk about what happens, but we need to be able to do more than just talk. Howard Gardner (1985) suggests the difficulties that are involved. He quotes Isadora Duncan, "If I could tell you what it is, I would not have danced it", then Martha Graham. "I have often remarked on the extreme difficulty of having any kind of conversation with most dancers which has any kind of logical cohesiveness - their minds just jump around (maybe like my body) - the logic - such as it is - occurs on the level of motor activity" (p. 224).

Schechner (1977) describes new research into performance as "parallel to work in kinesics - a science of human body motion behaviour based on analogical analysis of gesture, posture, groupings and constellations of groupings, all of which are presumed to contain understandable communications" (p. 100). Schechner describes the work of Darwin, in
establishing the field of ethology - defined in The Macquarie Dictionary as “the scientific study of animals in relation to their natural environment” - as closely related to kinesics. He observes; “animals communicate with each other and with men (sic) analogically not digitally” (p. 101). Beyond Darwin, Schechner attributes the strongest link between ethology and performance to biologist, behavioural scientist and philosopher, Gregory Bateson.

Bateson (1972) makes most reference to kinesics in his work on communication and relationships. He argues that we do most of our communicating about relationships “by means of kinesics or paralinguistic signals such as bodily movements, involuntary tensions of voluntary muscles, changes of facial expression, hesitations, shifts in tempo of speech or movement, overtones of the voice, and irregularities of respiration” (p. 370). This makes the organs through which messages are received and transmitted, sense organs. They receive and process the subtleties we encounter (in the self and others) in the environment we experience. Bateson cites the case of the blind man who makes us feel uncomfortable,

not because he cannot see - that is his problem and we are only dimly aware of it - but because he does not transmit to us through the movement of his eyes the messages we expect and need so that we may know him and be sure of our relationship to him (p. 370).

Reflection upon the process of reception and transmission generates another order of communication, that resulting from cognition, which gives rise to explanation. Accordingly, in the quote above, Bateson offers us his explanation for his discomfort, a discomfort he presumes is shared by others.

In this same area, geographer Paul Rodaway (1994) writes of touch as a learning system. His discussion goes beyond proxemics, to predicate a far more subtle and far reaching form of communication. Touch he says “may not contact a distant movement in the environment directly, but feel the vibration generated in materials in contact with, or reach of the body” (p. 26). In his conceptualisation of the “haptic system” Rodaway contains kinesthesia, which he describes simply as the ability of the body to perceive its own motion. The term, the haptic system, he says, “refers to the tactile receptivity of the skin, the movement of the body parts and the locomotion of the whole body through the environment” (p. 42). It is therefore a perceptual system rather than a sense. He cites Gibson’s (1986) description.
The haptic system... is an apparatus by which the individual gets information about both the environment and his (sic) body. He feels an object relative to his body and the body relative to an object. It is a perceptual system by which animals and men (humans) are literally in touch with the environment (Rodaway 1994: 42).

It is also a system marked by reciprocity: to touch is always to be touched. It is therefore, a social communication system, a feed-back system and an embodied learning system within which individuals and communities participate. As such, it exists in direct relationship to cognition and explanation. Harries-Jones (1995), in his study of Bateson's 'ecological' understanding of communication, says,

Patterns of communication in systems of communication emerge from the embodiments of our own ways of thinking and acting. In turn, the assumptions on which we base our own communicative relationships are coupled to assumptions of how we learn, and these, recursively, are drawn from our own epistemology, our ideas about how we know. This is what Bateson meant when he said that 'double bind' was a suitable model for our own survival. Our survival depends on our understanding that not only are we coupled to how we conceptualise ecological order but also to how we have embodied in our patterns of relationship our epistemological ideas of nature (p. 123).

The double-bind is that our survival is conditional not only on our knowledge about our condition but our knowledge about how our knowledge ties us to that condition. Our epistemology is our ontology. Clearly, the work of Maturana and Varela builds on that of Bateson.

Performance contains the knowing of which Bateson writes. It involves, as Bauman says, "a consciousness of doubleness, through which... an action is placed in mental comparison with a potential (or) an ideal" (Carlson 1996: 6). Gardner, in his argument for a 'bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence' puts a similar argument. Gardner perceives intelligences as structures that program their own means of receiving information. Hence learning is a feedback loop and a consciousness of this loop, this recursive process transforms the manner of our participation in learning and the world. This feed back has to be experienced if it is to be known, it has to be felt. It is the body that experiences
the feedback. This leads to change. Drama and performance employ and draw attention to this process.

Over the years the highly skilled performer has evolved a family of procedures for translating intention into action... Programming of actions... allows the choice of those particular units of performance... It is just because of this mastery of the possible alternatives, the ability to enact the sequence most effective for present purposes, that the expert looks as though he has all the time in the world to do what he wants. (Gardner 1985: 209).

I am reminded also of Augusto Boal's (1992) assertion that the first word of the theatrical vocabulary is the human body. Boal is a great advocate of theatre games. He calls the games he takes his actors through, "physical reflection". He argues that to control the means of theatrical production the body must be controlled and known. This desire to 'control' and 'know' the body could be better expressed as an awareness of, and a confidence in the way the body - as a system - responds to experience. Boal suggests that this knowledge enables the individual to grow free of the condition of spectator, to grow free of the body determined by social and economic forces and to act. Such action arises in the world, rather than on the stage. An actor is in this sense, not a paid-up member of Equity waiting for the agent to call, but a conscious participant in a creative community. The performance about performance, the meta-performance, which Boal's formulations - Invisible Theatre and Forum Theatre in particular - and contemporary performance in general are constructed around, demands that this dichotomy be addressed. In this regard there is learning about performance and learning about the body, the self and society contained in the construction of and/or the perception of meta-performance. This takes Barba's 'learning about learning' as a result of work on the 'technique of technique', out of the theatre and the classroom and into the world of social action.

**Deafness and kinesics**

Within the deaf community, kinesics is the base from which languaging arises. Recognising this, as said before, it comes as no surprise that deaf people from different parts of the world have less trouble overcoming language barriers than hearing people. This occurs because communication through Sign is a spatial and a sensual construction. It is a language of performance. My mind returns to Oliver Sacks and his writings on the profoundly deaf girl,
Charlotte, Sacks (1989) wrote of Charlotte’s parents, who tried to learn sign language so as to communicate with their daughter. They said; “we had to reorient the way we thought to produce visual sentences” (p. 71-72). A different way of thinking not only produces a different language, it produces a different way of being in the world and therefore, a different way of knowing the world. Communication around this way of knowing then creates a different culture.

All the characters or creatures or objects Charlotte talks about are placed... When Charlotte signs, the whole scene is set up; you can see where everyone of everything is; it is all visualised with a detail that would be rare for the hearing.

Sacks comments;

This placing of objects and people in specific locations, this use of elaborate, spatial reference had been striking in Charlotte, her parents said, since the age of four and a half - already at that age she had gone beyond them, shown a sort of ‘staging’ power, and ‘architectural’ power that they had seen in other deaf people - but rarely in the hearing (p. 75).

I find the search by the profoundly deaf performance poet Aaron Williamson, for a ‘voice’ another fascinating attempt to construct a communication through kinesics. As noted, Williamson’s own experience of sound occurs through feeling rather than hearing in the conventional way. He feels the vibration of sound pulse through his body in a way comparable to the seventeen year old boy who stands near the amplifiers at a rock concert. The sound has an impact upon his ears but it is the pulse of the rhythm section that moves through the floor into the pit of the stomach and sets his body rocking. It enters the body physically. There is an unavoidable ‘feeling’ response. This feeling response is part of that which Williamson seeks from his audience. "The text is timpani; the text is the mallet", he writes (1993: 37). In performance, Williamson stretches the limits of the body’s capacity for sound. His performance consists of guttural noise, growls, groans, occasionally intelligible words, powerful and deliberate gestures and great emotional intensity. Without that emotion - as a base from which to assume a voice - his performance would, in all probability, never occur. The legacy of Artaud beats powerfully in Williamson’s body. He is a demonstration of the fact that language is a way of living. His consciousness of this continually feeds back into his performance. While Boal, through performance, challenges the oppression of the body so as to challenge the
oppression of the individual, Williamson and Artaud challenge the oppression of the word, and the way of life that it invokes. Each, in their own way, use artfulness and creativity in the construction of their ways of knowing and communicating. That creativity expands the bounds of communication. It promotes creativity in response. It sets up conversations in newly created domains of understanding. It invites others to participate in it, just as Williamson invited me into his way of knowing through both the content and the construction of *A holythroat symposium*. This creativity is available to all who seek to invoke it. No formal constraints limit access to it. It is a personal and social feed back system that both generates and perpetuates itself. As a way of knowing the world it offers its own reward.

**The refugee**

The transition from one form of understanding to that of another is what I called, in my discussion of *Formwork*, the refugee experience. This is an experience of a consciousness of learning. It is for me, the experience that Williamson represents. It is the experience Boal advocates and the experience that Bateson considers a pre-requisite to ecological survival. It is the experience of the Peking Opera actor, now working as a storeman, in Australia, the experience of the tribal aborigine, away from his country, struggling with the city. It is the experience of the self conscious participant in a complex world in which meaning is made in many ways. It is the experience of living in language. By widening appreciation of the process of meaning making through language - or languaging - drama and creative work in general makes explicit a form of knowledge that is generally implicit, a way of knowing that, like Aaron Williamson's deafness, "speaks itself". Unspoken, unacknowledged, talked around, drama education not only acknowledges, it celebrates this way of doing and this way of knowing.

I am reminded of a conflict David Malouf presents in his 1994 novel, *Remembering Babylon*. The novel depicts a young castaway's return to European civilisation (in the middle of the nineteenth century) in northern Queensland after many years living with an Aboriginal tribe.

If he could get the words inside him... the creature, or spirit or whatever it was, would come up to the surface of him and take them. It was the words he had to get hold of. *It was the words that would recognise him...* when next day he began to run towards the boundary fence and the paddock... he had no notion of
abandoning the tribe, even less of breaking from one world to another. It was a question of covering the space between them, of recovering the connection that would put the words back in his mouth, and catch the creature, the spirit or whatever it was, that lived in the dark of him, and came up briefly to torment or tease but could be tempted, he now saw, with what these people ate and with the words they used..... and before he knew it the words were out. The creature or spirit in him had spoken up, having all along had the words in there that would betray him and which, when they came hooting out of his mouth, so astonished him: Do not shoot. I am a British object. (p.32-33).

Research into kinesics remains a marginal activity. The laborious documentation of movement is clearly at odds with the sea of emotions that drive human relationships. While notation systems have been used to document and preserve ballet and more contemporary forms of performance no system has yet been devised that has made it possible to capture and contain the performance in the way that, for example, musical notation can capture and contain music. The body communicates movement so much more succinctly. In the second half of this century research into kinesics has been undertaken with film and video. Computer systems are also being used extensively. Not only have these technologies been used to research and document ballet and other forms of performance they have also been used to construct art works. Performance artist Stelarc's work has been concentrated on the manner in which we look at and experience the body. The work which first earned him widespread attention saw him suspend his body in various ways with hooks and weights and wires. In his more recent work Stelarc has worked with sounds and images transmitted from inside his body. These sounds and images have then been digitally manipulated. This work is of course only possible because of advances that have been made in scientific research into the body in motion and because of the technologies that make such explorations possible. Advances in medical technologies, in particular in the burgeoning field of sports medicine, reflects the extraordinary interest in kinesics. By identifying the body in motion as a communication system performance studies takes this study further.

Schechner claims that "kinesics is finding an important place as a tool for rehearsal and as a source of images for performance". He asserts that, "kinesics will endure as a training and performance tool even when performance moves back to more expressionistic modes... because whatever
the mode there is a long standing wish among performers to codify physical expressions" (p. 106).

For me, the significance of kinesics lies far beyond the rehearsal rooms of experimental or professional theatre. It lies in the recognition that change, or transformation, hence learning, arises through a cognisance of participation in social process. It lies in the recognition that there is an unconscious communication system at work that we participate in, to which we give less than due consideration. It lies in the recognition that placing consideration upon that communication system through ritual, ceremony, drama, games, rehearsal activities, play, technology, creative work or any other means can provide greater understanding of the nature of communication and our participation in the relationships that sustain it. The work of Maturana and Varela provides us with another tool to understand this process. Arising from a constructivist perspective and focussing as it does on 'systems' and 'explanation' Maturana's and Varela's work on the biological roots of human understanding emphasises the need to appreciate our life in language and emotion. This is the domain of drama education. By acknowledging the interrelationship between language and emotion as well as that between ontology and epistemology drama education sets up invaluable opportunities for experience and reflection upon experience. Contained within these relationships is a richness of human experience and a wealth of human knowledge. It is with these interests in mind that I find the effective relationship between Drama and Education - in both theory and practice - an exciting domain of inquiry.
Section 7: Notes

1 Hybrid Arts was a strategy of the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council designed to identify and conduct research into new developments in art forms. In February 1997, following a restructure, which saw the previous Board structure redefined, Performing Arts was divided into the strands of Music, Dance and Theatre. The Hybrid Arts were relabelled New Media Arts and identified as an interdisciplinary area requiring its own administration and expertise. The 'new media' referred to in the title refer to new and interlocking mediums of artistic activity rather than specific technology-based communication forms.

2 When Sally Sussman, Formwork's director, sought funding for her next project Orientalia, her principal funding source was the Hybrid Arts fund.

