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A study of the experience of dramatic performance for drama students

Dale M. Irving
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**A STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF DRAMATIC
PERFORMANCE FOR DRAMA STUDENTS**

by

Dale Meredith Stewart Irving

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Award of

Doctor of Philosophy

At the Faculty of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences,
Edith Cowan University, Churchlands Campus.

September 2002.

ABSTRACT

Learning involves cognitive, psychological, sociological, historical, philosophical, aesthetic, emotional and spiritual aspects. This study argues that the spiritual dimension of the psyche is overlooked in the research into education. Spirituality in education is not easily addressed in secular settings and needs exploration and explication. The thesis probes the interstice between the act of dramatic performance and the spiritual awareness of the individual. Case studies allow the exploration of the experience of performance for senior high school drama students, drama teacher trainees and an adult actor. The students attended a school and university in Western Australia.

The study posits that in the moment of dramatic performance the individual may experience epiphany or insight. The heuristic and qualitative methods adopted in this study are to observe and describe the experience of dramatic performance when the individual is changed; through genuine focus in performance the performer may be aware of a sense of personal transformation; on reflecting upon the phenomenon the performer may be aware of transcendence. The power of focused performance is such that it can change the performer and spectator and this change embodies a spiritual dimension.

The link between dramatic performance and spirituality is an exploration of a neglected educational terrain (Carr). By identifying this dimension of the psyche this research adds to the understanding of dramatic performance and suggests that the participation in drama in schools will be beneficial for students if it were to enliven the spiritual aspect of learning.

The participants were invited to explore performing through a series of movement based workshops. The workshops' emphasis was self-awareness through dramatic performance involving creative and authentic movement. They were requested to reflect in journals about this experience of dramatic performance. Fourteen participants were interviewed.

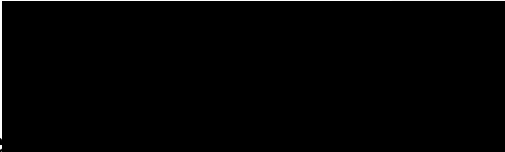
Drawing on research by Courtney on the importance of drama for cognitive and aesthetic learning and the writing of Carr and Miller on the importance of the spiritual in education, this study describes the experience of dramatic performance for eight senior secondary students, five university students and an adult actor.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or
- (iii) contain any defamatory material.

Signature



Date

September 2022

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John Taylor, my dear friend who introduced me to Rudolf Steiner's philosophy and Waldorf education.

The participants in the study, whose names have been changed to preserve confidentiality, and the drama students who continue to bring joy and fun to my teaching and learning.

Clement, Alice, Beatrice and Danny.

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Chapter One

Background

Dramatic performance is part of our cultural heritage. Augusto Boal (1995) believes that “theatre is the first human invention and also the invention that paves the way for all other inventions and discoveries” (p.13). He sees theatre as essential to our humanness. Through its ancient connection with rites and rituals to its flowering in classical Greek culture to its diverse contemporary expressions, performance has been a way of making sense of the world. Dramatic performance requires that the actors lead the audience through the cognitive, emotional and spiritual experience of the performance using the tools of body, mind and soul refined through techniques and practices of the theatrical methods of the time.

The purpose of this thesis is to describe the experience of dramatic performance of adolescent drama students, trainee drama teachers and a professional actor in order to consider the benefits of dramatic performance in learning about oneself and others. As Julia Kristeva wrote: “a work of art may become the basis of an authentic experience capable of opening the way to a change in personality” (Lechte, 1994, p.143). Although she takes this from the point-of-view of a spectator, it would seem plausible that the performer would also experience change. Ideally performers experiment with body, mind and soul, engaging in explorations and practices as diverse as Stanislavski’s system and Butoh. Their aim is to refine their ability to perform a range of roles, characters and styles of performance. Joseph Chaikin (1972) describing the process of The Open Theatre wrote: “...later, as the actor advances in the process of the work, the person is transformed. Through the working process, which he himself guides, the actor recreates himself” (p. 6).

This thesis is concerned less with the factors that make a ‘star’, or a media personality, but rather with the awareness of the transformation of self that is attainable through performance. To represent the text, the performer must discover the self - using the

diverse and eclectic range of contemporary performance practice and theory. The concern is to examine the effect of dramatic performance on the performer, especially in an educational setting. The participants in this study had different levels of experience of performance, but similar questions were asked of the secondary and university students, for the interest was in how each participant experienced performance. The dialogue was concerned with individual experiences of dramatic performance. The responses were personal and yet provided a range of insights about their physical, emotional, cognitive, aesthetic and spiritual experiences. The particular interest of this thesis was to attempt to tease out if any participants intimated a spiritual dimension to their performance work.

This dimension would relate to the ineffable but extant realization that there is a need to reach beyond everyday matters to comprehend our range of human possibilities. David Carr (1995) states that “spirituality is the function of appreciation or reflection upon ideals or goals which are apt for positive moral evaluation and concerned with those aspects of human experience which attempt to reach beyond the mundane and the material towards what is transcendent and eternal” (p. 90). Certainly the latter part of his definition relates to the act of performance and the self-awareness through reflection on the act. Through dramatic performance, in its many forms, and the employment of our imaginative faculties, understanding of others and tolerance of difference, it should be feasible that we should explore beyond the everyday.

On one level dramatic performance is visible, knowable and analysable. The component parts of a student performance are checked on a list of outcomes (this is the case in Drama and Drama Studies courses in Western Australia). They measure up to criteria of identified objectives. The theatre critic delineates the strengths and weaknesses of performance via specific conventions and a defining theatre language. Dramatic performance can be seen as a composite of skills, theories and commitment similar to those required of a sportsman. Dramatic performance, especially with the contemporary interest in physicality in performance, is akin to sporting performance. The sportsman is purveyor of skills and talents that lead to a particular accomplishment. On the other hand, actors present or represent others, if they play

themselves it is in a heightened sense. They represent something beyond the self. The actor is the medium through which text or ideas are interpreted. The actor enlivens the written word or the idea. In presenting text the actor utilises talent, knowledge, ideology and intuition. The director, like a coach, gives parameters and coheres the team. The analogy is useful, but not prescriptive.

Drama education can be quite mechanistic about the act of performance. The work of students is assessed and evaluated in relation to specific criteria. In Western Australia this is delineated by the Curriculum Council (1998) in the assessment guides to Drama and Drama Studies in years eleven and twelve, which are the final years of secondary schooling in Western Australia. It is an area of learning that is as quantifiable as any other where marking is subjective but culturally moderated. Yet in the rationale for the Arts in the Curriculum Framework document (1998) essential learning outcomes for all students state that “the Arts contribute to the development of an understanding of the physical, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic, social moral and spiritual dimensions of human experience” (p. 50). Therefore the spiritual dimension is accepted and expected as part of the curriculum package. Descriptions of and conversations about the spiritual component, as well as useful texts and pointers to define and evaluate the encouragement of spiritual experiences, are not obviously teased out in outcome statements.

In the Drama Support File (1998) for upper school Drama and Drama Studies reference is made to the ‘sacred’ space of theatre, the transitoriness of performance and that while theatre is “physical and sensory” it is always “fictional, metaphoric and symbolic” (Section 2.5). Spolin (1963) states: “Through spontaneity we are reformed into ourselves” (p. 4) and suggests the freshness that the performer gains through improvisation. She also describes the “moment of personal freedom” where we can discover, experience and express ourselves creatively. There is a gesture towards the spiritual. Curriculum Council documents acknowledge that there is a spiritual element to learning, but it is an area that requires delineation, description and exploration if it is to have meaning. It may well be an attempt to define the unknowable, but as Lechte (1994)

writes of Kristeva: “The predominant feature of Kristeva’s work is its concern to analyse the unanalysable: the inexpressible, heterogeneous, radical otherness of individual and cultural life” (p. 141). Yet she does not stop from attempting the exploration. There is every reason to attempt exploration and to be more skilful and mindful educators by encouraging the trailblazers to share their insights, practice and achievements for the ease of future trekkers.

This thesis postulates that in the moment of performance the performer experiences existence with immediacy, energy and focus that is different and unusual. It has the potency to make the performer aware of the otherness of this experience. The reflection of the performer after the event often permits insight into the experience and suggests greater self-awareness after that act. The performance itself may be a heightened experience that could be special and valuable to the performer. One motivating force for the study was the belief that the moment of performance was potentially rich in spiritual awareness, as well as in personal insight.

Researcher’s Role

As a piece of heuristic research the indwelling (Moustakas, 1990, p. 24) of the researcher has shifted and refocused the problem. The importance of exploring the spiritual dimension of education is germane to the work. As a performer I experienced the power of performance and its spiritual connection; as a teacher the concern to find meaning in education was similarly lengthy and allied to this search for the spiritual to give depth and purpose to the learning experience.

Education has been the focus of my life’s work. As my youth was spent at school, my young adulthood at university and my adult life teaching in secondary schools, my life has been devoted to education. Throughout that time I have perceived an acute sense of lack. Some crucial ingredient has been missing. The story spans half a century. It begins in suburban Melbourne, journeys to the North West of Western Australia, touches the Northern Hemisphere in Scotland and returns to suburban Perth. It is an ordinary life. I have intense enthusiasm and idealism about education and learning, but I live with this

acute sense of lack.

Over time I have searched in relationships, in spiritual traditions and eventually it was necessary to examine my work and to question my practice and the system in which I worked. As a young teacher I had read Freire, looked at teaching as a subversive activity (Goodwin), believed Summerhill was possible and held that a union was an essential voice for teachers in a state system. Assessment was a socially contrived control mechanism, inspection of teachers an antediluvian means of control and collegial discussion and support an ideal means of intelligent participatory professional development. I believed in grass-roots change. I knew flexibility was essential. I had great hopes for the power of a dynamic learning for life. But as each new year dawned, I too was “the whining schoolboy ... creeping like snail, unwillingly to school” (Shakespeare, *As You Like It*. I. vii, ll.145-147). Learning to be the best possible human is a vast and exciting task, yet schooling can be a routinised and numbing experience for students and teachers.

Mahayana Buddhism had a big impact on my awareness in the late eighties and the study and practice of dharma (the teachings of the Buddha) may well have answered the sense of lack I had experienced. I made contact with educators in the United Kingdom who were planning to establish a school run by dharma practitioners. I talked with the spiritual head of the Tibetan Buddhist Society about creating a school. I made contact with the Human Scale Education movement in the United Kingdom and met with one of its founders at the Small School in Devon, in England. I continued to teach but my teaching area changed. Although I had majored in History and English at university, my teaching subjects were drama and film. When I began my teaching career I was employed as a teacher of English and Social Studies. It took twelve years to have a timetable that seemed suitable - I was teaching Theatre Arts. There was less of a sense of lack.

Employed as a Drama and English teacher at a metropolitan secondary school in Perth, I was introduced to a Steiner speech and drama specialist and the Waldorf School and

members of its community. This had a huge impact on my teaching and my life. A completely new way of education was opened to me. It was education with a spiritual philosophy of a very particular kind and a teaching practice that was steeped in the arts. My response was not to become a trained Steiner teacher, but to begin a Master of Education degree, looking at Steiner education and the possibilities for cross-fertilisation with mainstream education (see Irving, 1991).

Holistic, appropriate-sized schools where teachers, parents and students had a voice seemed ideal. I was tired of not being heard. I felt that I had developed some feasible proposals. But I was still within a large system and I did not have the courage to share my ideas, to push for the changes I believed possible and the two years after completing the degree were difficult. I was teaching Drama and English, I was producing and directing school productions and I was performing and conducting workshops with two parents from the Steiner school. Despite this I was feeling silent and quite bitter about education. There was still a distinct sense of lack.

At this point I took an exchange-teaching position in Scotland. For two years I lived in Edinburgh and taught in large secondary schools mid-way between Edinburgh and Glasgow. They were not schools steeped in the arts and I taught English for the first year. I was able to perform, for the first time since university where the dramatic society had been my refuge. I joined a community theatre group, I performed in the Fringe Festival, I directed a women's play and I wrote, directed, produced and performed in my own show. At times the sense of lack disappeared. But exchange positions are limited in duration and I returned to Perth. For a time I blended my teaching, with my dharma practice and with performance. I taught drama and philosophy. When the sense of lack surfaced, I decided to embark on this study, for I was slowly realising what was the lack and how I might find one way of describing a salve to the pain that some others might also have in education. It would describe my situation and search and salve. It would be unashamedly personal and particular for I had discovered the heuristic research method and could make qualitative research even more my own.

Purpose

Contemporary education tries to provide many answers. It is expected to have academic rigour, vocational relevance, moral and ethical concern, creative and imaginative methods and outcomes. The statement of the Western Australian Curriculum Council's *Curriculum Framework* is necessarily broad:

Particular attention is given to the importance of maintaining a holistic view of curriculum, the responsibility of curriculum as a whole for such vital skills as literacy, numeracy and social cooperation, and the need to integrate knowledge, skills and values across all learning areas. The fundamental role of curriculum in the promotion of students' enjoyment of learning and excellence in learning is also emphasised. (Curriculum Council, 1998,p.15)

The document attempts to cover all exigencies, yet the lack that I perceive is the spiritual dimension, but the definition of spiritual is capacious and spirituality in education has many aspects.

At least nine facets comprised the sense of lack experienced in my years in education. They were the lack of meaning; of imagination; of connection; of interaction; of passion; of beauty; of heart; of joy and of soul. In each case I discovered that dramatic performance, in its widest sense, provided ways of addressing the sense of lack. Not only could dramatic performance allow a personal epiphany, it was a robust method of enlivening the spiritual in education.

These nine lacks are all part of the lack of spirituality in education. Each facet of lack represents part of that essential and missing dimension of life and education. It is in the combining of all these parts that we can begin to approach the largeness of spirit and breadth of soul that are denied in contemporary life. Yet a few brave teachers attempt to be Dionysian, that is, imaginative and creative, against the tide of Apollonian reductionism (Neville 1987).

The nine missing facets require more explanation as part of the lack of a spiritual

dimension in education. The lack of meaning relates to the concern that information and knowledge may seem too remote from or irrelevant to, adolescents. It is the manner and method of delivery that should first be questioned, but there is also a need to rethink the material that may be thought pertinent and relevant. It is a continual process of reappraisal. It requires flexibility, generosity and fearlessness in educators, as they remain open to change, continue to be learners and see themselves as facilitators of learning rather than only transmitters of tradition. Creative and critical thinking needs to be at the heart of their learning and teaching.

The lack of imagination means that limits are placed on creativity and possibility. Uniforms and conformity are more easily controlled than individuality. Eccentricity and idiosyncrasy are awkward within institutions that cater for many people. Student-centred learning, a more integrated curriculum as well as a more diverse and challenging array of possibilities and approaches should be accessible.

Lack of connection is related to a lack of relevance of information, knowledge and techniques to the students or their cultural lives or future aspirations. It also relates to a sense of belonging. Miller (1993) explores the importance of subject, community, earth and self-connections in evoking holistic education.

Lack of interaction goes beyond the social interaction of students to the solving of problems in a creative manner together, to a sense of being heard and a willingness to listen. Interaction occurs when time is made to listen, to share, to empathise, to converse and to stress the community of the classroom. The fragmentation often experienced in contemporary life comes from the lack of meaningful connection and interaction.

The lack of passion would seem to be indicated in the lack of enthusiasm to be involved and displayed through disengagement and a sense of boredom and lethargy. Recently I had the wonderful experience of witnessing a sixteen year old drama student talking to a group of younger students about subject selection and speaking candidly of her passion for drama. Her enthusiasm was palpable. The arts lend themselves to personal as well as

intellectual discovery.

The lack of beauty relates to an aesthetic dimension where the purpose of learning is not set within a larger sense of participating in creating work that is pleasing in a very broad sense. It connects to wider traditions of the arts and an awareness of beauty, proportion, harmony, balance, individuality and *communitas* (Turner, 1982). We need to discuss, define and discover beauty in our daily lives.

The lack of heart means emotional responses are not valued and emotional intelligence is not understood as an essential way of fully comprehending the world. Kindness and compassion and sensitivity to others, the world and the self are not encouraged. The ability to value others and to allow kindness to flourish often seems antithetical to survival in the materialistic contemporary culture. Love is a transaction rather than a gift.

The lack of joy becomes apparent as students reach adolescence and education becomes more serious and competitive. Laughter, happiness, fun, silliness, dancing and singing - antidotes to repressive seriousness - disappear. Simply by giving positive feedback instead of negative and critical comments most people gain in confidence and bravery. Basic to Buddhist belief is that all humans desire happiness and wish to avoid suffering. It is a simple statement. It is ironic that education often lacks joy.

Lack of soul could be indicated by a mundane approach to a task. Imagination and idealism might be derided. Excellence and brilliance to achieve something that is elusive and intangible could be considered indulgent. Displays of worship or veneration may be discouraged. Deep focus and concentration as found in contemplation and meditation might be seen as untrustworthy, by most mainstream administrators, if regularly and rigorously pursued.

The thesis explores the possibility of dramatic performance, as a fulfilment of the drama process, representing a point where these facets produce an experience that is special

and celebrates the mixture of the parts to attain a wholeness that is perceptible, communal and yet ephemeral. While the experience may be remembered, it requires continual expression on an individual and a collective level, a certain ritualising, to have its full effect. When the spiritual dimension of the human is awakened, all learning seems to be enriched.

An experience of the spiritual dimension of dramatic performance was recorded on the tape I made of my performance history: "it seems to give me focus, presence, meaning, purpose, a reality that is so much more than anything I know in this world. And it has such a purity and focus that it makes me start to believe that it has elements of the spiritual in it" (Irving, 2001, Tape 1).

I spend time imagining the ideal but then I travel by train. On suburban trains I perceive faces that suggest that my fellow travellers are often sad, bored, desperate, vacant, silly, unhappy and confused. I see humanity. If spirituality is a missing dimension, how do drama and dramatic performance make a difference? I believe that the robustness of Boal's social-political theatre has a spiritual dimension, especially in that it is a vehicle for allowing ordinary people to have a say in their world and that Steiner's ideas on speech and drama can provide a deeper experience of performance for the actor and the audience. Aspects of dramatic performance, which are varied, provide ways in which we can experience something more, something other than the mundane and the ordinary; where we can glimpse our infinite possibilities. The facets that are lacking are not always absent and certainly not all together. The spiritual dimension is special. Rocks and animals are not animated by it or able to articulate it beyond a benignity of being (Steiner, 1971, p.128-129). In a material world, concerned with the attainment of material pleasures, the higher aspects of our humanity are forgotten. We can exist without the spiritual but not without a sense that something is lacking.

The lack of an articulated spiritual dimension in education suggests to me that a whole aspect of our humanness is unattended. Within my field of specialisation I have perceived a way in which it might be enlivened. Other specialists might consider how

the spiritual could enrich their programmes. The Religious Education teacher will need to find ways to make the subject more than a bundle of ideas. Spirituality in education, as in life, has to do with connection, meaning, interaction, heart and soul, beauty and possibility and with joy.

Dramatic performance is special and exciting. It demands presence and focus, it requires energy and alertness; yet it is often derided as an area of the curriculum where you just have fun and that serious study of the art form is best left to historians and literary critics. Actors have a history of being outcasts, whores and vagrants. In Western Australia, Drama Studies received tertiary entrance examination status for 1999 through the relentless work of dedicated teachers and consultants. The course is extremely demanding with a practical and theoretical component. It is not a course for actors, but the practical work requires a level of competency best achieved by the talented. It could be argued that everyone is capable of acting effectively and that given the appropriate workshop techniques the humanness that it reveals is as varied as the multiplicity of human types.

The purpose of this study is to establish that students can discover much about themselves and others through dramatic performance. It is one of the few subjects that focuses so directly on what human beings are and can be. It is therefore an area where aspects of our humanness may be examined through dialogue, through actual performance and through observation of the work of others and through reflection on performance.

Underpinning the thesis is the idea that dramatic performance allows the performer, and the audience, to share moments of heightened perception and experience. These moments may permit the performer to experience transcendence or epiphany. Certainly to witness themselves as being other than usual, other or more than their daily perception of themselves. In so doing, they acknowledge that this is an aspect of themselves and that they are able to transcend the mundane through the use of imagination and the agency of ideas, both theirs and those of others. Dramatic performance provides a

particular forum to explore beyond the ordinary and to consider the spiritual element that is possible in this art form.

The study acknowledges the experiences of eight secondary and five university drama students and of an adult actor. Attitudes to performance, levels of commitment and focus and performance experiences form the material provided by the interviews and journal entries. It was believed that useful information concerning spirituality and education would be provided from this material. The hope would be that in describing the experience, practitioners and teachers might articulate further the benefit of drama as part of an holistic and aesthetic education (Miller 2000), which has as an aim the discovery of the self. Spirituality in the performing arts is an area that needs to be explored and it is hoped that this study may help delineate this experience and add to the conversation about the spiritual in the learning process.

The theoretical framework

Heuristic inquiry within a phenomenological perspective provides the theoretical framework for this study. Phenomenology looks for the structure and essence of the phenomenon. It places the researcher as an active participant within the research. Heuristic inquiry emphasises the connectedness of the researcher to the researched, while phenomenology encourages more detachment. Intuition and tacit understandings are essential to the heuristic researcher. Patton (1990) stresses that the rigour of this form of inquiry is not an issue. Systematic observation and dialogues with self and others, plus in-depth interviews with co-researchers build a meaningful research experience. Moustakas (1990, p.55) describes how a researcher acknowledged that her research had changed and enriched her life. The self-knowledge required of the heuristic researcher creates the depth of understanding of the situation that validates this method.

As I began the heuristic study, I placed myself strongly in the role of teacher, facilitator and researcher. I thought this was sufficient involvement. It proved to be insufficient. For the study to be effective I had to speak my own experience and in taping my own response to performance I found the key to the search. When I listened to the tape of my

experience of performance in my life, for a third time, a section was illuminated. It was describing my performance of part of T.S. Eliot's *Little Gidding* at a colleague's retirement function at the secondary school at which I teach. This occurred in 1998, a year after I had started my doctoral study, but prior to submitting my proposal. The following words are from my tape on performance:

This is my true offering. I walked out into the open space. Once I stepped into the space and stepped into my power, into the performance, into the poem it was as though there was a golden light connecting me to the heavens, coming through me and coming out of me and these beautiful words, these wonderful thoughts. I don't know that I even had a sense of my voice, for my voice was simply the beam of light, it was simply connecting the inspiration of the poem and the god behind that and the god in everyman. It was this huge feeling of connectedness, of community, of communion, of incredible otherness and incredible focus. (Irving, 2001, Tape 1)

Abraham Maslow (1970) looked at the religious aspect of peak-experiences: "Peak experiences sometimes have immediate effects...their after effects are so profound and so great as to remind us of profound religious conversions which forever after changed the person" (p. 66). If performance could have such power for both the performer and the audience who applauded and complimented, my interest in seeking to study the experience of dramatic performance was pertinent.

It was a very important point because it was the point where I had just experienced what I wanted to study. I had experienced the epiphany of performance. I had really moved to another space in myself. I had performed with excellence, with brilliance and in doing that I felt so completely other. There was power, there was beauty and there was the reverence of performance and thus of me. And there was focus, total focus on my performance. (Irving, 2001, Tape 1)

In the words of Eugenio Barba: "A performer's master knows how many years of work lie behind those moments. But still it seems that something flowers spontaneously, neither sought for nor desired. There is nothing to be said. One can only watch, as Virginia Woolf watched Orlando: 'A million candles burned in Orlando, without him having thought of lighting even a single one'" (Barba, 1991, p. 22). The articulation of the peak-performance will increase with experience and study, but the moment of that

experience and its impact upon the individual is one of epiphany. The mundane is transcended.

“Physically, emotionally, spiritually, that performance changed me, giving me insight *into* what it really means to perform” (Irving, 2001, Tape 1). Performance was important in my exploration of what was lacking in education. “All heuristic inquiry begins with the internal search to discover, with an encompassing puzzlement, a passionate desire to know, a devotion and commitment to pursue a quest that is strongly connected to one’s own identity and selfhood” (Moustakas 1990, p40). By exploring the personal stories of dramatic performance of the participants in this study, it is hoped that the power of dramatic performance to assist in the holistic growth of the individual will become evident.

Research questions

1. What have drama students discovered about themselves through performance?

- How do adolescent and young adult performers and an adult performer express their thoughts on dramatic performance in response to a series of interview questions?
- The questions were categorised as follows:
 - involvement and enjoyment
 - fears and butterflies
 - focus and commitment
 - the need for performance

2. Does reflection on dramatic performance help students to understand themselves and others?

- How do adolescent and young adult performers reflect on the experience of performance in their Perform/Transform workshop journals? (Underlying the workshops is a belief that movement work such as Authentic Movement and Creative Movement, is a tool for accessing self-awareness).

3. What links exist between dramatic performance and spirituality?

- Does dramatic performance change, transform or give insight to the participants?

Importance of the study

The study examined an aspect of education that is ripe for research. It pursued the problem of defining and describing spirituality in education; it also focused the debate in the Arts and specifically in drama education. It was interested in dramatic performance both as part of the drama process and product. It did not ignore the process but was more interested in the dynamic of the impact of performance on the performer. The heuristic method allowed the students' voices to be heard and as an active participant and researcher I had a sense of being part of profound experiences. The Perform/Transform workshops, using Authentic Movement and the Creative Movement of the Five Rhythms, allowed the embodied stories to be shared. By focusing the physicality of the body the spiritual was witnessed. The consideration of the spiritual and the possibility of speaking and exploring this element of education had deep purpose and meaning for me. The method allowed a sense of acknowledgement of my concern for the lack of recognition of the spiritual in our lives.

Scope of the study

The scope of the study was limited to a group of interested participants, known to the researcher. This qualitative sample of fourteen participants was comprised of eight adolescents in their last year of secondary school, five university students in their twenties and one middle aged adult actor. The common thread was their involvement and apparent interest in drama. The Perform/Transform workshops provided a common experience that permitted a shared language of the Five Rhythms and of Authentic Movement. The study assumed that the participants' responses were valid and the scope was particular because of the small number of participants, but it allowed depth of response through the interviews and journals.

The other factor, which could on one hand reduce the scope of the study and on the other provide colour and insight, was that as the teacher of the secondary students I had some previous knowledge of the participants. In the case of the university students, I had been the supervising teacher for the school practicum for two of the trainee teachers and facilitated all the students in the Perform/Transform workshops. I was a personal friend

of the professional actor. Within the heuristic method, such intimacy was necessary. The interview schedule was similar for all participants and did not continue beyond the first meeting. The journal responses were not extensive due to the workshop time, but still provided an extra comment for the participants. The scope was personal and particular and represented an insight into my practice. The study was personal but because it described activities in the public domain of education it had relevance to others who share commonality of experience of the drama classroom and workshop.

Limitations of the study

The study of the experience of dramatic performance was concerned to observe and describe links that might exist to a spiritual awareness through this particular artistic endeavour. The researcher's personal identification and experience of such connections was the spark that ignited the study. The participants were not asked to describe a spiritual experience per se, but were led, through workshops and interviews, to consider why performance might be significant for them. Thus there was a limitation in that the researcher's intentions were not, purposefully, clear to the participants. The importance of performance was accepted but there was a concern to leave space for the interviewees in particular, to discover, through the dialogue of the interview, the possible depths of their performance work. Thus, the spiritual link was not openly stated. This was both a strength and a limitation.

Another limitation was the fact that the school chosen for the study was a secular, co-educational, government, secondary school. The same study in a school with a Christian, Jewish or Muslim ethos might have had different responses or the language might have been more specifically spiritual within a defined religious tradition.

The small number of students in the study and the homogeneity of the secondary students may have placed limitations on the study's relevance to arts and drama educators. Although the secondary participants had an experience of dramatic performance through their upper school drama studies, their religious and spiritual backgrounds were diverse. In many cases they echoed mainstream society in having

limited religious affiliation and a generally materialistic, middle class background. The study was based on this cohort because it best reflected the heuristic intentions of the research method chosen. It was intentional to limit the cohort.

The complex relationship between the secondary students and the researcher could be both the strength of the study with its heuristic focus or a limitation. As teacher, workshop facilitator, examiner and researcher the relationship is diverse, but with the 2000 group there was a strong bond developed primarily through the fact that this was the first group to complete the two year drama studies course. The responses to the interview could be both limited by the relationship or enhanced.

The interview questions could have been both more open-ended and more challenging in seeking the spiritual aspect of the experience of dramatic performance in an educational setting. The use of Authentic Movement and Creative Movement (especially the Five Rhythms) in the workshops may have encouraged a certain type of response. The focus on movement as opposed to voice and character based improvisation may have skewed the responses.

Definitions

This thesis uses the following terms frequently. The definitions help to explain the perspective taken by the researcher.

Aesthetic: The aesthetic sensibility relates to perception by the senses of the beautiful in nature, in art and in the world. It is often a refined awareness, sometimes trained through fine arts studies into a philosophical critique of beauty. It is a more contemplative, even disinterested, attitude taken towards objects, which allows pure pleasure or enjoyment. In theatre it might be found in the technical aspects of a production, but could be discovered in the choreography of a dance, beauty of voice or relationship of characters on a stage. It needs to be shared, dialogued and acknowledged in education to begin a process of discernment and appreciation of the arts.

Audience: An audience can vary in size and composition. One definition is that an audience consists of one or more people, usually intentionally, witnessing a performative act by one or more others, for the purposes of religious, aesthetic, psychological, political, social, historical, emotional, spiritual enlightenment, or at least, entertainment. In relation to contemporary performance the audience are spectators at a theatrical performance or entertainment. Boal (1992) pushed the concept of the spectator into the interactive role of the 'spect-actor' of forum theatre (p. xxx). This thesis accepts that the concept of 'audience' is broad and diverse.

Authentic Movement: This is an improvised movement form where the performer attempts to move in a spontaneous and genuine manner. In its original form participants work in pairs, taking it in turns to be the performer and the witness (audience). Feedback is kept positive and subjective. The performer sits in front of the witness at the end of their performance and is asked: "*What did you enjoy?*". Once the performer has spoken, the witness contributes their enjoyment of aspects of the performance. Workshop processes are explained in the context of this study in the chapter on methodology.

Comprehensive education: In this instance, an inclusive education that provides the environment that promotes a general education of a good standard. It should strive to cover all aspects of learning: the cognitive, psychological, sociological, historical, philosophical, aesthetic, emotional and spiritual. In secular education, in Australia, the spiritual is not well defined or specifically catered for. A holistic education is a term used in the Curriculum Framework document, but as Plunkett (1990) observed, this does not necessarily cover the spiritual dimension. A comprehensive education needs to be all encompassing.

Creative movement: In this context it is movement to music that permits the participant to explore their body and push into a variety of ways of moving. In this thesis it relates to music and a philosophy of movement developed by the American dancer, Gabrielle Roth (1989, 1999). It relates to the Five Rhythms (flowing, staccato, chaos, lyrical and

stillness) and to music developed by Roth for creative movement or dance. It is possible to use any music that stimulates dance. Creative movement is seemingly unstructured in the sense of classical ballet, but the music played and the facilitator's coaching guides the form.

Creativity: In *The Chambers Dictionary* (Schwarz, 1994, p. 399) one aspect of creativity is 'to bring into being by force of the imagination.' The employment of the imagination in making or interpreting is what leads to the creative expression and experience. There is freshness and newness of the conception that makes it different, sometimes unique and novel. In education it requires an element of experimentation and a climate of curiosity and exploration and acceptance. It is used in the over arching outcomes in the Curriculum Framework document (1998) to relate to "creative activity" (p.25) where students are inspired by the work of others to produce individual responses in a range of art forms.

Drama: Exploration of the possibilities of presenting and representing what it is to be human in a range of contexts. This work may be based on a text or script. It may be devised individually or collaboratively. It is interactive, acting with others and often for others. Drama may have a ritualistic or cathartic dimension for those acting and for those viewing. In this thesis it encompasses the Drama curriculum and Drama as a formal course of study.

Dramatic performance: This places the drama activity often within a theatrical setting, ranging from the class workshop to the school production, amateur performances and professional theatre, dramatic performance covers a vast sweep of performance territory. The statement quoted by Boal: 'theatre is two humans, a passion and a platform' (1995) opens the types of situations that we will consider as dramatic performance to spontaneous work where two people might be interacting using improvisational methods. Authentic Movement is an example of dramatic performance that may not need a large audience for it to exist. Dramatic performance is used in this thesis to cover activities where the participants enliven ideas and characters with the intention of

sharing the heightened interaction.

Epiphany: A moment of insight and awareness; some form of illumination. In this thesis it is used without religious connotations but with the spiritual dimension of making the unknown knowable or at least momentarily.

Esoteric: This relates to the secret and special knowledge kept to the select few, often marking them apart. The esoteric is in many ways quite the reverse to the spiritual which is ideally accessible to everyone, even though this might be seen as a higher faculty, requiring the encouragement of the imaginative and a belief in something beyond the mundane and the material.

Experience: In *The Chambers Dictionary* (1994, p. 592) it is defined as 'the passing through any event or course of events by which one is affected'. It is something of which one is aware: 'anything received by the mind, such as sensation, perception or knowledge' (*ibid*). And that the response is significant: 'to have a practical acquaintance with, to have experience of; to feel, suffer or undergo' (*ibid*). For example, the students all had a real experience when they participated in the Perform/Transform workshops. As the performer their experience was actual and as the witness they vicariously experience the work of the other. The experience of performance relates to a real happening that will impact upon the body, mind and soul of the participant.

Holistic: This has to do with the whole person or dealing with all aspects of a phenomenon. Defined by Plunkett (1990) as 'an understanding of human beings as body, mind and feelings' (p. 20), he emphasises the spiritual as distinct from the holistic. Neville (1989) allows a distinction between the holistic and the spiritual by using Gibb's ten-point scale of 'environmental quality' (p. 270) which places the holistic as Stage 8 and below the transcendent and cosmic. In *The Chambers Dictionary* (1994) holism in relation to medicine is a theory that a complex entity is more than the sum of its parts, it relates to the whole person as a physical and psychological entity. The spiritual and transcendent are not mentioned. Yet holistic is often used with a sense of the spiritual as

part of the whole. In this thesis Plunkett's clarification of the holistic as encompassing the heart, the intuitive and ecological will be observed, but note that its common usage is often very broad.

Holy: Having to do with the divine in a theological sense and something that is worthy of veneration and devotion, the holy is perfect, pure and set apart for sacred use. When something is seen as holy it is regarded with awe (Schwarz, 1994). When used to describe theatre it attempts to place the theatrical within its vast heritage and to claim anew its special place in the human psyche.

Liminal: A threshold where worldly concerns are suspended, allowing an opening to other dimensions of the self. It relates to the role of inducting into another state as in the description of the liminal teacher (McLaren, 1987). In this thesis it is used to equate with the entire process of performance with its suspension of disbelief through the process of preparation and encompassing the performance.

Mystical: The mystical relates to the mysterious, the secret and often has a sacred intention. This is kept from the uninitiated and revealed to the spiritually enlightened. In the Christian tradition the mystic was often assumed to have direct communion with God.

Peak-experience: This is the heightened awareness of a phenomenon. Atkins (1990) listed the attributes of the perception of reality whilst undergoing a peak-experience as: truth, goodness, beauty, wholeness, dichotomy-transcendence, synergy, aliveness, uniqueness, perfection, necessity, completion, justice, order, simplicity, richness, effortlessness, playfulness, self-sufficiency. In exploring the peak-experience Maslow (1970) established that: 'Man has a higher transcendent nature, and this is part of his essence' (p. xvi). The plateau experience differs from the climactic peak-experience as the ability to stay "turned-on". These ideas are referred to but not utilised as a focus in this thesis.

Performance: This is a broad-based concept that is used widely to cover many different forms of activity that have intention and purpose. In this thesis performance is used in relation to the arts. It is described as dramatic performance to differentiate it from dance, music or film. The 'live' nature of performance and its ephemeral quality are important aspects of the experience. The diversity of types of performance usually have in common the "process as well as the final artefact" (Huxley&Witts, 1996, p.2).

Psyche: Other than the mind but described in *The Chambers Dictionary* (1994) as 'the soul, spirit or mind; the principle of mental and emotional life, conscious and unconscious' (p. 1385). Or as Hillman, quoted in Neville (1989) puts it 'that unknown human factor which makes meaning possible, which turns events into experiences, and which is communicated in love.' (p. 9). In this thesis it is believed that through psyche we perceive wholeness and receive the world in symbolic and metaphorical images. Psyche is the butterfly, ever emerging, ever changing but always embodying the butterfly quality of beauty and transformative powers. Psyche is our ability to see holistically, to weave and connect, to endure and to re-create. It is the font of our ability to be spontaneous and authentic. It is the soul in action; the manifestation of aspects of the soul.

Psychosynthesis: A holistic approach to psychoanalysis developed by Roberto Assagioli and influenced by A. H. Maslow. It stresses "the harmonious and well-balanced development of all aspects of the human being: physical, emotional, imaginative, intellectual, ethical, social and intuitive" and "the integration of these characteristics into an organic synthesis; into a personality which is Self-conscious" (Whitmore, 1986, p.22).

Its intention is to help the individual find its "true spiritual nature" (p. 23).

Rational: The logical, reasoned, empirically based aspect of the cognitive mind. We know through the experience rather than through the numinous or miraculous. It is knowledge of the factual, experiential dimension of the real, tangible world.

Sacred: This is a holy, consecrated place; and the theatre as a sacred place requires that it is seen as housing performances of significance and importance for performers and audience. The rehearsal and theatre workshop can be sacred if the approach to the work is 'holy' and the participants believe that their work has a special significance. The theatre can be seen as the temple of performance, the liminal space that allows mystery, illusion and enlightenment.

Soul: The essential part or essence of the human being; the essential and noble part of the human. The on-going essence at death and thus differentiated from the physical. For Miller (2000) 'soul is a deep and vital energy that gives meaning and direction to our lives' (p. 9). In this thesis the soul is the pure aspect of psyche that may need cultivation through meditation if we are to attune to this higher mind and be aware of the greater purpose that is beyond the material and ordinary. The soul links us to all that is good, so that it has a moral dimension; to all that is inspirational, so that it has a spiritual aspect; to all that is extraordinary so that it is beyond the mundane; to truth and beauty, and so it links to all that is authentic and aesthetically enriching. The soul is our higher self. Steiner identifies three soul states: sentient soul, intellectual soul and consciousness soul (Klocek, 1998, p. 13).

Spirituality: In this thesis it relates to the mind, the higher faculties, the soul; highly refined thought and feeling (Schwarz, 1994, p. 1664). It is without religious context. The spiritual is used here as an awareness of the ideal, the intangible, the ineffable; of the higher aspirations of the human intellectual ability to question beyond the material and mundane world and to seek further understanding of 'the possible human' (Houston 1982). Seeking spirituality through the authentic focus of the creative act of performance, when the human body, mind and soul are aligned, is part of this thesis. Spirituality reaches beyond the mundane and the material, in its intention, towards what is transcendent and eternal (Carr 1995). It is the point of insight that the performance gives to the person performing and is conveyed to the witness or audience. Spirituality also contains the following: imaginative, original responses to sensory stimuli from the material world; an awareness of the potential of the unconscious to interpret, to respond

to external or internal ideas; an acceptance of the mysterious, the ineffable and the immaterial; a belief in the possibility of attaining heightened awareness and understanding; a dissatisfaction with the limits of the material world; a tendency to look for core values in a situation (seeking the ethical considerations); a belief in the concept of a deity, a divine presence (the muse); a possibility of the transcendence of the material through faith.

Transcendence and transformation: These concepts require clarification for this thesis and it is seen as useful to place them together. Transformation in this context relates to the personal rather than to the theatrical. *The Chambers Dictionary* defines transformation as “the radical change to another shape or form” and “to be changed in form or substance” (p. 1840). In this thesis the focus will extend beyond characterisation and the assumption of role, to the idea of transcendence: “to pass beyond the range or limits of human understanding” and “to go beyond human knowledge” (p. 1839). Transformation thus relates to changes, especially in the psyche – “the soul, spirit or mind; the principle of emotional and mental life, conscious and unconscious” (p.1385), which are reflected via the subject’s personal awareness. By expanding transformation towards a concept of transcendence, change may be seen as something not previously experienced by the subject and “going beyond human knowledge” (p.1839).

Transpersonal: This relates to the interconnected nature of mankind. It may have some relation to Steiner’s higher self. Whitmore (1986) describes it as the true self or the essential self. The transpersonal allows an awareness of a deeper meaning in all that we do. In education it helps to keep us in touch with the true purpose of education. It also stresses that individual concerns are not placed above the interests of others for “the transpersonal dimension is consistently reported to bring a sense of solidarity with all beings and of being an essential part of a larger whole” (Whitmore, p. 178).

Witness: In this thesis it is a concept of a personal audience, often of one other, who contributes positive feedback to the performer. The witness also listens to the performer’s initial voicing of their enjoyment of their performance. It is a discrete form

of audience.

Workshop: This has to do with the work that actors do to develop techniques; it is about training verbally and non-verbally; it may have to do with specific styles of performance but it is concerned with the nuts and bolts of the work, about how the actor trains to achieve their skill. Specific to this thesis, the Perform/Transform workshop was a series of sessions where the participants were taken through particular styles of performance training. It is a term that is widely used in theatre and other performance circles and has filtered into the language of more general training environments, so that during professional development days for teacher in-servicing workshop sessions are routinely held to allow hands-on participation.

Summary and organisation of chapters

The problem formulation and definition of chapter one is followed by a literature review that considers relevant theories of performance, surveys drama education and spirituality and then places the study in the current conversation on spirituality in education. The final section is concerned with the theoretical framework of the study.

The chapter on methodology examines the heuristic process of research. The stages of the heuristic method are used as sub-headings. These are: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication and creative synthesis. The Perform/Transform workshop structure is explained. This was used as a common thread for the participants when discussing an experience of dramatic performance.

The biographical information contained in the first interview questions (see Appendix 2) helped to provide the information in chapter four where each interviewee is represented in a vignette with either quotes from their interview or the transcript of their Perform/Transform journal writing and drawing. The biographies of the secondary students, two of the university students and the actor were written with some influence of prior knowledge and familiarity. Rather than prejudice the thesis, such relationships should enrich the presentation of the information.

Chapter five is organised to explore the interview responses under the headings of involvement and enjoyment, fears and butterflies, focus and commitment, the final curtain and the importance drama students place on performance. Most of the interview questions are discussed under Research Question 1: What have drama students discovered about themselves through performance? The interview questions for the secondary students and the university students were very similar (see Appendix 2) but those asked of the actor were more focused on Research Question 3. The responses of the secondary students, the university students and the adult actor are in discrete sections within all but the last section that attempts to conclude the chapter and consider the importance the participants place on performance.

In chapter six the thesis is concerned with the second research question: Does reflection on dramatic performance help students to understand themselves and others? It utilises specific interview questions for the secondary students and for the university students. The students' journals are then analysed and the research question explored. The themes are self-discovery, delight and commitment, pathway to psyche and journal reflection. Again, as in chapter five, the three groups are quoted separately. The effect on the performance of participants of the movement forms of Authentic Movement and Creative Movement is a concern of this chapter.

The possible link between dramatic performance and spirituality is the focus of research question three and chapter seven. One of the university students and the actor provide a lot of material here. The secondary students have some insightful contributions but the language and ease with which the adults express and describe their experiences provides the study with clear indications of the links between dramatic performance and spirituality. The sections are transformation, epiphany, transcendence and connection, communion and communitas.

In chapter eight, the final chapter, the previous chapters of the thesis are summarised. The importance of dramatic performance; understanding yourself through performance;

and spirituality and the teacher are considered. Conclusions follow and the focus headings are: the importance of listening to students, where the contribution of the participants is highlighted; spirituality and drama education; and spirituality and the teacher. Under the consideration of discussion and application, the following headings are used: spirited learning; the spirit in drama; spirituality in education; dramatic performance, spirituality and the curriculum; and the benefit of acknowledging a spiritual dimension. Underlying the study is the belief that the arts provide the vehicle for exploring the spiritual dimension of the individual and the society.

The final section is concerned with future recommendations for research. The present study is seen as describing the possible existence of spirituality in drama education. It is hoped that it will encourage further research and debate.

Chapter Two

Introduction to literature review

The first part of this literature review addresses specific theories of performance. This part of the review explores contemporary attitudes to dramatic performance and the focus of this first section is to describe what is entailed in dramatic performance. It draws on research that fosters a sense of the whole person in performance. Peak-experiences, in relation to dramatic performance are considered. Linkages between dramatic performance and spirituality are explored in the broader setting of contemporary performance practice and theory.

In the second section drama education will be considered with particular concern with studies that have explored the spiritual dimension of the learning experience. This will then be related to the larger debate about spirituality and education. Current efforts to map this terrain are reviewed. There are some recent articles from the United Kingdom that are useful in understanding just what this may cover. These arguments deal with conventional educational theory and they are often located in the Arts. The North American debate is quite different and the fact that drama education is usually extra-curricular alters the conversation.

In the third section the methodology techniques are discussed. The theoretical framework has emerged as that of heuristic inquiry within a phenomenological perspective. Writings by various post-modern thinkers are considered by the researcher attempting to find a special ground for the study. There is much of interest about treatment of participants in feminist studies, which is explored. The writings of Julia Kristeva, which seek to analyse the unanalysable, are discussed in the context of linkage of performance and spirituality.

The methodology is found in the qualitative research approach utilising ethnographic methods such as participant-observation, in-depth interviews and personal documents.

This section will conclude with a brief extrapolation of the two forms of movement that informed the structure of the Perform/Transform workshops that were used as part of the research experience.

Theories of performance

Turner (1982) and Schechner (1977, 1982) discovered links between ritual and a healthful re-interpreting of the liminal area that can initiate performance. Turner's writing on the concept of the liminal and liminoid is useful. The liminal phenomenon tend to be collective, to be integral to social processes, to embody collective experiences over time and to keep a sense of continuity and tradition; whereas the liminoid generally have more to do with the individual and the idiosyncratic, were usually a part of a social critique and often presented as a commodity and a matter of choice, not obligation. "One *works* at the liminal, one *plays* with the liminoid" (Turner, 1982, p.55). The liminoid is that which we would associate with the contemporary artist or performer. The idea that we may well enter some liminal state when we perform and when we watch a performance provide a connection to the collective ritual state. Schechner (1988) considers that "performativity is everywhere" (p 283). Both Schechner and Turner believed that the imagination provides real alternatives to mass thought and control (1982, p.128). Schechner believed that performance could assist in the transformation necessary for human social survival (p.119). Schechner's view of a "postmodern subjunctively projected future" (p.120) may be useful in exploring the research participants' responses to performance and its impact on their lives in chapter five.

Turner's (1982) exploration of the concept of *communitas* has importance for the performer as part of a temporary social group. The intensity of the interaction required to produce successful performances - either amateur or professional and certainly in the context of a school dramatic production - correlates to the concept of *communitas*. The quality of *communitas* is that it is inclusive yet transient, it is expansive and not easily institutionalised. It is intense and highly interactive for its duration. *Communitas* is a concept that describes the phenomenon of the group dynamic that can be found when people join together to produce an artistic representation that is certainly found through

dramatic performance.

Artaud, Grotowski and Brook (Innes 1993) are essential reading for discussion on the holiness of the actor and the theatre. All posit that the theatre and performance have a vast power on the psyche of the performer and the spectator. As Innes (1993) observes, "...the hallmark of avant-garde drama is an aspiration to transcendence, to the spiritual in its widest sense" (p. 3). These three demand a focus and devotion to the art of performance. They have all had enormous impact on modern theatre. Apart from their own writing, they are well documented in many contemporary commentaries on theatre and performance. Stanislavski, Artaud, Brecht, Grotowski and Brook are some of the theorists studied by the secondary students interviewed for this thesis as part of their Drama Studies course. Shomit Mitter (1992) looks specifically at techniques of rehearsal inspired by Stanislavski, Brecht and Grotowski that Brook utilised. Mitter exposes Brook's ability to creatively synthesise the work of the others, extolling his manner of weaving their ideas into his work. Mitter still confronts such issues as authenticity and transcendence in their work. Although it is not a focus of the book, he mentions his belief that art carries 'a latent spiritual capability' (1992, p.131). Wholeness and authenticity are concepts that are considered which relate to interview questions in this thesis. Blau (1992) notes that Artaud and Grotowski have "made us aware of the affinity between acting technique and spiritual disciplines" (p. 209). Read (1993) looking at the ethics of performance writes: "theatre is a process of vital divergence from everyday life" from whence the performer and the audience experience the dynamic of the imagination (p. 171).

A range of practitioners is treated under the banner of experimental theatre in Roose-Evans (1991). This "foray into the unknown" (p. 1) seeks to discuss the effect of significant theatre practitioners within the contemporary artistic climate. Stanislavski, Grotowski, Brecht and Barba are some of the experimenters represented and designers such as Appia and Craig are discussed along with dance and movement innovators. Anna Halprin is one of the practitioners chosen as having pertinence to this study.

Drain (1995) provides a range of excerpts from the writings of many theatre practitioners. He divides the anthology into five parts considering the modernist, political, popular, inner and global dimensions. This is a diverse range of views that will be useful in analysing the student interviews and journals. Stanislavski, Kornfeld, Artaud, Grotowski, Brecht, Cixous and Barba will provide points of reference. Another anthology edited by Huxley and Witts (1996) will provide voice for Artaud, Boal, Brecht, Brook, Grotowski, Schechner and Stanislavski in relation to the students' comments in chapter five and six.

Moving into writings on postmodernism and theatre, Birringer (1991) believes that theatre has become "eccentric to mainstream culture" (p. 32) but he also places Artaud (and Brecht) in the forefront of theatrical ideas. The difficulty of rethinking the idea of performance intrigues his study and although he finds himself without conclusions or answers he believes that as long as theatre is able to "experience and reperform the contradictions produced" by the "technological culture of violence" (p. 228), it still has a place. Theatre allows dynamic experimentation concerning this human coil. In relation to this study, Birringer counsels that all creative exploration and performance is valid.

Other postmodern theorists and directors want to push performance and the line between the audience and the performance. Kaye (1994) quotes Lash in describing postmodernism as a "transgression of the boundaries that separate the aesthetic from other cultural spheres" (p. 22). Perhaps Derrida, as quoted in an essay by McGlynn (Silvermann 1990), captures the ephemeral quality of theatre as its strength: "it is neither a book nor a work, but an energy, and in this sense it is the only art of life" (p. 150). In this same essay the author acknowledges the impact of Artaud in "calling for a theatre which could capture life in its full passionate presence" (p. 138). An aspect of the postmodern thrust is to challenge theatre to rethink its boundaries and to focus on the power of the immediacy of live performance. For this study the relevance of looking at postmodern views of theatre is to seek to define and describe the "unknowable", to attempt to extrapolate the moment of performance as something beyond everyday experience, as something transformational, as something "other". The predominant

feature of Julia Kristeva's work is a concern to analyse the unanalysable, the inexpressible, heterogeneous, radical otherness of individual and cultural life (Lechte, 1994, p. 141). One concern relevant to this thesis is her belief that a work of art may become the basis of an authentic experience capable of opening the way to a change in personality. The postmodern conversation permits a language and canvas ready to speak of otherness and to explore its uniqueness. Phelan (1993) writes that theatre operates in a "curious psychic space" (p. 112). "Enfolded within fiction theatre seeks to display the line between the visible and the invisible power. Theatre has, then, an intimate relationship with the secret"(p.112). The theatre is the temple of performance, the liminal space that allows mystery, illusion and enlightenment.

Postmodern dance is a performance form that has challenged accepted aesthetics of dance. Developing from the "performance art" in the 1980s there was an attempt to bring the arts together. As Highwater (1996) comments: "What has emerged is a theatre in which movement is the compelling and central force" (p. 214). We find the mythic and ritual, and this new union of the arts in the theatre "transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary" (p. 218). The spirit is seen through the metaphor of the body. Postmodern performance delves into the totality of the performer. Butoh, as a form originating in Japan but giving spiritual home to Western practitioners, is all about pushing the performer and the audience into new relationships, and a new connection to time. Joan Laage (1997) has a website on the Internet where she describes the indescribable Butoh. She writes of "erasing" the self in the performance. The body of possibilities in contemporary theatre allows the performer vast potential for exploration of what it is to be human.

Fraleigh (1987) develops a phenomenological framework to support her belief that "dancing requires a concentration of the whole person as a minded body" (p. 9). Her belief that "the whole self is shaped in the experience of dance...soul spirit and mind...are not separate from what we call the physical" (p. 11) leads her to study Butoh as an aesthetic movement, as well as a dance form (Fraleigh, 1999). Dance, inspired by phenomenological existentialism and Butoh with its Zen influences, becomes

performance that seeks a wholeness of being (1987, p. 212). The therapeutic is discovered entwined with the aesthetic in dance (1999, p. 25).

This is an aspect of dance that is the focus of Authentic Movement, a “self-directed form in which individuals may discover a movement pathway that offers a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious” (www.au.authenticmovement-usa.com/ 2000, p.1). It offers self-exploration through creative movement in relationship with an empathetic witness. This form is utilised in the research and will be further discussed. It is pertinent in the conversation on performance to acknowledge the therapeutic, especially as it is used to enhance performance. BMC or Body-Mind Centering is described by its originator as “an ongoing, experiential journey into the alive and changing territory of the body. The explorer is the mind - our thoughts, feelings, energy, soul and spirit” (Bainbridge Cohen 1993, p.1). It is a form that requires the performer to develop a deeply intimate and scientific awareness of the body and movement.

Eutony is another movement form that has developed in Europe over the twentieth century. It was developed by Gerda Alexander and provides four-year training programmes in education and therapy. Its aim is to facilitate the body-mind-spirit unity of the whole person. “Eutony is a Western way of experiencing the unity of the total person” (Alexander, 1985, p. 19). It was developed as a form of relaxation but through subtle exercises developed a profound way of working towards selfhood. An important development is the Observing Self. It is the awareness that encapsulates the spiritual dimension of eutony. Its links with Zen practices is an example of how it brings the eastern quality of meditative practice to western movement traditions. Eutony is of note for its explicit connection of body-mind-spirit, although it is not a well-known practice in Australia.

Just as an iceberg is made of visible and invisible portions, the authentic capacity of the actor is made of the body and the spirit, the visible and the invisible. Only when he succeeds in unifying his body and spirit, can he make use of his full capacities. While feeling his body more and more deeply, the actor can search his spirit more and more deeply. It is by mastering his body that he can master his

spirit, and by mastering his spirit that he can master his body. ...His mastery is very close to the ease, spontaneity and freedom of any voluntary discipline. (Alexander, 1985, p.152-153)

As postmodern dance challenges and renegotiates performance, the concept of dance and its function in society shift to embrace the professional and the personal. The performer's journey and the layman's exploration meet in the theatre and the workshop. The inspirational dancer and mystic, Ruth St Denis believed that "we should bring our entire being- physical so-called and mental - in line with the divine will" (1997, p. 83). St Denis saw dance as a symbol of life and our potential to reach a spiritual threshold. In relation to education she wrote: "All children should be encouraged to value the divine rhythms which pulsate through our radiant bodies" (1997, p. 83). Practitioners such as Miranda Tuffnell bring to their rich awareness of dance and performance the liberating effect of improvisation (Tuffnell and Crickmay, 1993), while Polatin (1987) introduces the holistic awareness of the blending of eastern traditions with contemporary dance and performance.

Feminist theories of performance provide another perspective on contemporary theatre. Aston (1995) shows women trying to reshape their place in theatre by questioning even the hierarchical structure of groups and demanding a collective, collaborative approach to developing performances that would eventually promote audience comment and input. This 'perlocutionary effect' where audience was encouraged to respond and to take further action opened the theatrical space to social and personal action which had ramifications beyond the actual performance. But the performer was also discovering a new threshold where "the 'subject' for the performer is 'herself'" (p. 67). The radical feminist explorations moved the performer from the Stanislavski-influenced development of another character to placing the aesthetic within the personal, seeing the aesthetic statement as part of the personal story and the personal as relevant for performance. Aston succinctly describes feminist performance over the last thirty years and a lot of the work has had to do with the political and social re-positioning of the feminine. Within a socialist-materialist feminism there is little discourse on the spiritual. Although the social and political focus has been dominant, the structure to explore the

spiritual is found in this feminist model. Collaborative models encouraging personal exploration and performance within “perlocutionary” environments provide rich language for the investigation of the phenomenon of self.

Looking beyond the public and private spheres, Reinelt (Keyssar, 1996) discusses how feminist theatre has used the techniques of Brecht and Stanislavski to synthesise an evolving approach to performance. Authenticity is elusive if the actor works solely with political intent, yet political awareness fleshes out the emotive narrative. The moment of performance and the actor’s experience of this are not the focus of these commentators or performers. Certainly in the British theatre the socialist/materialist stance has been a motivating force. Yet there is space to identify the need the performer has to create authenticity and to consider the performer’s experience within the exposition of text.

Exploration and discourse on the self may be seen to be a bourgeois indulgence within the context of the social responsibility and energetic discourse of feminist theatre. The argument is that this study is concerned to name and frame an aspect of self-discovery accessed through performance, without requiring that the performance have an overtly therapeutic or spiritual ingredient. The collaborative exploration of feminist theatre instigates dialogue and interaction that permits the performer access to a forum of exploration where the synthesising of styles promotes the dynamic field wherein new understanding is possible.

Underpinning much theatre activity in the twentieth century is the work of Konstantin Stanislavski (1988). His techniques were designed to encourage the ideal human being, for being a great actor was synonymous with exploring our full human potential. Later in the century Jerzy Grotowski took the training of actors to demanding extremes. The physicality of his techniques was balanced with the inner discipline and creativity to allow the “holy actor” to really undertake a huge journey in self-penetration (Grotowski, 1968). Both Stanislavski and Grotowski have had an enormous impact on performance work. Mitter (1992) sees Peter Brook as synthesising and working through the ideas of major twentieth century theatre practitioners and theorists. Augusto Boal (1995) works

intimately with the social and the personal. "With the actor is born the theatre. The actor is theatre. We are all actors; we are theatre!" (p. 19). Boal's work has educational, social and therapeutic intentions and in *The Rainbow of Desire* (1995) he describes Image Theatre and gives clear methods to practitioners to utilise the method. "Theatre - or theatricality - is this capacity, this human property which allows man to observe himself in action, in activity" (p. 13). Theatre, for Boal, is the meaningful way for humans to comprehend their social, personal and political problems, but above all it is the perfect tool to understand breadth of our shared humanity. In their search for new and more genuine ways of performing these innovators have given the actor a path of self-discovery and realisation.

A limited view of educational drama could find this spectrum of ideas to be irrelevant to the study. The secondary students who were my co-researchers were in their final year of a Drama Studies course that had as its focus the theatre of the twentieth (and now twenty-first) century. They were exposed to the theories and expected to apply them to their work. They were ready to explore ideas and their performance was deepened and enriched through an awareness of the range of theories and practices. Christoffersen (1993) paints a strong portrait of the work of Eugenio Barba's Odin Teatret through interviews with four actors, interlaced with Barba's vision. Their insights into performance, into self, provide markers in understanding the possibilities open to the performer. To the student these explorers provide evidence of the joy and power of the human psyche; they are a testament to imagination and difference.

The search of these practitioners and theorists is to both refine and expand the possibilities of what it is to be human and to create this as a dialogue between the performer and the spectator. Maslow (1970) explores the importance of the transcendental in life and in education via the concept of peak-experience. Dramatic performance encourages peak-experience. Atkins (1990) applies the theory of peak-experience performance and non-peak-experience performance to an analysis of this in professional actors. In this dissertation the interest in this theory of peak-experience performance lies in its acknowledgement of the importance of spiritual values in all

areas of endeavour if we are to reach our full human potential.

Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Anthroposophy, is not represented in many anthologies of performance theory, yet he developed a system of training for the theatre and ways of performing imbued with his philosophy of spiritual science. He believed that developing as an actor would “bring you to the esoteric in your own being” (1960, p.334). Steiner believed that “all genuine art springs from the spiritual world” (p. 329). Of particular interest to this study is Steiner’s comment on the actor’s relationship to the role-played. The character should be so well rehearsed that the part should have “an independent being within him” (p. 331). The actor should be able to enjoy and be moved by the objectified creation, which is separate from him - participating in it while projecting it. The actor must use his mind to achieve complete presence and keep ego separate from the performance. Steiner demanded absolute authenticity and commitment: “No one can speak artistically about any art unless he can live in that art with his whole being” (p. 345). Rudolf Steiner is more widely known for the educational system that he established and this provides a link to looking at dramatic performance in the school environment.

Steiner’s ideas were crucial in the development of the actor training techniques for which Michael Chekhov, originally a disciple of Stanislavski, became renowned. Steiner’s Anthroposophy, speech-formation and eurhythmy helped Chekhov to find an original and effective mode of actor training. “Marrying the inner truth and emotional depth of Stanislavski’s system with the beauty and spiritual impact of Steiner’s work became Chekhov’s obsession” (Chekhov, 1985, p.15).