3 While experiential learning is not the principal subject of my inquiry here, Boud and Walker's observations on learning and experience offer a deeper understanding of the relationship between learning and creative expression. Boud and Walker offer five propositions about experiential learning:
   1. Experience is the foundation of, and the stimulus for, learning.
   2. Learners actively construct their experience.
   3. Learning is a holistic process.
   4. Learning is socially and culturally constructed.
   5. Learning is influenced by the socio-cultural context within which it occurs.
   (Boud and Walker (1993) in Boud, Cohen and Walker: 8-15)

4 In a delightful piece of writing, Eco describes the postmodern attitude in terms of love. He writes of "a man who loves a very cultivated woman and knows he cannot say to her, 'I love you madly,' because he knows these words have already been written by Barbara Cartland." The postmodern attitude is exemplified in his solution. Eco suggests the man can say, "As Barbara Cartland would put it, I love you madly." Contained within the comment lie assumptions about the difficulties in expressing an innocent feeling in a society marked by cynicism, disillusion and a widespread loss of innocence. "Neither of the two speakers will feel innocent, both will have accepted the challenge of the past, of the already said, which cannot be eliminated; both will console and with pleasure play the game of irony... But both will have succeeded, once again, in speaking of love" (Eco 1995: 32-33).

5 "But a hidden one because it is scattered over areas defined and occupied by systems of 'production' (television, urban development, commerce, etc.), and because the steady increasing expansion of these systems no longer leaves 'consumers' any place in which they can indicate what they make or do with the products of these systems" (de Certeau 1984: xii)


7 "There is an old Sanskrit word, lila, which means play. Richer than our word, it means divine play, the play of creation, the folding and unfolding of the cosmos. Lila, free and deep, is both the delight and the enjoyment of this moment, and the play of God. It also means love. Lila may be the simplest thing there is - spontaneous, childish, disarming. But as we grow and experience the complexities of life, it may also be the most difficult and hard won achievement imaginable, and its coming to fruition is a kind of homecoming to ourselves." (Nachmanovitch 1990: 1.)

8 Bhagavad Gita 9.7-10 cited in Capra, F. 1984: 184


11 Turner undertook two and a half years of fieldwork among the Ndembu of north western Zambia. The Ndembu are a West-Central Bantu speaking people. Turner describes his field work as sitting in villages before a calabash of millet or honey beer and collecting numerical data on village membership, divorce frequency, bride wealth, labour migration rates, individual cash budgets, birth and homicide rates, and more strenuously to measure the acreage of gardens and dimensions of ritual enclosures (Turner 1982: 61).

12 Similar comments could be made about the work of Barba. Patrice Pavis (1992) is particularly critical of him. The same criticism could be levelled at the Formwork project. One key difference lies in the fact that the Chinese participants in Formwork were, and still are, refugee residents of
a new nation seeking to find a new audience for their skills. In their attempt to meet that new audience they were complicit in the challenge to the strictures of the traditions of Peking Opera. They were, nevertheless, employed by an Australian director (whose formative theatrical education occurred in a mainstream Australian university) who was determined to launch the challenge. While they did not initiate the project, they modelled and choreographed much in the workshop, in consultation with the director. The performance that eventuated as a result of the Formwork experience must be evaluated differently to any learning that arose. The learning is what has interested me most.

13 Levi-Strauss (1973) justifies his structural form of analysis, by arguing: "We (anthropologists) find our experiments already set up but we cannot control them." Hence the need for abstract rather than concrete equations. "It is... natural that we attempt to substitute for... (the forms of behaviour we observe) symbols or codes, models or systems". These symbols are designed to "preserve the characteristic properties of the experiment", these properties remain however, ones which "we are able to manipulate" (p. 15).

Creativity and Embodied Learning

Section 8: Concluding Remarks
Concluding remarks

Concluding this thesis, and reflecting on the subject matter I have been dealing with, it is difficult not to reflect upon my experience in the same way I did when I commenced the discussion. That is, personally. The creativity and learning I want to discuss then is the subject matter I have been concerned with, and the creativity and learning I have found myself engaged in through immersion in this process of researching and writing. To a considerable extent both of these experiences have been addressed in the content. Inevitably there is more to say.

Subject matter

Entering into this process some years ago I sought at first to appreciate and to compare and contrast the learning encountered by a group of drama students. It soon became apparent that if I was to look at the learning of that group I had also to consider my relationship to them, in effect, my contribution to their learning, or even more accurately, my learning about their learning. Implicit in this recognition was an understanding of learning as a social process rather than a bank of knowledge, a complex social experience involving context, interpretation and explanation, rather than a personal store of tidily bundled packages that one draws from or adds to as it becomes necessary. This led me to withdraw a little, to re-consider, to re-cognise the important need to reflect upon my own learning before entering into a discussion about the learning of others. As my study proceeded therefore, my initial plan faded from view as, what seemed to me, more compelling issues arose.

The recognition that the examination of learning involves considerably more than looking at the products of learning and considerably more than searching out quantifiable results, led me to reflect upon the problems involved in identifying an experience of learning. This led me then to consider how learning is 'known'. My stumbling around this issue led me in turn, to point to, to name, to launch a discussion about one specific experience of learning. I chose to discuss that experience of learning as a physical experience, a feeling, a sensation. The term I used to describe the sensation was 'frisson': Through my considerations around this frisson I found a phenomena with which others were conversant. This provided me with a reference point, and within it, an opportunity to look beyond my experience, alone. Other correspondents assisted me in this process. Aaron Williamson's
representation of his experience in poetry and performance guided me, while Jorge Luis Borges, along with several other writers drawn to tread the heavily mirrored terrain of meta-fiction, provided me with sign posts.

I validated this approach to research through constructivism and its miscreant child, radical constructivism. Radical constructivism, as postulated by Ernst von Glasersfeld, is a theory of knowing, as distinct from a theory of knowledge. It is von Glasersfeld says, a way of understanding rather than an explanation of what has been understood. Because it is a process it is, of necessity, difficult to pin down once and for all. Radical constructivism is built on the assumption that there is a direct relationship between human knowing and the pursuit of that knowing. This in turn, is built on the understanding that we are deeply involved in this pursuit, that our intelligence, our emotion, our feelings, our sense of who we are assists us in this process. This means that we, as social and biological beings, are complicit in this pursuit, that we are participants in our knowing, participants in the construction of our knowledge. It reinforces the notion that our knowledge is something that we are inseparable from. Considerations upon this process necessarily involve considerations upon 'the self'. Through the self we 'play' with the experiences and understandings that guide us in the learning process. We feel, sense, shape, accept, discard, rationalise and intellectualise the experience of being and becoming in the world.

The introduction of the self to an academic discourse, while problematic in some quarters, offers, I feel, considerable opportunity for an enhanced understanding of the learning process and the relationship between the self and the social discourse through which the self and learning is defined moment by moment. This insight, which is an outcome, in part of feminist research into gendered experience, is supported by the subjectivist, relativist precepts of constructivism. Subjectivist constructions, because they are derived in part from feelings, inevitably draw the body into consideration. Hence the self, the body and learning processes are linked, in reflection, in interpretation, in explanation, in the process of making meaning from experience.

Bruce Gregory (1988) in *inventing reality: physics as language* tells a story about language and the game of baseball.
Three umpires were discussing their roles in the game of baseball. The first umpire asserted, “I calls ‘em the way I sees ‘em!” The next umpire, with even more confidence, and a more metaphysical frame of mind said, “I calls ‘em the way they are!” But the third umpire, displaying a familiarity with twentieth century physics concluded the discussion with, “they ain’t nothin’ till I calls ‘em!” (p. 195).

As Gregory points out, “the ball, the bat and the plate do not create the game; the rules create the game, and the umpire interprets the rules (and)... The umpire’s call, and not the any fact of the matter, creates a ‘ball’ or a ‘strike’” (p. 195). The game proceeds according to an explanation: players step forward, players sit down, balls are thrown, time-out is called, bodies run and bodies halt. These explanations in combination with other explanations lead to other activities. They stipulate for example, that some bodies leave the stadium early to avoid traffic jams and that other bodies eat far too much and regret it the next morning.

Through explanation, systems of understanding emerge - did I leave too early, should I have avoided the pies. Such explanations are constructed around relationships. Bodies, individually and collectively participate in that construction. The relationship between the body and explanation is central to the work of biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela. Through their work on ‘autopoietic’ or self organising systems (which could also be described as learning systems) they arrive at an explanation of the relationship between biology and knowledge. This explanation postulates the relationship between biology and knowledge as a ‘feed back’ system which gives rise to and is guided by a particular relationship to social and environmental circumstance. That relationship is one of participation. A consciousness of participation contributes to the manner in which one participation occurs. Hence issues of knowledge, ethics and responsibility emerge. Creativity is a powerful factor in the construction and explanation of the relationship between experiencing and knowing. Creativity: the subject of it, and the process of engaging with it, was central to my case study and the discussions of the praxis contained in the performance that arose from it.

In these sections I focussed on learning traditions and the manner in which learners have been shaped, physically and emotionally by their participation in their own socio-cultural learning. Employing the understanding made available by Maturana and Varela I looked at different learning processes, and
the different bodies shaped by those different learning processes. I reflected upon the need to consider more deeply the learning of the body in the construction of learning systems. I reflected on the manner in which drama and performance engage this learning most directly, while in some cases, having considerable difficulty in conceptualising and developing discussion around the body and learning. I looked at different cultural responses to this issue and the manner in which different responses have percolated through to European consciousness. The learning contained in the body is, I suggested, a form of knowledge or a way of knowing that like all processes, can be mapped as changing. Performance theory I asserted, has contributed to and is contributing to that change.

The learner

When learning is talked about as a process it is important that the learning not be considered apart from the learner and/or the social and physical environment within which the learning takes place. If, as seems obvious, one of the principal outcomes of a greater capacity to reflect upon and appreciate the learning process is a greater capacity to reflect upon and appreciate the self as learner, this greater capacity brings greater insight into the social and physical environment, or the context, within which the learning occurs. This appreciation of the relationship between the self, learning and context enables greater appreciation of the ‘feed-back’ process through which the self is enhanced within a context, through learning.

Learning can be found in and through relationships with the self, society and the environment. Our constructions upon these relationships become and create our learning. The ‘Hawkesbury hierarchy of approaches to problem solving and situation improving’ (see fig. 1.) certainly suggests this. This diagram, and the discussion that supports it (Bawden 1995), contends that a greater recognition of the complexities contained in learning is connected to a greater capacity to contextualise complexity, to work with it rather than to suffer it. In this equation recognition is the crucial factor. Recognition leads to explanation.

In the Formwork project, out of which my case study grew, I was required to work with complexity. Central to the project was a meeting, orchestrated by the director, between different learning and performance traditions. The search for a ‘hybrid’ form, within which the languages of those various performance
traditions could co-exist - while being transformed as a result of that which occurred or did not occur in the co-existence - required that I also participate in the transformation, or more accurately recognise and appreciate my own participation. My reflection upon the transformation, as a result of my participation, required that I find then identify or 'name' the transformation. As long as I could find evidence that I could use to support my identification of the change I felt safe, intellectually. Whenever I ventured too far away from the 'evidence' and sought to tell more personal stories about the experience, I felt more exposed and then more intellectually vulnerable. And yet those personal stories are extraordinarily valuable. They exist as responses to experience and therefore, in themselves, as evidence. And while there is great intelligence contained in them I do not purport them to be anything other than evidence of a response, a way of knowing or thinking, certainly not an incontrovertible truth. Performers constantly present their evidence (and their intelligence) in this way. That evidence, that intelligence, might be found in a facial tick or it may be found in something more substantial - the wearing of a costume, the presentation of a monologue, the development of a role over the length of a performance - or something equally slight - a raised voice, a slurred word, a dragged foot, a hesitation - but it is something that is constructed as significant by the cognising self in the relationship between the subject and the object within the context of its occurrence. This is no less the case for the writer, whether that person is working in the arts or the sciences. This I learned, to greater depth, through my participation in this project.

Ashgar T. Minai argues that this understanding is becoming recognised, increasingly, in both the arts and the sciences. He describes this coming together as characteristic of the process of 'emergence'. Minai (1995) argues that,

Since the turn of the century, there has been a major shift in our world views from the classical deterministic views, which focussed on isolated properties, whose behaviour was defined in terms of causal determinism, to views which see complex interacting processes manifested in dynamic and evolving systems. These dynamic features are often referred to as emergence, where the diverse properties rise to new levels of order in which one might observe patterns descriptive of some new systems. With these developments, the new task has become to find out how such emerging properties can be represented. Scientists are rigorously seeking presentation methods, while artists, by the very nature of their work, respond less formally to the desires and milieux of their time and
therefore to the presentation of new dimensions of man’s (sic) aspirations, thus reflecting such properties as well (p. 25).

The artist, Minai argues, not only responds to change but reflects change as well. Such a person is bound therefore to consider the construction of meaning in terms of both form and content. Such a person finds evidence therefore in both form and content. My background in the arts and my relatively recent introduction to the academic environment has led me to employ the interests and techniques of both the artist and the social scientist in my pursuit of meaning. Inevitably, both form and content have been significant in my constructions. My consciousness of this has made it seem incredulous, that form and content could ever been considered apart. This is an area of complexity that I have often found myself challenged by in the construction of this thesis.

Invariably, while complexities present challenges they also present satisfaction - when for instance, it ‘feels as if’ that multi-faceted thing has been drawn together, when ‘it seems as if’ some sort of meaning has been realised, when ‘it appears as if’ the learning has somehow been adequately represented. The pursuit of that satisfaction, which can be affirmed by a feeling, a sensation, a frisson of sorts, can be rationalised and intellectualised. It can be constructed as a logical response to objective criteria, but it can also be talked about in sensual terms. It ‘looks’, ‘feels’, ‘smells’, ‘tastes’, ‘sounds’ all right. I am not reluctant to admit that the ‘feel’ of things has been significant in my construction of my learning in this thesis.

My experience

Having broached the subject of satisfaction it is perhaps now time to write more personally about my involvement in this project. My experience of immersion in the process of constructing this document has been many things. Two words spring to mind, broad and difficult. There are many other words: big, tiring, satisfying, frustrating, life enhancing. The process has been all embracing. The document, like anything of this scale, like any experience of learning, has become an integral part of my life. Any words I use to describe it must also be words I use to describe my life, the two are interwoven. That which has occurred during the writing of the thesis has fed the life beyond it. It has come out of the study, into the lounge room, the bath room, the kitchen, the bed room, the garden, the car, the caravan park just south of Byron Bay and all points north, south and west (its impossible to go far east of Byron Bay.
without leaving the country and I have not left the country during this process). It has entered into most if not all my relationships, from the familiar to the casual. It has defined me in my relationship to some people. It has been a conversation starter and a reason not to start some conversations. It has become again, inseparable from me and my participation in the world. My learning is tied up in it. I am my learning. It is also a very particular sort of product of my learning.

Both the process and the product have been informed through my relationships with others interested in the fields I have ventured into. Both have been informed by the range of texts I have examined that touch those fields. Both have been informed incidentally, by numerous other experiences. It has been informed by my teaching. By taking work contained in the research out into the public domain and presenting it to an audience of students - young and old, post graduate and undergraduate, in small numbers in seminars, in large numbers in lecture halls. In this process I have found my notions challenged as well as affirmed. I have found them tested by others and tested by my self, upon reflection, then upon reflection again. I have found them in the rhythm of my presentation as well as in the sense. In his discussion of the work of Humberto Maturana, Alan Stewart says, "when I adopt what he (Maturana) proposes as the process of interactive adaptation in the course of living, ‘as if’ it’s true, the connections I make with people often have wonderful outcomes" (p. 87).

Stewart, via Maturana, recognises the manner in which the radical constructivist’s theory of knowing determines not simply a way of knowing the world but a way of living and relating within the world. While Maturana’s work is a study of biology and cognition it is also a study of relationships, a study of relating. In my study of learning and creativity I am also involved in a study of relationships. I have been describing these as the processes of participation or participating. Through reflection upon our own participation we are drawn to reflect upon that which informs our participation, our learning. We are drawn also to reflect upon the manner in which we construct our understanding of that learning, our processes of creating, our creativity. If the way in which we know determines the way in which we live, our living provides the key to our knowing. In accordance with this notion and the notion suggested by Stewart above, I live my life ‘as if’ my living provides the key to my knowing. Much as it is difficult to assert this and sustain belief in it through words, this is no idle theory.
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Creativity and Embodied Learning

Appendices
Appendices

‘Appendix 1: Video appendix 1’

Aaron Williamson in performance at the I.C.A. London 1993
00.10 - 12.45

‘Appendix 2: Video appendix 2’

Formwork: The Peking Opera Project 12.50
  • Introduction to the training 13.05 - 13.50
  • The training 13.50 - 41.00
  • Introduction to the characters 41.00 - 47.28
  • Crocodile 47.28 - 54.30
  • Chef 54.30 - 63.50
  • Leader 63.50 - 73.15
  • Philosopher 73.15 - 82.19
  • Ensemble work 82.19 - 86.30

‘Appendix 3: Audio appendix’

Side A Aaron Williamson in performance at the I.C.A. London, November 1994
‘Appendix 4: The ‘Formwork’ script’

- This script that follows was incomplete at the conclusion of the project. It remains incomplete. That which is included here is the draft that was in place when the funded workshop concluded.
- Segments marked (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) at the conclusion of this script were used during the showcase presentation at the Sidetrack Theatre.
- Segments marked (f) and (g) at the conclusion of the script were the male and female walks, and were written for the showcase presentation, though not part of the script.
- Performers are marked as A, B, C, D. A is ‘the crocodile’, B, ‘the leader’, C, ‘the chef’ and D, ‘the philosopher’. As you read through, the identities of these characters become more clear.
- No stage directions are marked. These were not my responsibility. They arose in interaction between the director and the actors (both Chinese and Australian) during the workshop process. Stage action is not necessarily subject to the written text. The text is present to sustain and extend the performance. The rhythm of the script (which arose out of the workshop process) needs to be integrated into the rhythm of the performance by the director and the actors.
- The script is written to be performed with Chinese percussion (a wide range of drums and cymbals) and movement. It is not naturalistic theatre. The words and the narrative are integrated into the performance and are equal in significance to the music and the performances of the actors. The words complement rather than lead the development of the performance. The rhythm of the script reflects the relationships between actors and musicians developed during the workshop process.
FORMWORK

A: Behind me,
B: Heroics.
C: Behind me,
D: Suspense.
A: Behind me,
B: Expectation.
C: Behind me.
D: Endless
A: Bodies
B: Hunched forward
C: In search of...
D: Youth.

(PAUSE)

A: I am the crocodile.
A, B, C, D: I am isolated.
I am specialised.
I am highly skilled.

B: Crocodile. Do not challenge. I am the leader. (Though secretly I doubt). When I was young. A hairless boy. I played. Violent games. I've scars to show. Control. Was then what adults used. Now I'm grown. A giant inside. (Though fear I fail to inspire). Leadership's, the game I play. I step forward. Grown strong. I'm not a child. Any more. (Like some.)
C: I am the chef. (PAUSE) Remember. The last time we made curried beef. My heart pumped blood frantically. A crimson flush flooded my skin. I feared that you. (The crocodile. My friend.) You'd mock. You'd smile. (My allergy is my disgrace.) (PAUSE) Remember, you just looked at me. You laughed. The joke as it occurred to you. How did I train my heart to spin. From head to toe at such a speed. What flows so slowly when we. (I still laugh.) Bleed.

D: I am the philosopher. (PAUSE) Crocodile; (He has character, but lacks intelligence.) Remember. I told the croc of Descartes. I told the croc of Marx. I told you, the croc, of Heidegger. Again. (PAUSE) Your eyes are beginning to close. (He never listens) Now. If free will is available. Belief arrives by choice. But faith is beneficial. Only assuming god is nice. (PAUSE) Stop sleeping. Yawning reptile. He closes his eyes so gently. I tip toe from the room. Crocodile sleeps sweetly. I tell my brain to pause. Poor simple ugly animal. I'm a monumental bore.


B: You are. (I circle slowly. Study... Pounce.) The fool. Tell him.

C, D: The fool.

(PAUSE)

A: I am the crocodile.

(PAUSE)

B: Time for f.f.f.f...

C, D: F.f.f.f....

B: Foooooodd... 

C, D: Foooooodd...

C: (Of course. Of course. All he'll get is stew) Philosopher?

D: Let me think.

C: (Doesn't know how to make up his mind) Crocodile? Wake up.

B: Food.

(PAUSE)

A: Me? (PAUSE) Am I to be eaten?

B: (I'm going to put the wind up him) This is the menu. Wheat and potatoes, barley and yam. Sheep and potatoes, tomatoes and ham. Stew with potatoes, melon and lamb. (And what about this.) Fillet of crocodile. Strawberry jam.

(PAUSE)

A: Listening?

B: (The crocodile is moody. The crocodile grows tense.)

A: Though my sight may be deficient. My hearing is acute. I might not know the words you speak. (These animals.) I know your meaning though. (The time has come to leave. I'm old enough. I've long left school. They all hate me. It's time to go.)

(EXTENDED PAUSE)

B: Where is the crocodile. It's been almost a day

C: A week.

D: A month. Can't you count.

B: Who got him upset then. Which one is at fault. (I won't accept the blame.)

(PAUSE)

B, C, D: (LOUD, CALL) Croodiile.
(EXTENDED PAUSE)


(PAUSE)

B: Gone.

C: Lost.

D: Wronged.

B: No point getting miserable. (I can't let them rebel.) You whingers. Get happy. Get happy or I'll crack both your kneecaps. (Of course that's not true.) Hap hap hap haaapy!

C, D: (UNENTHUSIASTIC) Happy.

B: Haaapy!

C, D: Happy.

B: The solution it seems. To this melancholy disease.

C, D: Crocodile.

B: He'll be back. You'll see. Meanwhile...

C: Let's pack bags and travel. (I'm scared on my own.)

(PAUSE)
Appendices

B: Please. The orders come from me. (I must try to take the lead.) (PAUSE) Put brandy into caskets. Put muesli into sacks. (PAUSE) My brave and faithful subjects. (Travel makes me ill.) Let us find the crocodile.

(PAUSE)

C: I sense him.

B: We need a guide.


C: I feel him now.

(CROCODILE JOINS)

A: Travel is like dreaming.

C: Red mountains.

D: Green rivers.

C: Blue forests.

D: White seas.

A: Move forward. Follow my trail.

(PAUSE)

(CROCODILE WITHDRAWS)

B: Croc.

C: Croc.

D: Croc

B, C, D: Crocodiile.
B: Where is he now?
C: Not Paris.
D: Not Berlin.
B: Not Brussels.
D: ... Rome!
(PAUSE)
B, C, D: (LOOK) No.
(PAUSE)
D: I lived in London. Years ago. And every day. I walked. Home to station. Station to...
C: Home?
D: House to station. Station to...
C: House.
D: And everyone I saw... I knew.
C: Knew?
D: From home.
C: In London?
D: No. (PAUSE) Their faces. I looked. And I...
C: Imagined I...
D: Knew. Them. Or their brothers. Or their...
C: Children.
D: By repute. (PAUSE) None did I speak to.

C: There was no need.

D: They comforted me.

(PAUSE)

C: Words would have cracked the illusion.

D: Rendered false the deception.

C: Yelled defiantly the truth.

D: From station to house. Every person I knew. (PAUSE) You're a chef, you say?

A: I look towards the west. I look towards the evening sky. I look towards the days to come. I look towards the... night. (PAUSE) I am the emotional refugee. There are feelings I must... desert.

C: Cooking's just a special. Way you learn. To move.

B: Croc.

C: Croc.

D: Croc.

B, C, D: Crocodile.

(PAUSE)

A: Crocodile's in exile. Should I become the modern reptile? Should I wear a tailored suit? Should I take up ocean racing? Trade in futures? Learn the flute?

(PAUSE)

B, C, D: Crocodiiiile.
C: Your village.

D: ... Caaalls.

B: Guilt.

C: Envy.

D: Suspicion.

B: Hate. (PAUSE) Responsible people.

C: Don't neglect their...

D: Croc, croc, croc, Crocodile.

B: Fate.

(PAUSE)

A: In. The modern state of "Compromise", the new arrival shades his eyes. He dare not look, he dare not spy, his eyes rise not above the thighs. His home is like a meal gone cold. It could have been. (PAUSE) Home. (PAUSE) No. (PAUSE) The largest town in "Compromise". To many things it does aspire. To human warmth and human heart... It builds a statue. (EXTENDED PAUSE) To my isolation. I invite. Those who cared enough... To cast. Me. Out. Philosopher. Chef. Leader... No.

(B, C, D JOURNEY... ARRIVE)

C: The sun warms my nose.

D: The waves lap my skin.

B: The storm throws me. Madly. Again.

C: This foreign land. Wonderful. The food. The light. The...

B: Cyclones.
D: The dreams. Desires. Intrigue me here.

B: Then lightning strikes. This time of year.

(PAUSE)


(PAUSE)

Fff Fooooooodd. Did you hear me? Fff Foooooooodd!

(PAUSE)

I am isolated.

(PAUSE)

C: I am specialised.

D: I... am.

A: I am... the crocodile.

(PAUSE)

C: Crocodile...

D: Crocodile...

C, D: Don't bow...

C: Such good luck.

D: That we meet.
C: Happiness pounding.

D: In truth.


A, C, D: Endless bodies, hunched forward...

(PAUSE)


A: But.

B: You misunderstood.

A: But.

B: But.

A: But.

B: But.

A: But.

B: But.

(PAUSE)

A: No.

(PAUSE)

C: Reptile meets.

D: Juvenile.
Appendices

C: No-one can

C, D: ... win.

B: I will find you a swamp. Sink down. (PAUSE) I, the leader. I do these... things.

A: But.

B: Ffooooood. (PAUSE) See you later. Alligator. Hazel Nuts. Honey Dew. Strawberries. Lime. Foul weather dissipates. This is home. This is fine.

(PAUSE)

D: Crocodile.

C: Crocodile.

C, D: Don't bow.

A: Behind me. The future. Behind me.

B: I would not eat. You.

A: If daffodils can flower. If kangaroos can hop. If green tomatoes ripen. Cannot leaders change their spots.

Ending... to this point in time.

SEGMENTS SCRIPTED FOR PERFORMANCE

Segment (a): A choreographed group movement to be performed by all.

A: Behind me,

B: Heroics.

C: Behind me,
D: Suspense.

A: Behind me,

B: Expectation.

C: Behind me.

D: Endless

A: Bodies

B: Hunched forward

C: In search of...

D: Youth.

Segment (b): *The speech performed by The Leader*


Segment (c): *The speech performed by The Chef.*

C: I am the chef. (PAUSE) Remember. The last time we made curried beef. My heart pumped blood frantically. A crimson flush flooded my skin. I feared that you. (The crocodile. My friend.) You'd mock. You'd smile. (My allergy is my disgrace.) (PAUSE) Remember, you just looked at me. You laughed. The joke as it occurred to you. How did I train my heart to spin. From head to toe at such a speed. What flows so slowly when we. (I still laugh.) Bleed.
Appendices

Segment (d): The speech performed by The Philosopher.

D: I am the philosopher. (PAUSE) Crocodile; (He has character, but lacks intelligence.) Remember. I told the croc of Descartes. I told the croc of Marx. I told you the croc of Heidegger. (PAUSE) Again. Your eyes are beginning to close. (He never listens) Now. If free will is available. Belief arrives by choice. But faith is beneficial. Only assuming god is nice. (PAUSE) Stop sleeping. Yawning reptile. He closes his eyes so gently. I tip toe from the room. Crocodile sleeps sweetly. I tell my brain to pause. Poor simple ugly animal. I'm a monumental bore.

Segment (e): The speech performed by The Crocodile.


Segment (f): The Female walk; performed by all.

A, B, C, D: My heart is a cloud.
I hover in the stillness of the sky.
I am patience.
Your servant.
A smile of virtue.
My head tilts, oblique.
The danger.
Once butterfly.
Now snake.
My body curls slowly.
I crush.
Imagining.
Smooth sincere seductive.
You deceive me.
Bones shatter.
My pressure.
Maintained.
Languidly.
Segment (g): The Male walk; performed by all.