Drama education and spirituality

Lawrence O’Farrell (1994) sees specific relevance for drama education in Turner’s exploration of the liminal and liminoid spaces in ritual and performance. He believes that it is essential to the curriculum to identify and accommodate the framed liminoid experience. The acknowledgement of the power of this threshold, this place of limitless creative activity is part of the thrust to allow the dramatic experience and performance to

have an authenticity and meaning far beyond any mimetic or contrived theatre work. Underpinning the liminoid experience is room to explore text and self. O'Farrell writes of the importance of transformation and is passionate about the depth and originality of creativity that can be exposed by hearkening to the work of Turner and Schechner. The three are helpful to this study for they establish that there is something other and special about the environment of the drama studio and theatre rehearsal and performance space.

Malcolm Ross (1996) is one of the voices speaking of the spiritual dimension within the experience of the drama classroom in the United Kingdom. In a journal article (1996) he explores the state of school drama in the UK. He quotes the playwright, David Mamet, as saying that certain aspects were needed to revive our sense of truth, simplicity, and feelings of wonder and reverence. It would revitalise theatre to connect drama to ritual and festival, for this places it in the realm of the holy. It is not described as a liminoid space in which authentic and original discoveries can be made, but there is a sense that transformation can occur through the drama class where exploration is facilitated in a group setting. Ross is concerned with evaluation in the arts and in giving rationales for the arts in education. He wants to preserve a space for exploration against the thrust for "a more subject-centred approach" (p. 43) while encouraging "proper drama" that allows polished performance.

"Young people feel increasingly that the whole of life is liminal" (Courtney, 1995, p.194). Richard Courtney has developed important theories for drama education and in his two books, *Drama and Intelligence: a cognitive theory* and *Drama and Feeling: an aesthetic theory* he has provided invaluable grounds for drama education within the curriculum. Although Courtney does not specifically focus on spirituality he provides well-argued and supported grounds for his claim that the growth of educational drama and spontaneous improvisation are phenomenal as a mode of teaching and for drama as a subject in its own right. (Courtney, 1990, p.3). His statement that human thought is a complex of modes (1995, p.13) and that the cognitive, affective, psychomotor and aesthetic all overlap, argues for holistic awareness in education. Howard Gardener should consider dramatic intelligence as a particular intelligence (p. 179). So

enthusiastic is Courtney that he suggests that educational drama has the potential to become one of the fundamental tools of all education in the future (p.188).

Limited references are made in Australia, in the National Association for Drama in Education journal, to spirituality in drama education. There are many fine articles on a vast array of topics and there is some relevance in documenting current trends in commentaries for this study. A search for ones with a particular concern with the spiritual has not produced a lot of information. An exception is McKenna's (1994) article on the need for putting soul into drama research. His focus on playback theatre (1999) as a model for drama research could be seen as anticipating the present study. It will be further considered in the section on the theoretical framework in this literature review. Interestingly, the article by Bjorn Rassmussen (1996) discusses the concept and importance of the liminoid and the need to make drama a more meaningful and culturally acknowledged area of learning.

Kevin Johnstone (1981) explores improvisation and the use of the mask in his renowned work *Impro: improvisation and the theatre*. His exploration of the state of trance and the power of the mask give some explanation to the otherness of performance. "In Mask work people report that perceptions are more intense, and that although they see differently, they see and sense more" (p.153). Johnstone is concerned with enlivening the actor and the student through developing spontaneity. "The actor that will accept anything seems supernatural; it's the most marvellous thing about improvisation: you are suddenly in contact with people who are unbounded, whose imagination seems to function without limit" (p.100). The ability to be fully present in what we do connects with the focus in this dissertation on the impact of dramatic performance on the psyche and its link to epiphany or insight in the moment of 'peak' or pure performance.

Neville (1989) devotes a chapter in *Educating Psyche* to the influence of J. L. Moreno's Work on psychodrama and a section of this relates to drama education. Neville suggests that the 'play' or 'problem solving' orientation of psychodrama are most pertinent for the classroom (p.204). The exploration of our multi-faceted personalities through drama

enriches the whole person. Psychodramatic techniques in the classroom help in the emotional development of the student. This links to Goleman's work on emotional intelligence (1996) and the increasing evidence of our multiple intelligence (Gardener, 1983). The influence of Moreno was also considered by Courtney (1974) who further explored the impact of Gestalt psychology in educational drama. Its concern with "presentification" (p.104) aligns with the need for being present and the presence demanded in dramatic performance. Drama, magic, ritual and meditation were seen as essential aspects of Gestalt therapy. It is interesting that warming up the body and movement were seen as very real ways of accessing individual story and awareness (p.106). Courtney reminds us that "Dramatic education is concerned with the life process" (p.273) and thus establishes that drama is a vehicle that is of its essence holistic and that dramatic education "...is the basic way in which the human being learns - and thus is the most effective method of all forms of education" (p.269).

Two distinct trends in educational drama were very clearly described by Burton (1990). One has been developed by Heathcote and Bolton and is concerned with the social context, while Slade and Courtney have focused on individual learning about the self. The focus of this study is on the personal insight that the individual experiences through the act of performance, whether this might lead to social relevance and action requires another study.

The concept of performance in educational drama was criticised by Neeland and Goode (1995) as being reductive. In their article they challenge this narrowness and open up the definition of performance to ritualistic and interactive drama. It is useful to the present study for it gives further information on a more stylised presentation and extends the dynamic potential of the representation of the real. They set the scene for devised work to become more explorative and innovative.

The teacher as a "liminal servant" (McLaren, 1993, p.114) is a model of teaching which fits well with the role of the drama teacher. McLaren describes a traditional educational setting where aspects of the liminal teacher could sometimes be seen. She is "ever

cognizant of her shamanic roots. She is a mystagogue rather than an ideologue” (p. 115). “Aesthetic truth is prized as much as objective truth” (p. 117), he goes on to say that the teacher as liminal servant is rarely found in complete form. In fact the catholic school that was the focus of the study was like many secondary schools and “at a fundamental level, the schooling that I witnessed was oppressive and could be improved substantially by a greater understanding of the ritualised relations inherent in classroom interaction” (p. 232). Seeking a new way, McLaren declares the importance “of bodily engagement and spontaneous drama” (p. 234) in learning. “Drama is the whetstone upon which we must sharpen the blade of school reform to excise the curricular cancer of current anti-incarnational educational programming” (p. 234). McLaren ponders why the arts, which are such powerful tools for understanding and communicating, have been marginalised in schools and society. Creative drama is “a valuable pedagogical or instructional technique open for use by teachers in the teaching of all subjects” (p. 237).

The writings of Rudolf Steiner on education do not dwell on dramatic performance in the classroom. While speech and drama have a definite role in learning, actor training and theories of performance are a separate concern for Steiner. The importance of dramatic art to the wellbeing of mankind suggests that drama could have a place in a school curriculum: “dramatic art has great tasks to perform...by its means man is carried up to spiritual heights” (1960, p. 406). The spiritual underpinning of Steiner education leads to the third focus of the study.

Performance is encouraged through the outcomes based courses developed for years eleven and twelve in Western Australia. The course is outlined in the Curriculum Council *Drama Support File* (1998). Performance of text-based work and devising work in groups and individually is the orientation of the two courses for upper school. The process is emphasised and reflection on practice is essential to the journey leading to production. But there is a need to explore the elements that make up this process and production in performance. The present study looks at the experience of process and performance in drama for eight secondary students and suggests that it is equally important to describe and focus on the spiritual dimension in learning as to forge links of

vocational value, for a meaningful education to be gained.

Spirituality in education

In *Secular and spiritual values: grounds for hope in education* (1990), Dudley Plunkett develops a cogent argument for the spiritual within secular education. According to Plunkett, the spiritual realm extends beyond rational and sensory forms of knowledge; it is unique to each person; it is a holistic concept; it allows us to sense the ultimate ground of our being; to access the transcendental; and to realise that the spiritual nature of humanity is its primary identity. He believes education needs to accommodate the rational, holistic and spiritual. Plunkett believes that there is a shift occurring and that “we are coming back to an authentically spiritual view of reality” (1990, p.118). Although this seems a naive and optimistic view, Plunkett skilfully places the argument. The discussion of the values terrain that “could be adopted as a basis for educational policymaking and practice” (p.17) provides a plausible shift in organisational thinking. His map of the values terrain shows the linkages between and the exclusive aspects of the three main perspectives of rationalistic, holistic and spiritual values. His discussions of the different perspectives are clearly explained, leading to a hopeful vision for the future through a thoughtful blending of the three. His hope lies in the spiritually attuned teacher: “The beginning of effective teaching must lie in the knowledge of the self, and yet this is a dimension that is virtually ignored in initial teacher education” (p. 133). Plunkett hopes for a revolution of the teacher’s heart and mind to return to a concept of teaching as an authentic vocation through which they “exercise an active moral and spiritual responsibility” (p. 136).

Peter Abbs has written extensively on aesthetics education and has entered the debate on the spiritual in education in his article: *On the Spiritual Element in Arts Education* (1995). He believes that the arts must provide the laboratory to explore the much-neglected spiritual aspect in education in contemporary life. Spirituality is seen by Abbs as intrinsic to human existence. Through the arts, metaphors and technical means for reflecting the invisible life of human experience are provided.

Yet David Best (1996) finds Abbs' work on spirituality and the arts to be specious and diminishing to the understanding and plausibility of arts education. "Understanding and feeling are inseparable" (p. 52). The ongoing argument between the two theorists is important. It is essential that students are able to develop their language within the terminology of particular practices and develop their critical abilities so that they are able to discern that which achieves its goal within the context of the work. But it is important that we tread beyond the safe paths and as Abbs has attempted, try to define and explain and describe otherness. Best works within a defined philosophical framework and his criticism of Abbs' work is useful in clarifying research into performance.

David Carr would seem to embrace Abbs' notion of an affinity between arts education and spirituality. *Towards a Distinctive Conception of Spiritual Education* (1995) moves spiritual education from the realm of morals education and aligns it with the arts-literature, poetry, drama, painting and music. Myth and metaphor, analogy and allegory, parable and poetry provide a common spiritual language for exploring the uncharted territory of the human soul through the arts and through religious education. Carr refutes the belief that spiritual education can take place across the curriculum. Schools that take religious and arts education seriously would be more likely to be able to lead a spiritual conversation.

Carr is driven to create more rigorous analysis of spirituality in education. Thus in *Rival Conceptions of Spiritual Education* (1996), he struggles with the idea that unless students are introduced to religious and spiritual practices their understanding will be superficial. But he holds that spiritual education is not identical to religious education. Carr acknowledges that introducing spiritual education within a secular education system is fraught with problems yet he remains open to the challenge. Carr is of interest because he is concerned to provide a feasible model of spiritual education (1995, p. 84). He has been more successful in suggesting what it is not, but in so doing examines the pitfalls open to "the legion of milk and water secular spiritualists who are currently

dancing to the bizarre tunes of officially inspired guidelines on spiritual education” (1996, p. 462). The comment in his paper on ‘Rival conceptions of spiritual education’ in the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* (1996) that the proper aim of religious or spiritual education is that of facilitating a critical understanding of faith and other aspects of experience on the part of young people is helpful.

Yet the arts provide opportunities for ‘spiritual experience and understanding...available through enquiries and activities’ (Carr, 1996, p.176). Carr does not seem to have formulated a definite approach to the curriculum implementation of spirituality but has suggested possible areas for exploration. He believes that the healthiest environment for an effective spiritual education would be ‘in schools which take religious education and the arts seriously to the extent that religious aspirations and artistic achievements are vigorously encouraged, appreciated and celebrated within the school community’ (199, p. 97). Carr is reluctant to release religious education from the equation for it seems to provide a language to discuss and critique spirituality within cultural contexts. It should therefore induce a greater sensibility towards transcendent experiences and an openness to the ineffable and the mysterious. There is benefit in the discussion that Carr has entertained for it should prompt a more rigorous engagement with the ways in which spirituality in education and spiritual education are approached. It informs the response to ‘the difficult question of how in practice spiritual knowledge and dispositions might be effectively communicated in the context of formal education’ (p. 97). Abbs and Carr are in conversation with the educational community on the issue of spirituality in learning. It is evident that, as Carr says, the terrain needs mapping and he is ready for that philosophical debate.

Nigel Blake (1996), on the other hand, disparages Carr’s earlier efforts. Blake argues that spirituality is incompatible with any form of secular institutionalisation. He states that social and economic measures to improve education and society would “do more to foster spiritual health than spiritual education ever could” (p. 455). Carr (1996) responded to this criticism by saying that educators should enter into and attempt to develop a curriculum of substance and relevance.

Lewis (2000) seems to offer clarification and a possible model for spiritual education. He places it within a holistic educational framework and perhaps attempts too drastically to make the spiritual commonplace. Although Lewis believes that the spiritual is complementary to the rational, intellectual or scientific aspects of the human mind, he also states that spiritual education deals with qualities of the heart and mind. Later in the essay he writes that spiritual education is conceived of as the cultivation of important qualities of the heart and mind and not the preserve of any area of the curriculum. Lewis swings more fully into a hymn for spiritual education towards the end of the essay:

The spiritual practice I am advocating is aimed at...cleansing, so that all our faculties may be deployed in seeing things as they are, with a balance between our intellectual and value-sensing capacities, and harmony in our physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual ways of being. (2000, p. 14)

Lewis hopes for a radical way of seeing education as a 'sacred enterprise' (p.15) and his idealism is energising. Unfortunately he does not provide models of practice or clarification of the debate. He seems to suggest that a renewed 'orientation towards ourselves and our relations with all other things...can find fruitful expression in all areas of the curriculum' (p.14). He has brought a range of new thinkers into the discussion, but remains unclear as to what the heart and mind really mean and how he proposes this is actually done within the curriculum. Lewis falls into idealistic generalisation and gives nothing more concrete than the other essayists, while Blake had no such intention and Carr admits to the difficulty. But Lewis provides a bridge to Miller's (2000) approach to spirituality in education within a holistic framework.

In *Rites of Enactment: Drama in Education Today* (1996) Malcolm Ross opens up further avenues, proposing a rather different role for the drama teacher - that of a reflective, guiding, negotiating model and one that acknowledges the ritual within the play. His work has focussed on validating arts education, often through modes of evaluation and assessment.

Spirituality and the curriculum edited by Adrian Thatcher (1999) provides a range of British views on the ways that spirituality might be accommodated in the curriculum. Sheldrake in Thatcher (1999) seemed to feel that spirituality was slowly being accepted as a serious academic discipline within the curriculum. But exactly how that should be done still seems problematic. It could be aligned to theology or to ethics or moral theology. He condemns naive 'new age' jargon but does not strongly commit to a particular approach, after all spirituality, Sheldrake admits, is still viewed with suspicion in academic circles. Markham in Thatcher (1999) calls for an engaged diversity model that still seems to attest to the desire for spirituality to be all things but not something specific and certainly not something quantifiable for the curriculum. Bowness and Carter consider that the English Framework for the Inspection of Schools attempts to develop a model for the assessment of the spiritual development of the child. The legislation recognised spirituality as underpinning the whole curriculum and ethos of the school. But the authors find that all the subjects of the curriculum are vehicles for spirituality. They find great reason for the inclusion of spirituality in education, but they do not seem much clearer about the form this should take. It would seem best to forget agreement as to the best curriculum approach and to allow a diversity of approaches to enable the reality of spirituality to enrich the curriculum. The debate is alive but it is proving difficult to accommodate and clearly legislate for this type of diversity within a National Curriculum approach to education.

In the mid-1990s there was not a lot of conversation in mainstream educational journals about spirituality and education and Groen's article 'Does your school have a soul?' in *Principal* (1996) is an exception. He looks to philosophy and theology for the metaphors for schooling and states that matters of the heart are not taken seriously in educational research. Although Groen is not entering the debate about spirituality and education, he points to the need to see schools as something other than businesses to be economically handled. Bede Griffiths (1989) echoes the need to question our present materialist view of reality and "to recover the elements of the more universal and profound vision" (p.11). But more is appearing and on the Naropa website (2001) Brown noted that the December-January issue of *Educational Leadership* was devoted

to the topic of “The Spirit of Education” and that submissions for the issue were greater than for any other. There would seem to be growing discussion as we enter the new millennium and there is the concern that spirituality should become used too ubiquitously. Mayes in *Teacher Education Quarterly* (Spring 2001) wrote concerning spiritual reflectivity in teachers. He defines spirituality as “the pursuit of a trans-personal and trans-temporal reality that serves as the ontological ground for an ethic of compassion and service”(p.1). Mayes seems initially concerned with a more creative and personal exploration of spirituality, but it is within the framework of religious education. He does not advocate infusing the curriculum with spirituality through the arts, for example.

As the arguments concerning spirituality and education continue, at the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, an on-line conference on Spirituality in Education (1998) has been conducted. The concern is not whether there should be a spiritual element in education, but an astonishment at the lack of a holistic approach to learning which embraces spiritual literacy.

Parker Palmer (1998) advocates the need “to explore the spiritual dimension of teaching, learning and living” (p. 1). He believes that the spiritual should infuse our learning and places emphasis on the honouring and enlivening of the spiritual life of the teacher. “The human quest for connectedness” (p. 2) is not subject specific. Retreats for teachers to explore their spirituality have become a reality in some parts of North America, through Parker Palmer’s work.

Miller (2000) provides a broad-brush stroke concerning the spiritual in education. Certainly it is easier to touch the spiritual in arts education but Miller, like Palmer, believes that it should pervade the teacher’s practice. He writes of the soulful school and teacher and invokes Palmer when he writes of soulful change (p. 143). Holistic education provides the stage for conversation about soul in education. It permits spirituality to be part of teacher practice and to soften the focus on how it is to be implemented through the curriculum. But Miller (2000) is cognizant of the problems

confronting a soulful education that would attempt to balance the trends of outcome based education and accountability that “can drain the vitality from our classrooms” (2000, p.11). Unlike the British journal contributors, Miller has the spaciousness of a book to explore his vision for a spiritual curriculum. He considers education as an holistic endeavour and is concerned with how spirituality might pervade the curriculum rather than be concerned, as the British must through the strictures of the National Curriculum, with arguing for a more subject specific solution rather than settling for the “scattershot” approach derided by Carr (1995, p. 86). The first part of the book establishes, in a well supported and enriching manner, the notion of the soul and its importance for well-being. Thomas Moore, the writer, psychotherapist and founder of the Institute for the Study of Imagination, has been inspirational for Miller and his concept of soul is essential for the study: “Soul has to do with depth, value, relatedness, heart and personal substance” (p. 21). The second part of *Education and the Soul* provides practical ways to bring spirituality into the curriculum. Tools that might be used in a range of classrooms such as meditation, visualisation, dream work and journal writing are explained and their utilisation seems viable. There is something practical provided for the teacher. Spiritual education would seem to permeate a school only in alternative and Waldorf environments. Otherwise the arts were the area suggested for the exploration of a soulful education.

Spirituality in education and the arts could be seen as the marriage of two marginalised areas. Miller cites Waldorf schools as examples of the arts being integral to everything in the curriculum and essential to the unfolding of the inner person (p. 75). He also quotes Neville (1987), the Australian educationalist who blends a theory of education of the psyche or the role of emotion, imagination and the unconscious in learning. Neville does not write of spiritual education but he does write of the attempts to avoid the soul in education and the need to balance this lop-sided approach to education. When citing Neville, Miller notes the importance that is made of nourishing the child’s soul through “play, dance and drama” (Miller, p. 84). The environment or earth education is another area where ecological interdependence mirrors the human need for relationship, relevance and reverence. Miller’s description of a soulful school is holistic and

integrates body, mind, emotions and spirit (p. 110). For education of the soul, the teacher is crucial. Mindfulness underpins the work of the fully authentic teacher (p. 132).

Miller's book provides some very practical approaches toward a spiritual education. The last section deals with change and the principles of a soulful education along with considering the work of Parker Palmer who has developed a model of change. Miller makes education of the soul a viable educational approach.

Bernie Neville's (1989) lucid study of educating the emotions, the imagination and the unconscious is a coherent exposition on how to expand our educational repertoire. *Educating Psyche* is a comprehensive application of the transpersonal in an educational setting that a priori acknowledges the spiritual dimension of the individual. Jungian influences are evident in his writing. He sees two forces in education, the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Neville argues that conventional teaching has been one-sided. The arts have been marginalised; they are seen as recreational diversions rather than real studies (p.10-11). He presents the need for developing a "multiple vision" (p. 292) of what education is. The arts are the path to a soulful education: "We desperately need to return Soul to the classroom..." (p. 293). It is a lively, well-referenced and engaging argument for soul to infuse education. Neville rarely uses the term spirituality in his writing. He employs soul, which is aligned to imagination, rather than to any religious or mystical experience. His arguments give a practical approach to working with concepts, such as Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence (1983). The writings of Jean Houston (1982, 1987) on the multiple possibilities for human creativity are inspirational and can be read as manuals for spiritual and creative enrichment that have some relevance to educational settings.

Waldorf education provides an example within our community of schooling that is based on spiritual premises. Martin (1993) states that the Waldorf teacher is encouraged "to see the divine in each human being" (p. 127). Although there is much in Rudolf Steiner's educational philosophy that would benefit mainstream, secular schooling, its blatant admission of the importance of the spiritual in daily life keeps such influence

marginal.

The Conference of Soul Education: Spirit of Learning held in October 2000 at Findhorn, in Scotland, brought the debate concerning arts education and spirituality into an international arena. Although the conference was broad in its treatment of spirituality in education, it attempted to open the conversation beyond the concern of a few esoteric individuals. Alfredo Steir-Younis, the Director of the Swiss office of the World Bank, gave the keynote address. Steir-Younis spoke on the important linkages that exist between spirituality and economics and the role that human values play in the decision-making process. Ethical, moral and spiritual dimensions of globalisation and development were his concerns. He gave the teacher a prominence that is not evident in government policy in many environments: "The role of the teacher is fundamental, a position of incredible responsibility - the most important role in society" (<http://www.findhorn.org> 2000). The importance of the teacher in bringing fuller dimensions to the learning situation was embedded in the conference. Miller stated that: "The soul of the child responds so much more to the being of the teacher than the curriculum" (*ibid*). The health and well-being of the teacher was crucial to the healthy functioning of the school and for Nash, Chief Executive of the UK's Teachers' Benevolent Fund, the spiritual was an essential element for well-being.

Zohar outlined the concept of spiritual intelligence. Her address was strongly informed by her research into spiritual intelligence and her writings (2000). Holism, tolerance, independence, questioning, self-awareness, compassion, being, vision and value, spontaneity and flexibility were some of her criteria for identifying the spiritual quotient of intelligence. Her research pinpoints a "god spot" in the temporal lobes and neural waves that bind the awareness. She believes that as we ask the necessary questions the physiology of the brain will be revealed to have this transformative intelligence.

Spirituality in learning is of interest to academics precisely because it is difficult and it is of interest to teachers because it is a dimension that is silent and lacking in articulation in contemporary schooling. It is the belief of this study that if we begin to be aware and

describe the spiritual in our educational experience that we will enrich and invigorate our curricula and learning environments.

Theoretical framework

Heuristic inquiry within a phenomenological perspective will provide the theoretical framework for the methodology of this study. Phenomenology looks for the structure and essence of a phenomenon. It places the researcher within the research. Heuristic inquiry emphasises the connectedness of the researcher to the researched, while phenomenology encourages more detachment. Intuition and tacit understandings are essential to the heuristic researcher. Patton (1990) stresses that the rigour of this form of inquiry is not an issue and implicit within its processes.

Systematic observation and dialogues with self and others, plus in-depth interviews of co-researchers builds a meaningful research experience. Moustakas (1990, p. 55) describes how a researcher acknowledged that her research had changed and enriched her life. The self-knowledge required of the heuristic researcher creates the depth of understanding of the situation that validates this method. Moustakas provides the definitive explanation of the heuristic method of research.

The coda in McLaren's *Schooling as a Ritual performance* (1986) excites the researcher to be a "laughing fool who challenges the idea of the rational western self-identical subject, wrapped in reifications and rationalizations" (p. 290). His vision and language take contemporary pedagogical attitudes to task when they do not break through intellectualisation to meaningful change. In the foreword to the second edition (1993) Colin Lankshear describes it as "a work of existential phenomenology and literature and an ethnography of a school" (1993, p. viii). The book is compassionate in its treatment of the study of the school and its micro and macro rituals and the scholarship behind the study is substantial and integrated into the analysis of the complex entity. McLaren is able to distil the vast scope of ritual scholarship into a workable format for framing his study of a Catholic secondary school that had a large Portuguese community. Underpinning McLaren's promotion of the use of ritology as a way of studying

classroom environments is the belief “in the inexorable exigency for building a more just and humane world and calls for teachers to critically engage students at the level of their own cultural literacy” (p. 257).

Although McLaren is interactive in much of his participant-observer role, he was not the teacher and the heuristic level of the research differs from the present study which embraces the researcher as co-participant in the research. McLaren was certainly cognizant of the need to be open and clear about the way he received the information from his role as observer: “I wanted to win the confidence of the teachers and students and encourage them to react to me as an individual first, and an observer second (p. 66). His emphasis on the need for meaningful change through the agency of mindful research is something that this thesis would seek to promote.

McKenna (1999) addresses research that is adequate to the task of revealing the “experience of the realm of the numinous” (p. 173) that is encountered in playback theatre. By working with personal story the actors and conductor in playback theatre actually reconstruct and reveal meanings. It allows the multiplicity of meanings. This theatre form evokes connectivity and communion. McKenna argues that it is “a reliable research instrument if we use the lens of heuristics and ethnography to explore inner validity” (p. 179). This argument could be applied to Authentic Movement as a research instrument. Yet the epiphany that McKenna suggests that might occur for the teller is different to that of the actor and more aligned to the illumination or catharsis that may occur for the audience in conventional theatre or the witness in Authentic Movement. McKenna’s article is an important voice in encouraging the soul in drama research. Although it was not instrumental in exciting this work, the synchronicity of the impulse of both is interesting.

Qualitative research methods are used in the present study, following experiences in previous research undertaken (Irving, 1991) where I utilised naturalistic research methods such as interviewing, participant-observation and journal reflection within a framework informed by a feminist approach to research. Although similar strategies of

data collection are employed, such as interviewing, participant-observation and written documents, the method of executing and analysing the data is influenced by heuristic inquiry processes within a phenomenological framework. Patton (1990) elucidates the method especially in relation to interviewing techniques and interpretation of data. The chapter on qualitative techniques gives a description of three basic approaches to interviewing and discusses the strengths and weaknesses of each. Patton teases out six types of questions that are used and in so doing guides researchers towards a meaningful interview design. In all, Patton's analysis and evaluation of interviewing technique opens the way for the possibility of a well thought out and sensitively structured approach to interviewing which still sits well within the theoretical framework chosen for this study. Processes of analysis and interpretation suggested by Patton are invaluable to this study (see chapter three).

Janesick (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) urges the qualitative researcher to be wary of methodology and writes of the idolatry of method. "Qualitative research depends on the presentation of solid descriptive data, so that the researcher leads the reader to an understanding of the meaning of the experience under study" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.390). Janesick believes that the research into education and the human services has become decontextualised. "We need to capture the lived experience of the individuals and their stories, much like the choreographer who crafts a dance" (p. 394). Often trivial questions have been asked, especially in quantitative and psychometric research and the essence of the matter was avoided. Janesick asks the researchers to reawaken their imagination and to put passion and wisdom back into research. This approach is heartening for the heuristic researcher who can often feel lightweight and lacking seriousness without the tools of questionnaires and statistics. The heuristic method asks the researcher to be fully present and vulnerable in the research and to represent the participants authentically. Taylor (1996) would seem to support this approach: "...since many studies are specialized and context specific, it may be best to generate your own instrumentation or adapt others for the needs of your particular study" (p. 124). He is also encouraging of research into drama and arts education: "research has the potential in this field not only to reveal new insights and to improve our practice, but to serve as

an agent for advocacy - to show decision makers that drama and theatre for youth 'works'" (p. 129).

Taylor (1998) expands upon the reflective practitioner as researcher. He argues that the qualitative researcher needs to avoid the pitfalls of over-validating their research and often losing the "unpredictable, the diverse and the different" (p. 137). Through the arts a multiplicity of truths are revealed. Taylor is cognizant of the power of listening to and learning from the life stories of the people we work with" (p. 141) as drama practitioners. Through his mapping of drama research as a rich, qualitative endeavour, meaningful research is encouraged.

Kvale (1996) describes the interview as an inter change of views. He writes in some length of the phenomenological method. Like Patton he is concerned with the quality of the interviewer's skill and gives guidelines for awareness and organisation before, during and after the interview. Kvale's study encourages the qualitative researcher to critique their work and to develop skills for creative analysis and interpretation. Although Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, and Alexander (1995) do not follow the phenomenological approach to research, the text is useful in that it is written with social and health science researchers in mind and is a practical manual which considers the preparation of the research; the style of interviewing, placing this within a clinical setting and considering the pragmatics of this style of research; and outlines the use of computer software such as NUD.IST in organisation and analysis of data. The text provides useful support in developing interview strategies and analysis.

Glesne and Peshkin's (1992) ethnographic base offers guidance with participant-observation. Their information on field notes is of great help. They make the study orderly and creative. Concerns about being the facilitator and researcher in the method of workshop study were raised through this reading and salved by Patton's explication of the heuristic method.

The interviews and journals that provide the "talk and text" (Silverman in Denzin &

Lincoln, 2000) for this study have been interpreted in a way that presumes “primacy of the individual mind” (Gergen & Gergen in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 1042). It provides an interesting first descriptive stage in research into the experience of dramatic performance in education. So much work in drama is relational that the next stage of the research should be with group discussion, interaction and performance across a broader spectrum in the drama classroom. Gergen & Gergen propose that “a new vocabulary of research methodology and ultimately a relational reconception of self” (p. 1042) will open up the possibility and impact of qualitative research. Heuristic research allows actual autobiographical connections with the phenomenon being investigated. “It demands the total presence, honesty, maturity and integrity of the researcher...” and a willingness to experience “the personal transformation that exists as a possibility in every heuristic journey” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 14).

The Perform/Transform workshops that were used as part of the study were informed by Gabrielle Roth’s Five Rhythms and Authentic Movement developed by Mary Starks Whitehouse and her students Janet Adler and Joan Chodorow. The journal writing of the participants and participant observation were used in the study. Yet the theory behind the two forms of movement is pertinent. Authentic Movement is explored in the compilation of essays edited by Patrizia Pallaro (1999). In an essay on ‘Tao of the body’ Mary Starks Whitehouse considers the connection between the physical and the psychological. “...the whole attempt is concerned with the connections between body and psyche or between physical movement which is outer and psychic events which are inner” (p. 49). Janet Adler’s essay on ‘Body and soul’ links the body and soul inextricably. Authentic Movement is a specific movement form that is defined by the relationship between the person moving and the person witnessing (p. 64). In this relationship the mover and witness will both experience the numinous and for both it can be a personal epiphany from intuitively embracing the experience. Adler is emphatic that “to transform, we must descend into our bodies” (p. 187). Adler also considers the transpersonal qualities of Authentic Movement. Joan Chodorow espouses the importance of the dance/movement experience as an age-old sacred language that will facilitate the “transcendent function” (p. 250) in the human psyche.

Roth (1989, 1997) has published two books on the Five Rhythms and the experiences of the rhythms by participants in her workshops. Her writing is descriptive of the process and effect of the movement through the Five Rhythms of flowing, staccato, chaos, lyrical and stillness. "Movement is the medium of change" (1989, p. 206). Roth's writing is accessible and inspirational, likewise the music she has composed for the creative movement through the rhythms. Roth's intention in her later book is to "retrieve our souls through our bodies" (1997, p. 5). It was more than a movement exercise: "The rhythms, when I first identified and named them, turned out to be much more than a way to work out my body, they became a way to work out my soul- to sensitise my intuition, stretch my imagination, and tap new levels of inspiration that I had never dreamed existed" (p. 37). Both methods provided a creative and purposeful base for the Perform/Transform workshops. These forms of movement are pertinent for all people and are particularly relevant for the actor as a means of understanding the power and subtlety of the body. They are integral to this study for they encourage the exploration of the inner life of the participants.

Chapter Three

Overview of methodology

This thesis is driven by a belief that in drama and the creative arts students are able to be fully involved in both immediate and long-term projects that demand personal and collaborative creativity. It is informed by a sense of loss and a belief that public education often lacks a sense of wholeness and meaning. “No one can dance your dance, so to speak. No one can choreograph your dance but you. No one can interpret your data but you” (Janesick, 2000, p. 390). The participants in the research were involved in a series of movement workshops that were designed to focus the experience of dramatic performance. Most wrote journal responses and fourteen participated in an interview session. My experience of similar movement workshops and performance work inspired the study.

The study

The study uses heuristic research methods that allow the researcher to be fully involved in the conversation. “I begin the heuristic investigation with my own self-awareness and explicate that awareness with reference to a question or problem until an essential insight is achieved, one that will throw a beginning light onto a critical human experience” (Moustakas, 1990, p.11). Starting from my articulation of the importance of performance in my own life, and deciding that the series of workshops I undertook with the then Perth-based dancer and teacher, Alice Cummins, was the turning point in my own work, I developed a series of five workshops. The intention of these Perform/Transform Workshops was to provide secondary and university students with the opportunity to experience performance in an intimate way through creative and authentic movement and to express their feelings and ideas about these workshops in their journals. Some of the students would discuss their experience of performance further in interviews.

In the first semester of 2000 Year Twelve Drama and Drama Studies students consented

to be part of the study. They experienced the series of five Perform/Transform Workshops and wrote in journals about their feelings and observations. Five students were selected to be interviewed. This was followed in the second semester of 2000 with a similar series of Perform/Transform Workshops with university students studying for Education degrees and graduate diplomas with drama as a major or minor teaching area. The university students were also interviewed. In 2001 the Year Twelve Drama and Drama Studies students were introduced to the movement work and three further interviews were conducted.

The third research question in this study investigates the links between dramatic performance and spirituality. In relation to this aspect of the study I attended the first International Conference of Soul in Education in Scotland in 2001. During the conference I led a workshop for participants who were not actors or involved in drama and experienced the form as therapy which proved both enlightening and delighting for the participants, according to their verbal and written responses. I was also given the opportunity to work with professional actors during a day's workshop of Perform/Transform and gained further insight into the personal and performance benefits of the workshops. A professional actor was interviewed at this time to provide mature language and experience of the phenomenon of performance.

In response to Moustakas' claim that the researcher must have "actual autobiographical connections" (p. 14) with the phenomenon being investigated, I searched my own personal journals and taped my reflections on performance and its importance in my life. The study has allowed students to talk about their experience of performance and to acknowledge its value; it has made me question the assumptions upon which it is based. Moustakas puts the heuristic process aptly when he describes it as a willingness "to commit endless hours of sustained immersion and focussed concentration on one central question, to risk opening wounds and passionate concerns, and to undergo the personal transformation that exists as a possibility in every heuristic journey" (p. 14). The journey of this part of the study has taken over three years. In that time a number of students have used the workshops as a tool for their performance work and as a method

of self-exploration.

Inspiration

The heuristic researcher is not only intimately and autobiographically related to the question but learns to love the question. It becomes a kind of song into which the researcher breathes life not only because the question leads to an answer, but also because the question itself is infused in the researcher's being. It creates a thirst to discover, to clarify, and to understand crucial dimensions of knowledge and experience. (Moustakas, 1990, p. 43)

In searching for the point when this study began, I tend to identify the impact that performing had in my life when I was teaching in Edinburgh in 1994 and 1995. But I must reach earlier to 1990/91 to my study of Waldorf education as part of my dissertation for my Master of Education degree and my search for a spiritual and creative approach to education. My archaeological dig into why I need to do this study revealed something even more essential. I journeyed into my past and my performance history and uncovered the path not taken when I was accepted into the National Institute of Dramatic Art in Sydney in 1967 and decided not to go:

And so I began not to follow my dream, and that has made all the difference. But now I am trying to reclaim it because I want to find out why, for some people, performance and dramatic performance is so powerful and so important. And thus this study - this study of what it is that happens when we perform... when we are purely, perfectly and fully alive. (Irving, 2001, Tape 1)

The study has been waiting for me for some years and thus I find the heuristic inquiry the appropriate vehicle. My self-dialogue has begun to emerge as an essential resource and a point of clarification of the focus of the work. In Moustakas words: "Such a process is guided by a conception that knowledge grows out of direct human experience and can be discovered and explicated initially through self-inquiry" (1990, p. 17).

The shape of the research began in 1992 when I attended creative improvisation movement classes in Perth with the dancer, teacher and performer Alice Cummins. Alice

has a national profile as a dancer and teacher. Since 1990 she has been developing an approach to teaching alongside her practice as an artist. She is one of the few Australian Body-Mind Centering practitioners and now lives in Sydney. The structure of her classes in the early nineties in Perth is reflected in my Perform/ Transform workshops that the students, who are my co-researchers, attended in 2000 and 2001. Creative movement based on Gabrielle Roth's Five Rhythms and Authentic Movement form the base of these workshops and it was the enlightenment that I experienced through a twelve-week series with Alice Cummins that emphasised the importance and healthfulness of performance in my life.

The first time I used Authentic Movement with secondary students was in 1998 and through an intuitive leap during a movement session I introduced the students to the method. They were a lively and eager group and they appeared to taste, savour and devour the work with delight. As a pre-study activity I provided them with an evaluation sheet that covered a range of aspects of their performance work but one question specifically considered their personal experience of Authentic Movement. Elle's response was important: "I feel more in touch with myself and who I am. I am more of a whole person and this has helped me know who I really am" (Elle, 1998, Response sheet).

Underlying my work is the belief that it is our grail to become fully human and that education should lead us to our potential. For some people the Creative and Performing Arts may be the path to their true identity. Embedded in being fully human is the engagement of the whole person and thus the acknowledgement of the spiritual. "The soul can only be present when body and spirit are; it cannot breathe, exist, or move disconnected from the body" (Roth, 1997, p.4). Gabrielle Roth articulates what I discovered in Alice Cummins classes: "Mine is a dancing path. My bible is the body because the body can't lie. My master is rhythm. There is no dogma in the dance. When you let your body dance you immediately strip away the lies and dogma until all you're left with is the spirit of life itself" (p. 8). The importance of movement to explore self and character has become stronger over the last years in my teaching and my own

performance work. I utilised aspects of the method when directing shows in Edinburgh and in Perth and as an essential part of the process when developing performance pieces with friends. Always there are shifts and changes but the inspiration of Gabrielle Roth and Authentic Movement, both legacies of the work with Alice Cummins, are the foundation to my approach to performance work.

During the workshops with Alice Cummins in 1992 I discovered more honesty and focus and strength in performing for an audience. No other technique had so liberated my work, self and spirit. The following is an extract from my journal at the time:

Things do not have to be beautiful but they do have to be honest. ...My piece was more in the body than before (I am so restrained) ... I do want to liberate my heart. I want to open truly and set my heart on a plate. I want to dance from my heart. To dance my love, my vision, my silence. (Irving, 1992, Personal Journal)

I began to wonder how secondary students might react to the Authentic Movement. I was using more creative movement in my classes, although I found it more difficult when teaching in Scotland for students seemed to have a fairly narrow range of what drama could be. Yet in Scotland I attended a weekend workshop on Authentic Movement that had a more therapeutic lean than the performance focused work I had discovered through Alice Cummins. As this form is vital to the Perform/Transform workshops that initiated the research to the students, it is necessary to define the method. The Authentic Movement Institute defines it on its homepage as "...a completely self-directed form in which individuals may discover a movement pathway that offers a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious. **Authentic Movement** explores the relationship between a mover and a witness, being seen and seeing" (<http://www.authenticmovement-usa.com>). Drama education professionals in Western Australia were concerned about drama as therapy in the classroom (Curriculum Council, 1998, Section 3.7). I wondered about implementing Authentic Movement. Eventually I felt justified in introducing it as part of creative improvised movement in drama. I reflected on the impact Authentic Movement had upon my performance work and the benefits adult performers in Perth and Edinburgh had discovered when I utilised it in rehearsal

processes.

As an actor it was a relief not to work in my usual 'head space'. In the early stages of the movement workshops conducted by Alice Cummins I found a freshness and naivety in working with my body. I was able to relax my critical mind:

Working with movement is an initiation into the world of the body as it actually is, what it can do easily, with difficulty, or not at all. But it is also, or can be, a serious discovery of what we are like - for we are like our movement". (Whitehouse cited in Pallaro, 1999, p. 45)

Mary Starks Whitehouse, in this quote, attests to the power of the body. When my voice came into the improvisation, it was integrated with my movement and more natural. The impact that a course of Authentic Movement and Creative Movement had on me as a performer and personally was powerful. I could not help but wonder at the effect such work might have on younger performers. Perhaps this more personal, focused and subtle style might overcome the superficiality of some of their improvisational work. Certainly the senior secondary students would benefit from movement explorations that would empower them personally and in their performance work.

The first student group to experience the Authentic Movement workshops was the Year Twelve class in 1998. These workshops were not identical to the final Perform/Transform workshops but they utilised the Five Rhythms and Authentic Movement. The students performance work matured as they discovered the acting space and audience through this method. Kris, a perceptive student, felt her performance had developed through the workshops and class work: "I am really aware of the audience in my body now but not in my mind. I am actually becoming the characters and feeling everything. Every time I perform I improve/develop/learn"(Kris, 1998, Response sheet). Through the workshops Kris had more faith in the truth of the embodied story.

Phases in research method

In May 2000 I wrote a series of observations about the Perform/Transform Workshops.

At that stage I had a two-session pilot with trainee teachers, my own rehearsal work with another performer and the Year Twelve Drama class of 2000 as my co-researchers. One excerpt describes Authentic Movement:

In authentic movement I stand before my partner. Move to a place to begin. Critical mind wants to shape and place. It is denied as, with my eyes closed, or attention inner, I move to the spot.... at that moment, in this exact spot in my history, I begin. The movements are my movements, dictated by my history, my physical type and rhythm/ patterning. The story is embedded and embodied in my body, in my psyche, in my mind.... this representation of my psychophysical state is peculiar to me. And can be interpreted, as always, sifted through the stories of the witness.... The reading is as valid as the writing... . Performance is about entering and presenting/representing in the shared domain. (Irving, 2000, Workshop Reflections)

The five stages identified in heuristic research of immersion, incubation, illumination, explication and creative synthesis have an interesting corollary in the five rhythms identified by Gabrielle Roth as universal. “In *flowing* you discover yourself. In *staccato* you define yourself. *Chaos* helps you dissolve yourself, so you don’t end up fixed and rigid in the self you discovered and defined. *Lyrical* inspires you to devote yourself to digging deep into the unique expression of your energy. And *stillness* allows you to disappear in the big energy that holds us all so you can start the whole process over again” (1997, pp. 194-195). For both Moustakas and Roth the concern is to give validity to the personal voice, the personal journey. In sharing the discoveries that are important for me as a drama teacher, performer and human being within the heuristic framework the study becomes relevant as it synthesises the personal experiences and allows their universal nature. “The creative synthesis is the peak moment when the researcher recognizes the universal nature of what something is and means, and at the same time grows in self-understanding and as a self” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 90).

Initial engagement

The initial engagement was a period of posing and disposing of questions that my research would answer. Although Patton (1990) utilises the five basic phases of the heuristic process of phenomenological inquiry, Moustakas (1990) expands those phases

to six: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication and creative synthesis. The actual commitment to a specific focus in the study took some time to be elucidated. Although dramatic performance was somehow linked to a concern for exploring how the spiritual element of the human psyche might be invigorated through Arts education, the actual question was elusive. “The engagement or encountering of a question that holds personal power is a process that requires inner receptiveness” according to Moustakas (1990, p. 27). When I examine my writing of the period prior to submitting my proposal, the quest for that focus cries from the pages. I was reading on spirituality, Arts education, and theories of performance and yet the research questions still ranged far and wide. Yet it was not until I performed myself that I realised the question: “I had just experienced what I wanted to study. I had experienced the epiphany of performance. I had really moved to another space in myself. I had performed with excellence, with brilliance” (Irving, 2001, Tape 1).

I was profoundly moved by my performance of a poem at a retirement function at the school and questions about how other performers experience performance were seeded and began to progress. The question may change in emphases but the desire to describe what happens to the person when they perform is the “passionate concern that calls out (to the researcher), one that holds important social meanings and personal, compelling implications” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27). In retrospect the time spent in contemplating, analysing and questioning possible ways of focusing the study seems lugubrious and even more onerous was the search for a research paradigm through which to explore the question. The ease with which the study sits within the heuristic process of phenomenological inquiry belies the path to accepting the approach. The personal tone of the inquiry seemed too comfortable. Research was still something that was impersonal, was written in the third person and could be reinforced with statistical evidence. It took further processing through the phases of the heuristic method for its appropriateness to be acknowledged and pursued.

Immersion

Reflectively, I have been bathing in the waters of this question for years. But once the

focus became clear and the proposal accepted in 1999, my life became permeated with the work. In my teaching I was aware that my belief in the power of drama in our lives could sometimes make me too serious in my defence of the area in a physical and educational sense. I had realised that the more performance work I did the richer my teaching and commitment to my work. The further reading, the development of the research questions that framed the interviews and eventual workshops that preceded them all occurred in an organic manner. Whether my life was swamped by the study or simply flowing in its current, I was utterly implicated in the process.

The development of the Perform/Transform workshops was encumbered by the introduction of the new Drama Studies course in the Upper School curriculum in Western Australia in 1999. I decided to use the students entering their final year of secondary school in 2000 and to focus on the university students. Difficulties arose in promoting the extra-curricular workshops to the university students but two trainee teachers joined me for two workshops in 1999. Both delighted in the form. My focus moved to the secondary students and I married the Perform/Transform workshops to their course in 2000 and 2001 there was no demurring and yet again the study wedded itself to my life and my normal teaching practice. From the first workshop in early 2000, the feedback was that the students enjoyed and benefited from them. The students, who were part of a series of five workshops, were asked to reflect in their journals on the process and invited to be interviewed about their experience of performance work after the workshops.

The second attempt to create a trainee teacher cohort for the study in 2000 was more successful. A university student who had elected to work with my secondary students and me on Thursdays distributed the flyers to his fellow students and friends. A group of seven university students began the journey. Once the annual school production was completed, we met each Tuesday for one to two hours, at the end of the day and completed the five series sequence by the end of the third term.

The flyer promoted the workshops in the following manner:

Trainee drama teachers, students and adults who would like to explore performance through creative and authentic movement are the people I wish to invite into a personally enriching space. These workshops are part of my research into performance and learning, thus the workshops are free. The exploration is nourishing and the chance to move freely in a safe environment offers a space to relax from all the demands of the day. (Perform/ Transform Workshop flyer, 2000)

The workshops ranged in size from seven to four participants. Study commitments meant two left, one young adult who was not studying at the university did not continue after the first session while two other women, one a trainee teacher and the other an art therapist, joined in the second session. Each of the five people interviewed from these workshops maintained the thread through the five week period, writing in their journals, sharing in the debriefing session often held at the end (which were inexpertly taped) and generously responding to the interview. As I noted after the first session of Perform/Transform: "The workshop seemed to have a good feel to it. The people were responsive and seemed involved and interested" (Irving, 2000, Workshop reflections).

The trainee teacher series of workshops allowed for some experimentation with the shape of the workshops. The participants' maturity and experience brought more confidence to push the work to new places and to indicate the possibilities for this combination of creative movement and authentic movement to devise improvised drama. These workshops showed how robust the method could be with actors and how it reaches far beyond therapy. Although I conducted the workshops, I would often join in, especially to even the numbers and I would participate in the whole group creative movement sections. After the third session, where we worked together in a circle, each performing for up to a minute, after which at least two, or the rest of the group, would respond by moving to the impulse created by the original dancer, I wrote the following:

...listening to the bodies - sensing, appreciating - loving the extensions, the reverberations of others, performing for the subtle other we dance. Performing for the subtle other we unite in delight, pain, terror, joy in our abstract dances of selves. Polyphrenically joyous - to sing each other's song. Huge possibilities for performance and devising. Nice tone to the workshop. (Irving, 2000, Workshop reflections)

Structure of the workshops

The workshops were organised along similar lines for both series of Perform/Transform sessions. In most cases we would meet together, sitting in a circle on the floor.

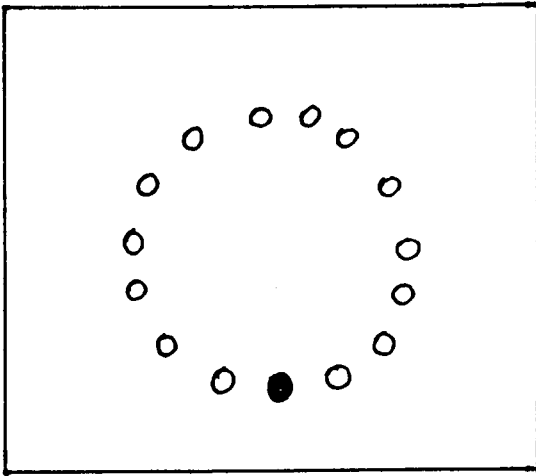


Figure 1.1: Initial meeting circle.

This is fairly standard practice in drama classes and provides a place to share our experience of the day and expectations, and in my case, to outline the activities.

Creative movement:

In the first workshop I introduced the group to Gabrielle Roth's *Five Rhythms* of *flowing*, *staccato*, *chaos*, *lyrical* and *stillness*. The five phases, when moved to the *Initiation* CD by Gabrielle Roth, take about twenty-five minutes. In this first session I often ask the participants to work by themselves and if possible, with their eyes closed at least for the first phase through *flowing*. This can be confronting but it also permits a privacy and discretion that enables concentration and focus and a real listening to the body and its movement. This movement is fluid, circular, and full and has a feminine energy.

Flowing is more than a rhythm; it's a specific energy field in which the feminine aspect of the soul is revealed in all its awesome beauty, fierce power and animal magnetism. Deep within each one of us is a *mother* longing to nurture, a *mistress* impatient to flirt, and a *Madonna* serene in her wisdom. And they all bop out when the beat kicks in. (Roth, 1997, p.54)

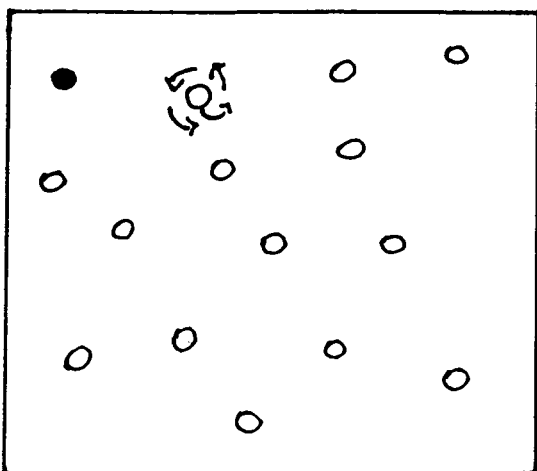


Figure 1.2. Flowing: individuals work separately with their eyes closed.

The staccato rhythm follows. This is far more alert and determined in its energy.

The eyes are open and individuals move with strong intention through the space.

They avoid contact and focus on angular, sharp and precise movement. Roth sees staccato as having a more masculine energy. The performers are aware of each other but make no visual or physical contact. “*Staccato* is about doing, not just being; taking action, not just thinking about it.”(p. 84).

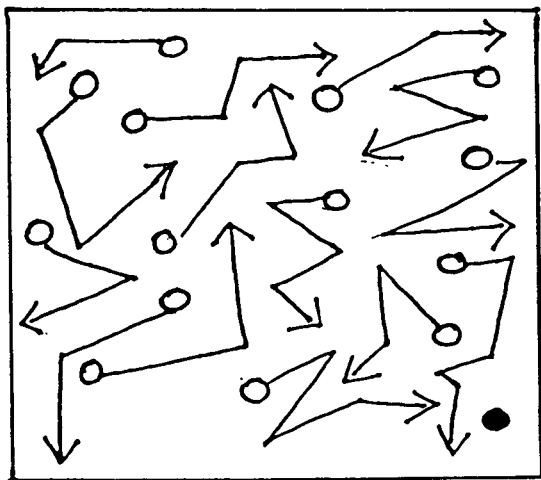


Figure 1.3. Staccato: individuals move around the space with eyes open.

Although I encouraged individual work throughout the first session for the university students, I usually shift the focus in secondary school settings and have the students

work in pairs for the next two rhythms. This allows a playful interaction and a chance to work the rhythms with another person. Roth describes chaos as “the rhythm of adolescence” (p.115). It unleashes an exciting energy. “In *chaos* we learn how to dive below the surface, logical mind to the intuitive mind; how to get in touch with our whims, our impulses, our spontaneous, poetic intelligence, and free them to move through our bodies and hearts” (p.117).

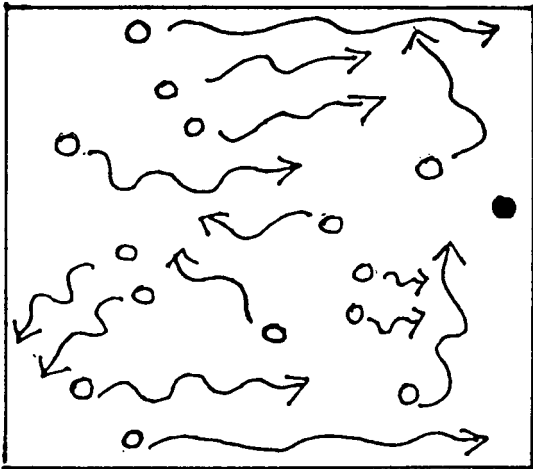


Figure 1.4. Chaos: the performers work together, but are often at a distance from each other. The contact is visual.

The lyrical phase is often trancelike. In the Perform/Transform workshops if students are working together, they may be encouraged to make physical as well as visual contact. The work can be soft and interactive. It might sometimes include the interaction of the whole group. “In *lyrical*, we realize that we have the freedom to keep shifting energies so as never to get stuck in any one possibility and to know that all possibilities are available to us at all times. Indeed, *lyrical* is the rhythm of the soul and the soul is a shape shifter by nature, heir to an ancient shamanic tradition” (pp. 162-163).

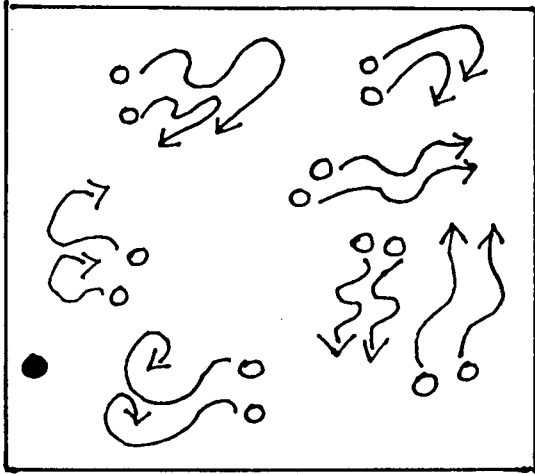


Figure 1.5. Lyrical: if performers work together their contact can help to focus their energies. Eyes are open.

Stillness is the last of the Five Rhythms. Performers return to working solo. Performers may choose to lie down, but they remain contained but not static in their own circle of concentration. “The mystery revealed me to myself as simply a moving meditation: I had to move to find *stillness*; I had to stop dancing to feel the dance” (p.177).

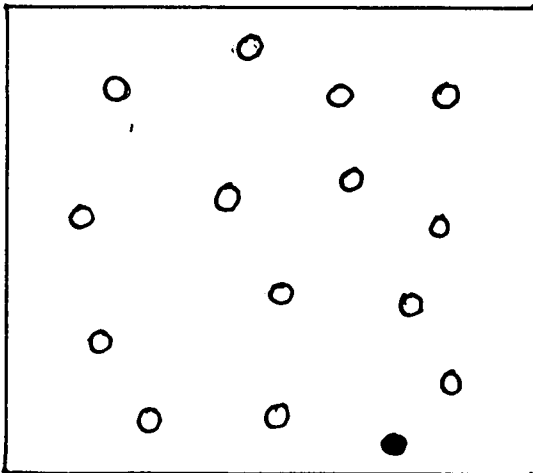


Figure 1.6. Stillness: the performer works alone and the eyes are usually closed.

After the first experience I asked the group to take a quiet time of ten minutes to drink water, relax, and write or draw in their journals.

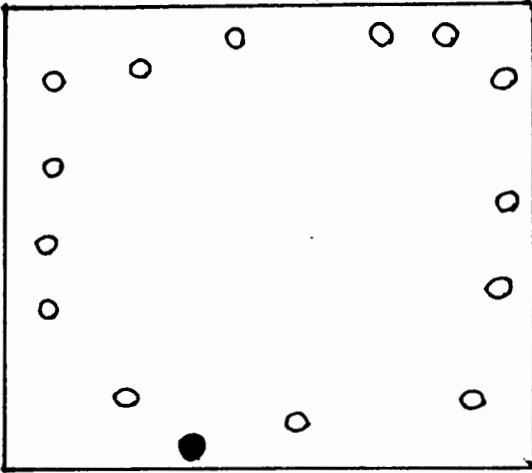
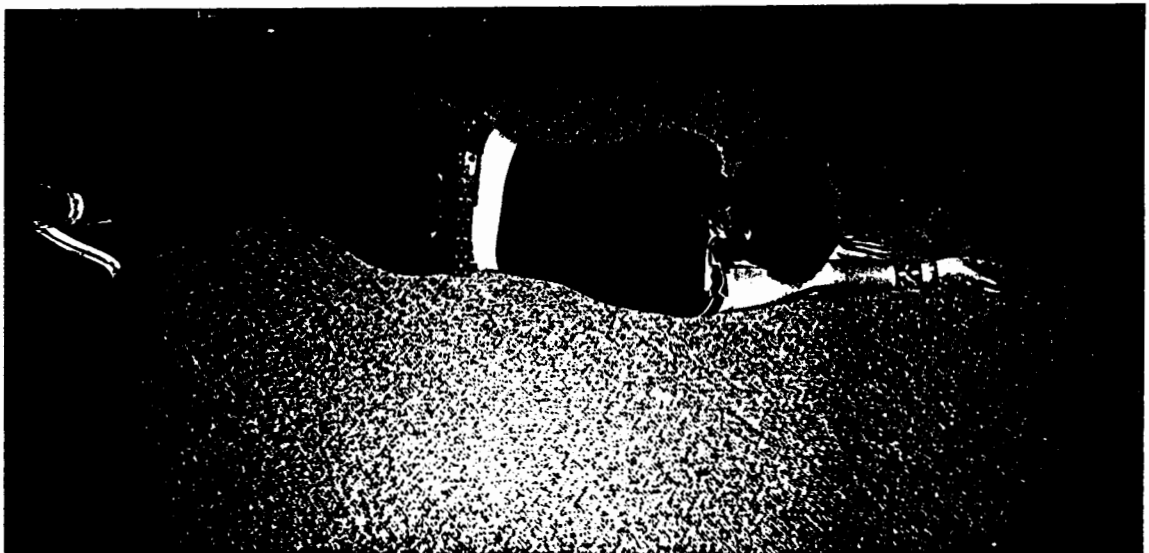


Figure 1.7. Journal reflection: writing or drawing in the journal allows time to integrate the experience.

Creative movement inspired by Gabrielle Roth's Five Rhythms - a photo story:

Flowing:



1.a. Students often start from a prone position.



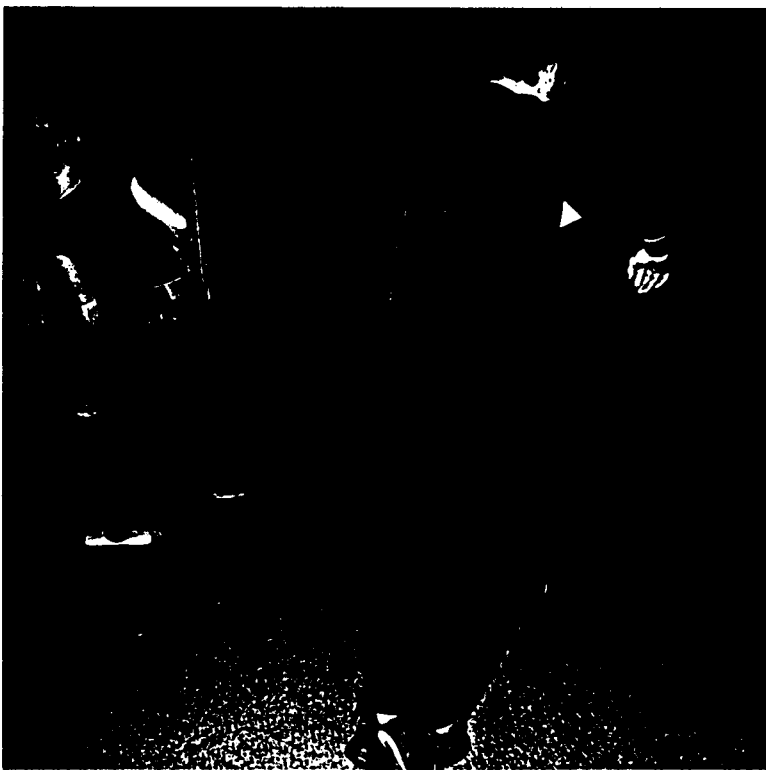
1.b. Some time may be spent on the floor. Movement may be minimal at this stage.