A, B, C, D: My sentinels guard the palace.
My tempests guard the sea.
My soldier.
His brave chest bared.
Guards the people.
With dignity.
Shield and spear.
Courage.
Bee.
Hyena.
Treachery.
Whispering on duty.
Purposefully.
He moves.
Ears lift.
Eyes shift.
Mouths repeat rumours.
They will assassinate.
Me.
Appendices

‘Appendix 5: Borges and I’

Things happen to him, the other one, to Borges. I stroll about Buenos Aries and stop, almost mechanically now perhaps, to look at the arch of an entrance way and the ironwork gate; news of Borges reaches me in the mail and I see his name on an academic ballot or in a biographical dictionary. I like hourglasses, maps, eighteenth century typography, etymologies, the taste of coffee, and Robert Louis Stevenson’s prose; he shares these preferences, but with a vanity that turns them into the attributes of an actor. It would be an exaggeration to say that our relationship is a hostile one; I live, I go on living, so that Borges may contrive his literature; and that literature justifies me. I do not find it hard to admit that he has achieved some valid pages, but these pages can not save me, perhaps because what is good no longer belongs to anyone, not even to him, the other one, but to the language or to tradition. In any case, I am destined to perish, definitively, and only some instant of me live on in him. Little by little, I yield him ground, the whole terrain, though I am quite aware of his perverse habit of magnifying and falsifying. Spinoza realised that all things strive to persist in their own nature: the stone eternally wishes to be stone and the tiger a tiger. I shall subsist in Borges, not in myself (assuming that I am someone), and yet I recognise myself less in his books than in those of many another, or than in the intricate flourishes played on a guitar. Years ago I tried to free myself from him, and I went from the mythologies of the city suburbs to games with time and infinity, but now those games belong to Borges, and I will have to think up something else. Thus is my life a flight, and I lose everything, and everything belongs to oblivion, or to him.

I don’t know which one of the two of us is writing this page.

by Jorge Luis Borges (translated from the Spanish by Anthony Kerrigan)

(Borges 1968: 171-2)
Appendix 6: AUGUSTO BOAL: Key definitions

DEFINITIONS (ref. Adrian Jackson's introduction to Games for Actors and Non-Actors.)

Image Theatre

A series of exercises and games designed to uncover essential truths about societies and cultures without resort, in the first instance, to spoken language - though this may be added in the various "dynamisations" of the images. The participants in Image Theatre make still images of their lives, feelings, experiences, oppressions; groups suggest titles or themes, and then individuals 'sculpt' three dimensional images under these titles, using their own and others bodies as 'clay'. However, the image work never remains static - as with all of the Theatre of the Oppressed, the frozen image is simply the starting point for or prelude to the action, which is revealed in the dynamisation process, the bringing to life of the images and the discovery of whatever direction or intention is innate in them. At its simplest, the idea underlying this is that 'a picture paints a thousand words"; that is our over reliance on words can confuse or obfuscate central issues, rather than clarifying them; that images can be closer to our true feelings, even our subconscious feelings, than words, since the process of 'thinking with our hands' can short circuit the censorship of the brain, the 'cops in the head' placed there by the society or personal experience. The polysemy of images is a vital factor in this work; a group of individuals will perceive a wide range of different, but often intriguingly related meanings within a single image, often seeing things within, which the sculptors had no idea were there. Images work across language and culture barriers and as Boal showed, frequently reveal unexpected universalities. Also, working with images, sculpting rather than talking, can be more democratic, as it does not privilege more verbally articulate people. Image theatre can be used in the preparation of Invisible Theatre or Forum Theatre and is central to the more recent therapeutic work, the subject of Boal's most latest book; The Rainbow of Desire.

Invisible Theatre

Public theatre which involves the public as participants in the action without their knowing it. They are the 'spect-actors', the active spectators, of a piece of theatre, but while it is happening, and usually even after the event, they do not know that this is theatre rather than real life; of course it is also 'real life', because it is actually happening, the people are real, the incidents are real, the reactions are real. This is theatre which does not take place in a theatre building or other obvious theatrical context, with an audience which does not know it is an audience. Several actors rehearse a scene which they then play in an appropriate public space; the scene usually involves an unexpected subversion of 'normal' behaviour within that particular society. In reaction to the incidents in the scene, the public becomes involved in an argument, usually
aided by a couple of agent provocateur actors mingling with the public and expressing extreme and opposite views to the events of the scene.

For example, in Brazil, a man in Boal's group went to a shop with street frontage, with a woman friend, and started trying on women's dresses; another actor, as part of the gathering crowd, expressed loud indignation at this 'perversion', while a third actor took the cross-dresser's part - why shouldn't he wear women's clothes if he wants to... in no time at all a crowd is involved in heated discussion. Invisible Theatre is a way of using theatre to stimulate debate, getting people to question issues in a public forum. It might be compared to 'agit-prop' theatre, with the essential difference that the audience is free to take up any position it wants, and has no feeling of being preached at. It asks questions without dictating the answers. This again is fundamental to the Theatre of the Oppressed - it is never didactic to its audience, it involves a process of learning together rather than one way teaching; it assumes that there is as much likelihood of the audience knowing the answer as the performers.

**Forum Theatre**

A theatrical game in which a problem is shown in an unsolved form, to which the audience, again spect-actors, is invited to suggest and enact solutions. The problem is always the symptom of an oppression, and generally involves visible oppressors and a protagonist who is oppressed. In its purest form, both actors and spect-actors will be people who are victims of the oppression under consideration; that is why they are able to offer alternative solutions, because they themselves are personally acquainted with the oppression. After one showing of the scene, which is known as 'the model' (it can be a full length play), it is shown again slightly speeded up, and follows exactly the same course until a member of the audience shouts "Stop!", takes the place of the protagonist and tries to defeat the oppressors.

The game is a form of contest between spect-actors trying to bring the play to a different end (in which the cycle of oppression is broken) and actors ostensibly making every possible effort to bring it to its original end (in which the oppressed is beaten and the oppressors are triumphant). The proceedings are presided over by a figure called the 'joker' whose function is to ensure the smooth running of the game and teach the audience the rules; however, like all the participants in Forum Theatre, the joker can be replaced if the spect-actors do not think he or she is doing a fair job, and virtually any of the 'rules' of the game can be changed if the audience wants. Many different solutions are enacted in the course of a single forum - the result is a pooling of knowledge, tactics and experience, and at the same time what Boal calls a 'rehearsal for reality'.

**The Joker**

Boal's introduction of the Joker and his early experiments with the function of the joker must be considered in association with the Brazilian society within which he was developing theatre. The
Joker arose initially to assist in the presentation of scripted plays - often "classics" - in parts of the nation marked by low levels of education and little experience of theatre. The Joker arose initially as a tool through which theatrical performance could be bought, aesthetically and economically to impoverished and largely neglected audiences.

The Joker facilitates the presentation of the play along with its analysis. This is already done to varying degrees in conventional drama by the actors and/or director. It is often done by the writer through the use of a narrator. The joker addresses similar problems to the narrator, but the true intention of the joker is not hidden. His purpose is explicit. Instead of hiding the role of the Joker in an actor, the Joker participates as a contemporary or neighbour of the spectator. He is situated between the play and the spectators, if anything closer to the spectators. The Joker is allowed to intervene in the action; to propose means of dealing with problems, to seek explanations from characters, to explain how and why actors may assume several roles; to explain the use of symbolic props; to describe features that the audience must imagine within the work. Through the Joker, the spectators are drawn to understand the work in which ever style or genre that is accessible to them; his presence ensures that each scene must be conceived aesthetically according to the problem it presents.

The Joker in Forum Theatre

The Joker is the person who acts as an intermediary between audience and performers, and is attached to no one party. The Joker, in Forum Theatre must avoid manipulating and/or influencing the audience. He must keep the debate open. Jokers personally decide nothing. They spell out the rules (accepting that the audience may alter them). The joker must relay doubts back to the audience; Is this the solution?; Will this work? The joker must ensure that spect-actors allow ideas to be tested effectively. The Joker must watch out for 'magic' solutions, inadequate solutions. The joker must be "Socratic". By means of questions and doubts he must help the spect-actors gather their thoughts, to prepare their actions. "The joker is a mid-wife responsible for assisting in the birth of ideas and actions".
Appendices

Appendix 7: A Summary Of The Work Of Some Significant Australian Drama Theorists

Roslyn Arnold (1993, 1994) builds on an earlier conception of Drama as a medium for personal development. She makes use of the work of self psychologist, Heinz Kohut to argue for the reflective qualities inherent in the experience. She argues that it deserves more prominence across the curriculum because of the affective benefits that are promoted.

Drama enactments can enhance students affective attunement to times and places beyond the here and now through the effective use of empathy. In turn, that affective attunement can be differentiated through reflective writing, post enactment discussions, guided observations and enactment replays to enhance students’ concept development and cognitive abilities (Arnold 1993: 55).

This requires that teachers gain the skills to work with the feelings and expression of students. This will enable “teachers to focus on developmental methods rather than upon primary motivation. Teacher working in empathic and affective ways are themselves energised, rather than enervated. Thinking and learning become internalised and personalised when they occur in harmonious social contexts that engage the right and left side of the brain” (Arnold 1994: 20-21).

Bruce Burton (1987, 1991a, 1991b) has made a major contribution to this field of learning through the publication of three extremely accessible texts, aimed at, in turn, primary school teachers, senior secondary school students and secondary school teachers and Drama education students. Burtons overviews of the practice of the Drama teacher and developments in the history of Theatre Studies and Drama education provide his readers with a comfortable entry point into challenging subject areas. Like O’Toole he advocates the integration of concerns - process vs product and drama vs theatre - into an understanding of the subject area that values each aspect of the experience. In the Introduction to The act of learning, Burton outlines his intention.

By seeing drama and theatre as part of the same continuum of experience, we acknowledge their nature as both process and art form, and again access to all the developments in educational drama over the past forty years, and to two and a half thousand years of theatre experiences and tradition (Burton 1991b: 3).

John Carroll (1993) has examined technology and drama education and is somewhat puzzled by the ambivalence to technology in the drama classroom. Through relating classroom drama to the popular cultures that dominate technologies, Carroll believes there is an opportunity to
extend the practical skills gained by students and the learning process contained therein. His advocacy of the use of video and computers, among other technologies, in the drama classroom is a challenge to much of the thinking that has supported practice here to fore.

It took a long time for educators to work out their relationship with the art form of theatre. It then took further time for the theory to be explicated and the teaching methodology developed... It is time now for us to start developing the methodology to come to grips with... (new technologies and new technological forms including television and) television drama (Carroll 1993: 88).

He has also worked on the development of language through drama and, in more recent times, on the relationship between community and performance. Initiatives in the development of regional identity through ritual and celebration has extended educational drama beyond the limited confines of the formal learning environment.

In addition to editing a substantial work on arts education Edward Errington (1993, 1996) has speculated about possible future directions for drama education. Setting three theoretical orientations developed by Stephen Kemmis - Neo-classical, Liberal progressive and Socially critical - up for analysis, Errington considers all orientations before expressing his preference for a socially critical practice. "A socially critical practice demands a collective will to transform students from passive observers to enactive social investigators advancing towards active citizenship" (Errington 1993: 191). This interest extends also into reflection upon the process of research into the practice of the drama teacher and the workplace (the school) within which the drama teacher works.

The very fact that drama is sited within education has meant that drama investigations have been subject to the same vagaries and debates about how teaching and learning should be observed which have dogged most fields of education for the last three decades. If we accept the view that education itself is always contested, it comes as no surprise that the means by which practitioners and others come to observe education in practice should also remain open to debate" (Errington 1996: 23).

John O'Toole (see Section 6 New developments in drama education.)

Heather Smigiel (1995, 1996) has focused her extensive research on the use of drama education in workplace training. Using skill acquired in schools and teacher training, Smigiel has set out to evaluate the extent and success of such practices. Her findings have affirmed drama experiences as strong learning tools in situations where human interaction and understanding is
paramount. She has reported also a general lack of understanding of the potential of drama among adult trainers.

Phillip Taylor (1993), who was cast into a major role as Publications and Research Officer of NADIE at a crucial time (1994-1997) in the consolidation of the organisation, commenced by looking at students reflections upon their own participation in drama activities. He used the log books of students to map this learning. His work was and is designed to foster more effective teaching practice and to encourage teachers to develop a greater understanding of their own artistry in the construction of the drama experience. Out of this focus upon teaching methods has come a strong interest in the fostering of research and the establishment of outlets for the dissemination of experience. Taylor has contributed significantly to the international debate about the direction(s) in which drama education is going. His meta-narratives occasionally pepper the complacency of those outside Australia who overlook the contribution to Drama education emanating from the distant depths of the southern hemisphere.
Appendix 8: Selected Stories

1) Cartoons and the blues

2) From the perspective of the participant

3) From the heart

4) It is midnight

5) Questioning the dream

6) Tokyo-san
1) CARTOONS AND THE BLUES

I am watching my nephews, aged eight and eleven, watching cartoon violence on T.V. Animals, with American accents. A cat slaps a dog around; humiliates it, laughs at it, pulls its tongue, hits it with a hammer, bites it's tail then steals its girl friend. My nephews love this. By the tone of my writing it is clear that I am not as taken. They, nevertheless, are roaring. The eight year old notices I am watching. He looks at me. "What?" he smiles. "Nothing", I reply. "You're looking", he says. "Aren't I allowed to?" His brother nudges him. He returns to the cartoon. "Do you like that stuff?" I ask afterwards. "It's O.K." he replies warily. Why am I asking? What reply do I want? He's eight years old, I can't expect him to articulate his feelings - to my satisfaction - without being influenced by my expectation. To appreciate his feelings I must enter into his experience. "I love it", I say. "Oh, bull", he tells me. "No you don't." "No?" "You're just saying that." I look at him, I smile and nod. "True." "See; told you."