1.c. Students eventually move quite strongly and locomote even with eyes closed.



1.d. Students work discretely, listening to their body's response to the rhythm.



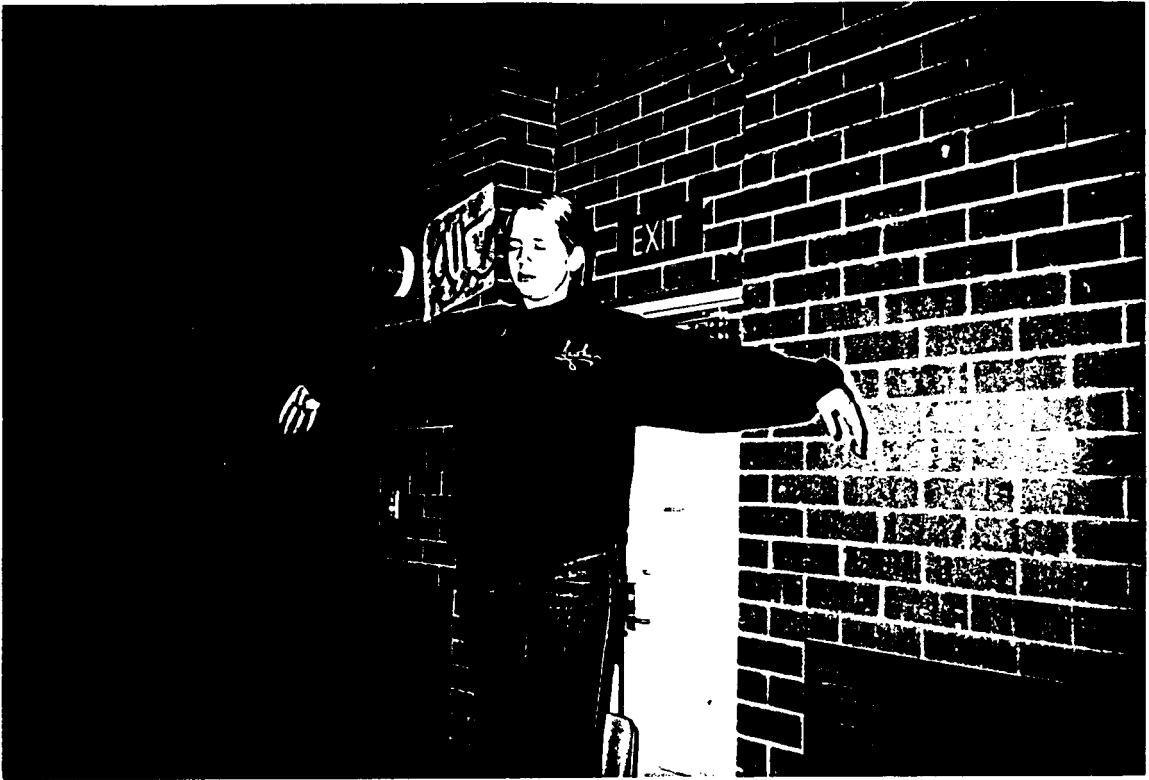
1.e. The focus is held and the action energetic as they move to the *Staccato* phase which is very dynamic.



1.f. Through the *Chaos* and *Lyrical* stages the students may work independently or with partners. Even when working individually they have awareness of each other, sometimes taking on aspects of each other's movement.



1.g. This more interactive phase precedes the final rhythm of *Stillness*



1.h. *Stillness*: This phase allows the performers to return to their own space and focus to integrate the feelings and thoughts invoked by the Five Rhythms.

Authentic movement:

The Authentic Movement used in the first session is the classic configuration for Authentic Movement where the participants work in pairs and take it in turn to be both performer and witness.

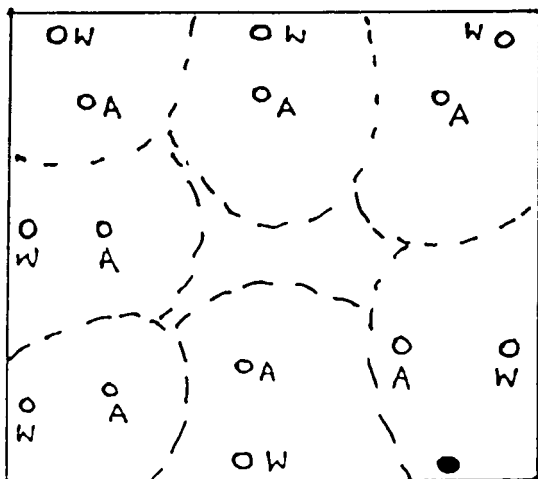


Figure 2.1. The performer works with eyes closed. There is no music.

As the conductor I timed the session and gave each performer four minutes of time for a spontaneous improvised movement piece which is performed with the eyes shut. The witness is therefore the shepherd who maintains safety in the space between performers and in relation to the physical terrain, as well as audience to the actor. At the end of the performance the pair sits and faces each other and the witness asks the performer to say what they enjoyed about the experience.

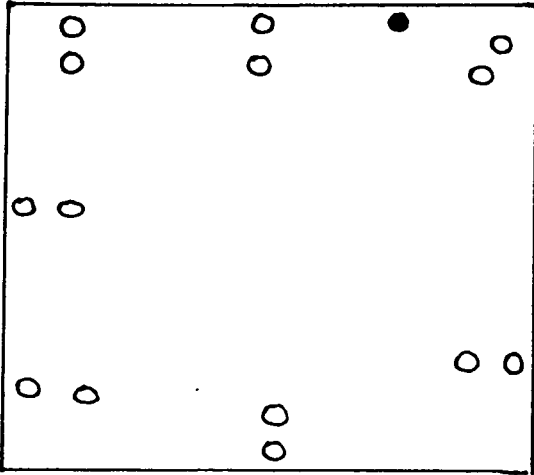


Figure 2.2. Analysis and interpretation are put aside and both the performer and then the witness spoke what they enjoyed about and through the performance.

At the end we met together in the circle and shared feelings, observations and questions.

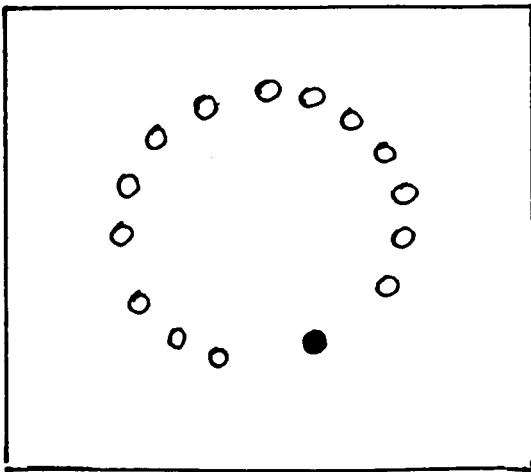


Figure 2.3. Sharing experiences is a way of completing the workshop.

The second meeting utilised the Five Rhythms but *flowing* was danced alone and with eyes shut, *staccato*, *chaos and lyrical* in pairs and *stillness* alone. The Authentic Movement was the same format as the previous week. The similarity is to build up personal comfort with the work and allow exploration to deepen and change. The journal reflection came at the end of the session and there was time for a brief sharing of experiences from the journals and other observations.

In the third session we met in the circle and then danced with a partner, where one initiated the movement and the other responded and the initiation was swapped through the session. The music used was Roth's *Body Jazz*. The sequence was shorter taking about fifteen minutes. At the end, as they lay and rested, I spoke a Kathleen Raine poem, and invited them to move to the words if they wished, or to just relax into it. I was delighted to see the impulse of the words and sounds transformed through their movement. This was an experiment of my own, to see the spontaneous movement reaction to the spoken word. I then introduced a different format for the Authentic Movement section. Inspired by a more recent workshop with Alice Cummins in June 2000, I asked the group to sit in a large circle. Each person would take the space for one to two minutes, the rest would witness.

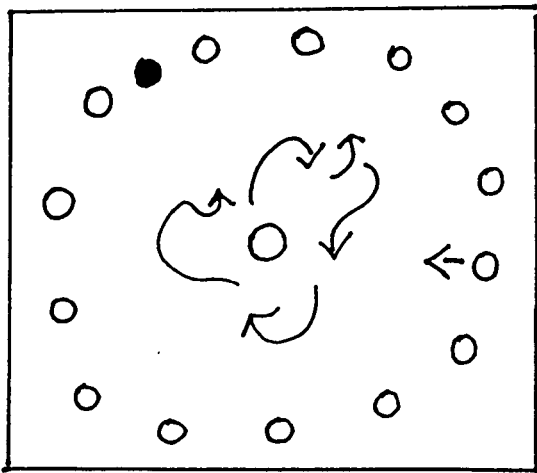


Figure 3.1. With eyes open or closed each performer dances watched by the group. At the end instead of speaking our enjoyment, at least two, or indeed the whole group, apart from the original performer, would respond in movement to the dance. The

performers could elect to move with eyes open or closed. As we progressed through the session this moved from being an imitation, to a response, to a continuation of the original impetus.

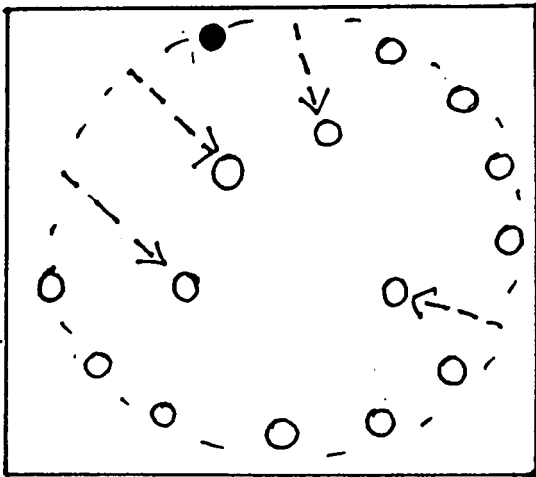


Figure 3.2. At least two “witnesses” move in response to the solo performer. We then had time to write or draw in journals and a debriefing circle.

The fourth session was slightly curtailed for the Year Eleven Drama Studies class was preparing for their assessment task performance evening. But the session was similar in the first section where we danced to Gabrielle Roth’s *Bones* album for almost twenty minutes. We worked, at my discretion, alone and with partners. During movement work I often coach a little, suggesting, reminding, and motivating. I have found such coaching helpful to keep on task with activities as disparate as dance and meditation. The Authentic Movement configuration was inspired by the first style of the form that I was introduced to by Alice Cummins in a series of creative movement improvisation workshops in 1993. I call the style *Taking the Space*. Here the performers sit in a line at the end of the room facing the performance space. Each one will perform for the group and may incorporate voice and sound. Again they may elect to work with eyes open or shut, but at this stage the conductor may suggest to work with eyes open, for this encourages a different relationship with the witnesses and allows them to become

audience. The performance should be up to five minutes in length but may be as short as two. There is no order given and the performers take the space and perform when the time seems right. With adults this works well, but in an earlier class with Year Twelve students we spent a lot of time waiting for the next participant to enter the space!

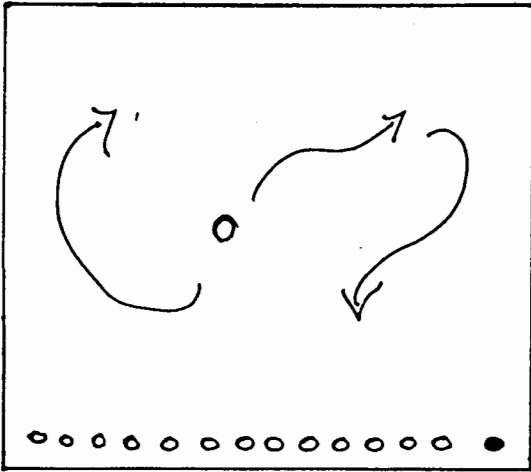


Figure 4.1. In *Taking the Space* the individual performs alone.

At the end of the performance, the performer returns and sits in front of the group.

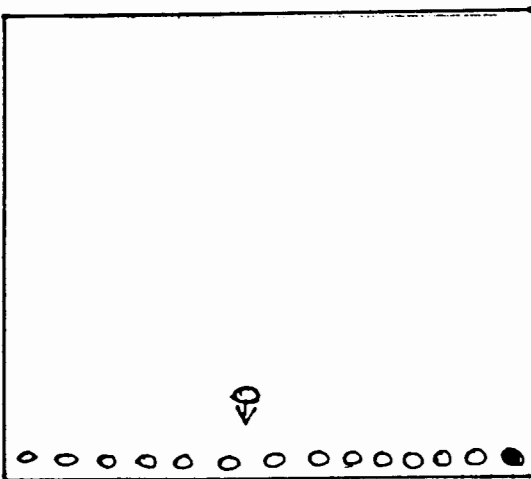


Figure 4.2. The feedback is positive. The performer speaks first.

They are asked to share the things they enjoyed about their performance. And eventually everyone responds with the aspect they enjoyed. It is important to keep the group from explanations and interpretations. Both performer and witnesses speak from their personal experience of the performance. It is astonishing to see how different and particular our perception can be. After this session the participants wrote and drew in their journals. There was no time for a feedback session.

The fifth and final session took place in the last week of the school term. The creative movement sequence utilised music from Osho's *Kundalini Meditation* CD. It is a fifteen-minute piece that evokes quite spirited dance. We moved alone, with a sense of each other's movement and as a whole group. A sense of the group, yet an awareness of self is reflected in the Authentic Movement which is *Taking the Space* and where I would counsel working with eyes open and an awareness of audience, in this last session. There was time for drawing and writing in journals but there was so much feedback during the *Taking the Space*, the final debriefing was more a farewell and thanks interchange. At the end of this session I asked trainee teacher participants if they would be willing to be interviewed and made arrangements for them to take place during the term vacation.

My joy in the Perform/Transform workshops is palpable. I learn so much about myself, about performance and about my students. And they discover a subtle way of working and exploring and devising and a more sensitive awareness of the work of others. Throughout the series of workshops with both secondary students and trainee teachers, I was deeply immersed in the method, aware of the impact of the work on the psyche and its opening of the imaginative and authentic voice of self as the artist.

Authentic Movement: part two of the photo-story.



2.a. The student in the foreground performs and her partner is witness to her work.



2.b. The students will each have a chance to be performer and witness.



2.c. This photograph shows students responding to the original performance of one student.



2.d. The witnesses who do not move their response hold the integrity of the circle.



2.e. Students watch as one performer “takes the space” and performs.



2.f. The performer utilises the space.



2.g. Another configuration that can be used in Authentic Movement is the small group where the performers might work in a group of four, taking turns to perform.



2.h. The feedback always emphasises the positive, requesting that participants talk about what they enjoyed and encouraging them to watch in a variety of ways.

Incubation

As a relict of a less personal form of research I constructed interview questions with something of the impersonality attached to the concept of a researcher. Thus I developed a series of questions that would be characterised by Patton (Moustakas, 1990, p. 47) as the standardized open-ended interview, the “carefully worded questions that all research participants will be asked” (p. 47). But the formal questions did not make the interview a stiff or unnatural situation. As the students’ teacher, the facilitator of the workshops and an erstwhile performer, the students seemed at ease and were willing to explore the questions in a committed manner. The questions gave a formality to the interview that gave structure to the situation. For all my interconnectedness with these students, it is imbued with the fact that I am their teacher and that role is permeated with nuances that are formal and preconceived. This is not to say that an open-ended approach would not have worked, but that there was both structure and openness of manner in the interview that did not undermine the search for meaningful responses.

The interviews were taped. The five students who were interviewed shared their experiences in a frank, personal manner. When transcribing their interviews I found myself becoming focused and involved with each person again. Their words, isolated from their presence resonated strongly and I discovered the intimacy of the human voice in this closer scrutiny of their words. Again I became aware that as their teacher they were used to my intervention in their lives (Patton, 1990, pp.353-354) and the interviews were the less intrusive because of this prior history. We already possessed a shared history and this was perhaps more personal than some student/teacher relationships because I had directed them in shows, I had opened opportunities for their creativity and I had initiated them into the creative and authentic movement explorations of their psyches. This was very different and far more suitable for a heuristic study than the concern over whether the interview questions were truly dialogic.

The interview questions that were asked of the secondary students were altered a little when I interviewed the trainee teachers. The following was a reflection after the first round of interviews:

... the questions need to be sharpened and opened. Some of my own discomfort at the more formal and constructed atmosphere of the interview can be seen in the slightly stilted questions. Although I softened these in the interview they were still a little bald in places. (Irving, 2000, Interview reflections)

The second series were very similar but a little clearer in their wording and order. Having similar questions allowed the possibility of comparing and contrasting responses from both secondary students and trainee teachers. The first questions were biographical; they then considered performance history, level of interest and enjoyment, fears and feelings about performance, level of focus and commitment to meaningful performance, self-knowledge through performance and the concept of transformation. The questions for both secondary students and trainee teachers are in the appendix. Once the interviews were completed, the transcription phase loomed. This was a more dynamic and interesting procedure than I had imagined.

Illumination

Before undertaking the transcription of the taped interviews, I travelled to Scotland to attend the Conference of Soul in Education at Findhorn. I delivered a Perform/Transform workshop at the conference and reflected on the difference between drama students, drama teacher trainees and a diverse bunch of adults in their response to the workshops. The therapeutic aspect of Authentic Movement was more apparent in the Findhorn setting and although the workshop was successful and well received, I realised that performance is viewed and realised differently by people without a drama background. Perhaps they lack a delight in play!

During this visit I was able to interview a professional actor and to conduct a daylong workshop with members of The Scottish Actors' Studio. This provided further material to reflect upon the workshops with the Perth students. It also distanced me from the material. "The data is set aside for awhile, encouraging an interval of rest and return to the data, procedures that facilitate the awakening of fresh energy and perspective" (Moustakas.1990. p 51). On my return I began to transcribe the interviews. It was fascinating. Each became a contemplation of the interviewee. I spent a day with each

respondent. As I typed their words and followed their train of thought I journeyed into their worlds. Cadence of voice, turn of phrase, idiosyncratic responses gave each their flavour and individuality. I was working deeply with these people, wondering about their lives and experiences, recognising similarities and surprised by differences in their perceptions. The transcription allowed me far greater insight than I had immediately realised from the interviews.

Once written, I teased out general trends both individually and then compared the group responses. I chose to return to the participants to share the chapters on the findings prior to completing the final draft. Their story is part of the whole and I believed that they would be interested in the context of the research and be aware if they had been taken out of context or misread. I hoped they might experience the illumination that their generosity had expedited. On meeting one trainee teacher at an in-service course, my greeting was warmed by the familiarity my transcribing had provided. Initially he seemed a little surprised at my manner and I had to realise the power of entering the life of an interviewee and my responsibility to honour that transaction. Patton (1990, p. 353) reminds the researcher that a good interview lays open thoughts, feelings, knowledge and experience to the interviewee and that being taken through a directed, reflective process affects the person interviewed. The proximity of the interviews to the workshops put the reflections of the interview into a context that was both safe and relevant to the interviewees. A certain trust was built through the workshops that flavoured the interviews. Further wisdom from Patton is pertinent: "It is a grave responsibility to ask. It is a privilege to listen" (p. 359).

I feel that I have been fortunate to begin this dialogue with the research participants and believe that for many it deepened their own conversation about the place and meaning of drama and performance in their lives. I did not have a sense of transgressing and believe that the questions allowed for a range of responses. Perhaps the participants shared a common love for their art and as Tali said at the end of the interview: "I can actually discuss drama endlessly" (Tali, 2000, Interview transcript).

Illumination comes in stages. Linkages and patterns emerged that may seem to have little bearing on the study. For example both Rachel and Paul were drawn to drama through experiences, though vastly different, which occurred during their schooling at alternative country schools in the United Kingdom. Seven of the eleven people interviewed were in families that were very mobile, at least through their primary schooling. The discoveries of the topic, the statement of the research questions are all moments of illumination. Moustakas' phases in the research process seem to interweave in an intricate tapestry and are not only to be understood as a logical progression.

Explication

The formal explanation of the material from the interviews and journals required distilling the responses and looking for common threads and dissimilarities. This was a process that required comparing responses to questions and seeking the story that might emerge of the experience of dramatic performance. It meant the disappointment of not finding the hoped response, of realising that the question required a more adroit phrasing or simply was not clear enough. Slowly a picture emerged that revealed the elements of the experience. "The purpose of the explication phase is to fully examine what has awakened in consciousness, in order to understand its various layers of meaning" (Moustakas, 1990, p.31).

In this section the findings are analysed and the "key ingredients discovered" (p. 31). The material is probed, trends sought, the language is examined for key words and phrases and for subtleties. Essential to the process is the "indwelling" on the part of the researcher. "The indwelling process is conscious and deliberate, yet it is not lineal or logical. It follows clues wherever they appear; one dwells inside them and expands their meanings and associations until a fundamental insight is achieved" (p. 24).

Understanding is deepened and enhanced by this process. As the researcher works with the material, reads relevant literature and contemplates the possibilities, the heuristic research works towards a creative synthesis. To be consistent with the heuristic approach, the researcher must allow time to revisit and reassess the material as the

perception of its meaning deepens through familiarity and through creatively engaging with the emerging patterns. Chapters five, six and seven will follow the journey towards the creative synthesis of ideas.

Creative synthesis

It would seem that at the heart of any real awareness and understanding lies the creative or intuitive leap that recognises connections and allows wonder and new ways of seeing. Moustakas sees the creative synthesis stage in the following way: “The researcher must move beyond any confined and constricted attention to the data itself and permit an inward life on the question to grow, in such a way that a comprehensive expression of the essences of the phenomenon investigated is realized” (p. 32). The concluding chapter of this thesis will draw the participants’ experiences of dramatic performance together. It will indicate how dramatic performance might be integral to the education of all students, especially in the secondary school environment.

Chapter Four

Selection of senior secondary students for Perform/ Transform Workshops and interviews, 2000

At the beginning of 2000 I invited my senior class of Drama Studies and Drama students, at Mawton Senior High School, to participate in the research study into performance. (The name of the school and the names of the participants have been changed to protect anonymity). This involved undertaking a series of five movement sessions that were called the Perform/Transform Workshops. They agreed to allow access to their responses through journal entries and interviews. It is pertinent to note that I had been the sole drama teacher at Mawton Senior High School throughout this cohort's secondary schooling. Five students from other schools had entered the programme in year eleven at the beginning of the tertiary entrance Drama Studies course. As part of the moderated assessment of the course they had contact with my colleague from a nearby private school. This class was the first to study the two-year Drama Studies course, which started in 1999. We had planned the Drama Studies courses at our two schools together. All performance tasks were assessed together and this provided extra feedback for the students at both schools. At the beginning of 2000 we had co-directed a joint production of *Oh! What a Lovely War* for the sixteen Mawton students and the three private school students.

An explanation was given that the workshops would illuminate and address the phenomenon of dramatic performance and how it resonated with people of their age. In the final year of secondary school in Western Australia most students are sixteen to seventeen years old. The final year, year twelve, is a time when many students obtain their driving licence. This is an important rite of passage. The completion of year twelve and secondary school is a primary ritual. During this year the students experience the threshold of change, a liminal space of great demand and expectation. I assured them that I believed the workshops could help their performance work and described how a series of similar workshops in which I had participated, created by Alice Cummins, had

improved my ability to perform in a focused and authentic manner. I suggested that the workshops would assist them in their approach to the original solo performance piece that was their final task in the Drama Studies and Drama courses. Along with a monologue, an improvisation and an oral interview, the solo original show also comprised the final practical exam for the Drama Studies students.

There were twelve students in the Drama Studies class plus four in the Drama class. The two classes were conducted as one. This is common practice as it is possible, through their original design, to marry the two courses. The non-tertiary entrance Drama course has no examination component and the writing is in the form of reports. The outcome - based performance tasks are similar in both courses. In 2000 the students from Drama Studies and Drama classes worked together on the five performance tasks. All the students provided written agreement to participating in the workshops. Four of the students missed more than one workshop; of the others, some participated in the workshops yet wrote little in their journals.... journals were available for use in this study.

I selected five students to be interviewed after the series of workshops from those who showed an immediate interest when I asked for interviewees at the completion of the series. The five students I chose were selected for the following reasons: They were prepared to be interviewed; they were all keen students; although keen, they displayed a range of abilities and achievements; in all cases, I felt that the extra involvement and conversation about performance and themselves, provided by the interview situation would be beneficial to the participant. The interviews attempted to put the students' stories of performance in the context of their experiences throughout their lives. The journals were specific to the Perform/Transform Workshops conducted as part of this study.

The journal entries from the Perform/Transform Workshops that have been presented in this chapter were immediate reflections, where the students, in the limited time, wrote or drew about how they felt after the experience of the workshop. They could choose to

respond to the creative movement sequence or the authentic movement component.

As the authentic movement was the second and last part of the session it was often uppermost in their minds.

Brief biographies of the five students, a synopsis of each interview and where available their journal responses provide a background to the further analysis of the material. At the end of each section I have offered a haiku (Japanese poetic form consisting of three lines, the first and third of five syllables, the second of seven) in which I synthesise something of the character and response of the interviewee. As a heuristic researcher a form of feedback to the interviewees in the process of the research is to send each a card thanking them again for their contribution and offering this haiku as my distillation of their story.

Biography 1: Abby

A newcomer to the school and the Drama Studies class was the blonde and attractive Abby. She could be typecast for her prettiness, but it was her focus and grit that were her hallmarks. Talent, beauty, a lovely presence and determination typified Abby's approach to life. Body, mind and soul conspired to produce genuine, imaginative and professional performances. Abby had been selected to be part of a Specialist Drama Programme at a secondary college of the arts. After a very successful season with a professional company she apparently found acceptance of her own achievements difficult at that school and her maturity and expectations for performance to have grown. Whatever family decisions brought her to Mawton Senior High, which is not a specialist drama school, Abby bestowed the gift of her ability, her focus and her acceptance of others, however frustrating she found them. She controlled her impatience with the attitude of some of the students and eagerly embraced the roles and tasks that came her way.

It is clear from the interviews that Abby loved performing. Her goal had always been to act. She danced and sang and embraced whatever was demanded in a mature, creative and practical manner. She had already become an expert make-up artist with her own kit. From childhood she had acted in commercials and took the commitments seriously. Yet the very practical side was blended with the urge to push boundaries and to explore the limitless possibilities she sensed in herself and to use different theories and styles of performance. She was open to new ideas while able to honour theatre traditions and conventions. Abby always had her lines learnt and was always ready to push the show or piece beyond predictable limits. Her response to the Perform/Transform Workshops was both intelligent and passionate and it is this dynamic blend that made her special in the group and inspired others to excellence.

Synopsis of Interview

Abby had been performing all her life. Her first television commercial was made when she was four. Performance was essential to her and Abby saw dramatic performance as the best way to know the self. By taking on other characters, understanding of self was nourished. Abby's professional work on a major production in the Perth Arts Festival in

Year Nine had a big influence on her awareness of theatre and of herself. More than anything else it had confirmed her desire to be an actor. The focus and commitment of the other actors was inspiring for a young actor. Like Neil, Abby was awed by the realisation of the power of focused, authentic performance. She was also very realistic about the work and commitment required to achieve excellence in performance. Abby was addicted to the “buzz” of performance and had a desire to continue to perform.

Abby wanted to be an actor. That was her focus and motivation. Abby’s parents had always supported her desire to act. She was realistic about the different ways of surviving but under the realism was a deep belief that acting, when approached wholeheartedly was a key to personal awareness and social connectedness through committing to the process of rehearsal and performance. Abby believed that her “heart lies in acting and performing.” She was focused and determined always to produce fine work. Abby often found the attitude of the other secondary students to be limiting. Few had her desire to excel; yet her focus had a strong influence on the class.

Journal

The following entries were made in her journal about her responses to the Perform/Transform workshops:

07.02.00.

The first movement class was a very enjoyable experience for me. I started off feeling hot and exhausted, but by the end I was completely relaxed. The music was really nice to close your eyes to, and forget everything, just letting my body experience the different music styles and rythem (sic). I loved this lesson. I found it focusing and relaxing to let my body move freely however it felt, exploring my body’s limitations was also nice to be aware of. Working in silence with a partner was a different experience again; there was more freedom with silence but, the brain had to start working to find your own rythem (sic). It was very interesting watching Lucy move, her movement was totally relaxed and free she was willing to let her body move any way, and I could see a lot of her

personality coming through her movement.

I found this exercise just as enjoyable to be witness to as to actually do, but what I liked best was the way it relaxed me, and helped me focus the whole lesson.

03.03.00.

Our first excersize (sic) was in pairs and we took our cues from the other person and developed their style in our own way.

We had good music and I found this very enjoyable.

Our second task was in groups of 4 and we each spent 3 minutes in front of our own group in silence with our eyes closed expressing our movement in any form we wished. I liked doing this as everyone was so different, there was no beat so there were no boundaries and it was exciting to do.

I love watching other people do it as well as it's such a creative and individual experience, you will only see this show once in a lifetime, it will never be the same. Maybe(sic) thats(sic) another reason I loved this session so much.

07.04.00.

Our movement class was very enjoyable as usual; it's a nice experience being given the freedom to move in any way the body wishes.

Watching others in the group, I can identify a lot of their characteristics in their movement, it's definitely(sic) a reflection of the individual style.

I find the excersize(sic) where you try to copy the movement of one person in the group very worthwhile, it kind of forces you to move in a way that isn't naturally you, but after a minute of imitating it becomes more comfortable to move as others do, you kind of take on what they are doing with every body part, legs -to-head; and if your(sic) watching right you should move in the same manner and rythem(sic) as the person. It becomes natural to move like them you discover their pt(sic) of center(sic) and what body parts they use to lead with. If they are a stiff person there(sic) movements reflect that stiffness. Dean's movement was very exact and it pushed my limits as I'm more of a flowing, floating person. Lucy's movement was bouncy and fun which is very like her personality. Mal's movement was very free and tribal looking maybe(sic) it reflects his carefree

attitude

Heart and soul combine
in passionate commitment
to holy theatre.

Biography 2: Alia

Alia was writing a novel. She was highly imaginative but could not always express her ideas and stories verbally. Alia's high-pitched nervous giggle was almost a signature tune and seemed to be a sign for others to back away from her slightly hysterical manner. From comments in the interview it seemed that she had been deeply wounded at the loss of her mother. The therapeutic side of drama may have encouraged her imagination and there was freedom to be other than herself if she should so choose. To me, as her teacher, Alia displayed bravery by being ready to release her inner feelings through Authentic Movement. There was often a contrived quality about her, but it came from her nagging self-consciousness. When she took on the role of Blanche, from *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the students seemed to relate to a sense of sadness in this girl.

Alia allowed much more of herself to show during this sequence of Perform/Transform Workshops and it changed her work on other Drama Studies tasks where she showed greater confidence than prior to the workshops. Throughout her high school years, by writing her novel, she had been creating her own special space. I hoped that the Perform/Transform workshops helped Alia to feel more at ease.

Synopsis of Interview

Alia first performed with a local repertory group when she was in Year One. She loved it. Performance made her feel good. Alia admitted that she was very self-conscious in her work. Acting seemed to give Alia a sense of personal power. Listening to her speak about performance, observing her over the couple of years of Upper Secondary school, it became obvious that performance for Alia was quite different to Abby and Neil. The sense of personal power contrasted with the very self-absorbed persona with which she confronted fellow students and made some of them avoid her company.

In her interview Alia acknowledged that drama, like writing, was a creative outlet. It was a personal therapy of understanding and acceptance of herself. Acting in Upper Secondary School allowed Alia to discover feelings and emotions she had denied. Although she remembered being a lot more confident in Year One there was still some

element in drama that made her feel wonderful. Alia did not mention any awareness of how the audience might be shifted or changed through her work.

Journal

Alia appreciated the Perform/Transform workshops by her own admission in her journal writing.

07.02.00.

Flowing, felt comfortable, easy, light, like a petal on the wind, almost like floating on water, soft, feminine.

Having someone watch me made me feel naked.

14.02.00.

I moved all easy like, around the edge of the block thingy especially. Kind of walking and floating around. Did this funky little shuffling to the side with groovy hand movements bit. Felt all breezy and carefree like a Sunday morning.

03.03.00.

Had to move while the rest of the group watched (groups of 4). I kind of floated along.

Never standing up, just my back and my arms and my hips moving, flowing. 3 mins.

Alison's movement was very good. At the start had to work with a partner. I worked with Alison. That was fun, she's a seriously good dancer.

07.04.00.

Floating, freedom, contentment, felt like I was at the beach and I was just flowing along with the gently lapping waves, I was at peace with myself and there was no-one else. I twirled a lot and felt graceful, easy. I finished like I fell asleep slowly.

I thought everyone else was good. Jane does hers to a song in her head and I could tell it was A Day in the Life by The Beatles.

Toby's was good. He made good use of the space both around him, and by moving at

different levels of up and down. He looked like he was presenting some tortured inner conflict, some torment.

Before that, when we had to follow the initiator, that was fun, very energetic. It made me feel good. I felt like I wanted to do it again. I almost giggled out of the sheer joy of it. Smiles. I wish we could do this again. So fun, it's like letting go of your mind and letting your soul control your body - being free.

Dancing your story
seeking the creative space
allow your real voice.

Biography 3: Andrew

While others appeared to wrestle with life, Andrew seemed to have everything correctly scheduled and under control. He was a kind and friendly young man who could be depended upon. It was a surprise to find that Andrew was determined to retain Drama as part of his academically focused Upper School course. As a younger student he had always been keen, polite and very focused when performing. Andrew changed from the Drama to the Drama Studies course in the final year. He was exemplary in his approach to the work and the sincerity of his manner. Assignments were always on time and well written, lines were learnt, backstage work was completed and he would willingly attend rehearsals and stay back to paint the set. Andrew appeared to embrace challenge and prepare himself thoroughly. He displayed a sense of humour and a way of being that others found reliable and comfortable. Indeed he was a pleasant young man who personally sensed how the Arts enhanced and developed his creativity, resourcefulness, sensitivity, depth and growth. Andrew worked well in the Perform/Transform workshops and later used the Authentic Movement in his exploration of his character and performance for the Solo Original Show, which is the final task in the Drama Studies course.

Andrew had really worked with these methods and it is typical of his approach to synthesise and work through the concepts and styles presented to him. He was a wonderful example of how an Arts education could blend and harmonise with an ostensibly academic focus. Certainly his awareness of self and the complexity of his humanness was seen and danced.

Synopsis of Interview

Andrew's first performance was as a dog. It was in Year Four or Five and he had good memories of the experience of performance. The chance to be different and to do things that would not normally be possible fascinated Andrew about drama.

He was finding himself more comfortable in performance and more focused in his work. Andrew was also aware of the importance of the interaction with the other student actors.

He could see how healthful theatre work could be and acknowledged the impact of audience upon the actor. Andrew had really enjoyed all the exploratory work on character and had realised the effect this had on his personal growth.

Andrew saw the power of performance upon the actor and the impact of the ideas when enlivened on stage on both performers and audience. Performance had helped Andrew. It had opened him up and brought him out of his shell. It allowed fun in the final years of secondary school.

Journal

07.02.00.

Today began our journey through movement. The basic focus was to move through certain styles of music, each differing in their feeling and strength. In the beginning I focused on my movements internally as though I was being taken on a tour of my body, from my brain through to my lungs and beyond. Then as the music continued I began to rise physically, soon losing consciousness of the room and of others.

Performance was then done with a partner which was weird in the way that someone else was reading your movements.

14.02.00.

Our movement today was only in three sections, seemingly of greater strength and rhythm. I started a bit slower than last time though I believe my concentration and lack of care for what others thought of my movement had both increased. The five minute session which followed (involving a watching partner) seemed to last forever, even though it was only two minutes more than last week.

03.03.00.

Bringing a partner into the movement really differs the experience of the movement. To incorporate and blend with another person yet still holding the feel and emotion of the music proved testing yet enjoyable. The second movement involving performance now

occurs with three watchers, each commenting on their thoughts of the positives of each other's movements. My movement was less centred than before as I felt I had a greater emphasize (sic) of not staying in one position.

07.04.00.

I really didn't feel into the movement work, maybe just because it's the end of term and the feeling being rundown and tired crept into my movement. Maybe it was the fact that today's performance was with the eyes open. I find it easier to focus and control the movement when my eyes are closed. Not entirely because I can see others watching the movement but because my eyes tend to wander around the room, distracting me. My performance in front of the group was a little more restricted in its use of space, centred in only usual area. The class seems to be relaxing in the classes, becoming more in tune with their body and the stories that it can tell. It is amazing to see the diversity of movement as well, so many different feelings and emotions that are expressed through the way we move.

Honest and aware
dance the possible human
and flourish and grow.

Biography 4: Neil

In his interview Neil said that whenever he was going through a hard time he would think of a Fijian warrior. He came to Mawton High after a successful period of filming for a television series and although he had an easy manner and the students liked him it was a difficult transition to make. His family had returned to Perth from Papua New Guinea so that he could pursue the television offer. Senior secondary schooling at Mawton High was planned to follow the television contract.

Born in Fiji to a Fijian mother and an Australian father, Neil grew up in Papua New Guinea. He missed the lifestyle in Papua New Guinea when they came to live in his father's hometown of Perth. Neil's talent for theatrical performance had long been evident and landing a part in a television series was a wonderful achievement for a teenage boy.

When Neil joined the Drama Studies class at Mawton Senior High in 1999 his delight in acting, his humour and talent and his warm and generous personality won approbation from the school community. He tried to focus on his studies but he was always being noticed by yet another agency or talent scout and offered the next possibility. When Neil sang a beautiful young man appeared, followed the passion of the performer. His presence was complete and sincere, his voice soft and mellifluous. Neil had the ingredients for success, his family was keen for him to perform and an uncle had become his manager. At school he was involved in class productions and the school production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He played an acrobatic Oberon and mastered the necessary trapeze techniques in a half an hour session with an expert.

Watching Neil perform was to see transformation from teenager to a presence and power that was compelling and attractive. During rehearsals for *The Dream* I became aware of a panther on the scaffold and watched Oberon shape-shift before my eyes while the fairies chatted away and Titania slept. He delighted in being and was utterly fascinating to watch as he brought his magic to the acting space.

When Neil decided to leave school after the semester exams in 2000, the lack of commitment to schoolwork became apparent. His departure saddened the whole class and made many contemplate the pros and cons of the decision. He took some rudimentary studies in the hospitality industry and entertained on river cruises. His desire to study at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts remained, but everyday commitments were difficult. There was a sense of disappointment, but a determination to see the positive, when last we met.

Synopsis of Interview

Neil had found instant response to his performance ability since delighting people in Papua New Guinea with his performance as a dog in a play at the age of eight. He continued to love the dynamic of actor and audience. Although Neil suffered a nervous response just before going on stage, especially before singing, he saw performance as healing. It made him happy and brought him closer to the other actors. Neil believed that the performers must totally believe in what they are doing on stage for others to find them credible. Perhaps the most important influence in Neil's life had been his involvement in a traditional dance company in Papua New Guinea when he started secondary school. They inspired Neil. Their wisdom still strengthened him when life was challenging. At the time of the interview Neil was in a quandary of whether to stay and finish Year Twelve or to leave school before graduating.

Neil would not be happy if he could not continue to perform. The healing he found in performance came both from the act and the response to the performance. At that stage in his life singing was the style he was using and he was able to see immediate work in that performance field. Neil wanted to be authentic in his performance work. But underlying much of his response was sadness at being away from the nurturing influence of his culture. But the connection he felt with the Papua New Guinean and Fijian cultures was a thread that he discovered when he performed anywhere. For Neil performance meant life and connection. It made a difference. He saw his ability as a gift from god. But Neil was aware that performance might well have more impact on him than on an audience in that it changed and perhaps made him a better person. Although

he was spending a lot of time singing he believed that theatre was much more: "It's live and it is a main way of shifting and changing people." Neil always spoke with integrity and humility about his work.

As one of the most natural and inspired young actors I have witnessed he was visited by doubt even though this was always dispelled through and after the actual experience of performance for and with others. His concept of performance as explained through the interviews was very connected with other people.

In the interview with Neil I teased out the questions to make them more specific. This seemed to expedite the interview. Later I realised that Neil found the situation a little awkward. The coaching, through refining the questions, helped to clarify the demands that may have been confusing.

Excerpts from the Interview

Neil made no journal entries. The following are excerpts from his interview after the workshop series. He was asked what he had learnt about himself through performance:

I don't really feel that I know me. I used to, I feel that I used to. Just after I came to Australia, I suppose I hadn't really been exposed to much of my culture and I need that, 'cause in Papua New Guinea I was exposed to culture, culture that was more my own. And I mean through the dances and the songs you learn. Just the way people were. They were my people and it's just easier to be happy there. I just don't.... (Where is the community for you here? Is there a community you feel part of?) No, not really. There were a few Fijian people that I met through the Oz Concert and I was singing and this guy, a Fijian was playing the guitar and they weren't Fijian, but they were from the Pacific, but they were my kind of people....
(Neil, 2000, Interview transcript)

In relation to performance, the question was about performing and how it made him feel: Do you feel more alive? "I guess you just experience something great."

What do you experience?

"Satisfaction from the applause. I mean the applause you get is amazing. And seeing a smile and knowing that you've turned the biggest, ugliest, strongest man into a little kid,

you know, that sort of feeling”.

Conjure and connect
weave us into the magic
of your performance.

Biography 5: Skye

The composure of Skye was the hallmark of her attempt to deal with the dilemma of adolescence. A gifted musician and dancer with a yearning to be a wonderful actress, Skye embodied idealism and already framed it with a spiritual quest for self. She came to the school as a senior student. Skye was able to present her creative and performing side as an artist and found a group of Drama students who were equally passionate in their approach. She had found an attitude to drama that was a little different. Skye always appeared to be in control and spoke softly and sweetly. In her perception there were family stories aplenty to overwhelm a sensitive teenager.

Drama and the Arts provided Skye with a place in the school system that was personal and creative. But the world stage beckoned early and she stepped into its demands, anonymity and tenuous embrace: the young artist of original mind and particular courage.

The paradox of Skye was that she often sounded so aware and capable but the young girl was sensitive, intuitive and vulnerable and often utterly denied by the demands placed on a beautiful and talented person. Skye did not complete her year twelve studies. Skye struggled with perfection to achieve her aspirations in the manner she felt they should be honoured. Skye left the school full of dreams and hopes. She had plans for friends to record her singing, while she was willing to give her soul.

Synopsis of Interview

Skye returned to the school after she had officially left to participate in the interview. Skye also found that drama was a way “to let go of reality for a little while and search” (Skye, 2000, Interview transcript). Skye found that in drama and even entering the drama room she was empowered to explore. She first performed in dance when she was four. Her decision to act in the school production in Year Ten deepened her awareness of the power of performance and led Skye to change schools and become ever more involved in drama, music and dance performances. For Skye, the involvement with the other performers is an important aspect of drama. She also found pleasure in the

enjoyment of the audience. Although she had a fear of being laughed at when performing she was thankful for the supportive way other actors, in her experience, worked. She also saw how powerful performance could be in a range of different settings, and had seen her own role in the family shift when she sang for a grandparent.

Skye had loved the intensity of the work she experienced through the authentic movement in the Perform/Transform workshops. She was eager to explore who she was and found drama a very real tool for such a journey. Skye found that performance made her happy. It was the process and the people as well as the experience of performance that made her love drama. She had gained self-confidence through the work and felt she had grown through the process of the drama course. Skye discovered connectedness with others through the work. She also said that the whole process was spiritual. She was aware that she might find that element in anything she did, but it was definitely accessible through drama.

Journal

07.02.00.

(Mind map?) Movement in centre/ freely/ depth/ dancing/ stretching/ releasing/ independent

Feelings at the beginning: nervous, isolated.

Feelings at the end: stretched, focused, free.

I absolutely adored the music that was used - it was perfect. I find it much easier to work with music - it's like a guide. I found it harder to get into movement when there is no music and someone watching me. But I eventually did it.

*Quote of the day: I won't be held down
 I won't be held back,
 I will lead with my faith
 Let me fly!*

Feeling for today: CONFRONTING. But good!

03.03.00.

SPACE.

I feel like crying! It was amazing today. I moved like I have never moved before. We went into pairs (but I was in a group of 3) and I loved dancing in a group it was great. The same word kept popping into my head and that was hope.

Don't ask me why because I seriously wouldn't be able to tell you why that word was in my head.

Hope for what? Me?

The world?

My family?

My cats?

I want to know.

Dancing is my religion, my spirituality. MY STRENGTH.

Yes. I do have one!

*Rise like the phoenix
lead us in the dance of life
and share your beauty.*

Selection of senior secondary students for Perform/Transform workshops and interviews, 2001

In 2001, aware of the perceived benefit of the Perform/Transform Workshops for the year twelve students, I used the workshop series as part of the Drama Studies and Drama courses. I wanted to see how this second group would respond to the workshops and interviews. The students were studying similar Drama Studies and Drama courses to those conducted in 2000. As the second intake into the two-year programme, their experience would be different. As I was on leave in the last term of 2000 this class finished year eleven with a relief teacher whose minor area was drama. Otherwise their experience of drama had been primarily through the courses I conducted at Mawton Senior High School. Many of the students had been involved in the 1999 and 2000 school productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*.

Time constraints of the Year Twelve Drama studies course meant that the Perform/Transform workshops were interrupted. Three workshops were conducted in Term One. The students wrote in their Journals after the first two and there was insufficient time after the third. The fourth workshop came after the mid-year examination period in June. A Journal entry was made. The final session was held in August and as there was a lot of spoken feedback after each authentic movement performance, there was not time for journal entries. The group had the chance to make up to four entries.

Three students were selected for the interviews and from those interested I chose these for their intense interest in the subject and willingness to give the time for the interview. Although they were all students who achieved well in Drama Studies, they all had different aspirations after completing Year Twelve. Zilla and Alex would probably continue their academic studies at university, but Marnie would be auditioning for every drama school in the country and beyond.

Biography 6: Alex

Alex was an intense young man who had taken the role as sidekick to a volatile and difficult individual throughout secondary school. Once the strident fellow decided to leave in the first term of Year Twelve, Alex slowly flowered in his own right. In the interview two themes developed - his love of family and his continued loyalty to the friend. Alex respected the influence of his immediate and extended family in his life. He could see how it had enriched and extended his worldview. Alex enjoyed family occasions and was about to go on a short walking tour with his father in the school vacation. He was aware of how mindful parenting had given deeper texture and experiences than the mass media and the fast food culture could permit. There was a certain smugness about the values and the world-view that his background provided. He was remarkable as the only student who spoke at length about the positive influence of his family on his life.

Alex was concerned to find self-expression in life. Drama Studies certainly allowed that in his school regimen. He had also discovered that the school production was a very fertile source of creative and collaborative performance work. Alex certainly thrived on the tribal ethos that I perceive surrounding the school production process. Reading Artaud's short play *The Spurt of Blood* had a deep impact on Alex and the confrontational qualities of the Theatre of Cruelty surfaced in his devised work. He was an explorative individual who felt at home in the performing arts.

After his positive experience in *The Tempest*, Alex became part of the 2001 student devised project. This allowed him the luxury of devising his own lines and movement as Pan to the despairing Psyche in a modern hero's journey. In *Sighs, Laughter and Dreams* Alex could both commentate on and involve himself in the performance. As a senior student it provided a role of quiet leadership. Zilla had chosen to direct others, but Alex preferred this more individual perspective. Throughout the year and even since the interview, Alex has placed himself firmly in the guise of the artistic performer. The intellectual who also performs.

Synopsis of Interview

Alex believed that he would live a full and creative life, adhering to the ethical and legal mores of the society. His parents had travelled extensively before settling in Perth and had strong British and European ties. Interestingly when asked why he was involved in drama, an early response was that he was a good liar! He enjoyed interacting with family and others at an early age but could not remember a particular performance. His recollection of having stories read and developing a rich imaginative life were mentioned as essential to his creativity.

Improvisation comes naturally to him but he spoke of his involvement in the school production of *The Tempest* in 2000 as significant. Alex felt that he now takes his performance work very differently as he has matured a great deal. He relished the intense focus of the school production. When asked about awareness of self when performing he described what he termed a “ghostly self-presence”. He described the feeling of being totally immersed in performance as “...a really serene feeling. There’s so much energy you just find serenity.” But like Zilla, he preferred to work with people who were committed to their performance work, wasted opportunities had started to frustrate Alex.

He enjoyed painting the set in the main Year Twelve production. That extra commitment of time and energy he now saw as part of the whole process, not an aggravating chore. When speaking of transformation through performance, Alex saw it as “...not a transformation of self but for the audience it is transformation”. He recognised a different energy in himself. When asked if the Authentic Movement work had a particular influence, Alex said that it was like a meditation. He was starting to appreciate the Authentic Movement. He especially enjoyed abandoning sight and discovering rhythm and music as his body took over as opposed to his mind.

Journal

Alex took time to find the benefit in the movement workshops and the journal entries pre-date the interview and his sanguine view of Authentic Movement.

09.02.01.

Exploration of various types of movement.

Flowing - natural movement.

Staccato - stop/start. Robotic automaton - felt uncomfortable.

Chaotic - random.

Lyrical - airy, free. Felt comfortable.

Stillness - explored various applications of stillness.

Authentic Movement:

In this activity we dealt with the assumptions of a role/ character.

16.02.01.

Authentic Movement:

Explored various shapes of body and surroundings.

15.06.01.

Authentic movement: today as a piece of movement I instead performed a piece of stillness. I felt that it pays for once in a while to watch, or indeed to become a blank canvas. I enjoyed isolating myself from everyone else, and alienating everyone else from me, as the idea of solipsism appeals to me. The conception that only yourself exists at a given time is an experience that is both strenuous and peaceful, paradoxically. My partner felt strongly on my performance, notably its lack of excitement or interest. As I was not observing myself I cannot justify or comfort her opinion, and so will not attempt to do either.

25.06.01.

Authentic movement is a tool of satan. (Further three lines were illegible).

As artist of hope
spur the human family
to creative acts.

Biography 7: Marnie

Marnie was born in Canada but spent her childhood and early adolescence in Tasmania. Arriving in Perth in Year Nine, Marnie seemed precocious but when put to the test she showed determination and the stamina to take on a part and work in a focused and creative manner. If she hoped to be a star she had been transported to a place that kept demanding that she push beyond her comfort zone. Each challenge demanded that she draw upon inner resources and so intense was the desire to act that she found the means to move beyond limitations. Essential to the shift was that she drop the idea of being a starlet and to see performance in a much larger context and to realise that her abilities could open a vista rather than tap into the immediacy of a talent agency. Happily her parents saw performance as her life path and that it meant self-exploration and development.

In her last year at school she had to play a range of roles, suitable and unsuitable, but at the last solo assessment task performance she really broke beyond her earlier work and portrayed a mature part with subtlety and total focus. Marnie had transcended the need to be the prima donna.

As the year progressed, Marnie began to take workshops with teachers from the adjacent performing arts academy. Her focus and awareness raced ahead of her contemporaries. She diversified into singing and took dancing classes to broaden her repertoire. Her love of the arts was apparent in her visual artworks, which seemed to balance and enrich her performance work. On personal as well as on a performance level, Marnie demanded a lot of herself. The ease with which she performed came from thorough preparation. Marnie had learnt to utilise the process time in a dynamic and reflective manner and to delight in the transformation of performance.

Synopsis of Interview

Marnie immediately said that what she liked to do is "...to sing and dance and act..." There was a sense that she needed to seek her homeland and relatives in Canada. Certainly she had a sense of family and home in Australia, but not of connection with

the country. Yet growing up in Tasmania allowed a very friendly environment and she recounted happy tales of performing for the local neighbourhood in the front of the house. She felt absolutely comfortable in these early performances.

Organising others was a skill that seemed innate and her performances often included children of the neighbourhood in musicals, which she narrated and sang. Marnie was concerned with being authentic for she was often accused of being egotistical and seeking the limelight. But in the years at Mawton High she had been forced to take demanding roles and still she believed that the greatest thing was to sense when there was a change in the audience, when the audience was truly with her character and transported through her authentic and credible performance skills. When Marnie is no longer visible and the audience is not looking at her but instead they are seeing the character she is portraying. School performances vary in their power and focus, but Marnie recalled a very intense experience when working with a very talented student. It was the one time she felt a real connection and brilliance when interacting on stage.

To reach a satisfying level of authenticity, Marnie was prepared to invest time and energy into developing well-researched and developed characters. She delighted in the range of characters she could conceivably play. There was nothing mechanical about her work and she hoped that audiences would find that her performances would engrave something in their souls.

As a singer Marnie experienced different audience responses to when she was acting a specific character. She felt that it might have been a result of performing mainly for a school audience, which was not always appreciative of individual talent. It was easier to present a different persona. Like Alex, Marnie believed that not only does the actor transform but that they excite a transformation in the audience. The whole idea of performance and its infinite variations enthralled Marnie. She saw a vista of possibilities before her and was palpably delighted by the thought.

Journal

The journal responses attest to Marnie's willingness to open to the experience of the Perform/Transform Workshops.

09.02.01.

I found that the movement piece we did was a way of understanding our bodies and the way in which they work. It gave me a greater understanding of the bodies (sic) connection to the spirit. I somehow felt as though my mind and body were adapting the sound of the music and the underneath rhythm that seemed to pound through my body. I lost all sense of self-consciousness and fell into a dreamlike quality.

I felt as though I was trapped inside a box that was closing in. The box consisted of a series of blocks that would cave in slightly every few seconds.

Flowing movement

intense reaction

stiff and edge like steel

Moving motions

like watching speech (sic)

plumiting (sic) down towards the ground

Like an eagle watching from afar.

faltering falls

eye of window.

15.06.01.

(Decorated/ framed page).

I felt as though I was moving within an unknown world. Everything seemed new and fresh. But at times I felt an erge (sic) of anxiety and feared where I was.

The world I was in was a harsh existence with many constraints. Often there were factors pulling me back. That's why I was binding myself in cloth and string as to protect myself as a safety net would do so.

My partner Nina, looked as though she was sure of her surroundings and felt cool and calm. her movements depicted that of someone at ease with one's inner and outer being.

Authentic focus
performance anticipates
vistas infinite.

Biography 8: Zilla

Zilla was a passionate young woman who was ready to speak out against prejudice and unfair discrimination. Her life experience was broad and at seventeen she was able to boast a business, a band, a boyfriend and a keen self-awareness. Zilla attended lots of theatre, deliciously opening her mind to the possibilities inherent in the Arts. She was a good student and seemed to have her TEE in a well-organised corner of her life.

Zilla had always lived in the immediate vicinity of Mawton SHS. Her primary school had encouraged performance and she remembered that fondly in her interview. At times Zilla would become very concerned about the rights of others. Zilla preferred to be the initiator. She had a steady group of friends and the loyalty invested could sometimes seem exclusive. Performance fascinated Zilla as she discovered the myriad ways of accessing and exploring character. The power of theatre to change attitudes and beliefs was brought home to Zilla when she and the Year Twelve class performed excerpts from their devised shows on the themes from the first indigenous Australian musical, *Bran Nue Dae*, for other Year Twelve students at the annual Visual and Performing Arts Camp. Students who would not usually watch the performances at school were impressed by the power of the ideas when presented theatrically.

Zilla always presented to her peers and to the world as a trendsetter and an innovative individual. Yet Drama Studies continued to help her to explore herself and the world. She was mature in her self-analysis and clear about the commitment she gave to her work in drama.

Zilla could be seen as a forthright individual but she was also a thoughtful person who was fascinated by performance work as a mode of human expression and communication. She was impatient rather than brash, so deep was her desire to explore the human psyche. Zilla had a strong presence on stage. She had a lot of fun along the way and would be proactive in finding creative outlets for her performance needs.

Synopsis of Interview

Zilla's focus was firmly on achieving a good overall Tertiary Examination Entrance score at the time of the interview. As a young woman with diverse interests it was edifying to see that she had prioritised completion of her secondary studies, even the part-time job had been sacrificed. She delighted in drama as an exploration of humanness. Yet she also found the technical side of production fascinating. Zilla also realised that people really listened to her characters on stage and she was besotted by the awareness that in theatre there was the power to influence and change people's experience. Her initial exploration in primary school had been encouraging, leaving a belief that performance was a right, if not a duty.

Zilla was ready to put effort into her performance work, but found that other students did not always hold the same focus. She enjoyed working in pairs with other good students to achieve the most satisfying results. Zilla was aware of the power of the imagination to create and concentrate. She cited a devised piece performed earlier in the year as an example of how the performer could carry the audience through their focused imagination. Zilla also spoke of the magic created by lighting and set in defining the acting space.

The adrenalin rush of performance excited Zilla to perform again. Success and the captive audience were ingredients of this addiction to performance. Zilla realised the need for commitment to the process of performance and that preparation was essential to being able to sway and change the audience through resonant performance work. She had also become aware of her own emotional constitution through observing her response to various characters she had portrayed. Zilla had also found the Authentic Movement work helped to make her more attuned to her movement work and its dominant rhythms.

Journal

The following entries were made on three occasions after the Perform/Transform

workshop:

09.02.01.

In today's movement session, we used 5 different pieces of music that were ... staccato, chaos, lyrical, still and contained.

I have never been very fond of movement, not because I dislike it but mainly because I can never seem to find the kinds of movement I feel is appropriate to me. However, today I did feel like the last section, in which the rhythm was very slow and almost sad.

Nina's movement piece seemed to portray a feeling of loss. As if she was searching for something, she kept looking for something in the distance.

16.02.01.

My final movement piece in today's session was influenced by the last piece of music, the still piece of music. My movement was influenced sort of by what we are studying at the moment, Bran Nue Dae (first indigenous Australian musical). I was in a sitting position, but something would not let me rise up, something kept pushing me down, keeping me on the floor.

15.06.01.

In today's session I found myself performing a very symbolic piece of movement. I found myself utilising my arms a lot, moving my hands over my face and pulling or opening up my body. It seemed to be linked to some sort of self-revelation, revealing what is underneath all the layers that make up our personality, what really lies beneath it all.

I found it hard to analyse Alex's piece since he didn't really use much movement, none at all.

Change the world, reveal
its beauty, its suffering,
perform and transform.

Selection of university students for Perform/Transform workshops and interviews

In August and September 2000 I conducted a series of five Perform/Transform workshops with trainee Drama teachers from a local university. The five interviewees were the workshop participants who attended regularly. It was not part of their course and was a commitment beyond the demands of their graduate diploma or bachelor of education courses. The participants were in their mid to late twenties. There were three males and two females. Two of the males had had a teaching practice under my supervision. Two of the participants had involvement in performance beyond an educational setting in their adult life

The people willing to participate were keen and interested in trying something different. The group met in the late afternoon at the Mawton High Performing Arts Centre. The structure was similar to that experienced by the senior secondary students and has been outlined in this dissertation in the chapter on methodology.

Biography 9:Ed

Ed was a dynamic, sincere and humorous person. To the workshops he brought a lovely openness and honesty, which was done through his enthusiasm and freshness of approach, while maintaining his questioning and analytical style. Performance had always been a natural part of his life, so much so that he found he needed to step back and reconsider some of the opportunities presented. According to Ed he enjoyed the workshops because they challenged him and allowed him to evaluate and assess his performance. Having spent the last year at an Eastern States College of the Arts, his concept of performance was completely rearranged. Ed returned to the West and to teacher training displaying a passion for his Art along with keenness not only to perform but also to explore the possibilities of theatre and to push boundaries, challenge and delight his students. Ed's positive, slightly zany love of performance and his commitment to all he did resulted in his attendance at every session where he brought enthusiasm, wonder and joy.

Ed used the workshops as an exploration of his potential. Perhaps the work to which he had been exposed at the college in the previous year invited him to enter the space and time of the workshops with focus and purpose. His earnest approach allowed him to utilise the possibilities the movement work contains and to enter a real conversation with the limitless narrative of embodied story.

Synopsis of Interview

Performance had always been a large part of Ed's life. He was fascinated and excited by theatre. His first memory of performing was at the age of six and when he had delighted in dressing up and performing. Since then roles had come easily to him but after a year at an Eastern State College of the Arts he was more discerning and keen to explore new ground in theatre and performance. Process had become more exciting than product. Ed had always been very focused in his work, but the intense training of the year at the college had really changed the way he wanted to work in theatre. He had been permitted greater freedom to pursue his own voice.

Ed had a desire to share his awareness and exploration of theatre with others. At the time of the Perform/Transform workshops that meant pursuing teaching as a way to impart that love of drama. In his own performance work it meant making discerning decisions about his role in the process. When Ed spoke of his love of the whole concept of theatre, excitement lit his features and he seemed filled with a naive joy. He spoke of being able to access his imagination and being perceptive about people and life. The experience at the college of the Arts permeated the interview.

Journal

His journal entries were extensive:

22.08.00.

Flow - switching off from the room - feeling. Body out. Angry sections of the body were back and ribs which needed this relaxing stage to loosen up.

Growing accustomed to floor texture - shutting eyes to escape. Patterns of circles in isolation. Switching off/on awareness.

Staccato - jerk of elbows and static thoughts - flashes of day - body was alert and aware of others.

Chaos - enjoyed, free flowing, working off impulse and others - floor, light and other movements.

Lyric - kind, like a fairy tale. Pleasant thoughts - soft, yet thoughtful.

Stillness - Bones, light single moves, textures.

Being aware of another is like stepping into another person's left shoe. It's like running a three-legged race - it can be really good or really bad. Really together or really apart.

Who leads? Who follows?

In my case I was constantly doing both - I felt like I had found an equal balance of initiating and reacting. This is probably because of previous work in organics. Working with a partner was fantastic! I experienced, and shared it, and felt comfortable. I felt like I shattered some things when I felt tedious or frustrated but it was usually picked up.

Authentic - I felt comfortable, yet uncomfortable with scratching and face. I felt like I was taking everything moment by moment, yet time was 2 seconds in front - and 2 seconds behind. I was surprised and then disappointed.

I felt heady when witnessing. Young and sneakily childish.

29.08.00.

Fill me up!

Responding> Observe> Witness

> Represent - reaction

> Copy imitate

Moments of/ or highlights

Saturation

Body moments - time when all makes sense!

Family/ Sharing/ Familiarizing.

During my 'turn' I felt at ease and free and trapped.

I felt an awareness of being critical in my response. I did not either allow it or disallow a judgement. It was either there or not. Or let myself breathe in another person> not one element but often the strongest element. I reacted to colours that I could identify. I opposed different colours and celebrated others. Sometimes the contents/colours were deep or shallow but each worthy of response or acknowledgement.

12.09.00.

Moving - before even getting up my body is saying "it's your turn". For some reason I knew I was first. The lights were a bother so 'change'.

My time was again working off impulse rather than a predetermined narrative. This helps me feel free to be in the moment - and allow anything to happen. interesting to note the intensity change from entering space to beginning.

When does the 'performance start' - when does it finish.

I really liked starting -

but knew when I needed to end.

Closing eyes was too scary -

I need to see body and environment -

Awareness of fingers and feet - enjoyed group awareness activity.

I like carrying movement to see where it goes - I don't even know where it will go.

I feel relaxed - spacy(sic) and vulnerable yet safe. Happily deflated.

I enjoy watching impulsive action - which is not mapped.

19.09.00.

Firstly, I would like to say how enjoyable and liberating this class has been for me. I was able to regain my confidence (quietly) through movement. I feel expressive more so, in everyday life and hope I remain and exercise my body talk. I love working off impulse and sustaining time and I think this was working throughout the 5 weeks. I loved witnessing other people - to take their journey, without placing a judgement on what is 'correct' or 'wrong'. It was interesting to observe experience and vulnerability, freedom, experimentation, and people - not through 'this is what I do or know', but through watching and witnessing people.

Authenticity is a funny word. It brings me to the origins or the first (and only) way, or the before time began way. I prefer truthful because it deepens the person to search, create, play with, deny or refuse that truth.

Performance lets me do all these things - and I believe I am most happyist (sic) when I am truthful - and the audience are there in pure delight of witnessing this honesty, vulnerability and depth.

The class brings me to an awareness of my work, an ability to witness with unconditional positive regard, with a sense of 'play'.

This play is so much fun to release, explode, delight, discover and develop.

Movement is probably, I think the least alive- or, slower than my mind. And it was fantastic to hear people liking, and observing this (what I thought to be a fault?) - so that was nice.

Focus warm ups let me rejoice - slide - come together with body, space, time, movement, sound and silence, and breath.

When do we energise so playfully - as kids.

Thanks Dale for this playful opportunity.

**Share exploration
of life, of art, through theatre
bring joy to the world.**

Biography 10: Hannah

Hannah moved around the Western Australian countryside with her family during her primary schooling, but rather than being destabilising this seemed to give her a sense of place and well being. Her Visual Arts degree brought success in her undergraduate years when she was awarded a scholarship to study overseas. After a few years working, she returned to university to complete an honours year. She had worked on collaborative projects but was realistic about the need for a regular income and for interaction with others. The artist's life could be a lonely one.

Hannah had enjoyed drama at school and the fun and interaction of those school productions stayed with her. She saw the blend of Visual and Performing Arts as mutually beneficial in a school setting. Hannah's passion was for the Visual Arts and for exploring the mind/body dichotomy. Perhaps in combining drama and textiles she could explore the body in a dynamic and performative mode.

Hannah brought the Visual Arts into relationship with the Performing Arts. Her responses to questions on performance related to her high school experience and while that was useful it failed to provide contemporary dialogue. Her journal spoke through images that attest to some shift and exploration through the workshops on creative and authentic movement

Synopsis of Interview

Hannah's first memories of performance were drama lessons in Year One where there was room for structured play and fun. But her first real experience of performance was in secondary school where she surprised the other students by landing a major part in the school production. Ego had to be contended with, but Hannah's family had her well-trained in being humble about tenuous achievements. Acting allowed communication and catharsis. Hannah was impressed by the spontaneity of dramatic improvisation. But she was delighted that in drama she could be heard and seen. Attention equalled acceptance and self-confidence and it marked her out as different. She was special and her world was that of the Visual Arts with a wing into performance.

Journal

(Drawing: Appendix 3.1)

Sketch of figure and balloons: "What are humans without words? What am I without words?"

(Drawing: Appendix 3.2)

GRAVITY

STRETCHING

YOUR STORY

THE LOST AND FOUND

INTERIOR OR EXTERIOR

(Drawing- wound dripping blood: Appendix 3.3)

Hear me and see me!
take imaginative flight
and colour the world.

Biography 11: Joe

Some people seem to play the octave and live the spectrum of the rainbow as they dance through existence. Joe was a charismatic person whose abilities and talents are manifold. A student in his late twenties, Joe delighted in the dynamic aspects of teaching. He appeared to have found a creative and accepting space at the school and had become part of the community. The younger female students would rush up and hug him and call his name delightedly if they saw him in the grounds. He brought joy to all of us. Laughter abounded and interesting projects were afoot. He was instrumental in advertising the Perform/Transform workshops and was a mainstay. He gave deliciously and fully in his participation and honoured the others and their work. Improvisation and the Authentic Movement work appealed to him enormously and he appeared to embrace it as a creative professional and personal journey.

Joe was a unique and widely talented person. His journal presented his very particular journey. He supped at the banquet of the workshops as he did in life and a poetic sojourn meets the reader. He brought a rich performance background and confidence to the work and a wide world of experience from his avid search for vision, beauty and truth.

Synopsis of Interview

Drama provided Joe with a means for self-exploration but he placed that in the context of his family and the sacredness that was connected to performance culturally. From the age of eight he embraced performance. As an adult he avowed a love of performing and a desire to combine art forms in performance work. When talking about performance Joe spoke of engagement, immersion in character and total commitment. There was passion in his responses and an eloquence and delight. Joe described himself as a traveller of the emotions and the psyche. He saw performance as a vehicle for that journey. Like Paul, Joe mentioned a link with meditation when he discussed the focus required for performance. He also felt that performance was a phoenix process and that transformation of self was endless but could be recognised through performance. Joe was comfortable with the concept of sacred theatre and discussed the shamanistic aspects of drama.

Joe certainly found therapy in performance. He did not approach the art as just a therapy but acknowledged this aspect. Life was a huge lesson and drama and performance provided Joe with a perfect crucible for self-exploration. He was articulate and drew upon a rich cultural base to discuss the power of performance. He considered this mainly from the point-of-view of the performer and tacitly assumed the journey of the audience as valid and authentic if the performance was based in a search for truth and beauty.

Joe's passion for life was obvious from the interview.

Journal

Through inspiration he drew images in the journal reflections but his natural bent for poetry allows initial insight into his experience:

22.08.00.

(Drawing: Appendix 3.4).

29.08.00.

(Drawing: Appendix 3.5).

04.09.00.

Breaking into the moment.

(Drawing: Appendix 3.6).

Thought into feeling

Sight into sensation

Moment of being

Time of liberation

Connecting through each part

Mind, body, soul

Bending from the start

No aim, no plan, no goal

(Drawing: Appendix 3.7).

04.09.00.

(Drawing: Appendix 3.8).

And now as the warmth rises

So does my sense of the living

Open

(arrow going down).

12.09.00.

In this place of creation

I rise to your call

Movements of unseen oceans

Guide from my silent mouth

Until these wings bring me near

To the waterfall of time

And the bliss of other

And beauty of me

(Drawing: Appendix 3.9)

In between

In that space

the void

creating

this

*(circle and arrow in from AM and on other side You Know sketch of green man
punching own knee SSS....KA... Ah...Sah...Na...PR and under heel Ta ta Ta Ta.*

(Drawing: Appendix 3.10).

19.09.00.

(Drawing of hand with warm rays emanating from its palm: Appendix 3.11).

New meaning of warm up!

(Drawing of globe of world as apple: Appendix 3.12).

Through thousands of years my ancestors travelled what for them was so far and yet to

us so little. Even still their small journey was SO vast an experience.

As I move through the space I sense the smallness of that which I occupy and still the vastness of its tale.

Speak of each part

Move through each sound

Unknown at the start

By the end profound

Transcend what is mundane

(Paint which seems grey

Difference now from what was same

Night mind seen in the day

Loosen, shift, transform

Light up the soul's fire

Shaking makes the heart warm

Newness in the old to aspire

VOICE SOUL

STORY

BODY

(Drawing: Appendix 3.13)

Sacred travelling
and on-going catharsis
- open horizons.

Biography 12: Paul

Paul dutifully laboured through the Perform/Transform workshops. Paul was a kind and sensitive man who was also strong and practical. He had a wonderful education that had celebrated drama and performance. As a child he attended an alternative school in the Lakes District in the United Kingdom. The school was for students whose needs were not met elsewhere and Paul's mother had searched to find a creative school that could assist her son's learning difficulties. Drama productions were the focus of the curriculum and all learning centred on the practical task of a theatrical performance. He enjoyed performance at high school in Australia and found a niche in a stage design course at a local Arts academy. Paul's training was in stage design, not performing. He was particularly interested in students with special needs and worked with students with disabilities in his spare time.

Paul wanted to teach kids with learning difficulties and this led him to the teacher-training programme and opened the way to the Perform/Transform experience. During the time he spent with me as a trainee teacher we jokingly agreed that I would 'fail' him if he didn't attend the Perform/Transform workshops. In fact watching the senior Drama Studies class intrigued him and he was interested to see how the series might be structured. The work was personally confronting.

Paul struggled through the workshops, which were challenging and posed more questions than supplied answers. Paul was quite right when he acknowledged that the difficulties provided the strong learning. He was brave in continuing and opening to this work.

Synopsis of Interview

Drama and outdoor activities were the focus of the curriculum in the enlightened farm school that Paul attended. Not only did the school turn his ability to learn around but also in his late twenties it had influenced his career choice. Drama was an essential tool in a successful education. Although drama had meant the many aspects of a performance, Paul recognised that he had learnt much from performing. The sense of fun

and of playing that performance provided was seen as very important. Paul would stress the process more than the product. The greatest learning came for him through the preparation and rehearsal stage.

Paul spoke of the anxiety he knew prior to performance, but of the joy in “*creating something for an audience*”. He also felt that in drama teaching he would be able to bring the process of working creatively in a team to students. He acknowledged that he had just touched the tip of the iceberg of self through his performance work. Sport had provided a sense of release as well. The focus and concentration that Paul recognised in his drama work were linked to his growing knowledge of the power of meditation and its importance to a healthy and balanced life.

Journal

28.08.00.

Less (sic) questions than last week flowing through my head (too many questions last week).

Main feeling of emptying out the feeling of the day.

Enjoyed watching my partner more this week. Could feel what they were doing, within myself. It felt good to shake.

12.09.00.

Heavy again. I don't want to be heavy. "Treat everything that comes along as a challenge."

"What don't kill you will only make us stronger."

Too much grounding. Not enough lightness.

Sharing the burden
making performance through fun
heavy becomes light.

Biography 13: Tali

A graduate diploma student in her mid twenties with a diverse and rich background in movement and bodywork, such as yoga, Tali was embracing teaching with energy and enthusiasm. Her personal journey coloured her approach to teaching and her multi-cultural background and travels as a child and young adult, meant that Tali had a wide vision and realisation of the need to be able to be authentic on every level of life. Concurrent with the Perform/Transform workshops, Tali was discovering further aspects of herself and the richness of styles by attending other exploratory drama focused workshops. She was happy to share her ideas and quick to participate in the workshop activities.

Tali was energetic in her interactions with the world. She was determined to understand herself and to encourage others to do likewise. She was quite critical of her ability to take on character but that lead her to seek deeper into alternatives that might have the key. Tali would be a compassionate teacher with an imagination, creativity and joy that would inspire students.

Tali wanted to analyse and know. Intuition and intelligence would give her awareness but at the price of questioning and conflict. Her passionate nature would quest against dogmatism and thoughtless conventionality. The last time I saw her she was heading off to a country teaching position with delight and determination.

Synopsis of Interview

Tali was open to a wide spectrum of performance styles and theories. She had a strong grounding in yoga and dance and had recently become aware of the influence of Jerzy Grotowski on modern theatre. Tali had a real sense of being a citizen of the world and of a broad and eclectic way of experiencing life. Her first memories of performance were of sessions of free dance after ballet classes. At the time of the interview Tali was experiencing a period of doubt about her ability to take on character in performance and was translating her need to perform into a desire to teach.

Tali was concerned to wrestle with ideas and to deepen her awareness of what theatre could be and where her own potential could reach. Drama and performance were keen tools to discover more about herself and the world. Tali was constantly considering how what she learnt could be adapted for the adolescents she would soon be teaching. She recognised that it was important as a teacher to keep performing and for her to continue to learn she would need to perform. At this stage Tali saw drama as an endless exploration of what it is to be human and her drama program would reflect the desire to lead others to that discovery.

Journal

22.08.2000.

Well, that was a bit amazing! It was fascinating how just doing 'free movement' to music took me to so many places. A few important things I noticed were:

- 1) That more new and interesting ways of moving emerge when I'm not thinking about 'performance'. Explorative expressionism.*
- 2) memories of childhood in the body. My body took me right back to my first ever crawling movement.*
- 3) Feelings of being 'authentic', truly in my skin came in the final track of 'Stillness'. A sense of sadness, futility and silence which gives birth to a sense of truth, of self. I was reminded of my first ever LSD trip. No communication necessary.*
- 4) a complete desire to try to communicate this 'realness' all the time. Wanting this to be me always, not just a place I visit on occasion. Relief. I'm still here!*
- 5) Aware of breath. That so often I don't really breathe.*

29.08.2000.

The initial exercise to the tape was not as mesmerising today. I think 2 factors counted in. The first was that we were working in pairs so my attention shifted from me and the feelings inside to the other person and how I might respond/intersect with them. Because of this the movement was more 'organised', not a spontaneous free-flow of an internal dialogue. The second factor was having the lights on. I felt that made a huge difference

to my ability to explore from a sensation driven impulse and instead transferred the knowledge to a visual centred medium. The result was that I didn't feel as grounded or meta-cognitive.

The second exercise with a viewer was good, if not better than last week. It was like my body decided to take the opportunity, now I had my eyes closed to engage with the self-sensations.

I really loved the way there seemed to be narratives in the movement today. Past exercises seemed to be more existential experiences of sensation. Today it seemed that we were telling stories. I liked to be free to interpret others' journey and for there to be no rights or wrongs. That I then responded in a creative medium meant that the story I had derived was actually then given its own life. So then there are two or three or a thousand stories in each. It seems to me that this is much more valid than the old ways of reading narrative and of authorities saying there is a singular interpretation. (More valuable. Why do we all need to understand the conventional symbols? Why all speaking the same language? Why absolutes? Naming things?)

My journey I went on took me through my movement history. It wasn't what I thought I would do and it was also really interesting that it just simply stopped when it was finished. It told me when it was done. Funny that. It was also interesting to feel how much joy and freedom and wonder was attached to my child movement and how my feelings toward strict dance training are actually quite negative DISCOVERIES!!

Enthusiasm
fused with compassionate mind
joyful performance.

Selection of professional actors for interview

Rachel's greatest gift to this thesis was her reflective language as she candidly shared her story. She provides an adult voice in the study. I chose Rachel because I respected her work, was intrigued by her return to study, her readiness to enter the volatile world of acting and because I wanted to remain in contact, although we now live across the world from each other, and share some of the trials and tribulations she was confronting.

Performance had impact on her from childhood. The path to a career in theatre was open but she chose a circuitous journey to her final goal. Rachel's decision in her mid-forties to seriously pursue her lifelong love of performing is inspiring and salves a concern as a drama educator about the involvement, focus and love some students find in drama for the same level of commitment and immersion is rarely found once they leave school. Perhaps they have a romantic sense of how they can be in the world. Rachel is a good example of how passion will blend with the practical exigencies of life. Rachel's adolescent love of theatre relates to the experiences of some of the secondary school participants in this thesis. Rachel's peripatetic early years are reminiscent of the experience of Paul and Joe and to some extent of Neil and Skye and to a lesser extent, Abby. The discovery of a school that allowed creativity, individuality and community, often through drama, links their journeys. She is particularly interesting in the way she blends her philosophy and beliefs to her life and work.

Biography 14: Rachel.

In 1994, Rachel was involved in a community theatre project in Edinburgh where we met. She was well known and had a big part. I was an unknown but had the part of the idiosyncratic narrator. Over the two-year stay we had a wonderful range of performance experiences together. These ranged from two community theatre projects, my direction of Rachel in a new feminist play and her participation in the workshopping and performance of my own theatre piece. Over the next few years Rachel pursued her adolescent dream to become a professional actor and achieved it when she was forty-four. Performance had been wedded to her life but she worked as a community worker after leaving university and when not travelling or working she was often involved in community theatre projects. Rachel was born in Scandinavia to English parents. Her father's work took them to many exotic places but Zimbabwe was the one closest to her heart. She recalled the laughter in the dining room in Harare as she entertained her family. But it was at a free school in Dumfries, Scotland that she began to understand her gift and the power of the performer and the performance. Rachel believed that she was still trying to find the 'natural stillness' that she found in that teenage performance of *Look Back in Anger*.

The love of theatre meant that Rachel delighted in watching the work of others. As a professional actor she was less involved in community theatre projects that were quite active in Scotland. Community theatre projects often had profound effects on the participants. Rachel experienced them deeply and the impact over a few years led to the confidence to take on projects of challenge that would eventually open the way for the post-graduate course at RSAMD which was the key to Rachel becoming a professional actor. Change was essential to being a good performer, according to Rachel. She blended Buddhist dharma practice with everyday life and endeavoured to live mindfully and kindly. This provided an antidote to the ego focus so often assumed of actors. Her path was individual but she loved the deep trust and connection found in working well with others as a team.

The interview with Rachel revealed a gifted and dedicated actor whose approach to her

art was sincere and total. It was enmeshed with her life and an essential motivation. Rachel provided a mature voice of an actor open to many avenues of performance. Her deep Buddhist faith was an important facet of her manner of meeting the world and living her art. Rachel had followed her dream and was living it daily. From the idealistic teenager's experience of performance to the aware woman's devotion to acting, Rachel's words showed an explorative, creative, thinking performer who would one day discover the natural stillness in performance that she knew in her youth.

Synopsis of Interview with Excerpts

Rachel's life changed radically when she attended a free school in the Scottish countryside. Boarding school had not proved a happy experience for that talented, independent person. But the sensitive spirit was understood and allowed at the free school. It was there that she experienced a purity of performance that fuelled her to touch that quality in her adult work: "I remember that performance - the economy of movement and stillness that I would still like to get back to. It's not an intellectual thing, it's instinctual" (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript).

As an adult performer, Rachel sought to work in a very special way:

Your own self is such a strong channel that the other human being comes through in a way almost like lit up, you know, by your radiance. You let that other human being shine and the beam goes out to other people's truth in the audience. A beautiful, circular energy. (*ibid.*)

After a successful experience with a professional acting company in Nairobi, Rachel made a conscious decision not to pursue acting. She wondered if she liked it too much or was scared of the commitment for she decided to attend university in England. But in her early thirties she formed a women's theatre company while living in Edinburgh. This was followed by the part of Stephen Gordon in *The Well of Loneliness*. Rachel had a deep commitment to the play and the workshop process. The director urged her to go to RSAMD to be trained as a professional actor. But then came a period of travel, which helped Rachel to ease away from her need to be useful as a community worker. Rachel

was strongly committed to her art: “I think you have a potential for an immense alchemy of change, if you really allow yourself to go to the forge of... of looking at your own pain”(ibid.). Through her work she gained more knowledge about the human condition:

When I first started doing much more acting, I remember having a lovely sense of being so much more solidly me. Because I'd been doing so many other characters that I had a much clearer sense of my own self and my own boundaries, it was kind of ironic I remember having the feeling that: “ I belong more to myself because I am allowing myself to be all these other people”.... You get to explore all the hidden aspects (of yourself) in a structured way. It's cathartic. (ibid.)

Rachel spoke of the experience of transcendence through performance or at least moments of pure focus and energy:

It's like you and the audience... you and the audience suddenly take off together. You and the audience suddenly fly. And other people in the cast. It's like a whoosh! It's like transcendence. You're all there and then suddenly you're all going somewhere else. I don't know, maybe I can only speak for myself. (ibid.)

Rachel had experienced powerful performance as audience:

Certainly when I was sitting there I felt transported. I don't know about transformed, just moved, deeply moved, affected, changed, dwelling on it afterwards... So, yeah, I think watching other people can be cathartic, I mean that's why I love theatre, I'm in theatre because it affects every fibre of your being. (ibid.)

When asked if she felt that acting could be a spiritual endeavour, Rachel's response was immediate:

...for me everything is a spiritual endeavour. For me theatre is definitely a spiritual endeavour. Everything to do with acting is a spiritual endeavour because it's to do with connection. Connection with yourself, connection with others, connection with the universal life force and that channelling of another person's ideas - the writer, to the people who have paid to see it, the audience. Who've come to see live theatre, to see... come to have something acted out for them. Some kind of catharsis, some kind of escape, some kind of comfort. It's about

communication and it's about spirit definitely.

I guess the spiritual aspect of a lot of what I do is listening. And enabling and empowering and certainly teaching well being and relaxation and meditation. There's something about the magic of theatre, the magic of all suspending belief together, of all imagining together. The writer's imagination, your imagination, the audience's imagination, which is so potentially exciting, transformative, phoenix-like, it has such enormous potential...

...I think I'm more consciously conscious of spirit in everything. I've brought that, hopefully, to my work with my colleagues and to work with character I've been playing. But I think it's almost something that most actors do and why people love acting and why nearly all actors want to play Shakespeare and like to do things that really matter and have depth. Kenneth Brannagh is an atheist and he says the nearest thing he gets to church is playing Shakespeare. (*ibid.*)

Radiant mirror

transforms and connects us to

natural stillness.

Conclusion

All the participants in the workshops and the interviews showed a strong interest and love for theatre and drama. Although this was manifested and expressed in a range of ways, drama was seen as a significant factor in their self-development. The reflective conversations on their various experiences of performance, that the interview provided, were intense and personal. All the participants were generous and forthcoming with their stories. Generally, they all seemed to enjoy the interview process for it engendered a reflective practice that is sometimes forgotten. The questions allowed the students and the actor to talk about their work and themselves. They seemed to delight in the chance to reflect on and evaluate their art.

The decision to include university students and the adult actor in the study are validated through the increased maturity and life experience that they bring to their reflections. When this is then studied alongside the secondary students' responses it corroborates and expands the younger participants' experiences. There is also a difference in the secondary students' level of response. Over the two years there were some particularly talented students but Marnie had taken a step ahead in her development and determination to continue to perform. Skye was focused on her personal growth and a spiritual aspect is apparent in her responses, yet she was less concerned with her role as performer.

The discussion of the idea of transformation illustrates the difference in their responses. Skye spoke of being aware of a growing process: "*We are transformed. I think it's in the form of growing*" (Skye, 2000, Interview transcript). For Skye the transformation was related specifically to her personal awareness and self-growth. Marnie's response admitted to the personal shift but also acknowledged an awareness of the effect of this on others, and in the case of performance, on the audience. 'Well, I think you're transformed mentally and physically and you not only transform yourself, you transform the people around you' (Marnie, 2001, Interview transcript). It is in Joe's response that the articulation of the transcendent becomes apparent. Joe was twelve or thirteen years older than the secondary students, Skye and Marnie. His initial response to the question

about transformation was: “I see it as a whole phoenix process. That would be the most logical archetypal expression, that transition of the phoenix. But in the same sense as well it allows that expression of awe” (Joe, 2000, Interview transcript). Joe is able to relate to mythology and literature, he is metaphorical and he easily moves from the personal to the spiritual in his discussion of transformation. He looks at the ramifications of the experience. Rachel, the actor, was nearly twenty years older than Joe. When she spoke of the transformative aspect of performance she integrated it into the life journey: “It’s a therapeutic process, if you’re being truthful... I think you have the potential for an immense alchemy of change, if you really allow yourself to go to the forge of...of looking at your own pain” (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript). Rachel acknowledged that the process was continuous. She had wedded the performance work to her life journey. Her interview illustrates both the personal growth and the responsibility to the audience and other performers in the on-going discovery of the power and importance of dramatic performance.

The participants’ discoveries are mediated by their life experience and focus. The following chapters allow their voices to be heard and will illustrate the benefit for the study in having a range of age groups and levels of life and performance experience for reference. The experience of dramatic performance has had impact on the lives of all the participants.

Chapter Five

Research question 1

What importance do drama students and an actor place on performance?

The focus of the interview questions was to establish how the participants viewed dramatic performance in their lives. The purpose was to discover the importance they considered dramatic performance to have on their lives. The breadth of the definition of dramatic performance means that it could range from an improvised authentic movement performance witnessed by one other to a fully rehearsed, scripted performance for a public audience. Dramatic performance was construed by most of the secondary students as an assessable element of their Drama and Drama Studies courses. Some of the students had experienced professional stage and television work. The range of dramatic performance experiences was both chronologically and contextually broad.

The selection of the interviewees from school and university drama classes meant that the language, emphasis and the perspective they would take in their response would influence the interpretation this thesis could then make about generally perceived attitudes towards the importance of dramatic performance. Students were asked to consider their history of performance, to evaluate its importance in their lives and its effect upon them.

Drama and dramatic performance allow students to use their imagination in a creative and collaborative way; to experience issues and emotions; to share realities and perceptions. "Theatre is the first human invention which paves the way for all other inventions and discoveries" (Boal, 1995, p.13). Their ideas matter and as they rehearse, workshop and perform they discover more about themselves and the world. They are both more and less than they are as they assume character and roles. "We have the whole gamut, in pure potentiality, ...We have within us such a wealth of possibilities! And we know so very little of it, so little about what we have, and almost nothing about what we are!" (p. 35). The importance placed on dramatic performance included the enjoyment

and involvement they experienced, the fears and concerns about performing, the focus and commitment they were willing to give to performance, the knowledge they thus gained about themselves, and the strength of their desire to continue to perform.

Involvement and enjoyment

In the interviews with secondary students, university trainee teachers and with an adult actor, self-awareness through drama was seen to be important. For a few participants, particularly Abby, Neil and Marnie, performance was also seen as a possible career and a vocation. Interestingly, the actor, Rachel, saw her involvement in theatre and drama as a career and as an essential tool for self-growth. The following quote from the interview with Rachel illustrates the holism she found: "I am in theatre because it effects every fibre of your being. I get that from performance" (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript).

The majority of the students, especially the female secondary students and all but one of the university males then echoed this. The secondary students saw their involvement as a means to explore their authentic self; a mode of self-empowerment and one described it as her life and love. The university participants saw it as self-exploration and something they just loved; an area of fun and ideas; and a place where the real self could be seen; a nurturer of self-esteem and personal development but also something that was important to pass on to others. All the participants were involved in drama, at their different levels, for both personal and vocational reasons. It is significant that self-exploration should figure prominently. Drama was not just another subject, but one that permitted and expected self-awareness, and demanded more than a superficial commitment.

The students enjoyed the many different aspects of performance. In their interviews the secondary students mentioned audience, working with others and the fact that drama was different from anything else they did. They celebrated the relational aspects of drama and theatre, and because it was *something else* and *bigger* than anything they knew. The university students ranged in their responses from enjoying performance for its aspect of play, while Joe used words such as *change* and *sacredness* as reasons for enjoyment. But some of the older students found that expectations and vulnerability had discoloured

their naive enjoyment. The delight of the actor Rachel was at a deeper level:

You're not acting, you're just being for other people and to other people. You are communicating being rather than acting... You let that other human being shine and the beam goes out to other people's truth in the audience. A beautiful, circular energy. (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript)

The two questions about involvement in drama and the enjoyment of performance were indicative of the trend of the responses throughout the interviews. Their involvement in drama had led them into an awareness of themselves. By taking other roles, by enlivening their imagination through improvisation and play building, they had opened possibilities in themselves. As Rachel explained: "I belong more to myself because I am allowing myself to be all these other people" (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript).

Rachel believes that she has a much clearer sense of herself and her boundaries through the cathartic experience of performance. The sense of a richness of personal growth is described by university student Joe as a *metamorphosis* through performance: "I just felt it was a bit like a tardus... still the same object but completely moved through time and space. And I like that magic that is in there, and it is magic" (Joe, 2000, Interview transcript).

Secondary student Abby expressed her commitment to drama as a love:

And I reckon acting is one of the best things ever to realise who you are. Which is when you experience all these emotions and feelings other people have you really start to understand your own as well. And when you're trying to find out ways to relate your emotions to how your character feels it really makes you realise a lot about yourself. I love it actually, I do. It's great. (Abby, 2000, Interview transcript)

The responses suggest that students value the special alchemy that occurs when the actor performs. It is experienced by the actor as personal awareness and as success in performance. And it is experienced by the audience both personally and collectively. But it is something that is valued and a reason for continued involvement and enjoyment.

Interview question 4

Why are you involved in drama?

The reasons for involvement in drama were an essential facet of this research study. It was important to acknowledge the range of responses. For some students it had always been part of their life. Early performance, even in informal family settings had impacted upon them to the extent that they continued to study drama and in some cases intended to pursue performance as a career. The university students hoped to transfer their passion for performance to their students when they completed their teaching diplomas and degrees. The actor had returned to her childhood passion to create more meaning and relevance in her life.

Responses of secondary students

Zilla was excited by the exploration of other people that drama permitted: "...to see into other people's way of being and doing" (Zilla, 2001, Interview transcript). Alex saw it as part of his creative life for the interactive and creative aspect of drama appealed: "Right from the start of my life I've liked acting, talking, interacting with other people" (Alex, 2001, Interview transcript).

For Marnie drama was inseparable to being: "It just came naturally to me. I just love to be on stage" (Marnie, 2001, Interview transcript). As a child Marnie effortlessly created family and neighbourhood performances. Her parents always accepted her focus and delight: "They'd just say they were dead certain what career I was going to follow" (Marnie, 2001, Interview transcript). Abby's experience was similar: "I've always been an actor, I've always been acting in my life and I just love it as a way" (Abby, 2000, Interview transcript).

Neil's initial response to this question was: "...that's what I want to do in the future. I just love it. ...I suppose I see it as a way to escape" (Neil, 2000, Interview transcript). Neil's comment relating to escape leads on to that of Skye: "Because it's a way to let go of reality for a little while and search" (Skye, 2000, Interview transcript).

Both Alia and Andrew related to the fun they found in the drama class, in their different ways. For Alia it was expressed in her bubbly fashion: “It’s just... it’s so fun and you can express yourself ” (Alia, 2000, Interview transcript). For Andrew it was quite matter of fact: “Partly really because it’s fun. At school it’s one subject where you can relax” (Andrew, 2000, Interview transcript). The students generally took their commitment to drama seriously and gave energy to their preparation and performance work.

Responses of university students and an actor

Tali admitted to an egocentric focus as a child that has metamorphosed in her mid-twenties into a desire to be able to be seen as she really is, for people to see: “...the real person inside” (Tali, 2000, Interview transcript). Joe also saw it as a process of self-exploration. “I think largely it’s been about that process of going through self-exploration. And some people explore it through all different types of media, so for me it was the Arts” (Joe, 2000, Interview transcript). Process had also become the focus for Ed. He delighted in everything to do with theatre, but was more and more concerned with the journey: “I just love being part of that process of something that no one knows what it’s going to be” (Ed, 2000, Interview transcript).

For Paul and Hannah, school was the facilitator of things dramatic. Paul had attended a small school in the countryside in England, where drama productions focused the curriculum for students with learning and other disabilities. Paul’s experience links with that of the actor, Rachel, whose life was shifted in a positive way after being sent to a free school in Scotland after grim boarding school experiences. Her experience of the Arts at that school and specifically a production of *Look Back in Anger* sealed her love of performance.

This question of why the participants had become involved in drama revealed that early dramatic experiences and freedom to be their creative selves had awakened the artist, providing environments, people and opportunities for essential personal expression. Their interest had been engaged and enlivened. A young professional performer expressed it as giving “from your soul” in the national newspaper:

“You can only give from your soul if you are willing to go that deep. And to go that deep I think you have to go through almost a state of possession.” Melita Jurisic and Robert Menzies are exponents of that technique, he says. “They are contacting something within themselves that in everyday normal life you can’t contact.” That’s the whole point. “People go to theatre to see something because they want to be contacted. They want to be reached. You can only be reached by something if it’s great. If something is meaningless and nothing and not from your heart, not from you, then...” he shrugs, what’s the point. (Matthew Whittet interviewed in *The Weekend Australian* 29-30 Dec 2001)

The students interviewed believed they were involved in something that was both fun but meaningful and would impact on their humanness. They were involved in something that they perceived to be worthwhile.

Interview question 6

What do you enjoy about performance?

It is curious that enjoyment is not an essential aspect and focus of education. Enjoyment encourages involvement and enthusiasm. Students who become involved in extra-curricular drama activities, like the annual school production, usually do it for the enjoyment. It is hard work but not an onerous task. Students have fun in drama. They interact and create together in an imaginative way. They share their work, usually through performance. The enjoyment and its concomitant involvement are palpable in a drama class. Boal’s campaign logo when he was seeking election to the Chamber of Vereadores in Rio de Janeiro was ‘Coragem De ser feliz’- ‘Have the courage to be happy’ (Boal, 1995, p. xxv). It is interesting that ‘enjoyment’, ‘fun’ and ‘happiness’ are rare to find in the index of most serious theoretical texts on education and theatre.

In Authentic Movement, as it was used in the research for this thesis, the initial question of the witness to the performer is “what did you enjoy?”. When they feedback their own response it is in terms of enjoyment. The critical and judgemental are avoided. The atmosphere created through positive feedback is supportive. It encourages participants to be more thoughtful and sensitive to the performance and to seek clearer ways of expressing their feelings about performance. It allows them to feel comfortable with

their performance work.

It is unfortunate that so many people would find resonance with Keith Johnstone's memory of secondary school: 'As I grew up, everything started getting grey and dull' (1987, p. 13). Fun, enjoyment and delight are states that can allow flow and communion. Miller (2000) ascertained that education could be enjoyable. He quotes Secretan's description of the chaotic organization: "A chaotic school would be categorized by lots of innovation and the teachers and students enjoying what they were doing. Spontaneity and fun would also be hallmarks of the chaotic school. However, there is also an underlying order that insures that learning and growth is occurring" (Miller, 2000, p.109). At the Soule School in Freeport, Maine two sections of the alternative school's creed are relevant: "We believe that children should have fun at school," and "We believe that teachers should enjoy their work and share their enthusiasm with the students and each other" (p.117). And putting it into a context of a life, Miller quotes from a piece by an elderly woman who wrote: "If I had my life over ... I would go to more dances. I would ride more merry-go-rounds. I would pick more daisies" (p.138). The students interviewed in this study had been asked to acknowledge the enjoyable aspects of their work in Authentic Movement, most of them often had fun in their drama class so it was useful to try to explore this aspect further as part of the research question's consideration of the importance of dramatic performance in the lives of the students.

Responses of secondary students

In the last two years of secondary schooling, students discover that personal awareness develops through their study of texts and theories of performance and performance experiences. It needs to be noted that the idea of theatrical performance as it is generally understood at this level is strongly influenced by societal views that are conservative. Most students watch films and television with which they experience differing degrees of involvement. The little theatre they will have been exposed to will usually have appealed to their ideas of believability, credibility and reality. The students, the course and the questions in the interview are grounded in a bourgeois concept of theatre and

life. Dario Fo epitomises this voyeuristic, bourgeois theatre in the following depiction: “...He (the actor) becomes the centre of the play and the audience tries to see itself in the character he represents” (Drain, 1995, p.205).

Both Abby and Zilla spoke of their enjoyment of performing for an audience. Abby’s initial response to the question was: “I love being in front of an audience” (Abby, 2000, Interview transcript). This response was honest and open and full of the energy Abby brought to her drama and performance work. Her statement focuses one very essential aspect of dramatic performance. Joseph Chaikin (1972) expressed it thus: “...the relationship between the actors and the audience. It is this living situation that is unique to the theatre, and the impulses of a new and more open theatre want to manifest it” (1972, p.1). Zilla spoke of the enjoyment and power through performance: “I like having everyone’s eyes on me and listening to what I’m saying” (Zilla, 2001, Interview transcript). Also, they both found it exhilarating to create a character. Abby described it in the following way: “I love being behind another character. It’s just so creative; it’s like exploring a different world to your own world” (Abby, 2000, Interview transcript). Zilla was fascinated by the potency of assuming a character: “If you do get into it, that you almost forget you’re on stage, that is really great and it’s almost like a real situation” (Zilla, 2001, Interview transcript). Taking on a character also entranced Marnie: “There’s something about becoming someone else... I just love it... being able to actually become someone else and step onto that completely different frame of mind...I think having the ability to be able to do that is amazing” (Marnie, 2001, Interview transcript).

For these students the exploration of the other equated with the discovery of self. Jean Houston’s work on sacred psychology gives an interesting perspective on characterisation: “If schizophrenia is a disease of the human condition, then polyphrenia, the orchestration and integration of our many selves, may be the health. ...Western culture is one of the few that demands a limited and singular self” (Houston, 1987, p.30).

For Marnie another point of intense enjoyment was her understanding of the dynamic between the performer and audience: “Knowing that you’re evoking some emotions

from the audience. (Is it just approval?) No. I think it's so much more than that" (Marnie, 2001, Interview transcript). Abby found something similar: "It's like you can feel them (the audience) go into themselves...you know it's such a deep change... when you can feel that from an audience I think it makes you as an actor believe in yourself so much more" (Abby, 2000, Interview transcript). Many of the students are fascinated by this aspect of dramatic performance, especially in their adolescence when they are beginning to articulate and experiment with who they are. The healthfulness of dramatic performance is to be encouraged for its therapeutic aspects.

The enjoyment that both Neil and Skye experienced had more to do with themselves and the people they were performing with. In Neil's words: "I suppose it's healing. (What do you mean?) Well, it makes me feel happy. And I love the fact that it brings you closer to people you're acting with" (Neil, 2000, Interview transcript). Skye's first response to the question of enjoyment was: "I enjoy working with people...at the end of the performance you're always really close... I do love that togetherness at the end" (Skye, 2000, Interview transcript). It would seem that a very special bond is forged and this can be seen as a tribal unity as the class or production group approach, enter and complete the performance period. Most humans like to feel that they are part of something meaningful and dramatic performance often provides a focused and heightened experience of the self and others:

Dramatic acts generate deep and significant feelings. G Wilson Knight once said that a player's experience in the theatre was, to him, like his time as a soldier in World War 1. A feeling of great camaraderie was built that went far beyond that given by team sports and games: performing before an audience felt like "going over the top" of the trenches in Flanders - a deeply felt and extreme form of human performance. (Courtney, 1995, p. 3)

Dramatic performance permits a largesse of being where the performer can feel great generosity in sharing the group's performance with the audience. Both Neil and Skye enjoyed the effect on an audience. Skye explained it: "It's really nice (focused performance) and you know the enjoyment people get out of watching it" (Skye, 2000, Interview transcript). Neil's response to a question on what he experienced when

performing is pertinent: "Satisfaction from the applause. I mean the applause you get is amazing. And seeing a smile and knowing that you've turned the biggest, ugliest, strongest man into a little kid, you know. That sort of feeling" (Neil, 2000, Interview transcript). For both, performance meant the joy of working creatively with others and an awareness of the difference performance made for the audience. As actors they were bringing a focus and energy through performing that had the ability to affect others in a positive way. They felt they were making a difference in the world.

Andrew found that performance allowed him to experience other dimensions of himself that were usually dormant: "I suppose it's something totally different to what you do normally" (Andrew, 2000, Interview transcript). Alia was very personal in her response: "It gives you such a rush and makes you feel so good" (Alia, 2000, Interview transcript). Alex linked back to Zilla's enjoyment at influencing the audience when he commented: "I like creating. I like swaying the audience" (Alex, 2001, Interview transcript). Enjoyment had different facets but it was part of the students' expectations of dramatic performance.

Responses of university students

Joe's immediate response to the question about enjoyment of performing left no doubt: "I love performing" (Joe, 2000, Interview transcript). He linked it to an ancient art: "It is the whole power to change reality...It's dramatic...the stuff that shamans and sorcerers and magicians do. So I like that tradition. It's within me too in its way" (Joe, 2000).

Interestingly Tali and Ed found that they were less enthusiastic about performing. Tali found the paradox of both enjoying performance work and yet feeling vulnerable: "The last couple of performances I did were enjoyable, but it was also quite a vulnerable place to be... they were very personal...very much autobiographical" (Tali, 2000, Interview transcript). Hannah offered an interesting insight after studying in the Visual Arts throughout her university career. She found it refreshing: "I like the link between the mind/body stuff" (Hannah, 2000, Interview transcripts).

The enjoyment was of personal awareness of the power of performance, the joy of being able to move an audience, the ability to effectively assume a character and the delight in working harmoniously and creatively with others. All are important in exploring our shared humanness. The various types of enjoyment show the level of importance that students see as inherent in dramatic performance. The actor, Rachel, provides a description that could well sit comfortably with most of the students: "You let other human beings shine and the beam goes out to other people's truth in the audience. A beautiful, circular energy" (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript). This quote has been used before, but in this context Grotowski's words expand it: "The actor makes a total gift of himself. This is a technique of the 'trance' and of the integration of all the actor's psychic and bodily powers which emerge from the most intimate layers of his being and his instinct, springing forth in a sort of 'translumination' " (1968, p. 16).

The Perform/Transform workshops allow space to honour the individual performer and to listen to their stories. From this point the actor emerges with renewed strength to tackle the roles and demands of theatre that may be text driven or based on improvised devising. As both Stanislavski and Grotowski emphasised the importance of honing this precious human form into a good human being before becoming a good actor, such workshops assist the actor in being both more explorative and confident of their own performance ability and aware of their unique human qualities.

For secondary school students, and the university trainee teachers, the palette of performance theories and styles that the two year drama and drama studies courses cover will help them to learn more about themselves, the people they study with and the people they perform for. Beyond the curriculum, it is about who they are, how others are in the world, the ways of relating, the ways of growing and coping with the inevitability of change. Ideally something of Grotowski's claim as the director might be touched: "The actor is reborn - not only as an actor but as a man - and with him I am reborn" (1968, p.25). Certainly the students interviewed could see the potential of performance to shift and change them, and they seemed to think that this was important. They were involved in something they enjoyed and they found self-development through pursuing

the 'love' of performance.

Fears and Butterflies

Juxtaposed to feelings of enjoyment and empowerment are those of dislike, fear and the many physical experiences of pre-performance nerves. The secondary students were concerned about falling out of character, forgetting lines, making fools of themselves and being ridiculed by the audience. The fear of failure was a real demon. Yet their ability to overcome the fear of performance illustrates the positive power and importance it has in their lives.

Interview question 7

What do you fear about performing?

Dramatic performance involves risk-taking. Peak performance is exciting but it certainly takes the performer to a personal edge. It can be as confronting as abseiling and the rehearsal and preparation are the ropes and shackles that provide support when the actor goes onto the acting space.

Responses of secondary students

Some students were cognizant of their responsibility to the audience. For example Neil explained it thus: "I am afraid to forget my lines...that just spoils everything, for the actor and the audience...I suppose I'm afraid of the audience not enjoying my performance" (Neil, 2000, Interview transcript). Abby also felt this duty: "I fear that if I'm not really in character, if I really don't feel it then the audience will not get as much from it" (Abby, 2000, Interview transcript). Zilla's experience was similar and she emphasised the difficulty of maintaining the character: "I think it's just forgetting your lines, because once you do that it wrecks the whole performance because it's so hard to get back into that confidence ...and get into the character, because all you're worried about is what you're saying" (Zilla, 2001, Interview transcript).

This links with the fear of not being accepted by the audience or of personal weakness. For Skye this meant: "My primary fear is that people will laugh at me. That's something

that comes from in me not from someone else” (Skye, 2000, Interview transcript). While for Alia it was even more intense: “I think I fear exposing myself, my inner self” (Alia, 2000, Interview transcript). Whereas Marnie was concerned at the quality of her portrayal: “Sometimes I fear that I’m not being genuine... I suppose that’s my ultimate fear. Not being able to do what I do best” (Marnie, 2001, Interview transcript). It was interesting to find that Alex was quite different in his response: “No. I don’t have many inhibitions. I’ve got morals, my own moral code but I don’t have fears or chaos about performing or anything like that” (Alex, 2001, Interview transcript).

The students had varying levels of awareness of the degree to which they felt they were vulnerable or exposed through performance. Often it had to do with not being prepared, but Alia moved beyond this and spoke of the fear of showing her ‘inner self’. Her awareness of the vulnerability of the performer also highlights the ability human’s have to achieve a level of refinement through training. In Grotowski’s poor theatre: “All is moulded in the actor: in his body, in his voice and in his soul” (1968, p. 99). Actor training for Grotowski is rigorous, the desire is to refine the human psyche and form but this quote admits to the levels that exist to be explored, enlivened and exposed.

Responses of university students

The university students were worried about being anxious, their own lack of interest and concerned about the lack of fun and the need to be perfect. They also identified performance styles that they felt ambivalent towards such as music theatre. Ed, was unhappy about ego in performance: “I dislike the ego that can come into performance” (Ed, 2000, Interview transcript). Another, Tali, echoed the secondary student fears about falling out of character and not being good enough: “I think text-based performances. I get concerned about my ability to portray a character” (Tali, 2000, Interview transcript).

Joe was afraid of the unknown that meets every authentic performance: “I think it’s like a dance of Shiva...self annihilation... I find that quite terrifying and at the same time the terror provides some of the greatest adrenalin rushes I’ve ever had” (Joe, 2000, Interview transcript). The paradox experienced by Joe relates to the power that resides in

performance. Fraleigh's comments are about dance but relevant to authentic movement where the body speaks: "...the whole self is shaped in the experience of the dance, since the body is besouled, bespirited and beminded. Simply stated, the body is lived through all these aspects in dance. Soul, spirit and mind ... are not separate from what we call the physical" (1987, p.11). The quote reminds us that humans are complex, multi-faceted beings. The materialistic world would encourage us to deny our depths but dramatic performance holds a key to our richer self. The university students are prepared to be critical of styles of theatre and are generally less concerned with being seen as foolish.

Interview question 8

When you are about to perform how do you feel physically?

All students attest to some type of pre-performance nervousness. They describe being nervous, having a racing heart, being really energetic, feeling sick, or feeling that their body is contracting. They feel excited, they yawn, one experiences a sense of the lower abdomen being on fire, another experiences tension, others cite the need to slow down and to breathe, another's nose blocks and throat constricts. Underlying their responses is the desire to get on stage.

Responses of secondary students

The whole body is engaged in dramatic performance. It is a total experience. The anticipation must be felt and then put aside to make way for the performance. Even the young actor learns to use this liminal state to enter the performance. Marnie exemplifies this: "All my emotions come together" (Marnie, 2001, Interview transcript). Sometimes that means she becomes quite emotional just prior to going on stage, but once on stage: "It all just disappears. I just become the character" (Marnie, 2001). Stepping onto the stage was the moment for Zilla when the tightness in her chest stopped: "...it's your little world. Just where the spotlight ends between the audience and you" (Zilla, 2001, Interview transcript). Andrew also experienced this tightness: "My whole kind of body kind of contracts" (Andrew, 2000, Interview transcript).

The desire to perform and the fear of performance live in this comment by Neil: "My

heart races and I just feel jumpy and I feel like I don't want to do it" (Neil, 2000, Interview transcript). Skye experiences the unease but also the readiness: "Sick! ...Sometimes I shake...My heart starts beating really fast... It's a process... I just feel ready... Okay this is it, let's go" (Skye, 2000, Interview transcript). Both continue to want to perform and like the musician Sting there is something that drives them to continue. He describes performance as "a chemical change that happens in your brain. I think that's why you do it - to get that thing" (Walker, 2000, p. 38).

Responses of university students

It is also the experience of the older students and Ed expresses it well: "It's just a pull. Bang! Go! It's my turn. Time to go" (Ed, 2000, Interview transcript). But it can be something almost overwhelming and unexpected and Joe, usually so confident and articulate reported: "I've nearly convulsed before going on stage" (Joe, 2000, Interview transcript). One university student, Paul, spoke of the tension he observed in the Olympic athletes prior to racing. It is similar for the dramatic performer. All eyes focus on the people on stage and under the lights.

The actor must have the audience, but these young actors are confronting huge fears in being the purveyors of ideas and delight. The students spoke of their enjoyment and desire to be involved in dramatic performance and exposed their feelings of vulnerability before performing. Once through the portal of their fears and in the acting space other things occur and they were asked to further describe their experiences.

Focus and Commitment

The students are young but they are still aware that something meaningful and powerful happens in performance. They also realise that they will only touch the potential in performance, thus in themselves, if they are serious about their efforts. "This act of the total unveiling of one's being becomes a gift of the self which borders on the transgression of barriers and love. I call this a total act. If the actor performs in such a way, he becomes a kind of provocation for the spectator" Jerzy Grotowski (Drain, 1995, p. 280).

Interview question 9

When you are performing are you aware of yourself?

The students with whom I worked were attracted to the dramatic arts but none of those in the groups interviewed would be described as a trained actor and certainly Grotowski's statement could seem excessive. The totality of the focused performance was experienced by some students and certainly by Rachel, the actor, as an adolescent performer. This related to her school performance in *Look Back in Anger*: "I played Alison and ironically, I think that was the best performance I've ever given. Because I was still, a natural stillness and such a feeling of safety in that place" (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript). The inspirational American dancer, Isadora Duncan, relates a similar experience in dance thus: "The true dance is an expression of serenity; it is controlled by the profound rhythm of inner emotion" (Drain, 1995, p. 248). It is unlikely that students will be able to describe their experiences as succinctly as either Rachel or Isadora Duncan, but an awareness of the power of performance when openly encountered is apparent in the response of some to the questions in this section.

These questions deal with the level of focus and commitment that the students' experience. All were earnest and vital people who were accepting challenges in their performance work that shifted them personally and enriched their performance. In the following questions self-awareness, immersion in role, authenticity of performance, the level of focus and the addictive quality of performance are explored. Within their experience their dramatic performance came close to *unveiling* their being.

Responses of secondary students

Abby, the secondary student who had a degree of experience with a local theatre company was quite adamant: "I think you have to be aware of yourself, you can't totally get into the character and totally be the character" (Abby, 2000, Interview transcript). Zilla emphasised her need to be credible: "...if I actually play a character and I really do believe what's going on - not to the point where I'd go crazy, but I do believe what's going on" (Zilla, 2001, Interview transcript). Another adolescent actor, Andrew,

concluded: "When I'm in character I'm still aware of who I am" (Andrew, 2000, Interview transcript). Augusto Boal writes about this human ability: "Theatre - or theatricality - is this capacity, this human property which allows man to observe himself in action, in activity" (1995, p.13).

Marnie easily worked with strong focus and credibility while still being aware of herself as performer: 'Yeah, I think I'm completely aware and I can always sense what the audience is thinking about a situation' (Marnie, 2001, Interview transcript). Boal further explains our ability to immediately reflect: "...Only the human being is tri-dimensional (the I who observes, the I-*in-situ* and the not-I) because it alone is capable of dichotomy (seeing itself seeing)" (1995, p. 14). The students are aware of the mind's ability to respond to a range of experiences simultaneously. The ability to be the character, the actor and the observer is a realisation of the flexibility of the human mind.

Responses of university students

A distinction was made between spontaneous improvisation and text based work, by one university student, Joe, who felt that his awareness had completely vacated in spontaneous improvisation, but that he was present in an emotional sense when performing realistic theatre. Whereas another university student, Tali, felt that awareness was essential: "I think that's the key... I would love to study at the Grotowski laboratory... you see. I think that's where he takes his actors... to be a performer you just have to be aware" (Tali, 2000, Interview transcript). Grotowski believed that acting must be "an objective act, that is to say articulated, disciplined" (1995, p. 280). Although there might have been something of the transcendent in spontaneous improvisation, none of the students were overwhelmed by the moment of performance. They were often acutely aware of other actors and one university student was aware of the disbelief in other actors. However fully involved, the students retained a sense of their own being and this differed in its focus and explanation. Suffice to say that only in one instance and in relation to improvisation, were any of the students not aware of themselves when performing.

Joe spoke of his experience of improvisation and especially of authentic movement: “I very much often feel that I’m not there. Completely vacated” (Joe, 2000, Interview transcript). Joe was receptive to the idea and practice of ritual and his cultural background provided an allowance of the liminal as a space for spontaneous improvisation.

Interview question 10

When you perform are you totally immersed in what you are doing?

Perhaps in Authentic Movement and other moments of spontaneous improvisation students were fully present and almost immersed in what they were doing. This demanded the personal as a base and an intuitive and spontaneous response that is akin to the liminality and trance-like stages of the ritual activity explored and explained by Turner (1982). But in most performance work the students were focused but not overwhelmed by the role or character.

Responses of secondary students

The students attested to a commitment to what they are doing and spoke of an ideal of being fully immersed in the role they are taking or improvisation they are exploring. But one secondary student, Abby, questioned the total immersion in performance:

I’d love to fully be that character - but I’m not, there’s always that control there. I guess that’s the way you stay focused. If you were playing a lunatic and you were in an insane asylum you wouldn’t want to be totally into that character. You’ve got to have some control of how you’re making yourself to be the character. (Abby, 2000, Interview transcript)

Alex connected to Rachel’s comment about her early experience of stillness in *Look Back in Anger*, when he responded to the question on immersion: “...you just get into the flow of it. Sometimes it’s just tranquillity - a really serene feeling. There’s so much energy you just find serenity. There’s so much energy” (Alex, 2001, Interview transcript). Dance, according to Fraleigh, permits a wholeness of being: “She (the dancer) is embodied in her dance and signs it with her being” (1987, p. 252). In dramatic

performance the actor is also able to experience a sense of integration that speaks of the mind, body and soul.

Marnie spoke of the intensity of performance, especially when two actors were particularly focused, prepared and able. She cited a performance in a school production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: "Neil and I had a real connection on stage. Even the looks between us were so real. When we were having the argument it was so intense you could have run a knife through it, it was so intense" (Marnie, 2001, Interview transcript). Zilla experienced immersion in a devised duo piece on indigenous Australian imprisonment: "Yeah, for anyone else to feel what I was doing, I had to feel it as well. I had to see it if they were to see it" (Zilla, 2001, Interview transcript).

Responses of university students

Students could interpret this question as they wished, but its placement beside the concern of awareness in performance permitted a continuation of the idea of focus and involvement in performance. The university student, Joe, who spoke of being completely vacated in improvisation work, spoke enthusiastically:

Completely. Complete immersion. Absolutely. And I think that for me is my most enjoyable experience... And there are times when complete transformation comes from that immersion...And I really suppose it is a baptismal thing...Cheapest therapy I've ever had in my life...my love of drama, to explore all experiences. (Joe, 2000, Interview transcript)

"It is when we are present centred - at one with the world and free of conflicting dualities - that we dance its grace. Then Kali, the energy of the universe, melts into Shiva's heart, releasing his cosmic dance of creation" (Fraleigh, 1987, p.158). Again Fraleigh describes the wholeness experienced by the performer when fully focused in performance.

Another male student, Ed, appeared shy of the idea of immersion for he believed there was: "Still an awareness but you transform yourself - you're the source of becoming

truthful” (Ed, 2000, Interview transcript). Stanislavski’s words support Ed’s in the following way: “An actor can subject himself to the wishes and indications of a playwright or director and execute them mechanically, but to experience his role he must use his own living desires, engendered and worked over by himself, and he must exercise his own will, not that of another” (Drain 1995, p. 254).

All had an idea of immersion as a state that sounds powerful, but that it was closer to psychosis than performance. The difference between being fully present and immersed is put by Fraleigh in relation to dance: “The dancer is at her best (she becomes her dance) when she is present centred” (1987, p. 23). One female university student, Tali, found immersion in free dance and authentic movement. Another, Hannah, felt that authentic movement expedited immersion.

Response of an adult actor

The professional actor, Rachel, was aware of the power and the pitfalls of merging too closely:

It’s like you and the audience... you and the audience suddenly take off together. You and the audience suddenly fly. And other people in the cast. It’s like Whoosh! It’s like transcendence. You’re all there and then suddenly you’re all going somewhere else. And the feedback you get is that it was magical, it was brilliant. Something’s happened and you all know it. (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript)

Rachel describes how this magical moment can disappear when the ego enters and allows an awareness of pride and congratulation: “I went off stage for a few minutes to change and I made the fatal mistake of thinking: ‘That was amazing. Wasn’t I good? Was I flying!’ And of course I came back on and my brain scrambled because I’d overcome myself and so I crashed” (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript).

Rachel is in her late forties, has undergone psychotherapy, worked in mental health for years and follows a path of self-awareness that embraces Buddhism and explores meditation. She has performed in a range of contexts leading up to her recent training to

enter the professional arena. That she struggles to find the balance between absolute immersion, awareness of self and action and authentic performance shows the intricate and demanding task that confronts and attracts students to dramatic performance. "It's a process of learning to discipline my mind, to breathe deeply, to take time, to take space, to be still" (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript).

Interview question 13

How authentic and genuine is your performance work?

It is essential for the reader to remember that the participants in the research were young and that the secondary students were all very keen to perform. The road to be followed to professional performance required exactitude as explained by the Australian actress Judy Davis: "...if you are to continue to act, you have to be prepared for everything that's possible to be revealed: 'I certainly didn't realise when I began that it would be this confronting...I'm always surprised when I meet someone who's not an actor and the levels of insecurity they haven't even begun to deal with'" (Blundell, 2001, p R6). But even at secondary school the serious actors realised that only through hard work would they achieve effective performance. Yet they were guided by their reading and study of theorists and practitioners. To be authentic and genuine in their performance they were beginning to realise they had to be quite able to be critical of their own work. Chaikin puts it thus: "The most articulate performances are always those which have been pared away. All that's not essential, all that's accessory, all that's indulgent, all that's outside the centre has been dropped, and what remains is a spare language of tasks which speak of life and nature" (Chaikin, 1972, p. 64).

Responses of secondary students

When questioned as to the authenticity and genuineness of their performance work, the struggle for touching that brilliance was again apparent and Neil put it aptly: "I don't want to be fake about anything" (Neil, 2000, Interview transcript). For the adolescents there were doubts about being utterly truthful. But there was a belief that by fully implicating themselves in the role there was no limit to the possibilities and a huge sense of freedom came from being fully committed. There was concern with how to be

credible with an intensity they believed they would like to achieve. Most were still searching for technique and self-awareness.

Abby, who had professional experience and was an exemplary performer, still struggled: "I think there should be a way of forgetting about my problems and just fully being the character" (Abby, 2000, Interview transcript). They had seen lack of authenticity in other performers and wanted more from their own work. Neil encapsulated the problem: "I mean you can tell if they're not using their heart" (Neil, 2000, Interview transcript). The writer and playwright Helene Cixous believes we need a theatre "whose stage is our heart" (Drain, 1995, p. 341). She believes that "...what we feel the lack of is going to the heart, our own and that of things. We live exterior to ourselves..." (p. 341). For the theatre to have that heart, the actors must provide work of depth and intensity that is meaningful and authentic. The students wanted their work to be credible and honest for the audience and themselves. And Zilla was emphatic: "Every time we perform we should put in the amount of effort otherwise we should not be performing at all" (Zilla, 2001, Interview transcript).