Cartoon violence; my nephews love it. I can't explain it. If it were blues music, I could talk about it at length. I could discuss the rhythm; the heartbeat. The mixture of tragedy and joy. The deep plea; the effort; the toil, the understanding that we all suffer equally. That in our unhappiness, we share something. Our vulnerability, our humiliation, our hurt, our desire for revenge. Blues music; I like it because it reinforces my hurt. It assures me, that I feel deeply. It tells me that while we may differ in the management of our unhappiness - we may slap each other around, humiliate each other; laugh at each other, pull each other's whiskers, hit each other with hammers, bit each other's tail, steal each other's friends - we are all alike in that we share the passion and the romance of our social world. That it is the relationship that gives rise to deep feelings. It is not the person with whom the relationship is held. "All along this path I tread / my heart betrays my weary head / with nothing but my love to save / from the cradle, to the grave..." (Eric Clapton; From the cradle.) If one of my nephews asked me to explain why I like blues music I would say, "blues is a romance."

"And you like that?" my nephew might say, turning up his nose. "Yes". "Why?" What can I say? Emotional self indulgence? It's not an intellectual experience? "It's something I... I... feel... it." I might reply. "Like cartoon violence?" I can imaging him saying. My answer would be quite definite. "No." I can imagine him as a little more circumspect. "It's a game you play." I imagine him continuing; "A game with your feelings ... ooooh it hurt when that piano landed on that dog. It makes me shiver. It makes me want to laugh. It's hurting. I'm laughing. And he goes and gets up again. Oh, no; more of the same. See; it's a game. Ooooh, listen to that bluesman sing; 'I don't need no sympathy... oh babe... don't you pity me. I may be blue. Baby I don't mind. Cause I know. Some day, some day baby... yeah'." It's a game"
So... we're both playing. He's watching T.V. I'm listening to the radio. But we're doing more than watching and listening. We're emotionally involved. We're involved in a relationship. We're participating. We're feeling our way into and through something. We're living life more fully because of an experience we are having. We're playing with possibilities, just as I, when I write these words feel my way in, and negotiate my way through the feelings that I want to communicate and the feelings that I want to experience as I communicate. "Play; it's not as simple as it seems." I can hear him saying. "Speak for yourself" I imagine myself replying. Then I'd smile at him and I'd say. "You eight year olds. You think you know everything."

* 'Someday after a while' Written by Freddie King and Sonny Thompson; Recorded by Eric Clapton: From the cradle. Reprise records 1994.
2) FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PARTICIPANT

Not too long ago I went to a seminar, delivered by three actors, on the subject: "Why we do what we do". Though I have described them as 'actors', the term that they would prefer is 'performers'. Each of the three work - at least some of the time - in the style described as 'contemporary performance'. Their experience in this style was what prompted their invitation to speak. I listened. Each spoke of their own practice and the rationale that supported it. I listened. I rationalised; it was after all a seminar put on for under graduate students. I was there, out of circumstance rather than deliberation; slightly superior you know. A research student and a writer with an interest in the general area of 'contemporary performance'. Each of the speakers spoke of contemporary performance as a form that distanced itself from 'high art' notions of theatre and the 'mainstream'. Each of them alluded to the traditional relationship to the audience - 'me artist, you audience' - that those working in contemporary performance seeks to challenge. I sat in the audience. 'Me audience'. I listened. I had heard much of this before. The speakers continued. One spoke of 'them' and 'us' to differentiate between his work with a group called "The Post-Arrivalists" and the theatrical mainstream. He used the same method to distinguish between his understanding of theatre and that of those in the audience. "You might think I'm weird, but then I might think you are weird as well". As if to say... "well... there's them and me... but then there's, me and you". Another speaker developed his analysis. He drew an analogy between performance and sex. "How did you perform?"; "Did it work for you?". He explained how through performance he sought to explore his own experience and the issues that arise from that experience. He described it as a union within which people participate rather than a theatre within which actors 'star'. He didn't talk; he smoothed, he slid, he grooved, slanted, slowed, sloped, showed, glowed. He starred. Talk turned to 'political correctness' and issues of censorship and self censorship. I felt myself wanting to make a contribution. Wanting to join in. Wanting to contribute the observation that if in contemporary performance, the performer is inviting the audience to explore the experience of the performer, and if there is no separation between 'us' and 'them', surely to talk about 'political correctness' is to erect and reinforce a barrier between 'us and them'. Even to admit it as a consideration is to do so. I waved my hand. I wanted to speak. I wanted to be included. To contribute to things. The speakers continued. The students buzzed. "Meme, meme." All developed their theories lucidly. I waved my hand again. I'm no longer here by chance. I am not just looking in. I've got something to say. They continued to speak. I sat back in my seat. I looked at my watch. I looked at my watch again. I had another appointment. I left. I asked myself the question; "Why do I do what I do?". Is it that I am into 'contemporary performance'. Shit, I thought. It would be good to have a stage to play within. So someone else could stand outside and look at me and say, "It's only a stage... A stage he's going through. It's only a stage."
3) FROM THE HEART

I listen, I hear, I hesitate. From the heart. Is this what you want to know? It is as if my heart stalls. The carburettor is blocked. The points need setting. I laugh. I submit to the caricature. I have never worked on an engine in my life. Nevertheless; it is as if as I stepped on the heart accelerator the engine flooded. I could not start. I needed to sit. I needed to pause. I needed to cool my heels, gather my thoughts, count to ten, let the blood drain away from my head, think things through a bit and gradually,
4) IT IS MIDNIGHT

It is midnight, maybe a little later. It is early in January. I am in my flat alone. I have been working on this project - intensely - since my holidays began in the second week of December. I shared Christmas with friends. Took a few days off between Christmas and New Year and visited relatives. I have been to the movies, been out for a meal now and then and been to the swimming pool, to swim at least one and a half kilometres, every second day. The weather has not been overly hot. It has been cool and wet enough to make working at home comfortable. I have not been bedevilled by the humidity that makes it so difficult to work in a room without air conditioning and curiously, I have not been bedevilled by a great need for company. I have, almost gladly, been quite satisfied working here - some days accomplishing a substantial amount, some days accomplishing little; some nights going to sleep satisfied with what I have done, other nights feeling that here is so much more to do - alone.

For relaxation - besides one day cricket on television - I have been reading Drusilla Modjeska's Poppy. It was recommended by a colleague and I enjoyed very much her more recent book, The Orchard. I have not found myself as engaged in Poppy. I can understand why it was recommended and I can put my lack of engagement down, to some degree, to the lack of commitment I am putting into the book. I am picking it up late at night and on occasions skimming quite brutally. It is the writer, her technique and her desire to undertake and document the subject matter that interests me, far more than Poppy and the other of the fictionalised Modjeska's family members. I feel that her perspective allows me to treat the characters that she feels so bound to, as fallible. They are, to me, not as interesting, not as wise, not as insightful, not as deserving of commitment and time as she, Modjeska, appears to feel.

Modjeska says, in writing of them, she is writing of herself. It is Modjeska that most interests me. This is not simply because of The Orchard, and not simply because I knew her, or was aware of her in the 1970's when we were both at the same university - I still wonder at the satisfaction I find in the success, the celebrity even, of past acquaintances and friends - it is because of her approach to writing; her style, her detail, her seeming honesty, her ability to use words to discuss feelings that I feel. It is her confidence with intimacy - again, more evident in The Orchard than Poppy - that I enjoy more than anything else. Clearly, I feel, in writing this, here, Modjeska has, to some extent, influenced me. She demonstrated that it is possible for me to make my experience less of a personal hedge; less of a private indulgence. That it is possible for me to explore more fully my own accessibility.

The immediate impulse to sit down and write this, besides the stage I have reached in the project and my current considerations upon the work of Winnicott - that I think this diversion bears some relationship to - is my lingering memory of an observation Modjeska attributes to her...
mother, Poppy. After searching through the novel I have not been able to find the passage I recall. Perhaps I have created the passage; put together some of her ideas and some of my own and out of need created something significant enough to linger in my memory. Perhaps I have just not been able to find it among the 300 or so pages. This means that I must attempt to re-create it.

The passage came, I think, from a diary entry made by Poppy and was written in relation to her ties to family and/or the two principal men in her life. She wrote something like; *people do not know you, and you cannot know yourself except through the relationships you form. Self knowledge cannot be acquired alone.* When I read this, I pondered upon my last few weeks of immersion in ideas, in writing, in imagination, in my own experience. If Poppy - via her daughter - is correct, can I claim to have learned anything during this period that I could not have learned more efficiently or more effectively elsewhere? Does my state of being alone disqualify my reflections upon myself and the circumstances in which this reflection arises? Does it mean that experience is not and cannot be contextualised. Obviously not. Poppy is portentously creating significance where experience dictates that there is no life apart from relationships. The hermit is defined and defines himself in relation to his lack of relationships; inevitably the consequence of past relationships. I comforted myself thus. For this last month is only a tiny experience of being alone, compared to experiences in the past. I once lived in London for eight months and talked to no more than a dozen people outside of work hours. There must have been weeks when I talked to no-one between 5pm and 8.30 am. Weekends when I did not talk at all. I did however walk and look; dream and think. Even more importantly, I read intensely and continually. I felt I met John Cowper Powys - a pagan romantic, with his feet and his fingers in the sensual mud of ancient England and his mind in the heroics of those who have celebrated it; the poets and the pre-Christian warriors. And I shared dreams with Italo Calvino as he voyaged through *Invisible Cities*. I knew each of them. Each geometric fantasy. Each emotional landscape; each architectural figment. I was sure one of those cities was a city I had imagined in my own childhood. By comparison, the trip to Stonehenge and Salisbury Cathedral with two work mates was tedium. I may have been a hermit as a consequence of past relationships but during my period of isolation I was able to refresh and enrich myself in my imagining, my fantasising, my dreaming, my play.

Being alone is no more a disqualification of self knowledge than being in company is a guarantee of it. In the ebb and flow of reflection and spontaneity, the condition of being alone can provide solace, comfort, security and a base of understanding through which social experience is more effectively contextualised. Surely this is self knowledge. I wanted to say this to Modjeska. I wanted to say it to Poppy. I felt as if I was reading homilies. I reflect now upon my sensitivity to this issue. My vulnerability. My fear. I play with these reflections. I toy with the words as I feel my way into and through the emotions as I toy with the words. Winnicott understands...
what it is to be alone. He knows that there is no such thing. That every moment exists within an
ongoing relationship to experience that varies, from time to time in one thing alone; intensity.
5) QUESTIONING THE DREAM

A few nights ago I had a dream. The dream stays with me, largely for its clarity. Like most dreams, it had several aspects to it. My reading of the dream necessarily carries a strong relationship to the circumstances under which the dream was dreamed. Let me tell you a little bit about those circumstances.

It was a Friday night. I had been to a school play. It was at the school of the second oldest son of a close, and relatively new, friend. The performance was good, and the night carried significance on many levels. The play, performed by students from a private school in the well heeled N.S.W. country town of Bowral, by a cast of well drilled and well costumed 14-16 year olds, was one of the great plays of the modern era, The persecution and assassination of Marat as performed by the inmates of the asylum of Charenton under the direction of the Marquis de Sade, referred to more frequently as 'Marat / Sade'. My first experience of this play was one of the most significant events of my youth. I was, back in 1968 an innocent and highly romantic idealist. I had formed an association with members of a political movement called Resistance - a Trotskyist youth group set up to target innocent romantics such as myself - and found myself swept into the great fun of 'solidarity', 'class struggle' and the 'revolutionary movement'. I remember the bare floorboards of a run down kitchen in a run down house behind a run down bookshop rich in intellectually inflammatory materials. I remember the decrepit hot water system, the huge and teeming cockroaches, the sour, drying spilt milk, the spraying of crusts and crumbs of burnt toast, the almost deliberately unwashed plates, bowls, cups and cutlery, the proudly filthy fridge, the overflowing garbage bins, the Sanitarium Puffed Wheat, the walls papered with colourfully defiant screen printed posters. I remember loving it.

And I sat in this kitchen, and I heard the young comrades - boys and girls like myself; shabbily dressed, long haired, deliberately unwashed, defiantly lacking in conventional ambition - singing;

Marat we're poor / And the poor stay poor / Marat don't make us wait any more; / We want our rights / and we don't care how / We want a revolution / Now!

And I heard them chant;

What's the use of a revolution / Without General / General Copulation, copulation, copulation.

And I heard them sing,
Four years after the revolution / And the new kings execution / Four years after
remember now / Those courtiers took their final bow / String up every aristocrat / Out
with the priests, let them live on their fat!

I don’t know who told me, but somehow I found out where these songs came from. The film of
the play - as performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company (R.S.C.) under the direction of
Peter Brook, featuring, among others, a young Glenda Jackson in the role of Charlotte Corday -
was playing at the Roma, in George Street. The film took Brook’s fascination with Antonin
Artaud’s confronting vision of a ‘Theatre of Cruelty’ out of the cramped confines of experimental
theatre, beyond the subsidised domain of London’s R.S.C. into the art house cinema circuit of
the world. This was my introduction to Artaud, probably the most significant writer on
performance in modern times. And it all occurred less than a kilometre from the kitchen, in the
house, behind the bookshop where, in my dirty shoes, socks, trousers and shirt, I ate my cereal
from my dirty bowl, with my dirty spoon. The house where I slept in a bedroom with five others,
where I listened to conversations about the betrayal of Trotsky and the betrayal of the
Revolution with little more knowledge of Trotsky than that his first name was Leon, and that he
was the one who got an ice-pick in his scone. The house that I left one summer afternoon and
walked up the road to the Roma and was excited by the possibilities of live theatre for the first
time in my life.

I had been to the theatre twice before I saw this film of the R.S.C. production. I knew nothing
about the experiments Brook was bringing to the stage in London. I was fifteen or sixteen years
old. I knew even less about the French Revolution than I did the Russian, but I could not forget
the songs and the passion, the bubbling, almost overflowing commitment to change; the
slogans, the excitement, the united demand for the overthrow of a long dominant and long
decaying regime. I could feel it as my feet led me from the cinema. I could feel it as I joined in the
songs that hummed around that kitchen; that hummed as we sold books in the markets, that
hummed as we walked, talked and argued our truths.

In this politics and in this theatre - in the form and in the content - of this communication, I found a
slogan, I found a medium. I found a song. A song, over 25 years later, performed by well drilled
and well costumed kids in a private school in Bowral. And while the song had grown tired and
worn over all those years, as I experienced the reality, rather than the romance of the interface
between the song and contemporary Australia, the shock of being confronted with so many
memories in such a contradictory environment threw me deep into personal reflection. The
song I once sang passionately, was now no more than moderately, cute. Yet, here I was with a
new love, and a new future and a new possibility, more than 25 years older. As we sat together I
felt as if I had outgrown that innocence. As she slipped her arm through mine, as we walked from
the school hall to the car, I thought about the bashful and fleeting romance that I pursued last
time I saw the play. I thought about the responsibility required to develop and maintain a strong relationship now. I thought about the journey between the two. That night, as we lay in bed together, I dreamed.

Let me add a little more context before I detail the dream.

As I drove from Sydney to Bowral earlier that day, news reports on the budget cuts proposed by the recently elected conservative government caused me concern. Although the emphasis upon economic, rather than human values, was not new to Australian politics - it having prevailed under the previous Labor regime - the direct, almost malevolent targeting of minority and/or vulnerable social groups by a federal government unsettled me. The view that a community is a competitive, rather than a co-operative association was at odds with my experience. The threats to cultural values represented by among other things, attacks on Aboriginal affairs, humanitarian assistance for refugees and foreign aid, alongside talk of dismantling the A.B.C. and savagely reducing funds for tertiary education demoralised me. This, along with changes in industrial relations determined by a commitment to reduce the cost of labour - wrapped up in the sanitised jargon of modern business management - led me to fear for the future of my community in a way I never had before. It was as if this government lacked any sense of continuity other than the commercial. As if their appreciation for economics was not enriched by a set of values about that which is to be gained from economic success; as if economic success was its own reward; as if 'to win' or 'to profit' was success enough. And I went to the school play. And I saw the well drilled and well costumed children of parents who had chosen - or been forced to choose by the systematic reduction in government support for public schooling - to provide their children with an expensive private school education sing, politely, of revolution. It confused me. Nice children were performing a deliberately provocative work of theatre. I was sitting - like so many other proud parents - watching, nicely. I could see this new government seeking to sanitise culture similarly. I feared it was going to be a government that valued its cultural wealth so little it did not simply allow it to deteriorate, it fuelled that deterioration with all the finesse of a slaughterman in a sushi bar. For too long the left wing of Australian politics has flaunted a holier-than-thou attitude that has allowed the indulgences of the ruling class to be contextualised as ultimately self destructive (the relationship between the far left and the mystical has never been sufficiently explored). Yet, where was the self destruction in this approach to culture? I could see plenty of good old fashioned destruction, but where was the self in this vision; where was the self in this separation, this division, this partition between those anointed as 'successes' and deserving of encouragement and those anointed as 'failures' and deserving of neglect?

There were two parts to my dream. I would prefer to talk about the second part, first. It was a simple image. There was a tray, the sort of tray breakfast-in-bed is served upon. On the tray were a large number of square tiles or tablets. These were humans. They were also economic units.
Appendices

They were being moved around the tray according to the priorities of those doing the moving. Shuffled, shifted, rearranged, relocated. The problem I saw - and I was aware of in my dream - was that those unseen forces that were doing the moving did not realise that they were among the tiles; that they were humans - even economic units - themselves; that they were not, as they appeared to believe, masters of the game, but contained within it. The part of the dream that preceded this was more complex, and more interesting.

In the dream I was aware of our bodies - hers and mine - on the bed. Yet I felt that our energy - mine and hers and ours in tandem - extended far beyond our physical composition. I felt as if we were tapped into a network of relationships. I felt that our connection, in forming this friendship, expanded the network that we participated in. I felt that we were part of a flow of feelings that linked us to other parts of the nation, other parts of the earth. That there were paths and channels and networks and connections and junction points and taps that provided access to and outlets for that flow of feeling - that emotion, that thinking - that we exist within. I felt that we, as we slept together, formed a crucial part of that flow; that we bought feelings from specific locations to here, this place where we slept, amidst our feelings, our emotions, our thoughts, our dreams, within our network of sympathetic reception and transmission. I felt that this gave us a particular responsibility. That lying in this bed together, we were a part of something much more substantial than ourselves, alone, even ourselves, as a couple.

Other ideas emerged from the same set of images. If we existed within a network of energy, our energy could become more substantial. In my dream our bodies transmitted goods and services. We transported freight and consumer goods as well as training and abilities and skills from other regions to our own as we lay together and dreamed. We relocated things through transmissions of energy along and through paths and channels and networks and connections and junction points. A gushing flow of soft drink emerged from a tap in the hills nearby. This was a physical substance, that could be bought and sold. It flowed from a pipe line that we imagined in our dream. I dreamed that in our sleep we were a switching point. We were entrepreneurs, manoeuvring, without moving. Somehow, subtly, almost imperceptibly, our networks of relationship had been subsumed by commerce. The energy that we shared, the links we established, the networks we created turned us into creatures of our own prosperity.

I was humbled when I woke the next day and recalled my dream. I was not wealthy. I was not an entrepreneur. I was not responsible for the trade of things. The room I woke up in was small, the roof low, the cool air, bracing. The great satisfaction I felt in being able to transmit materials over vast distances, with my mind, was gone. All that remained was my memory of the dream and my interpretation of its meaning. The act of remembering is itself an act of interpretation. The historical fascination with dreaming as a source of meaning aside, dreams cannot, not be subject to interpretation. So what does my dream mean?
In his 'First Manifesto' of the 'Theatre of Cruelty', Antonin Artaud (1977), who inspired Peter Brook's production of Marat / Sade says, "we must first break theatre's subjugation to the text and rediscover the idea of a kind of unique language somewhere in between gesture and thought" (p. 68). In demanding that theatre focus on the transmission of emotion and feeling rather than intellectual concepts, Artaud argues for the theatrical manifestation of the dream rather than the depiction of the dream's rational interpretation. His vision is of a theatre in which the "reality of the imagination and dreams will appear on a par with life." (p. 82).

In the morning, I told my new love about my dream. Powerful yet quaint, in the telling. Sort of charming somehow. I might be unemployed next year. We might have problems raising money. I haven’t been a successful entrepreneur. I have been an employee. I have put my labours in the market place a number of times but the most satisfying parts of my working career have been when I was employed by the state. I am frightened for my community. I see a need for a new understanding of energy. I see a need for a new set of metaphors that identify meaning in other than economic terms. I am confounded by my dream. Am I a customer, a client, an entrepreneur, a visionary or a politician. Perhaps simply a dreamer. Is there something that can sustain me more effectively than my participation in an economy? Is it my participation in a dream? What am I trading? What am I dreaming? Romance? Energy? Ability? Innocence? I think she bought me breakfast that morning. What will happen if we don’t have money? Will our network include us in anything as we sleep? What can we receive? What can we transmit? Is there a language to participate in that sustains the energy we feel in relationship with others, or does the language that we live within have to be a language that we trade? Are words made to be bought and sold? Are feelings? Is creativity? Is imagination? Are emotions? Are dreams? Are explanations inevitable, necessary or convenient? Where we sit when our dreams seem not to concur with the dreams through which our society structures its values and order.

Marat we're poor / And the poor stay poor / Marat don't make us wait any more; / We want our rights / and we don't care how / We want a revolution / Now!

---

David Wright: 'Creativity and embodied learning'
6) TOKYO-SAN

I don’t know why I liked her that way. My Tokyo-san. My Asian mystery. My slant. My bent. My angle. My kink. My secret little miss-tery. Straight black hair tight around her face, pale skins, so pale; small, reaching out... She sang to me. Almost. She sang... like a siren from a South China Sea pirates’ isle. *I’m not taking this obsession seriously. This conceit. Dishonesty. Self mockery. Yes, yes, she sang to me.* Is there a relationship between ideology and affection? Can we love conservatively, democratically, radically? Can we position ourselves in relation to... to feelings. To... love? No cheap jibes. I’ve said it now. No smug underhand... Yes. Ahh... hmmm... yes. he smiles at himself. To himself. This sensitive new age... boy. The romantic. The... contradiction. She sang to me. I found myself caught. So shy. I was. So pained. I almost... I couldn’t walk straight. Couldn’t walk straight up the driveway to her door. Park the gunboat in her port. It meant to much l... in my fear I became... I almost... ambushed... stalked. Her. Through the side gate, up the muddy rise, dim light, dark clouds, stealth, into evening... and straight into... I was caught. By a tree, by a bush full of prickles. Thorns. My jumper snagged, grabbed, my hands and face scratched, cut, gouged. Deep. Trapped. I stood. Not a whisper. Not a sound. Not even my own breathing. Shhhh... “If foxes come sniffing, if wolves, if bears, if night time descends suddenly...” It became essential to... shift. To move. I teased, I toyed, I tugged, I wrenched myself finally free. I slipped again. From mud I rose. I walked to the threshold. I stood. I thought, I calculated. I knocked. It opened. The door, l... thorns clinging, hands filthy. I wiped. Now, trousers dirty, face... The stalker. Stood. Caught by his fear. Like a rhino... a wild... jungle... mind. Snagged by a thorn bush. Placed strategically... perhaps. Fear. She sang to me. Her black hair fringed her face. So small. I wore my naval uniform. Perhaps. I was Fletcher Christian. She was Madam Butterfly. I was Douglas Macarthur. She was third concubine. She called. China. Japan. She appeared. Silently. I appealed. Look at me. Seriously. My face fell. Demure, Submissive. Feminine. My hope weighed. My anticipation rose. I never spoke. Between us. Waiting. Waiting. Me. Myself. There. Then. Inspected. Known? To be so welcomed. I envisaged the clarity she felt. She... saw. I saw no doubt. I saw what she saw. Curiosity. Approaching her territory. Stumbling at her door. Fearfully anticipating. Penetrating her entrance. Knocking on her door. Romance trapped two metres away, with thorns. I stood. Almost insistent now. The mud on my trousers. The fear flexing my hands. She had been neglected. I had been misinterpreted. Whose door was this? Mine? Hers? I flicked the hair from my eyes. She spoke through the fly wire. I spoke back. Politely. No-one comes to your rescue. There is no saviour. There is no help-mate. No Adventist calls. It’s just a repairman with a manual. A neighbour, a colleague, a door-to-door salesman. We relate by function. Not heart, not romance, not blood... stain. She looked at my hands. Matter of factly, we exchanged news. The weather. Storm clouds. Rain. Remarkably. Ordinarily. We remained... like the thorns in my jumper. The romance on my brain. This distance. This close. This love. Denial. Deception. Denial. Terror. Rage. Denial. I said farewell. I turned. I walked. She called. (We embraced.) I walked. I called. (We made
Creativity and Embodied Learning

A reflection upon and a synthesis of the learning that arises in creative expression, with particular reference to writing and drama, through the perspective of the participant and self-organising systems theory.

Thesis

David George Wright

Doctor of Philosophy
1998

University of Western Sydney
Nepean
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
ABSTRACT

Through a discussion of personal experiences of creativity and learning this thesis looks at the way in which drama education constructs opportunities for learning. Important in this discussion is the relationship between participants in the learning process. Accordingly, in this thesis I use constructivism and self-organising systems theory, as presented by Bateson, Maturana and Varela, von Glasersfeld, Mingers, Luhmann and others, to further understanding of the way in which individuals and societies construct their own learning. Important in this process is the self-conscious experience of the learner. The notion of being 'in learning' rather than outside of and observing the learning is central. This consciousness facilitates the creation of meaning. That meaning plays a role in determining the manner in which further participation in learning occurs, hence further learning. This emphasises the process of learning over the product of learning.

The function that language and emotion serve in this process also deserves consideration. I argue that, like learning, we live 'in language' and 'in emotion'. This perspective upon process has a considerable impact upon the way in which we make meaning and the way in which we approach learning.

Questions surrounding a consciousness of participation bring the senses, the feelings, the emotions and other physical experience to the fore. They require, in turn, that the learning of the body be considered. Embodied learning, which is an important part of drama and performance is, I argue, insufficiently acknowledged and insufficiently theorised in drama education. Considerably more attention is paid to the body in contemporary performance theory, though not specifically in relation to learning. Through bringing together constructivism, systems theory, drama education and contemporary performance theory I argue for a greater recognition of the relationship between the body and learning.

This thesis is therefore a pursuit of learning and creativity through the experience of learning and creativity. It is undertaken in an attempt to enrich appreciation of the manner in which learning occurs and to promote experiences that establish effective opportunities for further learning.
CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

This is to certify that this thesis, except where acknowledged within the text, is my original work, and that it has not been presented previously for examination for any other degree at this or any other institution.

I agree also to abide by the Copyright Rules of the University.

Signed .................................................. Date .................................

(David George Wright)
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I have been assisted immeasurably in the development of this thesis by my principal supervisor Anne Marshall. I have also been helped by colleagues and students in the School of Social Ecology (now part of the Faculty of Social Inquiry) at the University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury, as I have by staff and students in the Faculty of Performance, Fine Art and Design (now the School of Contemporary Arts) at the University of Western Sydney Nepean.

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The support of Peter, Michael and Vera Wright has been of considerable help during this process. The warmth and encouragement of Christina Nielsen has been invaluable in my efforts to take this project through to fruition.
The dynamic principle of fantasy is play, which belongs also to the child, and as such appears to be inconsistent with the principle of serious work. But without this playing with fantasy no creative work has ever come to birth. The debt we owe to the play of imagination is incalculable.

Carl Jung

God bless the lost, the confused, the unsure, the bewildered, the puzzled, the mystified, the baffled, and the perplexed.
Amen

Michael Leunig
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p. 157 1. (From left) Sally Sussman, Nigel Kellaway, Katia Molino, Xu Fengshan, Miki Okawa (obscured) and Nicholas Opolski. Xu Fengshan leads a rehearsal of the female walk.