Responses of university students

One university student, Paul, had a romantic notion of his earlier performance work and felt that he had been more honest and that it was harder to achieve that as he became older. Tali felt it depended strongly on whom you were working with or who was directing the performance. Joe described his early experience of acting as being guided and inspired by older artists and the eventual revelation that it must come from within: "There is that element that you are drawing within from somewhere in your external environment and somehow that is coming through some deeper part of yourself" (Joe, 2000, Interview transcript).

According to Cixous through the theatre "...we recall that we are human, that it is a hardship, but that it is a trying joy. *Equally* human: humanity comes through you and through me, and through *Macbeth* and through the king and through the beggar, and we understand ourselves" (cited in Drain, 1995, p. 343). Again we are asked to be fully

authentic and this has not always been seen as something inherent in theatre. Joe continued: “I was allowed, I was given permission to take those risks and find that authenticity and find that honesty and truth in the work I did. Which was amazing. It was a privilege” (Joe, 2000, Interview transcript).

Joe also considered the realities of the working world of the professional actor and was concerned with how a real authenticity could survive. Perhaps the professional actor, Rachel, might answer this:

You become the other person by being like a glass. You are a clear glass and the liquid is poured into you. If the glass is clear and clean then the clear liquid comes in and it's a good healthy drink. You become a pure channel... and this is a magical experience when witnessed. (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript)

There are techniques and training and the ongoing commitment to refine and develop the skills and self-awareness to be such a channel.

The university students were concerned that their work was not mechanical for they did not want it to be. Hannah reflected that at school, because she lacked “the mind/body connection” she felt her work had been less than fully realised.

Music theatre and dance were also areas where the students had felt that a mechanical quality entered their work and that it lacked the depth they wanted from a performance. The level of authenticity and realness came from being able to destroy the ego, a commitment to being in the performance and the readiness to dig and reveal new and fresh layers of self and potential character. Tali had discovered that through yoga and being well rehearsed, she found the ability to respond emotionally and not intellectually, in character.

These questions and this dialogue enlivened the debate in all the people with whom I spoke during the course of the study. The secondary students were wrestling with their identity on the threshold of change invading their world as the end of school loomed.

The university students had more training and life experience to draw on and even the professional actor would talk of the ongoing refinement and inner work needed to embrace each assignment whether it be on the stage or a television soap opera. Authentic and genuine performance were more than just coming to terms with yourself and seemed to be monitored by the desire not to be fake. It was important to all the participants. And it was theatre in all its manifestations and performance, especially in theatre, that allowed them to look at themselves and at life.

Cixous explores the importance of theatre in helping us to understand the difficulty of human life and our need to empathise and share the pain and suffering inherent in living and learning to reach our potential:

For if this Theatre is necessary it is because it allows us to live what no 'genre' allow us: the difficulty, the pain we have of being human. Evil. What happens at theatre is the Passion, but the passion according to Oedipus, according to Hamlet, according to Woyzeck, according to me, according to Othello, according to Cleopatra, according to Marie, according to this enigmatic, tortured, criminal, innocent human being that I am, I who am thou or you. (Drain, 1995, p. 340-341)

The final curtain

Dramatic performance presented these students with a huge challenge and some honoured the process but were not addicted to it while one found it highly addictive and cathartic. The younger students were more enthusiastic about their love of drama and their need to perform.

Interview question 14

What makes you want to perform again?

Responses of secondary students

The secondary students responded enthusiastically. Skye had a passionate response: "The love I have for Drama, for a start" (Skye, 2000, Interview transcript). Alia's reaction reflected her nervous energy: "The high I get when I'm performing" (Alia, 2000, Interview transcript). And Neil sought a sense of accomplishment: "... because after every performance I just feel I have accomplished something" (Neil, 2000,

Interview transcript). Abby certainly seemed to be gifted with the ability to perform, but she acknowledged the work and commitment and awareness needed to achieve presence and resonance on stage. Her experience with a professional theatre company had revealed the possibilities open to the performer:

...if I was doing another professional play and I was surrounded by all these people who had years of experience and you see the technique they use and they are so deep and you realise that there's no limit to getting into character, there's so much you can do. I still like to put in as much, I mean I like to put in so much more. (Abby, 2000, Interview transcript)

Responses of university students

The need to perform again was put to both groups and the university responses ranged from the fun and excitement of performance, the delight in creating for an audience, the realisation that there is so much to learn and experience through drama, the delight in being looked at and the freeing up that occurs through the process, to a joy in the unknown and the exploration - the personal odyssey that it permitted.

They performed for the love of it, self-exploration, applause, feeling good and happy, because they felt a true passion for it and because of the inner struggle it promoted. All these things enhanced the students' sense of well being. Drama is an area where students wrestle with their own identity as they prepare to take on the role of another. For all of the students I spoke with, although they were taking Drama as a subject, it was accessing a personal odyssey.

Joe explains the experience:

I'm a traveller, not just a physical traveller, and a traveller of emotions, of psyche, of form, of spirit. So performance is a wonderful vehicle for that. It is a ship, car or bike, whatever it is that time. Sometimes it is a lot rougher than others, the transit in that journey. Yeah, I think it is the foundation of the journey. (Joe, 2000, Interview transcript)

Time and place were given to honour the self and to open to the pain of others. A well-

written novel will transport the reader and allow them a window into another way of life. Performance requires a further commitment. The actor must enliven the idea of the character or concept, internalise the thought and feeling and represent a multi-dimensional character in an interactive, plausible environment to an audience. It is a huge task and one that non-actors dismiss as dependent on intuitive, magical talent. But these students know it is meaningful and serious work. Again, a concluding comment from Cixous is fitting:

To begin, let us take the Theatre seriously. I mean: it is good to go there seriously, like children. ...if one participates in *Woyzeck* or in *King Lear*, with a simplified, uncovered heart, and if by chance one sheds tears, then perhaps on the earth a woman will be saved, a prisoner will be liberated - and perhaps an innocent person justified, and a forgotten person will be recalled. (Drain, 1995, p. 344)

Ideally they will want to perform or to have dramatic performance in their lives because they know of its capacity to shift and change their humanity. Ego is a propellant but hopefully not a key reason for delighting in audience accolades and continuing to perform and to view the work of others.

The importance drama students place on performance

Both this thesis, in its search for the spiritual in drama and drama itself with its underlying exploration of the human mind, body and soul, are journeys of discovery. The heuristic methods employed marry the researcher to the quest. It follows that the common threads of experience of the participants regularly show involvement and enjoyment in affective terms.

Drama is seen as a special subject that promotes self-exploration while demanding commitment to specific tasks. It is special because it is a subject different to everything else the participants studied. It may share some of the elements of the other arts, but live dramatic performance to an audience provides a unique method of exploring human qualities. The endeavour opens the participants, both actors and audience to the possibilities and potentialities of what it is to be human.

Love is often used to describe the participants' feelings for drama. This is a powerful word and embraces deep felt and strongly held awareness. There is love of the process, the collaborative devising, workshopping, rehearsing and a love of performing with and for others. Most participants encountered performance and drama quite early in their lives and sought to rekindle and develop that delight.

Drama was a bright spot in their school lives. It was something they had all chosen to do. It was fun, it was creative, and it meant working with others often with performance in mind. Some participants were aware of the ability of focused, thoughtful performance to move and influence the audience. They perceived the personal change through drama activity and performance and understood the potential of dramatic performance to change how the audience think and behave.

Power and responsibility can be assumed through drama to lead the audience and to convey the idea. Some saw dramatic performance from their own point-of-view, a few realised its potential to affect others and therefore the importance of the awareness of what they were doing, of the truthfulness of the action and the ideas. Through authentic involvement the actor can convey meaningful experiences for and to others.

Dramatic performance was important to all the participants. All experienced the effects personally and most were aware of the potential power of dramatic performance as a mode of human expression and communication.

Chapter Six

Research question 2

Does reflection on dramatic performance help students understand themselves and others?

Discovering an understanding of themselves and others was a major aspect of the importance drama students placed on performance. The enjoyment of the practical and interactive style of learning and the fascination with the dynamic between performer and audience were particular to drama and not found in other courses of study. The discipline demanded, for effective and successful performance, was rigorous but rewarding. A degree of honesty and sincerity was also essential as the students started to explore how they might be fully present in their work. The first two research questions are closely linked. The second research question includes two interview questions and examines the journal responses to the Perform/Transform workshops. It develops upon the information shared in the first research question about the importance of performance in the lives of the interviewees and the resonance of this with the motivating concern of this thesis to understand the effect of dramatic performance on the whole person.

As a bridge between the interview material and the journal responses, the question relating to the participants' view of the way dramatic performance may have assisted their self-growth is useful. The question was put to see the value they attributed to drama in their lives.

Self-discovery

In some cases the secondary students came to terms with flaws they perceived in their person, through drama. As well as exposing concerns it had, in some cases, allayed worries. The reflection asked for an overview of experience.

Interview question 15

What have you learnt about you through performance?

The range of characters presented to and embraced by drama students allows them to explore a multitude of human experiences. When this is combined with the discipline of performance there is a rich palette of human emotions and motivations from which to learn.

Responses of secondary students

Abby related all she had learnt to her personal growth:

I think acting definitely teaches you a lot about yourself, your feelings that you probably don't want to face, but when you are trying to figure out something about another character. Working with others helps you to really see how other people take on characters or how other people are in a performance space. It makes you think what your qualities are and what you are lacking. (Abby, 2000, Interview transcript)

Uta Hagen wrote of the foolishness of a young actor's desire to lose themselves in the part. Abby has made a similar connection to Hagen's realisation: "...I finally saw the light, I must *find* myself in the role!" (Hagen, 1991, p. 53).

Zilla realised that she ignored some emotions, preferring roles and characters that allowed her to be extreme rather than subtle. She had realised that humans tend to get into set patterns and rhythms and through this awareness hoped she might not impose her traits on the character especially through movement: "I don't use my legs as much as my arms...just most things I do are upper body things... Even my star sign, Capricorn, says I have weak knees and maybe that's why I don't use my legs" (Zilla, 2001, Interview transcript). Hagen comments on the need to observe others and the greater need to be aware of our own habits and mannerisms: I find that the observation of *others*, which is taught and recommended by so many teachers, is useful *only* when that observation enlightens you about yourself, when you *identify* with it" (1991, p.58).

Alia was also able to reflect that she had to work with self-consciousness and found that

performance, and perhaps life, were a little easier in year twelve than previously:

And it kind of makes me think that when I do perform I feel I'm okay, I'm cool, I'm not a bad person and stuff. It makes me feel better about myself. I think this year I've been feeling better about myself. (Alia, 2000, Interview transcript)

Alia really involved herself and was fully absorbed in the creative movement. As Gabrielle Roth, the originator of the Five Rhythms dance work observed: "Self-consciousness absorbs the life force faster than a sponge. There is no way out but through it" (Roth, 1997, p. 22). Alia had begun the journey.

It was quite revealing to listen to Neil's response to this question. He is such a gifted performer, that his insight was most poignant:

I don't really feel that I know me. I used to; I feel that I used to. Just after I came to Australia, I suppose I hadn't really been exposed to much of my culture and I need that, 'cause in Papua New Guinea I was exposed to culture, culture that was more my own. And I mean through the dances and the songs you learn just the way people were. They were my people and it's just easier to be happy there. (Neil, 2000, Interview transcript)

Neil was suffering a personal and cultural schism. Barba is one theatrical theorist and practitioner who has studied both western and eastern cultural manifestations of performance. He sees eastern (and indigenous) performance art as "...a living art, profound, capable of being transmitted and implicating all the physical and mental levels of actor and spectator, but anchored in stories and customs which are forever old" (Barba cited in Drain, 1995, p.347). Neil's dilemma was that he had known Barba's "living art" and often felt at a loss for both the vibrancy of his culture and the community and connectedness that it provided.

Alex acknowledged that he had grown up but that drama had certainly assisted:

...I've learnt how unsure I was, tried to make myself a somewhat better person. Opened my mind considerably. Just being in the drama class... Yes I'm a lot more co-operative. Before I was a very closed person. This class is great. I can work with everyone. Now I'm friends with people I couldn't stand a few years ago.

(Alex, 2001, Interview transcript)

For Andrew performance had certainly helped him reflect on his life and himself:

...I think the movement work definitely helps you be more in control, maybe, in feeling your body. It gives you a greater understanding of yourself. By exploring your character I think you kind of reflect on yourself as well. Those kind of elements that are kind of me. I never kind of noticed that before. They just seemed to pop out of nowhere. (Andrew, 2000, Interview transcript)

Skye's journey through drama was very personal. She discovered a lot both relating to her general performance work and about herself. "Wow! I've learnt that I can do it. I can. Saying 'I can' was a big struggle for me... There's lots of different stuff. Lots" (Skye, 2000, Interview transcript).

Marnie's experience of drama and performance sum up much of the benefit that could be hoped for a drama course:

...I think that I've actually become a better person. I've become more aware of myself, my abilities, other people around me, being able to work in a group situation, I think it's taught me so much and also to be myself... And just being able to be moved by what you are doing, being able to feel instead of just going on the stage and performing, you're actually going on the stage and feeling these emotions. (Marnie, 2001, Interview transcript)

The secondary students have all related the learning of the drama class to their own lives. They have learnt about being human in the world and they have been able to experiment with taking on other characters and applying their imagination. The magic 'if' of drama, that Stanislavski so deftly realised, has allowed them to explore possibilities and difficulties of their humanness in a collaborative setting.

Responses of university students

The older students were more acutely aware of the complexity of life and perhaps related to the question less naively than the secondary students, who still had some propensity to show delight and amazement at their discoveries through performance. A spontaneous response from Hannah who was taking drama as her minor teaching area

because of her positive experiences in drama at school links to the secondary students. Her immediate response to the question about what she had learnt about herself through performance was: “That I like to be heard and seen...I like the attention. It’s a sense of acceptance. So I guess it gave me self-confidence, but also it meant that I was different. That we are all different” (Hannah, 2000, Interview transcript).

Both Hannah and Paul had had less recent performance experience than the other university students had. Yet drama productions had always been a part of Paul’s life from his early schooling to his study and work in stage design. His response was very realistic: “I think that there’s a lot more to learn. It’s pretty much recognising that it’s just the tip of the iceberg and there’s a lot more. It’s got me this far, so far I’ve been involved in it and I’ll keep going” (Paul, 2000, Interview transcript). Perhaps Paul is starting to articulate the “hundreds of different people within you” (Hagen, 1991, p.55). And as Hagen continues: “... you change your sense of self a hundred times a day as you are influenced by circumstances, your relationship to others, the nature of the event and your clothing” (p. 57).

Joe took a different tilt on a similar initial statement and seemed to speak more specifically of his experience of authentic movement:

Wow! There is so much more. ...It’s that element of vipassana (form of Buddhist meditation practice) in that all these stories are locked inside yourself... And realising that in every given moment you are in a space of honesty with yourself ... Sometimes performance can have that neutrality where it is not influenced by other things or the influences are balanced out enough and that clarity and perception *and* so there it has been a wonderful tool of self reflection. Self-discovery through that space of honesty. (Joe, 2000, Interview transcript)

This links to Neville’s (1987) discussion of Keith Johnstone’s work on spontaneous improvisation and education. Neville quotes Johnstone who wrote that he “began to think of children not as immature adults but as adults as atrophied children”. Neville further discussed Johnstone’s approach to improvisation: “He teaches adults to play games again...to stop being clever and original and to trust what comes when habitual

roles are disrupted” (Neville, 1987, p. 201). The Authentic Movement allowed Joe to be more immediate and spontaneous in his movement. In this way he released stories from his childhood and cultural heritage. He was using many tools to explore his humanness and constantly drew connections and related his experiences to this intriguing web of self. But the important points here are the introspection and awareness of the clarity that might be gained through fully committing to the process of performance.

Tali’s path through performance began as a girl when she would identify strongly with characters in a rather romantic way. She saw it in retrospect as an attempt to understand the facets of her being and realised a shift in her mid-twenties: “And it’s only as an adult with self-esteem and stuff like that and old age... We’re forced to discover that we have a voice and that voice is the only true one. And that the only way to get that voice heard is by our own awareness” (Tali, 2000, Interview transcript).

The excitement displayed by Ed about theatre came through in his wide-reaching comments about the benefits of performance in his life:

I think I’ve learnt I can access a lot. Accessing worlds, accessing my imagination because of my kicking and busting to get out. ... I think I’ve learnt about the depth within myself and also the shallowness of myself as well. I think I’ve learnt about that real surface sort of...introspective sort of person. ...It’s not understanding or it’s not worldly wise, I think it’s just being perceptive about things. (Ed, 2000, Interview transcript)

For the university students the learning was about journey, growth and development. Performance helped open the mind, access information; it also encouraged perception and allowed the individual to be heard by others. Each participant was able to reflect on the drama experience and add his or her personal view. But each was aware of a personal impact through working in drama. The responses were specific to drama work and performance and they relate to a holistic experience of personal growth.

The holistic aspect of the self is the domain of the arts. Certainly drama would assist the flowering of the whole person so aptly described by Whitmore in *Psychosynthesis in*

Education:

In the East the symbol of the lotus is viewed as representing the evolution of the personality. With the lotus, the roots are in the mud (earth) symbolizing the physical body. The stem is in the water, embodying feelings which grow from the body. The flower of the lotus (mind) is in the air, although resting on the water and connected with the stem (feelings).

The perfume floats upward from the flower representing the spirit, being open to the air as well as contributing to it. (1986, p. 68)

Not only does dramatic performance deal with exploring and presenting and representing character, it has techniques to begin this exploration starting from the body (movement work), from the mind (applications of ideas and theories), from the feelings (improvisation) and from the spirit (movement, contemplation, visualisation, dream work).

Delight and commitment

The interview questions relating to involvement and enjoyment opened the discussion of the first research question and will be used in this section to introduce the reflection on their work in the Perform/Transform workshops. The journals were used by most of the secondary students who participated in the workshops on a regular basis in 2000 and 2001. At this point, to allow new voices, I introduce the students who responded to the workshops but were not interviewed. These are Toby, Dean, Beth, Leo, Alison, Malcolm, Jane, Lucy, Mark and Laura in 2000 and Sam, Dana, Nina, Connie, Eva, Tess, Lea, Ryan, Vita, Joel and Tyson in 2001.

The students had little explanation of the theories behind the five rhythms developed by Gabrielle Roth or the Authentic Movement utilised in the sessions. Their words are inspired by their own experience of the sessions. All the statements attest to an involvement and focus and enjoyment that is almost meditative in its intensity. All the work is about performance. Some exercises utilise a very present and intimate audience of one or two people. Others open up to the whole group. It is both demanding and confronting but it also accesses a purity of performance that is not always available to

the actor. An actor from The Scottish Actors' Studio said, after a day long Perform/Transform workshop I conducted in Glasgow in 2000, that he rarely had the chance to perform freely or without direction and he had loved experiencing that sense of his own power of choice in performance. The secondary students were bound by the duration of the period, the music I chose, the time frame I imposed and the structure of the workshop. Yet the structure supported and guided them through the experience.

Journal reflections of secondary students 2000

The secondary students wrote in their journals after each session of the five Perform/Transform Workshops. In these workshops performance was spontaneous and individual. In the early sessions there was little group work and the students explored their own movement and witnessed the work of others. They mentioned enjoying a sense of calmness and the access to new experiences.

Lucy a humorous, happy person put positive energy into her work and collaborated effortlessly with all the other class members. She was involved in the school production in both years eleven and twelve. Lucy's ease in the world was special. Music seemed to live in her body and she responded well to the workshops: "Today was a real experience. Whatever movement came into my head - I just lived it. I'm so relaxed now, but an energized spirit" (Lucy, 2000, Journal entry).

Other responses were about being fully focused. Toby could be easily distracted and yet he was able to become engrossed in the movement work, especially when he closed his eyes. At times he seemed to be really exploring through the workshops. He wrote: "The second part, in the two-person group, I found most enjoyable. I forgot the other person and just got totally involved in the activity. I think just this little session will help me a lot in what I do in drama" (Toby, 2000, Journal entry).

Malcolm enjoyed the experience. He had a flair for performance although he was proceeding down a traditional academic path he had chosen to have drama continue in his life. The movement workshops revealed the dancer in him and I felt guilty for not

recognising that element earlier. His mother was quietly glad that this propensity had not been developed. His comments acknowledge an awareness of the power of movement: "Right now, looking back, I wish I was still moving. All concentration is focused on the movement and all problems are disregarded" (Malcolm, 2000, Journal entry). They relished the delight of being free and unrestricted. Alia felt liberated: "So fun. It's like letting go of your mind and letting your soul control your body - being free" (Alia, 2000, Journal entry).

Mark was surprised at the experience and observing him I was amazed by the shift in his presence. He had always been a quiet boy who occasionally showed surprising flashes of ability to perform. In the last two years of drama he began to unfold into his real potential. His final solo piece was well crafted and very witty. His comment in his journal reflected his real interest: "I liked the feeling of relaxation and feeling free to do anything of my choice. I felt complete freedom... I'm really looking forward to future lessons" (Mark, 2000, journal entry).

It evinced a powerful and personal response from one student, Skye: "Dancing is my religion, my spirituality, MY STRENGTH" (Skye, 2000, Journal entry). The words of Janet Adler, Authentic Movement practitioner and theorist are relevant. "People come to the form (Authentic Movement) to learn how to listen to their bodies and, in the process, some are guided from within toward experiences beyond ego consciousness" (Pallaro, 1999, p. 186). Adler identifies the responses of mystics of various traditions to stages of spiritual awareness. In attempting to find similarities between Authentic Movement and spiritual practice and awareness, Adler writes of the role of the witness who is like a spiritual friend. The concern with seeing and being seen and the clarity and wholeness of that seeing, are essential to the mover and witness. Authentic Movement is a form that has evolved out of the art of dance. As a form that is appropriate for this study it is first an art form that can lead to personal and spiritual awareness. Adler quotes Satprem to conclude her essay and it is appropriate here: "One discovers only oneself, there is nothing else to discover" (p. 187). Skye was particularly open to dance and movement as a path to self-awareness.

Yet others found a new way of seeing other people and their stories. Andrew discovered that: “To incorporate and blend with another person, yet still holding the feel and emotion of the music proved testing yet enjoyable” (Andrew, 2000, Journal entry). Abby really appreciated and honoured the value of the Perform/Transform workshops. Her response to Authentic Movement illustrates a naive delight in the form but she lacks the language and experience of the form to go beyond this initial, yet important observation: “I love watching other people... you will only see this show once in a lifetime, it will never be the same. Maybe that’s another reason I loved this session so much” (Abby, 2000, Journal entry).

The combined Authentic Movement and Creative Movement of the workshops was also seen as having an important function for the health of the whole class. Andrew perceived the change as follows:

The class seems to be relaxing into the classes, becoming more in tune with their body and the stories it can tell. It is amazing to see the diversity of movement as well, so many different feelings and emotions that are expressed through the way we move. (Andrew, 2000, Journal entry)

Reflecting on these experiences through writing and drawing allows students to remember their experience and by writing about it, keep record of the significant moment. “Recording after you have lived it brings it back to life and is doubly rewarding. And giving power to positive perceptions and modes of thinking eventually becomes a habitual way of perceiving and thinking in your life” (Rainer, 1989).

Journal reflections of secondary students 2001

The secondary students in 2001 experienced the workshops differently to the 2000 cohort. Demands of the Drama Studies course intervened and the workshops were conducted over a four-month period. This was not ideal for the study but a reality of the perceived course requirements for the students. The enjoyment and involvement of the students, as noted in their journals, follows.

Sam, who was an excellent student, in the sense that he kept a very well organised Drama Studies file and although his performance work was quite ordinary, his attitude to the work, his essays and his development as a person were very pleasing. His Perform/Transform journal was kept in the same manner of thoughtfulness and correctness. By the last sessions he wrote:

I really enjoy the inner feeling which I enjoy. Having my eyes shut makes me feel as though I was “shut-off” from the outside world and was able to explore all the emotions that I had stored up after a busy exam period. The use of music is also very good, because I find that my body falls into some kind of rhythm and I am able to concentrate on the movement through every area of my body. It is good to hear the similarities and differences between your feelings and your partner’s feelings of your movement piece. (Sam, 2001, Journal entry)

For Dana the workshops were encountered with the same dedicated focus that she gave to the whole course. Her written work was often a little confused but over the year she began to overcome her weakness and to develop her performance work. Like Sam, she lacked a spark that lifts performance work from being very competent to brilliant. It is the mystery and the frustration of the Arts that diligence and good intention are not enough to produce the delight that is given through the inspired work of the gifted. A gift is a present, being present, it is presence; thus the gifted performer is able to be fully present, fully alive in the moment of their work, in the moment of performance. Also like Sam, Dana’s first entries recorded the events of the workshops but by June she was allowing more candour:

I like the flowing aspect of our group’s movement:

- use of level - I thought this aided us with interest and a development of working and acting space.
- eye contact - I felt less intimidated working with my eyes closed - and felt that when Vita (the partner she was observing) worked with her eyes opened I felt a bit awakened.

My movement - helped to work every part of my body

- I feel I became more aware of every part of my body when performing. (Dana, 2001, Journal entry)

Nina was a humorous and harmonious person. She had been involved in the school

productions as a performer and as a director in the recent student devised piece. Nina really enjoyed drama and the other class members. She makes an interesting point about the honesty of the work:

Today I really enjoyed the partner/witness exercise. I found it intense watching my partner Marnie. She moved with an inner person within her. It was like she was under some sort of spell. It was like she was a book waiting to be read and her story was being told by her body and no words. It allows the watcher (reader) to enter a world and connect with the storyteller. I almost felt really bad, I felt like she was telling me her deepest, darkest secrets without her even knowing. (Nina, 2001, Journal entry)

Nina touches an interesting point here. It's something that the performer must come to terms with for the act of performance is one of revelation of who we are, of our humanity. Some people are fascinated by this, others terrified. Some people love to go to theatre, others prefer the distance of film. It is not an issue of theatre as therapy. As Boal puts it so brilliantly:

Actors search the depths of the soul and the infinity of the metaphysical. Theatre is a fire which makes the pressure-cooker explode and release the angels and devils dwelling inside it.... The actor works with human beings, and therefore works with herself, on the infinite process of discovering the human. (Boal, 1995, p. 37)

Connie liked drama and had been involved in the school production in the previous year. Her comments on movement show the benefit she discovered in the workshops:

Movement gives the body a chance to let go of all the thoughts and worries of what is happening around you. It gives you a chance to relax and concentrate on the music and how the body is responding to it... Movement is almost a state of wholeness. Your mind is concentrating on moving the body and the body is concentrating on the music and working in touch with the mind. (Connie, 2001, Journal entry)

Eva was a vibrant person who had a powerful physical presence that enriched her performance work. As she became more confident as a person, her performance work developed. She was also a singer and musician and thrived on the interplay of

performance. Her written responses rarely conveyed her ideas effectively, but may give some idea of her perception of the experience:

Today Sam and I finally worked together. We observed each other's movements and I actually felt really comfortable with them, while I was performing and he was. (Eva then goes on to describe the way they moved through the Five Rhythms) For the rest of them we had our eyes open, except the last which was silence (stillness). I (furerly) (sic) enjoyed working with Sam today and so can't wait to work on Juno and the Paycock with him. (Eva, 2001, Journal entry)

Marnie's first response to the work illustrates her focus and awareness of drama and its process:

I found that the movement piece that we did was a way of understanding our bodies and the way in which they work. It gave me a greater understanding of the body's connection to our spirit. I somehow felt as though my mind and body were adapting the sound of the music and the underneath rhythm that seemed to pound through my body. I lost all sense of self-consciousness and fell into a dreamlike quality. (Marnie, 2001, Journal entry)

Tess' talent for performance was subsumed by her lifestyle. She wore her theatre daily in her particular interpretations of school dress code, yet was self-conscious about performing in a formal sense. She did not complete the year but penned some insightful responses to the workshops: "Movement is art; the way one holds oneself. Certain poses can mean so many things. Movement is a type of language... we can express our emotions through our body. Exploring the body is exploring the mind and the soul" (Tess, 2001, Journal entry).

Lea suffered a chronic health problem and Drama (the year twelve class comprised three students studying the non-tertiary entrance Drama course) allowed her space for personal exploration. Roth's words are pertinent for Lea: "Mine is a dancing path. My bible is the body because the body can't lie. My master is rhythm. There is no dogma in the dance. ...Once your body surrenders to movement, your soul remembers its dance" (Roth, 1997, p. 8). Gabrielle Roth expands on her early conception of the Five Rhythms (Roth, 1989) in this later publication. Without discussing her theory the students spoke

students spoke of the movement experience in language that alludes to the spiritual. After the first workshop Lea wrote about her response to the Five Rhythms: "To me it was very spiritual and connected with something deep inside me." And in the next session she reported: "I felt a feeling of pure comfort, both within me and my surroundings... A spirit within me seemed to awaken and reflect who I am. A searcher rather than an acceptor. There was a sense of urgency to find what" (Lea, 2001, Journal entry).

Ryan's reaction to the workshops is worth noting. An intelligent boy, who saw Drama Studies as a soft option, he seemed to miss opportunities to open and grow with the course. He was used to responding in the correct way at school, while indulging a cynical distance. Ryan missed a crucial point about drama as a tool for self-exploration. His final entry sums up his approach: "Today we did more movement. I still don't feel comfortable doing this but hey whatcha gonna do? I feel obliged to move but my natural impulse is to remain still" (Ryan, 2001, Journal entry).

Another Drama student, Vita, was a creative visual arts student who, unlike Ryan, saw drama as an exploration. After the first session she wrote: "Very therapeutic. I love exploring new ways of making my body move". She realised benefits to her other work: "I have found that dancing like this has actually made my artwork develop interestingly, it's becoming a lot more feminine and a lot more personal" (Vita, 2001, Journal entry). Vita experienced the therapeutic aspects of performance through Authentic Movement:

Today in groups I expressed something very deep and tragic that happened last year in my life. It has had a big impact on me and I chose this part of my life to discuss non-verbally because I have found it very hard to talk about. I kept my eyes open because it is something that I have closed my eyes to. (Vita, 2001, Journal entry)

Roth is cognizant of the power of the Five Rhythm work to touch deep issues:

The rhythms, when I first identified and named them, turned out to be much more than a way to work out my body. They became a way to work out my soul - to

sensitise my intuition, stretch my imagination, and tap new levels of inspiration that I had never dreamed existed. Each rhythm was a state of being; an outrageous world of deep inner teachings on the nature of life and love, birth and death, art and God. (Roth, 1997, p. 37)

Joel, also a Drama student, displayed a huge personal growth through the two years of the course. Although he struggled to express himself in the written reports, the sincerity and the energy of his performance work grew and grew. He is testament to the personal benefits of drama in the development of adolescents. The first entry in his Perform/Transform journal illustrates his keenness to engage in the process of drama: "Movement I have displayed was most unusual but very interesting to see how I could change who I was. The pieces of movement were different as I tried to change each piece so it was different to the next. (The 5 Rhythms: flowing, staccato, chaos, lyrical and stillness) (Joel, 2001, Journal entry).

Tyson, a Drama Studies student who found the course intriguing but difficult, was fascinating to watch in the workshops. Movement seemed to unlock something in his psyche:

Music can do strange and wonderful things to a way a person moves. ...The music influenced me to do strange movements.

Moving in a space with your eyes closed is extraordinary. You can be anywhere and with anybody you want.

And in a later session:

I really enjoyed the types of moves I experimented with today. For my individual movement without music, I tried to become 'one' with the ground, and tried to explore my surroundings. ... For the movement with music I found myself inside the music...

His final response is worth reporting for it shows a sense of communitas while allowing self-exploration:

Today was individual movement and I really liked the way in which I moved in

the area, exploring the space I was in. I found it interesting looking at other people's movements and how they use the area. I enjoyed doing the movement without music as I thought that it gives you independence and freedom. Through movement I was able to express myself as an individual. (Tyson, 2001, Journal entry)

Roth's Five Rhythms, when practised regularly, are most healthful. The secondary students only had a few sessions, but the brief encounter with this creative movement displayed the potential of the method. Roth has developed a surprisingly holistic path:

To sum up, in the rhythm of *flowing* we receive the feminine teachings, in *staccato* we explore the masculine, in *chaos* we integrate the two. *Lyrical* is the rhythm of self-realization, in which we experience our most expansive and liberated self. In *stillness*, we contemplate the mystery that infuses every aspect of the universe - including the deepest recesses of our own souls. (p. 43)

The workshops were beneficial in allowing the participants time to contemplate and to reflect on the work of others and to share their creative responses. In the limited time they provided a taste of the power of movement work to encourage sensitive, focused and aware performance.

Journal reflections of university students

The university students also found freedom through the form provided. Tali was surprised at her response: "Well, that was a bit amazing. It was fascinating how just doing "free movement" to music took me to so many places" (Tali, 2000, Journal entry). Tali went on to list five important things that she had noticed which were the explorative expressionism, memories of childhood, feelings of being authentic, a desire to try to communicate the realness all the time and an awareness of the breath.

Ed enjoyed the workshops for they allowed him to enjoy the work of others: "I enjoy watching impulsive action - that is not mapped". And to explore his own performance work: "Firstly, I would like to say how enjoyable and liberating this class has been for me. I was able to regain my confidence (quietly) through movement" (Ed, 2000, Journal entry). "Doing the rhythms is about waking up to your most essential nature, stretching

your intuition and imagination as surely as your body”(Roth, 1997, p12). The students felt free and liberated via this exploration. It was both a private odyssey and a communal exploration. Imagination and spirit were allowed and there was no correct form, all the improvisation had integrity.

Pathway to psyche

The enjoyment and involvement that all the students discovered through the series of five Perform/Transform workshops are particular to that form which is very powerful in its focus on the individual and honours the personal path to performance. They had the effect of intensifying the experience of performance. The journal entries are in response to that special environment and allow an awareness of the uniqueness of individual expression. The workshops are therefore self-exploratory as well as a means to develop performance confidence and skills. In this context they were not used as a means of therapy, but as a means to explore the potential for improvised performance stored in our bodies and to experiment with being in the open space of the stage or performance place alone. The secondary students would complete their Drama Studies course with a solo performance and these workshops were ideal for giving them ownership of the performance space and confidence to work by themselves.

“Our body moves as our mind moves. The qualities of any movement are a manifestation of how mind is expressing through the body at the moment ... So we find that movement can be a way to observe the expression of the mind through the body, and it can be a way to effect changes in the body-mind relationship” (Bainbridge Cohen, 1993, p.1). Incipient portals of self, possible insights into the psyche and often pedestrian records of events; my hopes for the resource that would flow from the students journals was utopian. It could be a passport to the inner worlds of the students. It allowed some further illumination but the time to reflect after the workshops, especially with the secondary students was often too short for detailed and developed entries to be made. I have already made some use of the journals in relation to the things which the students enjoy in performance but will utilise them further to consider the reflective practice undertaken in relation to the series of Perform/Transform Workshops

with the secondary and university students.

Journal reflections of secondary students, 2000

In 1998, before I had developed the Perform/Transform Workshops, I introduced Authentic Movement to the Year Twelve Drama class in a movement session at the beginning of the year. The following is an extract from the Performance Journal I was keeping at the time:

It was one of the most inspiring, beautiful and spiritual moments in my teaching. Each partnership worked in absolute concentration. Each partnership absolutely honoured the work. And I felt, and said at the end, how honoured I had been to witness their work. The sense in the room at the end was one of spiritual awakening. Of tenderness. Of respect. (Irving, 1998, Journal reflection)

A recent statement on Authentic Movement corroborates this: “The transformative power of this work is profoundly connected to the creative sources of therapy, artistry and our humanity” (Authentic Movement Homepage). When the first research workshop began with the Drama Studies students in 2000, I was more restrained in my comments: “The feeling tone in the room at the end of the Five Rhythms was kind, and rather private/ inner” (Irving, 2000, Workshop reflections).

The liminal space existed. O’Farrell (1994, p. 31) described the liminal phase, defined earlier by Turner (1982), as one of profound significance, a period of potentially limitless creativity. The mood established through the Five Rhythms seemed to open the students to a creative dialogue of body, mind and soul. This phase allowed Schechner’s belief that the essence of drama is transformation (p. 33). And so the next stage in the Perform/Transform workshop of Authentic Movement would explore “how people use theatre to experiment with, act out and ratify change”(p. 34). I will look at the first and last entries made by these students in their workshop journals to consider the development or change that might have been experienced through the movement workshops. The following comments were made by eleven students involved in the

process.

In the first Toby commented on the developing focus: "...as I became more relaxed and forgot about the other people in the room, I became more involved." And the final response showed a development in the way he worked with others and watched and listened to them: "It also provided greater feedback once the piece was over. (This relates to working in a group of four). This helped to understand the implications of whatever we were doing and how they see our movements and meaning of it" (Toby, 2000, Journal entry).

This was still being seen in a framework of critical comment, but indicates an openness to the experience. Alia also commented on her feelings after the first session where she seemed ready to surrender to the experience. "...easy, light, like a petal in the wind..." This student was often very focused on herself: "I was at peace with myself and there was no one else." Yet at the end she allowed that this experience was possible for everyone in his or her own way. "I thought everyone else was good" (Alia, 2000, Journal entry).

Dean was also preoccupied with his own work and it was a barometer of his energy. Seeking beyond is part of the transcendent experience. "Reaching, yearning, arriving at a high point and deteriorating. Crawling and dragging. Stretching all muscles and pushing them out to limits" (Dean, 2000, Journal entry). He looked for a narrative line in his work and was disappointed with his achievement. He seemed most open in the first journal entry. The last was an illustration and this was a shift in itself.

Skye wrote: "Feelings at the beginning: nervous, isolated. Feelings at the end: stretched, focused." This student was going through a crisis of whether to continue at school. Her final realisation was: "Hope" (Skye, 2000, Journal entry). She had a sense of connection and meaning that was often absent.

After the first session Mark wrote: "I felt complete freedom." This student relished each

workshop and fully committed to the music and the exploration of the Five Rhythms. He had an obvious love of performing but he was often quite stiff and self-conscious, this melted away in the Perform/Transform workshops. A final comment showed the confidence to make performance decisions and to really take the space: "Once in the space I did what I felt like and became very focused. I changed my story whenever I wanted to and I produced an interesting result" (Mark, 2000, Journal entry).

Beth was another student who loved drama but was not overtly gifted or at ease in the work. Her initial response: "It was a different thing to any-thing I've done before." Over the course of the workshops and the year she became more articulate about and aware of others:

Some people move like a band writes music. They have the same style of movement but they move in different ways. A band may have rock style music but every piece of music they write is different. I find this very much like movement in some people. (Beth, 2000, Journal entry)

Beth drew a flower at the end of the journal entries.

Leo was another student struggling with issues and was often absent from school. He wrote: "I liked the work we did with the music and with the inner self." A final comment: "Movement activities are good, you are relaxed whilst performing" (Leo, 2000, Journal entry).

Andrew's initial comments were very particular and personal: "I focused on my movements internally as though being taken on a tour of my body, from my brain through to my lungs and beyond." As Bainbridge-Cohen writes, *Body-Mind Centering*: "...is an ongoing, experiential journey into the alive and changing territory of the body. The explorer is the mind- our thoughts, feelings, energy, soul, and spirit. Through this journey we are led to an understanding of how the mind is expressed through the body in movement" (Bainbridge-Cohen, 1993, p.1). Although this method was not being explored, it is interesting to see how the focus of the performer was shifted through

Authentic and creative movement to such contemplation. Andrew's comment about the change in the whole class through this work and the joy of watching others was referred to at the beginning of the chapter. He also shifted the focus from self to an appreciation of others.

Abby's enthusiasm for drama permeated her responses: "I loved this lesson, I found it focusing and relaxing to let my body move freely however it felt, exploring my body's limitations was also nice to be aware of." Her responses illustrate the way she learned from the situation. It also shows how she shifted in her relationship to others:

I find the exercise where you try to copy the movement of one person in the group very worthwhile, it kind of forces you to move in a way that isn't naturally you ... It becomes natural to move like them you discover their point of centre and what body part they use to lead with. (Abby, 2000, Journal entry)

Jane often struggled with her energy levels: "Because I was tired the first exercises took a lot to get into so I concentrated on small movements... I became more confident and was able to move truly in my space without emotional restrictions." By the end Jane felt she was able to work effectively in this mode: "With my eyes open I was still aware of my own space, but that was better because you know your own physical limitations better when you can see the whole space" (Jane, 2000, Journal entry).

Malcolm tended to record the whole situation and keep his observations from being personal. He was awakening to the awareness required of the witness in Authentic Movement. "It is also interesting to see the stories that are presented in the movement." But over the series of workshops he was able to change his focus somewhat and write more freely about his own experience:

It was good to lose myself to the music and move however you wanted with no restrictions. I felt free and forgot all my worries. I did have trouble breathing at times though. It's almost like I had entered a different world and the normal rules didn't apply. Right now looking back I wish I was still moving. All concentration focused on the movement and all problems are disregarded. (Malcolm, 2000, Journal entry)

“In being receptive to the immediate moment and in tuning in to our own sensations, feelings, dreams, we begin our narrative of discovery that differs from the received narratives of our culture” (Tuffnell & Crickmay, 1993, Introduction).

I will close this section of journal responses to the workshops with my entry towards the end of this series of workshops:

It is always with a sense of the sacred that I watch this work. There is something so profound in their focus - both as performers and as witnesses. There is a profound interchange of story. Our words, I feel, are inadequate to express the experiences both of performance and of being audience. (Irving, 2000, Workshop reflections)

This spontaneous, improvised movement work takes the performer and the witness beyond the mundane. They have a special bond where they share the particular and general stories of our human state. In the feedback they spend time in conversation about the experience. They speak about themselves in a new way. Their perceptions of themselves and others shift. At this stage of Authentic Movement, without voice or speech or music, the contemplation is the body and the embodied stories. It is both confronting, in allowing the witness to view the story and enriching in that it allows a different way of responding to another human being. “At this time in the Western world, in response to our deepening need for authentic spiritual experience, all we can do is to return to our physical selves” (Pallaro, 1999, p. 171).

This path to the psyche and the spiritual is particular and will access the journey for some students. As far as it is a performance tool it is beneficial in encouraging a more authentic voice in all aspects of the actor’s work. But as Neville reminds us, “truth does not live in one orthodoxy or another but can exist in a different way in each” (Neville, 1989, p. 292).

Journal reflections of university students

In this section I will work through the journals of the five university students. The Authentic Movement aspect of the workshops develops the ability to witness the work of the other person in a relatively non-judgemental manner:

The witness, especially in the beginning, carries a larger responsibility for consciousness as she sits to the side of the movement space. She is not 'looking at' the person moving, she is witnessing, listening, bringing a specific quality of attention or presence to the experience of the mover. (Pallaro, 1999, p.142)

Ed experienced both the difficulty and the joy of working with and witnessing the other person. When moving to the Five Rhythms he felt that: "Being aware of another is like stepping into another person's left shoe... I felt like I had found an equal balance of initiating and reacting." While in Authentic Movement he reported that: "I felt heady when witnessing. Young and sneakily childish." Awareness of self, of being present were noted:

Body moments - time when all makes sense.

I felt an awareness of being critical in my response. I did not either allow it or disallow a judgement. It was either there or not.

I loved witnessing other people - to take their journey, without placing a judgement on what is 'correct' or 'wrong'. (Ed, 2000, Journal entry)

An opening up was discovered:

My time was again working off impulse... This helps me to feel free to be in the moment - and to allow anything to happen.

I like carrying movement to see where it goes - I don't even know where it will go. I feel relaxed - spacey and vulnerable yet safe. (Ed, 2000, Journal entry)

"Dance changes biology into a metaphor of the spiritual body in much the way that poetry changes ordinary words into forms that allow meanings that words normally cannot convey" (Highwater, 1992, p.218). Ed also experienced some impact from the workshops on his life:

I feel expressive, more so, in every day life and hope I remain and exercise my

body talk. Performance lets me do all these things - and I believe I am most happiest when I am truthful - and the audience are there in pure delight of witnessing this honesty, vulnerability and depth. (Ed, 2000, Journal entry)

The holistic aspect of dance and movement is caught in the following quote: "Once the painter paints his picture on canvas, duality has arisen. We have the painter and the picture. The dancer has something unique. The unity is not broken: The dancer is the dance" (Polatin, 1987, p.59).

Ed wrote of enjoying the interaction and the feedback to his own movement. His own enthusiasm for performance was allowed and his delight in the work of others was promoted. The Perform/Transform workshops were good and timely for this student and gave him a sense of his authenticity, or as he preferred, his truth and a confidence in his expression through movement: "Movement is probably, I think the least active - or slower than my mind" (Ed, 2000, Journal entry). Through the sessions he began to listen more acutely to the mind of his body: "Moving- before even getting up my body is saying " It's your turn". For some reason I knew I was first" (Ed, 2000, Journal entry).

This leads to the journal writing of Tali who was aware that the impulse to move was found by listening to the intuitive voice of the body: "My journey... took me through my movement history. ...it was also very interesting that it just simply stopped when it was finished. It told me when it was done." Tali's response to the first class was ebullient but also analytical. She wanted to clearly record her experience, which she described as mesmerising. The second class initially disappointed because the lights were on and the creative movement work was with another student. She was forced back into her visual sense. This seemed to inhibit her involvement until the Authentic Movement section: "The second exercise as a viewer was as good, if not better than last week. It was like my body decided to take the opportunity, now I had my eyes closed, to engage with self sensations" (Tali, 2000, Journal entry). This student was fascinated with the stories we embody: "I liked being free to interpret others' journey and for there to be no rights or wrongs." And celebrated the diversity: "So then there are two or three or a thousand stories in each (person)" (Tali, 2000, Journal entry). Tali was intrigued with the mind of the body.

Paul was not keen on writing or using the journal. At first he was not at ease in the class although he was familiar with the venue and myself and some of the other participants. He made no entries after the first session and noted in the second session that there were: "...too many questions last week." In the second class he enjoyed watching his partner in Authentic Movement: "...could feel what they were doing, within myself." The drawing with the entry looked like a nuclear explosion. In a later session he was very aware of being heavy: "Too much grounding, not enough lightness" (Paul, 2000, Journal entry). Paul's spiral drawing illustrated that quite a shift took place. When he combined written text with a sketch, greater freedom seemed to enter his response.

Joe explored drawing as a reflective response and felt that the workshops had accessed his confidence to draw. He wrote in verse and delighted in the chance to work in and reflect on a medium he loved. Of special interest to me was an experience he depicted in drawing. He drew a hand from which warm rays emanated: "New meaning of warm-up!" The Saturday before I had written in my journal after a rehearsal session with a friend: "...during the dance my hands (palms) came alive and at the end found golden light streaming from them to the heavens. Beautiful" (Irving, 2000, Personal journal). An odd synchronicity here. I had not communicated my experience to Joe. This student talks and writes easily about his experiences. Although he chose to draw in his journal, he also wrote in verse:

Transcend what is mundane
Paint which seems grey
Difference now from what was same
Night mind seen in the day
Loosen, shift, transform
Light up the soul's fire
Shaking makes the heart warm
Newness in the old to aspire.
(Joe, 2000, Journal entry).

The movement session inspired clarity and creativity. Joe experienced this through improvised movement, both to music with The Five Rhythms and in the silence of Authentic Movement. "Improvisation provides us with a means of excavating layers of

experience, sensation, character, feeling that we normally rush through or suppress - to travel deeper into an ever enlarging and changing moment” (Tuffnell & Crickmay, 1993, p.46).

The fifth university student, Hannah, also wrote little. A Visual Artist, drawings proliferated. There was a flower with a spectacular root system; on another sheet vibrant arrows emanated from a central vertical black line, on a bed of frenetic short, coloured lines. There was a wound on skin that had been sewn together but was dripping blood.

Gravity
Stretching
Your story
The lost
and found
Interior on
exterior.

(Hannah, 2000, Journal entry)

All experienced a deepening and shift in themselves through the workshops. Ed rediscovered the delight of creative movement; Tali used Authentic Movement to revisit her childhood; Paul began to discover a lightening in his body; Joe started drawing and experienced some form of transcendence, while Hannah was pushed to go beyond words and images and work with her body in space.

Journal reflection

The use of a process journal is an assessable part of the secondary Drama Studies course in Western Australia and follows current practice in other states and countries. Teacher trainees have self-reflection as a part of their daily practice. All the participants in this study had been invited to keep a journal relating to the Perform/Transform workshops. Time to write fully was difficult for the secondary students for the one-hour session was consumed by the activities of the workshop, thus the responses were often terse. The university students had time for more comprehensive responses. The secondary students responded to the question on the process journal as the formal course journal. Their reactions to keeping a journal on a regular basis show the on-going need to make the

reflective aspect of the course a regular and honoured part of their work.

The value of the personal journal, and the process journal as demanded as part of the Drama Studies course work, is significant. It is particularly powerful if used to reflect organically on the learning journey. Reflection permits a candid view of what has been experienced and learnt. "From reflecting upon what has come from within they discover unrecognised parts of their personalities and interests of which they were unaware. They see patterns of meaning in their lives and secrets of self..." (Rainer, 1989, p.17). In relation to the course work, the process journal attempts to make the information and knowledge their own, to integrate it into the students' understanding. "The process journal should be a working document where you can 'tease out' your thoughts and ideas" (Fantasia & Timms, 2001, p. 301). Taylor (1998) believes that the journal is a powerful tool for the students in deepening their understanding and important for the practitioner-researcher:

Student journals and interviews, in this respect, can be quite powerful illuminators of the perspectives that surround a given moment; and when teachers can illuminate the multiple and shifting perspectives, they begin to air the complex and often competing student voices that bring life to a process drama encounter. (Taylor, 1998, p. 135)

Interview question 16

How does the process journal help you to develop your performance?

Responses of secondary students

Abby was like many students who had good intentions to use the journal regularly and could see the benefits of the process journal: "...I'm not that up-to-date in my process journal and I don't do a lot but when I do write in it, it is good to write down what you are feeling at that time" (Abby, 2000, Interview transcript). She noted that when she read back she could begin to see how her work had developed and understanding improved.

Marnie wanted to be candid in her reflections but didn't feel that she could do this in a public document that was an assessable part of a course. The very personal journey

elicited through drama creates a paradox in this case. Marnie wrote about her inner feeling that were an essential part of the journey but she kept the real responses separate to the course material:

I have this other sort of book where I jot down my personal feelings. I like to be really personal when I'm reflecting on my work and the work of others. and sometimes I feel I can't be personal enough in the journal. I think reflection is very important. (Marnie, 2001, Interview transcript)

Some students found reflective writing burdensome. Like Alex they might realise its benefit but the act of writing in this mode was often resisted:

I see the potential of it. I don't like self-reflection. I'm too critical of myself when I do that. It's quite depressing... I've done a bit of work in it. I try to write up my performances. I've been to a lot of theatre this year and I've written about them. (Alex, 2001, Interview transcript)

All the students who were interviewed enjoyed the interview process as a means to reflect on and talk about their enjoyment and love of performance. Yet most indicated resistance to the keeping of the process journal. It was not something they naturally wanted to do and the insights and thoughts they shared about their performance experience in the interviews showed no lack of ability to wonder about and delight in their discovery of self through drama.

Zilla believed that the journal was useful, but that there was little time available to write in it at the end of the class. The Perform/Transform jottings were made immediately after the experience and that certainly added to their poignancy and relevance. Zilla was positive in her response to the question about the process journal: "It does help me. I wish I had more time to write in it" (Zilla, 2001, Interview transcript).

Skye's comment on the role of the process journal is worth quoting in full. As she stated in the interview, she saw drama as helping in her search for her identity and meaning in life and the response to the question about the use of the process journal continues this quest:

I don't even call it a process journal; I just like calling it a journal. It's more of an everyday thing. How you felt that day. I think it helps. It does help. I think that also physically the action of writing brings out stuff that you might not say to someone. If someone asks you how drama was today you'd say something but if you wrote it down more comes through. I think maybe people put on a mask when they talk, subconsciously even the eyes... writing is more truthful even, more honest. I think journals help you discover things about yourself. It's just hard in year twelve because there's so much to do. I wasn't really up-to-date in the process journal but if I was only doing drama there's so much I could have put into it. I don't think people can see why the process journal needs to be there, to happen. But I do think people understand it. (Skye, 2000, Interview transcript)

Interview question 11

How does reflecting by writing or drawing help you to develop your performance?

Responses of university students

The question about the role of the journal was put differently to the university students. There was still resistance for one student but the others seemed to integrate it into their personal growth. This type of reflection is often expected in course work and was part of the trainee teacher's self-evaluation of their teaching experience. Their generally positive response should augur well for the development of the process journal in the Drama Studies course.

Paul was not comfortable with the written response and used drawing in the workshop reflections.

I never really got into keeping journals and that type of thing... not just trusting myself to write it down and not being able to express clearly what I was feeling or what was going on... I mean for other people I guess it's worthwhile, but just for myself I never really liked it. (Paul, 2000, Interview transcript)

Hannah, the visual artist, wrote very little but drew most of her responses, thus her comment on the use of this form of reflection: "I quite like doing the drawing for reflection because you look back on to what was happening and represent it in another way...a way of remembering it, capturing the moment" (Hannah, 2000, Interview transcript).

Ed's Journal response to the workshops was vast given the time frame. He was in the habit of keeping extensive journals and made an interesting point that he wrote in different modes as the actor, the student and the teacher and that this changed the focus of the journal writing. He had found journals extremely useful:

I think it's helped me in a lot of ways... Like first it's helped me in looking at what I've done... it'd helped me looking at drama in different ways and how I've reflected on these processes that I've been taken through and what it really is about for me... reflecting has helped me with the whole theatre concept...(Ed, 2000, Interview transcript)

Reflection was essential for Joe. Through that process he could learn from and value his performance experience:

...I really had vacated the space and so reflection was a vital tool to be able to provide an overall sense of safety in a sense. I wasn't getting up there and crapping on. Actually something happened there that was worthwhile and cherishing. So if anything it strengthened my belief in what I do. (Joe, 2000, Interview transcript)

Tali accepted the facility of the journal: "It's helped in my own life development. I've always kept journals. Only recently I've come to understand that I should keep a performance journal... It has become very important for me" (Tali, 2000, Interview transcript).

Conclusion

Authentic Movement and Creative Movement (especially the Five Rhythms) accessed an approach to performance that was new to the participants. Spontaneous improvisation had previously occurred in various guises in their performance experience but was very often character and role based, driven by situation and the tension of the plot.

In this work there was more space for individual exploration, but with Authentic Movement this was done with a sense of audience that permitted feedback. Self-reflection extended the experience via the journal. This method allows the performer

space to experience a taste of the numinous and transcendent that exists in the performing arts:

In the beginning there was not the word, rather there was the symbolic action - a union of body and psyche. In the beginning dance was the sacred language through which we communed and communicated with the vast unknown. In the earliest times the dancer was both healer and priest. (Pallaro, 1999, p. 267)

Joan Chodorow, student and colleague of the founder of Authentic Movement, Mary Starks Whitehouse, developed an argument for the importance of work on movement in Jungian analysis (p. 277) but also stressed the importance of movement for the performing artist as a means to personal exploration and as performer in the performing space. The actor/performer cannot be dissociated from the being who is performing. The clearer the person is about themselves, the clearer and more authentic their performance.

Grotowski believed that the actor should work at knowing himself through exhaustive training and demanding performance. "This act of the total unveiling of one's being becomes a gift of the self...if the actor performs in this way, he becomes a kind of provocation for the spectator" (Grotowski, 1968, p. 131). Such honesty is seen as essential to performance. His techniques are a rigorous form of therapy, as the actor wrestles with the possibilities and potentialities of his body, mind and soul. Authentic Movement used in actor training and in the Perform/Transform workshops, was a way to focus the self in a kinesthetic exploration with a discreet and interactive audience in the form of the witness.

All the students interviewed expressed a belief that they had been able to explore their humanness through dramatic performance. The degree to which they discovered more about themselves and others varied with individuals and experiences. The specific situation created through the Creative and Authentic Movement work in the Perform/Transform workshops allowed an immediate response to spontaneous improvised performance. Most of the participants were very positive about their performance experiences and sought to establish meaning about their world and

themselves. They described themselves in physical, psychological and spiritual language and the attempts to recount and witness their experience of the spiritual aspect leads to the third research question.

Chapter Seven

Research question 3

What links exist between dramatic performance and spirituality?

The need to perform, the desire to watch others perform, the fascination with our own image, the fantasy of other's embodying our dreams or of being the vehicle of otherness, taking on other personas, walking in the shoes of the other, transforming physically, mentally, psychologically and spiritually: the journey of performance is a vast raft of human story. In the European theatre tradition, from the religious ritual leading to classical Greek theatre, we have entered that liminal space, prepared ourselves and with a breath entered the world of otherness where we take the audience on a magic carpet ride to another realm. For the journey to reach its destination of catharsis, enlightenment and hope the performers must be utterly committed to the process. "Before I go on stage, I don't really feel like doing it, to be honest with you, but there is something about crossing the line. There's a chemical change that happens in your brain..." (Sting interviewed by Walker, 2000). There is 'something about crossing the line' as Sting put it. He explained it as a chemical change and what he is talking about is the focus, commitment and shift that are required for the performance to work its magic. It is an alchemy experienced by the audience and the performer.

Transformation

Part of this thesis is to consider how performers may be transformed or changed through performance. Grotowski explored and mapped this terrain: "Theatre only has meaning if it allows us to transcend our stereotyped vision, our conventional feelings and customs, our standards of judgement ... so that we may experience what is real, and having already given up all daily escapes and pretensions, in a state of complete defencelessness unveil, give, discover ourselves..." (Huxley and Witts, 1995, p.188). This is an ideal for the training of adult actors and only lightly experienced by secondary students but it informs this question. The students interviewed were all interested in drama and theatre and willing to see performance as potentially more than entertainment - a journey into

and beyond self.

Interview question 19

‘When we perform, we are transformed’. What do you think of this statement?

The responses to this interview question vary from a consideration of taking on a character to the personal growth we might experience through fully immersing ourselves in performance. The secondary drama students had intense experiences but were less articulate than the university student, Joe, and the adult actor, Rachel. Although they were less incisive, their responses show degrees of transformation and sometimes, transcendence.

Responses of secondary drama students

When the secondary students were asked if they agreed with the idea that “when we perform, we are transformed” they all felt it was true. There was a tendency to see the transformation from themselves into another character. Neil described it in the following way: “... like you can’t go out there really being yourself, you have to be transformed inside” (Neil, 2000, Interview transcript). As Grotowski explained it: “The actor must not illustrate but accomplish an ‘act of the soul’ by means of his own organisation” (cited in Huxley and Witts, 1996 p.189). Neil is alluding to a need to have worked beyond self and character.

Skye saw it differently. She was prepared to see drama as a search for self: “We are transformed. I think it’s in the form of growing” (Skye, 2000, Interview transcript). Rudolf Steiner’s vision of spiritual science covered many areas and the following explanation of the effect of metamorphosis on human growth by Howard helps to expand Skye’s statement:

We can infer that Steiner dedicated himself to creating artistic expressions of metamorphosis because he saw that it could stimulate us to an inner sensibility for transformation and growth in all spheres of human life. To experience this through works of art - or in any other sphere - may be enhanced when we see its importance for dealing with the force of change in modern life. (1998, p.86)

Although the audience may have been changed through the experience, there was recognition that performance may have an even greater impact on the performer. Neil expressed it thus: "You've been taught something. I think you more so than the audience" (Neil, 2000, Interview transcript). Neil's reaction contains similar ideas to Grotowski, although it is presented simply. Grotowski states, "Why do we sacrifice so much energy for our art? Not in order to teach others but to learn with them what our existence, our organism, our personal and unrepeatable experience have to give us; ... to fill the emptiness in us: to fulfil ourselves" (Huxley and Witts, 1996, p.188). Grotowski is relating to the whole training and performance experience but helps to articulate the awareness that there is depth of experience when the performer is fully engaged in the creative act. Neil's comment echoes Grotowski in respect to the way the actor discovers more about his or herself through pursuing their art.

Alia recognised the therapeutic aspect of performance and develops Neil's response: "In a way it helps me find out who I am and experience things that are in me and be things that I'm not and also it allows me to be myself more than normal" (Alia, 2000, Interview transcript). Boal(1995) puts the experience succinctly: "The actor works with human beings, and therefore works with herself, on the infinite process of discovering the human" (p.37). Alia was able to work through her masks and issues but without performance there would have been nowhere for her to experiment with her various realities.

Andrew felt he had been opened up through performance and was less shy as a result of drama work. He was also able to access parts of himself that were usually suppressed: "You don't have to be so docile. You can give your opinion or whatever out. These other parts can be let out if the situation arises" (Andrew, 2000, Interview transcript). He was aware of the personal experience of performing as a stronger motivation for change than the catharsis classically endowed upon performance. As Boal suggested when writing of the Theatre of the Oppressed: "...if the oppressed himself performs an action ...the performance of that action in theatrical fiction will enable him to activate himself to perform it in real life" (p. 46).

Marnie spoke of the transformation into another character and the impact of this on the audience:

...I think you're transformed mentally and physically and you not only transform yourself you transform the people around you... When I did one of my monologues, I felt completely in character. I felt completely transformed. When I looked in that little compact mirror I didn't even recognise myself. (Marnie, 2001, Interview transcript)

Grotowski stressed the importance of the actor's commitment to the transformation: "... to experience his role he must use his own living desires, engendered and worked over by himself, and he must exercise his own will, not that of another"(cited in Drain,1995, p. 254).

Such transformation was not experienced by all the students. Alex had found it difficult to acknowledge or allow a shift or change in his psyche. Throughout the Authentic Movement work he tried to lose self-consciousness but didn't feel he had achieved it fully. Yet he felt that as an actor he had achieved transformation for others:

We operate on a completely different level than we do in our every day lives. Not only are we someone else ... the audience sees us in a completely different light. ... We're not ourselves. It's not transformation of self but for the audience it's transformation. (Alex, 2001, Interview transcript)

This recalls Foreman's statement: " The truth of art is in the audience's, the individual's, awakened perception"(cited in Drain, 1995, p. 68). Yet Alex was not without change on a personal level. He noticed a shift in himself during performance: "The energy. Your natural instincts come to the fore. You really throw everything into it. You start doing that. You can really put everything into entertaining the audience" (Alex. 2001. Interview transcript). Alex had realised that for the Perform/Transform workshops to be effective he needed to abandon self-consciousness: "It's not authentic movement if you're self-conscious. ...I'm just starting to appreciate it a bit more... the rhythm and music become a driving force and your body takes over as opposed to your mind" (Alex,

(Alex,2001). Ruth St Denis, one of the inspirational forces behind modern dance and the 'grandmother' of the Dances of Universal Peace (Miller, 1997), wrote that: "Dance is a symbol of life - rhythmic, gorgeous, immortal. It is a language and a hieroglyphic of divinity"(p.18). Authentic Movement had allowed Alex to experience another dimension of his humanness.

Zilla loved the possibility of transforming into the character, into the other. The comments she made on character work are pertinent:

...I like the idea, of not escaping your own life, but trying to see into other people's way of being and doing...It's quite easy to change your voice, or movement but it's a lot harder to change your whole person, body, everything into somebody else's. (Zilla, 2001, Interview transcript)

Chaikin wrote about the effect that performance had on the actor's awareness of self and this amplifies Zilla's statement:

When we as actors are performing, we as persons are also present and the performance is testimony of ourselves. Each role, each work, each performance changes us as persons. The actor doesn't start out with answers about living - but with wordless questions about experience. Later, as the actor advances in the process of the work, the person is transformed. Through the working process, which he himself guides, the actor recreates himself. (Chaikin 1972, p.6)

The secondary students are not trained actors or even actors in training, but they are opened to a series of performance experiences in their two year course that allows them to experiment with forms, periods and styles of theatre performance. They are aware of something special occurring when they perform. They use the term 'transform' variously, yet they all seem to be aware of a change, a transformation even a metamorphosis that is significant.

Responses of university students

The university students presented a greater range of responses. There was the qualified agreement of Paul: "I think you are, in varying degrees...how much you are willing to be

transformed” (Paul, 2000, Interview transcript). While this is an honest response, it is in keeping with his guarded and self-conscious response to the workshops. It relates to Boal’s reminder that the acting profession can be “truly unhealthy” and that “...it is there, in the depths of the person, that the actor is obliged to seek out her character” (Boal, 1995 p. 37).

Joe’s experience is at the other end of the scale: “Absolutely. I see it as a whole phoenix process” (Joe, 2000, Interview transcript). Joe’s willingness to experience life to its fullest is reflected in D. H. Lawrence’s poem, *Phoenix*:

Are you willing to be sponged out, erased, cancelled, made nothing?
Are you willing to be made nothing?
dipped into oblivion?
If not, you will never really change. (Lawrence, 1950)

Joe was courageous about the rigour of the journey and willing to undertake it. He would not be intimidated by Lawrence’s ultimatum. From the interview it seemed that Joe’s search for meaning was in some way answered through the Arts and through performance. He spoke of the therapeutic aspect of performance and that performance can create a vehicle to carry the wounded psyche to healing, but acknowledges that it too can seem a frightening alternative:

...performance for me, and at that time in particular, it was the only safe space and so it is a place where you can cherish what’s left of yourself and nurture it and allow it to strengthen and so for me that sense of transformation is also a vehicle of holding .(Joe, 2000, Interview transcript)

The dialogue with Joe went beyond the set questions and ranged to a discussion of the performance space as a sacred space and then to whether it is possible in the contemporary world to have sacred theatre. Joe felt that it is, but as a counterculture. He was concerned that it should become integral to your life: “Whatever it is that impacts on your life it’s carrying that sacredness with you and taking it into the world”(ibid.).

There isn't a sense of proselytising but rather one of valuing your own integrity and choices. The passion with which he speaks of his experience can be found in the writing of Cixous: "I believe that today more than ever we need our own theatre, the theatre whose stage is our heart" (cited in Drain 1995, p.341). The very personal exploration provided through the public forum of theatre is seen by Cixous as missing in many lives: "I declare that we need these temples without dogma and doctrine ...where all our torments and above all our blindnesses are played" (p. 342). It is something for which Joe craves.

Hannah did not expand on her idea about transformation through performance, but seemed to accept that it could be quite a radical shift: "Well I think they are transformed in a sense, from the everyday person and the everyday role that they are playing out. Transformed from that into something else, into a different state, space" (Hannah, 2000, Interview transcript).

Ed had difficulty with the word transform. In all that he did he had a sense of a certain amount of detachment:

...I think there's a change. I don't know to what extent for a particular type of performance and for different people as well. And also I said something about movement or something I find more difficult. I don't think I'd give myself over to it and being allowed to transform or being allowed to be affected by it. And not until that happens, until you allow that to happen, otherwise there's still a little bit of going through the hoops. (Ed, 2000, Interview transcript)

He was aware of the power of performance, but unsure as to really feeling its power. Perhaps he would feel more comfortable with Steiner's belief that:

The actor should be able to keep himself in reserve, to hold back and not allow himself to be caught in his own creation; and then, having once fully objectified his own creation, be able to experience it from without with all the elemental force of his emotions, letting it arouse in him joy and admiration, or again sorrow and distress. (Steiner, 1959, p.332)

Tali had been able to use drama work to access her child self, but she still saw transformation as part of really taking on a character. And her belief that she couldn't really do that:

But that comes back to my problem with the idea, 'Am I able to take on character or not?' So I don't truly believe I've been able to experience transformation. But I do believe that other people have. That they can. And I think it just needs a really good teacher to take you there. (Tali, 2000, Interview transcript)

This last point is interesting. Tali does believe transformation is possible. Although it has to do with taking on a character, it is doing this in such a whole or complete way that the actor is shifted by the degree of commitment to the work. In the interview, Tali spoke of her awe on discovering Grotowski. Her comment in this excerpt about the need for a good teacher makes the following quote from Grotowski, when discussing the work at his Theatre laboratory, particularly poignant: "I am talking of the method. I am speaking of the surpassing of limits, of a confrontation, of a process of self-knowledge and, in a certain sense, of a therapy" (cited in Drain, 1995, p.280). The refinement of self, such a control or diminishing of ego is one aspect of the ability to be the clear glass that Rachel described. It would seem to be aligned to concepts of emptiness where attachment to self become unnecessary when something beyond the self enters the equation. Tali knows it is difficult to experience a real transformation. Grotowski is quite aware that it is a huge accomplishment: "The actor's accomplishment constitutes a transcendence of the half measures of daily life, of the internal conflict between body and soul, intellect and feelings, physiological pleasures and spiritual aspirations. For a moment the actor finds himself outside the semi-engagement and conflict which characterize us in our daily life" (p. 280). Tali's personal lack of transformation does not interfere with her belief that it occurs.

Epiphany

Epiphany, in the sense of making the unknown knowable, at least momentarily, would seem to be possible through dramatic performance for Rachel. She seems able to extract the pure experience of performance from the often mundane world of theatre where

personalities and schedules could be interpreted in a limited and petty manner. Rachel may well be peculiar in her blending of drama and the dharma. But the fact that she perceives her experience in the language presented in the interview suggests that the heightened state reached through dramatic performance invites the artist to extrapolate a spiritual intensity from their work.

Responses of the adult actor

The dialogue with the actor Rachel took place after the university interviews. The focus on transformation was teased out further in this interview. It was of interest to consider whether she saw performance as a transformative process and her response related to a community project: "I think it can change people on all levels and I assume that through community theatre performances projects, people gaining confidence and making changes... It can help you to grow and look at your own patterns - if you are willing to" (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript).

This willingness of the actor to change was certainly something that was essential to being an actor in the eyes of such luminaries as Grotowski and the American dancer and teacher Anna Halprin who believed that the actor must go "deeper and deeper into the inner world to the point where the actor ceases to be actor and becomes essential man/woman" (cited in Roose -Evans, 1989, p.199) and Rachel felt that it was important if there was a desire to develop: "...I think if you're trying to get the truth of yourself, or the truth of the performance then you have to keep changing and you have to keep peeling away your habits and the things you cling to, which is quite hard" (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript).

Steiner spoke of the need for the artist to seek the essence of each entity: "...the basis of artistic creation is not what is, but what might be; not the real but the possible" (Howard, 1998, p.130). In exploring performance in this way, Rachel is seeking a truer performance and a deeper awareness of self. The path to truth in performance is so difficult that Rachel described some of the really great actors like John Geilgud and Edith Evans as bodhisattvas, so powerful and truthful was their work. Kornfield (1993)

puts it thus: “The Buddha’s model of an enlightened being was a noble warrior or skilled craftsman who had developed a character of integrity and wisdom through patient training” (p. 209). Rachel acknowledges the need to continually refine and develop performance skills and she believes that all performers have the chance to work deeply: “So yes I think you have a potential for an immense alchemy of change, if you really allow yourself to go to the forge of ... of looking at your own pain”(Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript).

Yet through the change there is no sense of losing herself:

...I’d been doing so many other characters that I had a much clearer sense of my own self and boundaries, it was kind of ironic, I remember having a feeling that: I belong more to myself because I’m allowing myself to be all these other people. (*ibid.*)

Grotowski explained this as the “...surmounting of our solitude... the attempt to understand oneself through the behaviour of another man, finding oneself in him” (Grotowski, 1968, p.130). The therapeutic level of performance work was recognised by Rachel: “You get to explore all the hidden aspects (of yourself) in a structured way. It’s cathartic” (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript).

I then asked Rachel to describe a performance in which she experienced a deep sense of transformation. She immediately described playing Stephen Gordon in a community theatre project called *The Well of Loneliness*. She describes it as: “...a pure kind of project and a beautiful director and a very good energy and wonderful experiences” (*ibid.*). Rachel was able to explore her own experiences as a lesbian through the heroic character of Stephen Gordon. When describing the role of Hildegard von Bingen where the material and the play transformed the actors to the extent that: “...up there on stage at times it felt really otherworldly” (*ibid.*).

Rachel was both being fully present and entering into the world of the play in a very complete way. The dichotomy of feeling ‘other’ while being fully present and credible

for the spectator was expressed by Barba in a manner pertinent to expanding Rachel's insight: "The only territory into which I sink my roots is the 'country of speed', that tangible and inscrutable dimension which is myself as presence, as a unity of soul-body-spirit, perceptible to others through their five senses" (cited in Christoffersen, 1993, p.194). Rachel expressed it as being 'otherworldly' and this feeling of completeness is perhaps hearkening towards Steiner's ideal of attaining the beauty inherent in all forms. In his lecture: 'The aesthetics of Goethe's worldview' Steiner quotes Goethe on the highest task of art which is "giving the illusion of a higher reality through appearances. It is a false striving, however, to make appearances so real that in the end only common reality remains" (Howard, 1998, p.131).

The examples of experiences where Rachel was able to feel intensity of performance covered a range of subject matter and characters. Shirley Valentine provided as rich a source for this heightened state as did Hildegard von Bingen. The whore and the nun were equally rich in spiritual potential. The epiphany occurred through Rachel's approach to performance, through her desire to find 'the truth in the performance'. Perhaps the moment of insight essential to epiphany can happen most purely in performance. "Performance's only life is in the present" (Phelan, 1993, p.146). It can be discussed, theories can be written, but the experience of the performer and the spectator can occur only once and can never be exactly repeated. The actor may train and employ techniques to maximise the intensity and presence of performance. But there is an element of magic in the fact that "Performance's being ... becomes itself through disappearance" (p.146). Certainly the innovators in theatre throughout the twentieth century have sought to activate the latent power for change that resides in this art form. Rachel has realised that it is part of her personal path to awareness, and dare I say, enlightenment. Peter Brook believes that theatre holds a key:

Theatre must attempt to create a more intense perception at the heart of our own world ... theatre only exists at the precise moment when the two worlds of the actors and audience meet: a society in miniature, a microcosm brought together every evening within a space. Theatre's role is to give this microcosm a burning and fleeting taste of another world, in which our present world is integrated and

transformed (cited in Roose-Evans, 1989, p. 200).

Transcendence

This led into the next question, which was about whether Rachel's acting had ever had a level of transcendence. After the discussion of personal insights it was interesting that she chose to describe a moment (mentioned earlier in this thesis) when going on stage with the rest of the team, there was a feeling of deep trust and connection with the other performers. She was unsure that transcendent was quite the word but it was a meaningful and overwhelming feeling:

It's like you and the audience... you and the audience suddenly take off together. You and the audience suddenly fly. And other people in the cast. It's like a whoosh! It's like transcendence. You're all there and then suddenly you're all going somewhere else. I don't know, maybe I can only speak for myself. It feels like that and the feedback you get is that it was magical, it was brilliant. Something's happened and you all know it. It might be just a moment and then it might go back to being not quite as wonderful. (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript)

Fraleigh (1987) wrote of the creative act in dance as having a mythic connection, a transcendent aspect, but especially it conferred a wholeness of being. "She (the dancer) is embodied in her dance and signs it with her being" (p. 252). Rachel found catharsis and transformation in watching as well as performing in theatre. There were performances that had transformed and transported her as audience. She realised that others might find this in a range of activities: "But I get that from theatre. I get that from performance. Or from watching. Especially when I see really good ensemble work" (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript).

We went on to discuss whether there was a transformative stage in the rehearsal process:

Sometimes you do wonderful work and there are wonderful moments and you watch your colleagues achieve just amazing things in rehearsal and then you watch yourself and they, somehow something withers a wee bit under the lights and under the audience and that's what we talked about a lot in college. How to keep

that magic, that freshness, that discovery that you get in rehearsal, alive on the stage... What you do before you go on is very important. (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript)

At this stage the consideration of acting as a spiritual endeavour was pursued:

...for me everything is a spiritual endeavour. Everything to do with acting is a spiritual endeavour because it's to do with connection. Connection with yourself, connection with others, connection with the universal life force and that channelling of another person's ideas - the writer... to the audience... who've come to see something acted out for them. For some kind of catharsis, some kind of escape, some kind of comfort. It's about communication and it's about spirit definitely. (*ibid.*)

Halprin believed that "art is an enduring process for it touches on the spiritual dimension in a way that no other human activity does. In art you are able to give expression to it; you receive back a *vision* which is a *map* by which you can set other goals" (cited in Roose-Evans, 1989, p.199). Although Rachel was aware of trying to marry her spiritual practice to her everyday life, the theatre seemed a perfect forum:

There's something about the magic of theatre, the magic of all suspending belief together, of all imagining together. The writer's imagination, your imagination, the audience's imagination which is so potentially exciting, transformative, phoenix-like, it has such enormous potential... Theatres are such rich places... full of this energy, this expectation. This depth. (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript)

The special power that resides in the potential of theatre to explore and expand our humanness emanates from the fact that "theatre operates in a curious psychic space. The 'secret' of theatre's power is dependent upon the 'truth' of its illusion. Enfolded within fiction, theatre seeks to display the line between the visible and invisible power. Theatre has, then, an intimate relationship with the secret" (Phelan, 1993, p.112). Theatres are, as Rachel says, "rich places" of magical possibility.

Rachel has followed a path of Buddhist meditation over the last seven years but feels that most actors like to do things that really matter and have depth. She quoted Kenneth Brannagh who is an atheist but says that the nearest thing he gets to going to church is playing Shakespeare: "So certainly the dharma has helped and I hope that my

performance is better as a result of it. It's a process of learning to discipline my mind, to breathe deeply, to take time, to take space, to be still" (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript).

Rachel has chosen acting as her path to self-actualisation. The discoveries she makes about herself and others keep unfolding. In Grotowski's words: " To cross our frontiers, exceed our limitations, fill our emptiness - fulfil ourselves... in this struggle with one's own truth, this effort to peel off the life-mask, the theatre, with its full-fleshed perceptivity, has always seemed to me a place of provocation" (Grotowski, 1968, p.21). She even manages to find television soap operas as a place for self-awareness: "It's amazing how things reflect where you are, even the role of Lily in High Roads, her being, like thinking a lot about other people, I mean that's where I am in my own life trying to be less selfish and things like that" (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript).

The concept of transformation in this context has to do with the awareness of change in relation to the experience of dramatic performance. When writing on the perform/transform concept I made the following observations:

There is change in every performance. The psyche is shifted, shaped and changed every time we perform for an audience. Every time we create and shape a character and share this with others, we transform ourselves at the most cellular of levels. We are polyphrenic (having many selves) creatures with the possibilities of genetic lineages that are vast. We shift and move through a pantheon of gods as we explore our personas and seek deeper spirit. Drama allows us to go to profound awareness of ourselves. In the liminal space between performance and ourself, we enter the negotiation of ego and spirit. If we choose spirit, we move from the liminal to the actual and passing the threshold of preparation we are initiated into the depth of character that allows all space and time in one lovely breath. (Irving, Workshop reflections)

Focused performance has been documented in writings on peak performance variously by Maslow (1970), Fraleigh (1987) and Atkins (1990) as a time where the person is particularly focussed, and with effort and will induces otherwise spontaneous phenomenon to occur. I am concerned to go beyond the peak experience to the effect of

this immediately and over time on the life of the actor; to the importance of the experience and its effect on the whole life of the performer; to the Arts as an area where humans are able to regularly invoke the healthfulness of working at their best; and to the linkage between peak performance, transformation and spiritual insight.

The change experienced by the performer and by the creative artist through involvement in and commitment to their art is aptly explained by Howard in the introduction to a group of lectures by Rudolf Steiner on the arts:

The creative state - whether it descends unsought or through great anguish and effort - is so cherished because we are transported to an inner space, where we commune with inner thoughts and feelings of a different order than the everyday. The transcendent dimension...can lead us from our earthbound consciousness to an actual world of spirit. (Howard, 1998, p. 69-70)

Rachel experienced dramatic performance as a gift that required tending through ongoing workshops, meaningful performance opportunities and some humility. Her approach to dramatic performance was similar to her way of life within the framework of the dharma (Buddhist principles of a moral and compassionate life). It was a means of livelihood, but it was also a devotion. She had been able, through her life choices, to place dramatic performance at the helm of a life whose rudder was a spiritual path. Her language is that of a spiritually aware woman but one who acknowledges that her translation of her experiences while often embraced by others is particular. She provides an example of an enthusiastic actor whose frame of reference includes the spiritual. From her experiences and understandings the younger performers' interviews and journal reflections may gain.

Connection, communion, communitas

The links between dramatic performance and spirituality are well documented and various. Serious practitioners who seek beyond the material know that the sincere and meaningful work of the actor and theatre director must explore the essence of what it is to be human. It is an equation that requires more than the physical, the sensual, the intellectual, the aesthetic for it cannot deny the spiritual aspect of our humanity:

It is the world of your own soul that you seek. Only within yourself exists that other reality for which you long. I can give you nothing that has not already its own being within yourself. I can throw open to you no picture gallery but your own soul. All I can give you is the opportunity, the impulse, the key. I help you to make your own world visible. That is all. (Hesse, *Steppenwolf* as quoted in Roose-Evans, 1989, p. 4)

Theatre, ideally, offers a place for the individual to explore and a community tolerant of that exploration. Like Turner's *communitas* it exists "as an alternative and more 'liberated' way of being socially human" (Turner, 1982,p.51). Spontaneous *communitas* (Turner, pp. 47-48) where the individuals are together for a short, but intense period of time where a "mutual mystical participation" (p. 48) can be experienced, correlates with the tribal quality of connection between the cast and crew of all the school productions I have been associated with and observed. The secondary students mentioned the importance of the group and their fellow actors to the whole process of performance (Biography 4 Neil). The drama studio and drama class provided a space where the secondary students could cast away the external demands of their study and allow themselves to relax into exploring themselves through movement and in so doing, improving the authenticity of their performance work. Within the community of the drama class there was confidentiality and an ease and respect for each other's work. There was communion and the rituals of the drama class and studio sanctified this state. Connection, *communitas* and communion require an agreement that theatre is holy. In the case of the drama classroom this is established through the type of workshops provided and the focus of the teacher or facilitator. The Perform/Transform workshops using the inspiration of Gabrielle Roth's creative movement and Authentic Movement accessed a sacred space that honoured the sincere and genuine commitment of the students.

Chapter Eight

Summary

The importance of the spiritual impulse for our humanness needs to be pursued in all areas of education. The focus of this thesis is to describe the power of dramatic performance to encourage personal growth and transformation. This is aptly expressed in this comment on the work of the director and teacher Michael Chekhov:

Those who have worked seriously with Michael Chekhov's Technique know that each aspect, when exercised sufficiently, becomes a gift to the actor, not only as an artist but also as a human being - the gift that can become nourishment for the human spirit, given through the actor to the world. (Afterword by Mala Powers in Chekhov, 1991, p.172)

The thesis also describes the spiritual aspects of dramatic performance as a peak experience within drama education. The soul equation that overcomes the limitations of lack, which was explored in Chapter One, is imagination, meaning and beauty plus connection and interaction multiplied by passion, heart and joy which results in a soul-rich education. Dramatic performance within a drama education programme incorporates all these facets.

Peter Brook argues that theatre "must encompass the serious and the comic, the spiritual and the bawdy, being both elitist and popular" (cited in Roose-Evans, 1991, p.175). The experience of dramatic performance is a significant part of the individual's awareness of the power of theatre and drama. Brook takes the quest beyond the personal transformation to the world "for a necessary theatre, one which is an urgent presence in our lives, speaking to a man in his wholeness" (p. 194). Dramatic performance is an experience of a heightened state of presence and awareness that permits brilliance and even transcendence. It ushers the student into a refined and demanding dynamic with other performers and with the audience. The interviews and journals show ample imagination, connection, interaction, passion, beauty, heart, joy and soul that were identified in chapter one as lacking in contemporary mainstream education.

The literature review in chapter two provides an overview of relevant material and relates specifically to dramatic performance, spirituality and education, spirituality and drama education and the qualitative heuristic model that underpins the methodology and the ideas supporting the two movement styles used in the research workshops. The methodology is teased out in chapter three using the six phases of heuristic research as the framework. The Perform/Transform workshops are illustrated as a practical tool that could be followed by drama practitioners. The participants are introduced in chapter four where a biography, summary of the interview and journal entries helps to present a comprehensive portrait. The research questions that are the focus of chapter five, six and seven will be summarised in more detail.

The importance of dramatic performance

The first research question: What have drama students discovered about themselves through dramatic performance was explored in chapter five. Through interview questions that focus on their involvement in, enjoyment of, focus and commitment to and reasons for continuing to perform, the secondary and university students shared their discoveries. Drama and dramatic performance allowed self-exploration, providing material for reflection on themselves as individuals. In this exploration they considered qualities of shared humanness. Not only were they more aware of the possibilities and potentialities of being human, but also through performance they were able to share this wonder with an audience. They were able to comprehend the difference between emotional and intellectual or didactic styles, while having a sense of the power invested in the focused performer to shift and impact upon the audience. This extrapolation and realisation came through reflecting upon the process in their interviews and in their workshop journals.

Intrinsic to the learning in drama were the love of the process towards performance that required collaborative, creative interaction and the sharing of the harvest of performance well achieved by the ensemble. A developing responsibility was taken for the power that performance holds for the performer. There was a concomitant need to be authentic and

genuine in their work. A certain seriousness came through when the students pondered on the impact of performance that belies the fun that emanates from the drama studio. Love was a word frequently used to describe the involvement in and commitment to dramatic performance. Chapter five describes a response to learning that embraces all the missing facets of my own experience of education.

The articulation of aesthetic understandings or the presence of beauty as an aspect of the dramatic performance experience was not specifically focused on in the interview questions or in the journal reflections. Certainly beauty abounded in the eye of the beholder in the Perform/Transform workshops. A quote from the Sufi poet Rumi in Rubinov-Jacobson (2000) expresses this fittingly: “Let the beauty we love be what we do” (p. 167). Perhaps the words of Joe, one of the university students in the study are relevant. When asked what he enjoyed about dramatic performance, part of his extensive and expansive response was concerned with the joy of combining art forms in dramatic performance. As he put it, “everything in life should be an art form” (Appendix 2.5). This encapsulates his deep desire for a creative, meaningful and spiritual life.

Beauty, its expression and discussion were not absent from the experience of the participants. The appreciation of the work of others in the Authentic Movement work also released a delight and sharing beyond the often-critical comments that can surround performance work. Being able to enjoy the work of the self and of others was an important shift in my learning and teaching. To work from Rumi’s quote allows a more humane and creative voice, which may seem at odds with an education system that requires levels of performance judged upon a set of criteria that fail to address the elements that create a presence and aliveness that as audience we love and as actors we are inspired by and aspire to on the stage. The response to beauty is diffuse; perhaps it is best that it defies assessment. But it is not lacking in the education of drama students.

Understanding yourself through performance

The second research question was the focus of chapter six: Does reflection on dramatic performance help students understand themselves and others? The Perform/ Transform

workshop journals were the source of most of this information. As a tribute to the participants a final comment will help to summarise their responses. Neil, one of the secondary students, gave an interesting insight into the human-scale of theatre: “The audience... you are the same size as the audience” (Neil, 2000, Interview Transcript). There is no camera between the performer and the audience in the theatre. There is no editing or manipulation beyond the performer’s ability to enter the performance as creatively as possible, usually assisted by the director and designers. As Neil stated, the performer and the audience are in the same dimension.

In their journals the performers’ experience of their movement work and its huge implication provide a further insight into the self-knowledge that dramatic performance can access. In performance work ideas are embodied. The experience is real. The particular movement forms used in this study were effective in encouraging original, spontaneous responses that led to candid and personal writing and drawing. To perform meaningfully requires awareness of self and an ability to listen to others. Careful listening to the text of self and of others, both actual and written is essential. The discoveries the students made about themselves often excited new perceptions. When moving with focused awareness of another performer, one student achieved a sense of freedom. Such blending and community was not usually offered to this student. The acceptance came through the connection, the interaction, the joy, the heart and the soul of a drama workshop. The importance of connection and interaction is stressed by the students in their responses to the workshops. By working together creatively students experience the true sense of interaction and connectedness. When describing the experience of group work in Authentic Movement the defining word for one student was “hope” (Skye, 2000, Interview transcript).

There was a range of responses to working with a partner in both the Five Rhythms and Authentic Movement. One student chose not to move at all while being observed by the witness in one session of Authentic Movement. He provided difference and challenged his partner to examine her expectations of performance. Another student expressed interest and ambivalence in being able to respond effectively to his partner’s movement

and rhythm. The creative problem of exploring the difference presented formed his personal challenge.

The empathy and awareness that the Perform/Transform workshops promote is important in the intellectual, emotional, moral, aesthetic and spiritual growth of the individual. The range of characters, situations and ideas encountered in a two year drama studies course cannot but open students to greater tolerance and understanding. Dramatic performance expects that this insight be shared with others through both the process and product of performance. The rehearsal and workshop practices, such as the Perform/Transform series, enrich the students' pallet and the reflective journal writing encourages a deeper response to their work. The knowledge that students then gain from performance is expressed more mindfully and explored more deeply. The indications from the Perform/Transform workshop journals are that students are eager to undertake new approaches, especially when their reflections upon the exercise display the developing awareness they are gaining from such work.

Transformation through dramatic performance

Research question 3 is the focus of chapter seven: What links exist between dramatic performance and spirituality? Specific links to the spiritual have been annotated from the participants' interviews and journal entries. Joe expressed Turner's (1982) concept of *communitas*, where connection, interaction, imagination, passion, heart, joy and soul can be found. For Joe this occurred in the "sacred space" of performance. Joe has the Psychotherapeutic language to explain his experience of spontaneous improvisation. He takes this further when he speaks of a sense of divinity through performance when the ego is subdued in spontaneous improvisation as experienced in Authentic Movement:

...if burning the ego is a portal of entry into that awareness where you are aware of the multitude of experiences that are going on in that moment and the interconnectedness that you have with the sphere of existence, however large you like to define it, it's there because it does transcend time and since we're so bound by time that difference is profound...You are in a sense a divinity in that moment. And I can see why in a lot of sacred, ritual theatre why we do see the performer embodying the god or goddess. Because in a sense they are at times so self aware,

so aware of the all and the interconnectedness with it that they are a divine being.
(Joe, 2000, Interview transcript)

Dramatic performance, certainly changes, transforms and allows insight for the participants. This is borne out in chapter seven. The student journals and their interview responses underline the importance of the students' perceptions that in drama they are able to work with others in an authentic and creative manner, with confidentiality and ease. Students reported that they had respect for fellow performers. The sacred space of the theatre or drama studio provided a real sense of communion. Students felt they could be sincere and that their work would be honoured for its genuine commitment. This was especially true for the environment created for the Perform/Transform workshops, but certainly it was a developing aspect of the upper school students' approach to their work.

Conclusions

The desire to reach beyond the sense of lack and embark on this study has given time to listen to the experiences of students, to explore the developing conversation on the spiritual aspect of learning, to deepen my understanding of the role of the arts in education and in life and to reawaken the belief in the importance of teachers having time and encouragement to develop an authentic voice within the multi-faceted demands of their profession, with freedom to access creative learning journeys within curriculum frameworks; and given credence for the effort and originality that challenging but supportive teacher-training programmes would provide, in their on-going learning journey.

The conclusions that will be discussed in this setting are the richness of dramatic performance in the lives of the students interviewed and the intrinsic importance of such a method of learning for adolescents; the need to speak for the importance of the way the Arts access the spiritual dimension of the individual and for that process of drama and dramatic performance in particular; the essential requirement that Rumi's words are heeded: "Let the beauty we love be what we do" and the acceptance that teachers should find a spiritual or philosophical underpinning for their work so that mindful and informed choice that is pedagogically sound but individually sought and articulated at

the grass-roots is encouraged.

The difficulty of operating mindfully, authentically and independently within a large government institution is real. The idealism of this study lies in the desire to overcome the lack engendered by the inadequacy of a large system and to listen to the multiplicity of needs with the flexibility necessary to hear and act to overcome the shortcomings.

The importance of listening to students

The students and actor provided a rich source of material for this study. The shifts and changes they expressed about themselves through the experience of dramatic performance were explored through the interviews, journals and the analyses. The participants' voices are part of the concluding section for their voice should always be heard and heeded in our practice and research. Their final comment has to do with the breadth of the experience of dramatic performance and a statement of significance that has not already been contributed to the conversation on dramatic performance and its links to spirituality.

Abby was fascinated by performance and the audience's response. The dynamic between the actor and audience was an important articulation:

I mean you can't see it but you can feel their reactions, even if they're not laughing, it may be like, a feeling of "Oh, my God!" Like when we did the last scene of *Oh! What A Lovely War* and we were all just standing there still and singing the same song we'd been prancing around doing. (Abby, 2000, Interview transcript)

There is also an awareness of the power of the ensemble, of a community experience that is special. As trite as it may seem, it is significant that Abby chose the particular exclamation. For experiences such as this touch something beyond the usual. Abby was aware of the power of this moment for the performers and the audience. It is a point of transcendence.

For Neil, the personal and transforming quality of theatre was intriguing: “Theatre, it’s just much more.... It’s live and it is a main way of shifting people” (Neil, 2000, Interview transcript). The difficulty of finding words to describe their experience of performance meant that searching for the spiritual in their articulation of the phenomena was not always obvious. Neil’s statement signals the unexplainable, the ineffable. There is knowledge of the importance of theatre but limited language to express the otherness of the experience and the necessity of touching or *shifting* people through that activity.

Marnie was also aware of the power and impact of theatre and the arts as a forum to present ideas imaginatively and with impact: ‘In the arts people can go so far and go places people never really go and to different domains... Just sort of like walking down a road that nobody’s ever walked down before. Being able to enter that space and that frame of mind that’s never been touched” (Marnie, 2001, Interview Transcript). The struggle to articulate her experience of the mysterious and the intangible provides a powerful description. The awe of the experience speaks in her words.

The unfolding of the ideas and the power of the performance were experienced by Andrew as a specific revelation. The realisation that performance could be relevant to others as well as to his own development was a significant discovery: “Especially with *Oh! What A Lovely War*, I remember that scene where you had the Germans and English shaking hands at Christmas and it was just so profound. I probably wouldn’t have found that information out if I hadn’t done that” (Andrew, 2000, Interview transcript).

Zilla had also discovered the power of theatre through a performance task that permitted research, improvisation and devising around an emotive topic:

It just made me think about the power of theatre a lot more. There’s always theatre for enjoyment but I’d totally forgotten about theatre having something to say. That it’s actually made to say something. And I think it is actually something I will do for my original show. Something that I think needs to be said and something important. (Zilla, 2001, Interview transcript)

Skylar was aware and articulate about her personal experiences of dramatic performance. Her particular encounter with Authentic Movement was significant: "That was just so amazing. I wasn't in the drama room, I was somewhere in the universe and it was just amazing because you felt out there but you were so inward too" (Skylar, 2000, Interview transcript). This is an experience of intense otherness. Skylar definitely had an experience that was "beyond the mundane and material towards what is transcendent and eternal" (Carr, 1995, p. 90).

The university students sometimes placed their interest in performance in their role as teacher, but their voice as artist was also alive and well. For Paul there was a personal and a professional consideration:

... what I'm finding is just the focus and the concentration and it's sort of coming back to meditation, just breathing and coming back to that awareness... .But I guess now I feel that, even though I'm not sure where it's going to go. I feel positive about performance, education, children and things like that. (Paul, 2000, Interview transcript)

Tali was fascinated with drama and the focus at the time of the interview was shifting towards her teaching: "I think about how kids would react to certain exercises and situations. Where might it lead to or what could lead to it. And I'm constantly thinking about it" (Tali, 2000, Interview transcript).

Ed had experienced a huge shift in his approach to theatre and drama after a year at an Eastern State performing arts college: "I think the school last year really changed my outlook, really dramatically changed it...It's sort of a realistic outlook that performance is not just money and working. I found a lot more to it" (Ed, 2000, Interview transcript). There is a link here to Neil's comment cited above. The largeness of what they have found is almost inexpressible, but they are fully aware that theatre and drama holds something that is very special and important to their being.

Hannah had studied in the visual arts and was enlivening her adolescent love of theatre,

but now saw it through the eyes of a visual artist: “That’s what I like about performance... it incorporates the whole person. So my body isn’t irrelevant, and it’s engaged in what’s happening. ... I really enjoyed through authentic movement, the focus back on our body. Most of the time it’s just totally out of balance” (Hannah, 2000, Interview transcript).

The integration that occurs in moments of intense spiritual awareness is to be found in performance, especially when the performance blends body, mind and soul. Authentic Movement, the Feldenkrais inspired work of Annie Stainer, Body-Mind Centering, the explorations of Eugenio Barba, the work of Michael Chekhov and Rudolf Steiner are just some of the approaches that facilitate the awareness of the “more” that theatre and drama allows the practitioner and the spectator.

Joe links to the experiences of the adult actor, especially through his language that engages with the spiritual: “It’s been a great blessing to me and a great teacher, performance, for me. Of compassion.... And the wonderful thing about it is being able to transcend time and space” (Joe, 2000, Interview transcript). Joe has the language that describes the spiritual experience within his performance work.

The actor Rachel’s experiences and awareness have brought a rich language of sensitive engagement with life and performance: “Theatres are such rich places. You go to an empty theatre and it’s just (howling sound)...and that’s why they’re haunted, that’s why they’re so exciting. Just sit in a darkened theatre, it’s full of this energy, this expectation. This depth” (Rachel, 2000, Interview transcript). The depth of the experiences of so many actors and audiences creates a wonderful image of shared mystery. Rachel’s articulation reveals the threshold performance provides between the mundane and the transcendent.

Dramatic performance has provided these participants with a nourishing experience of complexity, connection and creativity. It combines the practical with the spiritual. The rehearsal and workshop techniques that prepare for dramatic performance lead to the

spiritual through the physical, psychological, poetic, aesthetic, moral and intellectual. “Dramatic activity affirms the integrity of subjective experience while using objective methods in a subjective context” (Courtney, 1990, p.164). The experience of dramatic performance and drama processes that the participants reflected upon in the interviews and the journals had significant impact upon their learning in drama and their awareness of self and others. “Unifying imaginative thought and dramatic action, drama produces positive changes that transform the way we think, the way we learn, and our moral and ethical attitudes. Thus it can result in a change of consciousness” (p. 164). But most importantly, these participants have provided the dissertation with authenticity, voice and joy.

To know and understand the nature, meanings, and essences of any human experience, one depends on the internal frame of reference of the person who has had, is having, or will have the experience. Only the experiencing persons - by looking at their own experiences in perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and sense - can validly provide portrayals of the experience. (Moustakas, 1990, p. 26)

Spirituality and drama education

In seeking to engage with the spiritual aspect of the human psyche as experienced through dramatic performance, this dissertation has been concerned to look at the emotional as opposed to the rational in asking students to speak of their feelings; the transcendent rather than the mundane by focusing on the impact of peak dramatic performance on their beings; and to allow for the influence of the unconscious upon the conscious mind and behaviour by working with creative and authentic movement, utilising guided visualisation and encouraging the imaginative over the logical. The soul or the higher faculties are considered in relation to being in the temporal world. Esoteric, mystical or religious practices are not the focus of this study. The spiritual embodies the imaginative and artistic processes of choice and creativity that allow energy and enthusiasm to revitalise and humanise the curriculum.

Michael Chekhov utilised the concept of the higher ego:

Our artistic natures have two aspects: one that is merely sufficient for our ordinary existence and another for a higher order that marshals the creative powers in us. By accepting the objective world of the imagination, the independent interplay of our images, and the depth of the subconscious activity in our creative lives, we open up the very limited boundaries of our “personalities”. We confront the Higher Ego. (Chekhov, 1991, p.15)

Chekhov believed that this higher faculty stood behind our creative processes: “The more an artist recognizes this higher function in himself, the more he is influenced by it in his creative work” (p. 16). The whole realm of the unconscious as nourishing the conscious mind and being is a theme that links to the use of contemplation, meditation, relaxation, guided visualisation and dream work in education. Miller (2000) believes that dream work is a useful educational ally. The ability to listen to the unconscious is seen as extending the concept of what it is to be human. Self-awareness, listening to others, creativity, inner wisdom are some of the faculties that dream work will enhance according to the studies quoted by Miller. The fear of working with such apparently personal areas as dreams, meditation and journal work requires that it be done “in a nonintrusive and invitational manner” (Miller, 2000, p. 73).

Steiner encourages the actor to “develop a delicate feeling for the experience of the world of dreams” (Steiner, 1960, p. 335). He extends that to the actor developing sensitivity to their part that has the subtlety of real life and that eventually the actor will feel “the same sort of intimate bond that you have with some dream of yours in the moment of recalling it” (p. 337). It is of interest to note Steiner’s advice to actors, given in 1924, and the studies in Miller which range from 1974 to 1995, along with the often Jungian inspired books on dream work that have a popularity as a tool in various self-awareness therapies. Resistance to working with this resource is part of the reluctance to encourage education of the psyche (Neville, 1987).

Michael Chekhov utilised Steiner’s ideas on dreams and performance: “The actor can increase his sense of Style by calling up his dreams and trying to live in them as clearly as possible with his waking consciousness” (Chekhov, 1991, p. 127). Allowing the imaginal world to penetrate the real offered the actor a way to create atmosphere that

was palpable. The value of the unconscious as a key to deeper understanding should not be avoided in a meaningful education. Certainly the arts offer ways of expressing and exploring this aspect of the psyche. The arts are an essential component in Steiner's educational approach and according to Miller when arts are integrated into the classroom as in Waldorf education "the children's souls are nourished" (Miller, 2000, p. 91). There are many theories of theatre, techniques and styles that can be explored in pursuit of the spirit of the human being. Steiner and Chekov have many useful approaches to performance, but while study of their techniques is important there are further valid approaches that are available.

In Perth, WA, the work of Alice Cummins and Annie Stainer in movement and performance work have had an impact on the actor training programmes at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. These practitioners use movement as a subtle method of awakening the psyche of the actor towards a more holistic technique of performance and humanness. Where Alice Cummins uses Body-Mind Centering as the profound factor in her work, Annie Stainer is steeped in the wisdom of Feldenkrais. Both lead the performer to a richer understanding of the interconnection of body, mind and soul. Their work accesses the spirit of the performer through the acknowledgement of the subtlety of the physical being. Both have had dance and actor training in conventional methods but have quested for approaches that have awakened the whole being. Neither would use the label of spirituality in their work, but in working in their subtle methods they allow the psyche room to breathe and for work of a far more complete and satisfying and truthful nature to emerge from the artist in every person. Both of these artists and teachers highlight the need for every practitioner to search for the methods that best access the creative potential of the individual in ways that allow for difference and otherness. They acknowledge that the methods they use work because they allow the individual to be authentic, while providing a framework that is kind through opening the body, mind and soul playfully to the vast creativity inherent in our human form. These practitioners are particularly interesting for they seem able to share their expertise without imposing ego on the work. They are performers as well as teachers and directors. Both embody a wealth of knowledge, experience and talent and

yet both are concerned to share their insight and expertise with fellow humans for the benefit of these beings. They exemplify the authentic and genuine teacher that resides in all educators. In working with them my practice is informed not only with the actual material of their workshops but with the love for their work, their delight in their students and the belief in the benefit of the ideas and techniques they use. They enliven the spirituality of their students by accessing the imagination and opening a journey for the creative interplay of the body, mind and soul.

Spirituality and the teacher

Miller (2000) and Neville (1987) are academics who encourage the teacher to be a courageous practitioner, mindfully seeking ways to open students to the rich array of tools and techniques that will awaken the whole person to their potential to be a fully realised human being. Opening the way must be done mindfully and appropriately. It is embedded as much in the teacher's personal pedagogy as in the ideas and techniques they teach. The personal and professional journey of the teacher is on going. Their students will discover that life-long learning is a joy not a task or a slogan.

This study has opened up a limitless array of approaches to mindful and meaningful teaching and learning practices within the arts and drama in particular. In focusing dramatic performance it acknowledges that there are highlights in the learning process that may enhance the understanding and insight of the individual, exposing them to a profound relationship with themselves and the text, with other performers, with the audience and with their own psyche. The arts access personal awareness within a rich cultural context. They encourage the personal and the community voice. They acknowledge our individuality and allow creative expression and platforms to share our ideas and feelings, joy and pain. Eugenio Barba expressed his journey to develop the experimental Odin Teatret:

The only territory into which I sink my roots is the 'country of speed', that tangible and inscrutable dimension which is myself as presence, as a unity of soul-body-spirit, perceptible to others through their five senses. For me the theatre is the ephemeral bridge which in 'elected' contexts links me to another: to the actor,

to the spectator. It is the interweaving of one solitude with another by means of an activity that obliges a total concentration of my entire physical and mental nature. (Christoffersen, 1993, p.194-195)

The student actor touches something of this exile in the moment of performance where achievement is peculiarly isolated even in the moment of applause and delight. The presence needed for an authentic and meaningful performance that both communicates with other actors and with the audience, needs patient and creative preparation. Dramatic performance requires huge maturity from student performers. It is useful for them to reflect on their experiences and to lead them to consider the theories and ideas of adult practitioners. The path needs to have fun and lightness as well as depth and meaning. In secondary drama it is useful to offer an array of approaches and techniques to the younger students and to apply these and experiment with them in upper school.

Discussion and applications

Spirited learning

The Arts allow greater flexibility, than most other learning areas, in course design and content. They are concerned with the physical, the intellectual, the imaginative, the aesthetic, the philosophical, the moral, the unconscious, the emotional and the spiritual dimensions of life. They are able to utilise the cognitive as one style of experiencing and responding to stimuli. It is the multiplicity of approaches that makes the Arts a feasible area to access the spiritual aspect of the human psyche. The Arts allow the expression of the spiritual impulse. "Steiner makes it clear that the path of art is not the only way - but a most important one - by which a modern person, fully engaged in the world of the physical senses, can become more self-aware as a being of soul and spirit" (Howard, 1998, p. 26).

Abbs, poet and arts theorist and educator, defines spirituality as "an intrinsic part of human existence" (Abbs, 1995, p.18). He develops this further: "To engage with the arts is to engage dynamically with the meanings and possibilities of human existence" (p.24)

The task of the teacher is to "bring together the image theatre of the individual soul to the image theatre of the entire culture" and "the arts studies become the much-neglected

laboratory of the human soul” (p. 24). This is a huge task for the arts educator, but one that most have been involved in without describing or defining this dimension of their work. Abbs is a founding member of New Metaphysical Art. It was established in the 1990s and has as its first aim “to encourage original work across all the arts, work that addresses the imagination and engages with the fundamental issues raised by life and the challenge of consciousness” (NMA Conference Brochure, 2000). The title of the conference was “Art as Quest”. The eminent philosopher Ninian Smart gave a paper entitled “Art as the exploration of spiritual experience”. In the same year the International Conference of Soul in Education was convened in Scotland. The spiritual was spoken of as an essential aspect of the fully realised human being. The arts were seen as the avenue to embody and explore the spiritual element.

The American Educational Research Association (<http://www.area.net> 2001) has recently posted a notice for expressions of interest to consider spirituality and education on its website. Established organisations are ready to engage in the conversation. Academics like Carr tread carefully, teasing out sound arguments to support spirituality in education. Spirituality of the New Age is easily derided as whimsical, lacking definition and invasive in its confusion of superstitious folklore and eclecticism. It is important that academic rigour should inform the debate on the place of spirituality especially in secular education. A critic of Carr’s, Blake, attempts to clarify what is meant by spiritual education and is opposed to spiritual education within secular systems. He believes that we should “...help children to walk philosophically before we call on them to run in spirituality” (Blake, 1996, p. 445). A meaningful and sensitive arts course will necessarily touch upon the spiritual. Those who would treat the spiritual aspect of the psyche as a separate entity or nestle it in a religious studies course are denying the dynamic representation and exploration of spirituality in the arts.

Reflective practice is spirituality in education for some. Others require a cultural tradition and religious affiliation. A sense of wonder and awe is enough for others. In this study the student interviews and journals relating to dramatic performance displayed a willingness to reflect on the meaning of their work; the involvement in the

Perform/Transform workshop showed a degree of focus and commitment when engaged in a creative journey of self; the personal observations about their performance experiences revealed a depth of perception that indicates a readiness to discuss the phenomena of self and others. Within the demands of the drama studies course it is feasible to consider theories and techniques of performance such as those of Rudolf Steiner and to acknowledge that for some the Arts and Drama necessarily have a spiritual impulse. The work of Michael Chekhov in marrying Steiner's ideas to practical theatre techniques shows how the spiritual element articulates an imaginative and plausible method of acting that is neither esoteric nor mystical.

Gerda Alexander's form of movement, Eutony, acknowledges the essential presence of the spiritual in the journey to "the holistic discovery of the total person" (Alexander, 1985). Like Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement, Eutony is a "living, unique and changing process" (p.14) where the individual is guided, through subtle movement exercises and reawakening to the mind of the body over a structured period, by a teacher, to discover their "Observing Self" (p.156). Alexander was careful not to link her work with a particular spiritual tradition. But the necessity of the unity of the whole person is essential to the actor.

Just as senior secondary students learn of significant theatrical theories, the efficacy of various therapies and movement forms in exploring the psyche of the actor and the human being, are useful to know about. Their application could inform the work of the teacher of drama, the student should at least be cognizant of the richness of material available in their search to become, as Stanislavski encouraged, a good human being and then a good actor. In this dissertation a good human being, and therefore a good actor, needs to be continually working at fathoming their limitless possibilities and potential. The spiritual should be openly discussed and pathways explored for their relevance and resonance for each individual.

The role of teachers in this debate could well be to describe and experiment, to dialogue with students and to share the findings with colleagues. So much in secular,

institutionalised education is decreed from above without grass-roots input. Academics often discuss secondary education while being removed from the actualities of the classroom. Teachers, on the other hand, are often too exhausted to pursue action research. Spirituality in education deserves to be discussed and considered. It is important that academics fuel the debate, but essential that teachers should feel comfortable to address the spiritual. With the widespread acceptance of Goleman's (1996) book on emotional intelligence, the role of emotions in thinking and learning became the by-word in professional development workshops. Yet there is a reluctance to speak of the place of spirituality in the human psyche and its connection to how and why we learn. The arts invite this conversation as Carr stated:

One area of the curriculum that does seem to have a strong claim to be a vehicle of spiritual education is that of the arts - literature, poetry, drama, painting and music - all have a key part in explicating the sense of a connection between the temporal and the eternal, the finite and the infinite, the material world and the world of the soul... in a very significant sense religion and art speak a common language- the spiritual language of myth and metaphor, analogy and allegory, parable and poetry... (Carr, 1995, p. 95)

This study invited the students to speak of their experiences in dramatic performance and suggested that an identifiable spiritual dimension exists and that when described supports the argument for the arts as the most suitable area for experiencing, expressing and developing the spiritual in education.

The spirit in drama

The findings of this research indicate that there is value in drama study for all students at a secondary level. There are excellent arguments for its inclusion, at some point, in the experience of all students. Courtney has established the importance of drama in education: "As Dramatic Education is concerned with the life process, it ranges wide over related disciplines and impinges on almost all aspects of learning" (1974, p. 273). But the particular difference from the all-encompassing idea of drama education and the specific focus of this thesis is the emphasis on dramatic performance. This bias relates to the act of performance as opposed to the collaborative and creative energy of the drama

classroom with its levels of acceptability and tolerance. It in no way denies that performance hinges upon the harmonious interaction of the performers and the depth of the process they have followed to achieve their performance. But it does specify that something else occurs for the individual through the experience of performance that may or may not happen in the sharing of work in a class or workshop situation. Perhaps only in music does the relationship between the performer and audience have bearing on their educational and personal experience to the same degree. The actual commitment of transforming the self to be the instrument for conveying the character or idea is the point of difference.

Dramatic performance goes beyond drama process of workshops, improvisations, playbuilding, role-playing, movement, voice work, theatre games and psychodrama. Dramatic performance allows the actor and the audience to transcend the ordinary and the real, to enter the liminal space of the theatre, to suspend disbelief and to engage imaginatively and to do this with critical awareness. Dramatic performance leads the actor and the audience to a form of interacting and communicating that is ancient in its deep connection to our humanness. It is alchemical in its ability to touch our emotions, enrich us aesthetically, challenge us intellectually and shift us spiritually. Dramatic performance in the education of the whole person is a gift beyond the mundane and material. In the words of Neil, the Year Twelve student, when describing the importance of performance in his life: "It's my...I see it as a gift from god and a ...one day give it back" (Neil, 2000, Interview transcript).

The belief that drama is beneficial for students because it allows them to search for personal meaning as they study a demanding upper secondary course over two years is crucial. Drama is also an area, like the arts in general, where students are able to study artistic pursuits as an aspect of the human's ability to work in the creative, imaginative, aesthetic and cognitive mode. In the drama curriculum they study examples of forms and styles of theatre and of individual performers and writers and theorists who explore beyond the mundane and the material. The focus of the drama work is always about reflecting the human existence in a multiplicity of ways. It creates the illusion of reality

and unreality for others to contemplate the struggles and joys of human beings. It is primarily concerned with the idea in performance. Always it works with the dynamic of the audience as participants. A therapeutic element is embedded in the study of drama and the performing of drama. It is a very interactive and responsive art.

The students and actor interviewed were passionate in their response to the question on the enjoyment they experienced through performance. (Senior secondary students interview question 6: What do you enjoy about performance?). The keywords and phrases for the secondary students were love, feel good, close relationship, healing, happy, and different. There was a wealth of experience and response open to them. The university students found: a sense of fun, laughter, metamorphosis, magic, the sacred and the whole person. Any of these attributes would be positive in education, but a discipline that evokes a passionate response brings the hope of energy and intensity for learning that is so often missing. To acknowledge that drama provides this array of reactions is to reveal the power of drama to transform and to provide a reflection of our humanness.

Dramatic performance allows the audience to view the different, or even the similar, and it allows the actor to transform beyond their usual personal limits. The actor and the audience learn through the personal transcending of self and the exploration of the other. In its purest sense dramatic performance is a very humble art. (Instead of being miffed by my father's inability to identify me in a university production, I should have been delighted. It may have been my father's wish not to see the whore in his daughter or it may have been my effective transformation into the wife in Albee's *The American Dream*). In a world where the ego of the actor is often barely contained by the character, especially in commercial cinema, and where the actor's ego is the stuff of tabloids and gossip magazines, the attempt to link dramatic performance to spirituality might seem ludicrous. The participants in this study spoke of their delight at receiving applause and approbation. But they also described a shift in their understanding of themselves when they were allowed and expected to be larger than life. In dramatic performance they are able to be more than and other than themselves. They step into the otherness of

presenting and representing characters and ideas that connects them to a sense of humanness beyond that which we can normally express. We are fascinated by other, but we are not meant to be them, except through dramatic performance.

The drama students, who were interviewed at both secondary and university level, wanted to perform again. (Senior secondary students interview question 17 and university students interview question 12, see Appendix 2.1 and 2.2). They recognised that something important was occurring through the process of performance. The keywords and phrases used by the secondary students were: love, acceptance, wanted, feel really good, accomplishment, great feeling, applause, chance to improve, creating, thrill of performance, something engraved on their soul. For the university students the focus was on: fun, carrying an audience, sharing, emerging in drama, catharsis, vehicle, journey, creating for an audience. The journey is both personal and public. It is for the actor and the audience. The performer has an acknowledged power and the university students realised that the process of dramatic performance was an excellent vehicle for self-growth and awareness. As Tali explained in relation to drama process and performance: "There's just so much that I can learn from that process, from that experience" (Tali, 2000, Interview transcript).

In learning about themselves through dramatic performance, students relate back to their world. They acknowledge that dramatic performance asks that the performer learn about relationship to others. Marnie, a secondary student, elaborated on the effect of performance: "And just being able to be moved by what you are doing, being able to feel instead of just going on the stage and performing, you're actually going on the stage and feeling these emotions" (Marnie, 2001, Interview transcript). This is specific for Marnie, but it shows the shift that students are able to experience when they commit to the work and explore its potential. The university students recorded the following keywords and phrases: self-discovery through honesty, understanding others, imagination, the depth within, self-confidence. Hannah explained the level of exploration of the self encouraged through drama in the following way: "We're just not all a mass and I guess that awareness that I was different and everyone else was different, was really important,

too” (Hannah, 2000, Interview transcript).

When asked how they would feel if they were unable to perform again, the secondary students responded strongly with keywords or phrases such as: terrible, lost, empty, devastated, bad, lop-sided, repressed. When pressed to consider an extreme scenario where performance and artistic outlets were restricted, Marnie believed that: “Performance would be within” and that in the worst scenario “ You’d have to cut off my imagination to really stop me... If I’ve got my imagination and my mind, I’ll be fine” (Marnie, 2001, Interview transcript).

Spirituality and education

David Carr has promoted debate on spiritual education by questioning assumptions and naivety in the conversation on spirituality and education. He is concerned to establish a plausible foundation for a meaningful enlargement of the secular curriculum to embrace the spiritual aspect of our humanness. He attempts to clarify what a spiritual education could be. Blake (1996) finds Carr’s attempts to explain spiritual education too specific and Eurocentric (p. 448). He also finds it too dependent on the notion of transcendence. In fact he is concerned that we expect too much of education. “Institutionalised education...cannot coherently sustain the kind of radical openness that true spirituality demands” (p. 454). That we are better to improve the mundane education than tamper with spiritual education, which is more likely “to disrupt the whole institution” (p. 454). Blake would stop the argument at that point. But it is important that Carr and others keep discussion alive for if educational bodies purport to be supporting spirituality in education, as did the British National Curriculum Council in 1993 (Carr, 1995) but do little to define or enshrine it, assistance must be sought for those who are interested to explore this terrain.

Students need the opportunity to be critically engaged in discussing their experience of learning and reflecting upon this in their lives. The interviews with the drama students after the Perform/Transform workshops were an example of their readiness to locate and discuss experiences that explore the capacity of their minds to observe while they are

performing. The questions on self-awareness when performing (see Appendix 2.1, interview question 9) and experiences of immersion (Appendix 2.1, interview question 10) in the performance allowed the students to explore the intricacies of the mind at a personal level. They reported that they were aware of themselves acting and that although they might apply Stanislavski's technique of emotion memory, for example, they intuitively felt it was, in Grotowski's words an "objective act" (see chapter five). Yet most of the students reported being in a more liminal or trance-like state when involved in some aspects of Creative and Authentic Movement. The general response seemed to be that a focused and rehearsed performance demanded an awareness of self. Only in spontaneous improvisation work could there be a sense of surrender to this experience. It is the lack of language to discuss their experiences and a philosophical framework to appreciate and critique it that needs to be considered if a truly comprehensive education is purported.

The important events in the lives of most young performers have to do with a sense of excellence that often relates to an experience of being fully committed to the performance. As a young woman the adult actor Rachel experienced this as a stillness. Alex, a secondary student experienced it as serenity. Joe, a university student, was the only one who seemed to completely immerse himself in the moment of performance and it was in relation to creative and authentic movement based improvisation (see chapter five).

Certainly some aspects of a spiritual curriculum would seem to require a mindful teacher, a school that honoured the arts and students and parents willing to participate in a kind education. Some of the barriers have been broken and the use of meditation, visualisation and reflective practices for both teachers and students are not foreign to many contemporary Australian classrooms. Miller's view of a spiritual curriculum seems plausible in a comprehensive educational setting that should be present in Australian government schools. The Middle Schooling movement in Western Australia would seem ripe to utilise these practices.

Dramatic performance, spirituality and the curriculum

The secondary students and university students who participated in the Perform/Transform workshops that were used as part of the research for this thesis were already involved in drama courses that focus dramatic performance. All attested to a range of benefits from studying drama. They were all able to speak in the interview and write in their journals of the positive effects of dramatic performance and at times wrote of the peak-experiences they had undergone through dramatic performance. The workshop structure used in this thesis provided a creative background to the journal entries and the interview structure and procedure that formed the research material. The students responded positively to both the workshop and interview experience. As a heuristic researcher, my involvement begins from the premise that dramatic performance can have a profound effect on the practitioner. It provides a connectedness and meaning that is often missing from our experience:

We live in a world that is splintered. The spiritual life is separated from scientific and artistic life. We classify knowledge and experiences into neat compartments, but the soul of the human being fights against such fragmentation and cries out for unity, for inter-relationship. Because the newly awakened soul-life of the adolescent is open to all that works upon it from the environment, fragmentation is particularly painful. Art is the healing remedy for fragmentation. (Staley, 1988, p.153)

In the context of this thesis Carr's (1995, 1996) attempt to explore the possible parameters of spiritual education and his determination to argue for a place for spiritual education in the curriculum is important. Blake's (1996) argument, in rejoinder to Carr, that there is no place for the spiritual in a secular education and his definition of spirituality, is too limited. Lewis (2000), another voice in the UK discussion on spirituality in secular education in the *Oxford Review of Education*, leans more to the approach that Miller (2000) has expounded and demonstrated in Canada. Miller calls for teachers to infuse a spiritual approach to education through their practice. He seeks inspiration from a broad range of spiritual teachers, ideas and practices and has had some years of implementing meditation, visualisation, dream work and other helpful tools of a spiritual nature through training programmes associated with his work as a

professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto and in particular as the Co-ordinator of the Holistic and Aesthetics Education Focus at OISE/UT. The North American approach, as seen in the work of Parker Palmer and the influence of the Naropa Institute and others, is like Miller's and allows the teacher, as practitioner in a sympathetic environment, to feel empowered to use methods which address the whole person and the range of intelligences and sensibilities.