2. (From foreground) Shen Yong, Zhang Zhijun and Xu Fengshan. Zhang Zhijun, orchestrates the performance, while playing the sigu (Chinese hard drum).

p. 158 1. (From foreground) Katia Molino, Nigel Kellaway, Miki Okawa and Nicholas Opolski. The performers rehearse ‘liangshan’ (the striking of a pose, accentuated by a precise rhythmic pulse).

2. (From left) Nicholas Opolski, Nigel Kellaway, Katia Molina and Miki Okawa. The performers rehearse the structured ensemble movement.

p. 159 1. Nigel Kellaway, Nicholas Opolski and Miki Okawa, wearing long silk ‘water-sleeves’, ‘circle the stage’, expanding the ‘cloud hands’ motion into a movement across the performance space, while Chen Baoping, Shen Yong and Xu Fengshan orchestrate their movement.

2. Nigel Kellaway rehearses the role of ‘The Leader’, watched by Miki Okawa and David Wright.

p. 160 1. (Top) Miki Okawa rehearses the role of ‘The Chef’, her movement orchestrated by Zhang Zhijun on the sigu, watched by (from left) Xu Fengshan, Sally Sussman, Nicholas Opolski, Nigel Kellaway and David Wright.


David Wright: ‘Creativity and embodied learning’
Creativity and Embodied Learning

Introduction
INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I employ constructivism and systems theory in the pursuit of a greater understanding of my own learning and the learning process in general. The understanding that I arrive at assists me in my argument for more effective ways of understanding the learning contained in creative work, in particular writing and drama. I focus much of this discussion within the domain of the theory and practice of drama education. Important in this discussion of learning processes are considerations upon the way in which learning is constructed and realised. This leads to considerations upon ‘self-organising systems theory’, ‘radical constructivism’, and the work of Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela.

When I came upon the work of Maturana and Varela, early in the preparation of this thesis, I found what has become a valuable aid to my learning. Within this work I have found a language, a logic and a conversation. I have found an open-ended scientific method that has accommodated my search for explanation and my desire to work creatively. While my discussion of the work of Maturana and Varela occupies only a part of this thesis, the ideas that are contained in the work have influenced much of the thinking behind much of the writing.

The work of Maturana and Varela could be described as constructivist research. It is centred on the concept of ‘autopoiesis’. Science writer Fritjof Capra (1996) says that “auto, of course, means ‘self’ and refers to the autonomy of self-organising systems; and poiesis - which shares the same Greek root as the word ‘poetry’ - means ‘making’. So autopoiesis means ‘self-making’.” (p. 97). Goolishian and Winderman (1988: 131) offer a similar interpretation, translating poiesis as ‘creation’ or ‘production’ and autopoiesis as ‘self-creation’ or ‘self-production’. Autopoiesis can be described therefore as the process whereby living - or biological - systems generate and organise themselves. It is a term that defines the processes of a self-organising system. Among humans, it is the process through which ‘self’ is created and a relationship to community constructed.

The concept of ‘autopoiesis’ has been taken beyond biology into sociology by Niklas Luhmann. Luhmann (1995) argues that communities that are maintained by socially constructed communication systems can also be described as autopoietic, self-organising systems. He cites such examples as
the legal system, the political system and the welfare system. Each are systems that continue, while changing, because of the systems of communication that maintain this. Accordingly, Luhmann depicts society as an interlinked network of self organising systems constructed around 'communicative events'. His analysis underlines the importance Maturana places on 'feedback processes' such as learning and creativity, and the manner in which changes in self organising systems are experienced and explained. I argue that creative work, in particular writing and drama, offer a perspective from which to appreciate the manner in which we participate in this learning.

By equating living and cognition, Maturana’s and Varela's work builds from a study of molecular interaction through an analysis of human understanding, into a discussion of ethics. Necessarily, the processes of 'knowing' and 'explaining' loom large in this analysis. Both are the outcome of a reflective consciousness. Both are a consequence of observation. The relationship between experience (experiencing) and reflection (reflecting), through which understanding is constructed, is therefore also a major part of this work.

The precepts of radical constructivism, as outlined by Ernst von Glasersfeld (1987, 1990), have also contributed to the development of my thesis. Von Glasersfeld describes radical constructivism as a 'theory of knowing' as distinct from a theory of knowledge. Describing it as post-epistemological, he emphasises that knowing is a way of being, rather than some wholly separate category of experience, like von Glasersfeld, Maturana also describes himself as a 'radical constructivist'.

In my discussion, I am calling the construction and re-construction of understanding 'the process of learning'. Within this process, I am arguing that there is an interdependent relationship between creativity (creating) and learning. Each enhances the other, or more accurately, reflection upon and understanding of one enhances the understanding of the other. From this perspective, the interpretation and representation of learning both requires and extends creativity. That creativity sets up further opportunities for further learning and further opportunities for further creativity. Accordingly, while this thesis is about learning and creativity, it is also submitted and discussed as evidence of learning and creativity.
The theory and practice of drama education offers a variety of perspectives on this process. The history of this relatively recent discipline is marked by a series of phases. The earliest phase could be characterised as one of naive romanticism (Caldwell Cook). This was followed by a more focused attempt to respect the integrity and creativity of individual children at play, as professed by Peter Slade and Brian Way. This in turn was followed by greater emphasis upon the social process of constructing understanding, as articulated by Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton. The next phase, if it can be talked of as such, represents a response to perceived failings in earlier attempts to understand the drama learning process. It emphasises art works, aesthetics and theatre, as distinct from the activities of drama. In this thesis I argue for a re-invigoration of what has been called 'process drama' through a greater understanding of the relationship between the body and learning or, embodied learning. This very important relationship has been neglected in drama education, for no good reason. That neglect is not so apparent in contemporary performance theory and theatre anthropology, which are both constructed upon a recognition of the body (and bodies) as a learning and communication system. I approach my study of this relationship therefore, informed by both contemporary performance theory and the biological insights of Maturana and Varela.

Maturana's biology suggests that learning should be addressed first and foremost as a physical process. This requires recognition of both 'the body of learning' and 'the learning body'. If the body contains learning, reflection upon the experience of the body can bring that learning to consciousness. That learning is then explained in language. Explanation is very important in this work. While reflection and explanation can only occur after experience, the experience (which may or may not be reflected upon and explained) remains. This experience, necessarily plays a role in the construction of further experience and further understanding. In his study of the construction of knowledge Maturana looks to the innumerable systems of experience through which individuals construct coherence. "All life, all living beings, whatever their manner of living, live coherently in the sphere of interactions which makes their living possible." (Maturana & Bunnell 1997: 3). The construction of coherence is described by Maturana as the process of 'linguaging'. This process occurs within a cultural context. The experience of emotion - 'emotioning' - likewise, can be described as a physical experience that constructs communication and accommodates understanding. There is not necessarily a full and complete consciousness of the intertwining processes of

David Wright: 'Creativity and embodied learning'
'languaging' and 'emotioning'. It is a process that is participated in, a process in which we, both consciously and unconsciously, are participants. Particular contexts construct different opportunities for reflection upon such experiences. Such contexts include ritual, ceremony, performance and play (including dramatic play). Here the codes through which meaning is made are many and varied. They interweave and overlap. They are as much a function of that which the participants bring to the experience as that which the construction of the experience generates.

The experiences of learning and creativity that I discuss in this thesis generally involve the creation of meaning through arts activities. The arts activities I am most concerned with are writing and performance. This includes writing for performance. Principal within the discussion is a 'case study', in which I write about a cross-cultural performance project involving myself (as writer), actors trained in a variety of styles, principally European, and Chinese trained Peking Opera actors and musicians. My discussion is contextualised further by considerations upon developments in performance and education theory. Particularly, it addresses developments in drama education in the second half of this century. This is an area which I argue, could benefit considerably from the additional insights made available through the radical constructivist perspective.

The thesis is divided into six sections, each of which is composed of a number of sub-sections. Within these six sections, the thesis includes a variety of writing styles and a variety of approaches to the topic. I consider the thesis, first and foremost, a reflective document, in that my own learning is the principal subject matter. I rationalise this by arguing that if I can identify that which I call my own 'learning', I can then pursue and perhaps even discover that which I could call 'learning' in the experience of others. I can then also engage others in discussion about that which they call 'learning'. This, necessarily, influences the manner in which I approach my roles and responsibilities as a learner and/or an educator. It influences the manner in which I imagine and participate in learning relationships and learning environments. It influences the manner in which I write and it influences the manner in which I relate to the world and others.

In the creation of this learning, I work with a radical constructivist perspective upon 'self' that suggests we bring forth the self just as we bring forth objects (Renk 1993, von Glasersfeld 1990). This understanding requires that
our self, or ego, does not have any independent existence. It is a consequence of the social relationships - the cultural context and the social discourses - we exist within, and both demands and defies understanding (Capra 1996). It is embodied. It cannot, I argue, be seen apart from that which it does. It is simultaneously both a ‘way of being’ and a ‘way of knowing’. Its learning lies in our explanation.

Section 1: Stories and Images

While this thesis uses the concept of autopoiesis in its pursuit of greater understanding of learning and creativity, in the first section of the thesis I am more concerned with establishing an environment for the discussion. In this section I am interested in mood, in feeling, in promoting the senses through which understanding is arrived at. These include but are not confined to the logical and the analytical.

Within this section images, metaphors and ‘ways of knowing’ come to the fore. Stories and story-telling looms large. These stories include the stories that I tell myself, the stories that others tell themselves and the stories that we tell each other. They include stories about stories and stories about stories about stories. I begin Section One with an account of my reading of the Biblical tale of Genesis. This opening chapter of The Bible is discussed for (but not only for) its cultural significance and for (but not only for) the events it details. While these are important, I enter into my discussion of Genesis primarily because of the effect a reading of the story had on me at the time I read it. Bruno Bettelheim (1977) contends that "if we hope to live not just from moment to moment, but in true consciousness of our existence, then our greatest need and most difficult achievement is to find meaning in our lives" (p. 3). I found meaning in my reading of Genesis. In relating my story I suggest that meaning is a function of the manner in which language facilitates the creation and understanding of relationships. Accordingly, I suggest that the questioning of meaning entails the questioning of the language and the social discourse through which those relationships have been created. A consciousness of learning is, I conclude, constructed on the bedrock of that questioning. That construction, like all constructions, is a creative endeavour which has social ramifications. It both reflects and sustains the learning that supports its existence.
I have titled the second part of this section, 'The Metaphor'. In this sub-section I approach the issue of my own learning, and learning in general, metaphorically. The metaphor that I employ is the learning of the English performance poet, Aaron Williamson. I argue that the particular circumstances of Williamson's learning and creativity provides me with a very particular insight into my own learning and creativity. I describe the insight that I am claiming in some detail. In the process I point out the manner in which Williamson's 'way of living' and 'way of knowing', as represented in the work through which he has made it available - written works, video and audio material are included and made reference to - prompts me in my research. Accordingly, my efforts to understand and appreciate both the manner and the matter of that which Williamson writes is a significant part of this section.

While I am fascinated by his poetry, it is not that which Williamson writes or performs that is of most interest to me here. I am more interested in the manner in which he writes and performs, the experience and the explanations that compel him to write. While I have gained some understanding of this in correspondence with him - we exchanged several letters - most of my understanding comes from my contact with his work; my reading, watching and listening, my emotional responses and my intellectual interpretations. I construct Williamson therefore as a cipher as well as a metaphor. I construct him as a prism through which to look in new ways. I construct him as a means through which to channel my creativity and my learning. Unbeknownst to him, he assists me in my explanation. His work enables me to both explore and demonstrate the creation of meaning and the construction of learning.

The third part of the opening section has been titled 'The Map'. In this sub-section of the thesis I use the image of the map to outline the parameters of my inquiry and to suggest some of the conflicts and complexities that I encountered in the research process. In addition to a discussion of mapping, my analysis becomes a meta-analysis of the writing process. I suggest that mapping, like writing, is a process that occurs within a cultural context. I suggest that the cultural context contributes significantly to the product that is arrived at, while acknowledging, (perhaps even celebrating) the fact that the map is never finally complete, that of necessity, we are continuing to map, always continuing. I suggest that the process of mapping, like writing, continually leads us into unknown territories, both physical and emotional. While venturing into new territories and encountering new feelings there is an irresistible urge - a natural response - to accommodate and make sense of
these experiences. By doing so we make them accessible to ourselves, we bend them to our needs, we identify them within our conceptual bounds, we claim them and they become ours - and known and not new - in relation to places and feelings with which we are already comfortable. Thus New York and New South Wales are named for the memories they promote, rocks found on the planet Mars are named after American cartoon characters, and immigrants from non-English speaking countries, with seemingly complicated names become known more simply as 'Stephen' and 'John'. (These were the names adopted by the two Chinese actors who tutored the locally-based actors in Formwork. Xu Fengshan was known as 'Stephen' and Zhang Zhijun was known as 'John'.)

The section titled 'The map' initiates discussion of meta-levels of analysis. Through such concepts as mapping about mapping, learning about learning and writing about writing I foreshadow the very important role that the meta-level of analysis plays in this thesis. By establishing this and contrasting the different forms of mapping used in different cultures and the different priorities of individuals who map their experience in different ways, I point also to the manner in which all forms of representation and language use are self referential. All grow from and feed back into personal, culturally bound, ways of knowing. This reinforces the systems analysis that is introduced in Genesis, that underlies Maturana's and Varela's work on the biological roots of human understanding.

Section 2: Constructivism and creativity

The maxim that propels my research (drawn from constructivism, self directed learning, action research and experiential learning) is that, rather than draw conclusions about the learning of others, learning is best defined by the learner, him or herself. In this section I make reference to a range of writers in the physical sciences, social sciences and the arts who argue for and exemplify this understanding.