At the Conference of Soul in Education in 2000, at Findhorn, the idea of the soulful practitioner was encouraged. Education with a spiritual base to the curriculum was left to Steiner Education. The Arts were seen as portals of the soul where the imaginative enlivened the psyche but the approach suggested seemed to sit within a holistic approach to an education delivered by aware teachers who sought to engage the whole person. The spiritual was usually part of the practice of teaching and the environment surrounding the students.

An example of the spiritual as part of a comprehensive education, alongside the holistic and aesthetic, may plausibly be developed in the drama curriculum. The understanding that a spiritual intelligence is as valid as any other type of intelligence (Zohar 2000) needs to be established. By using evidence from this study that dramatic performance is a form of peak religious experience, and that the history and theory of drama in the western, eastern and indigenous traditions abound with spiritual content and practitioners, a conclusion can be made that the drama upper school curriculum in Western Australia is a fertile place to propose the study of both the experience of performance and the traditions and styles of performance with a spiritual link. The course would acknowledge that the spiritual is a vast part of the human condition; that it is an essential part of the personal journey and needs both acknowledgement and reflection for absorption and development; that drama permits the experience of peak performance and the methods for reflection; that the traditions and methods of drama have a religious and spiritual base and function; that this has sometimes been appropriated by political and social activists; that theories and experiences of drama and theatre have the spiritual as well as the political, social, historical, aesthetic,

psychological and literary dimensions to be studied, understood and developed.

The benefit of acknowledging a spiritual dimension to the drama curriculum

The focus of this section is on how a drama teacher might infuse a spiritual element into the upper school drama course in Western Australia. With Miller's guidelines and inspiration from Steiner Education and a range of holistic educational practices, a Middle School with soulful teaching and curriculum would seem a very plausible project. An arts focused lower school course is being developed at Mawton High, and could be developed with a more spiritually based practice for teachers and a spiritually enlivened curriculum approach within holistic and aesthetic frameworks. But I will explore the challenge of developing a section of work within an existing syllabus, with the senior students.

Within the Western Australian Curriculum Council's Curriculum Framework document, small, but significant comment is made about the spiritual domain of human experience. In their avowed aim to maintain "a holistic view of the curriculum" (Curriculum Council, WA 1998, p.15), educational planners have underpinned the document with shared core values. They cover the pursuit of knowledge and achievement of potential; self-acceptance and respect of self; respect and concern for others and their rights; social and civic responsibility and environmental responsibility (1998, Appendix 2). Of the five core values 'spiritual' is used twice while other 'soul-related' terms are utilised: compassion and care; creative imagination; individual uniqueness; mindfulness; contemplation; and reflection. As a domain of human experience spirituality was to be encouraged; and a statement included referred to it. If we are to develop each person's unique potential the spiritual should not be neglected. Educational research was supported that helped in the advancement of knowledge in all its domains (1998, Appendix 2).

In the section devoted to The Arts Learning Area, the specific use of the word spiritual was surprisingly harder to find. In the Definition and Rationale under the heading 'The arts and life skills' the promotion of 'multi-sensory' learning and the development of

'multiple intelligences', plus the development of intuitive thinking and emotional intelligence (1998, p. 51) could suggest the inclusion of spiritual intelligence. Yet in the opening section it is stated that: "the arts contribute to the development of an understanding of the physical, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic, moral and spiritual dimensions of human experience (1998, p. 50). The physical, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic and moral can be traced to the over-arching outcomes in the Curriculum Framework document. The spiritual is harder to discern and is only partially treated in relation to the emotional, aesthetic and moral dimensions.

When looking at 'Links across the Curriculum' (1998, pp. 74-79) Overarching outcome 11: 'Students internalise and implement practices that promote personal growth and well being', the following is explicitly stated: "(Students) recognise how participation in the arts promotes confidence and personal growth and supports healthy attitudes, physical health and emotional and spiritual well-being" (1998, p. 76). The word is used but not defined. It is assumed to happen, but not described. It would seem to allow the educational practitioner the option to fill in the gap. With the help of a recently published text (Fantasia and Timms, 2001), where the year eleven drama and drama studies courses are thoroughly teased out so that the outcomes and task based approach is more readily followed, I will propose a course that might allow the spiritual to be discussed, evoked and explored. The Fantasia and Timms text is designed for Western Australian students. In the first section there is reference to how a teacher might set up the program. There is a program focus that covers a semester and the examples are: "Teacher A, Semester 1, Program Focus: Dreams and Dreaming". In Term 1 the set text, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was to be studied and in term 2, there would be presentations of dreams in Elizabethan theatrical conventions. Specific tasks and outcomes would be covered. In Semester 2 the Program Focus: 'Being Unconventional' and the focus would be *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* and Realism in Australian theatre as an expression of tradition and social change" (Fantasia & Timms 2001, p.13). These are examples of approaches that could be taken to the drama course. Using this model a program with a spiritual focus could be developed. (See Appendix 4).

Future research

The study is a description of the power and the beauty of dramatic performance in the lives of senior secondary students, university students and a life-long learner, the actor Rachel. The reflections and realisations of the students in the Perform/Transform workshops and the interview initiated by this study show the keenness of adolescents to be involved and passionate about their experiences. When their education is meaningful, it will also be met with passion and commitment. The students are not shy of the otherness they meet in their drama work and performance, but the limit of their language to discuss the transcendent and ineffable sometimes restricts their ability to describe and communicate their performance experiences.

This thesis has no desire to explore sacred theatre or shamanistic models but to encourage other practitioners to listen to the voice of the students and to consider how a range of learning experiences might be provided to enhance the students delight in and ability to perform while deepening their repertoire of techniques and non-techniques in the exploration of their humanness that is both physically defined and spiritually boundless. The richness that abounds in a drama programme from the mundane to the transcendent is a perfect starting point for speaking of and for the spiritual in education.

The heuristic research model was the preferred choice to allow credence to my performance experience and to honour the participants in an authentic and personal manner that was fitting for the established relationship as their teacher and workshop facilitator and, in relation to Rachel the actor, friend. Different research methods and focus would help to expand and define the spiritual within the drama classroom and curriculum. For example a semiotic study that explores the language used would be useful.

The choice of a secular secondary school may have limited the possible language open to students when responding to their experiences. To explore this apparent limitation in the present study it would be interesting to place a similar study within a school with a

specific denominational bias or in an alternative environment such as a Waldorf school. The setting and the interest of the researcher would test the assumption of spirituality in the drama process and product.

The decision to use the Perform/Transform workshop was germane to this study and a different movement focus or an absence of specific workshops prior to the interview could elicit other responses. Using a control group that is not exposed to Authentic Movement and Creative Movement and comparing the responses to a group of students who had undergone a series of movement workshops would explore the belief that movement work has an effect upon the students' self-awareness.

Research into peak performance experience has occurred in a number of fields. Focus on performance is essential for understanding drama education. The process of the drama classroom and the applicability of this approach to other areas of education have received attention. Spirituality has not really been researched or discussed in secular educational settings. There is room for opening this conversation in all areas of education. This is particularly relevant as there seems to be an acceptance and acknowledgement in educational documents in Australia and the United Kingdom that the spiritual is part of the learning appropriate for a comprehensive education, yet the spiritual remains ill-defined, poorly described and sporadically debated. Carr (1995) called for a mapping of this terrain. This study is an offering within drama and arts education and a provocation for further research.

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APPENDIX 1: ETHICS.

Appendix 1.1

PREAMBLE FOR STATEMENT OF DISCLOSURE AND INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

TITLE OF PROPOSAL:

- A study of the experience of transformation in dramatic performance and its relevance to education.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

- to explore the effect of performance on the performer's idea of self;
to demonstrate the role of drama in the development of self and
to see if any links exist between performance and spiritual insight.

PROCEDURE:

- the study will request the participation of students in a series of creative movement workshops.
the workshops will be conducted over 5 sessions of 1 to 1 1/2 hours.
the workshops will be for participants only.
they will be structured around movement work and will provide for feedback in small groups and as a whole group.
time will be given for individual written or sketched responses and a final debriefing conversation will close each workshop.

FURTHER INTERVIEWS:

- some participants will be asked for further participation in the form of in-depth interviewing. These will only be undertaken by willing individuals who would like to pursue the study of performance further with the researcher.

POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORT:

- Participation at all stages is voluntary. It is the belief of the researcher that the research allows a forum to share and articulate experiences of common interest to the participants in a situation which honours the voice of each person.

TIME INVOLVEMENT:

- Five one to one and a half hour workshops will be conducted after school, once a week for five weeks.

Interviews for two - three students will be conducted over two to three meetings of an hour's duration. These will be held at intervals of one to two months after the workshops.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

- Individual: Increased clarity about own performance work and an ability to deeply appreciate the work of others. Increased ability to perform individually- this is of great benefit to year 12 students who present their Original Shows at the end of Term 3.

Society: The development of insightful citizens who are aware of the stories of others.

CLARIFICATION:

- Any aspect not understood will be discussed either individually or in group sessions

PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY.

Appendix 1.2

STATEMENT OF DISCLOSURE AND INFORMED CONSENT.

I plan to undertake a study of dramatic performance as part of my doctoral research at Edith Cowan University. The purpose of the study is to explore how performance might change the performer's concept of self; how drama might help in self-development and if there are any links between performance and spirituality.

I would like you to participate in research into a series of five creative movement workshops which will be held as part of our workshops in our production of *Oh What A Lovely War!*. For the study I will keep a journal to reflect on the workshops and I will ask you to do the same. At the end of each workshop I would like to audiotape the feedback session. I would like you to agree with allowing me to have access to your journal and to the tape so that I might analyse them for further study. No names will be published and all material will be used confidentially.

I would like to interview two or three people for more information. I will ask for volunteers after the workshops. It will take up to three hours over one or two meetings and you would need to feel comfortable with having the interview audiotaped. Again, all information will be treated confidentially.

Participation in the research is voluntary.

If you would like further information on the research please ask me for clarification or contact my supervisor at Edith Cowan University, Dr Carlisle Sheridan on [REDACTED]

Thanks for your interest.

Dale Irving, BA, MEd.,
Doctoral Student
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
PH [REDACTED]

Please complete this form and return it to the Drama Department at Mawton SHS.

I have read the information on the attached form and I am willing to participate in the series of five workshops. I realise that these workshops are part of a research study and that I may withdraw at any time. I agree that the research data gathered in these workshops may be published within the doctoral thesis provided that I am not identifiable.


.....
Your signature

Date

Appendix 1.3

Letter concerning consent

Drama Department,
Mawton Senior High School.


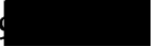

6th February, 2001.

Dear Parents,

I would like to invite your daughter/son to participate in a series of creative movement workshops. These workshops will be beneficial to performance work. They will take place in the Drama Studio as part of the Drama Studies and Drama workshop programme. Participation in the research is voluntary.

I am undertaking a doctoral research project at Edith Cowan University into the experience of dramatic performance. I hope to utilise these workshops as part of the study. I plan to use my observations while conducting the workshops and I would like to ask you and for permission to use any writing or drawing that may be produced. It is part of drama work to reflect on what we do. This study requests access those reflections for the purpose of increasing our understanding of the experience of performance so better to understand its usefulness in education.

I would like to audiotape the final feedback session at each workshop. This material will be treated confidentially. No names will be published.

If you would like to ask any questions about this research please phone either myself on  or Dr Carlisle Sheridan (Research Supervisor) on .

The consent form is attached to this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Dale Irving,BA,MEd.,
PhD Student, ECU.

Please complete this form and return it to Ms Irving (Drama Dept.)

I/We have read the attached information and have had any questions answered to my/our satisfaction. **I/We consent/do not consent** to having my/our daughter/son.....participate in the research and understand that I/we may withdraw her/him at any time.

I/we agree that the research data gathered for this study may be published within the thesis provided that my/our son /daughter is not identifiable.


.....

Your signature

Date

Appendix 1.4

Letter to Principal of school



24th January, 2000.

Mr Aristotle Plato

Principal



Dear Mr. Plato,

I am writing to request permission to undertake, as part of my doctoral study into the experience of dramatic performance, a series of workshops with the Year 12 Drama Studies class and to interview two to three student participants after the workshops. The proposed workshops will be incorporated in the workshop program of the Drama Studies course and integral to their course work. Permission to participate in the research will be requested from parents and students.

I hope that the research project will increase the knowledge about dramatic performance in learning. One aspect of the study is to conduct and observe a series of movement workshops. These workshops promote individual performance and increase the students' acting skills. They also encourage the ability to provide positive feedback to peers in a creative arts setting. The study is concerned with the exploration of the experience of dramatic performance in education. It intends to add to the understanding of performance and suggest that the benefits of participation in drama may be an important part of the development of self.

Students at Edith Cowan University will also be invited to experience similar workshops and to be involved in further interviews. It is seen as a bonus to their set class work. The project is yet another way to link with Edith Cowan University.

My research supervisor at Edith Cowan University is Dr Carlisle Sheridan who may be contacted on [REDACTED] if you would like further clarification.

I have attached a copy of the letter to parents for your perusal. I hope that you will consider my request to undertake this research.

Yours sincerely

Dale Irving, BA, MEd.,
Doctoral Student
School of Education,
Edith Cowan University.

Dear Ms Irving,

I have considered your request for permission to undertake a research project at Mawton Senior High School. It would seem a feasible project if participation in the research is voluntary and the parents agree to the proposal.

Yours sincerely

Mr Aristotle Plato

Principal.

Mawton Senior High School

Appendix 1.5

Letter to Head of School, local university

Dear Professor,

As a postgraduate student in the doctoral program at your university under the supervision of Dr Carlisle Sheridan, I wish to request permission to undertake a series of drama workshops. I have contacted, to ascertain the feasibility of such an undertaking.

I would require up to twelve students in the Bachelor of Education or Graduate Diploma of Education course who are taking drama as their major teaching area. The students would be asked to attend a series of five movement workshops. I would conduct the workshops and observe the students over the period of five weeks. I would also request access to their written documents and to audiotape the final feedback session at each of the workshops. As a follow-up I would request two or three students be available for in-depth interviews about their experience of performance throughout the workshops. Participation is voluntary.

The qualitative study requires the researcher and the co-researchers to explore the experience of dramatic performance. Rather than creating an extra load I believe that the students will deepen their insight into the learning experience of dramatic performance and reflect on their role as drama teacher/arts practitioner.

This part of the study provides contrast to the high school study and will expand the knowledge gained at the secondary level. I trust that you will allow the workshops to be undertaken in the School of Education.

Yours sincerely

Dale Irving, Student No. [REDACTED]

Doctoral Student

School of Education,

Edith Cowan University.

Appendix 1.6

Letter to adult performers.

Dear.....,

I am writing in relation to our earlier dialogue about the possibility of your participating in a series of interviews about performance.

It is necessary to request formal permission to audiotape the interviews so that I might make transcripts from which to analyse the data. The material will be treated confidentially and no names will be published. I would be happy for you to read the case study and suggest any alterations prior to submission.

I hope that two or three interviews of about an hour will be sufficient and would be delighted if you would like to share any journal entries or observations you have previously made about the moment of performance.

This is the initial stage of the research and we may discover further study, in relation to performance, may be generated from these in-depth interviews.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Dale Irving

Doctoral Student

School of Education

Edith Cowan University

Please complete this form and return it to me in the envelope provided.

I have discussed the research project with the researcher and read the attached letter. I am willing to be interviewed. I agree that the research data gathered in these interviews may be published within the doctoral thesis provided that I am not identifiable.

Your signature.....Date.....

Appendix 1.7

Letter to adult performer

Dear _____,

I am writing in relation to our telephone discussion and correspondence concerning my proposed research into the moment of performance.

I believe that you are in an interesting position, as a mature actor embarking on a professional career. The fact that you have recently graduated from a dramatic arts academy adds to the interest.

I am particularly interested in the documents that may be generated through correspondence as opposed to personal interviews. Perhaps you will find that you have journal reflections that would be appropriate to share in this study.

It is necessary to ask you to give your formal permission for this study. For that I purpose I have attached a consent form. If you are happy to go ahead, please sign the form and return it to me in the envelope provided.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Dale Irving
Doctoral Student
School of Education
Edith Cowan University

Please complete this form and return it in the envelope provided.

I have read the information provided in this and prior correspondence and I am willing to participate in the “interviews-by-letter” over a period of two to three months. I realise that these letters are part of your research study and that I may withdraw at any time. I agree that the research data gathered in these “interviews” may be published within the doctoral thesis provided that I am not identifiable.

Your signature.....Date.....

Appendix 1.8

Additional Consent Form for Secondary Students.

Re: Study of dramatic performance in an educational setting.

As a participant in the Perform/Transform Workshops, conducted as an on-going part of the Drama Studies course at Mawton Senior High School throughout 2001,

I have already consented to being part of the doctoral study being undertaken by Dale Irving.

I am aware that photographs of the classes may be used in the study and I accept that my image may appear in the final dissertation as part of the findings.

I consent to my photograph being available for this purpose.

Signature of participant:

Please print name:

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND TRANSCRIPTS

Preamble:

The three sets of interview questions (2.1, 2.2 and 2.3) show the development of the interview process and the perceived differences of the interviews with the senior secondary students, the university students and the adult actor.

Three transcripts were chosen to represent the interviewees. The eventual choice was made to represent participants with a passion for performance and ability to articulate their experience and love of performance. Marnie (2.4), Joe (2.5) and Rachel (2.6) provide further material for closer perusal in this appendix.

Appendix 2.1 Interview questions for secondary students

1. Who are you?
2. What do you do?
3. Where were you born?
4. Why are you involved in drama?
5. When and where did you first perform?
6. What do you enjoy about performance?
7. What do you fear about performing?
8. When you are about to perform, how do you feel PHYSICALLY? (nervous stomach, sweaty palms, shortness of breath, acceleration/adrenalin, dizzy, cold, calm, etc.).
9. When you are performing are you aware of yourself?
10. When you are performing are you totally immersed in what you are doing?(Are the two exclusive?).
11. Tell me about the first performance you remember. How did you feel? How did others respond?
12. Some actors and performers describe performance as addictive. In what ways have you found performance addictive?
13. How authentic/genuine is your performance work? Consider your commitment/ focus/ credibility.
14. What makes you want to perform again? Applause/sense of importance/good marks/ parents/teachers/ self/ need to do better?
15. What have you learnt about you through performance?
16. How does a process journal help you to develop your performance?
17. How would you feel if you could not perform again?
18. Where else in your life do you have a sense of performance?
19. "When we perform we are transformed." What do you think of this statement?
20. How are you transformed through the experience of performance?

Appendix 2.2 Interview questions for university students

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TRANSFORMATION THROUGH PERFORMANCE.

SECOND SERIES: University students.

Transformation Through Performance (TTP) is the subject of my doctoral research. I have explored the subject with the interviewees through creative and authentic movement improvisation workshops. At the completion of the workshops I have prepared a set of questions to asked of some of the participants.

Preamble:

I have prepared questions to use in this interview and if you are comfortable, I would like to ask if you are ready to begin. If there is any part of the question that you don't understand, please ask me for clarification.

These questions involve demographic influences and also your opinions, values and perceptions about performance.

1. First of all, as place to start, I would like to ask you to tell me who you are?

Please feel free to elaborate or to be as brief as you want.

2. I could ask you what you do, but I would like to extend that and ask what your main focus of your life is at present.

3.1. Where were you born?

3.2. Where have you spent most of your life?

4. Would you give me some background as to why you are involved in drama?

5. Let's look at you and performance:

5.1. When and where did you first perform? (You may go back as early as you like).

5.2. Tell me about that performance.

How did you feel?

How did others respond?

6.1. Do you enjoy performing?

6.2. If so, what is it that you enjoy about performing?

6.3. If not, what do you dislike about performing?

7. Are you ever afraid of performing?

8. When you are about to perform how do you feel physically?

Take a moment to think about it and try to describe how you feel.

9. Let's examine how you feel about dramatic performance a little further.
- 9.1. When you are performing are you aware of yourself?
- 9.2. When you perform are there times when you are totally immersed in what you are doing?
- 9.3. If we look at the authenticity of your performance work, are there times when it is more honest or genuine?
- 9.4. Are there times when it is mechanical/automatic?
- 9.5. Is the quality of the performance altered depending on your level of focus?
- 9.6. What makes you want to perform again?
- 9.7. Have you found dramatic performance to be addictive?
10. What have you learnt about you through performance?
11. How does reflecting by writing or drawing help you to develop your performance?
12. Do you have any desire to perform again?
If so, why?
13. Where else in your life do you have a sense of performance?
- 14.1. I believe that when people perform dramatically they are transformed.
What do you think of this idea?
- 14.2. Is there any time that you feel you have been transformed through performance?
15. Are there any comments you would like to make about dramatic performance, the workshops or the interview?

At the completion of the study I will make the work available to you.

I would like you to feel free to talk with me again on the topic of TTP if you wish to enlarge upon the interview.

Thank you for participating in this interview.

Appendix 2.3 Interview questions - professional actor:

1. Who are you?
2. Where were you born?
3. Where did you spend most of your adolescence?
4. Would you recall your first memory of performing? (Perhaps the first vivid recollection or the one that has been a family myth/story).
Can you remember the physical and emotional impact?
5. Would you outline your journey to the point where you decided that acting was going to be your focus? The impulse that moved you towards performance as the work you would do in the world. (There may be a number of significant moments.
6. How have the techniques learnt in your training helped you to be fully present in the moment? (In fact, has the training helped you to be more present in your work?)
7. Is performance a transformative process?
8. Would you describe an example of a performance in which you were transformed/changed?
9. Has your acting ever had a level of transcendence?
10. Have you ever been transformed/changed when watching others perform?
11. Is there a transformative stage in the rehearsal process?
How does this differ from your experience of transformation when performing?
12. Is it the whole performance that transforms or is it at certain moments?
13. Can acting/performing be a spiritual endeavour?
14. How do you bring the spiritual to your work? How does your inner work manifest in your performance?
15. How does your inner work sustain you in the world?
16. Is it easier to work from the spirit in the Arts than in other work you have done?
Does this depend on the subject/style/media used?
17. Does performance ever have the power to transform both actors and audience?
Have you any experience of this transformative energy/experience?

Appendix 2.4 Transcript of interview with secondary student

YEAR 12 2001.

MARNIE 23.08.01.

1. Who are you?

I am Marnie. I was born in Canada. We migrated to Tasmania when I was two years old and I grew up in the Tasmanian environment that cold, damp, wet place, but very beautiful. I love to sing and dance and act and... (that probably leads into the next question and I jumped in on you a bit there..)

2. What do you do?

I try to do everything. I try not to limit myself. I like to be challenged and just take life as it comes. Not have any regrets at all.

3. Where were you born? (Already answered.) How does being born in Canada impact on you now?

Well half of my family is Canadian. And I do hope to go back there, that's really where my roots are and I guess a part of me feels that that's really my homeland because I was born there and all my relatives are there and I really do want to go back there. And another part of me feels that I want to live in Scotland or something. (Tasmania, that's just part of the journey?)

I guess it was, I mean I don't feel I had a connection with anyone in Tasmania. It's a beautiful place and I hope to go back there but there was no connection at all.

4. Why are you involved in drama?

Well. I guess when I was about four I used to go into my sister's room and rummage through all her clothes and try on all her clothes and get all dressed up and then I used to go out on the patio and do my own little show and all the neighbours used to watch it outside. They use to gather round and I use to sing and dance and get the hairbrush out and pretend it was a microphone. I don't remember any of this I remember when I was about five or six doing it, but my parents tell me this story. They'd just say they were dead certain what career I was going to follow. And it just came so naturally to me I just love to be on stage. I've never felt like I wanted to be

in front of a camera, it's just always been the stage. It's the live audience. It's not technical, you're not looking into a camera, you're feeling the emotions of the people actually watching you. And then my parents built up this wardrobe of funny hats and shoes and it use to be my dress up area. I'd get dressed up and just go for it. I was so entertaining for everyone. *(When was your last family type performance?)*

I do it all the time. I find myself sitting at the dinner table and I start singing or practicing a monologue and grab the attention of my family members. *(They're quite use to it)* Oh, they love it. It's just so normal for them to see me in that atmosphere and so confident and not really aware of my surroundings.

(Do you ever surprise yourself? Does it always feel organic?) I think sometimes I stop and think, why did I do that? Sometimes I'll be walking down the street and I'll just start singing, but I'm just so comfortable.

(Would you do that in class? Do you feel the same comfort there?) Not really because in class it's a controlled environment and I guess it's not really my comfort zone.

5. When and where did you first perform?

I remember different performances I used to do for the neighbours and there is one that stands out because I get reminded of this one. I use to live on a quite big street in a family area and I used to be friends with all the kids on the street. We use to always play together. I got all the kids together and we did this musical.

I would have been about seven. I was quite mature for seven and I knew what I was doing. I got my sister to play the music and it was hilarious. It was in my driveway and I got all the kids to dress up. We were all mermaids and I just sang and narrated the whole thing, made it up as we went along. Tried to be as professional as possible. They just thought it was hilarious. I just organised the whole thing. *(And it was a really good feeling?)* Yes, it was and I just felt so comfortable. They loves it and I guess I knew right then and there that was what I wanted to do. *(If not before)* I guess at that point I felt "This is me." And then after that at school I was always in tournament of the mind (devising and improvising around a theme) and I did that and we won. Back when I was in Tasmania we came to Perth and competed against Western Australia. I would have been eleven. We had half an hour to come up with an idea. We sang and danced, very different to what other kids did.

6. *What do you enjoy about performing?*

There's something about becoming someone else, being a completely different character to who you are, I just love it. There's something about it that just makes my heart beat really fast, being able to actually become someone else and step into that completely different frame of mind. And step into a completely different world whether it be through your accent or age. I think having the ability to be able to do that is amazing.

(So, you enjoy your shift and change, but you also enjoy what is coming to you through the audience?)

Definitely. *(Do you think you'd want to do it if you didn't have the audience dynamic?)* Yeah, I think it's definitely the audience feedback. Just watching their faces as you manoeuvre on stage. Just the little things that you do. I always say to myself that it's the small things that make the difference. I try to do that when I'm on stage. Like in *Juno and the Paycock*, even the way I was wiping my hands and fluffing the pillows that were on the chair, making it authentic, not just standing there. I wasn't just a cardboard person copying what everyone else has done. (Being fully present in what you do so that it looks so natural) Knowing that you're evoking some emotions from the audience. *(Is it just approval?)* No. I think it's so much more than that. People sometimes say "You just love being in the spotlight. You just love people watching you."

It's so much more than that. *(Do you know what it is can you start to say what it is?)* I think depending on what script you have, it's more becoming aware of the character you're taking on and what other human beings around you relate to and the experience for them. like when we were doing *Bran Nue Dae*... it was so difficult that, like trying to be a male, aboriginal in his early twenties. I found that very difficult, but I was trying to do it in a very authentic way. I wanted people to think about the character and for it not to be a joke. Just being able to take on that character's burden of being aboriginal and being able to express that through my movement and voice and gestures and having the audience understand me and not think "Oh, there's Marnie on the stage, but there's an aboriginal boy whose hurting." (There were moments. When you pushed through all the layers.) Yeah, all the barriers. (It was a difficult thing to give you to do.) It was a good challenge.

7. Is there anything you fear about performing?

Sometimes I fear that I'm not being genuine. Especially when doing a monologue and you haven't really read the script. Last Saturday I did something from *A Season* at Sarsparilla and I hadn't actually read it, so I didn't really understand the character so I wasn't really able to make that connection. I really feared not being genuine and didn't feel that I was genuine and I suppose that's my ultimate fear. Not being able to do what I do best.

8. When you are about to perform, how do you feel physically?

Where do you find you respond physically?

It's funny you know. Some people get really nervous and fidgety and get butterflies and that, but I never do.

All my emotions come together. Sometimes I cry. *(How long before going on?)* It's not being nervous, I think it's more excitement than anything. About fifteen minutes before. Because I go through a stage about ten minutes before I go on where I'm just thinking about the character and the lines and thinking about my stage movement and all that, but just before that all my emotions just rise up. And as soon as I get on stage it all just disappears. I just become the character, I don't even think about what I'm feeling. I'm thinking about what that character would be feeling. *(So you've psyched yourself up pretty well in that last five minutes. Is there a shift in you when you walk into the light, into the space?)* As soon as I feel like people are watching me and I've got their attention, that's when I feel like I've got everything right. That's when I feel like I've got a complete shift in character. People aren't looking at me as if I'm an actor they're looking at me as if I'm a character. They just buy whatever you do. *(And you can actually feel that shift?)* Yes. *(Do you see it?)* Yes, I think you can actually. When people look at you... like when you see your friends in the audience and they look at you a different way, that's what I like. They're not laughing at you, rather they see that you are somebody else.

(Afterwards, are there any physical reactions?) I just feel excited afterwards. *(Do you ever feel bigger or stronger?)* Not really anything physical, I just feel, when I'm on stage, so confident, so I guess I do feel bigger than normal. I don't feel like me when I'm on stage at all. And people have even said, "You're so different when you're on stage." "It's just scary, the look in your eye when you've taken on a

different character.” (*When you have to give a talk as just Marnie, is that different?*) Very different. (*There’s not a point where you feel you’re performing?*) Not really. I felt like I was an alien. It seemed like nothing I was saying really made any sense. I’d feel quite at home if I got up and did a monologue. Afterwards I felt I should have performed in front of them. Also because they’re looking at me as Marnie and not as someone else. I think it’s harder for them to accept what I’m doing than if I’m being a different character.

9. When you are performing are you aware of yourself?

Do you mean am I aware of what I’m doing? Of my movements? (*What levels of mind are working here? What do you perceive?*) Well I think I’m completely aware of everything I do on the stage and I think that’s important. If I scratch my head I’m not scratching my head because it’s itchy I’m doing it because it’s what the character might do. I try to become completely aware of everything and sometimes I stop and think if I’m not speaking and I shift my movement and how I’m looking at a person. (*Do you listen to actors?*) I think I do, because I’m trying to react to what they’re saying. (*Not just wait for a cue line?*) No way. Sometimes I might have gaps or long pauses... it has to be more natural. (*The mind watching- audience reactions etc.*) Yeah, I think I’m completely aware and I can always sense what the audience is thinking about a situation. If it’s a dramatic theme or something really comical I can always sense what they’re thinking, being aware of their emotions.

(Are there times when working with others where you feel you’re all really focused?)

I don’t think I’ve ever felt that the whole group are really focused, but I have felt a really strong connection to certain characters. Like in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* I felt that Daniel and I had a real connection on stage. Even the looks between us were so real. When we were having the argument it was so intense you could have run a knife through it, it was so intense. That’s what’s so important. It’s funny because even in rehearsal you don’t get that same energy. But as soon as you’ve got that audience there, that’s when it happens. You could never get that same quality at a rehearsal. You have to say everything like it’s the first time you’re saying it and sometimes you can feel over-rehearsed.

10. When you are performing are you totally immersed in what you are doing?

I think I am. I try to be as much as possible. It's funny because I don't usually think of the person at first, I always think of their physical appearance because that's the first thing you see and I always try to take on the characters physical abilities, maybe their strengths and weaknesses. Just stance and movement and sometimes I might go a little bit too far into that and I might get a little bit carried away. (*Does it ooze out into your life in any way?*) Well, I think I've got a different personality for everybody. And I think we all do. I guess that's what I do when I'm on stage I take on these different personalities of self and I evoke these emotions that I sort of bottle up inside If it's a happy or sad emotion. But I'm quite an emotional sort of person. (*That emotion is there, that total involvement.*) I think the processes are most important because you can't get to that point in performance unless you've gone through that preparation.

12. In what ways have you found performance to be addictive?

That's an interesting question because I think it is addictive. I'd say what about it is addictive for me is really being in front of an audience. There's something about it that I love and I crave it all the time. I think it's like some people crave chocolate and junk food, well I crave being in front of an audience. Even if I'm in a class I still love to be in that atmosphere, it's the energy that I love and I crave that energy.

13. How authentic/genuine is your performance work?

I try to be really genuine. But sometimes it's really hard like if you've got lack of information about a character. It can be really difficult, so you have to do a lot of background research on a character. Or if you're doing a piece that you've devised yourself, really think about the background. it's not so much your performance then and there, it's that persons history that's important. that makes it genuine for me. I do a lot of drawings and stuff. I'm a very visual person. And sometimes it's just writing key words down that have the impact on what I'm trying to say. Little pictures or key words help me. It's all in the preparation.

(*In the authentic movement work, when you didn't have time to prepare, did you feel you were fully genuine?*) I think it's also being aware of your surroundings and who you are and what you're trying to convey to an audience. I think we had three people as our audience (in one particular instance), I had my eyes closed but I was very

aware. Every little movement that I was doing.

14. What makes you want to perform again?

(List of possible influences) Oh, I think all of them. But when I perform I don't want people to say, "Oh that was excellent," etc. (*You'd hate it if they said it was lousy.*) Yes, I would, and I'd probably take it to heart but I don't look for self-gratification. (*So, what do you want for them- the audience?*) I want them to walk away and think about what I've done and to still be thinking about it later. Something to be engraved in their souls. (*Really you want to change things and people. Therefore what you chose to perform is important*) I want to have the ability to work in musicals and serious plays. I love getting into different characters. I want to be comical and entertaining and yet to be a really dramatic character.

15. What have you learnt about you through performance?

I think, people think it's so corny when I say this, but it's so true I think that I've actually become a better person. I've become more aware of myself, my abilities, other people around me, being able to work in a group situation, I think it's taught me so much and also to be myself. (*A lot of trust in yourself*). And just being able to be moved by what you are doing, being able to feel instead of just going on the stage and performing you're actually going on the stage and feeling these emotions. (*Available for you in professional theatre? If you had a long run.*)

That's a really tricky question. I think every time I did it.... just be able to hold that same amount of energy and make it fresh each time. I was watching this lady, Nancy.. she was performing and she said, the main thing is in every performance make it the same. the same amount of energy and strength. I saw her perform twice and nothing changed. It was really good because it meant that she held onto that character and did it fantastically. It was so fresh, yet she's done that piece hundreds of times.

16. Is the process journal helpful to you in developing performance?

To be completely honest I felt it's sort of been a burden, 'cause I haven't really used it for reflection. I have this other sort of book, where I jot down my personal feelings. I like to be really personal when I'm reflecting on my work and work of others. And

sometimes I feel I can't be personal enough in the journal. I think reflection is very important. *(Important to do that reflection. Doesn't have to be THE process journal-good that you've made reflection part of your personal process.)*

17. How would you feel if you couldn't perform again?

Anytime? So no audience. Well I suppose... well we've all got a mirror. *(Even without a mirror?)* I think I'd talk myself mad. I'd talk to myself constantly, I'd try to switch in and out of characters, I wouldn't just be Marnie, I'd have to be different people all the time. *(Extreme situation)* I've got my mind that's good enough. *(You can't speak)* Oh, no. *(Could you handle it? I'm really pushing this question with you)* Yeah, I think I could handle it.

(Where would performance be?) Performance would be within. At that's most important.

(What does it mean- performance within? It's a fabulous idea, but explain it further.)

Sometimes when you just close your eyes, and imagining and creating your own world. *(So that imaginative world is utterly essential to you.)* You'd have to cut off my imagination to really stop me. It's really essential. If I've got my imagination and my mind I'll be fine.

18. Where else in your life, apart from drama, do you have a sense of performance?

I love public speaking. Just being a voice in the community for youth. I feel so relaxed when talking to an audience about something quite serious or comical, I love doing that.

(And singing?) Of course. *(Do you see singing as taking on a persona?)* Oh, yes. *(So you're really acting when you're singing?)* Yes. I love to sing. Even when I'm by myself. *(Do you have a different audience response to when you sing than when you act?)* Yes, I do. Definitely. Very hard to explain. I hold a different attention. *(Lovely, why do you think that is?)*

When I'm singing people gaze at you differently to when you are in character. It's very weird, I can't explain what they're thinking or feeling. *(More personal?)* Definitely. *(Not always nice?)* Um, sometimes I feel like when I'm singing I'm singing to myself. Sometimes I feel I get a negative response, maybe it's just the school atmosphere, I don't know. I've always treasured my ability to sing. I'm giving

something of myself. Not something of another character. *(Yes, it's very different.)* I find it harder to get up and sing in front of an audience because sometimes I feel I want them to appreciate me so much more than I think they're going to.

19. When we perform we are transformed. What do you think of that statement?

Well I think you're transformed mentally and physically and you not only transform yourself you transform the people around you. I suppose you really make other people think about what you're doing and why. You sort of, during performance, asking yourself these questions. I guess that comes from transformation mentally. *(You have seen changes in yourself through performance in a school situation?)* Well in the school atmosphere I've always found it very difficult to be able to do a really focused piece. When I did one of my monologues, I felt completely in character. I felt completely transformed. When I looked in that little compact mirror I didn't even recognise myself.

(Are there any other levels that performance is affecting you on?-physical, emotional, imaginative, does it shift you in any other aspect? Trying to put words into your mouth. I'm wanting to know if there's another dimension, something of yourself. you said: "I want to engrave it on their souls". You want to do this for the audience does anything happen to your soul in this work? Do you know that yet?)

Every time I do a performance I am definitely engraving something in my soul and a part of me that I've never seen before. I never want to repeat a part of a character from another play and put it into another character. I want to do something different, new and entirely untouched before. *(How much further can I go?)* The ability of the brain, I guess, seems never ending. *(You're very creative in the visual arts. Do you find that different, the work you're doing there, to the process when you prepare for a performance.)*

When I'm preparing for a performance it's very messy and it's all just sort of splattered down on bits of paper. But when I'm doing art it's so intricate, everything is so geometrical. *(But there is huge complexity in creating and preparing a character for performance.)* But sometimes when I'm painting I sometimes like to get the paints and splash colours everywhere and that's sort of like how I like to perform as well. I love doing the intricate, small work. I love being able to express both sides of myself. *(Both sides?)* I think I have multiple, multiple sides to myself .I

think everybody has multiple personalities. *(Is it possible to express this in the arts?)*

In the arts people can go so far and go places people never really go and to different domains. *(What do you mean?)*

Just sort of like walking down a road that nobody's ever walked down before. Being able to enter that space and that frame of mind that's never been touched. *(And in both your visual arts and theatre arts you then share this.)* Well I hope I never stop learning and educating myself. But also educating others through my work. *(Comment on sharing through the arts- the great generosity of the arts).* It is the sharing. It's realising your abilities and going forward. Never just stopping and thinking: "That's it. I can't get better than that," because we can get better in every area in our lives.

End of the interview.

Appendix 2.5: Transcript of interview with university student

JOE

26.09.2000.

1. Who are you?

I am a secondary drama and anthropology double major. My interests also go into using those avenues as a vehicle for therapy and personal development work. My influences come mainly from my cultural background which is the underlying driving force behind pretty much every area I've dealt my feet into expressing things it's just been an insatiable curiosity in the way people express. So which has meant that I've had to lots of travelling. So I've enjoyed living in different places and experiencing different cultures and currently I'm trying to make sense and amalgamate all of that.

2. What do you do? What is the main focus of your life at the moment?

There are extensions of where I'd like to take that in the future. I'm still really quite drawn to my post-graduate studies and in particular working with the Sufis in Egypt and Tunisia as well. Then I want to travel down the west coast of Africa right down to Ghana and actually work with Ghanese gatekeepers who are another group who use rite and ritual and spiritual performance to transcend into that state that combines both spirit and with physical, emotional and intellectual That whole body experience, the unit, and that's being seen as a divine experience. So I'm interested in, yeah the gatekeepers and from there probably a long, long-term goal is to do some work for the United Nations with UNESCO in educational policy basically. Rebuilding educational systems in countries that have been in civil war and stuff. And then take the drama therapy side of things as well, all those things relating.

3.1 Where were you born?

I was born in Auckland, New Zealand.

3.2 Where have you spent most of your life?

It's been spent all over the place. I grew up for awhile in New Zealand and then for a while in Fiji and then back to New Zealand. Australia then after that and then I

returned to New Zealand and then moved to the US, went to Central and South America then back to New Zealand, back to Australia.

Where did most of the education take place?

Most of the education has been in Queensland, formal education in Queensland.

4. Would you give some background as to why you are involved in drama?

Sure. I love it. I think largely it's been about that process of going through self-exploration. And some people explore it through all different types of media, so for me it was the Arts. And for me there is an element, the actual element of creative power is so sacred in itself that and that was drawn I suppose from watching my elders perform it, And do their dances and chants and so forth and the whole ritual of the day. Life is one big performance. It really captivated me at a young age. So I think since I was about eight I really threw myself into dramatic things.

5. Can you remember when and where you first performed?

Actually, yes. I can remember doing a button(?) dance which is a Fijian men's dance when I was about four or five. It was for, that's all I was allowed to be involved in, because then it was the men going off to do the men's business, but yeah it was just performing the rites, setting the atmosphere I suppose. For the men to go into the rituals.

(Do you remember how you felt?) I was really quite nervous at first. I think I've always had that progression. And I remember at some stage hiding behind my great grandmother. But, yeah, so again I was really quite ..*(Do you remember how others responded to you?)* Oh, with quite a lot of affection. that was one of the most encouraging...sorry that was one of the things that kept me in it I think. Just the sheer support I got from people along the road. It was interesting when I eventually took a break from performance was because someone was quite cynical. *(It was the affectionate response that kept you going?)* Yeah, absolutely, and that had a lot to do with where I was coming from as an individual in that process of introspection.

6. Do you enjoy performing?

I love performing. Sometimes I've felt quite *blase* about performance. That's had more to do with performance I've been forced to do through course work or

something. I remember having to do a terrible musical and I really don't like them so it was ugh. I can't get up there and not perform well, there's just a level of professionalism that was ingrained into me. No matter how much you dislike it you can't not do it. But, yeah there's times when I haven't got the passion behind it and I wondered if that was very transparent.

(What is it that you enjoy that you don't enjoy in musicals?)

Their plasticity. Yeah, but I enjoy the metamorphosis that takes place within the space of performance. I enjoy the ability to lose your identity and then walk back into it at another stage. It's like, I just felt it was a bit like entering a tardus still the same object but completely moved through time and space. And I like that magic, that is in there and it is magic. It is that whole power to change reality and that's really powerful. It's dramatic, you know. That's the stuff that shamans and sorcerers and magicians do. So I like that tradition. It's within me too in its way. That whole emotion.

(Do see any of the other art forms having that role?)

Yeah, especially in dance. Dance for me has been... I am really quite astounded how music has taken a real powerful place in modern culture more so than dance. Because I think, well the power of music has never been denied in a lot of indigenous cultures and historically looking back at our collective response and I think it's always had it's place but never has it had such an influence in the populace. So I'm quite amazed by that but at the same time it does turn my attention away from it. Well, you've got enough attention I suppose. But then again I'm drawn to the more alternative forms of music. I've gone okay well that's popular culture and now we'll see what the rest of the world has to say and I'm still glad to see that can bring in itself a transformation, a vessel of change a medium of change. I love combining art forms as well. I've always thought that the combination of painting and sculpture in dramatic performance, dance and music somehow can all fit together in a wonderful way. And I think this is what I like about Japanese culture. I've always been very drawn. That everything in life should be an art form. That the care, and precision and expression that comes in connection with anything you do even from the most mundane which I think is the some of the forms that come out of there take the sacredness of the moment and really push that into an artistic expression. Philosophically I find that a wonderful space to be in.

6.3 Is there anything you dislike about performance?

I think the only times I have ever disliked performance is when I've felt someone has not engaged. And not given it its own reverence. Sometimes when I've watched performance and thought that was really superficial, without wanting to be superficial. It really lacks energy or the energy is so contained within the space that it doesn't really shift the audience and then it may be a wonderful experience for the performer but not necessarily to be presented in a public space. There are times when I dislike that and it's more about that atmosphere and the whole reason I don't like musicals is that they don't create atmosphere or it's so bland. Energy is so tame. I suppose when I say musical I mean popular.

7. Are you ever afraid of performing?

All the time. All the time. *(It's more than an anxiety?)*

I think it's like a dance of Shiva. That the first part of the dance is to destroy everything that is there. And so that's why I'm here the fact that I'm just about to destroy myself. Self-annihilation and even when I have prepared a piece. How that piece will actually enter the space is a completely different and unknown quantity in a sense to the rehearsal beforehand. And so from that void how that space is filled is unknown and I find that quite terrifying and at the same time that terror provides some of the greatest adrenalin rushes I've ever had. I'm constantly even as a teacher, that for me is largely a performance in a sense I find it equally terrifying because even when prepared I believe you have to go with that flow that's going to happen.

8. When you are about to perform how do you feel physically?

My whole lower abdomen is on fire. I'm quite imbecilic. It's almost an eruption building and building. I get very.. the lower half of my body I lose sensation. It's kind of ..it's and then above on my upper torso is probably quite .. the scapular.. is quite light. It gets this interesting transition and that's before. It's something that has really fascinated me at the time. For many years I've nearly convulsed before going on stage.

(Entering that power.)

9.1 When you are performing are you aware of yourself?

That depends on what I'm performing largely. When I'm doing a lot of purely in-the-moment- improvisation so I suppose authentic movement would be very much one of those times, I very much often feel that I'm not there. Completely vacated. Whereas in some other dramatic performances, scripted pieces for example a lot of my interpretation of the character, or a fair chunk of my interpretation comes from my relationship with that character. And where that relationship may be drawn is another matter altogether. In that relation I still have a sense of myself. It sometimes may be more of an emotive self, sitting within the emotional body letting my emotional body sit within the character. To actually authenticate the emotions of that character. Which I find in realistic theatre - the emotional body gives the physical-ness to the performance. But whereas for an example the critical self may be in there- surrealist pieces for example. Analysing, dissecting, cross-examining, referencing.

9.2 Are there times when you are completely immersed in what you are doing?

Completely. Complete immersion. Absolutely. And I think that for me is my most enjoyable experience.

(Different outcome?)

Absolutely when I come out of that space I myself am changed. I fully recognise that I have gone through a process of change. *(Is it more physical?)* Yeah, physical, emotional, mental, psychological, spiritual it's (tape was dropped) Yes, so, there are times where that complete transformation comes through that immersion. And really I suppose it is a baptismal thing. Not necessarily just referring to Christianity. That complete symbolism of entering the grave of performance. And the stepping out anew. Cheapest therapy I've ever had in my life. *(So always that immersion has been good?)* Yes. Sometimes again terrifying, encountering that terror. For me I'm aware that it takes more than a pleasant sensation to make something good. That part of it is being able to explore and this is my love of drama, to explore all experiences. You have to at least touch and know you can touch sometimes it may be completely impractical but that's okay. Just know. And you have the advantage because it's something a lot of people would never have dreamed of touching. For me to find that is like finding a treasure.

9.3 Are there times when your work is more authentic or genuine?

Absolutely. I think in a lot of my, not always but the majority of my early performance from eight till probably until I was about nineteen I think was still, it was almost like a regurgitation of others work. I sought inspiration through other actors, through other dances it was always through another. So a character had to come through another person that wasn't there to enter them so there was always a filter of ... but that was important in itself. It was an avenue for me as a young artist to enter that space safely. We mentioned before the terror, that energy it itself was a buffer to allow you to get use to that energy. Even now I'm not use to it. I like not being use to it. But the authenticity really came through I remember when I was doing a performance at the university of Auckland which is in New Zealand it was called Tree. It was nothing to do with trees, it was all about death. I entered that space and forming this character who was just a man. It was this person's journey through facing death. In that I couldn't hide behind anyone else. Any other performer. I had to experience my own death. And it was from that that started to lead me into a realisation of spiritual birth which is that in death we have each moment. From that I was able to start feeling performance within myself. And feeling the artist as like a symbiotic creature that had lived its own life to this point within me and had been necessary for my own life to spark. But up until that point it had been largely an unknown quantity. Because I had been seeing the other artists and not that which was within myself. And then over time that merged with the self and now I am the artist. So that now I seek when I perform that it always is authentic. There is that sense of authenticity and I suppose that's why I get so much from improvised performance because it's almost like a channel. There is that element that you are drawing within from somewhere in your external environment and somehow that is coming through some deeper part of yourself.

9.4 Are there times when your performance is mechanical or automatic?

Not anymore. Although if I were to get up and do another Shakespeare performance, over a period of time it would lose, actually it would lose, its mechanical quality. I think I would find and I know when I've worked with people who have studied Shakespeare that my instinct desire is to just get it out there and in space is something from a previous experience so there is something of that mechanistic quality there.

But one of my great desires in performance is to take Shakespeare and move it out of its style and form and actually find something of my own style and performance that is captured within that text. If it's possible.

9.5 Is the quality of performance altered depending on your focus?

I think one of the reasons the intensity is fairly constant in authentic movement because it is so intense. I think largely it is because I do attempt to destroy the ego before going in there. So the outside distractions of the world aren't allowed to enter the space. And really are burnt away before I, whatever it is that is left of me, transforms itself to perform. *Are you able to get a similar focus when you are teaching or is it a different focus?* It is a different focus. Though there have been moments, I remember when I was doing a workshop with year 12's, two of them in particular. One of them on Artaud and the other on Grotowski I actually took the performance space there, because the concepts are quite difficult and really challenging to the performer. So it was a matter of shared experience yeah, I had to go into that process. Sometimes that's harder far more challenging because I think it's about self-confidence and exposing at such a regular rate that maybe people may become awkward or. But for me it's very important, for any type of teacher, to teach through doing. As an artist to teach would be to constantly be in a sense of performance because I think while we are really good at getting people to regurgitate, at some point people will see and adapt from what we do and if you hold the strength of your own passions in your performance then that's probably going to be your greatest teaching. And that's when I find I can make that transition to that intensity of focus. Allowing myself to sit in the honesty of that.

9.6 What makes you want to perform again?

The unknown. Yeah, exploring basically my sense of curiosity and inspiration. I'm a traveller, not just a physical traveller, a traveller of emotions, of psyche, of form, of spirit. So performance is a wonderful vehicle for that. It is a ship, car or bike whatever it is at that time. Sometimes it's a lot rougher than others the transit in that journey. Yeah, I think it is that foundation of the journey.

9.7 Have you found dramatic performance to be addictive?

Highly. Highly addictive at times. Other times I've found it more purging or cathartic or also as a beautiful gift. Sometimes I've just wanted to enter the space of giving and that is as a process of thanks for everything I've been given as well. And not just by artists but very much on a holistic level of so much. I remember just being really thankful for some beautiful friends coming together. People who had really carried me through an amazing journey of South America and my psyche and through several nervous breakdowns and I wanted to do a performance to thank them and treasure the space that friendship can go to. And the fear and the sense of belonging That can be birthed in that and yes, so that was a really treasure-able moment in my life to be able to give that over. And that was an amazing gift. It was received in all different forms. Some were more willing to take it on board and others absorbed it but you know they won't process it for a very long time and that's fine. It's their gift.

10. What have you learnt about you through performance?

Wow! There is so much more. There have been moments in performance that I've gone into such a space with myself that I've become aware of pain I wasn't feeling in some part of my body and then unwrapping that finding it has a greater it has a greater form in itself and so in a sense it has been a whole experience of Vipassana. To be a performance in a sense. I was thinking of that last night and I was explaining to someone my interpretation of authentic movement. I just turned around and went actually it's a very Buddhist thing. It's that element of Vipassana in that all these stories are locked within yourself. And so that then too could be explored through stories. And realising that in every given moment you are in a space of honesty with yourself so what you see yourself going through in one given moment may be completely different to what it is in more neutral space. Sometimes performance can have that neutrality where it is not influenced by other things or the influences are balanced out enough and that clarity and perception and so there it has been a wonderful tool of self reflection. Self discovery through that space of honesty. *(It seems that the journey has been often of the self, are there times where the journey has been much more communal?)*

Absolutely. It's been a great blessing to me and a great teacher, performance, for me. Of compassion. In so much of the experience of the collective. The collective self or the collective individuals. And the wonderful thing about it is being able to transcend

time and space is that it is not just everyone that exists now but in the past and in the future and in different cultures And so it's been interesting to learn things of cultures and suddenly be performing an individual from another culture and having gone out and done the Stanislavskian method acting of going and spending a hell of a lot of time with a family of Irish people to get the Irish character out and be performing and in the midst of performance thinking: 'Oh shit I've gone.' I never saw that they were experiencing this sense of humour, maybe, for example and clicking into it. Or this sense of guilt because sometimes there's that shared guilt that a race can hold. Which was something that I never knew before that performance. As well, there was that interesting experience I had with the American Indians the Ute tribe, which covered southern Utah and Colorado. They're a fairly nomadic tribe in themselves but their performance to me was so powerful that it actually brought me into it and I actually started performing with them without necessarily having the training or the connection with them. It was having been an artist and actually connecting in and learning to go into that whole... ideal and then practicing that ideal. Actually going into the collective unconscious and finding that space of the other. And then to be able to do that in a setting and an alien setting, really proved how true it was. And because you can so much talk about these things and philosophise but until they have a grounding experience they are really are something still quite alien to the self. And so to do that and be drawn into that performance and then to share their culture as, via that performance and that in itself being an initiation without realisation was a movement onto the unconscious because it was a completely involuntary shift. That shift into the unconscious was an amazing exploration of those people. Profound. Profound change. Well it did bring about a life change. It really showed to me to how inappropriate and insensitive cultural appropriation is. Whereas these cultures are so powerful that they can let anyone into their space. They don't need you to take them they are more than strong enough to hold you. And our role is to cherish them.

11. How does reflecting through writing or drawing help you to develop your performance?

I think in those spaces for me when I enter that space when I've really vacated, reflection can be the only time when I see what happened. Because I am that vacated from the space. And I... and in getting reflection from other people of that notion of

reflection. It pushed me to investigate whether I was denying myself my presence in that space. Or whether I was actually vacated. And through exploration and reflection and exploring through performance and then reflection so getting a spiral notion almost happening and I found that was really good for going deeper into the subconscious and unconscious. I really had vacated the space and so reflection was a vital tool to be able to provide an overall sense of safety in a sense. I wasn't just getting up there and crapping on. Actually something happened there that was worthwhile and cherishing. So if anything it strengthened my belief in what I do.

(Egocentricity?)- For me that really defeats the purpose of performance and so yes it does defeat authenticity. Because it somehow cheapens it. And there will always be that nature. You always have that space of being seen and the audience is always allowed to see. That's what performance is about. And so you don't need to hide from that. Not for your own self. You actually gain through giving in life. Into a much more rewarding and developing and so for me it's always been really advantageous from a purely quantitative place to consciously burn the ego, to remove it. To go into that space where.... and yet that's not true. In that space at that time it is in a sense irrelevant because I'm aware that I'm in that space, that there is a whole heap of different levels at work simultaneously and quite profoundly fast. It amazes the speed with which thought and experience travel. There's some wonderful stuff in quantum physics about that. How it actually does travel faster than the speed of light therefore is able to move through time and which within the space of performance brings about a whole realm of interest for me about and if burning the ego is a portal for entry into that awareness where you are aware of the multitude of experiences that are going on in that moment and the interconnectedness that you have with the sphere of existence, however large you like to define it, it's there because it does transcend time and since we're so bound by time that difference is profound. It's just profound. You are in a sense a divinity in that moment. And I can see why in a lot of sacred, ritual theatre why we do see the performer embodying the god or goddess. Because in a sense they are at times so self aware, so aware of the all and the interconnectedness with it that they are a divine being.

12. Do you have any desire to perform again?

Yes. It goes back to the unknown.

How would you feel if you could not perform again?

That would be a large death. And I'm not sure if I could without performance, at this stage, I'd have to relearn how to mourn that loss. Because performance in itself is the vehicle and that would be a really challenging. Challenging. I wouldn't kill myself right now but I do recognise at this moment just how profoundly immense the grief would be. And in itself it could be liberating. Could be liberating. But I don't want to go there.

13. Where else in your life do you have a sense of performance?

Oh, everywhere. One of those reasons why I see the workings of someone like Beckett for example is the really ... and when we combine that with very spiritual philosophies and training I've done is that if you really do adhere to that notion of seeing the special-ness and sacredness and temple-ness of each moment then each moment in itself provides a multitude of learning experiences as a performer. Just to learn different ways that people breathe, different posture or to know that seeing how people carry their weight and where they hold their stances and I love just having that awareness switched on constantly. Which for people when they are aware of it can be self conscious at times but then they have to learn that as an artist I would never defile that space and so for me it's as well to experience that I have not only to be aware on a visual or aural level of what's going on, but also in a sense it is quite a still place and to relive that and so I do that quite frequently I'll takeover the environment around me and actually internalise it. I actually I feel everyone would, but perhaps not.

14. I believe that when people perform dramatically they are transformed. What do you think of this idea?

Absolutely. I see it as a whole phoenix process. That would be the most logical archetypical expression, that transition of the phoenix. But in the same sense as well it allows that expression of awe. So it isn't one form of transition, one form of transformation. There are endless forms to transform into. And some people can hide in that and I know I have at times and that's okay too. Because often for those people who have been through such traumatic experiences that the world is such a dangerous place performance for me and at that time in particular it was the only sort

of safe space and so it is a place where you can cherish what's left of yourself and nurture it and allow it to strengthen and so for me that sense of transformation is also a vessel of holding. And that is something that is another type of performance. And vehicle for performance. That we don't often touch in maybe the educational and theatrical side of performance.

(Why are students attracted to the space- safety, sacred-ness.) I think both, and knowing that it's important to see how therapy can serve in that kind of transformation as well. In all the things, but without going that broadly, in a more specific sense I remember performing for twenty minutes a short performance that I gleaned from other short pieces and put them together. It was about how the unconscious is the safety and the will of the abused and that in doing that in a performance space was stating how performance is the avenue to place you there. For people who need to go into that space. Because the other option is to die. That is such an amazing undervalued choice that people make. They don't realise the other option they had was to self-annihilate and in saying everything that I've said so far the terror that every dramatic performance brings with it, the need to destroy and all those things and so it's not going to be an easy journey even though it does hold them so beautifully in the space. In a sense that ability to see such a beautiful, holy space is largely unconscious in the early part of performance and only after an experience and a longer journey can you see it for the beauty it has because sometimes in its rawness it is really quite confronting and you really do live the battle you are going through and you can't avoid it. But honesty is so powerful that sometimes I've known that maybe it was better to lose it all and just leave this life. Yeah there is that sense of transformation as well.

(The performance space is a sacred space.)

Absolutely. I think some people see it as a cash account and you've got to be aware of that. Otherwise your own appreciation of the sacredness of it could be affronted. It could be damaged and that would be a terrible thing to let other people's extension of experience damage your own.

(Is it possible in this world, as it is now, to have sacred theatre?)

I think it is and I think it is at this point in particular I think it is as a counterculture. And I think it operates best as a counterculture. If you're going to be an artist that performs the sacred you will be prepared to work in the gutter. But then that may not

always be the case, you may be able to support yourself. Whatever it is that impacts on your life it's carrying that sacredness with you and taking it into the world.

...Part of that sacredness is never forcing anyone to accept where you're at but valuing the fact. I demand to be valued. I demand the space I'm in be valued and respected.

Otherwise I have no self worth. And then I can't.... with authenticity.

(Do you demand that through your own performance?)

Yeah. Extending that focus out. I'm more or less aware of it, of how I'm entering the sacred space. Or using the sacred space. Journeying into that wonderful magic and what you do with it.

(Use of the word magic. The magic, the sacred, the shamanistic aspects of drama).

Incredibly relevant and there is a sense within youth culture... it's really carried on-it's been there all along, people wanting to commune, to return, reconnect with that, the things that were demanded by and sought after in the sense of the child. And so this sacred space is facilitating the child. It is the expression of their collective consciousness and unconsciousness and as well it is their resolution. It is their connection and expression of understanding and knowledge and it is their vehicle for living. And yet part of it demands that they all be within and respect and be involved in it.

I think at a level it retains its sacredness. No matter how much it has been butchered by commercialism.

Ritual and magic and ritual as a form of magic, magic meaning to transform. So, then ritual provides the mnemonics and the semantics and the schemas to trade, refine, focus and that brings to the sacred. So transverse the veil between the mundane and the sacred

is what ritual means and so... whether or not the movements have any special power in themselves is on an overall not... it's what's invested and so in sport and the Olympics is an example of this, the audience brings this wealth of investment on a cross cultural level. And if that in itself is the only thing then it serves beautifully and authentically then to me that is enough. It's to bring cultures together like that. Resolve issues and I think that's what the original Olympics was about was bringing them together under the banner of Zeus. He was our divine father and we can't squabble in front of him.

As well I think I like what the Olympics does to those who often feel left out. You can still be a street kid, a criminal, a refugee and have a sense of belonging to that person who's running. Because they're there for you to do that.