Beginning with a map of the intellectual domain of constructivism and its untamed child, radical constructivism, I proceed, through reference to work undertaken by constructivist scholars, to demonstrate the argument put by Linda Shepherd (1993), that our research is symbolic of ourselves. This understanding admits the 'self' to the research process. It enables personal understanding to be acknowledged as central to the pursuit of other forms of
understanding. It anticipates and accommodates subjective experience. This is in accord with my experience as a writer and researcher in fields other than academia. When I wrote plays I chose my subject matter for what it meant for me. I measured myself in relation to the stories I told of the worlds I imagined. I found my meaning in my representation of the meaning of a ‘fictional’ self and ‘fictional’ others. In the process I became an active participant in my own learning. Through my creativity I expanded that learning. Other writers do likewise, some more explicitly than others. For some it is their subject matter. This is the meta-fictional genre. This is the genre within which I am working in this thesis. In examining precedents for this sort of research one of the precedents I discuss is Helen Garner’s ‘novel’, The first stone. Work done in self-psychology and narrative therapy is also discussed. Each of these practices celebrate, like Garner, subjective responses to personal, social and environmental issues. Towards the conclusion of this section, the issue of ‘the body’ and ‘embodied learning’ comes to the fore. When subjective experience is being considered, the body cannot be left out of the discussion. This introduces questions about the relationship between the experience of the body and the languages used to represent and discuss the experience of the body. This foreshadows the work in the following section that addresses embodied learning and the languages through which learning is communicated, it foreshadows discussion of performance theory, drama and drama education.

Section 3: Systems, science, language and learning

The third section comprises a discussion of the research process employed in pursuing the learning that has lead to this thesis. As mentioned earlier, this grows out of systems theory.

The ‘systems view of the world’ (as differentiated from the ‘atomistic view’) is a study of relationships rather than a study of objects in isolation. In looking at relationships and the systems they give rise to, Ervin Laszlo (1972) lists humanity as one such system and nature as another. He offers the systems approach as a perspective on life and living (and therefore knowledge and knowing) as much as a basis for scientific research.

The systems approach does not restrict the scientist to one set of relationships as his (sic) object of investigation; he can switch levels, corresponding to his shifts in research interest. A systems science can look at a cell or an atom as a
system, or it can look at an organ, the organism, the family, the community, the nation, the economy, and the ecology as systems, and it can even view the biosphere as such. A system in one perspective is a sub-system in another. But the systems view always treats systems as integrated wholes of their subsidiary components and never as the mechanistic aggregate of parts in isolable causal relations (p. 14-15).

Language is then looked at as a systemic relationship that is implicit in the pursuit of understanding. Reference is made to Pierre Bourdieu and the significance he attaches to language in his discussion of the ‘habitus’. In addition to the habitus, Bourdieu (1991) also locates language in the body and writes of the determination of the body through the languaging community in which the body is situated and in which that body, by virtue of its presence, participates. Bourdieu’s analysis arises out of reflection upon relationship patterns and is, in this regard, a systemic analysis.

Different forms of languaging systems are also discussed in an attempt to establish key differences between ways of participating in a languaging relationship and ways of reflecting upon that relationship in language. This leads to further considerations upon the meta-level of language use, then on to a discussion of the manner in which play, creativity and artistic representation are used to construct different perspectives upon this difference.

The constructions of cultures through languages (and relationships) other than the written and verbal are also discussed in this section. These include oral cultures and deaf cultures. I argue that these cultures demonstrate the manner in which different ways of life construct different ways of knowing life. Other communication experiences are also considered, among them that of the performer and the experience of the group facilitator, along with the language that individuals in those positions have used to discuss their experiences. I argue that reflection upon such experiences not only challenges the degree to which verbal and written languages can be used to transmit understanding, it also creates a new form of understanding; a new story along with new stories about that story. Examples are offered of languages that have been used to tell such stories.

Within this section Maturana’s and Varela’s discussion of ‘autopoiesis’, ‘structural determinism’, ‘structural coupling’, ‘structural drift’ and ‘co-ontogenic
structural drift' is detailed. The context of this discussion is outlined and key terms are defined. The implications this understanding holds in approaches to formal learning environments is evaluated and the roles that particular individuals play in the understanding of this learning process are considered. Some concerns about this work are mentioned and Luhmann's application of the concept of autopoiesis to Sociology is discussed. Finally, in attempting to suggest the ramifications of this understanding I use stories to tell of, to interpret in some depth, a range of learning experiences.

Section 4: Formwork: A Case Study

Formwork was a month long theatre workshop designed to introduce actors trained in a variety of styles, principally European in origin, to the training methods and performance styles of Peking Opera. I am writing about it in this thesis because some time ago I was invited to participate in the workshop and because the experience has lingered in my memory. Formwork culminated in a performance presentation in front of an invited audience. The text I wrote emerged from the workshop process and was used in the performance presentation, hence though I was not a performer I was certainly an active participant in the workshop process.

The learning contained in the development of the text for the presentation was and is extensive and multi-faceted. Summarising it, even doing justice to it in a written thesis is a difficult task. Nevertheless, my discussion of my learning as a result of my experience in Formwork is the subject matter of the case study and central to my thesis. In my discussion I track the nuances contained in the various drafts that arose during the history of the workshop and explain the process of my assimilation into the workshop experience. In accordance with Maturana's and Varela's description of the autopoietic, biological process of change, I describe this as a process of learning. I argue that the various drafts produced during the process provide evidence of my learning.

The training methods employed in Formwork required that I respond first and foremost to the physical images that the performers were working with. In Peking Opera, words are used in combination with music and movement in the performance of long standing character-roles. Specific words are not as significant in the development of character and narrative as they are in mainstream European theatre. This meant that in Formwork, my writing had to emerge out of and feed back into the physical experience of the performers, in
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conversation with the sounds being produced by the musicians. It meant that I had to be present at the workshop. I had to sit, listen, and feel my way into the work. I could not do this in a room, alone. I could not sit in front of a computer screen and plot the rise and fall of tension isolated from the tension that was rising and falling during the workshop. My presence was required. My body, like the bodies of each of the performers, had to learn through its participation. My reflection upon that learning, which is a function of my feelings (feeling), my senses (sensing), my imagination (imagining) and my creativity (creating) is therefore both a physical and an intellectual experience. It is a function of both emotion (emotioning) and language (languaging), an experience of becoming, more so than being.

Howard Gardner argues that “the student of creativity must reconstruct the mental life of the creative individual at various points in the development of his (sic) work” (1982: 353). In reconstructing my own ‘mental life’ I am seeking to gain an insight into the relationship between my learning and my creativity and learning and creativity in general. Through self organising systems theory I have sought to further articulate this most fascinating of relationships.

Section 5: A Short History of Drama Education

If play is important in the development of social understanding and in furthering opportunities for social participation it is important that opportunities for play and play-related activities be structured into teaching and learning systems. It is even more important that considerations upon the learning of the body become evident in the construction of those processes. In this section I look at the classroom as an autopoietic, self organising, learning system. I look at opportunities for reflection upon embodied learning in formal educational settings. I look at the ‘languaging’ and ‘emotioning’ of the body in the learning process and I reflect upon opportunities to work with and extend this way of being, doing and knowing. Accordingly, I review the history of drama education through an examination of the work of a number of key education and drama education theorists. These include Peter Slade, Brian Way, Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton. I see each of these theorists as committed to a way of learning more than one single discipline. That way of learning is assumed to contain, rather than extol, powerful attitudes and values. Through their advocacy of drama education, each of these key theorists, offer powerful comments on the society in which they are living. The
fact that the learning they are seeking to make available is pursued through embodied experience makes it even more interesting.

In this section I also discuss the relationship between the work of key British theorists and the unfolding history of drama education in Australia, particularly N.S.W. Until recent times developments in drama education in Australia were largely determined by developments in Great Britain. Major theorists in the field were usually British and many drama teachers, at both secondary and tertiary level, were either British or British-educated. While the influence of British drama education continues to be significant, local theory and practice is emerging in response to a range of contemporary influences, many of which are particular to this culture and this part of the world. The influence of contemporary performance theory has been strong in recent years. This has been accompanied by greater awareness of and interest in performance traditions other than the Anglo-Saxon. Indigenous Australian approaches to performance offer a deep understanding of embodied learning as do performance traditions from Asia, Africa, the Americas and other parts of Europe. An appreciation of the learning contained in a variety of performance traditions brings with it an appreciation of the cultures and communities out of which those performance traditions have grown. This understanding contains significant challenges to long standing approaches to teaching and learning, in Australia and beyond.

**Section 6: New Directions in Drama Education**

Each of the theorists I discuss in this section see drama as more than an art form, each see it as a form of social action. Each, in different ways, argues that drama provides opportunities to participate more fully in the social experience of the community. The theorists include John O’Toole, Peter Abbs, David Best, David Hornrook, Augusto Boal, Howard Gardner and Herta-Elisabeth Renk.

O’Toole’s work on drama processes is juxtaposed against that of Abbs and Best on aesthetic education. It in turn, is compared to Boal’s work on the actor, the spectator and oppression. Each of these theorists has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the breadth and depth of the learning made available through drama education. In turn, each reflects a set of priorities and assumptions that deserve to be considered at greater length.
In this section I look into some contemporary writings that suggest some of the forces that are pulling at drama education. I look also at some of the research that recognises the importance of recognising the intelligence of the body in the learning process. Gardner’s work on multiple intelligences is pursued and Renk’s celebration of drama education through reflection on the work of Maturana and Varela is mentioned. Drama education is vital, Renk says, because it acknowledges and employs connotative (or analogous) forms of communication. Analogous communication is, she says, rooted in our physicality. It is our most familiar and most accessible vocabulary, yet largely ignored in most learning systems.

Acknowledging this insight, I argue that there needs to be greater understanding of the relationship between the body and the learning process. I argue that opportunities for reflection upon the experience of the body need to be constructed into teaching and learning processes and that the understanding derived from such experiences need to be appreciated as a vital part of the learning process. I argue that this process must accommodate both creativity and play, I argue that creativity and play accelerate access to understanding because of the manner in which they challenge explanation. This is the ground upon which Augusto Boal constructs his ‘theatre of the oppressed’. In this very political work, Boal invites individuals in the community to ‘play’ with their experiences of oppression. In the process he acknowledges and affirms the inter-relationship between ‘acting’ and ‘knowing’. Through his affirmation of the knowing participant or the ‘spectator’, Boal encourages individuals to appreciate their own participation in the society that surrounds them. This is a form of empowerment. While it entails first and foremost a shift in perspective, that shift brings learning and learning brings responsibilities. I argue therefore that the relationship between embodied experience (doing and being) and knowing needs to be both experienced and ‘known’ more effectively. I argue that drama education offers opportunities to appreciate this relationship more fully.

Section 7: Performing and learning

In the penultimate section, the learning that arises within the process of performance is subjected to deeper examination. Reference is made to the important role that performance holds in determining, representing, preserving and passing on the learning that is contained in different cultures. It is argued that the interdependent relationship between being, doing and knowing is
represented most succinctly through communicative events. These can take many forms. Throughout history, in all cultures and communities, such events have involved movement, music, words and dance. Movement, music, words and dance each exhibit and contain learning. They can be, and often are, identified as works of art. They exist differently in traditional and contemporary societies. In traditional societies they are openly acknowledged as central to the experience of the community, while in the latter they are carried out in more rarefied environments. In the former they are community events and all members of the community regard themselves as participants, in the latter, where the means by which individuals define themselves are more diverse, their centrality is less openly acknowledged. Separations between participants are more apparent. Individuals are drawn to consider themselves either spectators or performers, audience members or actors. This separation points to a particular attitude to social process. It is an attitude that some have sought to reinterpret through contemporary performance theory and combat through the construction of particular styles and understandings of the performance experience.

My discussion of performance and learning makes extensive reference to the work of performance anthropologists Victor Turner and Richard Schechner. Both Turner and Schechner have been important in the development of greater understanding of the role of performance within and across cultures. Their structural analyses of the processes of performance have generated considerable debate. While designing a structural framework to make the performance traditions of disparate cultures more accessible, Turner and Schechner have been criticised by representatives of many of those cultures. They have been criticised for assuming that it is appropriate that all performances in all traditions are available for interpretation, for containing and limiting performance traditions by focussing on structure rather than content and for failing to accommodate the understanding that structure and content can be perceived very differently by a member of a culture and an outside observer.

Schechner and Turner are not alone in their enthusiasm for the rituals, ceremonies and performances of a wide variety of cultures. This is a field of growing interest to many actors, directors and theorists working in the various fields of contemporary performance. The eclectic gathering of modes and styles of performance and the presentation of multi-faceted performance experiences that draw attention to the construction of performance rather than
any specific narrative or tale is a defining quality of post modern aesthetics. It is more over a defining quality of the meta-analysis that finds learning, (like performance), in the everyday. This perspective is further argument for drama education.

While drama education offers opportunities to discover and appreciate the rich cultural tradition we live within, it also offers opportunities to extend that tradition. Equally importantly, through an appreciation of the embodiment of knowledge it provides insight into the knowledge and the ways of knowing contained within our culture and our community’s ways of doing things. It offers evidence of and insight into the intimate and irrevocable relationship between performance and learning.

Section 8: Concluding Remarks

In this thesis I speak for myself far more than I speak for anyone else. While my own learning is my principal subject matter, that learning is also the vehicle I employ in search of a greater understanding of learning. That search is undertaken through a powerful interest in and commitment to drama, writing and learning. My inquiry into learning is necessarily a creative process. My own creativity is therefore, like my learning, both my subject matter and the vehicle I am employing to communicate my research.

This thesis is an integral part of an ongoing search for meaning. It involves a considerable amount of trust in my own feelings and judgements and a considerable amount of trust in my capacity to represent those feelings through the various language forms that are available to me. It builds on the cultural assumptions that allow language to survive.

As a learning process, this thesis directs me beyond its bounds. Through it I write myself into further learning, further research, further acting and further writing. I write myself into conversations, into friendships, into meetings in far flung cities, into conflict, empathy and understanding. I acknowledge the emotion that is a part of this process. Accordingly, I acknowledge also that I write myself into conviction, into strength and into the courage that will enable me to participate more fully, more effectively and more knowledgeably. Through this thesis I write myself into a way of living, which is and always will be, a way of knowing.