15. Are there any comments you'd like to make about dramatic performance?

It was interesting in so much for me actually for me, I'm not a drawer. I've never drawn before on a regular basis. And so it's ability to transform my own art was astounding. It was a profound experience for me. Poetry has been with me for a long time but drawing was always something I always aspired to do and I remember touching it in Year Eight, and never again. And then I started, the first one that I drew last week. That one there and I just came out of it and thought Oh my god! Where did that come from? And again it was really carrying that moment because I hadn't dropped out of that sense of not being in myself. Allowing the artist to work through the collective unconscious. So there are sensations there of touching into others and experiencing their expressive forms as well. Not there. Just not there. And I, no matter how much I sit within my spiritual body it blows me away to be able to experience that.

End of interview.

Appendix 2.6: Transcript of interview with professional actor

INTERVIEW: PROFESSIONAL ACTOR.

RACHEL

EDINBURGH: 03.11.2000.

1. Who are you?

I am Rachel. I am an actor. I live in Edinburgh. I'm forty-eight. I was a community worker for twenty years, but have changed tack recently. I did many years of community theatre, but I became a professional actor about four years ago. I did a Masters in Acting at the RSAMD in Glasgow and I'm just now at the point of acting full-time.

2. Where were you born?

In Oslo.

(You have lived in many places.)

Yeah, I lived in Singapore, Pakistan- Lahore, The Sudan, back to England, the Borders of Scotland at a free school called Kilmanity near Castle Douglas and Islamabad, Singapore again and Nairobi. I've travelled a lot as an adult. I've been in Central America, North America, Africa again, Egypt, Europe many times, particularly Greece.

I've got a wanderlust.

3. Where did you spend your adolescence?

At fourteen I was sent to Kilmanity which was a free school, which really felt like coming home. It gave me a chance to really expand and explore. And be free. It was in the countryside and that's where I really got into acting and writing. I want to go back a couple of years before that because at twelve I was in quite a strict boarding school and I was finding myself very popular with the other girls but I was in quite a lot of trouble. So the contrast when I went to this other school where they treated you as an adult, an individual and I just sort of transformed and channelled myself into acting, writing and a much more wholesome kind of way of being. And that's where the seeds come for my love of theatre. We did a production of *Look Back In Anger* and I played Alison and ironically, I think that was probably the best performance

I've ever given. Because I was still, a natural stillness and such a feeling of safety in that place. I would still like to get back to the quality of performance I gave at the age of fifteen. The reaction I got, the reviews I got were marvellous. And my boyfriend was playing Jimmy Porter so there was an awful lot of sub-text. I remember that performance - the economy of movement and stillness that I would still like to get back to. It's not an intellectual thing, it's instinctual. I think I'm getting close to that with telly. Starting to get close to it again. One of our tutors said 'Head, heart and gut connect and there's no effort.' You're not acting you're just being two other people. Being for other people and to other people. You are communicating being rather than acting. Your own self is such a strong channel that the other human being comes through in way almost like being lit up, you know, by your radiance. You let that other human being shine and the beam goes out to other people's truth in the audience. A beautiful, circular energy.

(How do you become the person?)

Being like a glass. You are a clear glass and the liquid is poured into you. The liquid of Lily or Hildegard or Shirley Valentine. If the glass is clear and clean then the clear liquid comes in and it's a good healthy drink. I felt like I'm the glass and I pour the other character into me. It's like when writers say they're suddenly not writing, something's writing for them because they've become a pure channel and I think when you're really present on stage that's what happens you're a pure channel and the writer and the person you're acting just comes through you. A wonderful performance I saw was Nora in *The Doll's House* that woman was a flame of light. You couldn't take your eyes off her. She was Nora. She wasn't acting Nora, she was Nora. And everybody in that theatre had the most magical experience to watch her. And that's what I would like to achieve and I suspect I got near to that with Alison in *Look Back In Anger* when I was fifteen.

4. Would you recall your first memory of performing?

(Perhaps the first vivid recollection or the one that has been a family myth/story?)

Yes it does. Well I lived in Zimbabwe when I was twelve. Ten, eleven, twelve. And I loved that country. I completely fell in love with Zimbabwe. And I felt really at home there. Welcome. And a family where I used to go and stay had horses and they wanted to adopt me and I was really into horses. And there was a song current in

Haire at that time, it was then Salisbury, and it went (sings) And I used to perform that for the family and they used to love it and I got a great deal of approval and appreciation. And they used to laugh, so I learnt, I remember, you know the feeling of power and pleasure of entertaining people by singing that song. And doing the accent and making fun. And then again at fourteen when I was at Kilmanity, me and one of the other girls used to imitate everybody, particularly the staff. And of course get a lot of feedback and approval and entertain people. So I guess that one of the earliest memories.

(Physical or emotional impact?)

As I say a feeling of power, a feeling of pleasure, of being wanted and... it's quite painful for me...you know in my childhood I did feel I had to prove myself. Just prove myself. So it's a kind of painful and pleasurable memory. I can see myself in the dining room of our house in Haire and making everybody laugh, particularly my dad. And my brother and they thought it was just really funny. And then the absolute praise that I got for doing Alison in *Look Back In Anger* and loving it so much. The seeds were there.

5. Would you outline the journey to the point where you decided that acting was going to be your focus?

The seeds were certainly sown when I was a teenager. And I remember telling family friends when I was about seventeen that I was going to be an actor. And it was seen as being quite funny that I wanted to be an actor. But I did follow that and at eighteen. My first professional job in a musical. I told you about that: 'Don't try to sing, just shout' and I did shout and I got the part. And I got a main part in a musical called *Anne of Green Gables* and we were living in Nairobi at the time and they were an ex-pat professional company. So I acted there... but I also got put off... because the older members of the company said I was one of the best people in it and I got a lot of encouragement on that level. People were nice to me and I enjoyed it, but I was aware of a lot of back-biting and two-facedness and I didn't enjoy the vibes between the company. So I took a conscious decision not to pursue acting, not to apply to drama college and I went to university because I got this impetus to learn, to have knowledge, to educate myself. So I went and got A-levels but I did a wee bit of drama at college but it was like I was almost afraid to go to it. Maybe I liked it too

much or maybe I was generally scared of the... I don't know. But it went on the backburner for quite awhile and then in my early thirties I started writing to women's theatre groups. You know just thinking maybe I could form a company and maybe I could act. It was like it was always there, but it sometimes went into the background a wee bit. So in my thirties my partner at the time and I formed a company called Witch. It was called Witch Theatre Company and the motivation for that was to tell the stories of the witches. And another friend Bridget joined us and we ate fruit together for about six months(?) Thinking we ought to do something, when are we going to do something? Thinking about it and all that sort of stuff and then a woman called Jack Fenton joined us and she was experienced as a writer and a director so then we gelled and we started to produce work Partially devised, partially scripted and improvised. And that was really exciting. And that was in my thirties. I was still working as a community worker. We did Witch the first one was called *To Fetch Her Haime*. And then we did one called *Out Of Boundaries* then we did, well we did six shows basically. So there was a much stronger impetus then to start moving towards full-time acting. And then I got a part with the Theatre Workshop in a play called *The Well of Loneliness*. I remember being in a chip shop and hearing that they were doing *The Well of Loneliness* and I got this incredible surge: 'I'm going to do that.' And it has to be done properly and I have to be part of it. Just this absolute, consummate desire. To be really fully involved in that. So I went along and I remember in the meeting when we were talking about how it was going to be done, I said: This is a really important piece and it has to be done really.... But I must have conveyed how much it mattered to me, how passionately I felt about the project and that it should be done right. But I did it in a bodhisattva kind of way, it wasn't .. I didn't care what I played I just wanted it done well, but dear me I was given the lead, which was Stephen Gordon, and I'm a lesbian so a lesbian playing a lesbian about lesbian oppression, a story of such courage. It was banned as being obscene. And there was a lesbian directing it. So that was an extraordinary kind of epiphany. But I just thought: 'Right, right.' And of course she said to me: 'Rachel, have you thought of becoming a professional actor?' I said, 'Yes of course.' She said, 'Well go to RSAMD and get yourself trained.' And that was in 1989 and then I went travelling for a couple of years and so it just stopped. But I encountered the 5 Rhythms and I was always thinking about it and my relationship was all consuming in many ways,

although Jackie had acted. But when I came back, by going away and travelling for a year and a half I managed to let go of some of the need to be really useful by being a community worker and allowing the artist to find expression. So when I came back to Edinburgh I signed on and I got lots of Community Theatre parts and I started going to community theatre auditions and get parts. I got bigger and bigger parts and then I did a one-woman show and that gave me the confidence to go to college. And since then although I've done a wee bit of community work I've been completely focused on performing and acting and I'm training myself and getting better and I'm getting back to where I was at fifteen.

It's something about karmic debts. I'm glad I did that work on homelessness and sexual abuse because I feel now I can truly let my hair down and be free because I've done something that's actually concretely useful in an obvious way. Who knows what debts I had to pay by doing those things and I've done it. And the fact that I've done all those sort of things brings something to my face and my eyes now. If I'd gone into acting at eighteen I might not be all that I am.

6. How have the techniques learnt in your training helped you to become fully present in your work?

Because it was a one year post-grad training the kind of assumed you could act and what they did was show you the ropes, of analysing your own performance, the kind of television techniques, radio techniques, some ensemble work, just getting in a nd doing a play. I don't actually think college particularly enhanced that ability to be present, although the way you act, the way you learn how to be can do that. But I think what actually helped me do that was meditation. My own sort of journey, but definitely about all I've learnt to sit still for hours at a time and what that's given me about being still onstage and present on stage. And being focused generally. And some of the training I've done with The Scottish Actors Studio has really assisted my attention to being present in the moment on the stage. I think keeping a journal at college has really helped in terms of watching. I certainly had a big urge towards that anyway in the work I've done. And reading Uta Hagen's *Respect For Acting* looking at the psychological realities of the character. And then meditation, body work, the 5 Rhythms, tai chi, belly dancing, creative movement, all these bits and pieces I've done over the years have certainly enhanced that ability. But I was interested in how

you bring yourself back to the present, how you stay in the present. I don't think it had much to do with the one year post-grad, it had more to do with an on-going journey, exploration. The work I did with a French director recently that was very much to do with here and now. Having to be naked. He was making me aware all the time of what was happening inside. What was going on, he made me realise that I can sometimes be too private. You're in the present moment, but you're with others who are in their present moment and you've got to communicate all that to these people watching. If you're too private how can you be truthful and communicate that to the public, to the other actors. I learnt a lot about it doing a one-woman show because that was very much about living there. That was easier because Shirley's talking to the audience. The audience was my best friend. Was my sister. When you're acting with somebody then that's a different thing. There's that kind of amazing dynamic between you and the other actors and the audience. Aware of you being alive in the present moment.

7. Is performance a transformative process?

(Higher self?)

I think it can change people on all levels and I assume that especially through community theatre performance projects, people gaining confidence and making changes. I left a relationship as a result of a powerful performance project. Many people did from that particular one. I think it can be immensely transformative. It can help you to grow and change and look at your own patterns- if you are willing to. You can probably go through life acting without altering anything and maybe hanging on to habits. But I think if you're trying to get the truth of yourself, or the truth of the performance then you have to keep changing and you have to keep peeling away your habits and the things you cling to, which is quite hard. I mean Hamish(?) he was someone who did help us very much with that attention to present moment. We studied a radio unit at college in terms of your voice. Why does your voice have certain grooves that it goes along and how do you change your familiar habits and patterns in your voice? And he wrote in one of his critiques of my work that I was very comfortable with my own voice and that I could benefit from stretching and doing a bit of work on it. And he was absolutely right. But of course I've been lazy and haven't done a lot about that, but it's kind of... if you did, if you

did keep doing that you'd keep re-moulding yourself, re-working yourself, changing and changing and changing and growing up and growing. Yeah, the skies the limit I think. But you see some of the great actors, they're almost like bodhisattvas- John Geulguid, Edith Evans some of these people that have done so much work on themselves and induced... you know the...even someone like Susan Sarandon in *Dead Man Walking*- to go to the kind of depth and delve around. It's therapeutic process I think if you're being truthful. Even when I played Mrs Joe in *Great Expectations* I saw myself there kind of holding back, because it's so painful to play an abusive mother figure. So instead of... I was... I could have been braver and gone through that and come out the other side, but I didn't, but if I had have done it would have been a better performance and beneficial to me. So you can see when you want to step back and when you really allow yourself... I mean with Shirley I was much braver and I went right to the nth degree and just did a much better performance. So yes I think you have a potential for an immense alchemy of change, if you really allow yourself to go to the forge of... of looking at your own pain.

(Is there any fear of losing yourself?)

No, I don't think there is. When I first started doing much more acting, I remember having a lovely sense of being so much more solidly me. Because I'd been doing so many other characters that I had a much clearer sense of my own self and my own boundaries, it was kind of ironic I remember having a feeling that "I belong more to myself because I'm allowing myself to be all these other people." That's why I'd like to play Medea or some of these great characters where you'd have to go through so much pain to produce something really truthful. Men get to play King Lear or Hamlet. Really go into the depth and then I think, of course it's utterly transformative. It can be. I saw Tom Courtenay playing Hamlet when I was about nineteen and I felt like the top of my head had been cut off and just to watch that depth of connection with such an outstandingly deep character... And to play Hamlet, you know, extraordinarily transformative and helpful to your own growth. (A little bit of chat about being fully human...) Especially when you can play your shadow. I played this wicked woman, it was absolutely fantastic to just give rein to that side of yourself and just allow it. In fact it's wanted and approved of, it's a kind of sexy, wicked, evil and just so much fun and yet it's safe. You get to explore all the hidden aspects in a structured way. It's cathartic.

8. Would you describe a performance in which you were transformed?

When I did Stephen Gordon in *The Well of Loneliness*, the last thing I had to say was: "God give us the right to our existence". And I remember yelling it from the depths of my being. And the director said the hairs stood up on the back of her hand. It was so wonderful to be allowed to actually say that. That line. And to play that part. Because she was a bodhisattva, she sacrificed her own happiness for her own partner. I mean that was an incredible privilege to play Susan Gordon. And again I suppose I actually did achieve something really good with that. I got really good reviews again. Because I'd been playing someone so close to myself in terms of being a lesbian. And the way she was, actually, I found very easy to be truthful and honest and real. And I think that was a really helpful experience and I think that was a real turning point in my life, playing her. There were sixty women. It was a big show and loads of women got a chance to play men and sort of look at their lesbian side and women were making the stage, so it was a pure kind of project and a beautiful director and very good energy and wonderful experience. I think that playing Stephen Gordon was one of the most amazing experiences of my life.

And then Hildegard, as well, of course, getting a chance to play a visionary and a nun. And there was an extraordinary performance of that one night when Lois was in the audience, who's very spiritual and it felt like it was an audience of angels. Because of course it was about spirit and Rachel was absolutely beautiful in that play- everybody was- yeah that was really remarkable as well. Just playing her, being... and the music in that.... up there on stage at times it felt really otherworldly. And there was another time where I suddenly became six-foot-six as Lady Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet*. (They're all quite different...)

It's amazing how things reflect where you are, even the role as Lily in *High Roads*, her being, like thinking a lot about other people, I mean that's where I am in my own life trying to be less selfish and things like that. (*Reflection of your own personal growth...*)

9. Has your acting ever had a level of transcendence?

Yes, there have definitely been moments. I think one of the most beautiful moments is before you go on stage with the rest of the team. Not that it's really transcendent, but there is a feeling of a very, very deep trust and connection with the other

performers. I know before going on to do *Women in Prison* (?) we did 'big, bold and beautiful' and holding hands and you know that beautiful kind of merging with other human beings.

A beautiful kind of sangha, almost, feeling, it happened in *Mothers and Daughters*, as well, you know it's on stage... actually, *Women in Prison* again... I'd been in prison and I really wanted to tell that story of women in prison and there was a speech about a young woman leading a demonstration and she was shot dead and then another young woman took her place and she was shot dead and another woman took her place... and I had to say this speech. That felt really extraordinary. I don't know about transcendent, but certainly speaking for those young women and it was so hard not to cry during the speech and I wanted people to feel defiant and hopeful and I remember Bronagh in that being incredible. I think as I've already said, moments in *Shirley*, moments as Stephen Gordon, moments with Hildegard... It's like you and the audience... you and the audience suddenly take off together. You and the audience suddenly fly. And other people in the cast. It's like a whoosh! It's like transcendence. You're all there and then suddenly you're all going somewhere else. I don't know maybe I can only speak for myself. It feels like that and the feedback you get is that it was magical, it was brilliant. Something's happened and you all know it. It might be just a moment and then it might go back to being not quite as wonderful. In *Shirley*, there was a time when I forgot my lines because I had been flying so high so then I scrambled. Because in the first hour I'd taken flight and everybody had come with me, so we were all flying around in some other dimension and I went off stage for a few minutes to change and I made the fatal mistake of thinking: 'That was amazing. Wasn't I fucking good. Was I flying!' And of course I came back on and my brain scrambled because I'd overcome myself and so I crashed. So we transcended and then I had broken the bubble by giving myself praise and coming out of character. If I'd just stayed there I could have done the whole two and a half hours at that pitch. But that was really interesting to see. And what my friends watching it said, was 'Shirley Valentine's sitting there, amazing it's Shirley Valentine' and then I went out and Rachel was sitting there. While I was thinking 'What's the line, what's the fucking line?' And I was going to my prompt and eventually I had to say in Liverpool: 'Give us a line, sweetheart'. Because she'd panicked too, my prompt and she'd gone off walkabout. And my director's sitting in

the audience: 'Chips and eggs' and I suddenly said 'Chips and eggs', and Olivia said Shirley Valentine came back. And then she was back. And then I did the rest of the piece. Not quite as well, but at least I recovered myself. Because my mum and dad were in the audience and my therapist. And I kind of freaked myself out. That was definitely transcendence but it was a crash landing. If only I could have done the whole thing at that pitch. And the next night I was much more controlled and I went back to old habits and I consciously didn't fly. I dared not because what if I fucking dry again and my director's going to be... and I'd be terrified, so I just consciously gave a very disciplined, controlled, ordinary performance.

It was an adequate performance. That was definitely present moment for about an hour. It was a most glorious feeling I'd love to be able to get there again but obviously what you have to do is... and it's very scary when you freeze. And I did that once in a play by... the first time I scrambled was I had a part in a play about Mary Queen of Scots and I was the servant Kennedy and I was silent and then I'd have these great big monologues. And this woman had lost her son in a joyriding accident and half way through this big long monologue, my brain just stopped completely. I had no idea what to say next. I knew I was on stage but I didn't know, and fortunately she was distressed so I could cover it up by thinking Oh god I don't know what's happening. But it was the most horrific feeling. And the spotlight on me, nobody else on stage and I realise what they mean by dying on stage... And the greatest pleasure I had was to get off the stage. And then I had to go and be this silent Kennedy again and come on and do another two page monologue, but thank god, something came back and I actually did it. It was a horrible feeling. I don't know whether it's transcendence but it's to do with what happens when you go the opposite almost and your brain freezes and you brain scrambles like a computer. I felt terrible. I felt so terrible for the director and the writer and the other performers but the second time it happened in *Shirley* I didn't feel so terrible. I just thought, 'Well you pick up again'. And that's the thing about live theatre it can happen and then you're forgiven and you have to forgive yourself. And you carry on. But heaven help me. It really shook me because I'd never had it before. An overload, so...

(End of side one of tape.)

10. Have you been transformed/changed when watching others perform?

The first thing that springs to mind is that performance of Nora in *The Doll's House*

that I saw on the Fringe. Certainly when I was sitting there I felt transported. I don't know about transformed, just moved, deeply moved, effected, changed, dwelling on it afterwards. And as an actor, feeling 'how did she do that?' I don't know if transformation would come from that yearning, wishing to improve myself as a performer.

And a wonderful performance I saw once from a South African company doing a Brecht, *The Good Woman of Setzuan*. And they placed it in Soweto. And that was very healing, in a way because of having lived in Zimbabwe and Hare when it was Salisbury and it was under an apartheid system, and somehow, watching that felt very healing.

As I said before, *Hamlet*, when I was nineteen. I was completely blown away by that. Not being able to speak for ages afterwards. The director came up to speak to me because he was a friend of my dad, and I couldn't even speak to him. I just said, 'Sorry I can't speak.' I just wanted to runaway and go and digest it and think on it. I think Tom Courtenay's one of this century. To see him do *Moscow Stations*, for an hour afterwards I felt completely affected by that. So, yeah, I think watching other people can be cathartic, I mean that's why I love theatre, I'm in theatre because it affects every fibre of your being. Obviously other people might get that from walking the hills or playing an instrument. But I get that from theatre. I get that from performance. Or from watching. Especially when I see really good ensemble work. Oh yes, the *Medea* I saw done by Japanese men. In Japanese, masked men. That actually felt like I was healing a childhood wound. Watching that man play *Medea* about to kill her children, then the gods take pity on her. It helped me forgive my mother for the murderous rage that I felt she felt towards me. That I had to do a lot of therapy about. So my fascination for *Medea*. Seeing those men perform, seeing that man playing her, yes, that was transforming. And seeing a play at the Traverse about child abuse, that was incredible.

11. Is there a transformative stage in the rehearsal process?

Yes. Definitely and actually I think sometimes... I think that's when the nitty-gritty is done. And it's so elusive. Sometimes you do wonderful work and there are wonderful moments and you watch your colleagues achieve just amazing things in rehearsal and then you yourself and they, somehow something withers a wee bit

under the lights and under the audience. And that's something we talked about a lot at college. How to keep that magic, that freshness, that discovery that you get in rehearsal alive on the stage. And sometimes because you've got the audience obviously something else happens. Say you do an Ibsen and you have the ghosts and Mrs Aveling. You know at rehearsal we went to some exciting places and we were very bold and brave and we kept some of that, but we definitely lost some of that in performance. It was an example for me of not quite hitting it in front of people the way we had in rehearsal. I think with big ensemble work it is sometimes the same you get something magical that happens between people. Actually yesterday, or a couple of days ago when we were doing that bird stuff, we hit it and then we went off. It's like having a conversation, sometimes you're both really listening and you're both really there. So, rehearsal... it feeds the performance and as much improvisation and risk taking as possible in the rehearsal because it will feed what comes out on stage, it will enhance it. When Corinne did *Saviours* we did loads of improvisation and I don't know if we did manage to translate it onto the stage.

What you do before you go on is very important. You warm-up inside yourself and with the other performers. It's not usually done that much, but I find it important (Uta Hagen... what has my character been doing before coming onto the stage?)

13. Can acting be a spiritual endeavour?

You're asking somebody who...for me everything is a spiritual endeavour. For me theatre is definitely a spiritual endeavour. Everything to do with acting is a spiritual endeavour because it's to do with connection. Connection with yourself, connection with others, connection with the universal life force and that channelling of another person's ideas- the writer, to the people who have paid to see it, the audience. Who've come to see live theatre, to see... come to have something acted out for them. For some kind of catharsis, some kind of escape, some kind of comfort. It's about communication and it's about spirit definitely.

I guess the spiritual aspect of a lot of what I do is listening. And enabling and empowering and certainly teaching well-being and relaxation and meditation. There's something about the magic of theatre, the magic of all suspending belief together, of all imagining together. The writer's imagination, your imagination, the audience's imagination which is so potentially- exciting, transformative, phoenix-

like, it has such enormous potential...

Theatres are such rich places. You go to an empty theatre and its just (howling sound) and that's why they're haunted, that's why they're so exciting. Just sit in a darkened theatre it's full of this energy, this expectation. This depth.

14. How does your inner work manifest in performance?

I think it's always been there in me. Because when I started acting I remember how much I started to connect with nature. At Kilmanity I think it was one of the reasons I did such a still performance as Alison in *Look Back In Anger* because I was spending a lot of time walking by myself. I chose to go for a walk every day by myself. To the river, to the hills and that sweetness and stillness I managed unconsciously, I think, to bring into that character. So I think I've always had a kind of connection, I've always felt that connection but obviously in the last seven years or so, consciously working on my own patterns and my own tendencies and my own negativities. I have enhanced my work, I think. I think I'm more consciously conscious of spirit in everything. I've brought that, hopefully, to my work with my colleagues and to work with character

I've been playing. But I think it's almost something that most actors do and why people love acting and why nearly all actors want to play Shakespeare and like to do things that really matter and have depth. Kenneth Brannagh is an atheist and he says the nearest thing he gets to church is playing Shakespeare. So certainly the dharma has helped and I hope that my performance is better as a result of it. It's a process of learning to discipline my mind, to breathe deeply, to take time, to take space, to be still.

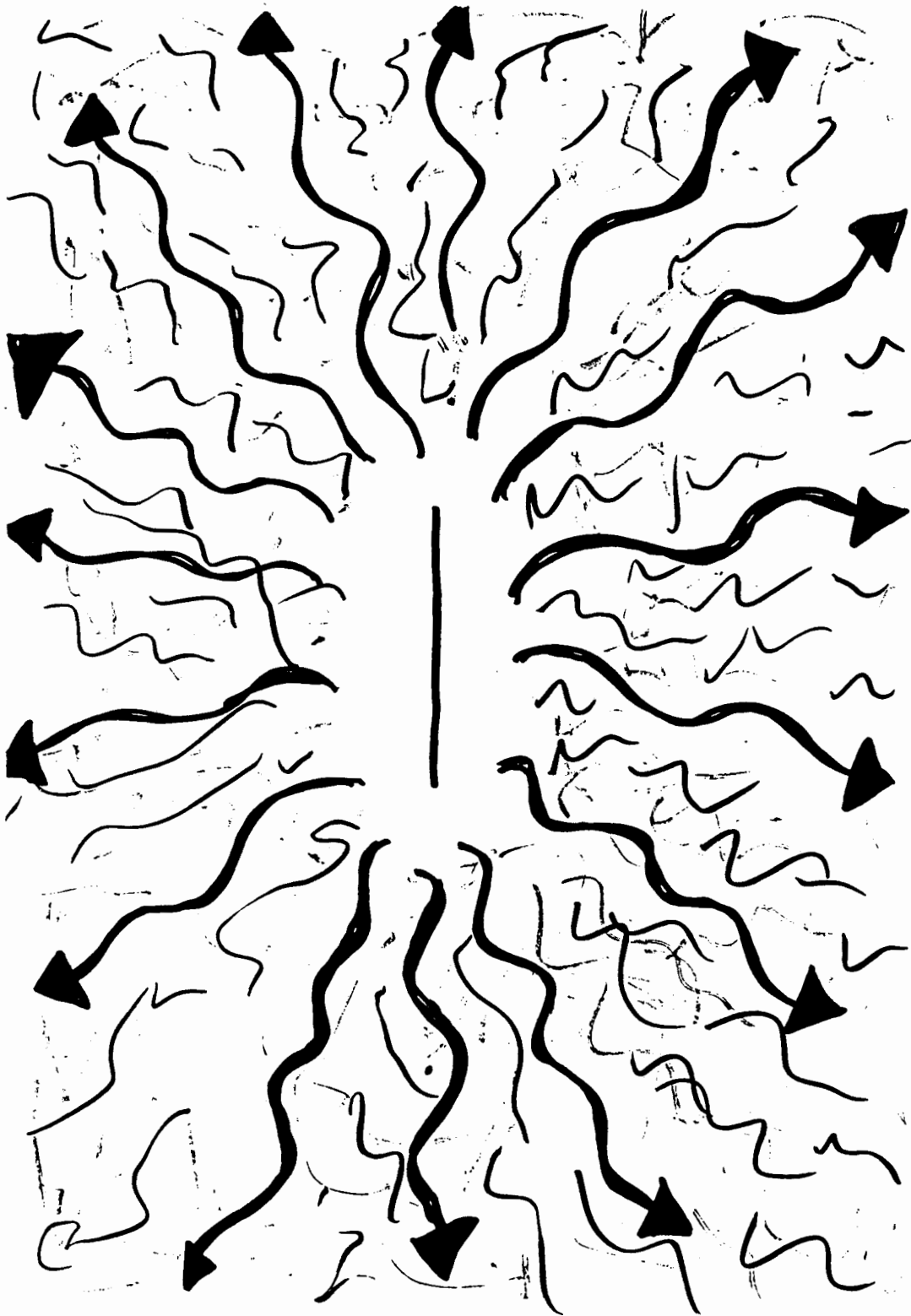
End of interview.

APPENDIX 3: JOURNAL DRAWING

Preamble:

Drawings created after the Perform/ Transform workshops were significant for some participants. Hannah, the visual artist, responded mainly with illustration and some of the sketches are included in the appendix (3.1, 3.2 and 3.3). Joe discovered his delight in drawing during the workshop series and it is relevant to include these to inform his journal entries (3.4 - 3.13).

**JOURNAL DRAWINGS:
HANNAH 3.1-3.3**



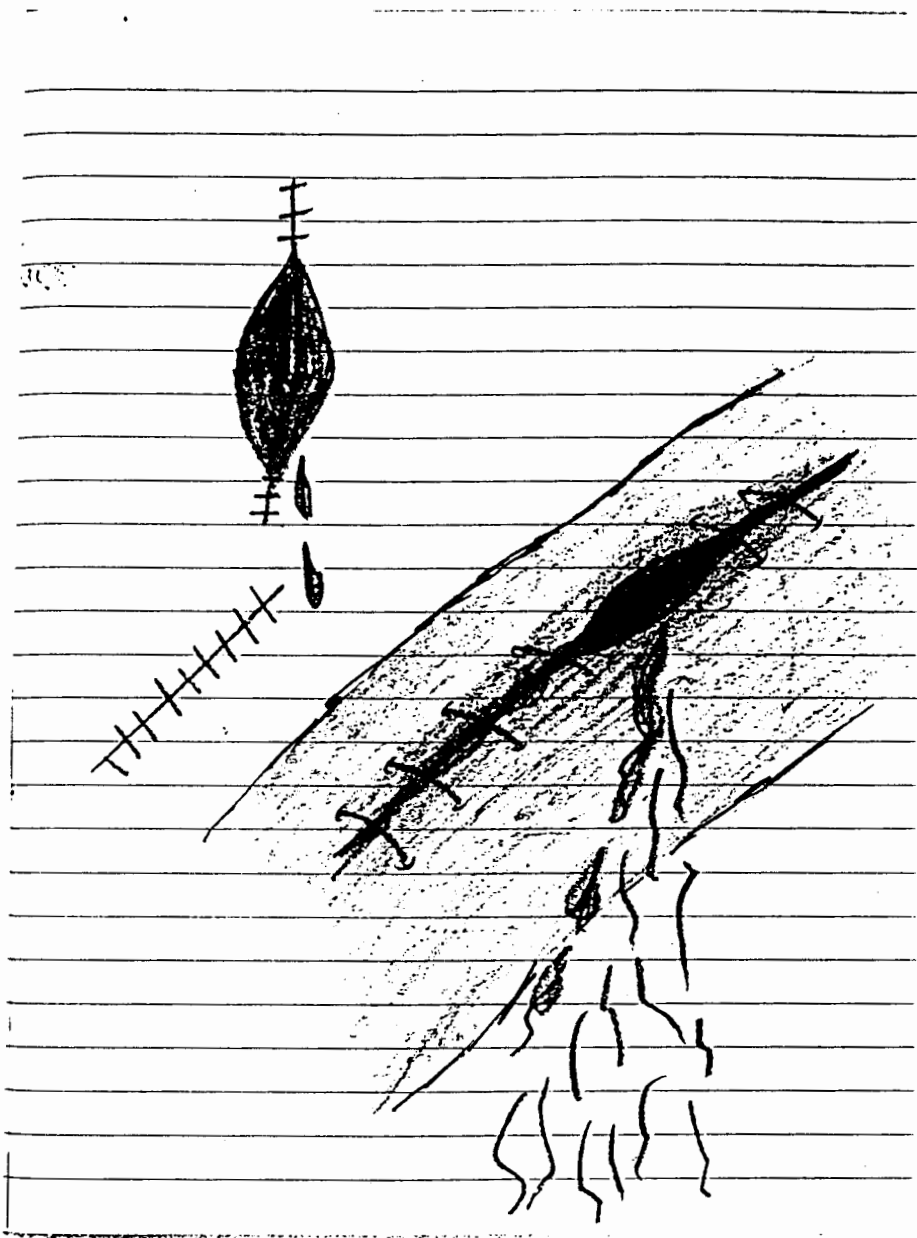
3.1 A3 size drawing on coloured paper completed after first Perform/Transformworkshop, 22.08.2000.

What are humans without words?

What am I without words?



3.2 What are humans...?



3.3 Last drawing in response to Perform/ Transform workshop.

JOURNAL DRAWINGS

JOE 3.4 - 3.13

22.08.2000



3.4 Perform/Transform workshop response, 22.08.2000.

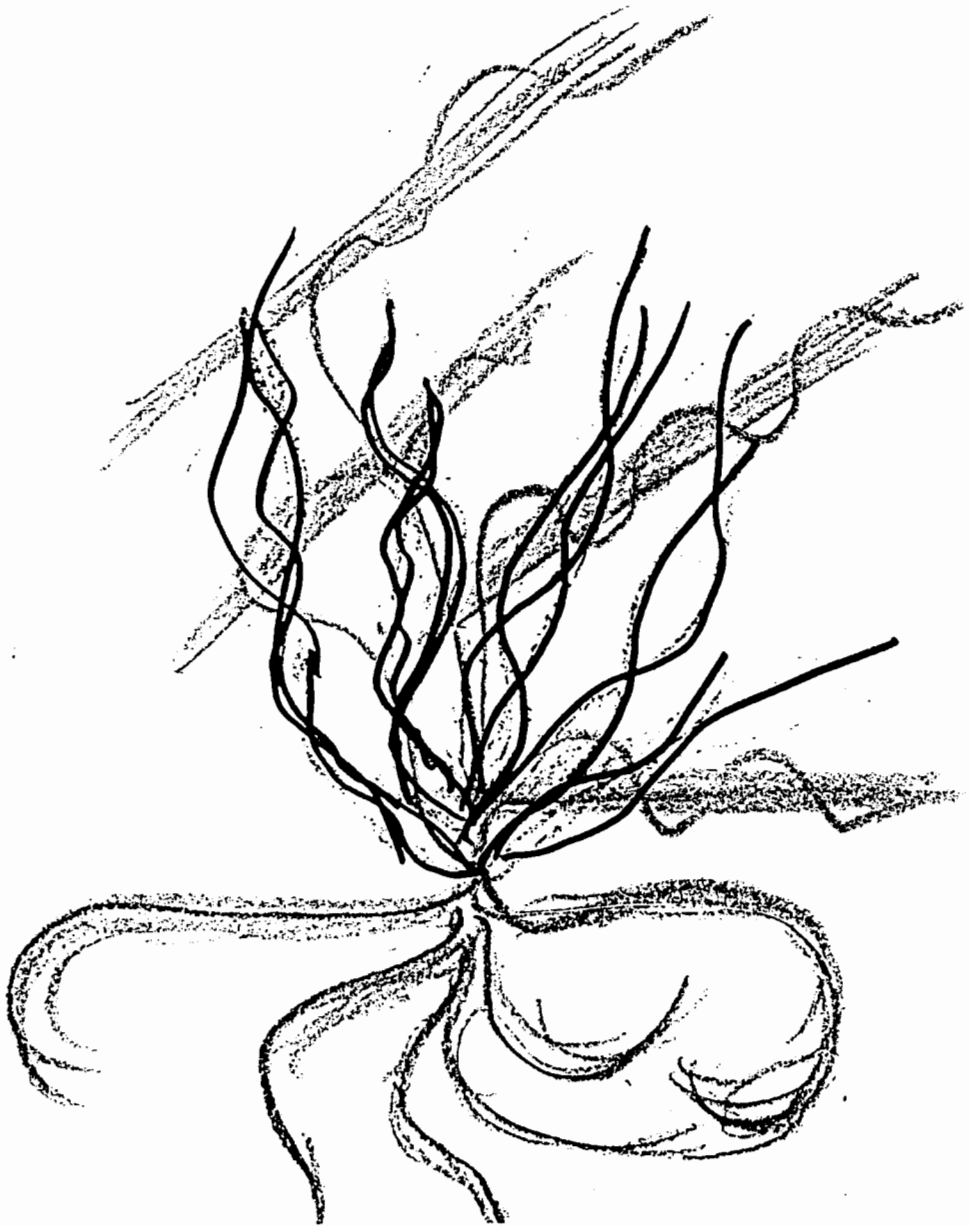
29.08.2000.



3.5 Perform/Transform workshop response, 29.08.2000.

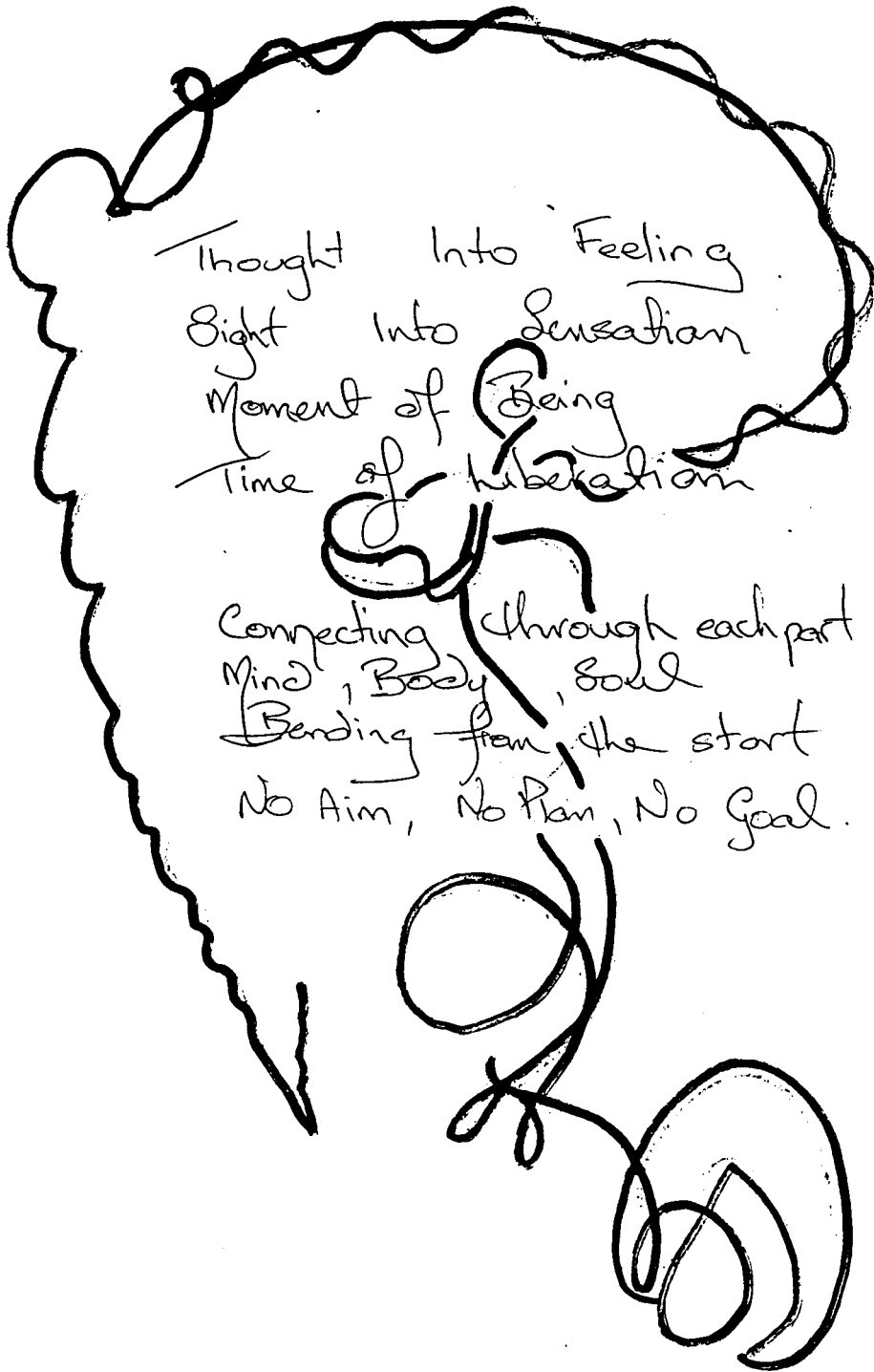
BREAKING INTO THE MOMENT.

4.9.00



3.6 Perform/ Transform journal response, 01.09.2000.

4.9.00



3.7 Drawing and poem, 01.09.2000.

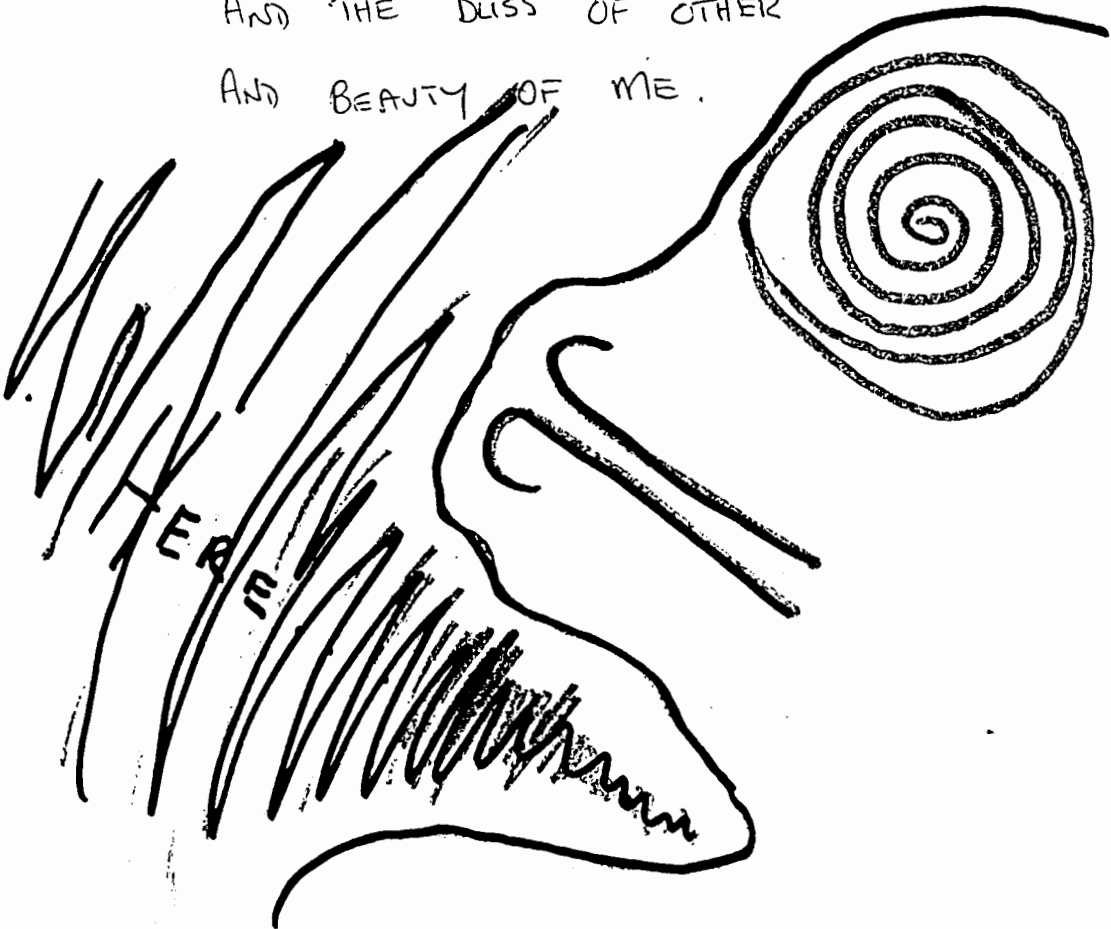
4-09-2000

AND NOW AS THE WARMTH RISES
SO DOES MY SENSE OF THE LIVING
Open



12.09.00.

IN THIS PLACE OF CREATION
I RISE TO YOUR CALL
MOVEMENTS OF UNSEEN OCEANS
GUIDE FROM MY SILENT MOUTH
UNTIL THESE WINGS BRING ME NEAR
TO THE WATERFALL OF TIME
AND THE BLISS OF OTHER
AND BEAUTY OF ME.

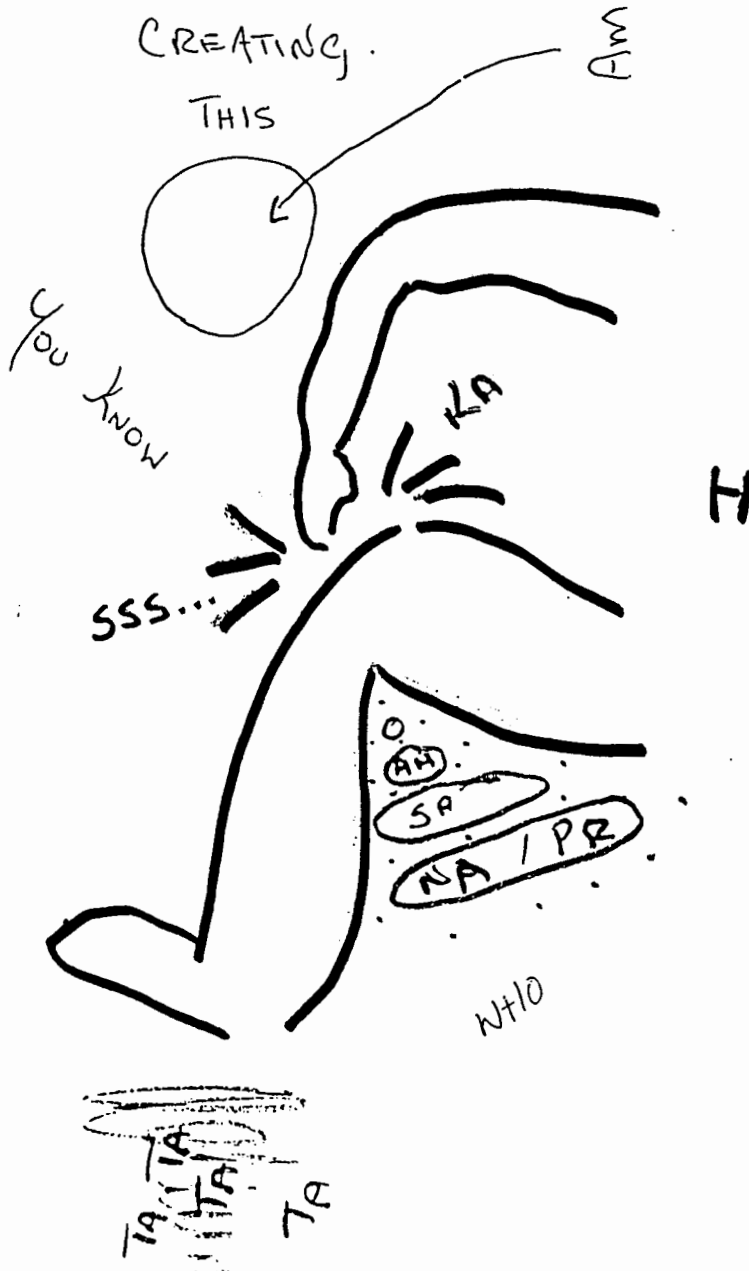


3.9 Perform/Transform workshop response, 12.09.2000.

12.09.2000

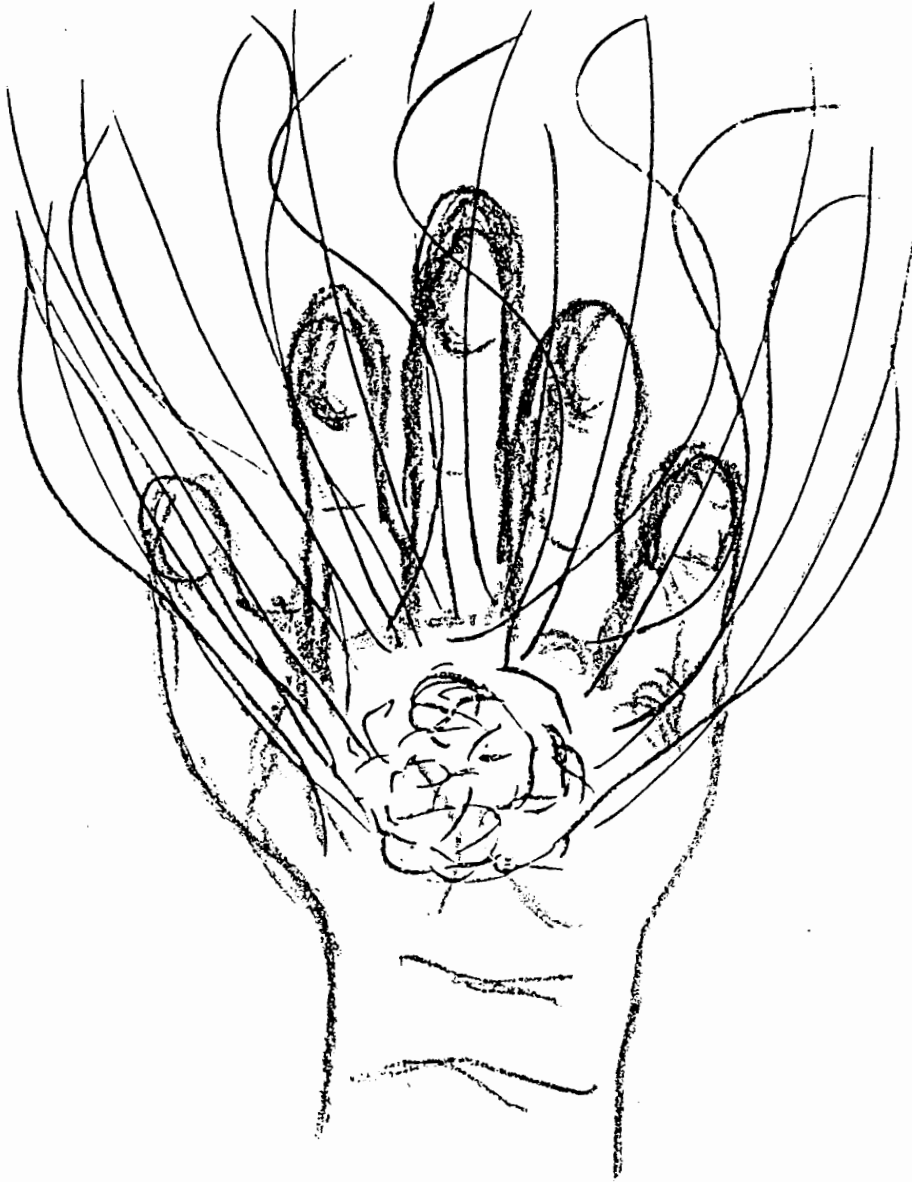
IN BETWEEN
IN THAT SPACE.
THE VOID.

CREATING.



3.10 Perform/Transform workshop response, 12.09.2000

19.9.00



New MEANING IN WARM-UP!

3.11 Perform/Transform workshop response, 19.09.2000.

19.9.00



Through thousands of years my ancestors travelled what was for them so far and yet to us so little. Even still there small journey was SO vast an experience.

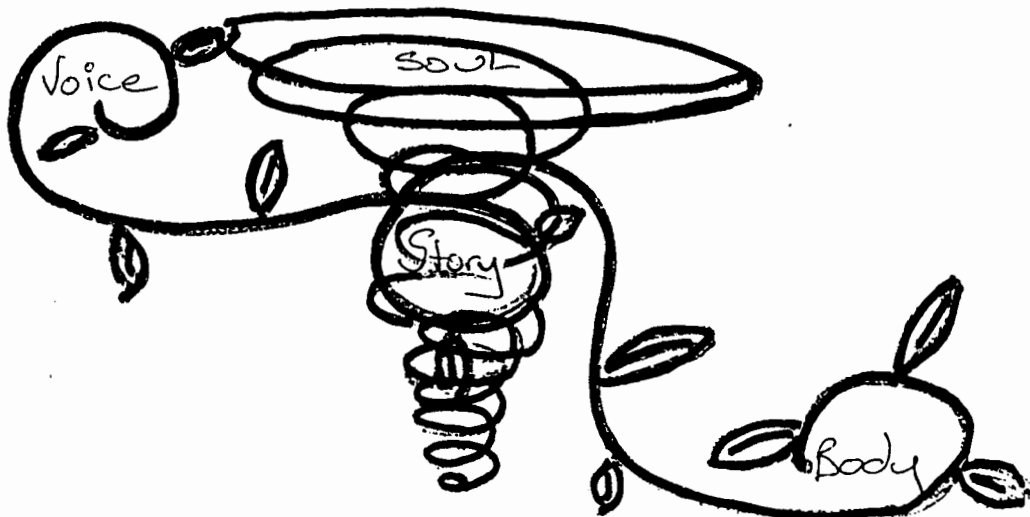
As I move through the space I sense the smallness of that which I occupy and still the vastness of its tale.

19.9.00

Speak of each part
Move through each sound
Unknown at the start
By the end profound.

Transcend what is mundane
Paint which seems grey
Difference now from what was same
Night Mind seen in the day.

loosen, shift, transform
light up the soul's fire
Sharing makes the heart warm
Newness in the old to aspire.



APPENDIX 4: DRAMA CURRICULUM

Appendix 4: Spiritual focus in a drama studies' program:

Within the existing drama studies course a spiritual component would be feasible. Rather than infusing my practice with ideas and practices from theorists with a spiritual inclination, the students would have a chance to comment on, discuss and find relevance for the theories and practices. The spiritual would be part of their study in a very tangible way and the value of such theories and practices would sit beside the well-accepted practices of Brecht and Stanislavski. It would be a more honest way of bringing the spiritual to their work than containing it within my approach to teaching. Practices of forms of meditation, guided visualisation and journal work are almost passe in the contemporary classroom that hopes for an iota of holism. In the ten years since I first proposed the benefits of Steiner Education for mainstream schools (Irving 1991) the climate has thawed a little towards these ideas.

A drama program for senior secondary students

Using Carr's (1995, p.90) words the program focus for the semester will be: 'Beyond the Mundane'. The set text will be *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the tasks will cover the performance of a rehearsed and memorised text (Task 4), playbuilding through improvisation around issues inspired by the text and using conventions of both the Medieval period and the Elizabethan (Task 2). The treatment of the text will consider the supernatural, the universal truths, the spiritual journeys of the characters and explore the poetry of the language and the benefits of speaking the blank verse using the very insightful approach to voice and text by Cicely Berry (1973, 1987). "The passion in the words is the most important thing" was Berry's comment about bringing a Shakespearean text alive when interviewed in Sydney on a teaching tour. (*The Weekend Australian* Oct. 6-7 2001). Allowing students to find their voice, to really experiment with the beauty and power of Shakespeare's poetry brings a spiritual element to voice work (Outcome 1: Verbal Communication). Exploring the characters' emotional, psychological, rational and spiritual lives through the elements, the temperaments, the zodiac, Laban's movement and Roth's Five Rhythms will provide a rich exploration to add to the verbal through Outcome 2: Non-Verbal Communication. In stressing the holistic quality of creating a character the students will also reflect on themselves and

others as they observe and play with what it means to be human. By workshopping selected scenes from the text the students will create their original response to the exploration of the characters and their poetry. The divining of the text in these ways will be supported with guided reflection in their process journals so that the students map their personal journey of understanding. Always it will be studied with constant reference to the demands of the set task and the requirements of the outcomes in every task.

Simple meditation and guided visualisation are tools for preparing the students for the class. Dream work, as suggested and described in Miller (2000), would also seem plausible and might lead to the Task 2 improvisation and playbuilding exercise. The whole approach to the class would allow the spiritual ambience described in Miller's soulful school or in this case a soulful drama studio. This workshopping (see Chapter 1: Definitions) of *The Dream* would permit research and discussion of Elizabethan theatre conventions.

The research into the elementals could be a study in the historical and romantic representation of the supernatural and mythical. Elizabethan attitudes to the supernatural might lead to seeking to study how the text has been portrayed in film in the twentieth century. Religious, supernatural, metaphorical and metaphysical nuances of the poetry would require explanation and research. Studying *The Dream* from a broad spiritual approach will let the text live in the students.

The spiritual dimension of the human seeks beyond the material and the mundane and *The Dream* certainly provides a rich terrain within the current Drama Studies curriculum. The powerful aspect of the course that distinguishes it from the other arts is the performance element. Using our human attributes the young actor must transform into another, must represent and present characters and ideas through voice, body, mind and spirit. The Steiner educationalist, Betty Staley wrote of art as the "healing remedy for fragmentation" (Staley, 1988, p.153). Lack of knowledge about Steiner or Waldorf education in the mainstream context means that a lot of plausible alternative practice is

ignored (Irving, 1990). Staley makes an interesting point about the self-discipline developed through studying the arts. It is certainly an attribute most people would not associate with the arts or with a pedestrian concept of spirituality as something nebulous, intuitive and soft. But as Staley reminds the reader, “music, poetry, literature, speech, drama, movement, sculpture, painting, drawing and architecture allow the soul opportunities for expression, exploration and self-discipline” (*ibid*, p.159). The students interviewed for this thesis certainly had fun and enjoyed the interaction in the drama class, but they also talked about the fear of forgetting lines through lack of rehearsal and preparation. Although some enjoyed the spontaneity of improvisation, they also knew the hard work required to really achieve a credible performance. The more experience they gain of performance the more they begin to realise the challenge of really achieving an authentic and truthful performance.

The spiritual can be found throughout the history of western theatre. A course that compared the Greek, Medieval and Elizabethan to *Commedia dell'arte*, Restoration and Realism would find that the religious element that accompanies the spiritual in the former might give way to secular concerns but does not preclude the personal spiritual journey through performance in the latter. The lack of time to focus on eastern and indigenous theatre traditions exposes the bias and time constraints of the present course with its western set text focus for tertiary entrance requirements. Certainly Australian indigenous writers and issues enter the year twelve course and could well open valuable dialogue about the imposition of cultural and religious values upon the individual's spiritual path.

The twentieth century and contemporary focus of the year twelve course and the study of theories of theatre allows a broad discussion of spirituality in a secular climate of a materialistic, consumer-orientated world. Practitioners and theorists, such as Artaud and Grotowski, immediately offer considerations of the spiritual. Although Rudolf Steiner is little known in the mainstream, a study of his theory of speech and drama, stage design, his mystery plays and movement through eurhythmy present a rich field of possibility. I have certainly found some of his ideas and exercises apt for use in my upper school

programs over the last decade. His ideas have had more impact in Europe but with the continuation of Steiner education in Britain, North America and Australia an awareness of his ideas are as valid, if less generally discussed than Artaud's. His approach to voice work is as useful as any I have encountered. Eurhythmics had impact on modern dance similar to that of Ruth St Denis and Isadora Duncan. "...Eurhythmics - the art of movement which is also an experience of the spirit. ...must not be thought of as something belonging to the past...but as belonging to the future" (Raffe et al, 1974, p. 12). It is an art form and a means of education and of healing (Ibid, p.26). Students should be aware of it, especially as it is still practiced and seen as essential in a Steiner Education of the whole child. The spiritual development suggested through this work is significant while the physical dexterity and harmony developed is beneficial for a performer. *Speech and Drama*, a compilation of some of Steiner's lectures gives a huge amount of practical guidance to the performer. It provides exercises and theory for voice work, but also treats stage design and gesture and movement and character development.

When I first met with his ideas on drama in 1990, I sought to find ways to infuse my teaching practice. I did this superficially at the time, but constantly find more and more inspiration. The time to really read and practice and seek the few opportunities to attend the rare workshops available in Perth when the vastness of the possibilities of the drama course are considered, means that I have neglected this area for the more readily acknowledged work of Stanislavski, Grotowski, Artaud, Brecht, Brook and Boal when designing my approach to the upper school curriculum. There seems to be every reason to bring Steiner's methods and theories into the work at this level. And to allow the dynamic of Steiner's admonition: "...if we forget that all genuine art springs from the spiritual world, then we must either resign ourselves to be guided by rules, or submit to an inartistic naturalism" (1960, p.329) and open students to a discussion of the benefits of a variety of theories and practices.

Michael Chekhov is interesting. His actor training, while initially influenced by Stanislavski, derives its special character from his blending of Steiner's anthroposophically inspired speech-formation and eurhythmics. Chekhov's approach to

actor training is an important part of contemporary theatre theory and practice. His ideas are available for utilisation in a drama course. A particular element of Chekhov's technique is the psychological gesture. By unravelling the character's gesture, Chekhov believed that "the soul of the character and the physical body of the performer meet" (Chekhov, 1991, p. xxxi). Chekhov's techniques would enrich the course in that they synthesise some of Steiner's ideas and provide excellent ways to work on character and performance.

Whether I would find the same ease in marrying spiritual ideas to a mathematics or economics course presents a different scenario. It suggests that the arts are still the area that permits greater flexibility in course design and content than some other learning areas. That the structure of the course and the reflective practice encouraged already exist to allow flexibility and exploration attests to the focus yet breadth permissible through drama.